

Management of Electronic Word of Mouth Communication for Culinary Products on Instagram

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Abstract—Information on culinary products is currently easy to find on Instagram. Businessmen who are members of the Footy MSME community located in Bandung Regency in marketing culinary products do a marketing communication, namely e-WOM (Electronic word of mouth) on Instagram. Initially, term of ‘word of mouth’ communication was conveyed by mouth to mouth, but now the communication is done through electronic media, one of which is Instagram. This study aims to analyze the ability of businessmen in compiling e-WOM messages, the ability to overcome obstacles in managing e-WOM messages and create relationships with consumers. This research method uses qualitative research methods with a case study approach. This study found that businessmen can compose e-WOM messages, overcome obstacles in managing e-WOM messages, and build relationships with consumers, so that consumers closely engage to the products being sold.

Keywords—MSME businessman, electronic word of mouth, instagram product

I. INTRODUCTION

At this time consumers communicate through word of mouth to talk about various products. Starting from entertainment products, fashion, food, travel, transportation services, retail stores, and other products. Communication through positive word of mouth sometimes occurs naturally, maybe even without advertising activities, because consumers feel more like they have a close relationship with the product. Unpaid media sometimes makes companies ignore paid media. Paid media generate advertising, publicity, and other forms of promotion. Unpaid media where consumers talk about a product or brand, and no cost is incurred to produce positive news and stories through verbal communication. That's why to produce communication through positive word of mouth also requires positive consumer interest in products or brands, because the results from word of mouth are the result of investment in company products and services, if the services and products provided are not good it will produce word of mouth. negative mouth. Word of mouth that develops can become a profitable opinion if it is managed properly, because of that business actors are able to take advantage of communication through word of mouth where this form of

communication requires investment in products and services that are supported by marketing activities in order to attract consumer confidence to produce a product. positive word of mouth.

In the digital era, marketing is growing following the advancement of internet technology. Especially now that there is a global COVID-19 outbreak, people are active at home, this encourages changes in consumer behavior. One of the supporters of this activity is internet consumption. For companies, this condition is a situation that opens up opportunities, including an effective way to reach consumers by utilizing digital marketing. One form of digital marketing is word of mouth [1]. Digital marketing media used by business actors include websites, Instagram, and Facebook, and Twitter.

Business actors who are members of the Footy Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) community are actively running a business in order to grow and develop, the community is located in Bandung Regency. The majority of these business actors have developed various types of culinary products, including cakes, pastries, various chips, and other types of food. This business actor has the principle of developing products based on local wisdom, namely typical products from Bandung Regency in the form of local snacks processed with original flavors, processed products from tubers, etc. These business actors apply electronic word of mouth (*e-WOM*) in marketing their products, and the media they use is Instagram. Electronic word of mouth has an important role in advancing the company such as in fostering relationships with consumers. Business actors in managing *e-WOM* culinary products on Instagram carry out three activities, namely compiling *e-WOM* messages, the process of forming *e-WOM*, inhibiting factors in managing *e-WOM* messages and efforts to overcome them, and creating closeness with consumers.

II. ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

Word of mouth starts from the story of the uniqueness of a product, then the information will spread, and the product will be more widely known. Word of mouth is the informal transmission of ideas, comments, opinions, and information

between two people, neither of whom are marketers. Elements in word of mouth include talkers, topics, and tools. Talkers is someone must know who the speaker is. In this case the speaker is a consumer who has consumed the product that has been given, sometimes other people tend to choose or decide on the product or commonly referred to as a referral, the party who recommends a product Topics where there is a word of mouth because it creates a message that makes them talk about products or services, as well as services provided, because the product has its own advantages, about the company, or a strategic location. Tools are tools to help make messages work, free product samples, brochures, banners, through radio ads and earned media such as social media and the internet [2].

Sutisna [3] explains the factors that can be used as the basis for consumers to talk about a product, namely someone who intends to talk about the product with other people, uses conversation as a way to inform others, and someone starts a discussion by talking about something that is out of the main concern of the discussion. This happens because there is an urge or desire that other people should not be wrong in choosing goods and do not spend time looking for information about a product brand. Word of mouth is a way to reduce uncertainty, because by asking friends, neighbors, or family, information about products or services is more reliable, so it will reduce brand searches and evaluations. Word of mouth is closely related to the experience of using a product or service. Word of mouth communication will be dangerous for companies that have a negative image, on the other hand it will be beneficial if word of mouth communication is about the quality of a good product or service. Word of mouth is one of the marketing communication activities, which is a means used by companies to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about the products and brands being sold [4]. Through marketing communication, a strong partnership relationship with consumers is created, where consumers bring friends, family members [5-13]. Electronic word of mouth (*e-WOM*) is a means of communication in the form of negative or positive suggestions that occur on the internet [14]. Consumers who have consumed the product will provide a review of the product and will submit it on their social media, such as on Instagram. The internet has spread information by word of mouth simultaneously [15].

The dimensions of *e-WOM* include intensity, valency of opinion, and content. Intensity is the number of opinions written by consumers on a social networking site, there are two indicators of intensity, namely the frequency of accessing information from social networking sites, and the frequency of interaction with social networking users. Second, the valency of opinion is the number of reviews written by users of social networking sites. This opinion includes positive and negative consumer opinions about products, services, and brands. Valence of opinion includes positive comments from users of social networking sites, recommendations from users of social networking sites. The content is the content of social network information related to products and services including food and beverage information, quality information (taste, texture, and

temperature) of food and beverages, and information about the prices offered [15].

Viviana and Candraningrum [16] conducted research on *e-WOM* as a culinary recommendation provider, finding that the presence of food bloggers in the new media era really helps social media users to find out information about culinary that is worth trying, and the interactions that occur can strengthen the relationship between followers and food bloggers in cyberspace. Another study conducted by Mutia [9] found that the communication style between influencers and Generation Z as followers uses non-standard language and is only understood by fellow Generation Z. Their nonverbal language has excessive intonation, appearance follows trends, is expressive to appear on social media.

This study focuses on analyzing the ability of business actors in compiling *e-WOM* messages, the process of *e-WOM* formation, inhibiting factors in managing *e-WOM* messages and efforts to overcome them, and the ability of business actors to create closeness with consumers. The application of *e-WOM* in research, starting from business actors delivering product information to the public through publications on Instagram, then business actors asking potential consumers if anyone is interested in buying or repurchasing the products offered. In addition, business actors ask for testimonies from consumers who have purchased products. Business actors actively respond to prospective consumers' questions about products and how to buy them, where potential consumers are interested in buying products because there are positive testimonials from consumers. The ability of business actors to compose messages, both verbal and non-verbal, namely messages in communication in the form of speech, either verbal or in words. The choice of words in verbal messages to followers has an important role in marketing products. These words are positively charged, and negatively charged [11-16]. To foster good relations with consumers, business actors use positive words, to form a positive consumer understanding of the product and product purchases occur. For this reason, business actors need training to be skilled in using positive words supported by high motivation to maintain a positive state in the resulting discourse, besides that, maximum product and service performance is needed from the company [16-17]. Business actors also manage nonverbal messages covering all stimuli (except verbal stimuli) in a communication setting and are generated by individuals and the environment [8]. Nonverbal messages include creating and exchanging messages using body movements, gestures, eye contact, your expressions, proximity, distance, and touch [11]. Nonverbal messages include the creation and exchange of messages using body movements, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, proximity, distance and touch [11]. Business actors manage *e-WOM* messages as a means for companies to promote products to consumers. The message is structured to contain verbal elements (text) and nonverbal elements (context).

The ability of business actors to create closeness with consumers, among others, by building partnership relationships through friendliness, trust, self-disclosure, and responsibility

[18]. A friendly person will create a pleasant communication atmosphere, as stated Waringin [19], [13] will encourage individuals to become friends to interact. Business actors can apply the pleasant atmosphere to create closeness with consumers.

III. METHODS

Research on the management of Word-of-Mouth Communication on Culinary Products on Instagram was carried out in collaboration with a team of lecturers from the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Bandung Islamic University. The research problem is how is the ability of business actors to manage electronic word of mouth culinary products on Instagram. The purpose of this study is to analyze the ability of business actors in compiling *e-WOM* messages, the process of *e-WOM* formation, the inhibiting factors in managing *e-WOM* messages on Instagram and efforts to overcome them, and the ability of business actors to create closeness with consumers. This research method uses a case study in the form of a single case design, in which the researcher maintains the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events [7-21]. The unit of observation of research is the ability of business actors to compose *e-WOM* messages, the process of forming *e-WOM*, inhibiting factors in managing *e-WOM* messages on Instagram and efforts to overcome them, and the ability of business actors to create closeness with consumers. The informants of this research are five businesspeople who are members of the Fotty UMKM community in Bandung Regency who use Instagram to promote their products. The informants of this research are five business people who are members of the Fotty UMKM community in Bandung Regency who use Instagram to promote their products. The Fotty MSME community is a collection of small business actors, and all of them have a type of product in the form of snacks. These business actors are trying to survive in producing products in the Covid-19 pandemic situation by using Instagram to promote their products. The time of the research was carried out in May-June 2021. The process of collecting data for this research was primary and secondary. Data collection techniques used observation techniques, documentation studies, and literature studies. In the observation technique, content observations are carried out, and post content records that have been uploaded by research subjects during May 2021. Documentation studies are carried out by collecting and analyzing objects that have been collected. The literature study technique is carried out by studying various relevant literature. The data analysis technique used is data reduction, data identification, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out through a selection process, simplification of rough data that appears during observation, after that making notes on the data that has been collected. Data identification technique is done by identifying data based on predetermined variables using the data that has been collected. In the process of drawing conclusions in the form of drawing conclusions from the results of data identification according to the answers from informants. At this stage, a brief description of the results of the

conclusions of the data that has been analyzed is explained. The informants of this study selected five business actors based on information from the head of the community of business actors, that this research informant had represented all members of the community. The products produced by the informants are in the form of cakes, pastries, including local specialties of Bandung Regency such as rangginang made from glutinous rice, crackers made from cassava flour, banana chips, chips made from tubers such as taro potatoes, cassava, cassava, typical West Java chili sauce, and other forms of food typical of West Java.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Ability of Business Actors to Compose e-WOM Messages on Instagram*

Business actors compose verbal and nonverbal *e-WOM* messages in marketing culinary products to consumers. Based on the research findings, Instagram research informants contain brief information about product information, tips about food, words to motivate, addresses, and phone numbers. Instagram provides photos and short videos that are 30 seconds long. The message content displays product photos, quotes, testimonials, and short videos such as the process of making products, and others.

All informants explained verbal and nonverbal messages intended to inform their company's activities and to market products. From this media, it can be seen how much interest the followers have and can see the number of likes from followers or comments from followers. Based on the explanation of the culinary business owner @ kuepuspita (May 10, 2021) that the use of Instagram is very helpful for his company in explaining products to consumers. In compiling *e-WOM* messages rely on creativity, so that *e-WOM* message designs can explain aspects related to products and services. Instagram has a unique value because by posting photos or videos, it can give meaning to consumers. On the Instagram menu there is a useful hashtag term to satisfy consumer curiosity based on certain categories when used by others. An example of a hashtag used in kuepuspita is #puepuspita, it is often used to make it easier to search for wet cake products. The third research informant (May 22, 2021) stated that before using Instagram, he first studied Instagram which was used for promotional activities, because through Instagram it could create awareness of potential consumers knowing the company's products. The fourth and fifth informants explained that Instagram was used to inform the company's products and services, and to communicate with potential consumers. Consumers ask about the availability of cake products, the length of time the cake can be consumed, prices, and information about orders in large quantities. Another goal is to share motivation, expand social networks, to convey opinions about the products provided meet the health requirements for potential consumers.

B. The Process of Forming e-WOM on Instagram

All informants (May 22, 2021) explained that Instagram is used as a medium for marketing products, to find out the position of products, and content that is used as a topic of conversation. Communication messages via *e-WOM*, contain messages that support the product (positive), or messages that do not support the product (negative). *e-WOM* occurs when consumers convey a message about a product that has been purchased, and the message is written on the company's Instagram. The message is a sense of satisfaction with the product purchased. Consumers also sometimes write impressions of the products they buy by conveying messages that are less supportive of the product, for example, it doesn't taste good, it's not fresh, the price is more expensive, and so on.

The process of establishing communication through *e-WOM* according to all informants (22 May 2021) starts from the information process, where the informant provides product information on Instagram. The next stage, informants ask consumers or potential consumers about their interest in buying products. After that the informant gets a response from consumers or potential customers. Then potential customers start to make contact and look for ways to buy the product. In the formation of positive *e-WOM* communication, communication occurs when consumers buy products, then talk about their experiences after becoming buyers, doing this process continuously to others, either through Instagram or through conversations with friends, relatives, family, or other parties.

C. Barrier Factors in Managing e-WOM Messages on Instagram and Efforts to Overcome Them

The obstacles encountered by all informants (22 May 2021) included unclear messages conveyed by consumers, managing Instagram requires special time, and great attention, such as updating activities, photos, or videos. Another obstacle is consumer awareness in using Instagram because consumers are less attentive, and do not understand using the media, consumers are also reluctant to ask questions, so it often causes misinterpretation of information about the products offered. For example, the information presented on Instagram is very brief, but consumers are reluctant to ask questions, so consumers often misinterpret information about the products offered. These findings become the focus in managing Instagram content. This is a problem, therefore, to overcome this creative informant look for ways so that the things experienced by consumers have solutions. Efforts are being made, among others, by informing consumers about product information by offering product discounts and adding more free gifts and actual services.

D. Ability to Create Closeness with Consumers

All informants in creating closeness with consumers, among others, by maintaining the quality and characteristics of the product, and providing services with a sincere heart. This is in accordance with the opinion of the informant (interview, May 23, 2021), who said, "In running a business, the company

maintains its quality and characteristics. Culinary entrepreneurs are disciplined in supervising the accuracy of the product in terms of taste, appearance, and freshness. Informants realized that it was obtained because of patience where consumers were satisfied with the quality of the product from their company. All the informants are committed to maintaining product quality and having distinctive characteristics, thereby fostering consumer confidence. The ability of business actors to gain consumer trust is in accordance with the research of Nadeem, et al. [10], trust mediates the relationship between social presence and commitment and loyalty in social commerce online brand communities.

All informants explained that they asked for consumer opinions in the form of testimonials. These opinions help to find out the position of products and services regarding the product to potential consumers. In managing *e-WOM* messages, the element of creativity is prioritized. Research by Casaló et. al. [20]. Proved that creativity is an important aspect of Instagram, positive emotions, affective, and commitment act as mediators in the relationship between creativity and interaction intention. The informant explained that the aspect that creates closeness with consumers is the preparation of messages using everyday language that is easily digested by consumers and the benefits of creating closeness with consumers so that potential consumers know and want to buy products. Research on consumer engagement is influenced by contextual factors of social media, namely media richness and trust in content [22], and influencer content elements contribute to the engagement behavior of followers on Instagram [23].

V. CONCLUSION

First, the ability of business actors to compose *e-WOM* messages verbally and non-verbally. The message is intended to inform product performance, and company services, and aims to get the product to be purchased by consumers. Second, the process of forming *e-WOM* begins with information submitted by consumers that contains positive or negative information, and if there is a negative *e-WOM* message, business actors try to compose messages that are clarifying the messages received on Instagram accounts. Third, business actors experience obstacles in using *e-WOM* messages on Instagram, among others, if there is an unclear message presentation from consumers and consumers are less attentive to explanations from business actors. Efforts by business actors to overcome consumers include planning for innovation development, offering product discounts, and giving free gifts. Fourth, business actors create closeness with consumers by maintaining quality, maintaining product characteristics, and using everyday language, so that consumers can easily understand product information.

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