

## **The Influence of Social Media Marketing, and Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Trust through Brand Experience: Skincare Study Case in Indonesia**

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### **Keywords**

social media marketing, brand experience, electronic word of mouth, brand trust

### **Abstract**

The skin care business in Indonesia in the past decade has grown rapidly along with the increasing number of consumers who care about their physical health and beauty. This study aims to determine the effect of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word Of Mouth on Brand Experience, and wants to know the effect of Electronic Word Of Mouth on Brand Experience of ERHA Products in the Special Region of Yogyakarta; This study uses a quantitative approach, specifically a survey method using a questionnaire. The sample in this study were 216 consumers of ERHA Products who used the product for the last three months, which were obtained by using purposive sampling technique. The research method uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis with the help of AMOS software. The results of this study indicate that Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word Of Mouth have a positive and significant effect on Brand Experience, and Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The skin care industry in Indonesia has shown significant growth in recent years. In the third quarter of 2024, the serum and essence market reached IDR 813 billion, an increase of 38.97% year-on-year, with sales reaching 10.2 million units, up 29.11% from the third quarter of 2023. E-commerce platforms and marketplaces play an important role in the distribution of skincare products; Shopee dominates the sales of serums and essences with a market share of

80.71%, followed by Lazada (11.45%), Tokopedia (7.71%), and Blibli (0.13%). Local and international brands compete fiercely in this market. Skintific is the market leader with a market share of 10.1%, followed by Elformula (6.1%), The Originote (4.1%), Y.O.U (4.0%) and Somethinc (3.4%). The best-selling product during the period was Elformula - Intensive Peeling Solution for Exfoliating, with sales of US\$2.79 million and 335 thousand units sold. Overall, the Indonesian cosmetics industry is projected to continue to grow at a CAGR of 5.35% during 2024-2028. This growth is driven by increasing public awareness of self-care, the trend of using natural products, and the development of e-commerce, which facilitates market access.

ERHA Group has grown into a network of beauty clinics offering a variety of leading skin care products and services in Indonesia, and is known for its innovation and social responsibility, especially in terms of sustainability. In April 2024, ERHA launched the Cosmetic Reverse Vending Machine (CRVM), the first recycling machine in Indonesia, to help reduce plastic waste from cosmetic packaging. In addition, through the Start to Change program launched in 2022, ERHA has collected more than 623,521 used cosmetic packaging, managed approximately 16 tons of plastic waste, and engaged more than 37,735 customers in environmental conservation efforts.

Digital marketing has become a crucial element in the skincare industry in Indonesia, along with increasing internet penetration and changes in consumer behavior that increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for information and make purchases. With active social media users reaching 160 million and sales on the TikTok platform alone reaching IDR 402.53 billion in 2024, this shows that social media activities, online advertising and the role of influencer marketing are effective in increasing brand awareness and influencing consumer purchasing decisions. In this case, attractive visual content such as product usage tutorials and user reviews enable direct interaction between manufacturers and consumers, while beauty influencer marketing can build trust and generate consumer interest in skin care products.

In addition to launching ERHA Apothecary to make it easier for consumers to purchase ERHA products, in 2018, ERHA began selling its products online on various marketplaces and launched [erhastore.co.id](http://erhastore.co.id) to anticipate advances in digital technology. According to Zulfikar & Mikhriani (2017), the role of the internet is not only as a means to search for information, but also has great potential as a marketing medium. This internet based marketing can also be called digital marketing. Komalasari (2021) also argues that digital marketing is one of the most widely implemented strategies by various companies in carrying out promotions in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0. Coupled with qualified support functions, digital marketing will be even more effective.

According to Wijoyo et. al. (2020), digital marketing is all forms of digital advertising that is conducted online without being limited by time and place. With such convenience, it allows people to always access marketing content at any time without limitations. They stated that one of the techniques for marketing or developing a brand through social media is called social media marketing. Based on the above background, the formulation of the problem in this study is to find out whether the variables social media marketing and electronic word of mouth have an effect on brand experience, and whether brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand trust in ERHA products in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this study, Signal Theory is used, which states the actions or attributes sent by one party (usually the party that has more information) to another party to convey relevant information (Yasar et al., 2020). The basic premise of signal theory states that there is information asymmetry between the signaller and the receiver-so the signaller has access to knowledge or information that the consumer does not know or has not acquired. In marketing, when there is information asymmetry, companies may choose to use signals to convey information that is beneficial to consumers' evaluation of products (Bergh et. al., 2014). and help consumers reduce feelings of uncertainty or risk in the purchase phase (Mandler et al., 2021).

### **Brand Trust**

Consumer trust in a product brand plays an important role in marketing and sales, this is driven by rapid changes in the business environment, thus forcing companies to be able to find more creative and flexible ways to adapt to an ever-evolving environment (Putri, et al. 2021). Customer trust in a brand (brand trust) is defined as the customer's desire to lean on a brand with the risks faced because of expectations that the brand will cause positive results.

Furthermore, Putri, et al (2021) say that, specifically, trust can reduce uncertainty in an environment where consumers feel insecure in it, because they know they can rely on the trusted brand. Tjahyadi (2006) states that consumer trust in a product brand can be conceptualised when consumers have confidence in relationships or exchange partners who have reliability and integrity. According to Firmansyah (2019) brand trust reflects two important components, namely the existence of consumer confidence that the product is able to fulfil the promised value or in other words the perception that the brand is able to meet consumer expectations by fulfilling brand promises which ultimately creates satisfaction, and consumer confidence that the brand is able to prioritise consumer interests when problems in product consumption arise unexpectedly. Research from Sintiadewi, et. al. (2024) states that brand trust plays a role in mediating the quality of good beauty products with product purchase intentions.

### **Brand Experience**

Brand experience is the consumer's past experience with the brand, especially in the scope of use. Thus it can be concluded that consumer experience of a brand is closely related to trust in the brand. According to Brakus and Zarantonello (2009) Brand experience is defined as the sensations, feelings, cognitions, and consumer responses generated by the brand, related to stimuli generated by brand design, brand identity, marketing communications, people and the environment in which the brand is marketed.

According to Neumeier (2013) brand experience is all interactions of a person with products, services, organisations, all of which are the raw material of a brand. Meanwhile, the theory put forward by Motta-Filho (2020) in his research brand experience is the transition between brand strategy and consumer experience. Another theory about brand experience states that brand experience is created when consumers consume products or services from the brand, tell others about the brand and find out information related to promotions, events, and

others. Brand experience can be assumed as consumer perceptions of existing touch points, be it promotions, or direct contact with people who carry out service activities. According to Yulianti and Tung (2013), brand experience is an internal response from customers and a behavioural response generated by brand-related stimuli which are part of brand identity, packaging, communication, and environmental design. Brand experience is an aspect of experience that consists of all understanding and perception of the brand by customers. Therefore, marketers must understand customers' experiences of their brands in order to develop marketing strategies. In brand strategy, brand experience is important. Nothing is more powerful than the customer's experience of the brand.

Brand experience is something subjective in the form of internal customer responses as a result of brand-related stimuli (Brakus and Zarantonello, 2009), when a consumer has a good experience with a brand, it will increase their expectations that the brand is able to fulfil the promised benefits, so that brand trust will be formed (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019). According to research conducted by (Rahmawati and Aji, 2015) Brand experience is something subjective in the form of internal customer responses as a result of brand-related stimuli (Brakus and Zarantonello, 2009), when a consumer has a good experience with a brand, it will increase their expectations that the brand is able to fulfil the promised benefits, so that brand trust will be formed (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019). In the context of mobile telecommunications, with empirical evidence of the significant effect of customer engagement on customer satisfaction. In addition, (Mahandy and Sanawiri, 2018) in their research stated that customer engagement has a significant effect on brand trust.

In his research on the consumer behavior of smartphone users in Pakistan, Sarmad et. al. (2024), research results show that the experience of a brand is a significant factor in determining both love and loyalty to that brand, and there seems to be a correlation between brand experience and brand love, with brand trust playing a moderating role in this correlation.

### **Social Media Marketing**

According to Wijoyo et. al. (2020), social media marketing is a marketing process carried out through third parties, namely social-based websites. Saputra, et al. (2020) Argues that social media marketing is an activity carried out in promoting products in the form of goods and services on social media platforms using certain strategies. good communication is not only established through a one-way relationship, but the need for a two-way relationship. Through their social media, they can find out what is very important and wants to be obtained by their consumers as well as input that they can use to improve the quality of products and services.

Zulfikar and Mikhriani (2017) state a number of indicators to measure Social Media marketing, namely Online Communities or companies build a community to encourage discussion and contribute information for joint development; Interaction, namely the occurrence of interactions between producers, consumers and potential consumers on social media; Sharing of content, namely media information exchange, distribution, and obtaining content through social media between producers and consumers; Accessibility, which is the ease of access and minimal cost of using social media, and is also easy to use and does not

require special skills; and Credibility, which is a company to create and convey messages clearly to consumers, build credibility about what the company says and strive to build emotional relationships with the target market, motivate purchases and encourage consumer loyalty. Meanwhile, Salamah (2021) states the benefits of social media in a business in many ways, including Relationship Building, Brand Building, Publicity, Promotions, and Market Research.

Research from Awali and Astuti (2021) concluded that social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on brand trust and brand loyalty. Meanwhile, research from Prayitno et. al. (2020) states that Media Marketing, Customer Engagement and Digital Advertising simultaneously affect Brand Trust. Media Marketing, Customer Engagement and Digital Advertising have a positive and significant effect partially on Brand Trust. Also research from Zulfikar and Mikhriani (2017) shows that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust. The research results above show the role of social media marketing in online marketing activities.

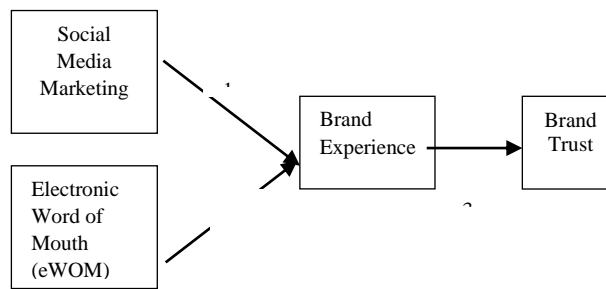
Beig and Khan's (2018) research findings on the behavior of mall visitors who are also active on social media. They found that content sharing and interaction had a positive and significant impact on sensory, affective, behavioral, and cognitive experiences.

### **Electronic Word Of Mouth**

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is marketing using the internet to create word of mouth effects to support marketing efforts and objectives. The theory of electronic word of mouth according to Kotler and Keller (2016) is a positive or negative statement about a product or company made by actual or real customers, potential customers or previous customers and information is conveyed via internet media. Meanwhile, according to Banjarnahor et. al. (2021) Word of Mouth (WOM) can not only be done between individuals but can also be in any form including the internet which is called electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). E-WOM provides geographical freedom for all humans wherever they are, can contribute to spreading information and temporal where e-WOM has a permanent nature in the form of writing. Furthermore, he stated that e-WOM becomes a 'venue' or a very important place for consumers to give their opinions and is considered more effective than traditional word of mouth (WOM), due to its greater level of accessibility and reach.

Research from Charvia and Erdiansyah (2020) states that there is a significant influence of electronic word of mouth and brand experience on brand trust. Among the two dependent variables, the one that has a greater influence on brand trust is electronic word of mouth. The conclusion of this study is that increasing brand trust can be done by improving electronic word of mouth and brand experience. Similarly, research by Syahdiany and Trinanda (2019) concluded that the electronic word of mouth variable had an insignificant effect on brand trust. This is because communication and information searches carried out through social media do not lead to brand trust.

From the discussion above, Figure 1 describes research model and hypothesis.



**Figure 1. Research Model**

H1: Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand experience.

H2: Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand experience.

H3: Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

## **METHODS**

This research is a quantitative study with data collection through a survey method using a questionnaire. The research time was conducted in July - August 2023, with respondents being consumers of ERHA products in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. For sampling, purposive random sampling technique was used, with the number of respondents collected being 216 ERHA consumers.

For operational definition is as follows: social media marketing is marketing activities that use social media to achieve marketing goals, such as increasing brand awareness, increasing sales, or building relationships with customers. While Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is any positive or negative comments made by consumers who have already purchased goods from an online store. Brand experience is the overall experience felt by consumers when interacting with a brand, starting from searching for information, purchasing, to using the product or service, and even to the experience of consuming the brand again. And Brand trust is the level of customer trust and confidence in a brand, reflecting how strongly customers believe that the brand can fulfill its promises and expectations.

The variables involved in this study are Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word Of Mouth, Brand Trust, and the mediating variable is Brand Experience. The variable size scale uses an ordinal measuring scale with indicators of each variable as follows. For Social Media Marketing, the indicators are Online Communities, Interaction, Sharing of content, Accessibility, and Credibility. While the Brand Experience variable is measured by indicators of Sensation, Cognition, Feeling, and Consumer response. Electronic word of mouth variables are measured by indicators of Intensity, Valence of Opinion, and Content. Brand Trust is measured by indicators of Trust, Honest, and Safe.

After the data is collected secondary data, then the data is analysed. The analysis used to test the hypothesis is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, which is a statistical modelling technique that is very cross-sectional, linear and general. Included in this SEM are factor analysis, path analysis and SEM (regression). As a testing method, the analysis used to test the hypothesis is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, which is a statistical modelling technique that is very cross-sectional, linear and general.

The SEM structural equation model is a multilevel causal model that includes two main types of variables: latent variables and observed variables. Latent variables are variables formed from several proxies that are formulated as observed variables. Observed variables are observed and measured variables that can be used to form a new variable (surrogate variable or latent variable). Combining factor analysis, path analysis and SEM, SEM is more a confirmatory method than exploratory, which aims to evaluate the proposed dimensionality derived from previous research by looking at and testing the dimensional relationship model. With this understanding, SEM can be used as a tool to confirm pre-knowledge that has been obtained previously (Hair et. al., 2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results are divided into two parts, namely profile analysis and hypothesis testing. Of the 216 respondents, the following is the composition of the respondents.

The table shows that most ERHA Product Customers in the province of Yogyakarta Special Region are women, young and productive (26-32 years old), and come from the middle class, with an income of around IDR 3,100,000 - IDR 5,000,000 per month. The findings above prove that ERHA is a skincare product with a target market of young and productive women, and is in the middle class; this target market is quite large in Indonesia.

For hypothesis testing, the research model is displayed in figure 2.

**Table 1. Gender Composition**

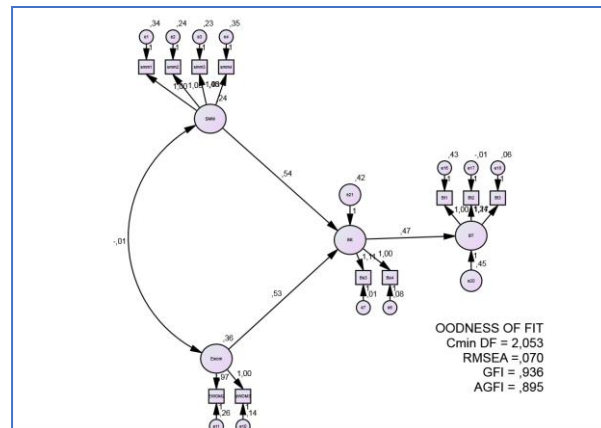
Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	51	23,61
Female	165	76,39
Total	216	100,0

**Table 2. Age Composition**

Age Range	Frequency	Percent (%)
17 Years Old - 25 Years Old	28	12,96
>25 Years Old - 30 Years Old	109	50,46
>30 Years Old - 40 Years Old	66	30,56
>40 Years Old	13	6,02
Total	216	100,00

**Table 3. Income Composition**

Income per Month (in Indonesian Currency Rupiah)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Rp. 500.000 - Rp 1.000.000	7	3,24
Rp 1.000.000 - Rp 3.000.000	48	22,22
Rp 3.100.000 - Rp 5.000.000	97	44,91
>Rp 5.000.000	64	29,63
Total	216	100,00



**Figure 2. Research Model in AMOS Software Display**

**Table 4. Goodness of Fit Test Result**

Goodness of Fit Index Criteria	Good Criteria	Result
RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation)	< 0,08	0,070
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	> 0,9	0,936
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of fit index)	> 0,9	0,895

Source: Hair *et al.*, 2009

**Table 5. Hypotheses Test Result**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Social Media Marketing → Brand Experience	,545	,131	4,166	0.000
eWOM → Brand Experience	,533	,118	4,505	0.000
Brand Trust → Brand Experience	,470	,067	6,972	0.000

Based on the above calculation results, the model can meet the required fit test criteria; this is indicated by the CMIN/DF value < 5, which is 2.053. The RMSEA value is <0.08, which is 0.07. While the GFI value is > 0.90, which is 0.936. The AGFI value of 0.895 meets the marginal criteria (close to 0.9). From the table above, research activities can continue with research hypothesis testing.

### Research Hypotheses Testing

From table 5, it can be seen that all the hypotheses (H1, H2 and H3) have been proven because all the relationships between the tested variables have a p (probability) level below 0.05, namely 0.000; this shows that marketing activities through social media of ERHA skin care and eWOM activities carried out by ERHA consumers who are satisfied with ERHA products will have a positive and significant effect on the brand experience of ERHA consumers. In the long run, this will encourage consumers to have brand trust in the ERHA brand.

The hypothesis that there is a positive and significant influence between Social Media Marketing partially on the Brand Experience of ERHA Products in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is proven. This shows that if Social Media Marketing is improved, Brand Experience will also increase. This result is supported by descriptive analysis of variables which shows that Social Media Marketing of ERHA Products is in the good category,



meaning that ERHA Products have an online community that discusses ERHA so that it helps consumers get information about ERHA in the form of pictures, videos of ERHA social media and can share with friends on social media to get information, reviews and testimonials about the ERHA brand. These results are in accordance with the income of Tuten and Ladik (2015), where social media plays a role when company marketing activities build individual relationships with customers and provide opportunities to access customer data. Social media marketing is the use of social media technologies, channels and tools to communicate, deliver and exchange offers that have value for organisational stakeholders. This opinion supports Muchardie et al. researchers, (2016), Utami & Saputri, (2020) and Farook & Abeysekara, (2016) regarding social media marketing which has a positive and significant influence on Brand Experience.

The hypothesis that there is a positive and significant effect between Electronic Word Of Mouth partially on Brand Experience is also proven. This shows that if Electronic Word Of Mouth activity is increased, the Brand Experience of ERHA consumers also increases. These results indicate that when ERHA Product Customers access information about ERHA on the internet and then recommend to others to use ERHA, potential consumers obtain information about the quality of ERHA, which encourages them to try the product and gain brand experience. This result is in accordance with Van Doorn et. al. (2010) that the role of e-WOM in Brand Experience is very important because it can influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Another influence is reputation for the company, engaged consumers can contribute to the company in the long term and also brand recognition, with evidence that consumers tend to follow and participate in brand communities and attend events that support the brand. E-WOM is a message or information that comes from personal experiences or consumer opinions about a product or service and is spread by word of mouth through internet media. High E-WOM can create customer engagement. This opinion supports the researcher Banjarnahor et. al. (2021), which states that Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Experience.

The hypothesis that there is a positive and significant influence between Brand Experience on ERHA Product Brand Trust is also proven. This shows that if the Brand Experience is increased, the Brand Trust of consumers towards the ERHA brand also increases. ERHA Product customers feel comfortable using ERHA as a beauty product and in the long run after many times using the product, consumers come to trust the ERHA beauty product brand, become more comfortable, and consider ERHA to provide guidance on the correct use of products for the health and beauty of their skin. This result is in accordance with the income of Rohadian and Amir (2019), which states that building engagement is an important thing for brands to do in order to have a good relationship with consumers. Because the higher the brand engagement, the easier it will be to gather information from its followers about their opinions about the products or services they use and find out what things the company might have to improve. This opinion also supports research from Rahmawati and Aji, (2015) and Mahandy and Sanawiri, (2018) which show that Brand Experience has a positive effect on brand trust. The study contributes to the Brand Experience literature in the context of mobile telecommunications, with empirical evidence of the significant effect of customer engagement on customer satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on the Brand Experience of ERHA Products in Yogyakarta City. This shows that if Social Media Marketing is improved, Brand Experience will also increase.
2. Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Experience of ERHA Products in Yogyakarta City. This shows that if Electronic Word Of Mouth is increased, Brand Experience also increases.
3. Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust for ERHA Products in Yogyakarta City. This shows that if Brand Experience is increased, Brand Trust also increases.

## Research Limitations

1. The sample size is still small, only two hundred respondents, so the existing results may not be able to describe the real situation, especially regarding the skin care sector.
2. The number of independent and dependent variables included in this research is still limited, especially only covering online activities and brand influence; this research does not include variables that are actually also important to determine the performance of the skin care business, such as sales, consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and so on.

## Future Research Suggestions

1. The scope of the research area, especially in taking the questionnaire, can be expanded in future research. Not only covering the special region of Yogyakarta, but also covering Central Java, East Java and other areas in Indonesia.
2. The number of variables in the research is increasing, not only covering brands and things related to online business. Future research may include consumer satisfaction variables, consumer complaints about service delivery to consumers, perceptions of skin care prices in the minds of consumers, offline promotions conducted, and others.

## Suggestion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, ERHA Products in Yogyakarta City are suggested as follows:

1. ERHA products in Special Region of Yogyakarta in order to improve Brand Experience by increasing the use of Social Media Marketing, by increasing online communities that discuss ERHA, continuing to provide information about ERHA through social media owned by ERHA, increasing information about ERHA in the form of pictures, videos of ERHA social media and sharing with friends on social media. Increase Electronic Word Of Mouth by allowing customers to access information about ERHA on the internet, customers to recommend to others to use ERHA, and so that customers can get information about the quality of ERHA on the internet.
2. ERHA products in Special Region of Yogyakarta in order to increase Brand Trust, it is necessary to improve Brand Experience, by increasing customer comfort in using

ERHA as a beauty product, increasing customer feelings to feel better in using ERHA beauty products, providing correct usage guidelines.

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