

Price Perception, Product Quality, and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) Increase Purchasing Decisions at Pizza Marzano

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the influence of price perception, product quality, and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on consumers' purchase decisions in the culinary industry. A quantitative method was employed, with a population consisting of consumers who have made purchases. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to 250 respondents using an accidental sampling technique. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results show that two independent variables, namely price perception and e-WOM, significantly influence consumer purchase decisions. This indicates that restaurants offering lower prices while maintaining high product quality are more likely to attract consumers. Moreover, customer experiences shared through online reviews can influence potential buyers in their future purchasing decisions. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for culinary business practitioners in developing more effective marketing strategies. Future research may consider including other variables that could further enhance purchase decisions effectively.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM); Price Perception; Product Quality; Purchase Decision

1. Introduction

The growth of the food and beverage business has been heavily influenced by the lifestyle of younger generations. Shopping centers and commercial areas are considered ideal locations for entrepreneurs to establish restaurants. One of the main driving factors behind this phenomenon is the increasingly hectic lifestyle. It is evidenced by the fact that 49.25% of Indonesia's population prefers to spend their money on food and beverages to save time (Nordiansyah, 2024). Additionally, culinary innovations and trends from other countries, such as Italy, have also influenced the development of the local culinary industry. Italian specialties like pizza and pasta attract consumers due to their distinctive and robust flavors. Initially, an Italian entrepreneur named Peter Boizot moved to London and established a restaurant called Pizza Express in 1965. Later in 2006, an Indonesian entrepreneur recognized the local demand for Italian cuisine and launched a new brand called Pizza Marzano. The owner of Pizza Marzano committed to serving high-quality food and enhancing customer satisfaction through halal certification from MUI, as a means of complying with prevailing regulations (Mitra Adiperkasa, 2024).

According to Mothersbaugh and Hawkins (2016), a purchase decision refers to an individual's careful evaluation process of a set of product attributes before making a choice to meet their needs. In making purchasing decisions, individuals are also influenced by

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psychological perspectives, emotional responses, and economic conditions. The objective of a purchase decision is to choose, determine, and minimize the risks involved in purchasing.

The first variable that affects purchase decisions is price perception. Perception is the process by which consumers select, organize, and interpret what they see, hear, touch, smell, or taste, thereby giving it personal meaning (Jones & George, 2022). Kotler et al. (2017) define price as the amount of money charged to consumers for owning or using a product. Price is a critical element in shaping consumer perception and plays a significant role in purchase decision-making. Thus, price perception refers to the individual's understanding of price information that holds personal meaning (Peter & Olson, 2010). Although price comprehension is objective, consumer perceptions are shaped by economic conditions and individual assumptions about quality relative to value. Research conducted by Yuliawan and Budiono (2024) shows that price perception significantly affects purchase decisions.

The second variable influencing purchase decisions is product quality. According to Heizer et al. (2021), quality is a product's ability to meet consumer needs. Tjiptono (2015) suggests that a product is a seller's interpretation of something that can be offered to buyers to meet their needs and wants, based on the seller's capabilities. Therefore, product quality can be defined as a product's ability to meet customer needs in terms of reliability, durability, usability, or other beneficial attributes (Pass et al., 1994). Product quality also distinguishes a business from its competitors and can indirectly foster sustainable consumer trust. Research by Hidayatullah and Tuti (2022) confirms that product quality influences purchase decisions.

The next variable is Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). According to Amin (2019), e-WOM refers to informal information exchange directed at customers regarding the use or features of products sold by producers, facilitated by internet-based technologies. e-WOM is considered efficient and effective, as the information originates from authentic sources, and consumers can evaluate past customer experiences to mitigate risk. Consumers are no longer passive targets but active communicators who seek product information and share experiences at any time. Cheung and Thadani (2010) also argue that e-WOM provides a platform for consumers to express opinions, comments, and reviews via blogs, forums, newsgroups, or social media platforms. Research by Puspitaningtyas and Saino (2019) demonstrates that e-WOM significantly affects purchase decisions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Price Perception

Price perception refers to how buyers process pricing information comprehensively in a way that provides significant meaning to them (Firmansyah, 2018). The objective of price perception is to assist buyers in inferring, comparing, and selecting a price that aligns with their capacity and needs, with the help of their sensory perceptions. Kotler et al. (2018)

identify four key indicators that influence price perception: (1) Affordability of price, (2) Price compatibility with quality, (3) Price match with benefits, and (4) Price competitiveness.

A crucial element in the purchasing decision-making process lies in the integration stage, which combines knowledge to evaluate various options before arriving at a final choice (Peter & Olson, 2010). Consumers tend to feel they have made the right choice when a product they purchase is economically priced yet delivers quality that meets their expectations. Rele et al. (2024) also explain that perceived price differences among products within the same category are an important consideration for consumers before making a choice. Therefore, companies must be able to read market conditions accurately so that pricing strategies can be used to create a competitive advantage. A study by Khaira et al. (2022) acknowledges that price perception significantly influences purchasing decisions.

H1: Price perception has an influence on purchasing decisions.

2.2 Product Quality

Kotler et al. (1999) define product quality as the product's ability to perform its functions, including durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation, and other valued attributes. Products that provide positive experiences and added value, either functionally or emotionally, are more likely to be chosen by consumers, as they perceive them as high-quality. Product quality plays a vital role, as customers' understanding of the offered product must meet their expectations, which in turn affects their purchasing interest. According to Vaclavik and Christian (2014), there are three primary aspects of food quality: (1) Appearance, (2) Texture, and (3) Flavor.

A purchasing decision is defined as the state in which consumers determine their preferred option to buy the most desirable product (Kotler et al., 2018). When customers decide to purchase a product, its quality often serves as a key consideration in affirming their decision. Products with good durability and appealing appearance can motivate customers to proceed with a purchase. Research by Suhendro and Silitonga (2022) confirms that product quality significantly influences purchasing decisions.

H2: Product quality has an influence on purchasing decisions.

2.3 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) define electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) as positive or negative statements made by potential, current, or former customers about a product, which are shared via the internet. e-WOM is a tangible outcome of internet development, allowing consumers to access a wide range of information instantly and flexibly, regardless of time and space. Selvi and Thomson (2016) argue that e-WOM generates a new form of information exchange by providing broader opportunities for consumers to share their experiences online. These customer experiences, conveyed through online reviews, offer diverse insights to potential buyers, which may in turn motivate them to make a purchase. Goyette et al. (2010)

outline four main dimensions to evaluate the success of e-WOM: (1) WOM intensity (activity, volume, dispersion), (2) Positive valence (praise), (3) Negative valence, and (4) Content.

According to Zusrony (2021), purchasing decision refers to a decision-making process that involves determining whether or not to make a purchase. e-WOM plays an important role for prospective buyers, as the reviews provided are often considered credible and trustworthy sources for making informed decisions. Nguyen et al. (2024) also emphasize that online consultations and reviews contribute significantly to the effectiveness of purchasing decisions because such information is deemed more reliable and persuasive. Research by Akbar and Sunarti (2018) reveals that e-WOM significantly affects purchasing decisions.

H3: e-WOM has an influence on purchasing decisions.

2.4 Purchasing Decision

A purchasing decision refers to the situation where a person decides whether or not to buy a product offered by a seller (Indrasari, 2019). One of the primary internal factors influencing a customer's decision to make a purchase includes their perception of price and preference for product quality. Additionally, external factors, such as social influence gained through e-WOM, can also impact the customer's final decision. According to Sudaryono (2014), purchasing decisions are formed based on weighing the positive and negative aspects of a product, which helps consumers find the most optimal solution. Peter and Olson (2010) assert that the key to successful decision-making lies in the consumer's ability to integrate all available information and knowledge, evaluate it thoroughly, and arrive at a single decision that is reflected in their behavioral intentions.

Kotler and Armstrong (2017) outline five stages in the consumer buying decision process: (1) Need recognition, (2) Information search, (3) Evaluation of alternatives, (4) Purchase decision, and (5) Post-purchase behavior. Based on justification provided, the following research framework is suggested:

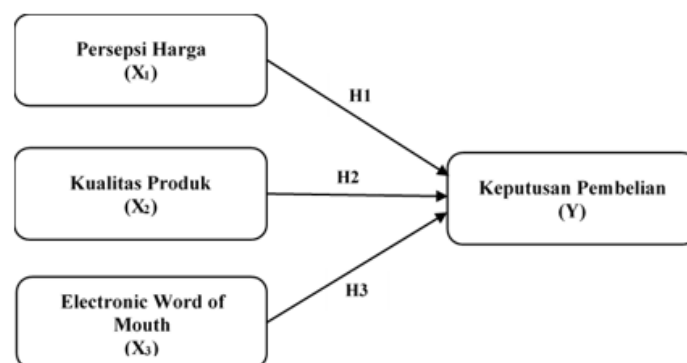


Figure 1. Framework

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

3. Research Method

The quantitative method was employed in this study, with a population consisting of consumers who had previously made purchases at Pizza Marzano. Additionally, the researcher used an incidental sampling technique, which refers to a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on accidental encounters with the researcher, provided that the individuals are deemed suitable as sources of information (Sugiyono, 2018).

For the data collection process, the researcher conducted a survey using questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, which were completed by the respondents. The data collection was carried out in December 2024 at Pizza Marzano, Summarecon Mall Bekasi, with a total of 250 respondents.

Furthermore, this study employed a five-point Likert scale as the measurement tool. The data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3.0 software, applying the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The first stage of analysis involved testing for validity and reliability, followed by discriminant validity, multicollinearity testing, R-square, F-test, prediction accuracy test, and hypothesis testing.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Respondent Description

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	89	35.6%
Woman	161	64.4%
TOTAL	250	
Age		
< 20 years	17	6.8%
20-30 Year	161	64.4%
30-40 years	31	12.4%
>40 years	41	16.4%
TOTAL	250	
Work		
Students	80	32.0%
Housewife	31	12.4%
Civil Servants/Private Sector	103	41.2%
Freelance and others	36	14.4%
TOTAL	250	
Purchase Intensity		
< 5 times	157	62.8%
>5 times	93	37.2%
TOTAL	250	

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the proportion of female respondents provides a higher level of involvement. This also proves that women have more interest in deciding to buy, either dine-in or takeaway at the restaurant. Then in terms of age, respondents 20-30 years old are higher than other ages with a total of 161 people. Civil Servant/Private Employee status is also the majority of buyers at this restaurant (41.2%)

followed by students (32.0%). Furthermore, the table above also concludes that 62.8% of consumers only make purchases <5 times.

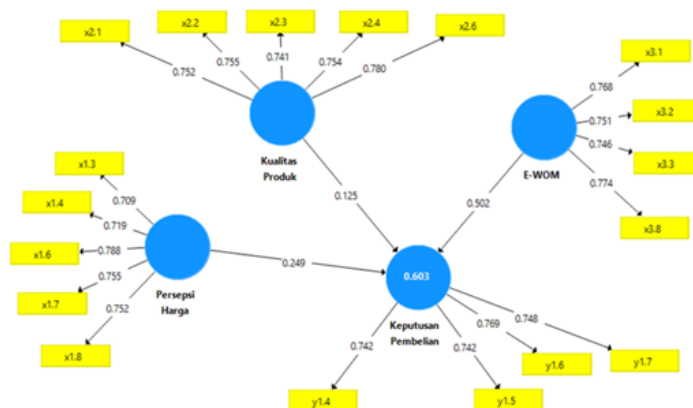


Figure 2. Structural Model

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

The structural model listed above has four variables, namely price perception, product quality, e-WOM, and purchasing decisions. The variables of price perception, product quality, and e-WOM are independent variables and the purchasing decision variable is the dependent variable. The absolute requirement of convergent validity is if an indicator is able to meet the outer loadings value > 0.5 so that it can be interpreted that the indicator is adequate and shows good feasibility. The picture above shows that all indicators in each variable do not have an outer loading value < 0.5, or in other words, all can be used in this study.

Table 2. Evaluation of Measurement Model

Variables		Indicator	Items	Outer Loadings	Reliability	AVE
Price Perception	1.	Affordability of price	X1.3	0.709	0.862	0.555
	2.	Price compatibility with quality	X1.4	0.719		
			X1.6	0.788		
	3.	Price match with benefits	X1.7	0.755		
			X1.8	0.752		
	4.	Price competitiveness				
		(Kotler et al., 2018)				
Product Quality	1.	Appearance	X2.1	0.752	0.870	0.572
	2.	Texture	X2.2	0.755		
	3.	Flavor	X2.3	0.741		
			X2.4	0.754		
			X2.6	0.780		
		(Vaclavik & Christian, 2014)				
e-WOM	1.	WOM intensity (activity, volume, dispersion)	X3.1	0.768	0.845	0.577
			X3.2	0.751		
			X3.3	0.746		
	2.	Positive valence (praise)	X3.8	0.774		
	3.	Negative valence				
	4.	Content				
		(Goyette et al., 2010)				

Buying decision	1.	Need recognition	Y1.4	0.742	0.837	0.563
	2.	Information search	Y1.5	0.742		
	3.	Evaluation of alternatives	Y1.6	0.769		
	4.	Purchase decision	Y1.7	0.748		
	5.	Post-purchase behavior				

(Kotler et al., 2017)

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Table 2 explains that in addition to looking at the outer loadings value, the measurement in this model also has good results because the reliability value is >0.7 which means the data meets the requirements and can be relied on. Next, this study is said to be adequate if the validity test value on the Average Variable Extract (AVE) is >0.5 for each variable. This can be clearly seen that each variable has an average value greater than 0.5, such as 0.555 for the price perception variable (X1), 0.572 for the product quality variable (X2), 0.577 for the e-WOM variable (X3), and 0.563 for the purchasing decision variable (Y).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Discriminant Validity

	e-WOM	Decision Purchase	Quality Product	Perception Price
e-WOM	0.760			
Buying decision	0.735	0.750		
Product Quality	0.706	0.637	0.756	
Price Perception	0.583	0.621	0.635	0.745

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Table 3 explains that the discriminant validity test can be said to be valid if the value of each variable has the highest value so that it can be distinguished as a whole without showing a significant correlation. So it can be stated that the factor value of each variable above is valid because e-WOM has a value of 0.760, purchasing decisions of 0.750, product quality of 0.756, and price perception of 0.745.

Table 4. Multicollinearity-Inner VIF Value

Variables	e-WOM	Decision Purchase	Product Quality	Perception Price
e-WOM	2.123			
Buying decision				
Product Quality		2,349		
Price Perception		1,786		

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Table 4 above explains that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of each variable is used as a tool to prove the presence or absence of multicollinearity. In this study, the VIF value is 1,786-2,349, which means that the data meets the requirements where the VIF value is <10 .

Table 5. Test Determination Coefficient (R2) / R Square

Variables	R Square	R Square
Buying decision	0.603	0.598

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

In table 5 above, the determination coefficient test serves to assess the effectiveness of the level of contribution of the independent variable in influencing the dependent variable. The results of table 5 conclude that the determination coefficient value is 0.603, which means that the independent variable has an influence of around 60.3% on purchasing decisions.

Table 6. Test Prediction Accuracy (Q2)

	SSO	SSE	Q2 (= 1-SSE/SSO)
e-WOM	1000.000	1000.000	
Buying decision	1000.000	676,093	0.324
Product Quality	1250,000	1250,000	
Price Perception	1250,000	1250,000	

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Table 6 explains that the Q2 value for the purchasing decision variable is 0.324. This number shows that each variable has a Q2 value > 0 or in other words, the findings of this study provide a fairly good level of prediction accuracy.

Table 7. F Square

Variables	e-WOM	Decision Purchase	Quality Product	Perception Price
e-WOM		0.298		
Buying decision				
Product Quality		0.017		
Price Perception		0.087		

Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

In table 7 above, it states that the F-Test for the structural model applied in this study functions as a measuring tool to see how much influence the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables has. The F-Statistics value for the relationship e-WOM -> purchasing decisions is 0.298 which means it has a moderate influence. Then, product quality -> purchasing decisions is 0.017 which means it has a low influence. Furthermore, price perception -> purchasing decisions also has a low influence, which is 0.087.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Price Perception -> Purchase Decision	0.249	0.258	7,735	0.000	Accepted
Product Quality -> Purchase Decision	0.125	0.121	1,893	0.059	Rejected

e-WOM Purchase Decision	->	0.502	0.496	3.317	0.001	Accepted
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Source: Data processed by the author, 2025

Hypothesis test is a way to analyze whether the results of the hypothesis can be accepted or otherwise. If the T-Statistic condition is >1.96 and the P-values <0.05 , then it can be interpreted that the results of the hypothesis are accepted. In table 8 above, it concludes that the relationship between price perception and purchasing decisions has a T-Statistic value = 7.735 and P-values = 0.000 or in other words the hypothesis is accepted. Likewise with the relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decisions with a T-Statistic value = 3.317 and P-values = 0.001 which means that the hypothesis is also accepted. Furthermore, it is different from the relationship between product quality and purchasing decisions where the hypothesis is rejected because it does not meet the requirements.

4.1 Discussion

The findings of this study state that external factors of price perception can influence a person's purchasing decision. Before buying, consumers tend to compare several similar products to find the cheapest price, one of which is by taking advantage of price cuts/discounts. According to (Irwansyah et al., 2021) discounts can influence consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions because the bigger the discount given, the higher the consumer's interest in buying the product. However, there are also consumers who have other understandings about prices, such as whether the goods are worthy and comparable to the money spent. Jamaludin (2015) also supports the statement above through his research which proves that there is a positive influence between price perception and purchasing decisions.

Then, this study states that product quality has no influence on purchasing decisions. This may be due to the strength of the brand that is already attached to the minds of consumers, so that consumers have more trust without evaluating quality. In addition, situational factors such as the atmosphere and layout of the restaurant can encourage consumers to make impulsive purchases. According to Zusrony (2021), there are two types of motivation that can drive purchasing decisions, namely emotional and rational motivation. Amelisa et al., (2016) also supports the above statement through research which proves that there is no influence between product quality and purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, the results of this study state that the independent variable, namely e-WOM, greatly influences consumers in deciding to purchase. With social media, companies are able to reach potential new buyers widely and effectively through stimuli obtained in the form of information from previous buyers' experiences. In addition to positive reviews, C2C information based on social media is more in demand because of its ease in accessing various information, being able to get the lowest price, and reducing risk before making a purchase

decision. (Selvi & Thomson, 2016). Research that has been conducted by Santosa (2019) also used as support that purchasing decisions can be significantly influenced by e-WOM.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study emphasizes that there is no influence of product quality on purchasing decisions, but it can be seen that price perception and e-WOM are crucial factors for consumers in deciding a purchase. Both variables are proven to have a direct and positive influence on purchasing decisions. In addition, this study also allows factors that are not discussed to influence purchasing decisions, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, it is recommended for subsequent researchers to use other variables that are more effective in increasing purchasing decisions at this restaurant.

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