The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Self-Control-Moderated Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce in Indonesia, driven by digital technology and social media, has elevated Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) as a key influencer of consumer purchase decisions, although moderated by psychological factors such as self-control. This study aims to analyze E-WOM's effect on purchase decisions moderated by self-control among Indonesian e-commerce users. Employing a quantitative causal-explanatory design, data were collected via Likert-scale questionnaires from 100 purposive respondents and analyzed using SEM-PLS in SmartPLS 4. Results reveal E-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions (β=0.373, t=4.207, p=0.000), while self-control negatively moderates this relationship (β=-0.075, t=1.961, p=0.050), weakening E-WOM's impact at higher self-control levels. The model explains 62% variance (R²=0.620). In conclusion, while E-WOM drives purchases, self-control enables rational decision-making, offering implications for ethical e-commerce marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed Indonesian behavior, with *online* activities becoming the primary choice due to their efficiency and convenience. The number of internet users continues to increase, driving rapid *e-commerce* growth, with transaction values expected to reach IDR 487 trillion by 2024. Social media reinforces this trend through the rapid dissemination of opinions, reviews, and product recommendations that influence consumption, particularly among the younger generation, who are responsive to digital content (Putri & Magistarina, 2023; Zuhroh et al., 2025).

E-commerce platforms now serve as primary reference sources, where consumers seek information before purchasing, including reviews from other users. *Electronic word of mouth* (e-WOM) is a key factor because it is perceived as authentic and credible, significantly influencing product evaluations (Aenaya et al., 2024; Maulida Rahmi Nasution et al., 2024). Research shows that e-WOM drives purchasing decisions through source credibility and positive tone, helping consumers objectively assess product quality (Sari et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2024; Khoirunnisa et al., 2023).

However, the influence of e-WOM is not always direct because it is influenced by psychological factors such as self-control, which helps control emotional impulses from *online* reviews. Consumers with high *self-control* are more selective, while those with low *self-control* are prone to impulsive purchases (Aenaya et al., 2024; Zuhroh et al., 2025). Previous research found that *self-control* weakens e-WOM in impulse buying on TikTok or shopaholics among Generation

Z, but has not specifically addressed purchasing decisions involving complex considerations (Putri & Magistarina, 2023).

This situation poses a problem because the dynamics of *e-commerce* purchasing decisions are broader than impulsive, necessitating a *self-control* moderation analysis to understand how internal factors alter the impact of e-WOM. Previous research has focused on extreme consumer behavior, leaving a gap in the context of rational purchasing in Indonesia (Nafisah & Murniningsih, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions moderated by *self-control* among *e-commerce* users in Indonesia. The urgency lies in the need for digital marketing strategies that consider psychological factors to optimize the influence of e-WOM in the rapidly growing *e-commerce* market. This research's novelty fills a gap with a specific focus on *self-control* moderation in complex purchasing decisions, differing from previous impulse buying studies (Siregar et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

*Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)*can be defined as a positive or negative message or statement conveyed about a product or service via the internet by consumers, whether potential buyers, consumers who are currently using it or consumers who have switched to another product.(Satri & Harsoyo, 2023). In addition, *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) is defined as a form of interaction that is positive or negative regarding a product that is conveyed by consumers to other consumers via the internet, thus enabling the wider dissemination of opinions and experiences on social media.(Yulindasari & Fikriyah, 2022).

Overall, *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) is a communication method used by consumers that has a significant impact because messages delivered *online* can reach many people, shape perspectives and directly influence the interests and purchasing decisions of other consumers.

Buying decision

Purchasing decision is a stage where buyers gather information, evaluate a number of product or service options, then make a decision based on the option that is considered most suitable while reducing potential risks that may arise.(Nurliyanti et al., 2022). In addition, purchasing decisions are also a process when consumers choose their options regarding a product or service after going through the stages of determining needs, searching for information and evaluating existing options.(Sudirjo et al., 2023).

From a marketer's perspective, the purchasing decision process is crucial because consumer decisions directly influence the success of the marketing strategy implemented. Marketers who understand how consumers make decisions will find it easier to design appropriate product, pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies.(Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Here are some factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions according to(Kotler & Keller, 2016), among others:

1. Cultural Factors
2. Social Factors
3. Personal Factors
4. Psychological Factors

Psychological factors such as motivation, perception and *self-control* have a crucial role in influencing how consumers respond to marketing information and make purchasing decisions.(Arifin et al., 2025; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Therefore, purchasing decisions are not only influenced by product characteristics, but also by the consumer's internal state and the external information they receive.

Self-Control(Self Control)

Self-control or *self-control* is an individual's ability to manage behavior and desires that can lead to consumer behavior.(Tumangger & Tanjung, 2023)*Self-control* is also understood as a person's ability to regulate impulses, thoughts and actions to remain oriented towards goals that are considered important.(Arifin et al., 2025). In addition, *self-control* is described as an individual's ability to restrain or ignore excessive responses to stimulation in everyday life.(Faradiba et al., 2023). Thus, it can be concluded that *self-control* is an internal control system that allows individuals to behave logically, planned and unhurriedly in different situations.

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Purchasing Decisions

*Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)*is a type of communication in the form of consumer reviews or recommendations that are distributed via digital platforms and are considered a source of information that can be trusted and can influence the assessments of other consumers before making a purchase.(Sari et al., 2022). Information conveyed through E-WOM can strengthen positive perceptions about the quality and superiority of a product because it is considered a real experience from other users.(Khoirunnisa et al., 2023)This is also supported by the results of other researchers who stated that E-WOM has a significant influence on the purchasing decision-making process.(Siregar et al., 2024).

Other previous research also shows the consistent influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) on consumer purchasing decisions.(Hennig-thurau et al., 2004)explains that e-WOM is a highly influential source of information because it is conveyed voluntarily by consumers and is considered more credible than marketing communications conducted by companies. This information supports consumers in evaluating product options before making a purchasing decision.

Furthermore, research conducted by(Cheung & Thadani, 2012)found that the quality and credibility of e-WOM information significantly influence consumer trust, which can impact purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to use *online* reviews as a reference for evaluation when facing uncertainty when purchasing products *online.*

From a consumer perspective, *online* reviews serve as a source of information that helps reduce uncertainty, increase trust in a product or service, and encourage faster purchasing decisions. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be formulated:
H1:*Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

The Influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) on Self-Control-Moderated Purchasing Decisions

In the context of consumer behavior, *self-control* functions as an internal element that influences how a person reacts to the information they receive. Consumers with low *self-control* tend to be more easily influenced by persuasive messages delivered through e-WOM, resulting in quicker purchasing decisions.(Aenaya et al., 2024)Meanwhile, individuals with good or high *self-*

control can resist the emotional impulses that arise from product reviews and recommendations, so the influence of E-WOM on purchasing choices becomes weaker.

Previous research also indicates that *self-control* factors have a significant role in moderating the influence of *online* information on purchasing decisions.(Baumeister et al., 2007)states that *self-control* is a psychological resource that determines a person's ability to resist consumer urges triggered by external stimuli, including information from digital marketing.

Research conducted by(Verplanken & Sato, 2011)From a *self-regulation* perspective, impulsive buying behavior occurs due to weak self-control, which makes a person more susceptible to situations and emotional impulses. Conversely, someone with strong *self-control* is usually better able to resist temptation and is more likely to consider before making a purchase.

Previous research also shows that *self-control* can weaken the influence of E-WOM on consumer behavior, including impulsive buying and shopaholic tendencies.(Putri & Magistarina, 2023; Zuhroh et al., 2025)This suggests that the level of *self-control* can influence the strength or weakness of the relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decisions. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2:*Self-control* moderates the influence of *electronic word of mouth* (E-WOM) on purchasing decisions.
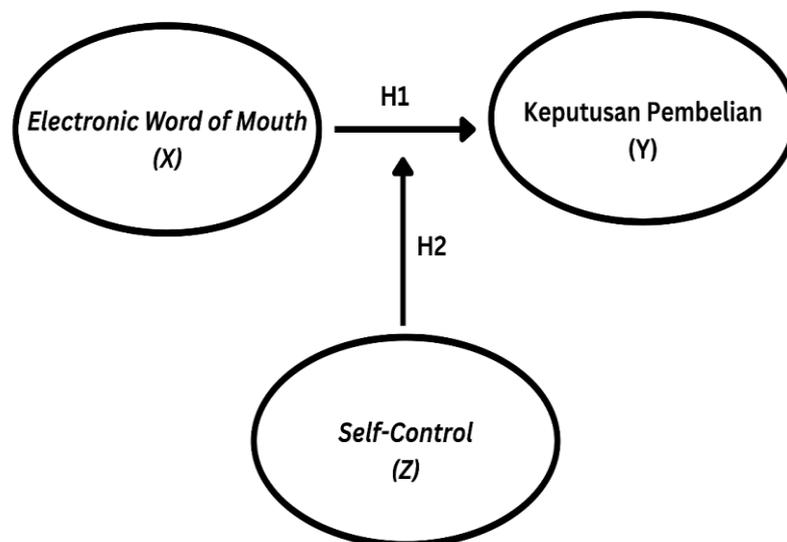
METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal explanatory design to examine the influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) as an independent variable on purchasing decisions as a dependent variable, moderated by self-control. This approach is suitable for analyzing causal relationships between latent variables through statistical hypothesis testing, as explained in the quantitative research framework that emphasizes empirical measurement and generalization (Sugiyono, 2021; Ferdinand, 2014). The Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method was chosen because it effectively handles moderation models with small to medium

samples and does not require data normality, making it ideal for the *e-commerce* context in Indonesia (Hair et al., 2017).

The main instrument is a 1-5 Likert scale-based questionnaire (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree), distributed through Google Forms to measure. The questionnaire was designed to collect primary data efficiently from a large number of respondents, ensuring reliability through convergent validity tests (loading factor ≥0.70; AVE ≥0.50) and reliability (composite reliability ≥0.70; Cronbach's alpha ≥0.70) (Sugiyono, 2017; Hair et al., 2017). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4, including evaluation of the outer model (validity and reliability), inner model (R-square), and bootstrapping (t-statistics ≥1.96; p-value ≤0.05) for direct and moderation hypothesis testing (Chin, 1998; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The population comprises all Indonesians who use *e-commerce* platforms and are exposed to e-WOM, selected due to the relevance of their experiences to the research variables. A sample of 100 respondents was drawn using the formula 5-10 times the number of indicators (10 indicators × 10 = 100), which is sufficient for generalization in SEM-PLS research with small-to-medium samples (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Ferdinand, 2014; Sanjaya et al., 2021). A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied with the following criteria: domiciled in Indonesia, at least 17 years old, having purchased and been exposed to e-WOM reviews via *e-commerce* in the last 6 months, ensuring the representation of active digital consumers (Sugiyono, 2017).

The procedure began with the development of a questionnaire instrument based on the literature, followed by *online* distribution via Google Form to eligible respondents during the specified research period. Data was collected primarily via survey, then processed in SmartPLS 4 through the PLS algorithm, bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples), and sequential model evaluation to verify the validity, reliability, and significance of the hypothesis (Emzir, 2022; Sudaryono, 2021; Hair et al., 2017). The entire process complied with research ethics with informed consent from respondents, ensuring data accuracy and generalizability to the Indonesian *e-commerce* user population (Sugiyono, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted on 100 respondents through the distribution of questionnaires, the characteristics of respondents in this study were obtained, including gender, age, occupation, domicile, frequently used *e-commerce* platforms, having made purchases and searched for information in the last 6 months through the *e-commerce* platform used to obtain object information.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Profile	Amount	%
Gender		
Man	10	10%
Woman	90	90%
Age		
17-24 years	72	72%
25-34 years old	19	19%
25-34 years old	2	2%
> 45 years	7	7%

Work		
Students	61	61%
Private sector employee	18	18%
Civil Servants/ASN	4	4%
Businessman	2	2%
Other	15	15%
Domicile		
Sumatra	8	8%
Java	44	44%
Kalimantan	4	4%
Sulawesi	2	2%
Bali & Nusa Tenggara	42	42%
Papua	-	-
E-Commerce Platform Frequently Used		
Shopee	72	72%
TikTok Shop	25	25%
Tokopedia	3	3%
Lazada	-	-
Other	-	-
Purchases Within the Last 6 Months		
Yes	100	100%
No	-	-
Searching for Information or Being Exposed to Product Reviews Online in the Last 6 Months		
Yes	100	100%
No	-	-

The results of this study were processed and analyzed using SmartPLS 4 which produced data such as Loading Factor, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and direct hypothesis testing (Direct Effect).
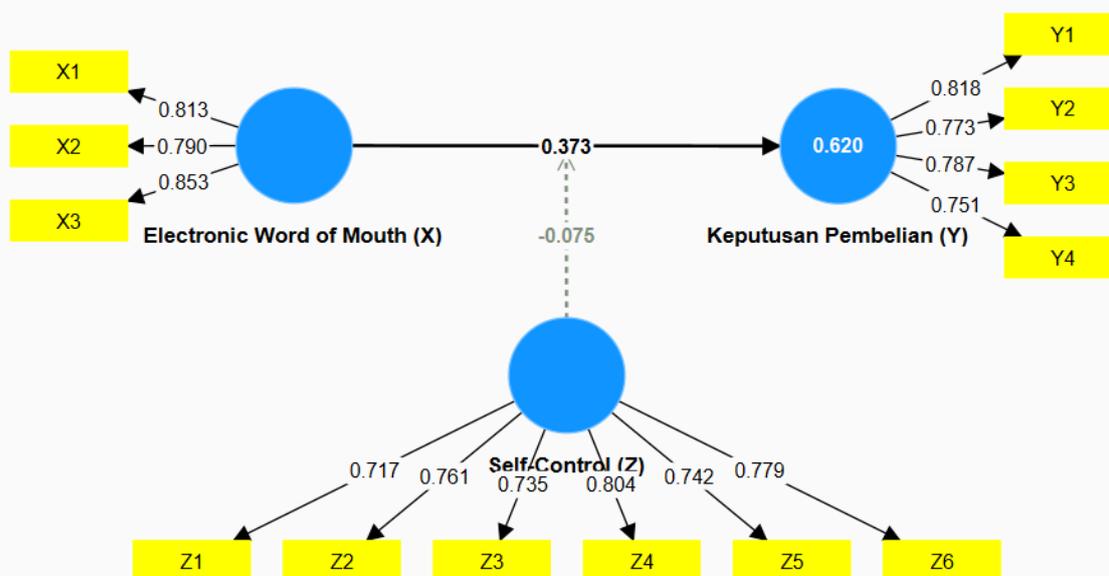
Table 2. Outer Loading Test Results

OUTERLOADING

	Electronic Word of Mouth (X)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Self-Control (Z)	Information
X1	0.813			Valid
X2	0.790			Valid
X3	0.853			Valid
Y1		0.818		Valid
Y2		0.773		Valid
Y3		0.787		Valid
Y4		0.751		Valid
Z1			0.717	Valid
Z2			0.761	Valid
Z3			0.735	Valid
Z4			0.804	Valid
Z5			0.742	Valid
Z6			0.779	Valid

Based onTable 2 above shows that the outer loading value for all indicators of the *Electronic Word of Mouth (*X), Purchasing Decision (Y) and Self-Control (Z) variables has a value of ≥ 0.70 so that all indicators can be declared valid in explaining the latent variables.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Electronic Word of Mouth (X)	0.755	0.759	0.860	0.671
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.789	0.790	0.863	0.612
Self-Control (Z)	0.851	0.857	0.889	0.573

Based on Table 3 above, the test results for all variables show Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed the minimum limit of 0.70, thus reflecting an adequate level of reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each variable is also within the range of 0.70.≥0.50, which indicates that convergent validity has been met. Therefore, all constructs in this study are declared valid and reliable, and are suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Table 4. R-Square Test Results

R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.620	0.610

Based on table 4.4 above, the R-square value (Purchasing Decision variable (Y) of 0.620 indicates that 62% of the variation in Purchasing Decision can be explained by the independent variables in the research model, while the remaining 38% is influenced by other variables outside the research model. The adjusted R-square value of 0.610 indicates a fairly stable model. Based on the criteria(Chin, 1998), this value is in the moderate to strong category, so the model has good explanatory power.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Electronic Word of Mouth (X) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.373	0.375	0.089	4,207	0.000

Self-Control (Z) x Electronic Word of Mouth (X) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	-0.075	-0.072	0.038	1,961	0.050

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 4, it can be explained as follows:

1. The results of the analysis show that the path coefficient value (Original Sample) is 0.373, with a t-statistics value of 4.207 with a minimum value of 0.373.≥1.96 and p-value 0.000 with the minimum value≤0.05. This means that *Electronic Word of Mouth* (X) has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. This means that the higher or better the *Electronic Word of Mouth* received by consumers, the higher the consumer's tendency to make purchasing decisions.

2. The results of the moderation interaction (*Self-Control* × E-WOM -> *Self-Control*) show a coefficient value of -0.075, with a t-statistic of 1.961 with a minimum value of≥1.96 and p-value 0.050 with the minimum value≤0.05. This indicates that *Self-Control* has a negative and significant effect at the 5% significance level as a moderating variable. The negative coefficient indicates that the higher a consumer's self-control, the weaker the influence of E-WOM on purchasing decisions.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth* on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the hypothesis test (bootstrapping) using SmartPLS 4, the path coefficient value was 0.373, the t-statistics value was 4.207 (≥1.96) and p-values of 0.000 (≤0.05). These results indicate that *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) has a positive and significant influence on Purchasing Decisions, so the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

A positive coefficient value (0.373) indicates that the higher the intensity, quality, and positive tendency of *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) received by consumers, the higher the consumer's tendency to make purchasing decisions on *e-commerce* platforms. This means that *online* reviews, recommendations from other users, and digitally available product information content can increase consumer confidence in making purchasing choices.

Theoretically, the results of this study are in line with the opinion(Hennig-thurau et al., 2004)which states that E-WOM is a form of communication between consumers that has a higher level of credibility than company marketing communications. In addition,(Cheung & Thadani, 2012)also emphasized that the quality and credibility of information in E-WOM can reduce uncertainty and increase consumer confidence before making a purchase.

The results of this study also support research(Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2024)who found that e-WOM significantly influences purchasing decisions on digital platforms. Thus, in the context of *e-commerce* consumers in Indonesia, *online* information in the form of reviews and recommendations has been shown to be a crucial factor in the evaluation and purchasing decision-making process.

These findings reinforce the fact that in the digital era, purchasing decisions are no longer solely influenced by product characteristics, but also by the experiences and opinions of other consumers spread *online*.

The Influence of *Electronic Word of Mouth* on Self-Control-Moderated Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the hypothesis test, the coefficient is negative at -0.075, indicating that *self-control* acts as a moderator that weakens the relationship between *electronic word of mouth* and purchasing decisions. This means that the higher the level of *self-control* a consumer has, the weaker the influence of *electronic word of mouth* on purchasing decisions.

Conceptually, these results are in line with the *self-regulation* theory put forward by(Baumeister et al., 2007)*Self-control* is a psychological resource that enables individuals to resist impulsive urges triggered by external stimuli. In the context of this research, these external stimuli are exposure to *online* reviews and recommendations, or *electronic word of mouth*.

Consumers with high *self-control* tend to:
1. Don't be tempted by positive reviews
2. More consideration of needs
3. Conduct an evaluation before acting

On the other hand, consumers with low *self-control* are more easily motivated by positive information and opinions spread *online*, so they make purchasing decisions more quickly.

The results of this study are consistent with research(Putri & Magistarina, 2023)as well as(Zuhroh et al., 2025)which found that *self-control* can suppress or weaken the influence of *electronic word of mouth* on consumer behavior. However, unlike previous research that focused on impulse buying, this study shows that even in the context of more rational purchasing decisions, *self-control* still plays a role in regulating an individual's response to digital information.

Overall, these findings indicate that although *Electronic Word of Mouth* has a strong influence on Purchasing Decisions, internal psychological factors such as *self-control* remain an important controlling mechanism in the consumer decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

This study found that *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on *e-commerce* consumer purchasing decisions in Indonesia, with a coefficient of 0.373 (t-statistics 4.207; p=0.000), while *self-control* moderates the relationship negatively and significantly (coefficient -0.075; t-statistics 1.961; p=0.050), so that the higher the self-control, the weaker the impact of E-WOM. The research model explains 62% of the variation in purchasing decisions (R-square 0.620), with all indicators valid (loading factor ≥0.70; AVE ≥0.50) and reliable (composite reliability ≥0.70). This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing E-WOM credibility as a key driver (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012) as well as the role of *self-control* in resisting external impulses (Baumeister et al., 2007; Zuhroh et al., 2025).

However, limitations of the study include the geographically and demographically limited sample of 100 respondents (the majority were women aged 17-24 in Java and Bali-Nusa Tenggara), requiring caution when generalizing, and the reliance on self-report data, which is susceptible to social bias. Suggestions for future research include expanding the national sample, including other variables such as FOMO or brand trust, and adopting a mixed-method approach for qualitative validation. Practically, *e-commerce* platforms like Shopee are advised to optimize their authentic review features to increase positive e-WOM, while *self-control* education through mindfulness content can help consumers avoid impulsive purchases, supporting responsible marketing strategies in the digital era.

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