

## The Influence of Customer Experience mediation on Customer Loyalty: The Case of Honda Matic Motorcycles in the City of Surabaya, Indonesia



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**ABSTRACT:** Customer experience is one of the dominant factors that triggers consumer loyalty which is characterized by repurchasing Honda matic products, therefore it is necessary to provide opportunities for potential consumers to try the product. The aim of this research is to find out whether customer experience is an effective mediator in the relationship between social media branding and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer loyalty. The analysis used a structural equation model on 230 respondents taken using a purposive sampling method, from the population of Honda automatic motorbike users in the city of Surabaya, Indonesia. The findings show that customer experience effectively mediates the relationship between social media branding and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer loyalty. The implication is that companies should improve social media branding, because it is an important element in building brand image and interaction with customers in the digital era. A good and positive brand image will become a characteristic of the product, which differentiates it from competitors' products.

**KEYWORDS:** social media branding, electronic word-of-mouth, customer experience, consumer loyalty

### I. INTRODUCTION

Social media plays an increasingly important role in shaping consumer interactions and brand image in the era of rapidly developing digital information technology. Currently, word of mouth advertising through electronic media has become important and attracts attention because it can influence sales turnover and increase consumers' tendency to buy something. The term "e-WoM" refers to marketing communications using online media (Suartina et al., 2022).

Motorcycles continue to be the primary mode of transportation in Indonesia. According to data from the Indonesian Motorcycle Industry Association (AIS), 89.87% of domestic motorbike sales between January and December 2023 totaled 5,634,885 units, of which motorbikes were automatic. In Indonesia, Honda is one of the most well-known motorcycle brands, particularly for its automatic scooter models. One of the Indonesian regions with a sizable motor vehicle market is the city of Surabaya. As a result, it's critical to comprehend how social media branding and e-WoM affect Surabaya residents' commitment to brands.

Social media has grown to be a significant forum for customers to discuss their interactions with certain companies and goods. Social media has made consumers more connected, and sharing personal experiences there affects their behavior where they travel and what they purchase, among other things (Lund, Cohen, and Scarles, 2018). In contrast to the passive role in traditional communication, this new tool for communication allows the user to be an active participant in the process. The number of consumers and brands interacting through social media platforms has increased (Maria et al., 2019). Social media users frequently discuss their experiences, both good and bad, with automated Honda motorcycles. Consequently, businesses and dealers in Surabaya need to comprehend how e-WoM and social media branding might affect client loyalty by way of the matic motorcycle user experience.

This research investigates whether the use of social media branding and e-WoM influences customer loyalty, and whether customer experience effectively mediates the relationship between social media branding and e-WoM on customer loyalty. This research is interesting to conduct because there are inconsistent results among researchers, who found positive and negative influences between customer experience and customer loyalty (Imbug et al., 2018; Nobar & Rostamzadeh, 2018; Hasfar et al., 2020; Panjaitan & Panjaitan, 2014). The important role of customer experience in forming loyalty is also the focus of this research. At the same time, this is an interesting research gap for further research.

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Positive interactions between brands and customers ultimately lead to customer loyalty. Even when presented with identical options for items or brands, loyal customers are more likely to stick with the same brand and purchase goods or services from it. Customer loyalty, according to Haryono and Albetris (2023), is influenced by things like perceived value and brand commitment. Because devoted consumers typically contribute positively to sales and profitability, client loyalty can help Honda Autobikes generate long-term profits for the business. Therefore, creating successful marketing strategies requires a thorough awareness of the elements that affect client loyalty, such as social media branding, e-WoM, and customer experience. Indicators of customer loyalty include recurring business and customer service, referrals to family, prioritizing the business, and positive word-of-mouth (Orel & Kara, 2014; Mardian & Muhammad, 2020).

Social media branding is a crucial tactic in today's corporate environment. Building, preserving, and enhancing relationships with clients on platforms with a worldwide audience is made feasible by this technique. As a result, in the digital age, social media branding is crucial for developing a brand's reputation and consumer relationships. Businesses can convey to their clients their brand values, vision, and mission by using social media branding. According to Muller (2021), social media is an internet platform that allows people to communicate, exchange content and take part in content creation. Social media can be used in branding settings to engage directly with customers, market products and enhance brand impressions. Positive perceptions of a brand can be generated through strong social media branding. In contrast, Aaker (2018) asserts that a strong brand image adds a significant amount of value to a business. Therefore, in the context of automated scooter motorbikes, the presence of social media and innovative branding initiatives can influence consumer opinion towards the Honda brand. The following metrics are used to measure social media branding: personalization, trends, entertainment, and interactivity.

Social media marketing's ability to attract clients remotely makes it even more obvious. Conditions that increase customer satisfaction and brand loyalty impact social media marketing and consumer based brand equity, as shown by Nuseir & Elrefae (2022). However, social media marketing still plays a small mediating function. According to Sanchez-Casado et al. (2019), interacting with clients through relationship-based strategies is one significant use of social media. that the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty is directly correlated with their level of competence. Customer loyalty is a strong indicator of brand success in the hospitality and tourism sector, as shown by Nobar & Rostamzadeh (2018). According to Al-Dmour et al. (2023), promoting social media marketing is very important to foster brand loyalty. This description leads one to propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Customer experience is greatly impacted by social media branding.

H2: Through customer experience, social media branding significantly affects consumer loyalty.

The term "Electronic Word-of-Mouth" (e-WoM) refers to the practice of people using online review sites, social media platforms, and forums to communicate their thoughts, opinions, and experiences about goods and services. E-WoM has a major impact on consumer loyalty and purchasing decisions. According to Cheung and Thadani (2012), e-WoM can influence consumer decisions and brand perceptions both positively and negatively. Positive feedback on riding comfort, product quality and performance, or after-sales support can influence customer perceptions and increase customer loyalty in the context of Honda motorbikes which are automatic scooters. Therefore, it is very important to monitor and manage e-WoM effectively using social media communication techniques. According to Goyette et al. (2010), the indices used to measure E-WoM are intensity, content, positive opinions and negative opinions.

Santika et al. (2020) shows that e-WoM has a positive and significant influence on electronic satisfaction and e-loyalty. Electronic satisfaction can significantly mediate the influence of e-service quality on e-loyalty. Yoo et al. (2013), illustrate that intrinsic motives (e.g. the desire to help other customers) are more important than extrinsic motives (e.g. monetary rewards) as antecedents of e-WoM participation. This description leads one to propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Customer experience is significantly impacted by electronic word-of-mouth.

H4: Through customer experience, electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences client loyalty.

Customer experience is the overall experience of customers during their interactions with a company or brand. Customer experience covers every point of contact or touch a customer has with a business, from product purchases to after-sales support. This is an important concept because positive customer experiences can increase customer loyalty and influence future purchasing decisions (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Customer experience is measured through indicators: Sense, related to styles; Feel, feelings here are very different from sensory impressions because they relate to the mood and emotions of a person's soul; Think, is a creative thought that arises in the minds of consumers about a brand or company or customers are invited to engage in creative thinking. The thinking principles consist of 3, namely: surprise, intrigue, and provocation; Act, relating to a person's real behavior and lifestyle; Relate, is an effort to connect oneself with other people, oneself with brands or companies, and culture (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

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Srivastava & Kaul (2016), show that customer trust and satisfaction are significantly and positively related to customer loyalty. Imbug et al. (2018), customer experience has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Designing a good customer experience will ensure the industry performs well. This description leads one to propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Customer loyalty is greatly impacted by the customer experience.

Based on the literature review and previously provided explanations, a research framework that explains the relationship between research variables can be constructed, as illustrated in Figure 1.

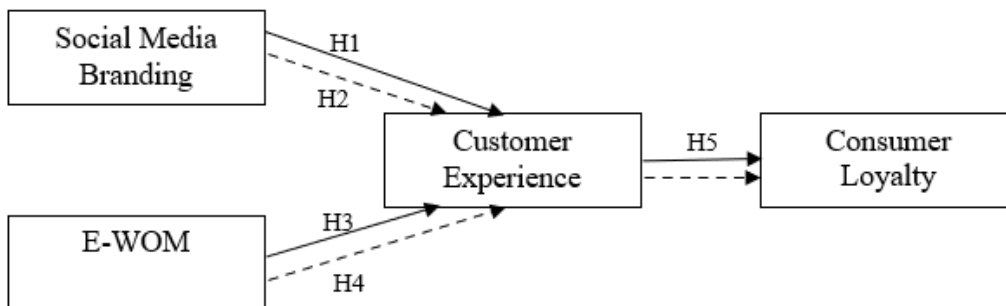


Figure 1: Research Framework

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is causal research. The research population was all consumers who had used Honda brand automatic scooters in the city of Surabaya. The research sample consisted of 230 respondents, and the 10X formula (number of variables + indicators) was applied to determine a minimal sample size in an unknown population (Malhotra et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2017). Customers who now own and ride a Honda brand motorcycle at least one and whose owner is at least 17 years old are the sample requirements, which are determined by a purposive sampling technique. The structural equation modeling (SEM) method makes use of Warp PLS (Warp Partial Least Square) software in the analytical process.

This research uses a questionnaire instrument with a 5-level Likert scale. Where each indicator uses two statement items. Variable Social media branding uses 4 indicators, namely: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization (Kim & Ko, 2012). The Electronic Word-of-Mouth variable uses 4 indicators, namely: intensity, content, positive opinion, negative opinion (Goyette et al., 2010). The Customer experience variable uses 5 indicators, namely: sense, think, act, relate, culture (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). The Customer loyalty variable uses 6 indicators, namely: repeat purchases, habit of consuming the brand, always liking the brand, still choosing the brand, believing that the brand is the best, recommending the brand to others (Panjaitan & Panjaitan, 2014).

### IV. RESULT

Table 1 displays the following respondent descriptions, which include gender, age, marital status, education level, and duration of ownership and use of a Honda automatic motorcycle:

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents (N = 230)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	147	64,0
	Famale	83	36,0
Age	15-25 years	97	42,2
	26-40 years	77	33,5
	41-60 years	56	24,3
Education Level	High school level	106	46,0
	Bachelor	95	41,3
	Master	29	12,7
Status	Mate	63	27,4
	Single	167	72,6
Owns a Honda automatic motorbike	1 – 2 years	94	40,8
	3 – 4 years	98	42,6
	> 4 years	38	16,6

Source: SPSS Analysis

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Descriptive data analysis of 230 respondents shows that: the gender of the respondents is predominantly male. Characteristics of respondents based on age, dominated by the 15-25 year age range, namely, 42.2% of respondents. The education level of the majority of respondents was high school level which reached 46.0%. The length of time respondents have owned a Honda automatic motorbike, as many as 40.8% are in the range of 1-2 years, 42.6%, in the range of 3-4 years, and as many as 16.6% are in the age range of more than 4 years.

The Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R Squared (ARS), and Average Block VIF (AVIF) metrics are used to examine the model's goodness of fit. The analysis's findings are presented in Table 2, where the multicollinearity of independent variables and their relationships are demonstrated by AVIF and APC. The evaluation's data indicates that the model is appropriate.

**Table 2: Goodness of fit model**

Result	Value	P_Value	Criteria	Description
Average Path Coefficient	0.260	0.000	acceptable if P < 0.001	Supported
Average R Squared	0.121	0.000	acceptable if P < 0.001	Supported
Average block VIF	1.074	0.000	acceptable if result < 5.000	Supported

Source: WarpPLS Output

### Validity and Reliability Test of Research Variables

Table 3 shows that each indicator's loading factor value and AVE (average variances extracted) value are both more than 0.5. As a result, all convergent validity indicators and measurements of study variables satisfy the criteria.

**Table 3: Loading Factor values, and AVE**

Research variables	Indicator	Outer Loading Factor Value	AVE
Social media branding (X1)	X1-X1.1	0.929	0.636
	X1-X1.2	0.904	
	X1-X1.3	0.977	
	X1-X1.4	0.983	
Word-of-mouth electronic (X2)	X2-X2.1	0.736	0.813
	X2-X2.2	0.750	
	X2-X2.3	0.766	
	X2-X2.4	0.737	
Customer experience (Z)	Z-Z.1	0.927	0.748
	Z-Z.2	0.924	
	Z-Z.3	0.788	
	Z-Z.4	0.923	
	Z-Z.5	0.886	
Consumer loyalty (Y)	Y-Y.1	0.756	0.839
	Y-Y.2	0.750	
	Y-Y.3	0.753	
	Y-Y.4	0.750	
	Y-Y.5	0.730	
	Y-Y.6	0.702	

Source: The Authors

The AVE,s value (square roots of average variance extracted) indicates discriminant validity. It is located in a diagonal location in the WarpPLS output of latent variable correlations, and the predicted value is higher than the correlation value in the same block. Table 4 indicates that the diagonal block's value is higher than the block's value. Thus, every variable satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity.

**Table 4: Correlations among latent variables**

Variable	X1	X2	Z	Y
Social media branding (X1)	<b>0.660</b>	0.127	0.346	0.068
Word-of-mouth electronic (X2)	0.127	<b>0.902</b>	0.141	0.868

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Customer experience (Z)	0.346	0.141	<b>0.669</b>	0.237
Consumer loyalty (Y)	0.068	0.868	0.237	<b>0.916</b>

Source: WarpPLS Output

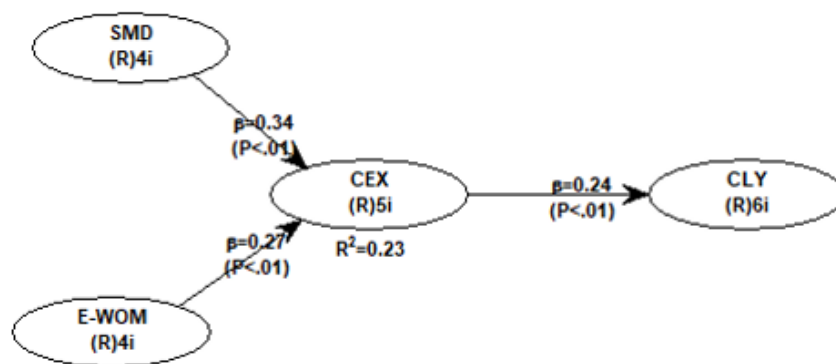
Two criteria were used to determine the reliability of the research variable test: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability.

**Table 5: Reliability Test Results**

Cut Off Value		X1	X2	Z	Y	Notes
Cronbach's Alpha	> 0.6	0.656	0.923	0.676	0.961	All items meet the requirements
Composite Reliability	> 0.7	0.706	0.946	0.795	0.969	

Source: WarpPLS Output

Every variable in Table 5 has a Cronbach alpha value better than 0.6. Furthermore, the composite reliability value exceeds 0.7. Consequently, every construct satisfies the requirements.



**Figure 2: Coefficient of research model path (B= coefficient; p=probability)**

## Hypothesis testing

Based on the projected significance values of the study model parameters displayed in Table 6, hypothesis testing is performed.

**Table 6: Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	P. Value	Decision
H1	Social media branding → Customer experience	0.337	0.000	accepted
H2	Social media branding → Customer experience → Consumer loyalty	0.081	0.044	accepted
H3	Word-of-mouth electronic → Customer experience	0.273	0.000	accepted
H4	Word-of-mouth electronic → Customer experience → Consumer loyalty	0.065	0.045	accepted
H5	Customer experience → Consumer loyalty	0.240	0.000	accepted

Source: The Authors

There is an influence of social media branding on customer experience of 0.337, with a p value = 0.000. This shows that H1 is accepted. There is an influence of social media branding on consumer loyalty, through customer experience, of 0.081, with a p value = 0.044. This shows that H2 is accepted. There is an influence of electronic word-of-mouth on customer experience of 0.273, with a p value = 0.000. This shows that H3 is accepted. There is an influence of electronic word-of-mouth on consumer loyalty, through customer experience, of 0.065, with a p value = 0.045. This shows that H4 is accepted. There is an influence of electronic word-of-mouth on consumer loyalty of 0.240, with a p value = 0.000. This shows that H5 is accepted.

This research found that consumer loyalty for Honda automatic motorbike products in Surabaya can be explained significantly by the variables of social media branding, electronic word-of-mouth and customer experience. This research proves that customer experience is a significant positive intervening variable in the relationship between social media branding, electronic word-of-

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mouth and consumer loyalty. For clarity, the discussion and discussion of the research results will be carried out one by one as follows:

### **Social media branding, Customer experience and Consumer loyalty**

The findings of this research inform that social media branding has a significant effect on customer experience. Thus, social media branding strengthens the customer experience. This evidence shows that the social media branding of Honda matic products in Surabaya is good. This is reflected in the respondents' answers who stated that Honda Matic products in Surabaya are good products and have a reputation for superior quality. There are many benefits that can be obtained after using Honda matic, and it gives a positive impression to users. This research is in accordance with the findings of Ayoub & Balawi (2022), which proves the influence of social media on customer experience. While Al-Dmour et al. (2023), proves that social media marketing has an impact on brand loyalty.

The trendiness indicator makes the dominant contribution to forming the social media branding variable, while the interaction indicator makes the smallest contribution. Therefore, interaction still needs serious attention. This attention can be done by ensuring that the social media brand used can share information with other users, communicate and exchange information with other users. It also makes it easy to provide opinions via the brand's social media. In this research, it was also found that there was a significant indirect influence between social media branding on consumer loyalty through customer experience. This informs that customer experience is an effective intervening variable in the relationship between social media branding and consumer loyalty.

### **Electronic word-of-mouth, Customer experience and Consumer loyalty**

The findings of this research inform that electronic word-of-mouth influences customer experience. This shows that electronic word-of-mouth strengthens the customer experience. This evidence shows that electronic word-of-mouth about Honda matic products in Surabaya is already high. This triggers consumers to be loyal to Honda products, and will repurchase Honda matic products. This is reflected in the respondents' answers which stated that the respondents believed that the Honda matic products they were using provided benefits according to their needs. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Kuppelwieser et al. (2022), which confirms the existence of a direct relationship between perceived customer value, customer experience and word-of-mouth. Cetin & Dincer (2014), show that there is a strong relationship between desired customer behavior and dimensions of perceived customer experience.

Positive opinion indicators make the dominant contribution to forming electronic word-of-mouth, while intensity indicators contribute the least. Therefore, intensity still needs serious attention. This attention can be done by providing the best possible information regarding the quality of Honda matic products so that it will increase the frequency of accessing information, and increase the frequency of interaction with other social networking site users. This will increase the number of reviews written by users of social networking sites, especially telling respondents' experiences about Honda matic motorbikes.

In this research, it was also found that there was a significant indirect influence between electronic word-of-mouth on consumer loyalty through customer experience. This informs that customer experience is an effective intervening variable in the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and consumer loyalty. This means that increasing electronic word-of-mouth and customer experience will increase the value of consumer loyalty.

### **Customer experience and Consumer loyalty**

The findings of this research inform that customer experience influences consumer loyalty. This shows that customer experience strengthens consumer loyalty. This evidence shows that the customer experience of Honda matic motorbikes is very good, and Honda matic motorbikes are liked. This is reflected in the respondents' answers who stated that the experience of riding a Honda matic motorbike in Surabaya was impressive and comfortable. It can be driven casually or at high speed, and is also good for use in road conditions that tend to be congested (congested), and the engine performance is good and the shock absorber also functions perfectly. This research, in accordance with the findings of Ertemel et al. (2021), and Brun et al. (2017), which shows the influence of customer experience on consumer loyalty.

Think indicators contribute dominantly to shaping customer experience, while act indicators contribute the least. Therefore, act indicators still need serious attention. This attention can be done by adjusting the appearance of the Honda matic product, so that it gives an effect that matches a person's real behavior and lifestyle in the current digital era.

The influence of customer experience on consumer loyalty informs that by improving customer experience, it will encourage an increase in the value of consumer loyalty. This shows that customer experience is one of the triggers for increasing consumer loyalty to Honda matic products in Surabaya.



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## V. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research show that social media branding, electronic word-of-mouth have a significant effect on customer experience. Customer experience is an effective intervening variable in connecting social media branding and electronic word-of-mouth variables with consumer loyalty. This emphasizes that increasing consumer loyalty must be done through customer experience.

As a practical implication, companies should improve social media branding, because this strategy is important in the modern business era. Social media branding is an important element in building a brand image and interacting with customers in the digital era. A good and positive brand image will become a characteristic of the product, which differentiates it from competitors' products. Companies should strive to aggressively improve electronic word-of-mouth, because it is one of the most important factors in building a positive customer experience. Companies should offer a positive shopping experience which can increase positive electronic word-of-mouth for the company.

For future research, it is necessary to increase the scope of research, it is also recommended to examine further the influence of other variable factors, such as product price, customer service, information and product availability and other variables, which are not yet part of the topic of this research. where there are many other variables that can influence consumer loyalty.

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