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## A literature review study of electronic word-of-mouth factors that influence purchasing decisions

**Kintan Kinari<sup>a</sup>, Agatha Citra Vannesa Drupadi<sup>b</sup>,  
Zhafira Yunita<sup>c</sup>, Ricardo Indra<sup>d</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia,  
[kintan.kinari@binus.ac.id](mailto:kintan.kinari@binus.ac.id)

<sup>b</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia,  
[agatha.drupadi@binus.ac.id](mailto:agatha.drupadi@binus.ac.id)

<sup>c</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia,  
[zhafira.yunita@binus.ac.id](mailto:zhafira.yunita@binus.ac.id)

<sup>d</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia,  
[ricardo.indra@binus.ac.id](mailto:ricardo.indra@binus.ac.id)

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## A literature review study of electronic word-of-mouth factors that influence purchasing decisions

Kintan Kinari<sup>a</sup>, Agatha Citra Vannesa Drupadi<sup>b</sup>, Zhafira Yunita<sup>c</sup>, Ricardo Indra<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia, kintan.kinari@binus.ac.id

<sup>b</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia, agatha.drupadi@binus.ac.id

<sup>c</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia, zhafira.yunita@binus.ac.id

<sup>d</sup>Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia, ricardo.indra@binus.ac.id

\*Corresponding Author: kintan.kinari@binus.ac.id

### Abstract

The rapid growth of social media platforms such as Instagram makes it easier for businesses to market their products online. Marketing is frequently done via the internet, which is made more widely known through social media and may even become a trending product. Electronic word of mouth is one of the marketing communication strategies businesses use with the help of the Internet. This strategy is used to achieve a specific goal, such as purchasing decisions. This is what makes the objectives of this study, namely to see whether there is an effect of electronic word-of-mouth personal body care products on purchasing decisions as buying behavior. The method used in this research is to review previous research with a specific set of processes as a literature review. SLR research is carried out for various purposes, namely to identify, review, evaluate, and interpret all available research on interesting topic areas with specific relevant research questions. This study found that e-WOM positively and significantly affected purchasing decisions. There is discussion about the forming factors of e-WOM, the role of e-WOM on consumer behavior, and many other discussions that discuss e-WOM in influencing purchasing decisions. Findings showed that participants who used the internet *also* read more online reviews than others. Product price and reading reviews before buying have a significant interaction effect. Most participants based recommendations on price and convenience. These findings help marketers to develop strategic plans for future applications. The usefulness of reviews from other reviewers is considered an important factor influencing buyers purchasing decisions in this age of high-tech, it's no wonder that consumers place the greatest trust in people they know and the online opinions of fellow shoppers. Findings showed that participants who used the internet also read more online reviews than others. Product price and reading reviews before buying have a significant interaction effect. Most participants based recommendations on price and convenience. These findings help marketers to develop strategic plans for future applications.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase Decision, Review, social media, Consumer Behavior

### 1. Introduction

Currently marketing can be viralized through social media as a form of word-of-mouth communication or news from one source to the next, which encourages consumers to tell other people about the products and services developed by the company in the form of audio, video, and writing to other people online (Dobele et al., 2014). Online marketing aims to increase sales and reach a broader market. In general, online marketing helps increase sales, but it needs to be aligned with the quality of the product itself (Goel et al., 2017). Product quality is something that can satisfy the wants and needs offered to the market so that it can be owned, cared for, used or consumed (Firmansyah & Haryanto, 2017). From this opinion, it can be explained that product quality is the satisfaction expected by consumers from a product in meeting their needs, whether to be marketed, owned, viewed and used to meet their needs.

The spread of information quickly and has spread to regional areas is proof of the power of social media which provides internet-based communication media which is also called viral marketing or e-WOM. According to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), e-WOM is the internet version of word-of-mouth advertising, e-WOM) can take the form of websites, mobile online

advertisements and applications, online videos, emails, blogs, social media, and events other marketing that is so interesting that consumers are interested in sharing it with other people. The availability of social media has reshaped IMC as it offers new channels and methods of communication with consumers (Gordon-Isasi et al., 2021), and allows consumers to fully utilize this media, therefore it is also called consumer generated media (CGM). Companies now actively engage with customers through social media platforms as they enable two-way communication (Aslam & de Luna, 2021). Social media enables customer interaction, collaboration, knowledge, and sharing of information related to their preferences to support brands (Carlson et al., 2018). Therefore, social media has revolutionized and reinvented modern IMC methods and strategies.

The rapid development of the use of social media such as Instagram makes it easy for business people to market their products using the internet. Not infrequently marketing is done via the internet and this marketing is better known through social media and even becomes a trending product. Viral marketing or also known as electronic word of mouth (eWOM) according to (Kotler & Keller, 2018) is marketing using the internet to create a word-of-mouth effect to support marketing efforts and goals. Basically, electronic word of mouth is oral communication or the dissemination of information about products, services, brands or customer experiences using electronic platforms, such as blogs, forums, reviews via social media. In the opinion of (Ruiz-Mafe et. al., 2018) positive eWOM has a wider social influence among large online user communities. Users connect in positive eWOM by integrating communication between the website's social environment and social influence. Positive online comments made by existing and potential customers in online user communities have a significant role in tourism services and empowering consumers.

Online user communities remain connected in product-related eWOM and have emerged as a promotional tool for e-commerce and marketing (Ruiz-Mafe et. al., 2018). One of the e-WOM activities is, when a consumer gives a positive review about the product or brand they use on social media, this review will of course be known to their friends or followers, where the review will influence them and they will most likely be inclined to buy the product. If the review is negative then this will also influence someone in making purchasing decisions (Bhat & Bhat, 2020). One of the impacts of e-WOM is that it leads to consumer behavior in purchasing decisions about which brand to buy. Purchasing decisions are defined as what to buy, whether or not, when, where, and how to pay for it (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Decision-making is a form of psychological construction, meaning that even though the decision cannot be seen, it can be concluded from observable behavior that a decision has been made so that it can be concluded that a psychological "decision-making" event has occurred. Consumer purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by communication. Effective communication in the current technological era is internet-based communication, which greatly facilitates market reach. Based on the explanation above, this research wants to show the influence of electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions. This research will be based on several previous studies with advantages and disadvantages, where the shortcomings in previous research will be refined using definite theories and based on data obtained in the field.

## 2. Method

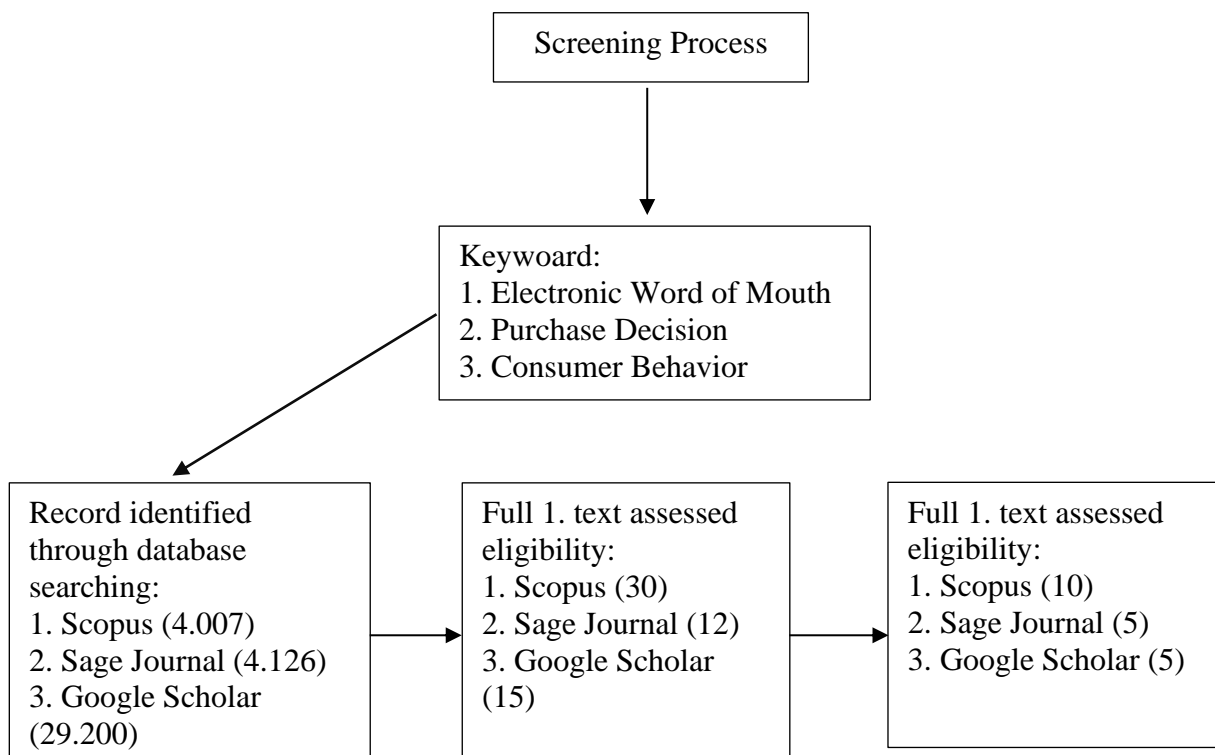
The method used in this research is systematic literature review (SLR), a term used to refer to research methodology or specific research and development carried out to collect and evaluate research related to a particular topic focus. SLR research is conducted for various purposes, namely to identify, review, evaluate, and interpret all available research on an interesting phenomenon with certain relevant research questions. This research approach uses

a systematic review by summarizing results presented in descriptive form (Tirandini et al., 2019).

This section will explain various articles to identify factors that align with the topic of discussion, namely the influence of electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions. Analysis and search for articles involving themes according to the title, abstract and keywords regarding the impact of e-WOM on consumer behavior, the influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions, the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions, the role of positive and negative e-WOM, from 2017 - 2023. Determination of articles based on selection that will be adjusted to writing needs. The source for this review comes from the Scopus-indexed journal database which is based on journals from Google Scholar which are indexed by Scopus and SAGE Journal, Scopus Journal, where data is taken through the Publish or Perish (PoP) database. Then they will be selected based on Google Scholar rankings from 1-20 journals.

Figure 1

Flowchart SLR Methods



### 3. Results and Discussion

By implementing Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on social media, business people can benefit from the low cost and high impact of this process. With the development of a person's mindset, consumers will become more expressive in convincing other consumers through opinions from their experiences. Taking a closer look at the findings, it is possible to conclude that the diversity of involvement within several sources of information that are generally available to all people allows future consumers to be more informed and aware prior to making a purchase decision by exploring other experiments and their perspectives on this product. e-WOM has grown increasingly concerned about this issue, which has been shown to play a significant role and influence on buyer decisions. This finding is fundamentally consistent with previous relevant studies (Moran & Muzellec, 2017), which also confirmed this aspect in this business and called for a greater emphasis on consumer feedback to ensure positive WOM, which in turn leads to the attraction of potential customers.

The findings of this work are also a mix of agreement and disagreement with previous existing literature. While some variable analyses yielded consistent results, others yielded insignificant effects, such as (Rehman et al., 2014). In light of the significance of the factors, the findings support the assumptions discussed in the literature and point out that communication in the digitalization era and comments from close friends and family members are essential and influential factors that shape the decision-making process of customers and readers using modern communication tools such as social media. Businesses can reach a larger audience by creating effective context on digital marketing channels. As a result, today's businesses should devise methods to motivate and compel prospective customers to create content that explains how to achieve satisfactory satisfaction with the products. In short, companies should not compete with user-generated content and reviews but instead focus on spreading positive experiences and raising product awareness (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

The result gave weight to questions about the importance of social media communication and comments and the implications for consumer decision-making. The study's findings confirmed that most participants would base their purchases on the available discussions and reviews from their acquaintances. Furthermore, it was stated that active consumers among digital marketing tools such as social media recommend a specific product or service and freely provide their experience regularly.

The methods by which buyers share and obtain their opinions are rapidly changing. Customers want to be involved in social relationships in which they can share and convey their perceptions and opinions about an item as technology advances. They prefer and hope to have timely access to the organization's items so they can make a purchase decision. To make this possible, a two-way relationship in terms of findings and discussion consistent with current marketing trends is required. The analysis also suggested that the freedom of being a contractor and commenter benefits both social media readers and commenters. The effectiveness of the commenters' comments and expertise on others to make their purchase decision rely on the actual and honest commenting on these sites, as well as the degree of adopting this opinion and review required trusted sources and more social members who fundamentally influence their close people. The existence of e-WOM has given rise to various discussions about the influence of e-WOM on purchasing interest and purchasing decisions. There is also a discussion about the factors that form e-WOM, the role of e-WOM in consumer behavior, and many other discussions that discuss e-WOM.

### **E-Wom Credibility**

E-WOM credibility is a widely researched area and academics and marketing practitioners are interested in understanding what makes e-wom information reliable to consumers (Hong & Pittman, 2020). Before the conceptualization of e-wom, early research on user-generated sources suggested that, similar to WOM, e-wom has higher credibility for consumers than marketer-created sources of information on the Web (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Consumers' judgment of e-wom credibility can be divided into informational and interpersonal factors.

Regarding informational factors, e-wom credibility is judged based on the other factors mentioned in this section: valence, volume, and content of e-wom information. In this regard, (Doh & Hwang, 2009) argue that negative e-wom information leads to higher perceived credibility of e-wom messages because negative e-wom information reduces the possibility of marketers being involved in e-wom communication. This also reflects a negative bias in consumers' information consumption (Kanouse, 1984). Numerous studies have claimed a positive relationship between the volume of e-wom messages and the credibility consumers perceive (Sher & Lee, 2009) forging many e-wom messages is relatively costly and easily sensed by consumers. Commenting on the influence of e-wom content on perceived credibility



(Cheung et al., 2009) argue that the quality of the argument positively influences consumers' perceived credibility of e-wom information. The source credibility of e-wom messages is also positively associated with consumers' perceived overall credibility of e-wom information. This raises another aspect of evaluating e-wom credibility interpersonal factors.

The perception of e-wom givers and the social relationships that consumers have with those e-wom givers influences consumers' judgment of e-wom information credibility. A study by (Moran & Muzzellec, 2017) found that the tie strength among the members of social networking sites positively influences consumers' perceived credibility of e-wom gathered from those sites. As a result, interpersonal factors are subject to the e-wom sites and the social capital resources that are available on those sites. Consumers rarely have any interpersonal relations with other members on review-based sites (review and e-commerce sites). Therefore, most research on social factors and e-wom credibility employ social networking sites and discussion forums as the research context.

### **Positive Vs Negative E-Wom**

Based on research conducted by (Phimai & Piya, 2021) positive feedback is used to increase product knowledge. This research highlights that this may not be the case. Our data shows positive e-wom as the primary confirmation tool of purchasing decisions. Positive Reviews increase purchase and purchase intent. Data shows that some consumers react more strongly to positive reviews than others. This shows that e-WOM plays a major role in the consumer purchasing decision-making. Previous research suggests that the valence of messages sent by previous consumers has a different influence on whether or not their followers make purchase decisions. Positive messages (product recommendations) have a greater influence on purchasing decisions than negative messages on not purchasing decisions. According to research (Tobon & Madariaga, 2021), negative messages spread faster and influence consumer decisions more.

Nearly half of respondents stated they would seek further negative reviews before confirming their credibility. This is a surprising finding and adds to knowledge of, according to research (Pan et al., 2017), an under-researched phenomenon. Reviews that contain negative comments decrease consumers' propensity to purchase. We suggest that negative Reviews are read more deeply than positive e-reviews due to consumers' curiosity and limited knowledge about the vacation they are interested in. Therefore, consumers intend to find out why negative reviews may influence their purchasing decisions. For example, consumers planning a family vacation often look for child-friendly places.

### **The Influence of E-Wom on Purchasing Decisions**

Based on the analysis results from several tests of the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions, it has a path coefficient, so it can be concluded that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Social media allows consumers to share text, image, audio, and video information with companies and vice versa (Kotler & Keller, 2018). In the case of several studies, electronic word of mouth influences purchasing decisions, because currently, many people use social media to find out various kinds of information, including about the sale of a product. In this case, social media talks a lot about the product, and social users talk a lot about the positive value of the product, besides that many consumers recommend using the product, some of which make e-WOM influence purchasing decisions.

This is in line with previous research conducted by (Perkasa et al., 2020), which stated that comments and reviews are an essential factor that helps Saudi consumers make purchasing decisions. More than 80% of study participants indicated that they read online reviews before making an online purchase. This is in line with previous research (Sari & Pangestuti, 2018) which proves that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions. Based on this research, it can be explained that e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth)

has been proven to influence purchasing decisions. In this case, positive comments given by internet users can increase consumer purchasing decisions.

### **Factors Forming E-Wom**

Based on the results of the analysis in several journals, several factors that form electronic word of mouth and their influence on purchasing decisions are obtained as follows: (1) Through the results of factor analysis, five factors were obtained that form e-WOM, namely: Platform Assistance, Expressing Positive Feelings, Economic Incentives, Helping the Company, and Concern for Others. (2) These five factors influence jointly and partially on purchasing decisions. (3) The Concern for Others factor has a dominant influence on purchasing decisions.

Not only that, the factors that influence e-WOM provision behavior are divided into several groups, namely personal conditions, social conditions, conceptual conditions, and consumption conditions (Dwivedi et al., 2021). One of the things that supports the provision of e-WOM is adding spell checking and determining the length of reviews such as the maximum number of words. Contextual factors such as product type and size of review play a role in influencing the ability of a technique to reflect the true sentiment of a check made according to research carried out by (Al-Natour & Turetken, 2020).

### **The Role of E-Wom on Consumer Behavior**

Argument quality, valence, and consistency are triggers to increase the intention to use the product (Shankar et al., 2020). Source expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily significantly influence the perceived usefulness and credibility of e-WOM, intention to purchase, and information adoption (Donthu et al., 2021) Online purchase intention and e-loyalty through site design and e-WOM purpose (Buhaliz et al., 2020) are supported by trends, e-WOM is a critical element that directly influences consumer brand engagement, then strengthens brand awareness and brand knowledge (Cheung et al., 2020) In terms of services because of their intangible nature. Services are more experience-dominated and challenging to evaluate before use. Therefore, consumers rely on prior consumer experience and e-WOM to reduce perceived service risks (Verma & Yadav, 2021). In short, consumers are more willing to visit a restaurant in the case of a negative-positive review order (primacy effect) than in a negative-positive order (Bigne et al., 2020).

### **The Role of E-Wom in Consumer Satisfaction**

The analysis results in several studies show that the better e-WOM increases in online platforms, the more consumer satisfaction will increase. These results are supported by several previous studies (Aakash & Gupta, 2020). Consumers see promotions from e-WOM as more persuasive and trustworthy. If any brand of a product has negative reviews online on any website of that particular brand, it will significantly affect the brand and is a serious issue. Nowadays, consumers interact more by word of mouth, they share experiences with a wide audience and communicate with them.

When positive reviews are associated with a brand, consumers are automatically influenced. They will be satisfied with that particular brand, but when negative reviews are associated with it consumers will be dissatisfied and this will lower the quality of their brand even if the brand quality is high but that specific negative review reduces purchases. This is the reason any brand faces difficulty responding to negative reviews (Kala & Chaubey, 2018). From the analysis results, it needs to be underlined that e-WOM is an important aspect in increasing consumer satisfaction. Several aspects form e-WOM and can increase consumer satisfaction, namely positive opinions, convincing information, objective comments and trusted sources (Aslam et al., 2020).

Findings showed that participants who used the internet *also* read more online reviews than others. Product price and reading reviews before buying have a significant interaction effect. Most participants-based recommendations on price and convenience. These findings

help marketers to develop strategic plans for future applications. Moreover, under the network environment, e-WOM is the most obvious reflection of consumers' product evaluation; Companies should pay attention to e-WOM and obtain consumers' opinions about the brand to continuously improve the brand's competitive strength. It is critical for modern marketing practitioners and marketers to focus and pay more attention to their consumer e-WOM's social media communication and reviews about their products and brands, as the more positive social media reviews there are, the more consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced. The company can also set up a section on their websites with previous customer evaluations and testimonials about the products they are selling, along with evidence such as photos. This may boost future potential customers trust in these products.

Furthermore, another important aspect of digital marketing channels, so marketers must be more aware of and sensitive to the issue of e-WOM via social media, as false reviews and opinions posted by some irresponsible individuals will negatively influence the business's reputation. The marketing implications for practice provided by this research must perceive the buyer profiles of the digital channels used and the changes in consumer attitudes and behaviors. Customers today have a diverse set of characteristics, and their behaviors have shifted significantly to include digital aspects. These changes will change the businesses to transform a consumer into a devoted customer and turn them to be loyal to the product or brand through post-purchase decisions. Marketing managers must compel the initiated methods of customer retention by resolving their complaints.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on research findings from 20 pieces of literature, it can be concluded that consumers are increasingly interested in sharing and communicating shopping experiences via internet platforms, so the scope and impact of word of mouth is increasing, and consumer purchasing decisions will be influenced to a certain extent through electronic word of mouth. There are several important points found, namely as follows:

- a) The results revealed that there was a significant main effect of reading reviews before purchasing and the buyer's purchase frequency.
- b) The number of reviews has a significant effect on purchasing decisions because it increases the perceived popularity of a product. According to previous research results respondents read between four and seven reviews before buying a product.
- c) Reviews such as positive or negative reviews are effective in purchasing decisions.
- d) The usefulness of reviews from other reviewers is considered an important factor influencing buyers purchasing decisions in this technologically advanced era. It is not surprising that consumers place the greatest trust in people they know and the online opinions of fellow buyers.

The recommendation for marketing managers is that they should advance the methods of consumer decision making due to the digital environments, and the consumers will create decisions to buy a product based on their peer experience, which has a role to decide because people do not want to take a risk and be involved in a wrong buying decision. In essence, the company must implement a new marketing strategy in order to succeed in consumers' intents at the time when the factors influence their choices. In conclusion, future research could investigate cross-culturally based models of e-WOM effects. Given the global nature of e-WOM, cross-cultural research on the effects of e-WOM would be an interesting issue. The limitation of this research is the focus on the topic of motivation and the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions. Focus on reviewing data based on previous research with predetermined research categories.



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