From Intention to Economic Purchase Decision :
The Contribution of Electronic Word of Mouth and
Social Media Marketing

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine the influence of the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Social Media Marketing on purchase intention at Rocket Chicken, Ngronggo Branch, Kediri City. The method used in this study is quantitative, using the accidental sampling technique with a total of 90 respondents. The data collected is primary data, obtained through the distribution of questionnaires. The study found that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a significant effect on Purchase Intention. Purchase Intention influences Purchase Decision, while Social Media Marketing significantly affects both Purchase Intention and Purchase Decision. Purchase Intention does not mediate the effect of e-WOM on Purchase Decision, but it does mediate the effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision. This study is original in the context of a specific research object, namely Rocket Chicken consumers at the Ngronggo Branch, Kediri City. It also combines e-WOM and Social Media Marketing variables with Purchase Intention as a mediating variable in the decision-making process. The results of this study provide strategic input for culinary business actors, especially Rocket Chicken, to focus more on effective social media marketing strategies in increasing purchase intention and purchase decisions of consumers.

Keywords: *Keywords : Brand Image; Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM); Purchase Decision; Purchase Intention*

1. Introduction

The fast-food industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth in line with the increasing trend of practical lifestyles among the public. Changes in consumer behavior, particularly among the younger generation and active social media users, have driven the dynamics of digital marketing in this sector. Marketing, which previously relied on conventional promotion, has now shifted to the digital realm, leveraging the power of social media and online consumer reviews as the primary sources of information in purchasing decision-making (Marjukah, Nursito, & Amelia, 2024). Amidst these changes, one notable phenomenon is the growing influence of

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Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and social media marketing on consumer behavior.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as an informal yet highly influential communication tool capable of shaping consumer perceptions of product quality and brand reputation. Unlike conventional advertising, e-WOM derives its strength from user-generated content such as reviews, comments, and digital testimonials that are considered more credible due to their experiential nature (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Hsu, 2021). Research indicates that e-WOM plays a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes and, consequently, their purchase intentions (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2020). In the culinary business context, consumers tend to seek references through social media before making a purchase decision—whether from friends, food bloggers, or digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram (Marjukah et al., 2024; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Meanwhile, social media marketing provides a strategic avenue for brands to create closer relationships with their customers. The interactive and engaging nature of social media platforms allows businesses to communicate directly with consumers, strengthen brand image, and stimulate purchase interest. Consistent and creative promotional content, when combined with structured e-WOM, has been proven effective in enhancing customer engagement and purchase decisions (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Winarno & Indrawati, 2022). Prior studies emphasize that social media marketing contributes significantly to building trust and value co-creation, which in turn strengthen the pathway from purchase intention to actual purchase behavior (Rao, Rao, & Acharyulu, 2021; Muda & Hamzah, 2021).

Rocket Chicken, as a local fast-food brand with a broad network across Indonesia—including Kediri City—has relied on the power of digital presence to compete in the highly dynamic food and beverage market. At the Ngronggo Branch, where social media penetration among the community is relatively high, the potential of utilizing e-WOM and social media marketing is particularly promising. However, there has been no specific study that measures how these two variables influence Rocket Chicken customers' purchasing decisions, particularly by considering purchase intention as an intervening variable.

Previous research suggests that the influence of e-WOM and social media marketing on purchasing decisions is not always direct. For instance, Marjukah et al. (2024) highlighted that e-WOM often influences purchase decisions indirectly through consumers' brand attitudes. Similarly, Kartika and Pandjaitan (2023) identified purchase intention as a crucial mediating factor bridging the relationship between social media marketing and actual buying behavior. Parallel findings from international studies also confirm this mediating role, where purchase intention translates online influence into real economic decisions (Munandar, 2021; Park, Hyun, & Thavisay, 2021; Xiaohongshu, 2020).

Thus, this study seeks to fill the research gap by empirically examining the role of e-WOM and social media marketing on purchase decisions through purchase intention

as an intervening variable, specifically in the case of Rocket Chicken Ngronggo Branch, Kediri City.

2. Theoretical Background

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM): Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is a form of consumer-to-consumer communication conducted digitally through social media platforms, forums, blogs, online reviews, and messaging applications. Unlike traditional word-of-mouth, which is oral and limited in reach, e-WOM has broader characteristics, is faster, and more permanent as it is recorded in digital systems (Prihartini & Damastuti, 2022). Technological advancements have transitioned communication platforms from physical to digital spaces. e-WOM has become a dominant digital phenomenon in the marketing world and now plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. According to Kotler and Keller (as cited in Safitri and Sulaeman, 2022), e-WOM is a strategy that identifies ways to persuade consumers by sparking curiosity about a company's brand, products, or services.

Social Media Marketing: According to Pujinata and Efrata (2023), effective social media marketing includes several key elements: relevant content, interaction frequency, and engaging product visuals. When these strategies are implemented consistently, companies can create emotional experiences that strengthen consumer engagement with the brand.

Social media marketing refers to the concept and practice of using social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands to a broader audience. This marketing approach continues to evolve and change over time.

**Purchase Intention*:* Purchase intention reflects consumer behavior that indicates the degree of commitment a person has in making a purchase. It typically arises after a process of evaluating various alternatives. During this process, individuals make a series of decisions based on brand considerations or personal interest (Kotler et al., 2014). Purchase intention is a psychological tendency that indicates how strong a consumer's desire is to purchase a particular product or service. This intention emerges after individuals go through a process of information searching and evaluation, along with consideration of various product alternatives available in the market.

Purchasing Decision: A purchasing decision is the final outcome of the consumer decision-making process in buying a particular product or service. The stages of the purchasing decision process include need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase. Understanding the factors that influence purchasing decisions provides marketers with valuable insights into how to develop effective marketing strategies and communication (Sangadji & Sopian, 2018).

3. Methodology

The data collection method in this study employed a research instrument, with data analysis conducted quantitatively/statistically to test the established hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2014). Furthermore, Sugiyono stated that a population is a generalization region consisting of objects that have specific qualities and characteristics defined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn (Sindunata & Wahyudi, 2018).

In this research, the population consists of all buyer reviews at Rocket Chicken, Ngronggo Branch, Kediri City. The sampling technique used in this study is incidental or accidental sampling, which is a technique where samples are taken based on chance any individual who happens to meet the researcher and is deemed suitable as a data source can be used as a sample. The sample size was determined based on the number of indicators. According to Hair et al. (2010), the minimum required sample size should be at least 100, or five to ten times the number of indicators. In this study, there are 18 indicators; thus, the minimum sample size is calculated as $18 \times 5 = 90$ respondents. This study utilizes SmartPLS 3.0 as a tool for statistical data processing, following two main stages of analysis: the outer model and the inner model.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Respondent Characteristics
In this study, a total of 90 questionnaires were distributed to 90 respondents. To provide a general overview of their characteristics, respondents are categorized based on gender and age. These characteristics are important because they help illustrate the demographic profile of consumers who purchase at Rocket Chicken Ngronggo Branch, Kediri City.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by Gender and Age

No	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Female	47	52.2
		Male	43	47.8
2	Age	< 20 years	25	27.7
		≥ 20 years	65	72.3
	Total		90	100

Source: Processed primary data, (2025)

The results in Table 1 indicate that the majority of respondents by gender were female, totaling 47 individuals or 52.2%, while the remaining 43 respondents were male, representing 47.8%. This shows that women were slightly more dominant as consumers at Rocket Chicken Ngronggo Branch. In terms of age, most respondents were 20 years old and above, amounting to 65 individuals or 72.3%. Meanwhile, 25 respondents (27.7%) were under 20 years old. These findings suggest that the consumer base is dominated by the younger to early adult generation, particularly Generation Z, who are known to be highly active social media users. This

demographic tendency highlights the strategic importance of digital marketing, including e-WOM and social media promotion, in influencing purchasing decisions.

Outer Model or Measurement Model

The assessment of the Measurement Model (Outer Model) in this study is fundamentally based on a second-order reflective model. There are three types of tests conducted to evaluate the outer model: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability.

a. Convergent Validity Results

Convergent validity of the reflective measurement model indicators is assessed based on the correlation between the item scores or component scores as estimated using the SmartPLS software. An individual reflective measure is considered to have high validity if it correlates above 0.70 with the construct being measured. However, according to Chin (1998) as cited in Ghozali (2015), for early-stage research in the development of measurement scales, a loading value between 0.50 to 0.60 is considered acceptable. In this study, a minimum loading factor threshold of 0.50 is applied.

Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity Outer Loadings

Item	EWom	Purchase Decision	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
X1.01	0.798			
X1.02	0.592			
X1.03	0.796			
X1.04	0.748			
X1.05	0.79			
X1.06	0.811			
X1.07	0.868			
X1.08	0.881			
X2.01				0.834
X2.02				0.76
X2.03				0.827
X2.04				0.847
X2.05				0.911
X2.06				0.893
X2.07				0.906
X2.08				0.836
Y.01		0.711		
Y.02		0.713		
Y.03		0.747		
Y.04		0.759		
Y.05		0.756		
Y.06		0.789		
Y.07		0.741		
Y.08		0.658		

Y.09	0.777	
Y.10	0.802	
Z.01		0.876
Z.02		0.834
Z.03		0.759
Z.04		0.595
Z.05		0.826
Z.06		0.81
Z.07		0.647
Z.08		0.749

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

The results of data processing using the SmartPLS software, as shown in the table above, indicate that the outer model values—or the correlations between the constructs and their respective indicators—have met the criteria for convergent validity. All outer loading values, or the correlations between the constructs and their indicators, are greater than 0.50, which signifies that the constructs of all variables are valid and can be used for hypothesis testing.

b. Discriminant Validity Results
Discriminant validity is conducted to ensure that each latent variable is conceptually distinct from the others. A model is said to have good discriminant validity if the loading value of each indicator is highest on its associated latent variable compared to its loadings on other latent variables. The results of the discriminant validity test in this study can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Results – Cross Loadings

Item	EWom	Purchase Decision	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
X1.01	0.798	0.634	0.69	0.667
X1.02	0.592	0.562	0.51	0.492
X1.03	0.796	0.579	0.682	0.683
X1.04	0.748	0.5	0.609	0.641
X1.05	0.79	0.565	0.704	0.687
X1.06	0.811	0.587	0.74	0.746
X1.07	0.868	0.655	0.838	0.814
X1.08	0.881	0.568	0.756	0.824
X2.01	0.755	0.627	0.767	0.834
X2.02	0.697	0.579	0.754	0.76
X2.03	0.761	0.623	0.796	0.827
X2.04	0.716	0.596	0.826	0.847
X2.05	0.788	0.617	0.827	0.911
X2.06	0.772	0.648	0.815	0.893
X2.07	0.804	0.618	0.822	0.906
X2.08	0.752	0.545	0.76	0.836
Y.01	0.478	0.711	0.598	0.504

Y.02	0.498	0.713	0.615	0.502
Y.03	0.651	0.747	0.699	0.64
Y.04	0.458	0.759	0.547	0.405
Y.05	0.403	0.756	0.508	0.353
Y.06	0.538	0.789	0.651	0.505
Y.07	0.478	0.741	0.598	0.413
Y.08	0.712	0.658	0.744	0.707
Y.09	0.58	0.777	0.661	0.592
Y.10	0.654	0.802	0.693	0.638
Z.01	0.744	0.687	0.876	0.85
Z.02	0.708	0.671	0.834	0.78
Z.03	0.688	0.579	0.759	0.76
Z.04	0.474	0.689	0.595	0.479
Z.05	0.845	0.629	0.826	0.792
Z.06	0.675	0.556	0.81	0.809
Z.07	0.527	0.778	0.647	0.494
Z.08	0.71	0.66	0.749	0.708

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

The results of all cross-loading values for each indicator of the respective latent variables show that the loading factor for each indicator is highest on its corresponding latent variable compared to other constructs. This indicates that all latent variables have demonstrated good discriminant validity.

c. Reliability Results

At this stage, construct reliability testing was conducted using two criteria: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Composite Reliability is used to measure the actual reliability value of a construct and is considered more accurate in estimating the internal consistency of a construct. Meanwhile, Cronbach's Alpha measures the lower bound of a construct's reliability. Reliability criteria are evaluated based on the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct. A construct is considered to have high reliability if it has a Composite Reliability value greater than 0.70 and a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Cross Loadings

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EWom	0.912	0.918	0.929	0.624
Purchase Decision	0.911	0.912	0.926	0.557
Purchase Intention	0.897	0.903	0.919	0.589
Social Media Marketing	0.946	0.947	0.955	0.728

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all Composite Reliability values are above 0.70, indicating that all constructs in the estimated model meet the criteria for

construct reliability. Additionally, all Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.60, which confirms that each construct has good internal consistency reliability.

Inner Model or Structural Model
The inner model, also known as the structural model, is tested to examine the relationships between constructs, their significance values, and the R-squared (R^2) of the research model. The structural model is evaluated using the R-squared values for the dependent constructs, t-tests, and the significance of the structural path coefficients.
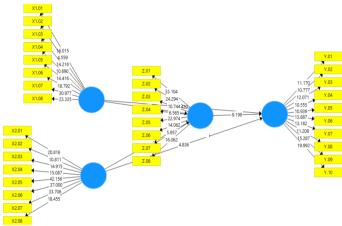

Figure 3. Structural Model – Bootstrapping Results

a. R-Square Results
In evaluating the model using PLS, the assessment begins by examining the R-Square (R^2) values for each dependent latent variable. The Goodness-of-Fit test for the model is reflected through the estimated R-Square values obtained using SmartPLS.

Table 5. R-Square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision	0.785	0.777
Purchase Intention	0.887	0.884

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

This study includes two dependent variables influenced by other constructs, namely Purchase Intention, which is affected by Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Social Media Marketing, and Purchase Decision, which is influenced by e-WOM, Social Media Marketing, and Purchase Intention. As shown in Table 5, the R-Square value for the Purchase Intention variable is 0.887. This indicates that e-WOM and Social Media Marketing simultaneously explain 88.7% of the variance in Purchase Intention, while the remaining 11.3% is explained by other variables not included in the model. Meanwhile, the R-Square value for the Purchase Decision variable is 0.785, meaning that e-WOM, Social Media Marketing, and Purchase Intention

together explain 78.5% of the variance in Purchase Decision, and the remaining 21.5% is explained by other variables not hypothesized in the model.

b. Hypothesis Testing Results Direct Effects

The hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the direct influence of one construct on another by analyzing the path coefficient and t-statistic values. The hypothesis testing is based on the values provided in the Path Coefficient output generated by SmartPLS. The decision rule is based on the t-statistic, which is compared to the critical t-table value of 1.98698. This value is determined using df = 89 (number of samples minus one: 90 - 1) with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed). A hypothesis is rejected (i.e., the null hypothesis is accepted) if the t-statistic falls within the range of –1.98698 to 1.98698. Conversely, if the t-statistic is outside this range, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating a significant relationship between the variables.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Results Direct Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
EWom -> Purchase Decision	0.135	0.133	0.095	1.42	0.156
EWom -> Purchase Intention	0.257	0.263	0.09	2.857	0.004
Purchase Intention -> Purchase Decision	1.41	1.404	0.153	9.199	0.000
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Decision	-0.725	-0.716	0.15	4.836	0.000
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Intention	0.707	0.702	0.086	8.185	0.000

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

The results of the hypothesis testing show that the Electronic Word of Mouth (X1) variable has no direct effect on Purchase Decision (Y) with a path coefficient of –0.135, a t-statistic of 1.42 ($\leq$ t-table 1.98698), and a p-value of 0.156, indicating that Ha1 is rejected. However, X1 significantly influences Purchase Intention (Z) with a coefficient of 0.257, a t-statistic of 2.857 ($\geq$ t-table), and a p-value of 0.004, thus Ha2 is accepted. Furthermore, the Social Media Marketing (X2) variable shows a significant direct influence on Purchase Decision (Y) with a coefficient of –0.725, a t-statistic of 4.836, and a p-value of 0.000, proving Ha3 is accepted, while X2 also has a strong direct effect on Purchase Intention (Z) with a coefficient of 0.707, a t-statistic of 8.185, and a p-value of 0.000, confirming Ha4 is accepted. Lastly, Purchase Intention (Z) demonstrates a significant direct impact on Purchase Decision (Y) with a coefficient of –1.41, a t-statistic of 9.199, and a p-value of 0.000, thereby supporting Ha7.

c. Hypothesis Testing Results Indirect Effects

Subsequently, an analysis of path coefficients (specific indirect effects) was conducted, as shown below:

Table 7. Path Coefficients Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
EWom -> Purchase Intention -> Purchase Decision	0.362	0.37	0.135	2.678	0.008
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Intention -> Purchase Decision	0.996	0.985	0.158	6.303	0.000

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, (2025)

Based on the Path Coefficients (Specific Indirect Effects) table above, the first indirect hypothesis test is the test of the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (X1) on Purchase Decision (Y) through the Purchase Intention (Z) variable, which has an effect (O = 0.362), with a t–statistic value for this construct relationship of 2.678, indicating that the t-count of X1 on Y through Z is ≥ t-table (1.98698), and the p–value is 0.008. Therefore, in this study Ho is rejected / Ha5 is accepted, which means that the hypothesis stating that there is an indirect effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (X1) on Purchase Decision (Y) through the Purchase Intention (Z) variable is proven. Furthermore, based on the Path Coefficients (Specific Indirect Effects) table above, the second indirect hypothesis test is the test of the influence of Social Media Marketing (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y) through the Purchase Intention (Z) variable, which has an effect (O = 0.996), with a t–statistic value for this construct relationship of 6.303, indicating that the t-count of X2 on Y through Z is ≥ t-table (1.98698), and the p–value is 0.000. Therefore, in this study Ho is rejected / Ha6 is accepted, which means that the hypothesis stating that there is an indirect effect of Social Media Marketing (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y) through the Purchase Intention (Z) variable is proven.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several important insights regarding the role of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), social media marketing, purchase intention, and purchase decision in the context of Rocket Chicken products. The results indicate that e-WOM does not have a direct effect on purchase decision, which is consistent with previous studies suggesting that e-WOM alone may not directly drive purchasing behavior but rather influences consumers' preliminary evaluations and perceptions (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Verma & Yadav, 2021). However, e-WOM demonstrates a significant influence on purchase intention, confirming that positive consumer reviews and online recommendations are important in shaping buying interest (Cahyono et al., 2016; Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Yurika & Rastini, 2022). This aligns with earlier studies which emphasized the strong impact of e-WOM on intention, particularly within digital marketplaces (Winarno & Indrawati, 2022; Xiaohongshu user study authors, 2020).

The role of social media marketing is also evident in this study. It has a meaningful effect on both purchase intention and purchase decision. Interestingly, while social media marketing increases buying interest, excessive or poorly aligned promotional content may discourage actual purchases due to information overload or consumer fatigue. This reflects findings from prior studies highlighting the risks of overexposure in digital promotions (Nurmalasari, 2021; Dewi & Sharif, 2021). Nevertheless, its positive role in stimulating consumer interest is clear, supporting the view that social media is an effective platform to build awareness and encourage buying consideration (Marjukah et al., 2024; Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Park et al., 2021).

Furthermore, purchase intention emerges as a strong predictor of purchase decision, reaffirming earlier studies which argue that intention is a key mediator linking marketing stimuli with actual behavior (Mukarramah et al., 2022; Rao et al., 2021). Both e-WOM and social media marketing influence purchase decision indirectly through purchase intention, demonstrating that consumer interest serves as a crucial bridge between exposure to digital communication and purchasing actions (Kristiawan & Wuryan, 2025; Lesmana et al., 2023).

However, this study also reveals that purchase intention does not significantly mediate the relationship between e-WOM and purchase decision. This suggests that while e-WOM can enhance perceptions and stimulate interest, it may not always translate into actual buying behavior without the support of other factors such as brand trust, product relevance, and credibility (Febiyati & Aqmala, 2022; Mawadah & Mada, 2022; Hsu, 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Overall, the results contribute to the literature by showing that e-WOM is more effective in building purchase intention, while social media marketing has a stronger and more direct influence on both intention and decision-making. For businesses such as Rocket Chicken, these findings underline the importance of carefully managing digital communication strategies to align with consumer expectations and avoid overwhelming audiences with excessive promotional content.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and social media marketing play different roles in shaping consumer behavior in food purchases at Rocket Chicken, Ngronggo Branch. While e-WOM does not directly influence purchase decisions, it significantly strengthens purchase intention, which in turn drives actual buying behavior. Social media marketing, on the other hand, has a dual effect: it strongly increases purchase intention but shows a negative direct influence on purchase decisions, suggesting the possibility of consumer fatigue or information overload. Overall, purchase intention emerges as a key mediating factor that bridges the influence of both e-WOM and social media marketing on purchase decisions. Future research should explore these relationships across broader contexts and industries to validate whether the findings apply to other sectors beyond food services. It would also be valuable to investigate additional mediating or moderating variables

such as brand trust, perceived value, or consumer engagement, which may further explain why strong online exposure does not always convert into actual purchases. Moreover, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how sustained exposure to e-WOM and social media marketing shapes long-term consumer loyalty and repeat purchase behavior.

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