

Social Media Influence on Consumer Behavior: The Role of E-WOM in Gfshop Online Purchases

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Abstract: The increasingly tight development of the business world encourages business people to keep up with technological developments to compete with competitors. The emergence of marketplaces and the high number of marketplace users in Indonesia are opportunities to market and attract consumers' attention through communication strategies in sales. This study aims to determine the level of electronic word of mouth (E-WoM) communication, the level of purchase decisions of Gfshop followers, and the influence of E-WoM communication on purchase decisions in Gfshop online stores. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for businesses, particularly those operating in the e-commerce sector, on the importance of E-WoM communication in influencing consumer purchase decisions. This study uses a survey method with a simple regression technique. Data collection used a questionnaire in the form of a google form given to 100 respondents who followed the Gfshop account using an accidental sampling technique. Data processing and analysis using SPSS Statistics 22 software. The study results show that the E-WoM communication level of Gfshop followers is very high (66%), and the purchase decision rate of Gfshop followers is also very high (52%). In addition, E-WoM communication influenced purchase decisions in the Gfshop online store, with a regression coefficient of 1.243 and a t-value of 8.052.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth *Communication*, Purchase Decision, Gfshop



1. Introduction

Technological developments are increasingly advanced, impacting the business world, where competition is increasingly rapid and fierce. So, every company that produces goods or services needs a better marketing system. Reporting from *beritasatu.com*, researcher Eisha Magfiruha Rachbini said digital technology must enter UMKM (Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah-Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) because of the potential of the Indonesian population, which 191.80 million people of productive age currently dominate. Of the 345.3 million people, 125.6% used mobile connections, and 212.35 million people in Indonesia used the Internet in March 2021(Prasetyo, n.d.). Competition in UMKM arises due to technological advances and new innovations that are needed to develop their businesses. This phenomenon gives rise to a UMKM, which must keep up with technological developments because consumers seek product information through online reviews.

Consumers are one of the elements that determine whether business people succeed or not in achieving their goals because, without consumers, it is inevitable that business people will suffer losses and even go bankrupt. Business people must be able to encourage consumers so that consumers are encouraged to buy products sold in the store. Consumer buying interest can arise due to the stimulus and strategies applied.

Strategy is basically a combination of planning and management to achieve goals that must be adjusted to the development of a market(Nabilla and Tuasela, 2021, p. 21). One of the strategies in sales is communication because communicating can establish relationships with all parties involved. Good communication is when communicators convey information to communicators whom their communicators then understand with the same understanding. With communication, business people can also build communication relationships with continuous interaction.

In Islam, communication is one of the nature of human beings, and Allah SWT was the first to teach humans to communicate (QS. 55: 1-4), which means: "God the Most Merciful has taught the Qur'an. He created man, He taught him to be good at explaining". The verse explains that the pleasure of teaching the Qur'an to humans is the greatest blessing and benefit. After Allah sent down His blessing to teach the Qur'an, Allah created His best being, namely man, and taught him to be good at expressing what was scratched in his heart and what was scratched in his mind. Then, the fourth verse in the tafsir of Al-Misbah, explained by Quraish Shihab, is the potential of al-bayan inherent in humans, allowing humans to live together in social life because the potential of human al-bayan produces voices and has a mutually agreed meaning. So that, in turn, mutual

understanding is created to connect with each other in creating a community of social life(Hakki, 2017, p. 1).

In the Qur'an, communication is not just the communication of basic information but also about the forms of communication that humans need. Because the information about communication patterns contained in the Qur'an aims to be a guide for believers, helping them achieve their goals. Therefore, humans can pay attention to the form of communication to achieve the desired goals(Muhtar, 2021, p. 68).

Nowadays, the development of information and science is very influential in all fields, including communication, which is increasingly sophisticated, starting from the means or media used. The existence of electronic commerce (e-commerce) has given rise to many *marketplaces* in Indonesia, which create opportunities to market and attract the attention of consumers. *Marketplace* is a new concept used to buy and offer products and services online.

Shopee is a marketplace that competes in the Indonesian market. Shopee, launched in Indonesia in 2015, is an online buying and selling site with interesting features that make it easier for consumers to find what they want from the marketplace other things, such as Live Chat hashtags and Shopee Live. Shopee has been successfully in demand by the Indonesian people, and this is based on SimilarWeb data. In Indonesia, the number of Shopee visits was 190.7 million as of August 2022, which increased by 11.37% compared to the previous month. This puts Shopee at the top of the ranking marketplace Indonesia beats Tokopedia, which only received 147.7 million visits(Annur, n.d.).

In this research, researchers want to analyze how E-WoM communication, such as reviews, recommendations, and online discussions about products on Gfshop, can influence consumers' purchasing decisions. The main goal is to understand the role and impact of E-WoM communication in the purchasing decision-making process by consumers in the Gfshop online store.

2. Methods

This research focuses on the followers of the Gfshop online store as the unit of analysis. The type of research used is quantitative with descriptive and associative approaches. The descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WoM) communication variables and purchase decisions. Meanwhile, associative research aims to test the influence between the two variables.

The data in this study was obtained from two sources, namely primary data collected through the distribution of questionnaires to Gfshop followers and secondary data

obtained from literature studies, journals, and other related sources. The data collection methods used are questionnaires, which are data collection techniques by providing a set of questions or written statements to respondents to answer, and literature studies, which are data collection techniques by studying books, journals, and other sources relevant to the research topic.

The data analysis methods used include Descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of E-WoM communication variables and purchase decisions. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the influence of E-WoM communication on purchase decisions. Analysis of the determination coefficient to determine the magnitude of the influence of E-WoM communication on purchase decisions, and hypothesis test (t-test) to determine the significance of the influence of E-WoM communication on purchase decisions.

3. Result and Discussion

Based on the study's results, it is known that 66% of respondents consume E-WoM communication in the very high category, and 34% of respondents consume E-WoM communication in the high category. So, it can be concluded from the whole that the level of E-WoM communication in the followers of the Shopee Gfshop account with a very high category is 66%. Meanwhile, in terms of purchase decisions, it is known that 52% of respondents have purchase decisions in the very high category, 44% in the high category, and 4% in the medium category. So, the level of purchase decisions in the category is very high.

The E-WoM communication variable (X) consists of two indicators, namely, reviews in the form of assessments and reviews in the form of recommendations. It was found that the one that produced the highest average score was a review indicator in the form of a recommendation, with a score of 4.39.

Reviews in the form of recommendations come from the experience of consumers who have purchased the product, so the information available is considered more trustworthy (Poernamawati, 2018, p. 134). With recommendations from consumers, others feel helped to make the right choice. Especially in today's digital era, many people get recommendations and make purchases online, one of which is through Shopee.

Shopee is a *marketplace* for buying and selling online easily and quickly, where Shopee has made changes to attract consumer interest to interact more. It has various features such as *live chat*, sharing and hashtags to facilitate communication between sellers and buyers and in finding the desired product.

The review indicator in the form of recommendations with the highest statement score is *"Through the review column, I feel helped to get information about the quality of Gfshop products."* In this context, respondents who follow the Shopee Gfshop account agree with reviews that recommend products from others. So that people who read the reviews are helped to get information related to their quality.

The purchase decision variable (Y) comprises six indicators: product selection, brand selection, distributor choice, purchase time, purchase amount, and payment method. It was found that the one that produced the highest average score was the payment method indicator, with a score of 4.42.

Payment method indicators, based on respondent data. Respondents of the account followers have an interest in making purchase decisions. This is based on the statement with the highest score: *"The transaction process at Gfshop is easy"*. This states that easy transactions influence respondents, thus giving rise to purchase decisions.

Gfshop consumers can pay for goods more easily and practically because of the various payment options available, including COD, account transfer, credit card payment, and cash payment at agent partners. The current transaction method is very simple, so many Gfshop consumers are interested in buying or making transactions. Both searching, paying, and waiting for the goods to arrive at the destination address.

Islam provides a code of ethics for communicating with others, commanding to do so with *Qaulan Baligha*, *Qaulan Sadida*, *Qaulan Maisura*, *Qaulan Ma'rufa*, *Qaulan Layyina*, and *Qaulan Karimah*. *Qaulan Baligha* (effective communication) means eloquent speech, clear meaning, and clear and precise expression of what is desired. As Allah says, Surah An-Nisa' verse 63: *"These are the people whom Allah knows what is in his heart. Therefore, turn away from them, counsel them, and say to they are words that leave an imprint on their soul"*

The above verse explains that one must speak to *Qaulan Baligha* or use words that contain speech and can represent what we want fluently, clearly, and precisely. Both expressing thoughts and communicating with others. So that these words will have an impact on others who unintentionally spread them to others (Octavia, 2019, p. 112).

Then, with *Qaulan Sadida*, which means when conveying opinions or words precisely, correctly, and argumentatively. Where Islamic communication must inform or convey the truth, factual, and not manipulate facts. *The Battle of Maisura* It means words that are easy, smooth and easy to understand by communicators. *Qaulan Ma'rufa* It means good words, which are words that are in accordance with a person's background and status and contain goodness. *Qaulan Layyina* It means words that invite or encourage,

where a person tries to convince others that what is conveyed is true and does not demean the opinions or views of others. *Qaulan Karimah* means gentle and noble words, whereas, in Islamic ethics, communication is the main principle, namely respect (Nasir, 2020, p. 77).

In the E-WoM theory, consumers will constantly search for information about goods based on user reviews posted on social media or the internet before deciding whether to buy them or not. Users of informational reviews have expanded E-WoM communication, which has grown in line with the increasing number of online media users, especially in Indonesia, where around 167 million people (Widi, n.d.). In the characteristics of information through internet-based E-WoM communication, Shopee is a method of information that analyzes posted reviews through consumer commercial sites that post product reviews on online store websites.

The involvement of Gfshop consumers in E-WoM is due to several motivations, namely altruism, self-improvement, social benefits, and emotional venting (Febrina, 2018, p. 4). Altruism is the act of Gfshop consumers to help others without expecting anything in return. Improving the well-being of one or more people outside of oneself is the goal of altruism.

Self-improvement is a fundamental human drive. Where Gfshop consumers hope to get praise from others serves as motivation for self-improvement. According to Sundaram, consumers seem to want to share positive experiences to improve their reputation by portraying themselves as knowledgeable, savvy, and appreciated shoppers.

Social benefits Gfshop consumers can join the virtual community by sharing E-WoM online. Gfshop consumers can post comments on internet forums, as it shows the involvement and presence of Gfshop consumers in the community and allows Gfshop consumers to get social benefits from the community, namely membership.

Emotional venting can deal with unpleasant or negative events that cause unpleasant sensations by expressing the feelings of Gfshop consumers. Emotions can be expressed in motivation to interact with E-WoM. Sharing E-WoM and expressing good emotions are part of the Gfshop consumer experience.

E-WoM is closely related to Gfshop's consumer purchasing decisions. E-WoM communication effectively attracts recipients' attention, arousing interest that ultimately results in sales in the Gfshop online store which automatically influences the behavior of Gfshop consumers' purchase decisions. Where E-WoM communication is very influential on Gfshop consumers who are interested in recommendations from others who have used Gfshop products. Nowadays, the internet empowers customers to act on the various

information available, and most Gfshop consumers can share their experiences online and utilize E-WoM to influence other buyers.

Based on the data processing results using SPSS *Statistics* 22 between the E-WoM communication variable and the purchase decision variable. Table 4.16 shows that the significance value of the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test* results is 0.088, meaning $0.088 > 0.05$. So, it can be concluded that the residual values are normally distributed. Based on Table 4.17, it is known that the significance value of deviation from linearity is 0.443, meaning $0.443 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between E-WoM communication and purchase decisions.

Based on the table, it is known that the t count is 8.052, while the table's value is 1.987. The regression coefficient of 1.243 states that for every 1% increase in the E-WoM communication value, the purchase decision value on the Gfshop online store increases by 1.243. Based on a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$, it is stated that the E-WoM communication variable has an effect on the purchase decision.

The results of this study support the previous research conducted by Santika Andriani Budiman with the title *Influence Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) Towards the Decision to Purchase Products at TikTok Shop Among Adolescent Girls in Semarang City*. From the study, it was concluded that there was an influence of E-WoM on purchase decisions of 12.1%, while other variables outside this study influenced 87.9%. So, it can be said that the hypothesis in this study is accepted (Budiman, 2022, p. 46).

In addition, other supporting research was carried out by Raihan Amil with the title *Influence Electronic Word of Mouth on purchase decisions*. From the study, it was concluded that there was an influence of E-WoM on purchase decisions of 52.1%, while other variables outside this study influenced 47.9% (Amil, 2021, p. 5). In line with the research conducted by Salma Soleha with the title *Influence Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and Trust in Purchase Decisions on Marketplace Lazada (Community Survey in the City of Bandung)* (Soleha, 2021, p. 99).

Furthermore, research was conducted by Sholihah Asri Wijayani with the title *The Influence of Communication Word of Mouth Electronic to purchase decisions on tars.id online stores*. From the study, it was concluded that there was an influence of E-WoM on purchase decisions of 6.1%, while other variables outside this study influenced 93.9% (Wijayani, 2022, p. 50).

And the research conducted by Annisa Putri Aminda with the title *Influence Electronic Word of Mouth by Beauty Vlogger to the interest in buying Wardah cosmetic products*. From the study, it was concluded that there was an influence of E-WoM *Beauty*

Vloggers on the buying interest of Wardah products by 4.4%. In comparison, other variables outside this study influenced 95.6%(Amanda.

Thus, the contribution made in the E-WoM communication variable (X) to the purchase decision variable (Y) can be seen in Table 4.21 above. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.398 from these results. This shows that the contribution of E-WoM communication to purchase decisions is 39.8%, and the remaining 60.2% comes from other contributions.

4. Conclusion

E-WoM communication plays an important role in driving purchase decisions among Gfshop followers. This finding can be considered for Gfshop to continue to optimize the E-WoM communication strategy to increase sales and customer loyalty. The following arguments can prove this finding: *First*, E-WoM (electronic word-of-mouth) communication among Gfshop followers is in a very high category. This can be seen from the score between 33 - 40, with a percentage of 66%. This shows that followers actively share information, reviews, and recommendations about Gfshop through digital media. *Second*, the purchase decision rate among Gfshop followers is also very high. The score obtained was in the range of 64 - 80, with a percentage of 52%. This indicates that followers tend to make purchases after receiving E-WoM information about Gfshop.

The study's results revealed a significant influence between E-WoM communication and purchase decisions on the Gfshop online store. This is evidenced by the t-count value that is greater than the t-table, which is $8.052 > 1.987$. Regression analysis also shows that a 1,243% increase will follow every 1% increase in the value of E-WoM communication in the value of purchase decisions on Gfshop. In addition, E-WoM communication contributed 39.8% to the purchase decision, while the remaining 60.2% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

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