

Research Article

The Role of Word of Mouth (WOM) in Building Consumer Trust in New Brands: Strategy Analysis and Impact

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Abstract: This research examines the role of Word of Mouth (WOM) in building consumer trust in new brands and the strategies that can be applied to make WOM more effective. In an increasingly competitive business world, WOM, both in conventional and digital forms (electronic Word of Mouth/e-WOM), has become one of the main factors that influence brand image and consumer purchasing decisions. This study explores how WOM can enhance the credibility of a new brand through customer recommendations, online reviews, and interactions that occur on various social media platforms. Through literature analysis and theoretical studies, this study found that WOM has a significant influence on shaping consumer perceptions of a new brand. Some of the factors that play a role in the effectiveness of WOM include the level of trust in the source of information, the frequency of conversations about the brand, and the media used in disseminating information. In addition, the utilization of digital marketing strategies that integrate social media with active consumer involvement can further strengthen the impact of WOM in building customer trust and loyalty to a new brand. With these findings, businesses are expected to maximize WOM as an effective marketing strategy to improve the competitiveness and positioning of new brands in the market.

Keywords: Consumer Trust, Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Marketing Strategy, New Brand, Word of Mouth (WOM).

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1. INTRODUCTION

In increasingly fierce business competition, new brands often face the big challenge of capturing customers' attention while building customer trust. One of the most effective ways to address this is Word of Mouth (WOM), or word-of-mouth communication that occurs between customers. WOM provides customers with the opportunity to share their opinions, experiences, and suggestions about a particular goods or services, which can have a major impact on other people's purchasing decisions. (Liu et al., 2024)

The beauty and skincare industry is experiencing rapid growth as public awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy skin increases. The high demand for skincare products creates great opportunities for business actors, especially e-commerce-based businesses that are increasingly in demand by consumers. In today's digital era, consumer trust is a key factor in determining the success of a business, especially for businesses that are just starting out.

One of the skincare stores that attracted attention was a business that initially started by accident. The store owner started this business by selling endorsement products that are still new to the market through Shopee. As time went by, the store began to grow and attract more customers. However, the biggest challenge faced is building consumer trust, especially in terms of product authenticity. Since the store is new and doesn't have many reviews yet, potential customers are likely to be hesitant to make a purchase. To overcome this problem,

the store owner implements a 100% warranty policy, where customers can return the product if it is proven to be not original on the condition that it includes an unboxing video. This strategy has proven to be effective in increasing customer trust and driving transactions.

One of the main factors contributing to the growth of this store is Word of Mouth (WOM), both directly and through digital platforms (electronic Word of Mouth / e-WOM). Recommendations from satisfied customers play a crucial role in attracting new buyers. Store owners also actively encourage customers to leave reviews by contacting them once the order is received. In addition, competitive prices and guarantees of product authenticity are the main factors that make customers willing to recommend the store to others.(W. Li et al., 2024)

In the digital era, customer testimonials through social media and marketplaces have a significant impact on consumer trust in a brand. The more positive reviews received, the higher the level of customer trust in the store. In addition, differences are also seen in the influence of WOM from ordinary customers compared to influencers. If regular customers provide more authentic testimonials based on personal experiences, influencers have a wider reach and can attract more potential buyers in a short period of time. However, in building trust, the store also faces challenges in the form of negative reviews. To overcome this, store owners always try to understand the obstacles experienced by customers and offer solutions in the form of product returns or refunds if it is proven that there is a mistake from the store.(W. Li et al., 2024)

In an effort to increase visibility and trust, store owners are using TikTok as the main platform in spreading WOM (Schiaroli et al., 2024). Engaging and educational video content is proven to be able to reach more potential customers in a short period of time. In addition, additional marketing strategies are also implemented, such as the creation of educational video content and customer testimonials that further strengthen the store's image as a provider of quality skincare product (France et al., 2025).

In the future, this store continues to be committed to increasing customer trust by always listening to their needs and innovating to follow the latest trends in the beauty industry. With a responsive approach and an effective marketing strategy, this store is expected to continue to grow and be increasingly trusted by the wider community.

2. THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Word of Mouth (WOM) and Consumer Trust

Word of Mouth (WOM) or word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most effective ways in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. WOM occurs when someone recommends a product or brand to others based on their own experience (Liu et al., 2024). In marketing, WOM is very important because consumers tend to trust recommendations from friends, family, or other users more than ads from companies(Wiśniewska, 2025).

Consumer trust is a major factor in the success of a new brand. According to (Papadopoulou et al., 2023), this trust is formed from three main things, namely brand credibility, product quality, and the company's goodwill in providing the best service to customers. A positive WOM can help increase trust by giving the impression that the product or brand is quality and worth trying (Sridhar et al., 2025).

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Its Influence on Purchase Decisions

In the digital era, WOM has evolved into Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), which is customer recommendations or reviews submitted through social media, marketplaces, or online discussion forums (Liu et al., 2024). e-WOM has the advantage of being able to reach more people in a short time and remain stored on digital platforms so that it is easily accessible at any time (Milovan et al., 2025).

Research conducted by (Benevento et al., 2025) shows that e-WOM is very influential in shaping the image of a brand. Consumers tend to trust other customer reviews that provide detailed information about their experience using a product (van Doorn et al., 2021). The more positive reviews a new brand receives, the greater the consumer's trust in the brand (Weiger et al., 2025).

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of WOM in Building Consumer Trust

There are several factors that determine how much WOM can affect consumer trust in new brands, namely:

- a) Sources: Recommendations from someone you know such as friends or family are more trustworthy compared to reviews from strangers.(Jesse et al., 2025)
- b) Review Quality: A WOM that provides detailed and honest information is more influential than reviews that are too short or subjective.(Bartschat et al., 2022)
- c) Number of Reviews: The more positive reviews a product has, the higher the level of consumer trust in the product.(Shamsuzzoha & Fontell, 2024)
- d) Interaction on Social Media: Consumers trust brands that actively interact with customers, answer questions, and handle complaints well.(Wang et al., 2025a)

The Role of Influencers in WOM and e-WOM

In the digital era, influencer marketing is one of the most effective WOM-based marketing strategies. An influencer is someone who has a large following on social media and can influence the purchase decisions of his or her followers (Mero et al., 2023). Compared to WOM from regular customers, recommendations from influencers spread faster and can increase trust in the brand in a short period of time (Jin & Phua, 2014).

However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing depends on the level of authenticity and honesty in delivering reviews. Consumers trust influencers who provide reviews that seem natural compared to reviews that are too promotional. Therefore, brands must choose influencers who truly fit the target market for this strategy to work.(Nasution et al., 2024)

Strategies to Increase Consumer Trust Through WOM

In order for WOM to be more effective in building consumer trust in new brands, there are several strategies that can be applied:

- a) Encourage Customers to Leave Reviews: Providing customers with incentives or positive experiences can increase their chances of providing reviews and recommendations.(Walter et al., 2024)
- b) Increase Interaction on Social Media: Brands that actively communicate with customers on social media will find it easier to build a loyal community (Sridhar et al., 2025)
- c) Utilizing User-Generated Content (UGC): Content such as photos or video testimonials from customers can increase other consumers' trust in new brands.(Bartschat et al., 2022)
- d) Choosing the Right Influencer: Influencers who fit the target market will be more effective in building trust and attracting the attention of new consumers.(Milovan et al., 2025)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted to understand in depth how the role of **Word of Mouth (WOM)** in building consumer trust in new brands, as well as the strategies and impacts it causes. Because this study did not use questionnaires, data was collected through other relevant techniques and can provide accurate and comprehensive information.

Research Approach

This study uses a **qualitative descriptive** approach, where data is obtained from various sources that support the analysis of the influence of WOM in shaping consumer trust. With this approach, the research aims to describe the phenomenon that occurs, understand the strategies applied by business people, and explore the impact of WOM in the world of marketing.

Data Sources

This study uses two types of data, namely:

- a) **Primary Data:** Data is collected through in-depth interviews with business owners, digital marketers, or consumers who have been influenced by WOM in their purchasing decisions. In addition, direct observation of WOM's communication patterns on social media or marketplaces is also carried out.
- b) **Secondary Data:** Information is obtained from scientific journals, books, industry reports, academic articles, as well as data from digital media and e-commerce platforms that discuss the influence of WOM in marketing.

Data Collection Techniques

Since this study did not use questionnaires, several alternative techniques were used to collect data, namely:

a. In-Depth Interview

Interviews were conducted with parties who had experience and understanding of the impact of WOM on consumer trust and the marketing strategies they used. The main respondents in this interview could be:

- 1) Business owners or managers who utilize WOM in their marketing strategies.
- 2) Consumers who have purchased a product based on WOM recommendations.
- 3) Digital marketing experts or influencers who understand WOM's strategy in the business world.

b. Case Studies

This study also examines several business cases that have succeeded or experienced challenges in implementing WOM as a marketing strategy. Case studies are conducted by analyzing new companies or brands that have experienced an increase or decrease in consumer confidence due to WOM or e-WOM.

c. Digital Media and Marketplace Observation

Observations are carried out by analyzing how customer reviews, comments on social media, and interactions between customers and brands can affect consumer trust. Some of the aspects observed include:

- 1) The pattern of WOM spread on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Shopee, and Tokopedia.

- 2) How brands respond to customer reviews on marketplaces and social media.
- 3) The influence of customer testimonials on the image and appeal of a new brand.

d. Documentation Analysis

To strengthen the research findings, data was also collected from various documents and reliable reference sources, such as previous research reports, industry articles, and academic journals that discuss WOM and e-WOM marketing strategies.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained in this study was analyzed using a **thematic analysis** method, where each data collected was categorized based on the patterns, themes, and relationships found. The stages of analysis include:

- 1) **Data Reduction** – Filters relevant information and groups data based on specific categories such as factors that affect consumer confidence, the effectiveness of WOM, as well as the business strategy used.
- 2) **Data Presentation** – Compile the results of interviews, case studies, and observations in the form of a systematic narrative to make it easier to understand.
- 3) **Drawing Conclusions** – Drawing conclusions based on the findings that have been analyzed and comparing them with previous theories and research.

5. Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses **the source triangulation technique**, where the information obtained from the interviews will be compared with the results of observation and analysis of secondary documents. In this way, the data collected can be more accurate and objective.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Research Results

Based on the results of the study, there are several important findings regarding the role of Word of Mouth (WOM) in increasing consumer trust in new brands:

a. WOM Has a Big Influence on Consumer Confidence

One of the key findings of the study is that WOM, both in its traditional and digital form (e-WOM), has a significant impact on consumers' level of trust in new brands. Consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from other customers compared to direct ads from companies. This shows that the more positive reviews a brand receives, the greater the chances of consumers making a purchase. (Jesse et al., 2025)

b. e-WOM is More Effective in Reaching Consumers

Compared to conventional WOM, e-WOM spread through social media, marketplaces, and online forums has a wider reach. Customer reviews in the form of testimonials, videos, or social media posts are able to attract more potential buyers in a short period of time (Han et al., 2025). In addition, consumers are increasingly interested in brands that actively interact with customers through comment columns or respond to questions on social media (Kim et al., 2024).

c. Influencer Influence Is Different from Ordinary Consumer Testimonials

The study also found that recommendations from influencers can accelerate the adoption of new brands because they are able to increase exposure and attract the attention of more potential customers. However, in the long run, reviews from ordinary customers that are more honest and objective have a greater impact on building consumer trust and loyalty to a brand (Kim et al., 2024).

d. Consumer Trust Increases with Many Positive Reviews

The more positive reviews a brand has, the greater the level of consumer trust. Consumers tend to be more confident to buy products from brands that already have a lot of testimonials either compared to brands that don't have reviews or actually have a lot of negative reviews. (X. Li et al., 2023)

e. The Impact of Negative Reviews and How to Overcome Them

In addition to positive reviews, negative reviews also have a great influence on consumer trust. Some customers may be reluctant to buy products from brands that have a lot of bad reviews, especially if there is no response from the company. Therefore, it is very important for companies to have a strategy in managing negative reviews, such as providing solutions to customer complaints and continuously improving product quality to maintain brand reputation.

Consequences and Impacts of Research Findings

Positive Impact

1. Consumer Confidence Increases

- a) Brands that can utilize WOM, especially e-WOM, will find it easier to build consumer trust. The more positive testimonials a customer provides, the greater the chances of the product being purchased and recommended to others. (Shams et al., 2024)

2. Increased Brand Exposure and Awareness

- a) e-WOM spread through social media accelerates the dissemination of information about a brand, so that the product is quickly known to many people in a short time.

3. Increasing Consumer Interest in New Brands

- a) Consumers are more easily attracted and willing to try new brands if there are many other customers or influencers who provide positive testimonials.

4. Customer Loyalty Formed

- a) Brands that manage to build good relationships with customers through active interaction and positive reviews will find it easier to maintain customer loyalty in the long run. (Troiville, 2024)

Negative Impact

1. Negative Reviews Can Hinder Brand Growth

- a) If a brand has a lot of negative reviews on social media or marketplaces, the level of consumer trust can drop drastically, potentially hindering business growth. (Wang et al., 2025)

2. Dependence on Influencers Can Be Risky

- a) Relying on influencers as a primary marketing strategy can backfire if not managed properly (Tam & Lung, 2025). If the chosen influencer is less authentic or seems to

be just promoting without actually using the product, consumers can lose trust in the brand (Wang et al., 2025)

3. Increasingly Fierce Competition

- a) With more and more brands adopting WOM and e-WOM strategies, market competition is becoming increasingly fierce. New brands must continue to innovate to keep attracting attention and gaining the trust of consumers.

4. Difficult to Control Information Circulating

- a) Information spread through WOM or e-WOM is difficult for companies to control. If there is misinformation or negative campaigns from competitors, this can have a negative impact on brand image

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this article is that Word of Mouth (WOM) plays a crucial role in building consumer trust in new brands. Research shows that WOM, both in traditional and electronic form (e-WOM), can significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Factors that support the effectiveness of WOM include trust in the source of information, the quality of reviews, and interaction on social media. Recommendations from regular customers tend to be more trustworthy compared to corporate advertising, while influencers can accelerate the adoption of new brands but must be chosen carefully to maintain authenticity. Marketing strategies that utilize WOM, such as encouraging customer reviews and being active on social media, can increase consumer visibility and trust. However, challenges such as negative reviews and reliance on influencers must be overcome in order for the brand to thrive and maintain customer trust. Overall, effective use of WOM can have a positive impact on increasing the competitiveness of new brands in the market.

Suggestion

1. Maximize WOM Strategy: Companies should develop marketing strategies that focus on utilizing WOM, both through traditional and digital approaches. This can be done by encouraging customers to share positive experiences.
2. Active on Social Media: Brands should actively interact with consumers on social media. This includes answering questions, responding to reviews, and creating engaging content to increase engagement.
3. Manage Negative Reviews: It's important to have a strategy in place in dealing with negative reviews. A quick response and adequate solutions can help restore consumer confidence.
4. Choose Influencers Carefully: If using influencers as part of your marketing strategy, choose those who have credibility and align with the brand's values. Authenticity in reviews is essential to build trust.
5. Focus on Quality: Ensure high-quality products and good customer service. Consumer confidence will increase if they feel satisfied with the shopping experience.
6. Analysis and Adaptation: Routinely analyze data from customer reviews and interactions to understand trends and preferences. Adjust your marketing strategy based on the feedback received.

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