ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOR IN ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY

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Abstract

Background: Digital technology has transformed consumer behavior regarding online food ordering. The rapid growth of online food delivery services has intensified competition, making electronic word-of-mouth a critical factor influencing consumer interest and decision-making.
Purpose: This study aims to examine the influence of eWOM usefulness and credibility on eWOM adoption and the subsequent effects of adoption on customer engagement, purchase intention, and purchase decisions in online food delivery services.
Design/methodology/approach: Data were collected from 230 respondents aged 18 and above residing in Greater Jabodetabek who used online food delivery services and engaged with social media. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS.
Findings/Results: eWOM usefulness and credibility both positively influenced eWOM adoption, with coefficients of 0.41 and 0.43 respectively. eWOM adoption directly drives customer engagement and purchase intention, with coefficients of 0.53 and purchase decisions with coefficients of 0.67, 0.53, and 0.40, respectively. Furthermore, customer engagement directly strengthens purchase intention, with a coefficient of 0.24. Purchase intention directly enhanced purchase decisions, with a coefficient of 0.42. These results indicate that credibility has a slightly stronger effect on adoption than usefulness, highlighting the importance of trustworthy content in social media. For online food delivery platforms, enhancing the credibility and perceived usefulness of user reviews can effectively engage consumers, strengthen purchase intentions, and ultimately drive actual purchasing behavior.
Conclusion: This study confirms that credible and useful eWOM reviews play a crucial role in driving consumer information adoption, fostering engagement, strengthening purchase intention, and enhancing purchasing behavior.
Originality/value (State of the art): This study contributes to the literature by extending the applicability of the information adoption model (IAM) to the context of Indonesia's online food delivery services. It also provides practical insights for platform managers to enhance review credibility and develop effective consumer engagement strategies in digital environments.

Keywords: electronic word of mouth, customer engagement, purchase decision, purchase intention, online food delivery

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has significantly affected most aspects of life, including how humans consume and utilize services. These behavioral changes have also extended to the food industry, which has become saturated and spawned online food ordering services (Chai et al. 2019). Online food delivery sites provide customers with convenience by allowing them to order food anywhere and at any time using an app. Online food delivery sites are expanding because they can offer an enormous variety of food and are faster and more convenient than visiting restaurants (Li et al. 2020). Indonesia emerged as the largest online food delivery market in Southeast Asia in 2023, with a transaction value of US$4.6 billion, up from US$100 million in 2022. This growth reflects the rising demand for food delivery among consumers, as reported by Momentum Works (Agil and Munawar 2024).

Platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood have developed websites and applications that aggregate numerous restaurants, enabling users in Indonesia to browse, select, order, track, and complete food transactions easily (Pillai et al. 2022). According to a study conducted by Tenggara Strategies (2022), 41% of consumers keep at least two online food delivery applications on their smartphones. This indicates that competition in the online food delivery industry is intensifying. The food sector is a highly competitive market; therefore, innovation is essential for survival in challenging environments (Yeo et al. 2017). One such innovation strategy is the implementation of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which is a dynamic and continuous process of information exchange among potential, current, and former consumers of a product, service, company, or brand, involving multiple individuals and institutions on the Internet (Ismagilova et al. 2020).

The eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility complement each other to increase the likelihood of adopting the eWOM message (Tien et al. 2019). Recipients of a message can gauge the usefulness of eWOM by evaluating the extent to which the information is appropriate for their needs. Factors such as the timeliness, relevance, and comprehensiveness of information also play a role in determining the usefulness of content for users (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Credibility matters in purchasing because reviews cannot always be relied upon, as they are typically written by anonymous individuals. As anyone can write and read reviews, buyers must carefully consider whether the information is credible enough to be used as a reference (Abedi et al. 2020).

Positive reviews, considered informative and trustworthy by potential consumers, strengthen their trust in the platform and stimulate their purchase intentions. The information adoption model is generally used to describe the process through which intentions are formed using messages communicated through eWOM communications (Sardar et al. 2021). The adoption of information has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, where the information obtained by consumers can expand their knowledge, thereby encouraging acceptance and interest in purchasing products based on the available recommendations (Indrawati et al. 2023).

The adoption of eWOM influences purchase intention and extends its impact to customer engagement and purchase decisions. Previous studies have found that eWOM directly affects consumer engagement (Mohammad et al. 2020). Feedback on social media influences purchasing decisions and stimulates engagement, as customers are encouraged to share their positive and negative experiences with their online communities (Ismagilova et al. 2020). Moreover, eWOM marketing can shape consumers' purchasing decisions, which is particularly important as consumers have become more selective about their chosen services (Nasution et al. 2019).

Although previous studies have examined eWOM in relation to consumer behavior, most have focused on specific variables in isolation, particularly purchase intention. This study advances prior research by developing an integrated framework that positions eWOM adoption as a central mechanism linking eWOM usefulness and credibility to customer engagement and purchase decisions within the information adoption model (IAM), particularly in Indonesia's online food delivery services.

This study employs the concept of eWOM adoption to promote engagement, interest, and decision-making in online food delivery services. This study is anticipated to provide insights into how eWOM reviews and information conveyed via eWOM can be strategically used to stimulate business growth and improve the competitive position of online food delivery platforms.

This study employs a quantitative research approach and utilizes Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis to examine the relationships among eWOM usefulness, eWOM credibility, eWOM adoption, customer engagement, purchase intention, and purchase decision. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who actively use online food delivery platforms and have been exposed to reviews or comments about these platforms on social media. By focusing on users in the Greater Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek) areas, this study aims to provide deeper insights into how eWOM influences engagement, intention, and decision-making in the online food delivery sector.

This study proposes a conceptual framework consisting of seven hypotheses: (H1) eWOM usefulness positively influences eWOM adoption; (H2) eWOM credibility positively influences eWOM adoption; (H3) eWOM adoption positively influences customer engagement; (H4) eWOM adoption positively influences purchase intention; (H5) eWOM adoption positively influences purchase decisions; (H6) customer engagement positively influences purchase intention; and (H7) purchase intention positively influences purchase decisions. This study provides empirical evidence that eWOM usefulness and credibility significantly enhance information adoption, which in turn fosters customer engagement, strengthens purchase intention, and ultimately leads to purchasing decision-making. These findings extend the information adoption model (IAM) by integrating both relational and behavioral outcomes within a unified framework, while also offering actionable managerial insights for online food delivery platforms to design more effective review systems and eWOM strategies.

METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative approach based on survey research to test the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on customer engagement, purchase intention, and purchase decisions on online food delivery (OFD) platforms. This study was geographically focused on the Jabodetabek region of Indonesia. Owing to its high Internet penetration, high population density, and dynamic economic development, Indonesia presents an average setting for studying digital consumer activity (Madyatmadja et al. 2021).

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, and the respondents were screened based on four conditions: (1) having used an OFD platform at least once in the past three months, (2) a minimum age of 18 years, (3) residing in Jabodetabek, and (4) prior experience with eWOM information on OFD services on social networking sites. The sample size was determined in comparison to Hair et al. (2019), who recommended a sample size between five and ten times the number of indicators for SEM. With 43 indicators in the model, the acceptable sample size would be 215 or 430 participants. The researcher collected 230 usable responses, which was well over the lower limit for successful SEM analysis. The measurement items were adapted from established scales in prior studies to ensure content validity and were modified to fit the Indonesian online food delivery context. The instruments were subsequently tested for validity and reliability, and all items met the required criteria. Data were gathered using an online survey implemented using Google Forms, where all the constructs were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The survey was administered in April and May 2025 to reflect consumer attitudes and behavior.

This study utilizes a reflective-reflective higher-order model and adopts an embedded two-stage approach for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis. In the initial stage, the higher-order construct was modeled using the repeated indicator approach, and the measurement model was evaluated at the first-order level. After establishing satisfactory validity and reliability, the latent variable scores (LVS) for the first-order dimensions are saved. In the second stage, these LVS are used as indicators for the higher-order construct in a new model, which is subsequently assessed for measurement quality, structural relationships, and hypothesis testing. This methodological approach is selected for its effectiveness in representing complex multidimensional constructs and reducing parameter bias (Sarstedt et al. 2019). The outer model is evaluated based on convergent validity, composite reliability, and internal consistency. Convergent validity is supported when the indicator loadings exceed 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50. Reliability is confirmed when the composite reliability values exceed 0.70. A bootstrapping procedure is applied using SmartPLS to test the significance of the path coefficients. A

hypothesis is supported if the computed T-statistic exceeds the critical value or if the corresponding p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 (Hair et al. 2019).

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 aims to examine the influence of eWOM usefulness and credibility on its adoption. Furthermore, this study assesses how eWOM adoption affects customer engagement, purchase intention and purchase decisions. Customer engagement is also expected to drive purchase intentions, which subsequently leads to purchase decisions.

eWOM usefulness refers to an individual's perception that an online review is helpful (Erkan & Evans, 2016). The usefulness of eWOM depends on several factors. Information quality determines the value of a message to consumers, encompassing its comprehensiveness, accuracy, and timeliness (Ngo et al. 2024). Information quantity, which refers to the number of reviews available, enables consumers to make more informed judgments about brands when there is a large volume of feedback (Indrawati et al. 2023). The need for information also drives eWOM behavior, as users rely on relevant and experiential content when selecting products. Moreover, attitudes toward information influence perceived usefulness, as positive emotions such as trust or enthusiasm toward the message enhance confidence and willingness to act on it (Ngo et al. 2024).

Tien et al. (2019) further confirmed that the usefulness of eWOM significantly and positively impacts eWOM adoption. When consumers perceive reviews as useful, they are more likely to internalize the information rather than passively consume it, thereby transforming external content into personally relevant knowledge and motivating adoption. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H1: eWOM Usefulness has a significant and positive effect on eWOM Adoption

eWOM credibility is determined by several dimensions. Perceived persuasiveness is a measure of how convincing the content of a review is, inducing positive consumer responses (Tien et al. 2019). Source expertise refers to the author's experience and competence in writing the review (Hussain et al. 2017), while source trustworthiness pertains to the honesty and credibility of the reviewer (Verma et al. 2023). Valence represents quantitative features such as likes, dislikes, and the general sentiment of reviews (positive or negative), which influence consumers' assessment of the information (Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2021). Consumers are more likely to utilize and accept credible eWOM messages when making decisions (Ismagilova et al. 2020). Ngo, Bui, et al. (2024) and Verma et al. (2023) confirmed that eWOM credibility positively and significantly affects eWOM adoption. Based on the explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H2: eWOM Credibility has a significant and positive effect on eWOM Adoption

The Information Adoption Model (IAM) has been widely applied in numerous information systems and marketing studies to examine persuasive information processing. The IAM is an effective model for describing eWOM adoption mechanisms and their effects (Leung, 2022). eWOM adoption means that consumers accept and use eWOM messages (Verma et al. 2023). Information adoption is a process that assists consumers in decision-making by providing helpful information (Hussain et al. 2017).

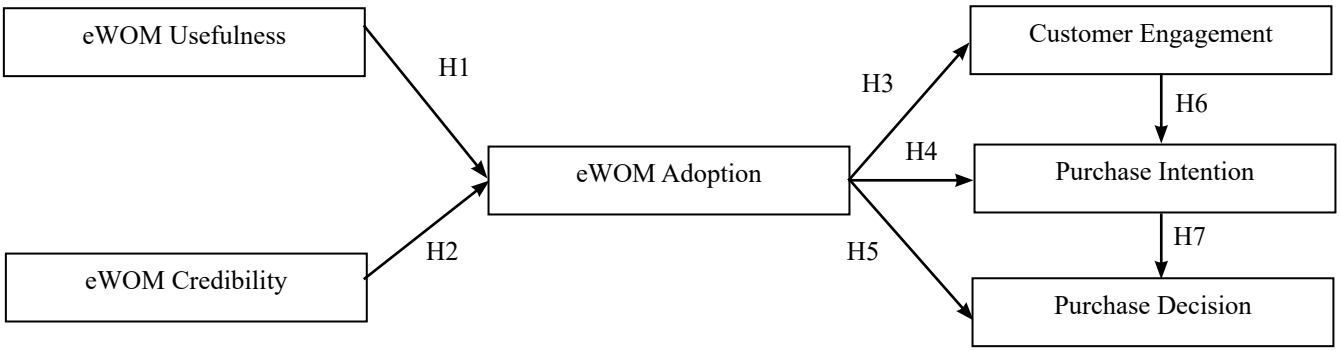

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the relationship between ewom, customer engagement, purchase intention, and purchase decision in online food delivery platforms

Customer engagement is the person's relationship with a brand, which is manifested by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activities outside the purchase environment. Mohammad et al. (2020) demonstrated through their research that eWOM positively and significantly affects customer engagement. Based on the explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H3: eWOM Adoption has a significant and positive effect on Customer Engagement

Consumers are now exposed to various consumer-to-consumer (C2C) eWOM messages through social media, enabling them to find relevant recommendations and ultimately increasing their intention to purchase (Erkan and Evans 2016). Evidence from Abedi et al. (2020), Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024), and Verma et al. (2023) confirms the positive and significant influence of eWOM on purchase intentions. Based on the above explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H4: eWOM Adoption has a significant and positive effect on Purchase Intention

Themba et al. (2024) indicate that the development of social networking sites (SNS) and the influence of eWOM on consumer purchasing decisions allow businesses to achieve a competitive edge by using social media as an eWOM tool. Prasad et al. (2017) established that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects purchase decisions. Based on the explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H5: eWOM Adoption has a significant and positive effect on Purchase Decision

There are three main components of customer engagement: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. The cognitive dimension reflects the absorption, attention, awareness, and cognitive processing associated with a brand. The affective component is concerned with enthusiasm, pleasure, satisfaction, and the customer's positive effect on the brand. When engaging with a brand, the behavioral component captures customers' time, effort, and energy. All three components rely on one another and contribute to customer engagement (Mirbagheri and Najmi, 2019). Increased consumer interaction positively influences purchase intention, both directly and indirectly (Huerta-Álvarez et al. 2020). Jayasingh et al. (2025) found that customer engagement positively and significantly affects purchase intention. Based on the explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H6: Customer Engagement has a significant and positive effect on Purchase Intention

Komalasari et al. (2021) found that purchase intention is positively and significantly associated with customers' purchase decisions in e-commerce. Similarly, a study in Vietnam on Korean product purchases determined that behavioral intention serves as a purchase decision driver (Truong, 2018). Based on the above explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H7: Purchase Intention has a significant and positive effect on Purchase

RESULTS

Respondent Description

The demographic profile of the 230 respondents shows that most were female (59.57%), aged 20–24 years (32.17%), unmarried (58.26%), and primarily residing in Jakarta (28.26%). Regarding income, the largest group earned IDR 5,000,001–10,000,000 (35.22%). Regarding online food delivery usage, most respondents accessed reviews on Instagram (33.48%) and TikTok (31.30%), used the service 1–5 times per month (43.91%), and spent less than IDR 300,001 monthly (46.96%). The majority had used OFD services for 4–6 years (53.91%), preferred digital wallets as their main payment method (70%), and most frequently used GoFood (50.44%) for food delivery.

Outer Model Validity and Reliability

Outer model testing began with a test for convergent validity at the dimensional level. The measurement model construct validity and reliability for the Stage 1 findings are shown in Table 1. Indicator loadings were used to test this, and all items revealed loading factors of more than the minimum 0.70 (Hair et al. 2019), thus ensuring their suitability and reliability. Convergent validity was also established by the average variance extracted (AVE) findings, each of which was higher than 0.5. Discriminant validity was further tested with cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criteria findings indicating that each construct was associated with higher within-construct correlations than the others, thus fulfilling discriminant validity requirements. Finally, all dimensions had composite reliability findings higher than 0.70, establishing their internal consistency and allowing the analysis to proceed to the next stage.

Table 1. Convergent Test and Composite Reliability for Stage 1

Dimension	Item loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
Information Quality		0.780	0.914
IQ1	0.901		
IQ2	0.897		
IQ3	0.852		
Information Quantity		0.811	0.928
IT1	0.878		
IT2	0.911		
IT3	0.911		
Needs of Information		0.766	0.908
NI1	0.845		
NI2	0.883		
NI3	0.898		
Attitude Towards Information		0.739	0.895
AT1	0.823		
AT2	0.898		
AT3	0.857		
Perceived Persuasiveness		0.769	0.909
PP1	0.834		
PP2	0.910		
PP3	0.885		
Source expertise		0.683	0.866
SE1	0.827		
SE2	0.878		
SE3	0.771		
Source trustworthiness		0.805	0.925
ST1	0.891		
ST2	0.904		
ST3	0.897		
Valence		0.755	0.903
VA1	0.872		
VA2	0.896		
VA3	0.839		
Cognitive engagement		0.692	0.870
KE1	0.833		
KE2	0.864		
KE3	0.797		
Affective engagement		0.759	0.927
AE1	0.860		
AE2	0.883		
AE3	0.873		
AE4	0.869		
Behavioral engagement	0.727	0.888	
BE1	0.756		
BE2	0.895		
BE3	0.898		

Following the evaluation of the measurement model at the dimensional level in Stage I, which confirmed the validity and reliability of all dimensions, the next step involved storing the latent variable scores (LVS). The LVS values obtained from the dimensions in Stage I were utilized as measurement items in Stage II at the variable level. In Stage II, the construct model was reconstructed by integrating the latent variable scores (LVS) and then re-estimated using the same procedures as in Stage I.

The measurement model construct validity and reliability for stage 2 are shown in Table 2, and the analysis of the measurement model confirmed that the constructs are all reliable and valid. All indicators had loading factors above 0.70, indicating their appropriateness for measurement. Convergent validity was also tested using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures, all of which were higher than the minimum of 0.50. Cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criteria were used to test discriminant validity. The construct correlations were greater than others in correlation with the within-construct correlations. The composite reliabilities of all constructs were greater than 0.70, which assured the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement model.

Inner Model

The evaluation of the structural (inner) model aims to elucidate the relationships among multiple latent variables. Testing the inner model commences with an examination of the coefficient of determination (R^2) for each endogenous variable. Hair et al. (2019) stated that R^2 values are low, moderate, and high at 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75, respectively. The results of this study indicate R^2 values of 0.449 (44.9%) for customer engagement, 0.642 (64.2%) for the adoption of eWOM, 0.587 (58.7%) for the purchase decision, and 0.522 (52.2%) for the purchase intention. These R^2 values fall under the moderate category, that is, the structural model has a reasonable amount of explanatory and predictive power.

Table 2. Convergent test and composite reliability for stage 2

Variable	Item loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
eWOM Usefulness		0.800	0.941
IT	0.889		
IQ	0.899		
NI	0.903		
AT	0.886		
eWOM Credibility		0.755	0.925
PP	0.909		
SE	0.818		
ST	0.877		
VA	0.868		
eWOM Adoption		0.744	0.897
EA1	0.837		
EA2	0.879		
EA3	0.870		
Customer Engagement		0.807	0.926
AE	0.925		
KE	0.913		
BE	0.855		
Purchase Intention		0.686	0.868
PI1	0.842		
PI2	0.859		
PI3	0.783		
Purchase Decision		0.668	0.857
PD1	0.774		
PD2	0.867		
PD3	0.807		

Subsequently, a predictive relevance (Q^2) test is conducted. Hair et al. (2019) stated that a Q^2 value greater than zero signifies that the PLS model has predictive relevance for the respective construct. The obtained Q^2 values are 0.349 for customer engagement, 0.470 for eWOM adoption, 0.385 for purchase decision, and 0.351 for purchase intention, indicating the research model's relevant predictive power. Furthermore, a goodness-of-fit (GoF) test was conducted. The GoF value is calculated manually using the formula: the square root of the average AVE multiplied by the average R^2. The computed GoF value of 0.639 indicates a high level of model fit for the measurement model. A higher GoF value suggests that the model effectively represents the research sample.

The outcomes of the structural model evaluation, as shown in Table 3, provide robust support for all proposed hypotheses. All seven hypotheses were validated based on the p-value criterion, where a hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is below 0.05 (Hair et al. 2019). Based on the hypothesis test results, seven results were significant.

First, eWOM usefulness has a positive and significant relationship with eWOM adoption (β = 0.410, t-statistics = 4.685), thus supporting H1. The results of this study align with those of Tien et al. (2019), who found that the usefulness of eWOM significantly and positively influenced eWOM adoption in social media. In the same Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024) emphasized that users are more inclined to adopt and apply information to their purchasing decisions when they perceive the shared content as relevant to them. These findings highlight the essential role of eWOM in motivating consumers to adopt information acquired from social media.

Second, the credibility of eWOM also has a positive and significant influence on the adoption of eWOM (β = 0.430, t-statistics = 5.293), verifying H2. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Sardar et al. (2021), who revealed that eWOM credibility exerts a positive and significant influence on eWOM adoption in online retail settings. Similarly, Reyes-Menendez et al. (2019) confirmed this relationship by showing that credible eWOM significantly shapes adoption in hotel reputation management through TripAdvisor review. These outcomes underscore the pivotal role of credibility in driving consumers to adopt information from online reviews. When the information source is perceived as reliable, reputable, and sincere, consumers are more inclined to integrate it into their decision-making process.

Third, adoption of eWOM has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement (β = 0.670, t-statistics = 15.917); thus, H3 is supported. These findings align with Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan (2021), who demonstrated that eWOM positively and significantly impacts customer engagement in the case of search and experience products. Similarly, Mohammad et al. (2020) reported that eWOM adoption significantly enhances consumer engagement in sustainable clothing purchase. These findings emphasize the vital role of eWOM in fostering customer engagement. When consumers embrace information obtained from eWOM, they tend to engage more actively with brands through social media interactions, reviews, and other activities that signal their engagement levels.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
H1 eWOM Usefulness → eWOM Adoption	0.410	4.685	0.000	supported
H2 eWOM Credibility → eWOM Adoption	0.430	5.293	0.000	supported
H3 eWOM Adoption → Customer Engagement	0.670	15.917	0.000	supported
H4 eWOM Adoption → Purchase Intention	0.533	7.520	0.000	supported
H5 eWOM Adoption → Purchase Decision	0.402	6.315	0.000	supported
H6 Customer Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.247	3.415	0.001	supported
H7 Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.429	6.450	0.000	supported

Fourth, adoption of eWOM has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention (β = 0.533, T-statistics = 7.520), thus supporting H4. The findings of this study align with those of Daowd et al. (2020), who showed that eWOM adoption positively and significantly impacts purchase intention among Generation Y consumers in Thailand. Leong et al. (2022) also reinforced this evidence, noting that eWOM adoption through social media significantly shapes purchase intentions, particularly among bubble tea consumers who actively engage online. These outcomes highlight the critical role of eWOM in strengthening purchase intentions. When consumers accept and utilize information derived from eWOM, they are more inclined to include the recommended products or services in their purchasing considerations. This is particularly important for online food delivery platforms, where consumer reviews and peer recommendations substantially influence trust and purchasing behaviors.

Fifth, the adoption of eWOM is also positive and significant in purchase decisions (β = 0.402, T-statistics = 6.315), supporting H5. The results of this study are consistent with those of Nursal et al. (2023), who demonstrated that eWOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions in online transportation services. Likewise, Yulindasari and Fikriyah (2022) showed that eWOM significantly shapes purchase decisions on the Shopee platform, as reviews from previous buyers directly impact the purchasing behaviors of other consumers. These findings underscore the importance of eWOM in driving purchase decisions. When consumers rely on eWOM, they base their choices on credible, relevant information.

Sixth, customer engagement has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (β = 0.247, t-statistics = 3.415), supporting H6. These findings align with Habib et al. (2022), who revealed that customer engagement positively and significantly impacts purchase intention toward OTT platforms, suggesting that stronger consumer engagement leads to higher purchasing intentions. Similarly, Yoong and Lian (2019) confirmed that customer engagement on social media significantly drives purchase intention in Malaysia's hospitality sector. When consumers actively interact with a brand through social media, reviews, or related activities, they are more inclined to form an intention to buy the promoted products and services. This is particularly important for online food delivery platforms, where customer engagement can strengthen consumer–brand relationships and stimulate purchase intentions.

Seventh, purchase intention has a positive and significant relationship with purchase decisions (β = 0.429, t-statistics = 6.450), thereby supporting H7. These results are consistent with those of Komalasari et al. (2021), who highlighted that purchase intention exerts a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions among e-commerce consumers. Similarly, research on online food delivery users has demonstrated that purchase intention strongly drives purchase decisions. These findings suggest that the higher a consumer's intention to buy through an online food delivery platform, the greater the likelihood of translating that intention into an actual purchase. When consumers possess a firm intention to acquire a product or service, they tend to follow through with concrete actions that culminate in a purchase decision.

Managerial Implications

This study underscores the managerial relevance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media in enhancing customer engagement and stimulating purchase intentions within online food delivery platforms. In line with the information adoption model (IAM), the findings indicate that increasing the perceived usefulness and credibility of user-generated content facilitates information adoption, thereby promoting consumer engagement and purchasing behavior. Features that encourage authentic user reviews, such as social media sharing, can expand the reach of credible and persuasive content, influencing adoption and decision-making. Collaborating with key opinion consumers further strengthens trust-based marketing, as their authentic reviews are often perceived as more genuine than paid endorsements, helping online food delivery platforms to build stronger emotional connections with users. These findings reaffirm the importance of emotional engagement in reinforcing the purchase intention. Accordingly, online food delivery platforms should move beyond transactional communication and foster interactive and experiential interactions, such as curating customer feedback, hosting live Q&A forums, and implementing gamified reward programs, to enhance brand loyalty and sustain long-term platform usage.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) usefulness and credibility on eWOM adoption and how this adoption affects customer engagement, purchase intention, and purchase decisions in the Indonesian online food delivery industry. The findings indicate that usefulness and credibility significantly encourage consumers to adopt eWOM, further strengthening customer engagement, stimulating purchase intention, and leading to actual purchasing behavior. Customer engagement also emerges as a crucial factor that reinforces the connection between intention and purchase decisions, confirming the relevance of the Information Adoption Model (IAM) in this context. These conclusions demonstrate that the quality and trustworthiness of user-generated content play essential roles in shaping consumer behavior within the digital marketplace. While these results generally align with prior research, some studies suggest that the impact of eWOM may vary depending on factors such as product type, consumer experience, and platform trust (Nasution et al. 2019; Truong, 2018). These potential divergences highlight that the effects of eWOM are not universally uniform and may interact with contextual or individual differences, offering avenues for future studies.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, online food delivery platforms should emphasize the perceived usefulness and credibility of reviews by encouraging authentic, persuasive, and informative content. Features that highlight reliable feedback, mechanisms that filter out low-quality reviews, and initiatives that motivate organic sharing can further improve consumer trust. Moreover, fostering stronger customer engagement through interactive features, such as gamification, personalized rewards, and active feedback loops, can help build lasting relationships and encourage repeat usage.

Future research should expand the scope by including post-purchase variables, such as repurchase intention, customer satisfaction, and switching behavior, to provide a more comprehensive view of long-term consumer dynamics. Additionally, employing quota sampling is advised to achieve proportional representation across demographic segments, thereby ensuring the broader generalizability of the results. These efforts will enrich theoretical contributions and provide actionable insights for practitioners navigating the evolving online food delivery service landscape.

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