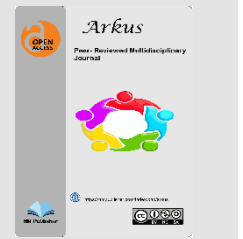




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The Effect of E-WOM on Green Purchase Behavior

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ABSTRACT

E-Wom, as a form of marketing communication, makes many contributions to marketing activities. E-Wom, in several previous studies, showed a contribution to consumer behavior. This study links the concept of E-Wom with green products and looks at its effect on Green Purchase Behavior. Green product is currently a much-discussed issue, given the increasingly felt impact of global warming. Global warming has finally forced corporates and consumers to be wise in choosing products. The method used in this research is an explanatory quantitative method, with a data collection tool in the form of a questionnaire. Respondents in this study were late adolescents and early adults in Surabaya and its surroundings. The results of this study indicate that E-Wom about green products has a significant influence on green purchase behavior. The influence of E-Wom as a single factor is not that strong. Another finding recorded in this study is the high value of the share information product that occurs. Most of the respondents were reluctant to start a chat about product reviews, they would provide arguments if they had started, and the E-Wom in this study was more on a personal level.

1. Introduction

Environmentally friendly products and services or better known as green products are one of the corporate answers to various environmental issues that are currently developing. According to de Medeiros & Ribeiro¹, green products can provide added value in the long term, reduce pressure, and are a form of client responsibility to the environment without having to reduce the use value of a product. The existence of green products can answer consumer anxiety about the product variants consumed. Green product is a meeting point that benefits corporates, consumers, and NGOs. Chan² states that the character of consumers who use green products is divided into two groups, namely heavy-light consumers. Heavy consumers are well educated, have high incomes, and believe green products suit the environment and health. Light consumers are a group

of consumers who make occasional purchases. Green product consumers are influenced by several things, including group collectivity, friendship, and green attitude^{2,3} Consumers who choose green products to reflect the values they understand.

The positive value of green products is an advantage to be introduced to consumer segmentation appropriately. Determining the appropriate marketing communication program can help consumers widely accept green products. Integrated marketing communication is considered capable of bringing green products to be known better. Integrated Marketing Communication offers various tools for corporates to be used as a tool to introduce and sell green products. Based on the consumer character that is the segmentation of green products, electronic word of mouth is a tool that is considered appropriate, given its superior credibility in it. Electronic Word of Mouth

or E-WOM is the latest word-of-mouth concept. WOM is exchanging information, communication, or conversation between two or more individuals.⁴ The level or levels of WOM from a communication point of view can be in two contexts, namely, personal and impersonal. Sources of information from WOM that occur personally come from family, acquaintances, friends, or friends, while those that are impersonal come from expert reviews, consumer reviews, or articles.⁴

Technological developments make WOM also grow. WOM, which initially only occurred in forums or in the form of direct conversations between individuals, is now also occurring in the online realm. WOM that occurs on the internet is called electronic word of mouth or E-WOM. E-WOM can appear in various forms, including blogs, review sites, email, and various other forms of private chat.⁵ E-Wom can arise as a result of other marketing activities such as advertising, PR, or event marketing. The development of WOM into E-WOM makes this concept have many intersections with viral marketing and buzz marketing. The most distinctive thing about E-WOM compared to the other two concepts lies in its independent and informal sides.⁴ Even now, experts are still debating the differences in the three concepts above because there are so many slices.

Social media helps e-Wom grow rapidly. E-WOM in social media has three main aspects, namely opinion leadership, opinion seeking, and pass-along behavior.⁵ Opinion leaders are individuals who start discussing a theme or become referrals; opinion seeking is related to information seekers who need referrals, while pass-along behavior is a pattern of passing information from one individual to another. These three aspects are a form of reflection of the conventional concept of WOM, namely intensity, valency, and word content.⁴ The development of the concept of WOM shows that the internet reinforces the existence of WOM and ushers in various new forms.

E-WOM is increasingly providing a positive value to marketing communication activities when applied to countries that adhere to a high collectivity culture.

Collectivity is the individual level in its value orientation.³ Indonesia is a country with a high level of collectivity. Pezzuti & Leonhardt⁶ explains that countries with high collectivity show high value in information-sharing activities but are not positively related to the way individuals evaluate a product. Sharing product information is a form of E-Wom that is widely practiced by various groups in countries with high collectivity. Yeonshin & Choi³ previously mentioned that there is a positive value drawn between collectivity and E-WOM related to caring for the environment and green purchase behavior. Yeonshin & Choi's³ emphasis on the relationship between collectivity and E-Wom is related to a form of perceived consumer effectiveness that is closely connected with the self-efficacy of an individual in his group. Collectivity alone is not enough to have a positive influence on environmental awareness; individuals must believe that they are capable of making changes to a situation (self-efficacy). Concrete self-efficacy will manifest in perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), and when PCE is related to environmental concerns, it is likely that consumers' desire to purchase green products will increase.

One of the effects of E-Wom to be achieved in a marketing communication activity is buying behavior. Likewise, in green product marketing communication activities, of course, the desired final value is green product purchasing behavior which is closely related to the concept of Green Purchase Behavior. Mirani et al. state that green purchase behavior (GPB) or green buying behavior is the act of buying products that are carried out by considering aspects of environmental needs and avoiding products that are harmful to the environment. The young group is one of the segments that are believed to be more easily attracted to and adapt to the concept of green purchase behavior. GPB is carried out on the principles of sustainability, future-oriented, and social benefits.³ Green purchase behavior must begin with intention first. The intention to make a purchase is influenced by several factors, including cognitive, which includes knowledge and concern⁷ Integrating cognitive concepts and self-

efficacy is predicted to bring positive value to the green product or GPB purchasing behavior.

This study tries to see that E-WOM related to green products will have an influence on buying behavior of green products. Based on the explanation above, we can draw a common thread that E-WOM is able to provide a positive value to communication marketing activities carried out in collective countries, but it is different from green products. There are many factors that influence the purchase of green products, including price and concern for the environment.

2. Methods

This research uses quantitative methods. Quantitative research leads to empirical research that is carried out deductively by looking for causal relationships and generalizing the results.⁸ The type of research used belongs to explanatory research. Explanative research will look at the causal relationship between the independent variables and

the dependent variable.⁹ Researchers will look at the causal relationship depicted in the form of the influence of E-Wom on Green Purchase Behavior.

The data collection method will be carried out by survey. Surveys are a data collection method that is considered capable of generalizing the final results of a study.¹⁰ The survey in this study was conducted online using the g-form. The survey results will be interpreted descriptively and explanatively. The population in this study is a group of late adolescents and early adults in the East Java region. Based on calculations using the Slovin and Yamane formula, a minimum sample of 100 people is taken. The results of filling out the questionnaire will be processed by T-test analysis and simple linear regression to see the effect. The questionnaire in this study is a derived form of the indicators in two variables, namely E-Wom and Green Purchase Behavior.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of questionnaire results.

| Variables | Dimensions | Questions | Means | Mode | Mean of variables |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-------------------|
| E-Wom | Intensity & opinion leadership | 1 | 3.33 | 2 | 3.82 |
| | | 2 | 3.05 | 3 | |
| | | 3 | 3.44 | 3 | |
| | | 4 | 3.45 | 4 | |
| | Valency | 5 | 4.27 | 5 | |
| | | 6 | 4.3 | 5 | |
| | | 7 | 3.62 | 4 | |
| | | 8 | 4.11 | 5 | |
| | | 9 | 4.51 | 5 | |
| | E-Wom content | 10 | 3.87 | 4 | |
| | | 11 | 3.49 | 4 | |
| | Information seeking | 12 | 3.76 | 4 | |
| | | 13 | 4.16 | 5 | |
| | | 14 | 3.92 | 5 | |
| | | 15 | 3.98 | 4 | |
| Green purchase behavior (GPB) | | 16 | 3.34 | 3 | 3,702 |
| | | 17 | 3.52 | 3 | |
| | | 18 | 3.88 | 3 | |
| | | 19 | 3.84 | 3 | |
| | | 20 | 3.93 | 5 | |

The total number of questionnaires in this study was 20. In the distribution of the initial questionnaire, there were a total of 22 questions, but two questions

were dropped after the validity test. Respondents in this study 70% were students, and the other 30% were workers. The age range of respondents in this study

was 17-42 years. The results of filling out the questionnaire show that the lowest mean independent variable is in the first dimension with the question "I have reviewed products that have environmentally friendly labels". This shows that respondents are not aware of the products they share, whether these products are classified as environmentally friendly products or not. In addition, the first question mode, namely "reviewing a product online is what I usually do" is low, namely at point 2. Respondents apparently did not really like to start reviewing products first. The mode and mean numbers, which tend to be low, are in the first E-Wom indicator, which is related to intensity and opinion leadership. The opposite results are shown in the other three indicators. The indicator for information seeking shows the mean and mode at number 3 and above. This indicates that in the context of E-Wom, respondents are more comfortable seeking information than having to become opinion leaders. The main characteristics of an opinion leader are to initiate discussions, spark ideas, and lead discussions in a forum. An opinion leader usually also gives strong opinions and tends to be dominant. Even in the online realm, opinion leaders tend to dominate. However, this did not appear in the respondents' answers. The character of opinion-seeking is very dominant in the respondents' answers. This picture of the domination of opinion-seeking answers emerges from the respondents' answers regarding the search for recommendations and information with a mean that tends to be high. This is very different from the character of the opinion leader. The evenly distributed mean and mode are indicated by the dependent variable. This stable value indicates that not much difference of opinion occurred in filling out the questionnaire. Almost all respondents agree that GPB is an essential thing that needs to be done. In the dependent variable, there is no dimension that starts the indicator. The indicators in this variable are the effort expended to obtain green products, comparisons between products, and forms of avoidance of products that are considered detrimental to the environment.

E-WOM mapping among late adolescents and young adults in Surabaya and surrounding areas

Word of mouth as a marketing communication concept has been used for a long time. The existence of the internet has led Wom to have another form, namely E-WOM. This change does not change the basic concept. Goyette et al. state that the three concepts of WOM that have so far been used to measure effectiveness and influence are intensity, valency, and WOM content. Intensity is closely related to how often a person discusses a product and talks about it with other people. Valency refers to the tendency of positive or negative discussions about a product, discussions that lead to recommendations, and pride. Finally, Wom content discusses the technical details of purchases, prices, product quality, and ease of transaction. The existence of the internet makes the term Wom change to E-Wom. This change is, of course, followed by changes to the elements in it.

New elements in E-Wom in SNS include opinion leadership, opinion seeking, and pass-along behavior.⁵ The character of opinion leadership is similar to the concept of intensity in conventional Word of Mouth. Slices of intensity and opinion leadership are from how someone starts to do a review to how often an individual disseminates that information. Valency also intersects with opinion leadership; valency discussing recommendations indicates that an individual is an opinion leader. Wom content intersects with opinion-seeking. Wom content contains online discussions, price discussions, quality, and so on. Meanwhile, opinion-seeking is an individual activity that focuses on finding detailed product specifications. Based on the questionnaire that has been compiled, it can be seen what role the respondents play in E-Wom related to green products. The adaptation of the concept of Wom to E-Wom is very relevant to discuss in this article. This form of adaptation is used in formulating the questionnaire.

The results of descriptive calculations show that the E-Wom dimension that most respondents agree on is E-Wom Content. Respondents are more likely to like action together to comment on the product that has

been reviewed, not to start the review first. Information-seeking references in E-Wom include blogs, review forums⁵ as well as forms of personal communication by directly asking relatives or friends. The mean and mode values of the valency indicators tend to be stable. This indicates that respondents will tend to give both positive and negative sentiments to the green products they try. Respondents also had to convince themselves by trying a product by trying it first before giving recommendations. The second mapping shows the level of E-Wom that occurs in respondents. In fact, E-Wom cannot stand alone but can occur due to other communication marketing activities. However, E-Wom also requires that conversations related to a product must occur naturally, without corporate intervention. Consumers may not receive benefits when conducting a review.⁴ E-Wom as a marketing communication strategy can be a start or even an impact on other marketing communication activities. This uniqueness makes E-Wom different. The character of E-Wom will also vary for each product. In green products, consumers tend to seek information first before giving a review. The context of communication that occurs in E-Wom can be classified into two, namely, personal and impersonal.⁴ The descriptive results show that respondents prefer the realm of personal communication and do not like starting chats in a forum.

The effect of E-WOM on green purchase behavior

The initial assumptions of this study are trying to see whether there is an influence or how much influence E-Wom has on Green Purchase Behavior. E-Wom as a marketing communication strategy has several impacts, including buying interest to purchasing decisions.^{4,5,11} The differentiator in this study is when the concept of E-WOM is associated with green products, will the results be the same, or will they be different? Efforts made to determine this influence certainly cannot be separated from other factors, such as collectivism. Previous research has shown that E-Wom can be influenced by collectivism.⁶

This study uses regression analysis to determine whether there is influence or how big the influence is if it does occur. Before carrying out the regression analysis, the researcher conducted two classic assumption tests, namely normality and linearity. Based on the results of the normality test, the research data is declared normal. The significance value of $0.2 > 0.05$. A significance value greater than the critical point of 0.05 indicates that the data is normally distributed. If the data has been proven to be normal, then the next classic assumption test is the linearity test. The linearity test with a significance value of 0.177 indicates a linear value because it is greater than the critical significance point of 0.05. Based on these two classic assumption tests, the data can be processed in further calculations, namely hypothesis testing and simple linear regression testing.

The hypothesis test shows that there is a significant relationship between E-Wom and GPB. The results of the hypothesis test with the product moment formula show that the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$, and the value of r count is $0.616 > r$ table (0.195). It is stated that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This relationship shows a number of 0.616 and is classified as a strong relationship. The simple linear regression equation is $Y = 3.148 + 0.268 X$. This regression equation can be interpreted that one change in the value of X or the independent variable (E-Wom), then the dependent variable (GPB) will be affected by 0.268 times. Based on the calculation results above, it can be concluded that there is an influence exerted by E-Wom on GPB. This effect signifies a positive relationship between the two variables. E-Wom activities carried out by consumers provide reinforcement to other marketing communication activities to produce purchasing behavior, including green purchase behavior.

The concept of green purchase behavior (GPB) is a product purchasing activity that takes environmental factors into account. GPB can be influenced by various factors, including collectivism, environmental concern, and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE).³

GPB also cannot appear only with external factors but requires cognitive factors, including knowledge and concern.⁷ Several studies on GPB mutually support each other, so in general, it can be described that the formation of GPB is the result of the influence of individual internal and external factors. The final GPB results will also be divided into two categories, heavy and light. The heavy group certainly has cognitive factors that are more involved than the light group. GPB, which was affected by the existence of E-Wom, which discussed green products, showed that the respondents actually cared about environmental conditions. Yeonshin & Choi stated that although groups and various other factors lead to environmental concern values, a person's behavior will not lead to environmental concern if there is no self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief to take action in solving problems. Yeonshin & Choi's research is related to collectivity factors that influence GPB when accompanied by self-efficacy manifested in perceived effective consumers. This is considered relevant to this research, considering that E-Wom cannot be used as the sole factor to encourage consumers to do GPB. The context of research conducted in Indonesia as a country with collectivity certainly strengthens the influence factor exerted by E-Wom on GPB. However, this assumption needs further proof with subsequent research. Another finding that is highlighted in this article is the existence of information-sharing activities carried out in E-Wom. This information-sharing activity shows a fairly high number. This supports previous research that information product sharing in collectivist countries tends to be high.⁶

4. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that E-Wom has a significant influence on Green Purchase Behavior (GPB). The influence exerted by E-Wom on GPB directly is 0.268 times, so when the independent variable changes one unit digit, the dependent variable will be affected by 0.268 times. Changes that occur in the GPB tend not to be large. This happens because there are many factors other than E-Wom that can

influence individuals to make purchases, including green purchase behavior.

Indonesia, as a country that adheres to collectivity, indirectly influences the results of filling out the questionnaire by respondents. The collectivity value that appears in the research can be interpreted from the high desire of individuals to share product information. This character describes the behavior of a collective society. Future research is expected to involve collectivity and E-Wom together to see the effect on green purchase intention and green purchase behavior.

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