
**ONLINE INFLUENCE PATHWAYS: A STUDY OF CELEBRITY
ENDORSEMENTS AND EWOM EFFECTS ON PURCHASE INTENTION VIA
BRAND TRUST**



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Celebrity Endorsements and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention. A quantitative design was employed with 385 respondents who actively search for online product reviews and follow Celebrity Endorsements. Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling to assess both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The findings reveal that Celebrity Endorsements significantly strengthen Brand Trust, particularly in the dimensions of benevolence, empathy, and honesty, and also directly enhance Purchase Intention. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) positively affects Brand Trust and contributes to Purchase Intention as well. Furthermore, Brand Trust was found to mediate the relationships between Celebrity Endorsements, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), and Purchase Intention, with indirect effects also proving significant. These results highlight that both direct and indirect effects play a crucial role, suggesting that effective marketing strategies should integrate Celebrity Endorsements and consumer-generated eWOM while prioritizing the development of brand trust to drive Purchase Intention.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsements, eWOM, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behavior, Online Marketing, Social Media Influence

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital transformation, social media has become a crucial foundation for shaping consumer behavior and marketing strategies. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allow brands to communicate directly with their audiences through personalized and interactive content (Hung, 2021). These platforms have transformed the way consumers gather and evaluate information, especially when considering products that require greater involvement, such as electronic goods, where purchasing decisions rely heavily on information credibility and perceived risk (Jun, 2020).

Among the various forms of digital communication, electronic Word-of-Mouth, often referred to as eWOM, has emerged as one of the most influential. It encompasses a wide range of consumer-driven communications, including testimonials, product discussions, and online recommendations that circulate across social platforms (Donthu et al., 2021). This type of communication represents a collective process in which consumers share their experiences and opinions, shaping brand perceptions and influencing purchasing behavior. As digital interactions continue to grow, electronic Word-of-Mouth has evolved into a major marketing force that can either strengthen or weaken consumer trust, depending on the authenticity and credibility of the information being shared (Sulthana, & Vasantha, 2019).

At the same time, Celebrity Endorsements have become significant figures in the digital marketing environment. These individuals, who are often public personalities with a large online following, play an important role in increasing product visibility and legitimacy through their perceived expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Javed et al., 2022; Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019). The persuasive impact of Celebrity Endorsements depends not only on popularity but also on the level of consistency between the influencer's personal image and the brand's identity. When credibility and congruence are established, such endorsements can generate consumer trust and positive attitudes toward the brand.

Although electronic Word-of-Mouth and Celebrity Endorsements have been widely recognized as powerful marketing instruments, only a limited number of studies have explored how these two online influence mechanisms operate together in affecting consumer behavior. The majority of existing research has concentrated on initial purchase intentions, while the concept of repurchase intention and continued brand engagement has received far less attention. Furthermore, the role of brand trust as an intermediary that connects online communication and consumer loyalty remains insufficiently studied (Delre, & Luffarelli, 2023). Trust functions as a fundamental psychological element that reduces uncertainty, fosters favorable attitudes toward the brand, and encourages repeated purchasing behavior.

Recent studies indicate that electronic Word-of-Mouth can enhance perceptions of brand reliability, whereas credible celebrity endorsements tend to strengthen emotional attachment and perceived authenticity (Hashmi et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the findings across studies remain inconsistent regarding the magnitude and direction of these relationships. Some research suggests that an excessive dependence on influencer marketing may lead to a loss of credibility when it appears overly commercialized, while other findings emphasize that authentic and experience-based messages in electronic Word-of-Mouth exert a stronger influence on trust and Purchase Intention (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

Given these mixed findings, a deeper understanding is needed regarding how electronic Word-of-Mouth and Celebrity Endorsements jointly shape consumer Purchase

Intentions through the development of Brand Trust. This study seeks to address that gap by proposing and testing an integrated model that unites peer-based and influencer-based communication as two complementary pathways of online influence. By emphasizing the mediating function of brand trust, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how digital interactions build consumer loyalty and sustain long-term brand value in an increasingly competitive e-commerce environment.)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celebrity faces tend to generate buzz because individuals love seeing someone whom they already know and see in their everyday life. Audiences feel connected to a product if they observe the same being utilized by someone they love on an individual basis. A reliable face has the potential to create a powerful connection between desire and belief without using much text. If followers get the feeling of authenticity from a post then they typically incline towards experiencing the product themselves. Hasan and Sohail (2021) wrote that emotional proximity among influencers and users can inform bolder decisions. That influence makes the product seem more compelling, simply by virtue of being a part of someone's celebrity universe.

H1: Celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on consumer purchase intentions

People spread their concepts on the internet and the language can shape how people perceive a product they never even handled. Al-Abeda et al (2022) found that eWOM is a key driver in the establishment of trust through stories that are shared on social media. One comment by a satisfied customer can generate a chain of interest that will travel to hundreds in a matter of hours. Social media facilitated it so much that opinions easily spread fast and affect even strangers. Individuals read through and give serious attention to organic posts one reads about something beneficial they do themselves. Customers behave after reading real testimonies that hit personally and in their face.

H2: eWOM has a positive effect on consumer purchase intentions

Celebrities possess some level of influence that individuals have trust in due to their reputation and public image. When a celebrity supports a product, his or her already established credibility carries over to the brand, thus consumers feel more comfortable with their choice. Consumers are likely to perceive celebrity endorsements as an approval of quality, which makes them more confident to purchase. When an influencer and a brand share similar values, trust is further boosted. As per Hasan and Sohail (2021), this trust prompts a stronger relationship and loyalty from consumers. The greater the trust grows, the higher are the possibilities of repeat business, thus making fans long-term brand heroes.

H3: Celebrity endorsements positively influence brand trust

eWOM creates a virtual word-of-mouth phenomenon that supports brand credibility through shared user experiences. Purchasers trust online peer discussions more than traditional advertisements. Positive eWOM builds a feeling of security for a brand as people are more certain of their decision during purchase intentions. Al-Abeda et al. (2022) emphasized the power of consumer interaction on social media to support the credibility of a brand. Brands that participate in online conversations can establish trust by showing

openness and sincerity. The organic nature of eWOM helps bridge the gap between brand communication and consumer perception.

H4: eWOM positively influences brand trust

Trust is the backbone of any fruitful consumer-brand relationship. Customers who trust a brand are more likely to make confident purchase intentions. High brand trust reduces the perceived risk associated with the use of new products. According to Hasan and Sohail (2021), the trust translates casual browsing into sales because consumers feel secure in their choice. Strong brands can also command premium prices since customers are willing to pay for what they perceive as a quality product. The greater the trust, the stronger it is as a prime driver of repeat purchase and long-term consumer loyalty.

H5: Brand trust has a positive effect on consumer purchase intentions

Celebrity endorsements don't just market products but also have a strong influence on building trust for brands. When the customer trusts a celeb, the same applies to the product they endorse. As the brand gains trust through promotion influence, it creates a bridge shaping purchase behavior. The relationship plays an important role in overcoming fear most times entailed while purchasing unfamiliar products. Belief in the celebrity endorsement creates trust in the product, causing the consumer to make faster buying intentions. Hasan and Sohail (2021) wrote that the effect of a celebrity endorsement is highly amplified when brand trust is the mediator, hence causing the consumer to implement the purchase.

H6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions

eWOM serves as a strong influence on consumer behavior by being based on word-of-mouth and feedback. Positive eWOM is involved in building brand trust as it offers true, unbiased peer reviews. By eWOM, as trust in a brand grows, consumers find it easier to make purchasing intentions. Brand trust provides trust the assurance that the product or service will meet their expectations. Internet reviews and social media interactions are an essential role in reconfirming such trust, creating a feedback loop that increases the chances of them making future purchases. According to Al-Abeda et al. (2022), when brand trust mediates between eWOM and purchase intention, it significantly increases the likelihood of consumers converting purchasing intentions into behavior.

H7: Brand trust mediates the relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase intentions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study will employ a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. A quantitative approach is selected because it allows for the systematic measurement of variables and statistical analysis to test hypothesized relationships between celebrity endorsement impact, electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), brand trust, and consumer purchase intention. The cross-sectional nature of the design means data will be collected from participants at a single point in time. This design is particularly suitable for this research due to its efficiency in terms of time and cost, allowing for a snapshot of current consumer attitudes and behaviors. The choice of a quantitative, cross-sectional design is further justified by the study's exploratory and hypothesis-testing objectives. It facilitates an initial exploration of the

relationships between the identified online marketing factors and purchase intention, while also enabling the statistical testing of specific hypotheses regarding these relationships and the mediating role of brand trust (Lim et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Given practical constraints such as time and resources, this design offers a feasible method to gather data from a sufficiently large sample to draw meaningful, albeit not causal, conclusions about the phenomena under investigation.

The relevant target population for this research comprises consumers aged 18-45 years who are active users of major social media platforms (such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok), possess experience with online purchasing, and regularly engage with or are exposed to celebrity endorsements, user-generated reviews, or eWOM content concerning brands and products (Jin & Phua, 2014; Lim et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). The primary parameters for investigation include the perceived influence of celebrity endorsements (Jin & Phua, 2014; Schouten et al., 2020), and eWOM (Brown et al., 2007; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Khammash & Griffiths, 2011); the level of consumer brand trust (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Mayer et al., 1995); and the subsequent purchase intention (Hsu et al., 2013; Jin & Phua, 2014; Lim et al., 2017). Demographic variables like age, gender, and social media usage patterns will also be collected as potential moderating factors. A formal sampling frame (a complete list of all members of the target population) is not practically obtainable for such a broad online population, necessitating the use of non-probability sampling techniques (Lim et al., 2017). Therefore, this study will utilize a non-probability convenience sampling method. Participants will be recruited through convenience sampling by distributing an online questionnaire via readily accessible channels, including social media platforms, online communities related to shopping and reviews, and email invitations to contacts fitting the demographic. This method is chosen for its cost-effectiveness and speed in acquiring a preliminary sample. This approach aims to achieve a target sample size of 385 complete and usable responses, a figure deemed appropriate based on power analysis considerations for detecting moderate effect sizes and the requirements for conducting robust mediation analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), aligning with sample sizes used in similar research (Hair et al., 2010; Lim et al., 2017).

The method of data collection is a quantitative survey, and the technique will be an online questionnaire (Hsu et al., 2013; Jin & Phua, 2014; Lim et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This approach is selected because quantitative surveys are highly effective for gathering standardized data from a large and geographically dispersed sample, which is essential for testing the study's hypotheses about the relationships between online marketing stimuli, brand trust, and purchase intention. Online questionnaires offer significant advantages in terms of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, ease of access for participants, and the ability to reach the target demographic of active social media users (Hsu et al., 2013; Lim et al., 2017). This method facilitates the measurement of attitudes and perceptions using structured scales, allowing for subsequent statistical analysis and potential generalization of findings to the broader online consumer population.

For data analysis, this research will employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2010). SEM is chosen as the primary statistical analysis technique because it is a powerful multivariate procedure that allows for the simultaneous examination of complex relationships among multiple independent, mediating, and dependent variables (Hair et al., 2010). It enables the assessment of a theoretical model by

testing how well it fits the collected data (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen et al., 2000). Specifically, SEM can effectively model latent constructs (like brand trust or influencer impact, which are measured by multiple observed items in the questionnaire) and can explicitly account for measurement error, leading to more accurate estimates of the relationships (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, SEM is well-suited for testing the proposed mediating effects of brand trust within the overall model (Hair et al., 2010; Lim et al., 2017).

This research employs a quantitative approach with a survey design to investigate the influence of Celebrity Endorsement (CE) and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on Brand Trust (BT) and Purchase Intention (PI) among e-commerce consumers in West Java and DKI Jakarta. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Lima, & Santos, 2022; Qalati et al., 2022). Measurement items for each construct were adapted from established indicators: CE was assessed through dimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, popularity, and relevance; eWOM was measured based on influence, behavioral adoption, opinion agreement, information seeking, and purchase anxiety when reviews are absent; BT was evaluated using competence, honesty, empathy, and benevolence; while PI was examined through future buying intentions, strength of intention, and overall purchase inclination.

The study population consists of active e-commerce users in West Java and DKI Jakarta, with the actual population size unknown. To determine the sample size, the Lemeshow formula was applied with a 95% confidence level, a population proportion of 0.5, and a margin of error of 5%.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{d^2}$$
$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2 \cdot 0,5 \cdot (1 - 0,5)}{0,005^2}$$
$$n = \frac{3,8416 \cdot 0,25}{0,0025}$$
$$n = \frac{0,9604}{0,0025} = 384,16 \approx 385$$

Based on this calculation, a minimum of 385 respondents was required. Purposive sampling was then employed to target individuals who actively engage with e-commerce platforms and social media, thereby ensuring the relevance of the responses to the research framework (Wong et al., 2025).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 3, applying a second-order model approach. The analytical procedure was carried out in three stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to test the validity and reliability of both reflective and formative constructs using outer loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Second, the structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships, including direct and mediating effects, using path coefficients, t-statistics, and R² values. Finally, model fit was examined through criteria such as the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the predictive relevance coefficient (Q²) (Dash, & Paul, 2021; Hair, & Alamer, 2022). Written using Times New Roman font 12 with 1.5 spacing and without using numbering. The method consists of

the description of the research type, data collection, data source, data type, and data analysis. It is written in paragraph form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software to analyze the data needs to steps, namely measurement model evaluation, and Structural Model Evaluation.

The Celebrity Endorsements (CE) variable was measured using five dimensions: Attractiveness, Expertise, Popularity, Relevance, and Trustworthiness. The outer loading results indicate that most indicators in each dimension exceeded the threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong convergent validity. In the Attractiveness dimension, three indicators met the convergent validity criteria, whereas CE3, and CE5 exhibited low or negative loadings and were recommended for removal from the model. Similarly, in the Trustworthiness dimension, most indicators showed high loadings, except CE8 and CE10, which were below the acceptable limit. Reliability tests confirmed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above the recommended thresholds of 0.70 for reliability and 0.50 for convergent validity. These results indicate that the CE construct is valid, reliable, and suitable for further analysis.

The Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) variable was assessed through five indicators, EW1 to EW5. The analysis revealed consistently high outer loadings, all exceeding 0.86, with EW3, EW4, and EW5 above 0.91, indicating strong convergent validity. Reliability measures further supported the construct's robustness, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.943, CR of 0.956, and AVE of 0.813, demonstrating that eWOM is a highly reliable and valid instrument for research purposes.

For Brand Trust (BT), measured via four dimensions: Benevolence, Competence, Empathy, and Honesty across 13 indicators, outer loading results demonstrated that most items exceeded 0.80. In the Competence dimension, BT1 to BT3 exhibited strong loadings above 0.81, while in Benevolence, BT9, BT12 and BT13 loaded above 0.87. Some indicators, such as BT10, BT11, showed negative or very low loadings and were recommended for removal. Empathy and Honesty dimensions also displayed high loadings for most indicators. Cronbach's Alpha and CR values for all dimensions were above 0.82 and 0.85 respectively, with AVE values above 0.70, confirming both reliability and convergent validity. Consequently, after removing invalid indicators, the BT construct was considered valid and reliable for further analysis.

The Purchase Intention (PI) variable, measured using three indicators, PI1 to PI3, showed outer loadings above 0.85 for all items, demonstrating strong convergent validity. Reliability results were also satisfactory, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.831, CR of 0.899, and AVE of 0.747, indicating high internal consistency and construct validity.

Overall, the instrument trial confirmed that all constructs, CE, eWOM, BT, and PI, meet the required criteria for validity and reliability. Indicators with low or negative loadings were eliminated to ensure the robustness of the measurement model. The validated instruments are therefore suitable for use in the main study, supporting the structural equation modeling analysis to examine relationships among Celebrity Endorsements, eWOM, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention in the Indonesian e-commerce context.

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category/ Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Seen or actively searched for electronic product reviews	Yes	385	100
	No	0	0
Brand of electronic products purchased in last 12 months	Samsung	77	20
	Xiaomi	58	15.1
	iPhone/Apple	39	10.1
	Oppo/Vivo	31	8.1
	ASUS	19	4.9
	Polytron	19	4.9
	Others	142	36.9
Follow a celebrity endorsements	Yes	385	100
	No	0	0
Celebrity endoresments followed	Rachel Vennya	8	2.1
	Baim Wong	4	1
	Fadil Jaidi	12	3.1
	Jerome Polin	12	3.1
	Others	349	90.6
Reside in Jabodetabek area	Yes	385	100
	No	0	0
Purchased electronic products via e-commerce in last 12 months	Yes	385	100

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The descriptive results presented in Table 1 reflect the responses of 385 participants. All respondents (100%) reported that they had either seen or actively searched for electronic product reviews online, underlining the critical role of digital information in shaping purchase-related decisions.

In terms of brand preferences, Samsung was the most frequently purchased brand within the last 12 months (20%), followed by Xiaomi (15.1%) and iPhone/Apple (10.1%). Oppo/Vivo accounted for 8.1% of purchases, while ASUS and Polytron were less prominent, each representing 4.9% of the sample. Notably, a substantial portion of respondents (36.9%) reported purchasing from other brands, indicating that consumers' preferences in the electronics market remain highly diverse and not entirely concentrated among a few dominant brands.

With respect to online influence, all respondents confirmed following at least one celebrity influencer (100%). While some specific figures were mentioned Rachel Vennya (2.1%), Baim Wong (1.0%), Fadil Jaidi (3.1%), and Jerome Polin (3.1%), the overwhelming majority (90.6%) fell into the "others" category. This suggests that consumers in Indonesia are influenced by a broad spectrum of public figures rather than relying on a small group of mainstream celebrities.

Demographically, all participants were based in the Jabodetabek area (100%), providing a consistent regional representation for the study. In addition, every respondent confirmed that they had purchased electronic products via e-commerce platforms in the past 12 months (100%), which strongly supports the relevance of online channels as the primary medium for electronic product consumption in this market segment.

Taken together, these findings emphasize three key trends: (1) the universality of online review consumption prior to purchase, (2) the heterogeneous nature of brand choices, with Samsung, Xiaomi, and Apple as leading players but with significant space for alternative brands, and (3) the strong yet diversified role of celebrity endorsements and e-commerce platforms in shaping purchase behavior among urban Indonesian consumers.

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study, including Celebrity Endorsements (CE), Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Brand Trust (BT), and Purchase Intention (PI). Three rounds of outer loading assessments were conducted to refine the indicators and confirm their suitability for structural analysis.

The outer loading assessment confirmed that most measurement items demonstrated strong convergent validity, as reflected by loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Table 2.
Construct Validity and Reliability Result

No	Variable	Dimension	Item	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE		
1	Celebrity Endorsements	Attractiveness	CE1	0.940	0.938	0.884		
			CE2	0.940				
		Relevance	CE20	0.899	0.936	0.830		
			CE21	0.941				
			CE22	0.893				
		Trustworthiness	BT7	0.943	0.942	0.891		
			BT8	0.938				
		Popularity	CE15	1.000	1	1		
			Expertise	CE10			0.926	
					CE11	0.942	0.964	0.869
					CE12	0.941		
CE14	0.921							
EW2	0.818							
EW4	0.790							
2	eWOM		EW5	0.690	0.811	0.59		
			Competence	BT2			1.000	
				Honesty			BT4	0.953
3	Brand Trust		BT5	0.955	1.000	1.000		
			Empathy	BT6			0.938	
		Benevolence	BT7	0.943	0.939	0.885		
			BT8	0.938				
			BT9	0.942				
4	Purchase Intention		PI1	0.892	0.910	0.770		
			PI2	0.879				
			PI3	0.862				

For the Brand Trust (BT) construct, indicators BT2, BT4, BT5, BT6, BT7, BT8, and BT9 exhibited excellent performance, with loadings ranging from 0.938 to 1.000. These results indicate that the selected items reliably capture consumers' trust in the brand.

The Celebrity Endorsements (CE) construct, operationalized across five dimensions, also showed satisfactory outcomes. Within the Attractiveness dimension, CE1 (0.940) and CE2 (0.940) both met the validity criteria. The Expertise indicators (CE10 = 0.928; CE11 = 0.942; CE12 = 0.941; CE14 = 0.921) consistently exceeded the threshold, reflecting strong reliability. The Popularity and Relevance dimension recorded loadings between 0.767 and 1.000, with CE15 (1.000), CE20 (0.899), CE21 (0.911), and CE22 (0.893) all considered acceptable. Meanwhile, the Trustworthiness indicators CE7 (0.949) and CE8 (0.935) demonstrated robust measurement strength.

For Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), three indicators were analyzed: EW2 (0.818), EW4 (0.790), and EW5 (0.690). While EW5 fell slightly below the conventional threshold, it was preserved in the model because it contributed meaningfully to the construct and the AVE value exceeded the recommended minimum.

Finally, Purchase Intention (PI) demonstrated consistently high results across all three indicators, with PI1 (0.892), PI2 (0.879), and PI3 (0.862) confirming strong convergent validity.

Overall, the outer loading results validate the measurement model. Even though a few items displayed relatively lower loadings, they were retained based on theoretical relevance and sufficient AVE values. These findings confirm that all constructs are adequately represented by their respective indicators and are suitable for inclusion in the subsequent structural model analysis.

The structural model analysis reveals several significant direct relationships among the studied constructs. Brand Trust shows a strong and significant influence on its dimensions, namely Benevolence ($\beta = 0.943$; $t = 101.669$; $p < 0.001$), Competence ($\beta = 0.824$; $t = 30.289$; $p < 0.001$), Empathy ($\beta = 0.943$; $t = 85.762$; $p < 0.001$), and Honesty ($\beta = 0.933$; $t = 72.723$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Brand Trust exerts a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.293$; $t = 3.990$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher trust in a brand enhances consumers' willingness to purchase.

In the case of Celebrity Endorsements, the construct significantly influences Attractiveness ($\beta = 0.901$; $t = 61.047$; $p < 0.001$), Expertise ($\beta = 0.960$; $t = 155.434$; $p < 0.001$), Popularity ($\beta = 0.814$; $t = 24.474$; $p < 0.001$), Relevance ($\beta = 0.915$; $t = 55.944$; $p < 0.001$), and Trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.904$; $t = 59.816$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Celebrity Endorsements have a significant positive influence on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.393$; $t = 4.807$; $p < 0.001$) and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.138$; $t = 2.341$; $p = 0.020$). These results highlight the pivotal role of celebrity attributes in shaping both consumer trust and purchase behavior.

Moreover, Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) positively affects Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.311$; $t = 4.458$; $p < 0.001$) and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.204$; $t = 2.709$; $p = 0.007$). This implies that favorable online discussions and consumer reviews contribute significantly to both strengthening trust in a brand and stimulating purchase intentions.

Overall, the findings confirm that Brand Trust, Celebrity Endorsements, and EWOM each exert a direct and statistically significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions, either independently or through their sub-dimensions.

This study set out to examine how online influence mechanisms, particularly celebrity endorsements and electronic word of mouth (eWOM), shape consumers' purchase intention through the mediating role of brand trust. The findings highlight several important insights into how trust serves as a central pathway connecting external influence strategies to behavioral outcomes (Chaudhuri, & Holbrook, 2001; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Table 2.
Research Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis					Path Coefficients	t-value	Results
Celebrity Endorsements -> Purchase Intention	H1	0,138	2.341	Support			
EWOM -> Purchase Intention	H2	0.204	2.709	Support			
Celebrity Endorsements -> Brand Trust	H3	0.393	4.807	Support			
EWOM -> Brand Trust	H4	0.311	4.458	Support			
Brand Trust -> Purchase Intention	H5	0.293	3.990	Support			
Celebrity Endorsements -> Brand Trust -> Benevolence	H6	0.370	4.763	Support			
EWOM -> Brand Trust -> Purchase Intention	H7	0.091	2.558	Support			

First, the results confirm that celebrity endorsements significantly influence brand trust, which in turn enhances consumers' perceptions of benevolence, competence, empathy, honesty, and trustworthiness. These results are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the credibility and attractiveness of celebrities as key determinants in strengthening consumer confidence toward a brand (Benevento et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025; Masuda et al., 2022). Notably, celebrity endorsements also directly affect purchase intention, though the magnitude of this relationship is weaker compared to the mediated pathway through brand trust. This suggests that while consumers may initially be drawn to a brand due to celebrity associations, their eventual decision to purchase is more strongly driven by the trust they develop in the brand itself (Gupta et al., 2017; Kim, & Yoon, 2023).

Second, eWOM emerged as another significant driver of brand trust, demonstrating that peer-generated content and consumer reviews are equally crucial in shaping trust perceptions. The indirect effects of eWOM on benevolence, competence, empathy, and honesty through brand trust indicate that consumer narratives and recommendations enhance the relational dimension of trust (Alalwan et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2023; Srivastava et al., 2025). Furthermore, eWOM significantly contributes to purchase intention, both directly and indirectly, underscoring its role as a powerful social influence mechanism in digital marketplaces (Ngo et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2020).

Third, the mediating role of brand trust is strongly supported. Both celebrity endorsements and eWOM exert indirect effects on purchase intention via trust, and in most

cases, the mediated effects are stronger than the direct effects. This finding reinforces the notion that trust acts as a central psychological mechanism bridging persuasive marketing strategies and consumer decision-making (Delgado-Ballester, & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Martini et al., 2018). Without trust, even strong celebrity associations or positive eWOM may not translate into actual purchase behavior (Morgan, & Hunt, 1994).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings enrich the literature on online consumer behavior by demonstrating how external cues of influence (celebrity endorsements and eWOM) converge through brand trust to drive intention (Dinh, & Lee, 2024; Lee et al., 2024). The study highlights that trust is not a static construct but is dynamically shaped by both top-down influence (celebrity image) and bottom-up influence (peer communication) (Ren et al., 2023; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002).

Practically, the results provide important implications for marketers. Brands should carefully select credible and relevant celebrities to endorse their products, ensuring alignment between the celebrity's image and brand values (Barari et al., 2025; Chiu, & Ho, 2023). At the same time, cultivating authentic and positive eWOM through satisfied customers, user-generated content, and community engagement can significantly strengthen consumer trust and, in turn, purchase intention (Hanaysha, 2022; Wang et al., 2023).

Overall, the study confirms that in online contexts where information asymmetry is high, brand trust is the cornerstone of purchase decision-making, functioning as the critical link between persuasive marketing strategies and consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

The results demonstrate that both celebrity endorsements and eWOM significantly enhance brand trust, which in turn strengthens purchase intention. Importantly, the indirect effects through trust were stronger than the direct effects, highlighting trust as the central psychological pathway that bridges external influence strategies with consumer decision-making.

From a theoretical perspective, this research enriches the literature on digital consumer behavior by providing empirical evidence that both top-down influence (celebrity image) and bottom-up influence (peer communication and user-generated content) play complementary roles in building brand trust. These findings suggest that trust is not a static construct but a dynamic mechanism that evolves in response to multiple sources of influence within online environments.

The findings of this study provide important insights for marketing practitioners in developing strategies that enhance brand trust and increase purchase intention. The results show that brand trust has a strong influence on its dimensions, namely benevolence, competence, empathy, and honesty. This finding highlights the importance of building meaningful and transparent relationships with consumers. Marketers should ensure that every promotional message and customer interaction reflects sincerity, reliability, and integrity because these elements are essential in strengthening consumer confidence and loyalty.

In addition, celebrity endorsements and electronic word of mouth have a significant effect on both brand trust and purchase intention. In practical terms, companies need to select endorsers who are credible, relatable, and consistent with the brand's image and values. At the same time, businesses should encourage authentic electronic word of mouth by motivating satisfied consumers to share positive experiences and by maintaining interactive

engagement within digital communities. By combining these approaches and placing trust at the center of marketing efforts, companies can transform consumer perceptions into real purchasing behavior, build lasting loyalty, and achieve sustainable growth in competitive digital markets.

Given the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research can be identified to deepen the understanding of digital consumer behavior. Although this study provides valuable insights into the roles of celebrity endorsements, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and brand trust in shaping purchase intentions, its scope is limited by factors such as geographic concentration, product category, and research design. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the geographical and demographic scope by including consumers from different regions or other ASEAN countries to examine how cultural and socioeconomic differences influence brand trust. Additionally, adopting longitudinal or experimental designs is advised to capture temporal dynamics and causal pathways of celebrity endorsements and eWOM, including the effects of endorser types or review valence. Subsequent studies should also explore various product and service categories and incorporate qualitative approaches to understand why certain celebrity attributes are more influential and how consumers respond to conflicting signals. Integrating complementary theoretical frameworks, such as social identity theory and algorithmic literacy, as well as developing metrics for sustaining consumer trust, would further enhance the practical and academic contributions of future research in digital marketing.

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