# The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and Brand Image on Consumer Loyalty with Consumer Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable on Samsung Smartphone Users in Banten Province

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and brand image on consumer loyalty with consumer satisfaction as a mediating variable on Samsung smartphone users in Banten Province. Data analysis was conducted on 180 respondents using regression with smartPLS software version 4.1.1.2 which was used to test the seven hypotheses in this study. The results of this study indicate that: (1) electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a negative and insignificant effect on consumer loyalty. (2) brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. (3) electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a positive but insignificant effect on consumer satisfaction. (4) brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction. (5) consumer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. (6) consumer satisfaction is unable to mediate the effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on consumer loyalty. (7) consumer satisfaction is able to partially mediate the effect of brand image on consumer loyalty.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The number of smartphone users in Indonesia is predicted to continue to increase due to the increasing affordability of smartphones. By 2025, it is predicted that at least 89.2% of the population in Indonesia will have used smartphones. Since 2019, smartphone penetration in Indonesia has increased by 25.9% in a period of six years (Pusparisa, 2020). The high demand for smartphones by the public has resulted in increasing demand for various smartphone brands. This can encourage many companies to offer smartphone products, so that the smartphone market competition is getting tighter. Tight market competition requires companies to maintain consumer satisfaction and loyalty in order to maintain the company's survival (Ritonga et al., 2022).

Based on data from Top Brand Index, Samsung is the most popular smartphone brand for the past seven years with a value of 48.60% in 2018. In 2020, Samsung experienced an increase in value to 46.5%, but dropped significantly by 13.8% to 32.70% in the following years until 2024. The data indicates a decline in consumer loyalty to Samsung smartphones due to the presence of new competing brands that have succeeded in attracting consumer interest by offering products with

attractive innovations. Analysts say that the decline in Samsung's market share is due to intense competition from Chinese companies (Meilina, 2024).

The author's pre-survey results show that 15 out of 30 or 50% of Samsung smartphone users in Banten province switched to using smartphones from other brands. The existence of Samsung consumers who switched to other brands indicates that there is a decline and problem in the loyalty of Samsung smartphone consumers in Banten province.

Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) is considered capable of influencing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavior in making decisions to purchase a product and in building trust in a company. Positive electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) will encourage consumers to be loyal and continue to use the products offered by the company through positive assessments shared by previous consumers on the internet (Tjahjaningsih et al., 2024). To increase competitiveness in the business world, companies must also build and create a good brand image in the eyes of consumers. Brand image is one of the keys to maintaining consumer loyalty because a brand will not get a good place in the market if it does not have a good brand image (Ngabiso et al., 2021). A good brand image can be formed from the emotional feelings of consumers based on considerations of their positive experiences (Jasin et al., 2023). A strong brand image will be firmly embedded in the minds of consumers, so that they will be loyal to the company in the future (Leonardo et al., 2021).

Research results of Hidayahtuhllah & Asteria (2024), Pritjahjono et al. (2023) and (Nawastuti & Irmawati (2023), show that e-wom has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. Differences in results are stated by research by Syamsu et al. (2024), Jamhadi & Rosyid (2023) and Putri et al. (2023) which show that e-wom does not have a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. Research results of Ramadhan (2020), Ritonga et al. (2022) and Handayani et al. (2021) show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. While the research results of Nurazis & Nisa (2024), Jasin et al. (2023) and Haryadi & Syahruddin (2023) show that brand image does not have a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty.

Based on the differences in the results of previous studies, there needs to be a variable that mediates the differences in these results. In this study, the consumer satisfaction variable is used as a mediating variable. Consumer satisfaction with electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and the company's brand image can lead to consumer loyalty.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Consumer Behavior Theory**

Consumer behavior is a consumer activity including searching, researching, and evaluating products that underlie consumers in making purchasing decisions for goods or services (Firmansyah, 2018). Loyalty can be seen from brand references or emotional commitments from consumers through the perspective of consumer behavior, therefore loyalty can be measured by the level of consumer desire to repurchase a product, not switching even though there are better alternative competing products, more tolerance for price, and the desire to recommend the product to others (Muhammad, 2018).

# **Consumer Loyalty**

Loyalty is a form of consumer loyalty to a particular product or brand (Ramadhan, 2020). The form of consumer loyalty is the consumer's commitment to repurchase and continue to be a customer in the future (Keni & Sandra, 2021). Consumer loyalty can be measured by the consumer's willingness to continue using the company's products, spreading positive information to others, not using other companies' products, and feeling satisfied with the results of use (Wijayani & Prambudi, 2020).

# **Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)**

Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) is information in the form of reviews from consumers on the internet in the form of writing, images, videos or even comments on other consumers' opinions regarding products or services (Sadeli & Aritonang, 2024). E-wom functions as a communication tool between consumers that can be accessed via the internet to express shopping experiences, share information about a product and influence other consumers before making a purchasing decision (Hidayahtuhllah & Asteria, 2024). E-wom can be measured using the indicators: feeling worried if not reading online reviews (Hamid et al., 2024), online reviews are an important source of information (Hasan et al., 2020), often relying on other people's reviews to help choose products, gathering insights from online reviews before purchasing a product and Confidence in purchasing products increases due to online reviews (Rahman et al., 2023).

# **Brand Image**

Brand image is a consumer perception in the form of trust and choice towards a brand, a set of brand associations plays an important role in the process of determining choices when consumers compare brands using their memories, perceptions, and beliefs towards a brand (Cholifah & AS, 2023). Brand image can be measured using the indicators: brand has distinctive characteristics, brand has many variants, brand always prioritizes quality, and brand is easy to pronounce and remember (Wijayani & Prambudi, 2020).

#### **Consumer Satisfaction**

Consumer satisfaction is defined as the consumer's response to expectations and experiences after consuming or choosing a product (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2020). Consumer satisfaction occurs when the product's performance results are able to meet consumer desires (Kusnanto et al., 2023). According to Ellitan in Suryaningsih et al. (2021), brand image can be measured using the indicators: no complaints, feeling happy with the overall product, service conformity with expectations, and exceeded consumer expectations.

#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This type of research is quantitative descriptive research that aims to determine the influence between research variables using hypotheses. The sampling technique in this study is nonprobability sampling with snowball sampling and purposive sampling methods. The population of the study was Samsung smartphone users domiciled in Banten who had used Samsung smartphones for one year or more. The number of samples used in this study was 180 respondents. A 10-point interval scale

(ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 10 = strongly agree) was designed to ask respondents to rate 17 closed statements in the questionnaire survey. The data analysis technique in this study used the Structural Equation Model - Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software version 4.1.1.2. There are two stages in the analysis using SmartPLS, namely: calculating the algorithm and bootstrapping.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### Result

Based on table 1, all indicators of the research variables can be said to be valid because they have met the requirements with a loading factor > 0.5 and an AVE > 0.5. This means that the indicators in each variable can be declared valid and have represented the latent variables, so that the model built is feasible and can be analyzed to a further stage. Each construct has a cronbach's alpha > 0.60 and a composite reliability > 0.70, so it can be concluded that the measuring instrument used in this study can be declared consistent or reliable.

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Electronic Word of	WOM1	0,756	0,854	0,894	0,629
Mouth (E-WOM)	WOM2	0,759			
	WOM3	0,822			
	WOM4	0,792			
	WOM5	0,834			
Brand Image	CM1	0,758	0,767	0,846	0,580
_	CM2	0,704			
	CM3	0,847			
	CM5	0,729			
Consumer Satisfaction	KK1	0,811	0,893	0,926	0,580
	KK2	0,889			
	KK3	0,906			
	KK4	0,874			
Consumer Loyalty	LK1	0,875	0,854	0,901	0,695
	LK2	0,847			
	LK3	0,754			
	LK4	0,855			

Source: SmartPLS Output

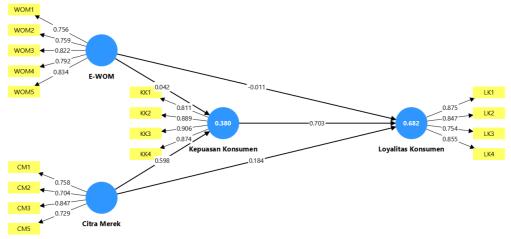


Figure 1. Research Model Source: SmartPLS Output

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination or R-Square

Dependent Variable	R-Square		
Consumer Satisfaction	0,380		
Consumer Loyalty	0,682		

Source: SmartPLS Output

Based on table 2, this study has met the requirements and is worthy of further analysis because both dependent variables in this study have an r-square value more than 0.10. The dependent variable can be said to be good if it has an r-square value of more than 0.10 (Ichwanuddin, 2018). The consumer satisfaction variable has a r-square value of 0.380, which means that 38% of consumer satisfaction has been explained by e-wom and brand image variables, while 62% is explained by other variables not included in this study. The consumer loyalty variable has a r-square value of 0.682, which means that 68.2% of consumer loyalty has been explained by e-wom, brand image and consumer satisfaction variables, while 31.8% is explained by other variables not included in this study.

Table 3. Standardized Root Mean Residual

Saturated Model Estimated Model

Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) 0,079 0,079

Source: SmartPLS Output

Standardized root mean residual (SRMR) values above 0.1 indicate problems with model fit (Hair et al., 2019). Based on table 3 above, SRMR value obtained is 0.079. This value is smaller than 0.1, so this research model can be declared fit or suitable.

**Table 4. Path Coefficients** 

Table III all Committee						
	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values			
E-WOM → Consumer Loyalty	-0,011	0,225	0,822			
Brand Image → Consumer Loyalty	0,184	2,836	0,005			
E-WOM → Consumer Satisfaction	0,042	0,510	0,610			
Brand Image → Consumer Satisfaction	0,598	8,567	0,000			
Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty	0,703	14,027	0,000			
E-WOM → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty	0,030	0,502	0,616			
Brand Image → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty	0,420	7,588	0,000			

Source: SmartPLS Output

The significance of the influence between variables is determined by the t-statistic and p-value, where the influence can be considered significant if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 (Dulyadi, 2021).

Based on table 4 above, the results of testing direct and indirect relationships for each research hypothesis are as follows:

- $\rm H_1$ : Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has no positive and insignificant effect on consumer loyalty. This is proven by the original sample value of -0.011, the t-statistic value of 0.225 is smaller than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.822 (>0.05).
- $H_2$ : Brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. This is proven by the original sample value of 0.184, the t-statistic value of 2.836 is greater than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.005 (<0.05).
- H<sub>3</sub>: Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a positive but insignificant effect on consumer satisfaction. This is proven by the original sample value of 0.042, the tstatistic value of 0.510 is smaller than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.610 (>0.05).

- H<sub>4</sub>: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.598, the t-statistic value of 8.567 is greater than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05).
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  m H}_5$ : Consumer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.703, the t-statistic value of 14.027 is greater than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05).
- H<sub>6</sub>: Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a positive but insignificant effect on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.030, the t-statistic value of 0.502 is smaller than the t-table (1.96) and the significance with a p-value of 0.616 (>0.05). The type of mediation effect in this relationship is no-effect, because the influence of e-wom on consumer loyalty is not significant, both direct and indirect influences through consumer satisfaction.
- H<sub>7</sub>: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.420, the t-statistic value of 7.588 is greater than the t-table (1.96) and significance with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). The type of mediation effect of this relationship is complementary (partial mediation) because the direct and indirect effects of brand image on consumer loyalty are both significant and lead in the same direction (positive).

#### **Discussions**

# **Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Consumer Loyalty**

The results of this study are not in line with the results of previous studies conducted by Hidayahtuhllah & Asteria (2024), Soraya et al. (2023), Fazrin & Safira (2022), Wijaya & Yulita (2020), Muis et al. (2020) and Jesslyn & Loisa (2019) which have the results of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) having a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. These results indicate that the better the electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) received by consumers, the consumer loyalty tends to decrease. However, the observed influence is not statistically strong enough, so the influence is not practically significant or cannot be relied upon. This means that even though there is a relationship between variables, changes in e-wom do not significantly affect consumer loyalty.

## **Brand image on Consumer Loyalty**

The results of this study are similar to the results of previous studies conducted by Priyankha & Sulistyawati (2023), Ritonga et al. (2022), Handayani et al. (2021), Wulandari et al. (2021), Ramadhan (2020) and Listyawati (2018) which showed that brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. These results indicate that the better the brand image in the eyes of consumers, the more consumer loyalty tends to increase. A strong brand image can increase consumer trust in a product, so that brand image can create consumer interest in making repeat purchases through the consumer trust that has been built (Soraya et al., 2023).

## **Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Consumer Satisfaction**

The results of this study are not in line with the results of studies conducted by Hamid et al. (2024), Rizkyta et al. (2024), Nawastuti & Irmawati (2023), Jamhadi &

Rosyid (2023), Itasari et al. (2020) and Muis et al. (2020) which have e-wom results that have a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction. These results indicate that the better the e-wom received by consumers, the more consumer satisfaction tends to increase. However, the observed influence is not statistically strong enough, so that the influence is not practically significant or cannot be relied on. This means that even though there is a relationship between variables, changes in e-wom do not significantly affect consumer satisfaction.

# **Brand Image on Consumer Satisfaction**

The results of this study are similar to the results of previous studies conducted by Ritonga et al. (2022), Praja & Haryono (2022), Darmadi et al. (2021), Handayani et al. (2021), Wulandari et al. (2021) and Suastini & Mandala (2019) which found that brand image had a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction. Brand image can influence consumer satisfaction through reputation which creates positive value and trust in the minds of consumers (Wulandari et al., 2021). A good brand image is able to convince consumers and show that the company has a uniqueness that differentiates it from other brands, so the better the brand image given by the company to its consumers, the more consumer satisfaction will increase (Nurazis & Nisa, 2024).

# **Consumer Satisfaction on Consumer Loyalty**

The results of this study are similar to the results of previous studies conducted by Ghazali & Sholahuddin (2024), Priyankha & Sulistyawati (2023), Arif & Yulianti (2023), Ramadhani & Nurhadi (2022), Purnomo (2021) and Handayani et al. (2021) which found that consumer satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. These results indicate that the higher the consumer satisfaction, the more consumer loyalty tends to increase. The attitudes and behavior of satisfied consumers will show signs of their loyalty to a brand because brand loyalty can be directly influenced by consumer satisfaction with the brand (Lestari et al., 2021).

# Consumer Satisfaction Moderates the Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Consumer Loyalty

Consumer satisfaction does not moderate the relationship between electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and consumer loyalty, consumer satisfaction with the electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) received does not guarantee that consumers will be loyal. The results of this study are not in line with the results of previous studies conducted by Rizkyta et al., 2024), Hamid et al. (2024), Azhari et al. (2023), Nawastuti & Irmawati (2023) and Habibi & Zakipour (2022) which have the results of e-wom having a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction.

# Consumer Satisfaction Moderates the Effect of Brand image on Consumer Loyalty

Consumer satisfaction can mediate the relationship between brand image and consumer loyalty. The satisfaction felt by consumers towards Samsung's brand image makes consumers willing to continue using Samsung products. The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by Nurazis & Nisa (2024), Leke et al. (2023), Ritonga et al. (2022), Wulandari et al. (2021) and Suastini & Mandala (2019) which have results that brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction. Feelings of satisfaction with a

company's image that is well-known and trusted by the public will make consumers loyal and continue to buy the company's products (Ritonga et al., 2022). Consumers will be loyal and recommend products to others when they are satisfied with the company's image (Suastini & Mandala, 2019).

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that brand image has a significant influence on consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Samsung is considered a brand that has many smartphone variants and has a brand that is easy to pronounce and remember, so consumers feel satisfied with the results of using Samsung products and are willing to spread positive information about Samsung smartphones to others. Consumer satisfaction also affects consumer loyalty, because the less complaints felt by consumers, the more consumers will be willing not to use other companies' products. On the other hand, e-wom does not have a significant influence on consumer satisfaction and loyalty because consumer satisfaction and loyalty do not only depend on online reviews and recommendations. Consumer satisfaction is proven to moderate the relationship between brand image and consumer loyalty. However, consumer satisfaction does not moderate the relationship between e-wom and consumer loyalty.

Companies are advised to continue to innovate to produce high-quality products that are in accordance with market needs in order to improve brand image and consumer satisfaction. This is important for companies to create consumer loyalty. Here are important managerial implications for Samsung:

- Samsung smartphones are often priced at or even higher than competitors with similar specifications. Therefore, Samsung must continue to innovate in the midrange segment with the Galaxy A series that has attractive features at a more affordable price, as well as offering bundles with accessories or special discounts. By increasing value for money, the company can maintain the loyalty of pricesensitive consumers.
- 2. Samsung smartphones have many pre-installed applications that are not always needed by users and can take up smartphone storage space. Therefore, Samsung must provide users with the option to uninstall or disable unwanted pre-installed applications.
- 3. Samsung needs to develop more competitive fast charging technology to be able to compete with Chinese competitors who offer super-fast fast charging technology.
- 4. Samsung no longer includes a charger in the box, which means consumers must purchase it separately. To prevent consumers from switching to other brands, Samsung must reconsider its charger-in-the-box policy or offer a charger bundle at a discount.
- 5. Several Samsung series have designs that tend to be monotonous and similar to each other. Therefore, Samsung must create design innovations in all segments to be able to improve product characteristics.

This study can be a reference for further research by adding values such as price, product quality, promotion, and warranty. Further research is also advised to involve more and more experienced respondents in order to obtain more comprehensive results.

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