Prefer Profit Alone or Profit Together? The Effect of of Word of Mouth (WoM) Referral Types on Product Purchase Intention

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Abstract. Word of Mouth (WOM) referral is a form of communication about a product or brand, intended to share information about consumption experiences with other people. The consumption experience shared by a trusted source directs individuals to purchase intention. Purchase intention is inseparable from personality factors, such as openness to experience, which directs individuals to the pleasure of trying new things, including products. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of WOM referral types on purchase intention, by statistically controlling for the openness to experience trait that measured by the Big Five Inventory. This research is an experimental between-subjects design, which was conducted on 145 participants aged young adults (20-38 years). Participants were randomly assigned into two groups (economic vs. public welfare WOM referral), which were given a review/recommendation that reflected each type of WOM referral, in narrative form. Data was analyzed using ANCOVA. The result shows that there is no effect of WOM referral type on purchase intention by controlling the openness to experience trait statistically. The results of this study can be used as a reference for businesses to consider WOM referrals as a marketing strategy, by using consumer assistance to provide reviews regarding their consumption experience on social media.

Keywords: Openness to experience, purchase intention, WOM referral, young adults

Abstrak. *WOM referral* merupakan suatu bentuk komunikasi mengenai produk atau merek, yang ditujukan untuk membagikan informasi mengenai pengalaman konsumsi kepada orang lain yang dikenal. Pengalaman konsumsi yang dibagikan oleh sumber terpercaya dalam *WOM referral* ini mengarahkan individu pada intensi membeli produk. Adapun intensi membeli tidak terlepas dari faktor kepribadian, seperti *trait* keterbukaan atau *openness to experience* yang mengarahkan individu pada kesenangan mencoba hal baru, termasuk produk. Oleh karenanya, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat pengaruh tipe *WOM referral* terhadap intensi membeli, dengan mengontrol *trait openness to experience* secara statistik. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimental *between-subject design*, yang dilakukan pada 135 partisipan berusia dewasa muda (20-38 tahun) yang berdomisili di Indonesia. Partisipan terbagi secara acak ke dalam dua kelompok (*economic vs. public welfare WOM referral*), kemudian diberikan ulasan/rekomendasi yang mencerminkan masing-masing tipe *WOM referral*, dalam bentuk narasi. Data partisipan dianalisis menggunakan ANCOVA. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat pengaruh tipe *WOM referral* terhadap intensi membeli dengan mengontrol *trait openness to experience* secara statistik. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga memberikan gambaran mengenai alasan-alasan yang mendasari pertimbangan intensi membeli, khususnya yang terkait dengan *WOM referral*. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, pelaku usaha dapat mempertimbangkan penggunaan *WOM referral* sebagai strategi untuk mengembangkan usahanya, baik dengan mode pemasaran diskon ataupun donasi.

Kata Kunci: dewasa muda, diskon, donasi, intensi membeli, *openness to experience*, *WOM referral*

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Introduction

Currently the internet has become an inseparable part of human life. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) state that the main motive of individuals using the internet is to seek information. Meanwhile, Gea (2022) adds that social media is used by individuals to give opinions, spread news, and do business. This illustrates that social

media can be utilized for integrated marketing communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In Indonesia, Instagram is social media platforms with the second largest number of users after WhatsApp (Yunus, 2022), where most users are in the range of 18-34 years (Annur, 2021). If it is related to integrated marketing communication also its usability features, Instagram can be a place for WOM or word-of-mouth to occur.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) define WOM as an activity of exchanging information regarding sales that occur between consumers and has an important role in determining consumer attitudes and behavior towards a product or service. Furthermore, Misner (1999) states that WOM is one of the most effective marketing communication strategies. This is supported by statistical data from the 99 Essential WOM Marketing Statistics 2022, that WOM generates five times more sales than commercial advertising (Todorov, 2022).

Compared to commercial advertising, WOM is more reliable source of information, helping customers avoid risks, and formulate better purchasing decisions (Chen & Law, 2016). Today's consumers trust WOM more, because it is an unpaid resource and the contents are honest reviews based on consumer experience (Sa'ait, Kanyan, & Nazrin (2016). This phenomenon illustrates that currently, consumer buying intentions are no longer easily influenced by companies or depend on personal preferences, but also involve other people, and the direction of marketing becomes horizontal (from consumer to consumer). Consumers are more interested in reading references from other consumers in choosing products, to protect themselves from worries related to false brand claims and tricks advertisement (Kotler & Keller, 2016). As the result in choosing a product or brand, consumers tend to follow references from other consumers who have previously used it.

Basically, WOM on social media (including Instagram) can be referred to as e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth). Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004) define e-WOM as positive or negative statements regarding a product or service, originating from current or past consumers, which can be found by many people via the internet. Cheung and Thadani (2012) state that e-WOM is an effective and most widely used way to share opinions and reviews about products and services. To control negative e-WOM, companies build positive e-WOM from influencers. However, some people don't trust WOM because they know that influencers are paid to promote a product (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

e-WOM includes information that contains individual consumption experiences regarding a product or brand. Based on the content, WOM referrals are divided into two types, namely economic WOM referrals and public welfare WOM referrals (Yuan & Peluso, 2021). When this information is shared by people who are known by the recipient of the message, such as friends or family, then e-WOM also involves e-referrals. WOM referrals were found to significantly affect purchase intentions (Danniswara, Sandhyaduhita, & Munajat, 2017; Gea, 2022). This might happen because the information provided in WOM referrals is considered reliable, considering that the identity of the information provider is easily recognized (Sari, 2018). When information about a product or brand is considered credible, it will increase the intention to buy in individuals. What's more, if the review (or in this case the WOM referral) is written in the form of a story, it will also increase the credibility of the information (Black & Kelley, 2009).

Apart from WOM referrals, purchase intentions are also influenced by other factors, such as brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, and perceived value (Marlien, Putri, Basiya, & Suteja, 2020). Purchases intentions may also be influenced by personality, such as the openness to experience trait. Lu and Chen (2017) found openness to experience trait allows individuals to accept many things more easily around them, including the behavior of buying new or unfamiliar products. If it is related to the type of economic and public welfare WOM referrals, situational and individual factors such as pandemics, selfishness, and the influence of religious teachings, may also influence consumer purchase intentions. This contradiction between personal and shared interests makes individuals need to think when they want to spend money to buy something. In addition, cultural factors may also have an influence, as found by Yablo and Field (2007) that collectivist societies tend to be more altruistically oriented.

This research is a follow-up study from Yuan and Peluso (2021) regarding the effect of WOM referral types on purchase intentions. If in the previous research the participants were college students, participants in this study also included workers. In addition, the product and platforms are used in the stimulus using current coffee products and the Instagram platform. Contemporary coffee was chosen as a product because it is suitable

for young people who have a habit of hanging out while drinking coffee (Widiyanti & Harti, 2021). Quoted from Sugianto (2019), there were 2,950 coffee outlets in Indonesia, which illustrates the intense competition and is a challenge for coffee business owners to be able to survive marketing their products on the market. Coffee business owners need to develop digital marketing strategies that are acceptable to young people (Wijaya & Rizka, 2021), because based on a survey by IDN Times it was found that most modern coffee consumers are young generation, with an age distribution of 18-28 (Cahya, 2019), and this is also in line with the age of active Instagram users.

The results of this study can be used as a reference for business actors to develop their business, by using the right WOM referral strategy. For consumers, when faced with two choices that are equally profitable but with different values, which one will consumers choose: individual profit or mutual profit?

Purchase Intention

Referring to Ajzen (1991), intention is a motivational factor that influences individuals in behaving. In this study, the intended intention refers to purchase intention. Espejel, Fandos, and Flavian (2008) defines purchase intention as a pattern of behavior that reflects predictions of individual purchasing decisions for a product or brand in the future. Based on this definition, purchase intention in this study refers to the extent to which individuals want to buy a product in the future after being exposed to content containing WOM referrals on social media.

According to Marlien, Putri, Basiya, and Suteja (2020), there are at least four factors that influence individual purchase intentions, namely brand image, perceived quality, perceived price, and perceived value. Brand image influences purchase intention because it allows individuals to choose a brand that they feel is suitable for them (Pandey & Srivastava, 2016). In perceived quality, an individual is said not to buy a product, if he does not consider the product to be superior, meets needs, and offers added value (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). How consumers perceive prices (high, low, or reasonable) also influences buying intentions. Finally, the greater the perceived value, the greater the possibility of individuals making purchases (Pandey & Srivastava, 2016). In addition to these four factors, purchase intentions are also influenced by other things such as WOM (or WOM referrals) and personality, one of which is openness to experience.

WOM Referral

Basically, WOM referrals are a combination of the concepts of WOM and referrals, which in the context of this study is based on the internet, so that they become e-WOM and e-referrals. e-WOM refers to positive and negative statements regarding a product or service, originating from current or past consumers, which can be found by many people via the internet (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2004), while e-referral refers to the process by which consumers communicate company marketing messages and/or reviews about a product or service to those closest to them (such as friends, family) via the internet (Abubakar, Ilkan, & Sahin, 2016). These two concepts are different in terms of providing information. In e-WOM, the information provider is someone else who is not known, whereas in e-referrals the information provider is known (Sari, 2018). WOM referrals were found to significantly affect purchase intentions (Danniswara, Sandhyaduhita, & Munajat, 2017; Gea, 2022). This might happen because the information provided in WOM referrals is considered reliable because the identity of the information provider is easily recognized (Sari, 2018).

Yuan and Peluso (2021) divide WOM referrals into two types, namely economic WOM referrals and public welfare WOM referrals. This type of division is based on the possible preferences of consumers in writing reviews or recommendations, in which some consumers may be more interested in economic information (such as price discounts, vouchers), while others may be more interested in public welfare information (such as donations). Economic WOM referrals cover product-related aspects and emphasize practical benefits for consumers. Meanwhile, WOM referral public welfare covers aspects related to the company and emphasizes more general benefits for the wider community.

Both types of WOM referrals can be shared in story form. Black and Kelley (2009) found that well-written online reviews in story form increase credibility. Kim, Maslowska, and Malthouse (2017) added that stories make individuals imagine themselves experiencing the product or service offered, so that they are immersed in the story and influence their brand attitude and purchase intention.

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience is one of the five basic dimensions in the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which discusses the categorization of individual personality. According to Piedmont (1998), openness to experience is openness to actively seek and appreciate different experiences, and to explore new things that were previously unknown. Meanwhile, in Feist, Roberts, and Feist (2021), it is explained that individuals with high openness to experience consistently seek new things, such as new menus at restaurants. In addition, Lu and Chen (2017) also found that the openness to experience trait is positively correlated with the intention to buy cosmetic products. So individuals with the openness to experience trait are easier to accept many things around them, including in terms of new product buying behavior.

From these explanations, it can be said that the higher openness to experience, the more likelihood of individuals trying or buying new and unfamiliar products. Tuten and Bosnjak (2001) found that individuals with high openness to experience use the internet to search for product information, and they rely on sources of information such as personal experience or WOM because it is deep and evokes imagination (Tan & Tang, 2013). In this case, WOM referrals in the form of stories allow individuals with high openness to experience trait to achieve these needs.

Dynamics of Relations Between Variables

Based on the description above, the authors suspect that the trait of openness to experience may have contributed to differences in buying intentions. Thus, the researcher proposes a hypothesis that there is an effect of WOM referral type on purchase intention by controlling the openness to experience trait statistically.

Methods

This research is an experimental study, with a between-subjects design. The researchers assigned the participants randomly into two groups with different manipulations. Participants in the study were young adults, with an age range of 20-38 years. Participants were taken using convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

The instruments used in this study were purchase intention and openness to experience. The researcher constructed a purchase intention measurement tool based on Espejel, Fandos, and Flavian's (2008) definition of purchase intention. The researcher adapted the measurement to the context and stimuli used in the study. The purchase intention was assessed with the question, "After reading this review/recommendation, how likely are you to purchase Kopincut coffee products in the future?". Measurement of openness to experience was carried out using the Big Five Inventory measuring tool developed by John et al. (1991) which has been adapted into Indonesian by Ramdhani (2012). Referral WOM manipulation was given in the form of a narrative stimulus using an Instagram Story illustration. Two types of manipulation, namely economic WOM referrals and public welfare WOM referrals, refers to research stimulus from Yuan and Peluso (2021).

The difference between the two stimuli is at the end of the sentence where in the economic WOM referral group, the story ends by offering benefits or economic benefits from a purchase. In the WOM referral public welfare group, the story ends by offering benefits or social benefits from a purchase. Researchers control the price and brand of the product using constancy in the story. The stimulus has been adjusted and tested on 34 participants at the pilot study stage.

The Manipulation of WOM Referral

This research begins with creating WOM referral stimuli which varies into two types, economic WOM referrals and public welfare WOM referrals. The stimulus is made in the form of a narrative using Instagram Story illustration. The narrative was made with reference to Yuan and Peluso's previous research stimulus (2021) and then adapting it to the context and situation in Indonesia. The researcher also did several other things such as equating the elements in the story, creating a fictitious brand and its logo also creating a research-specific Instagram account. The researcher also created a single item measure for the purchase intention construct, with reference to the definition from Espejel, Fandos, and Flavia´n (2008). After the WOM referral stimulus and purchase intention measuring instrument were ready, the researchers conducted a pilot study and looked for a psychometrically tested openness to experience measuring instrument. Next, the researcher created two Google Forms for Stage-1 (recruitment of participants) and Stage-2 (filling in the questionnaire) of the study. Researchers also make broadcasts and posters to disseminate the Stage-1 link to the target population:

"Today, I feel really dizzy because last night I had to stay up late finishing the office financial reports. Luckily, during the lunch break, I joined a friend's invitation to hang out at Kopincut. Because I feel sleepy and the weather was hot, I decided to buy iced coffee milk. And the taste is SO GOOD guys!! It's so unique... it doesn't make my stomach acid rise... The price is also affordable, only 20k!! After drinking my sleepiness immediately disappeared and my mood rise again. I highly recommend this for you to try!"

Economic WOM referral: Interestingly, during this month you can get a discount of 5k for every purchase of one cup iced coffee milk!

Public welfare WOM referral: Interestingly, during this month you also donate 5k to orphanages for every purchase of one cup iced coffee milk!

In addition, the researchers included a manipulation check item, which was assessed on a 6-point Likert scale to find out how participants interpreted the manipulation. Participant data that chooses a scale of 1-3 will not be used with the assumption that they do not feel the manipulation.

Purchase intention was measured using a single-item 6-point Likert scale, with reference to the definition of purchase intention by Espejel, Fandos, and Flavia´n (2008). Researchers adjust the measuring tool items to the context and stimulus used in the study. The item is "After reading these reviews/recommendations, how likely are you to buy Kopincut coffee products in the future?". As a complement to the data, the researcher also made an open-ended question related to the participants' reasons for choosing this score. The openness to experience measurement tool used in this study is a measuring tool adapted by Permatasari (2016), which is assessed using a 6-point Likert scale.

After stage 1 data was collected, the researcher conducted data filtering based on participant criteria, then randomized the participants into two random groups using the website https://id.rakko.tools/tools/59/. After being divided, each participant was contacted again by the researcher to carry out Stage-2. Participants who received a Type I questionnaire would be given manipulation of the economic WOM referral type, while participants who received a Type II questionnaire would be given manipulation of the public welfare WOM referral type. Participants are welcome to fill out the existing questionnaire according to written instructions. On the last page of the questionnaire, the researcher gave a brief debriefing, containing an explanation of the aims and objectives of the research.

From the collected data, the researcher conducted data cleaning based on manipulation check responses and outlier checks. Finally, the researchers processed the data using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical analysis technique to test the hypotheses in the study. In addition, the researcher also conducted a descriptive statistical analysis to see the demographic description of the participants and the general description of the variables. Meanwhile, the answers to open ended questions (related to consideration of buying intentions) are processed by calculating the frequency.

Results

In the first stage of the study (participant recruitment), the researcher managed to collect 258 demographic data of participants. Then, the researcher screened 17 participants who did not meet the participant criteria, so that the number of data was reduced to 241. Of the 241 participants, 97 of them did not respond or were not willing to continue to the second stage of the study (filling out the questionnaire), so that the number of data became 144. From the 144 data, the researcher conducted data cleaning based on the results of manipulation checks on participants who provided responses 1 to 3 on a 6-point Likert scale (with the assumption that most likely the participants did not feel the effects of manipulation) and also based on outlier checks. From this elimination, the final number of data was obtained as many as 135 participants, with 66 data in the economic WOM referral group and 69 data in the public welfare WOM referral group for further processing. In this case, the results of the general description of the research participants, including gender, age, domicile, education, monthly income, monthly expenses, duration of Instagram use per day and frequency.

Table 1
Participants' Demographic

Characteristics	Economic		Public Welfare		Total	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Gender						
Male	28	20.74	22	16.30	50	37.03
Female	38	28.15	47	34.81	85	62.97
Age						
20 – 21 y.o.	36	26.67	41	30.37	77	57.04
22 – 23 y.o.	18	13.33	14	10.37	32	23.70
24 – 25 y.o.	8	5.93	3	2.22	11	8.15
26 – 27 y.o.	3	2.22	5	3.70	8	5.93
28 – 38 y.o.	1	0.74	6	4.44	7	5.19
Domicile						
Bekasi	2	1.48	3	2.22	5	3.70
Bogor	24	17.78	25	18.52	49	36.30
Depok	17	12.59	9	6.67	26	19.26
Jakarta	10	7.41	17	12.59	27	20.00
Tangerang	4	2.96	4	2.96	8	5.93
Outside of Jabodetabek	9	6.67	11	8.15	20	14.81
Education						
High school	33	24.44	45	33.33	78	57.78
Diploma	6	4.44	4	2.96	10	7.41
Undergraduate	27	20.00	19	14.07	46	34.07
Postgraduate	0	0.00	1	0.74	1	0.74
Monthly Income						
Less than Rp4,500,000	46	34.07	49	36.30	95	70.37
Rp4,500,000 to Rp5,999,999	10	7.41	9	6.67	19	14.07
Rp6,000,000 to Rp7,499,999	4	2.96	4	2.96	8	5.93
Rp4,500,000 to Rp5,999,999	3	2.22	3	2.22	6	4.44
Rp4,500,000 to Rp5,999,999	1	0.74	3	2.22	4	2.96
Rp10,000,000 or more	2	1.48	1	0.74	3	2.22
Monthly Expenses						
Less than Rp500.000	10	7.41	8	5.93	18	13.33
Rp500.000 to Rp999.999	16	11.85	20	14.81	36	26.67
Rp1.000.000 to Rp1.999.999	16	11.85	17	12.59	33	24.44
Rp2.000.000 to Rp2.999.999	13	9.63	11	8.15	24	17.78

Characteristics	Economic		Public Welfare		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Rp3.00.000 to Rp3.999.999	8	5.93	5	3.70	13	9.63
Rp5.000.000 or more	1	0.74	2	1.48	3	2.22
Duration of Instagram Use per Day						
Less than 1 hour	14	10.37	13	9.63	27	20.00
1 hour ≤ X < 2 hour	36	26.67	37	27.41	73	54.07
2 hours ≤ X < 3 hours	13	9.63	13	9.63	26	19.26
3 hours or more	3	2.22	6	4.44	9	6.67
Frequency of Coffee Consumption per Week						
1 time	29	21.48	34	25.19	63	46.67
2 times	12	8.89	10	7.41	22	16.30
3 times	12	8.89	11	8.15	23	17.04
4 times or more	13	9.63	14	10.37	27	20.00

Based on Table 1, of the total 135 participants, the majority of participants were female (85 participants, 62.97%) compared to men. It was also found that overall, participants were in the age range of 20-38 years, with the majority of participants aged 20-21 years (77 participants, 57.04%). Furthermore, for domicile, most participant live in Bogor city, with a total of 49 participants (36.30%). The researcher also found that the majority of participants' last education was high school/equivalent, with a total of 78 participants (57.78%), followed by undergraduates (46 participants, 34.07%). It was found that most participants' monthly income was less than Rp4,500,000, with 95 participants (70.37%). For monthly expenses, it was found that the most data was spread fairly evenly in the range of Rp500,000 – Rp2.999,999. It was found that 73 participants out of the total used Instagram per day for a duration of 2-3 hours. Finally, the frequency of coffee drinking by participants was the most frequent, once a week, with a total of 63 participants (46.67%).

Table 2
Purchase Intention

	Mean	SD	N
Economic WOM Referral	4.71	0.941	66
Public Welfare WOM Referral	4.52	1.066	69
Total	4.61	1.007	135

The average purchase intention in both groups is $M = 4.61$ ($SD = 1.007$). More specifically, the average in the economic WOM referral group is $M = 4.71$ ($SD = 0.941$) and the average in the public welfare WOM referral group is $M = 4.52$ ($SD = 1.066$). In addition, the researcher also processed the answers to the open-ended questions regarding the factors that influence purchase intention.

Table 3
Openness to Experience

	Mean	SD	N
Economic WOM Referral	28.29	4.471	66
Public Welfare WOM Referral	26.32	3.946	69
Total	27.30	4.207	135

Then, the average for openness to experience in both groups was found to be $M = 27.30$ ($SD = 4.209$). More specifically, the mean openness to experience in the economic WOM referral group is $M = 28.29$ ($SD = 4.471$) and the mean openness to experience in the public welfare WOM referral group is $M = 26.32$ ($SD = 3.946$).

Table 4
Analysis of Covariate

	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
WOM Referral	1	0.209	0.648	0.002
Openness to Experience	1	7.779	0.006	0.058
Error	132			

Based on the results of the ANCOVA analysis, it is known that as a covariate, openness to experience significantly makes changes to purchase intentions, $F(1.132) = 7.779$, $p <.05$, $\eta P^2 = 0.058$. In addition, it is also known that there is no significant difference in giving the type of WOM-referral to the intention to buy a product after controlling for openness to experience, $F(1.132) = 0.209$, $p = 0.648$.

Discussion

This experimental research conducted on young adults in Indonesia showed that there was no effect of the type of WOM referral (economic and public welfare) on purchase intention by controlling for the openness to experience trait statistically. The results of this study contradict the results of Yuan and Peluso's research (2021), however, when viewed based on marketing modes (discounts and donations), the findings are in line with Zou, Tang, Qing, Li, and Razzaq (2021) that there is no difference significant effect on purchase intention between the two marketing modes. The reasons why the research hypothesis was rejected can be explained through the answers to open ended questions regarding considerations, reasons, or factors that influence participants' buying intentions. From the answers, several things can be explained, such as price, lifestyle, altruism, nature of profit, and brand trust.

Based on the answers to the open-ended question, it was found that both groups paid attention to the price factor as a consideration for buying intention. This factor was found to be the same in the three reasons at most, with a total of 11 times in the economic WOM referral group and 17 times in the WOM referral public welfare group. From the answers provided, the price may be perceived as too low by most participants. As said by Pandey and Srivastava (2016) that perceived price influences purchase intention, so in this case it is true that price has a negative correlation with purchase intention (Levrini & Santos, 2021). Too low a price makes buying intentions high, and therefore, offers of buying benefits (discounts and donations) in WOM referrals get less attention.

In addition, the participant's lifestyle can also be the reason why there is no difference in buying intentions in the two groups. Explained by Widiyanti and Harti (2021), currently young people like to spend their free time hanging out while drinking coffee. This lifestyle is also reflected in the large number of coffee shops which prove that there is a surge in the current coffee trend among young people. This consumption pattern of young people towards coffee makes buying intentions in both groups high and they tend to consider buying coffee in the future, regardless of the purchase benefits (discounts or donations) that are offered. In the answers to the open-ended question, lifestyle is reflected through factors of need (such as reducing sleepiness, raising mood) and coffee preference factors (a penchant for consuming coffee).

As in the economic WOM referral group, most of the participants in the WOM referral public welfare group also show high buying intentions. This is in line with the findings of Yablo and Field (2007) that collectivist societies tend to be more altruistically oriented, and in this case the participants who are Indonesian people really reflect the nature of altruism. Based on the answers to the open-ended question, donation was found to be the most frequently mentioned reason for buying coffee products, namely 21 times.

Furthermore, based on descriptive statistical analysis of purchase intention, it is known that the mean purchase intention of the public welfare WOM referral group is slightly lower than that of the economic WOM referral group. This can be explained based on the nature of the benefits obtained by the participants, which according to Xie and Keh (2016), the benefits of discounts are felt directly, while the benefits of donations offered are not felt indirectly. In other words, when and how the benefits are felt may also influence the purchase intention of participants.

Meanwhile, this is also related to brand trust, which based on answers from open ended questions, it was found that in the WOM referral public welfare group, some participants felt doubts about the veracity of the distribution of donations. This low brand trust occurs because participants previously had no experience consuming the Kopincut brand, as stated by Bilgin and Kethu¨da (2022) that brand trust comes from previous consumer experience with the brand. In other words, the promise of Kopincut as a brand that is considered new by the participants is less trustworthy.

Openness to experience was also found to significantly make changes in buying intentions. This is in line with Chaturvedi, Kulshreshtha, and Tripathi (2020) as well as Lu and Chen (2017) who found that the trait of openness to experience has a positive correlation with purchase intentions. Individuals with the openness to experience trait have a tendency to be open to new experiences and ideas around them, including in terms of new product buying behavior (Chaturvedi, Kulshreshtha, & Tripathi, 2020; Lu & Chen, 2017).

Another finding—related to the variable openness to experience—which can explain the high purchase intention of participants, can be seen based on a comparison of the mean openness to experience and the hypothetical mean, which is juxtaposed with the kurtosis value of openness to experience. In this case, the mean openness to experience (M = 27.30) was found to be greater than the hypothetical mean (M = 21), so it can be said that the average value of openness to experience is high. In addition, based on the descriptive kurtosis analysis, it was found that the distribution of openness to experience data was relatively homogeneous. This is in line with Robert, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) who explain that the trait of openness to experience increases in the teens until the early 20s, and then persists until the mid-50s, until it finally declines.

Participants in this study were a group of young adults, with an age range of 20-38 years, which indicated that apart from having uniformity in traits, participants' openness to experience was also in the high category, which made participants more likely to be willing to make purchases in the future. Meanwhile, based on the answers to the open-ended question, openness to experience is reflected through the factor of the need for exploration which appears twice in the economic WOM referral group and appears 13 times in the public welfare WOM referral group. Interest in buying this new product can be explained based on the findings of Putra and Fariz (2020) which state that the role of openness to experience for participants who have never consumed a product or brand in the past is stronger than the role of openness to experience for participants who have. consuming the product or brand.

Although it cannot explain the effect of WOM referral types on purchase intentions, the results of this study can still provide an overview of the reasons underlying consideration of purchase intentions, especially those related to WOM referrals, namely the form of reviews. In this study, WOM referrals were made in the form of stories, with the aim of increasing purchase intentions through the credibility and imagination of the participants. Based on the answers to the open-ended question, it was found that the form of the review (including language) was considered by the participants as a consideration for buying the product. Participants who see reviews as genuine have high buying intentions compared to participants who see reviews as advertising and seem hard selling.

Apart from the research results, the authors also realize that there are other limitations related to the characteristics of the participants in the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted by 34 participants with uniform characteristics, namely students from the Faculty of Psychology UI regular class class of 2021. This was a limitation in the study because the characteristics of the pilot study participants differed greatly from the characteristics of the sample or population (both in terms of age, domicile, education last, etc.). As a result, the results of the pilot study may be different if given to participants with characteristics that are close to the sample or population.

This research also has other advantages in several ways. First, the number of participants in this study ($N = 135$) exceeded the minimum number of participants based on G*Power calculations. In addition, this study also included workers ($N = 44$) as participants to expand the sample characteristics, as suggested by previous studies. Finally, topics regarding the influence of WOM referrals and purchase intentions are still relatively few. Therefore, the results of this study can also be used as a development of knowledge about purchase intentions that are influenced by WOM referrals.

Conclussion

Based on the results of an analysis of 135 participants in the young adult age group (age 20-38 years), it was found that there was no effect of the type of WOM referral on purchase intention by controlling for the openness to experience trait statistically.

Suggestion

For future studies (which use a population of young adults), researchers should seek equality in numbers for each age, so that the results can be generalized better. Alternatively, researchers can also control for the age variable by using a constant technique, such as only taking participants who are at the undergraduate level (18-22 years old) for more precise results. Regarding the purchase intention measurement tool, researchers recommend that further research include specific times in the items, that buying intentions occur within a "certain period of time" such as: tomorrow, the next three days, or the next month and measuring intentions should be carried out as closely as possible to behavior.

Researchers feel that it would be better if manipulation check questions were made not based on perception (such as "In my opinion ..."), but directly tested participants' understanding and attention, such as "There are economic or social benefits from purchasing products that are shared in review" (with dichotomous responses "Yes" or "No") to further strengthen data cleaning, which may affect the accuracy of the research results. Fourth, the researcher also suggests further research to use other products in their research stimulus and explore the role of moderator variables, such as brand awareness, brand trust, or other characteristics possessed by consumers.

For practical advice, the results of this study can be used as a reference for businesses to consider WOM referrals as a marketing strategy, by using consumer assistance to provide reviews regarding their consumption experience on social media. However, it is important for businesses to ensure that they and consumers are honest (not manipulating reviews) to maintain credibility and brand trust. In addition, business actors can also use discounts or donations as a marketing mode. It should also be remembered that the distribution of donations must be carried out transparently so that brand trust is maintained.

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