

# The Impact of Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Trust

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## Abstract

*This research aims to find out whether there is an influence of customer experience and electronic word of mouth (E-WoM) on brand trust of local skincare products of Z- Generation living in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi (Jabodetabek). This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach. To collect the data, a questionnaire is distributed to a total of 145 skincare products users. To analyse the data, multiple linear regression analysis is employed. This research shows that customer experience and E-WoM have a positive significant effect on Brand Trust both partially and simultaneously.*

**Keywords:** Customer Experience, E-WoM, Brand Trust

## Introduction

The cosmetics industry in Indonesia has witnessed substantial growth, driven by a rising emphasis on personal appearance and skin health, particularly among Generation Z. The younger generation has shown a heightened awareness of the importance of facial skin care from an early age. This trend is evident in the increased demand for skincare products tailored to specific needs and preferences. One notable shift is the expanding market among men, who are now actively participating in skincare routines and paying more attention to their overall appearance. As a response, companies in the cosmetics industry are engaged in fierce competition to develop and market skincare products that cater to the diverse requirements of consumers. This competition extends to both domestic and foreign brands. The market dynamics reflect a broader cultural shift, where self-care and grooming are becoming integral parts of lifestyle choices, not limited to a specific gender. The industry's focus on producing products that align with individual needs and skin types contributes to the diversity of available skincare solutions.

In the Populix survey (2022), Indonesian consumers' preference for local brand cosmetics is quite high. Of the 500 women surveyed, 54% admitted that they preferred local brands for their cosmetics, while 11% of other respondents preferred international brands, and 35% of respondents had no preference regarding the origin of their cosmetic brands. Three cosmetic brands dominate the list of most popular brands in this survey. Wardah is used by 48% of respondents, Emina by 40%, and Make Over by 22%. This survey involved 500 female respondents, the majority of whom were located in Jabodetabek (42%). Then there were also respondents from Surabaya (9%), Bandung (9%), Medan (6%), Semarang (4%), other cities on the island of Java (6%), as well as cities in other parts of Indonesia (24%).

With so many local product brands such as Scarlett, Ms Glow, Somethinc, Avoskin, Whitelab, Azarine, etc., competition in the beauty business sector has made competition between business actors even tighter. Therefore, companies are required to provide satisfactory service to consumers and quality service so that consumers are satisfied with their

purchases. According to Chen & Lin (2015), customer experience is defined as cognitive recognition or the perception of stimulating customer motivation. This recognition or perception can increase the value of the product. In an effort to achieve success in business, it is important for companies to build brand trust among consumers. This can be achieved by offering appropriate products, which will then get positive assessments from consumers towards the brand. This positive assessment will help build trust in the company brand.

Apart from Customer Experience, another factor that can influence brand trust is Electronic Word of Mouth. Consumers usually convey their experiences on various online media, where information is spread widely and openly, and can be accessed by many people as long as they are connected to the internet. In marketing, activities like this are called electronic word of mouth (eWOM) activities. According to Goldsmith (2008), electronic word of mouth (E-Wom) is internet-based social communication where web users can send or receive information related to products online. In research, Lianto (2015) stated that eWOM has a significant influence on Brand Trust because consumers who get information through online platforms feel confident and trusting based on reviews from other people who have tried a product. Therefore, eWOM has great power in influencing other consumers' decisions.

Based on the background description above, the researcher conducted research on local skincare and presented this research with the title "The Influence of Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth on brand trust in local skincare (Case study of Generation Z domiciled in Jabodetabek)".

## Literature Review

### *Customer Experience*

Experts have different concepts of customer experience. According to Gentile (2007), customer experience is defined as a series of interactions between customers and a product, company, or part of an organization, which causes a reaction. This experience personally implies customer involvement at different levels (both rational, emotional, sensory, physical and spiritual). Colin Shaw and John Ivens, n.d. (2002) customer experience is a combination of a company's physical performance and the emotions it evokes, measured intuitively against customer expectations at all moments. Meyer & Schwager (2007), customer experience is the customer's internal and subjective response as a result of direct or indirect interactions with the company. This direct relationship is usually due to the initiative of the consumer. This usually occurs in the purchasing and service departments. Meanwhile, indirect relationships often involve unplanned encounters, such as product and brand appearances, advertising and other promotional events.

Schmitt (1999) group's customer experience components into 5 dimensions that can be used to measure customer experience consisting of: Sense, Feel, and Think, Act are four elements related to consumer experience. Sense relates to experiences through the five senses such as sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Feel refers to the emotional experience created between a consumer and a brand. Think relates to the experience of creativity and rational thinking of consumers. Meanwhile, Act is designed to create a consumer experience that is connected to the physical body and lifestyle. Relate, namely a relationship with other people, other social groups (such as work, lifestyle) or broader social identity.

Meanwhile, according to Lemke et al., (2006) there are eight factors that are important in influencing the success of customer experience, covering several important aspects. Accessibility (ease of access), relates to the ease for customers to interact with products and gain access to the services provided. Competence refers to the ability of a product provider to provide competent services, both in terms of product knowledge and skills in providing solutions. Customer Recognition (customer recognition), involves the customer's feeling that

his presence is noticed and recognized by the product provider, so that consumers feel appreciated and considered important. Helpfulness includes customers' feelings about how easy it is for consumers to ask for help and get the support they need from product providers. Personalization (personalization), involves the customer's feeling that the consumer receives treatment or facilities that make the consumer comfortable as an individual, by paying attention to the consumer's personal preferences and needs. Problem-solving involves consumers' feelings that consumer problems or complaints are handled well by the product provider, by providing adequate and satisfactory solutions. Promise fulfillment (fulfillment of promises), includes the ability of product providers to fulfill the promises they have made they make to customers, such as delivery times, product quality, or service promises. Value for Time (time value), involves the customer's feeling that the consumer's time is valued by the product provider, by providing efficient and timely service.

### *Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)*

According to Gruen (2006), eWOM has the meaning of a communication medium for sharing information related to a product or service that has been consumed between consumers who do not know each other and have met before. Hussain et al (2017) electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is an information source that has expanded from WOM due to the development of the Web, where e-commerce has become a strategic emphasis for businesses and consumers, interest in WOM has been reconceptualized as eWOM. Thureau, et.al (2004) eWOM is a negative or positive statement made by actual, potential or previous consumers regarding a product or company where this information is available to people or institutions via the internet.

According to Goyette et al (2010), in measuring the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) using the following dimensions: Intensity, Intensity refers to the number of opinions or comments written by consumers on social media or online platforms regarding a product, service, or brand. Valence of opinion (value of opinion), Valence of opinion involves consumer opinions, both positive and negative, regarding products, services or brands. This content has the potential to influence consumer perceptions, decisions and attitudes towards business entities.

Thureau, et.al (2004) measured eWOM with 8 dimensions as follows: Platform Assistance, including the frequency of consumer visits to the platform and consumer activity in writing opinions or comments. Concern for Others (Attention to Other Consumers), involves consumers' desire to help others in making purchasing decisions. Economic Incentives refer to incentives for human behavior as a sign of appreciation from the gift giver. In the context of e-WOM, consumers can receive economic incentives, such as discounts or gifts, as a form of appreciation for consumer participation in providing reviews or comments. Helping Company (Helping the Company), involving consumers to help the company in return for consumer satisfaction with products or services. Consumers can provide constructive feedback or suggestions to help the company improve quality or service. Expressing Positive Emotions (Expressing Positive Experiences), consumers can share joy and satisfaction with others through reviews or comments. Venting Negative Feelings (Venting Negative Feelings), sharing unpleasant experiences to reduce dissatisfaction. Consumers can express dissatisfaction in the hope of providing warnings or input to others. Social Benefits, the assumption that consumers will receive social benefits from becoming members of a community and interacting with other people who have the same interests. Consumers can feel connected and get support from community members who have had similar experiences. Advice seeking this occurs when consumers look for reviews and comments from other people to get advice or guidance in making purchasing decisions.

### ***Brand Trust***

According to Lau and Lee (1999) brand trust is a customer's desire to rely on a brand despite the risks it faces because of the expectation that the brand will lead to positive results. Kumar (2008) Brand trust is "an individual's willingness to trust a brand's ability to satisfy their needs". Someone who has used a product and is followed by other people proves the quality of the product, so creates a sense of trust in the product. Delgado (2005) defines brand trust as the average consumer's willingness to rely on a brand's ability to fulfill their needs and desires.

Kustini (2011) brand trust can be measured through the dimension of viability and the dimension of intentionality: Dimension of Viability, this dimension represents a perception that a brand can fulfill and satisfy consumer needs and values. This dimension can be measured through indicators of satisfaction and value, Dimension of Intentionality, this dimension reflects an individual's feeling of security towards a brand.

According to Delgado-Ballester (2004), brand trust is reflected in two ways, namely brand reliability and brand intentions: Brand reliability is the consumer's belief that the product can fulfill the promised value and provide satisfaction in accordance with consumer needs. This is an important factor in building trust in a brand, because the brand's ability to fulfill the values it promises will make consumers feel confident that they will get what they need. Brand intention is based on consumers' beliefs that the brand will prioritize consumers' interests when unexpected problems occur in product use. Consumers believe that brands will provide adequate responses and solutions directed at meeting consumer needs in overcoming these problems.

### **Research Method**

This research is quantitative in nature. To collect the data, questionnaire is employed. As shown in Table 1, customer experience variable is measured by 3 indicators, 1). sense, 2). feel and relate while E-WoM variable is indicated by 5 indicators, 1). the frequency of information access, 2). the frequency of interaction, 3). the number of reviews, 4). the positive comment, 5). recommendation. Finally, brand trust variable is measured by 5 indicators, 1. brand reputation, 2). brand association, 3). brand love, 4). brand satisfaction and 5. brand support.

### **Data Analysis**

#### ***Instrument Validity and Reliability Test***

A questionnaire can be said to be valid if the questions contained in the questionnaire can accurately reveal the things that the questionnaire will measure. The significance test in the validity test is carried out by comparing the calculated  $r$ -value (correlation coefficient) with the table  $r$  value for degrees of freedom which is calculated using the formula  $df = n - 2$ , where  $n$  is the number of samples. In this significance test, the commonly used significance level is 0.05. If the calculated  $r$  value is significant (higher than the  $r$  table), then it can be said that the questionnaire is valid for measuring the desired construct.

A questionnaire is said to be reliable or reliable if a person's answers to the statements in the questionnaire are consistent or stable over time. In reliability testing, one method is commonly used in calculating Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient value that indicates the extent to which the items in a questionnaire are correlated with each other and can be considered as a measure of the internal reliability of the questionnaire. A variable is said to be reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60.

Table 1. Variable Indicators

No	Variable	Indicator	Scale	Source
1	Customer Experience	1. Sense 2. Feel 3. Relate	Ordinal	Schmitt (1999)
2	Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM)	1.The frequency of Information Access 2.The frequency of Interaction 3.The number of Review 4.The positive comment 5.Recommendation	Ordinal	Goyette et al., (2010)
3	Brand Trust	1.Brand Reputation 2.Brand Association 3.Brand Love 4.Brand Satisfaction 5. Brand Support	Ordinal	Lau & Lee (1999)

### *The Linearity Test*

The linearity test aims to test whether in the regression model, both the dependent variable and the independent variable, have a distribution that follows a normal pattern or not. The test is generally carried out using the one-way Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. To determine whether it follows a normal distribution or not is by assessing its significance value. If it is significant  $> 0.05$  then the variable is normally distributed and conversely if it is significant  $< 0.05$  then the variable is not normally distributed.

### *Multicollinearity Test*

The multicollinearity test aims to test whether there is a strong or definite linear correlation between several independent variables in the regression model. The existence of multicollinearity can cause problems in regression analysis, such as unstable regression coefficients and standard errors that become infinite. This can result in bias in the regression model. The multicollinearity test is carried out by paying attention to the tolerance value or variance inflation factor (VIF) of each independent variable. The limit used is tolerance value  $> 0.1$  or  $VIF < 10$ . If the tolerance value is greater than 0.1 or VIF is smaller than 10, it can be concluded that there is no significant multicollinearity in the regression model.

### *Heteroscedasticity Test*

The heteroscedasticity test aims to test whether there are differences in variance and confounding errors between various values of the independent variables in the regression model. In the regression model, it is hoped that heteroscedasticity will not occur. To test heteroscedasticity is the Glejser test. This test is carried out by testing the level of significance between the independent variable (x) and the absolute value of the regression residual which has not been standardized as the dependent variable. If the test results are above the significance level ( $r > 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity. However, if the test results are below the significance level ( $r < 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is heteroscedasticity.

### *Multiple Regression Analysis*

This research aims to see the influence between independent variables and dependent variables with a measurement scale or ratio in a linear equation. In this research, multiple

regression analysis was used which was processed with SPSS software. The independent variables in this research are Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth, while the dependent variable is Brand Trust

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

### ***Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) Analysis***

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) reflects the extent to which the independent variable influences the dependent variable. The purpose of this analysis is to measure how much influence the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The R<sup>2</sup> value shows the proportion of the total variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. The higher the R<sup>2</sup> value, the greater the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable.

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***Instrument Validity and Reliability Test***

Each question item in the 3 variables has a calculated  $r > r$  table (0.163). Thus it can be concluded that the question is valid. Each variable has a Cronbach Alpha  $> 0.60$ . Thus, the variables of customer experience, electronic word of mouth, and brand trust can be said to be reliable.

### ***The Linearity Assumption Test***

The normality test uses the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which shows that with the asymptotic only method Sig. (2-tailed) which has a significant value of 0.06 which is greater than 0.05. So it can be concluded that the data distribution in this study is normally distributed.

### ***Multicollinearity Test***

VIF value  $< 10.0$  in each variable. So it can be concluded that all variables do not have multicollinearity.

### ***Heteroscedasticity Test***

*The results of the heteroscedasticity test via the Glejser test can be seen that sig. each variable has a value of more than 0.05 and it can be concluded that heteroscedasticity does not occur in the regression model in this study.*

### ***Multiple Regression Analysis***

#### ***T-Test***

The results of the customer experience variable (X<sub>1</sub>) show that the Sig. for the influence of customer experience on brand trust, it is  $0.000 < 0.05$  and the calculated t value is  $9.662 > t$  table 1.976. So it can be concluded that customer experience has a significant positive effect on brand trust.

The results of the electronic word of mouth variable (X<sub>2</sub>) show that the Sig. for the influence of EWOM on brand trust, it is  $0.013 < 0.05$  and the calculated t value is  $2.525 > t$  table 1.976. So it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth has a significant positive effect on brand trust.

#### ***F-Test***

The significance value for the simultaneous influence of X1 and accepted, which means there is an influence of the Customer Experience variable and the Ewom variable simultaneously on Brand trust. The customer experience variable is more dominant because the standardized coefficient b value is further away from 0 with a value of 0.626 compared to the electronic word of mouth variable with a standardized coefficient b of only 0.196.

The feel indicator is the most influential indicator in the customer experience variable with a percentage of 91%, while the relate indicator is the indicator with the smallest percentage, 82%. Indicators of frequency of interaction with users of social networking sites and the number of reviews written by users of social networking sites are the most influential indicators in the electronic word of mouth variable with a percentage of 92%, while indicators of recommendations from users of social networking sites are indicators with the smallest percentage, 72%.

### ***Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) Analysis***

The Adjusted R square value is 0.540, this means that the influence of the Customer Experience and Ewom variables simultaneously on the Brand Trust variable is 54%. The constant coefficient value is 0.718 with a standard error of 1.355. The customer experience coefficient is 0.626 while the Ewom coefficient is 0.196. So the regression equation is formulated as follows:

$$BT = 0,718 + 0,626 X1 + 0,196 X2 + e$$

The magnitude of the regression coefficient and this research can be explained:

1. A constant value of 0.718 can be interpreted as if the magnitude of all independent variables is 0, then the brand trust value has a value of 0.718.
2. The Customer Experience coefficient has a positive influence on Brand Trust. A regression coefficient of 0.626 means that for every one unit increase in customer experience, brand trust will increase by 0.626.
3. The Electronic word-of-mouth coefficient has a positive influence on brand trust of 0.196, meaning that every increase in Ewom by one unit will increase brand trust by 0.196.

### **Discussion**

This research was conducted by raising two independent variables, namely Customer Experience (X1) and electronic Word of Mouth (X2) on Brand Trust (Y) in local skincare products (a case study of Gen Z domiciled in Jabodetabek), with the results as follows:

#### ***The Relationship between Customer Experience and Brand Trust***

The results of this research show that Customer Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust, with a coefficient value of 0.626. The significance value of customer experience on brand trust is  $0.000 < 0.05$ . So this research states that H1 is accepted, meaning "Customer Experience has a significant effect on Brand Trust". Feel is the more influential indicator with a percentage of 91.25%, followed by sense 90% and relate 82.5%.

These results are in line with research by Djayanto, n.d. (2019) researched the influence of customer experience on customer loyalty in the Grab-Food application with brand trust as an intervening variable. Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis technique, the results of the Statistical T test showed the number 15,569, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96 (at a significance level of 0.05). In addition, the P Values

obtained are 0.000, which is also smaller than the specified significance level. Thus, these results show that there is a significant influence of customer experience on brand trust.

So this research shows that local skincare brands have provided a consistent experience to consumers. With this consistency, local skincare brands are considered credible by consumers, making consumers feel confident in the brand.

### *The Relationship between E-WOM and Brand Trust*

The results of this research show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust, with a coefficient value of 0.196. The significance value of Electronic Word of Mouth on brand trust is  $0.013 < 0.05$ . So this research finds that H2 is accepted, meaning that electronic Word of Mouth has a significant effect on brand trust. The frequency of interaction with social networking site users and the number of reviews written by social networking site users are the most influential indicators with a percentage of 92.5%.

These results are in line with research by Trigani & Tobing, n.d. (2022) researched the influence of social media advertising and electronic word of mouth on brand trust for local shoe products. The research method uses multiple regression analysis and IBM SPSS 26 to test the data, and obtained t-count results for the electronic word of mouth (X2) variable of 9,882. With a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom of 383 ( $dk = n-2$ ), the t table value is 1.966. In this case, the calculated t value (9.882) is greater than the t table value (1.966). The significance value obtained is 0.000, which is smaller than the specified significance level (0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence of electronic word of mouth on brand trust.

So in this research, when consumers look for information about local skincare products, consumers tend to pay attention to online reviews or recommendations from other consumers on social media. Positive reviews left by other consumers have a significant influence in building trust in a brand.

This shows that consumers tend to trust the experiences and opinions of other consumers in choosing local skincare products. Positive reviews given by consumers can give other consumers' confidence that the brand is reliable and provides good results.

### *The Relationship between Customer Experience, E-WOM, and Brand Trust*

The results of statistical tests show that based on the results of statistical tests carried out and the results show that there is a significant influence of Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Trust. This was obtained from the results of the F test with a calculated F value of 85.686 with a significance value of 0.000. So it can be concluded that this hypothesis is accepted, namely "Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously influence Brand Trust. The results of the adjusted R2 test in this study obtained a value of 0.540 or 54%. So it can be concluded that 54% of brand trust in local skincare is influenced by customer experience and electronic word-of-mouth variables. Meanwhile, the remaining 46% is influenced by other variables that are not included this research.

### **Conclusion**

In this research, based on the results of the research and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: 1). Customer Experience has a significant positive effect on Brand Trust in local skincare 2). Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant positive effect on Brand Trust in local skincare, 3). Customer Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously have a significant positive effect on Brand Trust in local skincare, 4). Customer experience is the variable that has the most influence on brand trust in local skincare products.

Based on the results of this research, suggestions that can be conveyed in this research are as follows:

1. The results of this research show that Customer Experience has an influence on Brand Trust in local skincare. So it is hoped that local skincare brands can maintain consistency in providing the best service to consumers so that brand trust in the company is maintained. Customer satisfaction is measured regularly.
2. Electronic Word of Mouth in the current digital era is very appropriate to use for marketing. Social media is an effective marketing strategy for marketing and providing various online reviews. It is hoped that local skincare brands will maintain the company's good image so that consumers are happy when using the products so that consumers are happy to talk about or recommend the skincare products that consumers use to other people on the internet.
3. Research conducted by Muslim & Februadi (2022) recommends how ewom becomes an influential variable, namely by paying attention to the perceptions of non-customers.

It is hoped that future researchers will be able to conduct research with other variables outside the variables that have been studied and expand the scope of the sample and stronger research methods.

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