



## THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH IN SHAPING BRAND IMAGE AND DRIVING PURCHASE INTENTION

To Anh Tho<sup>1\*</sup>, Nguyen Kim Quoc Trung<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Finance - Marketing, Vietnam

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>DOI: 10.52932/jfm.v3i1e.648</p> <p><i>Received:</i> October 11, 2024</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> November 07, 2024</p> <p><i>Published:</i> March 25, 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Brand image, EWOM, Purchase intention.</p> <p><b>JEL codes:</b> M30, M31, M37</p>	<p>As the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) continues to grow in the digital marketplace, questions arise about its reliability and the extent to which it truly shapes consumer intention. This study seeks to investigate the critical role of eWOM in shaping brand image and driving purchase intention, with a particular focus on the dimensions of eWOM quality, quantity, and source credibility. The objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these eWOM factors influence brand image and purchase intention in an era dominated by online interactions. Utilizing data from 268 Vietnamese consumers, this study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and SmartPLS software to assess the relationships between the variables. The findings reveal that all three eWOM dimensions - quality, quantity, and source credibility - exert a significant positive influence on brand image, which in turn strongly affects purchase intention. Notably, eWOM quantity and source credibility were found to have a more substantial impact on brand image than eWOM quality. These results underscore the urgency for businesses to strategically manage online reviews and ensure the credibility of review sources to enhance brand perception and foster higher purchase intentions. The study provides insights for marketers and brand managers seeking to optimize their eWOM strategies in the competitive digital marketplace</p>

\*Corresponding author:

Email: Email: [totho@ufm.edu.vn](mailto:totho@ufm.edu.vn)

## 1. Introduction

The rapid growth of digital platforms has fundamentally transformed how consumers seek, assess, and make purchasing decisions. As traditional channels of communication evolve, social networks, and especially electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), have emerged as vital tools for gathering insights and shaping consumer perceptions (Harrison-Walker & Jiang, 2023; Hoang & Tung, 2023). Historically, word-of-mouth (WOM) has been one of the most influential communication channels for product evaluation (Breazeale, 2009). However, the transition from offline to online interactions has given rise to eWOM, which offers broader reach, more accessibility, and quicker communication, making it a more potent force in shaping consumer behavior compared to traditional WOM (Chatterjee, 2001; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Brand image, a key determinant of consumer loyalty and business success, is heavily influenced by both internal marketing efforts and external consumer perceptions (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). In the digital age, eWOM has become a central component in forming brand image, as it allows consumers to share personal experiences and evaluations in a public space, influencing others' perceptions and purchase intention (Sardar et al., 2021; Rani et al., 2022). This influence is particularly evident in the e-commerce sector, where online reviews and ratings have become indispensable tools for consumers evaluating potential purchases (Kumar et al., 2024).

As eWOM continues to grow in prominence, its impact on brand image and purchase intention can not be denied. It allows consumers to mitigate the risks of online shopping, especially for products they cannot physically inspect, by relying on the experiences and opinions of others (Litvin et al., 2008). However, the growing reliance on eWOM also raises concerns about

its credibility. Issues such as confirmation bias, where consumers are more inclined to trust information aligning with their existing beliefs, and the disproportionate effect of negative reviews, which can severely damage a brand's reputation, have prompted further investigation into the reliability and influence of eWOM (Chang & Wu, 2014; Sen & Lerman, 2007).

While previous studies have explored the direct effects of eWOM on brand image and purchase intention, there remains a gap in understanding how specific aspects of eWOM—such as the quality, quantity, and source credibility of online reviews—affect brand image and purchasing intention. The novelty of this research lies in addressing this gap by examining how brand image mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention, offering new insights into the complexities of consumer decision-making in the digital marketplace.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature and develops the research hypotheses. Section 3 outlines the research methodology. The results and discussion are presented in Section 4. Section 5 provides a summary of the findings, implications, and limitations.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. *Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)*

With the advancement of technology, traditional WOM has evolved into electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), disseminating opinions through online platforms such as blogs, forums, and social media channels (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Li & Du, 2011). The rise of digital platforms has expanded the reach of eWOM, enabling it to influence consumer choices on a much larger scale (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Senecal & Nantel, 2004). This shift highlights the growing importance of eWOM

in shaping brand perceptions and consumer behavior in the digital age.

The theoretical foundation for this research is Social Influence Theory (SIT), which posits that others significantly shape individuals' emotions, opinions, and behaviors in their social networks. In the context of consumer behavior, eWOM has become a powerful force, influencing both product consumption and purchase intention. As consumers increasingly turn to online reviews and recommendations before making purchasing decisions, eWOM has reshaped business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing strategies. Research indicates that 92% of consumers value recommendations from others, highlighting the pivotal role of eWOM in driving purchase intentions (Rani et al., 2022). Studies also show that eWOM platforms, such as online forums and social media, significantly impact consumer attitudes, with online reviews being trusted as much as, if not more than, brand websites (ACNielsen, 2007).

## 2.2. Hypothesis Development

### *Purchase Intention (PI)*

Purchase intention is a well-established predictor of consumer behavior, reflecting the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product (Spears & Singh, 2004). Research suggests that positive eWOM significantly enhances purchase intentions, while negative eWOM can have the opposite effect (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). As a driver of actual purchases, purchase intention is a key factor that businesses must consider when evaluating the effectiveness of eWOM (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

### *Brand Image (BI)*

Brand image is defined as an individual's perception of a brand, shaped through both real and imagined encounters with the brand, which can be influenced by various factors, including eWOM shared on social networking platforms

(Veloutsou & Delgado-Ballester, 2018; Hoang & Tung, 2023; Parris & Guzman, 2023). This perception reflects an individual's specific views of the brand, and eWOM plays a significant role in forming and altering these views (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Hoang & Tung, 2023).

### *Quality of eWOM*

The quality of eWOM refers to the clarity, relevance, and usefulness of the information provided in online reviews or ratings (Park et al., 2007; Thuy et al., 2020). High-quality eWOM is perceived as more credible and trustworthy, enhancing consumers' perceptions of a brand and improving their brand image. This factor is critical in shaping consumer attitudes, particularly for new customers who rely on eWOM as a key source of information (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H1: The quality of eWOM has a significant impact on brand image.*

### *Quantity of eWOM*

The quantity of eWOM refers to the number of reviews or comments about a product across various platforms (Fang, 2014). Research has shown that a higher volume of reviews is associated with increased consumer trust, as it signals the product's popularity and widespread use (Chatterjee, 2001; Xiao, 2016). This larger volume of eWOM can alleviate consumer concerns and reduce perceived purchase risks. Furthermore, positive eWOM quantity enhances brand perception, while negative eWOM quantity can harm it (Lee et al., 2009). Based on this, we hypothesize that:

*H2: The quantity of eWOM has a significant impact on brand image.*

### *Source Credibility*

Source credibility is defined as the perceived trustworthiness and reliability of the source

providing eWOM (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). In the context of eWOM, credible sources—such as influencers or expert reviewers—are more likely to influence consumers' brand perceptions and purchasing decisions. As eWOM accumulates over time, the credibility of sources can increase if the information remains consistent and truthful (Shanmugam & Sulthana, 2019). Thus, the source's credibility plays a significant role in shaping brand image and driving purchase intention. We propose the following hypothesis:

*H3: The source credibility of eWOM has a significant impact on brand image.*

*The impact of Brand Image (BI) on Purchase Intention*

Brand image is critical for fostering customer loyalty and influencing purchasing behavior (Hyun & Kim, 2011). A positive brand image provides a competitive advantage and allows firms to command higher prices and enhance perceived value (Kotler & Keller, 2009). A strong brand image is key to influencing consumer behavior, as it shapes their perceptions, emotions, and attitudes toward the brand, evoking trust and reinforcing its market position (Shanmugam & Sulthana, 2019). Companies invest significantly in creating and maintaining a positive brand image to differentiate themselves from competitors and foster deeper connections with consumers. This growing emphasis on brand image underscores

its importance in guiding consumer preferences and purchase decisions. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H4: The Brand Image has a significant impact on Purchase Intention.*

*The mediating role of Brand Image*

Information disseminated through eWOM has a sequential impact on brand image, brand attitude, and consumer behavioral intentions (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). A positive brand image, cultivated through favorable eWOM, serves as a mediator in the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention, underscoring the critical role of brand image in consumer decision-making (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). As eWOM rapidly circulates across global audiences, it significantly shapes consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. Given that consumers place greater trust in online reviews than in traditional advertising, eWOM has become an indispensable tool for businesses aiming to enhance brand recognition and build consumer trust (Alrwashdeh et al., 2019). Existing literature further corroborates the mediating role of brand image in the influence of eWOM on purchase intention (Elseidi & El-Baz, 2016; Kumar et al., 2024; Charo et al., 2015; Lien et al., 2015).

*H5: Brand Image mediates the relationship between eWOM and Purchase Intention.*

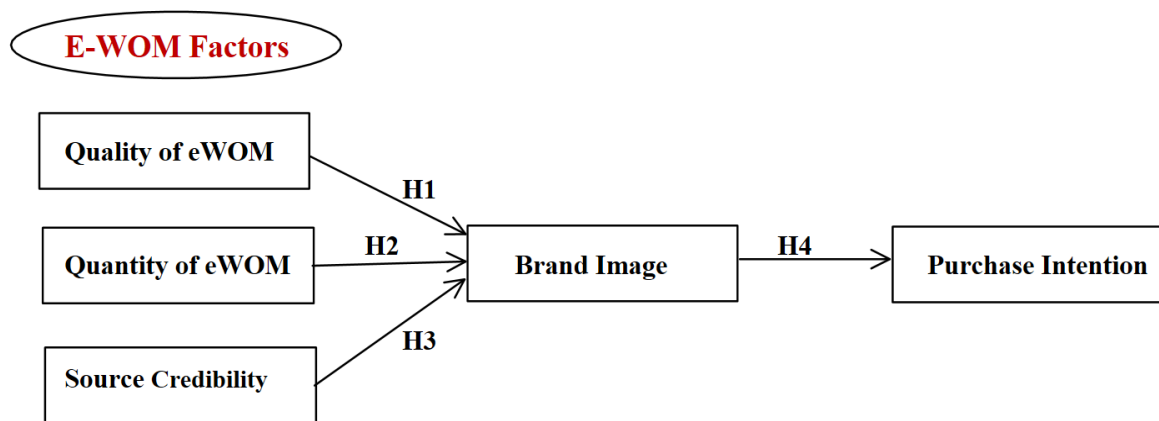


Fig 1. The proposed research model

### 3. Methodology

A quantitative research approach was employed to explore the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on brand image and purchase intention. Data were collected through an online survey distributed to Vietnamese consumers in Ho Chi Minh City, selected using a convenience sampling method. The use of this sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings. However, the impact of this limitation was mitigated by distributing the survey across a variety of social media groups, encompassing diverse socio-economic demographics.

The survey was structured into two main sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including respondents' gender, age, education, and income. These variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the sample characteristics. A filter question was included to ensure that only participants who had experience with online reviews or eWOM were included in the analysis. The second section consisted of measurement items designed to assess the five key constructs of the research framework, namely eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, source credibility, brand image, and purchase intention (details of the measurement items are provided in Appendix

I). The survey was designed using Google Forms and included a five-point Likert scale to assess participant agreement with various statements. The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The survey was administered to a total of 285 participants, resulting in 268 valid responses after filtering for incomplete or irrelevant data. This provided a valid response rate of approximately 94%.

To test the proposed hypotheses and analyze the relationships between the eWOM factors, brand image, and purchase intention, the study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is a robust statistical technique widely used for model testing in exploratory research, particularly when dealing with complex models and small to medium-sized datasets (Hair et al., 2010). It was chosen for its ability to assess both the measurement and structural models simultaneously and handle reflective and formative constructs, making it well-suited for testing the relationships between the latent variables in this study.

SmartPLS 4.0 software was utilized for the PLS-SEM analysis. The process followed a two-step approach: first, the measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity



of the constructs, including tests for internal consistency reliability (using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (via Average Variance Extracted, AVE), and discriminant validity (using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios). In the second step, the structural model was evaluated to test the relationships between the constructs and the hypotheses. The bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was used to determine the significance of the path coefficients.

The PLS-SEM approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of how eWOM factors—quality, quantity, and source credibility—affect brand image and purchase intention, providing valuable insights for businesses looking to leverage eWOM to enhance brand perceptions and drive consumer purchasing decisions

#### 4. Results and discussion

Results (*see Appendix 2 online*) present the demographic profile of the sample based on the 268 valid responses. Of the participants, 185 (69.03%) are female, while 83 (30.97%) are male. The largest age group comprises individuals aged 18-25, representing 39.6% of the sample. In terms of education, the majority of respondents (48.9%) hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Regarding income, 36.2% of participants report a monthly income of less than 5 million VND.

The measurement model was evaluated by assessing the reliability and validity of the construct measures using several key criteria: internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and indicator reliability, following the guidelines provided by Sarstedt et al. (2017).

The research model includes 20 items designed to assess the effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on brand image and purchase intention, as outlined in the Framework and Hypothesis section. However, after analyzing the survey data using SmartPLS, three items—BI5 and BI6 from Brand Image and QL1 from Quality of eWOM—were removed, as shown in Table 1. This elimination was necessary because their outer loadings were below the 0.70 threshold, indicating weak reliability. Furthermore, these low-loading items negatively impacted other indicators, causing Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values for the "Quality of eWOM" construct to fall below the acceptable threshold of 0.7. After removing these items, the remaining indicators consistently showed outer loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, and CR values above 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Additionally, each construct retained at least three items, ensuring that the measurement model remained robust and reliable. Therefore, the removal of these items was deemed appropriate.

Convergent validity was established with all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50, as presented in Table 1. This indicates that each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators, further supporting the adequacy of the measurement model. Discriminant validity was confirmed through two methods. First, the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs, following the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in Table 3. Second, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, as shown in Table 2, supporting the distinctiveness of the constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

**Table 1.** Outer loadings, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's Alpha

Constructs	Measurement	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Quality of e-WOM	QL2	0.729	0.813	0.825	0.640
	QL3	0.816			
	QL4	0.849			
	QL5	0.802			
Quantity of e-WOM	QT1	0.858	0.714	0.723	0.637
	QT2	0.778			
	QT3	0.754			
Source Credibility	SC1	0.879	0.869	0.874	0.793
	SC2	0.890			
	SC3	0.902			
Brand Image	BI1	0.819	0.852	0.876	0.695
	BI2	0.890			
	BI3	0.904			
	BI4	0.708			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.847	0.702	0.729	0.626
	PI2	0.817			
	PI3	0.702			

**Table 2.** HTMT ratio

	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	Quality of e-WOM	Quantity of e-WOM	Source Credibility
Brand Image					
Purchase Intention	0.815				
Quality of e-WOM	0.214	0.170			
Quantity of e-WOM	0.626	0.696	0.139		
Source Credibility	0.418	0.216	0.157	0.263	

**Table 3.** Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	Quality of e-WOM	Quantity of e-WOM	Source Credibility
Brand Image	<b>0.834</b>				
Purchase Intention	0.643	<b>0.791</b>			
Quality of e-WOM	0.183	0.132	<b>0.800</b>		
Quantity of e-WOM	0.504	0.491	0.106	<b>0.798</b>	
Source Credibility	0.384	0.179	0.131	0.208	<b>0.890</b>

The structural model was evaluated using SmartPLS with bootstrapping of 5,000 samples, and the results provide strong statistical support for the research hypotheses. First, multicollinearity among the independent variables—eWOM quality (QL), eWOM quantity (QT), and source credibility (SC)—was assessed, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all predictors were found to be below the threshold of 2, indicating no issues with multicollinearity.

All four hypotheses proposed in the study were supported. Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posited that the quality of eWOM positively influences brand image, was found to be statistically significant with a path coefficient of 0.100 and a P-value of 0.026. Although the effect size for this relationship was small ( $f^2 = 0.015$ ), the positive path coefficient suggests that eWOM quality has a modest yet meaningful impact on shaping brand image. This indicates that the clarity and relevance of online reviews contribute to consumer perceptions of the brand, albeit to a lesser extent compared to other eWOM factors. This finding aligns with previous research by Evgeniy et al. (2019), which explored the role of eWOM in shaping consumer intentions in the context of Korean-brand cars in Russia. The results confirm that while consumers cannot physically experience products when shopping online, they increasingly rely on online reviews and comments to guide their decisions. The quality of these reviews—specifically their clarity and relevance—plays an important role in alleviating the uncertainty associated with online shopping, as suggested by Atika et al. (2018). Even though eWOM quality had a smaller direct effect compared to other eWOM factors, it remains a critical component in the overall formation of brand image, which then indirectly influences purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2 (H2), which examined the effect of eWOM quantity on brand image, revealed a much stronger relationship, with a path coefficient of 0.435 and a highly significant P-value of 0.000. The effect size ( $f^2 = 0.274$ ) was moderate, indicating that a larger volume of reviews significantly enhances brand image. This finding emphasizes the importance of review volume in building brand visibility and credibility, as consumers often equate a higher number of reviews with product popularity and quality. This result corroborates the findings of Evgeniy et al. (2019), which emphasized the role of review quantity in increasing consumer confidence. As consumers are more likely to trust products with a large number of reviews, the sheer volume of online feedback has a profound impact on the consumer's brand image, thus reinforcing the importance of generating a substantial amount of eWOM content. Furthermore, Xiao (2016) also indicated that quantity plays a significant role in boosting brand image, with a greater number of reviews contributing to an improved perception of the brand's reputation.

The third hypothesis, testing the influence of source credibility on brand image, was similarly supported with a path coefficient of 0.281 and a P-value of 0.000. The effect size was moderate ( $f^2 = 0.114$ ), showing that the trustworthiness of the source providing the eWOM significantly impacts brand image. This finding underscores the importance of credible sources, such as influencers or experts, in enhancing consumer trust and positively influencing their perceptions of the brand. This result aligns with the work of Siddiqui et al. (2021), who found that source credibility directly impacts both brand image and purchase intentions. The trustworthiness of the eWOM source increases the likelihood that consumers will accept and act upon the



information presented, which strengthens the brand image. This is consistent with Evgeniy et al. (2019) and Atika et al. (2018), who identified source credibility as a crucial factor in shaping brand perceptions through eWOM. As consumers become more reliant on eWOM, particularly in the form of social media reviews or influencer endorsements, the credibility of these sources significantly impacts how the brand is viewed.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 (H4) was fully supported, with brand image found to have a strong and significant positive effect on purchase intention. The path coefficient for this relationship was 0.643, with a T-statistic of 5.241 and a P-value of 0.000. The large effect size ( $f^2 = 0.706$ ) suggests that brand image plays a critical role in driving purchase intention. This supports the notion that a strong, positive brand image increases consumer confidence and the likelihood of making a purchase, reinforcing the importance of brand perception in consumer decision-making. The strong relationship between brand image and purchase intention is consistent with previous research by Evgeniy et al. (2019) and Torlak et al. (2014), who found that a positive brand image significantly enhances consumer purchasing behavior. A well-established and positive brand image instills trust and reduces perceived risks, thereby encouraging consumers to proceed with their purchase decisions. Furthermore, Charo et al. (2015) identified a direct connection between brand image and purchase intention, emphasizing the influence of consumer perceptions on buying behavior. This highlights that brands with a strong, favorable image are more likely to convert consumer interest into actual purchases, supporting the notion that brand perception is a central driver of consumer decision-making.

Additionally, Table 5 shows that the relationships between eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, and source credibility with purchase intention are mediated by brand image, with positive coefficients and P-values of 0.000. In other words, these eWOM elements help shape a positive perception of the brand in consumers' minds, which in turn increases their likelihood of intending to purchase. This finding aligns with Masakazu et al. (2025) and Hoang and Tung (2023). This indicates that consumers are more likely to make purchase decisions when they perceive the brand positively due to favorable online reviews and credible sources, reinforcing the mediating role of brand image.

In Table 6, the  $R^2$  values indicate the explanatory power of the model. The  $R^2$  value for brand image was 0.345, meaning that eWOM quality, quantity, and source credibility together explain 34.5% of the variance in brand image. Similarly, the  $R^2$  value for purchase intention was 0.414, indicating that brand image accounts for 41.4% of the variance in purchase intention.

Overall, the results support the research hypotheses and provide valuable insights into how eWOM factors—specifically quality, quantity, and source credibility—affect brand image and, subsequently, purchase intention. The findings suggest that businesses should focus on increasing the quantity of eWOM, leveraging credible sources, and ensuring high-quality content to enhance brand image and drive consumer purchase decisions. The moderate R-square values indicate that while the model provides significant explanatory power, future research could further explore additional variables, such as the impact of negative eWOM or product-specific factors, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior.

**Table 4.** Estimation results of the structural equation model

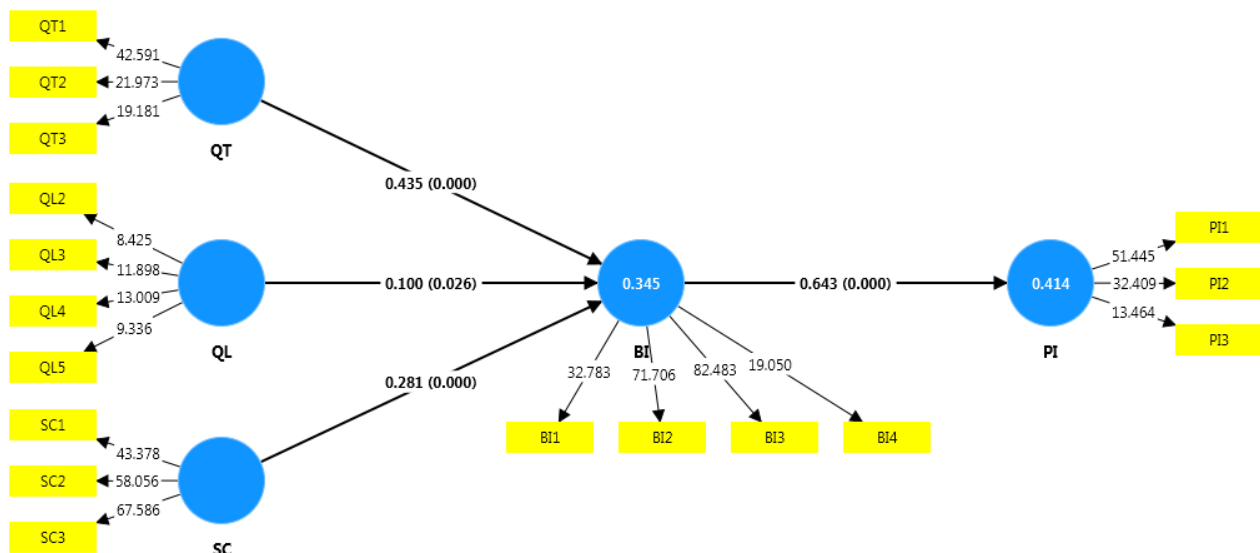
Hypothesis	Coefficient	T Statistics	f <sup>2</sup>	P Value
H1: Quality of e-WOM → Brand Image	0.100	19.419	0.015	0.026
H2: Quantity of e-WOM → Brand Image	0.435	2.232	0.274	0.000
H3: Source Credibility → Brand Image	0.281	9.147	0.114	0.000
H4: Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.643	5.241	0.706	0.000

**Table 5.** Analysis Results of the Mediating Role of Brand Image

Hypothesis H5	Coefficient	T Statistics	P Value
Quality of e-WOM → Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.064	2.223	0.026
Quantity of e-WOM → Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.280	7.346	0.000
Source Credibility → Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.181	5.259	0.000

**Table 6.** R Square

	R-square
Brand Image	0.345
Purchase Intention	0.414

**Fig 2.** The result of the structural model

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Main findings

This study investigates the influence of three key factors of electronic word-of-mouth

(eWOM) - quality, quantity, and source credibility - on brand image and purchase intention. Using Social Influence Theory (SIT) as the conceptual framework, the research emphasizes the critical role that eWOM plays in

shaping purchase intention. The study highlights that consumers often rely on information from previous customers, particularly online reviews, before purchasing.

The analysis, conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 with data from 268 respondents, reveals that all three eWOM factors—quality, quantity, and source credibility—positively affect brand image, which in turn significantly enhances purchase intention. Notably, quantity (the number of online reviews) and source credibility (the trustworthiness of review sources) have a more substantial impact on brand image than eWOM quality. This finding contrasts with previous studies, such as those by Cheung et al. (2008), Xiao (2016), and Atika et al. (2018), which highlighted eWOM quality as the most influential factor due to its provision of detailed and relevant information.

Although eWOM quality had a relatively smaller direct impact on brand image than quantity and source credibility, the study confirms that quality still indirectly influences purchase intention through its effect on brand image. This suggests that while quality may not be the primary driver of brand perception, it remains an important component in fostering a positive brand image, which subsequently influences consumers' purchase behavior.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on eWOM by integrating brand image as a vital intermediary factor that drives purchase intention. The findings provide valuable insights into the interplay between eWOM factors—quality, quantity, and source credibility—and their role in shaping brand perception and boosting sales, aligning with recent studies by Evgeniy, Lee & Roh (2019) and Atika, Kusumawati & Iqbal (2018).

## **5.2. Implications**

The study offers both theoretical and practical implications regarding the role

of eWOM in consumer decision-making. From a theoretical perspective, the research underscores the critical role of brand image in mediating the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. Although eWOM quality does not directly influence brand image, it strengthens the link between brand image and purchase intention, suggesting that quality remains an important factor in shaping overall brand perception.

Practically, the findings highlight the significant impact of eWOM on consumer behavior, driven by the increasing reliance on online reviews. To leverage eWOM effectively, managers should focus on strategies that enhance the quantity and credibility of online reviews. This can be achieved by encouraging more reviews from satisfied customers and collaborating with trusted influencers. Additionally, maintaining the quality of reviews is crucial, as even though its direct impact on brand image is relatively smaller, it still plays an indirect role in shaping consumer perceptions. Managers should also address negative eWOM promptly and implement effective communication strategies to mitigate potential harm to brand reputation. Furthermore, businesses can enhance brand perception by offering product trials, diversifying product lines, ensuring fair pricing, and improving customer service, all of which can help foster a positive brand image and drive purchase intention.

## **5.3. Limitations**

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. One key limitation is the use of a convenience sampling method, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Although the survey was distributed across various social media groups to include a range of socio-economic demographics, this method still lacks randomness and could lead to sample bias. To address this, future

research could employ probability sampling techniques to ensure a more representative and unbiased sample. Additionally, future research could examine additional factors, such as the recency of reviews and gender differences in the evaluation of electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), to gain a deeper understanding of consumer decision-making dynamics. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for further investigation into the relatively small impact of eWOM quality on brand image, as respondents seemed to prioritize the quantity

and credibility of reviews over their quality. These insights could inform more targeted eWOM management strategies aimed at boosting brand perception and influencing consumer behavior more effectively.

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