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The Effect of E-Wom and Consumer Trust on Purchase Decisions With Brand Image as Mediating Variable: Case Study of Indomie Reviewed By Influencer Tasyi Athasyia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), customer trust in influencers, and purchasing decisions, with Brand Image as a mediator. The author of this study used SmartPLS 4 with a quantitative analysis method. The sample size was 110 people, with the criteria of followers of influencer Tasyi Athasyia and having tried Indomie products. In the results of this study, eWOM does not directly influence purchasing decisions. Consumer trust in influencers influences purchasing decisions. Brand Image can mediate the influence of E-WoM and trust in influencers on purchasing decisions, which means that brand image plays an important role in bridging the influence of communication and consumer trust in determining the final purchasing decision.

Keywords: Keywords: eWOM, Consumer Trust, Brand Image, Purchasing Decisions, Influencers.

I. Introduction

Social media is one of the most popular forms of mass media, due to its two-way communication. It also facilitates faster information dissemination during online interactions. This makes social media a powerful platform for businesses to sell and promote their products or services, as more individuals use the internet and social media. Social media is particularly helpful for businesses because it enables more efficient marketing procedures, faster responses, and lower prices. Online product marketing may be more helpful in achieving desired turnover, as consumers anticipate increased sales due to lower prices and rapid information delivery. Commonly used social media platforms include YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which offer online microblogging services in the form of short, concise posts. These applications are widely used to create content, including product ratings or reviews (Alkatiri et al., 2020) social media, capable of providing widespread information and assessments, also functions as a medium for providing product reviews (Putra, 2020)). Social media is also widely used for online promotions or digital marketing in product sales. This online marketing strategy can be driven by influencer marketing, which involves reviewing products to increase brand awareness, expand reach, and influence the audience to make purchases.

An influencer is a person or organization with the ability to influence others, serving as a benchmark for society in making purchasing decisions. Influencers have the ability to share inspiring, entertaining, and

informative content, and can collaborate with various brands to promote products or services. Influencers also have a significant influence on sales for brands that can become well-known because they usually have a large following and maintain close relationships with their followers. Influencers have a significant impact on customer impressions and purchasing choices. However, this strategy also has risks, especially when influencers face controversy when reviewing a product, which can affect brand image and consumer purchasing decisions. Along with that, the presence of influencers as third parties with significant influence on social media also changes the way consumers perceive a product or brand. Consumers tend to trust influencers who are perceived as having credibility, expertise, and sincerity in conveying information. However, brand image is the perception or impression formed in the minds of consumers about a brand.

A strong brand image can increase purchase intentions and choices. In this study, Tasyi Athasyia was chosen as the object of research because she is one of the leading food influencers in Indonesia with millions of followers and a high level of engagement, especially in food review content. Tasyi consistently generates high interactions on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Her popularity and credibility in providing food reviews make her a relevant figure to observe the effectiveness of e-WOM communication and consumer trust in the digital context. In addition, previous research on the topic of influencer marketing has mostly focused on the fashion or beauty sector, so the use of influencer figures in the food category in Indonesia is still rarely studied, making this study have a strong original value. A strong brand image provides added value, both emotionally and operationally. Brand image is seen in consumers' perceptions of a brand, their level of trust in the brand, and their overall knowledge of the brand. Manufacturers benefit from a positive brand image because it discourages marketing efforts by competitors. Consumers benefit from a positive brand because it makes them more likely to prefer the product in the future, all of which are examples of extrinsic aspects of a brand. Based on research conducted (Amalia & Sagita, 2019; Mubarak et al., 2024) the first step in this process is need identification. This occurs when customers recognize they have a problem or need that needs to be solved, such as a desire to purchase a new product or service. Once customers realize what they need, they begin searching for solutions by gathering information about the product or service they need, reading reviews, or browsing social media for credible influencers. This can increase purchase intention by appealing to their audience's emotions.

## II.   Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

According to (Bastian & Rino, 2023) eWOM influences Purchasing Decisions, but conversely according to (Rahmadi et al., 2023) eWOM does not influence Purchasing Decisions. According to (Julianti & Oktavia, 2023) that influencer trust has a significant impact on Purchasing Decisions. Meanwhile, (Fadilah & Meria, 2023) found different results, where trust in influencers did not show a significant influence on purchasing decisions. According to (Aditria et al., 2023) revealed that eWOM has a significant influence on brand image and strengthens purchase intentions. also emphasized that brand perceptions can be formed through digital interactions and reviews shared electronically. However, According to (Hamida et al., 2023) showed different results where eWOM did not significantly influence brand image. In a study by Golden Ratio (2021), it was found that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) contributes significantly to the formation of brand attitudes and consumer purchase intentions. This study states that eWOM "significantly and positively influences branding, brand image, and brand awareness."

Research by Julianti & Oktavia (2023) shows that a high level of trust in influencers contributes to the formation of a positive brand image. This is supported by (Hamida et al., 2023) who found that influencer credibility can improve brand image in the eyes of consumers. Conversely, (Fadilah & Meria, 2023) stated that trust in influencers had no significant effect on brand image. In this study, brand image plays a significant role in encouraging consumers to make purchases. Bastian & Rino (2023) found that brand image positively influences purchasing decisions. However, Rahmadi et al (2023) found that brand image does not influence purchasing decisions, especially in product categories that rely heavily on price and consumer reviews. According to Aditria et al (2023) brand image can mediate the relationship between eWOM and purchasing

decisions, thereby strengthening the indirect effect. According to (Riswardani et al., 2023), eWOM can influence purchasing decisions when consumers have a positive impression of the brand. An article published in Golden Ratio (Susanto & Cahyono, 2021) states that brand image has a strong influence on purchasing decisions. However, Hamida et al (2023) found that brand image mediation was insignificant.

Research by Julianti & Oktavia (2023) demonstrated that brand image is a significant mediating variable in strengthening the influence of trust on purchasing decisions. However, different results were presented by (Fadilah & Meria, 2023) where brand image was unable to be an effective mediator in this relationship because it lacked strong brand strength. From this theory, according to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, the relationship between e-WOM, trust, brand image, and purchasing decisions, where e-WOM and trust are positioned as stimuli, brand image as an internal mechanism (organism), and purchasing decisions as the final response. Therefore, the research question was designed to determine how this process occurs in the context of food product reviews by influencers. Based on the background and research gaps, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) influences purchasing decisions.
H2: Consumer trust of influencers influences purchasing decisions.
H3: Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) influences brand image.
H4: Consumer trust in influencers influences brand image.
H5: Brand image influences purchasing decisions.
H6: Brand image mediates the influence of eWOM on purchasing decisions.
H7: Brand image mediates the influence of consumer trust on purchasing decisions.
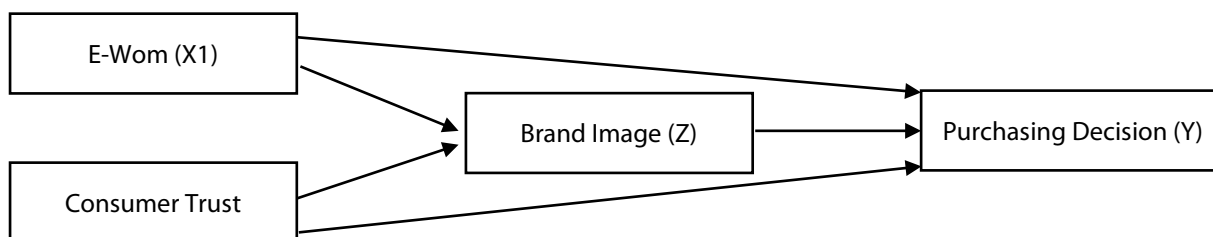
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III.   Research Method

In this study, the e-WOM variable was chosen because it is a highly influential form of consumer communication in the digital era. Modern consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from fellow users than formal marketing messages from companies. According to (Ismagilova et al., 2020), e-WOM has the power to shape consumer perceptions of products, increase purchase intentions, and influence final purchasing decisions. In the context of influencers like Tasyi Athasyia, e-WOM conducted through food product reviews and reviews has high reach and can shape public opinion widely. Therefore, e-WOM is relevant as an exogenous variable to explain the influence of digital communication on consumer behavior. According to (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020) trust plays an important mediating role between influencer credibility and consumer decisions. Therefore, trust was chosen because it can explain the psychological mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of influencer messages. Without trust, the influence of e-WOM from influencers will not have a significant impact on purchasing decisions.

The use of Brand Image was chosen because this variable functions as a mediator in the study because it bridges how influencer communication (through e-WOM and trust) influences consumer perceptions of the brand before finally making a purchasing decision. A strong brand image can strengthen

loyalty, trust, and convert purchase intentions into real actions. Therefore, in the context of food reviewed by influencers, brand image plays an important role in filtering and processing the influence of information received by consumers. Purchasing decisions are the end result of the influence process of the previous variables. This variable was chosen as the dependent variable (main endogenous) because this study aims to understand how e-WOM, trust, and brand image significantly influence consumer behavior. According to (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019) it is emphasized that purchasing decisions are a form of consumer behavior that can be influenced by many psychological and social factors. In this study, purchasing decisions are an indicator of the success of influencer-based marketing strategies and a benchmark for the effectiveness of the entire digital communication process being studied.

This research was conducted in April 2025 and was conducted online using an online survey platform distributed through social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp & Twitter. The Survey Platform used a questionnaire via Google Form distributed in online research locations covering all regions of Indonesia with the target respondents to fill out the questionnaire who are followers of influencer Tasyi Athasyia on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Respondent inclusion criteria included social media users who follow Tasyi Athasyia's account and have watched Indomie product review content delivered by the influencer and have tried Indomie products. This data collection lasted for 2 weeks with the Indicators of the questionnaire compiled based on indicators from previous studies that have been validated, then adjusted to the research context. The e-WOM variable indicators were compiled based on (Ismagilova et al., 2020), consumer trust based on (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), brand image based on (Wang & Horng, 2022), and purchasing decisions based on (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).The instrument was first pilot tested on 30 respondents with characteristics similar to the target population. The results of the trial were analyzed using a reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha), and all indicators showed values above 0.7, indicating good reliability.

This study employed variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), specifically Partial Least Squares (PLS). The SEM model allows testing direct and indirect relationships between latent variables, including the use of recent approaches such as multi-view SEM without non-Gaussian assumptions and sparse SEM (Kusano & Uchida, 2023) SEM-PLS is capable of testing structural and measurement models simultaneously. Therefore, this study employed SEM-PLS. Although SEM-PLS has advantages in testing structural models with small samples and non-normal data, this method also has limitations. One is the lack of a global goodness-of-fit test, as in CB-SEM. Furthermore, SEM-PLS results are exploratory and need to be retested in follow-up studies with more confirmatory methods. This study also did not compare alternative models, so interpretation is limited to the model constructed. This study employed a quantitative method based on a 5-point Likert Scale, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. According to (Jebb et al., 2021), the Likert Scale provides practical guidance in selecting and validating survey scales. This research approach used purposive sampling, based on certain predetermined criteria. This study resulted in 130 people participating as respondents, but only 110 data were used because the sample size of 110 respondents was determined based on the calculation method. According to (Hair et al., 2019) for SEM, which recommends a minimum of 5–10 respondents per indicator. With a total of 11 indicators in the model, the minimum sample size required is 110. This size is considered sufficient to achieve adequate statistical power. The survey was conducted anonymously; the respondents' true identities were not known, but only their age and occupation were listed. This aim was to respect the respondents' identities.

IV.   Results and Discussion

4.1.   Statistical Result

The instrument validity and reliability stages were then used to test the data obtained from the questionnaire. Construct validity was assessed by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which indicates authenticity if the indicator is AVE > 0.5. Composite dependency and Cronbach's Alpha were used to test instrument dependency, with a good value exceeding 0.7.A variance-based Structural Equation

Modeling (SEM) technique, Partial Least Squares (PLS), run by SmartPLS version 4 software, was used to examine the interrelationships among the study model variables. PLS was chosen for its flexibility in handling non-normally distributed data and small sample sizes, as well as its ability to handle models with multiple latent components.

The convergent, discriminant, and reliability validity of each construct were measured as part of the first of three steps of the Outer Model (Measurement Model) analysis. Analyzing the relationships between latent variables using R-square values and path coefficients is a crucial part of the inner model, also known as the structural model. The significance of the influence between variables is examined through the use of t-statistics and p-values from bootstrapping as part of the hypothesis testing process. Values such as AVE > 0.5 for convergent validity are used as benchmarks for model performance. A dependability value greater than 0.7 is defined as composite dependability. Goodness of fit is indicated by a SRMR value less than 0.08. R-squared (R^2) values of R=0.75, R=0.50, and R=0.25 are interpreted as strong, moderate, and weak, respectively. With this method, the research is expected to produce valid and reliable results that can be used to explain and predict consumer behavior in the context of digital marketing through the role of eWOM, trust in influencers, and brand image.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

|	Missing Item	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard deviation
X1.1	0	4.091	4	1	5	0.745
X1.2	0	3.882	4	1	5	0.922
X1.3	0	3.927	4	1	5	0.806
X1.4	0	3.927	4	1	5	0.902
X1.5	0	4.300	4	1	5	0.826
X2.1	0	4.191	4	1	5	0.826
X2.2	0	4.118	4	1	5	0.912
X2.3	0	4.282	4	1	5	0.822
X2.4	0	4.300	4	1	5	0.826
X2.5	0	4.209	4	1	5	0.799
Z1	0	4.036	4	1	5	0.883
Z2	0	3.945	4	1	5	0.989
Z3	0	4.264	4	1	5	0.849
Z4	0	4.173	4	1	5	0.749
Z5	0	4.182	4	1	5	0.886
Y1	0	4.191	4	1	5	0.826
Y2	0	4.155	4	1	5	0.800
Y3	0	4.164	4	1	5	0.792
Y4	0	4.209	4	1	5	0.799
Y5	0	4.155	4	1	5	0.765

The study involved 180 respondents as a sample, who filled out a questionnaire with a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The table shows that of the 180 respondents, there was no missing data, so all data was complete and could be continued for processing and analysis. The table shows that the highest mean (average) value was in the answers to questions X1.5 and X2.4 on variables X1 and X2, which was 4,300. While the standard deviation value in the answers to each question did not exceed the mean value, so it can be concluded that the reasonable answer data did not have high extreme values.

Table 2. Outer Loading

	E-WoM	Consumer Trust	Buying decision	Brand Image
X1.1	0.764			
X1.2	0.762			

	E-WoM	Consumer Trust	Buying decision	Brand Image
X1.3	0.718			
X1.4	0.771			
X1.5	0.769			
X2.1		0.767		
X2.2		0.704		
X2.3		0.819		
X2.4		0.814		
X2.5		0.716		
Y1			0.767	
Y2			0.737	
Y3			0.72	
Y4			0.823	
Y5			0.746	
Z1				0.822
Z2				0.805
Z3				0.714
Z4				0.73
Z5				0.801

A loading factor value between 0.5 and 0.6 has different meanings depending on the context of its use. In factor analysis in quantitative research, the loading factor value indicates how strongly an indicator represents the latent variable being measured. Loading factor values above 0.5 are generally considered valid and acceptable, although values above 0.7 are preferred to ensure stronger convergent validity. It is considered sufficient as a parameter that the questionnaire items or statements as parameter measures of the construct have passed the convergent validity test. a loading factor value of 0.5 was used as a threshold to determine the validity of indicators in the measurement model. The data in the table are calculated data processed by the PLS Algorithm based on questionnaire answers collected from each respondent. The outer model data processing to conduct validity tests was carried out until valid data was obtained.
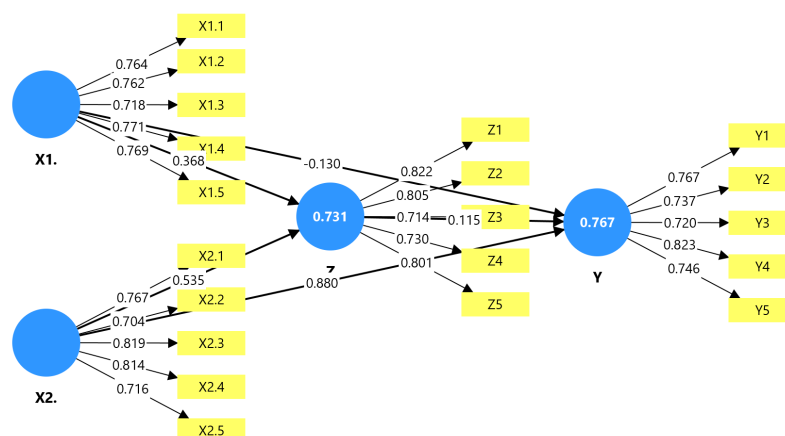
Figure 2. PLS Algorithm Diagram

The following PLS algorithm output shows that the loading factor value of each latent variable indicator is greater than 0.7. This indicates that the questionnaire questions or statements on the E-WoM, Consumer Trust in Influencers, Purchasing Decisions, and Brand Image variables have generated convergently valid responses from respondents.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
E-WoM	0.816	0.823	0.870	0.573
Consumer Trust	0.822	0.824	0.876	0.586
Buying decision	0.817	0.825	0.872	0.577
Brand Image	0.833	0.836	0.883	0.601

The Construct Reliability and Validity output table explains the following:

1. The AVE value for the E-WoM variable (X1) is 0.573 > 0.5, meaning 57.3% of the variance in the E-WoM indicator can be explained, thus concluding that the measurement indicator is convergently valid.
2. The AVE value for the Consumer Trust variable (X2) is 0.586 > 0.5, meaning 58.6% of the variance in the Consumer Trust indicator can be explained, thus concluding that the Consumer Trust measurement indicator is convergently valid.
3. The AVE value for the Purchase Decision variable (Y) is 0.577 > 0.5, meaning 57.7% of the variance in the Purchase Decision indicator can be explained, thus concluding that the Purchase Decision measurement indicator is convergently valid
4. The AVE value for the Brand Image (Z) variable is 0.601 > 0.5, meaning 60.1% of the variance in the Brand Image indicator can be explained. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Brand Image measurement indicator is convergently valid.

Table 3 showing the reliability test results for the research instrument shows the following Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable:

1. The E-WoM variable (X1) has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.870 > 0.6, thus concluding that the E-WoM variable questions in the questionnaire can produce reliable and consistent answers.
2. The Consumer Trust variable (X2) has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.876 > 0.6, thus concluding that the Consumer Trust variable questions in the questionnaire can produce reliable and consistent answers.
3. The Purchase Decision variable (Y) has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.872 > 0.6, thus concluding that the Purchase Decision variable questions in the questionnaire can produce reliable and consistent answers.
4. The Brand Image (Z) variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.601 > 0.6, so it can be concluded that the Brand Image variable questions in the questionnaire can produce reliable or consistent answers.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test

	E-WoM	Customer Trust	Buying decision	Brand Image
E-WoM	0.757			
Customer Trust	0.788	0.765		
Buying decision	0.653	0.872	0.759	
Brand Image	0.789	0.824	0.738	0.775

The discriminant validity test can be explained as follows:

The square root of the AVE for the E-WoM variable is 0.757, which is greater than the inter-construct correlation values of 0.653 (with Purchase Decision), 0.789 (with Brand Image), and 0.788 (with Consumer Trust), respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research instrument or questionnaire for the E-

WoM variable has generated discriminantly valid research data. It can be concluded that the research instrument or questionnaire for the Consumer Trust variable has generated discriminatively valid research data because the square root of the AVE for this variable is 0.788, which is greater than the inter-construct correlation values of 0.765 with Purchase Decision, 0.824 with Brand Image, and 0.788 with E-WoM. It can be concluded that the research instrument or questionnaire for the Purchase Decision variable has produced discriminatively valid research data because the square root of the AVE value for this variable is 0.872, which is greater than the inter-construct correlation values of 0.653 with E-WoM, 0.765 with Consumer Trust, and 0.759 with Brand Image. It can be concluded that the research instrument or questionnaire for the Brand Image variable has been able to produce discriminatively valid research data because the square root of the AVE value of 0.775 is greater than the inter-construct correlation values of 0.789 (with E-WoM), 0.824 (with Consumer Trust), and 0.738 (with Purchase Decision).

Table 5. Collinealrity Staltistics (VIF)

	E-WoM (X1)	Customer Trust (X2)	Buying decision (Y)	Brand Image (Z)
E-WoM (X1)			3.135	2.633
Customer Trust (X2)			3.697	2.633
Buying decision (Y)				
Brand Image (Z)			3.718	

Collinearity Statistics (VIF), there is no VIF value for each research variable > 5 so it can be concluded that there is no high linear intercorrelation between exogenous variables or there are no symptoms of multicollinearity.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity Test

		R-square	R-square adjusted
Buying decision (Y)		0.767	0.76
Brand Image (Z)		0.731	0.726

The coefficient of determination, or R-square, shows: With an R-square value of 0.731 for the Brand Image (Z) variable, it can be concluded that the exogenous variables of Brand Image, Purchase Decision, E-WoM, and Consumer Trust influence the variance of the Brand Image (Z) variable by 73.1%. Meanwhile, factors not included in the analysis contribute the remaining 26.9%. With a coefficient of determination (R-square) of 0.767, it can be seen that the exogenous variables of purchase decision, brand image, E-WoM, and consumer trust influence the variance of the purchase decision (Y) variable by 76.7%. Meanwhile, factors outside the scope of the study contribute the remaining 23.3%.

Table7. Effect Size

	E-WoM (X1)	Customer Trust (X2)	Buying decision (Y)	Brand Image(Z)
E-WoM (X1)			0.023	0.191
Customer Trust (X2)			0.897	0.404
Buying decision (Y)				
Brand Image (Z)			0.015	

Effect Size (f^2) indicates the respective influence categories between the research variables as follows:
1. Consideration of the Impact of E-WoM (X1) on Purchase Choices (Y)
   With a value slightly above 0.02, the f^2 value of 0.023 indicates that E-WoM has a small impact on consumers' propensity to make a purchase. Therefore, E-WoM has a negligible impact on consumers' final purchase choices.
2. How E-WoM (X1) Influences Consumer Perceptions of Brands (Z)

The f^2 value of 0.191 falls into the medium effect category, indicating that E-WoM plays a significant role in shaping brand image. This suggests a moderate correlation between the level of E-WoM's influence and Brand Image.

3. The Role of Consumer Trust in Decision Making (Y)

The large effect group includes an f^3 value of 0.897. This demonstrates how trust plays a significant role in the consumer decision-making process. In other words, high levels of consumer trust are directly correlated with the weight they place on various factors when making a purchase.

4. Factors Influencing Consumer Brand Perception (X2)

Furthermore, the f^2 value of 0.404 is quite high, indicating that consumer trust plays a significant role in shaping brand perception. People will think more positively about a brand if they trust it.

5. How Consumer Choices Affect Perceived Brand Value (Z)

6. Considering that the f^2 value of 0.015 is well below the simple threshold of 0.02, we can conclude that the impact of consumer spending on brand perception is negligible. This implies that the purchase itself may not have much of an impact on how people view the brand.

Table 8. Predictive Relevance

	Q^2 Predictive Relevance (=1-SSE/SSO)
Y1	1
Y2	0.478
Y3	0.506
Y4	1
Y5	0.5777

1. The Q^2 value of the endogenous indicator Y2 is 0.478 > 0, indicating that the research model has good observational results, or predictive relevance.

2. The Q^2 value of the endogenous indicator Y3 is 0.506 > 0, indicating that the research model has good observational results, or predictive relevance. The Q^2 value of the endogenous indicator Y5 is 0.5777 > 0, indicating that the research model has good observational results, or predictive relevance.

3. The Q^2 values of the endogenous indicators Y1 and Y4 are each 1 > 0, indicating that the model has excellent predictive ability, or very high predictive relevance.

4. The Q^2 values of the endogenous indicators Y1 and Y4 are each 1 > 0, indicating that the model has excellent predictive ability, or very high predictive relevance.

Table 9. Model Fit Test

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.117	0.117
d_ULS	2.878	2.878

The model fit test showed that: Overall, the SRMR value of 0.117 indicates that the model is not optimally fit, as it exceeds the ideal threshold (<0.08 or <0.10). However, the similar d_ULS values between the saturated and estimated models indicate no significant difference, which could indicate that the model is still acceptable depending on the research context. From the research results, the GoF index value can be calculated as follows:

GoF = √(Average AVE X Average R Square)
GoF = √(0,5845- 0.749) = √0,4378 = 0.6615

So it can be concluded that the GoF index value is 0.6615 > 0.35, so that both the outer model and the inner model, as a whole, the model falls into the category of having a high match, meaning that there is a match between the observed values and the expected values in the model.
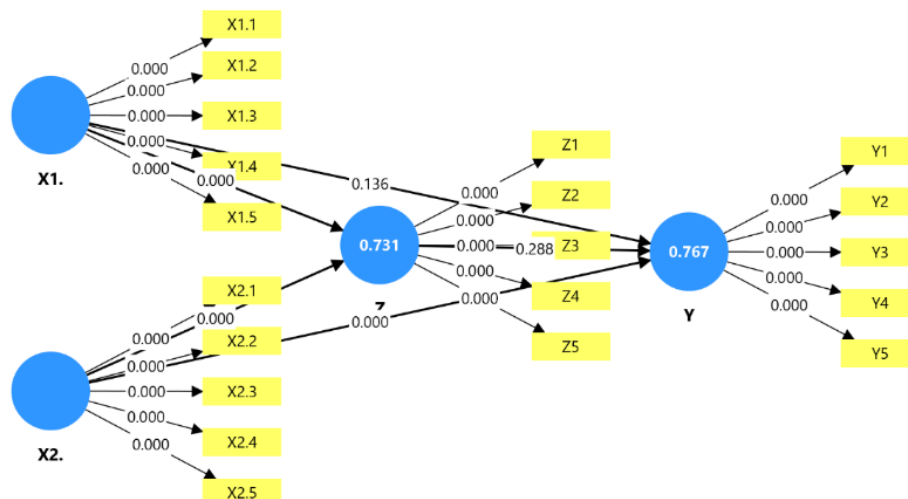
Figure 3. Output Bootstrapping Diagram

In this research model, there are two structural models: a direct influence structure and an indirect influence structure. The direct influence structure consists of two sub-structure models of direct influence:

Sub-structure 1: Direct influence, e-WoM, consumer trust, on purchasing decisions.
Sub-structure 2: Direct influence, e-WoM, consumer trust, on brand image.

Table 10. Bootstrapping Results

Hypothesis	Results	Description
E-WoM (X1) → Buying Decision (Y)	Rejected	Negative and Insignificant
E-WoM (X1) → Brand Image (Z)	Accepted	Positive and Significant
Customer Trust (X2) → Buying Decision (Y)	Accepted	Positive and Significant
Customer Trust (X2) → Brand Image (Z)	Accepted	Positive and Significant
Brand Image (Z) → Buying Decision (Y)	rejected	Positive and Insignificant

Accepted if the P value < 0.05 and T-statistic > 1.96. Rejected if the P value ≥ 0.05 and/or T-statistic ≤ 1.96. The direction of the relationship is seen from the Original Sample (O): positive or negative.

Table 11. Path Coefficients Results

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
E-WoM (X1) -> Buying Decision (Y)	-0.130	-0.131	0.087	1.492	0.136
E-WoM (X1) -> Brand Image (Z)	0.368	0.372	0.063	5.866	0
Customer Trust (X2) -> Buying Decision (Y)	0.880	0.889	0.086	10.238	0
Customer Trust (X2) -> Brand Image (Z)	0.535	0.526	0.073	7.303	0
Brand Image (Z) -> Buying Decision (Y)	0.115	0.099	0.108	1.064	0.288

Table 12. Indirect Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
E-WoM (X1) -> Brand Image (Z) -> Buying Decision (Y)	0.341	0.332	0.072	4.731	0
Customer Trust (X2) -> Brand Image (Z) -> Buying Decision (Y)	0.215	0.203	0.086	2.500	0.012

The final table 12 shows the indirect effect as follows:

1. X1 (E-WoM) → Z (Brand Image) → Y (Purchase Decision): Where Original Sample (O): 0.341, T-Statistic: 4.731, and P-Value: 0.000. This means there is a positive and significant effect of E-WoM on Purchase Decisions, mediated by Brand Image. This supports the hypothesis that E-WoM, enhanced by Brand Image, will enhance Purchase Decisions.
2. X2 (Consumer Trust) → Z (Brand Image) → Y (Purchase Decision): Where Original Sample (O): 0.215, T-Statistic: 2.500, and P-Value: 0.012. This means there is a positive and significant effect of Consumer Trust in Influencers on Purchase Decisions, with Brand Image as a mediating variable.
3. So it can be concluded that both paths (X1 → Y → Z and X2 → Y → Z) are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding indicates that sustainable sourcing practices and environmental reputation mediated by Brand Image contribute significantly to Purchase Decisions.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The Influence of E-WoM (X1) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Based on the bootstrapping analysis in the figure, it is known that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) does not significantly influence Purchase Decisions (Y), with a T-statistic of 1.492 (<1.96) and a P-value of 0.136 (>0.05). These results indicate that although E-WoM has a negative relationship with purchase decisions (original sample = -0.130), this effect is not statistically significant, therefore the hypothesis that E-WoM influences purchase decisions is rejected. Logically, this insignificance can be explained by several possibilities. First, circulating E-WoM information may not be considered credible or relevant by consumers, especially if the source of the information does not come from a trusted figure or does not have experiences deemed authentic. Second, today's consumers may rely more on personal experiences or direct information from brands than solely on online reviews. Third, the high amount of information available online (information overload) can make consumers skeptical or even ignore e-WoM. This aligns with research conducted by (Sitorus & Mawardi, 2021) entitled "The Influence of E-WoM on Purchasing Decisions with Trust as an Intervening Variable," where the results of this study indicate that e-WoM does not have a significant direct effect on purchasing decisions, but does have an indirect effect through trust. This is also in line with research conducted by (Yulianingsih & Sari, 2020) entitled "The Influence of E-WoM, Brand Image, and Trust on Cosmetic Product Purchase Decisions." This study found that e-WoM does not significantly influence purchasing decisions. Consumers are more influenced by brand image and trust.

4.2.2. The Influence of Consumer Trust in Influencers (X2) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Based on the results of the bootstrapping analysis in the table, it is known that Consumer Trust in Influencers (X2) has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Decisions (Y). This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.880, the T-statistic of 10.238 (greater than 1.96), and the P-value of 0.000 (less than

0.05). This means that the higher the level of consumer trust in an influencer, the more likely the consumer will make a decision to purchase a product recommended by that influencer. Logically, this influence can be explained by the influencer's role as a source of information perceived as credible, knowledgeable, and relatable. Influencers are perceived as having real-world experience with the products they review and often have a closer emotional or social connection with their audience. When consumers believe that influencers are honest, impartial, and competent in evaluating products, this trust becomes the primary basis for forming purchase decisions. Furthermore, trust can reduce perceived risk, especially for products consumers have never tried. This aligns with research conducted by (Sari & Wijaya, 2023) titled "The Influence of Influencer Credibility on Purchasing Decisions on Instagram," which found that trust in influencers has a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions. This also aligns with research conducted by N. (N. Putri & Hidayat, 2022) titled "Trust and Influencer Credibility as Determinants of Cosmetic Purchasing Decisions on Social Media." This study found that consumer trust in influencers significantly influences purchasing decisions.

4.2.3. The Influence of E-WoM on Influencers (X1) on Brand Image (Z)

Based on the results of the bootstrapping analysis in the table, it is known that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. This is indicated by the original sample value of 0.368, the T-statistic of 5.866 (above the critical limit of 1.96), and the P-value of 0.000, which is far below the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the more positive and intense the E-WoM received by consumers, the better the brand image formed in their minds. This influence can be explained because E-WoM is a form of communication between consumers that is considered more credible and objective than official company advertising. When consumers receive information, reviews, or product recommendations through digital media from other users (whether in the form of comments, video reviews, blogs, or social media), they tend to perceive it as social proof. This builds a positive perception of the brand, especially if the e-WoM is consistent, relevant, and comes from a source considered trustworthy. Over time, the accumulation of positive e-WoM will build a strong and beneficial brand image for the company, as the brand is perceived as capable of meeting customer expectations and needs This aligns with research conducted by (Wulandari & Nugroho, 2023) entitled "The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image and Purchase Intention of Local Fashion Products on Instagram," which found e-WoM had a positive and significant impact on brand image. This also aligns with research conducted by (Lestari & Prasetyo, 2022) entitled "The Impact of E-WoM on Brand Image and Customer Trust: A Study of Online Food Delivery Services." This study found that e-WoM significantly improves brand image.

4.2.4. The Influence of Consumer Trust (X2) on Brand Image (Z)

Based on the results of the bootstrapping analysis, it was found that Consumer Trust in Influencers (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image (Z). This is evident from the original sample value of 0.535, the T-statistic of 7.303, and the P-value of 0.000, which is far below the significance threshold of 0.05. This means that the higher the level of consumer trust in an influencer, the more positive the brand image formed in the minds of consumers. This influence can be explained by the power of influencers who are trusted by their audiences to shape positive perceptions of the brands they promote. Consumer trust arises from the consistency, credibility, and authenticity of an influencer's message delivery. When consumers believe that the information conveyed by an influencer is honest and based on personal experience, they tend to view the promoted brand positively. This process strengthens brand image, as the brand image is not only built by official company communications but also by third parties who are considered neutral and trustworthy by the target market.

This aligns with research conducted by (S. Putri & Susanti, 2023) entitled "The Influence of Trust in Influencers on Brand Image and Brand Loyalty for Beauty Products on TikTok," which found that trust in influencers has a significant positive effect on brand image. This also aligns with research conducted by (Alfian

& Setiawan, 2022) entitled "The Impact of Influencer Trustworthiness on Brand Image and Customer Engagement on Instagram." This study found that trust in influencers has a significant positive effect on brand image.

4.2.5. The Influence of Purchase Decisions (Y) on Brand Image (Z)

This analysis revealed that the effect of Brand Image (Z) on Purchase Decisions (Y) is positive but not significant, with a t-statistic of 0.115 for the original sample, a t-value of 1.064, and a p-value of 0.288 (greater than 0.05). This means that, despite the positive direction of the effect, Brand Image does not significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions in the context of this study. These results indicate that even if consumers have a positive perception of a brand, this doesn't necessarily lead them to make a purchase. In some cases, purchasing decisions are more influenced by other factors such as price, current needs, promotions, product availability, or even recommendations from close friends. In other words, a good brand image can increase awareness and preference, but it doesn't guarantee immediate conversion to purchase, especially if consumers are still considering other rational or practical factors. This aligns with research conducted by (Hidayat & Kusuma, 2023) entitled "The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions for Local Coffee Products Among College Students," where brand image showed a positive but insignificant influence on purchasing decisions. This also aligns with research conducted by (Yusuf & Pratiwi, 2022) entitled "Analysis of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions for Electronic Products in the Marketplace." This study found that despite a positive brand image, it did not significantly influence purchases, as consumers are more sensitive to price and reviews.

4.2.6. The Influence of E-WoM (X1) on Purchase Decisions (Y) Mediated by Brand Image (Z)

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) is a form of digital-based information communication conducted voluntarily by consumers regarding experiences, perceptions, or recommendations regarding a product or brand. E-WoM plays a crucial role in shaping Brand Image, which is consumers' collective perception of a brand based on the information they receive. In this context, Brand Image acts as a mediator, strengthening the relationship between E-WoM and Purchase Decisions. When consumers receive positive reviews or recommendations from other users through digital platforms (such as social media, forums, or product reviews), this will enhance the brand's image in their eyes. A strong and positive Brand Image will increase consumer trust and confidence in product quality, which ultimately influences purchase decisions. Thus, E-WoM not only acts as a source of information but also triggers the formation of positive brand perceptions, which significantly drives purchase decisions. This aligns with research conducted by (Setyawan & Hidayanto, 2023) entitled "The Influence of E-WoM on Purchase Decisions with Brand Image as a Mediating Variable for Technology Products in the Tokopedia Marketplace." The results of this study indicate that E-WoM has a significant positive effect on Brand Image and Purchase Decisions through Brand Image (p < 0.05). This also aligns with research conducted by Puspitasari, N., & Kusumawati, A. (2022) entitled "Brand Image as a Mediator of the Effect of E-WoM on Purchase Decisions in the Skincare Industry." The results of this study indicate that Brand Image mediation significantly strengthens the influence of E-WoM on purchase decisions.

4.2.7. Consumer Trust in Influencers (X2) on Purchase Decisions (Y) as Mediated by Brand Image (Z)

Consumer trust in influencers is a key factor in shaping the effectiveness of social media-based marketing communications. Consumers who trust an influencer tend to believe that the information conveyed is honest, objective, and relevant to their needs. This trust not only drives attention to product recommendations but also creates positive associations with the promoted brand, ultimately strengthening Brand Image (Z). Brand image, formed from consumers' perceptions of an influencer's credibility, enhances the brand's image as a quality, trustworthy, and lifestyle-friendly product. In this process, Brand Image

mediates the link between trust in influencers and purchasing decisions, as consumers tend to purchase products from brands they perceive as reputable. Thus, trust in influencers does not directly lead to purchasing decisions but is strengthened through the formation of a positive brand image in consumers' minds. This aligns with research conducted by (Rachmawati & Gunawan, 2023) entitled "The Effect of Trust in Influencers on Purchase Decisions with Brand Image as a Mediating Variable for Beauty Products on Instagram." The results of this study indicate that trust in influencers significantly influences purchasing decisions through brand image ($p < 0.05$). This also aligns with research conducted by (Setiawan & Kartikasari, 2021) entitled "The Role of Brand Image in Mediating Trust in Influencers and Purchase Decisions: Evidence from Online Retail." Where the results of this study show that brand image significantly mediates the influence of trust on purchasing decisions.

V.   Conclusion

Several previous studies have examined the influence of e-WOM and trust on purchasing decisions but most were conducted in the context of fashion, technology, or e-commerce products. This study makes a novel contribution by examining the same topic in the context of a food product reviewed by a local Indonesian influencer, Tasyi Athasyia. Furthermore, this research model positions brand image as a mediating variable, which has rarely been tested in a similar combination of variables, thus enriching the literature on consumer behavior in the digital era. This study aims to determine the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) and consumer trust in influencers on purchasing decisions, with brand image as the mediating variable, in a case study of the Indomie food product reviewed by influencer Tasyi Athasyia. The results show that e-WoM does not directly influence purchasing decisions, but it has a significant positive effect on brand image. This means that even though negative or controversial reviews from influencers do not directly influence purchases, brand perception can still be strengthened through e-WoM, which creates a positive brand image. The mediating variable explains that e-WoM is mediated by brand image on purchasing decisions. This supports the hypothesis that

e-WoM is enhanced by the addition of brand image, which will enhance purchasing decisions. Consumer trust in influencers has a direct and significant influence on purchasing decisions, meaning the higher the consumer's trust in the influencer, the greater the consumer's likelihood of making a purchase. The mediating variable explains that consumer trust, mediated by brand image, significantly contributes to purchasing decisions. Brand image is proven to mediate the influence of e-WoM and trust in influencers on purchasing decisions, indicating that brand image plays a crucial role in bridging the influence of communication and consumer trust in determining the final purchase decision. This study strengthens understanding of the important role of e-WoM and consumer trust in shaping purchasing decisions, particularly through the mediation of brand image. Theoretically, this study contributes by examining the relationship between these variables in the context of local Indonesian influencers, a previously understudied topic. Practically, these results can serve as a reference for brands or food businesses in selecting influencers who are not only popular but also trusted and capable of building a positive brand image. This research also opens up space for further exploration of other mediating variables, such as credibility or audience engagement, in digital marketing dynamics.

For Marketing Practitioners and Brand Managers, companies or brand owners like Indomie should prioritize selecting influencers who command a high level of trust among their audiences. Although eWOM is not directly significant in influencing purchasing decisions, its influence on brand image is significant. Therefore, utilizing eWOM remains crucial, but it must be accompanied by strengthening the brand image. Optimizing Brand Image as a Mediator: Brand image has proven to be a crucial bridge in strengthening the influence of eWOM and trust in influencers on purchasing decisions. Therefore, brand communication strategies should focus on message consistency, visual branding, and positive values that can strengthen consumer perceptions of the brand. Regular Influencer Performance Evaluation: In the case of Tasyi Athasyia, despite the controversy, trust remained significant in influencing purchasing decisions. Therefore, regular

evaluation of influencers' reputations and credibility is crucial to prevent dissonance between the brand image and the person representing it.

Diversifying Digital Marketing Strategies: Results show that consumer trust in influencers is more dominant than in eWOM. Therefore, marketing strategies should not rely solely on one communication channel (e.g., digital reviews), but should combine them with trust-based approaches such as personal testimonials, educational content, and direct interactions between brands and consumers. For Further Research This research focuses on one influencer and one brand in the instant food category. Future research is recommended to expand the study object to various product types and different influencer characteristics (e.g., micro-influencers vs. macro-influencers), as well as include other variables such as brand trust, risk perception, or consumer satisfaction as mediators or moderators in the model.

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