

## **THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON BRAND TRUST (A STUDY ON INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS OF @KAYBUN.ID)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on Brand Trust in the context of mobile marketing among Instagram followers of Kaybun Dimsum. The research adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population includes consumers who follow Kaybun Dimsum's Instagram account, and a total of 99 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an online questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale. Validity and reliability tests were conducted, followed by classical assumption tests and simple linear regression analysis using SPSS. The results indicate that eWOM significantly and positively affects Brand Trust, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.916 and a coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.839, meaning that 83.9% of the variation in Brand Trust can be explained by eWOM. The findings suggest that positive digital interactions and consumer recommendations effectively enhance brand credibility and trust in a mobile marketing environment. This study concludes that managing eWOM through authentic online communication and consumer engagement can serve as a strategic tool to strengthen brand trust and loyalty. Future research is recommended to explore mediating variables such as *brand image* and *customer satisfaction* to provide a deeper understanding of digital trust formation.

**Key words:** Electronic Word of Mouth; Brand Trust; Digital Consumer Behavior; Social Media Marketing; UPI

### **INTRODUCTION**

Brand trust is now a critical component of a company's longevity in the face of fiercer competition in the digital business world. Communication and interactions on social media, where customers and brands are closely connected, have a significant impact on brand trust and are no longer primarily established through traditional contacts (Cavadi et al., 2023). Building this trust is difficult since good consumer views created by direct experience, upheld reputation, and high brand awareness lead to brand trust (Alhamdina & Hartono, 2023). Since brand trust has been shown to influence purchase intention and consumer loyalty, a company's failure to uphold this trust could have major consequences (Bae et al., 2023). Thus, it is crucial to research how brand trust is established in the digital sphere, particularly through consumer-to-consumer contact.

Currently, electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is an important component that now greatly influences the formation of brand trust in the digital world. E-WoM differs from traditional word-of-mouth communication in that it includes any kind of review or comment, both positive and negative, that is shared by consumers over the internet and is accessible to many people (Mamoto & Gunawan, 2023). As e-WOM information spreads rapidly on social media such as TikTok and Instagram, research shows that authentic e-WOMs from fellow users are considered more credible than authentic e-WOMs from others (Rosmayanti & Ratnasari, 2024). When customers see positive reviews or recommendations about the brand, they directly believe in the brand and drive interest and the decision to buy (Tafolli et al., 2025).

In recent years, various studies have consistently shown that Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) plays an important role and has a positive effect on the formation of brand trust. A study of OVO digital wallet users, for example, found that eWOM makes a real contribution to increasing the level of consumer trust in the brand (Putra Wal-Asri & Ridho, 2025). Logically, this is understandable because reviews, testimonials, and recommendations from other consumers are more accurate and unbiased compared to formal marketing messages from companies. Information from other consumers can reduce doubts and build trust in a brand in the end.

However, some studies show different and even contradictory results. For one, research on factors that influence Gen Z's interest in buying skincare products reveals that eWOM does not have a significant impact on brand trust in Generation Z (Suyanti & Zai, 2025). The results show that eWOM's impact on brand trust is not universal; instead, it is influenced by many factors, such as the type of industry, consumer demographics (Generation Z tends to pay more attention to online reviews), and the digital platforms used (Putra & Sary, 2024). The inconsistent results suggest that the relationship between eWOM and brand trust is a complex phenomenon and still requires more in-depth research according to the context (Tafolli et al., 2025).

The limitations of this research also include theoretical aspects, especially in integrating electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) into brand trust (Putra & Sary, 2024). Although Kotler in Marketing 6.0 (2023) highlights the importance of immersive digital experiences in building consumer trust, the model has not fully explained the dynamics of eWOM on specific platforms such as Instagram that are widely used by culinary SMEs (Putra & Sary, 2024). In the context of Indonesian SMEs, such as Kaybun Dimsum, algorithm-powered

user-generated content and culture-based visual narratives have proven to be significant in building trust. In line with that, MacKiewicz in *The Spheres of Influence* (2025) emphasizes the role of influencers in strengthening brand equity and loyalty, but existing theoretical models are still inadequate in explaining real-time two-way interactions on social media (Cavadi et al., 2023). This underscores the need for a more adaptive conceptual framework by taking into account digital amplification and local community variables.

Empirical facts show that, especially in specific situations such as Instagram for food brands in Indonesia, there are still differences in determining the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on brand trust. Some studies have shown a positive relationship between eWOM and brand trust, but these findings typically come from broader fields such as e-commerce or fashion, making them irrelevant for local SMEs with different patterns of follower engagement (Putra & Sary, 2024). For example, data in Indonesia shows that eWOM contributes about 14.8% to consumers' decision to buy coffee through brand trust, but there is still a lack of data for food products such as dimsum. In addition, data for 2025 shows that 68% of Indonesian users make purchases due to eWOM and 76% follow influencers on Instagram (Putra & Sary, 2024). However, this data does not take into account the follower dynamics of certain brands, such as Kaybun Dimsum. Additionally, longitudinal data from 2022–2024 shows an increase in social media-based brand trust of between 25-30% in the food industry. However, the data did not describe cultural factors or algorithmic influences, so additional research is needed to address these inconsistencies (Tafolli et al., 2025).

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to empirically test the influence of eWOM on brand trust among Instagram followers Kaybun Dimsum (@kaybun.id). Another goal of the study is to measure relationships, find mediation elements, and provide actionable information about digital marketing strategies for comparable SMEs. This research aims to improve theory and practice about trust dynamics in social media-based branding by addressing the identified gaps.

## METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research approach to examine the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on Brand Trust, with Kaybun Dimsum Instagram followers (@kaybun.id) as the research subjects and the brand itself as the main object of study. This study is based on a positivist paradigm and focuses on objective measurement, empirical verification, and statistical analysis to find patterns of consumer behavior that can be generalized in the context of digital marketing. The main instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire, which consists of Likert scale items that are adjusted to a tested scale. eWOM was assessed using ten items that measured credibility, intensity, valence of opinion, and content, while Brand Trust was assessed using ten items that measured brand competence, brand value, and brand reputation. With 14,300 people following Instagram @kaybun.id as the target population, a simple random sample of 99 people was selected using the Slovin formula to ensure proper representation with minimal bias.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

The direct relationship between variables was measured through data analysis using simple linear regression, by testing the hypothesis:

$$Y = a + bX$$

H0 : Electronic Word of Mouth does not have a statistically significant positive effect on Brand Trust.

H1: Electronic Word of Mouth has a statistically significant positive effect on Brand Trust.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data processing using SPSS on a minimum of 99 respondents show that the Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) variable has an average of 39.93 with a standard deviation of 7.725, while the Brand Trust variable has an average of 41.23 with a standard deviation of 8.248. The high average values indicate that most respondents gave positive assessments of eWOM activities and their level of trust in the brands they use. This indicates that communication on digital platforms has a strong influence on perceptions of brand reliability and credibility. These findings illustrate that effective mobile marketing strategies can increase consumer participation in spreading positive information about brands and products.

**Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Range of Corrected Item- Total Correlation	r-Tabel (N=99)	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.541 – 0.754	0.195	0.918	Valid & Reliable
Brand Trust	0.525 – 0.855	0.195	0.952	Valid & Reliable

Before conducting regression analysis, the research instruments were tested to ensure their validity and reliability. Validity testing was conducted by measuring the correlation between item scores and total scores for each variable using Pearson Product Moment. Based on the data processing results, the correlation values of each item on the eWOM variable ranged from 0.541 to 0.754, while the correlation values of items on the Brand

Trust variable ranged from 0.525 to 0.855. All of these correlation values were above the r-table value (0.195) at N=99, so all items were declared valid. This indicates that each statement in the questionnaire is able to accurately measure the construct dimensions of the variables under study.

Next, reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess internal consistency between items in each construct. Based on the test results, the Cronbach's Alpha value for the eWOM variable was 0.918 and for Brand Trust was 0.952. These values far exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978) and Hair et al. (2010), which means that both variables have excellent reliability. These results indicate that all items in the questionnaire have a high level of internal consistency and can be reliably used to measure the concepts of eWOM and Brand Trust.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Electronic Word of Mouth (X)	99	25	50	39.93	7.725
Brand Trust (Y)	99	26	50	41.23	8.248

After the instrument was declared valid and reliable, an analysis of the relationship between variables was conducted using Pearson's correlation. The results showed a very strong positive relationship between eWOM and Brand Trust with a correlation coefficient of 0.916 and significance of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This finding confirms that the higher the level of positive communication among consumers through digital media, the higher their trust in the promoted brand. This result is in line with the research by Putera Wal-Asri & Ridho (2025), which found that eWOM is one of the important factors that strengthen the perception of brand credibility. User interactions on social media serve as a more trusted source of information because they are considered more authentic than direct promotions from companies.

**Table 3. Summary and Classical Assumption Tests and Simple Linear Regression**

Test Type	Result	Interpretation
Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Stat= 0.159, Sig.= 0.000	Data residual not normally distributed
Correlation (Kendall's tau-b)	0.518 ( $p = 0.000$ )	Significant positive relationship.
Correlation (Spearman's rho)	0.635 ( $p = 0.000$ )	Strong and significant correlation.
Linearity (ANOVA Table)	F = 505.161, Sig.= 0.000	Relationship between eWOM and Brand Trust is strongly linear.
Homoscedasticity	Residuals randomly scattered	No heteroscedasticity
Autocorrelation (DW)	1.967	No autocorrelation detected
Regression Coefficient (Constant)	2.183	-
Regression Coefficient (eWOM)	0.978	Positive effect
R	0.916	Strong positive correlation
R <sup>2</sup>	0.839	eWOM explains 83.9% of the variance in Brand Trust.
F-Statistic	505.161, Sig.= 0.000	Highly significant model.
t-Statistic (eWOM)	22.476, Sig.= 0.000	eWOM significantly influences Brand Trust.

Simple linear regression analysis shows that eWOM has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust, as evidenced by the values  $R = 0.916$ ,  $R^2 = 0.839$ , F-count = 505.161, and significance 0.000. The regression equation  $Y=2.183+0.978X$  explains that a one-unit increase in eWOM increases Brand Trust by 0.978, with 83.9% of Brand Trust variation explained by eWOM and the remaining 16.1% by other factors. Although the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test shows that the residual data is not normally distributed ( $p = 0.000$ ), the non-parametric Kendall's tau-b correlation test (0.518;  $p = 0.000$ ) and Spearman's rho (0.635;  $p = 0.000$ ) tests still showed a significant positive relationship. Thus, eWOM-based digital communication interactions have been proven to play an important role in strengthening consumer trust in brands consistently and significantly.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce Kotler's (2023) concept, which explains that interactive marketing through digital media can increase emotional engagement and brand credibility in the eyes of consumers. Information disseminated through social media provides an authentic experience for potential buyers and strengthens their belief in the quality and value of a product. This view is also in line with MacKiewicz (2025), who asserts that eWOM functions as a social system in the digital ecosystem, where user experience plays a major role in building brand reputation and value. Thus, the results of this study prove that electronic communication between users not only influences short-term perceptions but also strengthens brand equity and long-term loyalty.

These findings support the research by Suyanti & Zai (2025), which found that the influence of eWOM on consumer trust is stronger among younger generations who are active on social media. This is because younger

consumers have a high level of digital literacy and tend to trust the experiences of fellow users more than direct promotions from companies. In the context of mobile marketing, eWOM strategies have proven to be an effective means of building brand trust through active user participation. Consumers not only act as recipients of information, but also as messengers who expand the reach and reputation of the brand. Therefore, companies need to actively manage and monitor digital conversations to ensure that the eWOM that develops remains positive and supports the brand image.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant influence on Brand Trust with a very strong contribution. The implication of these findings is that companies need to leverage the power of digital communication to create trust-based relationships with consumers. Through strategies that encourage positive testimonials, collaboration with micro-influencers, and quick responses to negative feedback, companies can strengthen their brand reputation and credibility. This approach will support business sustainability in a competitive digital era by placing consumers as key partners in building brand image and trust.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) exerts a positive and significant influence on Brand Trust among consumers engaged in mobile marketing activities, specifically Instagram followers of Kaybun Dimsum. This finding implies that when consumers are exposed to authentic, positive, and consistent online recommendations, they tend to develop stronger confidence, integrity perception, and credibility toward the brand. Theoretically, this confirms that digital interpersonal communication has evolved into a key determinant of trust formation in the mobile marketplace, where peer influence and online reputation replace traditional advertising credibility. Practically, the results emphasize the importance for businesses to strategically manage eWOM interactions, through transparent engagement, consumer responsiveness, and trust-based digital storytelling to sustain long-term loyalty and brand credibility. Future research is recommended to integrate mediating variables such as brand image or customer satisfaction to further explore the underlying psychological mechanisms driving digital trust and consumer commitment in broader online business ecosystems.

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