

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF *E-WOM* AND FREE SHIPPING ON THE GROWTH OF *E-COMMERCE*

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ABSTRACT

The growth of e-commerce is significantly influenced by innovations in digital marketing strategies, particularly electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and free shipping promotions. This study aims to analyze the roles of these two factors in driving consumer purchase decisions and e-commerce business growth. The method employed is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), reviewing 49 relevant journal articles using the PRISMA approach. The results indicate that e-WOM serves as a dynamic communication medium providing experience-based information to help consumers evaluate product quality and authenticity. On the other hand, free shipping promotions act as a significant incentive to boost consumer purchase interest and volume. The combination of e-WOM and free shipping promotions has proven effective in creating more personalized and adaptive marketing approaches. Hence, these strategies can be optimally utilized to promote sustainable e-commerce growth.

Keywords: *e-commerce, electronic word of mouth, free shipping, digital marketing, business growth.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid advancement of technology and the adoption of the internet, the field of marketing has undergone a very noticeable change from the last few years. Especially in the industry *e-commerce*, These changes have an effect on the way consumers interact with brands and in purchasing decisions. Digital marketing now focuses on online platforms and social media which have become a forum to reach consumers from various generations, especially the younger generation, namely generation Z. The popularity of the use of social media in this era makes business actors more interested in promoting their businesses through digital media than promoting in conventional ways such as installing banners, distributing brochures and the like (AGUSTINA 2023; Mardhiyah 2022; Rolando and Ingriana 2024). This change and growth certainly creates new innovations and strategies, for example the existence of content on social media, discount strategies, *E-word of mouth* in assessing the product, or also the existence of free shipping in the shopping process. The strategy was created because of the many factors consumers in determining purchasing decisions (Dwitama, Syofian, and Safrianti 2024; Tan 2022).

Of the many strategies in digital marketing, which are relied on or widely predicted on online platforms that can influence purchase decisions at this time are the two main factors, namely *e-word of mouth* (E-WOM) and free shipping. This can be proven from the existence of a survey, which is the result of research from many strategies carried out in *e-commerce* in research producing statistics that 91% of consumers read online reviews on businesses and 93% of consumers admit that online reviews influence their decision to buy products. Then databox research found that the main reason for all strategies to make purchase decisions was because of free shipping (datadoks.co.id, 2021).

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Figure 1. Statistics from e-wom survey results and free shipping affect consumers in online shopping on e-commerce

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a form of marketing communication that contains positive or negative marketing provided by potential consumers of the product or Company through digital media (Wigayha, Rolando, and Wijaya 2025c) relates to the consumer experience of the product or service used or consumed. If the consumer is satisfied with the product or service, the consumer will voluntarily make a positive statement or review about the product or service. While not satisfied, it will be the opposite, namely giving negative reviews. Through *Electronic word of mouth* Consumers can get information about the quality of the product or service, while for fire or companies can use it for evaluation and innovation. The message contained in the *Electronic word of mouth* This can minimize the risks and uncertainties faced by consumers when purchasing products and services.

Free shipping is a program of several *E-commerce* which provides free fees in delivery services so that consumers feel interested. However, free shipping usually has certain terms or conditions for consumers, for example there is a minimum shopping or special region so that new consumers will get this free shipping (Rohayati, Rahayu, and Hidayat 2024; Rolando, Widjaja, and Chandra 2025; Winata 2022). This research will use the *Systematic Literature Review* with the analysis of various journals, articles and publications on the role of *Electronic word of mouth* and free shipping in influencing the growth of purchases on *E-commerce*. Through previous studies, this research was carried out to find out how *E-WOM* And free shipping can have a role in the growth of e-commerce and what are the factors. So that in the future this research can be the concentration of a company and e-commerce to increase its growth. Based on the above background, the objectives of this study are:

1. How are discussions related to *E-WOM* and Free Shipping classified?
2. How are research trends related to *E-WOM* and Free Shipping related to the growth of *e-commerce*?
3. What are the more widely published types of research related to *E-WOM* and Free Shipping?
4. What are the more published sources of publications related to *E-WOM* and Free Shipping?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a research method that is conducted systematically to collect, critically evaluate, integrate, and present findings from various research studies related to research questions or topics of interest. This process is called "systematic" because it adopts a consistent and widely accepted methodology. SLR has great benefits for researchers because it provides a clear motivation for new research, as well as for practitioners, by providing comprehensive evidence that can aid in decision-making in their work. The method used in this study is SLR, which aims to map previous research on the use of audiobooks in learning. The purpose of this method is to understand the development and evolution of the use of audiobooks in the context of education.

Literature review is a type of research applied through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR method is used to analyze, evaluate, identify, and interpret all research that has been conducted. In general, with this method, the researcher will conduct a study of articles that are relevant to the topic of the research being conducted. The article review process is carried out systematically and in a structured manner, following predetermined steps. After that, the researcher will conduct an in-depth analysis of the previously reviewed articles. The steps in the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) consist of several stages, namely: (1) the researcher formulates the research question to be answered; (2) the researcher collects articles relevant to the topic and purpose of the research; (3) the researcher conducts a selection of the articles found, including classifying and evaluating the appropriate articles; (4) the researcher processes the data contained in the article and presents the results of the data processing; (5) the researcher interprets the existing findings, and finally formulates conclusions from the research conducted.

The data in this study was obtained using the Publish or Perish software by utilizing the Google Scholar database. The selection of Google Scholar is based on its quality and reliability as a source of information that has been specifically indexed, making it more reliable than other search engines. The collected data is then processed using the PRISMA method. In collecting data, researchers searched for journal articles containing the keywords "*electronic word of mouth*" and "free shipping" in the Google Scholar database through the Publish or Perish application. The variables analyzed included the research methods used in the article, the number of articles per year, the article with the highest number of citations, the research subject, and the development model used. To map such trends, the data index is analyzed quantitatively, and the mapping analysis procedure is structured according to the PRISMA guidelines, as shown in Figure 2.

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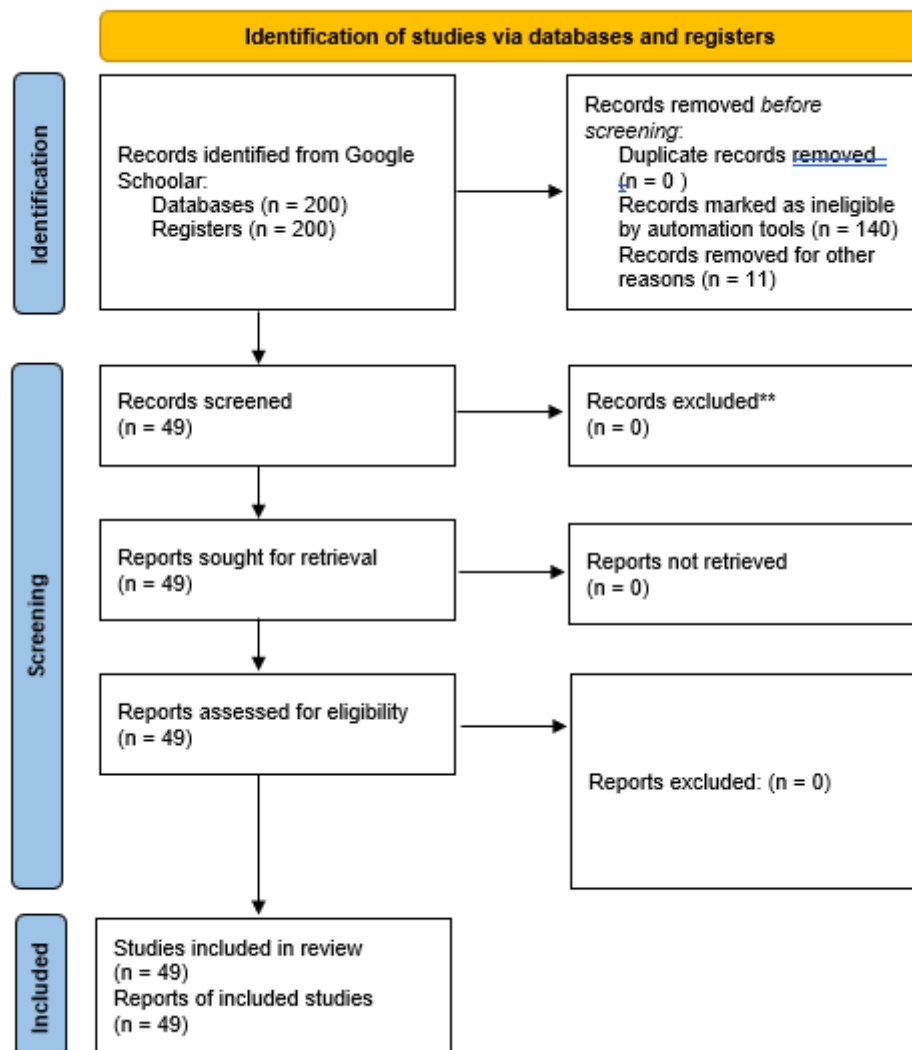


Figure 2. The PRISMA flow of this study

In the implementation of literature research, the first step is to search for references through databases and registries, especially using Google Scholar. In the early stages, as many as 200 records or journals from these sources were found. As the research progressed, 11 records were removed and another 140 records were eliminated because they were deemed irrelevant to the research topic. This process is carried out before the screening stage.

After the initial elimination, there were 49 records left which were then further screened. This screening process involves evaluating inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the retained records are truly relevant to the research focus. Records that meet the criteria are proceeded to the further assessment stage, while those that do not meet the criteria are excluded from the analysis. Although the exact number of records analyzed in the final stage is not described, the research process continues with reading and analyzing the remaining records.

The purpose of this stage is to obtain relevant findings or information in the context of the research. To support the transparency and readability of the methodological flow, the process of identifying and filtering this literature is visually illustrated using prism diagrams. This diagram helps to provide a clear picture of the stages carried out during the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

From the publication sources that have been collected in this study, there are 49 journal articles that will be the focus of the analysis. Distribution provides an interesting overview of the variation in the source of the literature. Here is the distribution table:

Table 1. Sources of Journal Publications Obtained

Source	Sum
<i>Journal of Management</i>	12
<i>Journal of Communication Sciences</i>	7
<i>Accounting Journal</i>	3
<i>Journal of Administration</i>	2
<i>Others</i>	25
Total	49

Based on the table above, there are 12 articles from management journals, 7 articles from communication science journals, 3 articles from accounting journals, 2 articles from administrative journals, and 25 articles from other journals. This shows that from various sources it consists of various kinds of publishers to literature. In the category of research types, there are Most of the results are quantitative journals, then the rest are qualitative and *systematic literature reviews*. The number of each is 41 articles from quantitative journals, 5 articles from qualitative journals and the rest are *systematic literature reviews*. Thus, the distribution of research types can provide an idea that there are variations in approaches taken by researchers in researching a particular topic that can form a diverse basis for further research.

Table 2. Year of publication of the journal obtained

Year	Sum
2024	27
2023	15
2022	4
2021	1
2020	0
2019	2
Total	49

If you look at the years of previous researchers, there are 2 previous researchers in 2019, 0 previous researchers in 2020, 1 previous researcher in 2021, 4 previous researchers in 2022, 15 previous researchers in 2023, 27 researchers in 2024. Overall, this distribution means that there is a variation that is not synonymous in the sense that although research continues to increase every year, it does not have the same pattern or amount. Researchers have the most journals in 2023 and 2024 because the research is more relevant and up-to-date in discussing topics related to this research. Although in the early years there was low data on previous researchers, it should be noted that each article has represented and made a significant contribution to the research literature.

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3.2 Discussion

The growth of *e-commerce* is the goal of each company or organization in the digital world today. Where *e-wom* and free shipping to the growth of *e-commerce* are strategies carried out so that purchase decisions from several brands in *e-commerce* increase and experience significant growth. Based on reviews from various journals and related publications, several experts have contributed views and theories of the variables that the researcher used in this study.

First, the free shipping promo is a form of sales promotion that utilizes various incentives to encourage consumers to buy products immediately while increasing the number of products purchased. Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that the tagline "free shipping" carried by the Marketplace serves as a stimulus to increase the number of product purchases in a certain period, by providing significant benefits to its users (Mulyono 2024; NUGROHO 2024; Putri 2022). According to Ismagilova et al., electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a dynamic and continuous process of information exchange between potential customers, existing customers, and previous customers related to a product, service, brand, or company. This process is widely available to the public or institutions through internet media (Mulyono, Hartanti, and Rolando 2025; Nabila 2023; Setiawan 2022; Wigayha, Rolando, and Wijaya 2025b).

Furthermore, according to Ardianti, what is known as word-of-mouth communication in the context of online sales is a method for potential buyers to obtain information about a product based on previous customer experiences that have benefited (Rahardja et al. 2025; Rolando and Mulyono 2025a; SARAGI 2024; Widjaja 2025; Wijaya 2022). According to (Maha et al. 2025; Wigayha, Rolando, and Wijaya 2025a) (Arma 2022) Simangunsong et al. (2022), free shipping promos are a strategy that frees customers from shipping costs, thereby helping them save on expenses related to shipping goods. This offer is a form of promotion in the e-commerce business that provides free shipping facilities and has the potential to affect consumer interest in buying a product.

Then according to Ardiansyah and Marlana, they revealed that electronic word of mouth has the potential to utilize the power of relevant reviews and references from various individuals in the context of marketing products and services through social media. Through these word-of-mouth promotions, consumers can access reviews written by genuine customers, which helps them in evaluating the authenticity of a product or service. In free shipping, according to Shoffi'ul, free shipping has a significant impact on purchasing behavior. Allowing purchases with free shipping gives customers more choice in their purchase choices (MARIAH 2024; Rolando et al. 2022; Rolando, Chandra, and Widjaja 2025; Rolando and Mulyono 2025b).

Efforts to launch *e-wom* or free shipping strategies from various literature suggest that success in improving purchasing decisions requires a more holistic and adaptive approach. The need to be accompanied by personalization of messages, active interaction on social media, and continue to develop and review reviews, free shipping provisions so that they are in line with the characteristics of certain industries or sectors are key factors that continue to emerge. In addition, accurate measurement of results and impacts is an important cornerstone for directing and improving policy strategies implemented by organizations. By summarizing the views of these experts, organizations can gain a comprehensive and relevant view in designing effective marketing policies to maximize *e-commerce growth*.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and analysis, it can be concluded that *electronic word of mouth* (e-WOM) and free shipping promos have a significant role in driving the growth of *e-commerce*. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a dynamic and continuous form of communication that leverages reviews, recommendations, and previous customer experiences. This process not only assists potential buyers in evaluating the quality and authenticity of a product or service but also provides an opportunity for companies to improve their marketing strategies. Meanwhile, free shipping promos have proven to be one of the most effective incentives in attracting consumer

interest. This strategy not only reduces the burden of shipping costs for customers but also contributes to increasing purchase volumes. In addition, the terms and conditions that accompany this promo, such as the minimum purchase limit or a specific region, allow the company to optimize its use according to the target market.

The combination of *e-WOM* and free shipping offers can create a holistic approach in digital marketing strategies. This research shows that adaptive approaches, including message personalization, active interaction on social media, and continuous evaluation of promo effectiveness, are key to success in maximizing consumer purchase decisions. By making the most of this strategy, e-commerce companies can strengthen their position in the market and drive sustainable growth

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