Jurnal Manajemen Komunikasi, Volume 11, No. 1, October 2026, page 27-49
https://doi.org/10.24198/jmk.v11i1.61972

Brand trust mediating social media marketing, E-WOM, and purchase intention

Citra Maharani Ivoniya[1], Nuryakin[2]
[1,2]Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background: Nowadays, people choose to get information about skincare through social media. Social media marketing and electronic word of mouth become the strategy of digital marketing to attract potential customers. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of social media marketing and electronic word of mouth on brand trust and purchase intention for a skincare brand. We also examined the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship. **Methods:** The study uses a quantitative approach, employing data from 200 social media users in Yogyakarta who knew Daviena Skincare. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). **Results:** The results indicate that all correlations are positive and significant (p <0,000). The largest relationship was seen between brand trust and purchase intention (β = 0.434). Social media marketing was shown to affect brand trust (β = 0.499) and purchase intention (β = 0.280). Besides, electronic word of mouth has an effect on brand trust (β=0.352) and purchase intention (β=0.225). We found favorable indirect effects: brand trust mediated the association between social media marketing and purchase intention and E-WOM and purchase intention. This suggests that brand trust improves the link between digital communication and purchase intention. **Conclusion:** The conclusion is that brand trust mediates the association between digital communication and purchase intention. **Implications:** Managers may align and trust social media postings and encourage positive evaluations produced by customers.

Keywords: social media marketing; E-WOM; brand trust; purchase intention; integrated marketing communication

To cite this article (APA Style):
Ivoniya, C. M., & Nuryakin. (2026). Brand trust mediating social media marketing, E-WOM, and purchase intention. *Jurnal Manajemen Komunikasi*, *11*(1), 27-49. https://doi.org/10.24198/jmk.v11i1.61972

Correspondence: Citra Maharani Ivoniya S.E., Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Jl. Brawijaya, Tamantirto, Kasihan, Bantul, Yogyakarta. *Email*: citramaharaniivoniya@gmail.com

Submitted: 28 February 2025, **Revised:** 11 March 2026, **Accepted:** 28 April 2026, **Published:** 31 October 2026
ISSN: 2548-3242 (printed), ISSN: 2549-0079 (online). Website: http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/manajemen-komunikasi
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INTRODUCTION

The cosmetic business in Indonesia, notably for skincare products, is a sector that still growing due to the strength of local companies. Sales of skincare goods in Indonesia have expanded considerably in the last five years, which reflects the public's increasing interest in beauty care products (Fitriana & Afifah, 2024). The development of this industry also reflects a broader, even global trend, showing expansion from 2012 to 2025 and is projected to consistently increase based on total sales (Herdyanti & Mansoor, 2020). The increasing need for skin care products is driven by society, particularly the preference for a fair complexion when it comes to beauty standards. This issue has been referred to as "colorism" and has seen an increase in the global usage of skin whitening products because of social pressure on skin color (Afzal et al., 2025; Chen & Jablonski, 2023). This phenomenon reinforces beauty standards, encouraging consumers to use skincare products (Afzal et al., 2025).

Apart from the booming cosmetics business in Indonesia, the digital marketing environment in this nation is also rising quickly. Advertising through social media may be done through social media marketing, which is among the most popular form. Companies can communicate with customers, promote products, and make sales using social media sites (Bashar et al., 2024). In a We Are Social study, it was found that in January 2023, 77 percent of Indonesia's 213 million inhabitants were online (Effendi & Defrizal, 2024). This figure is likely to climb year on year. The integration of digital and communication technologies in marketing operations in Indonesia is the current worldwide trend of changing customer behavior, information availability, and globalization (Kravchenko et al., 2019). It is through the use of social media for more than a decade that it has become possible to create strong bonds between the company and its customers (Li et al., 2021). This trend has changed the marketing to digital marketing to enhance customer purchase intention in a competitive market to improve sales (Li et al., 2021).

Modern businesses must go beyond fragmented digital strategies and adopt a unified message approach to handle this complexity. Marketing communications (IMC) entail the coordination of marketing functions in order to maintain consistency in the delivery of messages through various channels such as advertisements, promotions, public relations, social media, and direct marketing (Kamalasena & Sirisena, 2021). Organizations may use integrated communication strategies to enhance the reputation of the brand, to build customer trust, and to impact buying behavior.

Purchase intention refers to a buyer's attitude towards a particular act of purchasing and the desire of the buyer to purchase something (Zhang et al., 2020). This is shown in great demand for a buy transaction. As an attitude variable, purchase intention gauges customers' future contribution to product purchases (Manzoor et al., 2020). In the business sector purchase intention is an important aspect which assists customers to choose if a product is suitable for their needs and wants or not (Hung et al., 2023).

The list of questions not yet answered remains long. Such as how effective are the electronic word-of-mouth and social media marketing methods from the point of view of the consumers' behavior? Brand-level trust affects consumers' purchase intention. But previous research has shown opposite results (Armawan et al., 2023; Chuah et al., 2023; Manzoor et al., 2020; Sirojuddin et al., 2024). Research by Chan et al. (2020) and Ali and Naushad (2023) shows that using social media for marketing purposes affects consumers' buying behavior. Research conducted by Salhab et al. (2023) shows that E-WOM can be communicated through different channels such as social media, review sites, corporate website, other web pages, and in blogs. There was no correlation between the levels of trust and purchase intention revealed by Trianasari et al. (2023). However, Yohana et al. (2020) states that it affects the consumer's intention to purchase minimally. E-WOM plays a crucial role in the legitimacy perception of the firm. More research is required to check the relationship between social media marketing, E-WOM, brand trust, and purchase intention.

Social media marketing is advertising, direct or indirect, that uses social media to engage with people or other organizations to promote a product, brand, or service. It increases brand awareness, sales, and customer engagement with groups using microblogging, social networking, content sharing, or blogging methods (Gunelius, 2011). In view of the fact that the above may affect consumers' behavior in the present-day environment, social media is a vital component of marketing campaigns (Agung & Nuryakin, 2024). Leveraging social media as part of the marketing process provides companies with a wonderful opportunity to reach out to more people in a cheaper and more effective way (Salhab et al., 2023). Additionally, due to its significant impact on consumer behavior, social media has emerged as an essential tool for marketers in today's digital landscape (Khair & Ma'ruf, 2020). Therefore, businesses need to make use of various platform features and post appealing content to have higher customer attraction to the goods being offered (Chrisniyanti & Fah, 2022).

According to Hanaysha (2022) various

brands messages on social media sites can build trust in the product. To establish brand trust, companies should prioritize direct engagement with consumers via social media marketing, address complaints, and provide tailored services (Qiao & Sun, 2024). Consequently, the firm should enhance its social media marketing initiatives to cultivate client trust. Furthermore, social media has transformed corporate operations and significantly impacts customers' purchasing choices (Qiao & Sun, 2024). However, the tremendous impact that social media advertising has had on enhancing consumer intention must not be neglected (Salhab et al., 2023). The power of social media in advertising has been tremendously influential in developing positive intentions to purchase and assisting manufactures and consumers in connecting via advertisement, according to Seth et al. (2023).

The term "electronic word of mouth" refers to the practice of spreading positive product evaluations, ratings, and other information to current and future buyers using various forms of online communication (Kamalasena & Sirisena, 2021). Online conversations regarding a good or service, known as E-WOM, are crucial for companies; E-WOM is well-known to have great influence in the field of marketing (Riama, 2021). Social media, review sites, business websites, external websites, and blogs are all potential channels for electronic word of mouth (Nguyen et al., 2024). The more reviews there are, the more representative they are of the product's popularity, and interesting reviews can serve as a purchasing consideration for potential consumers (Salmiah et al., 2024).

When consumers are satisfied with a product, they may unwittingly promote it by bragging about its wonderful characteristics, which is an example of how E-WOM contributes to building confidence in the brand (Abbas & Ali, 2023). Electronic favorable word of mouth about the brand suggests a better product and creates a positive picture in customers' brains, leading to positive trust (Rao et al., 2021). According to Abbas and Ali (2023), companies need to pay attention to every positive review, as this is to enhance good branding and encourage consumers to make purchases. When individuals read about good or bad experiences with a product on social media, it can generate negative or positive feedback that results in interest in the product. However, if many negative reviews are circulating, it can reduce or even eliminate consumer purchase intention (Rahman et al., 2024).

Consumers have faith in a brand when they see it linked to high-quality goods and services (DAM, 2020). Trust becomes very important because consumers can choose products or services based on their trust in the company's

brand (Hung et al., 2023). This follows the opinion of Hanaysha (2022), where he states that the reactions of consumers to brand interaction in the virtual world depend on the trust and information that the consumers have about the brand. The attitude of consumers towards a brand helps predict their purchase intention (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023).

Trust in a brand can influence consumer purchase intention. According to Singh et al. (2021) an element that might enhance purchasing intention is brand trust. As per Kee et al. (2023) marketers must build good relationships with their consumers to gain trust, increasing the desire to purchase the product. Therefore, brand trust influences purchase intention towards the offered product. When it comes to social media marketing and the desire to buy, confidence in the company acts as a mediator (Sirojuddin et al., 2024). An influential component in consumers' confidence in brands and their propensity to make a purchase is social media marketing. Hence, since companies must always consider consumer expectations to increase purchases (Tümer et al., 2019). According to Moslehpour et al. (2022) promotion activities through the use of social media may influence the purchasing intentions of the consumer due to brand trust. This is because one will not be willing to buy if he/she does not trust due to the fact that trust is very important when creating and maintaining the connection between the seller and the potential consumers (Chan et al., 2020). E-WOM is an extremely significant determinant that will influence how consumers feel about the brand as well as their buying decisions. According to Ezzat et al. (2022), consumer trust in the company may affect the relationship. To put it simply, online recommendations are good for business. Companies need to pay attention to every review from electronic word of mouth, as this can enhance good branding and encourage consumers to make purchases (Abbas & Ali, 2023).

One of the local skincare brands experiencing growth in the Indonesian skincare industry is Daviena Skincare, owned by Melvhina Husyanti, which was established in 2018. The first actual store opened in Palembang in 2020, marking a significant milestone. Since then, Daviena Skincare has expanded quickly by launching many product variations specially made for different skin types to satisfy the wide range of customer demands. Every Daviena Skincare product is developed by dermatologists to provide actual results and features premium ingredients from across the world. Its main products are the Sunscreen SPF 50 PA++, Retinol Booster Sleeping Mask, and HB Dosing Serum. Their refined packaging also lends some luxury. Products like the Brightening Glow Duo Moisturizer and the Essence Infusion

BB Cushion also feature numerous versions. Daviena Skincare is prepared to challenge local brands in Indonesia with its goods in the face of fierce competitiveness. The MS Glow brand, one of Daviena Skincare's main rivals, has grown to be among the well-known beauty brands in Indonesia. With 22 distributors and 129 agents in Indonesia, Daviena Skincare is a brand of interest for beauty aficioners of both sexes (Herlambang, 2023). Daviena Skincare must thus improve its marketing plan if it is to reach customers.

Social media marketing has developed into a strategy capable of influencing customer behavior in the ever-changing digital landscape. Daviena Skincare promotes its products via official social media channels, including Instagram and TikTok, and markets them via e-marketplaces. Daviena Skincare appreciates updating promotional content about its goods on social media with fascinating content that can be utilized to provide consumer information. One reason Daviena Skincare's products have become so successful is because the company uses social media to promote them and listen to customer feedback. Reviews on Daviena Skincare's social media say the product can address facial problems, safe to use, of high quality, and so on. Positive consumer experiences shared online through social media platforms and product reviews can help attract potential consumers (Kamalasena & Sirisena, 2021). The Daviena Skincare brand needs to enhance the effectiveness of its social media and pay attention to every consumer review. If a customer is unhappy or dissatisfied with the product, the company only loses one customer. However, hundreds of potential buyers may be deterred by the bad experience of that one customer (Abbas & Ali, 2023). It is important for the Daviena Skincare brand to pay attention to every review that can enhance branding and influence consumer purchases (Abbas & Ali, 2023).

Therefore, this study intends to examine the following questions: (a) the influence of social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth on brand trust; (b) the influence of these variables on purchase intention; (c) the influence of brand trust on purchase intention; and (d) brand trust as a mediator of the aforementioned influences.

The previous literature has paid much attention to the marketing aspects of social media usage, specifically purchase intentions. Nevertheless, there has not been much discussion of the communicational aspect, including audience interpretation of the messages, construction of trust, etc.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology used in this research is quantitative because the aim of this research is to analyze the relationship between social media marketing, electronic word of mouth, brand trust and purchasing intention of Daviena Skincare products. Statistical analysis will be used to analyze the theoretical relationship between these variables. This research will be conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, by selecting people who often use social media and know about Daviena Skincare products. Yogyakarta was picked due to its strong digital engagement, high internet use and vibrant youthful consumer market that often engages with beauty material on several online platforms.

The primary data was gathered using an online questionnaire on Google Forms. The online administration was found effective in collecting responses from respondents who use the digital mediums often. There were 200 valid responses collected in this study that were analyzed further. The sample size has been considered sufficient for PLS-SEM, especially taking into account the number of constructs and indicators employed in the model.

The sampling technique adopted for this research study is referred to as non-probability sampling or purposive sampling. This approach was used when the target demographic was not clearly defined and responders had to fulfill pre-determined criteria. The admission requirements are 17 years old and above, domiciled in Yogyakarta, actively use social media and know Daviena Skincare products. In addition, the respondents must not have used Daviena Skincare products before, must not have seen commercials linked to the brand, and have read reviews or user comments via sites such as Instagram or TikTok in the last three months. The criterion guaranteed that the respondents were prospective customers with enough exposure to the brand's digital marketing activity.

The survey consisted of 21 indicators to measure the relevant constructs. All questions were rated based on the five-point Likert Scale, from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The reason why the Likert Scale is chosen is that it enables respondents to be consistent with their answers.

Validity and reliability tests were performed before the hypotheses test of the measurement model. The validity test of convergent validity was performed using the outer loading value and the average variance extracted (AVE). Outer loading above 0.70 and AVE above 0.50 show that the variables have sufficiently described the concept (Ghozali, 2017). The discriminant validity test is performed using the Fornell-

Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT value below 0.90 indicates proper construct differentiation (Ghozali, 2017). Reliability test is performed using the composite reliability test and Cronbach's Alpha above 0.70 (Ghozali, 2017).

Data analysis was carried out through SmartPLS using variance based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This statistical method is suitable since it is able to analyze several relationships between latent variables at the same time, making it an ideal choice for models where the goal of research is prediction. PLS-SEM can be applied in research where the sample sizes are moderate and the structural models are complicated (Ghozali, 2017).

In analyzing the structural model, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was utilized to check the explanatory ability of the endogenous variables. Hypotheses were evaluated through path coefficients, t-values, and p-values using bootstrapping procedures. The relationships would be said to be significant if the t-values were greater than 1.96 and p-values were below 0.05 (Ghozali, 2017). Besides, the significance of indirect effects from the bootstrapping results was used to test for the mediational role of brand trust. Overall, the use of PLS-SEM is consistent with the objectives of this research, especially in assessing the strength and direction of relationships between variables and predicting purchase intention of Daviena Skincare products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from questionnaire administration in most respondents in this study included females who were 161 (80.5%) respondents and males who were 39 respondents (19.5%). On the issue of age, most respondents in this study belonged to the age category of 17-26 years, with 110 respondents (55.0%), respondents aged 27-36 years with 64 respondents (32.0%), respondents aged 37-46 years, with 24 respondents (12.05), and the least number of respondents aged more than 46 years, with 2 respondents (1.0%). Based on education, the dominant educational attainment among respondents was S1, comprising 92 individuals (46.0%). Those with SMA/SMK as their highest education totalled 83 respondents (41.5%). Respondents with D3 accounted for 11 individuals (5.5%), while those with S2 numbered 8 respondents (4.0%). The least represented group comprised of 6 respondents (3.0%) with SMP as their highest education. The occupational distribution of the respondents indicates that the predominant group comprises students/university students, totalling 82 respondents (41.0%). This is followed by private employees, totalling 68 respondents

(34.0%), entrepreneurs, totalling 32 respondents (16.0%), and civil servants/military/police personnel, totalling 11 respondents (5.5%). The smallest category consists of respondents with other occupations, totalling 7 respondents (3.5%). Regarding income, it can be seen that most of the respondents in this research had a monthly income/allowance of Rp2,000,000 to Rp4,000,000, amounting to 93 respondents (46.5%). Meanwhile, those with monthly income/allowance below Rp2,000,00 Respondents earning Rp4,000,001 - Rp6,000,000 numbered 34 (17.0%), while the smallest group consisted of 3 respondents (1.5%) with an income of Rp6,000,001 - Rp8,000,000. The majority of respondents reside in Bantul, totalling 74 individuals (37.0%). In Yogyakarta City, there are 46 respondents (23.0%). Kulon Progo has 34 respondents (17.0%), while Sleman has 35 respondents (17.5%). The fewest respondents are from Gunung Kidul, with a total of 11 individuals (5.5%).

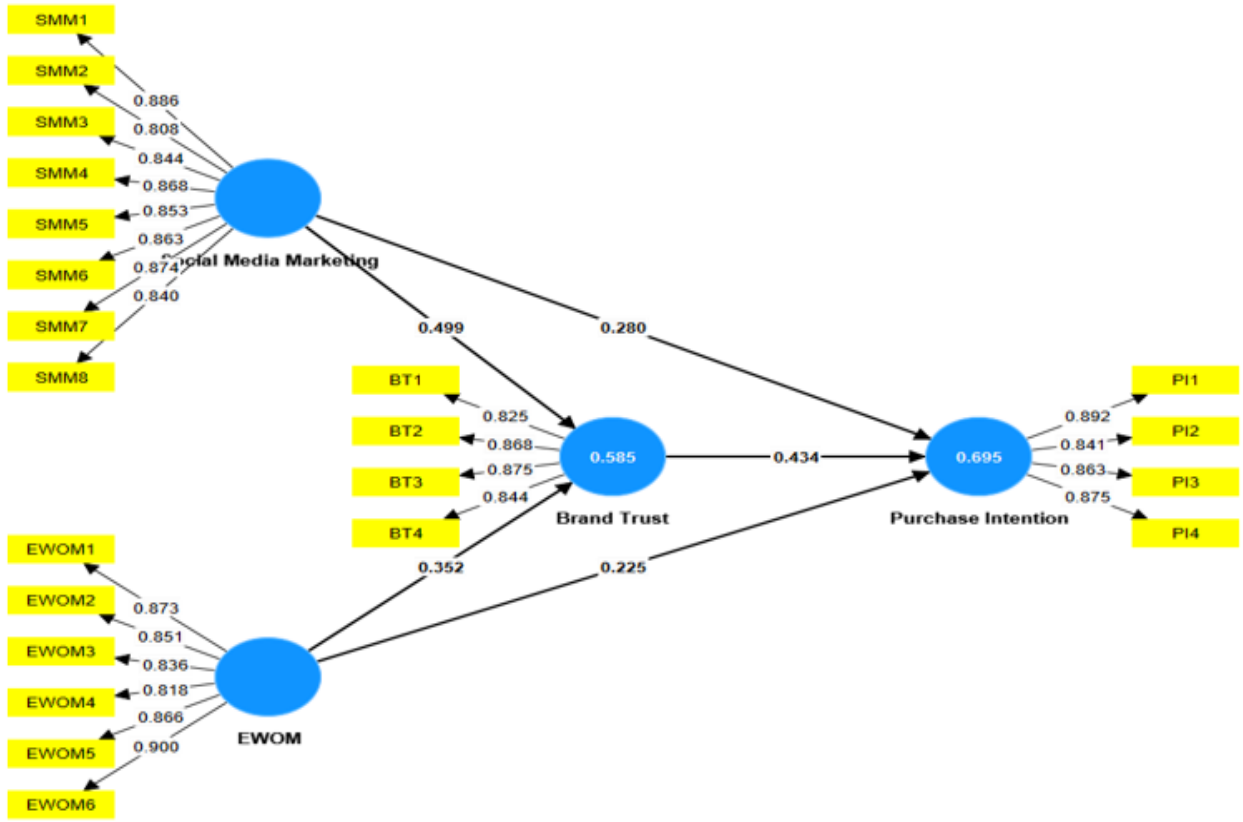
The demographic study of 200 replies shows that most respondents are young, educated female citizens from the Special Region of Yogyakarta, mostly from Generation Z and younger Millennials. The majority of respondents (80.5%) are female, and 55% are between 17 and 26 years of age. The biggest category is students, or those attending university (41%), and a big share has higher education (46% have a bachelor degree and 41.5% finished secondary school).

Considering the income level, it is found that the respondents fall into the category of earning an entry-level salary, where 46.5% of the respondents earn between IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 4,000,000 per month, and 35% of the respondents earn less than IDR 2,000,000.

This means that a significant number of respondents could still be dependent on parental financial assistance. Geographically, the sample is dominated by urban regions, especially Bantul (37.0%) and Yogyakarta City (23.0%). Representation from more rural areas such as Gunung Kidul (5.5%) remains modest, pointing to the fact that the results predominantly reflect an urban-oriented viewpoint of young educated women.

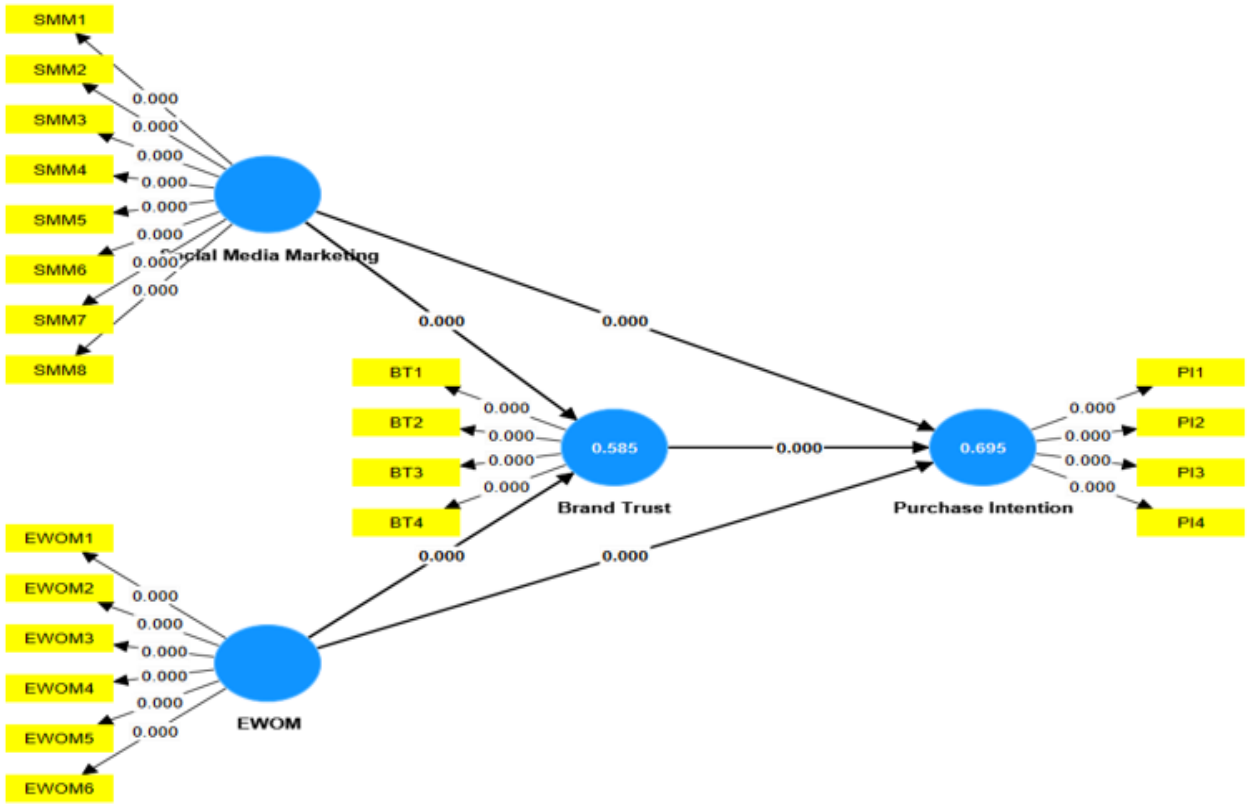
In addition, the relatively moderate income levels and high proportion of students indicate that respondents are likely to exhibit more cautious purchasing behavior, especially in the context of skincare products where perceived risk is relatively high. Under such conditions, brand trust becomes a critical factor in reducing uncertainty and facilitating purchase decisions.

The measurement model results are presented in Figure 1, which illustrate the relationships between constructs and their indicators, including the outer loading values generated using SmartPLS 4.



Source: Research Result, 2025

Figure 1 Presents the outer model results generated using SmartPLS 4



Source: Research Result, 2025

Figure 2 Illustrates the inner model results of SmartPLS 4

Table 1 Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	HTMT
BT	BT1	0.825	0.875	0.914	0.728	–
	BT2	0.868				
	BT3	0.875				
	BT4	0.844				
E-WOM	E-WOM1	0.873	0.928	0.943	0.736	0.725
	E-WOM2	0.851				
	E-WOM3	0.836				
	E-WOM4	0.818				
	E-WOM5	0.866				
	E-WOM6	0.900				
PI	PI1	0.892	0.891	0.924	0.754	0.884
	PI2	0.841				
	PI3	0.863				
	PI4	0.875				
SMM	SMM1	0.886	0.947	0.956	0.731	0.781
	SMM2	0.808				
	SMM3	0.844				
	SMM4	0.868				
	SMM5	0.853				
	SMM6	0.863				
	SMM7	0.874				
	SMM8	0.840				

Source: Research Result, 2025

From Table 1, it is apparent that all the outer loadings are greater than 0.70, implying that the indicator dependability is adequate. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability indexes are also above 0.70, indicating the reliability of the items of each scale. Moreover, AVE indexes are greater than 0.50, implying that the convergent validity is sufficient because each construct is capable of explaining more than 50% of the variation of its indicators. All the HTMT indexes are below the threshold value of 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity has been established for all constructs.

Figure 2 shows the results of the structural model comprising the relationship between the latent constructs as well as the coefficient of determination (R^2) values estimated using SmartPLS 4.

Table 2 demonstrates that R 2 for Brand Trust (0.585) and Purchase Intention (0.695) suggests the model has a medium explanatory power. In other words, the exogenous variables explain a significant part of the variance in the endogenous constructs. That degree of explanatory power is a reasonably well-defined structural model in the behavioral research setting.

Table 2 Structural Model Evaluation

Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Effect Size (f^2)
Brand Trust (BT)	0.585	0.581	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.695	0.690	
E-WOM>BT			0.190
SMM>BT			0.381
BT>PI			0.257

Source: Research Result, 2025

Table 3 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Coefficient (O)	STDEV	T-statistic	p-value
BT>PI	0.434	0.069	6.316	0.000
E-WOM>BT	0.352	0.069	5.096	0.000
E-WOM >PI	0.225	0.059	3.807	0.000
SMM >BT	0.499	0.064	7.809	0.000
SMM> PI	0.280	0.059	4.705	0.000
E-WOM>BT>PI	0.153	0.041	3.722	0.000
SMM>BT> PI	0.217	0.040	5.362	0.000

Source: Research Result, 2025

Additionally, the calculation of effect size (f2) adds further understanding to the significance of each of the predictors. The effect size of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust is f2=0.381. This implies that Social Media Marketing has contributed immensely to influencing customers and building trust in the brands through interactive media platforms. On the other hand, the effect size of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Trust is f2=0.190. This implies that although peer knowledge and online reviews do have an effect, it is less than marketing.

Moreover, Brand Trust has a very strong influence on Purchase Intention (f^2=0.257), which is significantly greater than the traditional threshold for a high effect size. This research highlights the importance of trust as a key factor in consumer choice-making behaviour.

From the hypothesis testing results as shown in Table 3, it is clear that all the predicted relationships are positive and statistically significant, as the p-values are less than 0.05 and the t-statistics are more than 1.96. The brand trust (BT) has a very significant impact on purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.434$), implying higher level of brand trust will result in higher purchase intentions. The results show that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a considerable effect on brand trust ($\beta = 0.352$) and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.225$). Hence, it can be assumed that online reviews and experience sharing are very important elements of trust building and purchase intention development

processes. Likewise, social media marketing (SMM) has a considerable effect on brand trust (β = 0.499) and purchase intention (β = 0.280). This implies that successful strategies of social media usage can significantly boost consumer trust and purchase intention. Additionally, the study reveals that Brand Trust mediates the relationship between E-WOM and Purchase Intention and between SMM and Purchase Intention. Therefore, E-WOM and SMM have a direct and indirect impact on purchase intention through brand trust.

H1 data indicates a favorable and substantial association between consumer trust in firms and social media marketing. Previous research by Qiao and Sun (2024), Salhab et al. (2023), Trianasari et al. (2023), and Hanaysha (2022) supports the first hypothesis (H1) put forth in this study. This study's results agree with those of Cheung et al. (2021) consumers are likely to have more faith in brands and choose them more when they rely on social media for product marketing and customer involvement. Social proof may impact the level of trust that customers have in a business. Customers tend to believe the information available on social media and the real-life experiences of other consumers (Manzoor et al., 2020). This research highlights the significance of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Theory in formulating interactive, integrated marketing strategies. Utilize the best social media channels for two-way communication. A Consistent message improves company identification and trust. Their approach is mostly about building customer trust, especially with college students and Gen Z, who value digital engagement and brand authenticity. The results demonstrate the impact of social media marketing on Brand Trust, especially among highly educated customers. The demographic is made up of 41% students and 55% Gen Z users who are well versed with platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Social media marketing communications are significant for building a brand image and trust. It is believed that the right social media marketing communication strategy is what would impact how customers perceive the business which could result in purchases by consumers (Vo et al., 2022). Hence, social media marketing communication is a very good way of communicating with customers, who are essential for creating interaction and in the end creating brand trust (Salhab et al., 2023).

According to H2, brand trust is highly improved through electronic word of mouth Salhab et al. (2023), Abbas and Ali (2023), Armawan et al. (2023) and Ezzat et al. (2022). The findings of this study are similar to the findings Kamalasena, B.D.T. M and Sirisena (2021) that reviews, comments and interaction in online communities can be helpful to improve

customer trust. Electronic word-of-mouth is a highly essential factor in assessing consumer brand trust as a driver of customer connection with the firm (Seifert & Kwon, 2019). The findings indicate the effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on brand trust, where online reviews and user experience are important in building customer confidence. According to the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory, E-WOM is an extension of integrated communication, in which marketing has been expanded to include consumer-generated material as well as business communications (Rehman et al., 2022). Positive E-WOM provides credible input that builds trust and decreases ambiguity (Ye & Motoki, 2024). Consequently, the significance of peer communication in contemporary marketing strategies is emphasized by the correlation between E-WOM and brand trust.

Purchase intention H3 does in fact connect favorably and statistically with social media marketing. The results suggest that previous studies undertaken in accordance with the third hypothesis (H^3) in this paper Manzoor et al. (2020), Armawan et al. (2023), Trianasari et al. (2023), and Qiao and Sun (2024). The results of the study also confirm the theory Nguyen et al. (2020) according to which the usage of social media marketing can lead to higher levels of buyer interest. The use of social media for marketing purposes provides an excellent chance for organizations to quickly, comparatively inexpensive, and on a broader scale promote their products (Salhab et al., 2023).

Integrated Marketing Communications Theory supports the claim that social media marketing intensifies purchase intention by employing coordinated communication efforts (Qiao & Sun, 2024). Marketing messages are consistently disseminated across multiple platforms to develop consumer relationships. Daviena Skincare's strong presence on popular platforms among young consumers fosters positive brand perceptions, increases brand awareness, and drives purchase intent.

Hypothesis 4 for purchase intention has a positive relationship with E-WOM. The results provide evidence in support of H4, which is proposed in this study, and also coincide with previous studies carried out by Ezzat et al. (2022), and Kamalasena and Sirisena (2021). The results of this study coincide with Xiao et al. (2022), who found that E-WOM has a positive impact on consumer's purchase intention. E-WOM facilitates the availability of information, which enables consumers to purchase according to their demands and expectations (Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2021).

Integrated communication strategies

acknowledge that consumers rely on social validation from other users alongside brand messages. Persuasive communication sources, such as product discussions, evaluations, and reviews, influence consumers' perceptions of product quality and reliability (Madelaine et al., 2025). In this study, young consumers who frequently use digital platforms used E-WOM to assess skincare products before making purchasing decisions. Consequently, the persuasive power of marketing communication is enhanced, and consumer intention to purchase the product increases due to positive E-WOM (Rumangkit & Lestari, 2024).

Marketing through social media and electronic word of mouth has become an integral part of digital communication that influences the consumer perception. In terms of IMC, both social media marketing and electronic word of mouth can be regarded as important elements of digital communication that need to be synchronized in order to ensure effective communication for brand building and purchase intention (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015; Porcu et al., 2017).

The findings from the statistics reveal that there is a significant positive impact of SMM and E-WOM on the brand trust (H1 & H2) and Purchase Intentions (H3 & H4). These findings are highly relevant for the group of young women (17 to 26 years) who are the most active on Instagram and TikTok. These are the same sites that Daviena Skincare utilizes to market its products and post E-WOM reviews. For this group, SMM is not just about getting the word out; it's also about providing information a tech-savvy audience can use to assess a brand's trustworthiness (Le et al., 2024). Likewise, the significant impact of E-WOM (H4) in this sample indicates that young, educated consumers rely on genuine social proof from peers to mitigate the risks associated with online skincare purchases (Nguyen et al., 2024).

From H5, the results show that there exists a very high correlation between purchase intentions and brand trust. This means that the previous studies in line with hypothesis five (H5) in this study include Nuryakin et al. (2024), and Kee et al. (2023). The results of this research further support Abbas and Ali (2023) respondents participated in an online questionnaire, and the structural equation modelling (SEM perspective that the main factor influencing the development of purchase intention is brand trust; companies can therefore improve their marketing plans and build customer confidence. The business may create plans to improve customer brand trust; consumers are more likely to intend to purchase a product if they believe in the brand offering it (DAM, 2020).

According to Integrated Marketing

Communications Theory, brand trust comes via consistent and effective marketing communications (Šerić & Mikulić, 2020). Businesses that employ integrated communications strategies, which include social media interactions, advertising, and customer feedback, build a consistent brand image that makes customers more likely to trust them (Meha et al., 2022; Šerić & Mikulić, 2020). Brand trust is a key psychological factor that integrated marketing communications leverage to entice consumers to purchase products (Kothari et al., 2025).

The results of H6 show that there is positive moderation of purchase intention by brand trust in social media marketing. It may be concluded that H6, which is the sixth hypothesis of this study, aligns with the results of the previous literature conducted by Salhab et al. (2023), Manzoor et al. (2020) and Qiao and Sun (2024). Consistent with the findings of this study as well as those of Qiao and Sun (2024), social media marketing promotions enlightening consumers with credible information, entertaining content or interactive experience can help increase consumer confidence in product brands. The company and confidence gets boosts as there is a high correlation between social media and consumer purchase intention. This shows that when marketers are good at social media, customers will have more faith in the brand, which in turn affects their propensity to buy (Manzoor et al., 2020).

This is an example of the sequence of the marketing communication process according to the theory of Integrated Marketing Communications. IMC theory asserts that successful marketing communication involves a series of four processes namely; message sending, change of perception, building of trust and finally changing of behavior. Social media campaigns that provide useful, engaging, and trustworthy information help people feel more confident in a brand (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021). When this trust is built, customers feel more confident in their purchase decisions. Therefore, brand trust is a key link between communication efforts and customer behavior.

According to H7 findings, confidence in the brand trust mediates the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and purchase intention. It can be noted that this research is supported by previous literature, which is consistent with the seventh hypothesis (H7) discussed in this paper Salhab et al. (2023), and Kamalasena and Sirisena (2021). The results of this research support Liao and Chung (2019) view on the mediation role of brand trust on electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention. It can be seen that the perception of brand of the product will change due to reviews, comments or feedback, thus leading to an

increase of purchasing desire (Liao et al., 2019).

This shows how consumer communication can make integrated marketing strategies work more effectively, according to Integrated Marketing Communication Theory. People see positive reviews and recommendations from other users as reliable sources of information (Qian et al., 2022). This kind of communication between people complements the brand's official marketing messages and makes it more trustworthy. When people trust a brand more, they are more likely to buy its products (Liu & Wang, 2023). Therefore, E-WOM is very important for making integrated marketing communication work better because it is a trusted way for people in digital communities to communicate.

Brand Trust serves as a "pivotal cognitive bridge" between digital marketing campaigns and the final purchase decision, according to the mediating effects analysis (see Table 3). The findings of this research suggest that the highly educated group does not need to see social media advertising to initiate a transaction (Pittman & Haley, 2023). The findings for H6 and H7 suggest the need to create Brand Trust prior to the effective impact of SMM and E-WOM on Purchase Intention. The findings suggest that there is a certain consumer behavior in Yogyakarta, where informed buyers need genuine evaluations and online conversations to establish the trust required before making a purchase.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research has proven that SMM and E-WOM affect consumer's intention to purchase products. The result of the research has proven the positive influence of SMM and E-WOM on purchase intentions of consumers. One of the significant contributions made by the research is the inclusion of brand trust as a mediator in this research. It is found that trust plays a very significant role as a precursor for behavioral intentions in digital communication. Social media marketing and E-WOM impact purchase intention, but their impact becomes greater when there is brand trust from the consumers. This indicates that confidence in product quality, brand legitimacy, and brand promises is a prerequisite to purchase interest, and online advertising and peer recommendations are not adequate on their own. The survey also found that SMM aids brands in building trust through consistent delivery of messages, clear provision of product information, and audience engagement. Educational and engaging social media content makes the brand more credible and trustworthy. E-WOM increases trust because consumers trust peer opinions more than firm-generated advertising messages. Positive online

reviews, testimonials, and suggestions reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, particularly for skincare products that need to be safe, effective, and appropriate.

This study adds to knowledge by logically extending the Strategic Communication and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) frameworks, with an emphasis on trust in digital-first markets. However, this study indicates that the effectiveness of communication is also influenced by consumers' confidence and credibility. Digital communication is two-way. Consumers actively assess, compare, and evaluate information from various sources in making decisions. This is consistent with the premise that message delivery and consumer credibility influence communication outcomes. Findings are relevant for emerging markets such as Indonesia, where social media usage is substantial, and consumers increasingly use online product information. Digital communication methods can increase brand equity by generating trust, decreasing ambiguity, and facilitating favorable appraisal of purchase. Trust is critical for skincare brands, since product safety and efficacy are high-stakes issues. The current research has provided some important results about the impact of SMM and E-WOM on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through brand trust.

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank the academic supervisor for his/her useful recommendations and constructive criticism. The author is also grateful to all participants of this research, especially to the users of Daviena cosmetics.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, C.M.I., N.; Methodology, C.M.I.; Formal Analysis, C.M.I.; Investigation, C.M.I.; Data Curation, C.M.I.; Writing – Original Draft Preparation, C.M.I.; Writing – Review and Editing, C.M.I., N.; Supervision, N. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript

AI declaration: The authors affirm that Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs have been used solely for language editing to improve the grammar of this manuscript and authors takes full responsibility for the content.

Ethical clearance: The ethical clearance for this study was obtained from Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. All subjects were made aware of the intention behind the study and informed consent was taken before collecting data. Data collection took place anonymously and only for research purposes.

Data availability statement: Data supporting the results of this study are available from the authors on request.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in publishing this article.

Funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not for-profit sectors.

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