



Research Article

The Effectiveness of Google Maps as an eWOM Media in Its Influence on Visit Intention

Shafa' Annisa Puspasari ^{1*}, Enjelika ², and Sudarmiatin ³

¹ Master of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, shafa.annisa.2404138@students.um.ac.id

² Master of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, enjelika.2404138@students.um.ac.id

³ Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, sudarmiatin.fe@um.ac.id

* Corresponding Author: Shafa' Annisa Puspasari

Abstract: This study discusses consumer behavior in the context of the effectiveness of Google Maps as an eWOM medium in its influence on intention to visit. The main objective of this study is to analyze the factors that influence intention to visit including eWOM. Five informants were interviewed as part of the qualitative research approach, and secondary data was gathered by consulting a variety of literature sources. According to the study's findings, Google Maps can be utilized as a marketing tool. It is anticipated that the study's consequences will shed light on how users interact with data from Google Maps and how companies can maximize the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: eWOM; Google Maps; promotion; visit intention

1. Introduction

One of the core concepts in the fields of business and marketing is consumer behavior. Businesses must comprehend how customers decide which products or services to buy in order to create marketing tactics that work. Consumer behavior is the study of how people, groups, and organizations choose, purchase, use, and discard products, concepts, services, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires [1]. Businesses can better adapt their products and communication tactics to the preferences of their customers by using this knowledge.

Consumer behavior is changing more quickly as a result of technological advancements and digitization. The internet age has altered how customers engage with brands and how they look for and evaluate products before making decisions, claim [2]. People's consuming habits are moving away from traditional transactions and toward digital ones as e-commerce and social media continue to grow. The existence of digital platforms has also produced a more dynamic marketing environment, according to [3], where consumers can readily access information, evaluate products, and share their experiences with other consumers, including through Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). According to [4] eWOM is informal communication that consumers do via the internet regarding the characteristics and their experiences with a product and service. eWOM has a major influence in shaping consumer perceptions because the information provided is often considered more credible than conventional advertising [5].

Google Maps is one of the platforms that is currently a popular eWOM medium. With its evaluations and ratings, Google Maps serves as more than simply a navigation tool; it is also a source of information for prospective customers. Online reviews from other users can serve as the primary source of information when making judgments about what to buy [6]. Reviews left by prior users on Google Maps might provide prospective clients a sense of the caliber of services or goods a company provides. However, more research is still needed to determine how useful Google Maps is as an eWOM medium. Reviews that are brief or lack sufficient context are less likely to affect customer decisions than those that are informative and provide clear facts [7]. Based on this, the purpose of this study is to evaluate how well Google Maps works as an eWOM medium to influence intention to visit. Insights into how

Received: March 19th, 2025

Revised: March 30th, 2025

Accepted: April 23th, 2025

Online Available: April 25th, 2025

Curr. Ver.: April 25th, 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

([https://creativecommons.org/li](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

[censes/by-sa/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

customers use data from Google Maps and how companies can maximize successful digital marketing strategy reviews are intended to be gained from this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Google Maps

Google created Google Maps, a digital mapping tool, to assist users in exploring and navigating places all over the world. This program offers a number of features, including satellite imagery, GPS-based directions, interactive maps, real-time traffic statistics, and details about establishments including eateries, retail stores, and tourist attractions. Additionally, Google Maps facilitates navigation for a number of other forms of transportation, such as driving, walking, bicycling, and public transportation. Additionally, the Google Review function allows users to post images and reviews of specific places, assisting others in making selections based on other users' experiences [8]. In addition to being a navigation tool, Google Maps also plays an important role in supporting businesses and MSMEs. This application helps promote businesses and makes it easier for visitors to find a location [8]. The benefits are not only limited to the ease of the delivery and pick-up process, but also increase the visibility and trust of consumers in a business [9]. Moreover, Google Maps can be an alternative promotional media that can be done independently and sustainably for a business [10]. With the integration of artificial intelligence and crowdsourcing data, Google Maps continues to develop into an increasingly accurate and useful tool in everyday life, both for individuals and business actors.

2.2 Google Maps as eWOM Media

Promotion is a communication effort carried out by companies to introduce products to the public so that they are accepted, recognized, and attract customer interest in the offers provided [11]; [12]. In the digital era, the use of technology is one of the effective strategies in promotion, including for MSME actors. They realize that Google Maps can be the right solution to facilitate the process of sending and picking up goods by consumers [9]. With Google Maps, consumers find it easier to find MSME locations, thereby minimizing the risk of difficulties or errors in addresses when delivering goods [9]. In addition to simplifying logistics, Google Maps also plays a role in building consumer trust through detailed information available, such as operating hours, contact numbers, and reviews from previous customers [9]. This platform not only functions as a navigation tool, but also as an effective marketing tool for MSMEs [13]. The benefits of Google Maps include improving communication with consumers, expanding market reach, delivering product information, and as a promotional media that can increase social and customer engagement [13]. The implementation of digital marketing through Google Maps has been proven to be able to increase sales volume and business profits more than traditional promotional methods [13]. In fact, the effectiveness of promotions using Google Maps is considered better than WhatsApp, Facebook, and conventional marketing [13]. Thus, Google Maps is a very potential tool for MSMEs in optimizing marketing strategies and increasing competitiveness in the digital era.

3. Proposed Method

This study uses a qualitative method by conducting interviews with a total of 5 informants in order to collect primary data and use various literature as references for secondary data. Determination of informants using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique for taking samples of data sources through certain considerations [14]. In this study, informants are considered to understand and have experience in using Google Maps as one of the information media before visiting a culinary place. The number of informants involved in this study was 5 people, because data collection from the informants had produced sufficient data. The population in this study were visitors or consumers at culinary businesses in Malang City. The criteria for informants are men/women with a minimum age of 17 years, have visited or c products at culinary businesses located in Malang City and have used Google Maps to search for information about a business.

Table 1. Informant Profile

Informant	Initial of Name	Gender	Age	Status
Informant 1	F	Female	28	Postgraduate
Informant 2	N	Female	23	Postgraduate
Informant 3	Y	Female	23	Postgraduate
Informant 4	N	Female	22	Postgraduate
Informant 5	D	Male	23	Postgraduate

4. Results and Discussion

Google Maps is an internet-based application that not only functions as a navigation tool, but can also be used as a promotional media for business actors in introducing their products and services to potential customers [15]; [16]. With location search features, reviews, ratings, and photos and videos from users, Google Maps helps customers find and rate a business before visiting it. Many people use this platform to search for places such as restaurants, cafes, workshops, or shops, and to get important information such as addresses, operating hours, and business contacts. Compared to other platforms such as Instagram or TikTok which rely more on visual content and trends, Google Maps offers practicality by displaying more structured data, including direct experiences from customers through reviews and ratings. This makes it one of the trusted recommendation media in helping potential customers make decisions. In addition, through this platform, businesses can include various important information, such as addresses, operating hours, contacts, and descriptions of the services offered. With the available features, Google Maps is an effective alternative digital marketing strategy in increasing business visibility. Based on the research that has been conducted, three main features in Google Maps have been summarized that can be used as promotional media, namely the review feature, rating, and photos and videos.

4.1 Review Feature

In today's digital era, consumer trust in a business is often influenced by reviews given by previous customers [17];[18] One platform that provides a review feature as a promotional media is Google Maps. The review feature on Google Maps allows customers to provide comments or their experiences regarding a business, either in the form of positive feedback or criticism. These reviews can later be seen by other potential customers, so that reviews on Google Maps can play a role in building a business reputation and influencing intention to visit. With the review feature, Google Maps not only functions as a navigation tool, but also becomes an effective promotional tool for business actors.

Increasing a company's trustworthiness is one of the primary functions of Google Maps' review feature. Before choosing to visit a place, consumers frequently look for and evaluate a number of possibilities. Good and genuine reviews can boost a potential customer's trust and encourage them to visit the establishment. Additionally, the more evaluations a company receives, the more visible it will be in Google search results, which may lead to an increase in the number of clients. The review option contributes to giving prospective buyers more transparent information in addition to enhancing credibility. Potential customers can make better selections by reading thorough reviews of prior experiences in addition to star ratings. Customers' posted images and videos also give a more realistic impression than the company's own advertising photos. Additionally, Google Maps' review tool gives business owners a chance to communicate with consumers. Reacting to evaluations, both favorable and unfavorable, can demonstrate that the company values its clients and is working to raise the caliber of its offerings. Business owners who respond well can boost customer loyalty and project a professional image. Nevertheless, there are still issues even though the review option might be an effective marketing tool. Negative reviews, for instance, might affect a company's reputation if they are not handled appropriately. Business owners should thus constantly keep an eye on reviews, reply to them professionally, and utilize the comments as input to enhance their offerings. All things considered, Google Maps' review function is crucial for enhancing a company's exposure, establishing a positive reputation, and giving prospective clients helpful information. In the cutthroat digital age, companies can broaden their market reach and improve their appeal by making good use of this capability.

4.2 Rating Feature

One significant tool for business advertising on Google Maps is the star rating feature. Based on prior customer experiences, star ratings offer a concise summary of a company's quality. In many cases, potential customers are more interested in visiting or buying from businesses that have high ratings because they are considered more trustworthy and of high quality. However, the number of reviews is also an equally important factor in determining the credibility of the rating. High ratings in online reviews play an important role in shaping potential consumers' positive purchasing intentions because high ratings involve positive assessments [19].

Based on user experience, many tend to choose businesses with a large number of reviews even though the rating is slightly lower than businesses that have high ratings but still have few reviews. This is because a larger number of reviews tends to provide a more accurate picture and represents a more diverse customer experience. Conversely, businesses that have high ratings but few reviews can still raise doubts, because the rating may not reflect the overall quality of the business or is only based on the experiences of a handful of people. In addition, giving a rating by clicking on a star is much easier than writing a review that requires more effort. Therefore, businesses with a high number of ratings are more trusted than businesses with high ratings but only a few reviews.

Potential clients typically consider a number of factors outside star ratings when evaluating multiple companies before choosing to visit or purchase from them. Other important variables include things like current customer reviews, location, accessibility, images, and videos. Although star ratings offer a basic summary, customers frequently verify further by reading more thorough reviews to determine whether the company lives up to their expectations. Therefore, a key tactic for boosting credibility and drawing in new clients for businesses is to retain high star ratings while encouraging additional consumers to write reviews.

Overall, the star rating feature on Google Maps is an effective promotional tool because it provides a quick first impression for potential customers. A high star rating can attract attention, but a high number of reviews gives customers more confidence to finally make a decision. Thus, businesses that want to use this feature as a promotional strategy need to ensure that they not only get high ratings but also build trust by increasing the number of reviews from satisfied customers.

4.3 Photo and Video Features

Photo and video features uploaded by users on Google Maps play a very important role as a promotional medium for a business. Photos and videos provide a more realistic picture of the condition of the place, product, or service offered, so that potential customers can make more informed decisions before visiting or buying. Compared to promotional photos taken by the business itself, photos and videos from customers tend to be more honest and realistic, thus giving more trust to potential customers. In particular, the presence of food images can be an indicator for building trust in online reviews [20]. In psychology, the image superiority effect implies the importance of food images in online reviews. In short, people's brains react more to information based on images than text (Park et al., 2021).

Attractive visuals, such as food that looks delicious or a comfortable atmosphere, can increase customer interest in visiting the place. Conversely, if photos and videos show poor conditions, such as a dirty place or poor service, this can reduce customer interest in coming. In addition, the presence of photos and videos also strengthens the credibility of reviews given by other users. By viewing the visuals that accompany the reviews, potential customers can compare their expectations with the actual conditions. This helps in avoiding disappointing experiences due to the difference between business promotions and reality on the ground. Not only for customers, this feature also provides benefits for business owners. If a business consistently gets positive photos and videos from customers, then the image of the business will be stronger and attract more new customers. Furthermore, photos and videos uploaded by users can affect the ranking of a business on Google Maps as well. The more photos and videos uploaded, the more likely the business is to appear in higher search results. This shows that the visual feature not only functions as a means of information for potential customers, but also as an effective marketing tool for business owners to increase the exposure and appeal of their business. Therefore, business owners should encourage customers to upload photos and videos after visiting their place, and maintain the quality of service so that the uploaded visuals remain positive and attractive.

5. Conclusions

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that consumer behavior is an important aspect in the world of business and marketing. Consumers are not only influenced by basic needs, but also by psychological factors (motivation, perception, and attitude), social (family, reference groups, culture) and situational factors such as trends and technology. A deep understanding of consumer behavior helps companies to develop more effective marketing strategies, from market segmentation, pricing, to product promotion and distribution. In addition, by understanding a number of factors that influence intention to visit. The suggestion from this study is that companies must continue to conduct market research regularly by monitoring changes in consumer preferences and habits, developing relevant marketing strategies by ensuring that the strategies implemented are in accordance with consumer needs and expectations, utilizing digital marketing such as social media and algorithm-based advertising to reach a wider audience, in addition to building long-term relationships with consumers through more personal communication strategies and implementing loyalty programs such as special discounts, cashback, or gifts for loyal customers will help increase customer retention and satisfaction.

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research employed a qualitative method with a limited number of informants—only five participants therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to a larger population. The sample was also selected through purposive sampling, which may introduce bias as the informants were chosen based on specific criteria. Second, the study focused solely on consumers in the culinary sector within the city of Malang, which limits the scope and applicability of the results to other sectors or geographic regions. Third, this research only explored consumer perspectives without involving business owners or digital marketing professionals, whose insights could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Google Maps' role as an eWOM platform. Lastly, the study primarily relied on self-reported data through interviews, which could be influenced by the participants' memory recall and personal interpretation. Future research is recommended to adopt a mixed-method approach, include a more diverse and larger sample size, and explore comparative analysis across different cities or business sectors.

References

- [1] L. G. Schiffman and L. L. Kanuk, *Consumer Behavior*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.
- [2] K. C. Laudon and C. G. Traver, *E-commerce 2020: Business, Technology, Society*, 16th ed. Pearson Education, 2020.
- [3] C. W. Park, I. Sutherland, and S. Lee, "Effects of online reviews, trust, and picture-superiority on intention to purchase restaurant services," *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.*, vol. 47, pp. 228–236, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.04.004>.
- [4] T. Hennig-Thurau, K. P. Gwinner, G. Walsh, and D. D. Gremler, "Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet?," *J. Interact. Mark.*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 38–52, 2024, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.10073>.
- [5] C. M. K. Cheung and R. Thadani, "The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model," *Decis. Support Syst.*, vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 461–470, 2012, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008>.
- [6] W. Zhang, Q. Ye, R. Law, and Y. Li, "The impact of e-word-of-mouth on the online popularity of restaurants: A comparison of consumer reviews and editor reviews," *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 694–700, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.02.002>.
- [7] R. Filieri, S. Alguezaui, and F. McLeay, "Why do travelers trust TripAdvisor? Antecedents of trust towards consumer-generated media and its influence on recommendation adoption and word of mouth," *Tour. Manag.*, vol. 51, pp. 174–185, 2015, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.05.007>.
- [8] R. Walalayo, E. A. Manuputty, and A. Ufie, "Pemanfaatan Google Maps dalam mempromosikan objek wisata Tebing Makariki Negeri Yaputih Kecamatan Tehoru Kabupaten Maluku Tengah," *J. Adm. Terap.*, vol. 1, pp. 23–34, 2022.
- [9] S. D. N. Septi and R. R. Ariescy, "Pemanfaatan Google Maps untuk meningkatkan penjualan pada UMKM Seblak 55 Kelurahan Rungkut Menanggal," *J. Pengabd. Kpd. Masy. Nusant.*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 2250–2255, 2024, doi: <http://doi.org/10.55338/jpkmn.v5i2.2365>.
- [10] S. F. Insani, Y. Syahrial, and A. Putra, "Optimalisasi aplikasi Google Maps sebagai alternatif media promosi pada UMKM di Shelter Taman Sriwedari," *War. LPM*, pp. 44–56, 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.23917/warta.v25i1.596>.
- [11] M. Firmansyah, *Manajemen Pemasaran: Strategi dan Implementasi dalam Bisnis Modern*, 2020.
- [12] P. Kotler and G. Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing*, 17th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2018.
- [13] R. Febrian, F. L. Nisa, and A. F. Utami, "Implementasi Google Maps sebagai digital marketing dalam efektivitas penjualan UMKM nasabah BTPN Syariah Kecamatan Bantur," *J. Ilm. Wabana Pendidik.*, vol. 10, no. 16, pp. 721–726, 2024, doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13765659>.
- [14] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D dan Penelitian Pendidikan)*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019.
- [15] H. Rizqian, I. Novianto, and I. Indrawati, "Efektivitas Google Maps sebagai fungsi promosi dan media eWOM pada pelaku usaha kuliner Surabaya," *J. Electron. Commer. Res.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 153–165, 2023, doi: <https://doi.org/10.33476/jobs.v4i2.4139>.

- [16] M. S. Pambudi, M. Wiska, K. Purwanto, and K. Gusteti, "Analisis pemanfaatan Google Maps sebagai sarana promosi terhadap penjualan usaha mikro kecil menengah (UMKM) di Nagari Koto Padang," *J. Soc. Sci. Res.*, vol. 3, no. 5, pp. 1562–1571, 2023.
- [17] S. Nurhayati, S. Sarjita, and E. Cahyono, "Pengaruh rating penilaian dan ulasan online terhadap kepercayaan konsumen pada penggunaan toko online Shopee," *Prima Ekon.*, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 18, 2023.
- [18] F. Maulana and D. Santy, "Pengaruh ulasan online terhadap niat beli dengan kepercayaan sebagai intervening (studi kasus terhadap pengguna aplikasi Tokopedia di Kota Bandung)," *J. Econ. Manag. Bus. Account.*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 38, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.34010/jemba.v1i1>.
- [19] M. J. Thomas, B. W. Wirtz, and J. C. Weyerer, "Determinants of online review credibility and its impact on consumers' purchase intention," *J. Electron. Commer. Res.*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 1–20, 2019.
- [20] N. Resti, "The psychological effect of uploading food picture on social media to willingness to dine out," *J. Soc. Dev. Sci.*, vol. 4, no. 7, pp. 316–324, 2013, doi: <https://doi.org/10.22610/jsds.v4i7.767>.