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The Influence of Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Decisions to Join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. The research method used is quantitative with an associative approach. The research sample consisted of 91 respondents taken using simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, t-test, and F-test through IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 software. The results showed that all variables have a positive and significant influence. Partially, Instagram Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Decisions with t-count $10.337 > t\text{-table } 1.986$. Electronic Word of Mouth also shows a positive and significant partial influence with t-count $15.823 > t\text{-table } 1.986$. Simultaneously, both variables significantly influence customer decisions with F-count 125.104. The coefficient of determination (R Square) shows the contribution of independent variables of 74% in explaining Customer Decisions, while the remaining 26% is influenced by other factors. This proves that managing Instagram content and positive digital customer reviews is crucial in increasing interest in joining R.A.Q Studio Gym.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Instagram, Electronic Word of Mouth, Customer Decision, R.A.Q Studio Gym.

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the rapid flow of digitalization, consumer behavior no longer grows entirely in physical spaces but moves within virtual landscapes that increasingly determine how they recognize, assess, and choose a service. Social media has now become one of the initial entry points for consumers to build perceptions of a brand, including in the fitness industry. Potential customers not only come to the business location to see facilities directly but first browse visual posts, read comments, listen to testimonials, and compare other users'

experiences through digital spaces. In this context, R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang operates within a marketing ecosystem increasingly influenced by digital technology and online social interactions. APJII recorded that Indonesian internet users in 2024 reached 221.56 million with a penetration rate of 79.5%, while DataReportal reported that by the end of 2025 there were approximately 230 million internet users and 180 million social media user identities in Indonesia (APJII, 2024; DataReportal, 2026). This data shows that consumer decision-making processes are increasingly shaped by digital experiences before consumers take real action, including decisions to join a gym.

Along with the strengthening wave of digitalization, marketing no longer relies on one-way message delivery but has developed into a strategic process that demands closeness, engagement, and meaning creation between brands and consumers. Social media in this context not only serves as a publication tool but also as a space for brand identity representation, where companies build image, strengthen trust, and instill value perceptions in potential customers' minds. Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021) explain that social media marketing strategies need to be understood as an integrated process connecting company objectives, consumer behavior, digital interactions, and customer engagement outcomes. In this research context, Instagram Social Media Marketing can be viewed through four main indicators: visual content, interactivity, consistency, and educational value, referring to Tafesse and Wien's thinking. Visual content functions to present depictions of facilities, workout atmosphere, service quality, and R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang's visual identity. Interactivity reflects management's ability to build two-way communication through comments, direct messages, Q&A, and responses to potential customers' information needs. Consistency shows the regularity and alignment of messages conveyed so that brand image appears more alive, organized, and trustworthy. Meanwhile, educational value becomes an important element because content containing knowledge about exercise, healthy lifestyles, or fitness benefits adds value for potential customers before they decide to join.

In addition to Instagram Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) also holds an important position in shaping customer decisions, especially in experience-based, trust-based, and quality-perception-based services like gyms. Potential customers generally not only consider price, location, or facilities but also absorb digital stories circulating around the brand, ranging from customer reviews, social media comments, member testimonials, friend recommendations, to workout experience posts shared voluntarily. Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, and Dwivedi (2020) explain that e-WOM influences purchase intentions because consumers view information from fellow users as consideration material that can reduce uncertainty, strengthen beliefs, and assist the evaluation process before making decisions. Factors such as argument quality, valence, e-WOM usefulness, and trust in messages become important predictors in influencing consumer purchase intentions (Ismagilova et al., 2020). In the context of R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, e-WOM can become a social voice that expands digital marketing influence, as positive member experiences can grow potential customers' trust, while negative experiences can become obstacles in the decision process. This aligns with Kotler, Keller, and Chernev's (2022) view that consumer decisions result from alternative evaluation processes influenced by psychological, social, and value perception factors. Lay and Parasari's (2025) findings in the gym context also show that social media engagement and content marketing influence gym subscription decisions, so the decision to join cannot be separated from how consumers read a brand's digital footprint. Thus, Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang can be understood as the meeting point between marketing messages built by the company and consumer conversations that grow organically in digital spaces.

The development of the gym industry cannot be separated from the strengthening public awareness of healthy lifestyles, physical fitness, and self-care as part of modern needs. Gyms

are no longer understood only as weight training places but have evolved into lifestyle spaces, self-identity formation, social interaction, and more directed fitness experience seeking. The Global Wellness Institute (2025) shows that the global wellness economy reached USD 6.8 trillion in 2024 and is projected to grow to USD 9.8 trillion by 2029, indicating that needs for health, fitness, and physical well-being are continuously rising economic sectors. In this context, the gym industry is in the midst of broader change, where consumers not only seek sports facilities but also experiences that provide confidence, comfort, motivation, and attachment to community. Bui and Huynh's (2025) study also confirms that the fitness sector is experiencing rapid digital shifts, so fitness business actors need to pay attention to customer experience, trust, and commitment as part of building customer loyalty.

These changes make gym industry competition increasingly insufficient if relying only on location, price, or equipment completeness. In today's marketing landscape, potential customers often build initial assessments through social media before visiting a place directly. Facility photos, workout activity videos, member testimonials, admin responses, sports education, and customer reviews form a series of information that shapes perceptions of service quality. ACSM notes that wearable technology is the main fitness trend for 2026, while digital platforms and health devices are increasingly becoming part of modern society's fitness behavior. This shows that the fitness industry no longer operates entirely in physical space but also moves in digital spaces that demand communication skills, content consistency, and trust-building abilities. Septiarini and Karamang's (2023) research in the fitness center context also shows that content marketing through Instagram can play a role in building brand engagement and purchase intention for fitness center membership services. Thus, the gym industry needs to be understood as a service industry whose competitive value is not only determined by what is available in the workout room but also by how that experience is communicated and trusted in digital spaces.

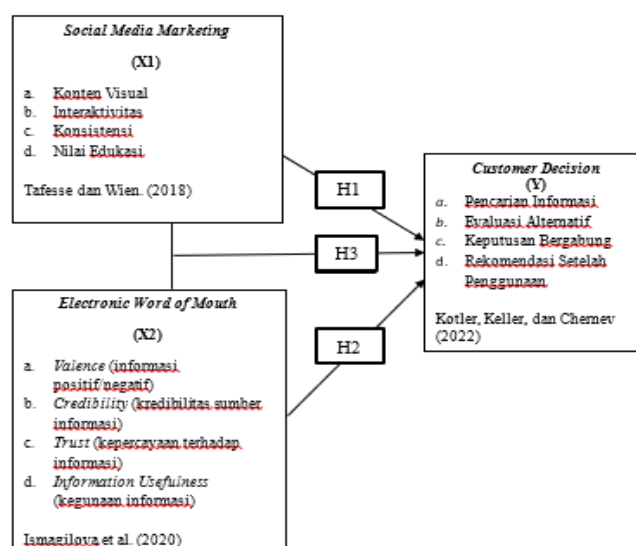
The phenomenon at R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang can also be seen through member number developments over the past two years. Based on internal data from R.A.Q Studio Gym, member numbers show changes from month to month, indicating dynamics in customer decisions to join or maintain membership. These changes are important to observe because customer decisions are not only related to facility, price, or location factors but can also be influenced by how R.A.Q Studio Gym builds communication through social media and how customer experiences spread through Electronic Word of Mouth.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative method with a survey approach. The quantitative approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objectives, namely testing causal relationships and determining the magnitude of influence between variables formulated in the research hypotheses.

The research was conducted at R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, located at Ruko Millennium City Soho Millenia No. 50, Kabasiran, Kecamatan Parung Panjang, Kabupaten Bogor, Jawa Barat 16360. The research was conducted from May to July 2026, including questionnaire preparation and distribution, data collection, data processing, result analysis, and research report preparation.

The population in this study was all members of R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang who had joined and had experience with the services and marketing activities conducted by R.A.Q Studio Gym. Based on the active member database of R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang in 2025, the number of unique members meeting the research population characteristics was 1,047 people. The sample was determined using the Taro Yamane formula with a 10% error tolerance, producing a sample size of 91 respondents. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling.



Source: Research Results

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The variables in this study consist of two independent variables and one dependent variable. Instagram Social Media Marketing (X1) is measured through indicators: visual content, interactivity, consistency, and educational value (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) is measured through indicators: valence, credibility, trust, and information usefulness (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Customer Decision (Y) is measured through indicators: information search, alternative evaluation, joining decision, and post-use recommendation (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022).

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was distributed to 91 respondents who were members of R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. Before data analysis, instrument testing was conducted including validity test using Pearson Product Moment correlation and reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. Classical assumption tests were also conducted including normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), multicollinearity test (VIF), autocorrelation test (Durbin-Watson), and heteroscedasticity test (Glejser).

Data analysis techniques used in this research include descriptive analysis, multiple linear regression analysis, correlation coefficient analysis, coefficient of determination analysis, and hypothesis testing (partial t-test and simultaneous F-test) using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.

Research Hypothesis:

H0₁: Instagram social media marketing does not influence the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

H1: Instagram social media marketing influences the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

H0₂: Electronic word-of-mouth does not influence the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

H2: Electronic word-of-mouth influences the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

H0₃: Instagram social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth do not simultaneously influence the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

H3: Instagram social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth simultaneously influence the customer decision to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Respondent Characteristics

Based on the questionnaire distribution to 91 respondents, the characteristics of respondents are as follows: Based on age, the majority are 20-25 years old (58%), followed by 25-35 years (22%) and 15-20 years (20%). Based on domicile, 65% of respondents live in Parung Panjang area and 35% from outside Parung Panjang. Based on subscription frequency, 52% have subscribed once, 32% twice, and 16% more than twice.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis results for each variable show that Instagram Social Media Marketing (X1) has an overall mean score of 4.13 (good category). The highest indicator is educational value (4.24) and the lowest is consistency (4.05). Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) has an overall mean score of 4.22 (very good category), with the highest indicator being trust (4.42) and the lowest being information usefulness (4.08). Customer Decision (Y) has an overall mean score of 4.22 (very good category), with the highest indicator being post-use recommendation (4.31) and the lowest being information search (4.15).

Instrument Testing

Validity testing using Pearson Product Moment correlation with r-table of 0.206 showed that all 11 items for X1, all 11 items for X2, and all 8 items for Y were valid ($r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$). Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha showed values of 0.850 for X1, 0.814 for X2, and 0.799 for Y, all exceeding the 0.600 threshold, indicating reliable instruments.

Classical Assumption Testing

The normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed a significance value of 0.188 > 0.05, indicating normal distribution. The multicollinearity test showed Tolerance values of 0.310 and VIF values of 3.223 for both independent variables, indicating no multicollinearity. The autocorrelation test with Durbin-Watson showed a value of 1.964, which lies between dU (1.7040) and 4-dU (2.2960), indicating no autocorrelation. The heteroscedasticity test using Glejser showed significance values of 0.290 for X1 and 0.642 for X2, both > 0.05, indicating no heteroscedasticity.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression equation obtained is: $Y = 2.564 + 0.054X_1 + 0.622X_2$. This equation shows that Instagram Social Media Marketing (X1) has a positive influence of 0.054 on Customer Decision (Y), and Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) has a positive influence of 0.622 on Customer Decision (Y), with a constant value of 2.564.

Correlation Coefficient Analysis

The correlation coefficient between Instagram Social Media Marketing (X1) and Customer Decision (Y) is 0.739 (strong relationship category). The correlation coefficient between Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) and Customer Decision (Y) is 0.859 (very strong relationship category). The simultaneous correlation coefficient (R) is 0.860 (very strong relationship category).

Coefficient of Determination Analysis

The partial R^2 value for X1 is 0.546 (54.6%), meaning Instagram Social Media Marketing contributes 54.6% to Customer Decisions. The partial R^2 value for X2 is 0.738 (73.8%), meaning Electronic Word of Mouth contributes 73.8% to Customer Decisions. The simultaneous R^2 value is 0.740 (74%), meaning both independent variables together contribute 74% to Customer Decisions, while the remaining 26% is influenced by other factors not examined.

Hypothesis Testing

Partial Test (t-test):

- For X1: $t\text{-count} = 10.337 > t\text{-table} = 1.986$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05 \rightarrow H_{01}$ rejected, H_1 accepted (Instagram Social Media Marketing significantly influences Customer Decisions)
- For X2: $t\text{-count} = 15.823 > t\text{-table} = 1.986$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05 \rightarrow H_{02}$ rejected, H_2 accepted (Electronic Word of Mouth significantly influences Customer Decisions)

Simultaneous Test (F-test): $F\text{-count} = 125.104 > F\text{-table} = 3.10$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05 \rightarrow H_{03}$ rejected, H_3 accepted (Both variables simultaneously significantly influence Customer Decisions).

Discussion

Influence of Instagram Social Media Marketing on Customer Decisions

The research results show that Instagram Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by $t\text{-count} (10.337) > t\text{-table} (1.986)$ and significance ($0.000 < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient of 0.739 indicates a strong relationship, and the coefficient of determination of 54.6% shows that Instagram Social Media Marketing contributes substantially to explaining Customer Decisions. This indicates that visual content, interactivity, consistency, and educational value through Instagram help customers obtain information, recognize services, and increase their decisions to join.

The highest indicator in Instagram Social Media Marketing is educational value (mean 4.24), indicating that R.A.Q Studio Gym's Instagram content successfully provides useful information about fitness, sports, and membership program benefits. Meanwhile, consistency has the lowest score (mean 4.05), suggesting that R.A.Q Studio Gym needs to improve content upload consistency and information alignment with actual services. This aligns with Tafesse and Wien's (2018) view that effective social media marketing requires strategic management of content, communication, and customer engagement.

Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Decisions

The research results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by $t\text{-count} (15.823) > t\text{-table} (1.986)$ and significance ($0.000 < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient of 0.859 indicates a very strong relationship, and the coefficient of determination of 73.8% shows that Electronic Word of Mouth provides a very high contribution to explaining Customer Decisions.

The highest indicator in Electronic Word of Mouth is trust (mean 4.42), indicating that positive reviews and testimonials from other users strengthen respondents' confidence in R.A.Q Studio Gym's service quality. The trust aspect becomes crucial because consumers face information limitations when evaluating services (Ismagilova et al., 2020). The lowest indicator is information usefulness (mean 4.08), suggesting that R.A.Q Studio Gym needs to expand information dissemination through various digital platforms to make information easier to find.

These results support Ismagilova et al.'s (2020) findings that e-WOM influences purchase intentions through factors such as argument quality, valence, information credibility, information usefulness, and trust in messages. In the context of R.A.Q Studio Gym, e-WOM through communities, WhatsApp groups, and personal recommendations has the potential to become a powerful marketing force because it originates from closer social relationships.

Simultaneous Influence of Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Decisions

The research results show that Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by F-count (125.104) > F-table (3.10) and significance (0.000 < 0.05). The simultaneous correlation coefficient of 0.860 indicates a very strong relationship, and the R² value of 74% shows that both variables together provide a very high contribution to explaining Customer Decisions.

This shows that information from R.A.Q Studio Gym's official Instagram account as well as reviews, experiences, and recommendations from customers through electronic media complement each other in building trust and helping customers determine their decisions to join. Information obtained from digital marketing activities and social influence from fellow consumers together form customer perceptions and strengthen their beliefs before making decisions. This aligns with Kotler, Keller, and Chernev's (2022) view that consumer decisions result from alternative evaluation processes influenced by psychological, social, and value perception factors.

The findings of this research support previous studies by Adelia (2021) which showed that Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously have positive and significant influences on purchase decisions. The results also align with Septiarini and Karamang's (2023) research showing that Instagram content marketing influences purchase intention in fitness centers. However, this research contributes by focusing on actual Customer Decisions rather than purchase intention, and by examining a local gym context that has specific characteristics in terms of community-based communication.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion regarding the influence of Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Instagram Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by t-count (10.337) > t-table (1.986) and significance (0.000 < 0.05). The correlation coefficient of 0.739 indicates a strong relationship, and the coefficient of determination of 54.6% shows that Instagram Social Media Marketing contributes to explaining Customer Decisions. The indicator with the highest score is educational value (4.24), while consistency (4.05) needs improvement.
2. Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by t-count (15.823) > t-table (1.986) and significance (0.000 < 0.05). The correlation coefficient of 0.859 indicates a very strong relationship, and the coefficient of determination of 73.8% shows that Electronic Word of Mouth contributes substantially to explaining Customer Decisions. Trust is the highest indicator (4.42), while information usefulness (4.08) needs optimization.
3. Instagram Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on Customer Decisions to join R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang. This is evidenced by F-count (125.104) > F-table (3.10) and significance (0.000 < 0.05). The correlation coefficient of 0.860 indicates a very strong relationship, and the R² value of 74% shows that both variables together explain Customer Decisions, with the remaining 26% influenced by other factors not examined in this research.

Suggestions

1. For R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, it is necessary to improve consistency in Instagram Social Media Marketing as a promotional communication medium. The

management should ensure that information regarding prices, facilities, operational schedules, training programs, promotions, and membership packages is always updated and aligned with actual conditions. A content posting schedule should be established, uniform content formats used, and content verification conducted before publication to prevent information discrepancies between Instagram and on-site services.

2. For R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, it is necessary to maintain and optimize Electronic Word of Mouth strategy. Information dissemination should be expanded through Instagram, WhatsApp Business, Google Business Profile, and online communities. Important information such as location, facilities, prices, schedules, customer testimonials, and registration procedures should be made complete, easy to find, and interconnected so that potential customers do not experience difficulties in obtaining needed information.
3. For R.A.Q Studio Gym Parung Panjang, it is necessary to pay attention to other factors that can influence Customer Decisions. Membership package information should be provided more clearly and transparently, including prices, facilities obtained, validity period, training programs, and other terms. Initial consultation, trial sessions, direct staff explanations, and member testimonials should be provided so that potential customers can assess service suitability before joining.

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