

The Influence of Regulation, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Religiosity on the Repurchase Intention of Unilever Products

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh regulasi, *electronic word of mouth* (E-WOM), dan religiusitas terhadap minat beli ulang produk Unilever di Kota Madiun. Fenomena penelitian didasari oleh isu boikot produk yang ramai diperbincangkan di media sosial dan diperkuat dengan keluarnya Fatwa MUI Nomor 83 Tahun 2023 mengenai kewajiban menghindari produk yang terafiliasi dengan Israel. Kondisi tersebut memunculkan pergeseran perilaku konsumen Muslim yang lebih selektif dalam melakukan pembelian. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 100 responden konsumen Unilever di Kota Madiun yang mengetahui adanya gerakan boikot. Instrumen penelitian menggunakan kuesioner dengan skala Likert, sedangkan teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan uji validitas, reliabilitas, asumsi klasik, serta regresi linier berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa regulasi, E-WOM, dan religiusitas secara parsial maupun simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap minat beli ulang. Koefisien determinasi (R^2) sebesar 0.612 menandakan bahwa 61,2% variasi minat beli ulang dijelaskan oleh ketiga variabel bebas, sementara sisanya dipengaruhi faktor lain. Kata kunci: Regulasi, E-WOM, Religiusitas, Minat Beli Ulang, Unilever, Boikot

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of regulation, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and religiosity on repurchase intention of Unilever products in Madiun City. The research background is based on the increasing boycott movement against Unilever products, triggered by the issuance of MUI Fatwa No. 83/2023 and massive discussions on social media. The research employed a quantitative method with a survey approach. The sample consisted of 100 respondents who are Unilever consumers in Madiun City and were aware of the boycott campaign. Data were collected through questionnaires using Likert scales and analyzed with multiple linear regression. The findings indicate that regulation, E-WOM, and religiosity significantly affect repurchase intention both partially and simultaneously. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.612 suggests that 61.2% of repurchase intention variation can be explained by these three independent variables.

Keywords: Regulation, E-WOM, Religiosity, Repurchase Intention, Unilever, Boycott

A. INTRODUCTION

The Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry is one of the most dynamic growth sectors in Indonesia. FMCG products, such as food, beverages, personal care items, and household cleaning supplies, have a high purchase frequency and are relatively affordable, making them an integral part of people's lives. The contribution of this sector to the national economy is very significant due to its rapid product turnover and continuous consumer demand. One of the major players in the FMCG industry in Indonesia is PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk, which has been operating for over 85 years and manages a diverse portfolio of well-known brands such as Pepsodent, Lifebuoy, Rinso, Sunlight, Wall's, Clear, Sunsilk, Vaseline, Ax, Lux, Molto, and Royco. Unilever's success in maintaining consumer loyalty is due to its consistent quality, adaptive marketing strategies, and extensive distribution network.

However, in recent years, social, political, and religious dynamics have brought new challenges for multinational companies, including Unilever. The geopolitical conflict between Palestine and Israel has sparked a global phenomenon: a boycott movement against products perceived to be affiliated with Israel. This movement is rapidly spreading thru social media, involving Muslim consumers in various countries, including Indonesia. This phenomenon gained further momentum when the Indonesian Council of Ulema (MUI) issued Fatwa Number 83 of 2023, which encourages Muslims to avoid products affiliated with Israel. Although not legally binding, this fatwa holds strong moral authority and significantly influences the consumption behavior of the Muslim community.

In the context of the FMCG industry, fatwas and boycott campaigns have serious implications. Data shows that Unilever Indonesia's profits experienced a significant decline following the boycott issue. This indicates that consumer decisions to repurchase a product are not only influenced by functional factors such as quality and price, but also by social,

ethical, and religious values. Repurchase intention is an important aspect of consumer behavior, as it serves as an indicator of loyalty to a brand. When this loyalty is disrupted by external factors, such as religious regulations, negative digital opinions, and consumer religiosity levels, companies must be able to understand and respond to these changes.

The role of social media in the spread of information is further strengthening this phenomenon. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), whether in the form of reviews, hashtag campaigns like #BoycottUnilever or #BoycottIsrael, or thru applications like "No Thanks!", has become a highly effective instrument in influencing consumer perception. Negative e-WOM has been proven to be capable of lowering brand image and reducing repurchase interest, as consumers trust authentic experiences shared between individuals more than information from company advertisements. The virality of digital information accelerates the formation of public opinion, thereby increasing social pressure on consumers to participate in boycott movements.

Beside regulations and E-WOM, the level of religiosity is also an important factor influencing consumption behavior, especially in Indonesia, where society is known for its religiosity. Religiosity encompasses the extent to which individuals understand, internalize, and apply religious teachings in their daily lives, including in economic decisions. In the context of boycotts, many Muslim consumers view the decision not to purchase certain products not only as a political protest, but also as a form of religious obedience and community solidarity. This creates a unique phenomenon where, despite Unilever products being halal-certified, some consumers still choose to avoid them because believe the company's affiliation contradicts their religious values.

Madiun City was chosen as the research location because it has a religious population, is active on social media, and has a high consumption rate of Unilever products. Initial survey data showed that 90% of the people in Madiun City are active users of Unilever products. However, after the boycott issue emerged, this figure decreased to 59%.

This indicates a rather drastic shift in consumer behavior, making it interesting to further investigate the factors influencing it.

Based on this phenomenon, this research focuses on analyzing the influence of regulation (MUI Fatwa No. 83 of 2023), electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and religiosity on the repurchase interest of Unilever products in Madiun City. Theoretically, this research enriches the literature related to consumer behavior in the social-religious context and information digitalization. Practically, this research provides strategic implications for companies in responding to sensitive issues that impact consumer loyalty, as well as for policymakers to formulating a regulatory approach that aligns with societal dynamics.

1. Theoretical Study

a. *Grand Theory*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was developed by (Ajzen, 1991) to explain behavioral intentions. TPB states that intention is the main predictor of actual behavior, which is influenced by three main components:

1. Attitude toward the behavior: the extent to which a person evaluates an action positively or negatively.
2. Subjective norm: the perception of social pressure or the expectations of others.
3. Perceived behavioral control: an individual's perception of their ability and the ease/difficulty of performing a certain action.

In the context of this research, regulations (MUI Fatwa No. 83 of 2023) influence perceived behavioral control, E-WOM shapes subjective norms, and religiosity determines individuals' attitudes toward consumption actions. All three influence consumers' repurchase interest in Unilever products in Madiun City.

b. Regulation

Regulation is not limited to formal government rules, but also includes normative and ethical regulations, such as religious fatwas. In Indonesia, fatwas from the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) often serve as moral guidelines for the Muslim community. One relevant regulation is MUI Fatwa No. 83 of 2023, which calls on Muslims not to buy products affiliated with Israel. Although not legally binding, this fatwa has significant influence because it touches upon the moral, ethical, and religious aspects of consumers.

According to ((Wardojo, 2018)), religious edicts serve to shape the collective consciousness of the community. (Wissha, 2025) asserts that the fatwa can be categorized as religious ethical regulation that emphasizes social justice and human solidarity. Therefore, regulation is seen as an important factor that can change consumer behavior in repurchasing products.

c. *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM)

E-WOM is the dissemination of consumer opinions, reviews, or experiences regarding a product or brand thru digital media. According to (Thorsten Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), E-WOM encompasses informal statements made by actual, potential, or former consumers, which are publicly accessible via the internet. E-WOM is divided into two types:

1. Positive E-WOM: reviews or opinions that enhance brand image and encourage repurchase interest.
2. Negative E-WOM: opinions that damage brand image, erode trust, and reduce repurchase intention.

In the context of boycotts, negative E-WOM such as hashtag campaigns (#BoycottIsrael, #BoycottUnilever) and the No Thanks! app become instruments for disseminating information that influences consumer behavior. (Delviana et al.,

2023) shows that positive E-WOM increases loyalty, while (Santika et al., 2024) found that negative E-WOM can significantly decrease repurchase interest.

d. Religiosity

Religiosity is the extent to which an individual understands, internalizes, and practices religious teachings in daily life (Glock & Stark, 1965). This concept has five dimensions:

1. Belief
2. Ritual practice
3. Experiential
4. Religious knowledge
5. Consequential behavior

Consumers with high levels of religiosity tend to consider ethical aspects and religious teachings in every consumption decision. In the context of boycotts, religiosity motivates consumers not to purchase products associated with parties that contradict religious values. Research (Anggita & Astuti, 2024) shows that religiosity has a positive influence on the consumption behavior of halal products and products that align with moral values.

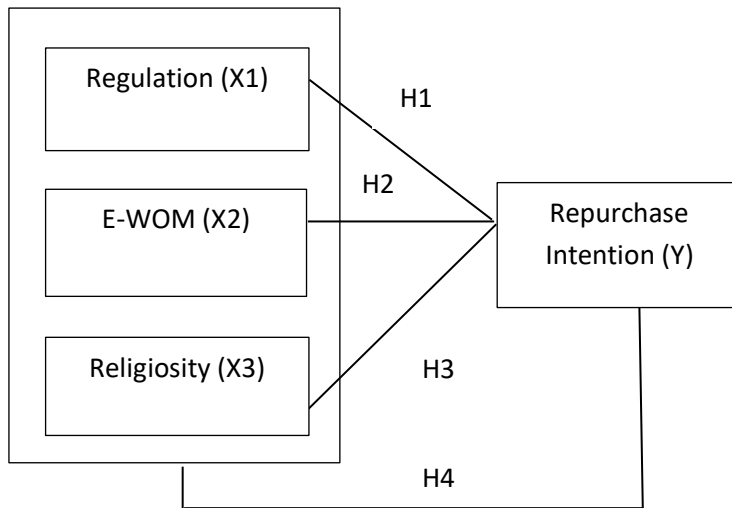
e. Repurchase Intention

According to (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010), repurchase intention is the tendency of consumers to buy a product again based on previous experience. Repurchase intention is a crucial part of post-purchase behavior that is essential for building brand loyalty.

In the issue of boycotts, repurchase intention is influenced not only by functional factors (quality, price) but also by social factors (regulation), digital opinions (E-WOM), and religious values (religiosity). (Fitria et al., 2022)

emphasize that repurchase intention in this context becomes complex because it involves moral, ideological, and humanitarian considerations.

2. Conceptual Framework



Source : (Fadhillah & Noor, 2024)

Gambar 1 Kerangka Berpikir

3. Hypothesis

Based on a review of theory and previous research, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows:

H1: Regulation influences the repurchase intention of Unilever products in Madiun City.

H2: Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) influences the repurchase intention of Unilever products in Madiun City.

H3: Religiosity influences the repurchase intention of Unilever products in Madiun City.

H4: Regulation, E-WOM, and Religiosity simultaneously influence the repurchase intention of Unilever products in Madiun City.

B. METHOD

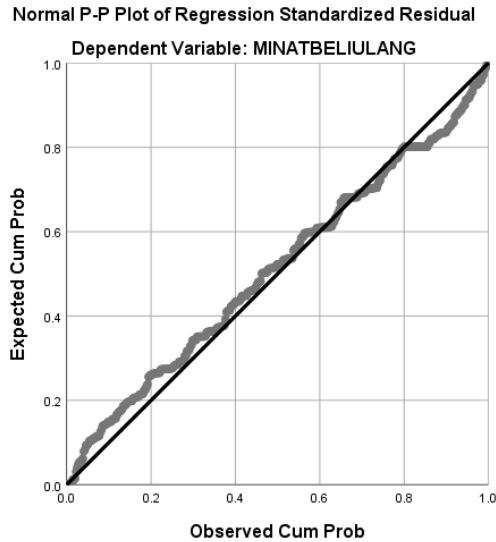
This research uses a quantitative method with a survey approach. The research object is Unilever product consumers in Madiun City who are exposed to the boycott issue. The selection of Madiun City was based on the high level of consumption of Unilever products and the characteristics of the community, which is religious and actively uses social media, making it relevant to research the influence of regulation, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and religiosity on repurchase intention. Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents selected using purposive sampling technique with the criteria being consumers residing in Madiun City, active users of Unilever products, and aware of the boycott issue. The sample size used in this study was 384 respondents. The research instrument is a questionnaire developed based on indicators from the variables of regulation, E-WOM, religiosity, and repurchase intention. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software thru multiple linear regression to determine the partial and simultaneous influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Classical assumption tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity tests, and hypothesis testing was performed using the t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Normality Test

The normality of the data can be tested using the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals, which is explained as follows:

Table 1 Normality test results



Source: Primary data processed in 2025.

The results in the table above show the results of the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for the dependent variable Repurchase Intention. In the graph display, it can be seen that the residual points largely follow the diagonal line representing a normal distribution. This pattern, which is close to a straight line, indicates that the residuals are normally distributed. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model meets the normality assumption, which means the model is suitable for further testing.

2. Partial Test (T-test)

The T-test is used to test the research hypothesis regarding the partial influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the T-test analysis in this study are as follows:

Table 2 Results of the Partial Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.431	.942		1.520	.129
	Regulasi	.218	.046	.224	4.800	.000
	E-WOM	.326	.044	.391	7.399	.000
	Religiusitas	.262	.040	.312	6.592	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Minat Beli Ulang

Source: Primary data processed in 2025.

Based on the analysis of the data in the table above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Testing the First Hypothesis (H1) The Regulation variable has a significance value of 0.000 with a calculated t-value of 4.800. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This indicates that Regulation has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention.
- b. Testing the Second Hypothesis (H2) The Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) variable also shows significant results, with a significance value of 0.000 and a calculated t-value of 7.399. Because the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H2) is accepted. This indicates that E-WOM has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention.
- c. Testing the Third Hypothesis (H3) The Religiosity variable obtained a significance value of 0.000 and a calculated t-value of 6.592. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H3) is accepted. This indicates that Religiosity has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention

3. Simultaneous Test (F-test)

Table 3 Simultaneous Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2839.334	3	946.445	401.364	.000 ^b
	Residual	912.574	387	2.358		
	Total	3751.908	390			
a. Dependent Variable: MINATBELIULANG						

Source: Primary data processed in 2025.

Based on the table above, with a simultaneous F-value of 401.364 and a significance value (p-value) of 0.000, it can be concluded that the p-value is much smaller than the commonly used significance levels (e.g., 0.05 or 0.01). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, and it can be concluded that there is a significant influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, namely Repurchase Intention.

4. Test of Determination Coefficient

The coefficient of determination (R²) test is conducted to determine the extent to which the independent variables as a whole influence the dependent variable. By examining the value of the coefficient of determination, the analysis results indicate the magnitude of the influence, expressed as a percentage, exerted by the independent variables on the dependent variable. The results of the coefficient of determination (R²) test are as follows:

Table 4 Result test of the determination coefficient (R²)

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870 ^a	.757	.755	1.53560
a. Predictors: (Constant), Regulasi, Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM) , Religiusitas				
b. Dependent Variable: Minat Beli Ulang				

Source: Primary data processed in 2025.

Based on the results in the table above, it can be seen that the R Square (R^2) value is 0.757, which means there is a strong influence between the independent variables and the dependent variable. For the percentage contribution of the independent variables, namely Regulation, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), and Religiosity, to Repurchase Intention for Unilever products, the results are as follows:

$$R^2 \times 100\% = 0,757 \times 100\%$$

$$= 75,7\%$$

This indicates that the percentage influence of the variables Regulation, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Religiosity on Repurchase Intention for Unilever products in Madiun City is 75.7%, while the remaining 24.3% is explained by other variables not examined in this study.

D. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that consumer behavior, specifically the repurchase interest in Unilever products in Madiun City, is significantly influenced by a combination of regulatory

factors, electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), and religiosity. Regulations in the form of religious edicts have proven to possess moral strength capable of changing societal behavior, even without coercive legal instruments. MUI Fatwa Number 83 of 2023 is one of the important factors that encourages consumers to reconsider their consumption decisions. Furthermore, E-WOM has proven to be a very powerful instrument in shaping public opinion. The spread of the boycott issue thru social media and dedicated applications creates social pressure that reinforces new norms within the consumer community. This makes consumers more cautious about repurchasing, especially when evolving digital opinions are negative. Religiosity has also been proven to significantly influence consumption behavior. Consumers with high levels of religiosity tend to be more consistent in using religious values as a guide in decision-making. In the case of boycotts, religiosity makes consumers more receptive to religious regulatory calls and digital information that aligns with the value of communal solidarity. Overall, these three variables form a mutually reinforcing pattern of influence. Regulation provides moral legitimacy, E-WOM strengthens the dissemination of information, and religiosity deepens consumer commitment. The decline in repurchase interest in Unilever products in Madiun City is the result of the interaction of these three factors. This research reinforces the understanding that consumer behavior is not only influenced by functional factors such as quality or price, but also by normative, social, and religious factors that have a significant impact.

E. SUGGESTION

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that companies, particularly Unilever Indonesia, pay more attention to social and religious values in their communication strategies and marketing policies. A transparent and religiously sensitive crisis communication approach is essential to restore consumer trust. Society, especially consumers, is expected to be more critical in filtering information from social media so that decisions are not based solely on digital opinions, but also on rational considerations and real needs. Meanwhile, for

academics, further research should expand the variables studied, for example, by adding brand image, consumer loyalty, or quality perception, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of repurchase behavior in the context of socio-religious issues. The government and relevant institutions are also expected to play a role in providing balanced consumption education, so that people are able to make smart and responsible decisions without neglecting moral and religious aspects.

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