

The Influence of E-WOM Source Credibility in Beauty Product Reviews Containing Shopee Affiliate Links on Consumer Trust

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Abstract

Indonesia's strong interest in online shopping encourages Shopee to develop the Shopee Affiliate Program as a marketing communication strategy. Shopee affiliate links are commonly used in beauty product reviews on the @ohmy_beautybank autobase account. The objective of this study was to analyze the influence of e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links on consumer trust. This study utilizes descriptive quantitative approaches. The probability sampling approach, specifically simple random sampling, is used to obtain research samples with the Slovin formula which generated 400 respondents. The research instrument proved valid and reliable, and the data was analyzed by employing normality, heteroscedasticity, correlation, determination coefficient, and simple linear regression tests. The findings revealed that e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links had a positive and significant influence on consumer trust. The correlation test result of 0.827 indicates a very strong correlation between the two variables. The coefficient of determination test results revealed that the e-WOM source credibility can explain or predict consumer trust by 68%, the remaining 32% explained by factors not examined in this study. This research can contribute theoretically to academic literature and practically for Shopee affiliate users in increasing consumer trust.

Keyword: Affiliate Marketing, Consumer Trust, E-WOM Source Credibility, Shopee

Abstrak

Tingginya minat dalam berbelanja secara daring di Indonesia mendorong terciptanya Shopee Affiliate Program sebagai strategi komunikasi pemasaran dari Shopee. Penggunaan tautan afiliasi Shopee pada ulasan produk kecantikan banyak ditemukan di akun autobase @ohmy_beautybank. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kredibilitas sumber e-WOM dalam ulasan produk kecantikan memuat tautan afiliasi Shopee terhadap kepercayaan konsumen. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif. Teknik probability sampling dengan jenis simple random sampling digunakan dalam pengambilan sampel penelitian. Sejumlah 400 responden diperoleh melalui perhitungan sampel rumus Slovin. Instrumen penelitian telah teruji validitas dan reliabilitas dan data dianalisis menggunakan uji normalitas, uji heteroskedastisitas, uji koefisien korelasi, uji koefisien determinasi, dan uji regresi linear sederhana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kredibilitas sumber e-WOM pada ulasan produk kecantikan memuat tautan afiliasi Shopee dapat mempengaruhi kepercayaan konsumen secara positif dan signifikan. Hasil uji korelasi sebesar 0.827 menunjukkan hubungan yang sangat kuat antara kedua variabel. Hasil uji koefisien determinasi menunjukkan bahwa variabel kepercayaan konsumen dapat dijelaskan atau diprediksi oleh variable kredibilitas sumber e-WOM sebanyak 68% dan sisanya sebesar 32% dapat dijelaskan oleh faktor lain yang tidak diteliti pada penelitian ini. Penelitian ini dapat memberikan kontribusi secara teoritis bagi literatur akademik dan secara praktis bagi pengguna afiliasi Shopee dalam meningkatkan kepercayaan konsumen.

Kata Kunci: Pemasaran Afiliasi, Kepercayaan Konsumen, Kredibilitas Sumber E-WOM, Shopee

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, given its large population and increased internet penetration, has recorded a rise in online shopping in the last few years. The significant percentage of online shoppers in Indonesia encouraged various e-commerce businesses to establish marketplace platforms. Shopee introduces the Shopee affiliate program to its users as one of

the marketing communication strategies to reach wider customers. Until recently, affiliate marketing has been regarded as a significant industry, with bloggers, celebrities, and influencers relying on this as their primary source of profits from digital platforms (Susilawati et al., 2023). This Shopee affiliate program features multiple parties, including marketers (affiliators) and customers. Shopee affiliates often choose products based on the interest of consumer.

The high interest in beauty categories on Shopee has shown the opportunity for the users of Shopee affiliate program. The rise of beauty content such as makeup tutorials and skincare product reviews has made beauty products popular among affiliates. CNBC Indonesia (2024) stated that approximately 77% of Indonesian consumers typically look at reviews before making their purchases of a beauty product. As a result, Shopee affiliates are starting to create convincing and helpful content related to beauty to promote engagement with customers while also attracting their attention to ensure customers will click on the links attached in the posted review on social media.

The data from We Are Social that there are approximately 80.9% of internet users utilize social media platforms to obtain information about brands and products (Simon, 2024). It also reveals that 10.3% of the respondents rely on micro-blogs such as Twitter, which is now referred to as X. According to Ni & Cheng (2024), reviews posted on e-commerce websites, blogs, and user-generated content on social media platforms including what was shared on autobase are common forms of e-WOM. Therefore, information shared on autobase account can be considered as e-WOM.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth or e-WOM in communication refers to sharing recommendations and opinions about products through various channels of the Internet. According to Verma & Dewani (2020), potential customers often look up related information and consider options before deciding to buy, since e-WOM has been acknowledged as a trustworthy source of information. As stated by Akyüz (2013) in Rizky & Dianita (2023), affiliate credibility as a source of information from ongoing e-WOM is one of the factors that influence consumer action on the product being promoted. Source credibility is not related to message content but refers to consumers' overall perception of the credibility of e-WOM sources and is considered a basic factor to help individuals assess e-WOM communication. Beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate link posted around @ohmy_beautybank X account has potential to affect consumer trust on e-WOM source credibility of the reviewers.

Customer trust is considered the foundation of affiliate marketing success. Customers are likely to trust information sources that provide value and relevance, such as good product reviews and authentic information (Sutandi et al., 2024). Mayer, et al (1955) in Wardhana (2024) identified three key factors of consumer trust namely the consumer perception of the online seller's expertise, honesty, and benevolence. This model emphasizes that trust is built based on previous experiences and interactions as well as the reputation of the other party in the context of a specific relationship. Shopee affiliates are expected to build trust in consumer to persuade them into interacting with the reviews related to beauty product posted on social media.

Some studies have shown that the use of affiliate links or reviews that suggest that they are getting paid might lessen consumer trust. According to the previous study, customers tend to be more skeptical of affiliated reviews that offer compensation to reviewers for writing a review on social media. Ai et al. (2022) stated that when the reviewer accepts an incentive from the evaluated business, the consumer's trust in the online review will significantly fall and the effectiveness of the incentive will be greatly reduced. The research aims to conduct further research on the influence of e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links on consumer trust.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Communication

Communication is considered as one of the fundamentally important aspects of human life and can not be separated. According to Kayode (2014), communication is the exchange of information and building an understanding between multiple parties. The sender or source initiates communication by conveying a message designed to generate

a particular response from the receiver. The message is then processed according to the receiver's perception and comprehension, and feedback in the form of behavior is returned to the source.

B. Marketing Communication

Marketing communication is the method by which companies attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, in both direct and indirect ways, related to the products and brands they offer. The variety of communication channels that a business intends to use to inform its target audience about its products can be recognized by the marketing communication media mix. The most widely used media forms are advertising, online communication and social media, mobile communication, direct marketing, experiences and events, word-of-mouth, public relations and publicity, personal selling, and packaging (Kotler et al., 2022).

C. E-WOM

Electronic word-of-mouth or e-WOM communication, other individuals effortlessly and indefinitely share knowledge across platforms. Source credibility refers to the consumer's overall perception of the credibility of the e-WOM source rather than the message content. Source credibility is considered a basic factor, which helps individuals to assess eWOM communication (Rumondang et al., 2020). Source credibility in e-WOM refers to a communicator's positive aspects that impact the intended audience's perception of their message. The credibility of a communicator consists of three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily (Ismagilova et al., 2020).

D. Social Media

According to Rumondang et al. (2020), an online platform that focuses on human interaction is referred to as social media. Social media serves as a free platform for shared communication, information transmission, and social engagement. As the number of social media users grows, businesses are looking for new ways to make revenue, with internet advertising being one of the most frequently used. Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and other forms of online advertising manage brand image across numerous social media platforms.

E. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing, often referred to as a pay-per-performance marketing strategy, is the most efficient type of marketing communication given that it is a commission-based agreement in which the merchant pays out only if affiliates accomplish a transaction or generate a lead (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Affiliate marketing operates on the idea of directing users to a website via a specific link managed by the marketer. The link is obtained from the merchant and provided to be used as a determining tool if a purchase transaction proceeds through the referral link (Firmansyah et al., 2024).

F. Consumer Trust

In marketing communication studies, consumer trust is included as one of the components of the consumer attitude model. Consumer trust is part of the cognitive component, which involves knowledge and perspectives gained from a combination of direct experience with the object of attitude and relevant information from multiple sources. This information and the impressions it commonly takes the form of trust, which indicates the attitude object has various features and that certain acts will lead to specific effects (Firmansyah, 2020). consumer trust model according to Mayer, Davis, Schoorman (1955) in Wardhana (2024) includes three fundamental components: competence, honesty, and benevolence.

G. Research Framework

This study focuses on two variables: Electric Word of Mouth or E-WOM Source Credibility (X) and Consumer Trust (Y). The independent variable (X) used in this study is E-WOM source credibility, especially a beauty product

review containing Shopee affiliate links on platform X (Twitter). Researcher has developed a research framework that will be used in this research as follows:

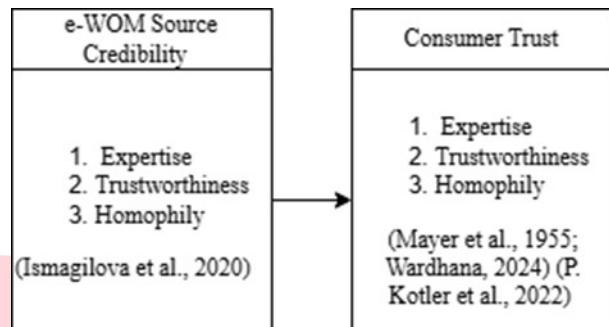


Figure 1 Research Framework (Author's Processed Data)

H. Research Hypothesis

The scope of this research is needed as a limitation and research guideline. Therefore, the scope of this research is as follows:

1. The object of the research only focuses on e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links and its influence on consumer trust.
2. Variable X used is an e-WOM source credibility with dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily.
3. Variable Y used is consumer trust with the dimensions of competence, honesty, and benevolence

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive analysis and quantitative research approaches are used in this study. A quantitative descriptive analysis approach is used along with an explanatory research approach to achieve the research objective. The population of this study are social media X users who follow @ohmy_beautybank, which as of January 5th, 2025, has the total of 173.769 followers. This study uses a probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling. The population was chosen from @ohmy_beautybank followers with 173.769 followers in total as of January 5th, 2025. The number of samples for this research is determined by using the Slovin sampling technique with a 5% margin of error. A total of 399.99 participants were identified based on the Slovin sampling technique formula. The numbers have been rounded for ease of calculation. Therefore, the sample size used in this research consisted of 400 participants. Relationships between variables are explained by theories is an element or characteristic of an individual or a group that can vary amongst individuals or groups and that researchers can measure or observe. The following are the variables used in this research:

A. Independent Variable

Table 1 Variable Operationalization

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Scale
e-WOM Source Credibility (Ismagilova, Slade, et al., 2020)	Expertise	Shopee Affiliator has a good skill in providing information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		Shopee Affiliator has the knowledge to provide information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		Shopee Affiliator always offers detailed information about beauty products.	Ordinal
	Trustworthiness	I find Shopee Affiliator's information about beauty products to be consistent with other information I have found.	Ordinal
		I find reviews from Shopee Affiliator to be objective as they provide pros and cons of the beauty products.	Ordinal
		I often read reviews from Shopee Affiliator as I trust them to only provide truthful information about beauty products.	Ordinal
	Homophily	I prefer to engage with Shopee Affiliator who shares the same interest with me about beauty products.	Ordinal
		I prefer to engage with Shopee Affiliators who has tried the beauty products I need.	Ordinal
		I prefer to read beauty product reviews from Shopee Affiliator who also follows @ohmy_beautybank account.	Ordinal

(Author's Processed Data)

B. Dependent Variable

Table 2 Dependent Variable Operationalization

Variable	Dimension	Indikator	Scale
Consumer Trust (Kotler et al., 2022)	Competence	I believe that Shopee Affiliator are knowledgable in providing information about the beauty product I need.	Ordinal

Variable	Dimension	Indikator	Scale
(Mayer et al., 1955; Wardhana, 2024)	Honesty	I find Shopee Affiliator to be more trusted compared to other affiliator (Tokopedia Affiliator, Lazada Affiliator, etc.)	Ordinal
		I find Shopee Affiliator to be reliable in sharing information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		I believe that Shopee Affiliator always transparent in delivering information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		I believe that Shopee Affiliator always truthful when sharing information about beauty products.	Ordinal
	Benevolence	I believe that Shopee Affiliator will help me fulfill my need of information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		I believe that Shopee Affiliator shares information about beauty product to help me make an informed decision.	Ordinal
		I believe that Shopee Affiliators understand my needs and preferences while sharing information about beauty products.	Ordinal
		I believe that Shopee Affiliator shares information about beauty products because they care more about their audience than just making profits	Ordinal

(Author's Processed Data)

C. Validity and Reliability Test

Researchers tested the validity by using the Software Statistical Program of Social Science (SPSS) Windows Version 22. Based on the validity test conducted on 30 participants, each of 18 items is considered valid as the result illustrates that with validity coefficients (R count) exceeding the critical value (R table) of 0.361. The calculation outcomes indicate all variables carried out with 30 respondents exhibit Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.6, which concludes that the data is reliable.

D. Descriptive Analysis

This study used descriptive analysis to determine the characteristics of participants, including gender, occupation, age, and other relevant factors. Descriptive analysis was also provided for the two variables including the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for each variable (Darwin et al., 2021).

E. Classic Assumption Test

Classic assumption tests are carried out to evaluate if parametric or nonparametric statistics should be employed in the study. The normality test in statistical analysis determines if data distribution is normal or not. A normal distribution is one in which the mean, mode, and median are in the center of the data. The heteroskedasticity test is used to determine whether there is inconsistent residual variance among observations in regression analysis.

F. Correlation Coefficient Test

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is commonly utilized to measure the strength of the association between two interval or ratio variables. The Pearson correlation test requires several characteristics to be achieved, including the presence of a linear and symmetrical relationship, the utilization of random samples, interval or ratio scales for variable measurement, and adherence to normal distribution assumptions.

G. Coefficient of Determination Test

The coefficient of determination test is intended to measure the extent to which an independent variable influences a dependent variable. The coefficient of determination is presented as a percentage. Using the formula, it's possible to determine whether the independent variable causes variations in the dependent variable. A higher correlation coefficient means a greater coefficient of determination.

H. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression is based on the causal relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). The findings generated through calculations carried out via SPSS software will determine the significance of variable X is on variable Y.

I. Hypothesis Test

A partial test is the process of analyzing research hypotheses based on the individual influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The requirement for the T-test stated that H_0 should be rejected if t-count exceeds t-table or t-count falls below t-table. The hypothesis will be accepted if H_0 $t\text{-table} < t\text{-count}$ or $t\text{-count} < t\text{-table}$, where t-table comes from a the distribution table with a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) equal to $n-2$.

The T-test can be analyzed using the hypothesis technique to test the significance as follows:

1. H_0 : E-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links has no significant influence on consumer trust.
2. H_1 : E-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links has a significant influence on consumer trust.

IV.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The normality test using one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis shows that the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) of 0.053 was obtained, and the value exceeded 0.050 significant value as required for the normality test, which indicates normal research data. There is no visible pattern shown above and below Y-axis in the scatterplot graph and the significance value of the regression model of residual's absolute value resulted in 0.205 which exceeds 0.05. Therefore, it can be confirmed by both tests that the data of this research does not contain heteroscedasticity, and the data can be used for analysis.

Table 3 Coefficient of Correlation Result

Correlations			
		E-WOM Source Credibility	Consumer Trust
E-WOM Source Credibility	Pearson Correlation	1	0.827
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	400	400
Consumer Trust	Pearson Correlation	0.827	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	400	400

The result of the correlation coefficient resulted in 0.827 significance value which exceeds the 0.05 significance value. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between variables namely e-WOM source credibility and consumer trust. The significance value shows that the relationship between variables is very strong and indicates a perfect correlation.

Table 4 Coefficient of Determination Result

Model Summary		
	R	R Square
1	0.827	0.684

Based on the calculation using the coefficient of determination formula, it resulted in 68% which indicates that e-WOM source credibility (X) has 68% influence on consumer trust (Y).

Table 5 Simple Linear Regression Result

Coefficients		
	B	Sig
(Constant)	2.343	0.014
E-WOM Source Credibility	0.886	0.000

Simple regression refers to bivariate regression that focuses on a causal relationship between a single independent variable. The result of the simple linear regression test can be explained as below:

- A constant positive value (α) of 2.343 explains the increase in consumer trust value when the independent variable value is reported as constant 0.
- A positive coefficient (βX) of 0.886 means keeping the other independent variable constant, increasing the e-WOM source credibility variable (X) by 1 unit also increases consumer trust by 0.886.

Table 6 T-Test Result

Coefficients		
	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.476	0.014
E-WOM Source Credibility	29.357	0.000

The significant value result from the Table of Coefficient shows the value of 0.000 which is below the significant value of 0.05. It indicates that e-WOM source credibility (X) in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links has a significant influence on consumer trust (Y). It shows the result of t-count is 29.357 which exceeds 1.965 of t-table value. Therefore, it can be concluded that H₀ is rejected and H_a is accepted which means e-WOM source credibility (X) in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links has a significant influence on consumer trust (Y).

The empirical data has been collected through the research questionnaire with 400 respondents obtained which confirmed that all of the respondents follow @ohmy_beautybank account on X. The respondent distribution calculation resulted in a total of 377 people or 94.25% of the respondents identified as women and a total of 23 people or 5.75% of the respondents identified as men. Furthermore, most respondents are @ohmy_beautybank followers between the ages of 20-24 years old, accounting for 332 people or 83% of the total respondents, while respondents between the ages of 30-34 years old accounted for only one person or 0.25% of the total. According to the demographics of this research, most respondents lived in West Java, accounting for 100 persons or 25% of all respondents. The minority of respondents lived in West Nusa Tenggara, accounting for one person or 0.3% of the overall respondents. The results revealed that the data was distributed to 22 out of 38 provinces, with young adults (women or men) aged 20-24 years old dominating.

Table 7 Overall Responses on E-WOM Source Credibility Dimensions

No.	Dimension	Total Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1.	Expertise	3863	80,50%	High
2.	Trustworthiness	3701	77,10%	High
3.	Homophily	4032	84,00%	Very High
Total Score		11596	High	
Ideal Score		14400		
Percentage Score		80,5%		

(Author's Processed Data)

Based on the e-WOM Source Credibility variable recapitulation, it has three dimensions: Expertise (80.5% of the score percentage), Trustworthiness (77.1% of the score percentage), and Homophily (84.0% of the score percentage). The overall result of e-WOM Source Credibility recapitulation resulted in 80.5% of the percentage, which indicates a good result or a high characteristic. According to the percentage of respondents' answers, the dimension of Trustworthiness has the lowest percentage (77.1%), while the dimension of Homophily has the highest percentage (84.0%). The outcomes demonstrate that the research's Trustworthiness characteristic for the e-WOM Source Credibility variable is in the high category. In accordance to the Trustworthiness dimension, it indicates that consumers believe Shopee affiliates who provide reviews of beauty products with Shopee affiliate links to be credible, truthful, and objective. The result also shows that the research has a high Expertise characteristic for e-WOM Source Credibility variable. It indicates that some consumers find Shopee affiliates

who posted beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links to be an expert, having a good skill, and provide detailed information.

Table 8 Overall Responses on Consumer Trust Dimensions

No.	Dimension	Total Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1.	Competence	3716	80,50%	High
2.	Honesty	2318	77,10%	High
3.	Benevolence	5184	84,00%	Very High
Total Score			11218	High
Ideal Score			14400	
Percentage Score			77,9%	

(Author's Processed Data)

Based on the recapitulation of the consumer trust variable, it contains three dimensions: Competence (77.4% score percentage), Honesty (72.4% score percentage), and Benevolence (81.0% score percentage). The overall outcome of Consumer Trust variable resulted in 77.9% score percentage, which indicates a good result or a high characteristic. The score percentage of respondent's responses can be taken as indicating that the Honesty dimension has the lowest percentage (72.4%) while the Benevolence dimension has the highest percentage (81.0%). The results implied that respondents exhibited a high Benevolence characteristic in the Consumer Trust variable which indicates that consumers believe beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links to be helpful and thoughtful to their needs and preferences. Consumers are more inclined to trust Shopee affiliate that provide reviews of beauty products containing helpful Shopee affiliate links and show concern for their needs and preferences, according to the Benevolence dimension of Consumer Trust variable. The result also shows that the research has a high Competence characteristic for Consumer Trust variable. It indicates that some consumers trust that beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links are reliable, knowledgeable, and trusted compared to others.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

The result of this research about "The influence of e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links" reached a conclusion based on quantitative methodology using statistical analysis. The research is conducted on 400 respondents using the followers of @ohmy_beautybank account on X as the population sample. The hypothesis test result reveals that there is a significant influence of e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews on consumer trust, which answered the identified problem of this research. The simple linear regression test identified a positive influence of e-WOM source credibility in beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links on consumer trust. It indicates that an increase of e-WOM characteristics resulted in an increase of consumer trust. The coefficient of correlation test result through Pearson's correlation reveals that e-WOM source credibility as an independent variable and consumer trust as a dependent variable are correlated and the relationship between variables has a very strong or perfect correlation. The coefficient of determination result shows that e-WOM source credibility has 68% of influence on consumer trust, while the rest (32%) of influence comes from other variables outside this research.

B. Suggestions

a. Theoretical Suggestions

It is suggested for future researchers to identify other variables that potentially have an influence on consumer trust in regard of beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links. The sample used in this research is

limited to @ohmy_beautybank followers on X. Therefore, it is suggested for the future researchers to conduct research with different population samples on a different social media platform.

b. Practical Suggestions

It is suggested that Shopee affiliate strengthen their e-WOM source credibility to influence the increase of consumer trust in their content regarding beauty product reviews containing Shopee affiliate links and Shopee as the company of the program to strengthen their regulation on links used for Shopee affiliate users to prevent fraud that will potentially affect consumer trust. Beauty companies could also utilize the collaboration with Shopee affiliate by employing e-WOM source credibility characteristics to increase consumer trust.

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