The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Buying Interest During the Covid-19 Pandemic

by Monique Monique

THE EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON PURCHASE INTEREST BASED ON SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

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Abstrak

This study discusses the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) and consumer purchase interest for an online shop in fashion. The study involved 100 respondents from the Instagram account followers, including 50 people who had made a purchase and 50 others who had never made a purchase. The finding shows a positive relationship between the shopping experience and the influence of EWOM, although the correlation rate is low. The shopping experience has a positive and strong magnitude on the effect to the EWOM on purchase intention. The odds ratio shows that the shopping experience affects the ease of online purchases. Also, there is an influence on the shopping experience with purchase interest which is influenced by EWOM.

Keyword: Electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase interest, SME

Intruduction

Information Technology (IT) and the right business strategy in a business can create a competitive advantage and meet market needs. In addition, IT used by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through e-commerce can increase sales growth (Saleh, 2016; Khan et al, 2014; Chen et al, 2015). One the crucial factors influencing sales is Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) (Charo et al, 2015). This argument is supported by changes in consumer behaviour patterns, where consumers, who previously preferred to shop directly at stores, are now moving to e-commerce purchases (Alfin, 2021). In Indonesia, online sales can be categorised by selling goods via social media, such as Instagram and e-commerce, such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Zalora, Lazada, etc. Shopee has been the top player in e-commerce (Al Hafiz, 2022). Comparing the interest of using social media or e-commerce for women's clothing, based on 5-year Google trends comparing Shopee and Instagram, it is revealed that e-commerce is used much higher than the social media (See Figure 1).
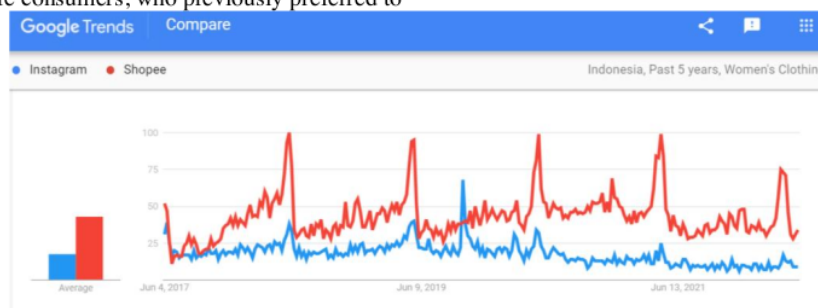
Google Trend, 2022

Figure 1. Interests in Women's Clothing

Digital channels have been identified as a new approach that customers use to find the information they need. These are exercised by using e-commerce platforms or chat messages in social media groups (Fabeil et al, 2020). Those who share this information are then used as a reference for the dissemination of instant messages between fellow consumers. These digital channels help consumers shop online, which drives consumer interest as they share their shopping experiences with the public (Alhalwachi et al., 2019).

This form of information exchange on online platforms is known as Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) (Charo et al., 2015). The study identified that EWOM has a significant and positive effect on consumers' purchase interest and further search for online information.

Some studies suggest that the relationship between EWOM with consumer purchase interest is evident. EWOM positively impacts consumer purchase interest by searching for information online (Charo et al, 2015; Susanti & Wulandari, 2021; Kundu & Rajani, 2017; Nuseir, 2019). Silverman in Kundu and Rajani's research (2017) states that customers pay more attention to EWOM among various other marketing modes. EWOM has been credible and reliable for consumers to look for their needs.

Based on personal experience in managing an online shop, EWOM becomes an important factor that influences consumer interest in making decisions to buy products. However, it needs to be further explored by conducting customer behaviour studies on SMEs that use online shopping as their digital channels. This study uses an SME named By Monique Official, which is an SME in the fashion sector (Women's Clothing). The selling channels are purely online, using both Instagram and Shopee. The study aims to obtain valid results regarding the relationship between EWOM and consumer purchase interest at By Monique Official. The different behaviours between the customers who have and have never shopped at By Monique Official are observed.

To answer whether EWOM has an effect on purchase interest, the following hypotheses are identified:

H1: The existence of a shopping experience negatively affects or reduces the effect of EWOM on purchase interest

H2: The absence of a shopping experience positively affects or increases the effect of EWOM on purchase intention

H3: There is an influence on the shopping experience with the ease of buying online

H4: There is an influence on the shopping experience with purchase interest which is influenced by EWOM.

Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) is defined as a form of non-commercial exchange information, a volunteer, which is usually based on the consumer's experience of the product/service. EWOM is considered a more accurate tool than other traditional forms of marketing (Charo et al, 2015). Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) is also defined as exchanging information form about a product through online platforms or social media that affects purchase interest in a business that offers services or goods (Bataineh, 2015). EWOM has become one of the most influential factors in public media sharing opinions and posting reviews about online products and services. This is what makes the spread of EWOM not limited by places or facilities.

It is essential to understand how it affects consumer purchase interest and strongly influences sellers to try to sell them (Nuseir, 2019). EWOM is a source of information that can be quite strong in influencing consumer purchase interest because the information is considered independent, honest, and trustworthy. This is commonly found in several reviews of a product on a particular platform (Rita et al, 2013; Le-Hoang, 2020). Not only EWOM can be delivered to people directly, EWOM can also be delivered through a platform and is right on target. Right on target means exchanging information for certain products only from and to those who are interested in the same topic. This indirectly makes EWOM an informal advertising medium. EWOM can also have a big influence if influencers convey it. Submission of influencers can build consumer confidence in a

product/brand and influence consumer decisions in purchasing the product (Rita et al, 2013).

Purchase interest

Purchase interest is identified as a individual's attitude to measure an object (product 9 service or brand) to consume (Mirabi et al, 2015). According to Ghosh in Mirabi et al (2015), measuring consumer purchase interest can be influenced by the object's price, quality, and value. In addition, purchase interest is also defined 30 the behaviour of consumers who plan before deciding to buy a product or service (Fitri & Wulandari, 2020). In addition to attitudes and behaviour, purchase interest is also defined as a type of decision making or considering 9 buying certain goods, services, or brands (Shah et al., 2012). According to Morinez in Mirabi et al. (2015) and research conducted by Supriyadi & Pratiwi (2018), purchase interest can also be interpreted as a condition when consumers begin to consider buying a product or service. When consumers consider this, consumers have a tendency to buy the product.

Purchase interest in a product is influenced by several factors, including attention, interest in presentation, starting to attract the attention of potential consumers, desire after attracting the attention of potential buyers, and actions after explaining the product. Attention in this case is attention to a particular product. An attempt to attract the attention of potential consumers can be done by preparing attractive advertising designs and appropriate marketing strategies. From an attractive presentation, it will influence consumers to see the advertisement or even want to have it. After exposing the product, consumers would eventually make a purchase (Mahfud & Soltes, 2016).

Research Method

The study was conducted quantitatively by using survey. Using purposive sampling, the study explore the odd ratio of respondents who have and have not made purchase. Data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents of By Monique Official's followers. Alld of a hundred respondents were female Instagram follower 26

The measurement uses a Likert scale technique with a scale of 1 to 5. Data processing uses SPSS software. This measuring variables were adopted from previous research conducted by Susanti and Wulandari (2021). Figure 2 shows a model adopted from this study.
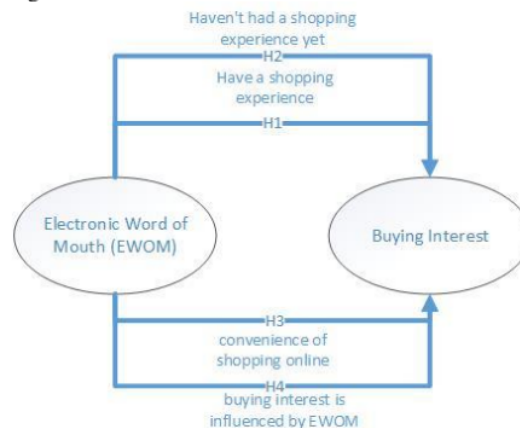

Figure 2. Research Model
(Adopted from Susanti & Wulandari (2021), p. xx)

From the research model above, it can be explained that this study analyses the relationship between EWOM and consumer purchase interest in SMEs By Monique Official. Based on previous research (Zhang et al, (2014); Susanti & Wulandari, (2021)), a positive relationship between EWOM affects purchase interest. Delivery of EWOM also requires relevant language skills in conveying electronic messages that would improve the marketing of MSME products (Kahar & Habil, 2017). The higher the number of positive EWOM messages recommending SME products, the more likely consumers would have purchase interest (Faza, 2019; Suarniki et al, 2020; Wolny & Mueller, 2013).

In the effect of EWOM on consumer purchase interest, the researcher divides the analysis into four, namely as follows.

H1: The existence of a shopping experience negatively affects or reduces the effect of EWOM on purchase interest

H2: The absence of a shopping experience positively affects or increases the effect of EWOM on purchase intention

H3: There is an influence on the shopping experience with the ease of buying online

H4: There is an influence on the shopping experience with purchase interest which is influenced by EWOM

To answer the four hypotheses, it is necessary to make a questionnaire statement with the following indicators.

Tabel 1. Research Questionnaire Indicator

No	Variabel	Indicator	Item Number	Question/Statement
1	Characteristics of Respondents	Respondent information	Q1	Do you know By Monique Official?
2	Shopping experience (Nurrohman, 2016;Bataineh, 2015)	Online shopping experience	Q2	Have you ever made a purchase at By Monique Official?
		Buying frequency	Q3	If so, how many times have you made a purchase?
		Platform usage	Q4	Through what platform did you make your purchase?
			Q5	Does online sales help in making purchases?
3	EWOM (Nurrohman, 2016)	EWOM's view	X1	Customer reviews help me to buy a certain product when I have never bought that brand
		Dependence on EWOM	X2	I still read reviews from other customers even though I've made purchases from the same brand
			X3	In my opinion, the more often I shop at a brand, the more I ignore other customer reviews
		EWOM influence	X4	If I haven't read product reviews online from other consumers when I buy a product or brand, I'm worried about my decision
			X5	When I am about to buy a product, online product reviews from other consumers make me confident in buying that product or brand
			X6	I often give reviews for the products I buy
4	Purchase interest (Nurrohman, 2016)	Purchase interest	Y1	I'm interested in finding information on By Monique
			Y2	I'm interested in buying By Monique Official products online
		The effect of EWOM on purchase interest	Y3	If the customer's review of a product is positive, then I am sure to buy the product
			Y4	If the customer's review of a product is negative, then I don't buy the product

	Opinion about purchase interest is influenced by EWOM	Y5	Purchase interest is influenced by EWOM factor

Result and Discussion

Characteristics of Respondents

The questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents, of which 50 respondents had shopping experience and 50 other respondents did not have shopping experience at By Monique Official. The following is the result of the Characteristics of Respondents and Shopping Experience indicator.

Table 2. Test Frequency

Q1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Q2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ONCE	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
	NO	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Q3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 TIME	32	32.0	64.0	64.0
	>1 TIME	18	18.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	50	50.0	100.0	
missing	System	50	50.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Q4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	INSTAGRAM	40	40.0	80.0	80.0
	SHOPEE	6	6.0	12.0	92.0
	INSTAGRAM & SHOPEE	4	4.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	50.0	100.0	
missing	System	50	50.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Q5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	93	93.0	93.0	93.0
	NO	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The questionnaire were distributed to 100 respondents of Instagram followers (Q1), 50 respondents are customers who have made a purchase at By Monique Official and 50 other respondents have never made a purchase (Q2). As shown in Table 2, of the 50 respondents who have made a purchase, 32 respondents have 1 time

purchase and 18 respondents have more than once (Q3). Respondents who made purchases on Instagram were 40 respondents, 6 respondent through Shopee, and 4 others are through Instagram and Shopee (Q4). Of the 100 respondents stated that online sales help in making purchases (Q5).

Instrument Test

The next stage is to test the instrument in the form of testing the validity and reliability of all research variable items. Variable X for EWOM items and Y for Purchase interest items.

Table 3. Validity Test

		Total_X			Total_Y
X1	Pearson Correlation	.676**	Y1	Pearson Correlation	.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100		N	100
X2	Pearson Correlation	.556**	Y2	Pearson Correlation	.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100		N	100
X3	Pearson Correlation	.704**	Y3	Pearson Correlation	.809**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100		N	100
X4	Pearson Correlation	.688**	Y4	Pearson Correlation	.856**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100		N	100
X5	Pearson Correlation	.706**	Y5	Pearson Correlation	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100		N	100
Total_X	Pearson Correlation	1	Total_Y	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	100		N	100

From Table 3 it can be shown that that the r table for 100 respondents with a significance of 5% is 0.195. It can be seen that overall r table (0.195) < r count (Pearson correlation), then the data can be said to be valid. Apart from being seen from the r table, it can be seen from the significance value <0.05, then the data can be said to be valid

Table 4. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,784	11

Data is declared reliable if >0.6. The reliability test was carried out for variables X and Y. As shown in Table 4, the Cronbach's Alpha for variables X and Y (0.784) > 0.6, then the data can be said to be reliable.

Analysis Test

To analyse the findings, there are two tests conducted, namely the correlation test and the odds ratio. Correlation test was conducted for each respondent who had shopping experience and who did not have shopping experience. While the odds ratio is carried out for all respondents, both those who already have experience and those who do not have shopping experience. Odds ratio is done to see the relationship of opportunities between respondents who do not have experience and already have

shopping experience with the EWOM variable and purchase interest. While the Pearson Correlation test was conducted to see whether the relationship between variables was positive or negative. In addition, the correlation test can see the level of relationship between the two variables. The following are the levels of relationship according to Sugiyono (2019).

Table 5. Correlation Coefficient Interpretation

Coefficient Interval	Relationship Level
0.00-1.199	Very weak
0.20-0.399	Weak
0.40-0.599	Moderate
0.60-0.799	Strong
0.80-1.000	Very Strong

The classification for Coefficient Correlation is divided into 5, namely very weak, moderate, strong, and very strong (See Table 5). The classification is based on the results of the significance of the correlation test.

In this study, the analysis is divided into 2, namely for respondents who have not had shopping experience and who have had shopping experience. The following are the results of the correlation test that has been carried out for the second respondent

Table 6. Correlation Test

Have Experience		Purchase Interest (experience)
EWOM (experience)	Pearson Correlation	.304*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032
	N	50
Haven't Experience		Purchase Interest (experience)
EWOM (experience)	Pearson Correlation	.607*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	50

From Table 6 it can be seen that the value of significance ("sig") for respondents who have shopping experience of 0.032 and respondents who do not have shopping experience of 0.000. Because both sig values < 0.05, it can be said that there is a relationship between the EWOM variable and the Purchase Interest Variable for both respondents who have shopping experience or not.

Futhermore, the odds ratio analysis was carried out. The analysis is conducted to see the relationship between groups (having and not having purchased) and to measure the events of the identified groups. Table 7 shows the Odds Ratio results and provides findings for Q5 and Y5.

Table 7. Odds Ratio (Q5)

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Experience_Q5 (Have Experience / Haven't experience)	1.362	0.289	6.426
For cohort Opinion_Q5 = Agree	1.022	0.917	1.138
For cohort Opinion_Q5 = Disagree	0.750	0.177	3.180
N of Valid Cases	100		

According to Table 7, it can be seen that the lower value for the odds ratio for experience is <0.1. Hence, it can be interpreted that there is a relationship between experience and opinion. Furthermore, for the value column in the first row, it can be construed that respondents who have shopping experience have a tendency of 1,362 greater to agree about online sales helping in making purchases (Q5), compared to respondents who do not have shopping experience. In the second row value column, it can be interpreted that respondents who have shopping experience have 1,022 greater opportunities to agree on the Q5 question. While the third row value can be interpreted as respondents who have shopping experience and disagree about the Q5 question, the chances are smaller, namely 0.750.

Table 8. Odds Ratio (Y5)

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Experience_Y5 (Have Experience / Haven't experience)	1.170	0.390	3.515
For cohort Opinioin_Y5 = Agree	1.024	0.868	1.207
For cohort Opinioin_Y5 = Disagree	0.875	0.343	2.230
N of Valid Cases	100		

Table 8 provides findings of the lower value for the odds ratio for experience is <0.100. From the data, it can be identified that there is a relationship between experience and opinion. Furthermore, for the value column in the first row, it can be interpreted that respondents who have shopping experience tend to be 1,170 greater to agree about purchase interest influenced by the EWOM factor (Y5), compared to respondents who have not had shopping experience. In the second row value column, it can be interpreted that respondents who have shopping experience have 1,024 greater opportunities to agree on the Y5 question. Whilst, the third row value shows that the respondents who have shopping experience and disagree about the Y5 question have smaller chance, namely 0.875.

If viewed as a whole, both using the correlation test and the odds ratio show the relationship between the variables being compared. If the correlation test is carried out for respondents who have shopping experience and respondents who do not have shopping experience, the odds ratio is different. The overall odds ratio is carried out both for respondents who have shopping experience and respondents who do not have shopping experience.

The correlation test was carried out separately, namely for respondents who did not have shopping experience and those who already had shopping experience. After each data is processed, then the results are combined to make it easier to compare. In the table of correlation test results that need to be considered is the value of sig. generated for each respondent (having shopping experience and not having shopping experience). From the value of sig. It can be seen the relationship between the EWOM variable and purchase interest.

Odds ratio was conducted for two types of questions/statements agree or disagree regarding the ease of shopping online (Q5) and purchase interest is influenced by EWOM (Y5). Analysis was performed for each question Q5 and Y5. The analysis begins by creating a table which is grouped into 4 classifications. The 4 classifications include respondents who have shopping experience and agree (1), respondents who have shopping experience and disagree (2), respondents who do not have shopping experience and agree (3), and respondents who do not have shopping experience and disagree (4). From the results of the classification for questions Q5 obtained classifications 1, 2, 3, and 4

respectively as many as 47 respondents, 3 respondents, 46 respondents, and 4 respondents. Meanwhile, for question Y5, classification of 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively as many as 43 respondents, 7 respondents, 42 respondents, and 8 respondents.

First Hypothesis

Through the correlation test, especially for data on customers who have shopping experience, it shows that there is a relationship between EWOM and purchase interest. The relationship is positive. This can be proven from the value of Sig. 0.032 < 0.050 (table 6). Because the value of Sig. < 0.050 then H1 is rejected, that the existence of a shopping experience has a positive effect or increases the influence of EWOM on purchase interest. However, because the Pearson correlation value is 0.304 (see table 5), the level of relationship between the two variables is relatively low or still affects but has a relatively low influence.

Second Hypothesis

Through the correlation test, especially for data on customers who have not yet had shopping experience, it shows that there is a relationship between EWOM variable and purchase interest. The relationship is positive. This can be proven from the value of Sig. 0.000 < 0.050 (table 6). Because the value of Sig. < 0.050 then H2 is accepted, that the absence of shopping experience has a positive effect or increases the influence of EWOM on purchase interest. Because the Pearson correlation value is 0.000 (see table 5), the level of the relationship between the two variables is strong or affects significantly.

Third Hypothesis

Through the odds ratio, it is proven that there is an influence between shopping experience and opinions (agree or disagree) about online sales helping consumers make purchases. This is evidenced by the results of the odds ratio as shown in Table 7. It can be seen that the lower values for the first, second, and third rows are 0.289, 0.917, 0.177 < 1.000, respectively. A lower value of less than 1.000

indicates a relationship between the variables being compared, namely the shopping experience variable and the statement of the convenience of online shopping. Because the lower value is <1.000, H3 is accepted, which states that consumers who have online shopping experience affect (agree or disagree) with easy statements in making online purchases.

Fourth Hypothesis

Through the odds ratio, it is proven that there is an influence between shopping experience and opinions (agree or disagree) regarding purchase interest which EWOM influences. This is evidenced by the results of the odds ratio (See Table 8). From the table, it can be seen that the lower values for the first, second, and third rows are 0.390, 0.868, 0.343 respectively, and those are lower than one. A lower value of less than 1 indicates a relationship between the variables being compared, namely the shopping experience variable and the statement of purchase interest influenced by EWOM. Because the lower value <1.000 then H4 is accepted, which states that consumers who have online shopping experience influence opinions (agree or disagree) regarding statements of purchase interest influenced by EWOM

Conclusion

The existence of a shopping experience has a positive effect or increases the influence of EWOM on purchase interest but the correlation is low. From the results of the significance of 0.032 <0.050 and the correlation value (0.304). The first hypothesis in this case is rejected. The shopping experience has a positive effect or increases the effect of EWOM on purchase intention and the correlation is strong. From the results of the significance of 0.00<0.050 and correlation value (0.607). The second hypothesis in this case is not rejected. In addition, aspects of the shopping experience affect the ease of making purchases online. From the results of the odds ratio obtained, the lower is 0.289, 0.917, 0.177 < 0.100. The third hypothesis in this case is accepted. In addition, aspects of the shopping experience with purchase interest are influenced by EWOM. From the results obtained, the odds

ratio is lower by 0.390, 0.868, 0.343 <0.100. The fourth hypothesis in this case is accepted. In this study, there is 1 hypothesis, namely H1 which is rejected, and there are 3 accepted hypotheses, namely H2, H3, and H4.

Suggestions for further research can add other variables such as product prices, product quality and other variables. In addition, a future study can also add characteristics of respondents other than consumers who do not have shopping experience and who already have shopping experiences, such as age or domicile. The limitation in this study is that the sample used is only Instagram followers By Monique Official, so the research may not be generalised to all other consumers until further study for greater samples are provided.

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