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THE ROLE OF CONSUMER TRUST AS A MEDIATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE CONSUMER REVIEWS (ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH) AND PERCEIVED VALUE ON PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR CULINARY PRODUCTS IN BOGOR

PERAN KEPERCAYAAN KONSUMEN SEBAGAI MEDIATOR DALAM HUBUNGAN ANTARA ULASAN KONSUMEN ONLINE (WORD OF MOUTH ELEKTRONIK) DAN NILAI YANG DIRASAKAN PADA KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN PRODUK KULINER DI BOGOR

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Abstract

This study aims to examine whether consumer trust mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and purchase decisions, as well as the relationship between perceived value and purchase decisions for culinary products in Bogor. The study involved 100 respondents who had previously purchased culinary products in Bogor, selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected because it does not require the assumption of normally distributed data. In addition, PLS-SEM is suitable for relatively small to medium sample sizes, approximately 80–160 respondents, while still providing stable parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2016). The results indicate that consumer trust significantly mediates the relationship between e-WOM and purchase decisions. This finding suggests that e-WOM influences purchase decisions indirectly through consumer trust. Consumer trust also significantly mediates the relationship between perceived value and purchase decisions.

Keywords : Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Perceived Value, Consumer Trust, Purchase Decision, Culinary Products.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji apakah kepercayaan konsumen memediasi hubungan antara electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) dan keputusan pembelian, serta hubungan antara nilai yang

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dirasakan dan keputusan pembelian produk kuliner di Bogor. Penelitian ini melibatkan 100 responden yang sebelumnya telah membeli produk kuliner di Bogor, yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM dipilih karena tidak memerlukan asumsi data berdistribusi normal. Selain itu, PLS-SEM cocok untuk ukuran sampel yang relatif kecil hingga sedang, sekitar 80–160 responden, dan tetap memberikan estimasi parameter yang stabil (Hair et al., 2016). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan konsumen secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara e-WOM dan keputusan pembelian. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM memengaruhi keputusan pembelian secara tidak langsung melalui kepercayaan konsumen. Kepercayaan konsumen juga secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara nilai yang dirasakan dan keputusan pembelian.

Kata Kunci : Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Nilai yang Dirasakan, Kepercayaan Konsumen, Keputusan Pembelian, Produk Kuliner.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology have brought about significant changes in consumer behavior, particularly in the process of information search and purchase decision-making. In today's digital age, consumers no longer rely solely on information provided by companies but also actively seek out and utilize information generated by other consumers through various online platforms. This phenomenon is known as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which reflects a shift in marketing communication patterns from one-way to interactive and community-based approaches.

e-WOM plays a strategic role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences because it is considered more credible and authentic. Consumers tend to trust the experiences of other users more than a company's promotional messages. In practice, online reviews, social media comments, and digital recommendations serve as the primary sources of information before consumers decide to purchase a product, especially in sectors with a high degree of variety, such as the food industry.

In addition to e-WOM, another important factor influencing purchasing decisions is perceived value. Perceived value is the result of consumers' evaluation of the benefits received compared to the sacrifices made. In the culinary context, perceived value is not only determined by taste and price but also encompasses the overall dining experience, including ambiance, service, product uniqueness, and the image associated with a brand. Thus, perceived value is a key determinant in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions.

The city of Bogor is one region with significant potential for the development of the creative economy, particularly in the culinary subsector. This is evident from the dominance of the culinary subsector within the creative economy structure of the City of Bogor. Based on the Study on the Contribution of the Creative Economy and MSMEs to the City of Bogor's GRDP, the culinary subsector is the most dominant creative economy subsector, contributing approximately 69.13% to the City of Bogor's creative economy GRDP at current prices in 2023. The culinary subsector encompasses activities related to the preparation, processing, and serving of food and beverages that prioritize creativity, aesthetics, tradition, and/or local wisdom as part of enhancing product value. This situation indicates that the culinary subsector holds a strategic position in the development of the creative economy and the economy of Bogor City.

Furthermore, the scale of the culinary industry in Bogor is also very significant. According to data from West Java Open Data, the number of culinary MSMEs in the Bogor region exceeds 204,000 business units, making it the region with the largest number of culinary MSMEs in West Java (Tambunan, 2025). In fact, another study indicates that in the city of Bogor alone, there are approximately 45,000 culinary MSMEs actively operating (Amin, 2023). The large number of business operators reflects a high level of competition and a highly competitive market dynamic.

From the demand side, the high level of culinary activity in Bogor is also closely linked to the development of the tourism sector. Research by Utami and Widiati (2023) notes that the number of

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tourist visits to Bogor during the 2018–2021 period reached 17,007,569 people. The study also indicates that Bogor is recognized as a culinary tourism destination, featuring several well-known culinary districts popular among tourists, including Jalan Surya Kencana, Jembatan Merah, Sukasari, Pajajaran, Air Mancur, and Yasmin. Tourists visit not only to enjoy tourist attractions but also to seek culinary experiences at their destinations (Utami & Widiati, 2023). In line with this, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that food and beverage services are a key component of domestic tourism spending, accounting for approximately 29.13% of total domestic tourism spending in 2019. This indicates that culinary experiences serve not only as a basic need for tourists but also as an integral part of the tourism experience and a vital component of the tourism economy.

Although the culinary sector in Bogor City has shown rapid growth and makes a significant contribution to the local economy, the reality on the ground indicates that culinary business owners still face a variety of complex challenges. These challenges are not only internal but also external in nature, which can ultimately influence consumer perceptions, trust, and purchasing decisions.

One of the main challenges faced by culinary MSMEs in Bogor City is increasingly fierce business competition. The growth in the number of MSMEs reflects increasingly dynamic economic activity, but at the same time, it can intensify competition among businesses in acquiring and retaining customers. Ermilia et al. (2026) note that the number of SMEs in Bogor City increased from 9,524 units in 2023 to 9,788 units in 2024, representing a growth of 2.77%. The study also indicates that intensifying competition and limited resources remain obstacles to the development of food-related SMEs in Bogor City.

These conditions indicate that the growth in the number of business operators must be accompanied by improvement in competitiveness, productivity, innovation, managerial skills, access to capital, and market access. Bank Indonesia has identified productivity and innovation, managerial skills, access to financing, and market access as several key aspects that need to be strengthened to enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs. Thus, the increasing number of culinary business operators in Bogor not only reflects growing economic opportunities but also creates an increasingly competitive business environment, requiring MSME operators to possess the ability to maintain the sustainability and competitiveness of their businesses.

The second issue is the limited resources and business capacity. Food MSME operators still face challenges in terms of capital, business experience, business knowledge, and labor. Findings by Ermilia et al. (2026) on food MSMEs in Bogor City indicate that capital, business experience, business knowledge, and labor simultaneously have a significant impact on business success, contributing 72.1%. These findings indicate that the success of culinary MSMEs is determined not only by the ability to produce goods but also by the entrepreneurs' ability to manage their available resources.

Limitations in managerial capacity and human resources can also hinder improvements in business productivity and competitiveness. Bank Indonesia identifies improving education and managerial skills as one of the key aspects in boosting MSME productivity. In the context of culinary SMEs in Bogor City, limitations in capital, experience, business knowledge, and labor have become increasingly critical to address, as business owners must contend with intensifying competition.

Furthermore, low digital literacy and limited technology adoption represent significant challenges for culinary SMEs in Bogor City. Although digital transformation is becoming increasingly important in modern marketing activities, many culinary SME operators in Bogor City have yet to make optimal use of digital technology, particularly to support marketing efforts. Amin (2023) notes that while the government continues to promote digital transformation, many culinary SME operators in Bogor City have not yet adopted it, especially in their marketing activities. This situation aligns with data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, which in September 2024 reported that only about 26% of 64 million SMEs had transitioned to digital platforms. The government has also positioned digitalization as a strategy to expand market access, improve operational efficiency, productivity, innovation, and the competitiveness of SMEs.

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The influence of online reviews on purchasing decisions is overwhelming. A global survey conducted by BrightLocal (2023) showed that 98% of consumers read online reviews before making a purchase, and about 76% of consumers trust online reviews as much as they trust personal recommendations. Additionally, a Nielsen report also stated that 92% of consumers trust recommendations from other individuals more than corporate advertisements. This data reinforces the role of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) as a key factor in influencing purchasing decisions.

Regarding consumer trust, a report from the Edelman Trust Barometer (2023) indicates that only about 55–60% of consumers have a high level of trust in unfamiliar brands or businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, approximately 63% of consumers state that trust is a key factor in determining purchasing decisions, especially in digital transactions. This indicates that trust is a key variable that bridges the gap between information and decision-making.

Another equally important issue is the limited business networks and external support (Ermilia et al., 2026). This makes it difficult for business owners to expand their markets, foster innovation, and strengthen their competitiveness. Furthermore, there are also challenges in maintaining consumer trust. In the context of culinary SMEs, there are still business operators who lack consistent quality standards, whether in terms of hygiene, food safety, or service. This situation can create uncertainty for consumers, particularly for tourists unfamiliar with local products. Such uncertainty has the potential to lower consumer trust levels, which ultimately affects purchasing decisions.

An additional relevant issue is the continued need to strengthen business model innovation and product differentiation. In an increasingly competitive environment, the ability of MSMEs to introduce innovations in products, marketing channels, business capabilities, and revenue streams is crucial for building a competitive advantage. Habibullah et al. (2022) indicate that business model innovation performance in the food and beverage industry in Bogor City has generally been innovative, but there is still room for improvement, particularly in the areas of new capabilities, new channels, and new revenue models. Consistent with these findings, Simanjuntak et al. (2025) demonstrate that innovation has a positive and significant impact on the performance of culinary SMEs in Bogor City. Thus, innovation is not only necessary to create product variety but also to develop new ways of creating, delivering, and capturing value from consumers. In the context of culinary SMEs, differentiation strategies are also crucial, as research by Pusung et al. (2023) indicates that innovation and competitive strategies, including differentiation, are linked to improved performance of culinary SMEs.

These various issues are directly or indirectly related to how consumers perceive, evaluate, and trust a culinary product. In a competitive and uncertain market, consumers tend to rely on external information—such as e-WOM—and their perceived value assessments before making a purchase decision. However, without sufficient trust, this information and these value perceptions do not always lead to a purchase.

Consumer trust is a crucial variable. Trust serves as a psychological mechanism that bridges the gap between the information consumers receive (such as e-WOM) and their perceived value, on one hand, and their purchasing decisions, on the other. Consumers do not immediately trust the available information; instead, they first evaluate the credibility of the source and the relevance of the information before forming trust.

Theoretically, the relationship between e-WOM, perceived value, and purchase decisions is not always direct. In many cases, the influence of these two variables on purchase decisions is mediated by consumer trust. Positive e-WOM can increase trust in a product, just as a high perceived value can strengthen consumer confidence. Conversely, without trust, even positive information is not always able to drive purchase decisions.

Therefore, the empirical issues observed in the culinary sector in Bogor, as described above, further underscore the importance of consumer trust as a mediating variable in the relationship between e-WOM and perceived value on purchasing decisions. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct a study titled **"The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust in the Relationship Between**

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Online Consumer Reviews (Electronic Word of Mouth) and Perceived Value on Purchasing Decisions for Culinary Products in Bogor."

Statement of the Problem

Based on the background described above, there is a phenomenon whereby, although electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and perceived value have a significant influence on consumer behavior, neither always directly drives purchasing decisions. This suggests the role of other variables—particularly consumer trust—which need to be further examined as mediating variables.

Furthermore, the high level of competition in Bogor's culinary industry, the dominance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and consumers' reliance on digital information underscore the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of consumer decision-making mechanisms.

Based on the above, the research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Does electronic word of mouth influence consumer trust in culinary products in Bogor?
2. Does perceived value influence consumer trust in culinary products in Bogor?
3. Does consumer trust influence purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor?
4. Does electronic word of mouth influence the decision to purchase culinary products in Bogor?
5. Does perceived value influence the decision to purchase culinary products in Bogor?
6. Does consumer trust mediate the relationship between electronic word of mouth and the decision to purchase?
7. Does consumer trust mediate the relationship between perceived value and the decision to purchase?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a field of study within marketing that examines how individuals and groups select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services to satisfy their needs and wants. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumer behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors that interact with one another in the decision-making process.

Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019) view consumer behavior as the study of how consumers make decisions to use their available resources—such as time, money, and effort—to acquire goods and services. This book also addresses the development of new media and technology, making it relevant for explaining consumer behavior in a digital environment.

In the modern context, consumer behavior has undergone significant transformation due to the development of digital technology. Consumers are no longer passive but are active in seeking information, comparing alternatives, and even influencing other consumers through digital media. This aligns with the concept of consumer empowerment, in which consumers have greater control over the purchasing process.

Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) explains that individual decisions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of this study:

- e-WOM → shapes attitudes and social norms
- perceived value → shapes rational evaluation
- trust → strengthens the intention to make a decision

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is a form of informal communication among consumers that takes place via electronic media. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), e-WOM refers to any positive or negative statement made by a customer about a product or company that is accessible to a wide audience via the internet.

e-WOM has the following characteristics:

- High credibility
- Wide reach

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- Easy access
- Permanent nature

Research shows that e-WOM has a significant influence on consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Perceived Value

Perceived value is a consumer's overall evaluation of a product's benefits based on what is received and what is given. According to Zeithaml (1988), perceived value is a trade-off between the benefits and costs perceived by the consumer.

The dimensions of perceived value include:

- Functional value
- Emotional value
- Social value
- Economic value

A high perceived value increases consumer satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is the belief that a product or company is reliable and will meet consumer expectations. According to Gefen (2000), trust is an important factor in online transactions because it reduces uncertainty and risk.

Trust encompasses:

- Integrity (honesty)
- Competence (ability)
- Benevolence (goodwill)

Trust serves as an important mediator in the relationship between information and purchasing decisions.

Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is the process by which consumers determine which product to buy after considering the various available alternatives. In the context of consumer behavior, this decision is reflected in the choice of product, brand, place or channel of purchase, purchase quantity, timing of purchase, and payment method. Thus, a purchase decision is not only related to the consumer's desire to buy but also demonstrates how consumers make their actual choice regarding the product to be purchased. This concept serves as a widely used foundation in research on consumer purchasing behavior.

A purchase decision is the stage in the decision-making process where the consumer actually buys a product. According to Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015), purchase decisions are influenced by internal and external factors, including information, experience, and trust.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

This study employs a quantitative method with an associative approach. The quantitative approach emphasizes the objective measurement of social phenomena using numerical data analyzed statistically. The primary objective of quantitative research is to test relationships between variables and to test previously formulated hypotheses. The associative approach was used because this study aims to identify the relationships and influences between the independent variables (electronic word of mouth and perceived value), the mediating variable (consumer trust), and the dependent variable (purchase decision). Quantitative methods allow researchers to generalize research findings based on sample data to a specific population through systematic statistical analysis (Siliwangi University Repository).

Research Location and Time

This study was conducted in the city and regency of Bogor, with the research subjects being consumers who had purchased culinary products in Bogor.

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The study was carried out during the following periods:

No	Description	2026		
		Juni	Juli	Agustus
1.	Research Proposal			
2.	Data Collection			
3.	Data Processing			
4.	Data Analysis			

Operational Definition

In the study titled "The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust in the Relationship Between Online Consumer Reviews (Electronic Word of Mouth) and Perceived Value on Purchase Decisions for Culinary Products in Bogor," the independent variables are Online Consumer Reviews (Electronic Word of Mouth) and Perceived Value; the dependent variable was Purchase Decision; and the mediating variable was Consumer Trust.

Tabel 3.1. Definisi Operasional Variabel

Variable	Item Indicator	Scale	Literature Source
***Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)* (X1)**	X1.1 I read online reviews before buying food products in Bogor	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Filieri et al. (2023); Tien et al. (2018)
	X1.2 Online reviews help me understand the quality of food products	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Filieri et al. (2023)
	X1.3 I trust the information from online reviews	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Xue et al. (2016)
	X1.4 I compared several online reviews before deciding to buy	Likert 1–5	Filieri et al. (2023); Tien et al. (2018)
Perceived Value (X2)	X2.1 Culinary products in Bogor offer good value for the price	Likert 1–5	Sweeney & Soutar (2001); Bharati et al. (2026)
	X2.2 The culinary products in Bogor are of high quality	Likert 1–5	Sweeney & Soutar (2001); Bharati et al. (2026)
	X2.3 I was satisfied with my experience trying the local cuisine in Bogor	Likert 1–5	Sweeney & Soutar (2001); Zeithaml (1988)
	X2.4 Culinary products in Bogor are unique compared to those from other regions	Likert 1–5	Sweeney & Soutar (2001); Sheth et al. (1991)
Consumer Trust (Z)	Z1 I believe that food products in Bogor are safe to be consumed	Likert 1–5	Macready et al. (2020); EIT Food Trust Report

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			(2020); de Jonge et al. (2007)
	Z2 I believe the quality of culinary products in Bogor is trustworthy	Likert 1–5	Macready et al. (2020); Siegrist & Hartmann (2021)
	Z3 I believe that food vendors in Bogor are honest when offering their products	Likert 1–5	Macready et al. (2020); EIT Food Trust Report (2020)
	Z4 I feel confident choosing culinary products in Bogor	Likert 1–5	Bharati & Zhang (2021); Macready et al. (2020)
***Purchase Decision* (Y)**	Y1 I decided to buy some food products in Bogor	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Tien et al. (2018); Kotler & Keller (2016)
	Y2 I am willing to buy more food products in Bogor	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Bharati & Zhang (2021)
	Y3 I would recommend culinary products from Bogor to others	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Filieri et al. (2023)
	Y4 I choose culinary products in Bogor over other alternatives	Likert 1–5	Erkan & Evans (2016); Tien et al. (2018)

Population and Sample

Population

The population in this study consists of all consumers who meet the following criteria:

- Have purchased food products in Bogor
- Have viewed or read online reviews before making a purchase

Since the exact size of the population is unknown (infinite population), a sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for this study.

Sample

The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method, which involves selecting a sample based on specific criteria.

Respondent criteria:

1. Have purchased culinary products in Bogor
2. Have read online reviews (e-WOM)
3. Are at least 17 years old

The required sample size for this study follows the method used by Hair et al. (2016). This approach was used to establish a more accurate basis for determining the sample size. According to Hair et al. (2016), the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM can be determined based on the rule that the minimum sample size = 5–10 times the number of indicators. In this study, there are 16 indicators. Therefore, for n = 5 × 16 = 80 (minimum) and for n = 10 × 16 = 160 (maximum). Thus, the recommended sample size is 80–160 respondents. In this study, the sample size is 100 respondents.

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Data Collection Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and perceived value on purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor City, as well as to test the mediating role of consumer trust in the relationship between these variables. Primary data was obtained directly from consumers of culinary products in Bogor who met the criteria for study participants, while secondary data was obtained from scientific literature, statistical reports, government publications, and other documents or information relevant to the development of the culinary industry and consumer behavior.

Questionnaire

Primary data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended statements representing indicators for each research construct: electronic word of mouth, perceived value, consumer trust, and purchase decision. Respondents' responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The use of this scale allowed the researcher to quantitatively measure the level of consumer agreement with each statement and facilitated the statistical data analysis process.

The respondents in this study were consumers who had purchased culinary products in Bogor and who had used or been exposed to information, reviews, ratings, comments, or recommendations regarding culinary products through digital media, such as social media, review platforms, food delivery apps, websites, or marketplaces. These criteria were established to ensure that respondents had relevant experience to evaluate the quality of e-WOM, perceived value, trust, and purchasing decisions. Respondents can be selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting a sample based on specific criteria aligned with the study's objectives. The questionnaire can be distributed online via a digital form link, such as Google Forms.

Literature Review

In addition to primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires, this study used a literature review as a secondary data collection technique. The literature review was conducted by examining journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, official reports, and other scientific publications relevant to electronic word-of-mouth, perceived value, consumer trust, and purchasing decisions for culinary products. The literature review aimed to establish a theoretical foundation, identify the findings of previous studies, determine measurement indicators for each variable, and identify research gaps that underpin the formulation of hypotheses.

The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Garuda, SINTA, and other relevant scientific sources. The keywords used included "electronic word of mouth," "e-WOM," "perceived value," "consumer trust," "purchase decision," "online review," "food product," and "culinary." The retrieved literature was then screened based on topic relevance, source credibility, clarity of research methods, availability of full-text articles, and alignment with the context of consumer behavior and the purchase of food or beverage products.

Data Analysis Method

This study uses Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as its data analysis technique. The choice of the PLS-SEM method was based on several methodological considerations relevant to the characteristics of the study.

1. PLS-SEM is more suitable for predictive and exploratory research, especially when the research objective is to test relationships between variables and maximize the explained variance in the dependent variable. In this study, the primary focus is on analyzing the effects of electronic word-of-mouth and perceived value on purchase decisions through consumer trust as a mediating variable; therefore, a predictive approach is more relevant.
2. PLS-SEM does not require the assumption of a normal distribution for the data. In social research, particularly studies using perception-based survey data such as Likert-scale questionnaires, data

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are often not normally distributed. Therefore, PLS-SEM is a more flexible option compared to Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM), which requires multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2016).

3. PLS-SEM is better suited for relatively small to medium sample sizes. With a limited number of indicators and a sample of approximately 80–160 respondents, PLS-SEM is still capable of producing stable parameter estimates. In contrast, CB-SEM generally requires a larger sample size to produce a statistically well-fitting model (Hair et al., 2016).
4. PLS-SEM is superior at accommodating complex research models, including those with mediating variables as in this study. PLS-SEM allows for the simultaneous testing of direct and indirect relationships through bootstrapping techniques.

Thus, based on its flexibility regarding data distributions, efficiency in terms of sample size, and ability to test complex models, the PLS-SEM method is the most appropriate approach to use in this study. The software used was Smart PLS 4.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview

The subjects of this study were consumers of culinary products in the city of Bogor who had made purchases and had experience obtaining information or consumer reviews online (electronic word of mouth). Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the study criteria. A total of 113 questionnaires were successfully collected. Next, a data screening process was conducted to ensure the completeness of the responses and the respondents' compliance with the established criteria. The screening results showed that 100 questionnaires met the requirements and were suitable for analysis, while 13 questionnaires were excluded because they did not meet the respondent criteria and/or contained incomplete or inconsistent data. Thus, the data analyzed in this study were derived from 100 respondents.

The research data were analyzed using the SmartPLS 4 software with the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The analysis was conducted through an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The evaluation of the outer model included tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability to ensure that the study's indicators were capable of measuring each variable validly and consistently. Furthermore, the inner model was evaluated by testing the coefficient of determination (R-Square), path coefficients, the significance of relationships between variables using the bootstrapping procedure, and testing for indirect effects to determine the mediating role of consumer trust in the relationship between e-WOM and perceived value on purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.

Analysis

Data analysis was conducted on 100 questionnaires that met the study's criteria out of a total of 113 questionnaires successfully collected. Testing using SmartPLS 4 was performed through the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). After the measurement model was found to meet the criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, the analysis continued to examine the direct and indirect relationships between electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), perceived value, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. The structural model (inner model) was used to test the relationships among these variables.

The outer model measurements were used to test validity and reliability. The results of the convergent validity test showed that, based on the outer loadings, two indicators—X1.1 and X1.4—did not meet the standard of above 0.7 and were therefore removed. Consequently, for the electronic word of mouth variable, only two indicators were valid: X1.2 and X1.3. Meanwhile, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5.

The discriminant validity test showed that the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was below 0.9. Meanwhile, the reliability test showed that both Cronbach's Alpha and CR (Composite Reliability) were above 0.7.

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Figure 1 illustrates the research model based on the PLS-SEM test results, as shown in the following figure.

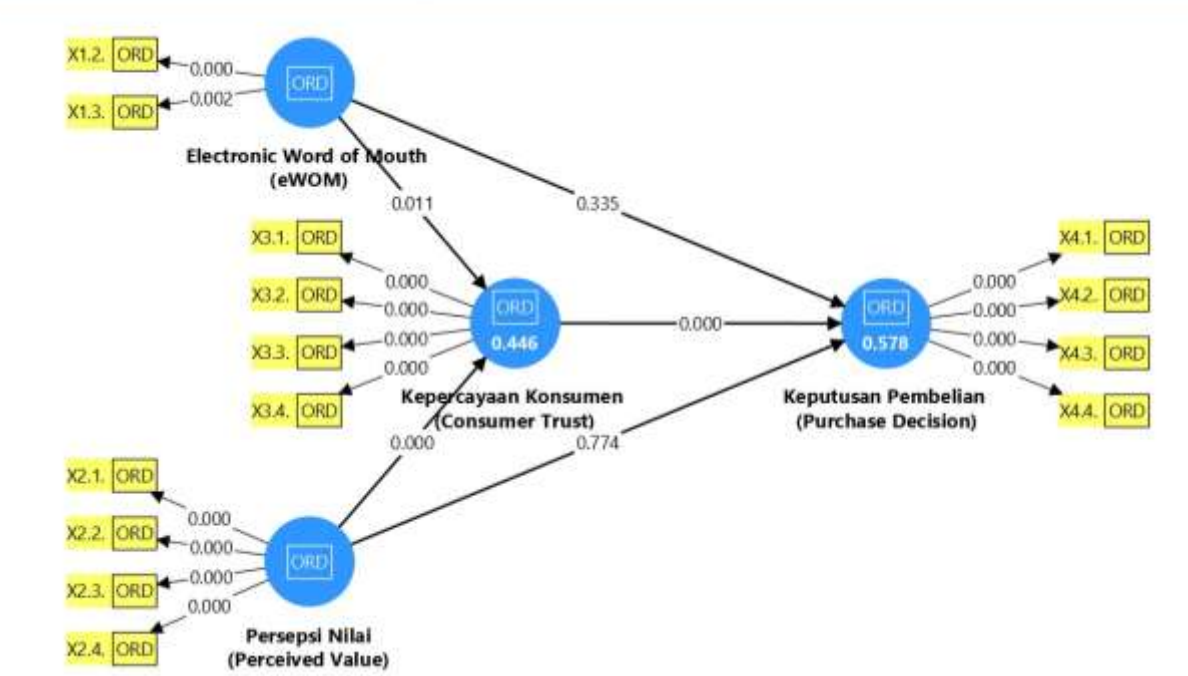


Figure 1. Research Model

Table 1, which presents the results of the inner model test, shows the coefficient values, calculated t-values, and p-values used to determine the relationships among the variables in the research model.

Table 1. Results of the PLS-SEM Test for Main Variables

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values — Copy to Excel/Word | Copy to

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) -> Kepercayaan Konsumen (Consumer Trust)	0.174	0.180	0.068	2.549	0.011
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) -> Keputusan Pembelian (Purchase Decision)	0.073	0.084	0.076	0.963	0.335
Kepercayaan Konsumen (Consumer Trust) -> Keputusan Pembelian (Purchase Decision)	0.713	0.707	0.110	6.459	0.000
Persepsi Nilai (Perceived Value) -> Kepercayaan Konsumen (Consumer Trust)	0.613	0.618	0.080	7.643	0.000
Persepsi Nilai (Perceived Value) -> Keputusan Pembelian (Purchase Decision)	0.034	0.038	0.120	0.287	0.774

Table 2 shows the results of the mediation analysis testing the effects of variables X1 and X2 on Y.

Table 2. Results of the Mediation Analysis

Specific indirect effects - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values — Copy to Excel/Word | Copy to

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) -> Kepercayaan Konsumen (Consumer Trust) -> Keputusan Pembelia...	0.124	0.127	0.052	2.402	0.016
Persepsi Nilai (Perceived Value) -> Kepercayaan Konsumen (Consumer Trust) -> Keputusan Pembelia...	0.437	0.435	0.082	5.354	0.000

The results of the study indicate that consumer trust is the primary mechanism linking e-WOM and perceived value to purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor. Directly, e-WOM and perceived value do not influence purchasing decisions; both influence purchasing decisions through the development of consumer trust.

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Testing Result Hypothesis

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) (X1) on Consumer Trust (Z)

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that eWOM influences consumer trust (P values 0,011 < 0,05). These findings indicate that information, reviews, recommendations, experiences, and consumer ratings conveyed through digital media can shape the level of consumer trust in culinary products in Bogor. The more consumers perceive online reviews as positive, relevant, credible, and useful, the higher their trust in the culinary products or businesses they are considering purchasing.

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) (X1) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

However, e-WOM does not directly influence purchasing decisions (P values 0,335> 0,05). These results show that the presence of online consumer reviews does not necessarily automatically lead consumers to decide to purchase food products. In the context of food products, consumers appear to consider not only the information obtained from online reviews but also require confidence in the quality, safety, and reliability of the product, as well as the seller's ability to meet their expectations. In other words, e-WOM serves as an initial source of information, but its influence on purchasing decisions becomes stronger only when that information helps build consumer trust.

The Effect of Consumer Trust (Z) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Consumer trust has been shown to influence purchasing decisions (P values 0,000 < 0,05). These findings indicate that the higher the level of consumer trust in food products or food businesses, the more likely consumers are to make a choice and complete a purchase. Such trust can arise when consumers perceive a product or seller as having integrity, being reliable, providing honest information, and being able to deliver products that meet the promised quality and benefits. Therefore, consumer trust is a key factor in driving purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.

The Effect of Perceived Value (X2) on Consumer Trust (Z)

Further test results show that perceived value influences consumer trust (P values 0,000 < 0,05). This means that when consumers feel a food product provides benefits that are commensurate with—or greater than—the costs, time, effort, and risks involved, their trust in the product or the business will increase. Perceived value can be shaped by the alignment of price with product quality, taste, portion size, service, ease of access to the product, and a satisfying dining experience.

The Effect of Perceived Value (X2) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Nevertheless, perceived value does not directly influence purchasing decisions (P values 0,774 > 0,05). The results indicate that consumers' assessments of benefits, quality, and price appropriateness are not sufficient to directly lead to a purchasing decision. Consumers still need a sense of security and confidence that the product or food vendor is trustworthy. Therefore, in this study, perceived value plays a greater role in building consumer trust than in directly driving purchasing decisions.

The Role of Consumer Trust as a Mediating Variable in the Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) (X1) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Consumer trust was found to mediate the effect of e-WOM on purchasing decisions (P values 0,016 < 0,05). These findings indicate that e-WOM influences purchasing decisions indirectly through consumer trust. Positive, informative, credible, and easily accessible online reviews can increase consumer confidence in culinary products. Furthermore, the trust that is established encourages consumers to choose and make purchases.

Since the direct effect of e-WOM on purchasing decisions was not proven, while the indirect effect through consumer trust was proven, consumer trust can be interpreted as a full mediator in the relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decisions. Thus, e-WOM does not directly determine purchasing decisions but operates through the process of building consumer trust first.

The Role of Consumer Trust as a Mediator in the Effect of Perceived Value (X2) on Purchase Decisions (Y)

Consumer trust was also found to mediate the influence of perceived value on purchasing decisions (P values 0,000 < 0,05). This means that consumers who perceive positive value in culinary

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products—such as reasonable prices, good food quality, satisfying taste, adequate portions, and perceived benefits—will tend to develop trust in the product or business. This trust then becomes a factor that drives consumers to make a purchase.

Just as in the relationship between e-WOM and purchase decisions, the absence of a direct effect of perceived value on purchase decisions, coupled with the evidence of an indirect effect through consumer trust, indicates that consumer trust acts as a full mediator in the relationship between perceived value and purchase decisions. Thus, perceived value can only translate into a purchase decision when consumers have trust in the culinary product or business.

Table 3. Summary of Research Findings

Hypothesis	Variable relationship	Result	Interpretation
H1	e-WOM → Consumer Trust	Affected	Online reviews build consumer trust
H2	e-WOM → Purchase Decision	Not affected	Online reviews alone are not enough to directly drive purchases
H3	Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	Affected	Trust drives consumers to make purchasing decisions
H4	Perceived value→ Consumer Trust	Affected	Perceived value increases trust
H5	Perceived value → Purchase Decision	Not affected	Perceived value does not directly translate into purchasing decisions
H6	e-WOM → Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	Proven to mediate	Consumer trust acts as a full mediator
H7	Perceived value → Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	Proven to mediate	Consumer trust acts as a full mediator

Implication of Findings

For food business owners in Bogor, the results of this study indicate that digital marketing strategies should not merely focus on the number of reviews or high social media exposure. Business owners need to ensure that customer reviews reflect real experiences, accurate product information, consistent quality, and transparent responses to complaints. Reviews that consumers trust will be more effective in building confidence in food businesses.

Business owners also need to enhance perceived value through appropriate price-quality alignment, consistent taste, cleanliness, high-quality ingredients, accurate order fulfillment, reasonable portion sizes, ease of ordering, and responsive service. However, this value must be backed by evidence that the business is trustworthy—for example, through clear menu and pricing information, accurate product photos, authentic testimonials, hygiene guarantees, and prompt complaint resolution. In this study, consumer trust serves as the pathway that transforms e-WOM and perceived value into purchase decisions.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. Electronic word of mouth influences consumer trust in culinary products in Bogor.
2. Perceived value influences consumer trust in culinary products in Bogor.
3. Consumer trust influences purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.
4. Electronic word of mouth does not influence purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.
5. Perceived value does not influence purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.
6. Consumer trust mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.

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7. Consumer trust mediates the effect of perceived value on purchasing decisions for culinary products in Bogor.

Research Limitations

a) This study is limited to consumers who have purchased or consumed culinary products in the Bogor area; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to consumers of culinary products in other regions.
b) The variables analyzed are limited to Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Perceived Value, Consumer Trust, and Purchase Decision, with Consumer Trust serving as the mediating variable.

The study employs a quantitative approach using data collected via a questionnaire; therefore, the findings are based on respondents' perceptions and experiences at the time of data collection and do not address factors outside the scope of the variables under investigation.

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