

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth and Events Towards Interest in Buying Dandito Crabs in Balikpapan

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

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This study aims to explain the influence of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and events towards interest in buying Dandito Crabs in Balikpapan. The research urgency rises from culinary arts that have become an integral part of people's lifestyles, fulfilling the need for pleasure. Popular culinary delights often become tourist destinations, attracting local and international visitors. Each culinary tour has unique attractions that boost potential visitors' buying interest, where e-WOM plays a crucial role as consumers typically seek information about products before purchasing. On the other hand, events that are designed with specific themes aim to capture visitors' attention and convey the intended message effectively. The theoretical approach used in this study focuses on the integrated marketing communication model. The study found that e-WOM significantly influences buying interest among consumers of Dandito Crab Restaurant. Similarly, events have a notable impact on purchase interest. The correlation test results indicate that e-WOM and events account for 71.2% of the variation in purchase interest, with the remaining 28.8% attributed to other variables. To enhance promotions, the management of Dandito Crab Restaurant can increase its presence and interactions on social media.

1. Introduction

Food is no longer just about satisfying hunger but has become intertwined with pleasure and enjoyment, influencing people's lifestyles. Many destinations use gastronomy as a tourism marketing tool, and many also use tourism to promote gastronomy (Fields, 2003). The phenomenon of culinary tourism extends beyond borders and demographics. It's about discovering the soul of a place through its food and forging connections between people and their environments. Travelers now plan their journeys around culinary hotspots, seeking out regional specialties and immersive dining experiences that leave lasting memories. The culinary delights that are currently popular will become a tourist destination, both for residents in the city and from outside the city or even abroad. Apart from visiting natural tourist destinations, out-of-town visits also involve culinary tourism with typical regional foods in that area (Purwanto, 2021).

As time continues, culinary tourism has blossomed into a rich mosaic of regional flavors, each culinary destination unveiling its unique tapestry of tastes and experiences. From tantalizing snacks and signature beverages to world-renowned dishes, these aren't just meals but immersive adventures designed to marry top-notch restaurant service with authentic local flair. Each culinary tour beckons with its distinct allure, drawing in prospective visitors with promises of unforgettable gastronomic journeys. Whether it's the artisanal mastery of a small village renowned for its cheese or the bustling energy of a night market alive with the aromas of spicy street food, every locale boasts its own irresistible charm and culinary treasures. Each culinary tour has its superior attraction, which makes potential visitors grow in buying interest (Julita et al., 2022).

Visitors' buying interest is multifaceted, influenced by personal recommendations, subjective preferences in culinary choices, and external factors like online reviews, Electronic Word-of-Mouth

(e-WOM), and company promotions through events (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hanifa & Ratnawati, 2019). Each of these elements plays a role in shaping the decision-making process of potential customers. When someone recommends a place or product, it can persuade others to check it out and potentially purchase various culinary products. Furthermore, culinary arts are highly subjective and require a lot of consideration. The taste and preference of what one person likes, another might not. This subjectivity requires individuals to consider multiple factors before deciding where to eat or what to try. One or two factors that can be regarded as and referenced by someone are the existence of electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and promotions carried out by the company, namely events.

Thorsten (2004) argues that e-WOM is a positive or negative statement made by potential customers, actual customers, and former customers about a product or company via the Internet. Consumers receive information from other consumers who have used the product through e-WOM. The Internet has enabled new communication platforms that further empower suppliers and consumers and allow them to exchange information and opinions, both business-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer. Statements related to tourist attractions shared via the internet nowadays have become something that influences a person's perspective when looking for references. It has become commonplace for potential visitors to search for information about a product online and compare it based on the comments listed (Kurniawan & Amali, 2024). In everyday life, people like to share their experiences with something. For example, talking about a restaurant or product you bought and recommending it to someone else. If the experience is positive, recommendations snowball, leading to product success; otherwise, negative experiences can lead to the product's and brand's demise.

Belch & Belch (2012) sees an event as a type of promotion where a company or brand is associated with an event or activity with a theme to create a consumer experience and promote a product or service. Events are activities companies create to invite a group of people to a place to gain experience or essential information directly, along with other objectives developed by the organizer (Kennedy, 2009). Event marketing is an effective medium for building a company's brand image. One of the most effective ways to convey a brand message is by inviting customers and potential customers to attend events organized by the company. Events in marketing strategy and public relations are a form of marketing with a soft-selling nature that aims to build relationships with the audience (Deslia & Amali, 2023). Therefore, Marketing events organized by the company must be influential and leave a deep impression on every customer who attends so that customers and potential customers remember the pleasant experience for a long time and remain loyal to the brand or product.

Events can become promotional media because visitors become sensitive and aware of the product's existence through these activities. Consumers who know about the product's existence will start looking for information related to the product and ultimately develop an interest in purchasing. Ajzen & Fishbein (2005) explain that the intention is a plan, or it seems that someone will behave in a certain way in a specific situation, whether someone does it or not. Purchase intention is a consumer behavior where consumers desire to buy or choose a product based on experience in selecting, using, consuming, or even wanting a product (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Culinary interest is a form of desire customers show for certain culinary products, where interests are personal and related to attitudes. Individuals who are interested in an object have the power or urge to carry out various behaviors to approach or obtain the object (Simamora, 2002).

Peter et al (2000) states that interest (intention) is a plan to engage in a particular behavior to achieve a goal. Buying interest is behavior that occurs in response to an object or repeated purchases, where purchase interest is the final stage of a complex purchasing decision process (Assael, 1998). This process begins with the emergence of a need for a product or brand, which is followed by consumer information processing. External influences, awareness of needs, product launches, and evaluation of alternatives can stimulate consumer buying interest. Buying interest also refers to the level of enthusiasm or intent that a potential customer exhibits toward purchasing a product or service. It indicates how likely a consumer is to make a purchase, often influenced by factors such as product appeal, personal needs, economic conditions, marketing efforts, and sociocultural factors (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008; Sutriyono, 2008).

Based on the argument above, some visitors might come to the Dandito Crab Restaurant due to direct recommendations and ultimately recommend the restaurant to others. Dandito Crab also has an Instagram account with more than 12,000 followers, which facilitates the search for a lot of

information about the restaurant, including its location, product quality, and reviews. Additionally, Dandito Crab is well known among officials at local government and state events, where an excellent culinary destination can attract people by leveraging e-WOM through social media platforms, where satisfied customers share their positive dining experiences. Furthermore, to attract visitor interest and expand its market share, Dandito Crab often promotes activities with unique themes, such as photography competitions, and collaborates with other brands. Hosting engaging events can draw crowds and create memorable experiences that attendees want to discuss online. These efforts serve as a form of promotion aimed at increasing product sales. Moreover, the company seeks to raise public awareness about Dandito Crab's existence.

2. Method

This research is included in casual associative research using a quantitative approach. Causal associative research aims to determine the influence between two or more variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). This research will explain the relationship between three variables: how electronic word of mouth and events influence purchase interest. Meanwhile, integrated marketing communication theory. Integrated communication theory, or integrated marketing communication, is a concept where a company integrates and coordinates various communication channels to send clear, consistent, and convincing messages regarding the company and its products (Kotler & Keller, 2021). This theory is one of the theories intended to market products in various ways on an ongoing basis so that they are suitable on target and can be well received to increase purchases such as advertising, sales promotions, direct sales, public relations, and marketing via the internet. This research shows how indirect marketing via the internet, namely e-WOM and public relations, is created from events.

The population in this research can be interpreted as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects with specific qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions drawn (Sugiyono, 2017). The population used in this research is consumers of the Dandito Crab Restaurant or all people who have ever visited the Dandito Crab Restaurant. This population is unlimited and can be measured with certainty (infinite population). According to Sugiyono (2017), the sampling technique is a sampling technique. Sampling in this study used a purposive sampling technique. The reason for choosing this technique is that not all samples have criteria that match the researcher's wishes. Therefore, researchers applied two sample criteria in this study: (1) who has ever seen reviews of Dandito Crab Restaurant via social media? (2) who has ever seen Keeping Dandito among tenants at an event? And (3) who has ever purchased Dandito Crab?

The data collection technique used in this research is a questionnaire technique. The questionnaire was distributed as a Google form by sending the questionnaire link via WhatsApp, Line, Instagram, and Twitter applications to visitors to the Dandito Restaurant. The type of questionnaire questions used in this research are closed questions. The type of closed question expects a short answer, and the respondent chooses one alternative answer from each available question (Sugiyono, 2017). This research uses a Likert scale in its data measurement scale. Likert scale measures the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group of people regarding social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2017). The researcher has precisely determined this social phenomenon as the research variable. With a Likert scale, the variables to be measured are translated into indicator variables. Then, these indicators are used as a starting point for compiling instrument items, which can be statements or questions.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Presenting the Results

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Results

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| (Constant) | 8,813 | 1,915 | | 4,603 | ,000 |
| Electronic Word of Mouth | 0,477 | 0,094 | 0,427 | 5.066 | .000 |
| Events | 0,700 | 0,124 | 0,477 | 5,656 | ,000 |

Table 1. describes the results of the multiple linear regression, in which the constant result has a value of 8.813. This constant refers to the condition when the buying interest variable is not influenced by other variables, namely Electronic Word of Mouth (X1) and Event (X2). If the independent variable does not exist, then the Buying Interest variable does not change. The Electronic Word of Mouth's regression coefficient value positively influences Purchase Interest, which means that every 1 unit increase in the organizational climate variable will influence Purchase Interest by 0.447, assuming that other variables are not examined in this research. The regression coefficient value of the Event variable also positively influences Purchase Interest, which means that every 1 unit increase in the compensation variable will influence Purchase Interest by 0.700, assuming that other variables are not examined in this research.

According to Table 1, the significance value is from the calculation results; it was found that the significance value was smaller than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the t-value was 5.066. This value is then compared with the t-table at df (degree of freedom) 93 from the calculation, and the significance level is 5% with a value of 1.985. So, H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. The hypothesis is that electronic word of mouth influences buying interest, which means that electronic word of mouth can increase or decrease buying interest with an error rate of 5%. The calculation results also found that the significance value was smaller than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the t-value was 5.656. This value is then compared with t-table at df (degree of freedom) 93 and a significance level of 5% with a value of 1.985. So that H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted, hypothesis 1 proves that events influence buying interest, which means that events can increase or decrease buying interest with an error rate of 5%.

Table 2. Coefficients of Determination Results

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | ,848 | 0,718 | 0,712 | 4,811 |

Table 2. describes the results of the coefficient of determination test (R^2). The correlation or relationship value section (R) has a value of 0.848, which explains that there is a relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) with a total value of 0.848. The value of the coefficient of determination or R Square (R^2) has a value of 0.718, which explains that there is an influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) with a total value of 0.718 or 71.8%. So, the electronic word of mouth and event variables influence the purchase interest variable with a total value of 71.8%, while other variables explain the rest with a total value of 28.2%.

3.2. Discussion

An excellent culinary destination can attract people by leveraging e-WOM through social media platforms, where satisfied customers share their positive dining experiences. Hosting engaging events can also draw crowds and create memorable experiences that attendees will want to talk about online. Each of these elements plays a role in shaping the decision-making process of potential customers. Based on the research findings using integrated marketing communication (IMC) theory, it is evident that e-WOM and events positively influence potential consumers' decision to buy Dandito crab products. Companies can build and maintain consumer relationships by utilizing e-WOM to spread information about Dandito crab products through third parties. The research further highlights that the excitement generated during events also plays a crucial role. Events create a positive experience for attendees, which helps capture their attention and increase their interest in purchasing products. Purchase intention is a consumer behavior where consumers desire to buy or choose a product based on experience in selecting, using, consuming, or even wanting a product (Kotler & Keller, 2021).

Dandito Crab Restaurant employs a marketing communication strategy that leverages e-WOM and events as promotional tools. This strategy focuses on delivering messages that boost consumer interest

in their product. Findings suggest that when consumers receive clear and engaging messages, it can change their attitudes and lead to increased purchasing decisions. e-WOM is discussion material in interactions that can be positive or negative. On the other hand, events provide participants happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure, creating a positive atmosphere that can drive enthusiasm and interest in the products. These two strategies are part of integrated marketing communication that can be understood as a process of managing and integrating all marketing communication activities to targeted consumers to achieve increased brand quality (Pickton & Broderick, 2005).

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) theory also emphasizes seamlessly integrating various promotional tools and channels to deliver a unified message to consumers (Belch & Belch, 2012). Beyond simply conveying information, IMC involves creating an immersive consumer experience during events such as product launches or promotional campaigns. This experience plays a crucial role in shaping consumer purchasing behaviors. When consumers attend an event, their interaction with the brand and its messaging goes beyond the passive reception of information. It becomes an active engagement where their perceptions, emotions, and overall experience influence their decision-making process. Therefore, for IMC to be effective, the message must be transparent, informative, captivating, and compelling enough to resonate with consumers more deeply (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Moreover, the event should be meticulously designed to align with the brand's values and resonate with the target audience. This entails creating an atmosphere that attracts attention and enhances understanding and interest in the promoted product or service.

The research results on the relationship between electronic word of mouth and events and consumer buying interest at Dandito Crab Restaurant show a significant positive relationship with the level of relationship in the strong category. This means a substantial relationship exists between electronic word of mouth, events, and buying interest. This supports the proposed hypothesis that a significant positive relationship exists between the intensity of electronic word of mouth and buying interest in Dandito restaurant customers. The results of this research align with research by (Erkan & Evans, 2016) that found e-WOM on social media indeed influences consumer purchase intentions. As well as research by (Hanifa & Ratnawati, 2019) which states that event marketing influences consumer buying interest. Many factors can still influence buying interest in electronic word of mouth, and events are some of them. Based on the results presented above, it can be concluded that consumer buying interest at Dandito Crab Restaurant is influenced by electronic word of mouth and events.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn. Electronic word of mouth significantly affects buying interest among Dandito Crab Restaurant Consumers. Events have a significant effect on buying interest among Dandito Crab Restaurant consumers. The correlation test results for the determinants of electronic word of mouth and event variables on purchase interest are 71.2%. In comparison, the remaining 28.8% is the contribution of other variables outside the electronic word of mouth and event variables. The correlation test results show a positive and significant relationship between electronic word of mouth and events and consumer buying interest at Dandito Crab Restaurant. This positive correlation means that the more positive the electronic word of mouth and the more attractive the event, the higher the buying interest that arises in consumers. On the other hand, the more negative the electronic word of mouth and the less attractive the event, the lower the level of consumer buying interest.

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