



From Authenticity to Action: How Perceived Authenticity and Digital Word-of-Mouth Drive Purchase Intention for Local Products

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh perceived authenticity dan electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) terhadap niat beli konsumen pada produk lokal di Balikpapan, Indonesia. Berlandaskan teori sinyal, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana isyarat internal produk dan informasi digital eksternal membentuk proses pengambilan keputusan konsumen. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan melibatkan 150 responden, dan data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linear berganda dengan bantuan SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perceived authenticity berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap niat beli, yang mengindikasikan bahwa konsumen sangat menghargai keaslian produk, representasi budaya, dan kredibilitasnya. Sebaliknya, e-WOM tidak menunjukkan pengaruh langsung yang signifikan terhadap niat beli, yang dapat mengindikasikan adanya ketergantungan yang relatif lebih rendah terhadap ulasan online dalam konteks pasar produk lokal. Namun demikian, kedua variabel secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan, yang menunjukkan bahwa perilaku konsumen dipengaruhi oleh kombinasi persepsi internal dan informasi eksternal. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dengan menegaskan peran dominan autentisitas serta mengidentifikasi bahwa pengaruh e-WOM bersifat kontekstual. Secara praktis, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pelaku usaha lokal perlu memprioritaskan strategi berbasis autentisitas sambil tetap mengintegrasikan keterlibatan digital secara lebih efektif.

Kata kunci: Perceived Authenticity; e-WOM; Niat Beli; Produk Lokal; Perilaku Konsumen.

Abstract: This study investigates the influence of perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan, Indonesia. Grounded in signaling theory, this research examines how internal product cues and external digital information shape consumer decision-making. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 150 respondents, and the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS. The results reveal that perceived authenticity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that consumers highly value product originality, cultural representation, and credibility. In contrast, e-WOM does not show a significant direct effect on purchase intention, which may indicate a relatively weaker reliance on online reviews in the context of local product markets. However, both variables jointly have a significant effect, demonstrating that consumer behavior is influenced by a combination of internal perceptions and external information. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the dominant role of authenticity and identifying the context-dependent influence of e-WOM. Practically, the findings suggest that local businesses should prioritize authenticity-based strategies while integrating digital engagement more effectively.

Keywords: Perceived Authenticity; e-WOM; Purchase Intention; Local Products; Consumer Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The growing prominence of local products in Indonesia reflects a broader shift toward

culturally embedded consumption, where consumers increasingly value authenticity, locality, and socio-economic impact. This trend is particularly relevant in urban regions with strong

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economic activity, such as Balikpapan, a strategic city in East Kalimantan that serves as a commercial hub and a gateway to Indonesia’s new capital region (IKN). In this context, local products—ranging from traditional foods, handicrafts, to creative industry outputs—play a crucial role in supporting regional economic resilience and cultural preservation (Nurlia et al., 2024).

Balikpapan’s local product ecosystem is characterized by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that rely heavily on product uniqueness, local identity, and perceived authenticity to compete with national and global brands (Rohman et al., 2024). Products such as *amplang* (fish crackers), *kain sasirangan*-inspired crafts, and locally processed seafood represent not only economic commodities but also cultural symbols. However, unlike established national brands, these local products often face challenges related to branding, consumer trust, and limited digital exposure (Indrayani & Nurlia, 2024).

Perceived authenticity, therefore, becomes a critical construct in shaping consumer evaluation. It refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a product as genuine, original, and aligned with its claimed cultural or local identity (Napoli et al., 2014). In the context of Balikpapan, authenticity may be derived from traditional production methods, locally sourced raw materials, and narratives of community-based entrepreneurship (Susianti et al., 2024). Empirical studies indicate that authenticity enhances emotional attachment and trust, which subsequently increases purchase intention (Kim et al., 2020; Nabih & Ashosseiny, 2024).

Alongside authenticity, the rapid expansion of digital platforms has intensified the role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Consumers increasingly depend on online reviews, social media content, and peer recommendations when evaluating products (Manda et al., 2026). This is particularly relevant for local MSMEs in Balikpapan, where digital channels such as Instagram, TikTok, and online marketplaces serve as primary tools for market access (Nurlia et al., 2024). E-WOM not only disseminates information but also functions as a mechanism of social validation, reducing perceived risk in purchasing relatively unknown local products (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Libai et al., 2025).

Despite these developments, a critical issue remains: many local businesses in Balikpapan have not effectively integrated authenticity

communication with digital engagement strategies (Indrayani & Nurlia, 2024). Authenticity is often implicit rather than strategically communicated, while e-WOM is largely organic and unmanaged. This creates a disconnect between product value and consumer perception, ultimately limiting market expansion.

To illustrate the empirical relevance of this issue, the following table presents supporting data related to local products and digital consumer behavior in Indonesia, contextualized to MSMEs in regions such as Balikpapan:

Table 1. Supporting Data on Local Products and Digital Consumer Behavior

Indicator	Findings	Source
Consumer preference for local products	68% of Indonesian consumers prefer local products due to cultural relevance and authenticity	(Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2021)
Trust in online reviews	79% of consumers trust e-WOM similarly to personal recommendations	(Manda et al., 2026)
Social media influence	74% of consumers rely on social media before making purchase decisions	(Tamara et al., 2023)
MSME digital adoption	Only around 54% of MSMEs actively use digital platforms for marketing	(Halik, Halik, et al., 2026)
Impact of authenticity	Authentic branding increases purchase intention by up to 45%	(Kim et al., 2020)

Source: Adapted from published literature (2026)

From a theoretical standpoint, this study integrates signaling theory and social influence theory to explain consumer behavior in the digital marketplace. Perceived authenticity functions as a quality signal that reduces information asymmetry, while e-WOM acts as a social proof mechanism that reinforces consumer confidence (Erkan & Evans, 2018). However, existing literature tends to examine these variables in isolation, with limited focus on their combined effect, particularly in localized economic contexts such as Balikpapan.

Research Urgency

The urgency of this study lies in the need to strengthen the competitiveness of Balikpapan’s

local products in an increasingly digital and highly competitive marketplace. As the city continues to develop as a strategic economic zone supporting the new capital region, local MSMEs must transition from traditional marketing approaches to data-driven digital strategies. Without a clear understanding of how perceived authenticity and e-WOM jointly influence purchase intention, local producers risk underutilizing their core value propositions and losing market opportunities to more digitally sophisticated competitors. Therefore, this research is essential to provide empirical insights that can guide more effective integration of authenticity-based branding and digital communication strategies.

Research Problems

Based on the research background and the analytical approach employed in this study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Does perceived authenticity significantly influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan?
2. Does electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) significantly influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan?
3. Do perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) simultaneously influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grand Theory: Signaling Theory & Information Adoption Model (IAM)

This study is grounded in Signaling Theory and the Information Adoption Model (IAM) to explain how consumers evaluate local products and form purchase intentions in digital environments. Signaling Theory explains that in situations characterized by information asymmetry, producers communicate certain signals to reduce uncertainty and influence consumer decision-making (Connelly et al., 2011). In the context of local products, perceived authenticity operates as a credibility signal that conveys information regarding the product's originality, cultural legitimacy, and production integrity (Nabih & Ashosseiny, 2024). When consumers interpret these signals positively, they are more likely to develop trust and favorable

evaluations, which ultimately influence their intention to purchase (Kim et al., 2020).

Complementing this perspective, the Information Adoption Model explains how individuals process and adopt information obtained from online environments, particularly electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Erkan & Evans, 2016). This model emphasizes that the perceived credibility, quality, and usefulness of information significantly determine whether consumers accept and rely on such information in their decision-making processes (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Within the digital marketplace, e-WOM represents a critical source of peer-generated information that shapes consumer perceptions and reduces perceived risk (Purandare, 2024).

In this study, both theoretical perspectives are integrated into a unified framework in which perceived authenticity is conceptualized as a firm-originated signal that communicates intrinsic product value (Connelly et al., 2011), while e-WOM serves as a socially constructed validation mechanism emerging from consumer interactions (Kusawat & Teerakapibal, 2022). Together, these elements explain how internal and external informational cues jointly influence consumer judgment and behavioral intention, particularly in the context of local products where formal branding signals are often limited.

Perceived Authenticity

Perceived authenticity refers to consumers' subjective evaluation that a product is genuine, original, and consistent with its claimed identity (Napoli et al., 2014). This concept is particularly relevant in the context of local products, where value is often derived not only from functional attributes but also from cultural meaning and heritage. Authenticity can emerge from various sources, including traditional production techniques, locally sourced materials, and narratives that emphasize the product's connection to a specific place or community (Beverland, 2005).

Recent literature conceptualizes authenticity as a multidimensional construct that encompasses both objective and subjective elements. On one hand, authenticity is associated with verifiable attributes such as origin and craftsmanship, while on the other hand it reflects consumers' emotional and symbolic interpretations of a product (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). These interpretations are shaped by prior knowledge, cultural familiarity, and

exposure to marketing communication ([Napoli et al., 2014](#)).

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that perceived authenticity plays a significant role in strengthening consumer trust and enhancing perceived value ([Portal et al., 2019](#)). When consumers believe that a product is authentic, they are more likely to perceive it as reliable and meaningful, which increases their willingness to purchase ([Nabih & Ashosseiny, 2024](#)). In this study, perceived authenticity is understood as the degree to which consumers perceive local products in Balikpapan as genuinely representing their origin, embodying local cultural identity, and being produced through processes that reflect honesty and trustworthiness. This perception is formed through the interaction of tangible product characteristics and intangible symbolic cues communicated to consumers.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) refers to the dissemination of product-related information through digital platforms, where consumers share opinions, experiences, and evaluations that are accessible to a wide audience ([Erkan & Evans, 2016](#)). In contrast to traditional word-of-mouth, e-WOM operates in a highly scalable and persistent environment, allowing information to influence consumer behavior beyond immediate social networks ([Kusawat & Teerakapibal, 2022](#)).

From the perspective of the Information Adoption Model, the influence of e-WOM on consumer behavior is determined by the extent to which the information is perceived as credible, relevant, and useful ([Erkan & Evans, 2016](#)). Consumers tend to rely on online reviews and peer-generated content as a means of reducing uncertainty, especially when evaluating products with limited brand recognition, such as local products ([Zhou et al., 2013](#)). The credibility of e-WOM is often associated with the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the information source, while its effectiveness is amplified by the volume and consistency of shared opinions ([Oktaviani & Estaswara, 2022](#)).

Furthermore, e-WOM functions as a mechanism of social influence, where individuals adjust their attitudes and intentions based on the collective opinions of others (Halik, Lambe, et al., 2026; [Manda et al., 2026](#)). Positive e-WOM can enhance consumer confidence and reinforce favorable perceptions, whereas negative e-WOM

may generate skepticism and reduce purchase intention ([Oktaviani & Estaswara, 2022](#)). Prior studies have shown that e-WOM significantly affects consumer decision-making processes across various digital contexts, including online marketplaces and social media platforms ([Roreng & Halik, 2025](#); [Zhou et al., 2013](#)).

In this study, e-WOM is conceptualized as consumers' perception of online information related to local products in Balikpapan, encompassing the credibility of reviews, the persuasiveness of shared experiences, and the overall volume of digital recommendations that shape consumer judgment.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention represents the likelihood that consumers will engage in buying behavior based on their evaluation of a product and their overall attitude toward it ([ANASTASIA et al., 2023](#); [Apriliani & Setyawati, 2023](#)). It is widely regarded as a strong predictor of actual purchasing behavior, particularly in studies grounded in behavioral intention frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior ([Dash et al., 2025](#)).

In digital environments, purchase intention is influenced by both cognitive and social factors. Consumers evaluate product-related information, assess potential risks, and consider social cues before forming a decision ([Londong, 2024](#)). For local products, which often lack strong brand recognition, purchase intention is highly dependent on trust-building mechanisms such as authenticity and peer validation.

Recent research highlights that purchase intention is shaped by an interplay of perceived value ([Khan et al., 2024](#)), trust, and information exposure ([Khan et al., 2024](#)). Consumers are more likely to develop strong purchase intentions when they perceive a product as both authentic and positively endorsed by others ([Libai et al., 2025](#)). In this study, purchase intention is understood as the degree to which consumers are willing to consider, plan, and engage in the purchase of local products in Balikpapan, reflecting both their evaluative judgment and behavioral readiness.

Hypothesis Development

The relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention can be explained through Signaling Theory, which suggests that credible signals reduce uncertainty and enhance consumer confidence ([Connelly et al., 2011](#)). When consumers perceive local

products as authentic, they are more likely to trust the product and assign higher value to it, leading to stronger purchase intention. Prior empirical studies support this relationship, demonstrating that authenticity positively influences consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, particularly in contexts where cultural identity and product origin are salient (Napoli et al., 2014). Based on this reasoning, the first hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Perceived authenticity significantly influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan.

The influence of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention can be understood through the Information Adoption Model, which posits that consumers adopt information that they perceive as credible and useful. e-WOM provides social validation and reduces perceived risk, making it a critical factor in shaping consumer attitudes. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that positive and credible e-WOM significantly enhances purchase intention across various digital platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Manda et al., 2026; Trusov et al., 2011). Accordingly, the second hypothesis is formulated.

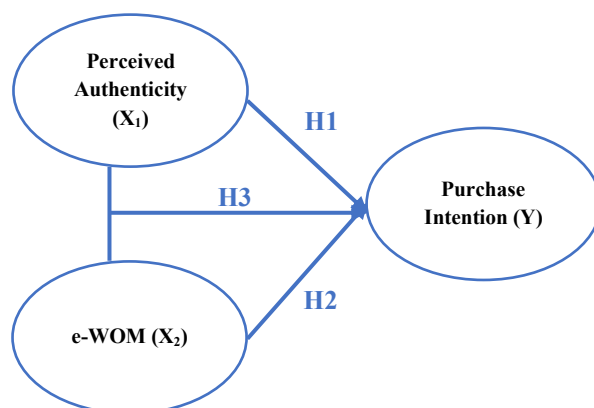
H2: Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) significantly influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan.

Finally, considering that perceived authenticity and e-WOM represent two complementary sources of information—one originating from producers and the other from consumers—it is reasonable to expect that their combined influence will provide a stronger explanation of purchase intention. The simultaneous presence of credible product signals and positive social validation creates a reinforcing effect that strengthens consumer confidence. Therefore, the third hypothesis addresses the joint influence of these variables on purchase intention.

H3: Perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) simultaneously influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan.

Despite the growing body of research examining authenticity and digital word-of-mouth independently, limited attention has been given to

their combined role in shaping consumer behavior within localized economic contexts. Addressing this gap, the present study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) as complementary determinants of purchase intention. Drawing upon Signaling Theory and the Information Adoption Model, the framework captures both firm-generated and consumer-generated informational cues that influence decision-making processes. This integrated perspective is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers evaluate and respond to local products in Balikpapan. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in **Figure 1**.



Source: Author's perception (2026)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research approach aimed at examining the causal relationships between perceived authenticity, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan. A quantitative design is considered appropriate as it allows for the systematic measurement of variables and statistical testing of hypotheses derived from established theories. Specifically, this research employs an explanatory research design, which seeks to identify and analyze the influence of independent variables on a dependent variable through hypothesis testing (Okello, 2024).

The population of this study consists of consumers who have experience or familiarity with local products in Balikpapan, particularly those who have been exposed to such products through digital platforms. Given the absence of an exact sampling frame, this study applies a non-probability sampling technique, specifically

purposive sampling. This technique is selected to ensure that respondents meet certain criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as having prior knowledge of local products and exposure to online reviews or recommendations. According to [Memon et al. \(2025\)](#), purposive sampling is suitable in behavioral research where respondents are selected based on their relevance to the study context.

The sample size is determined based on the recommendation for multivariate analysis, which suggests a minimum of 5–10 observations per indicator. Considering that this study utilizes 14 measurement indicators in total, the minimum required sample ranges from 70 to 140 respondents. However, to enhance statistical robustness and generalizability, this study uses a larger sample size of 150 respondents. This approach aligns with methodological recommendations for regression-based studies to ensure stable parameter estimates and sufficient statistical power ([Pallant, 2020](#)).

The research was conducted in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, as the primary location due to its strategic role as an economic hub and its growing local product sector. Data collection was carried out over a period of approximately two to three months, from December 2025 to February 2026, using an online questionnaire distributed through social media platforms and digital communication channels. The use of online surveys is considered appropriate given the study's focus on digital consumer behavior and e-WOM exposure.

The data collection instrument consists of a structured questionnaire designed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items were adapted from established studies to ensure content validity and reliability. Prior to full data collection, a pilot test was conducted to assess the clarity and consistency of the instrument. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was employed to confirm internal consistency, with a threshold value of 0.70 considered acceptable (Riadi, 2016).

In terms of data analysis, this study employs Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as the primary analytical tool. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to profile respondents, followed by classical assumption tests including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity to ensure the validity of regression analysis. Hypothesis

testing is conducted using multiple linear regression analysis to examine the individual and simultaneous effects of perceived authenticity and e-WOM on purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to assess the explanatory power of the model, while t-tests and F-tests are applied to evaluate the significance of individual and joint effects of the independent variables ([Okello, 2024](#); [Pallant, 2020](#)).

Table 2. Measurement Items

Variable	Code	Measurement Items	Source
Perceived Authenticity (X1)	X1.1	The local products in Balikpapan are genuine and original	Adapted from Napoli et al. (2014)
	X1.2	These products reflect the cultural identity of Balikpapan	
	X1.3	The production process of these products is trustworthy	
	X1.4	The products are consistent with their claimed origin	
	X1.5	The products convey a sense of authenticity and heritage	
Electronic Word-of-Mouth (X2)	X2.1	Online reviews about local products are credible	Adapted from Dwivedi et al. (2021) ; Manda et al. (2026)
	X2.2	I often rely on online recommendations before purchasing	
	X2.3	The information shared online is useful for decision-making	
	X2.4	Positive online reviews increase my confidence in buying	
Purchase Intention (Y)	Y1	I am interested in buying local products from Balikpapan	Adapted from ANASTASI A et al. (2023)

Variable	Cod e	Measurement Items	Source
	Y2	I intend to purchase these products in the near future	Dash et al. (2025)
	Y3	I would consider choosing these products over others	
	Y4	I am willing to recommend these products to others	
	Y5	I have a strong likelihood of purchasing these products	

Source: Adapted from published literature (2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Research Object

This study focuses on consumers of local products in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, which is recognized as a strategic economic city and a supporting region for Indonesia's new capital development. The local product sector in Balikpapan is dominated by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that produce a variety of goods, including traditional food products such as *amplang*, processed seafood, and locally inspired handicrafts. These products are not only commercial commodities but also represent cultural identity and regional uniqueness.

In recent years, the marketing landscape for these local products has shifted significantly toward digital platforms. Social media channels and online marketplaces have become primary tools for promotion and consumer engagement. However, despite this digital transition, many local businesses still rely heavily on informal marketing strategies, making consumer perception—particularly regarding authenticity and online reviews—a crucial determinant of purchase intention.

Thus, this research examines how perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) influence consumers' intention to purchase local products in this evolving digital ecosystem.

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this study consist of individuals who are familiar with or have experience purchasing local products in Balikpapan. A total of 150 valid responses were collected and analyzed. The demographic profile of respondents is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	45.3%
	Female	82	54.7%
Age	17–25 years	60	40.0%
	26–35 years	55	36.7%
	36–45 years	25	16.7%
	>45 years	10	6.6%
	High School	40	26.7%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	85	56.7%
	Postgraduate	25	16.6%
Purchase Experience	1–2 times	45	30.0%
	3–5 times	65	43.3%
	>5 times	40	26.7%

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The data indicate that the majority of respondents are female and fall within the productive age range of 17–35 years, suggesting that younger consumers dominate the market for local products. Additionally, most respondents have a bachelor's degree, indicating a relatively educated consumer base that is likely more exposed to digital information, including e-WOM. The purchase experience data further show that a significant proportion of respondents have repeatedly purchased local products, suggesting familiarity and relevance of the research context.

Data Validity Test

The validity test is conducted to assess the extent to which the measurement items accurately represent and measure the intended constructs within the study ([Pallant, 2020](#)). In other words, it ensures that each indicator is relevant and capable of capturing the underlying concept it is designed to measure.

In this study, validity is evaluated using the Pearson correlation method by examining the relationship between each item score and the total score of its respective variable. An item is considered valid if the correlation coefficient (r-

value) exceeds the critical value of the r-table (0.160 for $n = 150$ at $\alpha = 0.05$) and if the significance level is less than 0.05 (Okello, 2024). These criteria indicate that the item has a statistically significant and meaningful association with the overall construct, thereby confirming its adequacy for inclusion in further analysis.

Table 4. Validity Test Results

A. Perceived Authenticity (X1)

Item	r-count	Sig.	Conclusion
X1.1	0.832	0.000	Valid
X1.2	0.815	0.000	Valid
X1.3	0.892	0.000	Valid
X1.4	0.850	0.000	Valid
X1.5	0.768	0.000	Valid

B. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (X2)

Item	r-count	Sig.	Conclusion
X2.1	0.905	0.000	Valid
X2.2	0.915	0.000	Valid
X2.3	0.899	0.000	Valid
X2.4	0.827	0.000	Valid

C. Purchase Intention (Y)

Item	r-count	Sig.	Conclusion
Y1	0.862	0.000	Valid
Y2	0.885	0.000	Valid
Y3	0.829	0.000	Valid
Y4	0.844	0.000	Valid
Y5	0.803	0.000	Valid

The results of the validity test indicate that all measurement items used in this study are statistically valid. This conclusion is based on the fact that all correlation coefficients (r-count) exceed the minimum threshold of 0.160 and all significance values are below 0.05. These findings demonstrate that each indicator has a strong and significant correlation with its respective construct, confirming that the items are capable of accurately measuring the intended variables.

More specifically, the perceived authenticity variable exhibits correlation values ranging from 0.768 to 0.892, indicating a strong relationship between each item and the overall construct. Similarly, the e-WOM variable shows even higher correlation values, ranging from 0.827 to 0.915, suggesting that the indicators are highly representative of the construct. The purchase

intention variable also demonstrates strong validity, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.803 to 0.885.

From a methodological perspective, these results imply that the measurement instrument possesses good construct validity, meaning that all items are relevant and appropriate for capturing the underlying concepts of perceived authenticity, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. Consequently, all indicators are retained for further analysis in the subsequent stages, including reliability testing and hypothesis testing.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing is conducted to evaluate the consistency and stability of the measurement instrument used in the study. A reliable instrument ensures that the measurement items produce consistent results when applied under similar conditions, thereby reflecting the internal consistency of the construct being measured (Pallant, 2020). In quantitative research, reliability is a critical requirement to ensure that the data collected are dependable and free from random measurement errors.

In this study, reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Okello (2024), a construct is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency among the measurement items. Higher values suggest stronger consistency, while excessively high values may indicate redundancy among indicators.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Conclusion
Perceived Authenticity (X1)	0.888	5	Reliable
e-WOM (X2)	0.909	4	Reliable
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.898	5	Reliable

Source: SPSS output (2026)

The results of the reliability test demonstrate that all variables in this study exhibit a high level of internal consistency. The perceived authenticity variable shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.888, indicating that the five measurement items consistently capture the

underlying construct. Similarly, the e-WOM variable records the highest reliability value at 0.909, suggesting a very strong consistency among its indicators. The purchase intention variable also demonstrates a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.898.

These findings confirm that all constructs exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, thereby meeting the criteria for reliability (Pallant, 2020). This indicates that the measurement instrument used in this study is stable and dependable for capturing the relationships among perceived authenticity, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention.

From a more critical perspective, the relatively high Cronbach's Alpha values, particularly for the e-WOM variable, may also suggest that the indicators are closely related and potentially homogeneous. While this strengthens internal consistency, future research may consider incorporating more diverse indicators to capture broader dimensions of the constructs.

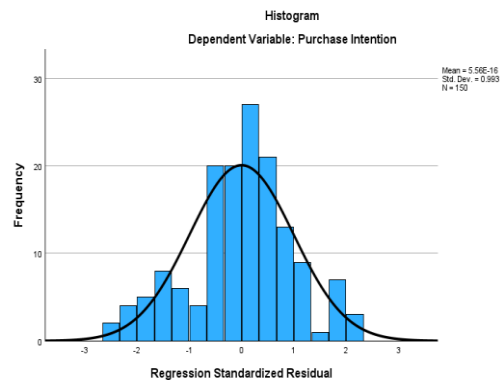
Overall, the reliability results provide strong support for proceeding with further statistical analysis, as the measurement scales are proven to be consistent and suitable for hypothesis testing.

Classical Assumption Test

a. Normality Test

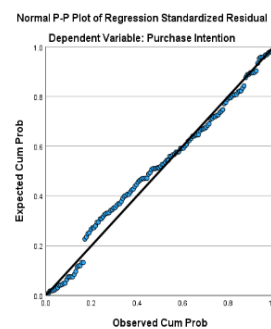
To ensure the validity of the regression analysis, a normality test was conducted to examine whether the residuals are normally distributed. The assessment of normality was carried out using both graphical approaches, namely the histogram and the Normal Probability–Probability (P–P) Plot. The results indicate that the distribution of residuals approximates a normal distribution, as evidenced by the symmetrical shape of the histogram and the clustering of data points along the diagonal line in the P–P Plot.

These findings confirm that the data in this study meet the assumption of normality, thereby satisfying one of the key prerequisites for multiple linear regression analysis. The results of the normality test are presented in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**.



Source: SPSS output (2026)

Figure 2. Histogram



Source: SPSS output (2026)

Figure 3. Normal P-P Plot

b. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is conducted to examine whether there is a high correlation among the independent variables in the regression model. Multicollinearity can distort the estimation of regression coefficients and reduce the reliability of statistical inferences. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the independent variables are not excessively correlated with each other.

In this study, multicollinearity is assessed using the Tolerance value and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). According to Okello (2024), a regression model is considered free from multicollinearity if the Tolerance value is greater than 0.10 and the VIF value is less than 10. These criteria indicate that each independent variable provides unique information in explaining the dependent variable.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Conclusion
Perceived Authenticity (X1)	0.641	1.560	No Multicollinearity
e-WOM (X2)	0.641	1.560	No Multicollinearity

Source: SPSS output (2026)

The results of the multicollinearity test indicate that the regression model is free from multicollinearity issues. This conclusion is supported by the Tolerance values of 0.641 for both independent variables, which are well above the minimum threshold of 0.10. Additionally, the VIF values for perceived authenticity and e-WOM are both 1.560, which are significantly below the critical value of 10.

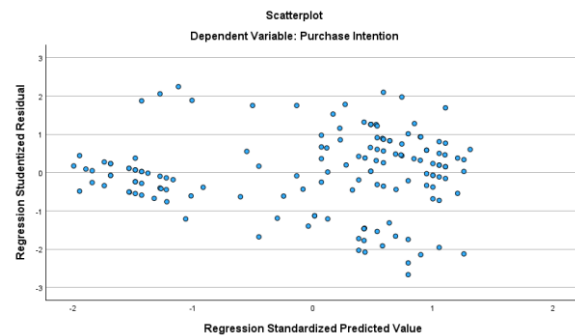
These findings suggest that there is no strong linear relationship between the independent variables, meaning that each variable contributes independently to explaining the variation in purchase intention. In other words, perceived authenticity and e-WOM capture distinct aspects of consumer evaluation and do not overlap excessively in the model.

From a methodological standpoint, the absence of multicollinearity ensures that the regression coefficients can be interpreted reliably and that the estimated effects of each independent variable are stable. This strengthens the validity of the subsequent hypothesis testing and supports the robustness of the overall regression model.

c. Heteroscedasticity Test

To ensure the robustness of the regression model, a heteroscedasticity test was conducted to examine whether the variance of the residuals remains constant across all levels of the independent variables. The presence of heteroscedasticity can lead to inefficient estimates and bias in hypothesis testing; therefore, it is important to verify that this assumption is satisfied (Okello, 2024).

In this study, heteroscedasticity is assessed using a scatterplot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values. A well-distributed pattern of residuals without a clear or systematic structure indicates the absence of heteroscedasticity. The result of this test is presented in **Figure 4**.



Source: SPSS output (2026)

Based on the scatterplot displayed in **Figure 4**, the distribution of residuals appears to be randomly scattered both above and below the horizontal axis, with no discernible pattern such as clustering, funnel shapes, or systematic trends. This indicates that the variance of the residuals is relatively constant across all levels of the predicted values.

These findings suggest that the regression model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity, meaning that the assumption of homoscedasticity has been satisfied. Consequently, the estimation results can be considered reliable and unbiased, allowing for valid interpretation of the regression coefficients and hypothesis testing.

From a critical perspective, the absence of heteroscedasticity strengthens the overall quality of the model, as it confirms that the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is stable across different levels of observation.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is employed in this study to examine the effect of more than one independent variable on a dependent variable simultaneously. This method allows researchers to estimate the magnitude and direction of relationships between variables while controlling for the influence of other predictors in the model. According to Pallant (2020), multiple regression is a robust statistical technique used to assess predictive relationships and determine the relative contribution of each independent variable in explaining the dependent variable.

In this study, multiple linear regression is used to analyze the influence of perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on purchase intention. The regression model is formulated to estimate how changes in the independent variables contribute to variations

in consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan.

Table 7. Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	4.446	1.297	—	3.429	0.000
Perceived Authenticity (X1)	0.536	0.080	0.540	6.709	0.000
e-WOM (X2)	0.137	0.087	0.126	1.571	0.118

Source: SPSS output (2026)

Based on the regression results presented in **Table 7**, the estimated regression equation can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Purchase Intention} = 4.446 + 0.536(\text{Perceived Authenticity}) + 0.137(\text{e-WOM})$$

The constant value of 4.446 indicates the baseline level of purchase intention when both independent variables are assumed to be zero. Although this value has limited practical interpretation, it serves as a reference point within the regression model.

The coefficient for perceived authenticity is 0.536, which indicates that an increase of one unit in perceived authenticity leads to an increase of 0.536 units in purchase intention, assuming other variables remain constant. This relationship is statistically significant, as indicated by the t-value of 6.709 and a significance level below 0.001. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient of 0.540 suggests that perceived authenticity has a strong and substantial influence on purchase intention.

In contrast, the coefficient for e-WOM is 0.137, indicating a positive but relatively weaker relationship with purchase intention. However, this effect is not statistically significant, as the significance value of 0.118 exceeds the threshold of 0.05. This implies that, within the context of this study, e-WOM does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention.

From a comparative perspective, perceived authenticity emerges as the dominant predictor in the model, as evidenced by its higher standardized beta coefficient and statistical significance. This finding suggests that consumers place greater emphasis on the intrinsic value and authenticity of local products rather than relying solely on external digital reviews or recommendations.

These results provide an important insight that, while digital communication channels are relevant, they may not be sufficient to drive purchase intention in the absence of strong authenticity perceptions. In other words, the effectiveness of e-WOM may depend on the underlying credibility and authenticity of the product itself.

Partial Test (t-test) / Hypothesis Testing Results

The t-test is conducted to examine the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. This test aims to determine whether each predictor individually has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention. According to [Okello \(2024\)](#), a variable is considered to have a significant effect if the significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05 and the calculated t-value exceeds the critical t-table value (t-table ≈ 1.976 for $n = 150$, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Effect of Perceived Authenticity on Purchase Intention (H1)

The statistical results show that perceived authenticity has a t-value of 6.709 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the t-value is greater than the t-table value ($6.709 > 1.976$) and the significance level is below 0.05, it can be concluded that perceived authenticity has a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase intention.

Therefore, **H1 is accepted**, indicating that higher perceived authenticity of local products in Balikpapan significantly increases consumers' intention to purchase.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding reinforces the importance of intrinsic product cues in shaping consumer behavior. Consumers tend to rely on signals of authenticity, such as cultural representation and product originality, when forming purchase decisions, particularly in the context of local products.

Effect of e-WOM on Purchase Intention (H2)

The results indicate that e-WOM has a t-value of 1.571 with a significance level of 0.118. Since the t-value is lower than the t-table value ($1.571 < 1.976$) and the significance level exceed 0.05, it can be concluded that e-WOM does not have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention.

Thus, **H2 is rejected**, meaning that electronic word-of-mouth does not significantly

influence consumers' purchase intention toward local products in this study.

Critically, this result challenges the common assumption that digital reviews and online recommendations always play a dominant role in shaping consumer decisions. In the context of local products in Balikpapan, consumers may prioritize direct product attributes and authenticity over external digital information. This suggests that e-WOM, while informative, may not be sufficiently persuasive unless it is supported by strong underlying product credibility.

Overall, the t-test results demonstrate that perceived authenticity is the only variable that significantly influences purchase intention, while e-WOM does not exhibit a significant direct effect. This indicates that consumer decision-making in this context is more strongly driven by internal evaluations of product authenticity rather than externally generated digital opinions.

Simultaneous Test (F-test)

The F-test is conducted to examine whether the independent variables simultaneously have a significant effect on the dependent variable. This test evaluates the overall fit of the regression model and determines whether perceived authenticity and e-WOM, when considered together, significantly explain variations in purchase intention. According to Hair et al. (2019), the model is considered statistically significant if the F-value exceeds the F-table value and the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.05.

Table 8. Simultaneous Test Results (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1009.720	2	504.860	46.879	0.000
Residual	1583.113	147	10.769	—	—
Total	2592.833	149	—	—	—

Source: SPSS output (2026)

Based on the results presented in **Table 8**, the regression model yields an F-value of 46.879 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance value is well below the threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that the independent variables—perceived authenticity and e-WOM—simultaneously have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention.

Therefore, **H3 is accepted**, indicating that the combined influence of perceived authenticity

and e-WOM significantly explains variations in consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan.

From a model evaluation perspective, this result confirms that the regression model is valid and has strong explanatory power. Although the partial test previously showed that e-WOM does not have a significant individual effect, the simultaneous test reveals that its presence, together with perceived authenticity, contributes to the overall model significance.

Critically, this finding suggests a nuanced interpretation: while e-WOM may not independently drive purchase intention, it may still play a complementary role within a broader decision-making framework. In other words, consumers' purchase decisions are not shaped by a single factor, but rather by the combined influence of internal perceptions (authenticity) and external information (e-WOM).

This reinforces the idea that marketing strategies for local products should not rely solely on digital promotion, but must also strengthen the core authenticity of the product to maximize consumer response.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination (R²) is used to measure the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables included in the regression model. This statistic provides an indication of the model's explanatory power and its ability to predict the outcome variable. According to Okello (2024), a higher R² value indicates a better fit of the model, although it should be interpreted in relation to the research context and the number of predictors used.

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.624	0.389	0.381	3.282

Source: SPSS output (2026)

Based on **Table 9**, the R Square value is 0.389, which indicates that 38.9% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by perceived authenticity and e-WOM. Meanwhile, the remaining 61.1% is influenced by other variables not included in this research model.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.381 suggests a slight adjustment to the explanatory

power when considering the number of independent variables and sample size. This value confirms that the model maintains a moderate level of explanatory capability even after adjustment.

From a statistical perspective, an R^2 value of 0.389 can be categorized as moderate, indicating that while the model provides meaningful insights, it does not fully capture all determinants of purchase intention. This is reasonable given the complexity of consumer behavior, which is often influenced by multiple psychological, social, and contextual factors beyond authenticity and e-WOM.

Critically, this finding highlights an important limitation and opportunity for future research. Variables such as brand trust, perceived value, price perception, and cultural attachment may play a significant role in shaping purchase intention, particularly in the context of local products. Therefore, expanding the model with additional predictors could enhance its explanatory power and provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making.

Discussion

The Effect of Perceived Authenticity on Purchase Intention

The findings of this study reveal that perceived authenticity has a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase intention. This result indicates that consumers in Balikpapan are more likely to develop purchase intentions when they perceive local products as genuine, culturally meaningful, and produced through trustworthy processes.

This phenomenon can be explained through signaling theory, where authenticity functions as a credible internal signal that reduces uncertainty and enhances consumer confidence in product quality. In the context of local products, authenticity is not merely a product attribute but also a symbolic representation of cultural identity and heritage. As a result, consumers tend to associate authentic products with higher emotional and functional value, which ultimately drives their purchase intention.

This finding is consistent with prior studies that emphasize the importance of authenticity in influencing consumer behavior. For instance, recent research has demonstrated that perceived authenticity significantly enhances consumer trust and purchase intention, particularly in the context

of local and culturally embedded products (e.g., [Napoli et al., 2014](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2021](#)). However, this study extends the literature by providing empirical evidence from a developing local market context, specifically Balikpapan, where authenticity appears to play a dominant role in shaping consumer decisions.

From a critical standpoint, this result suggests that authenticity operates as a primary decision heuristic in situations where consumers seek meaningful and trustworthy consumption experiences. This implies that local producers should prioritize maintaining product originality, cultural relevance, and transparency in production processes to strengthen consumer perceptions and increase market competitiveness.

The Effect of e-WOM on Purchase Intention

Interestingly, the results indicate that e-WOM does not have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention. This finding contradicts a large body of literature that highlights the influential role of online reviews and digital communication in shaping consumer decisions.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy lies in the contextual nature of the study. In the case of local products in Balikpapan, consumers may rely more on direct product experience, cultural familiarity, and intrinsic product attributes rather than external digital information. Unlike branded or high-risk products, local products are often perceived as low-risk and familiar, reducing the need for extensive online validation.

Another explanation is related to the credibility of e-WOM itself. Not all online information is perceived as trustworthy, especially in environments where fake reviews or promotional content are prevalent. As a result, consumers may discount e-WOM unless it is supported by strong authenticity cues. This aligns with recent studies suggesting that the effectiveness of e-WOM depends heavily on source credibility and perceived trustworthiness ([Dash et al \(2025\)](#); [Manda et al. \(2026\)](#)).

From a theoretical perspective, this finding challenges the assumption that e-WOM universally drives purchase intention. Instead, it suggests that the influence of e-WOM is conditional and context-dependent. In this study, e-WOM appears to play a secondary or complementary role rather than acting as a primary driver of consumer behavior.

This insight offers a significant contribution to the literature by highlighting the limitations of digital influence in certain market contexts. It also opens avenues for future research to explore moderating variables such as trust, product involvement, or cultural attachment.

The Simultaneous Effect of Perceived Authenticity and e-WOM on Purchase Intention

The simultaneous test results indicate that perceived authenticity and e-WOM jointly have a significant effect on purchase intention. This suggests that although e-WOM does not have a significant individual effect, it still contributes to the overall explanatory power of the model when combined with perceived authenticity.

This finding reflects a more holistic consumer decision-making process, where internal and external information sources interact in shaping purchase intention. Perceived authenticity provides a foundational belief about the product, while e-WOM may serve as a reinforcing mechanism that validates or complements this perception.

From a signaling perspective, authenticity can be viewed as a firm-generated signal, whereas e-WOM represents a consumer-generated signal (Connelly et al., 2011). The interaction between these signals creates a more comprehensive evaluation framework for consumers. When authenticity is strong, even a relatively weak e-WOM influence can still enhance the overall perception of the product.

This result contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the effectiveness of e-WOM should not be evaluated in isolation. Instead, its role should be understood within a broader ecosystem of consumer perception, where intrinsic and extrinsic cues jointly shape behavioral outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several important theoretical contributions. First, it reinforces the relevance of signaling theory in explaining consumer behavior, particularly in the context of local products. The findings confirm that internal signals such as authenticity are more influential than external signals like e-WOM in certain contexts.

Second, this study challenges the dominant narrative in digital marketing literature that positions e-WOM as a universally strong

predictor of purchase intention. By demonstrating its non-significant effect, this research introduces a boundary condition for the applicability of e-WOM theory.

Third, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on local products and cultural consumption by highlighting the central role of authenticity in emerging markets. It suggests that consumer decision-making in such contexts is driven more by meaning and identity than by purely informational cues.

Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide clear strategic direction for local product businesses in Balikpapan. First, producers should focus on strengthening the authenticity of their products by emphasizing originality, cultural identity, and transparency in production processes. These elements are proven to significantly influence consumer purchase intention.

Second, while e-WOM should not be ignored, businesses should not rely solely on digital marketing strategies. Instead, they should ensure that the product itself delivers authentic value, as this serves as the foundation for all other marketing efforts.

Third, policymakers and local governments can support the development of authentic local products by promoting cultural heritage, providing certification for authenticity, and encouraging storytelling strategies that highlight the uniqueness of local products.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusion

This study examines the influence of perceived authenticity and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on consumers' purchase intention toward local products in Balikpapan. The findings reveal that perceived authenticity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, confirming that consumers place substantial importance on product originality, cultural representation, and trustworthiness when making purchasing decisions.

In contrast, e-WOM does not demonstrate a significant direct effect on purchase intention. This result suggests that, within the context of local products, consumers are less dependent on external digital information and more influenced

by intrinsic product attributes. However, the simultaneous test indicates that both variables collectively contribute to the model, highlighting that consumer decision-making is shaped by a combination of internal perceptions and external information.

Overall, this study underscores that authenticity is the primary driver of purchase intention, while the role of e-WOM is conditional and complementary rather than dominant.

Limitation

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the explanatory power of the model is moderate, indicating that a substantial portion of purchase intention is influenced by variables not included in this study. Factors such as trust, perceived value, brand image, and emotional attachment may also play critical roles.

Second, the study is limited to a single geographic context, namely Balikpapan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or product categories. Consumer behavior toward local products may vary depending on cultural, economic, and social conditions.

Third, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to capture changes in consumer perceptions over time. As consumer behavior is dynamic, longitudinal approaches may provide deeper insights.

Future Research

Future studies are encouraged to expand the research model by incorporating additional variables that may better explain purchase intention, such as brand trust, perceived value, and cultural attachment. Including these factors could improve the explanatory power of the model and provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior.

Moreover, future research should explore potential moderating or mediating variables, particularly those related to trust and consumer involvement, to examine the conditions under which e-WOM becomes more influential.

Comparative studies across different regions or types of local products are also recommended to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, employing longitudinal or mixed-method approaches could provide richer insights into how consumer perceptions evolve over time.

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