



ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

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## The Role of Digital Word-of-Mouth and Influencers in Shaping Consumer Decisions

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**Abstract:** The development of digital technology has brought changes in consumer behavior and modern marketing strategies. This study aims to descriptively examine the relationship between electronic word of mouth and influencer marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in the digital era. Using a descriptive analysis method based on a literature review, this study examines several recent studies that highlight the influence of influencer credibility, e- WOM information quality, and digital social interactions on purchasing intentions and decisions. The results of the analysis indicate that e-WOM acts as a means of communication between consumers that increases trust, reduces risk perception, and strengthens confidence in a product. Meanwhile, influencer marketing functions as a persuasive medium that builds emotional connections between consumers and brands through social identification and content authenticity. Practically, the results of this study provide recommendations for marketers to design communication strategies that emphasize content authenticity, influencer credibility, and active consumer involvement in spreading e-WOM organically. Thus, this study contributes to the development of a more effective digital marketing concept, based on trust and social participation in contemporary social media.

**Keywords:** Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Influencer, Purchase Decision, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing

### Introduction

Digitalization has had a positive impact on human development and global interaction. Furthermore, advances in digital technology simplify administrative processes and support the success of industries and organizations, making them more efficient and effective (Sugiono, 2021).

Currently, technological development is influenced not only by materialism, which focuses on the direct connection between material interactions, but also by collaboration with existentialism. This school of thought emphasizes that humans are not merely

thinking subjects but also individuals who can act, feel, and live, creating their own thoughts (Rahmawati et al., 2021). The use of digital technology today can open access for all levels of society, support transparency in social media use, and function as a collective oversight system for various groups, not just the institutions involved (Khayyat, M., Alhemdi, F., & Alnunu, 2020).

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, consumer behavior is now influenced not only by rational factors such as product price and quality, but also by psychological elements such as opinions, feelings, and online social interactions. The emergence of social media platforms has transformed the way people obtain information and make decisions. With the rise of digital word-of-mouth and the role of influencers, consumers are now more influenced by the opinions, advice, and experiences of others they deem trustworthy.

From a social psychology perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates that the decision-making process is not solely personal, but also the result of social interactions where individuals seek validation from their environment. One type of social impact that is rapidly growing in the digital era is word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which is consumer-to-consumer interaction that occurs on digital platforms such as social media, online forums, and e-commerce sites. Research (Sintiya et al., 2023) shows that e-WOM has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions because it can increase trust, reduce perceived risk, and build consumer confidence in a product. This suggests that positive reviews from other consumers can be a more effective promotional tool than traditional advertising. In addition to e-WOM, modern marketing approaches often leverage the presence of individual influencers with large followings and reputable social media profiles. Influencers are considered opinion leaders capable of influencing consumer views and preferences through the content they present. According to (Romadani & Yamini, 2025), reviews and recommendations from influencers can increase brand awareness and influence consumer purchase intentions, especially for highly visual and emotional cosmetics and lifestyle products.

In the context of consumer psychology, e-WOM and influencers operate through psychological mechanisms that influence how individuals evaluate, understand, and respond to a product. E-WOM acts as a form of social proof that strengthens consumers' confidence in their choices, while influencers function as symbolic figures who can shape attitudes, identities, and purchasing behaviors through parasocial interactions and identification. These two factors create trust and a sense of emotional attachment that are fundamental in changing consumer attitudes toward a brand. In this context, trust and emotional attachment become crucial psychological variables linking exposure to marketing messages and purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, the relationship between e-WOM and influencers is mutually supportive.

Influencers are often the first to initiate e-WOM on social media platforms, while user feedback and interaction help expand the distribution of these marketing messages. A study by (Ismail et al., 2025) showed that marketing involving influencers strengthens the impact of e-WOM on consumer purchasing choices by increasing reputation and emotional engagement. In other words, consumers are more likely to accept product recommendations and make purchases.

In decision-making, consumers go through several steps, starting with need identification, information search, and alternative research. E-WOM and influencers play a role in each phase, particularly in shaping value perceptions, product beliefs, and purchase

intentions. Research (Ansar et al., 2024) shows that digital marketing, which includes e-WOM and promotions through influencers, simultaneously has a significant impact on buyer decisions by increasing brand awareness.

This phenomenon is particularly striking in Indonesia, where platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have surged in popularity, becoming primary means of interaction between brands and customers. Today, a number of companies are turning to collaborative strategies with micro- and macro- influencers to build emotional connections with their target market. However, the success of these strategies depends heavily on the credibility of these influencers and their relevance to the audience they are trying to reach.

Given this situation, it is crucial to conduct research on the impact of digital word-of-mouth and influencers on influencing consumer decisions. This type of research can provide companies with an understanding of how digital social media influences purchasing behavior and help them develop more efficient marketing tactics. Furthermore, from an academic perspective, this research can deepen knowledge about the relationship between consumer behavior theory and digital marketing communications in the social media era. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of modern marketing.

## **Literature Review**

This study (George et al., 2025) presents a summary of recent empirical evidence on the impact of influencers on purchase intentions. Many studies have demonstrated a positive impact, but this is influenced by influencer credibility, influencer-product fit, and perceived content authenticity. The authors demonstrate variations in this influence by industry type, for example, the fashion industry is more dominant than the electronics industry, as well as differences between platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Key findings indicate that influencer influence is significant in the evaluation and purchase intention phases, but its impact on actual purchases is conditional.

The purpose of this study is to systematically review recent empirical evidence on the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions in the fashion sector. This research focuses on key variables such as credibility, influencer-product fit, and content authenticity, which play a role in shaping purchase intentions. The study reveals that influencer influence tends to be significant in the evaluation and purchase intention phases, but its impact on actual purchase decisions depends on factors such as trustworthiness and content relevance. The study uses a combined model (credibility, audience engagement, and perceived usefulness) and finds that audience engagement levels and their perceptions of the usefulness of influencer content directly predict purchase intentions. Long-term studies are needed to explore the sustained effects (Samanta et al., 2025).

The primary focus of this study was to analyze how audience engagement and perceived usefulness of influencer content influence consumer purchase intentions. This research indicates that audience engagement and perceived usefulness of influencer content have a direct influence on increased purchase intentions, while influencer credibility acts as a partial intermediary. This study also emphasizes the importance of maintaining relationships between influencers and their audiences and recommends further, longer-term research.

Furthermore, a field study conducted with a sample of consumers revealed a positive relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions.

This study also showed that brand image and trust act as important mediators, while e-WOM strengthens this relationship (Nurfadhila, 2025). The primary focus of this study is to explore the relationship between influencer marketing and eWOM on consumer purchase decisions, considering the mediating role of brand image and trust. The results indicate that influencer marketing positively impacts purchase decisions, thanks to increased levels of trust and brand image. eWOM has been shown to strengthen this bond by providing additional social support that strengthens consumer trust. The researchers emphasize that the authenticity and credibility of influencer-generated content are crucial elements in maintaining the effectiveness of digital marketing communications.

This study aims to examine the impact of eWOM and the role of influencers on consumer purchase intentions for the Erigo brand. By surveying young Indonesian consumers, the results indicate that both factors, eWOM and influencers, significantly influence consumer purchase intentions, with eWOM having a stronger influence due to the perceived credibility of the information. The researchers note that combining eWOM strategies with marketing can create a more convincing brand image and increase consumer purchase intentions. This research provides practical contributions for fashion marketers in optimizing social interactions and digital reviews to strengthen the impact of influencers. (Aolia et al., 2025). This study aims to explore the influence of marketing content, online customer reviews, and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer choice of moisturizer products through the platform (Safitri et al., 2025).

Therefore, the results show that all three aspects examined have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Among these three variables, e-WOM demonstrated the strongest influence, indicating that recommendations and comments among users in the review section play a major role in determining purchasing decisions. This study also emphasizes the importance of the credibility and authenticity of online reviews in increasing consumer trust in the products offered.

The development of digital technology and social media platforms has significantly changed the way consumers interact, seek information, and make purchasing decisions. Communication, which was once one-way, has now become more interactive, participatory, and connected within extensive social networks. After analyzing five research journals, it can be concluded that word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and influencer marketing are two key tools that have a significant influence on shaping consumer behavior and decisions. Research by (George et al., 2025) shows that these two variables not only significantly influence purchase intentions but also have the potential to build brand trust and strengthen the psychological bond between consumers and brands. This phenomenon suggests that purchasing decisions in the digital era no longer rely on traditional promotional strategies, but rather on social trust and perceptions of authenticity conveyed through online interactions.

Theoretically, e-WOM functions as a communication network where consumers receive information from other users, rather than from companies. According to (Kumar et al, 2023), the quality of information in e-WOM, including clarity, relevance, and credibility, significantly influences consumer attitudes toward products and purchase plans. This is due to consumers' tendency to place greater trust in reviews and recommendations that are perceived as having no direct financial interest. The results of this study align with the findings of Samanta (2025), who emphasized that e-WOM is effective because it can stimulate perceived usefulness and social proof in the decision-making process. Therefore, the higher the quality and credibility of e-WOM information, the more likely consumers

are to adopt the recommended product or brand.

On the other hand, influencer marketing operates in a more emotional and symbolic realm. According to (Ismail, 2025) and (Dewi & Novitasari, 2023), influencers function as figures who not only convey marketing messages but also create a recognizable identity narrative among their followers. Influencer credibility, consisting of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, is a key factor influencing purchasing decisions. Research by (George et al., 2025) shows that the fit between influencer and product plays a crucial role in strengthening persuasive effects. Influencers who align with brand values are more effective in shaping positive perceptions and increasing purchase intentions. Furthermore, authentic, personal, and less promotional-oriented content has been shown to be more easily accepted by audiences, ultimately increasing emotional engagement and trust.

The combination of e-WOM with influencer marketing creates a powerful synergy in influencing consumer choices. Research by (Safitri et al., 2025) shows that when influencers spark viral conversations, their impact on purchase intentions is even more significant. Social activities such as comments, likes, and sharing content strengthen trust and increase brand awareness. In this case, e-WOM acts as an amplifier of influencer messages, while influencers act as triggers that create new e-WOM. (Aolia et al., 2025) reinforce this view by showing that a combined approach of e-WOM and influencers can enhance brand image and strengthen consumer loyalty, particularly in the fashion industry, which is heavily influenced by public opinion and aesthetic values.

From a practical perspective, these findings have significant implications for digital marketers. Companies are advised to design integrated communication strategies that seamlessly integrate influencer campaigns with natural e-WOM mechanisms. Key efforts should be focused on developing original content based on real experiences and encouraging consumer engagement through online reviews and interactions. The credibility and engagement level of influencers are key factors to consider, not just the number of followers. Furthermore, it is crucial for brands to continuously monitor the dynamics of e-WOM, as public opinion can change rapidly in the digital environment. By carefully leveraging the combination of these two aspects, companies can build long-term relationships based on trust, loyalty, and active consumer engagement in the brand's digital ecosystem.

## **Research Methods**

This research employs descriptive analysis, an expedited method for presenting a systematic, factual, and accurate overview of a phenomenon and the relationships between concepts by referencing relevant literature. This method is applied to examine and interpret various theories, concepts, and previous research findings without having to collect data directly from the field. The primary objective of this method is to thoroughly examine various academic literature, such as research journals, scientific books, and reports from credible institutions, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The descriptive analysis method in this research also presents an overview, examines the data in descriptive analysis, and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the research. This article is structured based on a literature review method from various related articles. Thus, this descriptive analysis provides the author with the opportunity to compile an informative and in-depth literature review of the phenomenon that is the focus of the research.

## Results and Discussion

Literature reviews indicate that digital word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and influencer marketing have a significant influence on shaping consumer decisions, particularly in the digital era characterized by high social media usage. Most studies have found that e-WOM serves as a credible and easily accessible source of information, influencing consumer perceptions of a product's quality, benefits, and risks. Positive reviews from other users create a perception of reliability and increase purchase intention, while negative reviews can decrease interest and strengthen risk perceptions. Research also indicates that the intensity, valence, and consistency of e-WOM messages are key factors determining their influence on purchase decisions.

Conversely, studies on influencers have revealed that an influencer's credibility, expertise, and personal appeal have been shown to influence consumer attitudes toward a brand. Influencers who are perceived as authentic and who have an emotional connection with their followers tend to be more effective in persuading consumers because their messages are perceived as honest and relevant recommendations. Increasing digital literacy has also led consumers to be more selective in following influencers, allowing only those with consistent and positive reputations to significantly influence purchase decisions. Research also shows that audience engagement—through comments, likes, and other interactions—is a key indicator that strengthens the impact of influencers on consumer purchase intention.

Further discussion shows that the influence of e-WOM and influencers does not operate in isolation, but rather complements each other in shaping the consumer experience. Effective influencer campaigns often drive a wave of e-WOM from audiences, which broadens the reach of the message and strengthens brand credibility. Furthermore, consumers are more likely to trust recommendations that emerge from a combination of the two—influencer endorsements and reviews from general consumers—because they provide a perceived more objective perspective. The literature also emphasizes that social media platforms play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of this influence, as algorithms can amplify message exposure and accelerate the process of information dissemination.

Overall, the results of the literature review confirm that e-WOM and influencers are strategic elements in digital marketing that can significantly shape consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. The interaction between these two factors creates a constantly evolving information ecosystem and influences how consumers evaluate a product before making a purchase. For companies, it is crucial to develop strategies that integrate e-WOM management, the selection of appropriate influencers, and digital reputation management to achieve optimal impact. Thus, these findings not only strengthen the theoretical understanding of the influence of digital communication on consumer behavior, but also provide practical implications for the development of relevant marketing strategies in the social media era.

## Conclusion

Based on an analysis of five research journals, it can be concluded that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing have a significant impact on consumer choices in this digital era. These two elements contribute in different yet complementary ways. eWOM serves as a reliable source of information based on real-world consumer experiences, while influencer marketing operates through emotional factors, social identification, and individual credibility. The effectiveness of both approaches depends heavily on the level of trust, the fit between the influencer's personality and the brand



identity, and the quality of the information conveyed. The findings of this study also confirm that collaboration between eWOM and influencers can strengthen a positive brand image, increase purchase intentions, and build brand loyalty through active interaction between consumers and the brand.

In practice, the implications of these findings suggest that companies should formulate digital communication strategies that focus on authenticity, interactivity, and social engagement. Marketers are advised to select influencers who align with brand values and encourage consumers to actively participate in the spread of eWOM through their reviews and personal experiences. In this way, the synergy between e-WOM strategies and influencer marketing can not only improve purchasing decisions but also strengthen brand positioning in the increasingly competitive trust-based digital marketplace.

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