

ANALYSIS OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM) ON TIKTOK SHOP SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF GENERATION Z

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Abstract. *Generation Z is a group of consumers who are very active on social media, especially TikTok, which they use to search for information and entertainment. This habit changes the way they interact with brands and decide to buy a product. In this situation, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) becomes a very influential factor. This study was conducted to determine the extent to which E-WOM on TikTok influences product purchase decisions among Gen Z. The research employed a qualitative method using interviews and literature review techniques. The participants were TikTok users aged 18–24 from Generation Z who had viewed product review content on the platform. The findings show that E-WOM on TikTok has a positive and quite strong influence on Gen Z's purchasing decisions. Reviews, recommendations, and other user content have been proven to shape their views and increase their interest in purchasing. The factors that make E-WOM effective are the attractive video format and TikTok's ability to create trends quickly. The results of this study provide insight for businesses and marketers regarding the importance of managing E-WOM on TikTok as part of a digital marketing*

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strategy that is more relevant and in line with the behavioral preferences of Gen Z consumers.

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), TikTok, Purchasing Decisions, Generation Z.*

Abstrak. Generasi Z adalah kelompok konsumen yang sangat aktif di media sosial, terutama TikTok, yang digunakan untuk mencari informasi sekaligus hiburan. Kebiasaan ini mengubah cara generasi Z berhubungan dengan merek dan memutuskan untuk membeli suatu produk. Dalam situasi ini Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) menjadi factor yang sangat berpengaruh. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana E-WOM di TikTok mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian produk di kalangan generasi Z. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan Teknik wawancara dan studi literatur. Partisipan penelitian Adalah pengguna TikTok usia 18 hingga 24 tahun dari generasi Z yangf pernah melihat konten ulasan produk di platform tersebut. Temuan penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa E-WOM di TikTok memberikan pengaruh positif dan cukup kuat terhadap keputusan membeli pada Gen Z. ulasan, rekomendasi dan konmten pengguna lainnya terbukti mampu membentuk pandangan mereka serta meningkatkan minat untuk membeli. Faktor yang membuat E-WOM efektif Adalah format video yang menarik dan kemampuan TikTok menciptakan tren secara cepat. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman bagi pelaku bisnis dan pemasar mengenai pentingnya mengelola E-WOM di Tiktok sebagai bagian dari strategi pemasaran digital yang lebih relevan dan sesuai dengan preferensi perilaku konsumen Gen Z.

Kata Kunci: *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), TikTok, Keputusan Pembelian, Generasi Z.*

INTRODUCTION

Advances in science and technology have triggered changes in consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z, in expressing their opinions about products and services through social media. TikTok, as the most dominant platform currently in use, provides a digital interaction space that allows users to post comments, reviews, testimonials, and even live broadcasts. These activities indirectly build consumer trust and encourage purchasing decisions. Iksyanti and Hidayat (2022) show that Electronic

Word of Mouth (E-WoM) on TikTok can increase consumer trust and have a significant influence on purchasing decisions if the information conveyed is considered valid and relevant.

In line with this, Slamet and Albab (2023) reveal that E-WoM has a major influence on purchasing decisions, especially among Generation Z, who tend to trust the real experiences of other users more than company promotions. These findings show that Generation Z relies heavily on recommendations from online communities and influencers before making purchasing decisions. Not only that, Tarigan and Aprianingsih (2021) stated that the visual and interactive features on TikTok play a role in influencing the purchasing intentions of Generation Z, given that this group is highly competent in utilizing social media and responding to digital marketing strategies. This finding is reinforced by Rohmah and Indarwati (2024), who state that E-WoM that is aligned with consumer experience and trust in the brand can increase Generation Z's confidence in purchasing local products on TikTok Shop.

This study focuses on two variables, namely Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) as the independent variable and Purchase Decision as the dependent variable, with Generation Z as the main consumer group. E-WoM is understood as a form of informal marketing communication built by consumers through digital media to share experiences, assessments, and recommendations on a product or service. In the context of TikTok Shop, E-WoM manifests itself through comments, reviews, ratings, review content, testimonials, influencer recommendations, and interactions in live broadcasts. Information sourced from fellow users is considered more authentic than company promotions, thereby influencing the formation of perceptions, trust, and purchasing preferences.

Meanwhile, purchasing decisions are interpreted as the final stage of the consumer choice process after evaluating needs, information, and product alternatives until the purchase is made. In this study, the purchasing decisions reviewed are the actual purchasing decisions of Generation Z through TikTok Shop, including post-purchase responses related to product satisfaction levels. Conceptually, this study is based on the assumption that E-WoM on TikTok Shop has a direct effect on Generation Z's purchasing decisions, where the higher the frequency, relevance, and positive sentiment of information circulating among users, the greater the tendency for Generation Z to make

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purchases on the platform. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is causal, confirming the role of electronic communication between users in driving purchasing decisions.

Although a number of previous studies have confirmed the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) on consumer behavior, research on E-WoM on the TikTok Shop platform is still minimal, especially with a focus on Generation Z in Indonesia. Previous research findings tend to focus on purchase intention, rather than actual purchase decisions, which are a tangible form of consumer behavior after going through an evaluation process. On the other hand, most studies have also examined different marketplace platforms, thus failing to describe the characteristics of TikTok Shop, which is based on visual content, interactivity, and social relevance among users. This situation indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed through direct testing of the extent to which E-WoM on TikTok Shop influences Generation Z's purchasing decisions. This research is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the digital marketing literature, while also providing practical contributions for businesses in designing effective marketing strategies based on consumer interactions on social media.

Based on the background description above, this study formulates three main issues. First, does Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on TikTok Shop have a significant influence on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z? Second, to what extent does e-WOM on the TikTok platform influence the shopping decision-making process of Generation Z, who are known to be highly exposed to digital information? Third, this study also examines supporting factors, such as brand trust, user experience quality, and the type of reviews received, which can strengthen the relationship between e-WOM and Generation Z's purchasing decisions. These research questions form the basis for understanding digital consumer behavior and the important role of e-WOM in online shopping activities through TikTok Shop.

REVIEW THEORITIS

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has become a crucial consumer communication mechanism in the contemporary digital ecosystem. Based on a synthesis of various literature, E-WOM is understood as the exchange of information between

consumers mediated by digital platforms (Ramadhany, 2023; Rizkyta, 2024). E-WOM includes the delivery of opinions, suggestions, and narrative reactions, both positive and negative, regarding experiences with a product or company (Khotimah & Sulistyowati, 2022; Ramadhany, 2023). This content is generated by various parties, including prospective buyers, active users, and consumers who have completed transactions. This communication is disseminated through electronic media, such as online stores and social media, which ensures that the information is widely accessible to the public (Khotimah & Sulistyowati, 2022; Rizkyta, 2024). Its main function is as a form of discussion and recommendation that directly influences the purchasing decisions of other consumers, especially in the context of online shopping (Rizkyta, 2024; Yulindasari, 2022). Thus, E-WOM can be concluded as a strategic consumer communication tool utilized to share experience-based information through the internet, functioning to shape perceptions, build trust, and act as an important determinant in the purchasing decision-making process in the digital era.

Generation Z, broadly defined in Indonesian literature as individuals born between 1997 and early 2010, are often labeled as digital natives because they grew up and developed in an environment that is fully integrated with digital technology (Wibowo & Ayuningtyas, 2024). The main characteristic of this group is their ability to adapt very quickly to technological developments, making the use of gadgets and the internet an integral part of their daily activities. In the context of education, research shows that Generation Z exhibits a high degree of independence in searching for and accessing information and learning materials through various online sources, including digital platforms and video formats (Hayati, 2024). Their learning preferences tend to lean toward methods that are visual, interactive, and easily accessible. Furthermore, Husain, S., et al., (2025) emphasize that for Generation Z, technology has surpassed its function as a functional tool and has become an ingrained part of the emotional dimension of their lives. However, the intensity of technology use without adequate supervision poses character challenges, highlighting the importance of character education so that this generation not only has technical skills but is also able to use technology wisely and responsibly.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with triangulation methods to gain an in-depth understanding of how electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on TikTok Shop influences Generation Z's purchasing decisions. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore consumer experiences and perceptions, while triangulation was used to increase data validity by combining various sources and techniques. Generation Z, who are active on social media, tend to rely on digital reviews in assessing quality and deciding on purchases, where e-WOM has been proven to increase brand awareness, trust, and purchase intent. On TikTok Shop, the influence of e-WOM manifests through comments, video reviews, live streaming, and influencer testimonials that are considered authentic. Findings from various studies indicate that digital recommendations can even be more influential than price for Generation Z. Thus, e-WOM becomes an effective marketing communication strategy because it creates social proof, and this study provides a contextual understanding of how user interactions on TikTok Shop shape Generation Z's shopping behavior.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings obtained through a qualitative approach, which focuses on a deep understanding of the experiences, views, and meanings formed by participants in the context of the phenomenon being studied. Data collected from interviews, observations, and document reviews were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of meaning, categories, and relationships between findings. The analysis process was carried out repeatedly with steps of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing that took place simultaneously during the research.

In a qualitative approach, the research results are not only presented as a series of factual findings, but also as a construction of meaning that emerges from the interaction between the researcher and the data. Therefore, this section not only presents a narrative description of the findings but also outlines the researcher's interpretation and its relevance to previous theories and research. The discussion is conducted to place the findings in a broader academic context, evaluate their compatibility with existing concepts, and highlight new dimensions that may emerge from the results of this study.

In addition, this section also discusses how social, cultural, and situational contexts influence the responses and dynamics observed in the data. Differences in perspective among participants are analyzed in depth to illustrate the complexity of the phenomenon, while also providing a comprehensive understanding of the issues under study. The theoretical and practical implications of the research results are also explained in this section as a contribution to the development of knowledge and practice in relevant fields.

Data Collection Process, Time Frame, and Research Location

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach that focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of Gen Z consumer behavior in responding to E-WOM on TikTok Shop. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with two active sellers on TikTok Shop and two Generation Z consumers aged 19–24 who regularly shop through the platform. The interviews lasted 25–40 minutes for each participant, allowing for a rich exploration of their experiences, perceptions, and decision-making patterns in purchasing.

Data collection took place from November to early December 2025. The researchers chose Tangerang and Jakarta as the research context because both areas have high levels of e-commerce activity and all participants reside or are active in these areas. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom and WhatsApp Call to provide flexibility for participants and enable more natural interactions. Supporting data was obtained from literature reviews and scientific publications published between 2021 and 2025, providing a strong theoretical and empirical basis for discussing the phenomenon of E-WOM in the context of TikTok Shop

Data Analysis and Key Findings

Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, presentation of findings, and drawing conclusions. Interviews were then categorized into core themes such as perceptions of trust, the role of video reviews, the influence of other users' comments, and patterns of interaction in live shopping sessions. These themes provide a comprehensive picture of how Gen Z assesses the credibility of information and determines product choices.

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1. E-WOM Influence Pattern Based on Interview Findings

To make the findings easier to understand, the following illustration is presented in table form.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Findings related to the influence of E-WOM on Purchase Decisions

Findings	Seller Perspective	The Perspective of Gen Z Consumers	Interpretation
Comment and review activity	Positive comments drive a surge in transactions; negative comments drastically reduce interest.	Always read reviews, especially from users who show proof.	E-WOM is an indicator of reputation and trust that directly influences decisions.
Video-based review	Video reviews are considered to have the most influence on conversion rates.	Video reviews are considered more honest and informative than photos.	TikTok's visual format reinforces the perception of realness and authenticity.
The influence of peer recommendations	Products go viral quickly when there is organic recommendation momentum.	Buying after seeing many other users try it	Social validation is a major factor in decision-making.

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2025

The findings in the table show that Gen Z's purchasing decisions depend on the credibility of information they obtain from other users, not from sellers. This confirms that E-WOM has become a natural filtering mechanism that helps Gen Z assess the risks, quality, and benefits of a product before purchasing.

The Relationship Between Findings and the Basic Concepts of E-WOM and Consumer Behavior

1. Relationship with E-WOM Theory

Conceptually, E-WOM is a form of digital interpersonal communication that takes place in public spaces and serves as a social reference for consumers before purchasing a product. The findings of this study reinforce the theory that E-WOM influences consumers' perception of risk, perception of benefits, and level of trust in

a product. Gen Z, as a generation accustomed to technology and fast-moving information, uses E-WOM as their main guide before choosing items on TikTok Shop. Their decision-making process follows the pattern of information seeking → trust building → purchase intention → purchase decision.

2. The Role of TikTok in Building Trust and Credibility

TikTok provides a dynamic visual environment and enables organic information dissemination through its FYP algorithm. The findings of this study show that this increases consumer trust because they obtain information in the form of visual evidence, not just text. Video reviews and comments in live shopping reinforce the perception that these reviews are a true representation of other users' experiences. Thus, TikTok is not only an entertainment platform, but also a major source of digital economic decisions for Gen Z.

Consistency and Contradictions with Previous Research

1. Compliance of Findings

1) Consistency with Dewi and Albari (2022)

The results of this study are in line with Dewi and Albari, who found that E-WOM plays a major role in shaping the purchasing interest of TikTok consumers.

2) Consistency with Agustin's research(2023)

Interactions during live shopping and spontaneous comments have been shown to strengthen decision-making, as observed in the study.

3) Harmony with Putri & Hayu (2024)

This study supports their findings that FYP content, affiliate marketing, and E-WOM work simultaneously to drive Gen Z's purchasing decisions.

2. Differences or New Findings

1) The dominance of video reviews as the most effective form of E-WOM

Previous studies have often emphasized comments and ratings. However, this study adds that video reviews are more significant because they provide visual evidence that strengthens consumer trust.

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2) The role of live shopping interactions

The interview findings show that comments from live viewers have a spontaneous effect on purchasing, something that has not been widely discussed in previous E-WOM research.

3) The influence of emotional resonance

Gen Z is not only looking for accurate information, but also responds to relatable communication styles. This emotional element is rarely discussed in previous E-WOM literature.

Interpretation of Findings

The results of this study indicate that E-WOM acts as a source of credibility that cannot be replaced by formal advertising. Gen Z's purchasing decisions are shaped by their trust in other users' experiences and the social reinforcement that comes from comments and visual reviews. Psychologically, E-WOM for Gen Z functions as a validation mechanism that reduces uncertainty and purchasing risk, especially for beauty, fashion, and accessory products, which are the dominant shopping categories. In other words, E-WOM forms a bridge of trust between consumers and sellers in a highly competitive digital environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This study concludes that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a strong influence on Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop, as evidenced by qualitative analysis involving hybrid (offline and online) interviews with two sellers and two Gen Z consumers. All informants emphasized that reviews, testimonials, comments, and recommendations from other users are decisive factors in assessing product credibility before purchasing. These findings support previous research-such as Agustin et al. (2023), Dewi & Albari (2022), Putri & Hayu (2024), and Rosilawati et al. (2024)-which shows that E-WOM increases consumer purchase interest, perceived value, and trust. Generation Z, who are highly responsive to visual content and real-time interactions, tend to rely on video reviews, unboxing, and live selling to build confidence before making a decision.

Suggestions

Based on these results, sellers are advised to optimize authentic review content, improve responsiveness in comment sections, and utilize TikTok features such as live streaming to strengthen the value of E-WOM. Brands need to focus more on credible user-generated content marketing strategies, while further research could expand the sample size or include moderating variables such as trust and perceived risk to enrich our understanding of the influence of E-WOM in the context of social commerce.

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