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# *Understanding E-WOM Toward Purchase Intention Among FPEB UPI 2023 Students Following @uppifess*

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*This study explores how Electronic Word of Mouth, or E-WOM, affects students' purchase intention within an anonymous social media environment, specifically the @uppifess confession account.*

# Background

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed marketing communication. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has become one of the most influential factors shaping consumer purchase decisions in the digital era (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

In Indonesia, confession-style accounts such as @uppifess serve as digital public spaces where students share opinions and product recommendations anonymously. However, anonymity creates a paradox, it may enhance honesty yet reduce information credibility. This duality raises a key question: to what extent does anonymous E-WOM influence purchase intention, and which elements determine its effectiveness?

# Theoretical Framework

E-WOM refers to online communication in which consumers express positive or negative opinions about a product or brand. It has four essential dimensions:

- Credibility: The extent to which information is perceived as trustworthy and believable.
- Quality: The accuracy, clarity, and usefulness of the information shared.
- Quantity: The number or frequency of reviews and recommendations.
- Valence: The tone of the message, whether it is positive, neutral, or negative.

Meanwhile, purchase intention reflects the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product after being exposed to such information. It often follows the AIDA model: attention, interest, desire, and action.

# Research Methodology

This study employed a **quantitative approach** with a **descriptive-correlational** design. The research population consisted of 636 students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Education (FPEB), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, class of 2023. A total of 243 respondents were selected using **purposive sampling techniques**. The research instrument was a **structured questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale (1–5)**, comprising 35 statement items designed to measure four dimensions of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and the variable of purchase intention.

Validity testing was conducted through **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**, with all factor loadings exceeding the threshold value of 0.5, while reliability was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha**, which achieved values greater than 0.7. Data analysis was performed using variance-based **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS 4.0** software to examine the causal relationships among the research variables.


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# Respondent Profile

The majority of respondents were female (64.2%) and between 19 and 21 years of age. Most participants were enrolled in the Management program (28.4%), followed by Accounting (24.7%), Economics Education (22.2%), Accounting Education (14.4%), and Business Education (10.3%).

Regarding media usage intensity, 78.6% of respondents reported accessing the @uppifess account on a daily basis, while 68.7% had read product or service recommendations shared on the platform. Nevertheless, only 36.6% of them had proceeded to make an actual purchase after reading these recommendations, suggesting a noticeable disparity between exposure to E-WOM and the realization of purchasing behavior.

# Validity and Reliability

| Variable | AVE | Cronbach's Alpha | CR |
|---|---|---|---|
| E-WOM Credibility | 0.728 | 0.897 | 0.912 |
| E-WOM Quality | 0.694 | 0.878 | 0.889 |
| E-WOM Quantity | 0.712 | 0.912 | 0.924 |
| E-WOM Valence | 0.681 | 0.834 | 0.856 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.743 | 0.889 | 0.903 |

All values exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.5 for AVE and 0.7 for reliability, confirming that our measurement instruments were both valid and reliable.

This ensures that the constructs truly represent what they are intended to measure.

# Structural Model Analysis Results

| Relationship | Path Coefficient | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credibility → Purchase Intention | 0.389 | 0.000 | significant |
| Quality → Purchase Intention | 0.287 | 0.000 | significant |
| Quantity → Purchase Intention | 0.156 | 0.019 | significant |
| Valence → Purchase Intention | -0.198 | 0.002 | significant (negatif) |

The results is among all dimensions, credibility had the most significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.389$; $p < 0.001$), followed by quality ($\beta = 0.287$; $p < 0.001$) and quantity ($\beta = 0.156$; $p < 0.05$). Interestingly, valence showed a significant negative relationship ($\beta = -0.198$; $p < 0.01$), suggesting that overly positive messages can reduce trust and lower purchase intention by raising doubts about the authenticity of the recommendations.

# Discussion

The analysis reveals that in anonymous environments, trust becomes the central factor driving purchase intention. Students tend to rely on the credibility of the message rather than the identity of the sender.

Recommendations that include specific personal experiences, detailed product information, and balanced arguments (both advantages and disadvantages) are perceived as more honest and persuasive.

On the other hand, messages that sound excessively promotional or lack concrete details are often dismissed as fake or paid endorsements. This reflects a higher level of digital skepticism among young consumers when interacting within anonymous online spaces.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, this study confirms that E-WOM significantly influences purchase intention, even within anonymous digital environments. Among the four dimensions, credibility has the strongest positive effect, followed by quality and quantity, whereas positive valence that appears exaggerated can have a counterproductive impact.

The unique context of anonymity shapes how information is perceived and trusted. Consumers tend to prefer realistic and balanced messages over idealized ones.

Future research is encouraged to explore psychological factors—such as trust formation, skepticism, and peer influence—and to develop social verification mechanisms that could strengthen E-WOM's effectiveness on anonymous platforms like @uppifess.

# Thank You

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