The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in the Relationship Between Brand Image and Social Media Marketing with Repurchase Intention (Case Study on Maxone Loji Kridanggo Hotel Customers, Boyolali)

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Abstract. *This study investigates the role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand image, social media marketing, and repurchase intention among customers of Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali. The research aims to analyze how brand image and social media marketing influence brand trust and repurchase intention within the context of the hospitality industry in Boyolali, Central Java. A quantitative research design using an explanatory approach was employed, with data collected from 100 respondents who stayed at the hotel between January and May 2024, selected through purposive sampling. A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables, which were analyzed using path analysis and the Sobel test to evaluate the mediating effects. The results indicate that both brand image ($β=0.606, p<0.05$) and social media marketing ($β=0.309, p<0.05$) have a positive and significant impact on brand trust, which in turn influences repurchase intention ($β=0.569, p<0.05$). Brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between brand image ($β=0.344, p<0.05$) and social media marketing ($β=0.175, p<0.05$) with repurchase intention. These findings underscore the importance of building a strong brand image and credible social media marketing strategies to strengthen brand trust and enhance customer loyalty in the hotel industry. This research provides insights for mid-tier hotel management to optimize digital marketing strategies to increase repeat visits.*

Keywords*: Brand; Image; Marketing; Social.*

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is a fundamental pillar of the global and national economies, contributing significantly to foreign exchange and employment. The sector's sustainability and growth inherently hinge on its capacity to foster and maintain customer loyalty. Loyalty not only ensures long-term operational and financial stability but also serves as a competitive bulwark amidst increasingly dynamic competition. In this context, hotels, as commercial entities that provide accommodation, culinary services, and various other supporting facilities for guests or travelers (Walker, 2021), assume a role beyond simply providing a place to stay.

Modern hotels are transforming into architects of customer experiences, built through premium service and the articulation of a unique and memorable brand identity. Consequently, repurchase intention, defined as a customer's tendency to reuse hotel services, has become a crucial indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of marketing strategies and the success of brand management. Several empirical studies, including those conducted by(Solomon et al., 2021), emphasized that repurchase intention does not merely reflect the level of customer satisfaction with previous experiences, but also contributes substantially to increasing recurring revenue and optimizing new customer acquisition costs.

Boyolali City, located in Central Java Province, is increasingly recognized as a tourist destination offering a compelling combination of beautiful natural scenery, rich local cuisine, and authentic cultural heritage, including unique copper crafts. This diverse tourist attraction potential directly drives the growth of the hotel sector in the region. Statistics on the number of accommodations in Boyolali City for the 2021-2024 period, as presented in the table, show a significant upward trend, both for star-rated and non-star-rated hotels.

Table of Number of Accommodations in Boyolali City for the 2021-2024 period

Information	2021	2022	2023	2024
Star Hotel Accommodation	20	22	23	**24**
Non-Star Hotel Accommodation and Others	140	144	146	148

Source: BPS and Annual Hotel Survey (2024), data processed by researchers

This phenomenon reflects the promising expansion of the local tourism industry. However, the increase in the number of accommodation providers also simultaneously indicates intensified competition in the local market. Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali, classified as a three-star hotel and starting operations in 2021 under the management of Artotel Group Indonesia, is one of the businesses responding to this expansion. With its strategic location at Jalan Pemuda No. 1, Gudang Village, Siswodipuran, Boyolali District, Boyolali Regency, precisely in the Simpang Lima Boyolali area, this hotel positions itself as a competitive mid-range accommodation alternative. However, analysis of room occupancy data at Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali from January to May 2024,

Previous literature reviews indicate divergent findings regarding the influence of brand image and SMM on customer purchasing decisions in the hospitality industry. For example,(Soeswoyo et al., 2021)found a strong positive correlation between international brand image and guests' decisions to stay at four-star hotels in Lampung, which implies that a solid brand image can be a major attraction for customers. In contrast, research by(Ling & Pratomo, 2020)reported that brand image did not show a significant influence on purchasing decisions at The Highland Park Resort Hotel Bogor, suggesting that the impact of brand image may be contextual and vary across conditions. In the realm of SMM, a qualitative study conducted(Annisa & Auliya, 2020)highlighted the effectiveness of the Instagram platform in

attracting potential customers for the Hotel Indonesia Group network through creative and informative content; however, the study did not quantify the impact on repurchase intention.(Galang et al., 2020)found that SMM did not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions among Simpati service users, which again indicates the variability in the effectiveness of social media strategies. The research gap identified from these various findings underscores the urgency of conducting further research to comprehensively elaborate the mechanisms of influence of brand image and SMM on repurchase intention, especially in the context of the Indonesian hotel industry. Therefore, this study is designed to attempt to fill this literature gap by exploring the mediating role of brand trust in the constellation of relationships between these variables, focusing on a case study of customers of Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali.

In order to explain the potential inconsistencies in previous findings, this study proposes the concept of brand trust as a relevant mediating variable. According to the view(Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2020), brand trust can be defined as the belief held by customers that a brand is able to consistently fulfill its expectations and communicated promises. Research conducted by(Nurhadi et al., 2024)shows that brand trust plays an important role as a mediator in the relationship between brand image and repurchase intention; a positive brand image will strengthen customers' perceptions of brand reliability and integrity, which in turn increases their intention to make repeat purchases. Furthermore,(Sembiring et al., 2024)stated that SMM and brand engagement have a positive and significant influence on the formation of brand trust. Based on this framework, this study aims to empirically test a conceptual model that integrates brand image and SMM as independent variables, brand trust as a mediating variable, and repurchase intention as a dependent variable, in the specific context of Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali customers.

2. Research Methods

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type. Explanatory research, as often referred to in the methodology literature, is an investigative approach that aims to identify, explain, and understand the causal relationship between two or more research variables. Explanatory research is specifically designed to test established or previously formulated hypotheses and theories regarding how one variable can influence another variable. The explanatory approach was chosen because of its suitability to investigate in depth how brand image and social media marketing variables interact and influence repurchase intention, considering the mediating role of brand trust among customers of Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali. The choice of this approach is also based on an effort to provide explanations for potential inconsistencies found in previous literature thus it is expected to strengthen the theoretical and practical contributions of this study.

3. Results and Discussion

Following the justification and methodological elaboration of the purposive sampling

technique comprehensively presented in Chapter III, the next crucial stage of the investigation is the delineation of the characteristics of the unit of analysis. In this regard, this section systematically presents the demographic profiles of the 100 respondents whose participation in the primary data collection process for this study was confirmed. It should be emphasized that the respondent selection process was not conducted arbitrarily, but rather through the application of rigorous and measured procedures, based on predetermined a priori inclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and homogeneity of the sample in aspects significant to the research objectives.

The first inclusion criterion required participants to have empirical evidence of their stay at the Maxone Loji Kridanggo Hotel in Boyolali within a specific time period, namely January to May 2024. This temporal limitation was essential to enhance the internal validity of the data, particularly regarding the recency and relevance of the reported experiences. The second inclusion criterion, inherently related to the research's focus on digital interaction phenomena, was the respondents' active and documented engagement with the hotel's social media platforms, with an emphasis on the official Instagram account. A thorough understanding of the demographic parameters of this study's sample was not merely intended to provide a comprehensive contextual description, but also as a fundamental prerequisite for valid statistical inferences and substantive interpretation of the research findings in the subsequent data analysis phase.

Observations of the sample's demographic profile revealed a relatively proportional gender distribution (male 52%, female 48%) and heterogeneity in age, with the 26–35 age group dominating (40%). These characteristics indicate the achievement of adequate diversity in the sample, which is essential for enriching data analysis and increasing the potential for generalizability of the findings (taking into account sampling limitations). Furthermore, analysis of the frequency of stays showed that the sample composition comprised a diverse spectrum of customers, encompassing both first-time service users (considered new customers or first-time visitors at 35%) and repeat service users (those who stayed two or more times, constituting 65% and potentially loyal customers). This sample structure was considered very conducive and provided a solid empirical basis for an in-depth investigation of the determinants influencing repurchase intention.

Evaluation of the quality of the research instrument was conducted to verify that the questionnaire used was able to measure the constructs being studied accurately (valid) and consistently (reliably). The validity test was conducted by comparing the calculated r-correlation value of each item with the r-table (0.197 for N = 100 at α = 0.05). An item is declared valid if the calculated r-> r-table. The reliability test used the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where the instrument is considered reliable if the Alpha value is > 0.70. The test results summarized in Table 4.2 show that all question items for the variables Brand Image (X1), Social Media Marketing (X2), Brand Trust (M), and Repurchase Intention (Y) are valid and reliable.

Table of Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variables	Indicator	Validity Test		Reliability Test	
		r-count	Validity Status	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Brand Image (X1)	X1.1	0.720	Valid	0.738	Reliable
	X1.2	0.760	Valid		
	X1.3	0.619	Valid		
	X1.4	0.668	Valid		
	X1.5	0.734	Valid		
Social Media Marketing (X2)	X2.1	0.752	Valid	0.761	Reliable
	X2.2	0.731	Valid		
	X2.3	0.658	Valid		
	X2.4	0.766	Valid		
	X2.5	0.667	Valid		
Brand Trust (M)	M1	0.638	Valid	0.745	Reliable
	M2	0.772	Valid		
	M3	0.739	Valid		
	M4	0.627	Valid		
	M5	0.750	Valid		
Repurchase Intention (Y)	Y1	0.683	Valid	0.726	Reliable
	Y2	0.644	Valid		
	Y3	0.657	Valid		
	Y4	0.708	Valid		
	Y5	0.759	Valid		

Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the table, all calculated r-values for each indicator exceed the r-table (0.197), and all Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable exceed 0.70. Thus, this research instrument is proven valid and reliable for use in further data analysis.

Prior to hypothesis testing, a series of classical assumption tests were conducted on both regression models to ensure that the models met statistical requirements (unbiased and reliable). These tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity.

1) Normality Test: Using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, both regression models show an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.200. Since this value is > 0.05, it can be concluded that the residuals in both models are normally distributed. This is important to ensure that the statistical inferences drawn from the regression models are valid, as many parametric statistical tests assume a normal distribution of the residuals.

2) Multicollinearity Test: Based on the examination of the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, all independent variables in both regression models have a Tolerance value > 0.10 and VIF < 10. This indicates that there is no significant multicollinearity problem among the independent variables. The absence of multicollinearity ensures that each independent variable provides a unique contribution to the model and the regression coefficient estimates are not biased due to the high correlation between predictors.

3) Heteroscedasticity Test: The Glejser test results for both models show that all independent variables have a significance value (Sig.) > 0.05. This means that no symptoms of heteroscedasticity were found in both regression models. The absence of heteroscedasticity ensures that the error variance is constant at all levels of the independent variables, so that the regression model is more efficient and the standard error estimates are reliable.

Since both regression models have passed all classical assumption tests, further analysis for hypothesis testing can be continued.

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the causal relationship between variables. Two structural models were analyzed: the first model tested the influence of X1 and X2 on M, while the second model tested the influence of X1, X2, and M on Y. The feasibility of each model was tested using the F Test.

Model Feasibility Test Results Table (F Test)

Model	Regression Equation (Standardized)	F-count	p-value	Information
First	$M = 0.619X_1 + 0.296X_2 + e_1$	84,313	0,000	Worthy
Second	$Y = 0.194X_1 + 0.158X_2 + 0.608M + e_2$	94,215	0,000	Worthy

Source: Processed data, 2025

The F-test results in Table 4.3 indicate that both regression models are suitable for use ($p < 0.05$). The p-value of 0.000 for both models is significantly lower than the 0.05 significance level, meaning that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable in each model. This confirms that the constructed models have good predictive ability and are suitable for explaining the relationship between variables.

Next, the coefficient of determination is presented to determine how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. As directed, the focus of interpretation is on the Adjusted R Square value.

1) First Model: The Adjusted R Square value is 0.627. This means that 62.7% of the variation in Brand Trust (M) can be explained by Brand Image (X1) and Social Media Marketing (X2). This figure indicates that Brand Image and Social Media Marketing have a substantial contribution in forming brand trust at Maxone Hotel. Nearly two-thirds of the fluctuations in customer trust can be predicted from these two variables, indicating the strategic importance of these two factors in building the foundation of trust.

2) Second Model: The Adjusted R Square value is 0.739. This means that 73.9% of the variation in Repurchase Intention (Y) can be explained by Brand Image (X1), Social Media Marketing (X2), and Brand Trust (M). This figure is very high and indicates that this model is very good at explaining repurchase intention. More than 70% of the variability in repurchase intention can be attributed to the combination of brand image, social media marketing, and brand trust. This emphasizes that these three variables are the main drivers of customer loyalty at Hotel Maxone.

Path analysis is used to test complex causal relationship models, including testing direct and indirect effects. Testing of the direct effect hypotheses (H1-H5) is conducted through regression analysis (t-test), while testing of the mediation hypotheses (H6-H7) is conducted through the Sobel test.

o   Direct hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the direct influence between variables through regression coefficients (t-test). A summary of the results of hypothesis testing H1 to H5 is presented in Table.

Summary Table of Direct Hypothesis Testing Results

Hip.	Path of Influence	β (Beta)	T-Stat	P-value	Information
H1	Brand Image (X1) -> Brand Trust (M)	0.619	9,017	0,000	Accepted
H2	Social Media Marketing (X2) -> Brand Trust (M)	0.296	4,312	0,000	Accepted
H3	Brand Image (X1) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.194	2,493	0.014	Accepted
H4	Social Media Marketing (X2) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.158	2,512	0.014	Accepted
H5	Brand Trust (M) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.608	7,144	0,000	Accepted

Source: Processed data, 2025

As shown in Table, all hypotheses (H1 to H5) are accepted, because all tested influence paths show p-values <0.05. This confirms that Brand Image and Social Media Marketing have a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust and Repurchase Intention, and Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between the two independent variables and Repurchase Intention.

To test the statistical significance of the indirect effect (mediating effect), this study used the Sobel test. This test specifically assesses whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through a mediating variable (mediator) is significant.
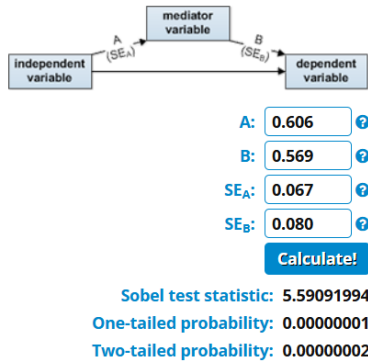
1) Sobel Test of the Influence of Brand Image on Repurchase Intention through Brand Trust.

To test hypothesis H6, the Sobel test was conducted with the following input:

a. (path coefficient X1 → M) = 0.606; SEa = 0.067

b. (path coefficient M → Y) = 0.569; SEb = 0.080

Sobel Test Image of Brand Image Variable

The calculation results in Figure 4.3 show a statistical value of the Sobel Test of 5.591 with a p-value = 0.00000002. Because this p-value is much smaller than the significance level of α = 0.05, it can be concluded that Brand Trust (M) acts as a statistically significant mediator in the relationship between Brand Image (X1) and Repurchase Intention (Y). Thus, Hypothesis H6 is accepted.
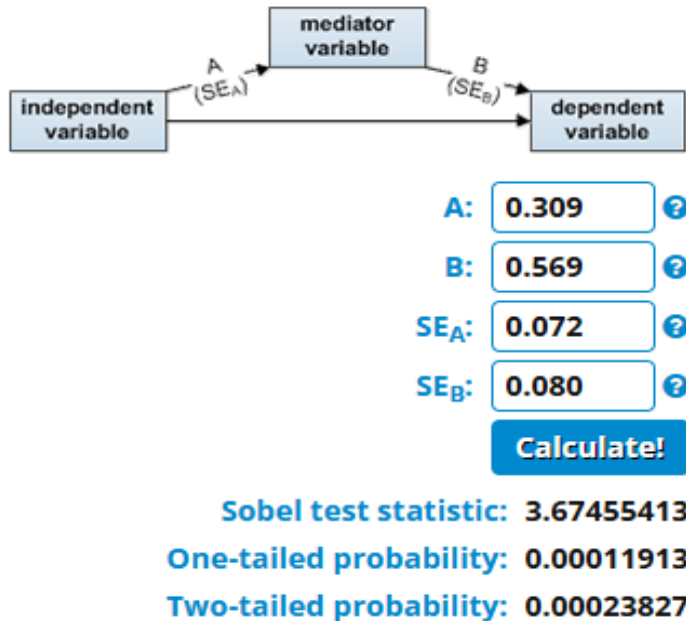
2) Sobel Test: The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Repurchase Intention through Brand Trust.

To test hypothesis H7, the Sobel Test was conducted with the following input:

1) (path coefficient X2 → M) = 0.309; SEa = 0.072

2) (path coefficient M → Y) = 0.569; SEb = 0.080

Sobel Test Image of Social Media Marketing Variables

The calculation results in Figure show a statistical value of the Sobel Test of 3.675 with a p-value = 0.00023827. Considering that this p-value is also significantly smaller than α = 0.05, it is concluded that Brand Trust (M) also significantly mediates the influence of Social Media Marketing (X2) on Repurchase Intention (Y). Thus, Hypothesis H7 is accepted.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

To provide a concise overview, Table summarizes the results of testing all hypotheses.

Summary Table of Overall Hypothesis Testing Results

Hip.	Path of Influence	β (Beta)	T-Stat	P-value	Information
H1	Brand Image (X1) -> Brand Trust (M)	0.619	9,017	0,000	Accepted
H2	Social Media Marketing (X2) -> Brand Trust (M)	0.296	4,312	0,000	Accepted
H3	Brand Image (X1) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.194	2,493	0.014	Accepted
H4	Social Media Marketing (X2) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.158	2,512	0.014	Accepted
H5	Brand Trust (M) -> Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.608	7,144	0,000	Accepted
H6	X1 -> M -> Y (Mediation)	0.376*	5,591**	0,000	Accepted
H7	X2 -> M -> Y (Mediation)	0.180*	3,675**	0,000	Accepted

*Note: *Beta value for indirect effect. *T-statistic value from Sobel test. Source: Processed data, 2025.

Discussion of Research Results:

1) The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Trust (H1 Accepted)

The finding that brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand trust (β = 0.619) is an important confirmation of marketing management theory. This suggests that strategic investment in building brand image will lead to increased customer trust. The logical relationship between the indicators can be explained as follows: when customers perceive Hotel Maxone as having a good corporate reputation and providing superior service quality, this perception directly shapes their belief in the hotel's reliability and integrity. Furthermore, the same experience across visits (brand consistency) will strengthen the perception of trustworthiness, which is a key pillar of brand trust. This finding is closely aligned with research by Hwang & Lee (2021), which found that a positive brand image in the hospitality industry increases trust through consistent service quality. Similarly, a study by Rahmanda, Laoli & Farida (2021) in the Indonesian context also confirmed this relationship, indicating that image is the psychological foundation for trust.

2) The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust (H2 Accepted)

The results showing a positive influence of social media marketing (SMM) on brand trust (β = 0.296) underscore the shift in social media's role from a mere promotional tool to a relationship-building instrument. Managerially, this means content strategies must be oriented toward building credibility. The logical link is this: when hotels facilitate high interactivity (e.g., quick responses to comments) and provide easy accessibility to information, customers feel heard and valued. If the content presented is high-quality (informative and engaging) and perceived as credible (e.g., through genuine guest reviews), this reduces uncertainty and builds the perception of the brand as honest and reliable, which directly fosters brand trust. These findings reinforce the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2022) who highlighted the role of credible content, and Rukmana & Abrian (2023) who found that responsive interactions on Instagram increase trust in hotels in Indonesia.

3) The Influence of Brand Image on Repurchase Intention (H3 Accepted)

The finding of a direct effect of brand image on repurchase intention (β = 0.194) confirms that a strong brand image serves as a trigger for loyalty. Logically, superior service quality and built emotional attachment (indicators of brand image) will directly increase customer satisfaction levels. Satisfaction, as a key component of repurchase intention, is a strong predictor of return intention. Satisfied customers tend to reduce alternative considerations and re-select brands that have provided positive experiences. These results are consistent with research by Foroudi et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2024), both of which concluded that a positive brand image is a strategic asset that directly drives repeat purchase behavior.

4) The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Repurchase Intention (H4 Accepted)

The positive influence of SMM on repurchase intention (β = 0.158) indicates that social media is an effective retention tool. The logical link lies in SMM's ability to keep the brand relevant in customers' minds (top-of-mind awareness). Engaging content quality and ongoing interactivity (SMM indicators) not only remind customers of their positive experiences but

can also trigger a willingness to return and encourage the intention to recommend the hotel to others. Exclusive promotions for social media followers, for example, can be a direct driver of repurchase intention. This finding is supported by Appel et al. (2020) who stated that engaging SMM can foster repeat purchase behavior, as well as Subawa et al. (2020) in the context of the Indonesian digital market.

6)   The Influence of Brand Trust on Repurchase Intention (H5 Accepted)

The very strong influence of brand trust ($\beta = 0.608$) on repurchase intention is a central finding of this study. This confirms that trust is a key determinant of customer loyalty in the service industry. Logically, when customers are confident in a brand's integrity and reliability (indicators of brand trust), they feel psychologically secure. This sense of security reduces perceived risk in decision-making and directly generates trust-driven intention to return, which is the strongest indicator of repurchase intention. This finding aligns closely with Konuk (2019) and Loureiro et al. (2020) who position trust as a key driver of repurchase intention, emphasizing that in a competitive market, trust is an invaluable competitive advantage.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and comprehensive discussion outlined in the previous chapter, the study aimed to analyze the influence of brand image and social media marketing on repurchase intention by testing the mediating role of brand trust among customers of Hotel Maxone Loji Kridanggo Boyolali, and several fundamental conclusions can be drawn as follows: This study successfully confirmed the hypothesis that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust. This finding answers the research question regarding how positive brand perception, formed from reputation and service quality, can effectively build the foundation of customer trust. The hypothesis stating that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust was proven to be accepted. This confirms that interactive and credible marketing activities through social media are an effective means to foster customer trust in the brand. Regarding the direct influence on repurchase intention, the hypothesis that Brand Image and Social Media Marketing each have a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention was also confirmed.

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