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The Influence of E-WOM on Facebook Social Media on *Purchase Decition* with *Purchase Intention* as a Mediation Variable

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ABSTRACT

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as the producer of *Bakso Balungan Mak Jah* in Tempuran Village, Demak, are increasingly using social media as a key strategy in the digital era. This study aims to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on consumer purchase decisions by considering the mediating role of purchase intention. A quantitative method is used in this research, employing the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach, supported by SmartPLS version 3.2.9. Data were collected from 100 individuals who actively use Facebook. The analysis results show that e-WOM significantly affects both purchase intention and purchase decision. Furthermore, purchase intention partially mediates the influence of e-WOM on purchase decision. The findings indicate that credible and positive online reviews can enhance consumers' desire to purchase and support better decision-making. This study offers practical recommendations for digital marketing strategies for local SMEs and highlights the importance of managing online reputation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has evolved to be a key tool for marketing and disseminating information in today's digital age. Platforms like Facebook influence user perceptions and preferences, primarily through consumer testimonials known as *electronic word of mouth (E-WOM).* This phenomenon indicates a shift from conventional marketing strategies centered on one-way communication to a more community-based and interactive approach. Balungan Mak Jah meatball producer in Tempuran Village, Demak, for example, has taken advantage of this platform to connect with customers through reviews and suggestions. Hootsuite (2021) reports that more than 170 million people in Indonesia are active on social media, and about 85% of them use social media to find information about products. This data supports the idea that social media is now a strategic means to influence *purchasing decisions*.

E-WOM has enormous power on social media, but the results are not always consistent. Not all positive reviews lead to real buying decisions. Despite receiving a lot of positive information and testimonials, some consumers are still hesitant to make a decision. This suggests that there is a discrepancy between what is expected about the impact of E-WOM and what actually happens with consumer behavior. Research by Alyssa et al. (2022) shows that the influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)* on *purchase decisions* is generally not direct, but mediated by *purchase intention* variables. In other words, E-WOM tends to influence consumers' intention to buy first, which then contributes to the formation of purchase decisions. Therefore, customer reviews have a greater role in shaping *purchase intent* first before ultimately influencing the final decision. These results show how complex the consumer decision-making process is, which is influenced by many psychological and social variables.

Previous research has consistently shown that *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, particularly in the food and beverage industry. Nie et al. (2023) in their study on betutu chicken products in Bali found that reviews from users with a high level of credibility play an important role in influencing purchase decisions. These findings are in line with research by Arta and Yasa (2019) which confirms that the credibility of E-WOM messages and *purchase intent* function as key mediators in the consumer decision-making process. Furthermore, Ruangkanjanases et al. (2021) also emphasized that E-WOM is a very useful source of information and has a significant impact on consumer behavior, especially in the context of online information adoption and increased purchase intent. This finding is strengthened by research by Putri and Aksari (2024) which shows that E-WOM and brand image have a positive effect on purchase intention, where brand image also mediates part of the influence of E-WOM on these intentions. This is an important basis for Amolas Café Canggu to focus on managing E-WOM and strengthening the brand image in attracting consumers.

A study by *Chen, Chang, and Sung (2021)* revealed that perception of product quality, emotional response to E-WOM, and perception of purchase risk fully mediated the relationship between E-WOM credibility and purchase intent. This suggests the existence of complex psychological mechanisms behind consumer decision-making in today's digital context. E-WOM, especially on the Facebook platform, for MSMEs for traditional food in rural areas is still very few. Most of the available literature concentrates on large brands or urban contexts that have different market characteristics and consumer behaviors du Plessis (2022). This shows that there is a research gap that needs to be bridged, especially to understand the dynamics of E-WOM in the local MSME ecosystem which is greatly influenced by cultural factors, social proximity, and community trust levels.

This research is unique because the business subject and geographical context chosen for this study are traditional food MSMEs operating in rural areas. The study not only looked at overall digital social trends, but also studied how E-WOM using Facebook affected local customer behavior. Unlike most studies on social media sites like Instagram or TikTok, this study specifically emphasizes Facebook as the main social media site because it is still the most widely used in rural communities. Thus, this research is expected to be able to enrich the treasure of literature on E-WOM in a more diverse socio-economic context. Literature or literacy is a person's ability to understand, analyze, and apply information (Kurniawati 2024) so it is hoped that this research can reach a deeper understanding of E-WOM.

The objectives of this study are (1) to see how E-WOM on Facebook social media affects consumers' *purchase decisions*; (2) to see how *purchase intention* functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between E-WOM and purchase decisions; and (3) to provide practical advice for MSME actors on how to optimize the use of E-WOM to increase consumer trust and loyalty.

Based on the understanding of changes in consumer behavior and the role of the internet and social media in marketing, the research that will be conducted will discuss the influence of E-WOM on Facebook Social Media on *Purchase Decition* with *Purchase Intention* as a Mediation Variable (a study on Balongan Mak Jah Meatball MSMEs in Tempuran Village, Demak Regency). This research is expected

to make a practical contribution for MSME actors in developing adaptive digital marketing strategies, as well as being the basis for regional policy makers in encouraging the digital transformation of MSMEs through digital literacy training and online reputation management.

2. METHODS

Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data analysis was conducted using *Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) version 3.0*, which is considered suitable for testing relationships between latent variables, especially in complex models with mediating variables.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is all consumers who have bought Balungan Mak Jah Meatballs and are active on Facebook social media (Sugiyono, 2013). The sampling technique uses purposive sampling with the following criteria:

1. Consumers are at least 17 years old,
2. Have bought Mak Jah Balungan Meatballs,
3. Have seen/read product reviews/testimonials on Facebook.

The minimum number of samples is determined based on the *rule of thumb* for SEM-PLS, which is at least 10 times the number of indicators in the variable with the most indicators (Hair et al., 2019). Assuming 4 indicators per variable and 3 main variables, the minimum sample required is around 80–100 respondents.

Research Instruments

The instrument is in the form of an online questionnaire *(Google Form platform)* that uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The variables and indicators used include:

1. E-WOM: review intensity, content quality, source credibility, relevance *(Leong, Loi, and Woon, 2022)*
2. Purchase Intention: purchase intent, possibility of buying, purchase plan (Alyssa et al., 2022)
3. Purchase Decision: purchasing decisions, the influence of reviews on purchases, buying considerations based on reviews (Arta and Yasa, 2019).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using *SmartPLS 3.0 software.* The analysis process includes:

1. Evaluation of Measurement Models *(Outer* Model):
   a. Validitas konvergen *(Average Variance Extracted/AVE > 0.5)*,
   b. Indicator reliability *(outer loading > 0.7),*
   c. Construct reliability *(Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.7*).
2. Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model):
   a. R^2 value to measure the predictive strength of the model, (Manfrin et al., 2019)
   b. Statistical t-values (> 1.96) and p-values (< 0.05) for hypothesis testing.
3. Mediation Test:
   Using *bootstrapping* to see the significance of the indirect influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions through purchase intent (Ali, 2022).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Descriptive analysis intends to find out the respondents' responses to each question asked. The descriptive analysis explained the respondents' responses to the statements submitted for each of the E-WOM, *Purchase Decision* and *Purchase Intention* variables. Respondents' responses were grouped into one score category using a scale range with the formula:

RS = TT – TR/Scale
Information:
RS = Scale Range
TT = Highest Score, is 5
TR = Lowest Score, is 1
Scale = 5
With this formula, then:
Source : SEM-PLS output output, 2025
RS = (5 – 1)/5 = 0.8
Thus the interval can be formulated as follows:
Interval 1.00 – 1.79 Very Low
Interval 1.80 – 2.59 Low
Interval 2.60 – 3.39 Medium
Interval 3.40 – 4.19 Height
Interval 4.20 – 5.00 Very High

a. Variable E-WOM

Table 1. Respondents' Responses to the E-WOM Variable

Indicator	Score Weights					Sum	Total Score (F x Scale)	Mean	Category
	STS	TS	N	S	SS				
X1	0	5	7	52	36	100	419	4,19	Very High
X2	0	1	6	40	53	100	445	4,45	
X3	0	0	17	51	32	100	415	4,15	
X4	0	0	12	53	35	100	423	4,23	
X5	1	4	10	43	42	100	421	4,21	
						Total	2123	21,23	
						Average	424,6	4,246	

Based on the respondents' responses to the E-WOM variable, it was shown that the respondents' responses found an average score of 4.24, so it was in the very high category, which means that many respondents responded positively to E-WOM. The highest response was to the Reviews indicator about products on Facebook that were actual and relevant with an average score of 4.45, while the lowest response in the User reviews indicator on Facebook was trusted by consumers with an average respondent answer of 4.15.

b. Variabel *Purchase Decision*

Table 2. Respondents' Responses to *Purchase Variables Dicision*

Indicator	Score Weights					Sum	Total Score (F x Scale)	Mean	Category
	STS	TS	N	S	SS				
Y1	1	1	14	37	47	100	428	4,28	Tall
Y2	0	1	6	42	51	100	443	4,43	
Y3	3	5	34	42	16	100	363	3,63	
Y4	0	5	26	50	19	100	383	3,83	
						Total	1617	16,17	
						Average	404,25	4,0425	

Based on respondents' responses to the *Purchase Dicision variable* , it shows that the respondents' responses were found to have an average score of 4.04, so it is in the high category which means that

many respondents responded positively to *Purchase Dicision*. The highest response was on the indicator I felt confident in my purchase decision with an average score of 4.43, while the lowest response was on the indicator I chose Balungan Mak Jah Meatballs over other products with an average respondent answer of 3.63.

c. Variabel Purchase Intention

Table 3. Respondents' Responses to *Purchase Intention Variables*

Indicator	Score Weights					Sum	Total Score (F x Scale)	Mean	Category
	STS	TS	N	S	SS				
Z1	1	8	38	39	14	100	357	3,57	Tall
Z2	1	4	31	49	15	100	373	3,73	
Z3	1	5	34	44	16	100	369	3,69	
Z4	0	4	24	43	29	100	397	3,97	
						Total	1496	14,96	
						Average	374	3,74	

Based on respondents' responses to the *Purchase Intention* variable, it was found that the respondents' responses found an average score of 3.74, so it was in the high category, which means that many respondents responded positively to *Purchase Intention*. The highest response was on the indicator I was looking for more information about this product with an average score of 3.97, while the lowest response was on the indicator I decided to buy this product because of the reviews I read with an average answer of 3.57.

Instrument Test Analysis

Testing Measurement Model (*Outer Model*)

1. *Convergent Validity*
   Convergent Validity is applied by looking at the value on *the outer loadings*. *Outer loadings* are the value of correlation of the value of a question item with the indicator of a variable. According to Hair et al. (2019), *outer* loadings > 0.5 are generally considered significant. Therefore, the value *of the loadings factor* less than 0.5 should be eliminated from the model. Furthermore, if the AVE is greater than 0.5, this indicates that half *of the construct* explains the indicator more. Meanwhile, if the AVE value is < 0.5, then the *lowest loadings factor* value of the variable must be eliminated from the model.
2. *Internal Consistency*
   The internal consistency of the reliability of a *construct* on the reflective indicator is carried out in two ways, namely by looking *at Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability*. A variable is said to be *reliable* if it has *Cronbach's Alpha* value > 0.7 and *Composite Reliability* > 0.7.
3. *Discriminant Validity*
   A research model is said to have *discriminant validity* both if the *target loading construct* value is higher than the *loading* value of other *constructs*. *Discriminant validity* measurements can be made using *Fornell-Lacker*.

Table 4. Outer Model Test Results

Variabel	Indikator	*Convergent Validity*		*Internal Consistency Reliability*	
		Loading	*AVE*	*Composite Reliability*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
E-WOM (X)	X1	0.855	0.613	0.886	0.839
	X2	0.590			
	X3	0.846			
	X4	0.833			
	X5	0.757			
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y1	0.546	0.537	0.817	0.720
	Y2	0.616			
	Y3	0.851			
	Y4	0.864			
Purchase Intention (Z)	Z1	0.921	0.661	0.875	0.791
	Z2	0.914			
	Z3	0.927			
	Z4	0.321			

Source : Processed Products, 2025

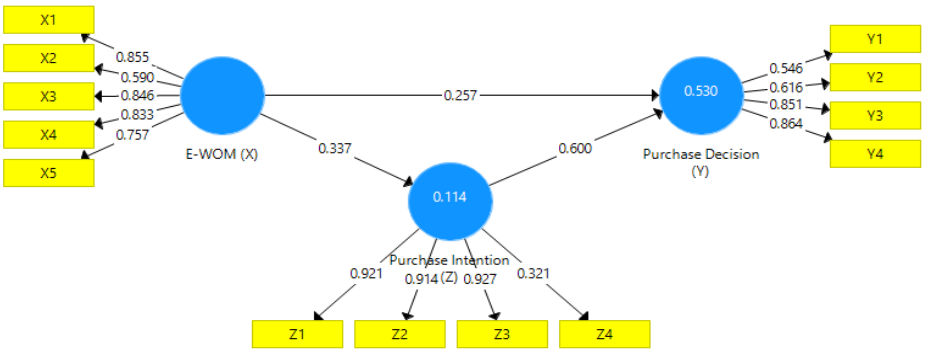

Figure 1. Outer Model Test Results

The results of the PLS Algorithm model test, in the table above, measure *convergent validity* and *internal consistency reliability*. *Convergent validity* shows that all indicators in all research variables have met the criteria of more than 0.50 and all variables have an AVE of more than 0.50. The *internal consistency reliability* value on *Cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability* of all variables has been met, which is more than 0.70.

Table 5. *Fornell-Lacker Criteria*

	E-WOM (X)	*Purchase Decision* (Y)	*Quality Purchase Intention* (Z)
E-WOM (X)	0.783		
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.460	0.733	
Purchase Intention (Z)	0.337	0.687	0.813

Source : Processed Data, 2025

From the table, the results of the *Fornell-Lacker* criteria show that the square root value of AVE in each latent variable is greater than the correlation value, so the latent variable in this research model is declared to have *good discriminant validity*.

Structural Model Analysis (*Inner Model*)

After testing the measurement model (*outer model*) that has met the requirements, then structural testing (*inner model*) is carried out.*The inner model* was tested by looking at *the r-square* value (reliability indicator) for the *dependent latent variable*, and testing the significance of the coefficient of the structural path parameter, *Effect Size* (f-square).

a. Coefficient of Determination (*R-Square*)

This coefficient functions to measure the ability of endogenous variables to explain exogenous variables. The *R-square value* of 0.75 indicates the ability of strong endogenous variables to predict a model, a moderate value of 0.50, and a weak value of 0.25 (Hair et al. (2019).

Table 6. *R-Square*

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.530	0.521
Purchase Intention (Z)	0.114	0.105

Source : Processed Data, 2025

From the table, it can be concluded that the *Purchase Intention* (Z) variable has a weak ability (0.114) and *Purchase Decision* (Y) has a moderate ability (0.530) in the ability to predict the model. The E-WOM (X) variable has an influence of 11.4% on the *Purchase Intention* (Z) variable while the rest is influenced by other variables. Meanwhile, the E-WOM (X) variable had an influence of 53% on the *Purchase Decision* (Y) variable after being mediated by *the Purchase Intention* (Z) variable and the rest was influenced by other variables.

b. Effect Size (*f-Square*)

Effect size shows that exogenous variables have a great influence on endogenous variables, the criteria are weak 0.02, moderate 0.15, and strong 0.35 *(Hair et al., 2019).*

Tabel 7. *Effect Size*

	E-WOM (X)	*Purchase Decision* (Y)	Quality *Purchase Intention* (Z)
E-WOM (X)		0.125	0.128
Purchase Decision (Y)			
Purchase Intention (Z)		0.680	

Source : Processed Data, 2025

From the table, the influence of the variable E-WOM (X) has an effect of 0.128 (weak) on *Purchase Intention* (Z), and 0.125 (weak) on *Purchase Decision* (Y). The *Purchase Intention* (Z) variable has an effect of 0.680 (strong) on *the Purchase Decision* (Y).

1. Hypothesis Testing (*Bootstrapping*)

   The hypothesis significance test can be done through *the bootstrapping* menu on *Smart PLS* by looking at the *Path Coefficients* table in the *T-Statistics* and *P-Values* columns. This hypothesis test uses the significance criteria of *a P-Value* of less than 0.05 and a significance value of 5 percent. *The Path Coefficient* is considered significant if the *T-Statistics* is greater than 1.96. To see the magnitude of the

influence of the relationship, it can be seen in the path coefficient, with the criteria if the moderate path coefficient is below 0.30, strong 0.30 – 0.60, very strong more than 0.60.

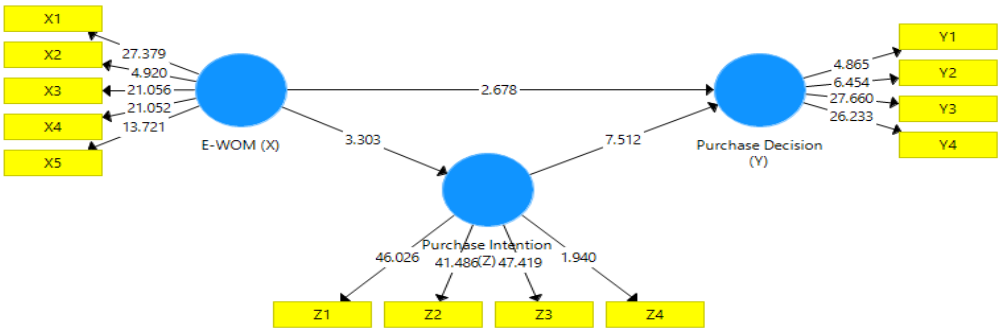

Figure 2. Bootstrapping Test Results

Table 8. Path *Coefficinets Results*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
X -> Y	0.257	0.264	0.096	2.678	0.008
X -> Z	0.337	0.358	0.102	3.303	0.001
Z -> Y	0.600	0.601	0.080	7.512	0.000

Source : Processed Products, 2025

From Table 8. It is known that:

1. The Relation of E-WOM to *Purchase Decision*
   Based on the test results, it was found that there was a moderate influence (O = 0.257) with P Values of 0.008 < 0.05, then it can be concluded that E-WOM has an effect on *the Purchase Decision*, therefore the hypothesis proposed is acceptable. This means that if E-WOM is more positive, intense, quality, and credible, it will influence someone to buy.
2. The Relationship of E-WOM to Purchase Intention
   From this test, it was found that there was a strong influence (O = 0.337) with P Values of 0.001 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that E-WOM has an effect on *Purchase Intention*, therefore the hypothesis proposed is acceptable. This means that if E-WOM is more positive, credible, and informative, then the Purchase Intention will be higher.
3. The Relation of Purchase Intention to Purchase Decision
   From this test, it was found that there is a very strong influence (O = 0.600) with P Values of 0.000 < 0.05, then it can be concluded that *Purchase Intention* has an effect on *the Purchase Decision*, therefore the hypothesis proposed is acceptable. This means that the higher *the Purchase Intention*, the **higher a person's decision to buy**

Table 9. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

	Hipotesis	Result	Information
H1	E-WOM has a positive effect on *purchase intention*	Koef. Beta = 0,257 T-Statistics = 2,678 P Value = 0,008	Accepted
H2	Purchase *intention* has a positive effect on purchase decisions	Koef. Beta = 0,337 T-Statistics = 3,303 P Values = 0,001	Accepted
H3	E-WOM has a direct effect on purchasing decisions	Koef. Beta = 0,600 T-Statistics = 7,512 P Values = 0,000	Accepted

Source : Primary Data Tested, 2025

2. Mediation Hypothesis Test

The results of the Mediation hypothesis test through *Purchase Intention* (Z) as an *intervening* variable or mediation using Smart PLS software can be seen as follows:

Table 10. Mediation Hypothesis Test Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
X -> Z -> Y	0.202	0.214	0.064	3.167	0.002

Source : Primary Data Tested, 2025

Based on Table 10. It is known that the influence of E-WOM (X) on *Purchase Decision* (Y) through *Purchase Intention* (Z) as an *intervening* or mediation variable has a path coefficient score of 0.202 with P Values of 0.002 < 0.05. This shows that *Purchase Intention* (Z) mediates the relationship between E-WOM (X) and *Purchase Decision* (Y).

The results of the study show that E-WOM has a significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions and purchasing decisions on Balungan Mak Jah Meatball products.

These findings corroborate previous research by Alyssa et al. (2022) which stated that E-WOM not only influences purchasing decisions directly, but also through the formation of purchase intent. The credibility and relevance of testimonials that appear on Facebook are proven to shape consumer confidence and encourage them to seriously consider the product.

Furthermore, these results are also consistent with the research of Nie et al. (2023) and Arta and Yasa (2019), which emphasizes the mediating role of purchase intention in the purchase process. The presence of a significant mediating effect indicates that digital testimonials work as an initial stimulus that influences the consumer's cognitive perception before finally triggering actual buying behavior.

In the context of MSMEs in rural areas, this is an important finding because it shows that digital community-based communication strategies such as Facebook can be effective in reaching the local market, as long as the messages conveyed have a high level of credibility and relevance.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) through Facebook social media on consumer purchase decisions for Balungan Mak Jah Meatball products in Tempuran Village, with purchase intention as a mediating variable. The results of the analysis using SEM-PLS show that: 1) E-WOM has a significant effect on purchase intention, showing that testimonials submitted through Facebook are able to shape consumer purchase intention. 2) *Purchase intention* has a significant effect on *purchase decision*, which shows that strong purchase intention will encourage consumers to take purchase action. 3) E-WOM also has a direct effect on *purchase decisions*, but indirect influence through *purchase intention* has a larger coefficient value, so the role of mediation is stated to be significant. These findings confirm that E-WOM is not only a passive promotional tool, but an active instrument in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions, even in the context of traditional food MSMEs in rural areas.

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