Electronic Word of Mouth at Online Travel Agent Traveloka

Suwindy Hutasoit
swindyhts01@gmail.com

Siti Zakiah
kszakiah@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Telkom University

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze positive e-WOM on Online Travel Agent Traveloka and negative e-WOM on Online Travel Agent Traveloka. This research type uses qualitative research carried out on Traveloka users who are in Bandung City and have made purchases at the Traveloka online travel agent. The sources of informants in this research are the OTA Traveloka user community and OTA Traveloka admins. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, interviews, and documentation. To find out E-WOM at Online Travel Agent (OTA) Traveloka, researchers have distributed questionnaires to 6 respondents. The researchers use dimensions and indicators to measure E-WOM. In the intensity dimension, are 3 indicators used, including the frequency of accessing Traveloka user information, the frequency of interaction between Traveloka users, and the number of reviews written by Traveloka users. Positive E-WOM is essential in building a positive brand image and increasing user trust in Traveloka. Negative E-WOM can reduce the level of user trust in Traveloka. Negative reviews signal a problem or dissatisfaction with the service or product, affecting the overall perception of the platform's credibility.
Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth, Online Travel Agent, Purchasing Decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Entering the digital era, information and communication facilities have developed rapidly along with technological advances. It is supported by the number of internet users increasing yearly. A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) noted that internet users in Indonesia reached 78.19% in 2023 or 215 million people. Compared to the previous survey, there was an increase in internet users by 1.17% (APJII, 2023). The Internetidely uses the Internet as a means of facilitating activities. One internet service that makes activities easier is the Online Travel Agent.

An Online Travel Agent (OTA) is a travel agent that acts as an online marketing medium via a website (Hendriyati, 2019). OTA manages the OTA website and aims to market various accommodations from hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses, and villas. Websites are used as "shops" to offer tourism products to

potential tourists (Florence et al., 2019). If, in the past, purchasing plane tickets, hotels, tourist destinations, etc., was done directly and took quite a lot of time, now with the Online Travel Agent, the above activities can be done in just a few minutes and can even alternate with other activities.

The development of the times is in line with the development of Online Travel Agents; now, many Online Travel Agent websites and applications are increasing and in demand by the public, including Traveloka, Tiket.com, Agoda, Booking.com, and so on. Traveloka is one Online Travel Agent service platform that is much more popular with the public than other OTAs. Traveloka is a unicorn startup from Indonesia operating in several Asian countries. Traveloka's complete product portfolio includes transportation booking services such as plane tickets, buses, trains, car rentals, airport transfers, and access to various accommodation options in Southeast Asia.

Electronic word of mouth or e-WOM is an opinion, both positive and negative, expressed by previous consumers regarding products or services or companies of a general nature via internet media (Thurau in Adriatic & Indriani, 2017: 3). The effectiveness of electronic word of mouth is better than word of mouth. Mouth in the offline world, because of greater accessibility and high reach, consumers use internet media to convey their experiences of a product or service that they have personally experienced.

The increase in Traveloka visitors is also influenced by previous consumers' electronic word of mouth. Consumer responses can be positive or negative, which cannot be avoided because consumers judge from different points of view. Other consumers can also see these responses to serve as an evaluation in determining purchasing decisions. E-WOM also influences the increase or decrease in sales or purchases of products or services marketed in the Traveloka application. With reviews given, both positive and negative, this becomes a problem for consumers to determine purchasing decisions. Consumers must determine which reviews to trust. The comments and review features on the website regarding the products or services being sold will be helpful information for potential consumers. Previous research by Khaerunnisa and Ramantoko (2022) shows that electronic word of mouth positively impacts purchasing decisions. The better the e-WOM, the better the purchasing decision.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

In research written by Dewi (2017) with the title E-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) Analysis for Consumers in Purchasing Notebooks on Online Shopping Sites using a qualitative descriptive method, it was revealed that the results of interviews from 4 informants stated that the ease and diversity of notebook choices offered by the site online shopping, causing informants to tend to prefer using online

shopping sites compared to other channels such as shopping at official stores or retailers that sell notebook products. The online review menu on a sales page is one source of information that informants can use in determining notebook product selection.

Then, in research written by Wardani (2023) with the title E-Trust and E-Wom Analysis of E-Loyalty among Tokopedia Users in Surabaya using quantitative descriptive methods, it is revealed that the E Trust variable contributes to E Loyalty, this proves that Trust is getting higher can increase consumer loyalty. E Wom contributes to E Loyalty, proving that electronic word of mouth, both positive and negative, is carried out from various forms of information about Tokopedia available on various electronic platforms/media.

Then, in research written by Hadiono et al. (2017) with the title Analysis of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) in Decisions to Stay: Case Study of the Influence of e-WOM on Guests' Decisions to Stay at Richland Glamping Bali using quantitative descriptive methods revealed that the research results This is in the form of data on negative feelings and Extraversion/Positive Self-Enhancement motives. This data can be used to support internet users' decisions in choosing a good internet service provider.

Furthermore, research written by Astawa et al. (2023) with the title The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions (Case Study at Favehotel Hyper Square Bandung) using quantitative descriptive methods revealed that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on guest decisions. Tourists staying at Rich Land Glamping Bali with a contribution of 31.6%. This research concludes that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on guests' decision to stay overnight. Suggestions from researchers for management are that the Electronic Word of Mouth owned by Richland Glamping Bali can be used as a strategy to influence tourists' decisions to stay overnight so that room occupancy rates can increase.

Finally, research written by Erdiansyah & Andrew (2021) with the title Analysis of the Influence of E-WOM, Online Reviews, and Information Quality on Purchase Interest in the Tokopedia marketplace, quantitative descriptive methods revealed that the research found that electronic word of mouth, online reviews, and Information quality influences buying interest among students in Jakarta by 46%, while 54% is influenced by other factors not examined in this research.

Thus, this research still has a gap in the research objective, namely the Traveloka Online Travel Agent, where research related to analysis has not yet been carried out *through electronic word of mouth*(e-WOM) on purchasing decisions.

Online Travel Agent

According to Hasan (2013), an online travel agent (OTA) is a travel agent that acts as a medium for online promotion and sales via a website. Currently, almost all companies have websites to promote products to consumers. Types of websites vary according to their purpose and content. Websites are used as a medium to offer products. According to Hasan (2013), Online Travel Agents are websites managed by OTAs that provide facilities and distribution for consumers to make reservations on the website. In this case, the website manager carries out online promotions in the form of affiliate marketing.

Electronic Word of Mouth

Hennig–Thurau et. al., (2004), stated that electronic word of mouth is a positive or negative statement made by potential or former customers about a product or company, which is aimed at many people or institutions via the Internet to Sari (2017: 97), electronic word-of-mouth (currently) is different from traditional word-of-mouth (previously). These differences can be seen from the following: First, in traditional word-of-mouth, information exchange occurs directly (face-to-face). However, in electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), the natural exchange of information occurs electronically (without face-to-face communication). Second, in traditional word-of-mouth, the information provider provides information to recipients who find out about the information needed and pay attention to the information (it is solicited). However, in electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), the information provider's referrals are usually unsolicited, meaning that they provide or send information to recipients who are not looking for the information and have no interest in it.

According to Goyette et al. in Sari et al. (2017: 100-101), electronic word of mouth is divided into 4 dimensions, including:
  a. *intensity*
     Intensity in e-WOM is the number of opinions consumers write on a social networking site. Indicators of Intensity include: 1)Frequency of accessing information from social networking sites. 2) Frequency of interaction with social networking site users. 3) There is a large number of reviews written by users of social networking sites.
  b. *Valence of Options*
     It is a consumer's positive or negative opinion regarding a product, service, or brand. Valence of Opinion has two characteristics, namely negative and positive. Valence of Opinion includes: 1) *Positive Valence* is a positive consumer opinion regarding products, services, and brands. 2) Negative Valence is a negative consumer opinion regarding products, services, and brands.

  c. *Content*
     Content is the information on social networking sites relating to products and services. Content indicators include: 1) Information on product choices, 2) Information on product quality, 3) Information regarding

prices, 4) Information regarding security in transactions on the social networking sites provided

METHOD

Design and Samples

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research. This research chose a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) phenomenon at Traveloka's Online Travel Agent (OTA). A qualitative approach allows researchers to explore and understand customers' context, meaning, and perceptions regarding their experiences with Traveloka in more detail. By collecting data through interviews, observations, and text analysis, this research can unearth substantial qualitative information, reveal nuances and factors that may be difficult to measure quantitatively and provide richer insights into how E-WOM influences consumer perceptions and decisions in the context of OTA services.

Table 3.1 Interview Guidelines

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Informant Source
Electronic Word Of Mouth	intensity	Frequency of accessing information from social networking sites	Public
		Frequency of interaction with social networking site users	Public
		The large number of reviews written by users of social networking sites	Public
	Valence of Options	*Positive Valence*	Public
		Negative Valence	Public
	Content	Product selection information	Public
		Product quality information	Public
		Information regarding prices	Public
		Information related to security in transactions on	Public

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Informant Source
		social networking sites is provided	

Informant Source
1. *Key informant*: Community of Traveloka OTA users.
2. Assistant informant: OTA Traveloka Admin.

Instruments and Procedures

The instrument in qualitative research is the researcher himself, but after the focus of the research becomes apparent, the research instrument may be developed in a simple way that is expected to be able to complete the data and compare data that has been found through observation and interviews (Sugiyono, 2019). The instruments in this research are as follows: 1) Instrument keys: The researcher himself acts as the primary tool in research. 2) Other instruments include interview guidelines, interview recording equipment, and image-taking equipment (photo and video cameras).

Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research because the main aim is to obtain data. Without knowing data collection techniques, researchers will not get data that meets the established data standards (Sugiyono, 2019). 1) Observation: Observation is the basis of all science. Scientists can only work based on data, namely facts about reality obtained through observation. This research uses observations using the official OTA Traveloka application or website (Sugiyono, 2019). 2) Interview: An interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers to construct meaning on a particular topic. Interviews are used as a data collection technique if the researcher wants to conduct a preliminary study to find problems that must be researched, but also if the researcher wants to know things from the respondents in more depth. The interview that will be conducted in this research uses a structured interview type; the researcher prepares several vital questions to guide the interview question and answer process. Interviews were conducted with OTA Traveloka admins and the community using the OTA Traveloka application (Sugiyono, 2019). 3) Documentation: Documents complement the use of observation and interview methods in this research. Through this documentation technique, researchers collect data in the form of notes, photos, and video recordings that are needed in the field that are closely related to the object being studied (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data Analysis

1. *Data reduction*(Data reduction)
   Reducing data means summarizing, selecting the main things, focusing on the essential things, and looking for themes and patterns. In this way, the

reduced data will provide a clearer picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data and search for it if necessary.

2. *Data display*(Data presentation)
   After the data has been reduced, the next step is to display the data. In qualitative research, the presentation of this data can be done in the form of tables, graphs, phi charts, pictograms, and the like. Presenting this data will be organized and arranged in a relationship pattern, making it easier to understand.

3. *Conclusion Drawing/verification*
   According to Miles and Huberman, the third step in qualitative data analysis is drawing conclusions and verifying. The initial conclusions are temporary and will change if strong supporting evidence is not found at the following data collection stage. However, suppose the conclusions put forward at the initial stage are supported by valid and consistent evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data. In that case, the conclusions put forward are credible.

Thus, conclusions in qualitative research can answer the problem formulation formulated from the start. However, perhaps not because, as has been stated, problems in qualitative research are still temporary and will develop after the research is in the field. The expected conclusions in qualitative research are new findings that have not previously existed. Findings can be in the form of a description or picture of an object that was previously unclear so that after research, it becomes clear; it can be in the form of a causal or interactive relationship, hypothesis, or theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained, there are several characteristics regarding the respondents who filled out the questionnaire, such as age, gender, occupation, and level of education. The questionnaire given to the respondents has been filled in completely and correctly so that further analysis can be carried out for this research.

Age
Respondents' ages were divided into 5 age categories, namely 17-20 years old, 21-25 years old, 26-31 years old, 32-36 years old, 37-40 years old, and over 40 years old. The following data on respondents based on age can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age

Criteria	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
17-20 Years	1	17%
21-25 Years	2	33%
26-31 Years	1	17%
32-36 Years	1	17%
37-40 Years	1	17%

>40 Years	0	0%
Total	**6**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processing (2023)

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there were 1 respondent aged 17 – 20 years, 2 respondents aged 21 – 25 years, then 1 respondent aged 26 – 31 years, respondents aged 32 – 36, there was 1 person, while there were 1 respondent with an age range of 37 – 40 years and 0 respondents aged more than 40 years. So, respondents aged 21 - 25 years are the largest category in this study, with the number of respondents reaching 6 people.

Gender
Gender is divided into 2 categories, namely male and female. The following is respondent data based on gender, which can be seen in the table below:

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

Criteria	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Man	2	33%
Woman	4	67%
Total	**6**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processing (2023)

Based on the results of distributing the questionnaire, it can be seen that 2 respondents were male, and the remaining 4 were female, making the female gender the most dominant in this category.

Work
Jobs are divided into 6 categories, including self-employed, private employees, civil servants/BUMN, students, TNI/Polri, and others, which can be seen in the table below:

Table 4.3 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Occupation

Criteria	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Self-employed	1	17%
Private employees	1	17%
Civil servants/BUMN	1	17%
Student/Students	3	50%
TNI/Polri	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	**6**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processing (2023)

Based on the results of distributing the questionnaire, it can be seen that 1 respondent's job is as an entrepreneur, 1 respondent works as a private employee, then 1 respondent works as a civil servant/BUMN, three students/students, respondents work as TNI/ There is 1 person from the National Police and 0 people from other jobs outside those mentioned. Thus, respondents who work as students are the most compared to other jobs with 6 respondents.

Level of education
Education level is divided into 6 categories: elementary/middle school, then high school/vocational school, diploma, bachelor's or bachelor's degree, master's or master's degree, and doctoral degree or doctoral degree. The following is data on the characteristics of respondents based on education level:

Table 4.4 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Education Level

Criteria	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Elementary/Middle School	1	17%
SMA/SMK	1	17%
Diploma	1	17%
S1	3	50%
S2	0	0%
S3	0	0%
Total	**6**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processing (2023)

Based on the results of distributing the questionnaire, it can be seen that there was 1 respondent with a final elementary/middle school education, then 1 person with a high school/vocational school education, then 1 person with a final diploma education. After that, there were 3 respondents with a bachelor's degree and 3 people with a master's degree. 0 people and 0 respondents with doctoral graduates. Thus, 3 respondents with Bachelor's degrees were the highest compared to other graduates.

Respondents' Responses Regarding E-WOM

To find out E-WOM at Online Travel Agent (OTA) Traveloka, researchers have distributed questionnaires to 6 respondents. The researchers use dimensions and indicators to measure E-WOM. The researchers explain it below:

In the intensity dimension, there are 3 indicators used, including the frequency of accessing Traveloka user information, the frequency of interaction between Traveloka users, and the number of reviews written by Traveloka users.
Based on this analysis, 1) the frequency of accessing information from social networking sites on the Traveloka Online Travel Agent has positive and negative

impacts.2) It is recommended that Traveloka consider careful interaction strategies to maximize positive benefits and reduce potential negative impacts. 3) It is recommended that Traveloka pay close attention to review management. 4) It is recommended that Traveloka continue to focus on creating positive experiences. 5) It is recommended that Traveloka proactively manage the impact of negative valuation with an open, responsive, and innovative approach. 6) It is recommended that Traveloka continue improving how it presents product selection information. Recommendations involve increasing the completeness of information, improving navigation, and simplifying displays to minimize user confusion. 7) Traveloka can increase user confidence in the product quality information provided and improve the overall user experience. 8) It is recommended that Traveloka continue to improve transparency and consistency in presenting price information. Recommendations involve clear and complete presentation of costs, precise handling of price increases, and the development of more sophisticated price comparison features. 9) It is recommended that Traveloka continue to increase transparency and education regarding transaction security. Recommendations involve providing clear, easy-to-understand information about security protocols, increased user education about security practices, and regular updates regarding privacy policies and responses to security events.

Positive E-WOM on Online Travel Agent Traveloka

Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to positive experiences shared by users with other users via online platforms. In the context of Online Travel Agents (OTA) such as Traveloka, positive E-WOM significantly impacts brand image and user purchasing decisions.

Positive E-WOM is essential in building a positive brand image and increasing user trust in Traveloka. By implementing strategies that promote positive reviews, Traveloka can leverage the power of E-WOM to expand its user base, increase loyalty, and strengthen its position in the online travel market.

Negative E-WOM on Online Travel Agent Traveloka

Negative E-WOM can reduce the level of user trust in Traveloka. Negative reviews signal a problem or dissatisfaction with the service or product, affecting the overall perception of the platform's credibility.

Negative e-WOM can be a severe challenge to Traveloka; however, the company can overcome its impact with a quick response and effective strategy. Thoughtful handling of emerging issues, improving service quality, and active efforts to rebuild a positive image can help Traveloka overcome the impact of negative E-WOM and maintain Trust.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been carried out, researchers can draw the following conclusions: 1) Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) significantly impacts the image and performance of Traveloka's Online Travel Agent (OTA). The benefits of positive E-WOM include increased user trust, more significant attraction, improved purchasing decisions, and the formation of customer loyalty. Negative E-WOM can have a detrimental impact on Traveloka. 2) Negative E-WOM impacts include decreased Trust, reduced user interest, barriers to purchasing decisions, and potential impact on customer loyalty.

Based on the research results and conclusions outlined previously, the suggestions that researchers can give are as follows: 1) Positive E-WOM enhancement strategies involving active engagement on social media, incentive programs, and inspiring moving content can help Traveloka harness the power of positive reviews to expand its user base and strengthen its position in the online travel market. 2) Negative E-WOM handling strategies involving quick and open responses, improved customer service, and positive campaigns to disguise negative reviews can help Traveloka overcome negative impacts and rebuild its positive image in users' eyes.

REFERENCES

Adji, J. (2014). The Influence of Satisfaction and Trust on Purchase Interest at Starbucks The Square Surabaya. Journal of Marketing Strategy, 2(1), 1-10.

Adriyati, R., & Indriani, F. (2017). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image and Purchase Interest in Wardah Cosmetic Products. Diponegoro Journal of Management, 6, 1–14.

Anwar, MI (2011). Impact Of The Word Of Mouth On Consumer's Attitude Towards The Non-Deceptive Counterfeits. Journal Of Scientific Research 9(1), pp. 51 – 56.

APJII. (2023). Indonesian Internet User Profile.

Aprillio, RG, & Wulandari, A. (2018). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions (Case study at Favehotel Hyper Square Bandung). Proceedings of Applied Science, 4(3).

Assael, H. (1995). Consumer behavior and marketing action. New York: South-Western College Publishing

Assauri, S. (2018). Marketing Management (Basics, Concepts & Strategy). Depok: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.

Chan Yew Ling (2013) Consumers' purchase intention of green products: investigating the drivers and moderating variables. Elixir Marketing Mgmt. 57A, pp. 14503-14509.

Chinco Lin, Yi-Shuang Wu, and Jeng-Chung Victor Chen. (2013). Electronic Wordof-Moutn: The Moderating Roles of Product Involvement and Brand Image. Proceedings of 2013 Conference on Technology Innovation and Industrial Management 29-31 May 2013, Phuket, Thailand.

Fakharyan, M., Jalilvand, M.R., Elyasi, M., & Mohammadi, M. (2012). The influence of online word of mouth communications on tourists' attitudes toward Islamic destinations and travel intention: Evidence from Iran. African Journal of Business Management, 6(38), 10381.

Florence, F., Ferlita, A., & Harianto, A. (2019). The Influence of Online Reviews on Purchase Intention in Budget Hotels at Online Travel Agents (OTA). Journal of Hospitality and Service Management, 7(2).

Hadjar, I. (1996). Basics of quantitative research methodology in education. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.

Hasan, A. (2013). Marketing and selected cases. Yogyakarta: CAPS (*Center For Academic Publishing Services*).

Hendriyati, L. (2019). The influence of online travel agents on room bookings at the Pearl Malioboro Hotel, Yogyakarta. Travel Media, 17(1).

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet of interactive marketing, 18(1), 38-52.

Khaerunnisa, S., & Ramantoko, G. (2022). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on Purchasing Decisions of Cirebon People at Tokopedia. eProceedings of Management, 9(5).

Kinnear, T. C. and Taylor, J. R. (2003). Marketing Research. (Translation by Thamrin), Edition Three. Jakarta: Erlangga.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016). Marketing Management 12th edition Volumes 1 & 2. Jakarta: PT. Index.

Nasehifar, V. and Es-hai, SMS (2014), Factors Affecting Consumer Attitudes and Their Impact on Purchase Intention of Leather Clothes. Nationalpark Forschung In Der Schweiz (Switzerland Research Park Journal), Vol. 103 No. 1, p. 33.

Prastuti, DI, & Karyanti, Y. (2020). The influence of electronic word of mouth on online train ticket purchasing decisions. Exacta Factors, 13(3).

Ramdhan, M. (2021). Research methods. Bandung: Cipta Media Nusantara.

Sari, N., Saputra, M., & Husein, J. (2017). Electronic word of mouth influences purchasing decisions at the Bukalapak online store. com. Darmajaya Masters Management Journal, 3(01), 96-106.

Sari, N., Saputra, M., & Husein, J. (2017). Electronic word of mouth influences purchasing decisions at the Bukalapak online store. com. Darmajaya Masters Management Journal, 3(01), 96-106.

Schiffman and Kanuk. (2015). Consumer Behavior (7th ed.). Jakarta: Prentice Hall.

Setiadi, NJ (2003). Consumer Behavior: Concepts and Implications for Marketing Strategy and Research. Jakarta: Kencana.

Sindunata, I., & Wahyudi, BA (2018). The influence of e-WOM (Electronic-word-of-mouth) on purchasing decisions on Agoda. com. Journal of Hospitality and Service Management, 6(1).

Sugiyono, (2018). Quantitative, Qualitative, and R&D Research Methods. Bandung: CV. Alphabet.

Suryani, T. (2008). Consumer Behavior: Implications for Marketing Strategy. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.

Susilawati, H., & Ampta, S. (2017). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on the Decision to Visit Sindu Kusuma Edupark. Equatorial Journal of Informatics, 8(2), 490029.

Tjiptono, F. (2017). Services Marketing Management. Jakarta: PT Index Gramedia Group

Zhang, J. Q., Craciun, G., & Shin, D. (2010). When does electronic word-of-mouth matter? A study of consumer product reviews. Journal of Business Research, 63(12), 1336-1341.