

## THE INFLUENCE OF E-WOM ON ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION MEDIATED BY BRAND IMAGE (STUDY AT SAMSAM MEREKAK RESTAURANT)

Stefanus Ryan Dwi Kurnia<sup>1\*</sup>, Gede Suparna,<sup>2</sup>

Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University,  
Indonesia

[ryan.dwikurnia.26@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.dwikurnia.26@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [gede\\_suparna@unud.ac.id](mailto:gede_suparna@unud.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyze the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on online purchase intention, with brand image as a mediating variable, in the context of Samsam Merekak Restaurant. Online purchase intention represents a crucial stage in the digital buying process, reflecting consumers' considerations before deciding to make a purchase through online platforms. Understanding the factors influencing online purchase intention is essential, particularly for culinary businesses that increasingly rely on digital marketing and consumer behavior shaped by online recommendations. This research employs a quantitative method with an associative approach. The sample was determined using a non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling, resulting in an adequate number of respondents for analysis. Data were collected through an online questionnaire. The analytical techniques used include path analysis and the Sobel test, conducted after all prerequisite assumption tests were fulfilled. The findings indicate that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image, and E-WOM also positively and significantly influences online purchase intention. Furthermore, brand image positively and significantly affects online purchase intention, demonstrating its crucial role in shaping consumers' digital buying intentions. Lastly, the results confirm that brand image partially mediates the relationship between E-WOM and online purchase intention. The practical implications of this study suggest that Samsam Merekak should strengthen its E-WOM strategies by enhancing the quality of customer reviews, increasing engagement on social media, and managing customer testimonials more effectively. Additionally, reinforcing brand image through consistent brand identity, highlighting the restaurant's uniqueness, and improving service quality is essential to boost online purchase intention and maintain competitiveness in the increasingly dynamic digital culinary industry.*

**Keywords:** E-WOM, Brand image, Online purchase intention, Samsam Merekak Restaurant.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, marketing strategies are undergoing significant transformation. The use of the internet in business is known as e-business, a modern approach to running a business that relies on digital technology to expand market reach. One local business that has implemented this strategy is the Samsam Merekak Restaurant. Samsam Merekak actively utilizes internet technology as a primary means of product promotion and sales.

Through social media platforms like Instagram and reviews from content creators on TikTok, the restaurant builds direct interactions with customers, promotes signature dishes, and showcases mouth-watering visual content to capture audience attention.

Although Samsam Merekak Restaurant has actively utilized digital technology and e-business strategies to reach a wider range of customers, in practice, the restaurant has faced quite serious challenges in recent years, particularly in terms of online sales. According to internal data from Samsam Merekak, there is a significant disparity in sales between 2022-2024, as shown in the table below:

**Table 1. Number of Online Transactions at Samsam Merekak Restaurant**

Year	Number of Online Transaction	Percentage Decrease (%)
2022	3492	-
2023	1702	51,27%
2024	1239	27.20%

Source: Samsam Merekak, 2025

Based on transaction data, the number of online purchases at Samsam Merekak Restaurant has decreased significantly year-over-year. In 2022, total online transactions were recorded at 3,492, then dropped to 1,702 in 2023, and then again to 1,239 in 2024. This data is taken from the online sales recap for the 2022–2024 period, which shows a consistent downward trend in purchases via digital platforms.

This situation indicates that consumers decisions to make online purchases are closely linked to the effectiveness of a restaurant's digital marketing efforts, particularly in building trust and brand image in the digital space. A decline in online purchases could indicate deeper issues with consumer perceptions of the product, both in terms of quality and perceived value. Therefore, understanding the factors influencing online purchasing decisions is a crucial first step in identifying the causes of the decline and developing more targeted marketing strategies.

In understanding consumer behavior in making online purchases, this research is also based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991). This theory explains that a person's intention to perform an action is influenced by three main factors: attitude toward behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, or the perception of the ease of performing the action.

Samsam Merekak also encourages customers to share their experiences through online reviews, making Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) one of the main forces in expanding market reach and building a positive brand image.

In addition to brand image, several previous studies have also identified alternative mediating variables that can bridge the relationship between electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and online purchase intention. These include trust, customer satisfaction, and perceived value.

Previous research by Rohman & Respati (2023) stated that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This means that the better a company's E-WOM practices, the higher the consumer's purchase intention. This contrasts with the findings of research by Nibraas (2023), which found that E-WOM had no significant effect on purchase intention. Research findings related to the influence of E-WOM on purchase intention revealed a research gap, so this study used brand image as a mediating variable.

The selection of brand image as a mediating variable in this study is based on its strategic role in bridging the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on online purchase intention. In the digital era, consumers are not only directly influenced by information they receive through social media or online reviews, but also form certain perceptions of brands based on that information. Brand image has an important function as a psychological mechanism that explains how E-WOM can influence online purchase intention more effectively. Without a strong brand image, the influence of E-WOM may not be enough to drive conversion into a purchase decision. Based on this, in the context of this study, brand image is positioned as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention. Brand image diganggap dapat memediasi hubungan antara E-WOM dan purchase intention.

The influence of E-WOM on purchase intention can be explained through brand image. According to Moksaka and Rahyuda (2016), brand image can make consumers more interested in purchasing a product because it can provide them with assurance that they will no longer feel worried.

Based on the existing phenomenon, research was conducted at the Samsam Merekak business regarding the role of brand image in mediating the influence of E-WOM on online purchases (Study at the Samsam Merekak Restaurant)

## **2. Method Research**

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The research was conducted in Bali Province, which was purposively selected because it serves as one of the main operational and marketing areas for Restoran Samsam Merekak. The target respondents were local consumers who were familiar with or had never previously made a purchase from Samsam Merekak through online platforms. A total of 140 respondents participated in this study.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on specific criteria, namely: residing in Bali and having a minimum educational level of senior high school. Data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire designed with a 5-point Likert scale to assess respondents' level of agreement with statements representing the study variables: brand image, electronic word of mouth and online purchase intention.

The measurement of research variables in this study was carried out using several indicators adapted to the context of Samsam Merekak. The E-WOM variable was assessed using four indicators, (1) tendency to read other consumers' reviews, (2) awareness of the restaurant obtained through others' stories or online posts, (3) comparison of different consumers' opinions before making a decision, (4) the influence of positive reviews on strengthening online purchase confidence. The brand image variable was measured through five indicators (1) consisting of positive brand perception, (2) distinctive brand characteristics, (3) brand name memorability, (4) brand recognition within the community, (5) consumer belief that the brand can fulfill their needs. Meanwhile, the online purchase intention variable was evaluated using five indicators, including (1) seeking further online information about the restaurant, (2) interest in the restaurant, (3) intention to try online purchasing services, (4) intention to buy food through online platforms, (5) intention to make an online purchase in the near future.

The data obtained in this study were evaluated through a series of statistical tests. Validity was examined using Pearson's Product Moment correlation, while reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics were employed to outline respondent characteristics and to illustrate the distribution of responses for each indicator. Before conducting multiple linear regression, several classical assumption tests namely normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were carried out to ensure that the dataset met the necessary analytical requirements.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Samsam Merekak's customers have a fairly balanced gender profile with 50% male, and 50% female, indicating that the restaurant is able to attract both men and women without any particular group dominating. In terms of age, the majority of respondents are in the younger age range, particularly the 18–24 age group. This indicates that Samsam Merekak has a strong following among younger consumers who are identified with a modern lifestyle, intense social media use, and an interest in unique culinary experiences.

The validity test results in this study indicate that the three variables obtained a correlation coefficient (Pearson Correlation) with a total score of all

indicators greater than 0.30. This indicates that the statement items in this research instrument have met the data validity requirements. The reliability test results in this study indicate that all three variables obtained a Cronbach Alpha greater than 0.60, thus the statements in this study questionnaire can be considered reliable and can be used for research.

**Classical assumption testing** revealed the following:

- The residuals were found to be normally distributed, indicating that the data met the assumption of normality.
- The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 10 and tolerance values exceeded 0.1, demonstrating the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables.
- The results of the Glejser test revealed no significant heteroscedasticity, thereby confirming that the assumption of homoscedasticity was fulfilled.

**Inferential Statistical Analysis** revealed the following:

- Path analysis is used to analyze the relationship patterns between variables with the aim of determining the direct and indirect influence of a series of exogenous variables on endogenous variables.
- Sobel test is a procedure used to test the strength of the indirect influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) through the mediating variable (M).

The sobel equation is as follows:

$$\frac{(a \times b)}{\sqrt{[(b^2 \times Sa^2) + (a^2 \times Sb^2)]}}$$

- VAF (Variance Accounted For) is a measure that shows how much the mediating variable is able to absorb the direct influence.

The VAF equation as is follows:

$$VAF = \frac{(a \times b)}{[(a \times b) + c]}$$

**Table 2. Path Analysis I  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	d Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.969	.977		6.110	.000
	TOTALX	.756	.079	.630	9.530	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TOTALM

**Table 3. Path analysis II  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.916	1.117		3.506	.001
	TOTALX	.295	.104	.235	2.846	.005
	TOTALM	.508	.086	.486	5.878	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TOTALY

- Path Analysis

Research conducted on consumers at Samsam Merekak Restaurant in Bali Province regarding the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention found that E-WOM has a direct influence on online purchase intention of 0.295. This indicates that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on online purchase intention.

Research conducted on consumers of Samsam Merekak Restaurant in Bali Province regarding the influence of E-WOM on brand image found that E-WOM has a direct influence on brand image of 0.756. This indicates that E-WOM has a positive and significant influence on brand image.

Research conducted on consumers of Samsam Merekak Restaurant in Bali Province regarding the influence of brand image on online purchase intention found that brand image has a direct influence on online purchase intention of 0.508. This indicates that brand image has a positive and significant influence on online purchase intention.

Research conducted on consumers of Samsam Merekak Restaurant in Bali Province regarding the role of brand image in mediating the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention obtained the results that E-WOM has a direct influence on online purchase intention of 0.295 and an indirect influence through brand image of 0.384 so that the total influence is 0.679. This indicates that brand image mediates the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention.

- Z Value

$$z = \frac{(a \times b)}{\sqrt{[(b^2 \times Sa^2) + (a^2 \times Sb^2)]}}$$

$$z = \frac{(0,756 \times 0,508)}{\sqrt{[(0,508^2 \times 0,079^2) + (0,756^2 \times 0,086^2)']}}$$

$$= 5,03$$

The results showed that the calculated z value was  $5.03 > 1.96$ , indicating that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_4$  was accepted. This indicates that brand image is a variable that can mediate the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention.

- VAF test

$$VAF = \frac{(a \times b)}{[(a \times b) + c^2]}$$

$$VAF = \frac{(0.756 \times 0.508)}{[(0.756 \times 0.508) + 0.295]}$$

$$VAF = \frac{0.384}{0.679} = 0.565$$

The calculation results above show a VAF value of 0.565 or 56 percent, meaning the VAF value is between 20 percent and 80 percent. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand image can be categorized as a partial mediator of the relationship between E-WOM and online purchase intention.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULT

##### The Influence of E-WOM on Online Purchase Intention

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a positive influence on online purchase intention. This finding clearly indicates that the better the quality of reviews, stories, and consumer experiences shared on social media, the more likely consumers are to make an online purchase at Samsam Merekak Restaurant. In other words, E-WOM is a crucial factor influencing consumer decisions in today's digital age.

The findings of this study align with research conducted by Putri and Aksari (2021), which states that implementing E-WOM can improve purchase intention. These results are supported by research by Chandra and Suparna (2019), Yuszana and Tunjungsari (2024), Putra and Rastini (2022), Stefanny, Pratikto, and Hermawan (2022a), Agus Ardana and Rastini (2018), and Rohman and Respati (2023), which also confirm that E-WOM positively drives online purchase intention.

##### The Influence of E-WOM on Brand Image

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that E-WOM has a positive and significant impact on brand image. This indicates that the E-WOM strategy implemented by the Samsam Merekak Restaurant has a strong influence on shaping its brand image in the eyes of consumers.

The findings of this study align with those conducted by (Rohman and Respati, 2023), (Moksaoka and Rahyuda, 2016), (Krisnawan and Jatra, 2021), (Prayoga and Yasa, 2023), (Rokhmawati, Kuncorowati, and Supardin, 2022), (Dewi and Ekawati, 2024), and (Novianti, Hardilawati, and Hinggo, 2022), all of which found a positive impact of E-WOM on brand image. This emphasizes that

E-WOM is not only a tool for increasing sales but also a crucial foundation for building a strong and sustainable brand reputation, which can become a long-term competitive advantage.

### **The Influence of Brand Image on Online Purchase Intention**

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that brand image has a positive and significant influence on online purchase intention. This finding confirms that the perceptions and associations formed in consumers' minds regarding Samsam Merekak Restaurant significantly impact purchase intention. The more positive the brand image of Samsam Merekak Restaurant, the more likely consumers are to choose its products.

These results align with research by Wahyuni and Suparna (2014), which emphasizes the importance of sustainable brand image in influencing consumer interest in purchasing Samsam Merekak Restaurant products. Other studies, such as Nasri et al. (Candra and Suparna, 2019) and Ikhsan Fazrin, Komariah, and Jhoansyah, (2024), also support that brand image positively influences purchase intention.

### **The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Online Purchase Intention**

The results of the H<sub>4</sub> hypothesis test revealed that brand image significantly mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and online purchase intention at Samsam Merekak Restaurant. This finding provides deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms that influence consumer purchase intention in the digital era. These results indicate that E-WOM not only acts as a direct stimulus to encourage consumers to purchase online but also indirectly influences purchasing behavior through the formation and strengthening of brand image.

When consumers receive positive information from reviews, testimonials, or recommendations from other users about Samsam Merekak Restaurant, their perception of the brand improves. This positive brand image then increases consumer trust and interest in making online purchases. This finding confirms the importance of brand image as a mediating element that strengthens the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention and demonstrates that efforts to build a strong digital reputation are key to increasing consumer loyalty and purchase intention.

The results of the study indicate that the indirect effect of 0.384 is greater than the direct effect of 0.295, indicating that brand image plays a significant role as an intermediary in the relationship between E-WOM and online purchase intention. This means that although E-WOM can directly influence online

purchasing decisions, its impact is much stronger when a positive brand image is formed in the minds of consumers. Therefore, building and maintaining a positive brand image is a crucial step in increasing the effectiveness of E-WOM's influence on consumer purchase intention on digital platforms.

These results align with studies conducted by Komang et al. (2023), which show that brand image as an intermediary variable can strengthen the impact of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on purchasing choices. This finding is also supported by research by Yuszana and Tunjungsari (2024); Suyoga and Santika (2018); and Prayoga and Yasa (2023).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion that have been described, this study produces several important conclusions as follows:

- 1) Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a positive and significant impact on online purchase intention among consumers at Samsam Merekak Restaurant. This indicates that the more positive reviews, recommendations, and customer experiences spread on social media, the higher consumer interest in making online purchases. Consumers tend to pay attention to the information and opinions of others before deciding to purchase products from that restaurant. Electronic Word of Mouth
- 2) E-WOM has a positive and significant impact on Samsam Merekak's brand image. This finding indicates that positive communication and reviews from customers can shape a positive brand image in the minds of consumers. The more frequently consumers encounter positive information or recommendations about Samsam Merekak in digital media, the stronger their perception of the restaurant's reputation and brand quality.
- 3) Brand image has a positive and significant effect on online purchase intention among Samsam Merekak consumers. This conclusion suggests that a positive brand image plays a crucial role in increasing consumer trust and confidence in online purchases. A strong brand image conveys a sense of professionalism, trustworthiness, and quality, thus encouraging consumers to choose the restaurant's products or services.
- 4) Brand image can mediate the influence of E-WOM on online purchase intention among Samsam Merekak consumers. The results of the mediation test indicate that brand image acts as a partial mediator. This means that E-WOM not only directly influences online purchase intention but also indirectly through the

formation of a positive brand image. The better the brand image formed due to positive customer reviews and experiences, the greater the tendency of consumers to make online purchases at Samsam Merekak Restaurant.

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