The Influence Of Electronic Word Of Mouth And Brand Image On Purchasing Decisions; The Role Of Brand Trust As A Mediation Variable (Study of Xiaomi Brand Smartphone Users in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this research is to determine the role of brand trust as a mediating variable in the influence of electronic word of mouth variables and brand image variables on purchasing decision variables. This research is included in quantitative research. The type of data in this research is quantitative data and the data source uses primary data. The population in this study were all Xiaomi brand smartphone users in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency. The sampling method used was non-probability sampling using purposive sampling technique. The data analysis method uses Partial Least Square (PLS) and the data is processed using SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. The research results show that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust as a mediating variable, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust as a mediating variable.
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INTRODUCTION

Smartphones become an effective solution for the community to support daily life both in conducting business and in various other activities. The development of telecommunications technology in Indonesia has progressed very rapidly, this is shown by the increasing number of smartphone users. Consumer choices for smartphone brands are increasingly diverse.

In Indonesia itself, there are several smartphone brands that are known to the public. One of them is the Xiaomi brand. Xiaomi is an electronics company headquartered in Beijing. Founded in 2010. The founder and CEO of Xiaomi is Lei Jun. Xiaomi is one of the companies that released its first smartphone in August 2011. The Xiaomi brand itself has become known to the Chinese public since 2011, and began to enter Indonesia in 2014 (Liputan6.com).

One of the factors that is very influential in marketing a product is electronic word of mouth, this is important considering that we are currently in an era where technology has developed very rapidly. Electronic word of mouth is the most powerful medium for communicating products or services to two or more people, because basically people are more interested in products that have been purchased or used by someone because they are more trustworthy and can see their experience using the product. This is in the form of a positive or negative statement because this can influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers whether to buy the product or not.

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Xiaomi itself has a strategy to build their brand image by forming a community in Indonesia with the name Xiaomi Community. This community consists of Xiaomi fans who initially tried one of Xiaomi's products. Apart from being consumers, Xiaomi smartphone users also participate in a community to provide advice for other users or those who will use similar smartphones and many users exchange information, share experiences in using products and provide recommendations for buying Xiaomi smartphones.

When a consumer has placed trust in a brand, this increases the likelihood that they will make a purchasing decision about that brand. Purchasing decisions are the result of the process of choosing from several available options or alternatives(Suprapti, 2010).

Based on the introduction that has been stated, this research wants to develop marketing management literature by examining an integration model and concept measurement that can provide a new picture of "The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions Through Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable" (User Study Xiaomi Brand Smartphone in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency).

METHODS

Types of research
This type of research is quantitative research. Quantitative research is research on samples and research populations. In conducting quantitative research, individuals need to collect data based on research instruments created such as questionnaires. And then individuals can carry out the next process, namely data analysis. Quantitative research aims to test previously established hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2015). In this research, quantitative research is used to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth and brand image on purchasing decisions through brand trust as a mediating variable.

Population and Sample
Population according to Sugiyono (2015) is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the author to be studied and then conclusions drawn. Population is not only people but also objects and other natural objects. The population in this research is all Xiaomi smartphone consumers in Aru Islands Regency.

Sampling in this study used a non-random sampling method or non-probability sampling using a purposive sampling technique or subjectively aimed sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples with consideration and having certain criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). The reason researchers use purposive sampling techniques is so that researchers really get the information they need from the right respondents. The sample criteria in this research are:
1   Respondents are Xiaomi smartphone consumers in Aru Islands Regency
2   Respondents were at least 17 years old when filling out the questionnaire.

Sampling was based on the consideration that respondents had previously purchased and used Xioami smartphone products. The sample chosen by the researcher as the data source needed for this research was Xiaomi smartphone consumers in the Aru Islands Regency.
Determining the minimum and maximum representative sample size according to Hair, JF, Jr., RE Anderson, RL (1998) depends on the number of indicators multiplied by 5 to 10. The sample size calculation for this research is as follows:
Minimum Sample Size = 20 x 5 = 100
Maximum Sample Size = 20 x 10 = 200

Furthermore, according to Hair, JF, Jr., RE Anderson, RL (1998), even though there is no correct sample size, the appropriate sample size is between 100 - 200 samples. In this research, there are a total of 20 indicator items used to measure 4 variables, so the number of respondents used is 20

indicator items x 5 = 100 + 4 (variables) = 104 minimum respondents, while the maximum sample size is 20 indicator items x 10 = 200 + 4 (variable) = 204. The sample used in this research is the minimum sample, namely 104 samples.

Operational Definition of Variables
In this research, there are three types of variables studied, consisting of independent variables, dependent variables and mediating variables. Independent variables are variables that influence the dependent variable, either positive or negative. In this research the independent variables are electronic word of mouth and brand image. The dependent variable is the variable that is central to the research or can be said to be the variable that is influenced. In this research, the dependent variable is the purchasing decision. A mediating variable is an intermediary variable that connects the independent variable with the dependent variable. In this research, what acts as a mediating variable is brand trust.

Data analysis method
In this research, we will use the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach which is a part and alternative of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is based on Variance Based SEM or Partial Least Square (PLS) and processed using the help of SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. Ghozali & Latan (2015) stated that SEM based on Variance Based SEM or Partial Least Square (PLS) is a powerful analysis method which is not based on many assumptions. Apart from that, the data obtained does not have to be normally distributed and the sample does not have to be large so research that has a small sample can still use Partial Least Square. PLS uses a three-stage literacy process and each literacy stage produces an estimate. This stage starts from measuring the model (outer model), model structure (inner model). and hypothesis testing (bootstrapping) (Ghozali, 2014).

Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)
Outer model analysis aims to explain the relationship between variables and their indicators, or it could be said that the outer model defines how each indicator relates to its variables. In the measurement model analysis, there are 2 things that must be tested, namely the Validity test and the Reliability test.

Validity test
Validity is a measure that shows the level of validity of an instrument. Validity testing is carried out to measure the authenticity or validity of a questionnaire (Ghozali, 2011). The Validity Test in SmartPLS can be said to be valid if the Outer Loading value is at least 0.7 and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value is at least 0.5.

Reliability Test
Reliability tests are carried out to prove the accuracy, consistency and precision of the instrument in measuring the construct. This test is also useful to ensure that the respondent's answer is an answer that can be accepted and trusted by the researcher and that the answer given by the respondent is the actual answer. The Reliability Test in SmartPLS can be seen from the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values with a minimum value of 0.7.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)
Inner model analysis was carried out with the aim of finding out the relationship

between variables in the research model. In this research, testing the inner model will use the coefficient of determination (R2) and Path Coefficients tests.

R Square (R2)
The coefficient of determination test is used to measure how much the independent variable can influence the dependent variable. The measurement standard for testing the coefficient of determination is 0.67, which means that the model is good, 0.33, which means that the model is moderate, and 0.19, which means that the model is weak. So, if the R2 value is close to zero, then the ability of the independent variable to explain the dependent variable is very limited, and vice versa. If the R2 value is close to one, then the independent variable is able to explain the dependent variable.

PathCoefficients
Pathcoefficients are values that indicate the direction of the variable relationship, whether the relationship is positive or negative. The path coefficient value is in the range -1 to 1. If the path coefficient value is in the range 0 to -1 it means the relationship is negative, conversely if the path coefficient value is in the range 0 to 1 it means the relationship is positive.

Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping)
Hypothesis testing is a procedure that will produce a decision, namely the decision to accept or reject a previously formulated hypothesis. Hypothesis testing in PLS can use the Bootstrapping method. Bootstrapping testing is intended to minimize the problem of non-normality in a study. When carrying out the hypothesis testing process, you can pay attention to the T-statistic value and probability value. The T-statistic value that will be used is 1.96 with a significance level of 5%, so it can be said that:
1.   Significant effect when the T-statistic value is > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05.
2.   No significant effect when the T-statistic value < 1.96 and P-values > 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Validity test

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Variable	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0.736
Brand Image	0.784
Brand Trust	0.762
Buying decision	0.773

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

An indicator is declared valid if the Outer Loading value is at least 0.7 and the AVE value is at least 0.5.

Reliability Test

Table 2. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values

Variable	*Composite Reliability*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0.920	0.905
Brand Image	0.949	0.948
Brand Trust	0.945	0.926
Buying decision	0.943	0.941

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

Reliability testing can be carried out by looking at the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values with a minimum value of 0.7 which can be described as follows:

1. The Composite Reliability value for the Electronic Word Of Mouth variable is said to be reliable because the Composite Reliability value is 0.920 > 0.7
2. The Composite Reliability value for the Brand Image variable is said to be reliable because the Composite Reliability value is 0.949 > 0.7
3. The Composite Reliability value for the Brand Trust variable is said to be reliable because the Composite Reliability value is 0.945 > 0.7
4. The Composite Reliability value for the Purchase Decision variable is said to be reliable because the Composite Reliability value is 0.943 > 0.7
5. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the Electronic Word Of Mouth variable is said to be reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.905 > 0.7
6. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the Brand Image variable is said to be reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.948 > 0.7
7. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the Brand Trust variable is said to be reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.926 > 0.7
8. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the Purchasing Decision variable is said to be reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.941 > 0.7

From the description above, it can be concluded that all variables have been declared reliable because the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values have met the specified requirements, namely 0.7.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)
R Square(R2)

Table 3. *R Square*

Variable	*R Square*
Brand Trust	0.57
Buying decision	0.29

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

The measurement standard for testing the coefficient of determination is 0.67, which means that the model is good, 0.33, which means that the model is moderate, and 0.19, which means that the model is weak. The R Square value of the Brand Trust variable is 0.57, which means it is moderate because the value is still below 0.67. The R Square value for the Purchase Decision variable is 0.29, which means it is moderate because the value is still above 0.19.

The R Square value means the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this case, the influence of the Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Image variables is 57% on the Brand Trust variable and 43% is the influence of other variables. This means that the opportunity for other variables to influence the Brand Trust variable is 43%. Likewise, the influence of the Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Image variables is 29% on the Purchasing Decision variable and 71% is the influence of other variables. This means that the opportunity for other variables to influence the Purchasing Decision variable is 71%.

Path Coefficients

Table 4. *Path*Coefficients

	Electronic Word Of Mouth	Brand Image	Brand Trust	Buying decision
Electronic Word Of Mouth			0.347	
Brand Image			0.454	
Brand Trust				0.534
Buying decision				

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

*Path*coefficients are values that indicate the direction of the variable relationship, whether the relationship is positive (+) or negative (-). It has a positive effect if the path coefficient value is in the range 0 to 1 and a negative effect if the path coefficient value is in the range 0 to -1.

1. *Electronic Word Of Mouth*shows a positive relationship towards Brand Trust because it has a path coefficient value of 0.347
2. Brand Image shows a positive relationship towards Brand Trust because it has a path coefficient value of 0.454
3. Brand Trust shows a positive relationship towards Purchasing Decisions because it has a path coefficient value of 0.534

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Electronic Word Of Mouth→ Brand Trust	3,454	0.001
Brand Image→ Brand Trust	4,547	0,000
Brand Trust→ Purchase Decision	4,650	0,000

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

Hypothesis testing is said to have a significant effect when the T-statistic value is > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05. Meanwhile, it is said to have no significant effect when the T-statistic value < 1.96 and P-values > 0.05.

1. The relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 3.454 and a P-value of 0.001. This means that the Brand Image variable has a significant influence on the Brand Trust variable because it has a T-statistic value > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05.
2. The relationship between Brand Image and Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 4.547 and a P-value of 0.000. This means that the Electronic Word of Mouth variable has a significant influence on the Brand Trust variable because it has a T-statistic value > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05.
3. The relationship between brand trust and purchasing decisions has a T-statistic value of 4.650 and a P-value of 0.000. This means that the Brand Trust variable has a significant influence on the Purchase Decision variable because it has a T-statistic value > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05.

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Table 6. Test the Mediation Hypothesis

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Electronic Word Of Mouth → Brand Trust → Purchaser Decision	0.175	3,158	0.001
Brand Image→ Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.230	2,347	0.017

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing (2024)

Mediation hypothesis testing was carried out to see the indirect relationship between the Electronic Word of Mouth variables and Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions through the Brand Trust variable as a mediating variable.

1. The indirect relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchasing Decisions through Brand Trust has a path coefficient value of 0.175, T-statistics of 3.158 and P-values of 0.001. This means that the Brand Image variable has an indirect positive and significant influence on the Purchasing Decision variable through the Brand Trust variable because it has path coefficient values in the range of 0 to 1 and has T-statistic values > 1.96 and also P-values < 0.05.
2. The indirect relationship between Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions through Brand Trust has a path coefficient value of 0.230, T-statistics of 2.347 and P-values of 0.017. This means that the Electronic Word of Mouth variable has a positive and significant indirect influence on the Purchasing Decision variable through the Brand Trust variable because it has a path coefficient value in the range of 0 to 1 and has a T-statistic value > 1.96 and also P-values < 0, 05.

Discussion of Research Results
The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Trust
Based on the research results, it is known that the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 3.454 and a P-value of 0.001. This shows that the T-statistic value is 3.454 > 1.96 and the P-value is 0.001 < 0.05 and has a positive relationship direction because it has a path coefficient value of 0.347. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust.

This shows that positive Electronic Word Of Mouth references are one way to build trust in the Xiaomi brand. Therefore, various information obtained from various online/social media must provide real information so that other consumers can see and decide for themselves which brand they should trust.

The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Trust
Based on the research results, it is known that the relationship between Brand Image and Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 4.547 and a P-value of 0.000. This shows that the T-statistic value is 4.547 > 1.96 and the P-value is 0.000 < 0.05 and has a positive relationship direction because it has a path coefficient value of 0.454. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust.

This explains that the Brand Image perceived by consumers influences the emergence of trust in the Xiaomi smartphone brand. The brand image perceived by consumers, such as the view of quality, service and a good company, is able to make consumers believe. (Cindy 2014).

The Influence of Brand Trust on Purchasing Decisions
Based on the research results, it is known that the relationship between Brand Trust and Purchasing Decisions has a T-statistic value of 4.650 and a P-value of 0.000. This shows that the T-statistic value is 4.650 > 1.96 and the P-value is 0.000 < 0.05 and has a positive relationship direction because it has

a path coefficient value of 0.534. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions.

This shows that consumers' high brand trust in the Xiaomi brand will further increase purchasing decisions for Xiaomi smartphone products.

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions Through Brand Trust

Based on the research results, it is known that the indirect relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchasing Decisions through Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 3.158 and a P-value of 0.001. This shows that the T-statistic value is 3.158 > 1.96 and the P-value is 0.001 < 0.05 and has a positive relationship direction because it has a path coefficient value of 0.175. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions through the mediation of Brand Trust.

If positive electronic word of mouth references are often made by consumers on various online/social media, this will indirectly increase trust in the Xiaomi brand among other consumers, so this will make consumers more confident in making purchasing decisions.

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be seen that the brand trust variable is successful in mediating the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions Through Brand Trust

Based on the research results, it is known that the indirect relationship between Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions through Brand Trust has a T-statistic value of 2.347 and a P-value of 0.017. This shows that the T-statistic value is 2.347 > 1.96 and the P-value is 0.017 < 0.05 and has a positive relationship direction because it has a path coefficient value of 0.230. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions through the mediation of Brand Trust.

This shows that indirectly brand trust also influences when consumers want to make purchasing decisions about Xiaomi smartphones. When a brand has a good image, it will influence consumers' perceptions of the brand. A good image for consumers will form trust in the brand which can indirectly influence the decision to buy the product.

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be seen that the brand trust variable is successful in mediating the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the testing and analysis that has been carried out in this research, the researcher can draw the conclusion that: The research results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust. In this case it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth can increase trust in the Xiaomi smartphone brand in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency. The research results show that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust. In this case it can be concluded that brand image can increase trust in the Xiaomi smartphone brand in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency. The research results show that Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. In this case it can be concluded that brand trust can increase purchasing decisions for Xiaomi smartphones in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency. The research results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions through the mediation of Brand Trust. In this case it can be concluded that Electronic Word of Mouth can increase purchasing decisions if mediated by brand trust, which means that the decision to purchase a Xiaomi smartphone in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency depends on the level of positive electronic word of mouth references and also the level of trust in the Xiaomi brand. The research results show that Brand

Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions through the mediation of Brand Trust. In this case it can be concluded that brand image can increase purchasing decisions if it is mediated by brand trust, which means that the decision to purchase a Xiaomi smartphone in Dobo City, Aru Islands Regency depends on the Brand Image of the Xiaomi smartphone and also the level of trust in the Xiaomi brand.

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