

How the word-of-mouth marketing strategy influence the consumer buying interest? (A case of *genestick* product)

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Abstract - The Genestick product is a stick-shaped snack product made from onions in the Manado local language called kue kering biji-biji. This cake is produced by students from Politeknik Negeri Manado who are managed in groups in the form of micro-entrepreneurship, since it was sold it has stagnated, because it only uses a promotion strategy using a social media platform. Since the marketing strategy changed through word-of-mouth marketing, sales have increased. The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of word-of-mouth marketing strategies on consumer buying interest in ginestick products. The research method used is quantitative descriptive, with data collection techniques through surveys, of 50 respondents. The analytical tools used are validity and reliability tests, correlation tests, regression tests, determination tests and hypothesis testing through the T test and F test. From some of these tests it is found that consumer buying interest is influenced by word-of-mouth marketing strategies. At the significance level of the hypothesis test (T and F tests) (0.001) and < the research error rate of 0.05 and with a coefficient of determination of 61.6%, it has a positive effect, which means that the higher the word-of-mouth marketing, the higher the buying interest of Genestick product consumers.

Keywords: word-of-mouth; marketing strategy; purchase intention, consumer

I. INTRODUCTION

The culinary business is growing rapidly, the competition in this business world has undergone many changes over time, even according to historical records this business began 250 years ago, so it can be categorized as the oldest business, (Putra et al, 2022). Humans are increasingly creative in making a variety of new foods, (Green & Dougherty, 2008). Many new foods have new and unique names, thus encouraging many manufacturers to compete to make competitive new products to meet customer desires. In the field of culinary business, business managers are increasingly competing. Every business must use the right marketing strategy to be able to face competition and maintain business. Marketing strategies include product, price, distribution and promotion strategies, (Varadarajan, 2010), (Fifield, 2012). These strategies are known as the marketing mix, (Wichmann, et.al, 2022, & Alsharif et al, 2023).

In marketing, promotion is an activity that aims to introduce products to potential customers, (Suryani & Syafarudin, 2021); Bondarenko & Vyshnivska, 2023; Ogu, 2024). One type of promotion that exists is by utilizing Word-of-mouth from consumers. Word-of-mouth (WOM) is one of the promotional medias because word-of-mouth communication is considered more convincing because it comes from a source who is satisfied with a certain product and then conveys information about the

product to others. WOM is also easier to do and more targeted than other promotional methods (Gildin, 2022; Ermeç, 2022; Budaya et al, 2022; and Bastos & Moore, 2021).

Word-of-mouth is a non-commercial act of consumers to provide information to other consumers personally (interpersonal), either about a brand, product or service. Besides that, word-of-mouth also has 4 indicators in the form of Mutual dialogue, Pass along effect, Knowledge diffusion and Cause and effect (Hasan, 2010; Marhaeni, 2021; Saputra et al, 2023). Meanwhile, Nur (2020), has the view that the word-of-mouth communication process starts from information conveyed through mass media, then informed or captured by opinion leaders who have followers and influence. In addition, Fakhrudin, (2021) states that word-of-mouth is an operational or non-personal statement conveyed to customers by someone other than the service provider. Word-of-mouth consists of three levels of talking, promoting and selling

Purchase interest is a consumption behavior where consumers have the desire to choose and consume a product (Utomo & Dwiyanto, 2022; Ernawati, & Koerniawan, 2023). Purchase interest will arise if consumers have an influence on product quality and quantity as well as product information, (Puspita & Budiatmo, 2020); Maino et al, 2022). Four indicators that someone has an interest in buying include transactional interest, referential interest, preferential interest and exploratory interest, (Algiffary et al, 2020); Mustika, 2023).

Genestick product is a stick-shaped snack product made from onions in Manado local language called "*kue kering biji-biji*". This cake is produced by students from Manado State Polytechnic which is managed in groups in the form of micro entrepreneurship. The cake was introduced and sold in early 2023. The marketing and sales strategy are carried out through social media platforms, namely Facebook and What's Up. However, it is realized that this strategy has not had a maximum impact on sales. In the course of time, researchers changed the marketing and sales strategy of Genestick by incorporating word-of-mouth marketing strategies. The research team went directly to potential customers, explained the products we offered and many of them were interested and even immediately bought the products offered. The impact that was realized was that within a few months there was an increase in sales. In addition, this product is systematically introduced by friends and colleagues who have bought this to others.

In connection with several theories about word-of-mouth marketing strategies and empirical experience as outlined in several previous scientific journals, the product team intends to examine word-of-mouth Marketing Strategy its influence on consumer buying interest in Genestick products.

The following researches are the research of the previous studies. The study of Kasiani et al (2024) reveals that PTKI markets non-food items like skincare products, sanitary napkins, and detergents. The company employs a hierarchical organizational structure with distinct roles and responsibilities flowing from higher to lower levels. Their market strategy involves assessing population data across various administrative divisions using statistical data. Leadership in the region focuses on strategic planning and instilling product values in consumers to ensure the products' integration into daily life, based on quality and affordability. The leadership style is the primary difference between past and current leadership, while their policies remain largely unchanged.

This research proposes a social media-based marketing model to help managers of Alas Kedaton increase tourist visits. The aim is to create a marketing strategy that is affordable, easy to use, targeted, and accessible to all societal segments without time and location limitations (Susanto et al, 2023). This is especially crucial since the tourist attraction has not recovered from the decline in visitor numbers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, visitor numbers are around 150 on normal days, rising to 800 during the Galungan holidays, but these figures are insufficient to cover operational costs. Admission prices are 15,000 IDR for children, 20,000 IDR for adults, and 30,000 IDR for foreign tourists.

The attraction offers nature and animal preservation experiences, making it ideal for educational tours aimed at school children, students, teachers, lecturers, and environmental enthusiasts. To develop the social media marketing model, the research will collect primary data from interviews with managers and secondary data from various library sources. The data will be processed and analysed using qualitative descriptive techniques. The resulting model aims to boost tourist visits, ensuring the attraction's sustainability and the local community's livelihood.

Pastini and Lilasari (2023; Nurfakih et al, 2024) explore how a company's marketing division enhances customer brand awareness, allowing customers to recognize the company's products. Brand awareness is a fundamental step in establishing brand equity, reflecting the strength of a brand's presence in consumers' minds. Higher brand recall leads to higher brand awareness, which is essential as consumers tend to recognize brands before purchasing, especially for high-value products.

The study employs qualitative descriptive research, collecting primary data through interviews with marketing staff and observations, while secondary data comes from company and online library sources. The data undergoes reduction, tabulation, and qualitative descriptive analysis to draw conclusions.

The findings reveal that marketing strategies are tailored to Indonesia's demographics, where millennials and Generation Z, constituting over 60% of the population, are highly engaged with social media. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are utilized to build brand awareness, with Instagram and TikTok being the most favoured by potential consumers.

This research investigates the marketing strategies employed by JeKo, a restaurant that uniquely manages its food and beverage services, differing from typical restaurants. Despite its classification, the name JeKo does not directly imply it is a restaurant. Through observation, documentation, and interviews, the findings indicate that JeKo has successfully applied marketing strategies across several aspects to draw in and keep its customers (Putra et al, 2024).

This study examines and evaluates the use of green marketing strategies in the hospitality sector of the tourism industry. The tourism sector is Indonesia's second-largest foreign exchange earner but is often criticized for being environmentally unfriendly. The rapidly growing hospitality industry is essential for regional tourism and should adopt green marketing practices (Angela et al, 2022).

The research focuses on a specific accommodation provider known for its green marketing efforts. Data was gathered through observation and document review. The results show that the company's green marketing efforts are highly rated, earning an "A" (Special) with a score of 86.78. The most prominent strategy is environmental preservation, scoring an average of 4.72. To implement green marketing, the company follows the Tri Hita Karana principles, which emphasize a balanced and harmonious relationship with God, other people, and the environment.

The research of Fuadi et al (2024) aims to identify and analyze the role of direct marketing in enhancing customer loyalty. It relies on theories pertinent to direct marketing and customer loyalty. Data was gathered through observations and interviews, then processed using descriptive qualitative analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of direct marketing and its impact on customer loyalty. The findings indicate that direct marketing is essential and has been effectively executed by the marketing team. Key factors in boosting customer loyalty include maintaining strong consumer relationships and delivering excellent service.

II. METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive quantitative (Bleibaum et al, 2020). Furthermore, data collection techniques through surveys with questionnaire instruments. The sampling technique in this study uses purposive sampling, or a purposeful sample with the number of respondents limited to 50 people who are active consumers. The limitation of the number of respondents is due to the research time, which is six months from the beginning of the proposal of the research proposal, besides that the product that is the case in this study is a self-produced product and was only introduced in early 2023.

The use of a Likert scale is used in compiling questionnaires with intervals: Strongly Agree (SS) = 5; Agree (S) = 4; Undecided (R) = 3; Disagree (TS) = 2 and Strongly disagree (STS) = 1, (Simamora, 2022). The variables measured are the Word-of-mouth variable (X) and Consumer buying interest (Y). Furthermore, the analysis tests used are: (a) test the research instrument to see the validity and reliability of the questionnaire to be used, (b) Simple correlation to measure the relationship between dependent and independent variants, (c) Simple linear regression test measures the effect of variables x and y, (d) Test the coefficient of determination to measure how variable x contributes to variable y, and (e) Hypothesis Test, consisting of Partial (T) and simultaneous (F) tests. This T test is used to determine how much influence the independent variable has in explaining the dependent variable,

while the F test aims to determine the effect of the independent variable simultaneously (Sugiyono, 2019).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of instrument testing using the validity test, it is found that each question instrument in each variable is declared to exceed the *r* table value, so it can be said to be valid. The reliability test results of the two variables also exceed the Alpha Cronbach's value of 0.6 so that it can be said that this research instrument is good and reliable for use in future research. Based on the results of descriptive analysis, it is known that the respondents' answers to the questions in the questionnaire, most of them chose the agree option and very few chose strongly disagree.

Table 1 Coefficient Correlations

		<i>Word-of-mouth</i>	<i>Consumer buying interest</i>
<i>Word-of-mouth</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	50	50
<i>Consumer buying interest</i>	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
source: SPSS processed data, 2024

Based on the results of testing the correlation coefficient, the correlation coefficient value is 0.785 with a significance value / *p* value of 0.001, because the significance value $p < 0.05$, then H_0 is rejected, meaning that there is a positive significant relationship between Word-of-mouth and Consumer buying interest. The result of the correlation coefficient value is 0.785, which means that the relationship between the Word-of-mouth variable and consumer buying interest is strong because it is between the coefficient interval 0.71 - 0.90.

The sign on the correlation coefficient price also affects the interpretation of the results of the correlation analysis, which is positive (+) indicating a unidirectional direction of the relationship, meaning that the relationship between the two variables is directly proportional.

This hypothesis testing uses simple regression analysis to determine how consumer buying interest (variable Y) can be influenced by Word-of-mouth Marketing Strategy (variable X). The results of the regression analysis through the t-test with the help of the SPSS 29.0 program are as follows:

Table 2 Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.520	3.287		2.288	.027
WOM	.792	.090	.785	8.781	<,001

Dependent Variable: MINAT BELI
Source: SPSS processed data, 2024

The regression equation obtained: $Y = a (7.520) + bX (0.792)$ or the constant value a show a value of 7.520, meaning that if there is no change in the independent variable (the value of X is 0) then the value of the dependent variable Y is 7.520. The coefficient value of variable X (Word-of-mouth) is (0.792) which is positive, so that if Word-of-mouth marketing has increased by 1 value, Consumer buying interest will increase by 0.792.

The results of the calculated T value of $8.781 > T$ table value of 2.010 and according to the coefficient table the partial T test results show that the significance value of the influence of Word-of-mouth marketing (X) on consumer buying interest (Y) is $0.001 < 0.005$ and the calculated T value is greater than the T table value, which means that there is a significant influence of the Word-of-mouth variable (X) and consumer buying interest (Y).

Table 3 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 ^a	.616	.608	156.105

a. Predictors: (Constant), WOM

Source : SPSS processed data, 2024

Based on the model summary table, the result of the R Square value is 0.616 and the Cronbach's alpha value has > 0.60 , it can be concluded that the contribution of the influence of the independent variable of consumer buying interest (Y) on the dependent variable Word-of-mouth (X) is 61.6% variable has a significant effect on the consumer buying interest variable (Y) and can be said to be reliable. The results of the analysis described above, it is found that the variable (X) WOM has a significant effect on the variable (Y) Consumer buying interest in Genestick products. This is shown from the validity test of each variable which has 4 indicators consisting of 8 statements in each indicator and produces valid data from the Word-of-mouth Marketing variable (Y) and Consumer buying interest (Y). With a correlation coefficient value of 0.785 and a significance value of 0.001, H_0 is rejected. Because the significance value is less than 0.05, the positive significant relationship between the word-of-mouth variable and consumer buying interest is strong, because the coefficient value is between 0.71 and 0.90.

The results of the product moment correlation analysis of 0.785 were compared with the r table at a significant level of 5% $N = 50$ of 0.279. Thus, r count is greater than r table, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and (H_1) is accepted. With a coefficient of determination of 61.6%, it has a positive effect, which means that the higher the Word-of-mouth marketing, the higher the consumer buying interest in Genestick products. Meanwhile, 38.4% is a factor that affects the consumer buying interest variable (Y) from other factors not examined by the researcher.

From the results of the t test analysis, it is known that there is a significant influence on the variable (X) Word-of-mouth marketing and the variable (Y) Consumer buying interest. This is evidenced by the results of the t test calculation of 8.781, while the t table is 2.010 at the 5% significance level, which means that Hypothesis H_1 (there is a significant effect of the independent variable on the variable) can be accepted. In addition, the regression equation $Y = a (7.520) + b (0.792)$ was obtained. The equation is in accordance with the simple linear regression formula, namely $Y = a + bX$, based on the information from the regression equation formula Y is the symbol of the dependent variable, a is a constant, b is the regression coefficient for the independent variable (X). So, it can be concluded from the t test results, there is an influence between variable Y on variable X , in other words, accept H_1 , namely: There is an effect of word-of-mouth marketing on consumer buying interest in Genestick products, and rejects H_0 , namely there is no effect of word-of-mouth marketing on consumer buying interest in Genestick products.

The significance value of the effect of word-of-mouth Marketing (X) on Consumer buying interest (Y) is 0.001 and H_0 can be rejected and H_1 is accepted because the significant value of $F < 0.05$ and the value of F count (77.111) $> F$ table value (4.04) which means that there is a significant influence between the word-of-mouth variable (X) on Consumer buying interest

(Y). The regression coefficient of the Consumer buying interest variable is 0.792, which means that if word-of-mouth Marketing (X) increases by 1, then Consumer buying interest (Y) will increase by 0.792. The coefficient is positive, meaning that there is a positive relationship between the word-of-mouth Marketing variable (X) and the Consumer buying Interest Variable (Y), the more the Word-of-mouth Marketing increases, the more the Consumer buying Interest increases. Thus, a conclusion can be drawn that Word-of-mouth marketing (X) has an influence on consumer buying interest, so that the strategy used to do marketing by means of Word-of-mouth has a significant influence on consumer buying interest in Genestick products.

IV. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the problems that have been formulated and the results of the analysis and hypothesis testing that has been carried out, the results of this study indicate that the word-of-mouth variable significantly affects buying interest. because it has a Significance value of T and F test hypothesis testing (0.001) and < the research error rate of 0.05 and with a coefficient of determination of 61.6%, it has a positive effect, which means that the higher the word-of-mouth marketing, the higher the buying interest of Genestick product consumers. Meanwhile, 38.4% is a factor that affects the consumer buying interest variable (Y) from other factors not examined by researchers.

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