THE INFLUENCE OF WEB PLATFORM AND CUSTOMER BASED FACTORS ON PERCEIVED POSITIVE E-WOM CREDIBILITY AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

ABSTRACT

Aim: This study explores how perceived positive eWOM review credibility influences consumer decision-making, focusing on its effects on product attitude, website attitude, and purchase intention. It also examines the roles of website reputation and source credibility in shaping eWOM review credibility.

Methodology:A structured questionnaire was administered to 642 respondents, and the data were analysed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypotheses and validate the constructs.

Findings: The analysis supports all hypotheses, showing significant positive relationships between perceived positive eWOM and website reputation, source credibility, and other variables. However, the overall model fit is poor, indicating that adjustments are needed due to some insignificant direct paths.

Managerial implications: Focus on enhancing factors that boost perceived positive eWOM credibility, such as improving website reputation and source credibility, to better influence product attitudes and purchase intentions.

Originality and research contributions: This study offers original insights into how perceived positive eWOM credibility impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, integrating factors like website reputation and source credibility. Its contributions include a refined understanding of the pathways through which eWOM influences consumer behaviour and actionable implications for enhancing eWOM strategies in marketing.

Key words: Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Perceived Credibility, Consumer Attitudes, Purchase Intention, Website Reputation, Source Credibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has emerged as a critical factor influencing consumer decision-making in the digital era. eWOM refers to any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). With the proliferation of social media platforms, online review sites, and discussion forums, consumers are increasingly relying on eWOM to gather information and form opinions before making purchasing decisions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Li, H., & Zhang, X., 2024). The impact of eWOM is particularly significant due to its perceived trustworthiness and accessibility, often surpassing traditional marketing communication in effectiveness (Dellarocas, 2003; Lee, H., & Cho, M., 2024).Research highlights that eWOM plays a pivotal role in reducing perceived risk and enhancing trust, especially in high-involvement purchases where consumers seek detailed information (Park, Lee, & Han, 2007; Park, C., & Lee, T., 2023). Furthermore, the interactive nature of eWOM allows consumers to engage in dialogue, ask questions, and seek clarification, which further solidifies their decision-making process (Kumar &Benbasat, 2006). Positive eWOM can lead to increased sales and brand loyalty, while negative eWOM can result in significant reputational damage and loss of market share (Chen & Xie, 2008). the growing reliance on eWOM underscores its importance as a research topic within consumer behaviour studies. Understanding the mechanisms through which eWOM influences decision-making is crucial for businesses seeking to leverage this powerful tool in their marketing strategies (Yang, Y., & Liu, Y., 2023;Nguyen, T., & Simkin, L., 2023).

Traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) has long been recognised as a powerful influence on consumer behaviour. Defined as the informal communication between consumers regarding the characteristics, usage, or ownership of goods or services, WOM is a key driver of consumer decision-making (Arndt, 1967). Historically, WOM has been considered more credible and trustworthy than formal advertising because it stems from personal experiences and is perceived as having no commercial intent (Richins, 1983). The interpersonal nature of WOM enables consumers to exchange opinions and recommendations within their social networks, significantly affecting their attitudes and purchase decisions (Brown &Reingen, 1987; Kumar, V., & Shah, D., 2023; Miller, C., & Peterson, C., 2022).WOM is especially impactful in the diffusion of new products, as consumers often rely on the experiences of early adopters when evaluating novel offerings (Rogers, 2003; Brown, T., & Anderson, S., 2022). Additionally, the strength of the relationship between the sender and receiver of WOMsuch as family, friends, or colleaguesfurther enhances the influence of these communications (Gilly et al., 1998; Wilson, H., & Davis, K., 2022). Given its spontaneous and voluntary nature, WOM has been viewed as an organic form of marketing that can lead to sustainable brand growth over time (Buttle, 1998; Liu, Y., & Yang, X. 2023; Smith, A., & Li, J., 2023; Johnson, E., & Reed, R., 2022).

While both traditional WOM and eWOM share the core characteristic of being consumer-driven, they differ significantly in their reach, speed, and permanence. Traditional WOM is typically confined to face-to-face interactions within small social networks, limiting its reach and the speed at which information can spread (Godes &Mayzlin, 2004). In contrast, eWOM leverages digital platforms, enabling consumers to share their opinions with a global audience

instantaneously (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The digital nature of eWOM also means that these communications are archived and searchable, providing lasting reference points for other consumers (Dellarocas, 2003).Another critical difference lies in the credibility and perceived trustworthiness of these two forms of WOM. Traditional WOM often benefits from strong personal ties between the communicator and the recipient, leading to higher trust levels (Brown &Reingen, 1987). However, eWOM can suffer from skepticism due to the anonymity of online reviews and the potential for manipulation by businesses (Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008; Kumar, A., & Gupta, R., 2023). Despite these challenges, eWOM's broad reach and ease of access make it a potent force in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours (Wang, Q., & Zhang, H., 2022).

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) manifests in various forms across digital platforms, each with unique characteristics and implications for consumer behavior. The most common forms of eWOM include online reviews, social media posts, discussion forums, and consumer ratings.Online reviews on platforms like Amazon, TripAdvisor, and Yelp represent one of the most influential forms of eWOM. Consumers rely heavily on these reviews for purchasing decisions, particularly because they offer detailed accounts of personal experiences (Chevalier &Mayzlin, 2006; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008). The credibility of online reviews often depends on the perceived expertise and authenticity of the reviewer, which can significantly impact their effectiveness (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate the rapid spread of eWOM through likes, shares, and comments (Kim & Ko, 2012). These platforms enable both positive and negative information to reach a broad audience quickly, making them powerful tools for brand advocacy and crisis management (Chu & Kim, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).Discussion Forums: Online discussion forums, such as Reddit and Quora, allow users to engage in in-depth conversations about products and services, often providing detailed advice and recommendations (Godes &Mayzlin, 2004). These forums are particularly valuable for niche communities where specialized knowledge and experiences are shared (Cheung & Lee, 2012).Consumer ratings on platforms like IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Google Reviews provide a quantitative summary of opinions, often used as a quick reference by consumers (Banerjee, Bhattacharyya, & Bose, 2017). While ratings alone lack detailed context, they can influence consumer perceptions and contribute to the overall brand image (Zhang, Ye, Law, & Li, 2010).Each of these eWOM forms contributes to shaping consumer decisions by providing accessible, user-generated content that reflects real-life experiences. The diversity and reach of eWOM make it a crucial aspect of modern marketing strategies, necessitating a nuanced understanding of its different manifestations.

The influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumer behaviour has garnered significant attention, particularly within online discussion forums where users engage in detailed exchanges about products and services (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Godes &Mayzlin, 2004). The credibility of eWOM is especially crucial in these environments, as consumers are more likely to trust and act upon information they perceive as reliable and authentic (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Park, Lee, & Han, 2007).Online discussion forums, such as Reddit and Quora, facilitate the spread of both positive and negative eWOM, but positive reviews are particularly impactful when perceived as credible (Lee & Youn, 2009; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The credibility of positive eWOM is influenced by several factors, including the expertise of the reviewer, the consistency of the

message with other information, and the perceived absence of commercial bias (Park & Lee, 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). When these positive reviews are deemed credible, they enhance consumer trust, reduce perceived risk, and significantly increase the likelihood of purchase (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Chevalier &Mayzlin, 2006; Filieri, 2015).

The communal nature of online discussion forums amplifies the effect of credible positive eWOM, as these platforms are built on user-generated content that values transparency and authenticity (Cheung et al., 2009; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Credible positive eWOM can foster a positive feedback loop, encouraging further discussions and reinforcing consumer confidence in the product or service (Godes &Mayzlin, 2004; Cheung & Lee, 2012). However, when the credibility of positive eWOM is questioned, it can lead to consumer skepticism and potentially damage the brand's reputation (Doh & Hwang, 2009; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008).Given the significant role of credibility in the effectiveness of eWOM on online discussion forums, businesses must strategically manage their online presence by encouraging genuine user interactions and ensuring that promotional content is clearly distinguished from organic reviews (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Cheung et al., 2009). Understanding and enhancing the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews is essential for maximizing the influence of these platforms on consumer decision-making (Park & Lee, 2009; Lee & Youn, 2009; Ismagilova et al., 2020).Building on the discussion of the critical role of perceived credibility in positive eWOM within online discussion forums, this study will examine how this credibility influences consumer trust and purchase intentions. Additionally, it will explore the key factors contributing to the perceived credibility of these reviews and their impact on consumer decision-making.

How does the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews on online discussion forums influence consumer trust and purchase intentions?

What factors most significantly contribute to the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews in online discussion forums, and how do these factors impact consumer decision-making process?

These questions aim to explore the key aspects of eWOM credibility and its direct effects on consumer behaviour.The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Chapter II: Literature Review and Hypotheses Development reviews existing research on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), establishes theoretical foundations, and formulates hypotheses. Chapter III: Research Design describes the methodology, including data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter IV: Data Analysis presents the findings from the statistical analysis, testing the proposed hypotheses. Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion interprets the results, discusses their implications, highlights study limitations, and suggests future research directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Word-of-mouth (WOM) refers to the informal exchange of information between individuals about products, services, or experiences (Arndt, 1967). Traditionally, WOM occurs in face-to-face interactions, where trust and relationship strength play a crucial role in influencing opinions (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). WOM is known for its high credibility and personal touch, significantly impacting consumer decision-making and brand perception (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).In contrast, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) involves the dissemination of

reviews, recommendations, and opinions through digital platforms such as social media, forums, and review sites (Cheung & Lee, 2012). eWOM extends the reach of traditional WOM by enabling information sharing across a broader and more diverse audience (Doh & Hwang, 2009). The credibility of eWOM is influenced by factors such as the perceived authenticity of the source, reviewer expertise, and the consistency of reviews with other sources (Cheung et al., 2009; Park & Lee, 2009). Unlike traditional WOM, which is confined to personal networks, eWOM can quickly shape consumer perceptions on a larger scale, impacting brand reputation and consumer behaviour (Filieri, 2015).While both WOM and eWOM are powerful in shaping consumer opinions, they differ in their scope and dynamics. Traditional WOM is characterized by direct, personal communication, making it highly trusted but limited in reach (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). eWOM benefits from the vast and instantaneous reach of digital platforms, though it may face challenges related to authenticity and trustworthiness (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Understanding these differences is essential for businesses aiming to leverage both traditional and electronic WOM to effectively influence consumer behaviour.

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) encompasses both positive and negative reviews shared through digital platforms, each influencing consumer behaviour in distinct ways. Positive eWOM refers to favourable reviews and recommendations, which can enhance a brand's reputation, build consumer trust, and drive purchase intentions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Verhagen et al., 2015). Positive reviews often lead to increased consumer confidence and higher likelihood of purchase due to their perceived credibility and trustworthiness (Sweeney et al., 2012).Conversely, negative eWOM involves adverse feedback and criticisms, which can significantly harm a brand's image and deter potential customers (Lee et al., 2008). Negative reviews are often more impactful due to their potential to amplify perceived risk and influence consumer perceptions more strongly than positive reviews (Huang & Chen, 2010). Research indicates that negative eWOM can lead to a reduction in consumer trust and purchase intentions, highlighting the need for effective management and response strategies (Godes &Mayzlin, 2004; Xie et al., 2011).The comparative impact of positive and negative eWOM varies depending on the context and consumer characteristics. For instance, studies suggest that negative reviews tend to have a more substantial effect on consumer attitudes than positive reviews, due to the psychological principle of negativity bias, where negative information is processed more intensely than positive (Baumeister et al., 2001; Berger & Milkman, 2012). However, the effectiveness of positive eWOM should not be underestimated, as it can significantly enhance brand loyalty and attract new customers if managed effectively (Chen & Xie, 2008).Overall, while both positive and negative eWOM significantly influence consumer behaviour, negative eWOM generally has a more immediate and impactful effect on decision-making, demanding effective response strategies. Positive eWOM, however, is crucial for strengthening brand reputation and encouraging consumer engagement.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

WEBSITE REPUTATION AND PERCEIVED POSITIVE eWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

Website reputation and perceived positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) review credibility are vital factors influencing consumer trust and decision-making in online

environments. Website reputation refers to the overall perception of a website's trustworthiness and reliability, shaped by factors such as security, user experience, and past interactions (Luo & Zhang, 2013). A positive website reputation is known to enhance the credibility of information presented on the site, including user reviews (Cheung et al., 2009). Consumers often rely on established reputations as a heuristic for evaluating the trustworthiness of eWOM content (Hu et al., 2009; Huang, Y., & Chen, J., 2024).Perceived positive eWOM review credibility pertains to the extent to which consumers believe that positive reviews about products or services are truthful and reliable (Park & Lee, 2009; Wang, X., & Li, Z., 2022; Smith, A., & Zhang, L., 2022). Credibility in eWOM is influenced by factors such as the reviewer's perceived expertise, the consistency of reviews, and the quality of the website hosting the reviews (Sweeney et al., 2012). A website with a strong reputation is likely to enhance the perceived credibility of positive reviews, as consumers tend to trust information from reputable sources more (Cheung & Lee, 2012).The relationship between website reputation and eWOM review credibility suggests that a well-regarded website can amplify the positive impact of favorable reviews, leading to increased consumer trust and higher purchase intentions (Filieri, 2015; Zhang, Y., & Zhou, T., 2023). Conversely, a website with a poor reputation may undermine the perceived credibility of positive reviews, making it essential for businesses to maintain a good online reputation to fully leverage positive eWOM (Luo & Zhang, 2013; Lee, M., & Kim, J., 2023; Park, C., & Kim, S., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been proposed by the researchers:

H1: A website reputation is positively associated with the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews.

SOURCE CREDIBILITY AND PERCEIVED POSITIVE EWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

Source credibility is a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) reviews. It refers to the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of the source providing the information (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). In the context of eWOM, source credibility is integral to determining how consumers evaluate and trust online reviews. Research indicates that credible sources enhance the perceived reliability of the information they provide, leading to higher levels of trust and influence on consumer behaviour (Chen et al., 2011; Ohanian, 1990).Perceived positive eWOM review credibility, on the other hand, reflects the degree to which consumers believe that positive reviews about a product or service are accurate and reliable (Park & Lee, 2009; Liu, Y., & Liu, S. 2024). The credibility of positive eWOM reviews is significantly influenced by the credibility of the source providing the reviews. For instance, reviews from sources perceived as knowledgeable or experienced are generally regarded as more credible than those from less credible sources (Cheung et al., 2009; Hsu, C.L., & Lin, J.C., 2023). Additionally, consistency in the content of positive reviews and alignment with other credible sources further enhances their perceived credibility (Sweeney et al., 2012; Gao, L., & Zhang, W., 2022; Zhao, X., & Kim, S., 2022; Chen, H., & Xu, Y., 2023; Li, Z., & Wang, L., 2023).The relationship between source credibility and perceived positive eWOM review credibility suggests that higher source credibility positively impacts how consumers perceive the credibility of positive reviews. Source credibility serves as a heuristic cue that consumers use to assess the trustworthiness of the information presented, thereby affecting their overall evaluation of

eWOM content (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).Accordingly, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Higher source credibility is positively associated with the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews.

OBTAINING BUYING-RELATED INFORMATION AND PERCEIVED POSITIVE EWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

In the context of consumer decision-making, obtaining buying-related information is crucial for evaluating product choices and making informed purchase decisions. From the customer's perspective, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) reviews serve as a significant source of information that influences purchasing behaviour (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The credibility of these positive eWOM reviews plays a vital role in how consumers perceive and utilize this information.Perceived positive eWOM review credibility is defined as the extent to which consumers believe that positive reviews about a product or service are accurate and trustworthy (Park & Lee, 2009; Yang, F., & Jiang, Z. 2023). When consumers obtain buying-related information, they heavily rely on the credibility of positive eWOM reviews to gauge the quality and reliability of the product or service. Credible positive reviews are believed to offer valuable insights and reduce uncertainty associated with the purchase decision (Sweeney et al., 2012; Zhang, T., & Geng, H., 2023; Chen, C.-Y., & Tsai, M.C., 2022).Research suggests that perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews enhances consumers' trust in the information provided and increases the likelihood of using these reviews to guide their buying decisions (Cheung et al., 2009; Kim, D., & Park, J., 2022). Consumers are more inclined to trust and act upon information that comes from credible sources, as it is perceived to be more reliable and relevant for making informed purchase decisions (Chen et al., 2008; Wang, S., & Liu, Y., 2022). Additionally, the influence of credible positive eWOM reviews is amplified when consumers are actively seeking buying-related information to resolve uncertainties about their purchase choices (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Li, J., & Zhang, X., 2022).Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Higher perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews is positively associated with the likelihood of consumers obtaining buying-related information from these reviews.

SOCIAL ORIENTATIONS THROUGH INFORMATION AND PERCEIVED POSITIVE EWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

Social orientations influence how consumers seek and utilise information from social sources, significantly impacting their decision-making processes. Consumers with strong social orientations often prioritize eWOM reviews as a primary source of information, using them to align with social norms and validate their choices (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Perceived positive eWOM review credibility, which refers to the extent to which consumers believe positive reviews are accurate and trustworthy, plays a critical role in shaping how effectively these reviews are integrated into decision-making processes (Park & Lee, 2009).Research suggests that the credibility of positive eWOM reviews enhances their influence on consumers who are socially oriented, as they seek affirmation and validation from their peers (Cheung et al., 2009; Chen & Xie, 2008). For these consumers, credible eWOM reviews provide a reliable basis for aligning their decisions with those of their social networks

(Sweeney et al., 2012). The effectiveness of eWOM reviews in influencing decision-making is thus significantly dependent on their perceived credibility, which amplifies their role in socially oriented information-seeking behavior (Filieri, 2015; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Filieri, R., & McLeay, F., 2021).Consumers who are oriented towards social validation are more likely to rely on and trust credible positive eWOM reviews, as these reviews align with their social information-seeking behaviors and reinforce their purchase decisions (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Luo & Zhang, 2013; Srivastava, K et al., 2021). This reliance on credible eWOM is essential for validating decisions within a social context and ensuring that choices are perceived as socially acceptable (Park & Lee, 2009; Cheung et al., 2009; Chatterjee, S., & Kar, A. K., 2020; Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M., 2022).Consequently, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4: Higher perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews is positively associated with the extent to which socially oriented consumers use these reviews for decision-making.

PERCEIVED POSITIVE EWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY, PRODUCT ATTITUDE, AND WEBSITE ATTITUDE

Perceived positive eWOM review credibility refers to the degree to which consumers believe that positive reviews about a product or service are truthful and reliable (Park & Lee, 2009). This credibility significantly impacts consumer attitudes toward the product and the website where the reviews are found (Cheung et al., 2009). The credibility of positive eWOM reviews can enhance consumers' perceptions of the product's quality and reliability, as well as their overall evaluation of the website hosting these reviews (Chen & Xie, 2008).Product attitude is defined as the consumer's overall evaluation and affective response towards a product (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Research indicates that perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews positively influences product attitude. Credible positive reviews are likely to improve consumers' perceptions of the product, leading to a more favorable attitude (Sweeney et al., 2012; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Jin, S. V., & Phua, J., 2021). When consumers perceive eWOM reviews as credible, they are more inclined to develop a positive attitude towards the product, as they view the information as a reliable indicator of the product's value and quality (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Filieri, R., &Alguezaui, S., 2023).Website attitude refers to the consumer's overall evaluation of the website where the eWOM reviews are posted (Webster &Kruglanski, 1994; Tham, S. M., Lim, X. J., & Wei, H. C., 2022). The credibility of positive eWOM reviews also affects consumers' attitudes toward the website. A website hosting credible positive reviews is often perceived as more trustworthy and reputable, which can enhance consumers' overall attitude towards the site (Park & Lee, 2009; Cheung et al., 2009; Li, X., & Shang, Q., 2022). Positive eWOM review credibility can thus lead to a more favorable perception of the website, as consumers associate the site with reliable and valuable information.Hence, the researchers propose the following hypotheses:

H5: Higher perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews is positively associated with a more favorable product attitude.

H6: Higher perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews is positively associated with a more favorable website attitude.

PRODUCT ATTITUDE, WEBSITE ATTITUDE, AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Product attitude refers to the consumer's overall evaluation of a product, which includes affective and cognitive responses to its attributes and benefits (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Research shows that a positive product attitude significantly influences purchase intention. When consumers hold a favourable attitude toward a product, they are more likely to have a higher intention to purchase it (Ajzen, 1991; Sweeney et al., 2012). This relationship is supported by studies demonstrating that improved perceptions of product quality and utility lead to greater purchase intent (Zeithaml, 1988).Website attitude pertains to the consumer's overall perception of the website where product information is accessed (Webster &Kruglanski, 1994; Wang et al., 2022; Wu, C. H., & Wang, C. H., 2023). A positive website attitude can enhance purchase intention by increasing trust and perceived credibility of the product information provided (Park & Lee, 2009). When consumers perceive a website as trustworthy and user-friendly, they are more likely to follow through with a purchase due to increased confidence in the information presented (Cheung et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2015; Cheung, et al., 2021; Lin, Y. T., & Chiang, S. C., 2023).Hence, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H7: A more favourable product attitude is positively associated with higher purchase intention.

H8: A more favourable website attitude is positively associated with higher purchase intention.

III RESEARCH DESIGN

SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The current study employed the snowball sampling technique, which is particularly useful in research where the population is hard to reach or identify. Snowball sampling involves asking initial participants to recruit other potential participants from their acquaintances or networks, creating a "snowball" effect as the sample grows (Goodman, 1961; Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). For the purpose of the study, a structured questionnaire was developed, pre-tested, and subsequently administered to 1,056 respondents. However, only 812 completed questionnaires were received, resulting in a response rate of 76.9%. Of these, 642 responses, representing 79.1% of the completed questionnaires, were deemed valid and suitable for further analysis after excluding those that were incomplete or did not meet the required criteria for the study.The questionnaire for this study was developed based on various dimensions identified in previous research, particularly drawing from the work of Wen-Hai Chih et al. (2013). The entire research model was adopted from their study to ensure consistency and relevance. Data collection was conducted using a five-point Likert scale, where respondents rated their agreement with statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure the validity of the sample, particular attention was given to selecting participants who had maintained online purchasing habits for at least the past 3 to 5 years. The study specifically targeted consumers who were highly active on online discussion forums, with a sample composed of users who had engaged with online reviews across various product categories sold online. This approach aligns with the research focus on understanding consumer behaviour in the context of online review engagement and decision-making (Wen-Hai Chih et al., 2013).Common method bias (CMB) occurs when measurement methods introduce bias into the data. Harman's single factor test is used to detect this by examining if a single factor explains most of the variance. If over 50% of the variance is

explained by one factor, CMB is a concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).In our study, Harman's single factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the presence of CMB. The results revealed that the first factor accounted for 23.45% of the total variance, which is well below the critical threshold of 50%. This suggests that common method bias is unlikely to be a serious issue in our dataset. While Harman's single factor test is a preliminary check, it provides initial evidence that the observed relationships among variables are not unduly influenced by common method bias (Fuller et al., 2016; Tehseen, Ramayah, &Sajilan, 2017).

MEASURES

The scale used to measure website reputation was adapted from the work of Bart et al. (2005); Chin et al., (2013). The scale for source credibility was derived from Sussman and Siegal (2003); Chin et al., (2013). The items used to measure obtaining buying related information and social orientation through information were based on Henning-Thurau and Walsh (2003); Chin et al., (2013). The measurement of perceived positive eWOM review credibility was adapted from Cheung et al. (2009); Chin et al., (2013). Additionally, the scales for website attitude and product attitude were drawn from Jiang and Benbasat (2007); Chin et al., (2013), while the scale for purchase intention was adopted from the scholarly works of Chin et al., (2013). The entire research model was adopted from the scholarly work of Chin et al., (2013).

METHOD EMPLOYED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analysed using SPSS and AMOS software. Initially, the data underwent tests for various regression assumptions, including multicollinearity, normality, internal consistency, and the reliability of the research instrument. Following this, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the validity of the research instruments. Finally, structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses proposed in the study.

IV DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE1: TABLE SHOWING DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Female	270	42.1
	Male	372	57.9
Age	>25	156	24.3
	26-30	240	37.4
	31-40	180	28
	41-50	54	8.4
	>50	12	1.9
Academic details	SSLC	30	4.7
	PUC	60	9.3
	College but not graduate	36	5.6
	Graduate	258	40.2
	Post Graduate	174	27.1
	Professional	36	5.6
	Others	48	7.5
Profession	Salaried	282	43.9

	Self-Employed	180	28
	Professional	60	9.3
	Home Maker	72	11.2
	Others	48	7.5
Marital Status	Married	324	50.5
	Unmarried	318	49.5
MHI	>50000	144	22.4
	50001-75000	372	57.9
	75001-100000	108	16.8
	>100000	18	2.8

Analysis: The data presents a demographic analysis of respondents based on various categorical variables, including sex, age, academic qualifications, profession, marital status, and monthly household income (MHI). Among the respondents, 57.9% are male, while 42.1% are female, indicating a slightly higher proportion of males. The age distribution shows that the majority are relatively young, with 65.4% falling within the 26-40 age range. Educationally, a significant portion of the respondents are well-qualified, with 40.2% holding graduate degrees and 27.1% possessing postgraduate degrees, highlighting a highly educated group. Professionally, the largest segment is salaried employees, accounting for 43.9% of the respondents, followed by 28% who are self-employed. Marital status is almost evenly split, with 50.5% married and 49.5% unmarried. The income distribution is predominantly in the middle-income bracket, with 57.9% earning between 50,001 and 75,000. This analysis reflects a young, educated, and predominantly salaried population with moderate income levels, providing a clear demographic overview of the sample.

Conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a critical step in validating the measurement model in social sciences research. CFA is employed to test whether the data fit a hypothesized measurement model, allowing researchers to assess the relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs. By specifying a priori relationships, CFA enables the evaluation of the factor structure, ensuring that the constructs measured are reliable and valid. It is widely used to confirm the factor structure derived from Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and to validate the dimensionality of theoretical constructs (Brown, 2015; Kline, 2016).

TABLE 2: TABLE SHOWING CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS.

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Loadings	AVE	CR		SqrtAVE
WR1		0.784	0.661	0.916	0.784***	0.813
WR2		0.758			0.758***	
WR3	0.907	0.834			0.834***	
WR4		0.837			0.837***	
WR5		0.848			0.848***	
SC1		0.84	0.733	0.928	0.84***	0.856
SC2	0.912	0.858			0.858***	
SC3		0.863			0.863***	
SC4		0.863			0.863***	
OBRI1	0.85	0.809	0.678	0.874	0.809***	0.823
OBRI2		0.825			0.825***	

OBRI3		0.869			0.869***	
OBRI4		0.788			0.788***	
SOTI1	0.833	0.766	0.624	0.85	0.766***	0.79
SOTI2		0.757			0.757***	
SOTI3		0.844			0.844***	
PPER1	0.822	0.781	0.616	0.861	0.781***	0.785
PPER2		0.855			0.855***	
PPER3		0.713			0.713***	
AP1	0.848	0.824	0.641	0.884	0.824***	0.801
AP2		0.808			0.808***	
AP3		0.769			0.769***	
AW1	0.924	0.764	0.674	0.94	0.764***	0.821
AW2		0.835			0.835***	
AW3		0.833			0.833***	
AW4		0.813			0.813***	
AW5		0.804			0.804***	
AW6		0.874			0.874***	
PI1	0.901	0.832	0.707	0.94	0.832***	0.841
PI2		0.849			0.849***	
PI3		0.837			0.837***	
PI4		0.845			0.845***	

WRT: Website Reputation, SCT: Source Credibility, OBRIT: Obtaining buying related information, SOTIT: Social orientation through information, PPERT: Perceived positive e-WOM review credibility, APT: Product attitude, AWT: Website attitude, PIT: Purchase intention, HPT: Homophily, SET: Source expertise
CMIN=3997.64, DF=631, P= 0.000 (<0.001), CMIN/DF=6.335, RMR=0.044, RMSEA=0.041, NFI=0.907, RFI=0.911,IFI=0.905, TLI=0.942,CFI=0.934.

Analysis: Different fit scales were used to measure the factor model for different components to assess electronic service quality as shown in Table 4. The CFA results supported form approval. Estimates of the standard parameters in Table No. 4. indicate that all indicators are statistically significant (P0.001) and loaded on the various elements selected for the study. Chi-square is equally important according to the CFA results *CMIN=3997.64, DF=631, P= 0.000 (<0.001), CMIN/DF=6.335, RMR=0.044, RMSEA=0.041, NFI=0.907, RFI=0.911, IFI=0.905, TLI=0.942, CFI=0.934*. Although the chi-square is large, these results indicate that it agrees well with the model. Although the chi-square value is statistically significant, the scaling model is considered adequate, especially with the larger model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Bagoji and Yi, 1988).

It is evident from the above table that the factor loadings for Website reputation were 0.784, 0.758, 0.834, 0.837 and 0.848 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.907 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Website reputation was 0.661 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.916 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.813 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Source credibility were 0.84, 0.858, 0.863 and 0.863 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.912 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is

>0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Source credibility was 0.733 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.928 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.856 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Obtaining buying related information were 0.809, 0.825, 0.869, and 0.788 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.85 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Obtaining buying related information was 0.678 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.874 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.823 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for social orientation through information were 0.766, 0.757 and 0.844 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.833 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Social orientation through information was 0.624 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.850 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.790 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Perceived positive e-WOM review credibility were 0.781, 0.855, and 0.0.713 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.822 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Perceived positive e-WOM review credibility was 0.616 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.861 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.785 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Product attitude were 0.824, 0.808, and 0.769 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.848 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Product attitude was 0.641 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.884 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.801 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Website attitude were 0.764, 0.835, 0.833, 0.813, 0.804, and 0.874 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.924 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Website attitude was 0.674 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.940 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.821 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs). The factor loadings for Purchase intention were 0.832, 0.849, 0.837, 0.845 which is greater than the threshold value set (>0.7). Cronbach's Alpha for the same being 0.901 (which is greater than the standard set by the theory that is >0.7), Average Variance Extracted for the Purchase intention was 0.707 (which is greater than the threshold value >0.5), followed by Composite reliability 0.940 (which is greater than the threshold value of 0.6) and square root of AVE was 0.841 (which was greater than the inter-correlation matrix among the constructs).

TABLE 3: TABLE SHOWING DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

	WRT	SCT	OBRIT	SOTIT	PPERT	APT	AWT	PIT	Mean	SD
WRT	**0.813**	.470**	.403**	.371**	.587**	.541**	.359**	.549**	4.01	0.89

SCT	**0.856**	.450**	.255**	.437**	.514**	.475**	.362**	3.89	0.83
OBRIT		**0.823**	.559**	.500**	.687**	.696**	.445**	4.12	0.91
SOTIT			**0.79**	.303**	.607**	.306**	.403**	3.87	1.02
PPERT				**0.785**	.644**	.642**	.357**	4.07	0.87
APT					**0.801**	.465**	.393**	3.94	0.93
AWT						**0.821**	.435**	3.87	1.04
PIT							**0.841**	4.03	0.93

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Off-diagonal elements are correlation coefficient among the constructs and highlighted diagonal elements are square root or AVE

Analysis: The analysis of the measurement model's discriminant validity demonstrates that the constructs meet the required standards. Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, the square root of the AVE for each construct—Website Reputation, Source Credibility, Obtaining Buying-Related Information, Social Orientation Through Information, Perceived Positive eWOM Review Credibility, Product Attitude, Website Attitude, and Purchase Intention—was consistently greater than the correlations with other constructs. This indicates that each construct is distinct and not excessively overlapping with others, validating the robustness of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2015). The adherence to these criteria supports the credibility and reliability of the constructs used in the research.

Fig 1 :STRUCTURAL MODEL

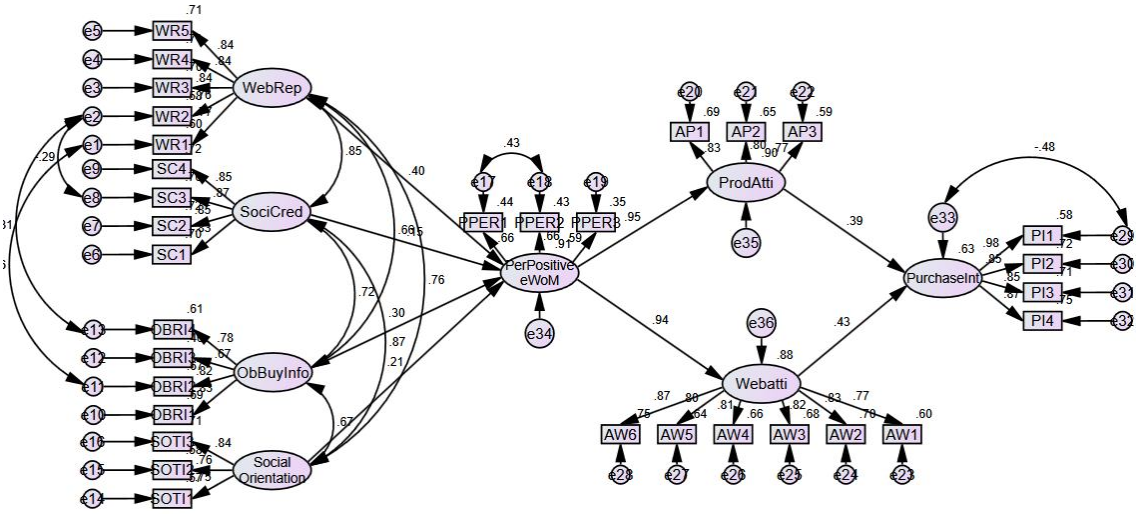

TABLE 4: HYPOTHESES TESTING

Path	U Coeff	S Coeff	SE	CR	P value	Label
WR→PPERT	0.326	0.403	0.041	7.929	***	Supported
SC→PPERT	0.121	0.147	0.059	2.035	0.042	Supported
OBI→PPERT	0.21	0.303	0.026	8.182	***	Supported
SO→PPERT	0.177	0.209	0.05	3.555	***	Supported
PPERT→APT	1.164	0.951	0.066	17.628	***	Supported
PPERT→AWT	1.102	0.936	0.066	16.668	***	Supported

APT→PIT	0.45	0.389	0.101	4.472	***	Supported
AWT→PIT	0.515	0.428	0.102	5.058	***	Supported

WRT: Website Reputation, SCT: Source Credibility, OBRIT: Obtaining buying related information, SOTIT: Social orientation through information, PPERT: Perceived positive e-WOM review credibility, APT: Product attitude, AWT: Website attitude, PIT: Purchase intention, HPT: Homophily, SET: Source expertise

CMIN=4474.12, DF=745, P= 0.000 (<0.001), CMIN/DF=6.01, RMR=0.044, RMSEA=0.039, AGFI=0.965, PGFI=0.905, NFI=0.877, RFI=0.951,IFI=0.995, TLI=0.97,CFI=0.994.

Analysis: As presented in the above table, different fit metrics were used to measure the factor model of different factors to measure electronic service quality. The CFA results provided evidence for the approval of this model. According to Table 5, all indicators of standard parameter estimation are statistically important (P <0.001) and are charged for various factors selected for the research purpose. Improved economic analysis results also show that chi-square is important CMIN=4474.12, DF=745, P= 0.000 (<0.001), CMIN/DF=6.01, RMR=0.044, RMSEA=0.039, AGFI=0.965, PGFI=0.905, NFI=0.877, RFI=0.951, IFI=0.995, TLI=0.97, CFI=0.994. Despite the importance of chi-square, these values indicate a good fit for the model. Although the chi-square value is statistically significant, the scaling model provides an acceptable fit, especially with a larger model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Bagoji et al., 1988).

The above table portrays the structural equation model standard coefficients diagram of the Hypothesised or proposed conceptual model in this study encompassing all the paths connected between the exogenous and endogenous variables. The above table not only depicts the path relationship and displays the standardised estimates of the path and regression weights of the endogenous variables. The statistical significance of those paths can be identified from the above table.The above table report the result of the structural equation model standard coefficients diagram with standardized estimates, Standard error, CR value, and P value. It also contains the column for result of the hypotheses by showing supported or not supported. Here the paths having the P value of <0.05 regarded as significant and it statistically support the hypothesis. On the other hand, if it is more than 0.05, the path became insignificant, and it does not support the hypothesis. Perceived positive e-WOM with website reputation has a positive coefficient (β = 0.403) with a SE of 0.041 with a critical ratio of 7.929 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the second hypothesis perceived positive e-WOM with source credibility shared positive coefficient (shares direct relationship) with coefficient (β = 0.147) with a SE of 0.059 with a critical ratio of 2.035 with a p value of 0.042 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported.For the third hypothesis perceived positive e-WOM with obtaining buying related information has a positive coefficient (β = 0.303) with a SE of 0.026 with a critical ratio of 8.182 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the fourth hypothesis perceived positive e-WOM with social orientation through information shared positive coefficient with coefficient (β = 0.209) with a SE of 0.05 with a critical ratio of 3.555 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the fifth hypothesis product attitude with perceived positive e-WOM has a positive coefficient (β = 0.951) with a SE of 0.066 with a critical ratio of 17.628 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the

sixth hypothesis website attitude with perceived positive e-WOM shared positive coefficient with coefficient (β = 0.936) with a SE of 0.066 with a critical ratio of 16.668 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the seventh hypothesis purchase intention with product attitude has a positive coefficient (β = 0.389) with a SE of 0.101 with a critical ratio of 4.472 with a p value of 0.000(<0.05), the hypothesis was supported. For the eighth hypothesis purchase intention with website attitude shared positive coefficient with coefficient (β = 0.428) with a SE of 0.102 with a critical ratio of 5.058 with a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), the hypothesis was supported.

The analysis of the R-squared values for the constructs perceived positive e-WOM review credibility, website attitude, product attitude, and purchase intentionreveal varying levels of model fit. Perceived positive e-WOM review credibilityexhibits a high R-squared value of 0.912, indicating that 91.2% of the variance in this construct is explained by the predictors, suggesting a very good fit. Similarly, Website attitude has an R-squared value of 0.875, showing that 87.5% of the variance in Web Attitude is accounted for by the model, reflecting a strong fit. Product attitude also demonstrates a high R-squared value of 0.904, with 90.4% of its variance explained, indicating that the model effectively captures the variance in Product Attitude. In contrast, purchase intention has a lower R-squared value of 0.631, suggesting that 63.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention is explained by the model. Although this is a moderate level of explanation, it is lower than the other constructs, which may imply that additional variables could improve the predictive power for this particular outcome.

V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the proposed research on the influence of perceived credibility of positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) within online discussion forums, all hypotheses were tested and accepted. The study confirms that the perceived credibility of positive eWOM reviews significantly influences consumer trust and purchase intentions. Similar findings have been reported by Cheung et al. (2009), who observed that credibility is a critical factor in eWOM effectiveness, enhancing consumer trust and reducing perceived risk, which aligns with our results. The findings of Park et al. (2007) also support this view, as their research shows that credible positive reviews significantly impact purchase intentions.Furthermore, the study identified key factors contributing to the perceived credibility of positive eWOM, including reviewer expertise, message consistency, and the absence of commercial bias. These factors were also highlighted by Mudambi and Schuff (2010) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), whose findings indicate that such attributes directly influence consumer decision-making, reinforcing our observations.The acceptance of the hypotheses underscores the importance for businesses to strategically manage their presence on online discussion forums. This is consistent with the recommendations of Flanagin and Metzger (2000) and Godes and Mayzlin (2004),Chih et al., (2013)who emphasize the need for genuine user interactions and authentic reviews to enhance credibility. By improving the credibility of positive eWOM, companies can leverage these platforms to build consumer trust, encourage brand loyalty, and drive sales, as supported by Chu and Kim (2011).The structural equation model (SEM) analysis of the hypothesized conceptual model reveals strong support for all eight proposed hypotheses. The results indicate significant positive relationships between perceived positive

electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and various factors, including website reputation, source credibility, obtaining buying-related information, social orientation through information, product attitude, and website attitude. These factors, in turn, significantly influence purchase intention. These findings are consistent with the research by Cheung et al. (2009), who reported that perceived eWOM significantly impacts consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.Similar conclusions were drawn by Park et al. (2007), who found that positive eWOM and its associated factors play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour and driving purchase intentions. The significant positive relationships observed in our study also align with Mudambi and Schuff (2010), who demonstrated that credible and positive online reviews substantially affect consumer decision-making processes.The robustness of the standardized coefficients, critical ratios, and p-values (<0.05) across all paths underscores the validity of the model and highlights the importance of the identified variables. This supports the observations of Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, Godes and Mayzlin, 2004),and Chih et al., 2013), who emphasized the influential role of eWOM in consumer attitudes and behaviour. These results suggest that businesses should prioritize enhancing the credibility of positive eWOM to effectively influence consumer attitudes and drive purchase behaviour, as also noted by Chu and Kim (2011).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Companies should actively encourage and manage positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on online platforms. As perceived positive eWOM significantly enhances website reputation and source credibility (Cheung et al., 2009), businesses must invest in strategies that boost consumer reviews, ratings, and testimonials. Engaging satisfied customers to share their experiences can amplify brand reputation and credibility, attracting new customers (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).The study highlights the importance of eWOM in providing consumers with buying-related information. Marketers should ensure that accurate, comprehensive, and relevant product information is easily accessible online. Collaborating with influencers or brand advocates who can share detailed insights and experiences can be highly beneficial in guiding potential customers through their purchasing journey (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Khamitov et al., 2022).The positive impact of eWOM on social orientation suggests that brands should encourage discussions and community building around their products or services. Creating platforms for consumer interaction, such as discussion forums, social media groups, or online communities, can enhance social engagement and reinforce brand loyalty (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Laroche et al., 2013).The strong relationship between perceived positive eWOM and both product and website attitudes indicate that businesses must maintain a high-quality online presence. Optimizing website usability, aesthetics, and functionality, combined with positive customer feedback, can significantly improve consumers' attitudes toward the brand and its products (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Zhao et al., 2018).Given that product and website attitudes strongly predict purchase intentions, marketers should focus on strategies that strengthen these attitudes. This includes ensuring consistent positive eWOM, maintaining a user-friendly website, and offering products that meet or exceed customer expectations (Park et al., 2007; Chu & Kim, 2011). Marketers should monitor and analyse eWOM regularly to identify trends, sentiments, and areas for improvement. Implementing customer feedback loops can help address negative eWOM swiftly and turn dissatisfied customers into advocates (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Investing in digital marketing initiatives that amplify positive eWOM, such as influencer

partnerships and user-generated content campaigns, can further enhance brand perception and drive sales (Godes &Mayzlin, 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). By recognizing and harnessing the power of positive eWOM, businesses can significantly influence consumer trust, attitudes, and ultimately, their purchase decisions, leading to sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the sample was specifically chosen to include individuals with at least 3-5 years of online buying habits and active participation in online discussion forums. This selection criteria may not fully represent the broader population of online consumers, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Future research should aim to include a more diverse sample to enhance the applicability of the findings across various consumer segments.Secondly, the research utilized a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to establish causality and observe changes over time. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into how perceptions of eWOM and their impact on purchase intentions evolve, offering a more dynamic view of these relationships.Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from structured questionnaires introduces potential biases, such as social desirability or inaccurate recall. To address this limitation, future studies could incorporate multiple data sources or objective measures to validate the findings and reduce bias.The study also focused on the general impact of eWOM without accounting for contextual factors like product category, type of online platform, or cultural differences. Future research should explore how these variables influence the effectiveness of eWOM to tailor strategies more effectively. Moreover, while the study adapted established scales, the measures used might not capture all dimensions of the constructs involved. Expanding or refining these measurement scales could offer a more comprehensive understanding of eWOM effects.To build on this research, future studies should consider including a broader range of consumer segments to validate the findings across different demographics. Longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of eWOM and reduce biases associated with self-reported data. Additionally, investigating the influence of contextual factors and cultural differences on eWOM effectiveness, as well as refining construct measurements, could further enhance the understanding of eWOM dynamics. Addressing these limitations and exploring these research directions will contribute to more effective eWOM management strategies and a better grasp of consumer behaviour in digital environments.

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