



The Effect of Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM) on Social Media TikTok to Brand Trust and Its Impact on Buying Interest in Mixue Brand Ice Cream Products (Survey on State University Students in West Java)

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ABSTRACT

Social media is now growing very fast. One of the social media commonly used by Indonesian people is TikTok. The spread of information on TikTok is so fast that many companies use TikTok for promotional activities. One of them is Mixue, which is a brand ice cream company. This study aims to examine and analyze The Effect of Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on Social Media TikTok on Brand trust and Its Impact on Interest in Buying Mixue Brand Ice cream Products (survey on State University Students in West Java). This research was conducted using quantitative methods with descriptive and verification approaches. The population in this study were state university students in West Java with a sample of 400 respondents who were calculated using the Slovin formula and an error rate of 5% and a nonprobability sampling technique with a purposive sampling approach. The data analysis technique used is path analysis with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software. The results showed that electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) directly had a positive and significant effect on brand trust and buying interest in Mixue ice cream products. Brand trust also has a positive and significant effect on the intention to buy Mixue ice cream products. The results of this study also show that brand trust can mediate the effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on buying interest in Mixue ice cream products.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is currently experiencing rapid growth. Internet-connected platforms provide convenience for people to access information and communicate with others without being hindered by distance and time. The number of social media users in Indonesia reached 167,000,000 in 2023. The majority of Indonesians use social media to stay connected with friends and family, fill their leisure time, follow trending discussions, and search for information about products they intend to buy. The extensive use of social media in Indonesia has led to the emergence of new applications. Based on We Are Social's data over the last four years, from 2020 to 2023, one of the applications that has seen rapid and continuous growth in Indonesia is TikTok. In 2020, the percentage of TikTok users in Indonesia was 22%. In 2021, TikTok users in Indonesia increased to 38.7%. In 2022, the TikTok user base experienced a significant surge, reaching 63.1%. In 2023, TikTok users continued to grow, reaching 70.8%. This demonstrates the popularity of the TikTok application in Indonesia. TikTok is a platform that provides short video content. Through TikTok, users can upload various videos on topics such as makeup, skincare, culinary, cooking, educational features, and even promotional content to win over potential consumers. TikTok has become an effective platform for product promotion due to its ability to rapidly disseminate information and its usability across various age groups.

Mixue is an ice cream company that utilizes social media platforms such as TikTok as a means of marketing. Mixue's content on TikTok is not only created by Mixue itself; other social media users also contribute by creating content about Mixue's products. These user-generated contents indirectly serve as Mixue's marketing strategy, gaining tremendous popularity without incurring costs. Establishing ice cream businesses in Indonesia was a strategic decision for Mixue, as it can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Ice cream is a popular culinary treat among Indonesian citizens, making it an excellent market opportunity for Mixue, which has expanded its market share by opening numerous branches. According to a survey conducted by Alexander (see <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/jason.alexander4222>) using Tableau, the number of Mixue branches in Indonesia, based on data from Google Maps as of December 27, 2022, exceeded 600 branches, with the majority located in the West Java province, totaling 189 branches.

The phenomenon of Mixue's success in Indonesia has been quite rapid, and as a result, Mixue faces competition from competitors such as Ai-CHA and Momoyo, which have similar concepts. Mixue uses bright red as its color scheme, and so do Momoyo and Ai-CHA. All three brands also have unique logos and mascots. Mixue's mascot is a snowman, Ai-CHA's mascot is a penguin holding a drink, while Momoyo uses a polar bear mascot holding an ice cream cone. With similar competitors in the market, Mixue needs to develop the right strategies to maintain consumer interest in Mixue ice cream products and to remain the preferred choice for consumers. Mixue has successfully implemented marketing strategies effectively, including price, product, place, and promotion, creating high buying interest among consumers. Consumer buying interest is considered crucial for business success. One of the strategies used to boost buying interest is strengthening consumer belief or trust in the product or brand. According to Rosdiana *et al.* (2019), consumers' buying interests are largely influenced by the level of trust they have themselves.

Brand trust is considered the most crucial factor in business. One strategy to enhance brand trust is by leveraging Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM). Imagine young people gathering and discussing, sharing their opinions; E-WOM operates when consumers start

conversing and providing product reviews in the form of comments and likes on social media. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) significantly and positively influences brand trust. This implies that when consumers receive positive recommendations or advantageous information about a brand through social media, they tend to have higher trust in that brand.

E-WOM also can influence consumers to make buys because a person's positive opinion of a product can affect consumer buying decisions. When consumers become interested in a product, they tend to seek further information before making a purchase. However, opinions obtained from Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) do not only include positive opinions but also some negative ones. On Social Media TikTok, several consumers express their dissatisfaction. Some mentioned their disappointment because their favorite Mixue menu is no longer available. Others complained that Mixue ice cream melts quickly, causing discomfort when consuming it. Some consumers voiced concerns that Mixue ice cream is too sweet, leading to coughing and throat irritation, and potentially contributing to diabetes. Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has the potential to reduce consumer buying interest. According to [Mudarifah et al. \(2020\)](#) research, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) significantly influences buying interest, indicating that effective E-WOM can play a crucial role in influencing consumer buying decisions. However, E-WOM does not affect buying interest. This discrepancy may be due to the unclear and unreliable sources of information in E-WOM.

Based on the considerations and information previously discussed, the researcher is interested in conducting a study related to how Electronic Word of Mouth on the TikTok social media platform influences the buying interest in Mixue ice cream products, mediated by the variable brand trust. The research hypotheses are as follows :

- (i) H1: E-WOM on TikTok social media influences brand trust in Mixue ice cream products.
- (ii) H2: Brand trust influences the buying interest of Mixue ice cream products.
- (iii) H3: E-WOM on TikTok social media influences the buying interest of Mixue ice cream products.
- (iv) H4: E-WOM on TikTok social media influences the buying interest of Mixue ice cream products, mediated by the variable Brand Trust.

2. METHOD

In this research, a descriptive and verification method is used. The descriptive method is to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon or statements under investigation, while the verification method is used to validate the proposed hypotheses. The descriptive method is a research method that focuses on the description and analysis of variables consisting of one or more factors separately, without making comparisons or seeking relationships with other variables. Meanwhile, the verification method is a research method used to test cause-and-effect relationships between variables through the use of statistical tests. This method is utilized to demonstrate the validity of the hypotheses proposed in the study.

The research approach in this study is quantitative. The quantitative approach is a method that adheres to scientific principles, including concreteness or empirical experience, objectivity, measurability, rationality, and systematicity. In quantitative research, data collected are in the form of numerical values and are analyzed using statistical techniques. The quantitative approach used in this study involves the survey method with the use of questionnaires as a tool for data collection, which will subsequently be processed using instrument tests, aided by SPSS.

The population in this study consists of students from State Universities in West Java. The total number of students in State Universities in West Java is 307,095. The sample in this study is taken from a portion of the student population at State Universities in West Java. The

determination of the sample size in this study follows Slovin's formula, resulting in a sample size of 399.48. To simplify the sampling process, this number is rounded up to 400 respondents. For these 400 respondents to represent the entire population, the formula for proportional stratified sampling is used. The sampling technique is used to collect samples. This study uses the purposive sampling method, where samples are selected based on criteria predetermined by the researcher. The data used in this research consists of primary data and secondary data. The required data sources for this research include internal data and external data. External data are data collected to illustrate conditions or activities outside the company or organization's environment. External data are used to identify business opportunities or risks and to observe trends or changes outside the company. The data collection techniques used in this research are literature reviews and questionnaires. The measurement technique used in this research is the Likert scale. The Likert scale is used to assess the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of respondents related to the researched social phenomena. The instruments in the Likert scale can take the form of checklists or multiple-choice questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Analysis Data

Based on **Table 1**, the path coefficient of the electronic word-of-mouth variable (X) on brand trust (Y) is 0.604. Thus, the equation can be derived as follows Eq. (1).

$$Y = 0,604X + \varepsilon_1 \quad (1)$$

where X is the *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)*; Y is the *Brand Trust*; and ε_1 is the Unexamined Variable that affects Y.

Based on **Table 2** in the Model Summary, it is evident that the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.364. This means that 36.4% of the variance in brand trust (Y) can be explained by the electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) variable (X). Therefore, the remaining variance or error is influenced by other variables that were not considered in this study. Consequently, the error term (ε_1) is calculated as $\sqrt{1-0.364} = 0.80$. Thus, the structural representation of Model 1 is in **Figure 1**.

Table 1. Table of path coefficients model 1.

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.038	1.302	9.247	0.000
	E-WOM	0.584	0.039	15.103	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: *Brand trust*

Table 2. Analysis of coefficient of determination for model 1.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.604 ^a	0.364	0.363	3.597125

a. Predictors: (Constant), E-WOM

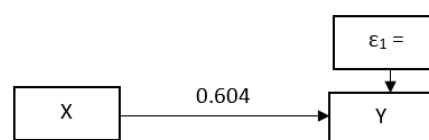


Figure 1. Path diagram for model 1.

Based on **Table 3**, the path coefficient for the variable Electronic Word of Mouth (X) on Buying interest(Z) is 0.207. Therefore, the equation can be formulated as follows Eq. (2).

$$Z = 0,207X + 0,549Y + \varepsilon_2 \quad (2)$$

where X is the *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)*; Y is the *Brand Trust*; Z is the *Buying Interest*; ε_2 = The unexamined variables that influence Z.

Based on **Table 4** in the Model Summary, it is evident that the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.482. This means that 48.2% of the variance in buying interest(Y) can be explained by the variables electronic word of mouth (X) and brand trust (Y). Therefore, the remaining variance (error) is influenced by other variables that are not part of this study. Consequently, the error (ε_2) = $\sqrt{1-0.482}$ = 0.72. Thus, the structural representation of Model 2 is in **Figure 2**.

Table 3. Table of path coefficients model 2.

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.174	1.240		5.785	0.000
	<i>E-WOM</i>	0.192	0.042	0.207	4.578	0.000
	<i>Brand trust</i>	0.525	0.043	0.549	12.129	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Minat Beli

Table 4. Analysis of coefficient of determination for model 2.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.694 ^a	0.482	0.480	3.108817

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand trust, E-WOM

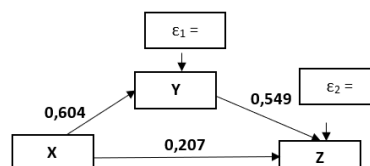


Figure 2. Path diagram for model 2.

Partial analysis is conducted to evaluate the extent of the influence of independent variables individually on the dependent variable. In this study, tests were conducted to identify the influence of the independent variable, electronic word of mouth (X), on brand trust (Y) as a mediating variable in Model 1, as presented in **Table 5**.

Based on **Table 5**, it is shown that sig. (0.000) < α (0.05) and t-value (15.103) > t-table (1.966). Thus, H₀ is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth (X) has a partial effect on brand trust (Y).

Table 5. Partial testing analysis in model 1.

Model		Coefficients ^a			T	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.038	1.302		9.247	0.000
	<i>E-WOM</i>	0.584	0.039	0.604	15.103	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand trust

Based on **Table 6**, it is shown that the partial effect of electronic word of mouth (X) on buying interest (Z) has a sig. value (0.000) < α (0.05) and a t-value (4.578) > t-table (1.966), so H0 is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth (X) has a partial effect on buying interest (Z). The partial effect of the brand trust variable (Y) on buying interest (Z) with the criteria of sig. value (0.000) and t-value (12.129) > t-table (1.966), which means that partially, the brand trust variable (Y) has a positive and significant effect on Z.

Table 6. Partial testing analysis in model 2.

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.174	1.240		5.785	.000
	<i>E-WOM</i>	.192	.042	.207	4.578	.000
	<i>Brand trust</i>	.525	.043	.549	12.129	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Minat Beli

The Sobel test is used to calculate the value of the mediating variable that is normally distributed. The indirect effect between variables X and Z can be found through the multiplication of path coefficients and can be reinforced by mediation testing through the Sobel test. The Sobel test is conducted to determine whether the mediation effect of the brand trust variable is significant or not. Here are the results of the Sobel test in this study.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Z &= \frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2SEa^2)+(a^2SEb^2)}} \\
 Z &= \frac{(0.604)(0.549)}{\sqrt{(0.549)^2(0.039)^2+(0.604)^2(0.043)^2}} \\
 Z &= \frac{0.331}{\sqrt{0.000456+0.000675}} \\
 Z &= 9.851
 \end{aligned}$$

To determine the significance of the indirect effect, the t-value is used from the coefficient ab with the following Eq. (3).

$$t = \frac{ab}{Sab} = \frac{0.604 \times 0.549}{0.039 \times 0.043} = 197.73 \quad (3)$$

Thus, the t-value (197.73) > t-table (1.966), indicates that the variable brand trust successfully mediates the relationship between the variables of electronic word of mouth and buying interest.

3.2. The Influence of Electronic Word Of Mouth (X) on Brand Trust (Y)

Based on the analysis results obtained between the variables of electronic word of mouth (X) on brand trust (Y) with a significance value criteria (0.000) and t-value (15.103) > t-table (1.966), H0 is rejected. The coefficient value of the electronic word of mouth (X) on brand trust (Y) is 0.64, which means that partially, the electronic word of mouth (X) has a positive and significant effect on brand trust (Y). consumers tend to gather information about the products they intend to buy before making a purchase, so positive E-WOM is one of the efforts to increase brand trust and maintain brand trust. This research is supported by studies conducted by [Alfian and Utami \(2019\)](#) and [Trigani and P. Tobing \(2022\)](#) that partially, the electronic word-of-mouth variable has a positive and significant effect on brand trust

3.3. The Influence of Brand Trust (Y) on Buying Interest (Z)

Based on the analysis results obtained between the variables of brand trust (Y) on buying interest (Z) with a significance value criteria (0.000) and t-value (12.129) > t-table (1.966), H₀ is rejected. The coefficient value of the brand trust (Y) on buying interest (Z) is 0.549, which means that partially, brand trust (Y) has a positive and significant effect on buying interest (Z). The brand trust built by the company enhance consumer confidence in making buys. Therefore, companies must continue to maintain and increase the level of trust in the eyes and minds of consumers. This research is supported by a study conducted by [Luki yana and Anjani \(2022\)](#) also [Santoso and Mardian \(2020\)](#) that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on buying interest.

3.4. The Influence of Electronic Word Of Mouth (X) on Buying Interest (Z)

Based on the analysis results obtained between the variable electronic word of mouth (X) and buying interest (Z) with the criteria of sig. value (0.000) and t-value (4.578) > t-table (1.966), the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected. It is found that the coefficient value of the electronic word of mouth (X) variable on buying interest (Z) is 0.207, which means that, partially, the electronic word of mouth (X) variable has a positive and significant influence on buying interest (Z). This is because E-WOM facilitates consumers in accessing information about products through social media networks. This research is supported by a study conducted by [Ningrum et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Yones and Muthaiyah \(2023\)](#) that found a positive and significant partial influence of electronic word of mouth on buying interest.

3.5. The Influence of Electronic Word Of Mouth (X) on Buying Interest (Z) Mediated by Brand Trust (Y)

Based on the calculation results of the Sobel test, the statistical value of the Sobel test is 9.851 with a probability value of 0.000, and a t-value of 197.73 > t-table 1.966, thus rejecting the null hypothesis (H₀). This means that the electronic word of mouth (X) variable has a positive and significant influence on buying interest (Z) through brand trust (Y) as a mediating variable. This is due to consumers' tendency to read comments before making a buy to avoid choosing the wrong product. Additionally, when consumers have trust in a particular brand, they are less likely to switch to other brands, ultimately affecting their buying interest in the chosen brand. This research is supported by a study conducted by [Mudarifah \(2020\)](#) found a significant influence of electronic word of mouth on buying interest with brand trust as a mediating variable.

4. CONCLUSION

The research results reveal that electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on the TikTok social media platform has a positive and significant impact on the brand trust of Mixue ice cream products. This indicates that when TikTok users provide positive recommendations or favorable information about Mixue ice cream products through the platform, it significantly enhances consumers' trust in the Mixue brand. Consequently, consumers tend to have higher levels of trust in Mixue ice cream products after being exposed to Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on TikTok.

The research also shows that brand trust has a positive and significant influence on buying interest. This means that when consumers feel confident and trust in the quality, integrity, or reputation of the Mixue brand, they are more likely to choose and buy. Mixue products compared to other brands they may trust less. This underscores the significant impact of brand trust in shaping consumers' buying interests in Mixue products.

Furthermore, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) also has a positive and significant influence on buying interest. This means that when consumers see or hear positive testimonials from others about Mixue products on social media platforms, they are more inclined to buy those products. This demonstrates that electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) plays a strong role in shaping consumers' buying interest in Mixue products.

The Sobel test results indicate that the brand trust variable successfully mediates the influence between the electronic word of mouth on the TikTok social media platform and the buying interest in Mixue ice cream products. This implies that electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on TikTok indirectly influences the buying interest of Mixue ice cream products by enhancing brand trust. In other words, when consumers have a high level of trust in the Mixue brand due to the positive E-WOM information they receive on TikTok, this will boost consumers' buying interest in Mixue ice cream products.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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