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# Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth, Price Perception, and Product Quality on Purchase Decisions at Richeese Factory in Surabaya

Rezhota Gemirangga<sup>1</sup>, Sugeng Purwanto<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Management, Faculty of Economic and Business, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia. Email: [21012010340@student.upnjatim.ac.id](mailto:21012010340@student.upnjatim.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [sugengpurwanto.mnj@upnjatim.ac.id](mailto:sugengpurwanto.mnj@upnjatim.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

These findings suggest that practitioners in the fast-food industry should prioritize price-value perceptions and digital reputation management to strengthen their market position for customers of Richeese Factory in Surabaya. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, while data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the aid of SmartPLS software. The results indicate that all three variables—E-WOM, price perception, and product quality—have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Among them, price perception has the most dominant influence, followed by product quality and E-WOM. These findings suggest that consumers tend to prioritize the perceived value for the price they pay, while also considering product quality and online opinions when making purchasing decisions.

**Keywords:** E-WOM, Price Perception, Product Quality, Purchase Decision.

## I. Introduction

Surabaya was strategically selected as the primary research location due to its status as a quintessential metropolitan hub with highly diverse demographics, allowing the study to capture a comprehensive snapshot of urban consumer behavior through a sample of 102 respondents that reflects both national economic progress and the evolving social fabric of Indonesia's second-largest city. This demographic variety provides a robust representative context for understanding how rapid urbanization and increased digital connectivity have fundamentally reshaped the way individuals interact with the market, specifically within the fast-food sector where the shift toward modern consumption patterns is most visible. As the city experiences significant economic expansion, modern consumers in Surabaya are increasingly departing from traditional shopping habits to prioritize convenience, service speed, and consistent product quality as the non-negotiable pillars of their purchasing decisions. These shifting preferences are a direct result of a fast-paced urban lifestyle where time has become a premium commodity, forcing individuals to seek out dining options that offer efficiency without sacrificing the sensory satisfaction or brand reliability they have come to expect. Consequently, these profound lifestyle changes have served as a critical catalyst for fast-food companies to move away from static business models and instead develop highly adaptive, relevant marketing strategies that can pivot in response to dynamic market conditions. By focusing on Surabaya, this

research highlights how local competitive landscapes are being redefined by a more demanding and savvy consumer base that values accessibility and rapid fulfillment. Ultimately, the study underscores that for a brand to remain sustainable and competitive in such a high-pressure environment, it must align its operational strengths with the specific behavioral nuances of the urban population, ensuring that every touchpoint of the consumer journey from initial interest to final consumption reflects the modern priorities of speed, quality, and seamless service in an ever-evolving economic climate. One of the key players in this industry is Richeese Factory, a local fast-food restaurant renowned for its spicy fried chicken combined with signature cheese sauce. Despite its distinctive product offerings, Richeese Factory faces challenges in maintaining customer loyalty amid strong competition from global brands such as KFC and McDonald's. According to the Top Brand Index 2021–2024, Richeese Factory's brand ranking has fluctuated, reflecting variations in consumer perception and purchasing behavior.

According to Prayoga and Yasa (2023), Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) represents a dynamic form of informal communication among consumers regarding their specific experiences or personal opinions about a product, serving as a powerful digital dialogue that is often perceived as significantly more trustworthy than the polished, biased nature of producer-generated advertising. This shift in credibility occurs because modern consumers are increasingly skeptical of traditional marketing, preferring the unvarnished and raw insights shared by peers who have no financial stake in the brand's success. This theoretical framework is further bolstered by the findings of Andini et al. (2024), whose research demonstrates that E-WOM exerts a profound and significant influence on final purchasing decisions because it is viewed as a highly credible and objective source of information that mitigates the perceived risk of a transaction. When consumers encounter E-WOM on social media, review platforms, or community forums, they are engaging with a form of "social proof" that provides a realistic expectation of a product's performance, quality, and utility, effectively bridging the gap between curiosity and the final click to buy. Unlike traditional advertisements that highlight only the best features of a product, E-WOM provides a multidimensional perspective that includes both strengths and potential flaws, making the information feel more authentic and reliable in the eyes of a discerning audience. Ultimately, the integration of these perspectives reveals that E-WOM has become the primary lens through which modern consumers evaluate brands, shifting the center of influence away from corporate marketing departments and into the hands of the global consumer community, where collective perception and shared digital experiences dictate the ultimate success or failure of products in a competitive and hyper-connected marketplace. Beyond E-WOM, price perception also plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making. As stated by Kanuk in Sinulingga (2021), price perception refers to how consumers view a price level—whether it is high, low, or reasonable—which can significantly influence purchasing intentions. Agita et al. (2022) found that price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Another essential factor for business sustainability is product quality, which refers to a product's ability to deliver results that meet or exceed customer expectations (Yusup & Nurmahdi, 2020). In the fast-food industry, quality encompasses aspects such as taste, texture, portion size, aroma, color, and presentation.

Surabaya was selected as the research location due to its diverse demographic characteristics and high penetration of fast-food outlets. With nine Richeese Factory branches, the city provides a representative environment to examine the impact of E-WOM, price perception, and product quality on purchasing decisions. The findings from this urban context are expected to reflect consumer behavior patterns in other major Indonesian cities. This study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that consumer trust in digital information (E-WOM) and perceived product attributes directly shape purchasing intentions and actions. In this context, purchasing decisions are influenced by consumer trust in digital information (E-WOM), fair price perception, and perceived product quality. The study aims to empirically and systematically examine how E-WOM, price perception, and product quality simultaneously and partially affect purchasing decisions at Richeese Factory in Surabaya. This study is theoretically grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), a framework that posits that human behavior such as the act of buying is a result of deliberate intentions shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the

contemporary digital marketplace, this theoretical foundation suggests that consumer trust in electronic information, specifically Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), combined with perceived product attributes, serves as the primary psychological driver that shapes purchasing intentions and subsequent actions. In the specific context of Richeese Factory in Surabaya, purchasing decisions are not isolated events but are complex outcomes influenced by a trifecta of critical variables: the level of consumer trust in digital discourse (E-WOM), the perception of fair and competitive pricing, and the perceived quality of the physical product. This research aims to empirically and systematically examine how these three factors E-WOM, price perception, and product quality interact both simultaneously and partially to affect the final purchasing decisions of consumers. By analyzing these variables through a systematic lens, the study seeks to uncover whether the collective influence of digital reputation and value-based pricing outweighs individual product attributes, or if each factor maintains a distinct, independent impact on the consumer's cognitive process. Furthermore, by situating the study within the unique culinary landscape of Surabaya, it provides a localized validation of Ajzen's theory, exploring how modern consumers navigate the trade-off between the "give" of financial cost and the "get" of sensory satisfaction and social validation. Ultimately, this investigation provides a deeper understanding of the modern "rational" consumer, who relies on a blend of peer-verified digital trust and tangible product value to justify their consumption choices in a highly competitive fast-food industry, thereby offering significant insights into the evolving mechanisms of planned consumer behavior.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. Electronic Word of Mouth

According to Prayoga and Yasa (2023), Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) is a form of informal communication among consumers that has rapidly developed in the digital era. This concept refers to the process of exchanging information. According to Jalilvand and Samiei (2021), the indicators of Electronic Word of Mouth are as follows:

a. Reading online reviews of other consumers' products

This indicator emphasizes consumers' active behaviour in seeking real experiences from previous buyers. Consumers no longer rely solely on product descriptions provided by manufacturers; instead, they evaluate product quality through testimonials available on various digital platforms.

b. Gathering information from consumer product reviews on the internet

This indicator refers to the systematic effort made by consumers to compare information from various digital sources, such as social media, online forums, and e-commerce review sections. At this stage, consumers act as "researchers" who seek to ensure that the product has a reliable track record.

c. Feeling concerned when someone does not read online reviews before making a purchase

This indicator reflects the psychological aspect of consumers, where a sense of uncertainty or lack of confidence arises when a purchase decision is made without consulting prior reviews. Reading online reviews has become a form of "standard operating procedure" for modern consumers, serving as a means of reducing perceived risk in transactions.

### 2.2. Price Perception

According to Rivai and Zulfitri (2021), price perception refers to consumers' evaluation of a product or service based on the amount of money they must pay to obtain it. Meanwhile, Dewi and Suprapti (2021) state that four indicators can be used to assess price perception, namely:

a. Price affordability

This indicator refers to consumers' purchasing power in relation to the price set by the company. It measures whether the price level is within the reach of the intended target market.

b. Price suitability with product quality

This indicator assesses the extent to which consumers perceive that the price they pay reflects the physical quality of the product, including aspects such as taste, portion size, and hygiene.

c. Price competitiveness

This indicator involves a systematic comparison of a company's pricing strategy with that of its competitors within the same industry, such as major fast-food chains like KFC or McDonald's. In a highly competitive market like the quick-service restaurant industry, price is perceived as a relative value that consumers continuously compare with prevailing market standards. When a brand such as Richeese Factory sets its price levels, it must carefully evaluate the price-value ratio offered by competing brands to ensure that its market position remains attractive and competitive. This evaluation includes not only direct price comparisons but also an analysis of how competitors package their products, design promotional strategies, and determine psychological pricing thresholds that influence consumer expectations for certain product categories, such as fried chicken or combo meals. By benchmarking against competitors, a company can determine whether its pricing strategy reflects a premium position, a value-oriented approach, or competitive parity within the market. Furthermore, this comparative assessment enables a company to justify higher prices if it can communicate superior product attributes or unique value propositions, such as distinctive flavors, exclusive offerings, or a unique dining experience. Ultimately, the effectiveness of price competitiveness lies in its ability to support a dynamic pricing strategy that responds to market competition and maintains the brand's attractiveness among price-sensitive consumers.

d. Price appropriateness with the benefits received

This indicator assesses whether consumers believe the benefits they receive are commensurate with the price they pay. These benefits include not only the physical attributes of the product but also emotional satisfaction, service quality, and the overall consumption experience.

### 2.3. Product Quality

According to Pelayanan et al. (2024), product quality refers to the level of excellence or superior characteristics possessed by a product—in this case, food products—which indicate the extent to which the product meets predetermined standards or quality specifications. Product quality encompasses several aspects, including taste, texture, raw materials, and food safety, all of which play an important role in influencing consumer satisfaction with the product. According to Davis et al. (2018), six indicators can be used to measure product quality, namely:

a. Taste

Taste is the primary sensory attribute and the most important factor in food products. It represents the flavor experienced by consumers when they consume the product.

b. Texture

Texture refers to the physical characteristics of food that are perceived in the mouth, such as crispiness, tenderness, or softness.

c. Portion

Portion refers to the quantity or size of the food served in relation to the price paid by the consumer.

d. Aroma

Aroma is the smell of the food, which serves as the initial sensory stimulus that consumers perceive before tasting the product.

e. Colour

This indicator refers to the visual appearance of the food, including its color and brightness, which may indicate freshness and proper cooking techniques.

f. Temperature and presentation

This indicator refers to the temperature of the food when served (whether hot or cold) and the aesthetic manner in which the food is arranged or packaged. These aspects contribute to the overall dining experience and influence consumers' perceptions of product quality.

## 2.4. Purchase Decision

According to Pakan and Purwanto (2022), a purchase decision is the process through which consumers identify a problem or need, search for relevant product information, evaluate several alternatives as potential solutions, and finally decide to purchase the product that best meets their needs. Meanwhile, Kotler (in Setiawan et al., 2023) states that there are four indicators of a purchase decision:

a. Confidence in a product

This indicator refers to the level of certainty and trust a consumer has toward a specific product or brand. It represents the psychological stage where the consumer believes that the chosen product is the right solution to their needs.

b. Habitual purchasing behavior

The concept of habitual purchasing behavior reflects a sophisticated psychological pattern where consumers transition from conscious, effortful decision-making to a state of cognitive ease, ultimately purchasing a product based on deep-seated familiarity or established routine. This shift indicates that the product has transcended into being a mere commodity and has successfully integrated into the consumer's daily lifestyle, becoming a non-negotiable component of their personal identity and ritualistic behavior. In the context of the fast-food industry, such as with Richeese Factory, this integration is often driven by consistent sensory satisfaction and the reliability of the brand experience, which effectively lowers the consumer's perceived risk and decision-making fatigue. When a purchase becomes habitual, it is no longer triggered by aggressive external marketing or temporary price fluctuations; instead, it is prompted by internal cues, such as a specific craving, a time of day, or the convenience of a location, signaling a high level of brand resonance. This behavioral entrenchment is a critical objective for business sustainability, as it fosters a form of loyalty that is remarkably resilient against competitor interventions. Furthermore, habitual behavior suggests that the brand has achieved "top-of-mind" awareness, where the act of purchasing becomes almost involuntary—a reflexive response to a need that the product has historically and consistently satisfied. Ultimately, this seamless integration into the consumer's lifestyle serves as a powerful barrier to entry for rivals, as breaking a consumer's routine requires significantly more effort than simply offering a lower price; it requires disrupting a psychological bond that has been reinforced through repeated, positive reinforcement over time, thus solidifying the brand's long-term market position. Providing recommendations to others

The phenomenon of post-purchase advocacy, where satisfied consumers share positive experiences with their social circles or digital communities, represents a critical transition from a transactional interaction to a sustained relationship between the brand and the individual. This indicator signifies that the consumer has successfully navigated the entire decision-making journey from problem recognition and information search to the final evaluation of alternatives and has reached a level of satisfaction high enough to warrant

public endorsement. In today's hyper-connected marketplace, this act of sharing serves as a potent form of organic marketing, as modern consumers increasingly rely on the lived experiences of their peers over polished corporate advertisements. When a Richeese Factory customer in Surabaya, for instance, shares a visual testimonial of their spicy chicken meal or discusses the unique taste of the signature cheese sauce on social media platforms, they are essentially providing a high-trust signal that mitigates the perceived risk for potential new buyers. This behavior reflects the social nature of modern consumption, where the "get" of sensory pleasure and value for money translates into social currency that the consumer uses to influence their immediate network. By engaging in this proactive recommendation process, the consumer shifts from being a passive recipient of a product to an active brand ambassador whose informal communication carries profound weight in the collective perception of the brand. Ultimately, this indicator is a hallmark of brand loyalty and a key driver of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), proving that the most effective marketing engine for a business is a customer base that feels compelled to share their delight with the world, thereby ensuring the brand's sustainability through peer-verified credibility.

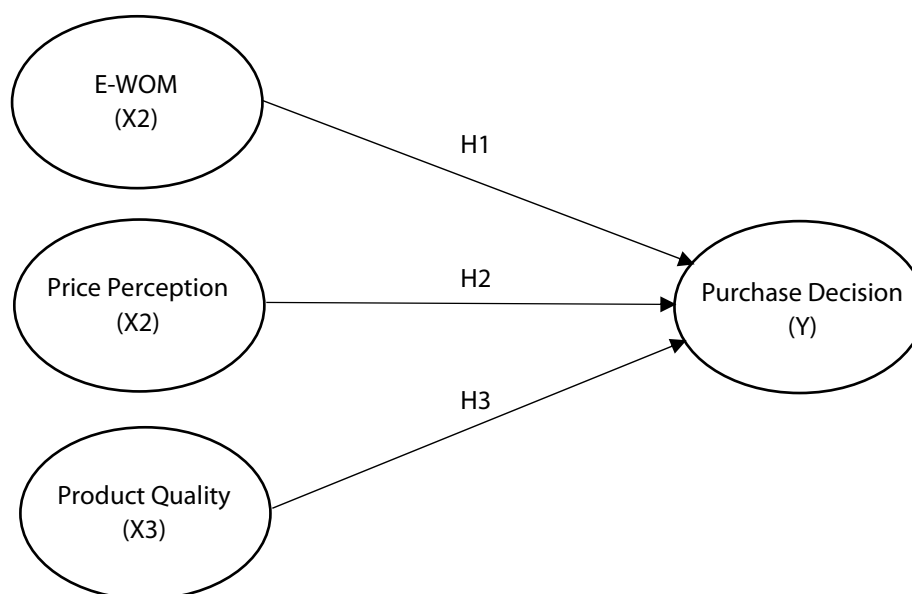
c. Providing recommendations to others

This refers to the consumer's commitment to purchasing the same product or from the same brand again in the future.

*H1 : E-WOM has a positive effect on purchase decision*

*H2 : Price Perception has a positive effect on purchase decision*

*H3 : Product Quality has a positive effect on purchase decision*



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

### III. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The questionnaire was developed based on established indicators and pre-tested for reliability to ensure that every item accurately measured the intended constructs. Respondents were approached directly via convenience sampling to ensure validity in a real-world setting, involving 102 respondents who had recently interacted with Richeese Factory outlets in Surabaya. Data were collected via Likert-scale questionnaires, providing a nuanced view of consumer agreement or disagreement. The data were then

analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) through SmartPLS software to test validity, reliability, and hypothesis, ensuring a robust empirical foundation for the study's conclusions.

#### IV. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

##### 4.1. Analysis Result

The analysis of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) outer loading results provides a clear visual and statistical representation of the research model. The factor loading values for each indicator are illustrated through structural lines connecting latent constructs to their respective observed variables. This representation is complemented by path coefficient values, which are positioned above the arrows linking independent and dependent variables to indicate the strength and direction of the hypothesized relationships. In addition, the R-square values are displayed within the circles representing intervening and dependent variables, indicating the model's predictive power and the extent to which independent variables explain the variance in dependent variables. Each latent variable is measured by several indicators; however, this study emphasizes indicators with the highest loading values, as they represent the most reliable measures of the constructs. These high-loading indicators play a significant role in ensuring the validity and reliability of the model, particularly in meeting the requirements of convergent validity. By focusing on these indicators, the study identifies key elements—such as price competitiveness and digital trust—that strongly influence consumer behavior. Overall, this analysis confirms the internal consistency of the data and provides a systematic explanation of how various factors interact to influence purchasing decisions, particularly in the fast-food industry.

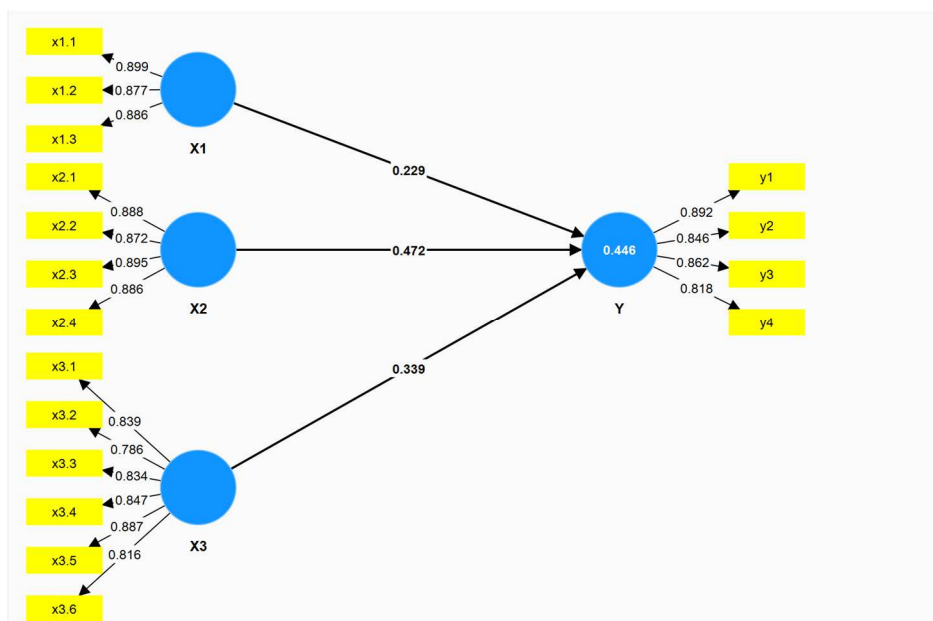


Figure 2. PLS Structural Model Results

Table 1. Outer Loading

Indicator	Loading Value	Result
X1.1	0.899	Valid
X1.2	0.877	
X1.3	0.886	
X2.1	0.888	
X2.2	0.872	

X2.3	0.895
X2.4	0.886
X3.1	0.839
X3.2	0.786
X3.3	0.834
X3.4	0.847
X3.5	0.887
X3.6	0.816
Y1	0.892
Y2	0.846
Y3	0.862

Based on the comprehensive data and statistical figures meticulously presented in the table above, it is objectively evident that every individual outer loading value within the measurement model has successfully surpassed the established empirical threshold, typically recognized as \$0.70\$ in social science research, thereby confirming the individual indicator reliability of the constructs. This robust alignment indicates that the observed variables are highly representative of their respective latent constructs, demonstrating a strong degree of convergent validity and ensuring that the measurement instruments are functioning with a high level of precision and consistency. Because these values are statistically valid and fall within the acceptable range for high-quality structural equation modeling, the measurement model is deemed sufficiently reliable to proceed to the next stage of structural analysis without the need for further iterative testing, data refinement, or the deletion of specific indicators. The absence of values below the critical cut-off point signifies that the data is clean and the relationships between the indicators and their parent factors are exceptionally strong, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent path analysis. Consequently, no further adjustments or corrective measures, such as recalculating the algorithm or performing additional factor loadings, are necessary at this stage, allowing the study to move forward with the assurance that the preliminary measurement criteria have been fully and strictly satisfied. This internal consistency not only strengthens the overall integrity of the study's methodology but also ensures that the resulting interpretations of the structural relationships are based on a statistically sound and verified framework, effectively minimizing the risk of measurement error and enhancing the generalizability of the findings within the context of the current research framework. Therefore, the researchers can confidently conclude that the current model is finalized and optimized for interpreting the direct and indirect effects proposed in the hypotheses.

**Table 2. Cross Loading**

Indicator	X1	X2	X3	Y
X1.1	0.899	0.114	0.120	0.305
X1.2	0.877	0.089	-0.006	0.257
X1.3	0.886	0.002	0.026	0.182
X2.1	0.117	0.888	0.137	0.511
X2.2	0.026	0.872	0.022	0.459
X2.3	0.111	0.895	0.086	0.441
X2.4	0.052	0.886	0.060	0.429
X3.1	0.030	0.062	0.839	0.384
X3.2	0.070	0.062	0.786	0.270
X3.3	0.054	-0.038	0.834	0.216
X3.4	0.053	0.147	0.847	0.381
X3.5	0.087	0.059	0.887	0.366

X3.6	0.008	0.108	0.816	0.289
Y1	0.291	0.449	0.330	0.892
Y2	0.236	0.464	0.323	0.846
Y3	0.255	0.468	0.375	0.862

Evaluation of discriminant validity through cross-loading analysis serves as a critical cornerstone in ensuring that each construct in a research model is truly distinct from others, thereby confirming that the empirical data accurately reflects the theoretical framework. In the context of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), cross-loading values provide a granular look at how individual indicators perform across different latent variables, where the fundamental requirement for establishing discriminant validity is that each specific indicator must exhibit a significantly higher correlation or loading with its own parent construct than with any other construct in the model. Based on the data presented in the table above, it is evident that this rigorous criterion has been successfully met, as the correlation values for each measured variable consistently exceed the cross-loadings of non-target variables, indicating that the indicators are uniquely aligned with their intended dimensions. This distinctiveness is essential because it demonstrates that the measurement items are not "leaking" or overlapping with other concepts, which would otherwise suggest a lack of conceptual clarity or redundant instrumentation. When the highest loading for an indicator is found on its designated variable, as shown in this study, the evaluation of discriminant validity is considered fulfilled, providing the necessary statistical confidence to proceed with structural model analysis. Consequently, these results reinforce the reliability of the measurement model by proving that the latent variables are statistically independent and that the data possesses the requisite integrity to support valid conclusions, effectively shielding the findings from the risks of multicollinearity or construct confusion that could undermine the overall scientific rigor of the research.

**Table 3. Composite Reliability**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
E-WOM (X1)	0.868	0.906	0.787
Price Perception (X2)	0.908	0.912	0.784
Product Quality (X3)	0.914	0.930	0.698
Purchasing Decision (Y)	0.877	0.880	0.730

The data analysis reveals that all research variables exhibit Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding the 0.70 threshold, which serves as a critical benchmark for ensuring that the measurement instruments fulfill the stringent requirements for internal consistency and reliability. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that the stability and consistency of the instruments used throughout the study are exceptionally high, confirming that the questionnaire items are not only well-constructed but also capable of yielding the same results under repeated trials. In the context of structural equation modeling and quantitative research, surpassing the 0.70 limit indicates that the various indicators associated with each latent variable are highly correlated and collectively measure the intended underlying construct without excessive measurement error. Consequently, the questions provided to the respondents can be classified as highly reliable statements that effectively capture the nuances of consumer perception, price competitiveness, and electronic word of mouth. This robust level of reliability ensures that the data gathered is a true reflection of the respondents' opinions, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent hypothesis testing and overall statistical inference. By meeting these criteria, the study minimizes the risk of randomness in the data, thereby increasing the credibility of the research outcomes and allowing for a more confident interpretation of how these variables interact within the fast-food industry framework. Ultimately, these high reliability coefficients act as a mathematical guarantee that the instrument is a dependable tool for academic inquiry, ensuring that the insights derived from the Surabaya consumer base are both accurate and scientifically sound.

**Table 4. R-Square**

Variable	R-Square
Purchasing Decision	0.446

Based on the data presented in Table 4, the R-Square value of 0.446 serves as a critical statistical indicator of the model's explanatory power, revealing that the Purchase Decision variable can be accounted for by the included independent variables to the extent of 44.6%. This specific value is formally classified within the moderate category, signifying that while the model possesses a reasonably adequate and robust ability to explain the variance in customer behavior and loyalty, it does not capture the entirety of the decision-making process. The remaining 55.4% of the variance is attributed to a diverse array of external factors and latent variables that reside outside the scope of this particular study, such as brand equity, service quality, or situational influences like economic fluctuations and individual psychological triggers. In the context of social science and consumer behavior research, achieving an R-Square of nearly 45% is considered a significant achievement, as it demonstrates that the primary predictors identified in the research such as price perception and Electronic Word of Mouth are indeed major drivers of consumer action. This moderate level of predictive accuracy provides a solid foundation for the study's conclusions, suggesting that while the current model is highly relevant and statistically sound for strategic planning, there remains a substantial opportunity for future research to explore additional dimensions that shape the complex path toward a final purchase. Ultimately, this finding reinforces the validity of the current framework while maintaining a realistic academic perspective on the multifaceted nature of consumer loyalty in the highly competitive fast-food industry.

**Table 5. Path Coefficients**

Relationship	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	P-Values	Description
E-WOM → Purchasing Decision	0.229	0.060	0.000	Accepted
Price Perception (X2) → Purchasing Decision	0.472	0.062	0.000	
Product Quality (X3) → Purchasing Decision	0.339	0.069	0.000	

Based on the results presented in Table 5, all independent variables have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. This is indicated by the P-values, which are all below the significance threshold of 0.05. In addition, all path coefficients are positive, demonstrating that each independent variable has a positive relationship with the dependent variable. Among the variables, price perception shows the strongest influence on purchasing decisions, with the highest coefficient value of 0.472. This suggests that consumers are more likely to make purchasing decisions when they perceive the price as fair and reasonable. Product quality follows with a coefficient value of 0.339, indicating that better product quality increases the likelihood of purchasing. Meanwhile, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) has a coefficient value of 0.229, which, although smaller compared to the other variables, still has a positive and significant effect. These findings indicate that all proposed hypotheses are supported, and each variable plays an important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The results of hypothesis testing based on the path coefficient analysis are presented as follows:

- a. H1: E-WOM has a P-value less than 0.05 and a coefficient value of 0.229; therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- b. H2: Price perception has a P-value less than 0.05 and a coefficient value of 0.472; therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

- c. H3: Product quality has a P-value less than 0.05 and a coefficient value of 0.339; therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

## 4.2. Discussion

### a. The Influence of E-WOM on Purchase Decisions

The results of this study indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a positive and significant influence on the purchasing decisions of Richeese Factory consumers in Surabaya. This is evidenced by the coefficient values, which suggest that in the modern digital landscape, a brand's "digital echo" plays a crucial role in driving market success. This finding implies that consumers in a highly connected metropolitan area such as Surabaya increasingly rely on and trust digital information, including social media reviews and peer testimonials. For example, viral content related to the "Fire Chicken" menu or reviews about the signature cheese sauce can significantly increase consumers' likelihood of transitioning from passive observers to active buyers. This phenomenon reflects a shift in consumer behavior, where traditional one-way advertising is gradually being replaced by decentralized "social proof." Consumers tend to rely on the experiences of others to reduce uncertainty before making purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with the interactive marketing communication theory proposed by Kotler and Keller (2022), which suggests that modern marketing is no longer linear but interactive, where brand value is co-created through consumer engagement. Furthermore, this study supports previous research by Firmansyah and Purwanto (2022) and Sanana et al. (2021), which found that E-WOM significantly influences consumer interest and purchase intention, particularly in the fast-food industry where visual appeal and instant gratification are important. Overall, these findings highlight that digital platforms empower consumers to become influential actors in shaping brand perception. For Richeese Factory, this implies that maintaining a positive digital presence is essential for sustaining competitiveness. E-WOM has therefore become a powerful tool that transforms online interactions into actual purchasing behavior.

### b. The Influence of Price Perception on Purchase Decisions

The findings of this study indicate that price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. In the highly competitive fast-food industry, price is not perceived in isolation but is evaluated based on perceived value and comparison with competing products. This is supported by the data, which show that the price competitiveness indicator has the highest loading value. This suggests that the ability of a brand to position its pricing relative to competitors is a key factor in influencing consumer decisions. Interestingly, the case of Richeese Factory presents a contrast to the traditional assumption that lower prices always increase demand. Although the prices are relatively higher than some competitors, this does not discourage consumers. Instead, consumers perceive the price as reasonable based on the value they receive. This perception is influenced by the overall sensory experience, including taste, presentation, aroma, and product uniqueness. These elements create a justification for the price, making consumers feel that the product offers good value for money. This behavior reflects a shift in consumer preferences from seeking the lowest price to prioritizing value. Consumers are willing to pay more if the perceived benefits meet or exceed their expectations. When satisfaction aligns with price expectations, the purchase is perceived as fair rather than expensive. These findings are consistent with Zeithaml's Value Perception Theory, which defines perceived value as the balance between what consumers receive and what they sacrifice. In this study, consumers perceive that the benefits outweigh the cost, resulting in a positive evaluation of price. In conclusion, price perception plays a crucial role in purchasing decisions. A well-positioned pricing strategy, supported by strong product value, can effectively influence consumer behavior and build long-term loyalty.

### c. The Influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions

The results of this study indicate that product quality has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This finding reinforces the idea that in the competitive fast-food industry, the physical and sensory attributes of a product are key determinants of consumer behavior. The analysis shows that indicators related to visual appeal have high loading values, suggesting that appearance plays an important role in shaping first impressions. Consumers often use visual cues, such as color, texture, and presentation, to assess product quality before consumption. For instance, the distinctive appearance of the cheese sauce and the texture of the fried chicken contribute to consumers' perception of quality. These visual and sensory elements help build trust and align consumer expectations with actual product performance. Consistency in product quality is also essential. When a product consistently meets or exceeds expectations, it reduces uncertainty and strengthens consumer confidence. Conversely, inconsistencies in quality may damage brand reputation and reduce customer loyalty. In the case of Richeese Factory, maintaining consistent product quality allows the brand to compete effectively in a saturated market. Consumers tend to prioritize reliable quality over promotional offers when making purchasing decisions. Therefore, product quality is not only an operational concern but also a strategic factor in marketing. Ensuring high standards in taste, presentation, and overall experience can enhance customer satisfaction and support long-term business sustainability.

## V. Conclusion

The results of the PLS analysis indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), price perception, and product quality have a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions at Richeese Factory in Surabaya. Specifically, a more positive and credible digital reputation increases the likelihood of consumer purchases, while a strong alignment between price and perceived benefits acts as a key determinant for consumers. Furthermore, consistent product quality creates a positive experience that encourages repeat purchases. Given that the R-Square value suggests the presence of external factors, future research is recommended to explore additional variables, such as brand image or location accessibility, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior.

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