The Role of Electronic Word of Mouth in Mediating the Influence of Social Media on Brand Image and Brand Trust

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of technology and information currently encourages coffee shop entrepreneurs to utilize social media as a marketing platform, especially through electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), in conveying information about their products and business premises. An effective viral marketing strategy through social media plays an important role in building a brand image that can influence brand trust. This study aims to analyze the influence of social media, E-WOM, and brand image on increasing brand trust. This study was conducted in Bekasi with a descriptive causality research design, using a quantitative approach and purposive sampling technique. The research data were collected from 175 respondents targeting active Instagram users as the general population and Kopi Tuku lovers in Bekasi as the specific population. The conceptual model analysis was conducted using Path Analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results showed that social media significantly increased E-WOM and brand image. E-WOM was proven to increase brand image and brand trust, while brand image also directly increased brand trust. In addition, social media has a positive influence on brand image and brand trust through E-WOM mediation. This study provides an important contribution for coffee shop entrepreneurs in developing social media-based marketing strategies. By utilizing E-WOM and building a strong brand image, business actors can increase brand trust, which ultimately encourages interest in purchasing products and visits to business premises.

Keywords: *Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Brand Trust.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and information is currently running very rapidly, affecting various areas of life such as transportation, electronic communication, and cyberspace. Therefore, to meet the growing information needs of consumers, information about products and services must always be updated, consistent and easy to understand in order to provide a satisfying experience for its users (Tyas, 2019). A business needs the right strategy to attract consumers to buy the products offered, one of which is by building trust in the brand. Brand trust is customer confidence in a brand's ability to fulfill what has been promised. This trust is formed when a brand consistently meets customer expectations (Fakhira, 2023). From the results of research by Satria & Firmansyah (2024), brand trust is known to have a partial positive and significant influence on consumer loyalty to a brand. In the digital era, brand trust is increasingly crucial because consumers have wider access to search for information, read reviews and share experiences (Subakti, 2023).

A positive brand image of a product can be a key factor influencing consumer decisions to purchase. When consumers see a brand has a good reputation, they tend to feel more confident and sure to choose the product (Firmansah & Jatmiko, 2024). According to Sibagariang & Nursanti (2010), brand image is a collection of perceptions or associations formed in the minds

of consumers towards a brand. In addition to gaining consumer trust, a brand image that is trusted by consumers will also encourage business actors to continue to strive to present creative, fresh and attractive products (Shelly & Sitorus, 2022). Therefore, brand image is a very important element that must be considered by business actors to maintain their brand or business (Dendeng et al., 2023).

In the business world, social media is often used to raise awareness of products and services, promote brands, maintain relationships with existing customers, and find new prospects. With the increasing use of social media, many companies are now beginning to realize the importance of this platform's role in shaping consumer perceptions, improving brand image, and influencing purchasing decisions (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021). Munandar quoted in Hanjaya et al. (2023), social media plays an important role in shaping consumer preferences, because brands that have high exposure on social media have a greater chance of attracting consumer demand. With good visibility on social media platforms, a brand can strengthen its appeal and significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Communication has undergone significant changes due to the development of the internet, especially in terms of reaching a wider audience and using electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) rather than just word of mouth (Safitri & Indra, 2024). E-WOM is informal communication about the features or use of a product, service, or vendor aimed at customers using internet-based technology. This communication includes producer-consumer and consumer-to-consumer contacts (Aksara, 2023). According to Sinandar (2021), customers can express their opinions widely through media such as social media, online forums, or review websites, which can then influence other people's decisions.

Research by Shiddiqi et al. (2023) states that E-WOM and brand image have a significant influence on brand image. This study has a gap compared to previous studies, especially in its focus and approach. This study examines the influence of social media on brand image and brand trust, while previous studies focused more on brand communication and brand image. The object of previous research was generation Z in the soft drink industry, while this study focuses on young people aged 18-35 who are fans of Toko Kopi Tuku in Bekasi. Researchers include brand trust variables because word of mouth marketing through social media can influence the level of consumer trust in a product. Previous studies tend to discuss the use of electronic media in general as a marketing platform, while this study specifically focuses on the use of Instagram social media as a marketing platform.

Thus, this study aims to analyze how the relationship between social media, electronic word of mouth, brand image and brand trust. This study will explore consumer trust. It is expected that this study can provide new insights into the influence of the use of social media, E-WOM and brand image on brand trust, so that the results can provide valuable information for companies in making decisions related to future marketing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Social Media

According to Nasrullah (2015), social media is an internet-based platform that allows users to display their identity, interact, collaborate, share information, and communicate with others, thus creating social relationships in virtual space. According to Liedfray et al. (2022), social media can be understood as an online platform that facilitates social interaction between users. Nurhasanah et al. (2023) defines social media as a platform that allows individuals to

create public or semi-public profiles in a restricted system, to describe a list of other users with whom they are connected, and to view a list of those connections made by other users in the system. One of the most interesting things about social media is its ability to generate large amounts of social data that can be used to better understand the characteristics of individuals, organizations, and communities that use social media (Suratnoaji et al., 2019).

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM)

According to Thurau et al. (2017) Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) is any online comment, review, or statement made by consumers, both potential customers and actual customers, about a brand, company, product, or service. Furthermore, Farzin & Fattahi (2018) defines E-WoM as information that can reduce service risk, correct perceptions of services and improve the condition of a service and can increase customer appeal. E-WoM, according to Risnawati & Rojuaniah (2021) is information shared verbally about a product among friends, relatives, or other customers. Lin et al. (2023) defines E-WoM as the exchange of information about products or services that occurs in the virtual world due to the existence of the internet which has spread almost all over the world. WoM has evolved into the digital realm, where communication is broader, anonymous, and temporary. Because of this shift, new ways have emerged to record, examine, evaluate, and control the impact that one customer can have on another (Chrismardani, 2023).

Brand Image

Mohammed & Rashid (2018) define brand image as a representation of the overall perception of a brand and is formed from past information and experiences with the brand itself. Furthermore, Nuseir (2019) states that brand image is a set of beliefs in a name, symbol, design, and impression that consumers have of a brand obtained from factual information and then they use the brand. Diputra & Yasa (2021) define brand image as a perception that arises in the minds of consumers when remembering a brand from a particular product line. According to Nurhasanah et al. (2023) brand image is interpreted as an indication used by consumers to evaluate a product when they do not have sufficient knowledge about a product and there is a tendency that consumers will choose products that are well known through experience using the product or based on information obtained through various sources. According to Foeh & Priyo (2024) brand image is a collection of associations about a brand that are stored in the minds or memories of consumers and brand image is formed in the minds of consumers because they are accustomed to using certain brands and there is consistency with the brand image.

Brand Trust

According to Herjanto et al. (2020) brand trust is a consumer belief that a product has certain attributes, a belief that arises from repeated views and with the learning and experience gained. Furthermore, according to Ebrahim (2020) brand trust is the willingness of consumers to trust and feel safe in a brand with all its risks, because there is hope that the brand can provide positive and reliable results for them. Artik & Duygun (2022) define brand trust as a consumer's desire to trust a brand and be faced with risks, because they have the hope that the brand will cause positive results. According to Huo et al. (2022) brand trust is one of the most important pillars of a strong brand. Then Elistia et al. (2023) defines brand trust as a form of

involvement process that has been fully anticipated and deeply realized.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES
The Relationship between Social Media and Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic word of mouth (E-WoM) through social media have a significant and positive impact on increasing public purchasing interest directly (Sinaga & Sulistiono, 2020). Online word of mouth as a form of interpersonal communication that occurs online between two or more parties, such as reference group members, consumers, and salespeople, where each individual has the potential to influence purchasing decisions (Godey et al., 2016). Moslehpour et al. (2020) stated that marketing on social media is one of the important aspects in marketing a product, and social media is identified as having the most significant influence on E-WoM, this shows that companies must pay attention and make interesting efforts in creating content to attract customers. In addition, Cheung et al. (2019) stated that social media allows consumers to share their experiences more widely and quickly. Social media, according to them, facilitates the exchange of information and recommendations in real time between users, which in turn influences their purchasing decisions or views on products or brands. Research by Innayah et al. (2022) shows that social media users often use platforms to exchange experiences and views on certain products or services, creating collective perceptions that influence consumer decisions. Through the statement above, the hypothesis is as follows:

H_1: Social Media positively influences Electronic Word of Mouth.

The Relationship between Social Media and Brand Image

Research by Taan et al. (2021), shows that marketing on social media has a positive and significant influence on brand image on a brand, which means that marketing on social media will be directly proportional to the increase in a brand's brand image. Diputri & Afriani (2022) show that brand image can be developed and strengthened by utilizing information technology, especially social media. Mohammad et al. (2024), revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between marketing through social media and brand image. This relationship is created thanks to active and ongoing interactions on social media, which effectively form a strong image of a brand. A study conducted by (Putri & Srinandini, 2024) shows that marketing through social media significantly affects brand image. Based on the statement above, the hypothesis is as follows:

H_2: Social Media positively influences Brand Image.

The Relationship Between Social Media and Brand Trust

Yang et al. (2022) showed that marketing through social communication carried out by brands on positive social media directly builds strong relationships and provides value from long-term interactions with users. Research by Dally et al. (2020) found that marketing activities through social media carried out can have an impact on brand trust in the brand, consumer perceptions of brand equity, and influence consumer loyalty to the brand. Salmiah et al. (2024) showed that the use of social media has a significant relationship in influencing customer brand trust. With the existence of social media platforms, brands can show the offers they have, the atmosphere of the place, and testimonials from customers. Through a transparent and consistent communication approach on social media platforms, banking companies are able to create emotional relationships with consumers, thereby building trust

Park & Namkung (2022). Meanwhile, research from Haudi et al. (2022) shows that social media marketing activities directly affect brand trust. In the study of Sohaib & Han (2023) found a significant empirical relationship between social media and brand trust. With the explanation above, the hypothesis is as follows:

H_3: Social Media positively influences Brand Trust.

The Relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Image

Research conducted by Hoang & Tung (2023), shows that E-WoM has a positive influence on brand image, this can be seen from the large volume of E-WoM that can support credibility and trust in online reviews of company products, so that with credible reviews it can contribute to the formation of the company's brand image (Tariq et al., 2017). E-WoM includes recommendations and reviews that are shared online, and its existence greatly influences how consumers view a brand. Yudanegara & Rahmi (2019), explain that the influence of E-WoM can be seen through consumers who provide recommendations for a product will strengthen the brand image of the product which can increase product purchases. Research by Budiarto et al. (2023), shows that active E-WoM through social media such as Facebook increases positive perceptions of the brand by utilizing frequent, relevant, and quality customer reviews. This study confirms the importance of E-WoM as a digital marketing tool to strengthen brand image. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: Electronic Word of Mouth positively influences Brand Image.

The Relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Trust

When customers trust a brand, they are more likely to recommend it so that others can experience it. In a study conducted by Putra & Sary (2024), it was found that when companies utilize E-WoM by presenting quality content, this can encourage positive opinions and interactions with other users so that brand trust will increase. Abouzeid et al. (2023) showed that E-WoM, which includes reviews, recommendations and testimonials shared on digital platforms, has a significant impact on consumer trust in brands. Overall, the results of this study highlight the importance of an effective E-WoM strategy for companies to build and maintain brand trust (Kala & Chaubey, 2018). Research by Thao et al. (2022) shows that there is a positive relationship between E-WoM and brand trust. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_5: Electronic Word of Mouth positively influences Brand Trust.

Relationship between Brand Image and Brand Trust

Existing literature reveals that brand image is often reflected by the perception of a brand and brand associations that exist in the memory of customers or consumers (Saputra, 2021). The better the brand image, the more positive the assertiveness or belief in branded products and their attributes that customers have (Rohmad et al., 2022). Brand image can serve as an important substitute for intrinsic product attribute information, which in turn fosters customer trust in a brand (Rudzewicz & Strychalska, 2021). Ultimately, the greater the trust customers have in a brand, the more likely they are to trust the brand. Previous research findings have supported a positive relationship between brand image and brand trust (Oppong et al., 2023). Likewise, in Chinomona (2016) study, it was found that a good brand image will increase customer trust in a brand, resulting in brand trust. Empirical results from the study (Farzin &

Fattahi, 2018; Singh et al., 2021) found that brand image has a significant impact on brand trust. Therefore, based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: Brand Image positively influences Brand Trust.

The Role of Electronic Word of Mouth Mediation

Social media has a significant impact on electronic word of mouth where E-WoM has a more positive impact on brand image (Abubakar et al., 2016). Efforts to encourage consumers to share their experiences through social media, as well as continue to develop attractive products or services, can be an effective way to improve a company's brand image (Fransisca & Santika, 2024). The influence of E-WoM can be seen from the activity of reading product reviews on social media, which provides information about the benefits and advantages of the product, thus forming a certain brand image (Eriza, 2017). The relationship between E-WoM and brand image, especially in the context of social media, is shown in a study by Solihin & Ahyani (2022) which shows that positive E-WOM significantly improves brand image by creating a good brand perception among consumers. Research by Malarvizhi et al. (2022) shows that E-WOM, when received positively, helps build trust and a more attractive brand image, which ultimately increases consumer purchase intentions.

In addition, E-WoM has a positive and significant impact on brand trust of a product (Yang et al., 2022). This confirms that the level of consumer trust in a product is greatly influenced by how E-WoM takes place on social media (Dewi & Sudiksa, 2019). Research by Tan (2023) shows that E-WoM acts as a channel that increases consumer perceptions of trust in a brand. This mediation occurs because E-WoM, especially on platforms like Facebook, amplifies positive and negative feedback, helping consumers make informed decisions based on the experiences of their peers (Cheung et al., 2021). The more positive E-WoM is shown, the stronger the brand trust, because consumers rely on opinions and recommendations shared in their social networks (Gökerik, 2024). This shows that E-WoM helps bridge the gap between social media interactions and brand trust by validating brand claims and increasing consumer trust through the influence of information from others (Han et al., 2019). Thus, the following hypothesis is made:

H_7: Electronic Word of Mouth is considered to have a positive impact in mediating the relationship between Social Media and Brand Image.

H_8: Electronic Word of Mouth is considered to have a positive impact in mediating the relationship between Social Media and Brand Trust.

Based on the theoretical logic explanation above, the following research model was created:
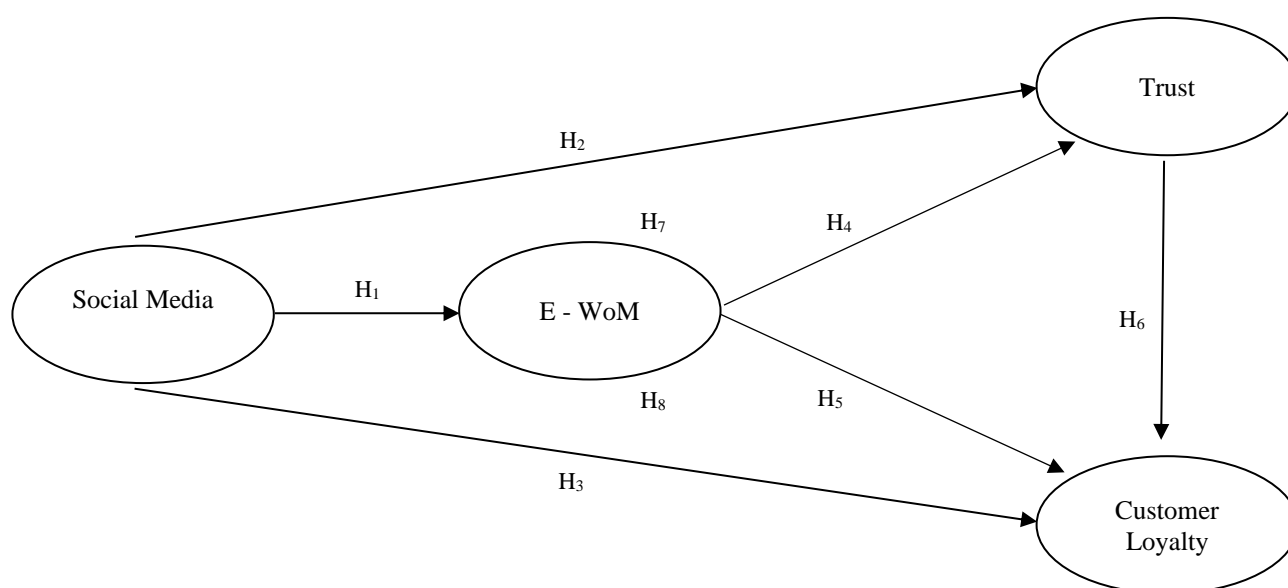

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study attempts to characterize research findings and test relationships between variables, this study is included in the category of descriptive and causal research. The purpose of descriptive research is to assess current data rather than draw general conclusions or generalizations by describing or characterizing the material that has been collected. In contrast, causal research is a technique that describes a causal relationship between two variables where certain variables influence and are influenced. This study uses a quantitative methodology. Because it contains statistics and statistical calculations and attempts to test the assumptions put forward, this study uses a quantitative approach (Sugiyono, 2018). The process of describing the variables included in the research problem produces operational variables, which are the smallest aspects that can be identified and measured (Indrawati, 2015). This facilitates the collection of data needed to evaluate the research topic. Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Image and Brand Trust are the variables in this study.

The Likert scale is the instrument scale used in this study. According to Sugiyono (2018), the Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of a person or group towards social phenomena. The measurement of factors in this study is based on previous research. Eight statements taken from Kustini (2011) were used to measure social media variables. Thurau et al. (2004) provided 13 statements used to measure the Electronic Word of Mouth variable. Nine statements taken from Aaker (2000) were used to measure the Brand Image variable, while five statements taken from Kustini (2011) were used to measure the Brand Trust variable.

People who actively use social media to search for information are part of the demographics and sample of the study. Purposive sampling, which involves selecting sample elements that are most likely to engage in the study and provide the necessary information, was used in conjunction with non-probability sampling methods to select the sample. Customers aged between 18 and 34 years who live in Bekasi City and have made at least one purchase of

Tuku coffee are part of the sample. Since this group is active on Instagram and often uses the network to search for information and recommendations, this birth year range was chosen (Hair et al., 2019). A total of 175 respondents (35 indicators multiplied by 5) are part of the sample size.

Descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis are two analytical methods used in this study to process and test the collected data. Google Form was used to distribute research questionnaires online to collect data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used to conduct hypothesis research because it can facilitate and increase the effectiveness of statistical hypothesis testing which is the basis for data analysis (Sabtohadi et al., 2024). Three simple linear regression analysis measurement models with five parameters were used to analyze the data: descriptive statistics, simple linear regression analysis, instrument reliability test (> 0.60), validity test (r_count > r_table), and coefficient of determination. Three criteria were used to conduct the Classical Assumption Test: Normality Test, Multicollinearity Test (Tolerance > 0.10 or VIF <10), and Heteroscedasticity Test (> 0.05).

If the measurement model explains how the construct is tested, then hypothesis testing that incorporates structural relationships between constructs can be considered valid or acceptable (Hair & Brunsveld, 2019). The crucial t value (t value) for a one-tailed test of 1.65 and the p-value significance level of 5% (0.05) are used in significance testing. This indicates that if the p-value is less than 0.05, the results are considered significant. Therefore, if the crucial t value is higher than 1.65, the hypothesis being tested can be considered significant at the 5% (0.05) level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved consumers aged 18 to 35 years who were interested in Toko Kopi Tuku in Bekasi and actively used social media as a source of information. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed using Google Form, with a total of 206 respondents, all of whom were in that age range. The majority of respondents, namely 89.32% or 184 respondents, were domiciled in Bekasi. In addition, most respondents showed high activity on Instagram social media, where 99.51% (205 people) used the platform to search for information about Toko Kopi Tuku. As many as 95.63% (197 people) of them followed the official Instagram account @tokokopituku, and 93.69% (193 people) regularly visited the account. Based on research by Hair et al., 2019, researchers will take a sample of 175 respondents (35 indicators multiplied by 5).

Data Quality Test

The method used to test validity is by utilizing the Pearson Bivariate correlation (Pearson Moment Product) on each question against the total score of answers from 175 respondents (Wahyuni, 2014). The instrument or question item is declared valid if the calculated r value ≥ r table (with a two-sided test at a significance level of 0.05), which indicates a significant correlation between the item and the total score.

Table 1. Results of Respondent Data Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Pearson Correlation (r count)	r table	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Standards
Social Media	SM1	0.211	0.148	0.954	0.60
	SM2	0.364			
	SM3	0.219			
	SM4	0.221			
	SM5	0.287			
	SM6	0.192			
	SM7	0.209			
	SM8	0.275			
Electronic Word of Mouth	WoM1	0.352	0.148	0.988	0.60
	WoM2	0.207			
	WoM3	0.266			
	WoM4	0.387			
	WoM5	0.435			
	WoM6	0.274			
	WoM7	0.249			
	WoM8	0.384			
	WoM9	0.209			
	WoM10	0.310			
	WoM11	0.230			
	WoM12	0.202			
	WoM13	0.197			
Brand Image	B11	0.154	0.148	0.981	0.60
	B12	0.251			
	B13	0.329			
	B14	0.218			
	B15	0.178			
	B16	0.168			
	B17	0.202			
	B18	0.281			
	B19	0.266			
Brand Trust	BT1	0.388	0.148	0.635	0.60
	BT2	0.377			
	BT3	0.373			
	BT4	0.335			
	BT5	0.538			

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

Based on Table 1, the indicators used for Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Brand Trust are declared valid as measuring instruments. This is because the correlation coefficient r count is greater than r table of 0.148 (r table value for n = 175).

Reliability testing is done by analyzing the Cronbach Alpha (α) value for each variable, because this research instrument is a questionnaire with a graded scale (Wahyuni, 2014). If the Cronbach Alpha value is > 0.60, then the variable indicator is considered reliable or can be trusted as a measuring instrument for the variable. Based on table 1, the results of the reliability test show that the Cronbach Alpha value for each variable is greater than 0.60. This indicates that the indicators used for Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Brand Trust have an adequate level of internal consistency. Thus, these indicators are declared reliable and can be relied on as measuring instruments for each variable studied.

Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe the distribution and characteristics of data in the research sample by examining the minimum value, maximum value, average (mean), and standard deviation of each independent and dependent variable (Binus, 2021). This analysis was conducted based on 175 respondents' answers that met the criteria for data processing. Based on the Descriptive Test Results, it can be seen that the distribution of data obtained by the researcher is Social Media, based on these data, it is known that the minimum value is 28.00, the maximum value reaches 40.00, and the average value (mean) is 35.7543 with a standard deviation of 1.98621. The average and standard deviation for this promotion variable indicate that the data distribution is classified as good, because the average value is greater than the standard deviation. Electronic Word of Mouth, based on these data, it is known that the minimum value is 42.00, the maximum value reaches 65.00, and the average value (mean) is 53.0514 with a standard deviation of 3.49428. The average and standard deviation for this promotion variable indicate that the data distribution is classified as good, because the average value is greater than the standard deviation. Brand Image, based on the data, it is known that the minimum value is 36.00, the maximum value reaches 45.00, and the average value (mean) is 40.2286 with a standard deviation of 1.70674. The average and standard deviation for this promotion variable indicate that the data distribution is quite good, because the average value is greater than the standard deviation. Brand Trust, based on the data, it is known that the minimum value is 7.00, the maximum value reaches 25.00, and the average value (mean) is 21.4686 with a standard deviation of 2.76844. The average and standard deviation for this promotion variable indicate that the data distribution is quite good, because the average value is greater than the standard deviation.

The multicollinearity test aims to determine whether there is a relationship between independent variables in the regression model. The existence of multicollinearity in the model can be identified through the tolerance value and variance inflation factor (VIF) (Binus, 2021). A variable is declared not to have multicollinearity if the VIF value <10 or the tolerance value> 0.01. Based on the output results, it can be seen that the Brand Image variable has a tolerance value of 0.780> 0.01. Then the VIF value is 1.282 <10. So from these results it can be concluded that the brand image variable does not experience multicollinearity symptoms in the regression model. The Brand Trust variable has a tolerance value of 0.963> 0.01. Then the VIF value is 1.039 <10. So from these results it can be concluded that the brand trust variable does not experience multicollinearity symptoms in the regression model. The Social Media variable has a tolerance value of 0.803> 0.01. Then the VIF value is 1.246 <10. So from these results it can be concluded that the social media variable does not experience multicollinearity symptoms in the regression model.

Heteroscedasticity is a condition in which the error variance is not the same for all observations on each independent variable in the regression model. In order for the regression model to meet the requirements, it must be ensured that there is no heteroscedasticity (Hidayat, 2013). If the sig. value > 0.05, then there is no heteroscedasticity. Based on the output table above, it can be seen that the Brand Image variable has a sig. value of 0.136 > 0.05. So from these results it can be concluded that the brand image variable does not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity because sig. > 0.05. The Brand Trust variable has a sig. value of 0.989 > 0.05. So from these results it can be concluded that the brand trust variable does not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity because sig. > 0.05. The Social Media variable has a sig. value of 0.641 > 0.05. So from these results it can be concluded that the social media variable does

not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity because sig. > 0.05. Then by looking at the scatterplot, the points are spread randomly and do not form a wave-like pattern that widens and then narrows. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data in this study is free from heteroscedasticity problems.

The coefficient of determination describes the extent to which the independent variable contributes to the related variable, expressed in percentage form. The higher the percentage, the greater the influence of the independent variable (X) on the related variable. Meanwhile, the remaining percentage shows the influence of other independent variables not included in this study (Sehangunaung et al., 2023). The results of this study indicate that the Social Media and E-WOM variables in this study are able to influence the Brand Image variable by 22.7%, while the remaining 77.3% (1 - 0.227) is influenced by other variables outside the independent variables analyzed in this study. The Social Media and E-WOM variables in this study were able to influence the Brand Trust variable by 6.6%, while the remaining 93.4% (1 – 0.066) was influenced by other variables outside the independent variables analyzed in this study.

The direct influence of each variable can be seen through the test results presented in the following table:

Table 2. Direct Influence Coefficient Measurement Results

	Hypothesis	*Original Sample (O)*	*t – Values* > 1.973	*P Values* 0.050	*Information*
SM → E-WoM	H_1	0.204	2.739	0.007	The data support the hypothesis
SM → BI	H_2	0.403	5.917	0.001	The data support the hypothesis
SM → BT	H_3	0.042	0.565	0.573	Data does not support hypothesis
E-WoM → BI	H_4	0.201	2.954	0.005	The data support the hypothesis
E-WoM → BT	H_5	0.265	3.543	0.001	The data support the hypothesis
BI → BT	H_6	0.192	2.580	0.011	The data support the hypothesis

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

Based on the hypothesis test table above, the results of hypothesis one (H_1) with the results of the direct influence analysis of the social media variable have a positive effect on the electronic word of mouth variable of 0.204 (20.4%). The t-count value is 2.739> t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.007 <0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which indicates that social media has a positive and significant partial influence on electronic word of mouth.

Hypothesis two (H_2) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of the social media variable has a positive effect on the brand image variable of 0.403 (40.3%). The calculated t value is 5.917> t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.001 <0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which indicates that social media has a positive and significant partial influence on brand image.

Hypothesis three (H_3) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of the social media variable does not have a positive effect on the brand trust variable of 0.042 (4.2%). The t-count value is 0.565 <t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.573> from 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected, which indicates that social media has no positive and insignificant partial influence on brand trust.

Hypothesis four (H$_4$) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of the electronic word of mouth variable has a positive effect on the brand image variable of 0.201 (20.1%). The calculated t value is 2.954> t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.005 <0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which indicates that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant partial influence on brand image.

Hypothesis five (H$_5$) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of the electronic word of mouth variable has a positive effect on the brand trust variable of 0.265 (26.5%). The calculated t value is 3.543> t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.001 <0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which indicates that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant partial influence on brand trust.

Hypothesis six (H$_6$) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of the brand image variable has a positive effect on the brand trust variable of 0.192 (19.2%). The calculated t value is 2.580> t table 1.973, with a significance value of 0.011 <0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which indicates that brand image has a positive and significant partial influence on brand trust.

Analysis of Mediation Effects

Table 3. Mediation Test Results

	Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	P Values	Information
SM → E-WoM → BI	H$_7$	0.041	0.272	Data does not support the hypothesis
SM → E-WoM → BT	H$_8$	0.054	0.042	The data support the hypothesis

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

Based on the table above, the hypothesis seven (H$_7$) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of social media on brand image is 0.403. The indirect influence through E-WOM is calculated by multiplying the beta value of social media on E-WOM by the beta value of E-WOM on brand image, which is 0.204 x 0.201 = 0.041. Therefore, the total influence of social media on brand image is 0.403 + 0.041 = 0.444. These results indicate that the indirect influence of 0.041 is smaller than the direct influence of 0.403. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media through E-WOM does not have a significant influence on brand trust.

Hypothesis eight (H$_8$) with the results of the analysis of the direct influence of social media on brand trust is 0.042. The indirect influence through E-WOM is calculated by multiplying the beta value of social media on E-WOM by the beta value of E-WOM on brand trust, which is 0.204 x 0.265 = 0.054. Therefore, the total influence of social media on brand trust is 0.042 + 0.054 = 0.096. These results indicate that the indirect influence of 0.054 is greater than the direct influence of 0.042. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media through E-WOM has a significant influence on brand trust.

Social media can increase E-WOM for Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi. When consumers feel that Tuku coffee products are superior to other products, they will be satisfied with their decision to buy coffee at Tuku. This finding is in line with several previous studies which also stated that social media directly has a positive impact on E-WOM (Sinaga & Sulistiono, 2020).

Social media can improve the brand image of Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi products. When consumers feel that Tuku is a valuable product, this can increase product demand and customer satisfaction. In addition, social media also plays a role in building strong relationships between brands and consumers. This finding is in line with several previous studies which state that

social media has a direct positive impact on brand image (Taan et al., 2021).

Social media has not been able to increase consumer trust in the Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi product brand. Although Kopi Tuku is active on Instagram, interactions with customers may be less effective. If the response to comments or questions is slow, or if the content is less personal, customers may feel less connected to the brand. The low effectiveness of marketing through social media can have an impact on decreasing the level of trust in the brand. This finding contradicts several previous studies which state that social media has a direct and positive influence on brand trust (Rukmana & Abrian, 2023).

E-WOM can improve the brand image of Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi products. When consumers give positive reviews and recommend products through digital platforms, this can form a better perception among potential buyers and encourage increased product purchases. This finding is in line with several previous studies stating that E-WOM directly has a positive impact on brand image (Candra & Suparna, 2019).

E-WOM can increase consumer trust in Tuku Coffee Shop products. When consumers receive positive information published on the internet about Tuku products, the level of trust in the brand will increase. In addition, consumers also tend to recommend products to others so that they can feel the benefits. This finding is in line with several previous studies which state that E-WOM directly has a positive impact on brand trust (Thao et al., 2022).

A good brand image can increase consumer trust in Toko Kopi Tuku products. When a company successfully displays a positive image to customers, they tend to trust the brand more and use products from the brand more often. This finding is in line with several previous studies stating that brand image directly has a positive impact on brand trust (Susilawati & Wufron, 2017).

EWOM in social media cannot improve the company's brand image because if only a few customers share their experiences about Kopi Tuku in Bekasi on Instagram, then the EWOM effect is not significant enough to mediate the relationship between social media and brand image. So Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi needs to consistently develop attractive products or services, this can be an effective strategy to strengthen the brand image in the eyes of consumers, which can ultimately increase their purchase intention. This finding is in line with several previous studies showing that social media influences brand image through E-WOM (Eriza, 2017).

When Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi is able to act as a channel that strengthens consumer perceptions, it can help them make more informed decisions based on their experiences or recommendations from their friends. This finding is consistent with several previous studies stating that social media influences brand trust through E-WOM (Tan, 2023).

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

In this study, all the hypotheses proposed were successfully proven. First, social media is proven to have a positive influence on E-WOM, where effective promotion can expand reach and increase product recognition among a wider audience. Second, social media plays an important role in improving brand image, because interesting content and initiatives can expand brand development and increase customer demand and satisfaction. Third, social media does not show a positive influence on brand trust, because the information provided is not enough to build consumer trust. Fourth, E-WOM is proven to have a positive influence on brand image, where strong interaction intensity can introduce the brand more widely and create a better image, which ultimately encourages more confident purchasing decisions. Fifth,

E-WOM has a positive influence on brand trust, because positive information from trusted sources can increase consumer confidence in the brand. Sixth, brand image has a positive influence on brand trust, which means that if the brand can meet or even exceed consumer expectations, customers will feel more confident in their choices. Seventh, social media has a positive influence on brand image mediated by E-WOM, where information about product advantages that is shared can build a positive brand image. Lastly, eighth, social media also has a positive influence on brand trust mediated by E-WOM, because content that informs brand credibility can increase consumer trust.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered for future improvements. First, the sample used in this study is limited to the Bekasi area, so the results obtained may not fully reflect broader conditions. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to expand the sample coverage to more areas, so that the results are more representative. Second, this study only analyzes the use of the Instagram social media platform from Toko Kopi Tuku, which limits the ability to obtain data from other social media platforms. For future research, it would be more useful if the analysis was conducted on various social media platforms, and involved more variables that can describe consumer behavior as a whole in a digital context. Based on the limitations found in this study, there are several recommendations and suggestions that can be put forward. First, for other researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of future research by covering various other coffee shops outside the Bekasi area. This will provide a broader perspective and allow the study to produce more generalizable findings. In addition, researchers can also consider adding other relevant variables, such as demographic factors or consumer preferences, to provide a deeper understanding of the influence of social media and E-WOM on brand image and brand trust. Second, for Toko Kopi Tuku Bekasi, to increase consumer brand trust through social media, the company should provide more relevant and clear information about the advantages of their products. Thus, consumers will feel more confident in the quality of the product, which in turn can strengthen their trust in the brand. Emphasis on real advantages and transparent information can contribute greatly to building a stronger relationship between brands and customers.

This study has important implications for coffee shop entrepreneurs in understanding the factors that can influence consumer purchasing decisions and their business development. Based on the research findings, social media has proven to be a strong factor in influencing a product's brand image. Therefore, coffee shop owners are advised to implement the right strategies to improve and maintain their brand image, such as ensuring the quality of the coffee beans used, creating a comfortable atmosphere, and offering an attractive and varied menu. This will help attract customers and encourage them to visit the place. In addition, coffee shop owners also need to pay attention to other aspects such as brand trust, by providing clear and transparent information about the advantages of the product. Increasing brand trust will help build consumer trust, which in turn encourages them to make purchases. No less important, coffee shop owners must increase E-WOM by providing a platform or site for customers to provide reviews or testimonials about the product. In this way, new consumers can get more accurate information about the price, taste, and quality of the product, and create more confidence in their decision to buy or visit the place.

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