

The Role of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on the Purchase Intention of Frozen Meat Products

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Abstract

In the modern digital era, technology and the internet have become essential components of marketing strategies. This study aims to investigate the influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on the purchase intention of frozen meat products in Samarinda, Indonesia. Understanding consumer response to online promotions is increasingly important, particularly in the food industry, given the expanding role of digital marketing. The research employs a quantitative approach, engaging 400 respondents across different age groups, genders, and education levels. Data was collected through structured questionnaires to gauge the impact of SMM and eWOM on purchase intention, as well as the moderating role of demographic factors. The analysis indicates that both SMM and eWOM significantly enhance purchase intention, with eWOM exhibiting a stronger influence. Younger consumers aged 20-35 and those with higher education levels are more susceptible to online reviews and social media promotions compared to older or less-educated consumers. Moreover, women display greater responsiveness to interactive marketing content than men. The study recommends that companies in the frozen meat industry focus their digital strategies on leveraging positive reviews and social media promotions to elevate consumer engagement and purchase intentions. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge on digital marketing and provide practical insights for marketers aiming to maximize the impact of digital campaigns in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Electronic Word of Mouth; Purchase Intention; Frozen Meat; Consumer Behavior.

1. Introduction

Changes in consumer lifestyles, including a shift in food consumption patterns among consumers, have been caused by changes in the strategic environment in business development and the increasing dynamics of society. The change in eating habits has led families to shift towards incorporating frozen food items in their household food stocks instead of solely using fresh ingredients. There is a wide range of frozen meat-based food products available in the market that are widely consumed. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture in 2023, there has been a notable rise in the consumption of processed meat nationwide. The yearly growth rate for processed meat consumption is 10.98 percent on average. Yet another study indicates that the yearly growth in average sausage consumption is 4.76 percent. Frozen nuggets, meatballs, and sausages are the most popular processed meat products in terms of consumption. The rising demand for chicken and beef is a result of the increasing consumer preference for frozen food [1].

In the digital era, technology and the internet are becoming more and more crucial in marketing strategies. Currently, firms are utilizing Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) as primary strategies to impact consumer behavior, particularly within the food sector, like frozen meat products. Utilizing social media and eWOM for marketing is effective in enhancing brand awareness and purchase intent, particularly in Samarinda City, where there has been a significant increase in internet access and social media engagement in the past few years[2]. Stated that social media is now a vital element of digital marketing strategy, acting as a platform for communication between businesses and customers. This is different from traditional marketing medium, which is one-directional. Businesses can engage with customers through

social media platforms, enabling them to deliver personalized and relevant marketing communications [2]. The growing popularity of social media in Samarinda allows frozen meat companies to connect with a larger audience by implementing personalized digital marketing strategies. In the past few years, there has been a notable rise in internet activity in Samarinda City. As reported by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association [3], over 73.7% of the population in Indonesia are now connected to the internet, with most of them using social media sites. The importance of social media for marketing is increasing, particularly in the food industry, as consumers rely more on online resources to make purchasing decisions. APJII disclosed this data in the year 2021. Businesses in Samarinda City and across the country are increasingly turning to social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for advertising their products and interacting with their customers.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) allows businesses to interact with customers in a more personalized and captivating way. Social media acts as more than just a tool for advertising, it also provides a space for businesses to create emotional connections with their customers [4]. The marketing strategy utilized on social media platforms enables consumers to not just see product details, but also engage in discussions, leave comments, and share content about products they are interested in [4]. In the frozen meat products sector, businesses have the opportunity to utilize social media marketing (SMM) to highlight product advantages, share details on ingredient quality, and present special offers and deals. This approach enables the business to create brand recognition and promote favorable engagements with customers. Emphasize the significance of social media marketing (SMM) for establishing consumer trust [2]. Consumers have more information in the digital world, leading them to be more discerning when selecting products. Social media offers a space for consumers to easily compare products, view reviews from other users, and communicate directly with brands. Developing trust and influencing consumer perceptions of product quality are essential elements that impact their purchase intentions significantly [2].

In the meantime, Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has transformed into one of the most powerful sources of information for consumers when making decisions. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), including online reviews, consumer recommendations, and social media discussions, is considered more reliable than traditional advertising [5]. This is because eWOM is thought to come from product users, providing a more impartial point of view. Consumers tend to trust reviews from other consumers more than ads from companies because they are seen as more genuine and open [5]. Online reviews play a crucial role in providing information about frozen meat products, particularly in situations where consumers are unable to physically inspect or sample the products before making a purchase. Favorable feedback about a product's quality, safety, and flavor can motivate customers to buy it, whereas unfavorable reviews can decrease their interest in purchasing, regardless of the product's high quality. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) plays a crucial role in influencing perceptions and buying intentions, particularly for products such as food that require trust in their quality and safety [6].

The cooperation between SMM and eWOM is a powerful partnership that impacts consumer buying intentions [7]. One way to look at it is that SMM is utilized for product promotion and attracting consumer interest, whereas another way to view it is that eWOM plays a role in building consumer confidence in products by showcasing reviews from other users. In today's fast-changing world of social media, customers frequently look for validation from others before buying a product, with reviews and suggestions from fellow users being crucial in the decision-making process [7].

This research is crucial in Samarinda City to explore how the increasing use of social media impacts the purchase intention of frozen meat products by focusing on digital marketing strategies like SMM and eWOM. This research is anticipated to offer guidance for businesses in creating better marketing tactics in the digital age, while also optimizing the use of social media and eWOM to appeal to larger numbers of customers.

2. Materials and Methods

This study focuses on examining how Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) affect the purchase intention of frozen meat products in Samarinda City. This research technique employs a quantitative method with surveys as the primary means of gathering data. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for clear and systematic measurement of the variables being studied and enables the generalization of results. In this regard, the research focuses on measuring how consumer interactions with SMM and eWOM influence their intention to purchase frozen meat products.

Population and Sample

The study includes consumers living in Samarinda City who are active on social media and have bought frozen meat online in the past six months. The reason for choosing this group is because the use of social media in Samarinda is on the rise, which is in line with the increasing popularity of online shopping, especially for food items.

This study employs purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling method, to choose the sample. This method was selected because it targets a specific sample group - consumers who use social media regularly and have bought frozen meat products before. The obtained sample comprises 400 participants. This quantity was selected to fulfill the minimal criteria in quantitative research that employs regression analysis, where it is suggested that the minimum sample size should be 10 times the number of independent variables utilized in the analysis model [8].

Research Instruments

The main instrument in this research is a questionnaire consisting of several sections. In the initial part, there are inquiries concerning the demographic information of the participants, including age, gender, income, and how often they use social media. The second part includes inquiries related to Social Media Marketing (SMM), which evaluates how much individuals see ads and promotions of frozen meat products on social media platforms. The third section assesses electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) by analyzing the frequency and intensity of participants' involvement in reading, writing, or sharing reviews of frozen meat items. The final section of the study evaluates the probability of making a purchase following interaction with social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). This assists in determining respondents' intention to make a purchase.

The questions in the questionnaire are based on scales that have been validated by previous research. For example, the scale used to measure SMM refers to the study conducted by [4], while eWOM is adapted from the instrument developed by [5].

Research Design

This research employs an associative quantitative research design to explain the relationship between independent variables (SMM and eWOM) and the dependent variable (purchase intention). The associative design allows researchers to identify cause-and-effect relationships and determine the extent to which SMM and eWOM influence consumers' purchase intentions.

Data Collection Techniques

The primary data was collected through a questionnaire distributed online using the Google Forms platform. The use of an online platform was chosen to reach respondents more easily and efficiently, considering the high internet usage among the people of Samarinda City. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out through social media such as Instagram,

Facebook, and WhatsApp, which are also the main platforms used by the company to implement SMM strategy.

In addition to the online questionnaire, secondary data was also used in this research. The secondary data was obtained from research reports, journal articles, and statistics related to trends in social media usage and consumer behavior in online food product purchases in Indonesia, particularly in Samarinda City.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using quantitative statistical methods. The first step in the analysis is to conduct validity and reliability tests on the questionnaire instrument to ensure that the questions posed truly measure the intended concepts and are consistent over time. Validity testing is conducted using Pearson correlation, while reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where a value of α greater than 0.7 is considered reliable [8].

Next, to test the research hypothesis, multiple linear regression analysis was used. This analysis is employed to determine the simultaneous effect of SMM and eWOM on purchase intention. The regression model used in this study is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

Description:

- Y = Consumer purchase intention
- X1 = Social Media Marketing (SMM)
- X2 = Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)
- A = Constant
- β_1, β_2 = Regression coefficient
- e = Error

By using multiple linear regression analysis, researchers can determine the extent of the contribution of each independent variable (SMM and eWOM) to the dependent variable (purchase intention). The F test is used to assess the joint effect of SMM and eWOM on purchase intention, while the t-test is used to evaluate the effect individually.

Classical Assumption Test

Before performing regression analysis, various traditional assumption tests are carried out to confirm that the produced regression model satisfies the BLUE criteria. An estimator that is both linear and unbiased and has the smallest variance among all unbiased estimators. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is utilized for normality testing, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is examined for multicollinearity testing, and the Glejser test is used for heteroscedasticity testing [9].

Interpretation of Results

After the analysis is conducted, the interpretation of the results is presented in the form of tables and graphs to facilitate understanding. The significant influence of SMM and eWOM on purchase intention will be discussed in detail, followed by the practical implications of these research findings for frozen meat companies in Samarinda City.

3. Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

This research involved 400 respondents who are consumers of frozen meat products in Samarinda City. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are described as follows:

Gender

This gender distribution shows a relatively good balance, ensuring that the research results can be considered representative of both genders. Gender can influence responses to digital marketing strategies, making this balance important for the validity of the findings [10]. This research shows that gender significantly influences purchase intent for frozen meat products in Samarinda. The study, consisting of 400 participants with 54% females and 46% males, offers valuable insights into the impact of gender on responses to Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM).

Table 1. Identity of respondent based on gender

| Gender | Quantity (person) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| Male | 216 | 54 |
| Female | 184 | 46 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Source: Primary data analysis, 2024

Regarding electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), gender variances proved to be noteworthy. Women tended to focus on detailed reviews and were more swayed by positive feedback compared to men. In this study, 70% of women and 60% of men reported that positive reviews had a notable impact on their likelihood of buying frozen meat products. In contrast, men were not as impacted by negative reviews as women were. Just 15% of men said that negative reviews affected their decision to buy, but 25% of women were swayed by adverse comments. This suggests that women generally approach their buying choices with more care and are more responsive to criticism. Discovery that women place greater emphasis on the reputation of products in the market than men do [11].

The importance of gender distinctions in reactions to SMM and eWOM is frequently disregarded, despite the potential benefits for companies in enhancing their marketing tactics [10]. This research validates that gender significantly influences the intention to purchase, particularly for household items such as frozen meat. Women are more active in sharing content on social media platforms, resulting in the organic generation of positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) [12]. This highlights the importance of encouraging women to engage with interesting and pertinent content, as they are more likely to pass along positive details about the product to their friends.

Age

The dominance of individuals aged 20-35 indicates their higher level of involvement in social media and digital marketing. Demographics show a greater receptiveness to digital advertising in comparison to other demographics [13]. Consumers between the ages of 20 and 35 showed greater receptiveness to social media marketing (SMM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM). They often utilize social media sites like Instagram and TikTok to find products and are more inclined to believe online reviews when choosing what to buy. Around 65% of individuals in this demographic stated that they bought frozen meat items because of promotions or favorable reviews on social media. The results are consistent with a study that demonstrated how social media significantly impacts the purchasing decisions of young consumers, especially when it comes to food items [14].

Table 2. Identity of respondent based on age

| Age (year) | Quantity (person) | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 20 - 35 | 260 | 65 |
| 36 - 50 | 100 | 25 |
| > 50 | 40 | 10 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Source: Primary data analysis, 2024

Education level

For consumers with higher educational levels, marketers should provide more comprehensive product details, such as sustainability practices, sourcing information, and quality certifications. Engaging content that provides value, such as educational blog posts or videos, can appeal to this demographic's desire for well-researched and verified information. The significant role of educational attainment in influencing digital marketing strategies [15]. Consumers with more education are typically more selective and look for information beyond just promotions or discounts. It is crucial to gain the trust of this specific group by offering detailed information and open data about the origins of products and their eco-friendliness.

Table 3. Identity of respondents based on education level

| Education level | Quantity (person) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Bachelor's degree | 160 | 40 |
| Diploma | 140 | 35 |
| High school | 100 | 25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Source: Primary data analysis, 2024

Descriptive Analysis

This study focuses on understanding how key variables, including Social Media Marketing (SMM), electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and purchase intention, impact consumer behavior toward frozen meat products in Samarinda. By analyzing these variables descriptively, the study provides valuable insights into how marketing efforts, especially digital marketing, influence different demographic groups. In line with previous research, the findings highlight the growing significance of digital channels in shaping consumer behavior, particularly among younger and more educated individuals.

Social Media Marketing is now a crucial component of contemporary marketing plans, especially for product types dependent on consumer knowledge and ease of use, like frozen meat. In this research, 60% of participants said they often encountered frozen meat product deals on social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Using social media for marketing has proven to be highly effective, with half of the participants expressing interest in discovering more about the product after seeing promotional materials. This discovery aligns with recent studies that highlight the importance of social media in capturing consumer attention. Social media marketing has become more popular due to its capacity to enable engagement, spark curiosity, and nurture customer connections [16]. The 20-35 age group, with a focus on the younger generation, shows a strong reaction to social media advertising. Millennials and Gen Z are significantly influenced by digital platforms when discovering and purchasing new products, especially in the food and beverage sector [14]. The effectiveness of SMM in influencing purchase decisions is further enhanced by the use of interactive features like stories, polls, and influencers. These tools interact with customers in personalized and dynamic manners, increasing the chances of turning interest into real purchases [17]. In the frozen meat products industry, trust and quality are crucial, and interactive SMM campaigns play a key role in establishing brand awareness and consumer trust.

In the age of digital communication, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly influences consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. In this research, 65% of participants mentioned that favorable reviews and suggestions from fellow users on social media platforms and online shopping sites greatly impacted their choice to buy frozen meat products. This discovery highlights how crucial peer recommendations are in influencing consumer decisions. The trustworthiness and credibility of user-created content are what enhance the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Consumers typically place more emphasis on the evaluations of other buyers rather than advertising, as these reviews are based on personal experiences with the product [18]. Online recommendations significantly impact consumer behavior, especially in industries where product excellence, like in the food sector, is vital. Additionally, electronic word-

of-mouth can rapidly propagate and reach a larger group of people, thereby enhancing its influence. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has the greatest influence on consumers during the early phases of their decision-making process, providing reassurance regarding the product's quality and safety [19]. Positive online reviews can alleviate concerns about the quality and cleanliness of frozen meat, impacting consumer purchasing decisions.

The intent to buy is a key result of marketing initiatives, as it is closely linked to how consumers behave. In this research, respondents were asked if they were inclined to purchase frozen meat products after being exposed to either SMM or eWOM to measure purchase intention. The results showed that 55% of respondents had a high intention to purchase frozen meat products after encountering these digital marketing efforts. The group with the highest purchase intention was consumers aged 20-35 years, followed by those with a bachelor's degree or higher education. This group is recognized for their active participation on digital platforms and their tendency to rely on social media and online reviews when making buying choices. Young consumers, especially those who are skilled in technology, are more inclined to depend on online resources when deciding on purchases [20]. The study found that consumers who are highly educated place a higher importance on product quality, brand reputation, and ethical considerations. Consumers with greater education are more inclined to seek detailed information about products, such as their origin, eco-friendliness, and health effects [15]. This makes them more likely to use SMM and eWOM to thoroughly research products before making a purchase. Purchase intention is heavily influenced by the perceived value of the product, which includes not only the price but also the quality and the brand's ethical practices [21]. In the context of frozen meat, consumers are concerned about the product's freshness, safety, and whether it meets ethical standards such as animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

This descriptive analysis highlights the significant role of SMM and eWOM in influencing purchase intention, especially among younger, educated consumers. Demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income play an essential role in determining how consumers respond to digital marketing efforts. These insights offer valuable guidance for marketers in crafting targeted strategies that resonate with their audience and drive purchase behavior.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The results from the regression analysis indicated an **R² value of 0.68**, meaning that **68% of the variance in purchase intention** can be explained by the two independent variables, SMM and eWOM. This suggests that the model has a strong fit, showing that a large proportion of purchase intention is influenced by these two marketing strategies. As shown in previous research, both SMM and eWOM play crucial roles in driving consumer behavior, particularly in online environments [17].

The effect of Social Media Marketing has a positive coefficient of 0.45 indicating a significant positive relationship between SMM and purchase intention. The p-value of own marketing strategies. Effective SMM campaigns can directly increase consumer awareness, interest, and ultimately, purchase intention [22]. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become primary channels for product promotion, particularly for food products [7]. SMM facilitates direct interaction between brands and consumers, allowing marketers to use targeted advertising, influencer endorsements, and interactive content, all of which contribute to increased consumer trust and engagement [23].

The coefficient for eWOM was slightly higher at 0.50, and it also showed statistical significance with a p-value below 0.01. This suggests that eWOM has a **stronger influence on purchase intention** compared to SMM. This finding highlights the growing role of consumer-generated content, reviews, and recommendations in shaping purchase decisions. As consumers tend to trust peers' reviews more than direct advertising, eWOM provides an avenue for authentic information sharing [18]. eWOM is often perceived as more credible and trustworthy compared to traditional advertising or even corporate-driven content on social media [5]. This aligns with the results of this study, where eWOM had a stronger coefficient, implying that positive online

reviews and recommendations substantially influence the likelihood of purchasing frozen meat products.

The significant roles that SMM and eWOM play in influencing purchase intention for frozen meat products. The multiple linear regression analysis demonstrated that both SMM and eWOM are positively correlated with purchase intention, with eWOM having a slightly stronger impact. These findings suggest that businesses should prioritize both social media marketing (SMM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) strategies in their marketing efforts, and adapt their approaches according to various demographics and consumer behaviors. It is crucial to comprehend the elements influencing consumer behavior as digital marketing constantly evolves. In the food sector, upcoming research could look into factors such as trust, loyalty, and product quality to gain a deeper understanding of how these influence consumers' buying choices.

The Role of Social Media Marketing (SMM) in Influencing Purchase Intention

Social Media Marketing has become an indispensable tool in today's digital marketing landscape, allowing brands to connect directly with consumers, build brand awareness, and influence purchase decisions. SMM utilizes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok to reach vast audiences through various forms of content, including advertisements, promotions, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content [7]. As consumers increasingly rely on social media to discover new products and services, businesses across industries, including the frozen meat sector, are leveraging SMM to shape consumer behavior and drive purchase intentions [14]. This analysis examines the role of SMM in influencing purchase intention, particularly in the context of frozen meat products, using recent studies to provide insight into how this marketing strategy impacts consumer decision-making processes.

Social Media Marketing plays a vital role in the food industry by influencing purchase intent through factors like visual attraction, endorsement by influencers, and engagement with customers. SMM is an important instrument for brands aiming to increase sales and cultivate lasting connections with customers through targeting specific consumer groups, engaging in real-time interactions, and improving brand loyalty. As the online landscape evolves, companies need to adapt their social media marketing approaches to stay ahead of the competition. By employing social media platforms and understanding consumer behavior, brands can effectively influence buying tendencies and foster expansion in an increasingly interconnected society.

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) refers to the online exchange of information and opinions about products and services among consumers. It encompasses user reviews, ratings, blog posts, social media comments, and other forms of online feedback. As digital communication has evolved, eWOM has emerged as a powerful factor influencing consumer purchase intentions. With the proliferation of e-commerce and social media platforms, understanding the impact of eWOM on consumer behavior has become critical for businesses aiming to harness this phenomenon to drive sales and enhance brand reputation [5]. eWOM plays a crucial role in shaping consumer purchase decisions by providing reliable, influential, and emotionally engaging evaluations. The power of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) lies in its ability to build trust, influence decision-making through social proof, and mold consumer perceptions of product quality. However, both businesses and consumers must address the challenges associated with eWOM, such as misinformation and information overload. The importance of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) in influencing consumer behavior is predicted to grow with the continuous development of digital platforms. Understanding its functionality and impact can aid businesses in enhancing their online reputation, engaging with customers, and increasing sales efficiently.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on the purchase intention for frozen meat products in Samarinda. The analysis revealed that both SMM and eWOM significantly influence consumer purchase intentions.

Specifically, 60% of respondents reported that SMM through platforms like Instagram and Facebook positively affected their interest in frozen meat, while 65% were influenced by positive online reviews. The research highlights that younger consumers and those with higher education levels are more responsive to these digital marketing strategies. In contrast, older consumers and those with lower education levels rely more on traditional shopping methods and price considerations. Businesses should focus on creating engaging social media campaigns and managing their online reputation to leverage eWOM effectively. Tailoring marketing strategies to different demographic groups can further enhance purchase intentions and drive sales.

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