

The Impact of Word-of-Mouth Completeness on Consumer Purchase Intention – The Case of Shopee

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Extended Abstract

E-commerce has grown over the past few years (Chevalier, 2022) as online shopping has become increasingly common. Taiwan doesn't deviate from this trend as the Ministry of Economic Affairs (2022) has reported that local e-commerce has grown by 24.5% in 2022. Consumers in the country habitually shop online (Chang and Meyerhoefer, 2021) despite it being riskier than traditional shopping (Chiu et al., 2014), with Shopee being the most preferred platform by Taiwanese consumers (Market Intelligence and Consulting Institute, 2022). What then drives consumers to continually purchase from Shopee?

Consumers rely on word-of-mouth (WOM), individual exchanges regarding brands, products, or services that aren't incentivized by commercial interests (Chan and Ngai, 2011), as a source of information (Litvin et al., 2008). Technology and the Internet have paved the way for WOM to transform into electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM (Goldenberg et al., 2001). It has a significant impact over consumers and their purchase intentions (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Daugherty and Hoffman, 2014; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Richins and Root-Shaffer, 1988; Roy et al., 2019). eWOM comes in different forms such as product reviews, testimonials, recommendations, and complaints (Hajli et al., 2014) which reflects the observations of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) that consumers look for information regarding the service sellers provide, the products under consideration, and the overall experience of others while shopping online.

eWOM has been one of the most researched topics in marketing literature such as those that focus on its characteristics like valence (e.g., Filieri et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2012) and volume (e.g., Kim et al., 2019; Lopez and Sicilia, 2014). However, eWOM is information and prior research has found that completeness is a crucial aspect of any form of information (Wixom and Todd, 2005). Consumer decision-making is influenced by eWOM and the strength of its message increases the more complete it is (Dutta-Bergman, 2003; Filieri and McLeay, 2014). Despite this, research into eWOM completeness has been minimal and this study aims to fill in this gap. The investigation is designed to see how the completeness of eWOM regarding the products, the sellers'

service quality, and the online shopping experience of others influence prospective consumers' purchase intentions.

An online survey was disseminated within Taiwan from July to December 2023 to collect data for this research. A total of 366 responses were received with 8 being invalidated, leaving 358 valid responses. A reliability analysis was run to identify the consistency of the measurement items, resulting in the deletion of one item. A correlation analysis was then run in order to determine the relationships between each of the variables. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was utilized to test the three hypotheses posited by this study and identified if the relationships between the independent and dependent variables were statistically significant.

The findings suggested that Taiwanese consumers are influenced by the completeness of product- and service-related eWOM; while experience-related eWOM did not have any significant impact. The impossibility of trying products sold online prior to receiving them highlights the importance of product-related eWOM (Li et al., 2019) and how it influences consumers' perceptions of related product criterion (Duan et al., 2008). Meanwhile, the omission of personal interactions highlights service eWOM's importance in aiding consumers' evaluation of the service quality an online seller provides (Long and McMellon, 2004).

The study contributes to literature by investigating a less-studied yet equally important characteristic of eWOM. It also provides new perspectives on the kind of eWOM that consumers are in search of when browsing customer feedback on online platforms. Future studies into eWOM completeness may take into consideration that the findings may only be specific to Shopee and that results may differ for other platforms. A more comprehensive research may also take eWOM completeness and see how it relates to valence and volume, which may bring about a deeper understanding into the effects of eWOM over consumer behavior.

Keywords: Electronic Word-of-Mouth Completeness, Purchase Intention, E-commerce, Online Shopping, Shopee

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