

Virtual ethnography of electronic word of mouth as a marketing enhancement

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Virtual Ethnography; Digital Marketing; Coffee Culture; Social-Media; Ethnography Communication.</p> <p>How to cite: Rochmana, S.D., Winarti, O., Kusuma, A., Nurhaqiqi, H., Achmad, Z.A., Bergerat, A.C. (2022). Virtual ethnography of electronic word of mouth as a marketing enhancement. <i>Etnosia: Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia</i>, 7(1): 51 – 66.</p> <p>DOI: 10.31947/etnosia.v7i1.21060</p>	<p>Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) is a form of promotion in the digital era by distributing and sharing visual content about a brand or product informally without commercial influence. This study aims to understand the enhancement of e-WoM as a promotional medium by the coffee blogger account @cafehittsurabaya. This study uses a qualitative research method with a virtual ethnographic approach. Researchers are participative and involved in e-WoM activities on @cafehittsurabaya. Data collection using virtual searches and online interviews via WhatsApp with eight informants, namely the owner of the @cafehittsurabaya account and seven active followers. The study results show that e-WoM helps disseminate visual content related to opinions, reviews, and recommendations for various coffee shops by @cafehittsurabaya so that it impacts promotions and encourages buying decisions for potential consumers. Furthermore, @cafehittsurabaya enhances e-WoM by interacting and discussing with followers as opinion seekers. This study concludes that the e-WoM process has become an effective promotional medium, forming a new culture of Instagram users to share their love for the tradition of drinking coffee and various coffees and delivering criticism and praise to different coffee shops.</p>

1. Introduction

Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) is a new form of word of mouth (WoM) marketing that developed before the advent of the internet era (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). E-WoM has now shifted the role of WoM, with the involvement of the internet and social media as channels to facilitate the search or delivery of information related to product and service reviews and opinions (Shannon & Chantavoraluk, 2019). One of the causes of the rapid development of e-WoM is a more interactive communication media platform for disseminating information (Hifziati, 2017). Some argue that e-WoM is a form of viral

marketing communication because the internet is used to transmit information by stimulating audiences to make purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The internet is like a highway, while the vehicles used to deliver e-WoM are various social media communication platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok. Social media as an online platform is optimized as an e-WoM channel for searching, disseminating information and reviews from entrepreneurs to consumers and from consumers to consumerism (Jalilvand, Esfahani, & Samiei, 2011). Electronic word of mouth is part of the elements of social media marketing (Al-Khinji, 2020). In the concept of e-WoM, for the sake of viral marketing communications, messages or content that will be uploaded to social media should be carefully designed. The success of e-WoM can be directed according to the scenario and design of the communicator. The role of social media in marketing has undergone a shift because it has made consumers part of marketers. Social media can create positive or negative pressure on companies and their products, depending on the presentation of the company's quality and the products sold (Qurniawati, 2018). As a consequence of social media marketing is a shift in the relationship between companies and consumers. Consumers can also give voice to companies or products, and they can connect, collaborate, and produce content (Mas'udah, Achmad, Chayani, Multazam, & Putra, 2021; Rahman, Tranggono, & Achmad, 2021). The principle of e-WoM content *by design* is that content created by users or consumers tends to be more trusted and significantly influences purchasing decisions (Sharma & Verma, 2018)

The most popular social media currently used as an e-WoM tool is Instagram. Apart from being cost-effective, Instagram provides a means of self-expression and communication through unique and creative visual content (Arviani, Candrasari, Rahmadillah, & Priambodo, 2020). In Indonesian, Instagram is the most popular social media and the most accessed by internet users (Mailanto, 2016). Even since its launch in 2010, Instagram has been the fourth favorite social media platform globally (Dean, 2021). Instagram facilitates the e-WoM process in messaging, engaging consumer relations, and building social bonds among users (Dijck, 2013).

Individual consumers are intentionally actively involved in being part of a voluntary promotion, which is to change and influence other individuals who interact with them (Goyette et al., 2010, Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Because each consumer is a member of a networked society, of course, e-WoM can connect a wide variety of widely dispersed consumers on the Internet (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009). These relationships are social interactions through chat, virtual forums, and social networks (Candrasari, 2019; Khelsea, Achmad, Tranggono, & Claretta, 2021; Safitri et al., 2022). Then utilized by various businesses of various scales, from MSMEs to the manufacturing industry. One of the new trends rooted in Indonesian traditions that are the target of e-WoM is the culture of drinking coffee (*ngopi*). To strengthen the love of Indonesians for Indonesian coffee, many coffee bloggers enhance e-WoM techniques by creating different content and reviews about coffee. They have a non-commercial orientation and prioritizes the formation of social bonds among coffee lovers.

Coffee bloggers encourage the reform of coffee drinking culture so that it becomes a new way of life for modern society (Gardjito & Rahadian, 2016). The reformation of drinking coffee culture causes the increasing growth of coffee shops in Indonesia. Coffee shops do not only serve coffee drinks; they are creative in offering comfortable locations with unique concepts, attractive interior designs, and various themes (such as tropical, art, rustic, and colorful) (Fauzi, 2019; Oktaviani, 2018). Based on data from the Ministry of Industry, as of August 2019, there are more than 2,950 coffee shops in Indonesia on a local to international scale (Kemenperin, 2020). Surabaya has a variety of coffee shops with the highest growth in East Java. Based on data from the Indonesian Cafe and Restaurant Entrepreneurs Association (APKRINDO) East Java, the development of coffee shops in Surabaya has increased by 16-18 percent per year (Putra, 2019).

The growth of coffee shops in Surabaya shows the increasing number of consumers who need coffee. As a result, the coffee shop business is experiencing increased competition. Competition between coffee shops gives opportunities for coffee bloggers in a more professional working manner. When they get involved in this coffee shop business competition, the orientation of the coffee bloggers become undoubtedly different. In the early days of the emergence of coffee bloggers, their work orientation was more non-commercial. Apparently, the business competition among coffee shops encourage coffee bloggers to work more seriously, professionally, and profit orientation.

Meanwhile, coffee shops can not only rely on internal promotions or through their own Instagram accounts because they are less efficient to reach potential consumers. It is hard for new coffee shops with a less strategic location and less budget to introduce their brands to netizen. Besides having a few followers, they have less budget to buy advertising. The most efficient promotional tools with rational budget is enhancing e-WoM on Instagram, to inform products, introduce brands, showcase interiors, excel in services, increase the purchases, and increase prospective consumers (Isa Mulyadi & Zuhri, 2020).

Prospective consumers not only need to drink coffee but also need recommended places, references of menus, various promos, and valuable facilities in certain coffee shops. The need of coffee shops to be well known in accordance with the expertise of coffee bloggers. Coffee bloggers are accounts or sites where coffee experts manage to share knowledge, information, and recommendations about coffee (Yuliandri, 2015). They have various information, ranging from coffee tools, types of coffee, history of coffee, the development of the coffee industry, to coffee shop recommendations. Specifically, a coffee blogger could provide information about certain coffee shops by giving reviews about taste, location, and price.

In the e-WoM perspective, coffee bloggers are external sources that act as opinion leaders in finding and disseminating information by utilizing the Instagram platform as communication facilitators. On the other side, the involvement of coffee blogger followers as opinion seekers can build a new reality in cyberspace through various activities and interactions that become an essential factor in the formation of e-WoM on Instagram. The involvement between coffee bloggers and their followers on Instagram is a form of collaboration that can provide good influences and mutual benefits.

The subject in this study is the coffee blogger account @cafehittsurabaya¹ which has more than 29,304 followers with a total of 416 posts about the ins and outs of coffee. This account is fascinating to research because it becomes a reference for recommendations and reviews about coffee shops in Surabaya and Sidoarjo. The coffee blogger @cafehittsurabaya, as an opinion leader so that citizens easy to find references for coffee drinking places. This study aims to understand the enhancement of e-WoM by the @cafehittsurabaya to promote coffee shops on Instagram. The researchers tracked digital marketing through content uploads, hashtags (#), mentions (@), and interactions carried out by @cafehittsurabaya.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a virtual ethnographic approach. Virtual ethnography is a method that comprehensively reveals and describes all subject interactions in the virtual world (Hine, 2000). Virtual ethnography describes interactions, subject experiences, and social phenomena in the virtual world and explores the meaning and records the transformation of the subject's digital life with the development of communication technology (Achmad & Ida, 2018; Achmad, Ida, & Mustain, 2020; Wahyuningtyas, Kusuma, Febrianita, & Achmad, 2021). Virtual ethnography as an approach that has the power to change traditional ways of knowing phenomena and reality by understanding new experiences and interactions at place and time in the virtual world (Angelone, 2018).

Data collection takes place online by (1) tracking uploaded content (feeds, stories, reels, highlights) and interactions (comments, questions, and answers) in the @cafehittsurabaya account. (2) online interviews via Direct Message and WhatsApp chat with informants, namely admin @cafehittsurabaya and followers @cafehittsurabaya. All data collection aims to map and categorize e-WoM interactions. Researchers involved participatively as followers of @cafehittsurabaya using the account @sunnahdwi² and @abidinzachro³.

The total number of informants in this study is eight accounts, those are:

No	Name of Account	Link	Remarks
1	@stvmrph	https://instagram.com/stvmrph	owner of @cafehittsurabaya
2	@novsyahh	https://instagram.com/novsyahh	Follower
3	@dellaarc	https://www.instagram.com/dellaarc	Follower
4	@annaskholif	https://instagram.com/annaskholif	Follower
5	@nellaaprililia	https://instagram.com/nellaaprililia	Follower
6	@silmamoo	https://www.instagram.com/silmamoo	Follower
7	@maroturr	https://instagram.com/maroturr ,	Follower
8	@erikazulya	https://instagram.com/erikazulya .	Follower

We interview with admin @cafehittsurabaya to find out motivation, how to create content related to reviews, recommendations, opinions of various coffee shops in

¹ <https://www.instagram.com/cafehittsurabaya/>

² <https://instagram.com/sunnahdwi>

³ <https://www.instagram.com/abidinzachro/>

Surabaya, and admin interactions with followers. While interviewing followers @cafehittsurabaya to find out the motivation, discussion themes, responses, comments, and responses to @cafehittsurabaya content uploads. Unit of analysis in this study using visual text through content uploads (text, pictures, photos, and videos) and interview readers (Direct Message and WhatsApp chat) to find out the process and involvement of informants in e-WoM and promotional activities on the coffee blogger account @cafehittsurabaya. Researchers analyzed the actions and interactions generated by uploading content in likes, comments, captions, mentions, and tagging.

3. Results and Discussion

- **The Effectiveness e-WoM on the @cafehittsurabaya account**

In the past, word of mouth (WoM) has become a reliable tool to search and deliver information, and is most widely used by individuals regarding brands or products (Dellarocas, 2003). In general, word of mouth is not only to search and to deliver information about brands and products but also to process and to form opinions through reviews of brands, products, and services (Jalilvand et al., 2011). The essential condition for promoting word of mouth is that communicators and recipients of the messages are not under the commercial influence for profit. Both communicators and the recipients act as an independent (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Word of mouth influenced individual behaviors and decisions about a brand or product effectively in the past. Individuals easily trust any sources of information by word of mouth and direct social interaction (Hifziati, 2017). Over time, the advantages of word of mouth are still not optimal, especially in terms of speed and ease of obtaining information retrieval and dissemination (Huete-Alcocer, 2017).

Through the presence of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) as a new form of digital marketing, the dissemination information about the quality and specifications of products (and brands) experienced a significant change in terms of area coverage and individual affection. E-WoM can cover a wider marketing area and a larger number of affected individuals by using social media and internet. E-WoM is a means of communicating brand or product information in more detail by reviewing information advantages, specifications, product qualities, brand characteristics to get suitability of the psychographic factors and the uniqueness of potential consumers. The information exchange process in e-WoM happens dynamically, interactively, massively, continuously, efficiently, effectively, and limitless (Ismagilova, Dwivedi, Slade, & Williams, 2017).

There are two types of electronic word of mouth sources, namely external and internal sources. External sources in e-WoM are parties outside the company and parties unrelated to the brand or product, voluntarily sharing and disseminating information about the brand or product. Meanwhile, internal sources in e-WoM are parties from within a brand or product company whose sole purpose is to increase sales and only focus on one brand or product (Oh, Baek, & Ahn, 2015). External and internal sources have the same role in e-WoM, namely opinion leaders (Shannon & Chantavoraluk, 2019). Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) is a new cyberculture that arises from the

relationship between humans and technological intermediaries. This culture is produced, disseminated, and consumed through the internet and the network created among users (Hifziati, 2017). E-WoM on Instagram is very easy and can give users the freedom to create, share, and consume the things they love.

E-WoM as a digital marketing strategy on social media is currently more reliable and trusted as an information provider than advertising in traditional media. It is more dynamic, trustworthy, interactive, and cheaper than advertising in traditional media in general (Goyette et al., 2010). Coffee blogger @cafehittsurabaya has realized the form of e-WoM in promotion on social media, mainly Instagram. For this reason, since getting to know the e-WoM technique, @cafehittsurabaya has tried to optimize its resources to impress by uploading content like e-WoM (Goyette et al., 2010).

"...e-WoM at @cafehittsurabaya is not just about disseminating and sharing information; promotional activities in e-WoM involve the role of followers. They are potential customers and former consumers. Potential consumers can be encouraged to make purchases. Former consumers generally act voluntarily to take an active role in virtual discussions, which can directly influence potential consumers who read our discussions." (Interview @stvmrph, 26 February 2022).

Promotional activities in e-WoM are more trusted and can encourage potential consumers to be stronger to decide on a purchase, especially when e-WoM is delivered or carried out by external parties (coffee bloggers) who are outside the company (coffee shops) or do not have ownership linkage. The coffee blogger @cafehittsurabaya gives several recommendations and reviews to make potential consumers, especially followers, easier to obtain some information regarding the choice of coffee shops to visit.

"...As far as I know, this @cafehittsurabaya account shares information about various coffee shops in Surabaya and Sidoarjo through attractive visual content, persuasive words, accompanied by objective and complete information from addresses, menus to average prices at some of those coffee shops." (Interview @novsyahh, 22 February 2022).

The @cafehittsurabaya account was created on August 17, 2020, and currently has more than 29 thousand followers with a total of 406 posts. Based on virtual searches conducted by researchers from November 2021 to February 2022, @cafehittsurabaya followers continued to increase, from 26,000 in four months to 29,304 followers. Any posting or upload of contents from @cafehittsurabaya are visual contents, including photos, videos, and texts, through reels, feeds, hits, IGTV, and stories. Even though it has only been about two years since the @cafehittsurabaya created, the engagement rate is relatively high. The engagement rate on Instagram is an indicator that shows how high the interaction between an account and followers or other Instagram users is. The engagement rate is the amount of the acquisition of likes and comments in a period and it can be used as a benchmark to see its looks, efficiency, and performance through an account in social media marketing (Yew, Suhaidi, Seewoochurn, & Sevamalai, 2018). The analysis using the analysis.io website displays the number of @cafehittsurabaya engagement rates, like rates, and comment rates. The following are the results obtained by the researchers (figure 1).

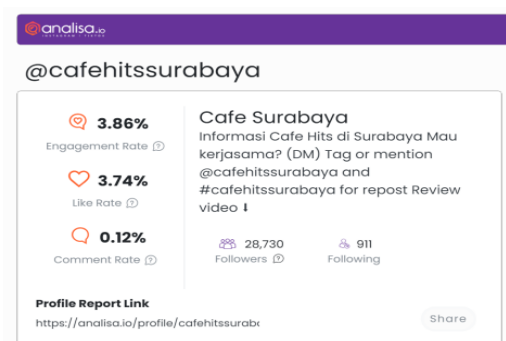


Figure 1: Average rate results @cafehittsurabaya

It is known that the engagement rate of @cafehittsurabaya is at 3.86%, while the likes rate is 3.74%, and the comment rate is 0.12%. In the calculation, the percentage of engagement rate, like rate, and comment rate categorizes low if it is less than 1%, categorizes average if it is 1% to 3.5%. Meanwhile, it categorizes high if it is at 3.5% to 6% and categorizes very high if the rate is more than 6%. Figure 1 shows that the engagement rate and likes rate of @cafehittsurabaya are in the high category, with numbers showing more than 3.5%. Furthermore, the comment rate for @cafehittsurabaya is still in the low category.

- **e-WoM @cafehittsurabaya and Drinking Coffee Culture Reform**

Enhancement of e-WoM in the @cafehittsurabaya account is a phenomenon of new support for drinking coffee culture reform. The phenomenon is influenced by the fact of shifting tradition in drinking coffee. Apparently, consumers are more interested in choosing a modern place to drink coffee with the name "café" or "coffee shop" which indicates a different level of social status and lifestyle compared to *warung kopi* (Putra, 2019). The *warung kopi* come from Javanese language which is a traditional name of coffee shop.

"... The name of a cafe or coffee shop is more of a differentiator for social status and lifestyle. A *warung kopi*, a *café*, or a coffee shop, they all sell coffee drinks. A kind of variant of coffee shops types. It only becomes different when, for example, I plan to meet up with friends or acquaintances, then mention the destination is a coffee shop or cafe. Of course, it will affect the way we dress" (Interview @maroturr, 24 February 2022).

This study names the phenomenon of shifting drinking coffee traditions as drinking coffee culture reform. Drinking coffee culture reform is not only marked by the physical presence of coffee shops and cafes, but also by the provision of a predicate or a *café* name and coffee shops affect the design of the place, the naming of menus, the appearance of waiters, and the equipment of coffee maker. For example, a coffee shop is improbable to provide a coffee grinder, drip coffee maker, espresso coffee machine, blender, juicer, and cash register. But, a *warung kopi* does not need to use and perform that equipment.

The drinking coffee culture reform has strengthened the position of coffee blogger accounts which providing recommendations and reviews related to coffee and various coffee shops. One of which coffee blogger account is @cafehittsurabaya. Since its inception, @cafehittsurabaya using e-WoM techniques has overgrown in line with the development of coffee culture reform.

"...I set up @cafehittsurabaya account, based on my hobbies of photography and traveling. At least my ability in the field of photography is an initial preparation to create and process this @cafehittsurabaya coffee blogger account. My main goal is to make @cafehittsurabaya as a virtual place and reference for many people to look for recommendations of coffee shops, cafes, and any places to hang out while enjoying coffee for young people. In addition, I intend to promote the coffee shop in Surabaya to survive this COVID-19 pandemic. At least, I can contribute to improving the community's economy with my ability" (interview @stvmrph, 26 February 2022).

Since promotional materials that contain product specifications in written form, such as catalogs, are not enough; audiovisual materials are needed to impact potential consumers (Ferguson & Greer, 2018). @cafehittsurabaya provide many products and brands reviews in a form of audiovisual to get more influence to netizens than text. Products and brands reviews delivered to netizens in the form of recommendations, opinions, or comments made by @cafehittsurabaya as outside part of the owner products. Those promotional form through social media becoming a digital marketing trend today (Akbar, Khotimah, Pasolo, & Labo, 2019). @cafehittsurabaya chose this position (outside part of coffee shop) to make followers easy to get complete information about various coffee shops through audiovisual content.

"...In my opinion, the information presented by @cafehittsurabaya is too detailed; this is fun. Just imagine, in addition to explaining the location, menu prices, quality of taste, halal certificate, this account goes into detail explaining the strength of the wi-fi connection, how fast it is, where to put the socket, and the practice of putting the laptop on the table, so we know how comfortable and how cozy it is if we visit the coffee shop" (Interview @annaskholif, March 1, 2022).

"...I like the content of @cafehittsurabaya the most which shows the corners of the room, from the front, side, inside, back, to the toilet. Then take a close look at the shape of the chairs, tables, lamps, floor details, and the overall theme of the coffee shop. Visualization of the atmosphere is a consideration for followers like me. So, I can choose and decide where to hang out, adjust my needs to do college assignments or just hang out and invite friends to look for instagramable photo spots" (Interview @dellaarc, 25 February 2022).

- **E-WoM Content Management Strategy at @cafehittsurabaya**

Digital marketing is necessary for business people in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. Online business development makes the internet the most practical and ideal business tool (Juliswara, 2019). For this reason, uploading audiovisual content on @cafehittsurabaya is not instantly, casually, and carelessly process. Each step of content production designed with severe planning as a teamwork. Everyone involves in the process as if actors in online business. In the context of digital marketing, the owner realizes that the position of @cafehittsurabaya is to role as a content producer, as a communicator, and as an opinion leader.

As an opinion leader in e-WoM, @cafehittsurabaya can influence the decisions of others. The understanding of the role makes @cafehittsurabaya strive to present audiovisual content as facts. Result in occurrence is the information become reputable, objective, and honest. The objective facts have a significant value in a marketing promotion strategy (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). By giving true and honest information in e-WoM, will elevate the trust of potential consumers and increase the credibility of

@cafehittsurabaya. Eventually it can encourage potential consumers to make buying decisions (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

In the preparation step, the @cafehittsurabaya team collected data and information from a certain coffee shop before designing the audiovisual content. @cafehittsurabaya collects data by visiting the coffee shop directly to conduct in-depth interviews with current business owners, managers, employees, and visitors. Interviews with visitors took place spontaneously. Collecting data and information becomes material for making scripts or narratives. It becomes the basis for shooting and taping videos in the next visit. As a complement to the information, @cafehittsurabaya visited the account of a certain coffee shop. Then the @cafehittsurabaya team browses the Instagram stories of the followers and some influencers who have visited the coffee shop account. Furthermore, @cafehittsurabaya designed e-WoM by presenting data and information about coffee shops in the form of audiovisual content on Instagram as objective facts.

The @cafehittsurabaya team also divides tasks into management accounts, including graphic design, content layout, question and answer service, photographer, videographer, editor, and scriptwriter. The division of tasks according to expertise aims to serve followers to obtain satisfaction.

"...I like the coffee shop review by @cafehittsurabaya because they delivered messages in an informal way, the tone is dynamic, and the talent is interactive. I had experienced in following the Q&A highlights; the admin was fun, and the answers were polite. The response was fast too. So, it is like chatting with close friends" (Interview @nellaaprillia, March 3, 2022).

Based on the findings on the e-WoM content management strategy for coffee shop promotion by @cafehittsurabaya, the researchers divided those strategy into three dimensions: intensity, the valence of opinion, and content (Goyette et al., 2010). Intensity is related to the number of reviews or the frequency of uploads by @cafehittsurabaya. The valence of opinion relates to the management of the direction of opinions and comments of followers, both positive and negative. The content refers to the type of upload about the coffee shop.

The intensity of the content upload by admin @cafehittsurabaya does not have limit number of uploads per day. Uploading Instagram stories content and reels is very often to convince followers and know the lack of material that needs to be fixed. Uploading content on the feed was selectively chose from some stories and improves from the existing stock of material, if necessary, to get additional information from fellow influencers. The intensity of uploading feeds and videos on @cafehittsurabaya is once a week. There is a content upload of recommendations or reviews from a coffee shop in Surabaya and Sidoarjo.

By enhancing e-WoM, @cafehittsurabaya team can managed the direction of opinions and comments from followers into positive. The strategy starts with writing post captions (story, reels, feeds) using persuasive sentences that can reduce the potential for negative comments from followers. Some influencer accounts or influential followers will start comments containing personal arguments that gave a positive recommendation and got a positive response quickly from admin @cafehittsurabaya.



Figure 2: One of the posts on the @cafehittsurabaya feeds

The types of content uploaded as e-WoM in @cafehittsurabaya include information about: the location and quality of place, the taste of food and drinks, menu variations, prices offered, and available facilities. The e-WoM content lays in Instagram in the form of feeds, story, highlights, reels, and IG guides. The following explanation is about content placement at @cafehittsurabaya. First, the visual content of images in feeds section, consists of a collection of photos about buildings, designs, vibes, food, and drinks from the coffee shop. Image posting in feed section photos always consist of several slides and captions with descriptions and or explanations. In addition, the caption for each content posting in @cafehittsurabaya always includes approximately 31 hashtags (figure 2). The use of hashtags is to categorize a content posting; and it makes easier for netizens to find the specific posting category (Wicaksono & Wahyuni, 2021).

Second, content uploading in Instagram stories section of @cafehittsurabaya contains information about a promotion or event in a certain coffee shop, congratulations cards or success flyer on the grand opening or birthday of a certain coffee shop (figure 3). In addition, through the Instagram story, @cafehittsurabaya often repost some feeds or story posts from followers who have mentioned @cafehittsurabaya.



Figure 3: One of the stories related to "Promo Morning Deals"

Third, highlights section on @cafehittsurabaya categorizes information of coffee shops based on the part of Surabaya city, such as West Surabaya, East Surabaya, South Surabaya, North Surabaya, and Central Surabaya. This categorization helps followers to find recommendation about the intended coffee shop easier, based on the distance. In addition, there are several highlights, such as a collection of Questions and Answers (Q&A) with followers, information about promotions, and events reminders. Fourth, reels section in @cafehittsurabaya delivers in the form of edited video clips and music. There are 27 content uploads in the reels section of @cafehittsurabaya account, with a total view of about 30,000 and a maximum of 53,000 views. Fifth, there are eight guides in IG Guides on @cafehittsurabaya. Each guide contains different information based on specific recommendation categories. Such as, a group of several coffee shops that provide live music, ten cafe hits in central Surabaya, and a collection of photos uploaded by @cafehittsurabaya followers. The photos from a certain coffee shop shows to the netizens that a specific coffee shop have some Instagramable photo spot references. IG Guides is the same as a collection of articles uploaded on a blog; the difference is that netizens can access IG Guides via Instagram and the account profile page.

As an e-WoM opinion leader, @cafehittsurabaya needs to interact with followers to build information credibility. The credibility of the communicator can influence information credibility. Information credibility supports the success of social media marketing through collaboration of opinion leaders with followers to maintain good relations. Both parties (@cafehittsurabaya's admin and followers) build a good relation and interaction through the post comment column, direct message (DM), and Instagram story. In the comment column, @cafehittsurabaya's admin always replies to the followers' comments on posts. The followers' comments consist of reviews about coffee shops, sharing content by mentioning other relatives, and comments about questions about certain coffee shops. The following is the activity of giving admin responses and responses to followers in the comment column (figure 4).



Figure 4: Display of followers' comments reviews

Through virtual ethnographic search, this study identified the interaction between followers and @cafehittsurabaya through Instagram direct messages (DM). Some followers sent messages to ask for information about certain coffee shops or ask for recommendations for coffee shops in certain areas. Interaction by replying the followers' questions or statements is a form of virtual social relations. Parties involved in a virtual social interaction then shaped a virtual community (Achmad, Arviani, & Santoso, 2021; Wahyuningtyas et al., 2021). The @cafehittsurabaya's admin also interact with followers through Instagram story by utilizing several tools such as question boxes, polls, and quizzes. The followers have motives to interact on the @cafehittsurabaya account. The most dominant reason is to get information, references, and recommendations for coffee shops in Surabaya that are newest, unique, and as needed. While others are to satisfy themselves of seeing the interior of a coffee shop and to capture moment in a good circumstance.

"...Apart from being a platform to find the latest cafe information, I can learn how to take aesthetic photo spots like in the @cafehittsurabaya post. I am delighted to see photos of unique interior designs of many coffee shops" (Interview @silmamoo, 2 March 2022).

"...The recommendation from @cafehittsurabaya make me easier to choose a good hangout place. The decision to select a place depends on the comfortable circumstance too, right? Fortunately, @cafehittsurabaya also provides information in detail about the price list menus. Such information avoids people from uncertainty and confuse to looking for information from Google to see prices and menu choices. Furthermore, some information in Google are incomplete and lacking in detail" (Interview @erikazulya, 28 February 2022).

The role of @cafehittsurabaya as an account for coffee shop recommendations in Surabaya get support from the followers. As a complete coffee blogger account, @cafehittsurabaya displays various information in detail which is helpful for netizens to make a choice.

"...@cafehittsurabaya is one of the most complete coffee shop recommendation accounts, in my opinion, from East to West Surabaya, informative from the place to menu prices, the appearance is also varied. The @cafehittsurabaya account, in my opinion, is a cool account that can take a loophole and know what people need because the coffee shop business is very popular right now. Then this account is like a breakthrough that is no less interesting than other food blogger accounts" (Interview @nellaaprillia, March 3, 2022)

- **The success of e-WoM with Volunteer Sharing**

The measure of the success of a promotion through e-WoM is the number of people getting exposure to the right information; and continues the willingness of those people to voluntarily share the correct information with several other people. This provision is a guideline for admin @cafehittsurabaya.

"...I believe, if we can provide complete, detailed, honest, and objective information to others. Of course, the person will voluntarily share this information with others. That is the word of mouth marketing, right? Just imagine, if the @cafehittsurabaya account has thousands of followers who trust our information, surely our data will go viral because

many followers are willing to share it voluntarily to other people. It could be a co-worker, a college theme, their family, or acquaintances” (Interview @stvmrph, 26 February 2022).



Figure 5: Content sharing activity via DM

The seven informants admitted to re-shared or forwarded information about coffee shops from @cafehittsurabaya to friends or relatives. Forwarding and sharing content @cafehittsurabaya usually through several ways: (1) via direct message personally, (2) copying the content link and sending it to WhatsApp, (3) sending screenshots of the content to the virtual group (figure 5). (4) mark mention or tagging in one of the content posts (figure 6).



Figure 6: One form of tagging content to another account

E-WoM activities by followers of @cafehittsurabaya about various coffee shop recommendations are increasingly widespread. The involvement of @cafehittsurabaya followers voluntarily in e-WoM, because of their high trust in information from @cafehittsurabaya which is objective, honest, and credible. The credibility of the information and recommendations from @cafehittsurabaya provides a direct visualization of the review content. The factual review content of a coffee shop provides certainty of information, so that many followers who have visited, provide supportive comments.

4. Conclusion

Virtual ethnography provides the ability to explore e-WoM enhancement by coffee blogger @cafehittsurabaya to promote many coffee shops in Surabaya with reviews and recommendations. @cafehittsurabaya consistently delivers informative, factual, and objective content uploads to followers and netizens. @cafehittsurabaya implements a strategy that meets the three dimensions of e-WoM, namely, intensity in the form of a high frequency of content uploads via Instagram story and reel, opinion valence by directing positive comments from followers through persuasive captions, uploaded content presenting various types of audiovisual information in the form of feeds, stories, highlights, reels and IG guides.

The e-WoM activity on the @cafehittsurabaya account shows a high level of interaction between @cafehittsurabaya as an opinion leader with followers and netizens. The interaction development takes place through conversations in the comments column, direct messages (DM), and Instagram stories. Followers are involved in e-WoM by forwarding and sharing @cafehittsurabaya content uploads to other Instagram users, through tagging or mentioning, sharing via direct messages, sharing via links to other social media and to various virtual groups.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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