

# WORD OF MOUTH FOR CONSUMERS: ALL-YOU-CAN- EAT JAPANESE RESTAURANTS

*by* Eddy M. Sutanto

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# WORD OF MOUTH FOR CONSUMERS: ALL YOU CAN EAT JAPANESE RESTAURANTS

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**Eddy Madiono Sutanto\***  
*Petra Christian University*

**John C. Cary**  
*Marist College*

**Cynthia Ani Purwanto**  
*Petra Christian University*

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine and analyze the effect of word of mouth on the purchasing decisions of consumers of all you can eat Japanese restaurants. The type of research was causal quantitative analysis tested using a linear regression test. The sampling technique was purposive sampling with a total sample of 100 respondents. Samples were obtained by distributing questionnaires to all you can eat Japanese restaurants consumers in Surabaya, Indonesia. The collected data were processed using SPSS 22 software. The results showed that word of mouth had a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This kind of study has never been conducted before. Thus, this research could be useful for managing the restaurant business, thereby to improve the existing marketing performance.

**Keywords:** word of mouth, restaurant, purchasing decisions, Japanese, behavior.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The restaurant business in Surabaya continues to grow and is well received by the public. Data obtained by the Indonesian Association of Cafes and Restaurants Entrepreneurs (APKRINDO) shows that the growth of restaurants in Surabaya is almost 20 percent per year ("Restaurants in Surabaya are growing 20 percent per year", 2018, para. 1). The increasing restaurant business in Surabaya has demanded business people to improve marketing performance, especially regarding consumer behavior.

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11 responding author: Eddy Madiono Sutanto, School of Business Management, Petra Christian University, 60236, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. Tel: +62818391691. Email: [esutanto@petra.ac.id](mailto:esutanto@petra.ac.id)

The number of Japanese restaurants in Surabaya has increased by 204 restaurants during the period of 2012–2018. Japanese restaurants have some uniqueness that are not typical by restaurant standards of other countries, such as waiters who use Kimono and Hachimaki; how waiters greet guests by shouting the word "Irasshaimase"; the use of Chochin and Noren as room decorations; as well as the use of fresh, raw food ingredients that are processed using Japanese special spices such as Shoyu, Dashi, and Mirin. Some of the restaurants have an all you can eat sales system. All you can eat is a sales system with the concept of a buffet that gives consumers the freedom to enjoy the entire menu within a certain time limit, and consumers only need to pay once with a flat-rate payment system (Akhmad, 2016, para. 2).

The all you can eat Japanese restaurant proved to be quite popular among the people of Surabaya. This is evidenced by the results of the 2017 BRI Jawa Pos Culinary Award survey that the three restaurants that won the Best All You Can Eat category in Surabaya are restaurants that sell Japanese cuisine. The three restaurants are Cocari, Kintan Buffet, and Shaburi Shabu Shabu (Jawapos-culinary, 2018). Why do all you can eat Japanese restaurants become more popular in Surabaya, Indonesia? This phenomenon helps explain the attraction by consumers to these types of restaurants.

Aslam, Jadoon, Zaman, and Gondal (2011) stated the benefits obtained by studying consumer behavior including helping managers in making decisions and providing theory-based marketing research that can be used to analyze consumers in making better purchasing decisions. One of the consumer behavior topics that needs to be the focus of business attention is consumer purchasing decisions. Having greater knowledge as to how consumers make their purchasing decisions, will benefit restaurants as to the most efficient marketing strategies.

Research on consumer purchasing decisions in the restaurant business has been widely carried out. These studies show that the restaurant consumer purchasing decision variable is influenced by numerous factors. These factors include product quality, trust in halal status, service quality, restaurant atmosphere, price, and location in full-service restaurants in Seri Iskandar, Perak, Malaysia (Akbar & Alaudeen, 2012); cultural, social, personal, and psychological aspects of McDonald's restaurant in Surabaya, Indonesia (Adipradja & Listiani, 2015); word of mouth, marketing communication, cultural learning, image, and social status, different experiences, value of money in upscale ethnic restaurants in New Zealand (Sriwongrat, 2008). Existing research shows that research on all you can eat restaurants, especially restaurants that sell Japanese cuisine in Indonesia has never been done.

One of the factors that is proven to have an effect on consumer restaurant purchasing decisions is word of mouth (WOM). Hasan (2010) stated that WOM could be a powerful source of information in influencing purchasing decisions (in Pratiwi, 2017). Personal verbal communication through choice words and recommendations from trusted friends, family, coworkers, and other consumers tend to be more credible than those from commercial sources, such as advertisements, or salespeople (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). WOM can affect one's views, thoughts, and deci-

sions. If WOM is used properly it will be especially useful in marketing products or services for a long period of time (Ahmad, Vveinhardt, & Ahmed, 2014). Word of mouth has been recognized as the ultimate driver for a success of a restaurant, and few studies have examined in detail the focus attributes of WOM towards purchasing decision (Basri, Ahmad, Anuar, & Ismail, 2016). Schabbink (2019) mentioned that when a customer expressed its customer experience online, it can influence a restaurant either positively or negatively. The effects of negative online reviews on the number of sales and the image of the restaurant are well known. While, Siddiqui *et al.* (2021) show Social Networking Sites (SNSs) activities play a significant role in creating eWOM credibility, this can lead to shaping the brand image and purchasing intentions. The findings would help companies create a positive brand image to enhance their purchasing intentions through eWOM aroused via SNSs. While previous studies have been done in the restaurant setting. While, the all you can eat Japanese restaurants are interesting to be examined, Japanese culture and hospitality is demonstrated in the restaurants.

The above research gap motivates us to know what makes the all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya, Indonesia become more popular to their consumers. This research will also aim to examine how the WOM influences consumer purchasing decisions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Consumer Behavior

Rani (2014) stated consumer behavior as the selection, purchasing, and use of products and services to satisfy consumer desires. Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) stated that consumer behavior was a study of consumer behavior or actions in searching, buying, using, evaluating, and depleting products and services that were expected to satisfy consumer needs. These notions indicate that consumer behavior is the act of consumers in choosing, buying, using, evaluating, and spending products and services that are expected to satisfy the desires and needs of consumers. Zhong and Moon (2020) also found that perceived price, food, service, and physical environment quality positively affected customer satisfaction. Perceived price can significantly influence customers' judgement on the quality dimensions of a restaurant. Moreover, customer satisfaction and happiness can lead to a sense of loyalty. Happiness functions as a mediator between satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, Uslu (2020) determined that the service quality dimensions of the restaurants have effects on satisfaction and eWOM and noted that restaurant atmosphere has been found to have a moderating effect on the outcome of service quality dimensions on eWOM in restaurants.

### 2.2 Word of Mouth

Malau (2017) stated WOM was a form of communication that involves individuals to share information directly with others in verbal form, including face-to-face, telephone, and internet regarding the use of a product. Kotler and Keller (2009) stated that WOM was oral, written, or electronic communication from person to a person relating to the benefits or experience of buying or using a product or service. Another point according to Lovelock (2011) said that WOM was an opinion and recommendation made by consumers about service experience, which had a strong influence on consumer decisions or purchasing behavior (in Andari & Napu, 2016). The above definitions emphasize that WOM is a communication of sharing opinions and recommendations on the use/purchasing of a product/service from one consumer to other consumers through face to face, telephone, and/or the internet. WOM means the extent to which (activity level) communication of sharing opinions and recommendations is carried out and affects others' decision-making process. Moreover, Huete-Alcocer (2017) highlighted that the rise and spread of the internet has led to the emergence of a new form of word of mouth and effectively impacted consumer behavior. Jeong and Jang (2011) also found that restaurant experiences triggered customers to engage in positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), where the quality of restaurant service (food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and price fairness) was the antecedent of eWOM communication. While Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi, and Mohammadi (2017) suggested that food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value influenced WOM behavior of customers in an indirect way through relationship quality as well. Further, Basri *et al.* (2016) concluded that the physical environment quality brought the most impact on the word of mouth. WOM will be measured by indicators suggested by Ferdinand (2014) such as intensity of opinion sharing and intensity of recommendation sharing.

### 2.3 Purchasing Decision

According to Schiffman (2010), a decision was the choice of two or more alternative choices, in other words, alternative choices must be available to someone when deciding. If someone has a choice between making a purchase or not, that person is in a decision-making position. Paendong and Tielung (2016) suggested purchasing decisions were actions by consumers, whether or not to buy a product. Pertiwi, Yulianto, and Sunarti (2016) said purchasing decision was a process when consumers made an assessment of various alternative choices and chose one or more alternatives needed based on certain considerations in purchasing. This understanding emphasizes that the purchasing decision has two meanings. Purchasing decisions can be a process and result in the selection of various alternative choices of products or services. This understanding shows that the purchasing decision has real value from the consumers' perspective when the selection process is made from the choices presented to them. Aslam, Farhat, and Arif (2019) find that the positive impact of eWOM and receivers' perspective on customer satisfaction and brand image. Also, customer satisfaction and brand image have a significant impact on purchasing intention. Their research provides valuable information to marketers demonstrating how quality websites generate positive word of mouth which leads to purchasing intention. The purchasing decision is measured by indicators suggested by Arda (2017), which are stability of the type and kind of pro-



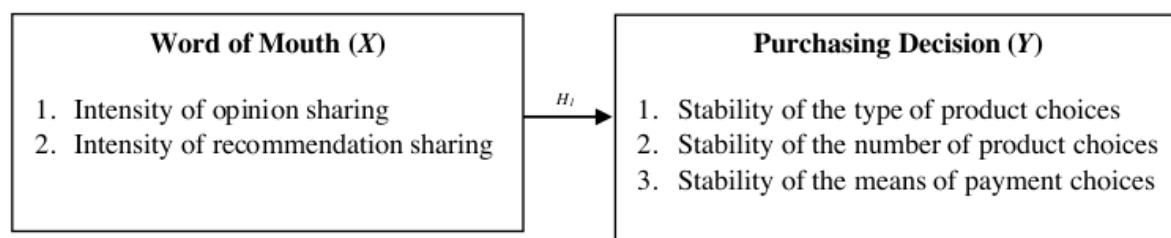
duct choice, stability of the number of product choice, and stability of the means of payment choice.

## 2.4 WoM Relationship to Purchasing Decision

Several research results have shown that the WOM variable <sup>2</sup> has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. These studies include Rahayu and Edward (2014), Oktaviano (2013), Nugraha, Suharyono, and Kusumawati (2015), Rembon, Mananeke, and Gunawan (2017), and Arda (2017). The results of research conducted by Arda (2017) showed that the level of relationship between WoM and consumer purchasing decisions was quite strong. In the research of Rahayu and Edward (2014), Nugraha, Suharyono, and Kusumawati (2015), and Rembon, Mananeke, and Gunawan (2017) the level of relationships was relatively strong. Further, Oktaviano's (2013) study showed that the level of <sup>1</sup>relationships that exist is classified as very strong. Huete-Alcocer (2017) also highlighted that the rise and spread of the internet has led to the emergence of a new form of word <sup>3</sup> mouth and has effectively impacted consumer behavior. Siddiqui *et al.* (2021) also find that Social Networking Sites (SNSs) activities play a significant role in creating eWOM credibility, which lead to shaping the brand image and purchasing intentions. The studies described above support the development of the following research hypothesis (Figure 1).

$H_1$ : WOM has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

**Figure 1.** Research Model



Source: Ferdinand (2014), Arda (2017)

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1 Sample Selection and Data Collection

The population used in this study included all consumers of all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya. The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations. The consideration used is that the respondent must be over 17 years old and have eaten at an all you can eat Japanese restaurant in Surabaya at least once. Respondents over the age of 17 are chosen because they are considered able to clearly understand and evaluate the statements in the questionnaire. The selected respondents must also have eaten at an all you can eat Japanese restaurant in Surabaya at least once because it relates to the operational definition of WOM, namely communication, sharing opinions, and recommendations to use/purchasing of a product from one consumer to another through face-to-face, telephone, and/or internet. According to Ferdinand (2014) the size of the sample if the total population is unknown can be determined using the following formula:

$$n = (Z^2 \alpha) \left\{ \frac{(P \times Q)}{d^2} \right\} = (Z^2 \alpha) \left\{ \frac{(50 \times 50)}{10^2} \right\} = 96,04$$

Remarks:

$n$  = Number of samples

$Z^2 \alpha$  = Z table with a certain level of significance

$P$  = Proportion of the population expected to have certain characteristics

$Q$  = Proportion of the population that is expected not to have certain characteristics

$d$  = Tolerable error rate (expressed in %)

The calculation shows the minimum number of samples that must be used are 96.04 samples. Therefore, the number of samples in this study are set at 100 samples. The 100 samples are obtained by distributing 120 questionnaires. This aims to anticipate the existence of questionnaires that are not returned, do not meet the criteria, or the data provided by the respondent is incomplete.

### 3.2 Measures

The research variables are measured using a Likert scale consisting of five points, ranging from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree. The research model used can be seen in Figure 1.

#### 3.2.1 Measures of Word of Mouth (X)

WOM is a communication of sharing opinions and recommendations on the purchasing/using of a product from one consumer to another through face-to-face, telephone, and internet, so that WOM has a meaning to what extent (activity level) the communication of sharing opinions and recommendations is carried out and has an influence on other consumers. So, in this study the WOM variable will be measured from the level of activity of sharing opinions and recommendations made by consumers as suggested by Ferdinand (2014). The indicators used are:

### **1. Intensity of opinion sharing ( $X_1$ )**

The higher the intensity of consumers' sharing opinions regarding the purchasing/using of a product, the higher the level of WOM activity. The higher the intensity of consumers' sharing opinions regarding the purchasing/using of a product does not cause a higher level of WOM activity (there is no logical causal relationship). This indicator is described in three statement items, namely:

- a. I talked about the restaurant to my family more than once ( $X_{1.1}$ )
- b. I talked about the restaurant to my friends more than once ( $X_{1.2}$ )
- c. I talked about the restaurant to other people more than once ( $X_{1.3}$ )

### **2. Intensity of recommendation sharing ( $X_2$ )**

The higher the intensity of consumers' recommendation sharing on the purchasing/using of a product, the higher the level of WOM activity. The higher the intensity of consumers' recommendation sharing on purchasing/using a product, the higher the WOM activity level (there is no logical causal relationship). This indicator is described in three statement items, namely:

- a. I recommend to eat at the restaurant to my family more than once ( $X_{2.1}$ )
- b. I recommend to eat at the restaurant to friends more than once ( $X_{2.2}$ )
- c. I recommend to eat at that restaurant to others more than once ( $X_{2.3}$ )

## **3.2.2 Measures of Purchasing Decision ( $Y$ )**

Purchasing decision is a process and result of choosing from various alternative product choices. In this study, the purchasing decision will be measured from the extent to which (level) the process and the results of the selection are carried out by the consumer. Arda (2017) suggested that the indicators to measure purchasing decisions are:

### **1. Stability in choosing the type of product ( $Y_1$ )**

The more stable a person is to choose the type of product, the higher the purchasing decision for the product will be. This indicator will be described in three statement items, namely:

- a. I feel good about choosing to eat Japanese BBQ ( $Y_{1.1}$ )
- b. I feel good about choosing to eat Shabu-shabu ( $Y_{1.2}$ )
- c. I feel good about choosing to eat Sukiyaki ( $Y_{1.3}$ )

### **2. Stability in choosing the number of products ( $Y_2$ )**

The more stable a person is to choose the number of products, the higher the purchasing decision for the product will be. This indicator will be described in two statement items, namely:

- a. I feel confident to choose the amount of food and drink that I want ( $Y_{2.1}$ )
- b. I feel confident to choose the amount of food and drink according to what I need ( $Y_{2.2}$ )

### **3. Stability in choosing payment instruments ( $Y_3$ )**

The more stable a person is to choose the means of payment for the product, the higher the purchasing decision for the product will also be. This indicator will be described in three statement items, namely:

- a. I feel confident to make payments by cash ( $Y_{3.1}$ )
- b. I feel good about making payments with a debit card ( $Y_{3.2}$ )



c. I feel confident to make payment by credit card ( $Y_{3.3}$ )

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Validity Test

The validity test in this study was carried out on statement items obtained from 100 respondents. The statement is considered valid if the value of sig is less than 0.05 (Sugiyono & Susanto, 2015).

Table 1 shows that the statements have a sig value below 0.05, except for the statement item  $Y_{3.1}$  which has a value of sig 0.063, so that the statement is declared invalid. Item  $Y_{3.1}$  is invalid because the prices offered by all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya are classified as premium so that consumers choose to make payments by debit or credit cards. If the consumer makes a payment with cash, the consumer must take cash again at the Automatic Teller Machine to fill the cash supply in the wallet. Invalid statements ( $Y_{3.1}$ ) will be discarded so they are not included in the next test.

**Tabel 1:** The Result of Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Items	Sig.	Remarks
Word of Mouth (X)	Intensity of opinion sharing	$X_{1.1}$	0.000	Valid
		$X_{1.2}$	0.000	Valid
		$X_{1.3}$	0.000	Valid
	Intensity of recommendation sharing	$X_{2.1}$	0.000	Valid
		$X_{2.2}$	0.000	Valid
		$X_{2.3}$	0.000	Valid
Purchasing Decision (Y)	Stability in choosing the type of product	$Y_{1.1}$	0.000	Valid
		$Y_{1.2}$	0.000	Valid
		$Y_{1.3}$	0.000	Valid
	Stability in choosing the number of products	$Y_{2.1}$	0.000	Valid
		$Y_{2.2}$	0.000	Valid
	Stability in choosing payment instruments	$Y_{3.1}$	0.063	Invalid
		$Y_{3.2}$	0.025	Valid
		$Y_{3.3}$	0.041	Valid

### 4.2 Reliability Test

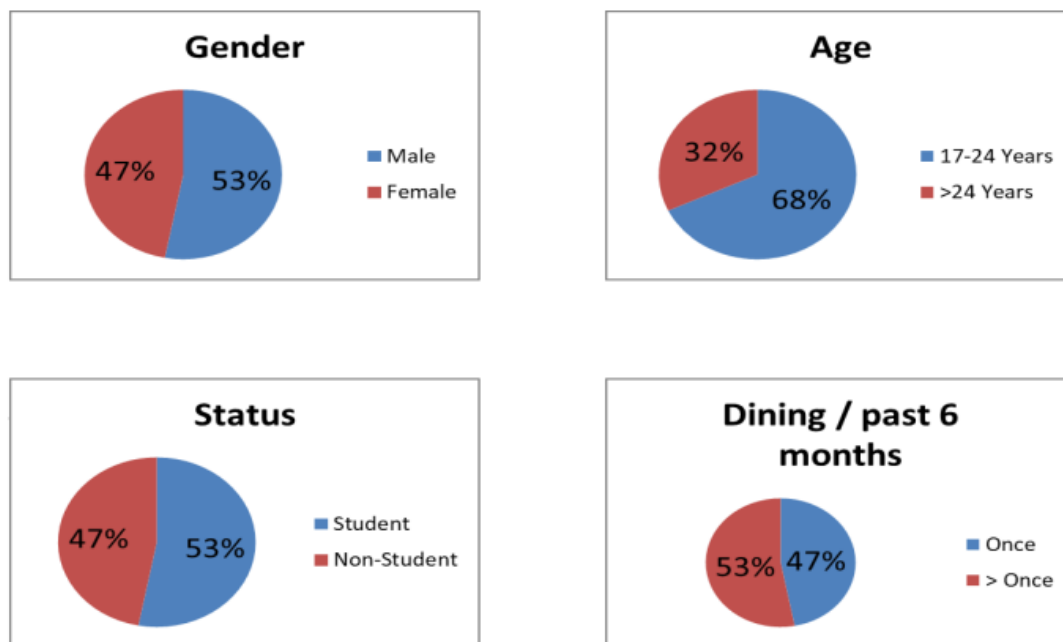
The reliability test was used to determine the reliability and consistency of the statement items in the questionnaire. Reliable means that the existing statement items when used several times to

measure the same object will produce the same data. The questionnaire is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.6 (Sugiyono & Susanto, 2015). Table 2 shows the results of the validity test for the variable word of mouth and purchasing decisions.

**Tabel 2:** The Result of Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Alpha	Remarks
Word of Mouth	0.880	0.6	Reliable
Purchasing Decision	0.612	0.6	Reliable

**Figure 2.** Respondent Profile



#### 4.3 Respondent Profile

The profile of respondents showed that the number of female respondents was 53 percent, while the male was 47 percent. The majority age of respondents was from 17 to 24 years old. 54 percent were students. 47 percent of respondents were one-time eating in all you can eat Japanese restaurants in the past six months (See Figure 2). The Japanese restaurants had been visited such as Gyu-Kaku (46 respondents), Cocari (37 respondents), Shaburi Kintan Buffet (24 respondents), Hanamasa (13 respondents), Shaburi (6 respondents), Shabu-Shabu on Yasai (2 respondents),

Sendai (2 respondents), Mr. Sumo (1 respondents), and Kizahashi (1 respondents). The data shows that there are respondents may visit more than one restaurant.

Before conducting a simple linear regression test, it is necessary to test the validity and reliability, as well as the classic assumption test. The classic assumption test consists of tests of normality, heteroscedasticity, and linearity. Existing tests were performed using SPSS 22 software. The results of the validity test show that item  $Y_{3.1}$  does not meet the criteria so that it is declared invalid and is not included in subsequent tests, while the reliability test results and all classic assumptions have met the existing criteria so that it can be continued in the test of simple linear regression.

A simple linear regression test is done by looking at the value of the coefficients of regression, correlation ( $R$ ), determination ( $R^2$ ), the results of the model feasibility test, and the results of hypothesis testing. The results of the simple linear regression test in Table 3 shows the magnitude of the constant regression coefficient of 2.251 and the WOM regression coefficient of 0.407. The value of the constant regression coefficient indicates the value of the purchasing decision variable if the value of the WOM variable is 0, while the regression coefficient value of the WOM variable shows the magnitude of the change in the value of the purchasing decision variable if the value of the WOM variable changes to one unit. The value of the regression coefficient is positive. It shows the direct relationship between WOM and purchasing decisions.

**Table 3: Regression Result**

Model	Coefficient of Regression	$T_{count}$	Sig.
Constant	2.251	9.775	0.000
Word of Mouth (X)	0.407	6.930	0.000

#### 4.5 Correlation Relationship Analysis

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) of 0.573, meaning that the level of closeness of the relationship between WOM and purchasing decisions is quite strong because it is at an interval of 0.400-0.599 (Sugiyono & Susanto, 2015). Table 4 also shows that the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) in this regression model is 0.322 or 32.2 percent, meaning that the WOM variable's ability to explain or predict changes in the purchasing decision variable is 32.2 percent, while the remaining 67.8 percent is explained by variables other than WOM variables such as product quality, service quality, and restaurant atmosphere.

**Table 4: Result of Coefficient of Correlation and Determination**

Model	$R$	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	Estimation of Standard Error
1	0.573	0.329	0.322	0.42876

Table 5 shows the results of the feasibility tests of the existing models. A significant value of the regression model of this study is 0.000. This number is smaller than the significance level used which is 0.05, meaning that the regression model used is feasible to explain the effect of the WOM variable on the purchasing decision variable.

**Table 5: Model Feasibility Test Results**

Variable	Sig.	Criteria	Conclusion
Word of Mouth (X)	0.000	< 0.05	Model is feasible

Table 6 shows that the Sig. of the hypothesis test results obtained are smaller than 0.05 which is equal to 0.000. This means that WOM has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

**Table 6: Hypothesis Test Result**

Variable	Sig.	Criteria	Conclusion
Word of Mouth (X)	0.000	< 0.05	Rejected

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results show that word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. The positive effect is proved by the results of the regression test which show the magnitude of the regression coefficient of the word of mouth variable is equal to 0.407. This means that if the value of the word of mouth variable increases by one unit, the value of the purchasing decision variable will increase by 0.407 or 40.7 percent. In other words, the higher the value of the word of mouth variable, the value of the purchasing decision variable will also be higher. The existence of significant influence is evidenced by the result of hypothesis testing which shows the value of sig of 0.000 is  $\leq 0.05$ . So, the result has answered the hypothesis in this study. It fulfills the research gap mentioned in the introduction section which is only done in the general restaurants.

The result confirms the importance of WOM to influence purchasing decision of consumers especially to the all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya, Indonesia. It implies that the Japanese restaurants management should consider the role of WOM to the success of their businesses. The Japanese culture and hospitality practiced in those restaurants are important to their customers in Surabaya, Indonesia so as to want to share their experiences and recommend it to others. Creating positive WOM becomes a key role marketing strategy. The all you can eat Japanese restaurants' managers need some factors as suggested by Zhong and Moon (2020) such as perceived price, food, service, and physical environment quality. These will positively affect customer satisfaction. Perceived price can also significantly influence customers' judgement on the quality dimensions of a restaurant. Moreover, customer satisfaction and happiness can lead to a

sense of loyalty. Moreover, Uslu (2020) also determined that the service quality dimensions of the restaurants have effects on satisfaction and eWOM. Further, restaurant atmosphere has been found to have a moderating effect on the effect of service quality dimensions on eWOM in restaurants.

This study suggests what Akhmad said previously (2016, para. 2) that Japanese restaurants had some uniqueness that were not typical of restaurants in other countries, such as waiters who used Kimono and Hachimaki; how waiters greeted guests by shouting the word "Irasshaimase"; the use of Chochin and Noren as room decoration; as well as the use of fresh raw food ingredients that were processed using Japanese special spices such as Shoyu, Dashi, and Mirin. Some of the restaurants had an all you can eat sales system. All you can eat was a sales system with the concept of a buffet that gave consumers the freedom to enjoy the entire menu within a certain time limit, and consumers only needed to pay once with a flat-rate payment system.

The result of this study is in line with previous studies conducted by Hasan (2010 in Pratiwi, 2017), Rahayu and Edward (2014), Oktaviano (2013), Nugraha, Suharyono, and Kusumawati (2015), and Rembon, Mananeke, and Gunawan (2017) which show that word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. The level of closeness of the relationship between word of mouth with purchasing decisions in this study is also in line with research conducted by Arda (2017) which shows a fairly strong level of closeness of the relationship. Therefore, the result of this study can be used to strengthen previous research.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

### 6.1 Conclusion

The result of the analysis and hypothesis testing that has been carried out in this study indicates that word of mouth affects positively the purchasing decisions of all you can eat Japanese restaurant consumers in Surabaya.

### 6.2 Managerial Implications

This study provides several managerial implications that can be applied by all you can eat Japanese restaurant managers, especially in Surabaya, Indonesia. So, it is expected that the existing restaurants can further improve their marketing performance through WOM conducted by consumers. WOM's strong influence cannot be ignored by restaurant management. Restaurant managers must ensure that every consumer gets a satisfying dining experience. The opinions expressed by consumers are positive and can increase the willingness of consumers to provide recommendations to others.



The more positive opinions and recommendations shared are expected to help all you can eat Japanese restaurants to get more consumers. The several methods in the research can be applied such as to increase the speed of the service of the waiter in presenting menus, so that the consumers' time to enjoy is not wasted. Another method that can be applied is to ensure the amount of food and drinks for the self-service menu is sufficient. Moreover, sold out menus should be available on the display table. More and more menus or portions that can be enjoyed by consumers will make these consumers not feel overwhelmed at "All you can eat restaurants". The restaurant manager, especially of the all you can eat Japanese restaurants is expected to be able to create promotions or family meal menus so that it can increase information-sharing activities about the restaurants among families. The results of this study indicate that the mean values for statement items  $X_{1.1}$  and  $X_{2.1}$  are lower than the mean values for other WOM statement items; and so, it can be concluded that the activity of sharing opinions and recommendations to families tends to be lower than to friends and others. Management should include family discount packages (kids under 10 eat for free, for example) on their menus to encourage and increase the weekend foot traffic into the restaurant.

### **6.3 Limitations**

One limitation of this study relates to the generalization of the findings. This study only examined nine all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya, namely GyuKaku, Cocari, Shaburi Kintan Buffet, Hanamasa, Shaburi, Shabu-Shabu on Yasai, Sendai, Mr. Sumo, and Kizahashi. But there are still many all you can eat Japanese restaurants in Surabaya that have not been studied. Another limitation is that this study only examined the influence between WOM and purchasing decisions. So, the result obtained also shows that WOM is only able to explain purchasing decisions by 32.2 percent.

### **6.4 Future Research Directions**

This study provides several suggestions that can be used for further research. Future studies are expected to be able to research in other all you can eat Japanese restaurants that have not been studied. This study has been localized, but perhaps expanding it to other nearby countries or non-Asian countries may present another story on WOM and suggest that these other countries are not heavily influenced by WOM communication. Further research is also expected to further develop research related to purchasing decisions, especially for all you can eat Japanese restaurant consumers not only in Surabaya. Future studies can examine other variables besides word of mouth so that the results of existing studies are more varied.

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