The Influence of Customer Trust, Advertising, Popularity Trend, Interaction and E-WOM on Brand Engagement

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ABSTRACT : *This study aims to implement E-commerce in Batam city not only limited to the sale of local products, but also includes transactions at national and international levels. Various e-commerce platforms have emerged and provide a variety of products and services to users in Batam, allowing them to transact comfortably without being bound by geographical boundaries. A total of 260 respondents have been collected for the statistical sample of this study. The research methodology was carried out using Smart PLS / SEM. The results of the study that almost all variables are supported and the Customer Trust variable on Brand Engagement and the Popularity Trend variable on Brand Engagement, the results of the hypothesis do not support. Likewise, the direct influence of Customer Trust, Popularity Trend on Brand Engagement through Purchase Intention is not supported. Companies can take advantage of popular trends to increase consumer purchase intentions by focusing on brand engagement that follows the trend. Interaction has a positive impact on purchase intention with brand engagement mediation. Interaction between brands and consumers on e-commerce platforms can increase consumer purchase intentions by building closer and more sustainable relationships.*

KEYWORDS - *customer trust, advertising, popularity trend, interaction, E-WOM*.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving digital era, electronic commerce or e-commerce has become a central element in global business transformation. E-commerce facilitates individuals and businesses to conduct trade activities, both selling and shopping, online through various digital platforms. Batam, as one of the leading cities in Indonesia, has also felt the impact of this e-commerce phenomenon.

Batam Island, which is the largest among the Riau Islands, has experienced significant growth in the adoption of technology and internet connectivity. Easy access to the internet and digital devices has made it easier for Batam residents to engage in e-commerce transactions. The ever-growing digital infrastructure and increasingly widespread internet penetration open opportunities for business actors in Batam to take advantage of the potential of e-commerce to expand their market reach.

E-commerce in Batam is not only limited to the sale of local products, but also includes transactions at national and international levels. Various e-commerce platforms have emerged and provide a variety of products and services to users in Batam, allowing them to transact comfortably without being bound by geographical boundaries. The internet is a global infrastructure consisting of thousands of interconnected computer networks. According to DataIndonesia.id (2022), it is estimated that the number of e-commerce users in Indonesia will reach 178.94 million users in 2022. This data shows that most internet users in Indonesia, especially in Batam, are experienced in using or have e-commerce applications. The level of use of e-commerce services in Indonesia has reached 88.1%, where internet users have used this platform to make purchases of certain products in the last few months. This figure places Indonesia as the country with the highest percentage of e-commerce use in the world, based on a We Are Social survey conducted in April 2021.

Some of the most popular e-commerce platforms in Indonesia include Shopee with 158 million people visiting its site every month, followed by Tokopedia with 117 million visitors, and Lazada with 83.2 million visitors in a month in the first quarter of 2023. The high number of visitors can be influenced by various factors, including massive promotional campaigns and discount offers held by e-commerce, as well as user preferences for user-friendly interfaces. Aside from the attractiveness of promotions, discounts, and user-friendly interfaces in e-commerce platforms, there are other factors that play a significant role in influencing user decisions and

satisfaction. These factors include user decisions and satisfaction related to e-commerce, such as customer trust, advertising, popularity trends, interactions and E-WOM.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Trust plays a crucial role in the world of e-commerce. In this context, trust can be interpreted as consumer confidence in the integrity of the seller after evaluating its characteristics. This trust not only plays a role in reducing transaction risk but also increases the value perceived by consumers. In e-commerce, high levels of trust are positively associated with higher online purchase intentions. In addition, trust in online reviews also has a positive influence on consumer choices. Therefore, it is important to build and maintain trust so that e-commerce transactions can run successfully (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). Based on research from Wang et al., (2022) stated that Customer Trust has a significant influence on Brand Engagement because trust is considered to have a large, significant, and heterogeneous influence on consumer purchase intentions. This trust has been shown to have a positive effect on consumer behavior in SC, with consumers tending to share perceptions, experiences, and evaluations of products or services. Research from Wallace et al., (2021) argues that Customer Trust has a significant influence on Brand Engagement because individuals who feel that a brand reflects their inner self tend to have a higher level of trust in the brand. According to Samhale (2022) stated that in the context of SmartPLS, significant results indicate that the relationship between Trust in the use of IoT and possibly User Engagement is statistically significant. This shows that the level of user trust in the use of IoT is significantly related to user engagement. In other words, the higher the user's trust in IoT, the more significant its influence on user engagement. Research by Aziz et al., (2023) also states that Trust acts as a strong and significant mediator in linking input variables with Emotional Brand Attachment results. Optimizing or controlling the Trust mediator can be a key strategy to influence Emotional Brand Attachment results. According to Cardoso et al., (2022) the direct relationship between Trust and Brand shows that non-specific Trust factors also have a direct impact on the level of consumer loyalty to the brand. These non-specific factors not only affect consumer trust in the Loyalty brand but also have a direct impact on their level of loyalty to the Brand.

Advertising is becoming increasingly popular in the ongoing era of digital transformation. This phenomenon encourages competition between companies to develop digital business strategies, especially in the marketing realm. The goal of advertising is to reach target market segments efficiently at low cost. Previously, many studies have been conducted related to online advertising that can provide guidance for research or companies in designing marketing strategies. Therefore, a literature review of online advertising from previous studies is needed so that information can be organized and categorized systematically (Alifia et al., 2022). According to research by Suprapto et al., (2020) stated that the influence of Social Media Advertising is significant on Consumer Perception, because the T-Statistic value of 20,883, which is greater than 1.96, indicates that Social Media Advertising has a positive and significant influence on Consumer Perception. Sarılgan et al., (2022) also argued that Advertising Creativity is significant on Flow Experience ($\beta = 0.557$, p <0.01), because there is a significant positive influence between advertising creativity and flow experience. This means that the higher the level of advertising creativity, the higher the flow experience that respondents may experience. According to Chen et al., (2021) Self-brand Connection is significant to Brand Engagement because the individual's connection with the destination brand (Shaolin Temple) has a significant impact on the individual's level of engagement with the brand. In other words, the stronger the individual's connection with the destination brand, the higher their level of engagement. Research by Gulfraz et al., (2022) also states that Informativeness is significant to Online Impulsive Buying because the level of informativeness of the e-commerce platform has a significant positive effect on online impulsive shopping. In other words, when consumers feel they have enough information about a product, they tend to be more impulsive in their shopping decisions. Then according to Sajjad & Zaman (2020), Blogging has a positive effect on Innovative Engagement because there is a positive influence between Blogging and Innovative Engagement. By looking at the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship. However, according to Malarvizhi et al., (2022) concluded that Entertainment is not significant to Brand Image because the entertainment aspect may not have a significant impact on brand image. Other factors may be more dominant in shaping brand image. However, according to research by Zhang et al., Advertising is not significant to Social Media Engagement

because there is no significant relationship between "advertising" activities and the level of user engagement in social media on AFNs accounts. In this context, users may not be too involved by advertisements that focus on purchases and do not discuss manufacturers or product growth history.

According to research by Gunawan et al., (2021) stated that Confirmation has a positive effect on Customer Engagement because (T-value = 15.878, p <0.001). There is a positive and significant effect between confirmation and customer engagement. This shows that early confirmation can increase customer engagement, which reflects customer interaction and participation in the after-purchase experience. Vijande et al., (2022) argue that effort is significant to enjoyment because the more effort users put in, the greater the level of pleasure or satisfaction they experience when using the application. According to Bilal et al., (2023) Perceived Value is significant to Consumer Attitude because if Perceived Value increases, Consumer Attitude also tends to increase. Then research by Huang et al., (2022) stated that Entertainment has a positive effect on Active Engagement because consumer motivation in seeking opportunities, talking, seeking entertainment, and investigating influences passive engagement behavior. According to Barreto et al., (2021) that Service Brand Coolness has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty because consumers who consider their service brand as more likely to be loyal customers to the brand. And research by Liua et al., (2020) argues that Product Brand Loyalty has a positive influence on Affective Brand Image moderated by Product Brand because the influence of Product Brand Loyalty on Affective Place Image is stronger when the perception of the authenticity of the product brand (Product Brand Authenticity) is high. This suggests that the perception of brand authenticity can strengthen the relationship between brand loyalty and emotional imagery related to the place.

In the context of digital markets, customer-based resources, as a subset of market-based resources, are increasingly gaining significance as potential sources of competitive advantage. Customer information assets, which include economically valuable information about customers held by a firm, are the main focus. Information analysis capabilities, as a complex bundle of skills and knowledge integrated into a firm's organizational processes, are key to generating customer knowledge from customer information assets. Thus, in-depth understanding or customer knowledge, which guides business decisions, becomes a critical aspect. This article takes a view of strategy, competitive advantage, and performance based on market resources, by presenting a framework that explains the relationship between customer information resources, marketing strategy, and firm performance, and discussing implications for theory, research, and practice in this digital era (Varadarajan, 2020). According to research by Alzaidi & Agag (2022), Information Quality has a positive effect on Trust because the better the quality of the information presented, the higher the level of consumer trust. Xia & Hamari's (2019) research argues that Social Interaction has a positive influence on Social Brand Engagement because interactions with features related to social interactions have a positive and significant relationship with brand social engagement, in accordance with the research results. According to Sharrifuddin et al., (2023) Interactivity has a positive influence on Online Purchase Intention because the coefficient (β): 0.151 *, There is a significant positive influence between Interactivity (the ability to choose content freely, feel able to quickly get information, etc.) with Online Purchase Intention. In other words, the higher the level of interactivity, the greater the tendency to make online purchases. Patrizi et al.'s (2023) research states that the Relationship between Brand Anthropomorphism and Cognitive Consumer Brand Engagement is statistically significant. It can be interpreted that Brand Anthropomorphism has a positive and significant impact on Cognitive Consumer Brand Engagement. Then the research of Prentice et al., (2020) also stated that Service Experience With AI is significant for Customer Engagement because significant results show that changes in the Service Experience With AI variable are related to changes in the Customer Engagement mediator. This indicates that service experiences with artificial intelligence (AI) also have a direct impact on customer engagement. According to research by Sarkum et al., (2020), it states that Knowledge has a positive influence on Employee Engagement because there is a significant positive impact of Knowledge on Employee Engagement. Knowledge not only affects customers but also employees. Employees who understand the market can more effectively contribute to the company's strategy, supporting previous findings.

E-WOM, an abbreviation of Electronic Word of Mouth, is a tool used to convey information quickly via the internet, with a primary focus on consumers. Online reviews have a positive impact on both parties, both consumers and companies. Reviews can affect product sales, depending on the type of reviews given by consumers, whether negative or positive. Positive reviews can increase consumer interest in buying a product,

and consumers tend to use E-WOM to search for product information or make purchasing decisions. This is because consumers have a high level of trust in E-WOM because it is considered a relatively more reliable source of information, especially because it is considered to reduce the risks that may arise. The difference between Word of Mouth (WOM) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) lies in the media used. Traditional WOM involves face-to-face communication, while e-WOM takes place online via the internet or other electronic platforms (Dedik, 2022). According to research by Tanprajna & Ellyawati (2021), it states that E-WOM is significant to Brand Image because statistical support from the t-test (t>1.96) and a significant p-value (<0.05) supports this hypothesis. Research by Khoirunnisa & Albari (2023) argues that Brand Image is significant to E-WOM because the better Brand Image, the better the delivery of E-WOM. If the Brand Image is good in the minds of consumers, consumers will be more confident in recommending the brand. However, according to Al-Gasawneh et al., (2022) E-WOM has a positive effect on Purchase Intention which is moderated by Reliability because the level of consumer trust in information received through e-WOM can moderate its effect on consumer purchase intentions. High trust can strengthen the relationship between e-WOM and CPI, while low trust can weaken it. Cheng et al.'s (2021) research argues that Brand Attitude is significant to E-WOM because through bootstrap testing, it was found that brand attitude partially mediates the relationship between Brand Attitude and E-WOM.

According to research by Dwidienawati et al., (2020), Influencer Review is significant to Purchase Intention because trust plays an important role in online transactions, and this trust factor has an influence. Research by Refi & Jamil (2021) argues that Customer Commitment is significant to Purchase Intention because commitment has a significant effect on purchase intention, the more committed the customer's sales, the higher the customer's purchase intention. According to Putra et al., (2020), the relationship between Brand Image is significant to Purchase Intention because the positive regression coefficient (0.207) indicates that brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. However, according to Tien et al., (2018), EWOM Credibility is significant to Purchase Intention because there is a positive and significant effect between eWOM Credibility and Purchase Intention. These results indicate that eWOM adoption mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and credibility of eWOM with purchase intention. Zheng et al.'s (2022) research argues that Customer Engagement Behaviors are significant to Purchase Intention because the results of the analysis show that visits (β=0.402, p<.01), likes (β=0.027, p<.05), and comments (β=0.624, p<.01) all have a significant positive correlation with purchase intention. Since all p-values are less than the 0.05 significance level, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, customer engagement behaviors, such as visits, likes, and comments, can be considered to have a positive influence on purchase intention.
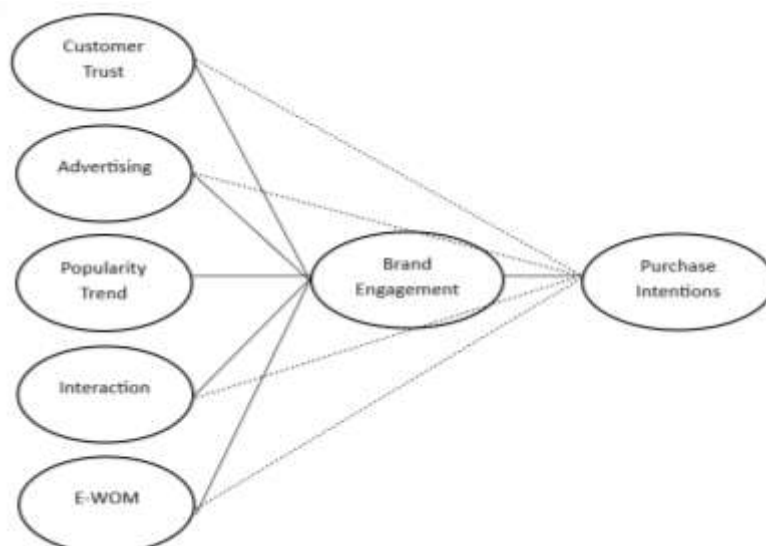

Figure 1. Research Model

III.   METHODOLOGY

The subjects considered in this study are e-commerce players in Batam City and Tanjungpinang, especially those active on the Shopee platform. The presence of many e-commerce players on this platform is one of the main reasons for conducting this study. In addition, the difference in the level of development between Batam City which is more advanced than Tanjungpinang as the capital of the Riau Islands Province is also an interesting focus for further research. The population to be studied is the community who use e-commerce in both cities, while the research sample will consist of individuals in Batam City and Tanjungpinang who have made purchases through the e-commerce platform. The sample selection method to be used is purposive sampling by setting certain criteria.

Table 1 List of Research Variable Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Reference
Customer Trust	E-commerce is a trusted platform. I am confident that E-commerce always prioritizes my interests E-commerce will fulfill all promises made to me I have full confidence in the information provided by E-commerce Shopee is committed to being a platform that is known for adhering to its promises and commitments to users	Chen *et a.,* (2020)
Advertising	I am satisfied with the advertised shopping experience on E-commerce I am considering making a shopping transaction with Shopee after seeing its advertisement I will recommend Shopee to others	Sarılgan *et al.,* (2020)
Popularity Trend	I give credit to products that I frequently purchase Certain products that I frequently purchase get positive marks from me, especially if the products have a good reputation I tend to appreciate products that are superior to their competitors in the same industry, especially if the products are products that I frequently purchase If I am already familiar with the product, I tend to give credit, especially if the product is something I have purchased before	Hien & Nhu (2022)
Interaction	I get to know my friends on social commerce platforms through information exchange I introduce myself to my friends on social commerce platforms by sharing photos I actively communicate and interact with my friends on social commerce platforms	Wang *et al.,* (2021)
E-WOM	I will post positive comments about the Shopee e-commerce platform on my social media I recommend using the e-commerce platform through my social media. I plan to recommend this e-commerce platform to my friends in my social media circle	Seo *et al.,* (2020)
Brand Engagement	I tend to share my opinions and feelings with others on social media about my favorite online stores on E-commerce. I want to share information about my favorite online stores on Shopee with my friends on social media I will leave a comment when I like information about my favorite online stores on E-commerce, I will recommend my favorite online stores on Shopee to others on social media	Thanasi-Boçe et al., (2022)
Purchase Intention	I would be happy to purchase this advertised product in the future on E-commerce I plan to use the advertised product in the future by shopping through E-commerce I would like to spend more time learning about E-commerce products because I want to use it in the future. I plan to purchase the product on Shopee in the future.	Hien & Nhu (2022)

IV.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 263 respondents were collected for the statistical sample of this study, with 260 respondents used in the analysis. The survey was conducted from January 4, 2024, to March 21, 2024, on individuals who had made purchases through e-commerce platforms. The demographic profile of the respondents showed that the majority were male (56.9% or 148 people), with a primary age range between 17 to 22 years (77.3% or 201 people). Most respondents had a high school/vocational high school education (87.3% or 227 people), current employment as private employees (54.6% or 142 people), and current monthly income between IDR 4,000,001 and IDR 6,000,000 (50.0% or 130 people).

The influence of the customer trust variable on brand engagement shows a T-Statistics value of 0.538 <1.96 with P Values of 0.591> 0.05. Through these results, customer trust can be stated to have an insignificant effect on brand engagement. Trust plays a crucial role in the world of e-commerce. In this context, trust can be interpreted as consumer confidence in the integrity of the seller after evaluating its characteristics. This trust not only plays a role in reducing transaction risk but also increases the value perceived by consumers. This is in contrast to the findings of Wang et al., (2022) which showed a significant impact, because customer trust and emotional brand involvement can encourage customers to provide positive recommendations. Strong brand involvement and customer trust that is established through strong interpersonal relationships can have a positive impact on the company. It is not uncommon for consumers who feel trust and are emotionally involved with a

brand to tend to give the intention to provide positive recommendations, which will ultimately help the brand reach more consumers. The influence of advertising variables on brand engagement shows a T-Statistics value of 5.170> 1.96 with P Values 0.000 <0.05. Through these results, advertising can be stated to have a significant influence on brand engagement.

Advertising is becoming increasingly popular in the ongoing era of digital transformation. This phenomenon encourages competition between companies to develop digital business strategies, especially in the marketing realm. The goal of advertising is to reach target market segments efficiently at a low cost. This is in accordance with research conducted by Alifia et al., (2022) which shows a significant influence, because effective advertising and strong brand engagement can encourage consumers to provide positive recommendations. Strong engagement with a brand that is formed through strong interaction with advertising can have a positive impact on the company. Often consumers who feel emotionally involved with a brand because of good advertising tend to have the intention to provide positive recommendations, which will ultimately help the brand reach more consumers.

The influence of the brand engagement variable on purchase intention shows a T-Statistics value of 31.681> 1.96 with P Values 0.000 <0.05. Through these results, brand engagement is stated to have a significant influence on purchase intention. Brand engagement is the level of involvement, attachment, and interaction that consumers have with a brand. This includes participation in activities such as purchases, loyalty programs, interaction with brand content on social media, and recommending and advocating the brand to others. In other words, brand engagement reflects how strong the emotional and cognitive connection consumers have with a brand. This is in line with research conducted by Refi & Jamil (2021) which shows a significant impact, because strong engagement with the brand and intention to purchase can encourage customers to provide positive recommendations. Strong engagement with a brand that is formed through strong interaction with the brand can have a positive impact on the company. Often consumers who have the intention to purchase because of strong engagement with the brand will tend to provide positive recommendations, which will ultimately help the brand reach more customers. The influence of the E-WOM variable on brand engagement shows a T-Statistics value of 1.922 <1.96 with P Values 0.055> 0.05. Through these results, E-WOM is declared insignificant on brand engagement. E-WOM, an abbreviation of Electronic Word of Mouth, is a tool used to convey information quickly via the internet, with a primary focus on consumers. This is in contrast to research conducted by Khoirunnisa & Albari (2023) which shows that there is a significant influence, because electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM) and brand engagement have a strong influence on customers in providing positive recommendations. Although strong E-WOM and brand engagement can occur, their influence on positive recommendations from customers is significant.

The effect of interaction variables on brand engagement shows a T-Statistics value of 2.826> 1.96 with P Values 0.005 <0.05. Through these results, interaction is stated to have a significant effect on brand engagement. Interaction is a reciprocal process between two or more entities, involving the exchange of information, responses, or actions. This can occur between individuals, groups, or between humans and technology. Interactions include various forms, including verbal or non-verbal communication, exchange of goods or services, and cooperative or competitive activities. In the context of technology, interaction often occurs between users and user interfaces, where users interact with software or systems to achieve certain goals. This is in accordance with the findings of the study by Alzaidi & Agag (2022) which showed that there was no significant relationship, because the interaction between customers and brands (interaction) did not have a strong influence on the level of customer engagement with the brand. Although there is active interaction between customers and brands, its impact on customer engagement with the brand is significant. The influence of the popularity trend variable on brand engagement shows a T-Statistics value of 0.292 <1.96 with P Values 0.771> 0.05. Through these results, the popularity trend is stated to have an insignificant effect on brand engagement. Popularity Trend is a tendency that shows the level of popularity of a topic, product, service, or phenomenon among the public in a certain period. This contrasts with the findings in the study by Barreto et al., (2021) which showed that there was a significant correlation, because the popularity trend has a strong influence on the level of brand engagement. Although the popularity trend may occur, its impact on brand engagement remains significant.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the impact of factors such as customer trust, advertising, popularity trend, interaction, and E-WOM on purchase intention, with brand engagement as a mediator on e-commerce platforms, especially Shopee in Batam City. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how consumer behavior evolves in the context of e-commerce. The results of the study indicate that customer trust has a negative effect on brand engagement. This indicates that the higher the level of customer trust in an e-commerce platform such as Shopee, the lower the level of brand engagement that occurs. This could be because consumers who strongly trust the platform may feel less need to actively engage with the brand. Advertising has a positive impact on brand engagement. This finding suggests that creative and engaging advertising can increase customer engagement with brands on e-commerce platforms. An effective advertising strategy can build a solid relationship between brands and consumers, increasing customer interaction and participation. Popularity trend has a positive impact on purchase intention with brand engagement as a mediator. This finding suggests that popular trends in e-commerce can influence consumer purchase intention through their engagement with the brand. Companies can leverage popular trends to increase consumer purchase intention by focusing on brand engagement that follows the trend. Interaction has a positive impact on purchase intention with brand engagement as the mediation. Interaction between brands and consumers on e-commerce platforms can increase consumer purchase intention by building closer and sustainable relationships. This emphasizes the importance of active interaction between brands and consumers in building consumer trust and loyalty. E-WOM has a negative impact on purchase intention with brand engagement as mediation. These findings suggest that negative reviews or adverse E-WOM can reduce consumer purchase intention through their influence on brand engagement. Companies should pay attention to their online reputation management and strengthen brand engagement to reduce the impact of negative reviews. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior on e-commerce platforms and provides valuable insights for business practitioners in developing effective marketing strategies. This study also provides a solid foundation for further research in this area, including the development of a more comprehensive model to understand the dynamics of brand engagement and consumer purchase intention in the context of e-commerce.

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