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## The influence of Social Media Branding and e-WOM on Customer Loyalty through Customer Experience

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### Abstract

This study aims to fill the existing gap by focusing on the geographical context of Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, specifically on the problem of broken ESAF frames on Honda automatic scooters, as well as exploring the role of dealers in managing crisis management strategies on social media to mitigate the impact on customer loyalty through user experience. loyal to Honda. This research method is quantitative with an explanatory research approach. The number of samples in this study was 100 with respondents uses Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. Distribution of questionnaires via google form. The analysis technique used is descriptive and statistical test Smart PLS. The results of these 7 hypotheses show that 6 hypothesis are accepted and 1 hypotheses is rejected. Social media branding and e-WOM significantly affect customer experience, while social media branding and customer experience significantly affect customer loyalty, whereas e-WOM does not significantly affect customer loyalty. Meanwhile, in the indirect effect, social media branding and e-WOM significantly affect customer loyalty through customer experience.

**Keywords:** *Social media branding, e-WOM, experience, loyalty*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the digital era and information technology which is increasingly developing rapidly, social media plays an important role in shaping brand image and interactions between customers. Word of mouth communication via electronic media, or what is known as e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth), is becoming increasingly significant because it can increase consumer intentions to buy products and have an impact on sales turnover (Suartina et al, 2022). Data from AISI shows that motorbikes, especially automatic scooters, are still the main choice in Indonesia with domestic sales reaching 4,721,683 units from January to September 2023, of

which 89.76% are automatic scooters. Honda is a brand that is widely known in Indonesia, especially in Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, which has a large motor vehicle market.

Social media is becoming a major platform for consumers to share their experiences with certain brands and products. Consumers are increasingly connected on social media where sharing personal stories influences their behavior, including purchasing decisions (Lund, Cohen, dan Scarles., 2018). Social media platforms provide two-way communication between consumers and brands, which has changed the passive role of consumers to a more active one (Maria et al., 2019). In the context of Honda motorbikes, automatic scooters, social media users often share positive and negative experiences. Therefore, it is important for Honda and dealers in Sidoarjo Regency to understand how social media branding and e-WOM influence public perceptions of their products.

Negative news regarding the broken ESAF frame on Honda automatic scooters spreading on social media can damage the brand image. Research shows that negative e-WOM can reduce consumers' perceptions of product quality and their purchase intentions (Park, Lee, & Han., 2019). Negative news on social media can change the public's perception of a brand and reduce the positive image that has been previously built (Kim, S., & Kim., 2019).

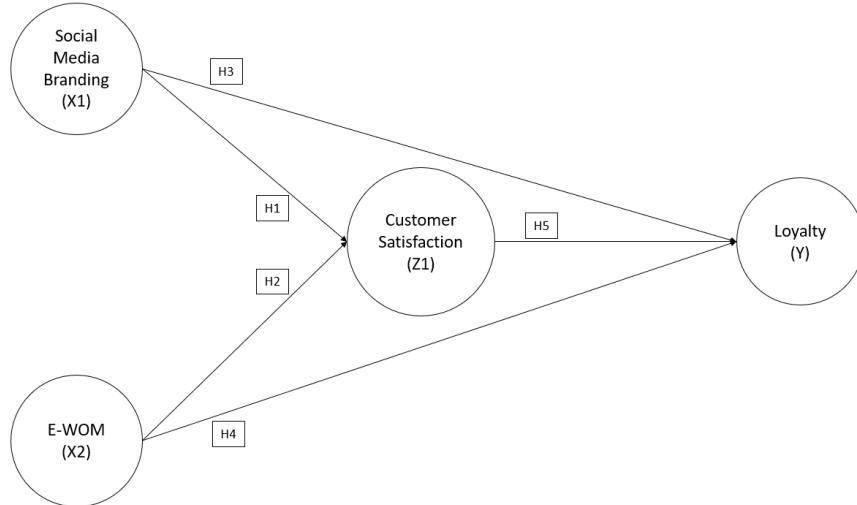
Poor handling of a crisis, such as ESAF framework issues, can have a negative impact on customer loyalty. Research shows that negative news spread widely on social media can significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Rozi et al., 2024). This kind of crisis requires effective crisis management from Public Relations to minimize the negative impact on the company's image (Reynaldin & Saputra., 2024). PT Astra Honda Motor needs to respond quickly and transparently to maintain consumer trust.

Negative customer experiences can reduce their satisfaction and loyalty. Research shows that slow or inadequate responses to consumer concerns can reduce their overall satisfaction levels (Zeithaml et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020). Quick and transparent communication in dealing with a crisis can help mitigate the negative impact on customer loyalty (Yan & Cao., 2017). Honda dealers also need to be given training to handle this issue effectively, including repair procedures and communication with customers (Wu, et al., 2018).

In facing these challenges, Honda must continue to evaluate and improve the quality of its products and respond to ESAF frame issues quickly and transparently to minimize negative impacts on customer experience. Service recovery efforts and good communication can help restore customer trust and maintain their loyalty (Van Vaerenbergh et al., 2019; Chien, F. S., Zeng, S., Yen, Y. Y., & Tsai., 2020).

This research refers to various previous studies which have discussed the impact of social media branding, e-WOM, and customer loyalty. This study aims to fill the existing gap by focusing on the geographical context of Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, specifically on the problem of broken ESAF frames on Honda automatic scooters, as well as exploring the role of dealers in managing crisis management strategies on social media to mitigate the impact on customer loyalty through user experience loyal to Honda.

## Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**  
 Source: Processed Secondary Data, 2024

Regarding the research context, problem formulation, and conceptual framework, then hypothesis that can be formed is as follows:

- H1: Social Media Branding has a significant effect on Customer Experience for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H2: e-WOM has a significant effect on Customer Experience for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H3: Social Media Branding has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H4: e-WOM has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H5: Customer Experience has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H6: Social Media Branding has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty, mediated by Customer Experience, for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.
- H7: e-WOM has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty, mediated by Customer Experience, for Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.

### **METHOD (Capital, 12 pts, bold)**

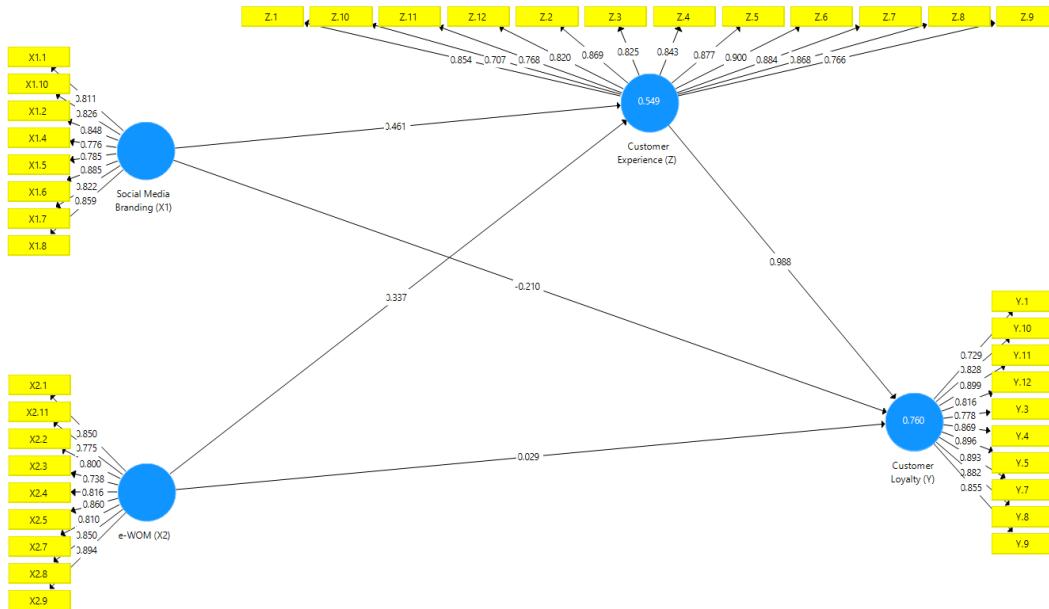
This research method is quantitative with an explanatory research approach. The number of samples in this study was 100 with respondents uses Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. Distribution of questionnaires via google form. The analysis technique used is descriptive and statistical test Smart PLS, and the questionnaire uses a Likert scale with 5 categories, namely:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Evaluation of Measurement Model/ Outer Model Testing



**Figure 2. Outer Model**

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

To test convergent validity, the outer loading and values are used Average Variant Extracted (AVE). An indicator is declared to be satisfactory convergent validity in the good category when value outer loading  $> 0.7$  and value Average Variant Extracted  $> 0.5$ . The following are the outer loading values and Average Variant Extracted of each indicator in this research variable:

**Table 1. Outer Loading**

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Social Media Branding (X1)	X1.1	0.811
	X1.2	0.848
	X1.4	0.776
	X1.5	0.785
	X1.6	0.885
	X1.7	0.882
	X1.8	0.859
	X1.10	0.826
e-WOM (X2)	X2.1	0.850
	X2.2	0.800
	X2.3	0.738
	X2.4	0.816
	X2.5	0.860
	X2.7	0.810
	X2.8	0.850
	X2.9	0.894
	X2.11	0.775

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Customer Experience (Z)	Z.1	0.854
	Z.2	0.869
	Z.3	0.825
	Z.4	0.843
	Z.5	0.877
	Z.6	0.900
	Z.7	0.884
	Z.8	0.868
	Z.9	0.766
	Z.10	0.707
	Z.11	0.768
	Z.12	0.820
Customer Loyalty (Y)	Y.1	0.729
	Y.3	0.778
	Y.4	0.869
	Y.5	0.896
	Y.7	0.893
	Y.8	0.882
	Y.9	0.855
	Y.10	0.828
	Y.11	0.899
	Y.12	0.816

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Based on the data presented in table 1 above, it is known that each research variable indicator has many values outer loading  $> 0.7$ . An indicator is said to have good reliability, if the value outer loading is above 0.7 (Sarwono, 2014: 44). The data above shows good validity because there are no indicator variables that have values outer loading below 0.7.

**Table 2. Average Variant Extracted**

	AVE
Social Media Branding (X1)	0.684
e-WOM (X2)	0.677
Customer Experience (Z)	0.695
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.716

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Based on the data presented in table 2 above, it is known that the value Average Variant Extracted all variables in this study were  $> 0.5$ . Thus it can be stated that each variable has a good convergent validity.

#### *Discriminant Validity Test*

In this section the test results will describe discriminant validity using values Fornell-Larcker. An indicator is declared to meet standards discriminant validity when value Fornell-Larcker the indicator on the variable is the largest compared to the other variables. The following are the values Fornell-Larcker each indicator:

**Table 3. Fornell-Larcker**

	X1	X2	Z	Y
Social Media Branding (X1)	0.827			
e-WOM (X2)	0.714	0.823		
Customer Experience (Z)	0.702	0.667	0.834	
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.505	0.538	0.846	0.860

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Based on the data presented in table 3 above, it can be seen that discriminant validity has been fulfilled in compiling their respective variables where the construct indicators are not more strongly connected to other constructs than to their own constructs.

*Reliability Test*

This section is the test results reliability using value composite reliability, rho\_A, and Cronbach's alpha. An indicator is declared to meet standards reliability when value nilai composite reliability  $> 0.6$  (Bagozzi & Yi, 1998; Chin & Dibbern, 2010), then the rho\_A and Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.7$  (Vinzi, Trinchera, & Amato, 2010). The following are the value composite reliability, rho\_A, and Cronbach's alpha each indicator:

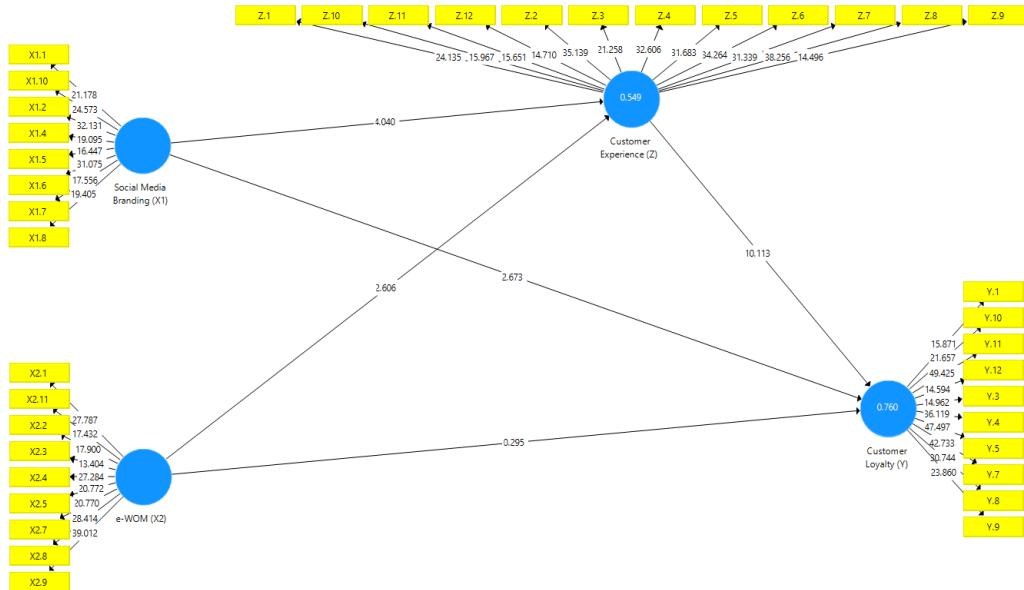
**Table 4. Composite Reliability, rho\_A dan Cronbach's Alpha**

	Composite Reliability	rho_A	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Branding (X1)	0.945	0.938	0.934
e-WOM (X2)	0.949	0.944	0.940
Customer Experience (Z)	0.965	0.962	0.960
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.962	0.959	0.955

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Based on the data presented in table 4 above, it can be seen that the value composite reliability of all research variables is  $> 0.6$ , then the values of rho\_A and Cronbach's alpha is  $> 0.7$ . These results indicate that each variable has met a good value of composite reliability, rho\_A, and Cronbach's alpha, so it can be concluded that all variables have a high level of reliability.

### Evaluation of Structural Model/ Inner Model



**Figure 3. Inner Model**

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

#### *Uji Path Coefficients*

Evaluation of path coefficients is used to show how strong the effect or influence of exogenous variables is on endogenous variables. Based on the inner model scheme shown in Figure 3, it can be explained that the largest path coefficient value is the influence of User Experience on Customer Loyalty of 10,113, then the influence of social media branding on User Experience is 4,040, while the smallest influence is e-WOM on Customer Loyalty of 0.295. Based on the results of this description, it shows that all variables in this model have positive path coefficients with. This shows that if the greater the value of the path coefficient on an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable, the stronger the influence will be.

#### *R-Square*

R-Square used to measure how much endogenous variables are influenced by exogenous variables. Following are the results of the analysis:

**Table 5. R-Square**

	<b>R-Square</b>
Customer Experience (Z)	0,549
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0,760

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Based on the data in table 5 above, it can be seen that the value R-Square for the Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty variables, respectively, it is 0.549 and 0.760, which means that the ability of the exogenous variable to explain the endogenous variable is 54.9% (Strong) and 76% (Strong). Meanwhile, 45.1% and

the remaining 24% are the influence of other exogenous variables which were not measured in this study.

#### *Uji Hipotesis*

**Table 6. Path Coefficients-Direct Effect**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Value	Signifikansi
Social Media Branding (X1) □ Customer Experience (Z)	0.461	0.459	0.114	4.040	0.000	Significant
e-WOM □ Customer Experience (Z)	0.337	0.343	0.129	2.606	0.009	Significant
Social Media Branding (X1) □ Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.210	0.202	0.079	2.673	0.008	Significant
e-WOM □ Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.029	0.028	0.098	0.295	0.768	Not Significant
Customer Experience (Z) □ Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.988	0.982	0.098	10.113	0.000	Significant

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

Table 6 shows the results of the PLS calculation, which indicates the influence between variables. Based on the table, it can be seen that of the 7 hypotheses processed in this research, a hypothesis can be declared accepted or significant if the T-Statistics is  $>1.96$ . There are 6 hypotheses that are positively significant and 1 hypothesis that is not significant.

#### **Discussion**

##### *Effect of social media branding on customer experience of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.*

Based on the results of statistical tests carried out, it was found that the influence of social media branding on user experience showed an original sample (O) result of 0.461 which states that these two variables have a positive influence, with a t-statistic of 4.040 which meets the t-statistics standard  $> 1.96$ , then it can be concluded that the first hypothesis in this research is accepted and significant.

The research results show that social media branding has a significant influence on the customer experience of Honda brand motorbikes, especially the Automatic Scooter type in Sidoarjo Regency. This research found that the way Honda manages branding on social media plays an important role in influencing how customers experience the product, especially when facing problems such as the ESAF frame breaking.

When Honda manages social media well, including communicating problem handling transparently and proactively, customers tend to have a more positive experience. Effective handling through clear updates and quick responses to complaints helps minimize the negative impact of technical issues and improves customer perception of the brand. These results show that good communication on social media can improve customer experiences and strengthen their relationship with Honda.

On the other hand, if Honda does not make good use of social media, such as responding slowly to complaints or not providing adequate information, the customer experience could be bad. Research indicates that negative reviews and complaints that are not handled properly on social media can spread and influence the views of other customers, making their experience with Honda Automatic Scooters less than satisfactory. Therefore, effective management of branding on social media is very important to maintain a positive customer experience and strengthen brand loyalty.

*Effect of e-WOM on customer experience of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.*

Based on the results of statistical tests carried out, it was found that the influence of e-WOM on User Experience showed an original sample (O) result of 0.337, which states that these two variables have a positive influence, with a t-statistic of 2.606 which meets the standard of t-statistics  $> 1.96$ , then it can be concluded that the second hypothesis in this study is accepted and significant.

The research results show that e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) has a big influence on the customer experience of Honda brand motorbikes, especially the Automatic Scooter type in Sidoarjo Regency. This research identifies that e-WOM accelerates the dissemination of information regarding product advantages and disadvantages. When problems such as ESAF (Enhanced Smart Architecture Frame) frame breakage arise, negative reviews from users experiencing this problem can spread quickly through digital platforms, impacting the views of potential buyers and creating uncertainty in the market.

The ESAF frame, which was designed to increase the strength and stability of Honda Automatic Scooters, experienced problems such as frame breakage, which reduced customer confidence in the product's quality. Research shows that these technical issues are often shared online by frustrated consumers. The impact of negative e-WOM, especially in a local market context such as Sidoarjo Regency, is significant because public opinion influences each other and contributes to overall brand reputation.

To overcome the negative impact of e-WOM related to technical problems, research suggests that Honda proactively handles customer complaints and offers adequate solutions. Fixing technical issues and strengthening communication regarding corrective measures has proven effective in restoring customer confidence and improving brand image in the market.

*Effect of social media branding on customer loyalty of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.*

Based on the results of statistical tests carried out, it was found that the influence of social media branding on customer loyalty showed an original sample (O) result of 0.210, which states that these two variables have a positive influence, with a t-statistic of 2.673 which meets the standard of t-statistics  $> 1.96$ , then it can be concluded that the third hypothesis in this research is accepted and significant.

The research results show that social media branding plays an important role in forming customer loyalty for Honda brand motorbikes, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. This research found that when a technical problem occurs, such as a broken ESAF frame, branding management on social media greatly affects customer loyalty. If Honda handles this issue transparently and responsively on social media, customer loyalty is likely to be maintained despite technical problems.

On the other hand, research reveals that if the issue of ESAF frame fractures is not addressed well on social media, or if communication on such platforms is slow and inadequate, this could affect customer perceptions and damage their loyalty. Negative reviews and discussions that spread on social media can erode trust in the brand and make customers start considering other brands, which has a negative impact on loyalty to Honda.

To maintain customer loyalty and manage negative impacts, research shows that Honda needs to use social media as an effective and responsive communication tool. Quick responses to complaints, providing clear information regarding improvements, and demonstrating commitment to product quality have been proven to help restore and strengthen customer loyalty even when faced with technical problems.

#### *Effect of e-WOM on customer loyalty of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.*

Based on the results of statistical tests carried out, it was found that the influence of e-WOM on customer loyalty showed an original sample (O) result of 0.029, which states that these two variables have a positive influence, with a t-statistic of 0.295 which does not meet the standard of  $t\text{-statistics} < 1.96$ , then it can be concluded that the fourth hypothesis in this study is rejected and is not significant.

The research results show that e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) does not have a significant influence on customer loyalty for Honda brand motorbikes, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. This research found that even though there was negative information regarding the ESAF frame breaking which was spread through social media platforms and online forums, the impact on the level of customer loyalty was relatively small. This shows that negative online reviews do not always have a big impact on the decisions of customers who are already loyal to the Honda brand.

The ESAF frame break on a Honda Automatic Scooter, despite being a technical issue that received attention on social media, was not enough to change the views of customers who already had a positive relationship with the brand. Customer loyalty appears to be influenced more by their direct experience with Honda products and services than by information spread on the internet. Customers who are satisfied with Honda's performance and after-sales service tend to remain loyal, despite technical problems reported by other users.

Overall, although e-WOM plays a role in disseminating information regarding technical problems such as broken ESAF frames, its impact on Honda

customer loyalty in Sidoarjo Regency is not significant. This shows that other factors, such as product quality, after-sales service, and personal experience, are more dominant in forming customer loyalty than negative information circulating online.

*Effect of customer experience on customer loyalty of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency.*

Based on the results of statistical tests carried out, it was found that the influence of user experience on customer loyalty showed an original sample (O) result of 0.988, which states that these two variables have a positive influence, with a t-statistic of 10.113 which meets the standard of t-statistics  $> 1.96$ , then it can be concluded that the fifth hypothesis in this research is accepted and significant.

The research results show that customer experience has a significant effect on customer loyalty for Honda brand motorbikes, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. This research found that technical issues such as a broken ESAF frame on Automatic Scooters directly affected customers' experience and, in turn, affected their level of loyalty to the brand.

When customers experience problems such as ESAF frames breaking, this reduces their satisfaction with the product. These negative experiences often impact customer loyalty, making them more likely to consider other brands. The research results show that damage to the ESAF frame can cause customers to feel dissatisfied, which has the potential to reduce their loyalty to Honda.

Therefore, to maintain customer loyalty, it is important for Honda to handle technical issues quickly and effectively. Repairing defects in the ESAF framework and providing adequate support to customers can improve their experience and increase brand loyalty. This research confirms that the quality of customer experience is a key factor in building and maintaining customer loyalty.

**Table 7. Path Coefficients-Indirect Effect**

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T-Statistics ( O/STDEV )</i>	<i>P Value s</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Social Media Branding (X1) $\square$ Customer Experience (Z) $\square$ Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.456	0.451	0.127	3.601	0.000	Significant
e-WOM $\square$ Customer Experience (Z) $\square$ Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.333	0.335	0.129	2.587	0.010	Significant

Source: Processed by SMART-PLS, 2024

*Effect of social media branding on customer loyalty of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency through customer experience as a mediation.*

From table 7 above, it can be seen that the original sample value (O) is 0.456, which states that the three variables have a positive influence. Then, by looking at the significance value or t-statistics, it is  $3.601 > 1.96$  (greater than 1.96), indicating

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that social media branding (X1) has an effect on customer loyalty (Y) with customer experience (Z) as a mediator. Based on the regression results, it can be concluded that the sixth hypothesis is accepted and significant.

The research results show that social media branding has a significant influence on customer loyalty for Honda brand motorbikes, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency, with customer experience as a mediator. This research reveals that when a technical problem occurs such as a broken ESAF frame, how Honda manages branding on social media can affect the customer experience, which in turn affects their loyalty.

The problem of broken ESAF frames on Automatic Scooters affects customer experience directly. If Honda handles these issues well on social media, for example through quick responses and clear communication, customers are likely to have a better experience. This can improve the brand image in the eyes of customers and increase their loyalty. Research shows that effective social media branding can improve customer experience and strengthen customer loyalty.

On the other hand, if branding management on social media is inadequate, such as if Honda is slow to respond or is not transparent about repairs, the customer experience could be poor. This negative experience can reduce customer loyalty to the brand. Research emphasizes the importance of good social media branding to ensure that customer experience remains positive, which ultimately influences customer loyalty significantly.

*Effect of e-WOM on customer loyalty of Honda brand automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency through customer experience as a mediation.*

From table 7 above, it can be seen that the original sample value (O) is 0.333, which states that the three variables have a positive influence. Then, by looking at the significance value or t-statistics, it is  $2.587 > 1.96$  (greater than 1.96), indicating that e-WOM (X2) has an effect on customer loyalty (Y) with customer experience (Z) as a mediator. Based on the regression results, it can be concluded that the seventh hypothesis is accepted and significant.

The research results show that e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) has a significant effect on customer loyalty for Honda brand motorbikes, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency, with customer experience as a mediator. This research reveals that when technical problems such as ESAF frame fractures occur, e-WOM affects customers' experiences and, in turn, their loyalty to the brand.

The issue of broken ESAF frames on Automatic Scooters is frequently discussed in online reviews and discussions, potentially affecting other customers' experiences. If many negative reviews about these defects spread, this could worsen the customer experience and affect their perception of the product quality. Research shows that negative experiences caused by these problems can reduce customer loyalty, especially if e-WOM contains harsh criticism and complaints.

To maintain customer loyalty, it is important for Honda to handle technical issues such as ESAF frame breaks effectively. Positive responses and quick problem handling can improve customer experience and reduce the negative impact

of e-WOM. This research emphasizes that e-WOM can significantly influence customer experience, which in turn influences the level of customer loyalty to the Honda brand.

## CONCLUSION

The research results show that both social media branding and e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) influence the experience and loyalty of Honda motorbike customers, especially automatic scooters in Sidoarjo Regency. Good branding management on social media can improve customer experience and maintain loyalty even if there are technical problems such as a broken ESAF frame. In contrast, negative e-WOM can worsen customer experience, but its effect on existing customer loyalty is relatively small. Overall, customer experience is a key factor in forming loyalty, with social media branding and e-WOM acting as significant influencing factors.

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