WEBSITE AESTHETIC IN MILLENIAL'S CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON SATISFACTION AND IMPULSE BUYING: EWOM AS MODERATOR

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Abstract

Various online website marketplaces attract consumers to experience a good and visually pleasing shopping experience, especially for the young age group in generation Y or millennials. This study was made to explore the effect of online shopping experience in terms of aesthetics on customer satisfaction and impulse buying with eWOM as moderation. Through this study, there is a goal to contribute in explaining the importance of website aesthetics in the consumer shopping experience by adding eWOM for the millennial group which can affect customer satisfaction and impulse buying. The research was conducted by collecting data through a survey using a questionnaire distributed online. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Model- Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The findings in this study are first, good aesthetics can directly increase customer satisfaction, and second, aesthetics influence impulse buying. The research implication, so that companies can set up the eWOM area as an active and positive means for customers to exchange and share their own opinions about the online shopping experience.

Keywords: Website Aesthetics; Online Customer Experience; Customer Satisfaction; Impulse Buying; eWOM.

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M37

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of information technology and online marketplace websites that can be accessed through mobile phone applications attracts consumers to experience an easy and comfortable customer experience in shopping online, especially for the young age group in generation Y or millennials who are much familiar with digital media (Smith, 2011). The online customer experience that comes from consumers' feelings in thought, emotion, psychology, and mentality (Hult *et al.*, 2019) is different from various websites that can be seen from the visual appearance and aesthetics of each website. In competition, companies that use marketplaces also need to understand the importance of website aesthetics that shape the online customer experience to continuously improve the experience received by consumers in various aspects appropriately and efficiently to lead to purchases and consumer satisfaction.

The online customer experience gained as long as consumers interact with the company through website displays directs both complex cognition and affecttion and results in customer satisfaction (Pandey & Chawla, 2018). Customer satisfaction is a performance indicator of retail business. Customer satisfaction has an important role for companies to increase customer loyalty, prevent consumer declines, reduce consumer price sensitivity, streamline the marketing and operational costs, acquire new customers, increase advertising effectiveness, and company reputation. (Kim *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, customer satisfaction is one of the company's goals in formulating its strategy.

The aesthetics of the website in the online customer experience received during exploration while shopping also results in unplanned purchases (impulse buying). Impulse buying is often used by marketers to promote new products or to increase sales. Therefore, marketers involve the external motivation from the product and the shopping atmosphere as part of the online customer experience and internally from the desire and purchase thought to control consumer impulse buying (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991).

Apart from advertising and promotions carried out by marketers, consumer expectations regarding the aesthetic experience of the website offered can be formed even before consumers shop which results in customer satisfaction and impulse buying. Expectations for website aesthetics are triggered by the existence of eWOM which is widely available on the internet and can be easily accessed by potential consumers. Consumers obtain information about experiences, reviews, opinions from other consumers and regarding stores, products, brands through online communication media such as email, instant messages, homepages, blogs, forums, online communities, groups, chat, review sites, and websites, social networks (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) those are constantly evolving.

Previous studies found that the appearance of a website that is supported by visual and artistic elements in the consumer online shopping experience has an effect on customer satisfaction (Liu *et*

al., 2008; Devalage & Kulathunga, 2019; Duarte et al., 2018; Algharabat et al., 2017). In addition, previous studies have found the influence of website aesthetics on online customer experience to be a stimulus of consumer feelings during shopping which leads to impulse buying (Liao et al., 2016; Zou, 2018; Himawari et al., 2018). Previous studies also found that eWOM as a non-advertising opinion from previous consumers influenced customer satisfaction (Shi et al., 2016; Tandon et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2020) and impulse buying (Husnain et al., 2019; Astuti et al., 2020; Liu & Hsu, 2017) by forming expectations at a certain level prior and during consumers shop (Alhidari et al., 2015).

Several previous studies have discussed the influence of aesthetics as one of the online customer experience factors on customer satisfaction. However, these studies had not looked at the same specific effect of website aesthetics on online customer experience and impulse buying with eWOM factors that strengthen the influence of website aesthetics. For comparison, the researches of Liu et al. (2008), Deyalage & Kulathunga (2019), Duarte et al. (2018); Algharabat et al. (2017) study the aesthetic factors that play a role in online shopping on customer satisfaction, while researches of Liao et al. (2016), Zou (2018), and Himawari et al. (2018) focuses on individual impulse buying. Furthermore, the effect of eWOM exposure on consumers has not been measured as a moderating role in rising customer satisfaction and impulse buying through the aesthetic experience felt by the customer.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between customer experience at the millennial age obtained from the visual appearance of the website during online shopping in the B2C marketplace application with customer satisfaction and impulsive shopping carried out as well as the moderating effect of eWOM comprehensively. Through this research, it is expected to provide scientific contributions as integration and development of the relationship between website aesthetics in online customer experience, customer satisfaction, impulse buying, and eWOM. The application of the results of this study is expected to be a reference in managerial strategies for companies in selling products online to face global competition.

LITERATURE REVIEW Aesthetic on Online Cu

Aesthetic on Online Customer Experience

Website aesthetics is described by Rose *et al.* (2012) as a dimension of affective experience in online customer experience. Akin to the aesthetics found in offline retail stores, website aesthetics provide an impetus to customers' perceived aesthetic experience (Eroglu *et al.*, 2003; Gentile *et al.*, 2007). To create a pleasing visual appeal, website aesthetics are built using various bases of art and creativity (Lee & Chen, 2011).

Mathwick et al. (2001) separate aesthetics into dimensions of visual appeal and entertainment that can factor to provide additional value that can be enjoyed by customers during shopping. The visual appeal itself is a dimension in sales that attracts consumers through designs that have aesthetic value (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994). Meanwhile, Leder et al., (2004) built a model of aesthetic experience with five stages (perceptual analysis, integration of implicit memory, explicit classification, mastery of cognition, and evaluation) based on their definition as a person's psychological process involving appreciation in artistic aesthetics. Wang et al. (2010) distinguish website aesthetics as a medium for evaluating website design into two dimensions, namely formal aesthetics and aesthetic in appearance, in line with the opinion of Schenkman & Jönsson (2000).

Aesthetic and Customer Satisfaction

Consumers state that the results of their experiences with products and services they receive for a certain period become a part of customer satisfaction (Clemes et al., 2011; Fournier & Mick, 1999). To build customer satisfaction, it is done by starting from the stage when collect information consumers and consider alternatives (Liu et al., 2008). In this stage, the consumers evaluate the appearance and quality of the information provided. This is the process of forming customer satisfaction that occurs when consumers make purchase transactions and becomes the realm of marketers' tasks. This is also supported by the definition of customer satisfaction put forward by Pham & Ahammad (2017) as a result of an assessment of the experience received by consumers from each stage of shopping carried out.

When customers interact with products while shopping, it allows the feeling of encouragement to emerge within the customer (Šerić et al., 2020). Liu et al. (2008) stated that customer satisfaction will be obtained based on the quality of information obtained when gathering information about products and considering various alternatives. The completeness of information in the store pages accessed by customers is mentioned by Vasić et al. (2019) as a determining factor for customer satisfaction that occurs on the website in online shopping (Pei et al., 2020). With regards to customer satisfaction, according to Yoo & Kim (2014), online stores affect customer experience through the ease of use for the users, the ease of receiving sound and images, and the ease of accessing links.

Previous research supports the findings of customer experience resulting from website aesthetics, (i.e the combinations of colors, layout, treatments, fonts, use of bulleted list) that has a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Pandey & Chawla, 2018; Tseng & Lee, 2019; Tey & Mahmoud, 2020). Wang *et al.* (2010) describes the influence of websites that have aesthetic value that builds customer satisfaction significantly. Corroboratively, Deyalage & Kulathunga (2019) also mentions customer satisfaction in online stores which comes from website design. Meanwhile, customer satisfaction and positive feelings during shopping are supported by websites that have good, attractive, clear, and fast information (Dharmesti & Nugroho, 2013). Customer experience is also supported by the finding that visual elements also have an influence on customer satisfaction in previous study by Algharabat *et al.* (2017).

The website pages as a visually appealing online retail sales tool have been shown to have a positive influence on customer satisfaction as stated by Nia & Shokouhyar (2020). This is also supported by the findings of Rita *et al.* (2019) in which there is a positive influence obtained by customers from website design as a part of the e-service quality received and felt by customers to form customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Taherdoost & Madanchian (2021) explains that customer satisfaction while shopping and using e-commerce websites is formed from the aesthetics in website design.

Based on the foregoing, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1: There is a positive influence of Aesthetics in Online Customer Experience while shopping on Customer Satisfaction.

Aesthetic and Impulse Buying

Hoch & Loewenstein (1991) explain the existence of external motivation from the product and atmosphere as well as internal from the desire and thought to buy that are involved by marketers to control impulse buying (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Rook, 1987). Stern (1962) classifies impulse buying into 4 characteristics, namely (1) pure impulse buying, which is a purchase that begins with browsing without a specific purpose and finding offers and reviews, (2) offers, limited products, advertisements from browsing such results, and former experiences to impulse buying reminders, (3) suggestive impulse buying resulting from recommendations from other people found, (4) planned impulse buying, namely planning shopping on a list based on unplanned browsing results. Beatty & Ferrell (1998) categorize impulse buying into 2 categories, namely the urgency of buying and the tendency of impulsive buying.

Customers' experience during online shopping is related to the customers' desire to buy without any prior planning (The customer experience during online shopping is related to the customer's desire to buy without any prior planning (Wu et al., 2020). Furthermore, Wu et al. (2020) explained the positive influence of Flow State (enjoyment, control, and concentration) that occurred to costumers during online shopping impulse buying. Visual customer experience in obtaining good information about products during shopping is also one of the factors in impulse buying which was researched by Liao et al. (2016). In addition to security and navigation factors, visual factors included in online shopping websites have an influence on online impulse buying (Zou, 2018). On the other hand, Himawari et al. (2018) also explained the influence of aesthetics on online store websites in providing positive encouragement to customer when shopping online which leads to impulse buying. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive influence of Aesthetics while shopping on Impulse Buying.

Moderation Role of eWOM on The Relationship Between Aesthetic and Customer Satisfaction

Cheng & Zhou, (2010) concluded that the advantages of eWOM over traditional WOM are that it does not require face-toface communication, can occur between people who do not know each other, lower costs, and faster communication speeds. Email, instant messaging, homepages, blogs, forums, online communities, groups, chats, review sites, and social networking sites can be places for the communication and exchange of information processes in eWOM (Rizal Muhammad et al., 2020, Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Alhidari et al. (2015) explained eWOM as a marketing communication medium to share postpurchase experiences with others can be seen from the ease of using the internet and SNS in the form of videos, images, social media, and the brand's official website. Furthermore, eWOM is investigated as a non-commercial communication medium that occurs between consumers who provide information and recommendations from consumers who have previously made purchases (Kala & Chaubey, 2018).

EWOM accessed from various online media by prospective customer related to customer's previous the shopping experience generates a certain level of expectation before making a purchase (Alhidari et al., 2015). This was found by Shi et al. (2016) as a factor shaping customer satisfaction after obtaining a shopping experience. The study of Tandon et al. (2020) mentions the positive influence of integrated website quality, eWOM and Product Satisfaction on customer satisfaction. This is also backed up by Hasan et al. (2020) who found the

higher customer satisfaction from positive eWOM. Therefore, a hypothesis can be made:

H3: eWOM increasing the relationship between Aesthetic and Customer Satisfaction.

Moderation Role of eWOM on The Relationship Between Aesthetic and Impulse Buying

Alhidari *et al.* (2015) describes other people's experience that are shared in eWOM through the use of the internet and SNS in the form of videos, images, social media, and the brand's official website. Customer access to eWOM on various internet media moves customers to make unplanned purchases (Husnain *et al.*, 2019). EWOM gives positive feelings to customers to then make impulse buying (Liu & Hsu, 2017). This is supported by the opinion of Astuti *et al.*, (2020) that there is a positive eWOM influence on impulse buying. Based on this theory, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: eWOM moderates the relationship between Aesthetics and Impulse Buying

Refering to the hypothesis framework presented above, the research model can be described as shown in Figure 1.

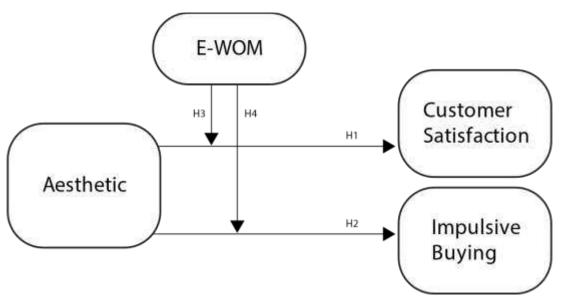


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses data collection methods through surveys by distributing questionnaires which are preferably done online. Measurements were made using a Likert scale with a scale of 1 - 5 (1 =strongly disagree dan 5 = strongly agree). Measurement of Aesthetic variable in Online Customer Experience during online shopping was adopted from Rose *et al.* (2012) with 4 questions; the advertising on the website, branding that shows in the web, the look and feel of the website.

Afterwards, the measurement of Customer Satisfaction was adopted from Pham & Ahammad (2017) has 4 questions; facility, payment procedure, sales support, delivery care. The measurement of *Impulse buying variable* was adopted from Beatty & Ferrell (1998) has 6 questions consisting of urge of purchase and impulse buying tendency.

Last, the measurement of eWOM variable was adapted from Kala & Chaubey (2018) with 5 questions; relevant information, get influenced, testimony, product recommendation, e-Wom as personal sources of information. The total measurement amounted to 19 questions on the variables measured in this study.

The respondents of this study are individuals who are in the millennial group between the ages of 21 to 40 years (Ordun, 2015) and have purchased products from the B2C marketplace website accessed through application. This research was conducted within Jakarta and Tangerang areas. Data collection commenced by distributing pre-test questionnaires to 30 people.

The validity test was carried out to trial the questionnaire items, by measuring Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO). In the validity test, KMO and MSA values above 0.5 indicate the appropriate factor. The reliability test of the survey was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha measurements. Chronbach's Alpha value above 0.5 indicates the reliability of the questionnaire questions and the closer to 1 indicates the better reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The variables of Customer Satisfaction and Impulse Buying were declared valid. Meanwhile, only 3 out of 4 questions of Aesthetic variable were valid. Then the eWOM variable is declared valid. Thus, after the pre-test analysis, since we make some changes of 19 questions, there were 18 valid questions to be used as questionnaires.

Considering this study uses the Structural Equation Mode – PLS analysis tool, the number of samples used in this study is 5 times the number questionnaire questions (Hair *et al.*, 2014), namely 90 people who have fulfilled and reached 251 respondents with characteristic showed in Table 1.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The validity and construct reliability analysis were carried out based on the recommendations stated by Hair et al. (2014). The results in this study meet the reliability requirements with the construct reliability values above 0.60 and the extract variance above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). The measurement of construct validity in this study can be accepted and declared valid since all indicators in each variable have a loading factor value more than 0.50. aesthetic variables (CR=0.777; VE=0.543) met the requirements of construct reliability along with Customer variables Satisfaction (CR=0.891; VE=0.672), Impulse Buying (CR=0.946; VE=0.745), and eWOM (CR=0.845; VE=0.523).

Structural test analysis is carried out by looking at the R^2 value in each equation as an indicator that shows how far the independent variables in the equation are able to explain the dependent variable. Based on the results of the SEM analysis, the results of the first analysis can be obtained, namely Customer Satisfaction is jointly influenced by the Aesthetics variable with the moderating role of eWOM with R^2 value of 0.322. This shows that 32% of the variance of the Customer Satisfaction can be explained by Aesthetic variable, while the other 68% can be explained by other variables not included in this study. In the second analysis, the Impulse Buying variable is jointly influenced by the Aesthetics variable and the moderation of eWOM variable with a

value of 0.222. Thus, it can be concluded that 22% of the variance of Impulse Buying can be explained by Online Customer Experience, while the remaining 78% can be explained by other variables not included in this study.

Aspect	Criteria	Number	Percentage
Age	21 - 25	126	50.2%
	26 - 30	58	23.1%
	31 - 35	39	15.5%
	36 - 40	28	11.2%
Gender	Male	173	68.9%
	Female	78	31.1%
Education Level	Below senior high school	0	0.0%
	Senior high school	102	40.6%
	Diploma	33	13.1%
	Bachelor	110	43.8%
	Magister/Doctoral	6	2.4%
Monthly income	0 - 3.000.000	124	49.4%
	3.000.001 - 5.000.000	59	23.5%
	5.000.001 - 10.000.000	61	24.3%
	above 10.000.000	7	2.8%
Product Category	electronic	110	43.8%
	cosmetic	150	59.8%
	home appliances	126	50.2%
	fashion	153	61.0%
	food & drink	107	42.6%
	stationary	58	23.1%
	other	53	21.1%
Marketplace	tokopedia	67	26.7%
-	shopee	145	57.8%
	lazada	23	9.2%
	blibli	2	0.8%
	bukalapak	9	3.6%
	other	5	2.0%

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

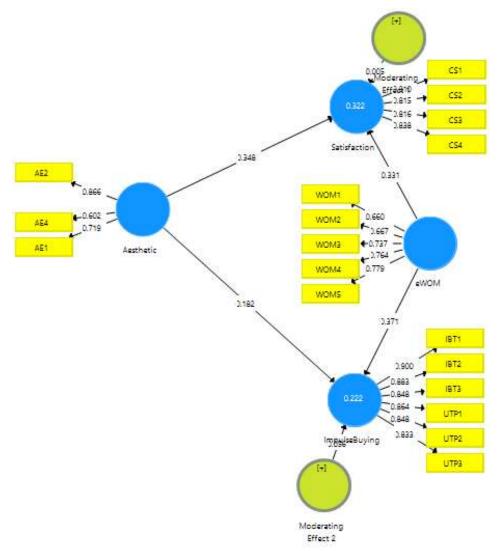


Figure 2 Bootstraping Output

Effect	Original	Sample	Standard	T-	P-	Description
	Sample	Mean	Deviation	Value	Value	
	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)			
Aesthetics \rightarrow	0.348	0.359	0.067	4.972	0.000	The hypothesis
Customer Satisfaction.						is supported by the data
Aesthetics \rightarrow Impulse buying	0.182	0.188	0.067	2.721	0.007	The hypothesis is supported by the data
Aesthetics*eWOM \rightarrow	0.005	0.013	0.073	0.068	0.948	The hypothesis
Customer Satisfaction						is not supported by the data
Aesthetics*eWOM → Impulse Buying	0.056	0.062	0.049	1.099	0.251	The hypothesis is not supported by the data

Table 2. Results of hypothesis testing

The first analysis on the website aesthetics variable has a direct effect on customer satisfaction as seen on Figure 2 wich related to Table 2 with a value of t =4.972 (>1.96). Furthermore, the Aesthetic variable has a direct effect on Impulse Buying with a value of t = 2.721 (>1.96). Subsequent analysis on the moderating eWOM variable as not proven to have an effect on the relationship between Aesthetics and Customer Satisfaction with a value of t = 0.068 (<1.96). Thereupon, the eWOM variable was not proven to have a moderating effect on the relationship between Aesthetics and Impulse Buying with a value of t = 1.099 (<1.96).

In this study, the results showed that there were aspects of online customer experience, namely website aesthetics which showed an influence on customer satisfaction in the millennial group while shopping in the marketplace. Customers feel the experience of website design that has aesthetic value and is attractive to customers during online shopping (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994). An attractive appearance and website design gives a good impression to customers and becomes an added value received by customers (Eroglu et al., 2003). The ease of receiving messages and information through website designs offered by e-commerce websites shapes the customer experience during shopping (Yoo & Kim, 2014). Based on the experience and value felt by customers during the shopping process, it becomes a form of customers assessment of the marketplace and evaluates their assessment with expectations. When customers who feel that the experience is a good and in line with expectations during online shopping accordingly express satisfaction with the customer (Clemes et al., 2011). The findings in this study are supported by the statement of Rose et al. (2012), Wang et al. (2010) Nia & Shokouhyar (2020), Pandey & Chawla (2018), and Deyalage & Kulathunga (2019) that customers who experience good aesthetic during shopping indicates good shopping satisfaction.

In this study, there are also findings that show online customer experience from website aesthetics obtained by the millennial group has a positive effect on impulse buying when shopping online using a marketplace application. This can be interpreted that the customers from the millennial group can make impulsive and unplanned purchases done virtually provide a positive aesthetic experience for customers (Liao et al., 2016). Customers who do not intend to buy when opening the marketplace application and feel a good shopping experience received from the visual aesthetics of the website as an external factor in the shopping environment can be moved to shop and make purchases immediately (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). In addition, customers who make impulse purchases also add a shopping list spontaneously that they did not intend to buy impulsively beforehand (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998) during shopping experience from website aesthetics. The findings in this study are also supported by previous studies as stated by (Liao et al. (2016), Himawari et al. (2018), Zou (2018) that website aesthetics have a positive influence on impulse buying.

However, the results in this study also found that eWOM was not proven to have a moderating effect either on the relationship between aesthetics in online customer experience and customer satisfaction or on the relationship between aesthetics and impulse buying. This can be due to the low level of consumer confidence in eWOM which is found freely in various online media containing various positive and negative opinions (Nam et al., 2020). The lack of variation of positive and negative opinions in the eWOM forum results in the formation of customer doubts about the credibility of the website as described by Zhang et al. (2016). Opinions received by customers in the form of eWOM do not help customers to understand the product or the shopping process that is done virtually in the online marketplace application. EWOM that contradicts the reality of direct customer can negatively affect customer experience and satisfaction. This can happen when customers who shop based on the opinions of others in eWOM and become the basis for expectations since before they start shopping (Haistead et al., 1994). This can be interpreted that the lack of intensity and quality of opinions expressed by previous customers also causes a lack of information received by other customers who will shop, causing the expectations of customers who will shop on the marketplace application to be less well formed. Meanwhile, consumers who carry a certain level of expectation do not change their opinion about the aesthetic experience on the website even though they have seen comments in online forums that contradict which leads to customer dissatisfaction (Kuo & Nakhata, 2019). customer satisfaction and Therefore, impulse buying in this study are only influenced by aesthetics as an online customer experience and are not moderated by eWOM. This finding is supported by the statements of Jones et al. (2018) and Kuo & Nakhata (2019) that eWOM has no effect on Aesthetics and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDA-TION

The results that can be concluded based on the findings of this study are, first, the aesthetics of the website as a good online customer experience will never increase customer satisfaction. Second, a good marketplace aesthetic increases impulse buying. However, eWOM does not have an effect either on the relationship between aesthetics and customer satisfaction or on the relationship between aesthetics and impulse buying in millennial age consumers who make online purchases through marketplace applications.

There are still some limitations in this study that need to be improved in future research. First, this study only collected respondents from the millennial age group, with their perceptions, so that no comparison and significance of how the variables in this study impacted other age group could be obtained. Second, the aesthetic variable is one of the dimensions of online customer experience, experience from visual view after visiting the web, that is subjective reactions to stimuli presented that can be investigated further with more complexity as a factor influencing customer satisfaction and impulse buying. Third, the factors that influence customer satisfaction and impulse buying in addition to website aesthetics and the moderating effect of eWOM in this study can still be influenced by more factors that are not currently investigated, such as the level of consumer confidence, promotions, brand image, and factors from consumer behaviour as marketplace application users.

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect of website aesthetics as an online customer experience on customer satisfaction and impulse buying and the moderating role of eWOM in the millennial age group who shop online through marketplace applications. From a business and sales point of view, the understanding consumer behaviour from various age groups including millennials who use marketplace applications for a lot of online shopping. From the results of this study, managerial implications can be drawn that are important to do in order to increase customer satisfaction and impulse buying. First, considering the aesthetics of the website has a role in customer satisfaction and impulse buying, the shopping process provided by the marketplace application needs to continue to improve the design as a visual appeal with the value of beauty in the application to answer the needs and desires of consumers so that they can experience an interesting and attractive experience while shopping. This will have an impact on customer satisfaction in general which leads to customer loyalty and the company's business continuity. In addition, maintaining the quality of the appearance and aesthetics of ecommerce websites that are used as shopping media can also increase impulsive purchases from the millennial group where when consumers shop at the marketplace and then add other products that they did not intend to buy before. On this occasion, the number and value of purchases made by consumers will be higher so that it benefits the seller.

Furthermore, because eWOM is not proven to have a moderating effect on the relationship between aesthetics as an online customer experience and customer satisfaction as well as the relationship between aesthetics and impulse buying, thus the sales through online marketplace application must pay attention to and improve the quality of eWOM spread across various online media and listened by potential customers who will shop online through the marketplace application. Companies can encourage consumers who have a good level of satisfaction to be able shopping experiences share their to through various opinion sections or user forums. This is necessary to encourage other customers to form positive expectations on the shopping experience. In addition, positive eWOM also has an important role in convincing customers to make a purchase immediately even though the product they buy is not included in the shopping list to be purchased. Companies can set up the eWOM area as an active and positive means for customers to exchange and share their own opinions about the online shopping experience.

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