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The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in the Influence of Promotion, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Price on Hangry Culinary Consumer Loyalty

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of brand trust as a mediating variable in the relationship between promotion, electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), and price regarding consumer loyalty toward Hangry culinary products. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing primary data collected via questionnaires distributed to 100 Hangry consumers in Lenteng Agung who had made purchases through digital platforms. Purposive sampling was used as the sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software, involving the assessment of measurement and structural models, as well as bootstrapping to test for direct and indirect effects. The results indicate that promotion has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on brand trust. Conversely, both E-WOM and price have positive and significant effects on brand trust. Furthermore, brand trust was found to have no significant effect on consumer loyalty. Regarding indirect effects, brand trust did not mediate the influence of promotion, E-WOM, or price on consumer loyalty; this was evidenced by p-values of 0.676, 0.645, and 0.578, respectively. These findings suggest that enhancing promotion, E-WOM, and price perceptions does not automatically foster consumer loyalty through brand trust. Therefore, Hangry needs to strengthen other aspects that build consumer loyalty, specifically customer experience, product and service quality, and the consistency of the value delivered to consumers.

Keyword: Promotion, Electronic Word of Mouth, Price, Brand Trust, Consumer Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The growth of technology-driven culinary businesses has made digital platforms increasingly vital for communication and transactions between companies and consumers. PT Modular Kuliner Indonesia (Hangry) is a technology-based culinary company operating under a multi-brand restaurant and cloud kitchen model that leverages platforms such as GoFood, ShopeeFood, and GrabFood. In this landscape, consumer loyalty is crucial, as consumers face a multitude of product and brand choices.

Brand trust forms the foundation of the relationship between a brand and the consumer. Amprawati (2024) explains that trust is established when consumers perceive a brand as honest, reliable, and beneficial. Rianto (2022) identifies customer confidence—specifically the belief that a brand will not disappoint—as a key factor in a brand's growth and popularity. Ahmad Fadli (2024) notes that transparency regarding services, pricing, and quality can foster consumer trust and loyalty.

Promotions serve as a communication channel between companies and consumers. Munadiyan et al. (2023) explain that promotions are used not only to convey information but also to influence consumers to purchase or use products based on their needs. Kotler et al. (2024) define promotion as the activity of communicating, introducing, persuading, and reminding consumers about products or services. Grewal et al. (2021) further explain that marketing communication can be executed through advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, direct marketing, and online marketing.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to communication regarding products or services via the internet. Erislan (2024) describes E-WOM as digital communication—such as consumer reviews, opinions, or recommendations shared over the internet and social media. Chrismardani (2023) explains that E-WOM encompasses informal, internet-based communication regarding the usage or characteristics of products, services, or sellers. In the context of Hangry, E-WOM manifests as reviews, comments, ratings, and recommendations on digital platforms.

Price is a critical element of the value proposition, as it reflects the relationship between the benefits received by the consumer and the costs incurred (Grewal et al., 2021). Kotler et al. (2022) defines price as the amount consumers are expected to pay in exchange for a product or service. Ningsih et al. (2024) view pricing as a strategy for determining the selling price of a product or service to support business objectives and competitiveness.

Relevant research indicates that the relationships between variables are not always consistent. Adiani et al. (2025) examined E-WOM and brand trust as mediating variables in the context of culinary products. Made et al. (2025) also investigated the role of brand trust in mediating the impact of E-WOM on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Utami et al. (2023) studied brand trust, brand image, and promotion within online fruit and vegetable purchasing platforms. These prior research findings serve as a crucial basis for re-examining the role of brand trust as a mediator regarding consumer loyalty toward Hangry.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the influence of promotion, E-WOM, and price on consumer loyalty, with brand trust serving as a variable mediati.

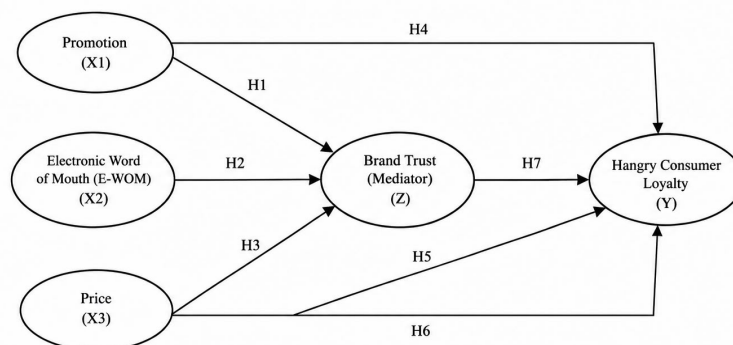


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

H1: Promotion has a positive effect on Brand Trust among Hangry consumers.

H2: Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a positive effect on Brand Trust among Hangry consumers.

H3: Price has a positive effect on Brand Trust among Hangry consumers.

H4: Promotion has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty among Hangry consumers.

- H5: E-WOM has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty among Hangry consumers.
H6: Price has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty among Hangry consumers.
H7: Brand Trust has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty among Hangry consumers.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach based on primary and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2023). The research was conducted from May to June 2026, focusing on Hangry culinary consumers in Lenteng Agung. Primary data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to Hangry consumers.

The sample consisted of 100 respondents, selected based on the criteria of being Hangry culinary consumers in Lenteng Agung and having consumed or purchased Hangry products via digital platforms within the last three months.

The research variables comprise promotion (X1), electronic word-of-mouth (X2), and price (X3) as independent variables; brand trust (Z) as a mediating variable; and consumer loyalty (Y) as the dependent variable. Indicators and operational definitions were formulated based on the theoretical framework used in the thesis, referencing sources such as Amprawati (2024), Munadiyan et al. (2023), Erislan (2024), Kotler et al. (2022), Kotler et al. (2024), and Grewal et al. (2021).

Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. Hypothesis testing was based on a p -value < 0.05 or a t -statistic > 1.96 at a 5% significance level, consistent with the testing methods employed in the thesis (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023; Sugiyono, 2023). Mediation testing was conducted by analyzing the specific indirect effect using bootstrapping.

Table 1. 1 Respondent Characteristics (n 100)

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Persentase</i>
<i>Famale</i>	60	60%
<i>Male</i>	40	40%
<i>Total</i>	100	100%

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study recruited 100 respondents, all of whom were Hangry consumers in Lenteng Agung who had purchased products via digital platforms within the last three months. The respondents were predominantly female (60 individuals, or 60%), while 40 were male (40%).

Table 1. 2 Convergent Validity And Reliability Results

<i>Variabel</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
<i>Brand Trist</i>	0,736	0,918	0,881
<i>Promotion</i>	0,704	0,905	0,860
<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i>	0,687	0,898	0,848
<i>Price</i>	0,705	0,905	0,861
<i>Consumer Loyalty</i>	0,757	0,926	0,893

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

All constructs have AVE values above 0.50, thereby meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs also exceed 0.70, indicating that the research instrument is reliable. Results from cross-loadings and the

Fornell-Larcker criterion demonstrate that the indicators exhibit their highest loadings on their respective constructs and that discriminant validity is established.

Table 1. 3 Coefficient Of Determination (R-Square)

<i>Endogenous</i>	<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square Adjusted</i>
<i>Kepercayaan Merek</i>	0,678	0,668
<i>Loyalitas Konsumen</i>	0,767	0,757

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

Table 1. 4 Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

<i>Hypothesized Path</i>	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>T-statistic</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>P-Valeu</i>
<i>Brand Trust → Loyalitas Konsumen</i>	0,072	0,562	0,574	<i>Not signifikan</i>
<i>Promotion → Brand Trust</i>	0,238	1.461	0,144	<i>Not signifikan</i>
<i>Promotion → Consumen Loyalty</i>	0,188	1.392	0,164	<i>Not signifikan</i>
<i>Electronic Word Of Mouth → Brand Trust</i>	0,292	2,290	0,022	<i>Signifikan</i>
<i>Electronic Word Of Mouth → Consumen Loyalty</i>	0.427	3.031	0.002	<i>Signifikan</i>
<i>Price → Brand Trust</i>	0,377	2.255	0.024	<i>Signifikan</i>
<i>Price → Consumen Loyalty</i>	0.277	2.022	0.043	<i>Signifikan</i>

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

Table 1. 5 Specific Indirect Effects

<i>Hypothesized Path</i>	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>T-statistic</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>P-Valeu</i>
<i>Promotion → Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalt</i>	0.017	0.418	0.676	<i>Not signifikan</i>
<i>Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty</i>	0.021	0.461	0.645	<i>Not signifikan</i>
<i>Price → Brand Trust → Consumen Loyalty</i>	0.027	0.556	0,578	<i>Not signifikan</i>

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

Table 1. 6 Coefficient Of Determination (R-Square)

<i>Variabel Endogen</i>	<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square Adjusted</i>
<i>Brand Trust</i>	0,678	0,668
<i>Consumer Loyalty</i>	0,767	0,757

Source: Research data, processed in 2026

H1: Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty

The results of the first hypothesis test indicate that the brand trust variable was rejected, demonstrating that brand trust has no influence on consumer loyalty. This study aligns with research conducted by Made et al. (2025), Adiani et al. (2025), and Utami et al. (2023), which also found that brand trust does not influence consumer loyalty.

This conclusion is supported by the low path coefficient value and a p-value that exceeds the established significance level.

H2: Promotion → Brand Trust.

The results of the second hypothesis test indicate that the brand trust variable was rejected; this demonstrates that the promotion variable has no influence on brand trust. This study aligns with research conducted by Alyanda & Astuti (2026), Fikri (2025), and Yapputra & Dahlan (2024), which also found that promotion does not influence brand trust.

This is evidenced by the low path coefficient value or a p-value that exceeds the established significance level.

H3: Promotion → Consumer Loyalty

The results of the third hypothesis test indicate that the brand trust variable was rejected; this demonstrates that the promotion variable does not influence consumer loyalty. This study aligns with research conducted by Damayanti & Saputro (2023) and Utami et al. (2023), which also found that promotion had no effect on consumer loyalty.

This conclusion is supported by the low path coefficient value, a p-value exceeding the established significance level, and the significance level itself.

H4: Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Trust

Hasil uji hipotesis H4 menyatakan bawa variabel ditolak, hal ini ini menjelaskan bahwa variabel Electronic Word of Mouth tidak memiliki pengaruh terhadap loyalitas konsumen. Penelitian Ini selaras pada penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Nalini et al. (2025), Sari (2025), Made et al (2025)

Pada penelitiannya menemukan hasil yang bertentangan, yaitu Electronic Word of Mouth yang tidak memiliki pengaruh terhadap kepercayaan merek

H5: Electronic Word of → Consumer Loyalty

The hypothesis test results for H4 indicate that the variable was rejected, demonstrating that Electronic Word of Mouth has no influence on consumer loyalty. This study aligns with research conducted by Nalini et al. (2025) and Sari (2025), which also found contrary to expectations that Electronic Word of Mouth does not influence brand trust.

H6: Price → Brand Trust

The hypothesis test results for H6 indicate that the Price variable was not supported, demonstrating that Price has no influence on Brand Trust. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2023).

With a p-value of <0.05 , the Electronic Word of Mouth variable was found to influence Consumer Loyalty.

H7: Price → Consumer Loyalty

The hypothesis test results for H7 indicate that the Electronic Word of Mouth variable does not have a significant influence on consumer loyalty. This finding aligns with research conducted by Damayanti & Saputro (2023), Sari et al. (2025), and Nurfitriana & Iriani (2019).

With a p-value of less than 0.05, the Price variable is shown to influence consumer loyalty. This indicates that the more suitable the price offered to consumers, the higher the level of consumer loyalty toward Hangry's culinary products.

H8: Promotion → Brand trust → Consumer Loyalty

The hypothesis test result for H8 led to its rejection; thus, it can be concluded that promotion does not mediate the effect of brand trust on consumer loyalty toward Hangry. This finding is supported by Sosrobahu and Isa (2025), who found that promotion has not yet been able to significantly build brand trust. This indicates that promotional activities do not always result in increased loyalty through brand trust.

H9: Electronic Word of → Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty

The hypothesis test result for H9 led to its rejection; thus, it can be concluded that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) does not mediate the effect of brand trust on consumer loyalty toward Hangry. This finding aligns with Utami et al. (2025), who found that brand trust does not mediate the relationship between e-WOM and brand loyalty. Although e-WOM can enhance brand trust, that increase is not strong enough to indirectly drive customer loyalty.

H10: Price → Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty

The hypothesis test result led to the rejection of H10 thus, it can be concluded that Electronic Word of Mouth does not mediate the effect of brand trust on consumer loyalty toward Hangry. This finding differs from that of Satrio and Putri (2023), who stated that brand trust mediates the relationship between price and customer loyalty. This discrepancy in results may be attributed to respondent characteristics, the specific subject of the study, and consumer perceptions of price which were not strong enough to indirectly foster brand trust and loyalty.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that E-WOM and price have a positive and significant impact on consumer loyalty, whereas brand trust and promotion do not have a significant effect. E-WOM also significantly influences brand trust, while promotion does not. Price has a significant impact on brand trust. Thus, E-WOM emerges as the strongest factor in enhancing Hangry's consumer loyalty, whereas promotion has not yet become a primary factor in shaping loyalty.

It is recommended that Hangry more actively boost E-WOM through Hangry communities or groups, using them as platforms to share product information, gather reviews and feedback, and encourage consumers to share positive experiences and recommendations. Hangry is also advised to maintain pricing that aligns with product quality, ensure price consistency, and offer special deals or loyalty programs that deliver value to consumers without compromising product quality.

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