



Debunking The ‘All Publicity Is Good Publicity’ Myth: The Detrimental Effects of Negative Publicity on Brand Trust Among Indonesian Generation Z

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of negative publicity on purchase intentions among Indonesian Generation Z social media users and examines the effects of negative word of mouth, brand betrayal, brand attitude, brand trust, and brand advocacy. Quantitative research was conducted by collecting primary data from 158 questionnaire respondents. The nine hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results demonstrate that five hypotheses were supported, while the rest were not. Notably, the findings refute the idea that negative publicity has a significant impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases in Indonesia's online marketplace. Brands are advised against the use of negative or controversial marketing strategies as it decreases brand trust, increases negative word-of-mouth, as well as brand betrayal. This study is designed to provide a more in-depth understanding of the importance of selecting the proper strategy and content for contentious social marketing. Businesses can avoid losses and protect their long-term viability by knowing the risks and consequences of unfavorable publicity.

Keywords: Controversial Marketing, Purchase Intention, Negative publicity, Negative Word of Mouth, Virtual Market

JEL: M31, M37

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1. Introduction

As the number of Indonesian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) accounts for 65 million and continues to grow (Kadin, 2024), businesses continue to seek ways to survive and adapt to the volatile changes in the market, leading to the birth of various marketing strategies. Celebrity endorsement—advertising activities through an individual with a high level of public recognition and used for the benefit of consumer goods (McCracken, 1989 as cited in Rocha et al., 2020)—thus become all the more common through various social media channels such as Instagram, Tiktok, and Twitter. The delivery of celebrity endorsement is usually accompanied by contents that would pique an average audience’s attention. However, the wrong content selection and strategy can lead a brand to negative publicity—problematic publications in the media that have a negative effect on the reputation of the person or brand involved (Dean, 2004 as cited in Woo et al., 2019).

The rampant growth of numbers in various MSMEs in Indonesia has urged business owners to innovate in all aspects of their business, including the marketing strategies they implement in order to create buzz in the market. MSMEs may utilize various marketing gimmicks to achieve this effect, leading to controversial advertising campaigns that may relate to customer’s intention to purchase products from these MSMEs. One such case in Indonesia was the controversial marketing that involved a faux feud in between a dessert box business and an influencer. Audience was made to believe that a “petty Twitter fight” happened between both parties which sparked discourses between Indonesian Twitter users to determine which party was on the right, only for both parties to reveal that the petty social media exchange was a part of their marketing campaign. This led to both the influencer and the business to not only receiving backlash and criticism, but to also being known more by the general public, albeit for a negative reason. Oftentimes, controversial marketing was executed under the assumption that being “viral” on social media, regardless of the reason of publicity being positive or negative, is great publicity that would orbit the name of the businesses involved to the collective’s hivemind (Barrera & Olivo, 2023). However, this effect on consumer’s purchase intention remains a question to be answered.

Research on topics related to controversial marketing, otherwise known as shockvertising, has been conducted several times. Previous research explains that controversial marketing is indeed very risky to do, regardless of the attention that will be given by consumers, but do not know exactly what is classified as controversial and potentially can threaten the brand advocacy and purchase intention of their consumers (Alharbi et al., 2022). It is most unfortunate if every businessperson, especially MSME owners, cannot choose a good marketing strategy. This can threaten losses and even the worst cause the end of the existence of a business. Therefore, we feel that it is very important to conduct this research especially on the virtual market. We define virtual market as a market that exists only on the internet—this includes social media as a marketplace, social media marketplace (TikTok Shop, Instagram Shop, etc.), as well as e-commerce that are used frequently by Indonesian (Shopee, Tokopedia, etc.).

Controversial marketing cases such as that experienced by various MSMEs in Indonesia showed that negative publicity can have a serious impact on the reputation and sustainability of a business. Previous research has discussed controversial marketing, but none has specifically examined the relationship between negative publicity and negative word of mouth, brand betrayal, brand trust, and brand attitude. The research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how negative publicity affects various aspects of consumer trust and perceptions of the brand, and how it ultimately affects brand advocacy and purchase intention. In addition to that, this research also aims to explore such cases in Indonesia, which remains underexplored in the country.

This research also aims to explore and understand the impact that negative publicity has on various aspects of social media marketing strategies. Specifically, this research will investigate how negative publicity affects negative word of mouth, brand trust and brand betrayal. Furthermore, this research will assess the impact of negative word of mouth on brand betrayal. It also studies the relationship of brand betrayal to brand attitude and brand trust, as well as the relationship of brand attitude to brand trust, brand trust to brand advocacy and brand advocacy to purchase intention.

By examining these relationships, this research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the impact of controversial marketing strategies on social media on consumer perceptions and behavior and provide guidance for brands in properly managing the marketing strategies they use to increase consumer buying interest.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations

We base our study on the cognitive dissonance and congruity theory, both of which possess significant impact on the shaping of modern shockvertising theories, in particular one that involves individuals otherwise known as influencers. Festinger (1957) posited that when individuals hold two conflicting beliefs and/or engage in actions that contradict their beliefs, they might experience psychological discomfort (hence the term dissonance). Resolving this inconsistency within them would be the main drive to execute any response afterwards. They might address the dissonance by modifying their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors, seeking new information that leads to a change, or downplaying the significance of the conflicting beliefs. Over time, individuals need consistency and alignment between their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Festinger, 1957; Festinger, 1962) because unresolved dissonance negatively impacts well-being, forcing people to adjust in order to achieve harmony between their beliefs and actions. The goal is to restore balance and coherence.

Congruity theory, primarily focused on communication and persuasion, asserts that individuals favor cognitive consistency between various elements (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). When a message source makes a statement about an object or concept—either positive (associative) or negative (dissociative)—the audience's pre-existing attitudes toward both the source and the object determine whether they experience congruity or inconsistency. If there's incongruity, audiences are driven to adjust their attitudes to create greater alignment between their perceptions and the new message (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). This need for congruity compels individuals to modify their attitudes, thereby achieving a more harmonious mental state. By understanding these processes, it becomes possible to anticipate not only the direction but also the extent to which attitudes will shift, depending on the nature of the message and the audience's initial stance.

Additionally, congruity theory suggests that stronger, deeply held attitudes may be more resistant to change, but incongruity still exerts pressure to reconcile differences. In the context of negative publicity, for example, audiences may initially resist changing their positive views of a brand, but persistent exposure to conflicting information may gradually shift their attitudes, particularly if they are motivated to restore internal consistency.

Negative Publicity

Andrews & Shimp (2019) defined negative publicity as an activity of disseminating ideas and ideas without compensation from negative information through the main media that has the potential to damage a product, service, and business unit. In the study of Wattegama & Qing (2014), Dawar &

Pillutla (2000) explained that negative publicity has a serious impact on consumer behavior towards a brand, one of which is negative word of mouth.

In addition, several studies, Ahluwalia et al. (2000); Yu et al. (2018); Liu et al. (2018); Tong et al. (2023) as cited in Delgado (2023) proved that negative publicity has a detrimental impact on brand trust. In addition, in a study conducted by Su et al. (2022), it was found that negative publicity has a significant effect on perceived betrayal which can lead to boycotts. Based on the theory presented above, we propose the following research hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant influence of negative publicity on negative word of mouth.

H2: There is a significant influence of negative publicity on brand betrayal.

H3: There is a significant influence of publicity on brand trust.

Negative Word of Mouth

Balaji et al. (2016); Sinha & Lu (2016) define that negative word of mouth is an attempt by consumers to denigrate a brand to their family and friends by sharing unpleasant opinions or responses to a brand. Grégoire & Fisher (2008) explain that betrayal is the key to retaliatory behavior. Betrayal is associated with anger, which is a negative emotion that can motivate consumers to give negative responses to brands as a form of retaliation they give (Tripp & Gregoire, 2011; Lee et al., 2013). This is reinforced by a study (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000 as cited in Wattegama & Qing, 2014) explaining that bad experiences shared by close people can lead to feelings of hatred and betrayal. So based on the previous theory that has been presented, we propose a research hypothesis:

H4: There is a significant influence of negative word of mouth on brand betrayal.

Brand Betrayal

Reimann et al. (2018) and Tan et al. (2021) explain brand betrayal is an unpleasant emotion arising from a moral violation of a brand owned by an individual by breaking the relationship that exists between the individual and the brand. Based on the study, Tan et al. (2021) shows that there is no significant relationship between brand betrayal and brand attitude in consumers after having a disappointing experience with a brand.

Meanwhile, based on the study, Reimann et al. (2018) brand betrayal has an adverse effect on brand attitude. This implies that an influencer's betrayal has an impact on the relationships that people have with the brand that the influencer has promoted as well as the ties that the influencer has with their own followers. Based on previous research, we want to find out more specifically in the context of the Indonesian state, thus proposing a research hypothesis:

H5: There is a significant influence of brand betrayal on brand attitude.

H6: There is a significant influence of brand betrayal on brand trust.

Brand Attitude

According to Saydan & Dülek (2019) brand attitude is a broad evaluation of the customer's relationship with a brand. Brand attitude also consists of a consistent overall assessment of a brand which may be positive or negative and effective actions related to the brand. This information reveals how customers feel about a brand, whether the brand meets their needs, and how much they want it (Walean et al., 2023).

In research conducted by Reimann et al. (2018), it was explained that brand attitude has a positive

and significant relationship to brand trust which can increase consumer intention to buy products on a brand. Based on the theory above, we want to dig deeper into the study results by proposing a research hypothesis:

H7: There is a significant influence of brand attitude on brand trust.

Brand Trust

According to Khan & Fatma (2023), the desire of consumers in general to believe in the capacity of a brand to fulfill its purpose is known as brand trust. Akoglu & Özbek (2022) state that in addition to increasing consumer behavior such as the desire to buy, attitudes towards products, and advocacy activities, brand trust also reduces the influence of negative customer evaluations. Based on a study conducted by Sami et al. (2022), brand trust has a positive and significant relationship with brand advocacy. This is based on the commitment of consumer behavior to a brand that has reached expectations, so that consumers will automatically advocate for a brand.

On the other hand, based on a study conducted by Sultoni et al. (2019), brand trust does not have a significant relationship with brand advocacy in the dissemination of digital content on social media. Based on the theory that has been described, we want to find out more about the relationship between the two by proposing a research hypothesis:

H8: There is a significant influence of brand trust on brand advocacy.

Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy refers to consumers' voluntary recommendation of a brand to others (Fullerton, 2011; Bhati and Verma, 2020). Such advocacy behavior includes spreading positive word-of-mouth as well as defending the brand against criticism (Wilk et al., 2018). Brand advocacy may result from a satisfactory consumer-brand relationship, whereby consumers are willing to support the brand through their words and action (Bhati and Verma, 2020). In Thapa's research (2023), it is explained that advocacy factors on social media can attract consumers to make purchases on a brand. Thus, based on previous theories, we want to dig deeper by proposing research hypotheses:

H9: There is a significant influence of brand advocacy on purchase intention.

Purchase Intention

According to Wu et al. (2011), purchase intention indicates the likelihood that consumers will plan or be willing to purchase a certain product or service in the future. In line with this definition, when consumers have a positive response to or favorable impression of a brand's product or service, purchase intention is more likely to occur, as it is influenced by these positive impressions. This has been proven through Thapa's research (2023), brand advocacy, electronic word of mouth, and micro influencers are a trigger for consumers to gain trust to make purchases of a product on social media.

Research Framework

Based on the literature review that has been described before, this study proposes nine hypotheses which are contained in the following research framework.

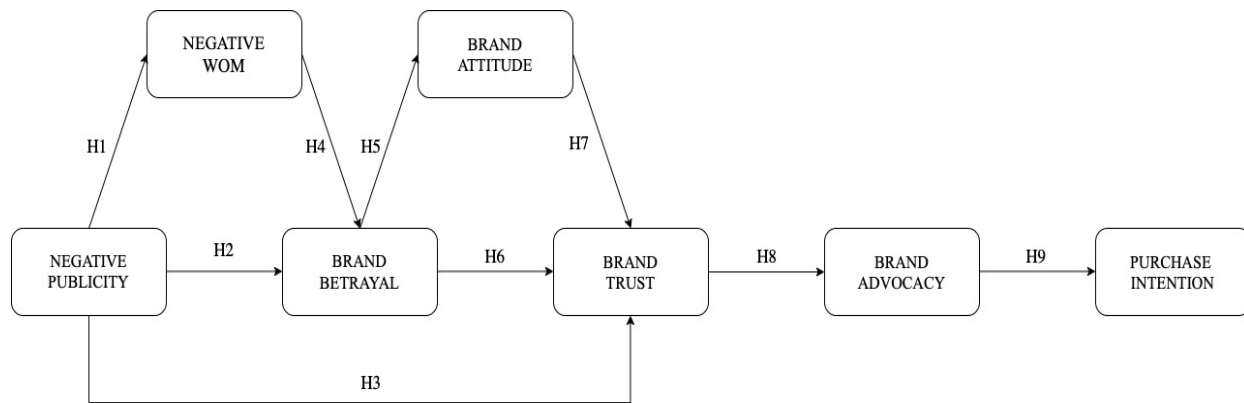


Figure 1. Research Model

3. Materials and Methods

Data Collection and Sampling

The research method used in this paper is quantitative. The type of research is deductive research with an individual unit of analysis, namely Indonesian social media users who often follow brand developments in the Indonesian market, and the type of data in this study is cross-sectional. This study takes individual subjects of social media users in Indonesia who are in the age range of 18-27 years (Generation Z), have shopped online, and follow brand developments in the Indonesian virtual market. Generation Z is a relevant research subject given that 27.94% of Indonesia's population is dominated by Generation Z (Jayani, 2021), and the level of access to the internet has reached 34.4% and 54% of Generation Z has made transactions in virtual markets (Safitri & Sukmana, 2023). This is certainly a strong potential to uncover controversial marketing dilemmas and their impact on various aspects of business on social media.

Measures

The type of data in this study is quantitative data with primary data sources. We conducted in-depth research on the following variables including negative publicity (Agustina, Y. et al., 2022) which is divided into four indicators. Then proceed with negative word of mouth (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021) with three indicators. Brand betrayal (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008) has three indicators. Brand attitude (Wang et al., 2019) has three indicators. Brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) with four indicators. Brand advocacy (Shimul & Phau, 2023) with three indicators. Finally, purchase intention (Van der Heijden et al., 2003) with three indicators. The data collection technique used in this study was to distribute questionnaires using a Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data sample collected was at least 115 respondents where the total number of indicators of all variables was 23. The reference standard for the minimum number of samples that can be studied is 5 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, the data analysis technique used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) to test nine hypotheses using Smart-PLS 3.0 software with the aim of seeing the influence of the variables negative publicity, negative word of mouth, brand betrayal, brand attitude, brand trust, brand advocacy, and purchase intention in accordance with the proposed hypothesis.

4. Results and Discussion

Respondent profile

This study collected 158 responses from respondents who were virtual market users from Generation Z. The data can be accessed online through Zenodo (Meivitanli et al., 2026). Data's demographic

sample included gender, last educational history, home country and domicile, job, history of virtual shopping, experience of virtual shopping, intensity of virtual shopping, favorite marketplace, estimated income, and outcome for virtual shopping.

The sample's demographics reveal 76.6% female respondents, 22.8% male respondents, and 0.6% others, with 60.8% having graduated from high school. Geographically, 35.4% of responders come from Java Island, specifically Jabodetabek. Furthermore, 46.2% of respondents have 1-3 years of purchasing experience, 68.3% shop 2-5 times each month, and 91.8% use Shopee as a marketplace to buy online goods, with 97.5% spending less than IDR 5 million. Ultimately, 80.4% of respondents rely on pocket money as their primary source of income, earning less than IDR 5 million per month.

Structural Equation Modeling

Based on the results of data processing with Smart-PLS 3.0, it is known that there are several indicators that cannot be declared valid because they do not meet the limits of the outer loading value > 0.7 , thus these indicators were eliminated to obtain a valid and reliable SEM-PLS model.

Additionally in convergent validity, the requirements that must be met are the outer loading value larger than 0.7 and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value larger than 0.5 (Ghozali, 2021). The first provision and second provision can be seen in Table 1 which shows that the AVE value of each variable is above 0.5. Therefore, the convergent validity test can be declared passed.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Constructs and Scale Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
<i>Negative Publicity (NP)</i>		0.655	0.852	0.743
Negative news about celebrities is serious	0.639			
Negative news really reveals celebrity morality issues	0.626			
Celebrities who fall into negative publicity are not credible	0.786			
Celebrities who fall into negative publicity are unreliable	0.792			
<i>Negative Word of Mouth (NWOM)</i>		0.628	0.839	0.723
I discourage friends and relatives to buy a betraying brand	0.634			
I say negative things about betraying brands to others	0.733			
I leave a low rating/ranking to the betraying brand's official fan page	0.833			
<i>Brand Betrayal (BB)</i>		0.879	0.925	0.805
I felt betrayed by this brand	0.907			
I felt that this brand broke a fundamental promise to me	0.878			
I felt that this brand let me down in a moment of need	0.905			
<i>Brand Attitude (BA)</i>		0.926	0.953	0.871
The brand is favorable	0.910			
The brand gives me a good feeling	0.938			

The brand is desirable	0.951			
Brand Trust (BT)		0.954	0.966	0.878
I feel confidence in this brand	0.929			
I could rely on this brand	0.949			
I think this brand would be honest	0.928			
I think this brand would be safe	0.941			
Brand Advocacy (BAD)		0.973	0.842	0.640
I recommend this brand to other people	0.825			
I talk directly to other people about my experience with this brand	0.790			
I suggest others for taking service from this brand	0.791			
Purchase Intention (PI)		0.724	0.879	0.784
How likely is it that you would return to this store’s website?	0.847			
How likely is it that you would consider purchasing from this website in long term?	0.874			
For this purchase, how likely is it that you would buy from this store?	0.570			

Furthermore, discriminant validity test was carried out using Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) value lower than 0.9 (Ghozali, 2021), which in Table 2 can be seen to have passed the cutoff value for all variables. Finally, the reliability test is seen from two provisions, namely the Cronbach's Alpha value which should be above 0.6 and Composite Reliability values should be above 0.7 (Chin, 1998). As attached in (TABLE I), all variables have a Composite Reliability value above 0.7. So, it can be stated that the research is valid and reliable.

Table 1. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Results

	Brand Advocacy	Brand Attitude	Brand Betrayal	Brand Trust	Negative Publicity	Negative WOM	Purchase Intention
Brand Advocacy							
Brand Attitude	0.195						
Brand Betrayal	0.423	0.039					
Brand Trust	0.174	0.804	0.075				
Negative Publicity	0.376	0.120	0.334	0.202			
Negative WOM	0.276	0.17	0.456	0.117	0.605		
Purchase Intention	0.702	0.137	0.383	0.145	0.257	0.143	

From the analysis above, the research model has shown indicators that have passed the provisions of the outer loading value above 0.7 by eliminating the NP1, NP2, NWOM1, and PI3 indicators as shown in Figure 2.

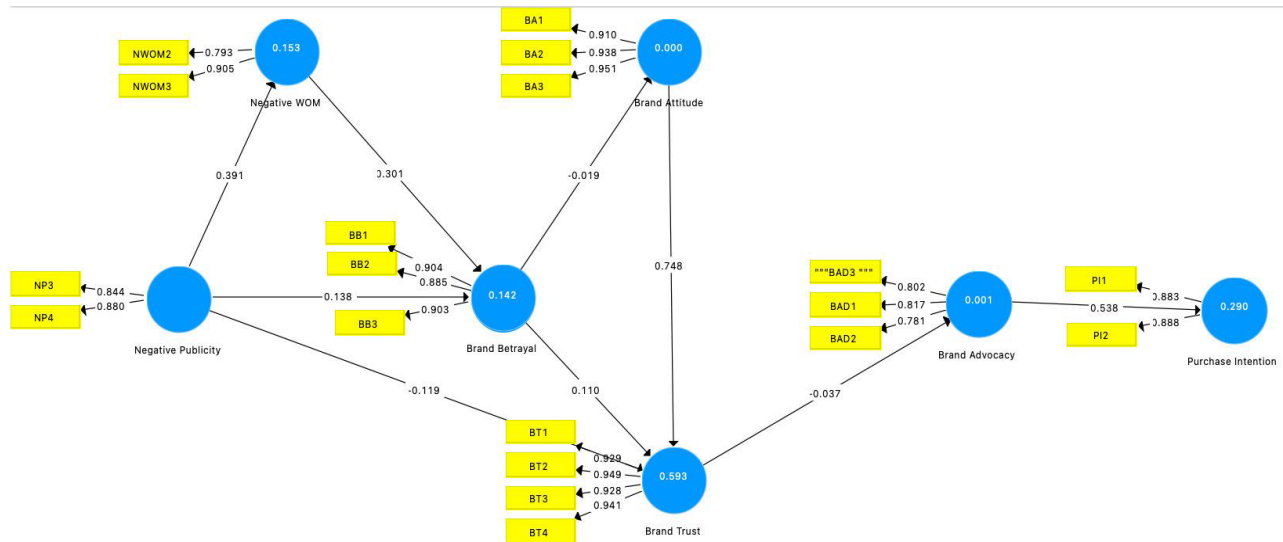


Figure 2. Path Coefficients for Research Model

R Square Result

After ensuring that the research model has passed the validity and reliability tests, the next stage is to show the inner model test which explains the proportion size of the variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable. According to Hair's rule, an R-square value of 0.75 indicates a strong model, 0.50 indicates a moderate model, and 0.25 indicates a weak model (Ghozali, 2021), which can be seen in Table 3. For example, it is known that the effect of brand advocacy on purchase intention is explained by 29% and 71% can be explained by other variables not mentioned in the study.

Table 2. R-Square Results

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Number of Independent Variables</i>	<i>R Square</i>
Brand Advocacy	1	0.001
Brand Attitude	1	0.000
Brand Betrayal	2	0.142
Brand Trust	3	0.593
Negative WOM	1	0.153
Purchase Intention	1	0.290

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing Results

	Original Sample	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Brand Advocacy -> Purchase Intention	0.538	0.552	0.056	9.559	0.000
Brand Attitude -> Brand Trust	0.748	0.746	0.058	12.810	0.000
Brand Betrayal -> Brand Attitude	-0.019	-0.012	0.085	0.229	0.819
Brand Betrayal -> Brand Trust	0.110	0.109	0.065	1.692	0.091
Brand Trust -> Brand Advocacy	-0.037	-0.031	0.081	0.460	0.645
Negative Publicity -> Brand Betrayal	0.138	0.134	0.079	1.744	0.082

Negative Publicity -> Brand Trust	-0.119	-0.117	0.058	2.061	0.040
Negative Publicity -> Negative WOM	0.391	0.399	0.068	5.728	0.000
Negative WOM -> Brand Betrayal	0.301	0.307	0.094	3.211	0.001

The significance test examines p-values < 0.05 and T statistics > 1.96 as indicators of a significant relationship. From the test results as shown in Table 4, it is known that brand advocacy has a significant effect on purchase intention, brand attitude has a significant effect on brand trust, negative publicity has a significant effect on negative word of mouth, negative publicity has a significant effect on brand trust, and negative word of mouth has a significant effect on brand betrayal. Meanwhile, in this test, we also found an insignificant relationship, namely, brand betrayal has an insignificant relationship to brand attitude, brand betrayal has no significant relationship to brand trust, brand trust has no significant relationship to brand advocacy, and negative publicity has no significant relationship to brand betrayal.

Discussion

The research findings show that five out of nine hypotheses were significant. Furthermore, the results suggest that negative brand publicity does not have a direct or significant effect on consumer purchase intentions in virtual markets in Indonesia. Lower levels of negative publicity are associated with higher consumer trust in the brand (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Yu et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2018; Tong et al., 2023 as cited in Delgado, 2023). However, negative publicity does not significantly contribute to brand betrayal. Reducing negative publicity can also reduce negative word of mouth, thereby diminishing feelings of betrayal (Wattegama & Qing, 2014; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). Brand betrayal, influenced by negative word of mouth, does not have a strong effect on consumer attitudes or trust in the brand (Tan et al., 2021). A positive brand attitude fosters trust (Reimann et al., 2018), and elements like celebrity endorsements can further enhance this attitude (Putri & Roostika, 2022). In turn, a positive attitude promotes consumer interest in purchasing through brand advocacy in virtual markets (Thapa, 2023). While brand trust does not directly lead to advocacy (Sultoni et al., 2019), emotional attachment can act as a mediator between the two (Bidayah, 2024; Sumantri, 2024). Therefore, results of this research were supported by previous literature. It is important to note that negative publicity significantly decreases trust and increases negative word-of-mouth which in turn increases brand betrayal.

The findings suggest a nuanced role for negative brand publicity in shaping consumer purchase behavior in Indonesian virtual markets. However, while negative publicity alone does not directly lead to brand betrayal, it plays a role in diminishing trust, which can escalate negative word-of-mouth and, in turn, affect brand loyalty. Negative word-of-mouth can amplify feelings of betrayal and dissatisfaction, albeit without an immediate significant impact on consumer attitudes or trust. Therefore, avoiding negative publicity is crucial for preserving consumer trust and preventing brand betrayal.

Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of fostering positive brand attitudes, which can strengthen trust. For instance, Reimann et al. (2018) find that a positive brand image fosters trust, a sentiment that may be further bolstered by celebrity endorsements, as suggested by Putri & Roostika (2022). This favorable brand perception can then encourage consumer purchase intentions through brand advocacy (Thapa, 2023), with emotional attachment playing a mediating role between brand trust and advocacy, as observed by Bidayah (2024) and Sumantri (2024).

5. Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

Conclusion

The results indicate that negative brand publicity has no direct and significant effect on consumer purchase intentions in virtual markets in Indonesia. Additionally, the findings suggest that the lower the level of negative publicity, the less negative word of mouth circulates. Consequently, with less negative word of mouth, consumers feel a reduced sense of betrayal toward a brand. Interestingly, while brand betrayal in the study is linked to negative word of mouth, it does not have a significant impact on consumer trust or attitude toward the brand.

The study also demonstrates that a positive brand attitude can enhance consumer trust in the brand. As consumers' attitudes toward the brand become more positive, their trust in the brand increases. Similarly, an increase in brand advocacy is shown to boost consumer purchase interest in virtual markets. However, this study reveals that brand trust does not directly influence brand advocacy, although brand advocacy can impact consumer purchase interest.

This research offers new insights into digital marketing in Indonesia, particularly concerning the current state of the Indonesian virtual market. The study's target population represents potential future virtual market users, and the findings may help align marketing strategies with market needs to enable more effective marketing actions in the future.

Managerial implications

Based on the results of this study, business actors can take preventive actions, such as avoiding negative publicity in promotional activities used for product introduction. The findings clearly demonstrate that the more a company uses negative content in its publicity, the more it increases negative word of mouth among customers, which in turn leads to a decline in the brand's trustworthiness. Furthermore, adopting positive behavior toward consumers would be a practical strategy for businesses to enhance consumer trust in the brand. Building a positive environment for customers can significantly strengthen the connection between them and the brand, ultimately fostering greater trust in the brand.

In addition, a repressive action that can be taken by brands is to maximize the use of user-generated reviews. The organic feedback provided by customers can have a significant impact on how the brand is perceived. Moreover, utilizing satisfaction surveys is a practical approach to identify the brand's weaknesses. This can provide positive feedback on how the brand should act in the future to improve and sustain the business in the long term.

Limitations and future research directions

Just like any other research before ours, our research came with its own set of limitations. The cross-sectional design and the use of data collected from a single location, Indonesia, limit the generalizability of the findings. This research aims to provide initial insights into the current state of the digital marketing landscape, particularly in Indonesia, as context is crucial in the field of marketing. Therefore, future research could be conducted in other countries with different backgrounds. Additionally, longitudinal studies and cross-country comparisons should be considered to enhance generalizability.

The study focuses exclusively on Generation Z, who shop online and follow brand developments in the Indonesian virtual market. We targeted this niche segment to better understand the specific

behaviors and needs of current customers, helping businesses tailor their promotional activities to each segment. Furthermore, future research could broaden the scope of respondents and delve deeper into specific products or industries to gain more comprehensive and detailed insights, as well as expand the target segment of the research.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture for the research grant that has helped us throughout the whole research process. We also thank Bina Nusantara University for providing the essential facilities and resources needed to finish this research. B.M. Conceptualization, Data Analysis, Discussion, Managerial Implications. L. F. P. Introduction, Literature Review, Data Collection, Conclusion. T. A. Literature Review, Discussion. D. M. A. Introduction, Literature Review. N.O.M.B. Conclusion, Limitation.

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