















ORIGINAL

## Exploring the impact of E-WOM information via social media on customer purchasing decision: a mediating role of customer satisfaction

### Explorando el impacto de la información de E-WOM a través de las redes sociales en la decisión de compra del cliente: un papel mediador de la satisfacción del cliente

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#### ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of E-WOM information on purchasing decisions, using customer satisfaction as a mediator. It examines E-WOM information as independent variables, such as quality, quantity, and credibility, and as dependent variables, such as consumer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediator to investigate the relationship between E-WOM information and purchasing decisions. A questionnaire was issued to 307 social media-active clients, and the hypotheses were tested using quantitative methods. Data analysis comprised descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, skewness and kurtosis, and Pearson correlation coefficient, as well as a fit model for measuring questionnaire reliability and validity, regression for sub-hypotheses, and a path model for evaluating main hypotheses. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of E-WOM information had a positive impact on customer satisfaction and purchase decisions, both individually and jointly. Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, E-WOM information has been shown to positively impact purchasing decisions via consumer satisfaction. The study suggests that organizations should understand the dimensions that impact customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions in order to fulfill their goals, remain ahead of the competition, and obtain a competitive advantage. Proper tracking of social media reviews, comments, and recommendations may help organizations deliver answers, increase customer satisfaction, and aid in making purchasing decisions.

**Keywords:** E-WOM Information; Social Media; Customer Satisfaction; Purchasing Decision.

#### RESUMEN

El estudio investiga el impacto de la información de E-WOM en las decisiones de compra, utilizando la satisfacción del cliente como mediador. Se examina la información de E-WOM como variables independientes, tales como calidad, cantidad y credibilidad, y como variables dependientes, tales como satisfacción del consumidor y decisiones de compra, siendo la satisfacción del cliente un mediador para

investigar la relación entre la información de E-WOM y las decisiones de compra. Se emitió un cuestionario a 307 clientes activos en redes sociales, y se probaron las hipótesis utilizando métodos cuantitativos. El análisis de datos comprendió estadísticas descriptivas, el alfa de Cronbach, asimetría y curtosis, y el coeficiente de correlación de Pearson, así como un modelo de ajuste para medir la fiabilidad y validez del cuestionario, regresión para sub-hipótesis y un modelo de ruta para evaluar las hipótesis principales. Los hallazgos revelaron que las tres dimensiones de la información de E-WOM tuvieron un impacto positivo en la satisfacción del cliente y en las decisiones de compra, tanto de manera individual como conjunta. La satisfacción del cliente tiene una influencia positiva en las decisiones de compra. Además, se ha demostrado que la información de E-WOM impacta positivamente en las decisiones de compra a través de la satisfacción del consumidor. El estudio sugiere que las organizaciones deben comprender las dimensiones que impactan la satisfacción del cliente y las decisiones de compra para cumplir con sus objetivos, mantenerse por delante de la competencia y obtener una ventaja competitiva. El seguimiento adecuado de las reseñas, comentarios y recomendaciones en redes sociales puede ayudar a las organizaciones a ofrecer respuestas, aumentar la satisfacción del cliente y facilitar la toma de decisiones de compra.

**Palabras clave:** E-WOM Información; Redes Sociales; Satisfacción del Cliente; Decisión de Compra.

## INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements, particularly in communication technologies, have had a huge impact on global lives and are changing communication that occurs in person into virtual communication through social media. Social media is a powerful tool for electronic word-of-mouth, enabling people to share product-related experiences, information, and opinions with friends and customers, making it an integral part of daily life.<sup>(1,2)</sup> social media has evolved from an individual platform for sharing customer experiences and product usage to a valuable commercial marketing tool, affecting how people live and interact as the number of internet users grows.<sup>(3)</sup> Web 2.0 introduced user-generated content, making social media platforms a popular service. These social media platforms have evolved from simple interaction platforms to integral components of our daily lives, transforming communication, information sharing, and decision-making from any location at any time and with ease.<sup>(4,5,6)</sup>

E-WOM is a social media platform where customers share their experiences and feelings about products or organizations, potentially influencing their behavior and attitude. Social media's electronic word-of-mouth is gaining popularity due to its significant impact on customer attitudes and behaviors.<sup>(7,8)</sup> Customer behaviors and attitudes are crucial in customer-seller interactions, enabling product and service evaluation.<sup>(9)</sup> Social media plays a significant role in this process, as the lack of identity makes it difficult to assess products and services.<sup>(10,11)</sup> Positive E-WOM information increases customer satisfaction and encourages customers to adopt positive opinions about products, services, and businesses, while negative information reduces customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. Customer attitude is crucial in analyzing consumer buying behavior on social media, as satisfaction is essential for business success, and E-WOM information from others can influence consumer behavior and attitudes.<sup>(12,13)</sup> E-WOM, a key factor in customer satisfaction, can lead to increased loyalty and product recommendation.<sup>(14)</sup>

Social media is a vital marketing tool in today's competitive economy, as consumers value product information and seek opinions before making purchases. Successful businesses understand and effectively use social media to generate, support, communicate, and connect with potential customers. Implementing E-WOM can improve performance, reputation, customer trust, and satisfaction, making it a vital marketing tool.<sup>(15,16)</sup> This study explores the influence of E-WOM information on customer decisions, focusing on satisfaction with other customers' information and its potential to improve performance and reputation.

### Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a digital communication method where customers share information about products or companies through websites and other media.<sup>(8)</sup> It aids in decision-making by providing access to, processing, and utilizing data for informed actions, serving as a digital indicator of customer satisfaction, and fostering virtual communities with shared interests.<sup>(17,18,19)</sup> E-WOM information influences customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions through quality, quantity, and credibility. The internet has revolutionized traditional face-to-face communication, making it accessible to many individuals and institutions.<sup>(2,6)</sup> E-WOM offers numerous benefits through three dimensions: quality, quantity, and credibility, influencing customers to use social media and making understanding their use or rejection of E-WOM crucial in their purchasing decisions.<sup>(21,22,23,24,25,26)</sup>

**Information quality**

Information quality is stated as the persuasiveness of information about products on social media<sup>(27,28)</sup> with two forms: simple and more informative.<sup>(22,24)</sup> Customers' willingness to adopt E-WOM is influenced by their concerns about information accuracy, usefulness, and value. High-quality, honest, transparent, and consistent E-WOM information can positively impact purchasing decisions and enhance customer satisfaction.<sup>(29,30)</sup> Studies show that customers are more likely to participate and be impacted if they perceive the information to be of high quality.<sup>(31,32)</sup> Therefore, it is crucial to provide high-quality information to enhance customer satisfaction. Previous studies show that customers are more likely to take part and be impacted if they perceive the information to be of high quality.<sup>(33,34,35,36)</sup> However<sup>(37)</sup> found that quality has no impact on purchasing decisions. Therefore, it is essential to provide high-quality information to enhance customer satisfaction.

**Information quantity**

Information quantity refers to the number of product-related comments, reviews, and information posted online.<sup>(23)</sup> A large quantity indicates many customers have bought the product, alleviating anxiety about purchasing decisions. The visibility of the product increases when customers search for online reviews, comments, or suggestions. Multiple online reviews show high sales, popularity, and a powerful reputation, aiding customers in making informed purchasing decisions.<sup>(21)</sup> A product with a large number of recommendations and comments is considered popular, indicating product quality, performance, and customer awareness.<sup>(38)</sup> As the quantity of E-WOM increases, so will purchase intentions, as consumers justify their decisions based on increased quantity. Studies have found that E-WOM quantity has a positive impact on customer purchase decisions<sup>(33,35,25)</sup> found that information quantity had no impact on customer purchasing decisions.

**Information credibility**

Information credibility is the evaluation of information received by a message recipient, which is crucial for customers as it is perceived as reliable, credible, and free from personal bias.<sup>(39,40)</sup> Customers often place more faith in other customers' opinions than in marketers or commercials, making it essential for them to have credible information before making purchases.<sup>(38,41)</sup> Credibility is evaluated using information sources, components, and medium characteristics, with internet users' evaluations based on the trustworthiness of others, information content, and the media used to spread the information.<sup>(1)</sup> Perceived information trustworthiness influences consumer behavior, with those who believe information is credible having positive attitudes towards a product, while those who believe it is unbelievable are less likely to adopt E-WOM communications. Previous studies have shown that credibility significantly influences customer satisfaction and is more likely to be considered in their purchasing decision process.<sup>(25,27,33,41,42,43,44,45)</sup> In contrast,<sup>(37,46,36)</sup> found credibility has no impact on customer purchasing decisions.

**Customer satisfaction (SAT)**

Customer satisfaction is a crucial aspect of marketing, as it influences future purchase decisions and understanding consumer desires. Positive E-WOM before making a purchase increases satisfaction, and vice versa.<sup>(47)</sup> Increased satisfaction is higher when customers use social media more often and are exposed to more positive E-WOM.<sup>(48)</sup> E-WOM significantly influences customer satisfaction and purchase decisions, building trust and loyalty.<sup>(49,50)</sup> Positive evaluations, persuasive information, and credible sources can increase customer satisfaction.<sup>(51)</sup> Marketers should provide clear, helpful, and relevant information about their products or services on social media to enhance product performance and consumer satisfaction. Previous studies found that E-WOM significantly impacts customer satisfaction by confirming expectations through reading information.<sup>(47,52,53,54,55)</sup> However Li N et al.<sup>(56)</sup> found that E-WOM information may not significantly impact customer satisfaction.

**Purchasing decision (PD)**

Purchasing decisions involve customers finding needs, generating options, and choosing products or brands.<sup>(57)</sup> They are influenced by their preferences and evaluation of options.<sup>(58,59)</sup> E-WOM communication plays a crucial role in these decisions, as customer recommendations and social media information significantly influence them. The growth of social media has democratized access to product information, allowing customers to research, compare, and evaluate products and services before making a purchasing decision.<sup>(17,60)</sup> The likelihood of making a purchasing decision increases as more information is received via E-WOM on social media. Understanding why customers use or reject E-WOM in their purchasing decisions is essential.<sup>(26)</sup> Previous studies have found a relationship between E-WOM information and customer purchasing decisions<sup>(47,61,62,63,64,65,59,66)</sup> in their studies, disagreements persist among researchers.

## METHOD

### Study model

The model proposed in figure 1 examines the impact of E-WOM information—quality, quantity, and credibility—on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, drawing from previous studies. <sup>(21,22,23,25,33,35,36,37,46)</sup>

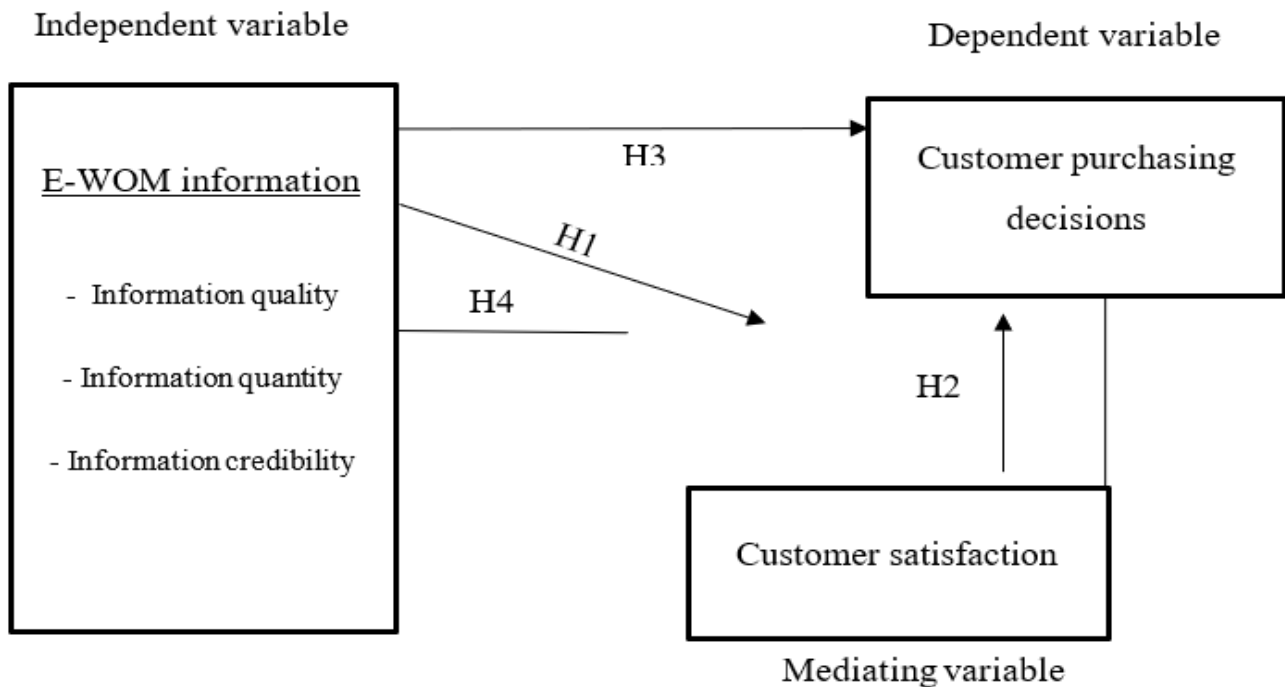


Figure 1. Proposed model

### Data collection

The study used a quantitative method, utilizing a questionnaire with modified items from previous studies, a five-point Likert scale for item estimation, and theoretical data from reliable secondary sources to support its results.

### Sampling

In this study, the sample involved Jordanian individuals who volunteered to take part. To increase response rates, the questionnaire was provided to individuals directly by hand and indirectly online. Data collection was made easier by using a convenient sampling technique.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire, consisting of 22 items, was divided into three sections: Part A, which reveals demographic data; Part B, which covers E-WOM information; and Part C, which focuses on satisfaction and purchasing decisions.

## RESULTS

The study used Cronbach's alpha, skewness, kurtosis, Pearson correlation coefficient, and fit model for questionnaire reliability and validity, regression for sub-hypotheses testing, and a path model for main hypothesis evaluation.

### Sample characteristics

As shown in table 1, the majority of respondents were female, with 169 (55%), 138 (45%), and 121 (39,5%) aged between 25 and 35, followed by those aged 36 to 45 (28,4%), and those over 46 (13%). In terms of educational level, 163 (53,1%) have a bachelor's degree, 54 (17,6%) have a secondary education, 47 (15,3%) have a postgraduate degree, and 43 (14%) have a diploma.

According to the respondents' income, 115 (37,5%) had a monthly income of 501 to 1 000 JD, followed by 92 (30%) with a monthly income of less than 500, 67 (21,8%) with an income of 1001 to 1500, and 33 (10,7%) with an income of 1501 or more.

Samples' demographic characteristics	No	%
Gender		
Male	138	45
Female	169	55
Age		
Less than 25	87	28,4
25-35	121	39,5
36-45	59	19,1
More than 46	40	13,0
Education		
High secondary school and less	54	17,6
Diploma	43	14,0
BA	163	53,1
Postgraduate	47	15,3
Monthly income (1 USA = 0,71 JD)		
Less than 500	92	30,0
501-1000	115	37,5
1001-1500	67	21,8
1501 and more	33	10,7
Total	307	100

### Questionnaire analysis

Table 2 presents data on questionnaire responses, including mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, skewness and kurtosis.

Statements	M	S.D	Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
Information quality					
E-WOM information provides clear information.	3,78	0,879	0,892	-0,671	-0,346
E-WOM information offers adequate information.	3,85	0,970			
E-WOM information presents useful information.	3,93	0,978			
E-WOM information displays precise information.	3,45	0,969			
Information quantity					
E-WOM information provides an abundance of information.	3,97	0,897	0,795	-0,899	-0,093
The abundance of E-WOM information shows a positive reputation for the products.	3,82	0,802			
There is extensive E-WOM information about the product I concern.	3,52	0,887			
The abundance of E-WOM information aids in making an informed purchasing decision.	3,64	0,738			
Information credibility					
I believe that E-WOM information is highly trustworthy.	3,71	0,856	0,844	-1,015	0,365
The E-WOM information provided by others is correct.	3,81	0,869			
I think E-WOM information is authentic.	3,73	0,865			
I consider E-WOM information convincing.	3,79	0,818			
Customer satisfaction					

I am happy with using e-WOM information before making a purchasing decision.	3,72	0,841	0,908	-0,822	1,695
I enjoy engaging with people before making purchasing decisions.	3,74	0,978			
E-WOM information always fulfills my demands.	3,59	0,869			
E-WOM information is helpful in deciding the best product for me.	3,44	1,039			
My entire experience with E-WOM information is satisfactory.	3,37	0,921			
Purchasing decision					
I would like to buy products based on E-WOM information provided by others.	3,81	0,770	0,789	-0,631	1,587
I would like to buy products introduced by my friends.	4,25	0,647			
The E-WOM information provided significantly influences my purchasing decision.	3,68	0,732			
My purchasing decision will be made based on the E-WOM information about the product.	3,79	0,791			
I plan to buy products recommended through E-WOM information in the future.	3,32	0,701			

### Measurement model

The measurement's internal consistency and validity were assessed, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient that should exceed the 0,70 criterion.<sup>(67)</sup> Normality of variables was assessed using skewness and kurtosis, with acceptable values within the normal distribution.<sup>(68)</sup> Pearson correlation coefficient values were valid, showing a significant correlation for each variable. E-WOM information, satisfaction, and purchasing decision all showed a positive correlation, confirming the questionnaire's reliability and validity as shown in tables 2 and 3. In addition, the questionnaire's validity was assessed using the fit model, with a  $\chi^2/df$  value below the recommended limit. The AGFI result exceeded the limit of 0,80, while the RMSEA value was 0,076. The NFI, CFI, and GFI values were all greater than 0,90, as shown in table 4.

**Table 3.** The correlation coefficients values between each variable

Variables	Information Quality	Information Quantity	Information Credibility	Customer satisfaction	Purchasing Intention
Information Quality	1				
Information Quantity	0,581**	1			
Information Credibility	0,607**	0,713**	1		
Customer satisfaction	0,702**	0,519**	0,513**	1	
Purchasing decision	0,629**	0,679**	0,712**	0,535**	1

**Table 4.** Structural model fit

Model	AGFI	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Recommended	> 0,80	< 5	> 0,90	$\leq$ 0,10	> 0,90	> 0,90
References	<sup>(69)</sup>	<sup>(70)</sup>	<sup>(69)</sup>	<sup>(71)</sup>	<sup>(72)</sup>	<sup>(72)</sup>
Study model	0,837	4,11	0,936	0,064	0,941	0,915

The study used regression analysis to investigate the impact of E-WOM information on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, with the findings presented in tables 4 and 5.

### Test of sub-hypotheses (H1.1; H1.2; H1.3)

A simple regression test was conducted to examine the impact of information quality, quantity, and credibility on customer satisfaction. The results showed a significant positive relationship between information quality and customer satisfaction ( $R^2 = 60,8$ ). The impact of information quantity on customer satisfaction was also significant ( $R^2 = 47,1$ ). Information credibility was found to have a correlation with customer satisfaction ( $R^2 =$

51,1). The beta coefficient for information quality was ( $\beta = 42,9$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ). The impact of information quantity on customer satisfaction was ( $\beta = 67,8$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ), and the impact of information credibility was ( $\beta = 72,1$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ) beta coefficients.

**Table 5.** The impact of E-WOM information dimensions on customer satisfaction

Hypotheses	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	T	Sig. T
H1.1	Information quality	0,769	0,608	0,429	9,541	0,000*
H1.2	Information quantity	0,678	0,471	0,678	8,409	0,000*
H1.3	Information credibility	0,696	0,511	0,721	9,632	0,000*

### Test of sub-hypotheses (H2.1; H2.2; H2.3)

Similarly, the study used a simple regression test to examine the impact and relationship between E-WOM information dimensions and purchasing decisions. Results showed a significant positive correlation between information quality and purchasing decisions ( $R^2 = 56,1$ ), with beta coefficients for information quality ( $\beta = 26,8$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ). The correlation between information quantity and purchasing decisions was also significant ( $R^2 = 63,1$ ; beta coefficients of information quantity ( $\beta = 35,9$ ;  $P = 0,000$ )). The impact of information credibility on purchasing decisions was also significant ( $R^2 = 44,8$ ) with beta coefficients ( $\beta = 46,1$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ).

**Table 6.** The impact of E-WOM information dimensions on purchasing decisions

Hypotheses	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	T	Sig. T
H2.1	Information quality	0,748	0,561	0,268	5,698	0,000*
H2.2	Information quantity	0,787	0,631	0,359	7,127	0,001*
H2.3	Information credibility	0,557	0,448	0,461	9,412	0,000*

### Test of main hypotheses

The main hypotheses were evaluated using path analysis, and the relationship between variables was examined. Table 6 of path model results displays direct and indirect influences, with significance values less than 0,05 showing statistical significance. The results show direct and indirect effects.

The study found a significant positive correlation between E-WOM information and customer satisfaction ( $R^2 = 47,1$ ). This beta coefficient has a significant impact on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 55,8$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ). Additionally, E-WOM information positively correlated purchasing decisions ( $R^2 = 48,2$ ), with beta values for E-WOM information on purchasing decisions ( $\beta = 28,7$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ). The correlation between customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions ( $R^2 = 27,5$ ); beta coefficients for customer satisfaction on purchasing decisions are also significant ( $\beta = 20,2$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ). Finally, the correlation between E-WOM information and purchasing decisions via customer satisfaction ( $R^2 = 52,3$ ) is significant and positive ( $\beta = 57,6$ ;  $P = 0,000$ ).

**Table 7.** Results of Path model for main hypotheses

Hypotheses				R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T-value	P	Decision
H1	Satisfaction	<-----	E-WOM information	0,647	0,471	0,558	11,854	0,000*	Supported
H2	Purchasing decision	<-----	E-WOM information	0,529	0,482	0,287	6,717	0,000*	Supported
H3	Purchasing decision	<-----	Satisfaction	0,362	0,275	0,202	4,513	0,000*	Supported
H4	Purchasing decision	Satisfaction	E-WOM information	0,698	0,523	0,576	14,143	0,000*	Supported

## DISCUSSION

The study is conducted to explore the impact of E-WOM information on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, considering E-WOM information dimensions such as quality, quantity, and credibility. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is used as a mediator between E-WOM information and purchasing decisions. The questionnaires ( $n = 307$ ) were gathered from Jordanian individuals who use E-WOM information from social media to make their purchasing decisions. The study used the above-proposed study model to analyze the main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses and draw conclusions.

The study reveals that information credibility, information quantity, and information quality significantly impact customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. Customer satisfaction is most impacted by information credibility, followed by information quantity and information quality. The study also found that all E-WOM information dimensions have a high influence on purchasing decisions, with credibility having the highest impact, followed by information quantity and information quality. The study found that all E-WOM information dimensions significantly affect customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, albeit to different degrees. This means that the beta coefficients for each of the E-WOM information dimensions indicate that for every 1 unit increase in information quality, quantity, and credibility, it would increase its impact by 42,9 %, 67,8 %, and 72,1 % on customer satisfaction and by 26,8 %, 35,9 %, and 46,1 % on customer purchasing decisions, respectively.<sup>(6,27,33,34,35,36,38,42,44)</sup> However, this study disagrees with previous research by<sup>(25,37)</sup> who found credibility has no impact on customer purchasing decisions. In contrast, this study disagrees with<sup>(25)</sup>, who found quantity has no impact on customer satisfaction, and with<sup>(37)</sup>, who found that information quality and credibility had no impact on customer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, this study disagrees with<sup>(36,46)</sup> who found credibility has no impact on customer purchasing decisions.

The study found that E-WOM information directly influences customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. The study also revealed that customer satisfaction has a direct influence on customer purchasing decisions. The beta coefficients of E-WOM information showed that an increase in E-WOM information has a direct effect on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. Customer satisfaction influences purchasing decisions by 20,2 %, and an increase in E-WOM information increases purchasing decisions by 57,6 % due to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings revealed that E-WOM information influences customer purchasing decisions through customer satisfaction. The results showed a significant and positive relationship between these variables. The study's findings align with previous research on customer satisfaction<sup>(47,52,53,54,55)</sup>, but disagree with<sup>(56)</sup> findings. The study also aligns with previous studies on purchasing decisions by<sup>(6,21,22,23,24,25,33,34,35,62,63,66)</sup> However, the study is inconsistent with previous research by<sup>(56,59,66)</sup>, which found no impact of E-WOM information on customer purchasing decisions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study explores the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, focusing on its quality, quantity, and credibility. A survey was distributed to 307 social media users to understand the role of e-WOM in decision-making, as it serves as a digital indicator of customer satisfaction and aids in informed purchasing decisions. The study reveals that E-WOM information dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, both individually and jointly. Customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions are most influenced by E-WOM information credibility, followed by quantity and quality. The study revealed that E-WOM information significantly influences customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, and customer satisfaction directly impacts purchasing decisions. Indirectly, E-WOM information impacts purchasing decisions via customer satisfaction. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of E-WOM information in shaping customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. It suggests that organizations should understand the impact of E-WOM on social media and follow customers opinions to stay ahead of the competition. By analyzing reviews, comments, and recommendations on social media, companies can provide solutions, gain customer satisfaction, and aid in their purchasing decisions, achieving their goals and staying ahead of the competition.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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