

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention of Healthy Food Products

Lisnawati¹

Anton Agus Setyawan²

^{1,2}Management, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Indonesia

¹Author's correspondence: b100210610@student.ums.ac.id

Abstract. The research aims to highlight the effect of e-WOM on brand attitude and purchase intention for healthy food products, particularly on the TikTok platform. The development of digital technology has changed the way consumers receive information and make purchasing decisions, especially among the younger generation. A quantitative research approach was adopted for this study, using surveys as the primary method. The sample consisted of 160 respondents selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria such as age, occupation, frequently used social media, and preference for healthy food products. The results showed that e-WOM significantly influenced brand attitude and purchase intention. The conclusion highlights the importance of strengthening e-WOM marketing strategies on TikTok to encourage positive reviews and companies can enhance their brand position in the market. This research is expected to help business practitioners design effective marketing strategies using e-WOM as a promotional medium.

Keywords: E-WOM, Brand attitude; Purchase intention; Marketing; Healthy food products.

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti pengaruh e-WOM terhadap sikap merek dan niat beli untuk produk makanan sehat, khususnya di platform TikTok. Perkembangan teknologi digital telah mengubah cara konsumen dalam menerima informasi dan mengambil keputusan pembelian, terutama di kalangan generasi muda. Pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif diadopsi untuk penelitian ini, dengan menggunakan survei sebagai metode utama. Sampel terdiri dari 160 responden yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling berdasarkan kriteria tertentu seperti usia, pekerjaan, media sosial yang sering digunakan, dan preferensi terhadap produk makanan sehat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM secara signifikan memengaruhi sikap terhadap merek dan niat beli. Kesimpulan ini menyoroti pentingnya memperkuat strategi pemasaran e-WOM di TikTok untuk mendorong ulasan positif dan perusahaan dapat memperkuat posisi merek di

pasar. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat membantu para praktisi bisnis dalam merancang strategi pemasaran yang efektif dengan menggunakan e-WOM sebagai media promosi.

Kata kunci: E-WOM; Sikap merek; Niat beli; Pemasaran; Produk makanan sehat.

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BACKGROUND

Indonesia ranks fourth in the world in terms of population, and it is experiencing significant growth in digital technology usage. Internet user behavior in Indonesia continues to evolve. In 2024, 221,563,479 people in Indonesia used the Internet, up from 278,696,200 in 2023, according to research undertaken by the survey Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (*Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia* or APJII). The survey findings indicate that internet penetration in Indonesia in 2024 increased by 1.4% from the previous period, reaching 79.5%.

The rapid increase in internet users is largely due to the growing ease of internet access for the public. Companies can use this as a platform or tool to promote their goods and services, while consumers can discuss the products and services they purchase through various social media platforms. Due to references gathered from other customers' comments on various social networking sites, it is now much easier for consumers to find information about products that should be considered before making a purchase (Verma & Yadav, 2021).

Academics and marketing practitioners have been interested in word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing to examine its effect on brands, businesses, and purchasing behavior, both online and offline. E-WOM in marketing refers to the practice of customers informing other customers about products, services, brands, or businesses. e-WOM is defined as information disseminated on the internet (e.g., feedback from reviews, social media posts such as tweets, blogs, 'likes,' 'pins,' as well as shared photos and videos testimonials); it represents one of the most significant shifts in modern consumer behavior (Rosario et al., 2016). The role of electronic WOM is becoming increasingly dominant in today's digital era in shaping consumer perceptions of brands and products.

Keller (Saleh & Siagian, 2020) defines brand attitude as customers' perceptions of a brand based on quality and satisfaction. Attitudes toward a particular brand often influence the buyer's decision to purchase that product. According to Sutisna (Himawan, 2019) brand attitude, in the form of a positive attitude toward a particular brand, will encourage consumers to make a purchase, while a negative attitude will prevent them from purchasing.

The desire or tendency of a buyer to purchase a particular product or service is referred to as purchase intention, which is influenced by an individual's perception of the product, subjective norms, and control over their behavior (Srivastava, 2023). A consumer's decision to purchase an item is essentially influenced by their purchase intention. Purchase intention refers to how much consumers intend to buy a product and

is commonly viewed as a predictor of real purchasing actions. Purchase intention is affected by various factors, including product perception, brand attitude, previous experience, and recommendations from others.

Healthy food products are one of the categories that are becoming increasingly popular as consumers' awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle grows. Consumers who trust a particular brand or product tend to choose and purchase that product repeatedly, and they may even avoid or refuse to purchase competing products. (Lubis & Yafiz, 2023).

TikTok will be used as the platform for this research, which aims to analyze the effect of e-WOM on brand attitude and purchase intention. The focus category of this research is the food category, encompassing various types of food purchased and consumed by consumers. According to data from Market Research Future (MRFR), the market for healthy food is projected to grow from USD 988.46 billion in 2023 to USD 1,405.96 billion by 2032, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.50% during this timeframe. The primary factor driving growth in the healthy food market is the rising number of individuals altering their diets and embracing healthier lifestyles.

This research analyzes how e-WOM affects consumer attitudes toward brands and the intention to buy healthy food products. Therefore, this research is anticipated to enhance digital marketing strategies, and teach industry players how to optimize the use of e-WOM as a promotional tool. The benefits of this research are divided into two, namely theoretical and practical benefits. theoretically, the theories used and applied to deal with problems in marketing science, such as e-WOM, brand attitude, and purchase intention. Practically, this research is expected to assist companies in formulating policies related to e-WOM, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

According to the TPB developed by Ajzen (1991), three main components influence a person's attitude toward a behavior: subjective attitude (an individual's feelings about whether the behavior will yield the desired outcome), subjective norms, which are the perceived social pressures for or against engaging in a particular behavior, and perceived behavioral control, which reflects how a person perceives their ability to perform the specific action. In marketing, TPB can be utilized to analyze and project consumer behavior when making purchasing decisions. In marketing, TPB can be used to analyze and project consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions. For example, a positive attitude toward a brand can increase the interest in buying the product. Additionally, subjective norms, such as influence from friends or family members, can also affect a consumer's decision to purchase something. Lastly, perceived behavioral control indicates the consumer's perception of how simple or challenging the purchasing process will be, also has a significant impact.

Studies have shown that TPB is an effective tool in designing marketing strategies. TPB significantly enhances the predictive and explanatory capabilities in consumer

behavior research, making it highly relevant for use in developing more accurate and efficient marketing strategies (Zong et al., 2023). Additionally, positive perceived behavioral control related to the consumer's ability to access the product also enhances purchase intention. By understanding these factors, marketers can design more effective campaigns, such as increasing brand awareness through positive testimonials or simplifying the purchasing process by improving online services

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Its Effect on Brand Attitude

A buyer's perspective on a brand is defined as a brand attitude, which encompasses affective (feelings or emotions), cognitive (beliefs or thoughts), and conative (intentions or tendencies to act) dimensions toward the brand. It has been widely discussed that an individual's interest in a brand positively correlates with their desire to own that brand. Product quality, customer experience, and communication with the brand are some of the factors that affect consumers' perceptions of the brand (Dwivedi et al., 2019). This research highlights the significance of implementing effective marketing strategies and providing positive consumer experiences in creating a strong and favorable brand attitude.

Consumers attitudes toward a brand are greatly affected by personal experiences, group associations, and the influence of key individuals (citation needed). The interpretation of social stimuli is shaped and affected by personal experiences. Responses will form attitudes, and the prerequisite for response and interpretation is experience related to the psychological object. Studies have found that e-WOM affects consumer purchase choices as the information shared by other consumers is frequently regarded as more trustworthy and trustworthy than company advertisements (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Based on the description, H1 is formulated:

H1: e-WOM affects brand attitude.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Its Effect on Purchase Intention

A buyer's desire to purchase a brand is based on the information they receive and their opinions about the brand. Factors such as personal customer experiences, the reliability of the information source, and the standard of the available information affect purchase intention. Studies show that e-WOM significantly affects consumers' desire to purchase. e-WOM can enhance purchase intention by providing more detailed and trustworthy information compared to traditional advertising, especially when the information comes from fellow consumers (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Additionally, customer confidence in product quality can be reinforced by positive reviews from other customers, ultimately increasing purchase intention. For healthy food products, positive reviews about health benefits and product quality can significantly affect consumers' purchase intention. Based on the description, H2 is formulated:

H2: e-WOM affects purchase intention.

Purchase Intention Affected by Brand Attitude

The tendency of a buyer to purchase a particular brand or item is based mental and emotional assessments of the product or brand. Purchase intention pertains to the consumers' perceived likelihood of their readiness to buy a particular product which is influenced by their experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward that product (Wu et al., 2011). Brand attitude, which pertains to the comprehensive assessment by customers of a brand that can be either positive or negative, is a crucial factor that influences purchase intention.

According to TPB, attitude is a key factor that determines the motivation to act, including purchasing. Research by Kim et al. (2020) found that brand attitude affects purchase intention, with perceived behavioral control and subjective norms also playing significant roles. This study found that when buyers feel they have sufficient control and believe that their social environment supports the purchase, their purchase intention increases. The findings of this study support the relevance of TPB in the context of marketing and highlight the importance of building a positive opinion about the brand to enhance consumer purchase intention. Based on the description, H3 is formulated:

H3: Brand attitude influences purchase intention.

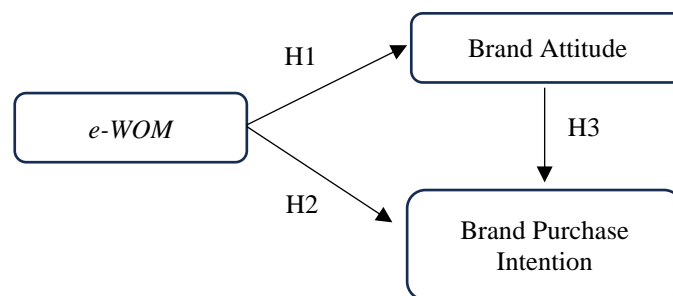


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a quantitative approach utilizing multiple regression methods. The population of this study includes consumers who have never bought healthy food products but know healthy food products. In this study, the target and population consisted of groups of people with similar characteristics for the generalization of research findings (Creswell, 2018). A sample represents a subset of the population chosen for research, serving as a representative of the entire population (Etikan & Bala, 2017). A sample of 160 respondents was chosen through a purposive sampling method based on specific criteria such as 18-35 years old, have never bought healthy food products but know healthy food products. Purposive sampling is a sampling method based on specific considerations (Sugiyono, 2017). Primary data were obtained through questionnaires distributed directly to respondents.

This study used a Likert scale with five response options. This measurement facilitated the researcher in quantifying qualitative data, making statistical analysis simpler. The use of the Likert scale made it easier to collect and analyze subjective data in a more systematic and structured way (Joshi et al., 2015). This research applied the Partial Least Square (PLS) method to analyze the data. Partial Least Square is a superior analysis method because it does not require many assumptions for application. As explained by Ghozali (Ghozali, 2018), PLS is designed to assist researchers in predicting targets. The PLS model is a variance-based or component-based SEM analysis method. SEM is a complex statistical technique used to evaluate research (Waluyo, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Data Respondents

This study involved the general public as subjects, specifically individuals who had never previously purchased healthy food products but were already familiar with them. The purpose of this research is to examine how e-WOM influences brand perception and purchasing decisions regarding healthy food products. The characteristics of data contributors by age are outlined as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Age Description

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 20 years	23	14.4%
20-25 years	128	80.0%
26-30 years	7	4.4%
31-35 years	2	1.2%
Total	160	100.0%

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

From the Table 1, there are 23 respondents under the age of 20, representing 14.4% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, 128 respondents, or 80%, are between 20 and 25 years old. Seven respondents are aged 26 to 30, accounting for 4.4%, and two respondents are aged 31 to 35, representing 1.2%. The data indicates that the majority of respondents, totaling 128 people, are between the ages of 20 and 25. The description of data contributors by gender is outlined in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Gender Description

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	43	27%
Female	117	73%
Total	160	100%

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

From the previous table, the gender characteristics of the data contributors' show that 43 individuals, or 27%, are male, while 117 individuals, or 73%, are female. Therefore, the majority of the respondents interviewed were female, with a total of 117 individuals. The description of the data contributors' occupations can be reviewed in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Employment Description

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Homemaker	3	2%
Private Employee	13	8%
Student/College Student	121	76%
Entrepreneur	5	3%
Others	18	11%
Total	160	100%

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2024

Based on the previous data, the characteristics of the data contributors, categorized by occupation, show that there are 3 homemakers, representing 2% of the total respondents. Private employees account for 13 individuals, or 8%. There are 121 students,

comprising 76% of the sample. Respondents who are entrepreneurs total 5 individuals, making up 3%. Additionally, 18 respondents fall into other occupational categories, representing 11%. Thus, the results indicate that most of the respondents identified are students, totaling 121 individuals. The description of respondents based on frequently used social media is presented in the following Table 4.

Tabel 4. Deskripsi Media Sosial yang Sering Digunakan

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
TikTok	120	75%
Instagram	34	21%
Facebook	1	1%
X	5	3%
Total	160	100%

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

Based on the previous table, the characteristics of data contributors show that TikTok is the platform most commonly used social media, with 120 users representing 75%. Instagram is used by 34 individuals, comprising 21%. Facebook is used by a maximum of 1 person, representing 1%, while X is used by 5 individuals, comprising 3%. In conclusion, the majority of data contributors are TikTok users, with a total of 120 individuals.

Table 5. Outer Loadings Values

Variables	Indicators	Outer Loadings	Description (Valid: >0.7)
Electronic Word of Mouth (X1)	1. I frequently see reviews or feedback about healthy food products on TikTok	0.794	Valid
	2. Reviews or feedback on TikTok affect my views on healthy food products	0.892	Valid
	3. I often read other people's posts to gather information about healthy food products	0.802	Valid
	4. I find reviews on TikTok helpful in making decisions to buy healthy food products	0.866	Valid
Brand Attitude (Y1)	1. I feel healthy food products promoted on TikTok are of good quality	0.886	Valid
	2. I feel interested in the brand of healthy food products that often appear on TikTok	0.877	Valid
	3. I trust that the brand of healthy food products promoted on TikTok is reliable	0.874	Valid
	4. I have a positive impression of the brand of healthy food products promoted on TikTok	0.891	Valid
Purchase Intention (Y2)	1. I plan to buy healthy food products after seeing reviews on TikTok	0.899	Valid
	2. I feel encouraged to try healthy food products promoted on TikTok	0.899	Valid
	3. I will recommend healthy food products I see on TikTok to others	0.866	Valid
	4. I feel interested in buying healthy food products after seeing many people recommend them on TikTok	0.874	Valid

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

Assessment of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity denotes the extent to which indicators correlate with their underlying constructs in the measurement model. An indicator is considered reliable when its correlation with the construct exceeds 0.70. However, in studies involving broader-scale development, loading values in the range of 0.50 to 0.60 are still considered acceptable (Ghozali & Fuad, 2008).

Referring to the presented table, the findings indicate that the outer loading values for each indicator of the research variables are above 0.7. However, according to (Chin, 1998), these indicators are considered valid and available for further analysis. Therefore, outer loading values between 0.5 and 0.6 are considered adequate to satisfy the criteria for convergent validity.

2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity in research evaluates the relationship between a latent variable and its indicators by analyzing the standardized factor loadings. Factor loadings exceeding 0.5 are considered significant, while an AVE greater than 0.5 is used to assess convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 6. Average Variance Extracted Values

Variables	AVE (Average Variance Extracted)	Description
E-WOM	0.705	Valid
Brand Attitude	0.782	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.778	Valid

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

From the Table 6, the AVE values for all variables in this study exceed 0.5. Each variable recorded individual values: e-WOM at 0.705, brand attitude at 0.782, and purchase intention at 0.778. This indicates that each variable used in this study meets the standard for discriminant validity.

3. Reliability test

Reliability testing evaluates the consistency and stability of a measurement tool or research tool evaluates particular concepts or constructs (Hartono & Abdillah, 2015). In this study, the reliability test was conducted utilizing Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Composite reliability is employed to evaluate how reliable the indicators of a particular variable are. The composite reliability score for all variable in this study is considered satisfactory if it exceeds 0.7. The composite reliability values are shown in the Table 7.

Tabel 7. Composite Reliability Values

Variables	Composite Reliability
e-WOM	0.905
Brand Attitude	0.935
Purchase Intention	0.933

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

The table outlines the composite reliability score for all research variables, each exceeding 0.7. This indicates that each variable satisfies the composite reliability standard, indicating a high degree of reliability. Cronbach's alpha serves as the second approach for assessing reliability. In the context of psychometric instruments or data, internal consistency is crucial. A construct is regarded as reliable when its cronbach's alpha value is above 0.60. The table below presents the results of the Cronbach's alpha values obtained in this research

Table 8. Cronbach's Alpha Values

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
E-WOM	0.860
Brand Attitude	0.907
Purchase Intention	0.905

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

All variables in this research have cronbach's alpha score exceeding 0.6, indicating that all constructs can be considered reliable, as outlined in the table.

4. Multicollinearity Test

As long as there is no correlation between independent variables, the data testing results are considered good. To assess multicollinearity, it is important to examine both the tolerance value and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). It can be explained that if the tolerance value exceeds 0.01 or the VIF does not exceed 5, multicollinearity is likely present. Multicollinearity arises when the coefficient for each independent variable is greater than 0.8. In contrast, if the correlation coefficient among independent variables is below 0.8, then multicollinearity does not exist (Ghozali, 2018). Tolerance values and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) can be used to determine the presence of multicollinearity. The cut-off values indicate that tolerance should exceed 0.1 or that the VIF should not exceed 5. The VIF values in this research are shown in the Table 9.

Table 9. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

	e-WOM	Purchase Intention	Brand Attitude
e-WOM (X1)		1.552	1.000
Brand Attitude (Y1)	1.552		
Purchase Intention (Y2)			

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

1. Model Fit Test (Goodness of Fit)

The structural model analysis aims to reveal the relationships between observed and unobserved variables, including predictors, key mediators, and outcomes within a complex model. The fit of this model is measured through two tests: R-Square (R^2) and Q-Square (Q^2). The R^2 value illustrates the calculation of endogenous and exogenous

variables. A higher R^2 value indicates a better degree of determination. Thus, R^2 scores of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate that the model exhibits strong, moderate, or weak strength, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The following Table 10 presents the coefficient of determination values in this study.

Table 10. R-Square Values

	R Square
Purchase Intention	0.682
Brand Attitude	0.356

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

2. Path Coefficient Test

The t-statistic, critical p-ratio and original sample values are calculated through the bootstrapping process. When the p-value does not exceed 0.05, there is a direct effect between the two variables. In cases where the p-value exceeds 0.05, there is no effect. In this study, a t-statistical significance value of 1.96 was used, with a significance level of 5%. A significant effect is found if the t-statistic value exceeds 1.96. The path coefficient values resulting from the test are shown in the Table 11.

Table 11. Hypotheses Testing

	Hypotheses	Original Sample	t-Statistic	P Values	Description
e-WOM → Brand Attitude	H1	0.193	6.844	0.000	Positive Significant
e-WOM → Purchase Intention	H2	0.597	2.397	0.017	Positive Significant
Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention	H3	0.696	9.186	0.000	Positive Significant

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2024).

Referring to the results of the path coefficients in the Table 11 and Fig. 2, the interpretation is as follows:

H1: The findings from the first hypothesis show that e-WOM significantly influences Brand Attitude in a positive manner.

H2: The findings of the second hypothesis reveal that e-WOM significantly impacts Purchase Intention in a positive manner.

H3: The findings from the third hypothesis suggest that Brand Attitude significantly influences Purchase Intention in a positive direction.

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention

E-WOM positively affects purchase intention. This study aligns with the research by Nofal et al. (2022). This study explores how weak-tie e-WOM serves as a moderator that strengthens the effect of e-WOM from celebrities on the desire to purchase. This relationship indicates that e-WOM has significant potential to influence consumers' purchasing decisions, especially when there is interaction between different information sources utilized by consumers during their decision-making processes.

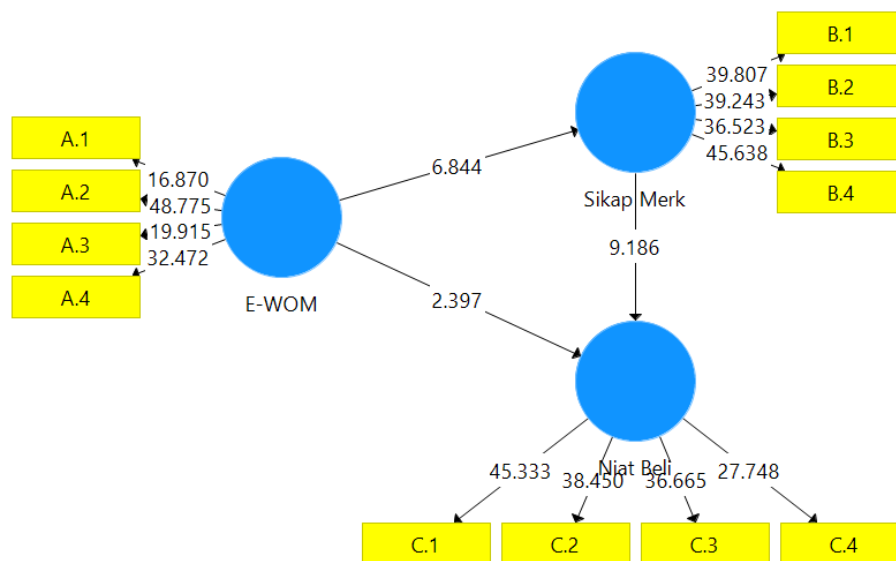


Figure 2. Hypotheses Testing

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Attitude

E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on Brand Attitude. This study is consistent with the research by Kudeshia and Mittal (2016). The research analyzed how e-WOM affects brand attitude. The study found that consumers are more inclined to form a positive attitude toward a brand if the e-WOM comes from a source that is considered trustworthy and credible.

The Effect of Brand Attitude on Purchase Intention

Brand attitude strongly influences purchase intention positively. The findings of this study are consistent with prior research by Aravindan et al. (2023). This study emphasized that epistemic Importance, emotional resonance, and beneficial word-of-mouth promotion. are the main factors influencing the desire to purchase environmentally friendly products. The study found that a strong and positive brand attitude can motivate customers to purchase the same brand's products in the future. Consumers with a positive attitude toward a brand tend to be more loyal and less affected by competing brands, ultimately increasing their purchase intention.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to analyze how e-WOM affects consumer perceptions of healthy food brands and their desire to purchase healthy food products on TikTok. The findings reveal that e-WOM exhibits a significant positive influence on how consumers perceive healthy food brands and their intent to purchase. Higher quality e-WOM received by consumers leads to more positive attitudes toward the brand and increases their desire to purchase. Therefore, healthy food product manufacturers are advised to actively manage

and leverage e-WOM on TikTok as part of their marketing strategy. By improving the quality of content and encouraging positive reviews, companies can strengthen their brand position in the market and boost product sales.

Several limitations of this study need to be considered. First, the data contributors in this research were predominantly individuals aged between 20 and 25 years who had never purchased healthy food products but were already familiar with them. This limitation may affect the study's results because the respondents had no direct experience with healthy food products, meaning their perceptions may not be fully formed and are likely affected by secondary information or trends. Most respondents in this study were students without a personal income. As a result, their responses may not fully reflect purchase intentions based on actual financial capability, which could affect the validity of the findings related to purchase intentions in a broader demographic context. Secondly, since the respondents had no prior purchasing experience, the purchase intentions measured in this study are more hypothetical and may not fully represent actual market behavior. Thirdly, although the respondents were familiar with healthy food products, their level of knowledge and exposure to e-WOM on TikTok could vary significantly, which may impact the consistency of their responses.

Further research is recommended to involve respondents who have experience purchasing healthy food products and to expand the age range and demographic backgrounds to obtain more comprehensive and representative results. The study indicates that e-WOM on TikTok exerts a notable positive influence on brand attitude and the intention to buy healthy food products. The results suggest that companies should enhance their digital marketing strategies. One approach is to create engaging and informative content on TikTok that can spark positive interactions, such as user reviews, recipe tutorials, or inspirational stories related to a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, collaborating with influencers who have audiences aligned with the target market can strengthen positive brand perception through trusted information and reviews shared by consumers.

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