



E-WOM Orientation Strategy as a Catalytic Dimension in Enhancing Brand Equity of Craftonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), digital marketing strategy, and innovation on the brand equity of Craftonesia, an MSME in Semarang that produces woven crafts from waste paper. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach, which involves in-depth interviews and observation. The results showed that E-WOM plays a significant role in increasing brand awareness and consumer purchase intention. In addition, a digital marketing strategy that includes Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) helps Craftonesia reach a wider audience. The research also identified challenges facing Craftonesia, including limited human resources and digital marketing. The conclusion of this study is that a combination of E-WOM, consistent branding, and effective digital marketing strategies are key to Craftonesia's success in increasing brand equity. The implications of this study recommend Craftonesia to partner with micro-influencers and increase customer engagement through User-Generated Content (UGC) and collaboration with local communities.

Keywords: E-WOM, brand equity, MSMEs, digital marketing strategy, craftonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology, especially the internet, has brought significant changes in various aspects of human life. These changes are not only seen in the way we communicate and interact, but also affect the way we work and shop (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). In addition, the craft sector has also experienced a significant increase driven by internal and external factors. Internal factors, such as effective management, innovation and human resource skills, play an important role in this development. Effective management allows businesses to respond quickly to market changes, while product and process innovation improves competitiveness. In addition, adequate human resource skills are key for businesses to produce high-quality products and meet evolving market demands (Hernita, Surya, Perwira, Abubakar, & Idris, 2021).

External factors also play an important role in increasing the number of business units in the handicraft subsector. The high market demand for handicraft products, such as wickerwork made from waste paper, is a key driver. In addition, easy access to raw materials and local government support for potential new entrepreneurs have also contributed to this growth (Ausat, Velmurugan, Mazil, Mazher, & Okombo, 2023). Therefore, a combination of internal and external factors is crucial to the development of the handicraft sector. The ability of MSMEs to analyze the industry environment is key to determining market orientation. Without an adequate understanding of the internal and external environment, MSMEs will struggle to formulate effective marketing strategies and compete in a dynamic market (Mishra & Kiran, 2025).

Social media platforms have two-way communication, creating a vibrant social ecosystem. This ecosystem not only facilitates extensive interaction among users, but also enables the exchange of constantly evolving information. Users can navigate the various dimensions of online social interaction, where the exchange of ideas and opinions can influence their various decisions. In addition, the internet enables real-time interaction activities, remote working, and provides quick access to up-to-date information (Albahri et al., 2018). This convenience also affects the fulfillment of consumer needs, so that they can shop online more easily, comfortably, and save time (Rashaduzzaman, 2020).

In the digital age, businesses often implement complex marketing strategies. However, some business entities spread exaggerated or inaccurate product information and take advantage of customers for financial gain. As a counterpoint, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) plays an important role in contemporary marketing strategies. The rapid development of online technology has accelerated the evolution of E-WOM, creating multiple platforms for consumers to express their opinions, both positive and negative (Akbari, Foroudi, Fashami, Mahavarpour, & Khodayari, 2022).

Credible E-WOM has important characteristics in building the foundation of trusted information dissemination (Nurfadli, 2025). This credibility encourages the creation of an information landscape that empowers consumers to make conscious choices and improves the quality of decision-making. As such, consumers are not easily swayed by superficial appeals. Furthermore, credible E-WOM also plays a positive role in fostering a sense of communal experience and trust. Individuals tend to feel resonance towards recommendations and testimonials from others, which further forms a strong communal validation. This communal validation then becomes a catalyst that significantly influences online purchase intentions. Therefore, every business needs to formulate an effective E-WOM strategy to optimize its potential and manage online reputation comprehensively.

The right business orientation and strategy model is a crucial factor in improving the competitiveness of an entity (Golovchenko et al., 2022). This is supported by various studies that show a positive correlation between effective business models and strategies with business performance, innovation, and competitive advantage, especially in MSMEs (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Furthermore, proper planning enables entities to create and capture business value and make those models and strategies the foundation for differentiation and sustainable long-term success (Teece, 2018). One relevant orientation model is the inside-out orientation. This model infuses all aspects of business operations, from strategy to implementation, with attention to internal relevance and deep understanding (Almandoz, 2023). Thus, the inside-out orientation emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding of internal resources, capabilities, and values in formulating business strategies.

This research investigates the business model of Craftonesia, an MSME in Semarang, Central Java, founded by Piliari Ernawati in June 2021. The MSME produces a variety of woven crafts from used newsprint, based on the principle of zero waste and community empowerment. The focus of this research is Craftonesia's approach to value proposition, value creation and value capture, with the entrepreneur's social competence as one of the variables studied. Furthermore, social competence, namely the ability to build social relationships through the development of relational competence and a spirit of familiarity based on social interaction, is hypothesized as a determinant of increasing competitive advantage and business performance of MSMEs (Ayelotan, 2024).

This study aims to analyze the influence of strategic flexibility, market orientation, and innovation on the performance of business units in the craft sector in Semarang City, especially for Craftonesia. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide insight into the factors that influence small business performance, including brand equity, through SWOT analysis. This analytical model is expected to be a reference for practitioners in improving brand equity and to make a practical contribution to small entrepreneurs in the handicraft sector by examining the influence of E-WOM on brand equity.

This research has theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research deepened students' understanding of the scientific method and honed their critical and analytical thinking skills. Practically, for the researcher, this process facilitates the development of analytical and decision-making skills. For Craftonesia, this research helps to understand customer perceptions, so as to improve satisfaction and loyalty and devise more effective marketing strategies. In addition, this research encourages the diversification of craft products and the development of a local wisdom-based creative economy, which is important for creating new business opportunities and reducing environmental pollution.

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

Qualitative research is often considered a relatively new method, especially given its increasing popularity in recent years. This method is also known as the post-positivistic method which is based on the philosophy of post-positivism. In addition, qualitative research is often referred to as an artistic method because the process tends to be artistic and less structured. Furthermore, this method is known as an interpretive method, where the data generated focuses on the interpretation of findings in the field. In contrast to quantitative approaches that aim for generalization, qualitative research emphasizes a deep understanding of a problem.

The owner of Craftonesia is the key instrument in this research. To collect data, researchers conducted field research with several methods, namely documentation studies, observations, and interviews. This direct approach was favored over the use of questionnaires or other standardized instruments. Although sometimes certain guidelines or protocols are still used, the direct approach allows researchers to explore information more actively and in depth from data sources.

Subjects, Objects, and Research Informants

The subjects of this study include individuals and groups involved in the operations of Craftonesia MSMEs, including artisans, MSME owners and consumers. Understanding the role of each subject is important for the sustainability of craft businesses. The research could also involve other aspects such as raw material supply chains, marketing strategies, technology utilization, and the socio-economic impact of MSMEs. With a focus on artisans and consumers, this research can analyze skills, innovation, preferences and customer satisfaction, so choosing the right subjects will produce valid and reliable data.

The research object focuses on specific variables related to MSMEs in Craftonesia, such as digital marketing strategies, product innovation, and consumer behavior. This research can examine the effectiveness of platform features as well as the challenges faced by MSMEs in utilizing technology. Research informants were purposively selected, including artisans, MSME owners, Craftonesia managers, and consumers, based on their knowledge and experience. Data was obtained through in-

depth interviews and observation, ensuring credibility and depth of information to understand the dynamics of craft businesses on the platform.

Type of Data Source

Qualitative research relies on multiple sources of data and offers flexibility in information collection through instruments such as interview and observation protocols. Interviews, which are structured conversations between researchers and informants, aim to gather information related to the research topic, while observation involves direct observation of social phenomena in their natural context. In addition, analysis of audiovisual documents, which include photos, videos and audio recordings, is used to understand social phenomena through visual representations. The selection of innovative and creative methods, such as visual ethnography, can enrich research data and results.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis techniques are processes that include examining, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to find useful information and support decision-making. In qualitative data analysis, which uses non-numerical data such as text, images, and audio, some common methods include thematic analysis, which identifies recurring patterns in the data; narrative analysis, which focuses on the meaning individuals create through stories; and discourse analysis, which studies the use of language in social contexts to create meaning and shape identities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Presentation



Figure 1. Orientation Strategy Framework

1. Social Media

Social media is a digital platform that facilitates the formation of online communities. It allows users to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content, such as videos and photos. In addition, social media also provides users with the opportunity to create profiles and connect with other users, both those known in the real world and virtually. The following are some of the key characteristics of social media:

a. Promotion and Direct Selling Platform

Some social media platforms, such as Instagram Shopping and Facebook Marketplace, allow Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to sell directly. These features simplify the buying process for customers.

b. Social Proof and User Recommendations

Testimonials, reviews and user-generated content (UGC) on social media act as strong social proof, which can influence potential customers' purchasing decisions. In addition, recommendations from friends or influencers can also increase trust in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products.

c. Improve Marketing Cost Efficiency

Social media offers more affordable marketing costs compared to traditional marketing methods, such as print or television advertising. This advantage is very beneficial, especially for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that have limited budgets.

Platform & Strategy Specific Examples:

- » **Instagram:** A platform that is perfect for businesses that rely on visual elements, such as fashion, culinary, and handicrafts. Therefore, it is important to focus on high-quality photo and video content.
- » **Facebook:** A great platform for building communities and engaging with customers, Facebook Groups and Facebook Ads can be utilized to achieve these goals.
- » **TikTok:** A platform that is perfect for businesses targeting the younger generation. This is due to the platform's ability to maximize creative and entertaining short video content.

2. Marketing Website

A marketing website for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is a website specifically designed to assist MSMEs in marketing their products or services online. The main purpose of this website is to attract potential customers, increase sales, and build a strong brand. The following are some of the key elements of an MSME marketing website:

a. Product/Service Showcase

It is a means to display products and services offered by MSMEs. The display is attractively designed and equipped with clear descriptions, high-quality photos or videos, and information on prices.

b. Social Media Integration

It is an effort to connect websites with various social media platforms owned by MSMEs, so as to expand marketing reach.

c. Design

Websites must be accessible and display well on various devices, such as desktops, tablets, and smartphones.

d. Call to Action (CTA)

Encourage visitors to take a specific action, such as buying a product, contacting an MSME, or subscribing to a newsletter.

e. Website Analytics

Utilizing web analytics enables monitoring of website performance and tracking of important metrics, including the number of visitors, traffic sources, and conversions. This is aimed at measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

3. Content Management

Content management is a process that includes planning, creating, distributing and managing relevant and valuable digital content. This process aims to attract, engage and retain target audiences to achieve various business objectives. These objectives include increasing sales, building brand awareness, and driving growth. The main objectives of content management are as follows:

a. Building Brand Awareness

Quality content, which provides added value and relevant information to the target audience, can help introduce the brand and build a positive image at the same time.

b. Attracting and Retaining Customers

Relevant and engaging content can help Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) not only in attracting potential customers, but also in maintaining the loyalty of existing customers.

c. Building Credibility and Trust

Informative and valuable content will help Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) build credibility and trust in the eyes of their target audience.

4. MSME Brand Equity

Brand equity of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) refer to the value that customers feel towards a brand owned by MSMEs. This equity is an intangible asset that reflects customer perceptions and interactions with the brand. Strong brand equity provides various benefits, including:

a. Higher Customer Loyalty

Customers who have a positive perception of MSME brands tend to repurchase products or services from these brands. In addition, they are also relatively less easily influenced by competitors.

b. Premium Price

MSMEs with strong brand equity can set higher prices compared to their competitors, as customers are willing to pay more for the value they perceive.

c. Competitive Advantage

Strong brand equity not only serves to differentiate MSMEs from their competitors, but also creates significant barriers for new competitors looking to enter the market. Thus, brand equity is one of the key factors in maintaining the competitive position of MSMEs.

d. Better Marketing Effectiveness

Marketing campaigns will tend to be more effective if they are aimed at customers who already have a positive perception of the brand.

e. Easier Market Expansion

The ease of introducing new products or services for MSMEs is directly proportional to the strength of the brand equity they have. This is due to the fact that customers are familiar and have trust in the brand.

i. Analytics & Optimizations

Analytics and optimization refer to the process of utilizing data to understand the performance of something, such as a website, marketing campaign, or business process. Subsequently, the insights gained from the analysis are used to improve performance. This process is a continuous cycle that involves data collection, data analysis, testing, and refinement. The following is a more detailed explanation of each stage in the process:

1. Data Collection

Relevant data was collected from various sources. These data sources include data from websites, such as Google Analytics; marketing data, such as advertisements and emails; sales data; and customer data, among others.

2. Hypothesis Development

Based on the data analysis, hypotheses have been developed regarding changes that can be made to improve performance.

3. Data Analysis

The data analysis process involves examining the data that has been collected to identify trends, patterns, and insights. This analysis includes several aspects, including customer segmentation, user behavior analysis, identification of trouble spots, and performance measurement.

4. Testing

Experiments, such as A/B testing and multivariate testing, are conducted to test hypotheses and see if the proposed changes can lead to improvements.

5. Iterations

The analytics and optimization process are a continuous cycle. After the implementation phase, data collection and analysis continue to identify further optimization opportunities.

Example of Analytics & Optimization implementation:

- » **Website:** Analysis of website traffic data is conducted to identify pages that have a high bounce rate. Subsequently, the design and content of these pages were optimized to increase user engagement.
- » **Business Process:** Sales data analysis is conducted to identify bottlenecks in the sales process. Based on the identification results, the sales process is then optimized to increase conversions.

ii. Resilience Digital Entrepreneurs

Digital entrepreneur resilience is the ability of an entrepreneur operating in the digital realm to overcome and recover from various business obstacles. It is not just about surviving adversity, but going beyond it. A resilient digital entrepreneur is not only able to deal with failure, but is also able to analyze mistakes, adjust strategies, seek new opportunities, and continue to grow their business amidst competition and rapid change in the digital world. This includes flexibility, innovation, perseverance and the ability to learn continuously. Here are some key aspects of digital entrepreneur resilience:

1. Adaptability

Adaptability is crucial in today's market dynamics. This is reflected in the company's agility in adjusting business strategies, operational models, and product or service offerings in response to changing market trends, new technological developments, and shifts in consumer behavior. In addition, flexibility and willingness to experiment with new approaches are also important characteristics that companies must possess.

2. Innovation

They are constantly looking for new ways to improve their business, create value for their customers and stay ahead of the competition. In this endeavor, they embrace technology and innovative ideas.

3. Risk Management

The ability to identify, assess and mitigate potential risks associated with digital business is critical. Such risks include cybersecurity, algorithm changes, and intense competition.

4. Study Skills

A commitment to continuous learning and the development of new skills relevant to the evolving digital landscape is essential. Therefore, they must be proactive in seeking out new knowledge and information.

5. Networking and Collaboration

Building and maintaining a strong network with other entrepreneurs, mentors and industry experts is important. This is due to their understanding of the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

b. Analysis of Research Findings

i. Information Adoption

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) adoption refers to the level of acceptance and use of E-WOM communication by individuals in the purchase decision-making process (Liao, Wu, Le, & Phung, 2022). Cheung and Thadani's study show that E-WOM communication has a significant effect on information adoption. Furthermore, consumers' adoption of E-WOM can trigger attitude change, which in turn impacts their purchasing decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers' decision-making process is strongly influenced by the information received (Gursoy, 2019).

Several researchers, such as Aghakhani & Karimi, Chang & Wu, Lis, Shuang, Wang et al., and Yu & Natalia, have identified various factors that influence the adoption of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM). One important factor that is often highlighted is the credibility of E-WOM. In fact, some studies suggest that credibility is a fundamental prerequisite for E-WOM adoption.

For example, Lis through an online survey of 634 participants found that information credibility has a significant influence on E-WOM adoption. This finding indicates that publicizing credible E-WOM is an effective way to increase E-WOM adoption, which in turn can increase the probability of purchase. Furthermore, this study reveals that the level of consumer engagement acts as a moderator that significantly influences source credibility in the context of E-WOM adoption.

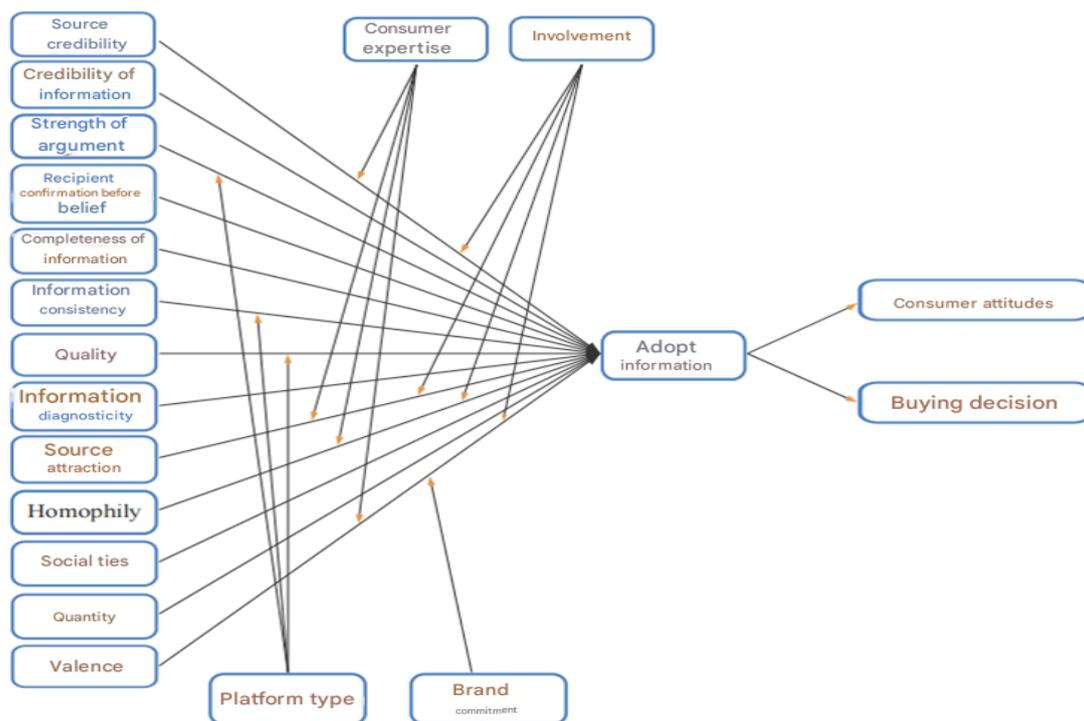


Figure 1. Informant Adoption Diagram

Chang and Wu conducted research on the effect of source credibility and information credibility on the adoption of negative Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM). The results showed that there is a positive relationship between perceived information credibility and negative E-WOM adoption. This finding indicates that E-WOM recipients tend to adopt recommendations if they consider the source of the information to be reliable. In line with these findings, Cheung et al. used dual processing theory to find that E-WOM credibility dimensions, which include argument strength, source credibility, and confirmation with recipients' prior beliefs, have an effect on E-WOM adoption.

Aghakhani and Karimi used the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to investigate the factors that influence the acceptance of explicit and implicit Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Facebook. Explicit E-WOM is a recommendation given

intentionally by one user of a social networking site to another user, while implicit E-WOM refers to profile information that is not directed specifically to other users, but has the potential to have an unintended recommendation effect. The results showed that argument quality has a positive effect on the acceptance of explicit E-WOM.

Peripheral route factors, such as source credibility, sender attractiveness, homophily, and social ties, positively influence Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) acceptance, both explicitly and implicitly. This study concludes that E-WOM credibility and usefulness significantly influence information adoption. In addition, recipient expertise and involvement are proposed as moderators in information acceptance.

Furthermore, Luo et al. found that website attributes moderate the influence of information argument strength, information consistency, and information quantity on information adoption. Specifically, argument strength does not affect information adoption on commercial websites, but has a significant effect on third-party websites. In contrast, information consistency and quantity have a significant effect on the adoption of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on commercial websites, but no effect on third-party websites. Finally, Chang and Wu investigated the moderating role of brand commitment and found that brand commitment can prevent information recipients from accepting negative E-WOM messages.

ii. Information Overload

Individuals are often exposed to large volumes of information from Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) communications, which can lead to information overload. Information overload occurs when the volume of information presented exceeds their capacity to process it. While consumers may not feel overwhelmed just by finding a lot of reviews, the content of such reviews varies from simple recommendations to information regarding the value of attributes. This variation can result in decreased satisfaction, confidence, and increased confusion in choosing a product.

Based on the research conducted by Park et al., the two aspects of the review studied are the amount and type. Luo et al. proposed that information recipients will have difficulty in processing large amounts of information. This difficulty may lead to confusion over the review viewpoint and reduce the usefulness of the information. The results of the online experiment show that information consistency and information aggregation tools have interactive effects on E-WOM recipients' perception of information overload.

Most previous research on information overload has only considered the use of personal computer (PC)-based web browsers. However, as an increasing number of consumers use mobile devices to search for information to make decisions, the influence of information overload is becoming more pronounced. Furner and Zinko examined the influence of such information overload by comparing conventional web platforms and mobile product review platforms. Through research with an experimental service setting, they found that information overload affects trust and purchase intention. This effect was more significant in the mobile environment.

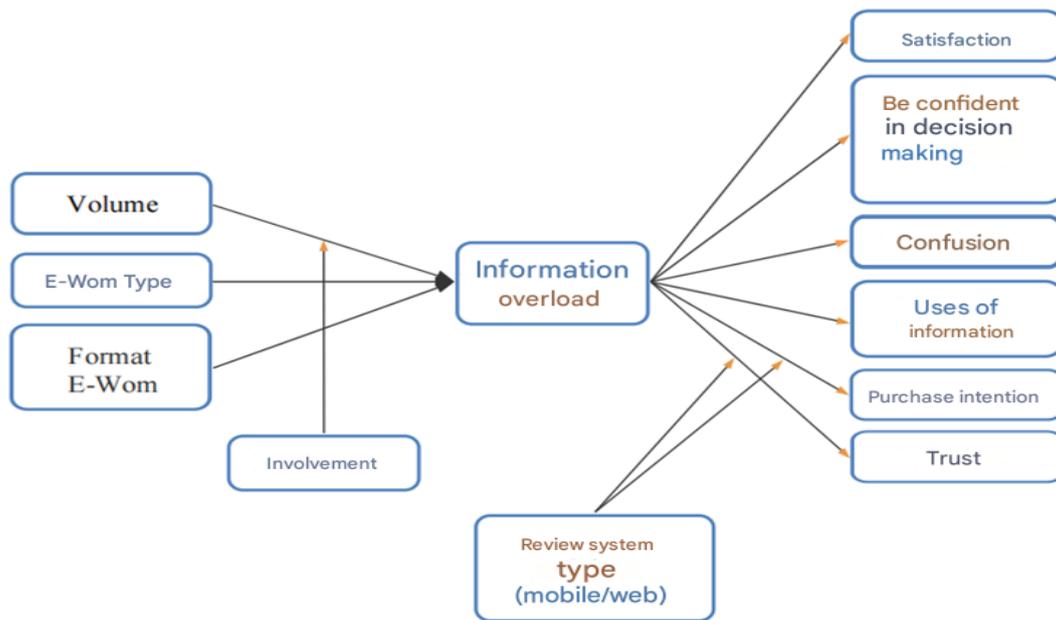


Figure 2. Overload Information Diagram

Research conducted by Park and Lee (2021) proposes that information overload is not always negative. They stated that a large number of online reviews can signal product popularity as well as a variety of related information. Moreover, the study showed that low-involvement consumers, who focus on product popularity, can cope with information overload. This, in turn, can increase their purchase intentions.

iii. The Effect of E-Wom on Consumer Attitudes

Attitude is defined as a psychological tendency expressed through the evaluation of an entity with a certain degree of favorability or unfavorability. Research shows that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) impacts attitudes toward products, brands, and websites. These impacts, in turn, can influence purchase intentions.

Other studies have also investigated the impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on brand attitude. Wu and Wang showed that source credibility affects brand attitude in the context of E-WOM. In addition, Sandes and Urdan found, through exploratory and experimental methods, that exposure to online consumer comments can affect brand image. Negative comments can worsen brand image, while positive comments can improve it.

Lee et al. conducted two studies to investigate the impact of valence and extremity of online product reviews on consumer attitudes towards brands and websites. The results of both experiments show that highly positive reviews increase attitudes toward the brand. However, a moderate number of negative reviews can eliminate the positive effect. In addition, highly negative reviews have a stronger impact on brand attitudes than moderately negative or highly positive online reviews. These results are in line with the negativity and extremity effects in the impression formation literature, which predicts that individuals consider negative or extreme information more than positive or moderate information.

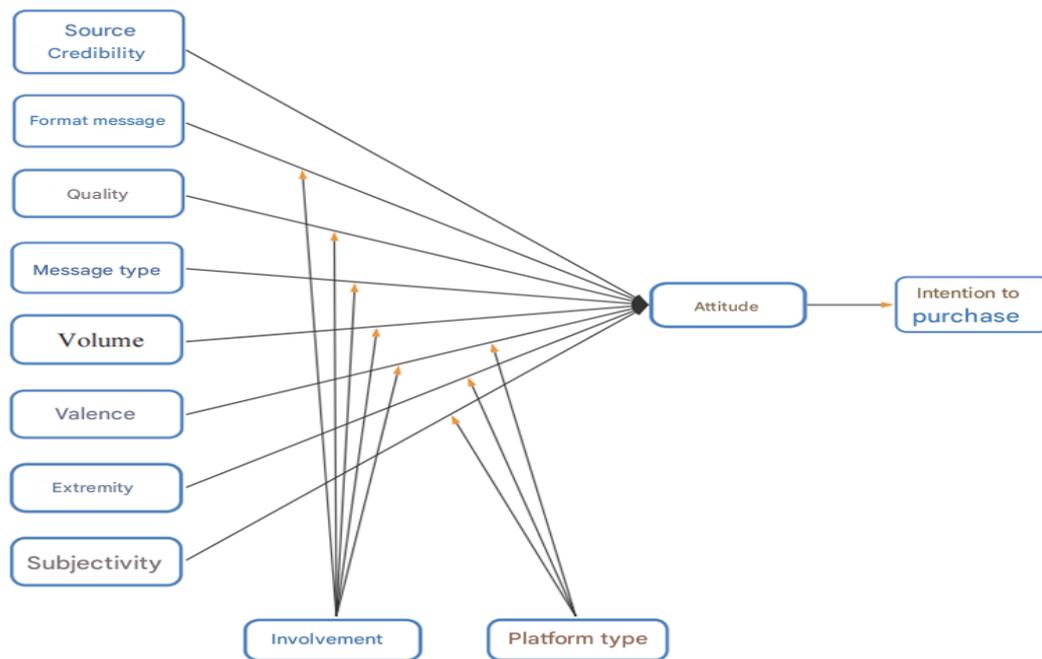


Figure 3. Consumer Attitude Diagram

Previous research has examined the moderating role of consumer engagement on consumer attitudes. Several studies, such as Cheung and Thadani and Lee et al., addressed this topic. Specifically, Lee et al. showed that increased consumer engagement strengthens the negative effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on consumer attitudes, especially for high-quality E-WOM compared to low-quality E-WOM. In line with these findings, Wu and Wang found that product involvement moderates the relationship between positive E-WOM messages and brand attitude. Furthermore, they also found that at low levels of product involvement, emotional appeals, although persuasive, did not exceed the effects produced by rational appeals.

Park et al. analyzed the impact of online consumer reviews on information processing based on the level of consumer involvement. The results showed that the number of simple recommendations had a positive effect on the attitudes and purchase intentions of consumers with low levels of engagement. In contrast, the recommendations did not affect the attitudes and purchase intentions of consumers with high levels of engagement. In high-involvement consumers, attitudes toward the product and purchase intentions initially increased; however, as the number of product attribute reviews increased, these attitudes and purchase intentions gradually decreased, forming an inverted U curve.

Jeong and Koo examined the moderating effect of online platforms on consumer behavior. Their results showed that positive online reviews, both objective and subjective in nature, uploaded on the website by customers, were rated higher in terms of attitude towards the product compared to similar reviews uploaded by marketers on the website. Conversely, negative online reviews, both objective and subjective, posted by customers on the website were rated lower compared to similar reviews posted by marketers.

iv. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as the probability or willingness of a consumer to purchase a product. Several studies have shown a significant relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior. In addition, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has also been shown to influence purchase intention. This indicates that electronically shared information can increase consumers' likelihood of making a purchase.

Research by Lin et al. examines the effect of visual information on consumer interest and purchase intention. The results showed that consumers' interest and purchase intention increased when they read Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) information about search products accompanied by images. The findings also apply to experiential and hedonic products, indicating that visual elements play a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decisions.

The personal characteristics of the recipient of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) can influence its impact on purchase intention. Research conducted by Chen investigated how consumer personality affects the impact of e-WOM. The results showed that extroverted consumers are more easily influenced by external information, such as E-WOM, as they are more communicative during the buying process. In contrast, introverted consumers tend to be more cautious and less affected by external information, such as comments and advertisements, because they are less communicative. Therefore, it can be concluded that extroverted consumers are more easily influenced by external information, while introverted consumers are more concerned with product quality and are not easily influenced by the external environment.

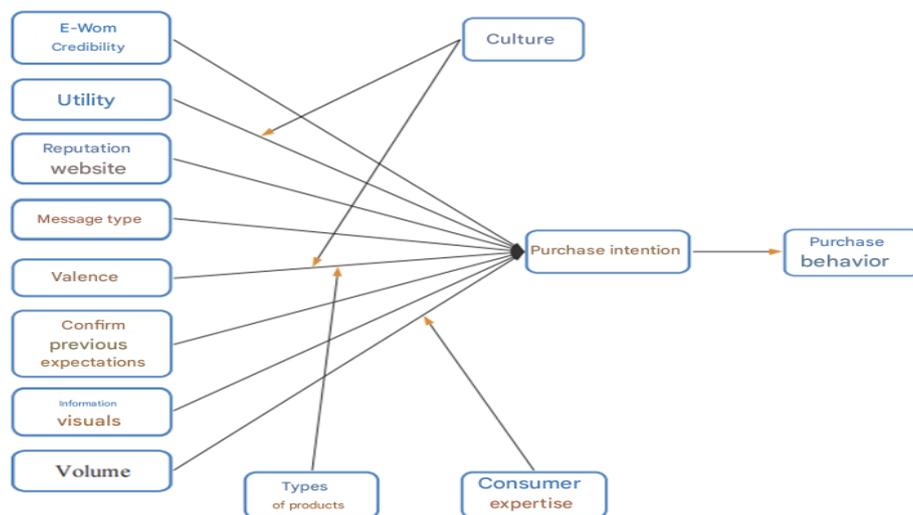


Figure 4. Purchase Intention Diagram

Christodoulides et al. examined the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on consumer purchase intentions from different national cultures. This study analyzes the impact of exposure to user comments from product review sites on purchasing decisions. The results showed that exposure to E-WOM, both positive and negative,

influenced purchasing decisions. However, the study also found that negative bias affected product search and experience. Furthermore, for experience products, consumers are more influenced by recent E-WOM comments regardless of their valence. In contrast, for other products, consumers are more influenced by negative information regardless of the order in which it appears.

v. Sales

Studies on Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) show that E-WOM communication has a positive impact on sales. For example, Hyrynsalmi et al. found that such communication affects sales in the mobile app market in the long run using data from Google Play. This study shows that E-WOM can act as a predictor of future sales. In addition, Sharma et al. examined the effect of E-WOM on sales and revenue of digital products, such as music albums. The results of this study also show that E-WOM is a reliable predictor of market success.

Research results show an inconsistent relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) valence and consumer purchase intention or product sales. Some studies show mixed results. For example, research by Charlett et al. showed a positive relationship between E-WOM valence and sales, meaning that the impact of positive E-WOM influences sales more than negative E-WOM. In contrast, Chevalier and Mayzlin found a negative relationship, indicating that negative E-WOM affects sales more than positive E-WOM. However, there are also studies that state there is no significant relationship between E-WOM valence and sales, as revealed by Duan et al. and Liu.

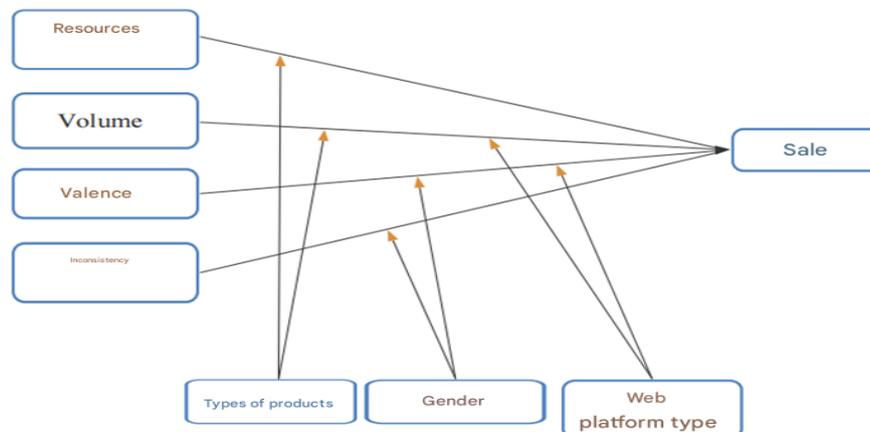


Figure 5. Sales Diagram

Other studies have shown mixed findings depending on the type of product. For example, through experimental methods, Hao et al. found that the effect of positive reviews is greater for search goods than experience goods. However, the effect of negative reviews showed no significant difference between the two product types. Furthermore, the difference in impact between negative and positive reviews is greater on experience goods than search goods.

c. Discussion and Results

The results showed that Craftonesia MSMEs faced several challenges in developing their business. This is based on the results of an interview with Ms. Pilliani Ernawati, as the owner of Craftonesia, conducted on October 25, 2024. The challenges faced include digital marketing and limited human resources (HR). To overcome these challenges, Craftonesia has made several efforts, including online marketing. Overall, the interview results indicate that Craftonesia has great potential to grow. However, to realize this potential, better synergy and collaboration between MSMEs, the government, and other stakeholders are needed.

No	Rumusan Masalah	Temuan Penelitian
1	Bagaimana penerapan strategi E-WOM dapat meningkatkan <i>brand equity</i> Craftonesia ?	<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) melalui platform seperti media sosial, forum daring, dan situs ulasan terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran merek (<i>brand awareness</i>) dan jangkauan (<i>reach</i>) Craftonesia. Keefektifan ini disebabkan oleh kemampuan E-WOM menjangkau audiens yang lebih luas dibandingkan metode pemasaran tradisional. Lebih lanjut, penyebaran konten positif secara daring berperan penting dalam memperkenalkan Craftonesia kepada calon pelanggan baru, sekaligus memperkuat kesadaran merek.
2	Faktor-faktor apa saja yang menghambat efektivitas branding produk Craftonesia dalam mengatasi <i>etnosentrisme</i> di pasar domestik ?	Komunikasi branding yang tidak konsisten atau kurang terintegrasi dapat melemahkan citra merek dan mempersulit upaya mengatasi etnosentrisme. Agar efektif, pesan branding harus disampaikan secara konsisten di semua platform, mulai dari kemasan produk, situs web, media sosial, hingga materi pemasaran lainnya. Ke tidak konsistenan, seperti perbedaan pesan, visual, atau nada komunikasi, akan menciptakan kebingungan di benak konsumen dan bersifat kontraproduktif terhadap tujuan branding.
3	Bagaimana penerapan strategi E-WOM untuk meningkatkan <i>brand equity</i> Craftonesia di masa mendatang ?	SEO (<i>Search Engine Optimization</i>) dan SEM (<i>Search Engine Marketing</i>) merupakan langkah krusial dalam pemasaran digital. Oleh karena itu, SEO perlu diprioritaskan untuk memastikan situs web dan konten Craftonesia mudah ditemukan di mesin pencari. Prioritas ini mencakup penggunaan kata kunci yang relevan dengan produk dan target pasar. Selain itu, pemanfaatan iklan berbayar (SEM) juga perlu dipertimbangkan untuk memperluas jangkauan kepada calon pelanggan serta meningkatkan visibilitas merek.

Figure 6. Research Results

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) communication has increasingly attracted the attention of academics. This increase is shown in Figure 4.10, which illustrates the increase in the number of articles related to E-WOM communication published annually from 2000 to 2016. The increase in publications indicates the higher interest of academics in E-WOM. Studies on E-WOM communication can be categorized into three groups. One of these groups is research on individual motivation to engage in E-WOM communication.

The results show that consumers' main motivations for providing E-WOM are altruism, self-enhancement, venting feelings, social benefits, and economic incentives. Meanwhile, the main motivations for seeking E-WOM include risk reduction, social approval, efficiency of time and search effort, obtaining product information, and social interaction benefits (Akyuz, 2022; Burton & Khammash, 2022; Huang et al., 2023; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2023; Reichelt et al., 2024; Song & Sun, 2021).

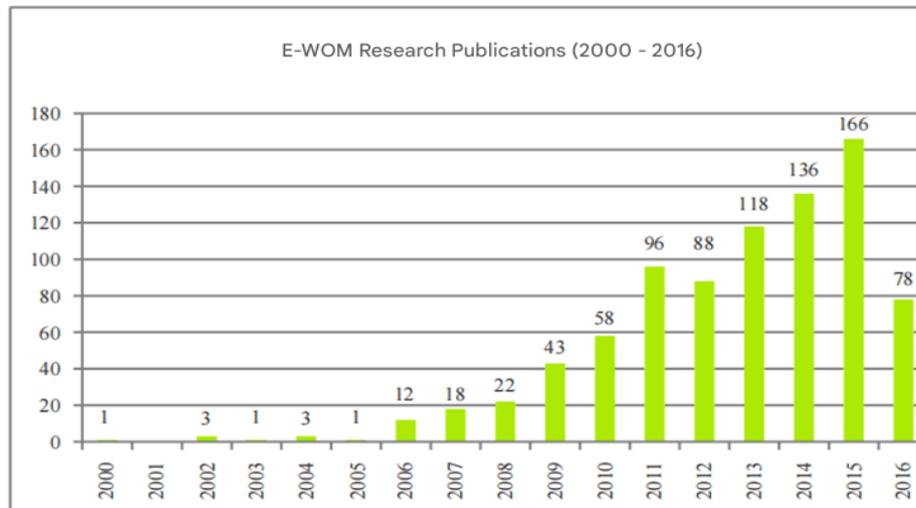


Figure 7. Research Progress Chart

Research Limitations

The growth of internet technology has driven the development of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) communication. While E-WOM communication has some similarities with traditional Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), the differences present new opportunities for companies and consumers. Previous research notes that some retailers sometimes overlook the differences between traditional E-WOM and E-WOM. Understanding the differences between these two forms of communication can help marketers develop successful E-WOM strategies for their products and services. In addition, this understanding can help academics conceptualize and measure online interpersonal communication that thrives in new media.

No	Tema	Ringkasan	Keterbatasan Penelitian	Studi
1	Keterlibatan dalam E-WOM	Motivasi utama konsumen terlibat dalam <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) dikorong oleh beberapa faktor, antara lain: altruisme, aktualisasi diri, pelepasan emosi, manfaat sosial, insentif ekonomi, reduksi risiko, validasi sosial, efisiensi waktu, upaya pencarian informasi, perolehan informasi produk (termasuk penggunaannya), serta keinginan dari interaksi sosial.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Penelitian ini hanya mempertimbangkan <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) tertulis. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat menyelidiki preferensi konsumen terhadap ulasan berbentuk video dalam mengevaluasi produk kreatif dan produk fungsional, serta pengaruh preferensi tersebut terhadap keputusan pembelian. 2) Penelitian selanjutnya perlu menyelidiki alasan individu tidak terlibat dalam <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM), untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang faktor-faktor yang mengarahkan partisipasi mereka. 3) Penelitian ini belum mempertimbangkan dampak dari karakteristik pribadi, seperti pendapatan, usia, jenis kelamin, pendidikan, dan kepribadian. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk menguji pengaruh aspek-aspek tersebut terhadap keterlibatan individu dalam <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM). 	(Ahrens dkk., 2013; Akyuz, 2013; Hu, 2011; Bremser & de Hoog, 2011; Burton & Khamisiah, 2010; Cheng & Lee, 2012; Choi & Scott, 2013; Gibongbe & Lias, 2012; Guo dkk., 2009b; Hansen & Lee, 2013; Hennig-Thurme & Walsh, 2003; Hennig-Thurme dkk., 2004; Mardiyah dkk., 2013)
2	Sifat Positif dari E-WOM	Karakteristik pesan, sumber, dan penerima yang memengaruhi persepsi terhadap manfaat dan kredibilitas komunikasi <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM). Oleh karena itu, pemahaman tentang interaksi ketiga elemen tersebut menjadi penting, hal ini akan membantu dalam meningkatkan efektivitas komunikasi.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sebagian besar penelitian terdahulu hanya mempertimbangkan satu jenis platform. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya dapat dikembangkan dengan mempertimbangkan beragam platform internet. 2) Sebagian besar penelitian terdahulu terfokus pada <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) tertulis, oleh karena itu, evaluasi E-WOM visual masih kurang mendapatkan perhatian. Penelitian mendatang perlu mengeksplorasi kebutuhan informasi visual untuk berbagai industri dan kategori produk. 3) Studi ini meneliti evaluasi <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) positif dan negatif. Sebagai pengembangan, penelitian di masa mendatang perlu menyelidiki bagaimana konsumen mengevaluasi E-WOM netral. Hal ini penting karena E-WOM netral belum banyak dieksplorasi dan berpotensi memberikan wawasan baru terkait perilaku konsumen. 	(Baek dkk., 2012, 2014; Bai & Stanton, 2014; Breazeale, 2009; Cadario, 2014; Cheng & Ho, 2015; Chung, 2014; Chung dkk., 2008; Joo & Hwang, 2009; Guo dkk., 2009a; Luo dkk., 2015; Moore, 2015; Park & Lee, 2008; Park dkk., 2014; Robinson dkk., 2012; Willemssen dkk., 2012; Yin dkk., 2014)
3	Dampak E-WOM	Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) memengaruhi penerimaan informasi, sikap terhadap informasi, serta niat beli konsumen.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Penelitian terdahulu, yang cenderung terbatas pada satu jenis produk atau layanan, belum sepenuhnya memunculkan variasi yang ada di pasar, oleh karena itu, diperlukan penelitian yang lebih komprehensif. 2) Penelitian selanjutnya perlu mengeksplorasi dampak negatif <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (E-WOM) terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen. Selain itu, penelitian juga harus mengidentifikasi strategi efektif yang dapat diterapkan perusahaan untuk menganggulangi dampak tersebut. 3) Penelitian selanjutnya perlu menyelidiki pengaruh valensi dan intensitasnya terhadap perbedaan individu, termasuk kecenderungan terhadap pengaruh interpersonal dan harga diri. 	(Aghakiani dan Karimi (2013), Akyuz (2013), Baek dkk. (2014), Burtikowski dan Webb (2014), Benerke dkk. (2015), Bai dan Stanton (2014), Cadario (2014), Chung dkk. (2009), Chung (2014), Chih dkk. (2013), Cai dan Guo (2009), Dhar dan Chang (2009), Jitmagin dkk. (2014), Henke (2013), Hwa dkk. (2013), Huang dan Koefoort (2015), Lee dan Yi (2010), Lin (2013), Luo dkk. (2013), dan Park dkk. (2006).

Figure 8. Research limitations

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), branding, and digital marketing strategies, such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM), have a significant role in increasing brand awareness and market reach for Craftonesia. E-WOM has proven effective in reaching a wider audience and introducing Craftonesia to potential new customers. However, the effectiveness of E-WOM needs to be supported by consistent branding communication across all platforms to strengthen the brand image and overcome consumer ethnocentrism. In addition, search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM) are also crucial to ensure Craftonesia's visibility and reach in the digital realm. Therefore, the combination of E-WOM strategy, consistent branding, and digital marketing optimization, is the key to Craftonesia's success in increasing brand awareness and expanding market reach.

Craftonesia is advised to expand the reach of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) by engaging with micro-influencers on various social media platforms, as they have a high level of engagement with their followers, so that brand messages can be delivered in a more personalized and convincing manner. In addition, increasing engagement through user-generated content (UGC) with strategies such as photo or video competitions, online workshops and live sessions with artisans can help increase brand awareness and loyalty. Furthermore, Craftonesia can expand its impact with close collaboration with local artisan communities, including skills training, business mentoring, and co-marketing, to increase the capacity and welfare of artisans while preserving traditional Indonesian crafts.

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