

Customer Satisfaction as Mediator of eWOM and Social Media Marketing Effects on Purchase Intention in Indonesia's Fitness Industry

Impact of eWOM and SMM on Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The fitness industry in Indonesia has undergone a rapid transformation, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened public interest in health and home-based exercise. This shift has encouraged brands like Gymfitnessindo to adopt digital marketing strategies to influence consumer behavior. This study aims to analyze the impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Purchase Intention, with Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable and ICT Effectiveness and Endorsement as moderating variables. A quantitative research design was used, collecting data from 220 respondents via purposive sampling using Google Forms. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that eWOM and SMM do not directly affect Purchase Intention. However, both significantly influence Purchase Intention indirectly through Customer Satisfaction. Conversely, ICT Effectiveness and Endorsement do not significantly moderate the relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention. The study concludes that digital marketing strategies are only effective in influencing Purchase Intention when mediated by Customer Satisfaction. This highlights the critical role of satisfaction in the digital purchase journey, especially in high-involvement products such as fitness equipment.

Keywords: *Customer Satisfaction, Digital Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing.*

ABSTRAK

Industri kebugaran di Indonesia telah mengalami transformasi yang pesat, terutama setelah pandemi COVID-19, yang meningkatkan minat masyarakat terhadap kesehatan dan olahraga di rumah. Pergeseran ini mendorong merek seperti Gymfitnessindo untuk mengadopsi strategi pemasaran digital guna memengaruhi perilaku konsumen. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) dan Social Media Marketing (SMM) terhadap Purchase Intention, dengan Kepuasan Pelanggan sebagai variabel mediasi dan Efektivitas dan Endorsement TIK sebagai variabel moderasi. Desain penelitian kuantitatif digunakan, mengumpulkan data dari 220 responden melalui purposive sampling menggunakan Google Forms. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa eWOM dan SMM tidak secara langsung memengaruhi Purchase Intention. Namun, keduanya secara signifikan memengaruhi Purchase Intention secara tidak langsung melalui Kepuasan Pelanggan. Sebaliknya, Efektivitas dan Endorsement TIK tidak secara signifikan memoderasi hubungan antara Kepuasan Pelanggan dan Purchase Intention. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa strategi pemasaran digital hanya efektif memengaruhi Niat Pembelian jika dimediasi oleh Kepuasan Pelanggan. Hal ini menyoroti peran

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian fitness industry has transformed significantly, driven by growing public awareness of healthy lifestyles and the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated home fitness adoption (Ketaren et al., 2022). Globally, the wellness market reached \$4.9 trillion in 2019 before dropping to \$4.4 trillion in 2020 due to the pandemic, with projections to grow to \$7 trillion by 2025 (Global Wellness Institute, 2023). In Indonesia, the Health & Fitness sector is expected to expand 12.5% annually through 2025, fueled by increased adoption of fitness technology and home gym equipment. Digital advancements, including fitness apps, wearable devices, and streaming platforms, have facilitated home-based exercise (Faisal & Ekawanto, 2021; Amiroh & Hartono, 2024). Exercise equipment revenue is projected at \$2.05 billion, with technology adoption expected to reach 121.96 million users by 2025 (Statista, 2025).

PT. Asia Krisna Fitindo, or Gymfitnessindo, has become a leading player in Indonesia's home fitness equipment market by leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The company's revenue grew from 27.5 billion in 2020 to 37.276 billion in 2024, reflecting strong and increasing purchase intention over time. Purchase intention, defined as an individual's tendency to buy a product based on beliefs, attitudes, and needs, is influenced by electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media marketing (SMM), with customer satisfaction as a mediator and ICT effectiveness as a moderator (Jalilvand et al., 2011; Dirmawati et al., 2023; Bhukya & Paul, 2023; Chunyan & Cheng, 2024). SMM expands brand reach, boosts engagement, and builds loyalty through platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Gymfitnessindo uses Facebook (3.7K followers), Instagram (25.8K), TikTok (11.5K), and YouTube (2.6K), with Instagram serving as the main platform generating the highest sales prospects.

Despite the growing adoption of social media marketing (SMM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in influencing purchase intentions, current evidence suggests that Gymfitnessindo's implementation remains suboptimal. Performance analysis of six organic content samples revealed engagement rates between 0.023% and 0.1%, which fall significantly below the industry standard of 1.05% or higher for effective engagement (Prabhawati et al., 2004; Putri & Rahyuda, 2021). This indicates a clear gap between the theoretical potential of digital marketing strategies and their practical execution within the Indonesian home fitness market. Chunyan and Cheng (2024) demonstrated that positive eWOM increases trust in products and brands, thereby enhancing purchase intention, and Ivana (2018), Cheung et al. (2020), and Sylvia and Ramli (2023) state that SMM expands brand reach, engagement, and loyalty through social media platforms. However, few studies have empirically examined how these mechanisms operate specifically in the context of home fitness equipment companies like Gymfitnessindo, particularly when customer satisfaction serves as a mediating factor.

Customer satisfaction has been identified as a critical mediator between eWOM, SMM, and purchase intention, enhancing perceived product quality and reducing perceived risk (Rahayu, 2017; Batjo et al., 2022; Cahyaningrum & Hartini, 2023; Khoirunnisa & Albari, 2023). Similarly, the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as user-friendly apps, fast websites, and responsive customer service, can strengthen the translation of purchase intention into actual purchases (Mantiri et al., 2022; Sugiati & Sudirman, 2024). While these variables have been studied individually, the combined effects of eWOM, SMM, customer satisfaction, and ICT effectiveness, particularly within the Indonesian home fitness

industry, remain underexplored. Additionally, the role of endorsements as a potential moderator in enhancing the impact of customer satisfaction on purchase intention has received limited empirical attention.

Therefore, this study aims to address these research gaps by analyzing the influence of eWOM and SMM on purchase intention through the mediation of customer satisfaction, while examining the moderating roles of ICT effectiveness and endorsement at Gymfitnessindo. By explicitly testing these relationships in the context of a rapidly growing Indonesian fitness market, this research provides a novel contribution that contrasts with prior studies conducted in broader or unrelated sectors. The findings are expected to offer actionable insights for optimizing digital marketing strategies, improving engagement rates, and strengthening purchase intention, thereby supporting business growth in the competitive home fitness equipment industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Marketing and Digital Marketing

Marketing, according to Kotler and Keller (2021), is about identifying and meeting human and social needs in ways that align with organizational objectives. Rachmad et al. (2022) add that marketing is the process of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing goods, services, and ideas to facilitate exchanges that satisfy customers and build positive relationships with stakeholders in a dynamic environment.

Digital marketing represents the application of digital media, data, and technology integrated with traditional marketing communications to achieve marketing objectives. As defined by digital marketing, it utilizes technology-based platforms such as the internet, networks, mobile devices, and social media to interact with individual consumers, consumer communities, and businesses. This approach leverages these platforms to provide information, build engagement, persuade consumers, drive brand purchases, and ultimately build profitable long-term relationships (Armstrong et al., 2023).

Electronic Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) are critical determinants of consumer purchase intention in the digital fitness equipment sector (Al-Ja'afreh & Al-Adaileh, 2020). eWOM, which involves sharing opinions, reviews, or attitudes about products or services online, helps build consumer trust and reduce uncertainty in decision-making. According to Chunyan and Cheng (2024), favorable eWOM increases perceived product credibility and quality, thereby boosting purchase intention. This influence is particularly significant in sectors like home fitness, where consumers rely heavily on online information due to limited opportunities for direct, physical interaction with products (Litvin et al., 2008; Babić Rosario et al., 2020; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Similarly, SMM is recognized for its ability to expand brand reach, build engagement, and foster loyalty through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. Gymfitnessindo, a leading home fitness equipment provider in Indonesia, utilizes these platforms for product promotions (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Alamsyah et al., 2024; Pradana et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025). Despite its broad reach, particularly through Instagram, the company's social media engagement rates remain below the industry benchmark, indicating a need for optimization to fully leverage SMM's potential in stimulating purchase intention.

According to Bhukya and Paul (2023), purchase intention refers to an individual's tendency to buy a product based on personal beliefs, needs, and perceptions. Both eWOM and SMM directly influence these factors by shaping how consumers perceive brand credibility, quality, and relevance (Sun & Wang, 2020). Chunyan and Cheng (2024) further confirm that these digital marketing strategies significantly affect purchase intention, with customer satisfaction acting as a crucial mediating factor (Alves et al., 2016).

H1: Electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on purchase intention.

H2: Social media marketing has a significant effect on purchase intention.

Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator between EWoM and Purchase Intention

Customer satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention. eWOM, which refers to consumers' online sharing of opinions, experiences, and attitudes regarding products or services, significantly influences purchasing decisions by reducing uncertainty and increasing trust (Chunyan & Cheng, 2024). When consumers encounter positive online reviews or testimonials that align with their expectations, their perception of product quality improves, which in turn enhances satisfaction (Cahyaningrum & Hartini, 2023; Iskanto & Rahmalia, 2023; Al-Gasawneh et al., 2023).

Customer satisfaction acts as a psychological mechanism linking the impact of eWOM to purchase intention. Rachmad et al. (2022) and Bhukya and Paul (2023) explain that purchase intention represents a consumer's propensity to buy a product in the future, influenced by their beliefs, attitudes, and needs. This intention, however, depends on whether expectations formed during the information search, particularly via eWOM, are met (Anser et al., 2020). When consumers perceive peer-shared information as trustworthy and consistent with their experiences, their satisfaction increases, thereby strengthening their motivation to purchase. Chunyan and Cheng (2024) demonstrate that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. In digital settings, this mediation is further enhanced by effective Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as responsive websites and intuitive applications, which foster user comfort and trust. Additionally, endorsements from credible influencers can intensify satisfaction by creating emotional connections with the brand (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; Elgahwash et al., 2024).

In essence, eWOM influences purchase intention not only directly but also indirectly through customer satisfaction. When satisfaction arises from aligned expectations, positive peer feedback, and smooth digital experiences, consumers' purchase intentions become stronger and more likely to translate into actual buying behavior.

H3: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchase intention.

Customer Satisfaction Mediates between SMM and Purchase Intention

Customer satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and purchase intention, particularly in the context of digital consumer behavior in the fitness industry (Caoili-Tayuan & Ramos 2024). SMM functions to broaden brand visibility, foster engagement, and build loyalty by utilizing platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok (Zangeneh et al., 2024). In the case of Gymfitnessindo, these platforms serve as the primary channels for promoting home fitness products, with Instagram being the most prominent (Vukmir, 2006; Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). However, current engagement rates ranging between 0.023% and 0.1% are still far below the industry standard of 1.05%, suggesting the need for improved strategies to convert engagement into purchase intention.

Bhukya and Paul (2023) state that purchase intention represents a consumer's tendency to buy a product, shaped by their beliefs, needs, and attitudes. Albarq and Al Doghan (2020) highlight that while Social Media Marketing (SMM) can directly influence purchase intention, its impact is considerably strengthened when mediated by customer satisfaction. Social media content that is engaging and informative enhances consumers' perceptions of brand value and product quality, generating satisfaction when expectations are fulfilled. Iskanto et al. (2024) add that satisfaction emerges when digital marketing efforts, including product showcases or influencer endorsements, meet consumer

expectations and reduce perceived risk. Moreover, the effective implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as fast-loading websites and responsive customer service, can further improve satisfaction by providing smooth and reliable user experiences (Armstrong et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024). Consequently, customer satisfaction functions as the psychological and emotional link that translates positive experiences with social media content into stronger purchase intentions (Astoriano et al., 2022; Wilia & Thabrani, 2023).

H4: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

ICT Effectiveness and Endorsement in Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention

In the digital marketplace, customer satisfaction alone may not always translate into strong purchase intentions; this relationship can be significantly moderated by factors such as the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and endorsement credibility. Chunyan and Cheng (2024) explain that the connection between satisfaction and purchase intention strengthens when companies implement effective ICT systems that ensure seamless consumer experiences. For Gymfitnessindo, operating in Indonesia's growing home fitness market, this entails user-friendly websites, responsive applications, and prompt customer service, all of which enhance convenience and trust. Such ICT capabilities improve customer comfort, minimize friction in the purchasing process, and ultimately increase the likelihood that satisfied customers will act on their purchase intentions (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Rukmana et al., 2024).

Moreover, endorsement from influencers or celebrities also plays a critical role in moderating the satisfaction–intention relationship. As Eckert et al. (2022) and Cahyaningrum and Hartini (2023) note, endorsements function not merely as marketing tools but as emotional connectors between consumers and brands. Endorsements that are perceived as authentic and credible reinforce customers' positive perceptions and heighten their emotional involvement with a brand. In the context of Gymfitnessindo, endorsements by fitness influencers through Instagram or TikTok can create relatable and aspirational narratives that translate satisfaction into stronger purchase intention. Bhukya and Paul (2023) define purchase intention as the consumer's tendency to buy a product based on belief, need, and experience. Therefore, even when satisfaction is high, the presence of efficient ICT and trustworthy endorsements ensures that the intention to purchase becomes more actionable (Al Kurdi et al., 2020).

H5: Effectiveness of information communication technology moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention.

H6: Endorsement moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention.

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual research model that shows the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Social Media Marketing on Customer Satisfaction, which in turn influences Purchase Intention (Purchase Intention). In this model, Customer Satisfaction acts as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of e-WOM and social media marketing on purchase intention. In addition, this model also introduces two moderating variables, namely ICT Effectiveness and Endorsement. ICT Effectiveness moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention, while Endorsement also strengthens or enhances the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Overall, this model illustrates how digital factors and consumer promotions influence consumer purchasing behavior. This research framework builds upon the study by Chunyan and Cheng (2024) with the addition of endorsement as a moderating variable, recognizing the growing importance of influencer marketing in contemporary digital marketing strategies.

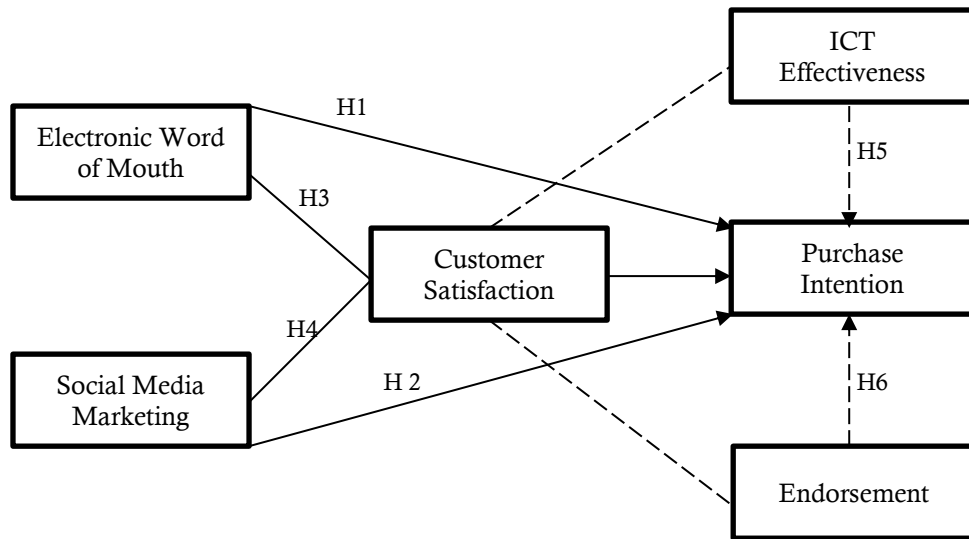


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs descriptive research with a quantitative correlational design using a causal approach to examine relationships between electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), social media marketing (SMM), customer satisfaction, purchase intention, ICT effectiveness, and endorsement. Following Sugiyono (2020), the research uses quantitative methodology based on positivist philosophy with cross-sectional data collection through a survey strategy targeting individual units of analysis in non-contrived settings without researcher intervention.

Table 1. Research Characteristics

Research Characteristics	Type
Methodology	Quantitative
Purpose	Descriptive
Investigation Type	Causality
Research Strategy	Survey
Unit of Analysis	Individual
Research Involvement	Non-intervention
Research Setting	Non-contrived
Time Execution	Cross-sectional

The research population consists of 25,800 Instagram followers of @gymfitnessindo. To obtain a representative and relevant subset of this population, purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to deliberately select respondents who meet specific criteria, ensuring that the collected data are pertinent to the research objectives. In this study, respondents were required to have accessed @gymfitnessindo’s Instagram account and have experience using, owning, or purchasing Gymfitnessindo products. By focusing on this target group, the study captures insights from individuals most likely to provide meaningful responses regarding electronic word of mouth (eWOM), social media marketing (SMM), customer satisfaction, ICT effectiveness, endorsement, and purchase intention, thus enhancing the validity of the findings (Table 1).

Sample size determination follows the guidelines of Hair et al. (2017) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which recommend a minimum of 100–200 respondents for models with multiple latent variables and indicators. Considering that this study involves six latent variables and 27 indicators, a sample within this range is considered adequate for reliable and stable parameter estimation. Out of 233

completed questionnaires, 220 were deemed valid after screening, achieving a 94.42% validity rate. This sample size satisfies the “10 times rule” often cited in SEM literature, which requires the number of observations to be at least ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular latent variable. Furthermore, having 220 valid responses ensures sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing, mediation, and moderation analyses within SEM, reducing the risk of Type II errors.

In addition, using purposive sampling aligns with the study’s focus on specific behavioral experiences related to Instagram interactions and product use. By intentionally selecting knowledgeable participants, the study enhances the relevance of observed relationships among variables, such as the impact of eWOM and SMM on purchase intention through customer satisfaction, and the moderating roles of ICT effectiveness and endorsement. The combination of purposive sampling and an adequately sized sample ensures that the PLS-SEM analysis can produce valid, reliable, and generalizable insights within the defined target population, supporting both theoretical inference and practical implications for digital marketing strategies in the fitness equipment sector.

RESULTS

The study successfully collected data from 220 valid respondents who met the specified criteria of having accessed the @gymfitnessindo Instagram account and possessing experience with Gymfitnessindo products. The demographic profile reveals a balanced distribution across key characteristics relevant to the fitness equipment market. Gender distribution shows 52.3% male and 47.7% female respondents, indicating relatively equal engagement from both genders with fitness equipment content. Age distribution demonstrates that 38.6% of respondents fall within the 25-34 age range, followed by 31.4% in the 18-24 category, 22.7% in the 35-44 range, and 7.3% above 45 years, reflecting the primary target demographic for home fitness equipment. Educational background analysis reveals that 54.5% hold bachelor’s degrees, 25.9% have completed high school, 13.6% possess master’s degrees, and 6.0% have other educational qualifications, suggesting a well-educated consumer base. Income distribution shows 34.1% earning between IDR 5-10 million monthly, 27.3% earning IDR 3-5 million, 23.2% earning above IDR 10 million, and 15.4% earning below IDR 3 million, indicating substantial purchasing power among respondents.

Descriptive analysis on Table 2 of research variables using five-point Likert scale measurements reveals positive tendencies across all constructs. Electronic Word of Mouth demonstrates a mean score of 3.82 (76.4%) falling within the “Good” category, indicating respondents perceive information from Gymfitnessindo’s social media as high quality, useful, credible, current, and adoptable. Social Media Marketing achieves a mean score of 3.91 (78.2%) categorized as “Good,” suggesting effective interaction, customization, trendiness, and information sharing capabilities through social media platforms. Customer Satisfaction records the highest mean score of 4.12 (82.4%) in the “Good” category, demonstrating strong goal setting and goal striving behaviors among customers. ICT Effectiveness shows a mean score of 3.76 (75.2%) classified as “Good,” indicating satisfactory compatibility, trialability, and observability of technological features. Endorsement achieves a mean score of 3.68 (73.6%), falling within the “Good” category, reflecting positive perceptions of visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and power of endorsers. Purchase Intention records a mean score of 3.94 (78.8%), categorized as “Good,” showing strong attitudes, perceived behavioral control, product knowledge, and perceived consumer effectiveness regarding future purchases.

The measurement model evaluation demonstrates satisfactory validity and reliability across all constructs. Convergent validity assessment reveals that all factor loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, ranging from 0.743 to 0.891, indicating strong relationships between indicators and their respective latent variables. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpass the minimum requirement of 0.5, with eWOM (0.589), SMM (0.612), Customer Satisfaction (0.654), ICT Effectiveness (0.598), Endorsement (0.641), and Purchase Intention (0.627), confirming adequate convergent

validity. Composite reliability coefficients exceed the 0.7 benchmark for all variables: eWOM (0.877), SMM (0.864), Customer Satisfaction (0.903), ICT Effectiveness (0.882), Endorsement (0.876), and Purchase Intention (0.869), while Cronbach's Alpha values also meet reliability requirements ranging from 0.770 to 0.914.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Percentage	Standard Deviation	Category
Electronic Word of Mouth	3.82	76.4%	0.64	Good
Social Media Marketing	3.91	78.2%	0.58	Good
Customer Satisfaction	4.12	82.4%	0.71	Good
ICT Effectiveness	3.76	75.2%	0.62	Good
Endorsement	3.68	73.6%	0.67	Good
Purchase Intention	3.94	78.8%	0.69	Good

Table 3. Reliability and Validity Assessment Results

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Result
Electronic Word of Mouth	5	0.770	0.877	0.589	Reliable & Valid
Social Media Marketing	4	0.785	0.864	0.612	Reliable & Valid
Customer Satisfaction	5	0.914	0.903	0.654	Reliable & Valid
ICT Effectiveness	5	0.854	0.882	0.598	Reliable & Valid
Endorsement	4	0.842	0.876	0.641	Reliable & Valid
Purchase Intention	4	0.871	0.869	0.627	Reliable & Valid

Based on Table 3 the discriminant validity examination through the Fornell-Larcker criterion confirms that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio analysis shows all values below 0.90, ranging from 0.342 to 0.876, supporting discriminant validity. Cross-loading analysis reveals that all indicators load higher on their intended constructs than on other constructs, further confirming discriminant validity. These results collectively establish the measurement model's adequacy for subsequent structural model assessment.

The structural model evaluation demonstrates satisfactory explanatory power and predictive relevance. The coefficient of determination (R^2) analysis reveals that the model explains 68.7% of the variance in Purchase Intention, 54.3% in Customer Satisfaction, indicating strong to moderate explanatory power according to Hair et al. (2017) guidelines. The predictive relevance assessment using Stone-Geisser Q^2 values shows positive results for all endogenous constructs: Purchase Intention ($Q^2 = 0.412$) and Customer Satisfaction ($Q^2 = 0.348$), confirming the model's predictive capabilities exceeding zero threshold requirements.

Table 4. Structural Model Assessment Results

Construct	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Q^2	f^2 Effect Size	Model Quality
Purchase Intention	0.687	0.681	0.412	-	Strong
Customer Satisfaction	0.543	0.537	0.348	-	Moderate

Table 4 shows the effect size (f^2) calculations, demonstrating varying influence magnitudes between constructs. Customer Satisfaction exhibits a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.428$) on Purchase Intention, while eWOM shows a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.067$) and SMM demonstrates a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.163$) on Customer Satisfaction. The moderating variables ICT Effectiveness ($f^2 = 0.021$) and Endorsement ($f^2 = 0.018$) display small effect sizes in their moderating roles between Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention.

Model fit assessment using various goodness-of-fit indices reveals satisfactory results. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.072 falls below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating good model fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) achieves 0.841, approaching the desired 0.90 benchmark, while the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio maintains acceptable levels at 2.84, below the maximum threshold of 3.0. The path analysis results reveal significant and non-significant relationships among

the research variables, providing insights into the complex dynamics of digital marketing in the fitness equipment industry. The direct effect analysis shows that Electronic Word of Mouth does not significantly influence Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.124, t = 1.752, p = 0.081 > 0.05$), leading to rejection of H1. Similarly, Social Media Marketing demonstrates no significant direct effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.186, t = 1.891, p = 0.059 > 0.05$), resulting in H2 rejection. These findings suggest that eWOM and SMM require mediating mechanisms to effectively influence purchase intentions in the fitness equipment context.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Indirect Effect	Beta	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	eWOM → Purchase Intention		0.124	1.752	0.081	Rejected
H2	SMM → Purchase Intention		0.186	1.891	0.059	Rejected
H3	eWOM → CS → PI	0.287		4.163	<0.001	Accepted
H4	SMM → CS → PI	0.329		4.891	<0.001	Accepted
H5	CS × ICT → PI		0.089	1.247	0.213	Rejected

Table 5 presents the mediation analysis, which reveals significant indirect effects through Customer Satisfaction, demonstrating the crucial role of customer satisfaction as a mediating mechanism. Customer Satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.287, t = 4.163, p < 0.001$), supporting H3 acceptance. The specific indirect effect calculation shows: Indirect Effect = $0.412 \times 0.697 = 0.287$, where 0.412 represents the path coefficient from eWOM to Customer Satisfaction and 0.697 represents the path from Customer Satisfaction to Purchase Intention. Similarly, Customer Satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.329, t = 4.891, p < 0.001$), confirming H4 acceptance. The indirect effect calculation: Indirect Effect = $0.472 \times 0.697 = 0.329$, demonstrates the mediating mechanism's effectiveness.

The moderation analysis reveals that neither ICT Effectiveness nor Endorsement significantly moderates the relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention. ICT Effectiveness shows no significant moderating effect ($\beta = 0.089, t = 1.247, p = 0.213 > 0.05$), leading to H5 rejection. Similarly, Endorsement demonstrates no significant moderating influence ($\beta = 0.076, t = 1.094, p = 0.275 > 0.05$), resulting in H6 rejection. These findings suggest that while ICT effectiveness and endorsement are important factors in digital marketing, they do not significantly alter the strength of the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention in the current model.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Description	Result	Significance
H1	eWOM → Purchase Intention	Not Supported	$p > 0.05$
H2	SMM → Purchase Intention	Not Supported	$p > 0.05$
H3	eWOM → CS → Purchase Intention	Supported	$p < 0.001$
H4	SMM → CS → Purchase Intention	Supported	$p < 0.001$
H5	CS × ICT → Purchase Intention	Not Supported	$p > 0.05$
H6	CS × Endorsement → Purchase Intention	Not Supported	$p > 0.05$

Table 6 shows that eWOM and social media marketing have no direct effect on purchase intention ($p > 0.05$). However, both have a significant indirect effect through customer satisfaction ($p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, the interaction between customer satisfaction and ICT effectiveness and endorsement does not show a significant effect on purchase intention ($p > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) do not exert a direct influence on Purchase Intention in the fitness equipment sector, specifically for Gymfitnessindo. This challenges the common expectation that digital marketing straightforwardly drives purchasing decisions and is

consistent with prior studies showing that high-involvement products typically involve more complex decision-making (Armstrong et al., 2023; Alamsyah et al., 2024). As fitness equipment represents a considerable financial commitment, consumers tend to assess multiple experiential and informational factors beyond mere exposure to online marketing efforts.

While direct relationships are insignificant, the study highlights that both eWOM and SMM significantly affect purchase intention indirectly through customer satisfaction (Al-Ja'afreh & Al-Adaileh, 2020; Babić Rosario et al., 2020). This mediation aligns with findings by Chunyan and Cheng (2024), emphasizing the importance of customer satisfaction in digital marketing effectiveness. eWOM enhances satisfaction by providing credible, relevant insights that reduce uncertainty, while SMM fosters satisfaction through interactive and personalized content (Cheung et al., 2020). The mediation effects are statistically significant, with eWOM showing an indirect effect of 0.287 and SMM at 0.329 ($p < 0.001$).

This mechanism can be understood through Goal Theory, where consumers derive satisfaction by achieving informational and emotional goals set during their product search (Buckley et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2024). Positive eWOM or engaging SMM content helps customers set clear goals and expectations, and satisfaction from meeting these goals fosters purchase intentions. Thus, customer satisfaction becomes a crucial bridge transforming engagement into conversion.

Interestingly, the study finds no significant moderating impact of ICT Effectiveness and Endorsement on the satisfaction-purchase intention link. This contrasts with past research highlighting the importance of technology and influencer credibility (Anser et al., 2020; Iskanto & Rahmalia, 2023). The non-significance of ICT ($p = 0.213$) may suggest that basic technological functionalities are now perceived as standard rather than differentiating. Similarly, endorsement strategies might lack effectiveness due to misalignment with consumer expectations in high-involvement products like fitness equipment, where consumers prioritize functionality over popularity (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2025).

The findings suggest companies like Gymfitnessindo should pivot from direct sales approaches to strategies centered around building customer satisfaction ecosystems. Rather than focusing solely on reach or promotional tactics, digital marketing should emphasize content quality, community engagement, and goal-oriented service delivery (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kotler & Keller, 2021).

In optimizing eWOM, marketers should emphasize information depth and credibility over sheer volume. Strategies like curated testimonials, transparent feedback, and active review management enhance consumer trust and satisfaction (Albarq & Al Doghan, 2020). For SMM, meaningful interactions and personalized storytelling are more effective than follower counts, highlighting the importance of value-based community engagement (Sun & Wang, 2020). The findings also suggest reexamining ICT and endorsement investments. While ICT supports operational efficiency, resources may be better allocated to enhancing customer experience and feedback loops. Endorsements should focus on credible experts or real users whose insights align with customer needs and satisfaction (Iskanto et al., 2024). This study is limited to Gymfitnessindo in Indonesia, with a cross-sectional design that restricts causal inference (Ivana, 2018; Cheung et al., 2020; Sylvia & Ramli, 2023). Sugiati and Sudirman (2024) and Pradana et al. (2024) state that future research could examine longitudinal, cross-cultural, and product-category effects to deepen the understanding of satisfaction's mediating role in digital marketing. The study reinforces that customer satisfaction drives purchase intention in high-involvement contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study finds that Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) do not have a direct impact on purchase intention for fitness equipment at Gymfitnessindo. However, both variables significantly influence purchase intention

indirectly through customer satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of satisfaction as a mediating variable, especially for high-involvement products where consumers prioritize detailed information and emotional reassurance in their decision-making process. Furthermore, the study shows that ICT effectiveness and endorsement do not significantly moderate the relationship between satisfaction and purchase intention.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that Gymfitnessindo and similar companies should shift digital marketing strategies from direct persuasion toward satisfaction-based engagement. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing the quality and credibility of eWOM content and developing SMM strategies centered on meaningful interactions and personalized storytelling. Additionally, endorsement strategies should move away from general popularity-based figures to trusted experts or satisfied users whose experiences resonate with prospective buyers. Investments in ICT should focus more on enhancing customer experience and service quality rather than superficial features. Theoretically, this study contributes to digital marketing literature by reinforcing the mediating role of customer satisfaction within high-involvement purchasing contexts. It also supports Goal Theory, where satisfaction results from the fulfillment of consumers' informational and emotional objectives during their product evaluation process.

This research is subject to limitations, including its focus on a single company (Gymfitnessindo) and the Indonesian market, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Additionally, its cross-sectional design constrains causal interpretation. Future research should explore these dynamics in different cultural and industry contexts, utilize longitudinal methods to examine causal relationships, and assess other potential mediators or moderators, such as trust or product knowledge, to enrich the model.

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