

Building Purchase Decisions in the Digital Era: The Role of e-WOM and Viral Marketing (A Study of D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo)

M. Trihudyatmanto

Universits Sains Al-Qur'an Jawa Tengah di Wonosobo

Email: trihudyatmanto@unsiq.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the influence of e-WOM, viral marketing, servicescape, and service quality on consumer purchase decisions at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo.

Methodology – Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire distributed to consumers at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto via Google Forms. The sample consisted of 100 respondents, determined using Hair's formula. Data analysis techniques included descriptive statistical analysis, data quality testing, the F-test, classical assumption testing, hypothesis testing via multiple linear regression, and the coefficient of determination test.

Results – The findings indicate that the variables examined e-WOM, viral marketing, servicescape, and service quality have a positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

Limitations – During the data collection process, respondent answers may not always reflect their true opinions. This can be attributed to various factors, such as the level of understanding regarding the questionnaire and the honesty of the respondents.

Implications – The findings serve as a reference and consideration for D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo to encourage consumer purchase decisions by integrating marketing strategies that encompass service, technology, and promotional aspects.

Keywords: e-WOM, viral marketing, and consumer purchase decisions.

Introduction

A purchase decision is the process by which consumers decide to acquire a product or service they need or desire after seeking information about it. Kotler & Armstrong (2013), as cited in Maulida et al. (2022), describe the purchase decision as a stage in the decision-making process that consumers undergo prior to making a purchase. According to Puspita et al. (2022), a purchase decision is a process wherein a consumer decides to buy something as the outcome of a mental (cognitive) process that ultimately leads them to choose a specific course of action. Consumer purchase decisions serve as a benchmark for a company's success, as consumers are a crucial pillar of that success. These decisions can be influenced by various factors both external and internal that shape how consumers process information and draw conclusions regarding the products or goods they intend to buy. It is essential for business operators to understand consumer purchase decisions, as these decisions can indirectly impact business profitability (Mayasari & Surono, 2023). A lack of understanding regarding consumer purchase behavior can affect a company's sustainability, potentially leading to consequences such as declining or fluctuating revenue. Consequently, understanding consumer purchase behavior is vital for business operators. This is particularly important for businesses that interact directly with consumers, such as D-Cozy Glamping & Resto.

D-Cozy Glamping & Resto is a combined restaurant and glamping destination located in Tlogo Village, Garung District, Wonosobo. It is highly recommended for customers wishing to enjoy a meal while taking in the beautiful scenery of Lake Menjer. The venue also offers glamping facilities suitable for gatherings with family or close friends. D-Cozy Glamping & Resto is open daily from Monday to Sunday, with operating hours from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Observations and interviews with the manager revealed that the establishment has experienced revenue fluctuations between September 2022 and September 2024. These fluctuations stem from difficulties in devising a marketing strategy that integrates service, technology, and promotional aspects to effectively influence holistic purchasing decisions. Researchers have identified e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) and viral marketing as key factors that can boost purchasing decisions. Positive reviews generated through e-WOM can be reinforced by effective viral marketing campaigns to encourage consumers to make a purchase. A lack of understanding regarding consumer purchasing behavior can cause marketers to lose ground in the business world; leveraging e-WOM is one approach that can effectively encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions.

e-WOM is a powerful form of digital marketing wherein consumers interact and exchange information discussing products or services online based on their prior purchasing experiences. The growth of the internet enables consumers to access information and communicate with others, regardless of distance. Internet connectivity facilitates the search for information regarding needed products or services, allowing consumers to view reviews or recommendations from celebrities, influencers, and fellow consumers on social media. Kotler and Keller (2016), as cited in Fitryani & Nanda (2022), define e-WOM as a digital marketing method used to support business objectives by leveraging the internet to generate word-of-mouth effects. e-WOM typically refers to consumer statements based on positive or negative experiences with a product, brand, or service that are shared online, thereby influencing the purchasing decisions of others. Frequent discussion and promotion of a product on social media foster interaction and information dissemination, encouraging consumers to voluntarily share that information. This aligns with the view of Purnomo & Hakim (2024) that e-WOM is considered more effective than traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) due to its high accessibility and ability to reach a broader audience, thereby influencing purchasing decisions.

To boost consumer purchasing decisions, businesses can employ viral marketing strategies. As a marketing approach, viral marketing is a digital phenomenon utilizing social media platforms to rapidly and widely disseminate information to the public. Mathur & Saloni (2020:181), as cited in El-haq & Nurtjahjani (2023), describe viral marketing as a sales system in which customers widely spread messages, creating a platform for significant business growth in product marketing. According to Glennardo (2016), viral marketing is a strategic marketing technique that uses electronic media to achieve corporate goals through a self-replicating, chain-reaction process. Viral marketing is regarded as a highly effective form of digital marketing for influencing

consumer purchasing decisions. In viral marketing, engaging messages or content can be rapidly and widely shared by other users, thereby generating a viral effect. This aligns with the statement by Putri and Yulianti (2024) that the widespread dissemination of information through viral marketing is considered capable of influencing consumers' purchasing decisions.

This research is driven by the fluctuating revenue experienced by D-Cozy Glamping & Resto, making it crucial for the business to understand consumer purchasing behavior. By gaining insight into this behavior, D-Cozy Glamping & Resto can develop effective marketing strategies and better understand the preferences and needs that influence purchasing decisions. Ultimately, optimizing these decisions will positively impact the revenue generated. Conversely, failing to conduct this research could lead to declining sales, a loss of market share, and difficulties in implementing appropriate marketing strategies, resulting in continued revenue fluctuations or an overall drop in income.

Literature review

Purchase Decision

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2018) (cited in Putri & Yulianti, 2024), a purchase decision is a process consumers typically undergo before deciding to buy; it involves comparing products or services based on personal preference and perceived benefits, while also being influenced by situational factors and external elements—such as the attitudes of others. Tjiptono (2020:21) (cited in Tua et al., 2022) describes the purchase decision as a process wherein consumers evaluate how effectively various product or service alternatives can solve their problems; this evaluation, driven by familiarity with the product or brand, ultimately leads to the decision to purchase. Alma (cited in As'ary G & Hidayati N, 2020) states that the purchase decision is a consumer choice process influenced by several factors, including finance, technology, politics, culture, product variety or interest, price, location, advertising, physical evidence of the product or service, social influence, and the process itself. Based on these expert opinions, it can be concluded that the purchase decision is a complex process experienced by consumers; it involves numerous internal and external factors that influence the consumer's choice leading up to the final decision to purchase.

E-wom

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a form of review based on accurate, emotional, and candid information, aimed at sharing consumer experiences regarding products or services whose benefits and outcomes the consumers have personally encountered (Sunarto et al., 2024). The relationship between e-WOM and purchase decisions represents a fundamental aspect of consumer behavior in the purchasing process. This is because consumers tend to conduct preliminary research before making a purchase by examining reviews from others who have used the product or service, subsequently using this information to guide their purchasing decisions.

Previous research by Rahayu and Kusnanto (2023) indicates that e-WOM has a positive effect on purchase decisions. Similarly, a study by Purnomo and Fahmi Hakim (2024) concludes that e-WOM positively influences purchase decisions. These findings are further supported by research conducted by Djimantoro and Gunawan (2020), which also affirms the positive impact of e-WOM on purchase decisions.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that a greater volume of positive e-WOM can influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Rahayu et al., 2024). Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H1: E-WOM has a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a digital marketing strategy devised by companies to create a striking impression of a product or service, thereby encouraging consumers to spread information rapidly and widely (Putri & Yulianti, 2024). The relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions stems from the fact that modern consumers often base their purchasing choices on what they see on social media and what is currently trending or "going viral" among the general public. Viral marketing can enhance product or service exposure while serving as a promotional tool to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Previous research by Ananda et al. (2024) indicates that viral marketing has a positive effect on purchase decisions. Similarly, a study by Wongkar et al. (2023) found that viral marketing positively influences purchase decisions. These findings are further supported by research conducted by Mulya et al. (2023), which also confirms the positive impact of viral marketing on purchase decisions.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the more effectively a company implements viral marketing strategies, the broader its consumer reach becomes; furthermore, it builds a positive perception of the product or service, which in turn encourages consumers to make a purchase (Laily & Yulianti, 2023). Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H2: Viral marketing has a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo.

The research model in this study is presented in the following figure:

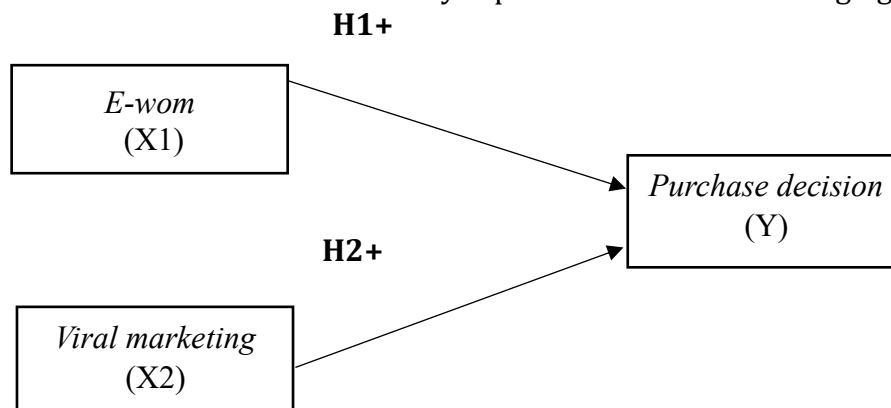


Figure 1. Research Model

Research methods

Type of Research

This study employs quantitative research, a method used to identify patterns, relationships, and cause-and-effect links among variables within a specific phenomenon. It is often termed "positivistic" research due to its foundation in positivist philosophy; "scientific" because it adheres to scientific principles—being concrete, objective, systematic, and structured; and "discovery" research because it facilitates the development of new lines of inquiry (Machali, 2021). It is designated as a quantitative method because the data are expressed numerically (Suliyanto, 2018).

Population and Sampling Technique

The population comprises the entire set of subjects relevant to the study, and its selection must align with the research objectives (Suliyanto, 2018). The population for this study consists of consumers of D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo, the exact size of which is unknown.

The sample size was determined using the formula proposed by Hair et al. (2018), which calculates the sample size by multiplying the number of independent variables by a minimum of 15–20 observations. As this study involves four independent variables, the sampling calculation based on Hair et al. (2018) is as follows:

Formula = (15–20 observations) × independent variables

Sample = $20 \times 4 = 80$

Based on this calculation, the initial sample size was 80 respondents; however, Hair et al. suggest that the ideal sample size for research ranges from 100 to 200 respondents. Consequently, this study utilizes a sample of 100 respondents, a size deemed sufficient to represent the population and achieve model goodness-of-fit.

Operational Definitions and Variable Measurement

An operational definition is a definition of a variable formulated based on the characteristics of that variable to be observed. The operational definitions of the variables used in this study are presented in Table 1. below:

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables

Sub Variable	Definition	Indicator
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	<i>A purchase decision is a process in which consumers evaluate how effectively the various alternatives offered by a product or service can solve their problems through familiarity with the product or brand thereby leading to a decision to purchase.</i> <i>Tjiptono (2020:21) in (Tua et al., 2022)</i>	• Product loyalty • Product purchasing habits • Recommending the product to others • Making repeat purchases
<i>E-wom (X1)</i>	It is a communication tool utilized in digital marketing to disseminate information about a product or service via social media or other electronic media. (Rohman & Santoso, 2024)	• Reading online reviews of consumer products before deciding to make a purchase • Gathering information from consumer product reviews on the internet • Consulting online

Sub Variable	Definition	Indicator
		- Feeling anxious about not reading online reviews before a purchase - Increased confidence after reading online reviews
<i>Viral Marketing (X2)</i>	<i>Viral marketing is a strategy that involves disseminating opinions or information via social media to spread the word about and market products or services to others (Sandi et al., 2020).</i>	- Product knowledge - Clarity of product information - Discussing the product - Reducing uncertainty

Source: Primary data, processed in 2024

Data Quality Test

Validity Test

The results of the validity test are presented in Table 2. below:

Tabel 2. Hasil Uji Validitas

Variable	Correlation Range	Significance	Information
<i>E-wom</i>	665**-897**	0,000	Valid
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	804**-900**	0,000	Valid
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	723**-865**	0,000	Valid

Source: Primary data, processed in 2024

Based on the instrument validity test results summarized in Table 2. above, it can be concluded that all variables exhibit correlations ranging from 0.665** to 0.909**, with significance at the 0.000 level. This indicates that all statements included in the questionnaire used to measure these variables are valid.

Reliability Test

The reliability test results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Limit Value	Information
<i>E-wom</i>	0,773	0,7	Reliable
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	0,755	0,7	Reliable
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	0,837	0,7	Reliable

Source: Primary data, processed in 2024

Based on the data in Table 3., the overall reliability results of this study are favorable. This is evidenced by the Cronbach's alpha value exceeding the 0.7 threshold. Consequently, it can be concluded that the statements regarding e-WOM, viral marketing, and purchase decisions are reliable.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Results of the t-Statistic Test

Model	Unstandarized Coefficients		Standarized Coefficients	T	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 Constant	3,906	1,266		3,085	.003
<i>E-wom</i>	.096	.044	.162	2,171	.032
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	.187	.053	.271	3,540	.001

Source: Primary data, processed in 2024

Based on Table 4. regarding the t-test results with a sample of 100 respondents where the degrees of freedom (df) are calculated as $n - k = 100 - 4 = 96$ and the significance level (α) is 5% the t-table value is 1.984. From Table 4.12, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Testing the effect of e-WOM on purchase decisions

Based on the regression coefficient results, the e-WOM variable has a t-count value of 2.171 with a significance level of 0.032. These results show that t-count (2.171) > t-table (1.984), meaning the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This indicates that, individually, the e-WOM variable has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision variable. Thus, it can be concluded that H1 stating that e-WOM has a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions is accepted.

Testing the effect of viral marketing on purchase decisions

Based on the regression coefficient results, the viral marketing variable has a t-count value of 3.540 with a significance level of 0.001. These results show that t-count (3.540) > t-table (1.984), meaning the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This indicates that, individually, the viral marketing variable has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision variable. Thus, it can be concluded that H2 stating that viral marketing has a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions is accepted.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Of the Estimate
1	.791	.626	.610	1,060

Source: Primary data, processed in 2024

Based on Table 5. above, the regression analysis yielded an adjusted R-squared value of 0.610, indicating that the variables e-WOM (X1), viral marketing (X2), servicescape (X3), and service quality (X4) account for 61% of the influence. The remaining 39% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Discussion

The Influence of e-WOM on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Based on the hypothesis testing regarding the influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions, a calculated t-value of 2.171 was obtained, while the t-table value was 1.984. Since the calculated t-value exceeded the t-table value (2.171 > 1.984), the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. This study

demonstrates that e-WOM influences purchase decisions, implying that consumers seek information before making a purchase.

Before deciding to make a purchase at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto, consumers tend to read online reviews from other customers to gather information. Reading online reviews prior to purchase boosts confidence and certainty regarding the product. Conversely, if consumers do not read reviews beforehand, there is a risk of disappointment should the product fail to meet expectations. In addition to reading reviews, consumers also engage in online consultations—either with previous customers or directly with the company—to ensure the product they intend to buy meets their needs and expectations.

These findings align with previous research conducted by Rahayu & Kusnanto (2023), which stated that e-WOM has a positive influence on consumer purchase decisions, as well as research by Purnomo & Fahmi Hakim (2024), which also found that e-WOM positively influences purchase decisions.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Based on the hypothesis testing regarding the influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions, a calculated t-value of 3.540 was obtained against a t-table value of 1.984. Since the calculated t-value exceeds the t-table value ($3.540 > 1.984$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This study demonstrates that viral marketing influences purchase decisions, indicating that viral marketing strategies can be effectively employed in promotional campaigns for products or services to influence consumer purchasing choices.

Consumers of D-Cozy Glamping & Resto tend to be inclined toward making purchase decisions based on social media activity and topics currently trending among the general public. Consumers also perceive viral marketing as a source of product knowledge and clear information such as product descriptions, benefits, and characteristics thereby helping to reduce uncertainty in the purchasing process.

These findings align with previous research conducted by Ananda et al. (2024), which indicates that viral marketing has a positive influence on consumer purchase decisions, as well as research by Wongkar et al. (2023), which similarly concludes that viral marketing positively affects purchase decisions.

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing regarding the influence of e-WOM, viral marketing, servicescape, and service quality on consumer purchase decisions at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto Wonosobo, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Based on the hypothesis test results using SPSS, the partial test (t-test) between the e-WOM variable and the purchase decision variable shows a calculated t-value of 2.171 with a significance value of 0.032. Meanwhile, the t-table value used in this study is 1.984, with a significance level of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. In other words, the e-WOM variable has a positive effect on purchase decisions.
2. Based on the hypothesis test results using SPSS, the partial test (t-test) between the viral marketing variable and the purchase decision variable shows a calculated t-value of 3.540 with a significance value of 0.001. Meanwhile, the t-table value used in this study is 1.984, with a significance level of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the null

hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. In other words, the viral marketing variable has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

Recommendations

Based on the research conducted, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future consideration and practical application:

1. Regarding the e-WOM variable, it is recommended that D-Cozy Glamping & Resto effectively influence consumer purchasing decisions by focusing on aspects such as online reviews and consumer feedback. The establishment should provide online consultations and foster trust through positive e-WOM, thereby instilling the confidence needed for consumers to decide to visit and make a purchase at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto.
2. Regarding the viral marketing variable, it is recommended that D-Cozy Glamping & Resto boost consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions through viral marketing campaigns. These campaigns should aim to reduce uncertainty by sharing product knowledge, ensuring clear product information, and encouraging discussion about the offerings. Specifically, the establishment should create engaging content that builds trust and motivates consumers to decide to make a purchase at D-Cozy Glamping & Resto.

Future Research Agenda

For future research involving the same variables or subjects, the following is recommended:

1. Incorporate additional factors that influence consumer purchase decisions. These factors could include facilities, customer experience, food quality, and social media marketing.
2. Ensure respondents have a clear understanding before the questionnaires are distributed, so that the data obtained accurately reflects their true opinions.

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