



The Influence of Word-of-Mouth Communication on Purchasing Decisions for Depot Dua Legenda Food Products in Malang City

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Abstract

The increasingly competitive culinary business landscape demands that entrepreneurs adopt effective and efficient marketing strategies. Among various available strategies, Word of Mouth (WOM) communication has proven to be one of the main drivers of consumer purchasing decisions due to its honest, personal, and trustworthy nature. This study aims to analyze and measure the extent of the influence of WOM communication on consumer purchasing decisions, using Depot Dua Legenda as a case study—a contemporary culinary business with a unique concept in Malang City. This research employs an explanatory quantitative approach using a survey method. A sample of 100 consumers of Depot Dua Legenda was selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires using a 4-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, including validity testing, reliability testing, Pearson correlation, and linear regression. The research findings indicate that Word of Mouth communication has a positive and significant influence on the purchasing decisions of consumers at Depot Dua Legenda. A correlation coefficient of 0.708 indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. The regression analysis results produce the equation $Y = 7.072 + 0.565X$, meaning that every one-unit increase in WOM increases purchasing decisions by 0.565 units. Furthermore, the WOM variable can explain 50.1% of the variation in purchasing decisions ($R^2 = 0.501$). This finding reinforces the statement that WOM, especially when organic and amplified through digital media, plays a primary role in driving consumer decision-making processes in the modern era.

Keyword: Word of Mouth, Purchasing Decision, Consumer Behavior, Culinary Business, Quantitative Research.

1. Introduction

The culinary industry today is evolving dynamically, characterized by the emergence of numerous businesses offering similar products, resulting in highly competitive markets. In this saturated "red ocean" environment, a business's ability to maintain and grow its market share is crucial for long-term success. Effective and efficient marketing strategies are essential for gaining a competitive edge, with increasingly selective consumers at the core of strategic planning.

Among various marketing approaches, Word of Mouth (WoM) communication has proven to be highly effective, especially in the digital age. WoM includes both direct oral communication (offline) and online platforms (electronic Word of Mouth/e-WoM). Defined as a process where individuals or groups exchange personal recommendations about a product or service, WoM stands out for its natural, honest, and genuine nature, fostering a high level of trust among consumers.

Research by Ogilvy (2015) reveals that 74% of consumers consider WoM the most influential factor in their purchasing decisions. Nielsen (2015) data for Southeast Asia shows an even higher figure, with 88% of consumers specifically 89% in Indonesia placing the most trust in recommendations from people they know. This trend marks a shift in marketing paradigms, moving away from costly one-way "broadcast" approaches toward more organic and credible interpersonal communication.

A compelling case study of WoM's impact can be found at Depot Dua Legenda in Malang. Opened in August 2021, this eatery offers a unique concept serving Chinese-Javanese fusion cuisine in a simple, nostalgic atmosphere, contrasting with the proliferation of modern cafes. Despite employing an undifferentiated marketing strategy, Depot Dua Legenda has gained significant popularity, particularly among young consumers. Its success can be largely attributed to positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations shared both online (such as Google Reviews) and in direct conversations. These reviews go beyond describing dining experiences they actively promote, recommend, and even encourage others to visit, illustrating a complete WoM cycle from talking and promoting to selling.

The research gap addressed in this study lies in its unique approach to WoM, analyzing it across four dimensions Communication, Promotion, Recommendation, and Sales and linking them to Kotler & Armstrong's five-stage consumer decision-making process. This study treats WoM as a unified communication phenomenon, integrating both online (e-WoM) and offline (oral WoM) interactions rather than treating them separately.

The novelty of this research is twofold: first, it extends beyond viewing WoM merely as communication and recommendation, measuring its impact up to the "Sales" dimension, where consumers actively persuade others to make purchases a stage often referred to as "customer-driven selling." Second, it provides robust evidence of how e-WoM amplified through platforms like Google Reviews and Instagram significantly enhances the reach and impact of traditional oral WoM in today's digital landscape.



2. The Art of Research

a. Literatur review

1. Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory: This theory assumes that a stimulus in this case, Word of Mouth (WoM) communication in the form of verbal messages (spoken/written), nonverbal cues, images, or specific actions—will trigger the recipient (consumer) to produce a certain response, such as attention, interest, and ultimately, a purchase decision.
2. Word of Mouth (WoM) Communication: WoM is considered the most credible marketing tool because it is independent and honest (Hasan, 2010). Rosen (2014) defines it as any form of consumer conversation about a brand. Sernovitz (2012) details the elements of WoM in the Five T's: Talkers, Topics, Tools, Taking Part, and Tracking. Sumardy (2011) categorizes WoM into Organic (occurring naturally) and Amplified (company-designed). This study focuses on organic WoM arising from customer satisfaction at Depot Dua Legenda.
3. Purchase Decision: This is the outcome of an individual's selection process from various alternatives to fulfill a need (Engel et al.). Kotler & Armstrong (2016) map this process into five sequential stages: (1) Need Recognition, (2) Information Search, (3) Evaluation of Alternatives, (4) Purchase Decision, and (5) Post-Purchase Behavior. This process is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors.
4. Relationship between WoM and Purchase Decisions: WoM influences purchase decisions because it (1) serves as an independent and honest information source, (2) provides the benefit of firsthand experience, (3) is tailored to the receiver's interests, and (4) can spread rapidly through social networks (Hasan, 2010). WoM is most effective during the Information Search and Evaluation of Alternatives stages, helping to reduce purchase risk and uncertainty.

b. Hypothesis Development

- There is no significant influence between Word of Mouth and the purchase decision for food products at Depot Dua Legenda in Malang City.
- There is a significant influence between Word of Mouth and the purchase decision for food products at Depot Dua Legenda in Malang City.

3. Method

This study employs a quantitative method with an explanatory (causal) research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because the research aims to test the influence and prove the measurable, objective, and generalizable relationship between the independent variable Word of Mouth (X) and the dependent variable Purchase Decision (Y).

Population and Sample: The research population consists of customers of Depot Dua Legenda in Malang City. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using the Lemeshow formula for an unknown population (with a 95% confidence level, 10% margin of error, and a proportion of 0.5). The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling.

Research Instrument: A closed-ended questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree) was used. An even-numbered scale was chosen to avoid neutral responses and encourage respondents to indicate a clear tendency.

Data Analysis Techniques:

The analysis consists of three stages:

1. Instrument Testing:

- Validity test (Pearson correlation, where calculated $r >$ critical r -table value of 0.195).
- Reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha $>$ 0.6).

2. Descriptive Analysis:

Used to describe respondent characteristics and answer profiles.

3. Inferential Analysis:

- Pearson Correlation Test: To measure the strength and direction of the relationship.
- Simple Linear Regression Analysis: To determine the magnitude of the influence of variable X on Y and to create a prediction equation, supplemented by t-test and F-test.

Rationale for Method Selection:

The quantitative method is suitable for addressing causal research questions and hypotheses. Purposive sampling was used because the study requires respondents with specific, direct experience with the product. This technique enhances efficiency and ensures data quality from relevant respondents. A sample size of 100 is considered adequate for inferential statistical analyses such as linear regression and meets the requirements for statistical calculations.

3. Result

a. Respondent Criteria

In this study, the required respondent characteristics are:

- (1) Male or female aged ≥ 17 years (considered capable of understanding the questionnaire), and
- (2) Have ever purchased or tried products from Depot Dua Legenda.

Using the Lemeshow formula (95% confidence level, 10% precision, estimated proportion 0.5), the minimum required sample size is 96.04. For practicality, the sample size is rounded to 100 respondents.

b. Research Instrument Testing :

1. **Validity test :** The test uses a significance level (α) of 5%. The decision criteria are as follows: If $r_{\text{calculated}} > r_{\text{table}}$ (0.195), the item is valid.
If $r_{\text{calculated}} < r_{\text{table}}$ (0.195), the item is invalid.

After conducting a validity test on the available data, all items were found to be valid, with the results as follows::

Variabel	Item	r-calculated	r-table	Explanation
Communication Factor	X1_1	0.081	0.195	Valid
	X1_2	0.713		
Promotion Factor	X2_1	0.724	0.195	Valid
	X2_2	0.829		
Recommendation Factor	X3_1	0.594	0.195	Valid
	X3_2	0.821		
Selling Factor	X4_1	0.588	0.195	Valid
	X4_2	0.756		
	X4_3	0.759		

Tabel 1 : Validity Test Results for the Word of Mouth Variable

Variabel	Item	r-calculated	r-table	Explanation
Need Recognition Factor	Y1_1	0.719	0.195	Valid
	Y1_2	0.758		
Information Search Factor	Y2_1	0.685	0.195	Valid
Alternative Evaluation Factor	Y3_1	0.806	0.195	Valid
Purchase Decision Factor	Y4_1	0.731	0.195	Valid
Post-Purchase Behavior Factor	Y5_1	0.699	0.195	Valid
	Y5_2	0.734		



Tabel 2 : Validity Test Results for the Purchase Decision Variable

Based on the above tests, it is confirmed that all statement items for variables X and Y have calculated r-values > 0.195; therefore, they are declared valid.

Reliability Test:

The test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha (α), where a variable is considered reliable if $\alpha > 0.600$. The reliability test results show that all data are reliable, as follows:

Variabel	Item	Cronbach Alpha	Kritis Score	Explanation
Communication Factor	X1_1	0.868	0.6	Reliabel
	X1_2	0.876		
Promotion Factor	X2_1	0.875	0.6	Reliabel
	X2_2	0.865		
Recommendation Factor	X3_1	0.888	0.6	Reliabel
	X3_2	0.865		
Sales Factor	X4_1	0.886	0.6	Reliabel
	X4_2	0.877		
	X4_3	0.876		

Tabel 3 : Hasil Pengujian Reliabilitas Variabel Word of Mouth

Variabel	Item	Cronbach Alpha	Kritis Score	Explanation
Need Recognition Factor	Y1_1	0.828	0.6	Reliabel
	Y1_2	0.821		
Information Search Factor	Y2_1	0.840	0.6	Reliabel

	Y3_1	0.812	0.6	Reliabel
Alternative Evaluation Factor	Y4_1	0.839	0.6	Reliabel
	Y5_1	0.833	0.6	Reliabel
	Y5_2	0.825		

Table 4: Results of Reliability Test for Purchase Decision Variable

The reliability test results indicate that Cronbach's Alpha for all dimensions of variables X and Y is > 0.6 (ranging from 0.812 to 0.888), thus they are declared reliable.

Descriptive Analysis:

In this study, the Word of Mouth variable serves as the independent variable. The factors of the Word of Mouth variable used by the researcher in this study are: Communication, Promotion, Recommendation, and Sales..

Question Variabel X	Explanation	Answers				Average	Category
		STS	TS	S	SS		
1	I have talked about Depot Dua Legenda to others.			47	53	3,53	High
2	I have heard others talk about their satisfaction after enjoying the food products from Depot Dua Legenda.			61	39	3,39	High
3	I have received information and positive feedback about the service quality of Depot Dua Legenda from others.			53	47	3,47	High
4	I have promoted the food products of Depot Dua Legenda to others.		1	43	56	3,55	High
5	I received recommendations from others to try the food products of Depot Dua Legenda.		5	57	38	3,33	High
6	I have recommended the food products of Depot Dua Legenda to consumers who		6	40	54	3,48	High
	were looking for dining recommendations.						
7	I have used Depot Dua Legenda for both important and casual occasions.			30	70	3,7	High



8	I have successfully sold food products from Depot Dua Legenda to other consumers through "open pre-order services."		25	47	28	3,03	High
9	I have successfully persuaded and invited close friends and relatives to try the food products of Depot Dua Legenda.		19	48	33	3,14	High
Average						3,40	High

Tabel 5 : Hasil Analisis Deskriptif Variabel Word of Mouth

Based on Table 5 (also referred to as Table 4.5 above), it can be seen that the statement with the highest frequency is statement number 7, which confirms that all respondents in the questionnaire are customers of Depot Dua Legenda.

Next, the statement with the second-highest response is statement number 1, where 53 respondents (53%) strongly agreed and 47 respondents (47%) agreed. Statement number 1 is related to the communication factor. This indicates that all respondents agree that Word of Mouth communication has occurred, initiated by discussing the food products and service of Depot Dua Legenda among themselves.

Meanwhile, the statement with the highest mean score is statement number 4, which relates to the promotion dimension. It can be seen that 43 respondents (43%) agreed, 56 respondents (56%) strongly agreed, and only 1 respondent (1%) disagreed with this statement, meaning that this respondent has never promoted the food products of Depot Dua Legenda. Therefore, it can be concluded that regarding this factor, almost all respondents have promoted the food products and service of Depot Dua Legenda.

Through the nine questions in the questionnaire regarding the Word of Mouth variable, an interesting finding was identified related to statements number 8 and 9. For statement number 8, 25 respondents stated that they disagreed with the statement that they had successfully sold food products from Depot Dua Legenda to other customers. However, interestingly, for statement number 9, only 19 respondents disagreed with the statement: "I have successfully persuaded and invited close friends and relatives to try the food products of Depot Dua Legenda."

- a. Word of Mouth (X): The average score is 3.40 (High category). The dimension with the highest score is Promotion (3.55), followed by Communication (3.53). The Sales dimension has a relatively lower score (3.03-3.70), indicating that not all consumers reach the stage of actively selling the product.
- b. Purchase Decision (Y): The average score is 3.48 (High category). The Need Recognition dimension has the highest score (3.63), followed by Post-Purchase Behavior (3.60). This indicates that consumers feel Depot Dua Legenda fulfills their needs and they are satisfied, leading to a desire to return.

Inferential Analysis (Hypothesis Testing):

a. Correlation Test

The correlation coefficient (r) value is 0.708. This indicates a positive relationship, meaning that an increase in WoM is accompanied by an increase in purchase decisions. The relationship is strong, as the value of 0.708 falls into the

strong category (approaching 0.70). A significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant. These results are presented in the following table:

		Word of Mouth	Deals
Word of Mouth	Pearson Correlation	1	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Keputusan Pembelian	Pearson Correlation	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed).

Tabel 6 : Model Summary Regresi Simple Correlations

Simple Linear Regression Test

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.072	1.755		4.030	.000
	Word of Mouth	.565	.057	.708	9.924	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

Table 7: Coefficient Table

Regression Equation: Based on the coefficient table above, the Linear Regression Equation is as follows: $Y = a + bX$
 $Y = 7.072 + 0.565X$

Where: Constant ($a = 7.072$): If there is no WoM ($X = 0$), the consumer purchase decision level is at 7.072.

Regression Coefficient ($b = 0.565$): For every one-unit increase in the WoM score, the purchase decision score increases by 0.565 units. This positive coefficient indicates that the influence of variable X on Y is positive.

- t-test:
The calculated t-value (9.924) > t-table (1.987) with a significance of 0.000, meaning that WoM has a significant partial influence on the purchase decision.
- F-test:
The calculated F-value (98.479) > F-table (3.94) with a significance of 0.000, indicating that the regression model is suitable/significant for predicting purchase decisions.
- Coefficient of Determination (R-Square):
The R-Square value is 0.501 (from the correlation coefficient squared: 0.708^2). This means that variation in WoM can explain 50.1% of the variation in purchase decisions. The remaining 49.9% is influenced by other factors outside the model (such as price, location, facilities, or personal/cultural factors).



4. Discussion

The research findings confirm existing theories and previous findings regarding the power of WoM. In the context of Depot Dua Legenda, WoM serves as the Primary Driver: The analysis results prove the hypothesis is accepted. WoM has a significant and strong influence on purchase decisions at Depot Dua Legenda. Positive reviews, recommendations, and word-of-mouth promotion (both online and offline) have successfully created buzz, captured attention, reduced perceived risks, and ultimately encouraged consumers to make purchases.

Sustainable WoM Cycle: High post-purchase satisfaction levels (score 3.6) foster repeat purchases and simultaneously generate new material for subsequent positive WoM. This creates a virtuous cycle: Satisfaction → Positive WoM → New Purchase Decisions → New Satisfaction.

The Role of Digital Media as an Amplifier: Reviews on Google Maps and Instagram serve not only as e-WoM but also as tools that accelerate and expand the reach of traditional WoM conversations. Depot Dua Legenda greatly benefits from this organic e-WoM

However, WoM has its limitations: Despite its strength, WoM only explains 50.1% of purchase decisions. This means other factors—such as product quality, affordable pricing, unique atmosphere, and location remain nearly equally important. WoM functions as a trust builder and accelerator, but the business foundation must still be solid.

6. Conclusion

There is a significant and positive influence between Word of Mouth communication and the purchase decision for food products at Depot Dua Legenda in Malang City. This influence is strong, as indicated by a positive correlation coefficient of 0.708, meaning that the higher the intensity and quality of positive WoM, the greater the tendency for consumers to decide to purchase. WoM contributes 50.1% in explaining the variation in purchase decisions. The magnitude of this influence is demonstrated by the regression equation: $Y = 7.072 + 0.565X$.

Key aspects of WoM in this study:

Among the four dimensions of WoM, Promotion (giving positive evaluations) and Communication (sharing stories about Depot) are the most dominant activities among consumers, while the Sales dimension (inviting or actively selling) has a lower level of participation. The WoM process at Depot Dua Legenda operates organically and credibly, starting from sharing experiences, promoting, recommending, and to a certain extent, encouraging others to try. The "honesty" inherent in WoM is key to its acceptance by other consumers. The purchase decisions of Depot Dua Legenda consumers are strongly influenced by WoM information, particularly in fulfilling the information search and alternative evaluation stages. High post-purchase satisfaction also creates a sustainable WoM cycle.

This research strengthens empirical evidence that for culinary MSMEs like Depot Dua Legenda, managing and facilitating positive WoM with a focus on product quality, service, and unique consumer experiences can be a far more effective and efficient marketing strategy compared to conventional paid promotion strategies.

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