



## Analysis of Electronic Word of Mouth Factors on Interest in Buying Culinary Products in the City of Surabaya

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### **Abstract**

This research analyzes the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) factors to the purchase intention of culinary products in Surabaya. Five e-WOM factors are identified including Platform Assistance (X1), Expressing Positive Feelings (X2), Economic Incentive (X3), Helping the Company (X4) and Concern for Others (X5). This research uses quantitative approach of multiple regression analysis. Questionnaire as research instrument were randomly circulated (random sampling) to social media users in Surabaya city with three research objects which include contents and commentary sections taken from Instagram platform. The analysis concludes that e-WOM factors simultaneously affect purchase intention on culinary products in Surabaya while partially only two factors include Expressing Positive Feelings (X2) and Economic Incentive (X3) that have significant effect.

**Keywords:** *Electronic Word of Mouth; Multiple Regression Analysis; Purchase Intention*

### **Introduction**

Marketing is a way to introduce and improve a product or service. In his book entitled *Marketing Management*, Kotler et al. (2019) said that the purpose of marketing activities is to find and meet customer needs and wants. In his discussion of customer behavior (*consumer behavior*) it was emphasized that marketing activities run effectively if the company is able to establish good relationships with its customers so that the products marketed can meet the right customers at the right time as well. According to Lamb et al. (2011), marketing is a communication activity carried out by companies to inform, seduce, and remind potential buyers of a product with the aim of influencing customer opinion. This is in line with Jiang & Ma's (2018) research that the purpose of marketing activities is to lure potential buyers to make purchases and then increase sales. Marketing activities are essential for various types and scales of businesses.

Marketing activities and methods are growing, one of which is by utilizing the internet as a promotional medium. As a consequence of the development of information technology in the field of marketing, *Electronic Word of Mouth* (e-WOM) appears in the form of reviews or comments embedded on a product or service page. *Electronic Word of Mouth* can be defined as all opinions, both positive and negative, that are widely accessible in cyberspace (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2004). *E-WOM* occurs in various forms such as, but not limited to, opinions on various platforms, discussion forums, news groups, and so on that can be accessed through electronic media. E-WOM can be part of promotional activities

and become one of the determining factors for consumers in making purchase decisions.

Since the rapid development of the topic, there have been many studies that take the topic around e-WOM and its role in the field of marketing management. A literature study in (Damayanti, 2019) states that e-WOM can increase customer buying interest on social media. The increase in buying interest occurs due to the availability of information circulating by parties other than companies providing goods or services facilitated by the existence of digital platforms. The same thing was conveyed in (Hariono, 2018) which stated that e-WOM influences customer decisions in the purchase process. This is influenced by the experience of fellow users who become trusted sources of information because of their nature. Moreover, e-WOM is considered superior to conventional WOM because it has a wider reach due to the loss of geographical restrictions from the benefits of the internet or social media. E-WOM cannot only be seen as a natural activity of internet users or customers but can also be a promotional medium for a product.

Several studies examine directly how e-WOM plays a role in increasing customer buying interest. Cahyono, Kusumawati, & Kumadji (2016) examined how e-WOM affects buying interest with a case study in one restaurant. Five factors were identified to model e-WOM. Using quantitative studies, the study concluded that the five factors studied influenced buying interest quite significantly where *concern for others* was the most dominant. Another research is described in Virenabia & Oktafani (2018) by taking a case study on followers of Bandung Makuta's Instagram account. Research using this quantitative method concludes that e-WOM, in terms of the quality and quantity of e-WOM and the level of expertise of its makers, has a positive relationship with market buying interest. Yudanegara & Rahmi (2019) also examined how e-WOM affects buying interest in MSMEs in Bandung City. This research also adds brand *image elements* as *intervening variables* that bridge the influence of e-WOM on buying interest. Using quantitative methods, this study concluded that e-WOM affects buying interest with a positive correlation. The *brand image* is also concluded to be an important element in bridging the influence of e-WOM and buying interest.

This study analyzes the influence of e-WOM on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya. Currently, the culinary industry in the city of Surabaya is increasing and growing, its contribution to awakening the wheels of the national economy. According to the East Java Cooperatives and SMEs Office (2021), the development of gross value added generated by East Java Cooperatives and MSMEs increased by 0.56% compared to 2020. This is also shown by the increase in business opportunities with the highest growth coming from the accommodation and food and drink provision sector of 9.68%. This growth places the culinary sector as the sector with the highest number followed by the transportation and warehousing sector (9.38%), and corporate services (9.27%). This research is expected to provide new information about the role of e-WOM, which is reviewed in several factors, in the marketing activities of culinary sector businesses in Surabaya.

## **Literature Review**

### **a. Electronic Word of Mouth**

*Electronic Word of Mouth* (e-WOM) emerged as a consequence of the digitization of marketing activities and has the same role as its conventional form, *Word of Mouth* (WOM). In their book entitled *Consumer Behavior: Building Marketing Strategy*, Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2015) define WOM as the activity of sharing information between individuals in verbal form, including face-to-face, through telephone lines, or the internet. Unlike marketing communications that tend to favor the company, customers tend to trust the opinions obtained from fellow users more because they are felt to be more representative of the experience of using the product. WOM has a very significant influence on customer decision making and business success of a product or company (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2015).

Cahyono, Kusumawati, & Kumadji (2016) explained that e-WOM has a more significant impact

because of its wider reach, so that business people benefit from low-cost benefits but have a big impact. In addition, e-WOM is considered capable of accommodating more accurate public expression based on actual experience of the products or businesses they use. However, it does not rule out the possibility of e-WOM having a large negative impact if the sentiment given by customers towards the product is negative. e-WOM can have a two-way impact, positive or negative, based on customer experience and response. Cahyono, Kusumawati, & Kumadji (2016) concluded that e-WOM can be represented in five factors, namely:

1. Platform Assistance;
2. expressing positive feelings;
3. Economic Incentives;
4. The Assistance Factor in Culinary Business;
5. Concern for Others.

### **b. Buying Interest**

Kotler et al. (2019) use a purchasing process framework that is divided into five stages or called *the five-stage model of the consumer buying process*. The decision-making framework includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, buying decisions, and post-purchase behavior. The purchase decision occurs after the customer gets all the information needed and evaluates the information obtained. Kotler et al. (2019) mentioned that if further investigated there is a determining factor where customers determine attitudes or behaviors after evaluating available alternatives based on the information obtained, namely *purchase intention*. Buying interest becomes a measure of how marketing activities play a role in individual customers before there are finally external factors that influence individual decisions to make purchases. The purchase interest factor that arises will then be determined by two intermediate factors that determine whether the customer will take a stance to make a purchase (*purchase decision*); behavior of others and factors in unanticipated situations. Both of these intermediate factors become something that cannot be fully controlled, both by the company and customers, so it can be considered as an influencing risk factor. Customer behavior to change, postpone, or even avoid purchases is largely determined by *perceived risk* including, but not limited to, functional risk, physical risk, financial risk, social risk, psychological risk, and time risk. Companies must consider and take the necessary actions against these risks so that the risks felt by customers can be reduced and the opportunity for buying interest turns into a greater purchase decision (Kotler et al., 2019).

Morwitz (2012) defines buying interest as a leading indicator of future demand for a product. Buying interest is also used as a measure of whether marketing activities affect future sales. However, companies cannot necessarily believe that the purchase interest expressed by customers will manifest in actions that lead to purchases. This is in line with what was conveyed in Kotler et al. (2019) that there are other factors that influence how customers convert buying interest that arises into a *purchase decision* and leads to sales transactions. Apart from this, many studies show how buying interest is directly proportional to buying activity therefore buying interest remains an important indicator in measuring the effectiveness of marketing activities.

Various references discuss how buying interest is measured quantitatively so as to provide measurable estimates on the effectiveness of marketing activities. Morwitz (2012) describes several methods for measuring buying interest, starting with the simplest using the question of whether respondents will buy a product within a certain period of time. This question then became the basis developed in various studies so that varied approaches emerged in measuring buying interest; Such as using the purchase opportunity factor, using the Likert scale, and the application of naming as a classification on a certain predetermined scale.

Dachyar & Banjarnahor's (2017) research proposes several questions used to measure buying

interest. These questions are compiled based on several previous studies and are considered capable of representing variables of buying interest. The main ideas of the questions used in measuring buying interest include:

1. The desire to buy;
2. Desire to recommend;
3. Desire to provide information;
4. Desire to use a payment method;
5. Forecast to make transactions in the future.

## Method

This study uses multiple regression analysis method to prove the influence of e-WOM factors on buying interest quantitatively both partially and simultaneously. The questionnaire models and tools used in this study refer to two studies (Cahyono, Kusumawati, & Kumadji, 2016; Dachyar & Banjarnahor, 2017). The model analysis used in this study is shown in Figure 1.

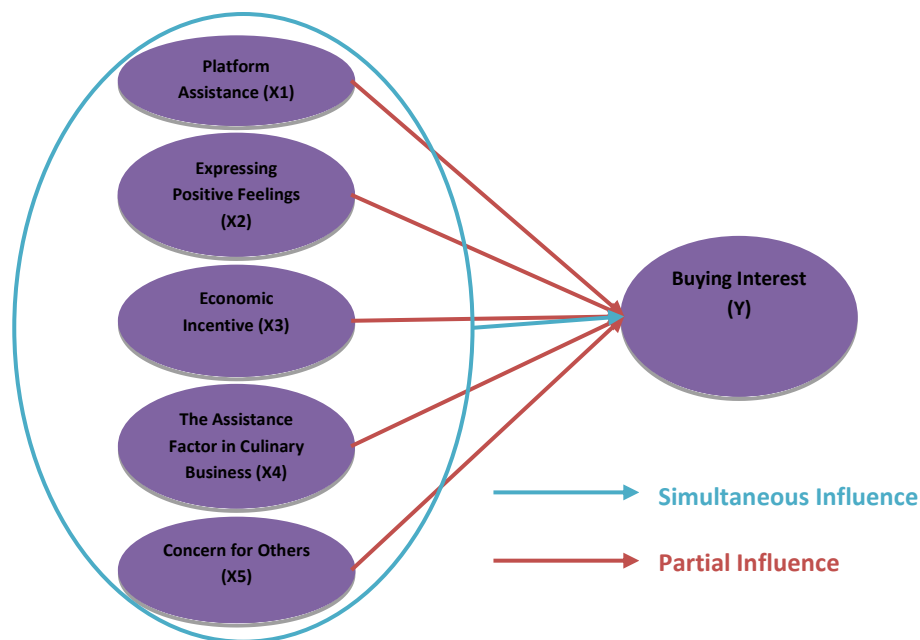


Figure 1 Model Analysis

This research takes the scope of e-WOM and buying interest in culinary businesses in the city of Surabaya. Three contents and conversations were extracted from three Instagram social media accounts that promoted three different culinary businesses in the city of Surabaya, namely @kulinersby, @kokobuncit, and @mamariareview. The questionnaire was compiled and distributed to respondents with a demographic of 90% domiciled in the city of Surabaya, 99% have a social media account, and 86% have purchased culinary products online.

The e-WOM factors categorized in five variables were measured with seventeen questions while the Buying Interest variable was measured with five questions. All questions as indicators of determined variables use the Likert scale to quantitatively measure the responses given on a scale of 1: strongly disagree; 2: disagree; 3: neutral or undecided; 4: Strongly agree; 5: Totally agree. A recapitulation of the average values for responses to indicators in the distributed questionnaire is shown in Figure 2. (Data processing in this study was assisted by Minitab software)

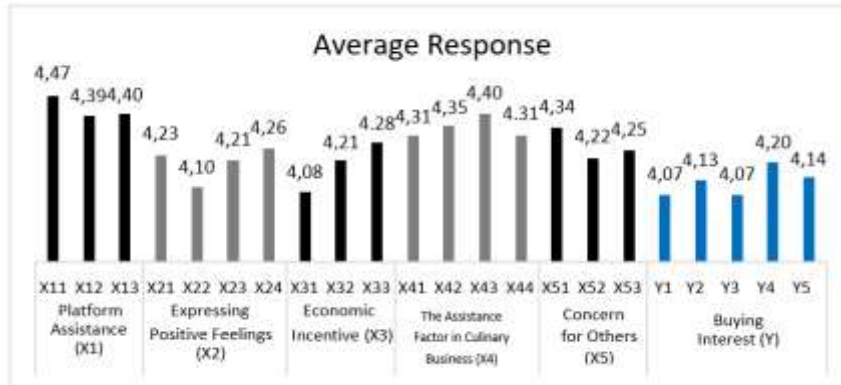


Figure 2 Average Response Value of each Indicator

**Results and Discussion**

**a. Analysis of Questionnaire Validity and Reliability**

Validity tests and reliability tests are carried out to ensure that the research instrument or questionnaire used meets the necessary requirements. The validity test is performed by testing each response average value has a positive correlation to the total variables it represents. The reliability test is carried out by calculating *Cronbach's alpha* value which shows the comparison of the covariance of each indicator to fellow indicators in the same variable with reliability criteria that is more than 0.7. A recapitulation of the validity test can be seen in Table 1, with the result that each indicator is quite valid against the variable it represents. The recapitulation of reliability tests is shown in Table 2 with the result that each indicator is consistent enough to measure the variables it represents.

Table 1 Recapitulation of Validity Test

Factor	Indicator	Corelation (r-count)	Correlation of terms (r-table)	Interpretation
Platform Assistance (X1)	X11	0.867	0.196	High
	X12	0.891		High
	X13	0.860		High
Expressing Positive Feelings (X2)	X21	0.789		Enough
	X22	0.817		High
	X23	0.826		High
	X24	0.779		Enough
Economic Incentive (X3)	X31	0.925		High
	X32	0.930		High
	X33	0.908		High
The Assistance Factor in Culinary Business (X4)	X41	0.832		High
	X42	0.886		High
	X43	0.883		High
	X44	0.888		High
Concern for Others (X5)	X51	0.882		0.196
	X52	0.908	High	
	X53	0.897	High	
Buying Interest (Y)	Y1	0.785	Enough	
	Y2	0.811	High	
	Y3	0.852	High	
	Y4	0.867	High	
	Y5	0.841	High	

Table 2 Recapitulation of Reliability Tests

Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation	Questionnaire	Cronbach's alpha(Omitted Item)
Platform Assistance (X1)	0.8405	Very High	X11	0.7710
			X12	0.7354
			X13	0.8302
Expressing Positive Feelings (X2)	0.8149	Very High	X21	0.7827
			X22	0.7623
			X23	0.7449
			X24	0.7794
Economic Incentive (X3)	0.9078	Very High	X31	0.8795
			X32	0.8452
			X33	0.8798
The Assistance Factor in Culinary Business (X4)	0.8932	Very High	X41	0.8901
			X42	0.8514
			X43	0.8527
			X44	0.8555
Concern for Others (X5)	0.8744	Very High	X51	0.8327
			X52	0.8232
			X53	0.8120
Buying Interest (Y)	0.8867	Very High	Y1	0.8804
			Y2	0.8697
			Y3	0.8544
			Y4	0.8491
			Y5	0.8575

## b. Assumption Test

An assumption test is performed to determine whether the multiple regression analysis performed meets the required assumption requirements. Assumption tests carried out include normality tests and heteroscedasticity tests, as well as multicollinearity tests.

### Normality Test and Heteroscedasticity Test

The normality test and heteroscedasticity test are carried out by processing residual values from the data obtained based on the regression model made, the normality test maps residual values using the *Normal Probability Plot* diagram while the heteroscedasticity test maps residual values using the *Versus Fit* diagram. The *Normal Probability Plot* diagram is shown in Figure 3 while the *Versus Fit Diagram* is shown in Figure 4. Based on these two diagrams, it can be said that the distribution of data in multiple regression analysis is normally distributed and arranged randomly and consistently.

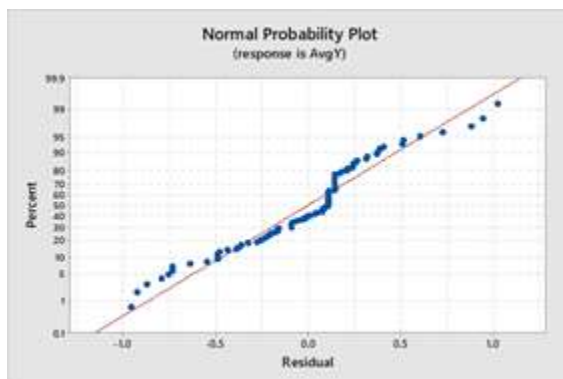


Figure 3 Diagram Normal Probability Plot

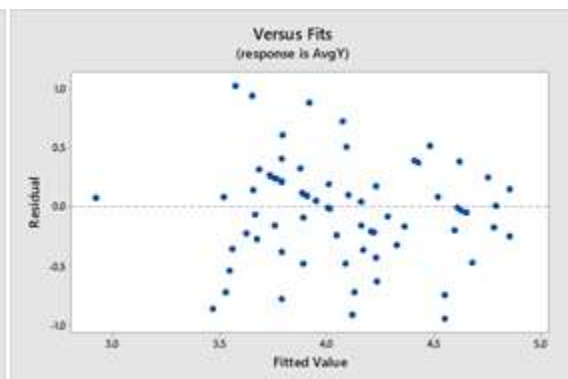


Figure 4 Diagram Versus Fits

## Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is carried out by estimating the value of *Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) between independent variables. The VIF criteria used are:  $VIF < 1$  indicates a very low level of multicollinearity;  $1 \leq VIF < 5$  there is no multicollinearity (Santoso, 2009); while  $VIF \geq 5$  indicates that there is an independent variable that has high multicollinearity in a multiple regression analysis and has the potential to cause misinterpretation in the multiple regression analysis. A recapitulation of the VIF values in multiple regression analyses that have been performed is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Recapitulation of VIF values

Factor	VIF	Conclusion
Platform Assistance (X1)	2.35	Multicollinearity does not occur
Expressing Positive Feelings (X2)	2.77	Multicollinearity does not occur
Economic Incentive (X3)	1.59	Multicollinearity does not occur
The Assistance Factor in Culinary Business (X4)	3.17	Multicollinearity does not occur
Concern for Others (X5)	3.09	Multicollinearity does not occur

## Double Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to examine the effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y). Formally, multiple regression analysis notates the regression model as follows:

$$Y' = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + e$$

In this study the independent variable is the five factors e-WOM and the dependent variable is Buying Interest (Y). Based on the processing of questionnaire dissemination data using Minitab software, the influence of e-WOM factors on Purchase Interest is modeled as follows:

$$Y = 0.031 + 0.002X_1 + 0.403X_2 + 0.222X_3 + 0.242X_4 + 0.095X_5$$

A recapitulation of data processing using multiple regression analysis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Recapitulation of Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Coefficient	t-count	Interpretation
X1	0.002	0.01	Insignificant positive effect
X2	0.403	3.26	Significant positive effect
X3	0.222	2.78	Significant positive effect
X4	0.242	1.97	Insignificant positive effect
X5	0.095	0.78	Insignificant positive effect
t-table	= 1.98		
R-sq (adj)	= 57.74%		
F-count (model)	= 28.05 (Significant effect, F-table = 2.31)		

## Discussion

Based on multiple regression analysis conducted, it is known that all independent variables studied have a positive coefficient value against the dependent variable so that it can be interpreted that e-WOM factors have a positive influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya. However, each factor as an independent variable has a different influence and significance on the Buying Interest variable, where:

- a. Platform Assistance Factor (X1) has a positive but not significant influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya, indicated by the value of t-count (0.01) < t-table (1.98) and the value of coefficient 0.002.
- b. The Factor of Expressing Positive Feelings (X2) has a positive and significant influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya, indicated by the value of t-count (3.26) > t-table (1.98) and the value of the coefficient 0.403. This means that if social media users express positive feelings on a content on social media platforms, the higher the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya. This factor is also the most dominant factor among other e-WOM factors with the highest coefficient value.
- c. The Economic Incentive Factor (X3) has a positive and significant influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya, indicated by the value of t-count (2.78) > t-table (1.98) and the value of the coefficient 0.403. This means that the more social media users get information about the opportunity to get bonuses or promos on content on social media platforms, the higher the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya.
- d. The Assistance Factor in Culinary Business (X4) has a positive but not significant influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya, indicated by the value of t-count (1.97) < t-table (1.98) and the value of the coefficient of 0.242.
- e. The Attention to Others factor (X5) has a positive but not significant influence on the interest in buying culinary products in the city of Surabaya, indicated by the t-count value (0.78) < t-table (1.98).

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis, it is known that F-count (28.05) > F-table (2.31) which can be concluded that e-WOM factors have a simultaneous influence on Buying Interest. Then partially obtained mixed results on the variables studied. Two independent variables namely Expressing Positive Feelings (X2) and Economic Incentive factors (X3) are known to have a significant positive influence with t-count values respectively namely 3.26 and 2.78 where the t-table is 1.98 (if t-count > t-table then it can be concluded that the related independent variable X has a significant influence on the dependent variable Y). Different results are shown in three other factors, namely the variables Platform Assistance (X1), Assistance to Culinary Business (X4), and Attention to Others (X5) with t-calculated values respectively namely 0.01, 1.97, and 0.78 where it can be concluded that these three factors do not have a significant influence on Buying Interest.

The results obtained from multiple regression analysis in this study are quite different compared to the study (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2004; Cahyono, Kusumawati, & Kumadji, 2016) where the two studies concluded that factors commensurate with Platform Assistance (X1), Assistance to Culinary Business (X4) and Attention to Others (X5) have a significant influence on buying interest. This shows that the buying interest of Instagram social media users, especially in culinary products in the city of Surabaya, is not so influenced by the facilitation of information sharing facilities, the desire to be involved in the continuity of the culinary business, and the desire to help fellow social media users in the city of Surabaya. In addition, the type of observation object used in this study, namely the account of the culinary content creator, not the culinary business owner itself, makes the information shared about related businesses quite limited and there is no closeness that is built directly between the culinary business itself and social media users or between social media users themselves.

In addition to these multiple regression models, Minitab software also estimates the reliability of the models it builds in coefficients of determination or R-squared. The coefficient of determination is a statistical measure that represents the ability of a model to estimate deviation (error) when the model estimates the value of the dependent variable by the independent variable. The *adjusted* R-squared (R-sq adj) value produced in multiple regression analysis in this study was 57.74%. In simple terms, it can be said that e-WOM represented in five factors affects 57.74% of the distribution of Buying Interest data.



## Conclusion

Based on the processing and analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that e-WOM factors have an influence on buying interest simultaneously. Partially, the factors of Expressing Positive Feelings (X2) and Economic Incentives (X3) had a significant positive influence on buying interest but the factors Platform Assistance (X1), Assistance to Culinary Business (X4), and Attention to Others (X5) had a significant positive influence on Buying Interest. The e-WOM factors accommodate 57.74% influence on Buying Interest. This study provides new findings on the influence of e-WOM factors on the buying interest of social media users in the city of Surabaya. Culinary business actors in Surabaya City can consider the factors studied in this study as marketing strategies, especially in social media networks. Similar research can be developed by examining more variables that are deemed necessary or adding more and wider research objects either from the social media accounts studied or the number and scope of respondents involved.

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