

BUILDING CUSTOMER TRUST AND EXPERIENCE THROUGH MARKETING FACTORS: EVIDENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL PERSONAL SHOPPER SERVICES IN BATAM

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Abstract

Background: Technological advancements and digitalization have sparked new shopping trends, such as international personal shopper services. Batam is a city with significant potential for these services. However, building customer trust is a major challenge, as most transactions are conducted online, which can impact customer experience.

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth (EWOM), social media marketing, service quality, and brand image on customer trust and their impact on customer experience among users of international personal shopper services in Batam.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study employs an explanatory quantitative research method with a purposive sampling approach. A total of 361 responses were collected; of these, 339 were deemed valid, having met the established criteria, and subsequently analyzed. Data were gathered via an online questionnaire distributed through social media, using a five-point Likert scale. IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used for descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS-SEM 4.0 was used to evaluate the measurement and structural models.

Finding/Result: The results show that social media marketing ($t=3.256$), service quality ($t=3.769$), and brand image ($t=4.049$) were found to be significant positive influences on customer trust. In contrast, EWOM was found to have a positive but insignificant relationship with customer trust ($t=1.706$). However, customer trust was found to have a positive and significant influence on customer experience, with the strongest path coefficient among the relationships examined ($t = 14.050$).

Conclusion: The research findings indicate that social media marketing, service quality, and brand image are significantly and positively associated with customer trust, whereas eWOM does not show a significant relationship within the context and model of this study. Customer trust also exhibits a positive and significant relationship with customer experience.

Originality/value (State of the art): This study extends previous research by integrating marketing factors and conducting a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between customer trust and customer experience within a single research model, while also examining the context of international personal shopper services in Batam City, which has not been previously investigated.

Keywords: EWOM, customer experience, international personal shopper service, social media marketing, customer trust

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has had a significant impact on consumer behavior patterns and habits. In today's digital age, consumers can access information, interact with others, and conduct buying and selling activities online without having to visit physical stores (Asrul, 2024). This provides convenience for both consumers and producers in conducting business transactions, leading to an increase in online transactions in Indonesia (Sasabone et al. 2023). We Are Social (2025) reported in April 2025 that Indonesia has approximately 223.3 million active internet users. On the other hand, approximately 191.4 million or 78.3% of the total population in Indonesia uses social media. According to data from the *Badan Pusat Statistik* (BPS), the value of online shopping or e-commerce transactions in Indonesia reached Rp 487.01 trillion in 2024. This figure represents a 7.3% increase from 2023 (BPS, 2025). Technological advancements, the growing number of social media users, and shifts in consumer behavior have sparked a new trend in the economy called international personal shopper service (Hidayat A. et al. 2022). International personal shopper services help consumers obtain products from overseas through individual intermediaries. Generally, these businesses operate by leveraging the internet or social media. (Sembiring et al. 2025).

International personal shopper services are popular in major cities such as Batam (Suvia et al. 2022; Yulfiswandi & Rosmawati, 2025). Batam's geographical location is highly strategic for operating international personal shopper services (Suprpto & Angelina, 2026). The city's location, which is close to countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, is a key factor driving increased opportunities for international trade (Anugrahini, 2025). Given Batam's proximity to several countries, operational costs and service prices can be lower compared to other cities. Additionally, Batam is a unique area featuring a free trade zone (FTZ) that offers exemptions from import duties and taxes, as well as streamlined investment licensing processes, further reducing operational costs for businesses (Azzahra et al. 2022). Consequently, international shipping services in Batam have grown rapidly.

The business potential for international personal shopper services in Batam is indeed very high, but this industry comes with its own set of challenges. These

challenges must be overcome to prevent them from disrupting business operations and sustainability. One of the biggest challenges is how companies can build customer trust so that consumers are willing to use these international consignment services (Yulfiswandi & Rosmawati, 2025). This is because nearly all transactions in the international personal shopper business are conducted online without any prior face-to-face contact. Therefore, building customer trust will be a crucial foundation (Ginting et al. 2023).

In general, customer trust can be influenced by or is interrelated with several factors, such as electronic word of mouth (EWOM), social media marketing, service quality, and brand image (Kesumahati et al. 2025). These variables are closely related to building customer trust. EWOM is reviews or information about service providers circulating on social media or the internet often shape consumers' perceptions of those providers (Lady et al. 2025). Meanwhile, Arifin & Rahmat Syah (2023) stated that EWOM is the process by which social media users share information with the aim of conveying their experiences or knowledge regarding a product or service they have used to other social media users and build consumer trust (Arifin & Rahmat Syah, 2023). This is a phenomenon resulting from technological advancements. In traditional cultures, information exchange between customers still takes place through face-to-face interactions, and the dissemination of information tends to be slower. However, with rapid technological advancements, information exchange increasingly occurs through social media or the internet, where information spreads much more quickly (Firman et al. 2021).

Social media marketing refers to the strategies used by businesses to market their products or services through social media. This process fosters interaction between businesses and consumers (Kesumahati et al. 2025). In the digital age, the number of social media users is on the rise. Consequently, using social media as a platform for interaction can help businesses reach a wider market. Consequently, sales can also increase compared to before (Rachmat R & Ariyanti, 2023). Meanwhile, Taufik H & Fiqri A (2023) argue that by delivering content-driven marketing through the right social media channels, trust and consumer perceptions toward a service provider are gradually built. Therefore, social media marketing can build customer trust.

Service quality refers to the level of service provided by companies. The better a company is at meeting customer expectations, the more positive customers' perceptions of the company's service quality will be, and the more customer trust will be built (Pasaribu et al. 2022). However, since service quality is heavily influenced by consumer perception, companies and business owners are required to meet the often-varying expectations of consumers. Therefore, companies and business owners must identify the appropriate target market and provide clear and comprehensive information about the services they offer (Purba et al. 2023). Providing consumers with high-quality services influences their level of trust and can deliver a positive experience.

Basrowi et al. (2023) stated that brand images refer to the impression consumers have of a company or brand. This impression can form after consumers see, read, hear, or experience the products or services offered. It can also be defined as the extent to which the company meets consumers' expectations and builds customer trust. Therefore, the more fully consumer expectations are met, the better the company's brand image (Mandasari et al. 2024). Building a strong brand image instills trust and a sense of security in consumers when using a service.

These four factors directly influence customer trust, which ultimately impacts the overall customer experience when using a service (Julianto & Kesumahati, 2024). Meanwhile, Lawone et al. (2026) argue that customer trust refers to the emotional response of consumers who feel satisfied and get what they want. Customer trust can also arise when customers decide to trust a product based on external influences, such as the opinions of others. The higher the level of customer trust, the higher the customer expectations. Customer trust is crucial for building customer experience and long-term relationships between companies and consumers (Longli & Kesumahati, 2023).

Hipólito et al. (2025) stated that customer experience is the overall outcome of the interaction process between consumers and producers, beginning with the first encounter and extending through the postpurchase phase. This experience can be both physical and emotional. A consumer's first impression can also influence their experience with a product or service. When a company provides services or products that align with or even exceed consumer expectations, it builds trust and enhances the customer experience.

Consumer perceptions can be influenced by their own motivations. The higher the motivation, the greater the level of analytical scrutiny applied to a product (Saefudin, 2023).

Previous research has examined the relationship between these factors and customer trust. For example, Kesumahati et al. (2025) conducted an EWOM, social media marketing, brand image, and service quality as factors influencing customer trust in international personal shopper services and found that all four variables significantly influenced customer trust. Other studies have also demonstrated the relevance of EWOM, social media marketing, service quality, and brand image in influencing customer trust and response in the context of digital commerce (Le et al. 2024; Pasaribu et al. 2022; Purba et al. 2023; Taufik H & Fiqri A, 2023). These findings suggest that building customer trust in digital-based transactions is related to marketing communications and customer perceptions of service and brand factors.

However, several research gaps remain. First, previous research on international personal shopper services focused on identifying factors that influence customer trust (Hidayat Arrosadi et al. 2022; Kesumahati et al. 2025; Yulfiswandi & Rosmawati, 2025). While customer trust is crucial in building relationships between consumers and service providers, it can also influence subsequent customer experiences. Research in the broader e-commerce context has examined the relationship between customer trust and customer experience, but this research has generally focused on traditional marketplace environments or digital product purchases (Halim & Claudia, 2023; Pires et al. 2024; Suryadiningrat et al. 2022). Therefore, the role of customer trust in shaping customer experience in the specific context of international personal shopper services remains relatively under researched.

Second, previous research findings regarding the influence of EWOM on customer trust have not been completely consistent. Some research finds a significant relationship between EWOM and customer trust, such as Kesumahati et al. (2025) and Le et al. (2024), while others show different results depending on the research context and respondent characteristics, such as Nur Idris et al. (2023) and Lawone et al. (2026). This inconsistency suggests the need for further empirical testing of the role of EWOM in shaping trust, particularly in international personal shopper services in Batam.

To address this gap, this research builds on a model derived from previous research that examined how eWOM, social media marketing, service quality, and brand image influence customer trust, while customer trust, in turn, influences customer experience. This approach extends previous research by examining not only the factors that build trust in international personal shopper services but also the role of trust in shaping customer experience. This research presents a novel approach.

Based on these gaps in research and approaches, this study aimed to examine the influence of EWOM, social media marketing, service quality, and brand image on customer trust and the subsequent influence of customer trust on customer experience among users of international personal shopper services in Batam. This study is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the factors contributing to customer trust and clarify the role of customer trust in shaping customer experience. The findings of this study are also expected to contribute to the literature on digital commerce and international personal shopper services integrated into a single research model.

METHODS

This research falls under the category of quantitative research, employing an explanatory research approach to analyze the relationships among EWOM, social media marketing, service quality, brand image, customer trust, and customer experience. An explanatory research approach was chosen because this study aimed to test theoretically derived relationships between these variables, rather than simply describing respondent characteristics (Sari et al. 2022). Furthermore, PLS-SEM was used because the research model comprises several latent constructs measured by multiple indicators and involves the assessment of both measurement and structural models. PLS-SEM is also suitable for predictive-oriented research and models with multiple relationships between latent variables (Hair et al. 2021)

The population for this study consisted of all users of international personal shopper services in Batam, the exact number of whom is unknown. Therefore, this study employed purposive sampling as its sampling technique (Asrulla et al. 2023). Respondents were required to meet the following screening criteria: (1)

reside in Batam City, (2) be at least 17 years old, (3) have used international personal shopper services at least once in the last six months, and (4) have a social media account and follow the international personal shopper service's social media accounts.

Respondents were assessed through screening questions at the beginning of the online questionnaire. Only respondents who met all the criteria were allowed to proceed to the main questionnaire. The screening procedure was used to ensure that the results were obtained only from respondents with recent and relevant experience with international personal shopper services. The questionnaire, distributed via social media such as WhatsApp or through barcode scanning, was completed by 361 respondents. After screening responses based on data quality criteria and requirements, 22 responses were excluded because they did not meet the predetermined respondent screening criteria. Consequently, 339 valid responses were retained for analysis.

In a study, if the population size is unknown, researchers can use the ten times rule method, namely, by multiplying the number of questionnaire items by 10 to determine the sample size (Memon A. et al. 2020). Ali et al. (2020), Hair et al. (2021), and Subhaktiyasa (2024) suggest that the ten times rule is a very simple way to determine the minimum sample size and can be used in PLS-SEM. This study consisted of a 30-item questionnaire adapted from previous research (Hipólito et al. 2025; Kesumahati et al. 2025). Each variable consisted of five questions. Therefore, the minimum sample size required for this study was 300 respondents, and a final sample of 339 valid responses was used for the PLS-SEM analysis. This sample substantially exceeds the minimum requirements for a structural model and provides an adequate basis for testing the hypothesized relationships.

In this research, the researcher utilized two data sources including primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to respondents. In this study, two data sources, primary and secondary data, were utilized. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to respondents using WhatsApp or direct barcode scanning. Questionnaires were distributed from December 2025 to January 2026. The questionnaire used a Likert scale of 1–5. To analyze the data, researchers used IBM SPSS

Statistics 27 for descriptive analysis and Smartpls-SEM 4.0 to analyze the relationships between variables.

The secondary data used consisted of literature reviews from various sources, such as articles or previous studies, reports from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), and reports from international organizations. This data were used to support the research arguments and as a reference source (Nurul M. H. et al. 2025). The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents over a two-month period. The questionnaire was distributed from December 2025 to January 2026. The questionnaire used a 1–5 Likert scale (Hair et al. 2019). To analyze the data, the researcher used IBM SPSS Statistics 27 for descriptive analysis and Smartpls-SEM 4.0 for analyzing the relationships between variables. The study began with a common method bias test to determine whether a single factor explained most of the variance using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 and Smartpls-SEM 4.0 (VIF). The first factor explaining less than 50% of the total variance was interpreted as indicating that no single factor dominated the covariance structure under this diagnostic (Hair et al. 2021).

PLS-SEM analysis consists of two main stages namely measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. Researchers use the measurement model to assess construct reliability and validity, while the structural model is evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships between constructs (Hair et al. 2021).

The measurement model was assessed by examining indicator reliability, reliability and validity testing, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loadings. reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_a). Validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker, cross-loading, and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Hair et al. 2019).

Indicators were retained or evaluated based on their loading values, along with the reliability and validity of each construct. The evaluation was based not only on individual loading thresholds but also on the overall measurement quality of each construct. Therefore, several indicators were removed because the overall measurement scores did not meet the criteria: B5, CX4, CX5, EWOM4, EWOM5, SMM5, and TR5.

Researchers evaluated the structural model by examining the path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), Q^2 , effect size (F^2), and statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships (Hair et al. 2021). The structural model was assessed using bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4.0. Path coefficients were used to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationships between constructs, while R^2 was used to assess the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs that can be explained by their predictor constructs, expressed as a percentage. The F-square (F^2) test was used to assess the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable it influences (Hair et al. 2019). Q-square was used to evaluate the predictive ability of the PLS-SEM model for the dependent variable (Shmueli et al. 2019).

Each hypothesized relationship value was evaluated based on the estimated path coefficients, Beta Coefficients (β), STDEV, T statistics, P values and Confidence Interval obtained from the PLS-SEM analysis (Figure 1). This was followed by SRMR and goodness-of-fit testing to assess the quality of the research model.

All parties participating in this survey or research did so voluntarily and without any coercion. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and the use of the collected data for academic purposes. The questionnaire did not require respondents to provide any information not necessary for the research, and the responses collected were used solely for the purposes of this research. Respondents may contact the telephone number or email address listed in the questionnaire if they have any questions or concerns.

H1: Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) has a significant positive effect on Customer Trust

Le et al. (2024) showed a significant positive correlation between EWOM and customer trust. The research found that in today's digital age, consumers are more likely to be influenced by reviews posted by other consumers on social media, as these are more easily accessible. Supporting this, Arifin and Rahmat S. (2023) also found a significant positive correlation between EWOM and customer trust. This research confirms that consumers in Indonesia are more influenced by information shared via social media or EWOM than by information received directly. This is because more information or reviews about a product on social media

than information obtained directly. However, in their research, Lady et al. (2025) found that the effectiveness of EWOM in boosting consumer trust depends heavily on consistent reviews and messages.

H2: Social Media Marketing has a significant positive impact on Customer Trust

According to Kesumahati et al. (2025), social media marketing can play a role in exerting a significant positive influence on customer trust. Through interactive content, effective branding, and positive reviews or comments from customers, social media marketing can enhance customer trust. In accordance with this research, Taufik H & Fiqri A (2023) state that the results of their research indicate a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and customer trust. Specifically, engaging social media marketing and the right strategies can increase consumer trust in Samsung smartphones in Indonesia. In a research (Lady et al. 2024) it is stated that social media marketing strategies, such as involving brand ambassadors, can increase consumer trust, encourage purchases, and enhance customer loyalty.

H3: Service Quality has a significant positive effect on Customer Trust

According to Pasaribu et al. (2022), service quality has a significant positive effect on customer trust. With good service, consumers are more likely to be satisfied and place their trust in a particular service. In contrast, research conducted by Purba et al. (2023) shows the same result, indicating a positive relationship between service quality and customer trust. Customer trust tends to increase when consumers receive good service from the initial contact through to post-purchase. This is because consumers feel more valued when they receive good service. In line with this, a study by Angela &

Kesumahati (2023) confirmed that good service quality builds consumer trust and confidence, which ultimately influences purchasing interest.

H4: Brand Image has a significant positive impact on Customer Trust

Putri & Fauzi (2023) found in their research that there is a significant positive relationship between brand image and customer trust. This research underscores the importance of building a strong brand image in the global market. With a strong brand image supported by EWOM among the public, consumers tend to trust a company more. On the other hand, Basrowi et al. (2023) argue that brand image can significantly influence customer trust. Their research shows an increase in customer trust toward companies with a good and strong brand image. They emphasize that companies can leverage digital promotions to reach a wider audience when building a strong brand image. In the long term, this will ensure the company's sustainability

H5: Customer Trust has a significant positive impact on Customer Experience

Hipólito et al. (2025) state that there is a significant relationship between customer trust and customer experience. The researchers explain that if consumers trust a service when using it, they will feel safer and more comfortable purchasing a product or service. This, in turn, will provide a positive experience for consumers. In line with this, research conducted by Pires et al. (2024) concluded that there is also a positive relationship between customer trust and customer experience. With trust, consumers tend to feel less worried about the risk of fraud or misuse of personal data. Consequently, consumers will have a better experience

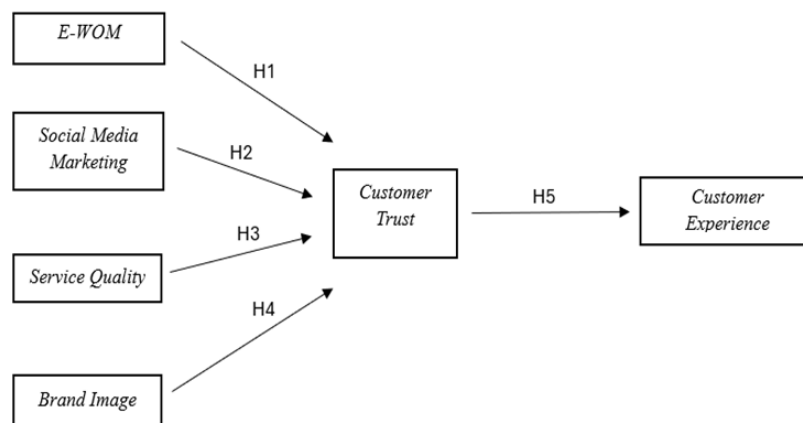


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESULTS

Demographic of Respondents

Based on the questionnaire distributed online, a total of 361 respondents were collected. However, 22 questionnaires did not meet the criteria, resulting in 339 valid respondents. By gender, there were 99 male respondents (29.20%) and 240 female respondents (70.80%). This indicates that the sample was dominated by female respondents. By age, the respondents included 246 people aged 17–22, 84 people aged 23–28, 8 people aged 29–34, and 1 person aged 35–40, and there were no respondents over 40 years old.

Based on the highest level of education, 233 respondents (68.7%) had completed high school or vocational school, 5 respondents held a diploma (1.5%), 90 respondents held a bachelor's degree (26.5%), 10 respondents held a master's degree (2.9%), and 1 respondent held a doctoral degree (0.3%). Meanwhile, no respondents had a final educational level of elementary school or junior high school. Meanwhile, based on current employment, the respondents consisted of 8 respondents (2.4%) who were civil servants, 75 respondents (22.1%) were private-sector employees, 30 respondents (8.8%) were self-employed, 157 respondents (46.3%) were students, 62 respondents (18.3%) were students who also worked, and 7 respondents (2.1%). When viewed by monthly income, the respondents consisted of 220 respondents (64.9%) with an income below IDR 5 million, 101 (29.8%) respondents with an income of IDR 5 million to 10 million, 6 respondents (1.8%) with an income of IDR 10 million to 15 million, 5 respondents (1.5%) with an income of IDR 15 million to 20 million, and 7 respondents (2.1%) with an income of more than IDR 20 million in month.

The demographic (Table 1) findings indicate that the respondents in this study were predominantly female, aged 17–22 years. Additionally, the respondents were predominantly those with a high school or vocational school education, currently enrolled as college students, and with a monthly income below IDR 5 million. This indicates that the findings of this study sample were concentrated among younger, female consumers with relatively low incomes. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting the characteristics of the respondents obtained through the

sampling process, rather than as representative of the broader population of international personal shopper service users in Batam. This demographic imbalance may limit the generalizability of the findings to older users and consumers with different occupational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Table 1. Respondents profile

Criteria		Total (People)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	99	29.20%
	Female	240	70.80%
	Total	339	100%
Age	17–22 years	246	72.6%
	23–28 years	84	24.8%
	29–34 years	8	2.4%
	35–40 years	1	0.3%
	>40 years	0	0%
	Total	339	100%
Highest level of education	Elementary School	0	0%
	Junior High School	0	0%
	High School	233	68.7%
	Diploma	5	1.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	90	26.5%
	Master's Degree	10	2.9%
	Doctoral	1	0.3%
	Total	339	100%
Occupation	State Official	8	2.4%
	Private Official	75	22.1%
	Self-Employed	30	8.8%
	College Student	157	46.3%
	College Student Who Also Work	62	18.3%
	unemployment	7	2.1%
	Total	339	100%
Monthly Income (IDR)	<5.000.000	220	64.9%
	5.000.000 - 10.000.000	101	29.8%
	10.000.001 - 15.000.000	6	1.8%
	15.000.001 - 20.000.000	5	1.5%
	>Rp. 20.000.000	7	2.1%
	Total	339	100%

Common Method Bias (CMB)

According to Hair et al. (2021), a research can be considered free of common biases if the factors do not explain more than 50% of the variance. Based on the analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 in Table 2, it can be concluded that the data in this research is free from common biases or errors. This can be seen from the % of Variance value, which shows a result of 36.852, which is less than 50%. Therefore, the research can proceed with the analysis using SmartPLS-SEM 4.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

According to Hair et al. (2019), an indicator's VIF value must be below 5 to be considered free from common method bias. Table 3 shows that the data is free from common method bias. This is evident from the VIF values for all indicators, which range from 1.113 to 1.617, with all variables having values below 5.

Validity and Reliability Testing

According to Hair et al. (2021), to conduct an outer loading test, each indicator has a factor loading on its variable. Indicators with loadings ranging from 0.40 to 0.708 or higher can still be used in a research. However, if an indicator's loading is lower than 0.40, it must be removed from the model because it is deemed unable to adequately represent or explain the model. Based on the test results in Table 4, all indicators showed values above 0.6. This indicates that all indicators met convergent validity and could adequately describe the model.

Meanwhile, in validity testing, each indicator must explain its respective variable. If an indicator cannot explain its variable, the research results will be inaccurate. An indicator can be said to explain its variable well if the AVE value for each variable is greater than 0.5 (Hair et al. 2019). Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that the indicator (questionnaire) explains the variables well, or by more than 50%. This can be seen in the results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable, which are above 0.5.

In reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha is the lower bound, and composite reliability (ρ_a) is the upper bound for internal consistency reliability. The minimum value for reliability is 0.6 and the maximum is 0.95 for the results to be a good representation (consistent and stable) (Hair et al. 2021). Based on Table 4, the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_a) values range from above 0.6 to below 0.95. It can therefore be concluded that all questionnaire items yielded consistent and stable responses. This indicates that no responses deviated significantly from the expected range. Additionally, the reliability test assesses how accurately an indicator measures its variable.

Tabel 2. Common Method Bias

Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
8.476	36.852	36.852

Tabel 3. Variance inflation factor (VIF)

Variable	Indicator	VIF
Brand Image (BI)	BI 1	1.281
	BI 2	1.259
	BI 3	1.275
	BI 4	1.265
Customer Experience (CX)	CX 1	1.298
	CX 2	1.215
	CX 3	1.396
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	E WOM 1	1.113
	E WOM 2	1.617
	E WOM 3	1.538
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM 1	1.259
	SMM 2	1.293
	SMM 3	1.300
	SMM 4	1.331
Service Quality (SQ)	SQ 1	1.260
	SQ 2	1.350
	SQ 3	1.506
	SQ 4	1.596
	SQ 5	1.355
Customer Trust (TR)	TR 1	1.351
	TR 2	1.296
	TR 3	1.419

Table 4. Outer Loading, Reliability, and AVE

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	AVE
Brand Image (BI)	BI 1	0.755	0.674	0.685	0.503
	BI 2	0.639			
	BI 3	0.698			
	BI 4	0.739			
Customer Experience (CX)	CX 1	0.737	0.655	0.659	0.592
	CX 2	0.755			
	CX 3	0.813			
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	E WOM 1	0.767	0.646	0.651	0.575
	E WOM 2	0.770			
	E WOM 3	0.737			
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM 1	0.660	0.675	0.683	0.505
	SMM 2	0.729			
	SMM 3	0.687			
	SMM 4	0.763			
Service Quality (SQ)	SQ 1	0.640	0.757	0.761	0.509
	SQ 2	0.693			
	SQ 3	0.755			
	SQ 4	0.770			
	SQ 5	0.703			
Customer Trust (TR)	TR 1	0.744	0.719	0.725	0.542
	TR 2	0.679			
	TR 3	0.772			
	TR 4	0.748			

Discriminant Validity

Based on Table 5, all correlation coefficients between a variable and other variables must be lower than the correlation coefficient between the variable and the variable itself. This is because a higher correlation coefficient between the variable under test and another variable indicates a similarity between the two variables (Hair et al. 2021). As shown in Table 5, the correlation value for each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs. The diagonal values are 0.709 for Brand Image, 0.769 for Customer Experience, 0.758 for EWOM, 0.711 for Social Media Marketing, 0.714 for Service Quality, and 0.736 for Customer Trust. Therefore, based on the Fornell–Larcker criterion, these constructs demonstrated discriminant validity.

Table 6 presents the results of the cross-loading test. Although some indicators have values below 0.7, since these indicators cluster or are closely grouped with other indicators that have values above 0.7, they are also considered to meet the criteria (Hair et al. 2021).

It can be concluded that each indicator (questionnaire item) is suitable for explaining the variable. Therefore, the indicator value for a given variable must not be lower than the indicator value for other variables that are not its pair.

HTMT

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to Hair et al. (2021), the highest threshold for HTMT testing is 0.90. In this study, most construct pairs met the recommended criteria, indicating that the constructs are generally distinguishable from each other. However, several construct pairs exceeded the threshold, including Brand Image–Customer Experience (0.980), Brand Image–Service Quality (0.965), Brand Image–Customer Trust (0.918), Customer Experience–Service Quality (0.918), Customer Experience–Customer Trust (1.003), Social Media Marketing–Service Quality (0.951), and Service Quality–Customer Trust (0.931) (Table 7).

Tabel 5. Fronell – Lacker

	BI	CX	E WOM	SMM	SQ	TR
BI	0.709					
CX	0.664	0.769				
E WOM	0.591	0.499	0.758			
SMM	0.587	0.559	0.563	0.711		
SQ	0.698	0.649	0.632	0.682	0.714	
TR	0.661	0.694	0.561	0.623	0.692	0.736

Noted: Brand Image (BI); Customer Experience (CX); Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM); Social Media Marketing (SMM); Service Quality (SQ); Customer Trust (TR)

Tabel 6. Cross Loading

	BI	CX	E WOM	SMM	SQ	TR
	0.755	0.530	0.453	0.457	0.538	0.537
	0.639	0.363	0.341	0.340	0.431	0.340
	0.698	0.470	0.416	0.346	0.455	0.445
	0.739	0.496	0.450	0.499	0.541	0.517
	0.456	0.737	0.323	0.443	0.436	0.478
	0.545	0.755	0.397	0.373	0.499	0.561
	0.526	0.813	0.424	0.478	0.556	0.558
	0.511	0.417	0.767	0.443	0.515	0.524
	0.386	0.343	0.770	0.398	0.446	0.334
	0.416	0.356	0.737	0.432	0.458	0.369
	0.395	0.378	0.298	0.660	0.451	0.393
	0.451	0.391	0.491	0.729	0.485	0.482
	0.431	0.382	0.382	0.687	0.440	0.383
	0.399	0.437	0.414	0.763	0.555	0.499
	0.449	0.433	0.393	0.472	0.640	0.443
	0.480	0.491	0.432	0.511	0.693	0.483
	0.560	0.486	0.515	0.496	0.755	0.534
	0.518	0.430	0.438	0.472	0.770	0.502
	0.476	0.475	0.466	0.485	0.703	0.502
	0.549	0.502	0.423	0.461	0.576	0.744
	0.356	0.444	0.347	0.411	0.417	0.679
	0.516	0.565	0.459	0.444	0.527	0.772
	0.505	0.526	0.415	0.517	0.507	0.748

Noted: Brand Image (BI); Customer Experience (CX); Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM); Social Media Marketing (SMM); Service Quality (SQ); Customer Trust (TR)

Tabel 7. HTMT

	BI	CX	EWOM	SMM	SQ	TR
BI						
CX	0.980					
EWOM	0.859	0.743				
SMM	0.858	0.842	0.831			
SQ	0.965	0.918	0.883	0.951		
TR	0.918	1.003	0.780	0.884	0.931	

Noted: Brand Image (BI); Customer Experience (CX); Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM); Social Media Marketing (SMM); Service Quality (SQ); Customer Trust (TR)

These results indicate potential empirical overlap between several constructs, particularly between customer experience and customer trust. However, the remaining construct pairs with HTMT values below 0.90 meet the recommended criteria for discriminant validity. Therefore, the measurement model can proceed to further assessment, but construct pairs exceeding the threshold should be interpreted with caution and examined further.

According to Hair et al. (2021), a relationship between variables can be considered significant if the P value is less than 0.05, the T statistic is greater than 1.96, and the 95% CI does not include zero. Beta coefficients were used to indicate the direction and magnitude of the hypothesized relationships. Table 8 presents the results of the path coefficient tests for the direct relationships between each variable.

Based on Table 8, EWOM has a positive but insignificant effect on customers' trust. This is indicated by the positive path coefficient between EWOM and customer trust ($\beta = 0.093$; STDEV = 0.054). However, the relationship is not statistically significant, with a t-statistic value of 1.706 and a p-value of 0.088. The 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.019 to 0.195, which includes zero. Therefore, the results of this study do not provide strong enough statistical evidence to support H1, therefore H1 is rejected.

Social media marketing has a significant positive impact on customer trust. The results of the path coefficient test show that the results indicate a positive relationship between social media marketing and customer trust, as evidenced by a beta coefficient of 0.203 and a standard deviation of 0.062. Furthermore, the relationship is statistically significant, as indicated by a T statistic of 3.256 and a P value of 0.001. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.082 to 0.326 and does not include zero. Therefore, H2 is supported. Based on Table 8, service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer trust ($\beta = 0.303$; STDEV = 0.080). The results also show a statistically significant relationship, with a T statistic of 3.769 and a P value of 0.000. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.152 to 0.458, indicating a positive interval that does not include zero. Therefore, H3 is supported.

The results of the path coefficient test on the relationship between brand image and customer trust show that the beta coefficient is 0.276 and the STDEV is 0.068, indicating a positive relationship. The results also show a T statistic value of 4.049 and a P value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.138 to 0.400 and does not include zero. Therefore, H4 is supported. The path coefficient test indicates a significant positive effect of the Customer Trust variable on Customer Experience, with the largest beta coefficient among the hypothesized relationships ($\beta = 0.694$; STDEV = 0.049). Furthermore, the relationship is also statistically significant, with a T statistic value of 14.050 and a P value of 0.000. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.593 to 0.783 and does not include zero. Therefore, H5 is supported.

R-Square

Hair et al. (2021) state that the categories for testing relationships between variables using the R-Square test can be divided into three: strong (0.75), moderate (0.50), and weak (0.25). Based on the test results in Table 9, the Customer Experience variable has an R-Square value of 0.480, meaning that the Customer Trust variable can explain 48.00% of the Customer Experience variable, while the remaining 52.0% represented the variance in Customer Experience not explained by Customer Trust in the proposed model. Based on the statement by Hair et al. (2021), this can be categorized as weak. On the other hand, the Customer Trust variable has an R-Square value of 0.578, meaning that 57.80% of the variation in Customer Trust is explained by EWOM, SMM, Service Quality, and Brand Image. The remaining 42.2% represented the variance in Customer Trust not explained by the predictors included in the model.

Q-Square

Q² was used to evaluate the predictive ability of the PLS-SEM model for the dependent variable. According to Pendi, a Q² value greater than zero indicates that the model has predictive power compared to the mean-based benchmark (Shmueli et al. 2019). The results show that the Q² values for Customer Experience and Customer Trust are 0.466 and 0.549, respectively. Both values are greater than zero (Table 10).

Tabel 8. Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Beta Coefficients (β)	STDEV	T statistics	P values	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Result
H1: E WOM $\rightarrow$ TR	0.093	0.054	1.706	0.088	-0.019	0.195	Unsupported
H2: SMM $\rightarrow$ TR	0.203	0.062	3.256	0.001	0.082	0.326	Supported
H3: SQ $\rightarrow$ TR	0.303	0.080	3.769	0.000	0.152	0.458	Supported
H4: BI $\rightarrow$ TR	0.276	0.068	4.049	0.000	0.138	0.400	Supported
H5: TR $\rightarrow$ CX	0.694	0.049	14.050	0.000	0.593	0.783	Supported

Tabel 9. R-Square

Variable	Sample mean (M)	Percentage
CX	0.480	48.00%
TR	0.578	57.80%

Tabel 10. Q-Square

Variable	Q2
CX	0.466
TR	0.549

F-Square

The F-Square (F^2) test was used to assess the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. According to Hair et al. (2019), the criteria for the F^2 value can be categorized into several categories: a value below 0.02 indicates a negligible influence due to its small size; a value from 0.02 to below 0.15 indicates a small influence; a value from 0.15 to below 0.35 indicates a moderate influence; and a value of 0.35 or greater indicates a large influence. Based on these results, Brand Image has a small influence on Customer Trust ($F^2 = 0.082$), while Social Media Marketing and Service Quality also have a small influence on Customer Trust, with F^2 values of 0.047 and 0.079, respectively. EWOM has a negligible influence on Customer Trust, with an F^2 value of 0.011. Customer Trust has a large influence on Customer Experience, with an F^2 value of 0.931 (Table 11).

SRMR

According to Setiabudhi et al. (2025), a model can be considered to fit the data if the SRMR test result is below 0.08. The results show a saturated model value of 0.055 and an estimated model value of 0.059,

both of which are below 0.08. This indicates that the model fits the data, and thus the model used in this study is acceptable. It can therefore be concluded that the developed model can explain the relationship between the variables in this study. In contrast, the 95% and 99% confidence intervals have relatively low and stable values. This indicates that the research model is sufficiently stable and does not exhibit significant bias.

Goodness of Fit

The GoF test is conducted to determine whether the model is sound or suitable for use overall. Ghazali & Kusumadewi (2024) argue that the criteria for the GoF test can be divided into three categories: weak (≥ 0.10), moderate (≥ 0.25), and strong (≥ 0.36). To obtain the GoF value, the researcher used the formula $GoF = \sqrt{Comm \times R^2}$. Comm was calculated by finding the average of the AVE, yielding a result of 0.527. Meanwhile, R^2 was calculated by finding the average of the R-Square, yielding a result of 0.529. These two values were multiplied and then squared. The resulting GoF value for this research model is 0.52, which is above 0.36. Therefore, the research model is deemed valid and can be used for hypothesis testing and drawing research conclusions.

Tabel 11. F-Square

Variable	F ²
BI → TR	0.082
EWOM → TR	0.011
SMM → TR	0.047
SQ → TR	0.079
TR → CX	0.931

This study analyzes the influence of the relationship between the variables of electronic word of mouth (EWOM), social media marketing, service quality, brand image, customer trust, and customer experience on users of international personal shopper services in Batam City. The results of the study show different relationship patterns for each variable. One interesting finding is that EWOM does not show a statistically significant relationship with customer trust, although it has shown a positive relationship. Meanwhile, social media marketing, service quality, and brand image have a positive and significant relationship with customer trust. Furthermore, customer trust has a positive and significant relationship with customer experience. These findings indicate that the formation of trust in international personal shopper services is not only related to information originating from other consumers but also to consumer perceptions of communication, service quality, and the image of the service provider.

The Influence of EWOM on Customer Trust

The results of this study indicate that EWOM has a positive path coefficient on customer trust, but the relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, although the estimated direction of the relationship is positive, the statistical results obtained are not sufficient to conclude that EWOM is significantly related to customer trust among the respondents in this study. This indicates that H1 is not supported.

This finding is interesting to investigate further because it differs from previous studies that found a significant positive relationship between eWOM and customer trust. For example, Kesumahati et al. (2025) conducted a study in the context of international personal shopper services in Batam City and found that eWOM significantly influenced customer trust. These differences in results indicate that the influence of eWOM on trust does not always appear consistently across all research contexts. Therefore, the presence of information or reviews from other consumers does not necessarily result in higher levels of trust.

Many factors may influence these differences in findings. One possible interpretation is that the influence of eWOM may depend on how consumers assess the credibility, quality, relevance, and authenticity of the information contained in the reviews. For example, research conducted by Lady et al. (2025) found that review quality is related to consumer trust in the marketplace environment, while perceptions of fake reviews can influence trust in the rating system. These findings suggest that consumers do not always treat all online reviews with equal weight and readily trust the reviews provided.

This possibility is relevant to the characteristics of international personal shopper services. In conventional marketplace transactions, consumers can use various information available on the platform, such as product reviews, consumer ratings, transaction volumes, and transaction protection mechanisms. Meanwhile, in international personal shopper services, consumers interact with intermediaries who help them obtain products from abroad. Therefore, consumers not only need information about the product but also need to build trust in the parties carrying out the purchasing and delivery processes.

In the context of international personal shopper services, eWOM can be one of the initial sources of information that consumers obtain, but consumers may also consider information obtained through direct interactions with the service provider. For example, consumers can gain information through communication with the service provider, responses to questions, clarity of transaction steps, and their experience of using the service. This is a possible interpretation, but not a mechanism that was directly tested in this study. This study did not specifically measure review credibility, review-reading frequency, consumer behavior, or prior experience with the service provider.

This finding also differs from several previous studies, such as those conducted by Arifin & Rahmat S. (2023),

which found a significant relationship between EWOM and customer trust. In contrast, this finding also shares similarities with the findings of Nur Idris et al. (2023) and Lawone et al. (2026).. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be directly interpreted as meaning that EWOM is unimportant for users of personal shopper services. A more appropriate interpretation is that in this study's sample and model, there is insufficient statistical evidence that EWOM is significantly related to customer trust. This difference with previous research could indicate that the influence of EWOM may depend on respondent characteristics, transaction context, and how customers evaluate information from other customers.

Future research could further examine whether review credibility, information quality, review consistency, information source expertise, and prior experience using international personal shopper services can explain variations in the relationship between EWOM and customer trust. These variables were not measured in this study and therefore cannot be used to determine the direct cause of the insignificant EWOM results.

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Trust

The research results show that social media marketing has a positive and significant relationship with customer trust, and H2 is supported. This indicates that effective social media marketing activities can increase the trust of users of international personal shopper services in Batam City. Lady et al. (2024) argue that if a business implements a good marketing strategy and interacts with consumers, it can increase consumer trust in that business.

One possible mechanism explaining this relationship is that social media can function not only as a promotional tool for consumers but also as a communication channel between service providers and consumers. In international personal shopper services, consumers often obtain information about products and services through digital platforms, such as social media. Furthermore, consumers can observe how service providers convey information, respond to questions, and interact with followers or customers, which builds trust.

Social media marketing can be an easily accessible source of information about service providers. This information can help consumers gain insight into

the service provider's identity and communication style before making a transaction. In the context of international personal shopper services, this aspect is relevant because most interactions take place digitally, and consumers cannot always meet the service provider in person.

These findings are also consistent with the results of studies by Kesumahati et al. (2025) conducted in the context of international personal shopper services in Batam City, who found that EWOM significantly influenced customer trust. This finding is also in line with the research conducted by Trianasari et al. (2023) and Taufik H & Fiqri A (2023). These results support the view that marketing activities through social media can be related to building consumer trust.

This finding is also very interesting. Although social media marketing and EWOM are two aspects related to digital information, the results of social media marketing differ from those of EWOM. EWOM is information originating from consumers, while social media marketing is marketing activities carried out by service providers. One possible interpretation is that consumers may respond differently to communications originating from service providers compared to information originating from other consumers. However, this study did not directly compare the credibility of these two types of information sources, so this interpretation should be viewed as a possibility, not a proven mechanism.

However, these results cannot be interpreted as implying that specific social media activities directly lead to increased trust. This study measured respondents' perceptions of social media marketing and customer trust within a single data collection period, sample, and research context. Therefore, the results are more accurately understood as a positive relationship between perceptions of social media marketing and customer trust.

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Trust

Service quality has a positive and significant relationship with customer trust. The results of this study indicate that more positive consumer perceptions of service quality are associated with higher levels of customer trust among users of international personal shopper services in Batam. So H3 is supported.

One possible mechanism explaining this relationship is that the quality of service provided by service providers, such as providing clear and prompt information and using polite language, can build perceptions of good service quality. Unlike EWOM, which originates from the experiences of other consumers, service quality can be assessed through direct interactions with consumers. In international personal shopper services, these interactions can include communication, responding to questions, handling problems, the service process, and evaluating feedback. Consumers cannot directly oversee the entire process when products are purchased from abroad. Therefore, consumer experiences when interacting with service providers can be a source of information used to evaluate service reliability.

This finding aligns with Pasaribu et al. (2022), who found a significant relationship between service quality and customer trust among e-commerce consumers in Indonesia. Purba et al. (2023) also showed a positive relationship between service quality and consumer trust. Thus, the results of this study extend previous findings to the context of international personal shopper services in Batam.

In this study, EWOM did not show a significant relationship with customer trust, while service quality did. Therefore, one possible interpretation is that consumers place greater emphasis on their own interaction experiences when evaluating service providers compared to the assessments of others. However, this study did not directly test whether consumers rely more on direct experience than eWOM. Therefore, this interpretation cannot be considered a causal conclusion.

The Influence of Brand Image on Customer Trust

Brand image has a positive and significant relationship with customer trust, and H4 is supported. These results indicate that a more positive perception of a service provider's image is associated with higher levels of trust among users of international personal shopper services in Batam City.

A possible mechanism explaining this relationship is that brand image can serve as a reflection of consumer or market perceptions of service providers. Before making their first transaction, consumers may not have complete information about the actual quality of

the service. In this situation, perceptions of a service provider's image can serve as a reference point for consumers in evaluating that service provider.

This finding is relevant to international personal shopper services because of the uncertainty associated with searching for and acquiring products abroad. Customers need to entrust the process of finding suitable products to the service provider. A positive image of the service provider can provide an initial insight into consumers' views and perceptions of the service provider.

This finding aligns with Putri & Fauzi (2023), Basrowi et al. (2023), and (Mandasari et al. 2024), who showed a positive relationship between brand image and customer trust. Monfort et al. (2025) also found a relationship between brand image and brand trust, showing that consumers' perceptions of a brand can be related to the formation of trust among consumers.

However, this study only examined brand image broadly and in the context of international personal shopper services. However, it did not examine the specific brand image components that play the most important role in building customer trust. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that certain brand characteristics directly lead to increased trust. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship between brand image and customer trust among the respondents.

The Influence of Customer Trust on Customer Experience

Customer Trust has a positive and significant relationship with Customer Experience. These results indicate a statistically strong positive relationship between Customer Trust and Customer Experience in the research model. So and H5 is supported.

A possible mechanism explaining this relationship is that consumer trust can influence how consumers evaluate interactions and uncertainty during the service process. When consumers have a higher level of trust in a service provider, they may have an expectation that the service provider will fulfill their desires as expected. In the context of international personal shopper services, this condition is relevant because consumers do not directly oversee the entire product purchase and delivery process.

Consumer trust is also crucial because international personal shopper service transactions involve a relationship between the consumer and the service provider, acting as an intermediary. Consumers need to be confident that the service provider can fulfill their agreed-upon requests at a reasonable cost. Thus, the level of trust can be related to how consumers evaluate the overall experience of interacting with the service provider.

This finding aligns with the research of Hipólito et al. (2025) and Pires et al. (2024), which examined the relationship between customer trust and consumer experiences in online shopping. Peña-García et al. (2024) also demonstrated the importance of trust in the marketplace context for creating a better customer experience. Therefore, this study extends this discussion to the context of international personal shopper services in Batam City.

However, the significant relationship between Customer Trust and Customer Experience cannot be directly interpreted as evidence that high Customer Trust leads to a better Customer Experience. This study used cross-sectional survey data, so a causal relationship cannot be confirmed. There are still variations in Customer Experience that are not explained by Customer Trust and may originate from other factors not included in the research model.

Managerial Implications

These findings offer several practical implications for international personal shopper service providers in Batam City. These implications stem from the significant relationships identified in this study and are intended as practical considerations, not causal recommendations. For international personal shopper service providers in Batam City, the results indicate that social media marketing, service quality, and brand image are important aspects to consider in building customer trust. Service providers can maintain informative and courteous communication through social media, improve the quality of interactions and responsive service delivery, and maintain a brand image that aligns with the customer experience. Although EWOM did not show a significant relationship with customer trust, customer reviews can still be monitored and managed as a source of information for potential customers. Furthermore, this study also found that customer trust has a positive and significant relationship with

customer experience. Service providers can emphasize transparency in communication, clarity of transaction stages, and consistency of service quality as part of efforts to build a better customer experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between EWOM, social media marketing, service quality, brand image, customer trust, and customer experience among users of international personal shopper services in Batam City. The results show that social media marketing, service quality, and brand image have a positive and significant relationship with customer trust, while EWOM has a positive but insignificant relationship with customer trust. Furthermore, customer trust has a positive and significant relationship with customer experience. The findings regarding social media marketing, service quality, brand image, and customer trust are generally consistent with previous research, while the eWOM results are inconsistent with several previous studies, including research in the context of international personal shopper services. These differences indicate that the relationship between eWOM and trust can vary depending on the research context and how consumers evaluate information available online.

Recommendations

The theoretical framework of this study demonstrates that the formation of customer trust in international personal shopper services in Batam City involves several marketing factors at varying levels of relationship. Furthermore, the insignificant eWOM finding indicates inconsistent findings and the need for further research to examine factors such as credibility, quality, authenticity, quantity, and source of reviews, which were not measured in this study. Further research is also recommended to expand the characteristics of more diverse respondents, research areas, and consider other variables that can explain customer trust and customer experience, which are still limited in this research.

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