

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable



Kirana Damayanti¹, Indrawati²

^{1,2}School of Economics and Business, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: The use of the internet has become a necessity in modern life, especially since the digital era. Additionally, e-commerce is still growing because more people are using the internet. In Indonesia, Tokopedia is one of the most popular e-commerce websites that people use and offers various kinds of products and services. Tokopedia is still confronted with several challenges that lead to customer dissatisfaction, which is communicated through e-WOM, despite efforts being made to deliver high-quality service that produces the best possible shopping experience. Therefore, to minimize this, Tokopedia needs to improve its e-service quality to remain competitive and maintain its reputation in the e-commerce sector. This research aims to investigate the influence of e-service quality on e-WOM through e-satisfaction among Tokopedia website users in Indonesia. This research uses quantitative methods with a descriptive research type and surveys using a questionnaire via Google Form to 275 respondents who are users of the Tokopedia website who make at least three transactions and provide reviews about the Tokopedia website. In addition, the sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, which is a purposive type. Then, the data analysis techniques were performed using Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. The results show that e-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-satisfaction and e-WOM. Additionally, e-satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. Then, e-satisfaction can mediate the relationship between e-service quality and e-WOM. Based on research results, Tokopedia needs to re-optimize the e-service quality provided, so that it can create a satisfying customer experience, encourage positive e-WOM, and increase reputation and business growth.

KEYWORDS: E-Service Quality, E-Satisfaction, E-Word of Mouth, E-Commerce Website

I. INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world, especially in the digital era, using the internet has become an essential component of people's lives. The internet plays an important role because it helps with almost all activities. From simple things to complex things, everything can be easily solved with the help of the internet, so the level of use is always increasing, especially in Indonesia (Sendari, 2023). According to the We Are Social survey on DataIndonesia.id (2023), the number of internet users in Indonesia has always increased over the last five years. In January 2023, there will be 213 million Indonesians using the internet. Then, the growing popularity of e-commerce is one of the effects of increasing internet usage.

E-commerce is a sector that is growing rapidly along with the development of the internet. This development occurs not only in Indonesia but also throughout the world. In Indonesia, e-commerce growth is very rapid, along with an increase in the number of internet users. According to a report from the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of e-commerce users in Indonesia always increases every year. It hit 179 million in 2022 and is expected to rise to 196 million in 2023 (Yusril, 2024). This increase is due to the many benefits consumers feel from shopping online. Some of these benefits include ease of shopping, saving time and energy, the availability of free shipping services, various vouchers and discounts, and cheaper prices compared to offline stores (Nisaputra, 2023).

Along with the growth of e-commerce, there is also increasingly fierce competition between e-commerce companies. One of the main players in the e-commerce industry in Indonesia is Tokopedia. As a leading e-commerce platform in Indonesia that offers a variety of products and services through its website, covering various categories, including electronics, fashion, daily necessities, and financial services (Tokopedia.com, 2024). All of these products and services are presented to provide a more enjoyable, practical, and interesting shopping experience for users. However, despite these efforts, the reality is that not all services always run smoothly. Various obstacles, both technical and non-technical, often arise in the shopping experience at Tokopedia. This may create

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

dissatisfaction among users. One way that users use to express their dissatisfaction is using electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which is statements, both negative and positive, made by consumers about a product or company that can be accessed by various groups via the internet (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). The reviews given by consumers regarding the Tokopedia website are as follows:

Table 1. Tokopedia Website User Reviews

Reviewer	Review Date	Review
Erg** Kand**	March 2, 2023	Hi @tokopedia, I tried to log in via a web browser, why can't I log in? Are there any problems with the system?
Ri**	March 13, 2023	Tokopedia, access to the website and application is now very slow. Please fix it, it's very uncomfortable when browsing products
Fauz** Faj**	December 9, 2023	@TokopediaCare checked the direct message, my order didn't arrive and it's been 4 days. But there is no update from the Tokopedia team.
Jelaj** Jalan**	November 22, 2023	@TokopediaCare Tokopedia's service is getting worse day by day. This is my order from November 9th until today it hasn't arrived. It's already in the resolution center. But there was no answer, it even seemed that Tokopedia didn't want to answer. How about this? Does it need to go viral?
Ditaaaaalagi**	Februari 26, 2023	I swear I will never shop at @tokopedia again. I've been tricked by the seller, asked customer service @TokopediaCare for help, but there was no result and the response was slow. I lost hundreds of thousands here. I've given up on shopping here again.

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the thoughts expressed by Tokopedia service users on social media X reflect significant dissatisfaction with the services provided by Tokopedia. The e-WOM provided by users illustrates the perception that the services provided by Tokopedia are considered not to have met consumer expectations in various aspects. Those negative e-WOM given by users above is related to problems such as late delivery, unhelpful or delayed customer service responses, and malfunctioning systems. This situation shows that there is still a gap between the service that consumers expect and the service that Tokopedia currently provides. Therefore, Tokopedia needs to immediately minimize this, because e-WOM has a wide reach and can influence the perceptions of many people in a short time (Rahayu, 2017) and also because e-service quality and e-satisfaction are critical components of the business's success (Ginting et al., 2022). To solve this problem, Tokopedia needs to meet and even exceed consumer expectations by taking appropriate steps to improve the overall quality of services provided. By improving the e-service quality, Tokopedia can increase customer satisfaction, which will lead to positive reviews and strengthen its reputation in the Indonesian e-commerce market.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

E-Service Quality

A thorough evaluation of the excellence and caliber of electronic services provided in virtual marketplaces is known as e-service quality in e-commerce (Santos, 2003). Moreover, Zeithaml et al. (2018) defined e-service quality as the degree to which a business website can efficiently and effectively support online ordering, delivery, and shopping. In the meantime, Lesmana & Balqiah (2023) state that e-service quality is customers' evaluation of the caliber of services rendered through electronic or online platforms, including websites, applications, or online customer care. In addition, Tjiptono and Chandra (2020) noted that the notable distinctions between online and traditional buying experiences form the foundation for the emergence of e-service quality.

E-Satisfaction

E-satisfaction is defined as a customer's expectation of a product or service, and it is measured by comparing the customer's level of satisfaction throughout the purchasing process to their expectations following the transaction (Ahmad et al., 2017). Similarly, Ulum & Muchtar (2018) explain that when user happiness with a prior online purchasing experience is typically correlated with e-satisfaction. Furthermore, according to Kaya et al. (2019), e-satisfaction refers to the level of happiness customers experience when their pre- and post-purchase experiences surpass their expectations.

E-Word of Mouth

The advent of the internet brought about an evolution in word-of-mouth communication, leading to the creation of electronic word-of-mouth, or known as e-WOM (Rahayu, 2017). Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) define e-WOM as any comment whether favorable or unfavorable made by current, prospective, or past customers on a company or product while the information is made available to the public or institutions via online media. E-WOM also refers to the online exchange of consumers' feedback,

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

suggestions, and experiences on a product or service. Furthermore, Putri & Lestari (2024) also state that e-WOM is the term for public communications provided to customers via the internet.

Framework and Hypothesis Development

According to Kartika and Shihab (2019), an aspect that may boost the emergence of e-WOM is the quality of the e-service. Yaqin (2020) discovered through previous studies that e-service quality positively and significantly affects e-WOM among Indonesian OLX users. This suggests that when customers experience a company's excellent quality of service, they are more likely to inform others about it. Similar findings were also revealed by Santika et al. (2020) in their research which focused on online shop users in Denpasar, Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia, and Puspita et al. (2022) on Shopee Food users in Malang city. These results led to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H1: E-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM

According to Kaya et al. (2017), e-service quality has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM among online shop users in Turkey. This study's findings indicate that customers will be satisfied with the services they receive from a business when they perceive great e-service quality. Moreover, Kotler & Keller (2016) also stated that it can be inferred that a customer is satisfied if their opinion of the service aligns with their expectations. However, in situations where the customer feels that the level of service provided above their expectations, they will be more than satisfied. But, if the customer feels that the service did not live up to their expectations, they can become unsatisfied. Other findings with similar results were made by Yaqin (2020) on OLX users in Indonesia and Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: E-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-satisfaction

E-WOM comes from consumer perceptions of satisfaction based on past experiences (Kartika and Shihab, 2019). Yaqin (2020) shows that among Indonesian OLX consumers, e-satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. These results show that the higher the level of satisfaction felt by consumers, the greater the possibility of positive e-WOM from consumers. Research conducted by Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia and Dhamore et al. (2019) on online shop users in the city of Pune, India also produced similar findings. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: E-satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM

Research conducted by Risnia & Solekah (2023) shows that e-satisfaction can mediate the influence of e-service quality on e-WOM among Linkaja syariah users in the city of Malang. According to this research, customers who receive high-quality eservices will have a positive and satisfying experience, which motivates consumers to refer the service to others on a variety of digital channels. These results led to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H4: E-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM through e-satisfaction

Based on the previous explanation regarding literature review and hypothesis development, the following is the framework of thought formed in this research.

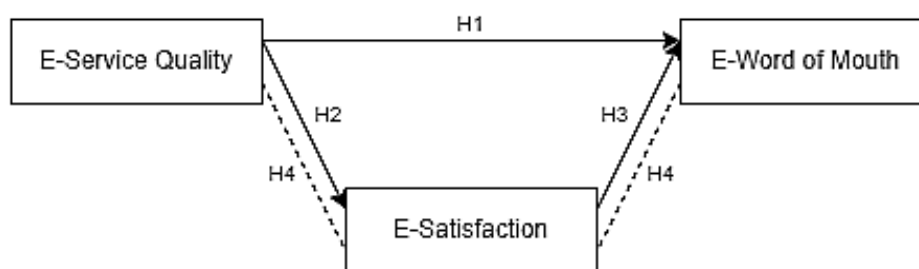


Figure 1. Research Framework

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The main focus of this research is to investigate the influence of e-service quality on e-WOM through e-satisfaction among Tokopedia website users in Indonesia. To achieve this goal, the method used is quantitative with an online survey research strategy using a questionnaire. Using a quantitative research approach through surveys allows researchers to draw reliable and statistically supported conclusions based on data processing, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the topic under research. In this research, the data collection technique used is a questionnaire in the form of an online survey via Google Form, which is distributed through social media, including Instagram, Facebook, Line, Telegram, X, and WhatsApp to Indonesian people who are users of the Tokopedia website that make at least three transactions and provide reviews about the Tokopedia website. A total of 275 respondents were obtained based on the distribution. A five-point Likert scale was then used to measure the data from the questionnaire. After the data was gathered, it was quantitatively examined using the Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

Square (SEM-PLS) technique with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. There are two stages to processing data in the analysis using SEM-PLS, which are the outer model and the inner model. Outer models were carried out to evaluate the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments. There are three measurements in the outer model, which are convergent validity (factor loading > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5), discriminant validity (Fornell Larcker and HTMT), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.7). Meanwhile, the inner model is used to understand the interactions between one latent variable and another. There are two measurements in the inner model, which are R Square (> 0.75 strong, > 0.50 moderate, and > 0.25 weak) and path coefficient (β value, p-value, and t-statistic; the t-statistic value applied to α 5% is 1.65 and the p-value < 0.05) (Hair et al., 2016; Indrawati et al., 2017; Indrawati et al., 2023).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is used to measure how well indicators perform in measuring variables. In order to meet convergent validity, both the factor loading and AVE values must be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2016; Indrawati et al., 2017). Table 2 indicates that in this study the factor loading values were higher than 0.7 and AVE values were higher than 0.5, indicating the validity of all the constructs. The following table provides specific scores for each variable.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Result

Variable	Item	Factor Loading (FL)	AVE	Critical Value	Evaluation
E-Service Quality	ESQ1	0.797	0.662	FL > 0.7 AVE > 0.5	Valid
	ESQ2	0.776			Valid
	ESQ3	0.795			Valid
	ESQ4	0.796			Valid
	ESQ5	0.784			Valid
	ESQ6	0.810			Valid
	ESQ7	0.790			Valid
	ESQ8	0.811			Valid
	ESQ9	0.834			Valid
	ESQ10	0.892			Valid
	ESQ11	0.831			Valid
	ESQ12	0.784			Valid
	ESQ13	0.828			Valid
	ESQ14	0.755			Valid
ESQ15	0.869	Valid			
E-Satisfaction	ES16	0.852	0.672		Valid
	ES1	0.804			Valid
	ES2	0.812			Valid
	ES3	0.851			Valid
	ES4	0.842			Valid
E-WOM	ES5	0.788	0.711		Valid
	EWOM1	0.822			Valid
	EWOM2	0.850			Valid
	EWOM3	0.863			Valid
	EWOM4	0.836			Valid

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is used to measure the extent that an item meant to measure one variable actually differs from other variables based on empirical standards. Additionally, Fornell Larcker and Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) can be used to assess discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016; Indrawati et al., 2017). Based on table 3, it can be seen that the Fornell Larcker has good results where the square root value of each construct is higher than the other constructs. The following table shows the scores for each variable in detail.

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

Table 3. Fornell Larcker Result

	E-Satisfaction	E-Service Quality	E-WOM
E-Satisfaction	0.820		
E-Service Quality	0.692	0.813	
E-WOM	0.700	0.716	0.843

Moreover, the HTMT value needs to be less than 0.85 in order to achieve discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016; Indrawati et al., 2023). Table 4 indicates that every correlation of variables has an HTMT value less than 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity is met by every variable. The following table provides specific scores for each variable.

Table 4. HTMT Result

	E-Satisfaction	E-Service Quality	E-WOM
E-Satisfaction			
E-Service Quality	0.746		
E-WOM	0.799	0.778	

Reliability

There are two methods used for evaluating reliability, which are Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values must equal or be greater than 0.70 in order to achieve the required reliability standards (Hair et al., 2016; Indrawati et al., 2017). Table 5 shows evident that the study's findings are regarded as reliable because Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are higher than 0.70. The following table provides specifics about the scores for each variable.

Table 5. Reliability Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Critical Value	Evaluation
E-Service Quality	0.966	0.969		Reliable
E-Satisfaction	0.878	0.911	> 0.70	Reliable
E-WOM	0.864	0.908		Reliable

R Square (R²)

Hair et al. (2016) state that R Square is to determine the degree of impact that the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The R Square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively show that it is strong, moderate, and weak. Table 6 shows that e-satisfaction has an R Square value of 0.476, meaning that e-service quality influences e-satisfaction by 47.6%. These outcomes are classified as weak. Additionally, the e-WOM R Square value of 0.590 indicates that e-service quality and e-satisfaction have a 59% influence on e-WOM. These outcomes are classified as moderate. The following table provides specific scores for each variable.

Table 6. R Square Result

Variable	R ²	Evaluation
E-Satisfaction	0.476	Weak
E-WOM	0.590	Moderate

Hypothesis Testing

The significance and strength of the relationship between the constructs are then determined by measuring the path coefficient, which additionally allows to test the hypothesis (Hair et al., 2016). At a significance level of 5%, the hypothesis is considered supported or accepted if the p-value < 0.05 and the significance value of t-statistic > t-table (the t-table is 1.64), respectively, indicates an acceptable hypothesis test. On the other hand, if the p-value > 0.05 and the t-statistic value < 1.64, the hypothesis is not accepted or denied.

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Result

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Value
E-Service Quality -> E-WOM	0.445	0.439	0.083	5.391	0.000
E-Service Quality -> E-Satisfaction	0.692	0.693	0.042	16.276	0.000
E-Satisfaction -> E-WOM	0.392	0.398	0.092	4.264	0.000
E-Service Quality -> E-Satisfaction -> E-WOM	0.271	0.278	0.075	3.603	0.000

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in Table 7, it shows that all the hypotheses were accepted. The first relationship between e-service quality and e-WOM produces a t-value of 5.391, where this value is greater than 1.65. Furthermore, the resulting p-value is 0.000, where this value is smaller than 0.05. This can be interpreted as indicating that e-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. Thus, H1: E-Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM can be accepted.

The second relationship between e-service quality and e-satisfaction produces a t-value of 16.276, where this value is greater than 1.65. Furthermore, the resulting p-value is 0.000, where this value is smaller than 0.05. This can be interpreted as indicating that e-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-satisfaction. Thus, H2: E-Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on e-satisfaction can be accepted.

The third relationship between e-satisfaction and e-WOM produces a t-value of 4.264, where this value is greater than 1.65. Furthermore, the resulting p-value is 0.000, where this value is smaller than 0.05. This can be interpreted as indicating that e-satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. Thus, H3: E-Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM can be accepted.

The fourth relationship between e-service quality and e-WOM which is mediated by e-satisfaction, produces a t-value of 3.603, where this value is greater than 1.65. Furthermore, the resulting p-value is 0.000, where this value is smaller than 0.05. This can be interpreted as indicating that e-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM through e-satisfaction. Thus, H4: E-Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM through E-Satisfaction can be accepted.

DISCUSSION

The four hypotheses in this research are supported by the data gained from testing the hypotheses. The first results show that e-service quality has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM, supporting previous research conducted by Yaqin (2020) on OLX users in Indonesia, Santika et al. (2020) on online shop users in Denpasar, Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia, Puspita et al. (2022) on Shopee Food users in Malang city, and Kartika and Shihab (2019) on Lazada users in Indonesia. Therefore, it can be concluded that when consumers experience high service quality on the Tokopedia website, consumers tend to recommend the Tokopedia website to others. The second result shows that e-service quality has a positive and significant influence on e-satisfaction, supporting research conducted by Yaqin (2020) on OLX users in Indonesia, Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia, and Kaya et al. (2017) on online shop users in Turkey. Consequently, since the Tokopedia website meets or exceeds customer expectations, consumer satisfaction will rise as long as the high quality of service it provides. The third result shows that e-satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM, supporting previous research conducted by Kartika and Shihab (2019) on Lazada users in Indonesia, Aditya et al. (2023) on Traveloka users in Indonesia, Yaqin (2020) on OLX users in Indonesia, and Dhamore et al. (2019) on online shop users in the city of Pune, India. Thus, positive e-WOM will arise if consumers are satisfied with the Tokopedia website. The fourth result shows that e-satisfaction can mediate the influence of e-service quality on e-WOM, supporting previous research conducted by Risnia & Solekah (2023) among Linkaja syariah users in the city of Malang. Therefore, it can be concluded that if consumers are satisfied with the performance of the Tokopedia website, they are more likely to recommend the Tokopedia website to others. It is clear from these findings that the roles of e-satisfaction, e-WOM, and e-service quality have connections and create relationship patterns in e-commerce.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that e-service quality has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM and e-satisfaction. Furthermore, e-satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. In addition, e-satisfaction can mediate the relationship between e-service quality and e-WOM. As a result, the Tokopedia website must optimize both the user interface and experience through a simple layout and quick loading times. Service reliability must be maintained by ensuring all features function without interruption, as well as providing quick responses to customer questions and complaints through an easily accessible help service. Additionally, personalization of services based on customer data is also important to provide relevant recommendations. Encryption technology and appropriate security procedures are required to ensure data confidentiality and

The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

privacy. Moreover, the information provided must always be correct, current, and simple for customers to comprehend. Then, providing attractive promotions, such as discounts and vouchers, can also be done to increase consumer satisfaction and increase customer participation in providing positive reviews. Apart from that, Tokopedia can regularly ask for input from customers so that it can be used as a continuous improvement on the Tokopedia website.

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The Effect of E-Service Quality on E-Word of Mouth in E-Commerce Website Users with E-Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

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