THE EFFECT OF E-WOM AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS OF AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS: MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST

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Abstract: The automotive industry, especially in the classification of four-wheeled vehicles, is one of the largest industries in Indonesia, which has massive and stable sales. In this sector, products from several global-scale automotive companies have long been the choice of Indonesian consumers, including Toyota as its leading brand. In this era of information technology, product marketing and communication has become embedded in digital forms and the internet along with the increasingly important role of social media. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has been investigated to play an important role in establishing brand trust and purchases. This study attempts to analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and brand image on Toyota car purchasing decisions in Bandung by testing brand trust as a mediating variable. The research was conducted on Toyota consumers in Bandung who actively use Instagram social media. Sample collection was carried out using simple random sampling technique with data analysis using the PLS-SEM approach. The results show that E-WOM has a significant effect on brand trust (Path Coefficient=0.202; p-value= 0.033), and on purchasing decisions (Path Coefficient=0.226; p-value= 0.012). Empirical results show a significant effect of brand image on brand trust (Path Coefficient=0.526; p-value=0.000), and on purchasing decisions (Path Coefficient=0.210; p-value= 0.037). Direct analysis also shows a significant role of brand trust in purchasing decisions (Path Coefficient=0.460; p-value=0.000). Mediation analysis shows that brand trust is able to mediate the relationship between E-WOM on Purchase Decisions, and between Brand Image on Purchase Decisions.

Keywords: brand image, brand trust, E-WOM, purchasing decision, toyota

Abstrak: *Industri otomotif khususnya pada klasifikasi kendaraan roda empat merupakan salah satu industri terbesar di Indonesia yang memiliki penjualan yang masif dan stabil. Di sektor ini, produk dari beberapa perusahaan otomotif berskala global telah lama menjadi pilihan konsumen Indonesia, termasuk Toyota sebagai leading brand-nya. Pada masa teknologi informasi ini, pemasaran dan komunikasi produk telah melekat dalam bentuk digital dan internet seiring dengan semakin pentingnya peran media sosial. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) telah diinvestigasi berperan penting dalam pembentukan bran trust dan pembelian. Penelitian ini mencoba menganalisis pengaruh electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) dan citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian mobil Toyota di Bandung dengan menguji kepercayaan merek sebagai variabel mediasi. Penelitian dilakukan terhadap konsumen Toyota di Bandung yang aktif menggunakan media sosial Instagram. Pengumpulan sampel dilakukan dengan teknik simple random sampling dengan analisis data dengan pendekatan PLS-SEM. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa E-WOM berpengaruh signifikan pada kepercayaan merek (Path Coeficient=0.202; p-value= 0.033), dan pada keputusan pembelian (Path Coeficient=0.226; p-value= 0.012). Hasil empiris menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan brand image pada kepercayaan merek (Path Coeficient=0.526; p-value=0.000), dan pada keputusan pembelian (Path Coeficient=0.210; p-value= 0.037). Analisis langsung juga menunjukkan peran signifikan kepercayaan merek pada keputusan pembelian (Path Coeficient=0.460; p-value=0.000). Analisis mediasi menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan merek mampu memediasi hubungan antara E-WOM pada Keputusan Pembelian, dan antara Citra Merek pada Keputusan Pembelian.*

Kata kunci: *citra merek, E-WOM, kepercayaan merek, keputusan pembelian, toyota*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the automotive industry in the midst of current technological advances encourages companies to be more stringent in competing in order to maintain the company's sustainability. Determining the right strategy by looking at the company's external conditions that are constantly changing is the main key for companies to be able to win market competition. The planned strategy focuses on how companies can optimize profits by minimizing risks. The automotive industry, especially in the classification of four-wheeled vehicles, is a large industry that has developed quite rapidly. This can be seen from the increasing number of new types of cars with good quality and various models. One of the largest four-wheeled vehicle companies in Indonesia and on the world-stage is Toyota. Based on data from the Association of Indonesian Automotive Industries (GAIKINDO) in 2020, Toyota is ranked first as the car company with the highest level of sales and market share in Indonesia (Table 1). The data showed that Toyota's sales figures in Indonesia in 2020 are 161,256 units with a market share of 30.3%.

Table 1. Sales and Market Share of Car in Indonesia by producer

Brand	Sales (Unit)	Market share (%)
Toyota	161,256	30.3
Daihatsu	90,724	17.0
Honda	73,315	13.8
Suzuki	66,130	12.4

Source: Gaikindo, 2020.

At the global level, Toyota managed to survive for 12 years as Best Japan Brands until 2020 and won the Best Global Brands award in 2019 with a valuation of USD 56,246 billion (Figure 1). This award indicates that Toyota's financial performance, brand efforts to convince consumers, and brand strength in building trust for consumers and future profits owned by Toyota are very good. Toyota's high sales figures as one of the aspects that drive the achievement of these awards indicate that Toyota has succeeded in implementing an effective and targeted marketing strategy. A good marketing concept is that in addition to the interests of the company, marketing is also oriented to how the company can meet the needs and desires of consumers. Brands are considered to be able to guarantee the quality provided by a product. Products that have a strong brand image have the ability to create consumer trust in the product. Siddiqui et al. (2021) explained brand image is one of the factors that can influence consumer judgment in determining purchasing decisions. Consumer trust in their interactions with a brand is based on the perception that the brand is reliable and able to meet the interests and safety of consumers. Moreover, Lau & Lee (1999) explained that brand trust is the willingness of consumers to trust the brand with all its risks, because of the expectations promised by the brand in providing positive results.

Technological advances in Indonesia have resulted in major changes in the business world, especially in the field of marketing. The large amount of internet usage penetration in Indonesia can increase the company's opportunities in marketing activities or can even become a big threat to the company. In the current digital era, information can be spread easily and quickly. Makrides et al. (2020) stated that social media with billion active users have created effective and affordable ads for marketers, with some companies achieving 80% lower cost per lead by utilizing social media's ad targeting options based on age, location, and interests. Digital marketing strategies through Instagram social media can trigger word of mouth from Toyota consumers. Consumers can give their opinion to others in using Toyota products through Instagram. This has an impact on the formation of a brand image or brand image and consumer trust in products from the Toyota brand which can influence consumers to make decisions in purchasing automotive products that are needed or desired. In this case, E-WOM is a means for companies to provide information about the advantages of their products. Currently, messages in an E-WOM will become very important as a reference in facilitating consumers to make purchasing decisions. According to Khwaja and Zaman (2020), E-WOM messages are an important means for consumers to obtain information about product quality and service quality. In addition, it also explained that the message was effective in reducing the risks and uncertainties experienced by consumers when buying products or services so that consumer purchase intentions and purchasing decisions could be influenced. This study seeks to analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and brand image on toyota car purchasing decisions in the city of Bandung by examining brand trust as mediating variable.
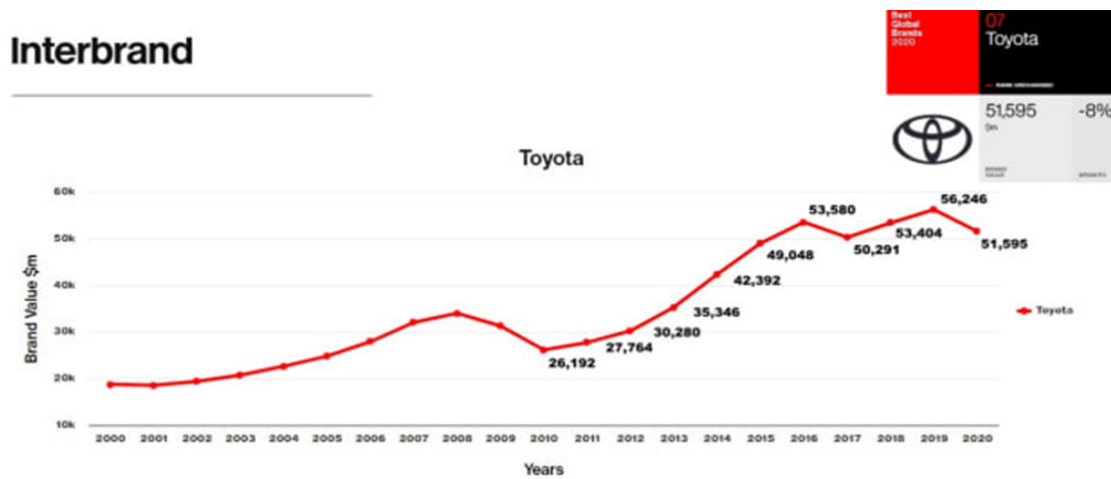
Figure 1. Toyota Brand Values 2019 (Interbrand.com, 2019)

METHODS

The research was conducted on Toyota car consumers who actively use Instagram social media in the productive age category or teenagers to adults. Research will be carried out on the consumer scale in the city of Bandung with a population recorded in 2020 of 2,510,103 people. The data was obtained based on statistics from the Bandung City BPS 2020. This research was conducted for approximately 4 months, starting from November 2021 to March 2022. This research is explanatory research with a quantitative approach method. This study aims to describe the relationship between electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand image, and brand trust on purchasing decisions.

Electronic word of mouth or E-WOM is a marketing tool that provides many benefits to companies. In addition to a wider reach, communication through E-WOM is more easily believed that can influence the formation of purchasing decisions (Wandoko and Panggati, 2022; Arifin and Syah, 2023). Adam et al. (2023) argued that e-WOM also can minimize costs of advertising as WOM comes from the personal desire of consumers. Filho and Barcelos (2020) explained that e-WOM can only be formed with consumers positive views or perceptions of the products or services. Seo et al. (2020) and Jain et al. (2022) found that positive e-WOM can help increase the trust of other consumers in the quality of a product or brand, especially in the word of mouth obtained from people who are from their immediate environment such as family or friends. Nugroho et al. (2017) in examining Traveloka consumers, found that consumers who were exposed to high and positive e-WOM had more trust in these

products and brands than those who did not receive e-WOM.

In the relationship between brand image and brand trust, Atulkar (2020) found that brand image has a significant and positive influence on brand trust. This means that consumers who have a positive perception of a product or brand will have higher trust whole Joshi and Garg (2021) explained that to get a high level of trust from consumer, a brand must be able to display or project a positive image consistently. Therefore, brand image is one of the main determinants in establishing brand trust. Mainolfi and Vergura (2022) found that positive e-WOM is more likely able to influence purchasing decisions because it can be useful for building positive perceptions about products and services. Word of mouth is also seen as one of the means of communication that produces good conversation about the quality of an item or service for consumers so as to convince potential consumers to make a decision to buy or consume the goods or services. Zhao et al. (2020) stated that word of mouth is considered to be able to influence a person's purchasing decision. Kajtazi and Zeqiri (2020) found that e-WOM had a significant effect on purchasing decisions. In addition, Iqbal et al. (2022) also showed that a significant influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions.

Brand image is a representation of the overall perception of the brand and is formed from information and past experiences with the brand (Febriyantoro, 2020; Pratyaharani et al. 2022). A positive brand image is more likely to stimulate someone to buy products from that company. By maintaining the superiority of the company's brand image, the company can create loyal customers and customer satisfaction (Cuesta-Valiño et

al. 2021). Previous studies highlighted the lingkage as an important aspect for consumers to make purchasing decisions for the brand. Arya et al. (2022) argued that a well-managed brand image is more likely to produce positive consequences. Waluya et al. (2019) found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Similarly, Febriyantoro (2020) stated that brand image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Thus, a good image of a brand or company can influence consumers in determining product purchasing decisions from that brand (Ebrahim 2020). Furthemore, Ebrahim (2020) argues that consumers who have no experience with a product is more likely to look at the brand image to brand trust of a well-known product.

Furthermore, brand trust or trust in a brand arises because of a feeling of trusting or relying on a brand even though there is a potential risk, because there is hope that the brand can provide positive results or be able to act in accordance with the needs and desires of consumers (Kurnia et al. 2022). For companies, consumer trust in brands is an important aspect for the good name and survival of the company (Rizky et al. 2023). Companies need to build and maintain consumer trust so as to create a strong commitment from consumers to the company. Priscilla (2019) in analyzing the effect of brand image and brand trust on purchasing decisions found that brand trust did not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions partially. However, simultaneously the results showed that brand image and brand trust have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Hanaysha (2022) and Benhardy et al. (2020) found that brand trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, consumers who have trust in a brand tend to determine the brand as an option in purchasing decisions.

Tan et al. (2022) in analyzing the effect of brand image and brand trust on purchasing decisions found that brand trust is of significant influence on purchasing decisions. Amalia (2020) found that brand trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, consumers who have trust in a brand tend to determine that brand as an option in

purchasing decisions. E-WOM has an important role for consumers as a reference in making purchasing decisions. It has a means for consumers to find out information about the quality of a product or service they need (Piramita et al. 2021). This information will be a stimulus for consumers in generating perceptions of a product which has an impact on the formation of brand image. The better the brand image that is formed through e-WOM, the more consumers tend to trust the brand which makes the brand a great opportunity in determining consumer purchasing decisions. Stefanny et al. (2022) found that there is a positive and significant influence between E-WOM, brand image and brand trust on purchasing decisions. Ruhamak and Rahmadi (2019) state that there is an indirect effect of E-WOM and brand image through the mediation of brand trust on consumer decisions. Thus, E-WOM and brand image are the right tools in building brand trust in consumers so that they influence their purchasing decisions (Kumar et al. 2023).

Based on the frameworks as previously described, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H_1: There is a significant influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions

H_2: Brand image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions

H_3: There is a significant influence from E-WOM on brand trust

H_4: Brand image has a significant influence on brand trust

H_5: There is a significant influence of brand trust on purchasing decisions

H_6: Brand trust is able to mediate the influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions

H_7: There is a significant influence of brand image on purchasing decisions through mediating role of brand trust

This study uses two independent variables, namely e-WOM (X1), brand image (X2), one mediating variable, namely brand trust (Z) and one dependent variable, namely purchasing decision (Y) (Figure 2). The indicators and reference of all variables used in this study were shown in Table 2.
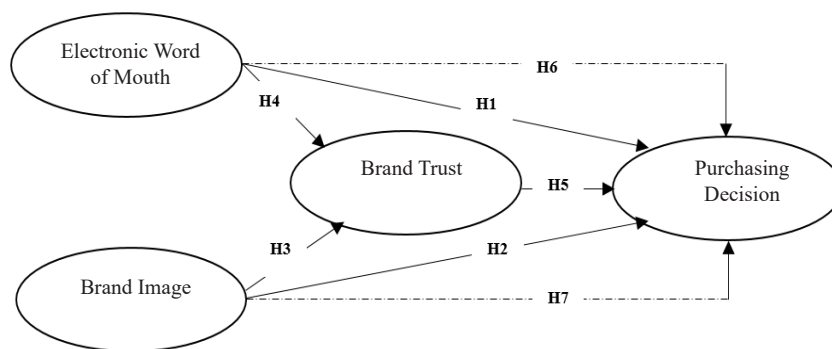
Figure 2. Research model

Table 2. Operational Variables

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Reference
E-WOM (X1)	Assistance platforms	Frequency of visits to opinion platforms	Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004
		Number of comments written on the opinion platform.	
	Concern for the others	Recommending product	
		Preventing others from buying the product	
	Extraversion/positive self-enhancement	Expect positive recognition from others	
	Vent negative feelings	Giving vent to negative feelings	
	Social benefits	Interest in gaining social benefits	
	Economic intensive	Interest in economic rewards	
	Helping the company	Interest to help the company	
	Advice seeking	Interest in seeking advice and recommendations from other consumers through opinion platforms	
Brand Image (X2)	Corporate image	Company popularity	Keller, 2011
		Company credibility	
		Company owned network	
	User image	Consumer lifestyle	
		Consumer personality	
		Consumer social status	
	Product image	Product attribute	
		Benefits for consumers	
		Guarantee for consumers	
Brand Trust (Z)	Brand characteristic	Brand reputation	Lau & Lee, 1999
		Brand predictability	
		Brand competence	
	Company characteristics	Trust in the company	
		Company reputation	
		Perceived motives of the company	
		Company integrity	
	Consumer-brand characteristics	Consumer's self-concept and brand personality	
		Brand liking	
		Brand experience	
		Brand satisfaction	
		Peer support	

Table 2. Operational Variables (continue)

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Reference
Purchasing decision (Y)	Problem introduction	Having need	Kotler & Keller, 2016
		Having desire	
	Information search	Personal information	
		Commercial information	
		Public information	
		Experimental information	
	Alternative evaluation	Looking for other alternatives	
	Purchasing decision	Attitude of others	
		Unanticipated situational factors	
	Post-purchase behavior	Satisfaction	
		Action	
		Use and removal	

The population in this study are consumers of Toyota cars in the city of Bandung who actively use Instagram social media. The number of the population who are consumers of Toyota cars in the city of Bandung who actively use Instagram social media is not known with certainty. Determining the number of samples in this study using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In the SEM method according to Ferdinand (2014), the number of samples required is at least 5 times the number of indicator variables used in the study. Guidelines for using SEM to determine sample size according to Ferdinand (2014), namely a sample size of 100-200 for the Maximal Likelihood (ML) estimation technique which depends on the number of parameters estimated. The guideline is 5-10 times the number of parameters estimated. Another parameter is depending on the number of indicators used in all formation variables. The number of samples is the number of indicators of the formation variable multiplied by 5 to 10. In this study, the number of indicators used was 48 indicators. The number of samples determined based on SEM for this study is 48 x 5 or as many as 240 respondents. The ideal sample size for a population that is not known with certainty is to use the rule of thumb. Hair et al. (2014) explained the rule of thumb method, namely the sample calculation method by multiplying the number of indicators used in the study by a unit of 5 (five).

The primary data collection technique in this study was to use a questionnaire with indicators of variables measured by a 5-point Likert scale. Questionnaires were distributed randomly to samples in a predetermined research population, namely Toyota car consumers who actively use Instagram social media in the city of Bandung. The form of the questionnaire used is an online questionnaire using Google Forms to facilitate data collection. Data analysis was tested with the PLS-SEM technique. In addition, testing the outer model consists of three types of testing, namely validity testing (convergent and discriminant), reliability testing, multicollinearity testing, and R2.

RESULTS

Testing the outer model is divided into validity testing and reliability testing, validity testing itself is divided again into convergent validity tests (outer loading test and AVE) and discriminant validity tests (HTMT test), while reliability testing is carried out by Cronbach's Alpha test and Composite reliability (Table 3). Outer loading test showed that all indicators used in the study have an outer loading value > 0.700. Thus, all indicators are valid. Table 4 displays the results of the AVE test which showed that the AVE value of each variable meets the requirements, which >0.500. This indicates that all variables are valid. In addition, the results of Heterotrait-Monotriat ratio of correlations (HTMT) test in Table 5 showed that the HTMT correlation value of the research variables is <0.900. Thus, each variable is valid and can be used in further testing.

Table 3. Outer loading test results

Items	Loading	Items	Loading	Items	Loading	Items	loading
E-WOM1	0.846	BI1	0.804	BT1	0.763	PD1	0.738
E-WOM2	0.748	BI2	0.742	BT2	0.790	PD2	0.723
E-WOM 3	0.791	BI3	0.770	BT3	0.723	PD3	0.710
E-WOM4	0.772	BI4	0.793	BT4	0.716	PD4	0.724
E-WOM5	0.792	BI5	0.753	BT5	0.755	PD5	0.730
E-WOM6	0.710	BI6	0.810	BT6	0.815	PD6	0.753
E-WOM7	0.780	BI7	0.752	BT7	0.790	PD7	0.753
E-WOM8	0.768	BI8	0.774	BT8	0.747	PD8	0.711
E-WOM9	0.736	BI9	0.770	BT9	0.777	PD9	0.705
E-WOM10	0.797	BI10	0.780	BT10	0.762	PD10	0.703
		BI11	0.742	BT11	0.701	PD11	0.723
		BI12	0.714	BT12	0.804	PD12	0.725
		BI13	0.811			PD13	0.743

Table 4. AVE Test Results

Variable	AVE	Provision	Information
Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)	0.645	> 0.500	Valid
Brand image (BI)	0.633	> 0.500	Valid
Brand trust (BT)	0.771	> 0.500	Valid
Purchasing decisions (PD)	0.651	> 0.500	Valid

Table 5. HTMT Test Results

Variables	Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)	Brand image (BI)	Brand trust (BT)	Purchasing decisions (PD)
Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)	1.00	-	-	-
Brand image (BI)	0.802	1.00	-	-
Brand trust (BT)	0.680	0.740	1.00	-
Purchasing decisions (PD)	0.771	0.796	0.842	1.00

The testing for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability test results in Table 6 showed that all variables have the values > 0.700. This showed that each variable used in this study is reliable. The results of the validity and reliability tests showed that each indicator and variable used in this study has fulfilled the respective validity and reliability requirements, so that the data collected can be used for further data processing. In addition, direct hypothesis testing showed how much influence each independent variable has on the dependent variable contained in the study. Direct hypothesis testing is carried out using the path coefficient test (Table 7).

Statistical testing found a T-statistic value 0.202 (>1.97) and a p-value 0.033 (<0.05) in the relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decision. This means that the first hypothesis is accepted. This indicates a positive and significant effect of E-WOM on brand trust. This showed that the higher the level of E-WOM, the higher the brand trust of consumer towards a product. Jain et al. (2022) explain that an E-WOM carried out at high intensity can build a person's trust in a product. Zeqiri et al. (2023) and Akbari et al. (2022) explained that e-WOM has a very positive impact on a company because it relatively does not require costs from the company. On the other side, one of the most important impacts of e-WOM is the establishment of brand trust in the products of the company (Seo et al. 2020).

Table 6. Testing Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
E-WOM	0.860	0.888	Reliable
Brand Image	0.835	0.865	Reliable
Brand Trust	0.897	0.914	Reliable
Puchasing Decisions	0.831	0.865	Reliable

Table 7. Path Coefficient Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path Coeficient	T-Statistic		P-Value		Information
E-WOM --> Brand trust	0.202	2.135	>1.97	0.033	<0.05	Accepted
Brand image --> Brand trust	0.526	5.734		0.000		Accepted
E-WOM --> Purchasing decision	0.226	2.533		0.012		Accepted
Brand image --> Purchasing decision	0.210	2.096		0.037		Accepted
Brand trust --> Purchasing decision	0.460	6.367		0.000		Accepted
Dependent variable	R-Square					
Purchasing decision	0.628					

The results of testing the second hypothesis which examines the effect of brand image on purchasing decisions showed that the T-statistic value is 0.526 and the *p*-value 0.000<0.05. This means that the second hypothesis is accepted, which indicates a positive and significant influence of brand image on brand trust. This means that the better brand image in the eyes of consumers, the higher their level of brand trust. Marliawati and Cahyaningdyah (2020) explained that consumers who have positive assessment of some or all aspects of a product or brand is generally to have a higher level of brand trust, especially when compared to consumers who have negative or unformed brand image. Ahmad et al. (2020) emphasized that brand image is one of the main determinants of brand trust formation, because consumer trust will be formed or influenced by their perceptions of the brand itself, where positive perceptions will result in a high level of trust, while negative perceptions will result in a high level of trust. The low one. Brand image especially becomes more important when these consumers have never purchased a product from a brand, so they only rely on subjective perceptions or judgments.

The testing of third hypothesis is accepted. The T-statistic value is >1.97 and the p-value is <0.05, meaning e-WOM has a significant and positive influence on brand trust. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a significant influence of e-WOM on purchasing decision. This indicates that the more and positively the brand is discussed by consumers, the more it will influence consumers to make a decision to buy. On the side of being a message

sender, consumers who collect information from an online discussion forum can showed a high interest in the topic of a product than consumers who get information from sources carried out by the company's marketing department (Lee and Cho, 2020).

The results of testing hypothesis 4 which examines the effect of brand image on brand trust finds a T-statistic value > 1.97 and a P-value <0.05. This means that hypothesis 4 is accepted. This proves empirically the significant influence of the brand image variable on the purchasing decision variable. This indicates that the better the brand image received by consumers, the more it will determine consumer purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by Dash et al. (2021) who stated that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Consumers who have a positive image of a brand will be more likely to make purchases (Srivastava et al. 2022).

Statistical testing on hypothesis 5 which examines the effect of brand on purchasing decisions showed that the T-statistic value >1.97 and the P-value <0.05. Thus, hypothesis 5 is accepted. This means that this research empirically proves the significant effect of the brand trust variable on the purchasing decision variable. This indicates that the higher consumer trust in a brand, the more it will determine purchasing decisions for that brand. The results of this study are supported by Amalia (2020) which stated that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Brand trust is the ability of a brand to be trusted which originates from consumer trust that the product is able

to fulfill the promised value and the good intention of the brand based on consumer belief that the brand is able to prioritize consumer interests (Atulkar, 2020).

Testing the coefficient of determination is carried out to find out how much the level of strength or ability of the independent variables used in the study affects the dependent variable, testing the coefficient of determination is carried out using the R Square test (Table 6). R-square test showed that the variability of the purchasing decision variable is 0.628. This indicates that 62.8 percent of the influence on purchasing decisions comes from the independent variables examined in this study. Furthermore, indirect hypothesis testing is carried out to look for the indirect effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable through mediating or moderating variables. Indirect hypothesis testing is carried out using specific indirect effects (Table 8).

In testing specific indirect effect test, the findings explained that the sixth hypothesis is accepted because the T-statistic value >1.97 and the P-value <0.05, meaning that brand trust mediates significantly the influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the seventh hypothesis is accepted, indicated by the T-statistic value >1.97 and the P-value <0.05, meaning that brand trust mediates significantly the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. This study showed the results that there is a significant influence of E-WOM and brand image on purchasing decision through the mediation of brand trust. This indicates that the more and positively the brand is discussed by consumers and the better the brand image, the higher their level of trust in a product, which will then influence consumers to make purchasing decisions for the Toyota brand. The results of this study are in accordance with Marliawati and Cahyaningdyah (2020) who found a significant influence from E-WOM and brand image on purchasing decisions through mediation from brand trust.

Managerial Implications

Companies can utilize the power of interpersonal networks such as e-WOM to promote products or services which is known as the concept of viral marketing. The concept assumes that e-WOM is an effective means of influencing consumer behavior to transform electronic communication networks into influence networks by capturing recipients' attention, triggering interest and ultimately driving sales. Communication through e-WOM can affect consumer interest from the suggestions of people who have experience with the product. Thus, consumers will be more confident in making purchasing decisions for a product or service. For Toyota, utilizing e-WOM can be a feedback mechanism that can help improve the quality of products and get new customers. Therefore, transparency regarding the details and value of products is important for companies in making their promotion strategy because it can influence consumers to decide whether to buy Toyota or switch to another brand.

As brand image is very important for Toyota in defending the company from market competition, it is important for companies to form or maintain a positive image in the eyes of consumers because indirectly it will also affect brand image and consumer trust in to products. In addition, another competitive value of Toyota is that consumer trust in the Toyota brand can arise because of a feeling of security and low risk in using the brand. Brand trust is one important aspect that can stimulate consumers to be loyal or choose one product compared to other products. Trust is considered the most important way to build and maintain long-term relationships between companies and customers. In addition to the impact on sales, loss of trust or a low level of consumer trust in Toyota will have a negative impact on Toyota's brand image. Therefore, the importance of building a strong commitment with consumers is one of the right strategies for Toyota to increase and maintain consumer trust in the Toyota brand.

Tabel 8. Specific indirect effect test results

Hypothesis	Path Coeficient	T-Statistic		P-Value		Information
E-WOM → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision	0.093	2.107	> 1.97	0.036	< 0.05	Accepted
Brand Image → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision	0.242	3.991		0.00		Accepted

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that E-WOM and brand image has a significant and positive influence on brand trust. on brand trust significantly and positively. Furthermore, E-WOM, brand image and brand trust have a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions. Indirect testing found that brand trust was able to mediate the relationship between E-WOM and purchasing decisions with significant results. Likewise, the indirect test found that there was a significant influence of brand image on purchasing decisions through the mediation of brand trust.

The findings of this study have several theoretical implications. The findings of this study provide further evidence of the importance of E-WOM, brand image, and brand trust in shaping consumer behavior and decision-making of automotive products. Theoretically, the findings would imply the need for marketers to focus on building strong brand images and cultivating positive E-WOM, as well as establishing trust with consumers, in order to influence their purchasing decisions. The findings also support the theory that electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) reinforces the idea that online reviews and recommendations are important sources of information for consumers.

Recommendations

As recommendations, these findings are expected to be a consideration in strategic management in terms of implementing marketing strategy to focus its strategy on aspects of forming positive E-WOM, brand image and brand trust among consumers. Maintaining a positive opinion that is formed in the minds of consumers can be controlled by providing transparent positive information about the product and giving a positive response to anticipate consumer disappointment. Market competition and the development of increasingly transparent and globalized information technology have encouraged companies to manage information directly with their consumers. For further research, it is suggested to add other independent variables such as perceived price, perceived product quality or perceived service quality.

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