

## The Influence of eWOM, Brand Image, and Trust on Online Purchase Intention of Local Perfume Products HMNS (A Case Study on Gen Z)

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### ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology and the increasing penetration of the internet have transformed consumer behavior, particularly among Gen Z, who rely heavily on social media in their purchasing decisions. One of the key marketing strategies in e-commerce is Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), which is closely linked to brand image and trust. This study aims to evaluate the influence of eWOM, brand image, and trust on the online purchase intention of local perfume brand HMNS among Gen Z. Using a quantitative approach, this research employs a survey method involving 223 respondents categorized as Gen Z who are familiar with HMNS products. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire, while data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The study tested six hypotheses, five of which were found to be significant. However, the results indicate that brand image does not have a positive influence on online purchase intention.

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of ICT has brought about modernity marked by various phenomena such as economic growth, increased social mobility, and the wider spread of culture. This makes it easier and provides many benefits for human activities today. The development of ICT in modern times is now very influential in the business world, especially in the marketing system. Efforts to market products, including promotions, have become more effective and efficient because by simply utilizing social media on the internet, products can reach many consumers. Many conventional offline activities have shifted to online as a result of the development of information and communication technology (ICT), making the Internet an important component in people's daily lives (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018). In a competitive and dynamic global market, companies need to be aware of the demands, habits, lifestyles and characteristics of online consumers to be able to meet their needs (Akar & Nasir, 2015). Every year, the number of internet users continues to increase due to easy access, especially in Indonesia.

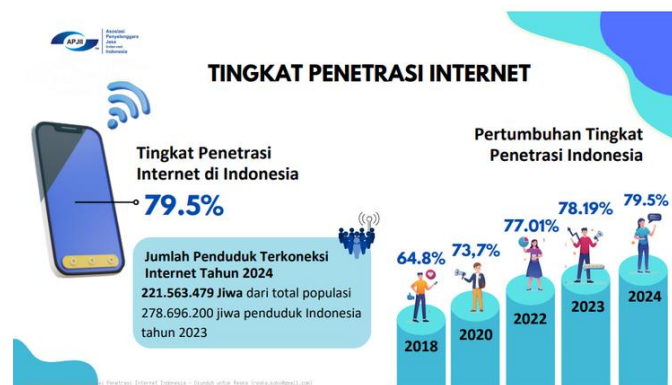


Figure 1. Internet Penetration Rate

Source: Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (2024).

Figure 1 shows the results of a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association which explains that Indonesia's internet penetration rate continues to increase every year. The internet penetration rate in the country will reach 79.5% in 2024. This means that 79% of the national population is already connected to the internet. Of that number, Generation Z (born 1997-2012 aged 12-27 years) is the age group most connected to the internet. With the development of the internet in Indonesia, many businesses have implemented social media to increase their sales.

Social media marketing serves as an internal strategy or technique that shapes a business's reputation and impact among its potential client base (Pasaribu & Silalahi, 2020). Using social media marketing strategies is the most effective approach to increase customer engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). In 2024, the number of active social media users in Indonesia will be 191 million people or around 73.7% of the domestic population (Annur, 2024). Social media has completely changed the way customers interact with brands and decide what to buy. Product discovery has become easier with platforms like Instagram,

which leverages influencer support, organic posting, and targeted advertising. Visual content on Instagram makes it easier for consumers to browse, making it easier for them to discover brands and products. Social media gives users access to a wide range of user-generated content, which is one of the main ways it influences consumer behavior. Instagram allows users to easily read product and service reviews, comparisons, and feature ratings. This democratization of information makes consumers more informed in making decisions, reducing their reliance on conventional advertising techniques (Murtaza, 2021).

One of the brands that is currently being loved and talked about by many people, especially Gen Z, is a local perfume brand, HMNS. HMNS or Humans is a perfume brand founded by Rizky Arief, who also serves as CEO. With a capital of IDR 10 million and driven by his love for the world of fashion, Rizky decided to start a perfume business. Since its inception in 2019, Rizky realized that Indonesia has great potential in providing high-quality perfume raw materials, with 70% of the world's perfume raw materials coming from the country. This encouraged him to not only make Indonesia a supplier of raw materials, but also to create a globally recognized perfume brand. The main advantage of HMNS lies in its commitment to presenting quality perfumes at affordable prices. With this vision, Rizky founded PT HMNS (Hadir Mengharumkan Nusantara), which managed to achieve a market share of 10.65% in the local perfume industry. HMNS has released its products since 2019 through an online platform, and has several product variants, namely: Alpha, Essence of the Sun, Orgasm, Farhampton, The Perfection, and Ambar Janma. Orgasm, a best-selling HMNS perfume variant, has been awarded several times as the best perfume in Indonesia (Female Daily Award) in 2020. Based on Kompas data: ECommerce Market Insight from August 1 to 15, 2021. As a result, HMNS now sells thousands of bottles of perfume every month, becoming a local perfume brand with the highest market share in 2022.

trust plays an important role in influencing consumer purchase intention, especially in the context of online transactions. Based on various studies, purchase intention is positively influenced by trust. Customers tend to be more willing to make purchases or services when they have a higher level of trust (Fadhilah, 2020). For example, a study on e-commerce in Indonesia found that trust significantly increases purchase intention, indicating that buyers are more likely to choose to buy from sellers they trust (Mahliza, 2020). Trust is a key factor in determining Gen Z's intention to make online purchases. This is evidenced by an analysis of Gen Z's intention to shop online, which emphasizes the importance of trust signals and functional benefits in the context of e-commerce (Achim et al., 2024). The relationship between purchase intention and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is mediated by trust. Studies show that users' purchase intention is positively influenced when they perceive eWOM as reliable information. This mediation highlights the importance of building trust in online review communities through trustworthy eWOM interactions (Gharib et al., 2020). The high number of HMNS sales indicates a high level of trust in the product. To gain the trust of its customers, HMNS places great emphasis on the use of high-quality ingredients and unique scent formulas. When a company consistently produces

products that meet or even exceed their expectations in terms of quality and scent longevity, customers tend to trust it more. Based on reviews from buyers, consumers love HMNS products because of their good quality and affordable prices.

Based on the above background, the author is interested in conducting research on "The Influence of eWOM, Brand Image, and Trust on Online Purchase Intention on HMNS Perfume Products" (Case Study on Gen Z).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Theory of Planned Behavior***

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1985) as a development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which was previously introduced by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975). TPB explains that the greater an individual's intention, the higher the possibility of carrying out an action. This theory consists of three main elements that determine a person's intention to act, namely action on attitudes, subjective norms, and opinions on attitude control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of consumer behavior, TPB is often used to analyze factors that influence purchase intentions Kotler et al. (2007) suggests that marketing strategies, brand communications, and consumer psychological factors can influence purchase intentions, which then trigger certain responses. These factors are then linked to individual attitudes, which are one of the main components in TPB (Ajzen, 2020). As a theory that highlights the planned decision-making process, TPB also considers the role of motivation and information in shaping individual behavior (Mitevski & Blazheski, 2024). According to Ajzen (1991), the core of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the individual's intention in carrying out an action.

### ***Online Purchase Intention***

Online purchase intention refers to the likelihood or readiness of customers to purchase goods or services over the internet. Online purchase intention plays an important role in understanding consumer motives and behavior in e-commerce situations by predicting consumer behavior in completing transactions online (Wagner Mainardes et al., 2019). According to Zhu et al. (2020), several factors can influence the process of forming online purchase intentions. The perceived quality of information from online reviews has a positive impact on consumer purchase intentions. Reviews that are considered credible and of high quality can increase trust and satisfaction, which ultimately encourages consumers to buy. Social presence in online reviews also contributes significantly. Perceived social interactions in reviews can strengthen trust and influence purchasing decisions. Emotional polarization in reviews shows that positive reviews have a more significant impact on trust, satisfaction, and purchase intentions than negative reviews, indicating that emotions in reviews play an important role. Finally, previous purchasing experience acts as a mediator in the correlation between social presence and purchase intentions in e-commerce. Overall, the quality of information and social interactions in online reviews are important elements in forming consumer purchase intentions.

### ***E-WOM***

*Electronic word of mouth*, or eWOM, is a type of communication that can be used to disseminate information, build brand strength, and influence consumer purchasing decisions (Mishra & Satish, 2016). Consumer behavior, trust, social networks, online reviews, brand loyalty, social media, negative word-of-mouth, and service failure and recovery are some of the topics that are the focus of eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) studies (Donthu et al., 2021). eWOM influences consumers' desire to purchase directly or indirectly through social media platforms, which is influenced by their level of trust in the product (See-To & Ho, 2014).

### ***Brand Image***

Brand image is a perception formed in the minds of consumers based on experiences, interactions, and information they obtain through various communication channels, both directly and indirectly (Wibowo & Sabardini, 2024). This image not only includes visual aspects such as logos or designs, but also involves emotional and rational factors, including trust in product quality, company reputation, and customer experience in using certain products or services (Ponikasari & Sibarani, 2024). In an increasingly competitive business environment, brand image plays an important role in differentiating a brand from its competitors, attracting consumer interest, and increasing customer loyalty (Aini et al., 2024).

### ***Trust***

Trust in online shopping refers to buyers' confidence in the reliability, integrity, and competence of sellers, as well as intermediary platforms, which reduces the perception of risk and increases the likelihood of completing a purchase (Khan et al., 2016). Brand trust is the consumer's desire to trust a brand no matter what, because consumers generally have an expectation that the brand can deliver good results (Rifai, 2019). Brand credibility is a major predictor of customer loyalty. Trust plays a crucial role in determining whether a customer will shop again on the same platform. Research by Mberewere et al. (2024) revealed that customer loyalty is influenced by their belief in transaction security, product quality, and satisfactory customer service. Trust in a brand leads to repeat purchases and long-term loyalty, which is essential for maintaining brand equity (Idrees et al., 2015).

### ***Relationship between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables***

#### ***The Relationship between E-WOM and Brand Image***

eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) refers to the dissemination of information about a brand, product, or service through various online platforms such as social media, blogs, forums, and customer reviews on e-commerce sites. eWOM plays a role in shaping customer perceptions of a brand. When a brand receives a lot of positive reviews, customers tend to associate it with high quality and strong credibility, thus building a more positive brand image in their minds (Saraswati & Giantari, 2022). Consumers generally trust information from other customers more than direct marketing messages from companies, because

customer reviews are perceived to reflect real experiences rather than simply promotional strategies (Binh et al., 2017). Consumers who have a high level of involvement with a brand tend to search for information more often through eWOM and invest more time in forming expectations and perceptions of the brand, which ultimately strengthens the brand image itself (Devantha & Ekawati, 2020). Conversely, negative eWOM such as bad reviews or unsatisfactory customer experiences can have a detrimental effect on brand image. If customers consistently encounter negative reviews, they may start to doubt the quality of the product or service being offered, thus decreasing their interest in making a purchase (Pratiwi et al., 2019). Therefore, effective eWOM management is a key factor in building and maintaining a positive brand image in today's digital era. From the discussion above, the hypothesis arises that:

**H1: eWOM has a positive effect on Brand Image**

#### *The Relationship between eWOM and Trust*

Brand trust is a crucial component in developing a strong correlation between a company and its consumers. When a company successfully meets consumer expectations, it can increase the level of trust in the product brand. This trust serves as a foundation in strengthening consumer loyalty and encouraging repeat purchase decisions (Hadi, 2018). The growing power of digital media has completely changed the way customers interact with brands, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is now a key component in determining how people think and act. A study conducted by (2025) revealed that the combination of eWOM and influencer marketing can increase consumer trust in brands, especially in the fashion industry. In the realm of e-commerce, a study conducted by Wahyudi et al. (2025) explains that effective eWOM can accelerate the purchasing decision-making process by increasing customer trust in the products offered. The formation of trust is greatly influenced by the quality of information distributed through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), including the accuracy, relevance, and level of knowledge possessed by the source of the information. When eWOM is considered credible and informative, consumers tend to trust the brand more. The trust built through this exchange of information can have a positive effect on consumer purchasing intentions (Susanti & Wulandari, 2021). Due to the discussion above, a hypothesis arises that:

**H2: eWOM has a positive effect on Trust**

#### *Relationship between Brand Image and Trust*

Everything that has to do with how consumers view a brand is brand image (Ruhamak & Rahmadi, 2019), when a brand has a good reputation, customers will be more confident in making purchases. This trust can be created because customers already know that the product or service offered has a positive image (Anggitasari & Wijaya, 2016). A strong brand image can in itself make customers believe that the brand will meet their expectations and needs, which increases the likelihood of customers remaining loyal. According to Keller (2013), brand image adds to the impression of professionalism and buyer confidence, which are important factors in building customer trust. Brands with strong reputations are often perceived as more credible. Trust often acts as a mediator in the

relationship between brand image and other marketing outcomes, such as customer loyalty and purchasing behavior. A good brand image can increase trust, which in turn affects other marketing outcomes (Propheto et al., 2020). The hypothesis given is:

**H3: Brand Image has a positive effect on Trust**

#### *The Relationship between eWOM and Online Purchase Intention*

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is a crucial component in digital marketing and has a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. In an era where consumers have unlimited access to information, reviews and recommendations shared through online platforms such as social media, discussion forums, and e-commerce have greater power than direct company advertising. eWOM makes consumers believe in transparency and credibility, which are often more credible than conventional advertising. This trust is an important basis that drives online purchasing intentions, which are increasingly influenced by the high quality and quantity of customer interactions in the digital space. A study conducted by Tafolli et al. (2025) revealed that eWOM contributes to building trust and brand image, which ultimately drives purchasing decisions. In addition, eWOM also plays a role in reducing risk perception, which is often a major obstacle in online transactions. Meanwhile, the study Yang et al. (2025) shows that information obtained through eWOM, especially from influencers or credible consumers, can reduce uncertainty and increase consumer confidence in making purchases. Online customers' intentions to utilize eWOM and develop purchasing behavior through social media are largely determined by the quality, credibility, usefulness, and ease of use of eWOM information (Rahaman et al., 2022). Due to factors such as the amount of information and ease of access, recommendations from friends on social media have a smaller effect on online purchase intentions than anonymous reviews on shopping sites (Erkan & Evans, 2018). The hypothesis given is as follows:

**H4: eWOM has a positive effect on Online Purchase Intention**

#### *Relationship between Brand Image and Online Purchase Intention*

Brand Image very important in shaping consumer perceptions of a product or service. This is increasingly important in today's digital age because consumers cannot see or touch products directly before making an online purchase. Research conducted by Triyani (2025) shows that a good brand image can strengthen consumer trust in a product, which in turn has a direct effect on online purchasing intentions, especially in the cosmetics industry in the Jabodetabek area. On the other hand, research conducted by Ani et al. (2025) emphasizes that good product quality can strengthen brand image, thus encouraging increased consumer purchase intention for MSME products marketed online. As competition in the digital market increases, it is important for businesses to understand how brand image influences consumers' desire to buy goods online. This is an important part of designing a sustainable and successful marketing strategy. Online purchase intention is directly influenced by a good brand image. Buyers tend to be more interested in making purchases from companies they view well (Abdel et al., 2022). Online purchase intention is

influenced by brand image, which is positively influenced by online consumer reviews. However, without brand image as a mediator, the direct effect of reviews on online purchase intention becomes less significant (Larasati & Bagus Purmono, 2023). The given hypothesis is as follows:

**H5: Brand Image has a positive effect on Online Purchase Intention**

### *The Relationship between Trust and Online Purchase Intention*

Trust plays a crucial role in developing a solid correlation between buyers and brands, especially in online transactions. In a digital ecosystem, where customers cannot assess products directly, trust is a crucial factor in purchasing decisions. When buyers feel that a seller or online platform is reliable, they will be more confident in making transactions, thereby reducing the perception of risk (Zhang & Wang, 2021). The study was conducted by Jadil et al. (2022) shows that in developing countries, trust in e-commerce platforms plays an important role in driving customer purchasing decisions. A study from Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) emphasizes that the greater the level of buyer confidence in a platform, the higher the likelihood of making a transaction. From a practical perspective, companies need to implement transparent marketing strategies, improve data security, and provide a reliable user experience to build customer trust. By understanding the role of trust in depth, companies can increase customer purchase intentions in the digital environment. According to research Dam (2020) brand trust has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Brand trust is the first step that drives interest in making purchasing decisions for a product or service. Therefore, understanding the effect of trust on online purchase intention is very important for companies in building marketing strategies that can increase customer purchase intention online. The given hypothesis is below:

**H6: Trust has a positive effect on Online Purchase Intention**

### *Research Hypothesis*

Hypothesis is a temporary assumption about a problem, so the truth of it must be analyzed and proven in more depth. The hypothesis that is the formulation of the problem of the following study is:

H1 : There is a positive influence of eWOM on Brand Image.

H2 : There is a positive influence of eWOM on Trust.

H3 : There is a positive influence Brand Image towards Trust.

H4 : There is a positive influence of eWOM on Online Purchase Intention.

H5 : There is a positive influence Brand Image towards Online Purchase Intention.

H6 : There is a positive influence Trust towards Online Purchase Intention.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The context of the following study is to find out what influences online purchasing intentions. By conducting hypothesis testing, this study investigates the cause-effect correlation between relevant variables. This is done through a causal relationship study. The following study applies a quantitative approach. This study aims to establish a relationship between eWOM, Brand Image, Trust,

and Online Purchase Intention which will later be analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The variables to be studied in this study include three independent variables, namely eWOM, Brand Image, and Trust; two mediating variables, namely Brand Image and Trust; and one dependent variable, namely Online Purchase Intention.

The sample acquisition method applied is purposive sampling, where research subjects must meet the following categories:

1. Gen Z
2. Get to Know HMNS Local Perfume

The data obtained in the following study will be analyzed by applying the Structural Equation Model (SEM). In this study, there are 17 question indicators and 4 latent variables ( $a = 21$ ) so that the target number of respondents who can be accepted as research samples can be calculated as follows:

$$5a \leq x \leq 10a \quad \approx 5 \times 21 \leq x \leq 10 \times 21$$

$$\approx 105 \leq x \leq 210$$

Referring to these results, the following study requires a number of research subjects between 105 and 210 people.

## RESEARCH RESULT

### *Descriptive Analysis*

#### *Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables*

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Interval	Category
1.00 to 1.80	Very Low
1.81 to 2.60	Low
2.61 to 3.40	Currently
3.41 to 4.20	Tall
4.21 to 5.00	Very high

Source: Processed data, (2025)

#### *Descriptive Analysis of eWOM Research Variables*

The following are the results of descriptive analysis of the eWOM variable:

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of eWOM Research Variables

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
eWOM1	I feel online reviews have a significant influence on my decision.	4.28	Very high
eWOM2	I followed the advice given in the online reviews.	4.33	Very high
eWOM3	I agree with the opinions given in the online reviews.	4.34	Very high
eWOM4	I often gather information from online consumer product reviews before purchasing a particular product/brand.	4.32	Very high
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Source: Processed data, (2025)

From Table 2, the average respondent gave a score of 4.32 (very high). The highest score is shown in the eWOM3 code item, namely "I agree with the opinion

given in the online review" at an average of 4.34 (very high) and the lowest score is in the eWOM1 item code "I feel that online reviews have a significant influence on my decision" with an average of 4.28 (very high). Therefore, eWOM can be a factor that influences a person's purchase intention.

#### *Descriptive Analysis of Brand Image Research Variables*

The following are the results of descriptive analysis on the BI variable:

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of BI Research Variables

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
BI1	I feel that HMNS products/brands are of high quality.	4.26	Very high
BI2	I feel that HMNS products/brands have a rich history.	4.23	Very high
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Source: Processed data, (2025)

From Table 3, the average respondent gave a score of 4.25 (very high). The highest score is shown in item code BI1, namely "I feel that HMNS products/brands have high quality" at an average of 4.26 (very high) and the lowest score is in item code BI2 "I feel that HMNS products/brands have a rich history" with an average of 4.23 (very high). Therefore, the brand image of a product can be a factor that influences a person's purchase intention.

#### *Descriptive Analysis of Trust Research Variables*

The following are the results of descriptive analysis on the TRUST variable:

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of TRUST Research Variables

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
TRUST1	I would trust word of mouth online	4.39	Very high
TRUST2	I will trust reviews, comments and suggestions found online.	4.41	Very high
TRUST3	I would trust HMNS to represent its products fairly.	4.44	Very high
TRUST4	Overall, I would trust HMNS products	4.41	Very high
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Referring to Table 4, the average respondent gave a score of 4.41 (very high). The highest score was shown in the TRUST3 code item, namely "I will trust HMNS to represent its products fairly" at an average of 4.44 (very high) and the lowest score was in the TRUST1 code item "I will trust online word of mouth" with an average of 4.39 (very high). Thus, trust in a product can be a factor that influences a person's purchase intention.

#### *Descriptive Analysis of Online Purchasing Intention Research Variables*

The following are the results of descriptive analysis on the OPI variable:

Table 5 Descriptive Analysis of OPI Research Variables

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
OPI1	I will purchase HMNS products online in the future	4.24	Very high
OPI2	I have a strong intention to make online purchases of HMNS products in the future.	4.27	Very high
OPI3	I am willing to recommend others to purchase HMNS products/brands.	4.33	Very high
OPI4	I intend to purchase HMNS products/brands in the future.	4.31	Very high
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Based on table 5, the average respondent gave a score of 4.41 (very high). The highest score was shown in the TRUST3 code item, namely "I will trust HMNS to represent its products fairly" at an average of 4.44 (very high) and the lowest score was in the TRUST1 item code "I will trust online word of mouth" with an average of 4.39 (very high). Thus, trust in a product can be a factor that influences a person's purchase intention.

### Outer Model Fit Analysis

#### Validity Test

Referring to the test results by applying SmartPLS software, the results obtained are presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6 Outer Loading

	BI	OPI	TRUST	eWOM	Information
<b>BI1</b>	0.957				Valid
<b>BI2</b>	0.931				Valid
<b>OPI1</b>		0.932			Valid
<b>OPI2</b>		0.931			Valid
<b>OPI3</b>		0.937			Valid
<b>OPI4</b>		0.924			Valid
<b>TRUST1</b>			0.855		Valid
<b>TRUST2</b>			0.902		Valid
<b>TRUST3</b>			0.909		Valid
<b>TRUST4</b>			0.849		Valid
<b>eWOM1</b>				0.923	Valid
<b>eWOM2</b>				0.925	Valid
<b>eWOM3</b>				0.897	Valid
<b>eWOM4</b>				0.927	Valid

Source: Processed data, (2025)

It can be concluded from Table 6 that all aspects have reached the category above the criteria (>0.50). Based on this, it can be interpreted that all aspects have good loading factor coefficients. Referring to these results, it can be continued to the next test.

Table 7 Average Variance Extracted

	<i>Average Variance Extracted(AVE)</i>
<i>Brand Image</i>	0.892
<i>Online Purchase Intention</i>	0.867
<i>Trust</i>	0.773
<i>eWOM</i>	0.843

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Referring to Table 7 above, it can be observed that the average variance extracted (AVE) coefficient for all variables exceeds 0.5. Meanwhile, discriminant validity testing is conducted by analyzing the coefficient of each variable item. A variable is considered discriminantly valid if its value exceeds the criterion limit (>0.50). The following is a review of the results of the discriminant validity test.

### *Discriminant Validity Test*

Table 8 Discriminant Validity Results  
Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	<b>BI</b>	<b>OPI</b>	<b>TRUST</b>	<b>eWOM</b>
<b>BI</b>	0.944			
<b>OPI</b>	0.303	0.931		
<b>TRUST</b>	0.342	0.337	0.879	
<b>eWOM</b>	0.338	0.342	0.265	0.918

Source: Processed data, (2025)

In the table of discriminant validity test results, it can be seen that most of the variable items have higher coefficients than the values of the other variables below them. For example, the value of the Brand Image item (0.944) is more massive than the value of the Online Purchase Intention item (0.303) which is in the row below it. Likewise, the value of the Trust item (0.879) is higher than the value of eWOM (0.265). Referring to the results of this test, it can be concluded that the variables in the following study achieve the discriminant validity category with positive results.

Table 9 Discriminant Validity Results  
Heterotrait - monotrait

	<b>BI</b>	<b>OPI</b>	<b>TRUST</b>	<b>eWOM</b>
<b>BI</b>				
<b>OPI</b>	0.328			
<b>TRUST</b>	0.377	0.362		
<b>eWOM</b>	0.360	0.362	0.281	

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Discriminant validity testing is also carried out through Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) analysis. This analysis has a provision that each HTMT value for each variable must be below 0.90. Table 4.15 presents the test results for all variables in this study resulting in an HTMT value below 0.90 based on the

provisions stated by Manley et al. (2021). Thus, the HTMT values on all variables in the following study are considered valid.

**Reliability Test**

In this study, each variable is considered reliable because its value exceeds the Cronbach's Alpha standard. Further calculations are presented in the following table.

Table 10 Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Information
BI	0.880	0.915	0.943	0.892	Reliable
OPI	0.949	0.950	0.963	0.867	Reliable
TRUST	0.902	0.905	0.931	0.773	Reliable
eWOM	0.938	0.945	0.955	0.843	Reliable

Source: Processed data, (2025)

**Structural Model Test (Inner Model)**

**Collinearity Test**

Table 11 Collinearity Test

	BI	OPI	TRUST	eWOM
BI		1.224	1.129	
OPI				
TRUST		1.165		
eWOM	1,000	1.162	1.129	

Source: Processed data, (2025)

**Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)**

Table 12 R-Square Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
BI	0.114	0.110
OPI	0.200	0.189
TRUST	0.142	0.134

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Based on Table 12, Brand Image is explained by its antecedent variables of 11%, which means that there is still 89% influence from other variables outside Brand Image. Meanwhile, Online Purchase Intention is influenced by its antecedent variables of 18.9%, with the remaining 81.1% coming from other variables outside Online Purchase Intention. Trust is explained by its antecedent variables of 13.4%, so there is still 86.6% influence from other variables outside Trust.

**Predictive Relevance (Q-Square)**

Table 13 Q-Square Results

	<b>Q<sup>2</sup>predict</b>	<b>RMSE</b>	<b>MAE</b>
<b>BI</b>	0.099	0.972	0.705
<b>OPI</b>	0.099	0.967	0.702
<b>TRUST</b>	0.053	1.001	0.708

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Referring to Table 13, the Brand Image variable has a Q-square value of 0.099, as well as Online Purchase Intention which shows the same value, while Trust has a Q-square value of 0.053. Meanwhile, the eWOM variable has a value of 0. Although all three variables have a value of 0, this result is still considered normal because all three are independent variables.

**Path Coefficient (Hypothesis Testing)**

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 4.20, all hypotheses are proven to be supported, except for H5 which is not supported. The following is in accordance with the theory expressed by Hair et al. (2022), which states that the T-statistics value must be greater than 1.96 and the P-value must be less than 0.05. Therefore, all hypotheses are accepted, except H5. Table 4.20 below presents the results of the path coefficient test in detail.

Table 14 Path Coefficient Results

	<b>Original sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T statistics ( O/STDEV )</b>	<b>P values</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>eWOM -&gt; BI</b>	0.338	0.335	0.095	3,543	0.000	<b>H1 is supported</b>
<b>eWOM -&gt; TRUST</b>	0.168	0.168	0.085	1.984	0.047	<b>H2 is supported</b>
<b>BI -&gt; TRUST</b>	0.285	0.284	0.091	3.128	0.002	<b>H3 supported</b>
<b>eWOM -&gt; OPI</b>	0.233	0.236	0.086	2,711	0.007	<b>H4 supported</b>
<b>BI -&gt; OPI</b>	0.148	0.144	0.090	1,635	0.102	<b>H5 Not supported</b>
<b>TRUST -&gt; OPI</b>	0.225	0.225	0.085	2,661	0.008	<b>H6 supported</b>

Source: Processed data, (2025)

Therefore, the following is Bootstrapping in the Path coefficient results:

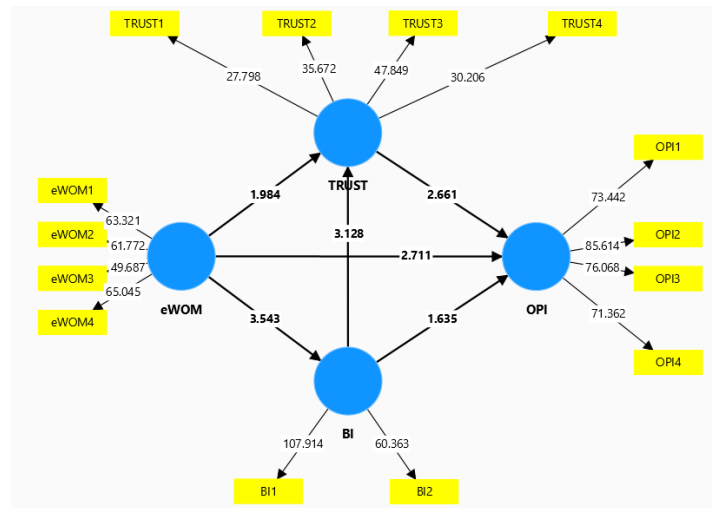


Figure 2 Path Coefficient Results  
 Source: Processed data, (2025)

## DISCUSSION

### *The Influence of E-WOM on Brand Image*

In the context of a local perfume brand like HMNS, an E-WOM-based marketing strategy can be a major factor in building a strong brand image. To maximize the impact of E-WOM, HMNS can implement several approaches, such as strengthening social media campaigns that focus on customer reviews, collaborating with influencers, and managing digital reputation effectively. A study from The Last Supper (2024) shows that collaboration with influencers who have high credibility can increase consumer trust in a brand. On the other hand, research by Rahmatullah et al. (2025) highlighted that brand image can easily be reduced by negative reviews that are not managed well, so responding quickly to customer feedback is a crucial aspect. On the other hand, improving product quality also plays a role in strengthening brand image. According to Safira Puteri et al. (2025), direct experience with the product has a long-term impact on customer loyalty. Based on various studies that have been reviewed, it can be concluded that E-WOM is a key element in building and maintaining brand image in the digital era. Companies that want to increase their competitiveness must actively manage E-WOM-based marketing strategies to attract consumer attention and increase customer loyalty.

### *The Influence of E-WOM on Trust*

In the realm of online HMNS perfume sales, customer reviews play an important role in reducing uncertainty for buyers, especially for consumers who are trying the product for the first time. This is very relevant considering that perfume is a personal product and often requires direct experience to decide on a purchase. However, with positive reviews, consumers can feel more confident in making a purchase decision even though they have not tried the product directly. Previous research also supports this finding. For example, Hendro & Keni (2020) found that trust is a positive and substantial factor on purchase intention, although E-WOM itself does not show a substantial direct effect on purchase intention. However, E-WOM has been shown to influence brand image

which in turn increases purchase intention of buyers. This shows that E-WOM can create a positive perception of the brand which leads to increased trust and purchase intention of consumers. In addition, research by Samuel & Lianto (2014) also indicates that E-WOM has a substantial influence on brand image and brand trust, which in turn influences consumer purchase intention towards smartphone products in Surabaya. Although the products studied are different, this finding emphasizes the importance of E-WOM in building trust in brands. In today's digital era, E-WOM is one of the main sources of information for consumers in the purchasing decision-making process. Reviews and testimonials from customers presented on various digital platforms provide valuable information and help reduce the uncertainty experienced by consumers.

### ***The Influence of Brand Image on Trust***

A number of recent academic studies support these results (2020) emphasized that an effective marketing communication strategy can strengthen brand image and increase customer trust Agustin et al. (2024) found that superior service quality and positive brand image can increase customer loyalty through Trust Naumova et al. (2024) also highlighted that a strong brand reputation has a direct contribution to customer trust levels and influences purchasing decisions. On the other hand, research by Kusuma et al. (2024) emphasizes that effective use of social media can increase customer trust through transparency and responsive communication. This is reinforced by the findings Hidayat et al. (2024), which identifies that digital marketing strategies have a crucial role in developing brand image and strengthening interactions and trust between customers and the company.

### ***The Influence of E-WOM on Online Purchase Intention***

The following findings confirm that online door-to-door communication can significantly influence users' purchasing decisions Hirzianto et al. (2019) also suggested that positive reviews and online recommendations can increase customer trust and purchase intention. Therefore, companies like HMNS can take advantage of E-WOM based marketing by encouraging customers to provide positive reviews and share their experiences on digital platforms. Other studies also support the following findings. For example, a study by Ayu et al. (2024) shows that direct interaction in live selling through social media strengthens the influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions. Buyers are more likely to believe recommendations from users who have had real experience with the product or service. In addition, research Yusuf et al. (2023) highlights how the application of sharia principles in the banking sector can strengthen the impact of E-WOM on Muslim customer loyalty, finding that the congruence of values with consumer beliefs increases the effectiveness of E-WOM in driving purchase intentions.

### ***The Influence of Brand Image on Online Purchase Intention***

The difference is likely due to a shift in consumer behavior patterns among Gen Z, who are more influenced by other factors, such as customer reviews and recommendations from people close to them, than by brand image alone. In

today's digital era, the reach of product information has become easier through social media and e-commerce platforms. Therefore, although brand image can shape initial perceptions of a product, the final purchase decision is more determined by interactions with reviews from other users and personal experiences in trying the product. This finding is in line with other studies. For example, a study by Annastasya (2022) found that brand image has a positive but not substantial effect on purchase intention, while electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and customer satisfaction have substantial effects. This shows that Gen Z buyers consider reviews and real experiences more than the brand image formed by the company.

### *The Influence of Trust on Online Purchase Intention*

These results are in line with previous studies, as stated by Du et al. (2024), which states that consumer trust in a brand and product can increase their confidence in making transactions online. In the realm of e-commerce, trust can be built through several factors, such as consistency of product quality, transparency of information, and positive reviews from previous customers (Wu et al., 2024). In the context of HMNS perfume, trust can be formed through several main strategies. First, maintaining product quality consistently is a major factor in building customer trust. Consumers are more likely to trust products that consistently have high quality standards and meet their expectations (Yahelska & Vasylyshyna, 2024). Second, transparency of information regarding ingredients, benefits, and how to use the product plays an important role in increasing customer trust. The clearer the information provided by the manufacturer, the more likely the buyer is to purchase the product (Ayu et al., 2024). Third, positive reviews and recommendations from other customers have a big influence in strengthening trust in a brand. Studies show that consumers trust the opinions of fellow customers more than advertising or direct promotions from the brand (Sudirjo et al., 2024). Therefore, based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that in the following study, the influence of Trust on Online Purchase Intention is supported.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Conclusion*

The following study aims to analyze the impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Brand Image, and Trust on the intention to purchase online local perfume products HMNS among Gen Z. The results of data analysis and hypothesis testing reveal several key findings that lead to conclusions including:

- 1) Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has a positive contribution in shaping the brand image of HMNS among buyers. Information conveyed through social media, online forums, and user reviews significantly influences consumer perceptions of product quality and excellence. This finding confirms that in the perfume industry, testimonials and recommendations from other users can be an effective strategy for building brand reputation.
- 2) Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has a positive influence on customer trust, especially when they find positive reviews from other users. Information from trusted sources, such as influencers or close friends, can

strengthen confidence in HMNS products. This trust is a crucial factor in online purchases, where consumers do not have the opportunity to try the product before making a transaction.

- 3) Brand image positively affects trust or buyer confidence in a product. When a brand has a solid reputation and is known for its good quality, buyers are more confident in making a purchase. This finding indicates that Brand Image can be a crucial factor in developing consumer trust in HMNS.
- 4) Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has a positive effect on online purchase intention. Consumers who receive positive information through online reviews, comments, or recommendations have a greater intention to purchase HMNS products online. This finding indicates that eWOM plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions, especially for Gen Z who often rely on digital information before making transactions.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the conclusions and contents that have been taken, the suggestions that the author can put forward with this research are:

- 1) This study analyzes the impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), brand image, and trust on online purchase intention of local perfume products among Gen Z. For further studies, it is recommended that the population coverage be expanded to include other age groups, such as millennials or generation X, to identify whether their behavioral patterns are in line with or different from Gen Z. In addition, the study can be expanded to other product categories in the beauty or luxury industry that also rely on eWOM and brand image in online purchasing decisions.
- 2) The research approach can be expanded to include other factors that have the potential to influence online purchase intention, such as price, promotion, product quality, and online shopping experience. Future studies can also explore the role of more specific mediators or moderators, such as customer engagement or user experience level in online shopping, to understand how these variables interact to influence purchase decisions.

### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

In this study there are several research limitations:

- 1) The following study not only examines the effects of eWOM, Brand Image, and Trust on Online Purchase Intention on one local perfume brand, namely HMNS. Although it provides valuable insights into the behavior of Gen Z consumers in purchasing perfume online, the results cannot be used as a general reference for all perfume brands, both local and international.
- 2) This study collected data through an online questionnaire, which relies on subjective responses from participants. While questionnaires are effective in collecting large amounts of data in a short period of time, they have limitations in exploring psychological motives and emotional factors that influence purchasing decisions. In-depth interviews or other qualitative methods can provide additional insights into the reasons behind purchasing decisions that cannot be fully explained by quantitative data.

- 3) Another limitation of the following study is the sample size that focuses only on Gen Z. This generation has unique characteristics in digital consumption and interaction, which may not be representative of other age groups. Therefore, the results of the following study cannot be directly generalized to broader consumer segments, such as millennials or older generations, who may consider different factors when purchasing perfume online.
- 4) This study has not included external variables that can influence Online Purchase Intention, such as price, promotion, consumer purchasing power, and sensory experience of perfume. These factors can act as important mediating variables in understanding purchasing decisions more deeply. Therefore, further research can consider these aspects to provide a more holistic insight into online perfume consumption patterns.

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