



#### Research Article

# The Effect of eWOM Social Media on Purchase Intention: The Role Moderation of Involvement

Mochammad Farid Afandi\*, Diddo Adding Adove, Fajar Destari

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Jember, Indonesia

#### Abstract.

The aim of this study was to examine and analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on purchase intentions with high involvement as moderation. The research sample was 390 college students. Hypothesis testing used multiple regression analysis and moderation regression methods with SPSS software version 26. This research analyzed the effect of eWOM social media on components of the information adoption model (IAM) including information quality, information credibility, information usefulness and information adoption. The results showed that there was a significant effect between information quality and information credibility on purchase intention. Information usefulness and information adoption have no significant effect on purchase intention. High involvement moderates the effect of eWOM on purchase intentions.

Mochammad Farid Afandi; email: m\_faridafandi@unej.ac.id

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Corresponding Author:

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Keywords: electronic word of mouth, purchase intentions, high involvement, IAM

#### 1. Introduction

Internet growth in Indonesia has increased rapidly over time. This can be seen by the number of internet users, which consistently increases every year [1]. Growth of the internet helps consumers to find information about products or brands more easily. Consumers are now using electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to gather information about products or brands. eWOM can be defined as a useful informational medium for consumers because it consists of consumer experiences and peer opinions rather than company-sourced information [2]. The process of gathering information with eWOM can be through social media (eWOMsm) or other eWOM platforms (e.g., consumer review sites, discussion forums, shopping sites, blogs).

Internet-based applications allowing users to exchange and create content defined as social media [3]. On social media, content can be created through various features such as images and videos. Users can create not only personal content, but also about

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products or brands. Social media is a platform with a great potential to share product information or brand reviews [4]. Previous research argues that people often use social media to gather information about specific products or brands [5]. Therefore, social media is a platform considered appropriate for eWOM [4,6].

The eWOM method consists of exchanging basic information. Therefore, the effect of information can change among people and equal content can lead to different ideas among recipients [7,8]. [9] explains the process of information adoption underlying how a person concentrates the information they receive. Previous researchers have mentioned multiple process theories to determine how information adoption affects people [10,11]. Furthermore, [11] developed theories by proposing information adoption model (IAM).

Information Adoption Model specifically explains how a person is affected by information mediated by a computer-based communication platform. IAM is based on the possibility of an elaboration likelihood model (ELM), which states that a person's ability to think critically depends on how much they are interested in the topic being discussed. The elaboration likelihood model has two ways in which an individual can receive the message delivered: the centre and peripherals [8]. Like the ELM, Information Adoption Model focuses on the effect of information on communication mediated by computer platforms [8,12]. According to [11], IAM has four indicators: information quality, information credibility, information usefulness and information adoption.

The internet has simplified eWOM communication among consumers through various platforms [12]. In addition, eWOMsm is useful for users who know each other personally, while anonymous communication users can use other eWOM platforms [13]. Therefore, consumers use social media to gain more knowledge about products or brands [5]. Furthermore, previous research found that eWOMsm significantly effects consumer purchase intentions (PI) [14–16]. Purchase intention plays an important role in evaluating consumer behaviour because it can measure the likelihood of consumers to buy a product. If consumer purchase intention is high, then the consumer's readiness to buy a product will increase. According to [17], purchase intention is an encouragement that urges someone to purchase products or services to fulfil their needs. Purchase intention can also be a consumer's plan to purchase products of a particular brand. Understanding purchase intention is necessary for marketers to understand future consumer interests.

Information quality (IQ) is defined as the persuasive power of an argument embedded in informational messages [10]. IQ is assessed in the context of end-user computing evaluated according to information content, accuracy, format and timeliness [18]. [19] measure the quality of information with accuracy, timeliness, completeness, relevance, and consistency. eWOM information can be produced by anyone and thus, information



quality becomes more important for consumers [20]. IQ plays an important role in consumer evaluations of products and services [21]. [22] found that IQ significantly affects PI. However, because eWOM occurs on social media among people with extant connections, we estimate IQ on social media has a significant effect on PI.

Information credibility (IC) is the information recipient's perception of an information source's credibility, not reflecting anything about the information itself [7]. Whether the source of information is considered reliable or competent all depends on the recipient of the message [23]. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, source credibility is defined as the extent of trust in people and other organizations that tell them about certain products or services. [24] measure IC in terms including convincing information credibility, strong information credibility, credible information, and accurate information credibility. [25] argue that the credibility of information on social media platforms is more trusted for eWOM because information is shared among people who know each other. The results from previous research assume that eWOMsm affects consumer purchase intentions among people that already know each other [25]. However, a recent study from [26] that examines eWOM comparisons among social media and anonymous consumer review sites found that eWOM on social media has no significant effect on purchase intentions but anonymous consumer review sites significantly affect purchase intention. These results certainly do not match with other research, which states that eWOMsm has a significant effect on PI [25].

Information usefulness (IU) is the understanding of information's value insofar as it allows people to make a better purchase decision [8]. Measuring IU requires the measure of information adoption. [8] mention indicators such as information's ability to increase consumer knowledge, informativeness, reduction of uncertainty in decision-making, and describing the state of things or events that occur. The relationship between IU and PI has been discussed and demonstrated in previous research [27,28] and found that PI will increase if the information is trusted and useful.

The definition of information adoption (IA) was developed by [29] as the extent to which people accept an informational message's content and believe that it is meaningful after assessing validity. [9] describes the process of IA as the processing phase of knowledge transfer, in which the information recipient transfer processes knowledge and meaning. The indicators of IA according to [8] are information's usefulness in increasing knowledge about the product, making purchase decisions easier, increasing purchase decision effectiveness, and motivating consumers to make purchase decisions. IA is likewise a factor that affects PI [12]. Consumers who are involved and adopt



information will probably intend to purchase products or services ([26]. Therefore, we estimate adoption of eWOM information significantly affects PI.

Our research will examine the effect of eWOMsm on consumer PI, but in contrast to [26], this research uses high consumer involvement as moderation and chooses specific products with high consumer involvement to observe the effect of eWOM on PI. Consumer involvement is defined as a proactive action taken by consumers against stimuli given by marketers/producers that are shown to minimize risks and maximize profits or benefits from product purchases [30]. Consumers involved are usually more motivated to pay attention to information about products, suppliers, brands, quality, prices, places to shop and so on [30], therefore consumers can spend more time and energy to buy a product. Consumers with high involvement are usually more motivated to get information about products, suppliers, brands, quality, prices, and places to shop [30]. Therefore, consumers can spend more time gathering information before buying a product. Previous research has shown that the effect of eWOM on PI is only significant for the group of respondents who have high involvement, demonstrating that customer involvement can moderate the effect of eWOM on PI [31]. To test the hypothesis we used an Information Adoption Model approach [11]. Our hypothesis state that:

H1: IQ on social media has a significant effect on PI

H2: IC on social media has a significant effect on PI

H3: IU on social media has a significant effect on PI

H4: IA on social media has a significant effect on PI

1:

H5: High involvement moderates the effect of eWOM social media on PI

Based on our hypothesis, we described the research framework as shown in Figure

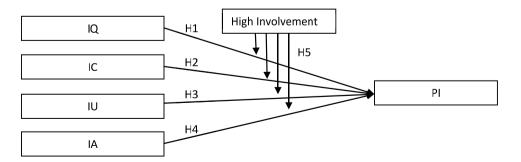


Figure 1: Research theoretical framework.



#### 2. Methods

We employed an experimental method to examine the effect of eWOM on PI with high involvement as moderation under controlled conditions. 390 college students enrolled at the University Java participated as respondents. The respondent characteristic is shown in Table 1.

The experimental method was conducted by giving treatment to participants before they completed the survey. An experimental model in this research used the one shot case study model. We conducted experiments on a group of respondents by providing examples of eWOM information (product information spread by people who are known in social media).

The experimental method used the following preparations: respondents were divided into several classes, where each class contained about 30-40 respondents. The concept of dividing respondents into several classes allows for limited interference from external variables and preserves research controls. Dividing respondents into several classes likewise avoids overcapacity in each class, allowing respondents to become comfortable enough to participate in the experiment when the capacity about is about 30-40 respondents per class. In the next stage, the respondent is given an example display of product information which has been shared on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Furthermore, the respondents were given experimental instructions as follows:

"Assume that you [the respondent] work as computer expert, which requires a laptop. The respondent will buy a laptop with high specifications according to his/her work. The respondent will purchase the product online through an online store website /application."

After that, the respondent finds product information on social media. Product samples in this study are laptops, which we used because this product is categorized as having high involvement among students and is likewise considered a necessity for many students. The duration of time in which the respondent can find information on social media is 10 minutes. After that, respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire involved several arguments related to consumer purchase intentions. The questionnaire is based on a Likert scale in which a respondent's response to the question may range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) [32]. The control variable in this research is the purchase of a laptop with high.

TABLE 1: Respondent characteristic.

	Measure	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	161	41.3%	
	Female	229	58.7%	
Product "Laptop" Specifications	Intel i7	160	41.2%	
	Intel i5	137	35.3%	
	Intel i3	35	8.6%	
	AMD	58	14.9	
<b>Product Brands</b>	Asus	268	69.1%	
	Lenovo	36	9.3%	
	Dell	60	15.5%	
	Others	26	6.1%	
Social Media	Facebook	87	22.3%	
	Twitter	22	5.7%	
	Instagram	215	55.1%	
	Youtube	66	16.9%	
	Tokopedia	133	34.2%	
Online Shopping Sites	Bukalapak	60	15.4%	
	Shopee	177	45.5%	
	Others	20	4.9%	
Product Understanding	Understand about the product	63	17.6%	
	Not Understand about the product	327	82.4%	

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Validity and reliability testing

Based on the validity test (using multiple linear regression analysis methods with a significance value of 5% [33]) and the reliability test (based on the minimum value of Croncban's Alpha 0.6 [33]), from several statements submitted, all proved to be valid and reliable. The validity test results are presented in Table 2 and the reliability test results are presented in Table 3.



TABLE 2: Validity test.

Variables	Statements	Pearson Correlation	R Table	Sig.	Results
Information Quality (IQ)	Statement 1	0.729	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.664	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.680	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.651	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 5	0.692	0.098	0.000	Valid
Information Credibil- ity (IC)	Statement 1	0.752	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.771	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.778	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.857	0.098	0.000	Valid
Information Usefulness (IU)	Statement 1	0.717	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.744	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.684	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.753	0.098	0.000	Valid
Information Adoption (IA)	Statement 1	0.747	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.775	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.747	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.735	0.098	0.000	Valid
Purchase Intention (PI)	Statement 1	0.609	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.695	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.644	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.791	0.098	0.000	Valid
High Involvement	Statement 1	0.710	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 2	0.645	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 3	0.668	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 4	0.615	0.098	0.000	Valid
	Statement 5	0.670	0.098	0.000	Valid

## 3.2. Hypothesis testing results

To test our hypotheses, we used multiple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of eWOM on PI. Table 4 displays the results of testing using multiple linear regression and the T-test. The fifth hypothesis testing uses moderation regression analysis to determine the high involvement can moderate the effect of eWOM social media on PI. Table 5 shows the test results using moderation regression.

TABLE 3: Reliability test.

No	Variable	Cronbach Alpha		Results
1	IQ	0.712	0.60	Reliable
2	IC	0.798	0.60	Reliable
3	IU	0.693	0.60	Reliable
4	IA	0.741	0.60	Reliable
5	PI	0.616	0.60	Reliable
6	High Involvement	0.677	0.60	Reliable

The first hypothesis in this research argues that IQ significantly affects PI. The results of multiple linear regression analysis showed the T-value is 2.495, with a significance value of 0.013. This indicates a significant correlation between IQ and PI, so the hypothesis was accepted. The second hypothesis in this research argues that IC has a significant effect on PI. The results of multiple linear regression analysis showed the T-value is 3.585 with a significance value of 0.000. Our analysis indicates that there is a significant correlation between IC and PI; therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. The third hypothesis in this research argues that IU significantly affects PI. The results of multiple linear regression analysis provided a T-value of 1.877 with a significance value of 0.061. The results showed that IU has no significant effect on PI, so the hypothesis was rejected. The fourth hypothesis in this research argues that IA has a significant effect on PI. The results of multiple linear regression analysis produced a T-value of 1.588 with a significance value of 0.133. The results showed that IA has no significant effect on PI, so the hypothesis was rejected. The fifth hypothesis in this research argues that high involvement moderates the effect of eWOM social media on Pl. The results of the moderation regression analysis showed that the value of R-squared after the presence of a moderator of high involvement increases, showing that high involvement moderates eWOM on PI, so the hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 4: Multiple regression analysis result.

Variable	В	Std Error	Т	T table	Significant	Test Result
(Constant)	8.279	1.171	7.070	-	0.000	-
IQ	0.103	0.041	2.495	1.966	0.013	Accepted
IC	0.140	0.039	3.585	1.966	0.000	Accepted
IU	0.099	0.053	1.877	1.966	0.061	Rejected
IA	0.078	0.049	1.588	1.966	0.133	Rejected

Source: Processed Data, 2021.



TABLE 5: Moderate regression result.

Variable	R Square Value (before moderation)	R Square Value (after moderation)
IQ	0.040	0.052
IC	0.057	0.077
IU	0.034	0.050
IA	0.021	0.037

#### 3.3. Discussion

The results of the first hypothesis test indicate that the quality of information shared on social media has a significant effect on PI, which suggests that the higher quality of information on social media is, PI will increase. This research has the same results as research conducted by [22], which generally argues that IQ has a significant effect on PI. The results of this research want to compare with the results of previous research from [26], which found that IQ has no significant effect on PI, while the results of this research found significant. This results show that the insignificance of social media eWOM can be a result of the type of product purchased; therefore, in this research, we choose products that require a high level of involvement. This result agrees with that of [34], who explain that the purchase of products requiring high involvement necessitates the quality of information that affects PI.

The results of second hypothesis test showed that IC has a significant effect on PI, which means if the credibility of information on social media increases, then PI also increases. This research has the same results as previous research conducted by [22], which argues that there is a positive relationship between IC and PI. The results of the information credibility are also compared with the research of [26], which found that the result did not match with this research. [26] state that the IC does not significantly affect PI. The product purchased can be the reason why eWOM in the IC has no significant effect in [26] research, so this research chooses specific products that require a high level of involvement. This explains that the purchase of products with high involvement requires credible information.

The results of the third hypothesis test indicate that IU does not significantly affect PI, meaning that the role of IU on PI is less than optimal for consumers who have to gather information on social media. This research matches with the results from [26], which found that information usefulness has no significant effect on PI. Several reasons make information usefulness has no significant effect on PI. Respondents in this research have information about the product or brand that can be found on social media which



is not entirely useful because the people who share the information do not aim to provide detailed information on product or brand information. Instead, they merely post updates on social media, so the accuracy of information may be doubted by information seekers. This was explained by [26], who argued that on social media information is sometimes a positive message and also a short negative about the product; a review on social media usually does not provide detailed information, but only gives an opinion in a short message such as "this product is good, try it," or "I hate this product, don't buy it," therefore consumers who are looking for information on social media may find information difficult to evaluate. [8] reinforce the above opinion that if everyone is free to give a review of a product or brand on social media, it will be difficult to evaluate whether the review came from an expert or authority-bearing person to share the review on social media. The research results of [26] also suggest that some people who share information about products or services on social media only aim to improve their social status. The conclusion is if the information is not entirely useful for other consumers who want to find detailed information about products or services.

The results of the fourth hypothesis test showed that IA has no significant effect on PI, which means that the role of IA on PI is less than optimal for consumers who have to gather information on social media. These results did not match with the results of [12] which found that IA is considered a factor that can affect PI. In eliciting PI, the information needs to be obtained from several references so that the information can be received by consumers. Consumers may not adopt information exclusively from one platform when they want to purchase a product or service. [35] state that the process of IA can change in different media or platforms. This opinion is reinforced by the results of [26] which suggests that if a review on social media is not always available, consumers cannot find it at any time. Therefore, social media is not the only media that determines PI. Consumers may need information from other media or platform to strengthen PI. This research supports the results of [26] which states that other platforms have more effect on PI than social media.

The fifth hypothesis testing results show that high involvement moderates the effect of eWOM on PI. This research has the same results as [34], who state that involvement in a product has a moderating effect on the relationship between eWOM and PI. This proves that the higher the consumer's involvement in the product or brand to be purchased is, the higher the consumer's interest in finding information related to a specific product or brand will be. This research also matches with research from [31] which suggests that the effect of eWOM will be more effective when consumer involvement of a product is high in the purchasing process.



## 4. Conclusion

This research shows that the Information Adoption Model (IAM) has an effect on purchase intention, with two variables having an effect: IQ and IC. IU and IA were found to have no significant effect. High involvement was found to conditionally moderate the effect of eWOM on PI. This can be interpreted as eWOM having a greater effect when the consumer involvement of a product is high in the purchasing process. To improve the information quality on social media, so that it is appropriate for consumers' decision-making needs, and to make the information more credible, useful, and adoptable, it needs to be improved and developed. This research has limitations, as it is conducted in the form of an experiment, which may not show the actual conditions. Further research can be conducted on purchasing products or services that require high or low levels of involvement.

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