

CHAPTER V

CLOSING

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis and research conducted in this research entitled "The Effects of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on Purchase Intention with Brand Image as a Mediating Variable for Skincare Products by Ourdaylee", this is the conclusion obtained by researcher :

1. Hypotehses 1 was accepted, there is a positive and significant effect of e-WOM on the purchase intention of Ourdaylee. That means when Ourdaylee receives positive electronic word-of-mouth, potential customers are more likely to develop the intention to purchase from Ourdaylee. This suggests that favorable reviews, recommendations, and comments on social media and other online platforms can significantly increase the likelihood of consumers choosing Ourdaylee for their needs.
2. There is a positive and significant effect of e-WOM on the brand image of Ourdaylee. This indicates that positive electronic word-of-mouth can enhance the overall perception and reputation of Ourdaylee in the minds of consumers. As people share their positive experiences and feedback about Ourdaylee online, it helps to build a stronger and more favorable brand image.
3. There is a positive and significant effect of brand image on the purchase intention of Ourdaylee. This means that a strong and positive brand image directly influences consumers' willingness to purchase from Ourdaylee. When customers perceive the brand positively, they are more likely to consider and choose Ourdaylee when making purchasing decisions.
4. There is a positive and significant effect of e-WOM on the purchase intention of Ourdaylee mediated by brand image. This suggests that the influence of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intentions is partly explained by its impact on the brand image. Positive e-WOM helps to improve the brand image, which in turn increases the

likelihood of purchase intentions among consumers. Therefore, the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intentions is strengthened through the enhancement of the brand image.

The research utilized statistical methods to analyze survey data that measured the impact of e-WOM and brand image on purchase intention and the mediating effect of brand image on purchase intention. The acceptance of hypothesis indicates that the data showed significant positive relationships between these variables. Positive e-WOM acts as social proof and builds trust among potential customers. When people read favorable reviews or recommendations about Ourdaylee, they are more inclined to believe in the quality and effectiveness of the product, which leads to a higher intention to purchase. Positive feedback and experiences shared online help to construct a strong and favorable brand image. As more people talk positively about Ourdaylee, the brand's reputation improves, making it more attractive to other potential customers. A strong brand image creates a sense of reliability and credibility. When customers have a positive perception of Ourdaylee, they are more likely to trust the brand and its products, thus increasing their purchase intentions. The mediating effect of brand image means that e-WOM indirectly affects purchase intention by first enhancing the brand image. Positive e-WOM improves the brand image, which in turn makes consumers more likely to intend to purchase. This mediated relationship shows that brand image is a crucial factor that strengthens the impact of e-WOM on purchase intentions.

5.2 Limitation

Researcher acknowledges the existence of several limitations in this study during the research process. Here are some key limitations identified in this research:

1. This study uses brand image as a mediating variable for purchase intention, influenced by electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). However, there is other potential antecedents of purchase intention.

Future research should consider incorporating these and other relevant variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting purchase intention.

2. This research is focused on understanding the purchase intentions for skincare products by Ourdaylee, with respondents limited to a specific demographic or customer base. This scope may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations or product categories. Expanding the research to include a broader and more diverse sample could provide more generalized and applicable insights.

5.3 Suggestion

Researcher acknowledges several limitations in this study during the research process. Therefore, here are some suggestions for future research that are expected to provide deeper and more comprehensive contributions:

1. Future research can broaden the scope of purchase intention antecedents by incorporating other influential factors such as price perception, product quality, and purchasing convenience, were not included in this study. Future research should consider incorporating these and other relevant variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting purchase intention.
2. Future studies should aim to expand the respondent sample beyond just consumers of Ourdaylee. Collecting data from a variety of consumer segments, including buyer from skincare user in other regions can offer a more holistic view of purchase intentions. By broadening the respondent sample, researchers can enhance the generalizability of the findings to different types of industries, not just Ourdaylee consumer. This approach will help in obtaining more widely applicable insights and conclusions.

5.4 Managerial Implication

Based on the findings of this research, several practical implications can be drawn for businesses, especially those in the skincare industry such as Ourdaylee:

1. Businesses should actively encourage satisfied customers to share their positive experiences online. This can be done through various strategies such as offering incentives for reviews, engaging with customers on social media, and providing platforms where customers can easily leave feedback.
2. Since brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention, companies should invest in building a strong, positive brand image. This can be achieved through consistent branding efforts, high-quality products, exceptional customer service, and effective marketing campaigns.
3. Recognizing that brand image mediates the effect of e-WOM on purchase intentions highlights the importance of a holistic approach to marketing. Companies should not only focus on generating positive e-WOM but also ensure that this positive feedback translates into a strong brand image.
4. The findings of this research have significant implications when considering the demographic profile of the respondents. The largest age group represented in the study is 21-25 years old, comprising 39.5% of the sample, which predominantly falls within Generation Z. Additionally, 88.6% of the respondents are female. This demographic insight suggests that Ourdaylee's primary audience is young women who are active consumers of digital content and are likely influenced by online reviews and recommendations. The strong influence of e-WOM on this demographic highlights the importance of maintaining a positive online brand image to drive purchase intentions. For Ourdaylee, strategically engaging with this segment through targeted social media campaigns and influencer

partnerships could further enhance brand perception and capitalize on the purchasing power of young female consumers.



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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE



Formulir Kuesioner "Pengaruh Elektronik Word-

Pertanyaan Jawaban 273 Setelan

273 jawaban

Menerima jawaban

Ringkasan

Pertanyaan

Individual

Siapa yang telah menjawab?

Email

APPENDIX II: DATA

NO	INDICATOR												TOTAL		
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Y1	Y2	Y3	e-WOM (X)	Brand Image (Z)	Purchase Intention (Y)
1	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	22	19	12
2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	25	19	15
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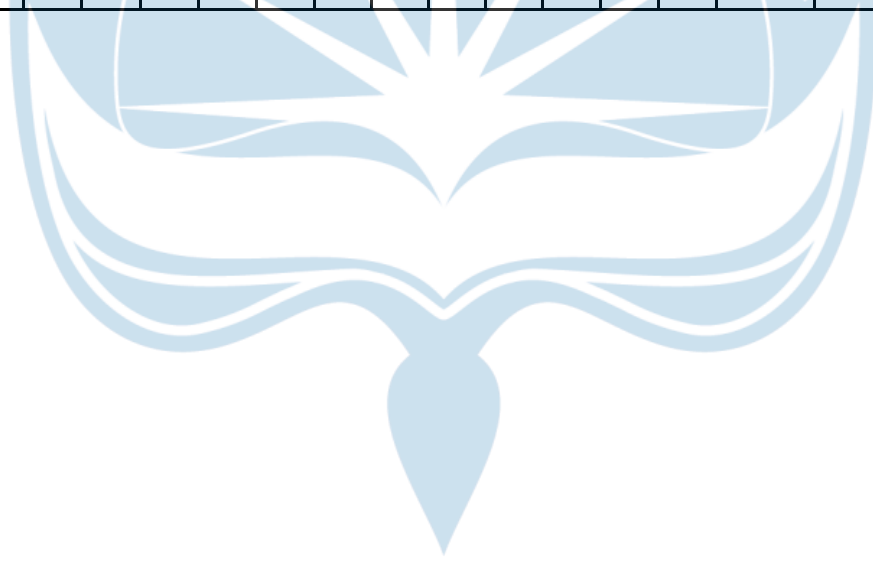
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127	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	25	18	15
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129	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	25	16	11
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131	4	5	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	5	4	21	16	13
132	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	5	22	17	12
133	3	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	20	19	15
134	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	21	20	14
135	4	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	16	19	12
136	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	24	18	13
137	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	17	15	13
138	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	20	16	12
139	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	19	16	11
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141	4	3	5	4	4	5	4	3	4	5	4	5	20	16	14
142	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	20	16	13
143	3	4	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	19	12	9

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146	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	3	4	5	22	19	12
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172	5	5	4	3	5	3	3	4	5	4	5	5	22	15	14
173	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	24	20	14
174	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	25	20	15
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179	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	25	18	12
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183	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	24	20	14
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185	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	15	20	14
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187	3	5	4	2	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	19	16	14
188	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	22	17	13
189	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	22	18	12
190	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	21	17	13
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210	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	23	19	13
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212	5	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	5	3	5	5	21	17	13
213	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	20	18	14
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216	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	22	16	12
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220	3	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	21	18	11
221	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	21	17	13
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230	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	17	14	11
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236	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	24	19	15
237	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	2	4	3	4	4	20	13	11
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255	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	25	20	12
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267	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	25	17	15
268	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	23	20	14
269	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	23	19	14
270	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	20	16	13
271	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	23	20	14



APPENDIX III: DATA ANALYSIS

1. Normality Test

NPar Tests

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		271
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.51377363
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.074
	Positive	.030
	Negative	-.074
Test Statistic		.074
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.001 ^c
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		.097
Point Probability		.000

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

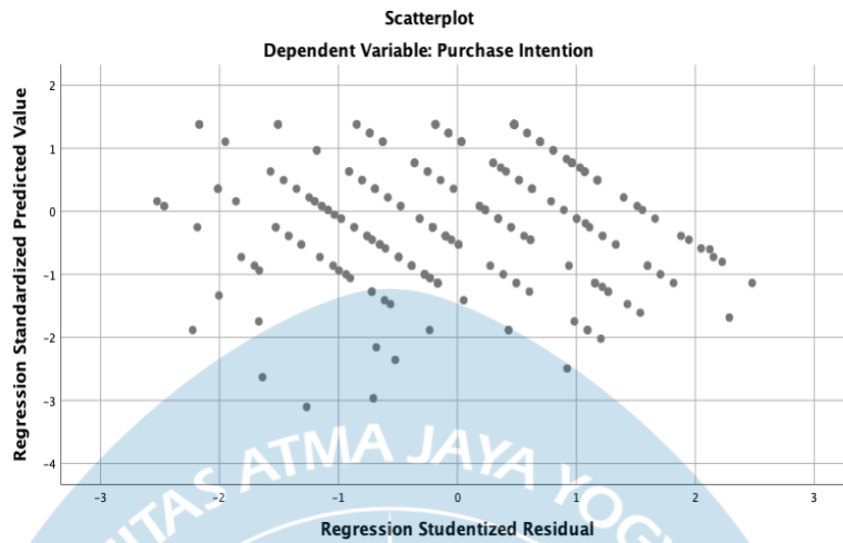
2. Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.141	1.081		3.832	.000		
	E-WOM	.165	.050	.186	3.313	.001	.728	1.373
	Brand Image	.734	.081	.505	9.018	.000	.728	1.373

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

3. Heteroskedasticity Scatterplot Test



4. Heteroskedasticity Glejser Test

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.057	.622	4.915	.000	
	E-WOM	-.054	.029	-.134	-1.900	.059
	Brand Image	-.046	.047	-.069	-.982	.327

a. Dependent Variable: ABS

5. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Step 1 : e-WOM to Brand Image

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	E-WOM ^b	.	Enter

- a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image
b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.521 ^a	.272	.269	1.13789

- a. Predictors: (Constant), E-WOM

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	129.812	1	129.812	100.257	.000 ^b
	Residual	348.299	269	1.295		
	Total	478.111	270			

- a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image
b. Predictors: (Constant), E-WOM

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.201	.716		8.666	.000
	E-WOM	.319	.032	.521	10.013	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

Step 2 : e-WOM and Brand Image to Purchase Intention

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Brand Image ^b	.	Enter

- a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.602 ^a	.362	.360	1.54733

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	365.808	1	365.808	152.788	.000 ^b
	Residual	644.044	269	2.394		
	Total	1009.852	270			

- a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.958	.948		6.284	.000
	Brand Image	.875	.071	.602	12.361	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

6. Path Analysis

I

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,449 ^a	,201	,198	1,73145

a. Predictors: (Constant), eWOM

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8,693	1,089		7,984	,000
	eWOM	,399	,048	,449	8,237	,000

a. Dependent Variable: BrainImage

II

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,664 ^a	,441	,437	,99854

a. Predictors: (Constant), BrainImage, eWOM

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,444	,698		4,932	,000
	eWOM	,192	,031	,314	6,149	,000
	BrainImage	,317	,035	,461	9,018	,000

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

APPENDIX IV: BUNDLE ATTACHMENT

182 *Int. J. Networking and Virtual Organisations, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2021*

The effect of the electronic word of mouth on purchase intention via the brand image as a mediating factor: an empirical study

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on the brand image and purchase intention in the telecommunication sector in Jordan. A quantitative-based approach was used for data collection, and a research model was suggested and tested empirically using a sample of 354 respondents who had experiences with the internet and social media. Measurement items are adopted and modified from existing scales found in the relevant prior studies to fit the study's objectives. Using multiple regression analysis, the findings show that eWOM has a positive significant effect on both purchase intention and brand image; the brand image

has a significant impact on purchase intention, and eWOM has a fully indirect impact on purchase intention through the brand image as a mediating factor. The current study suggested that telecommunication service providers should wisely and professionally focus on eWOM's favourable contacts to promote a brand image that will later promote the customers' purchase intention.

Keywords: regression analysis; electronic word of mouth; eWOM; brand image; purchase intention; mobile and internet; Jordanian telecommunication sector.

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1 Introduction

According to Daugherty and Hoffman (2014), the word of mouth (WOM) is commonly perceived in the consumer behaviour to have the most effective influence, especially on consumer information research and subsequent buying decision-making. At the emergence of the Internet as a valuable service research tool, a new form of WOM appears which is the electronic word of mouth (eWOM) (Yang, 2017; Horrigan, 2008). The eWOM is usually a positive or negative statement made available online about a product or service through current customers who bought/experienced such product or service or through prospective customers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). The availability of eWOM for consumers to share their reviews with others using online platforms is considered as an advantage. Once a consumer trusted WOM from reference groups, online comments (eWOM) are usually viewed to collect relevant information about a product or service (Nieto et al., 2014).

According to the latest statistics and trends, 90% of customers read online reviews and 88% of them trust online reviews such as personal recommendations (Rudolph, 2015). It means that customers read reviews as part of their pre-purchase research when they intend to purchase a product or service. Therefore, marketers should consider the customers' online reviews usage towards the purchase intention. Nowadays, almost every service organisation faces marketing challenges in a business environment because of the basic characteristics of services. Service is simply an act or performance that one party offers to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in any ownership (Abbasi and Dahiya, 2016). Fisk et al. (1993) suggested that the major output from the service marketing literature was the projection of four services characteristics: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability. These characteristics reinforced the case of marketing services and made services as a field of marketing that was distinct from the marketing of products.

Regarding the telecommunication services sector, it is recognised as one of the most important sectors in the world's economy, it is considered the infrastructure which contributes to support other sectors, improve the quality of offered services and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government departments and companies. The Jordanian Government, therefore, gives this vital sector more attention, in which it has witnessed, in recent years, a remarkable increase in the size of its contribution to the GDP of the various countries worldwide and specifically in developing countries (Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, 2017). Accordingly, the telecom infrastructure is growing rapidly and continually being enhanced. In fact, the three mobile network operators in Jordan have had a noticeable fierce competition in acquiring new customers and retaining the existing ones. The current study examines the impact of eWOM on purchase intention through the mediating role of the brand image on the customers of the telecommunication services in Jordan. Since, there are no prior studies in the Jordanian market context that have investigated this issue, this work endeavours to bridge this gap.

The current research has come up with the intention to investigate the effect of eWOM on customers' purchasing intention via the brand image as a mediating factor. This research work is conducted on customers of telecommunication services (mobile and internet) in Jordan as a developing country. Understanding consumers' behaviours in developing countries, such as Jordan, would be important for practitioners and researchers. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be valuable to

telecommunications service providers in order to develop appropriate promotional strategies in general and social media strategies in particular, which will eventually influence consumers' purchase decisions.

2 Theoretical background of the study

2.1 eWOM: definition and importance

eWOM communication is defined as any positive or negative statement presented by a former, current or prospective customer that is available online (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Moreover, eWOM includes sharing opinions and information not only about products but also about services and brands (Jalilvand et al., 2011). The rating and reviews are examples of the most common forms of eWOM (Chatterjee, 2001). Park et al. (2007) state that the review can be positive or negative, either as information or recommendations. Furthermore, according to Chen and Xie (2008), reviews can be written either by consumers or by professionals. Also, according to Nielson (2012), customers' comments are as trusted as if they are on a company's website.

Comparing with WOM, Bickart and Schindler (2002) showed that eWOM may have higher reliability, understanding and importance to customers as a source of information available on the internet. The spoken words versus written words, face-to-face interaction vs. indirect interaction, and the narrow range versus the wide access are attributes that differentiate WOM from eWOM. Due to the continuing growth of internet users and the increasing number of people who publish or share their opinions or experiences, online communications have become the most important communication medium. Consequently, business companies must develop social marketing strategies (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The eWOM is recognised as an effective tool to build brand awareness, create hype in the market, affecting purchasing decisions and brand loyalty development (Ferguson, 2008).

Why is it important to research on eWOM? One reason is that more than ever people are talking about brands in different online platforms (Zhang et al., 2010). Moreover, Ferguson (2008) claims that eWOM may affect the evaluations of a product's acceptance. However, the most important reason behind investigating eWOM is that it affects consumers' purchase decisions and product sales (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006, Trusov et al., 2009; Jalilvand et al., 2011; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). Therefore it should be closely connected to companies with their online presence. Online customers typically trust the reviews of people who are similar to them more than the reviews of experts (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). Users report eWOM is considered of high influence compared to the efforts created by a company (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Companies are also affected by eWOM through its impact on customers' decisions (Libai et al., 2013). Additionally, it can help in acquiring customers who would not have bought a product or service in the first place.

Several studies have also shown that eWOM has a direct impact on purchase intention as well as indirect impacts through trust and credibility (Stubkjaer, 2015; Alrwashdeh et al., 2019). These studies also indicate that consumers trust eWOM in general. However, review sites are greatly weakened by the knowledge of fake reviews. Stubkjaer (2015) and Alrwashdeh et al. (2019) argued that the use and popularity of eWOM communication will continue to grow, despite a trend that is constantly

increasing in the processing of online customer reviews, with up to 30% of estimated reviews to be fake, can threaten to undermine customers' trust in this ideal, unbiased and trustworthy medium for expressing personal opinions and conveying experiences and information. Others also claim that fake reviews are so prevalent and are of such sophistication that they are rendering the use of customer reviews largely (Rosario et al., 2019). The creation of fake online customer's identities and fake reviews is a behaviour designed to deceive and mislead online customers. Misleading or fake reviews undermine customer confidence in the integrity of online reviews, which would harm customers (Malbon, 2013).

Several approaches have been suggested to overcome online fake reviews and misinformation. For example, Valant (2015) suggested that improving digital skills and digital literacy can help consumers avoid deception, manipulation, and persuasion by misleading online reviews. Educating consumers about fake online reviews not only helps identify potential fake reviews but also contributes to reducing potential harm to consumers.

2.2 *Brand image*

According to Keller (2009), brand image is considered as to how a brand is associated with a consumer's mind. It is also defined as an overall perception of customers on a brand, resulting from customers' understanding of information relevant to the brand (He et al., 2013). Brand image is created when a consumer makes special feelings, opinion and expectations regarding a certain brand as a consumer perceives and eventually become familiar to it (Keller, 2009). Kotler and Keller (2016) discussed that a brand can smoothen a consumer's buying decision. Brands image is also considered by researchers as an important added value that assists a company's business (Ait-Sahalia et al., 2004; Keller, 2009).

Brand image plays an important role in improving a company's performance because it is an indirect tool which can change customers' buying behaviour (Malik et al., 2013). Consequently, brand image creates the highest values regarding a company (Baker and Chevalier, 2012). Brand image has a huge effect on marketing success as it raises consumer willingness to pay more attention to a product, increase acquisition, and eventually affects companies' profits (Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

2.3 *Purchase intention*

In the consumer behaviour domain, purchase intention is considered as the key component that explains how a consumer intends to buy a certain product or service at a certain time (Hosein, 2012). Purchase intention can measure the probability of a consumer's intention to buy a product. The higher the purchase intention is, the higher a consumer's willingness is to purchase that product (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2018). One of the most popular approaches undertaken by marketers in attaining an understanding of consumers' actual behaviours is through studying their intentions (Engel et al., 2006; Ghalandari and Norouzi, 2012).

Purchase intention helps in collecting data needed for a specific purchase related to a product or a service; so that consumers can compare the alternatives based on his/her preferences. Therefore, it is considered as a necessary component in consumer buying behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Consumers constantly search for information

about the products and services they intend to purchase (Kasuma, 2012). Nowadays, consumers are aware more regarding the importance of online search when they intend to buy a product or find a service through gathering the needed information from online sources.

2.4 Factors influencing purchase intention

Purchase intention is the behaviour that consumers show in searching for, using, buying, evaluating, and disposing of products or services, which are assumed to satisfy their needs (Pelau, 2011). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), external factors have a big impact on a consumer buying decision among other many factors existed. Another study showed that having knowledge about a product or service plays an important role in a purchase decision (Jayachandran et al., 2004). Consumers with a positive attitude toward a product tend to look for products that they prefer when they need it and neglect other products they do not like (Zhang and Kim, 2013).

Since each brand may have many kinds of products, the product looked at will be the brand image for the overall products of that brand. Consequently, brand image will influence the consumers' attitude toward all products of that brand (Hameed et al., 2014). Other factors, that can be respected, are perceived behavioural control and subjective norm; these two factors describe how consumers experience the benefits after having a product that will later influence their purchase intentions (Al-Azzam, 2014). Additionally, environmental factors whether internal or external affects consumer decisions about purchasing a specific brand (Blackwell et al., 2001). The external information comes from reference groups, from the market, etc., while internal information is from previous personal experience. However, considerations that come from family, friends, groups referred by a person's subjective norms will affect the purchase intention (Byon et al., 2014).

Moreover, demographic factors also influence purchase intention because consumers with different demographics will show different purchase intentions (Yang et al., 2011). As there are many studies investigated the traditional factors that affect customers' buying intention, the present study investigates the eWOM and brand image in the telecommunication sector in the Jordanian market.

2.5 Literature review and hypotheses development

2.5.1 The eWOM and purchase intention

Previous research studies showed that the impact of eWOM on a brand image would eventually affect the consumers' purchase intention. For example, it has been reported that positive eWOM contributes to positive purchase intentions, while negative eWOM contributes to negative purchase intentions (See-To and Ho, 2014). Other studies findings reveal that there is a partial mediating role of the brand image between WOM and consumers' purchase intentions (Kala and Chaubey, 2018; Pham and Ngo, 2017; Yunus et al., 2016). The purchase intention is a transaction behaviour made by customers after evaluating products and services (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2018). A study, by Luong et al. (2017), reveals a positive impact of WOM on buying intention. Another study of Shahrinaz et al. (2016), finds that the relationship between brand image and purchase intention is significant and insignificant for eWOM.

Luong et al. (2017) also examined the relationships among eWOM, buying intention and brand image in a tourism industry. Their questionnaire was distributed to 524 respondents who experienced online social media websites. The study results supported that eWOM has a positive impact on buying intention, so, managers should keep tracking online consumer reviews and create timely solutions. Kazmi and Mehmood (2016) conducted a research study on students from the University of Haripur. Their study revealed that eWOM and brand image have a positive correlation with purchase intention, which means that the eWOM communication can positively respond to the purchase of these products in the case that the products are branded and have a certain image in the mind of a consumer.

Another study, by Torlak et al. (2014) in Turkey concerning cell phone brands, found that the relationship between eWOM on brand image and purchase intention is significantly positive. Yunus et al. (2016) investigated the mediating effect of the brand image between eWOM and purchase intention in social media, they found a partial mediating role of the brand image between eWOM and purchase intention. Shahrinaz et al. (2016) conducted a study on a sample of 380 participants in Malaysia, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

Elseidi and El-Baz (2016) conducted a quantitative-based study on a sample from business schools in Cairo. They found that eWOM had a positive impact on purchase intention. Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) proposed a research model and was tested empirically using a sample of 341 respondents who had experiences within online communities of customers and referred to Iran Kodor's agencies. Their results indicated that eWOM is one of the most effective factors influencing brand image and purchase intention of automobile brands in the Iranian market. Another study found that the relationship between online reviews and purchase intention towards a specific brand is significant (Berger et al., 2010). Also, Lee et al. (2011) study revealed that the products with more favourable reviews generally sell better. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₁ eWOM has a significant impact on purchase intention.

2.5.2 *eWOM and brand image*

Kala and Chaubey (2018) investigated the impact of eWOM on brand image and purchase intention towards lifestyle products in India. Data collected from people who experienced online institutions. The results obtained showed a significant impact of eWOM on brand image. Another study, by Pham and Ngo (2017), using a sample of 379 consumers from the smartphone sector in Vietnam, showed a significant impact of eWOM on brand image, and purchase intention towards smartphone brands. Another study, by Charo et al. (2015), found that eWOM has a significant and positive impact on brand image and purchase intentions of online information seekers. They investigated the whole process from the adoption of online information to how it impacts purchase intention. Torlak et al. (2014) conducted a study in Turkey on youth consumers of cell phone brands, they found that there is a significant positive relationship between the eWOM on brand image and purchase intention.

An Iranian study showed that eWOM is an influencing tool that positively impacts the brand image and purchase intention, the eWOM directly affects and assists in building a good brand image (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). Their research, also, reveals a mediating role of the brand image between eWOM and purchase intention.

Another research conducted in India showed that brand image mediates the relationship of eWOM and purchase intention, and there is a significant impact of eWOM and brand image (Kala and Chaubey, 2018). A study of electronic products consumers conducted in Pakistan reveals that the relationships of eWOM and brand image on the purchase intention are significant and have positive correlations. This implies that having branded products in the mind of consumers impacts the WOM communication and can positively respond to the purchase intention (Kazmi and Mehmood, 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂ eWOM has a significant impact on brand image.

2.5.3 Brand image and purchase intention

Kala and Chaubey (2018) investigated the relationship between purchase intention and eWOM being mediated by brand image. The recommendations of their study for marketers are to focus on eWOM that would impact brand image and drive buying decisions. Additionally, a study, by Pham and Ngo (2017), indicated that there is an indirect impact of eWOM on purchase intention through brand image. Shahrinaz et al. (2016) collected data from a sample of 380 from Kota Samarahan and Sarawak states in Malaysia. Their results showed that there is a significant relationship between brand image and purchase intention but an opposite result for eWOM. Yunus et al. (2016) studied the mediating effect of brand image between the eWOM and purchase intention in social media, they found that the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention is partially mediated by brand image. Some researchers also found a significant relationship between brand image and purchase intention (Shukla, 2011; Wu et al., 2011; Lien et al., 2015).

Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) found that eWOM is an effective factor influencing brand image and purchase intention of the automobile industry in Iran. Additionally, Lee et al. (2011) revealed that products with more favourable reviews generally sell better. Also, consumers consider online reviews and customer testimonials are extremely influential as 90% of them say their purchasing decisions are influenced by reviews. Online reviews are considered as the most genuine way for customers to share brand experiences with others in the community (Fish, 2018). Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H₃ Brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention.

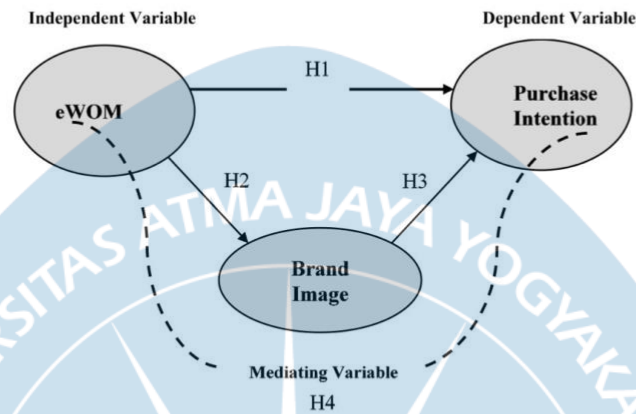
H₄ Brand image has a mediating role between eWOM and purchase intention.

3 The study's model

The utilised model of this study consists of three types of variables: an independent variable (eWOM), a dependent variable (purchase intention) and a mediating variable (brand image). Based upon reviewing the related studies and literature (Luong et al.,

2017; Pham and Ngo, 2017; Charo et al., 2015; Torlak et al., 2014; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012), the study's model was developed and assumed that the purchase intention is a function of eWOM and brand image as a mediating variable. The expected relationships can be shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The proposed model



4 Research methodology

In order to examine the hypotheses of this study, a systematic approach was followed to investigate the effect of eWOM on purchase intention and the mediating role of the brand image of telecommunication services in Jordan. Consequently, a quantitative approach was used to examine the causal relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2007). Moreover, the study relied heavily on collecting primary data from a sample of subjects who were the right group to achieve the objectives of this study. The target population in this study is 600 customers of telecommunication services (mobile and internet) in Jordan.

A questionnaire was designed to collect the needed data to test the hypotheses of the study. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed. A convenience sample of social media and internet users was applied in this research. The distribution of the questionnaire to the samples was conducted on an individual basis. In other words, each person was approached personally by the researchers and was briefed as to the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it. Respondents were requested to fill in the questionnaire. A total of 370 questionnaires were returned and only 354 were usable with a 70.8% response rate. Moreover, the questionnaire consisted of two sections with the first including the participant demographic questions and the second relating to the variables of the study.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the scale of measurements

Code	Variables	Mean	Std. dev.	Skewness tests	Kurtosis test
	<i>E.WOM variables</i>	3.49	0.864	-0.598	0.327
EM1	I understand the mobile and internet services of a certain provider after receiving relevant information about these services on online reviews.	3.46	1.091		
EM2	A comment or update about the mobile and internet services of certain providers on eWOM forms has an influence on how I consider these services.	3.33	1.086		
EM3	I often read the reviews of the mobile and internet services to know what provider(s) make good or bad impressions on others.	3.50	1.181		
EM4	Given a choice between two mobile and internet services, one recommended on eWOM forums and the other not, I would always choose to buy the recommended services.	3.63	1.147		
EM5	eWOM forms are important sources of information for me.	3.52	1.098		
	<i>Brand image</i>	3.405	0.898	-0.435	-0.056
BI1	In comparison to other mobile and internet services, the mobile and internet services of the provider I deal with has high quality.	3.52	1.046		
BI2	I can reliably predict how the mobile and Internet services of the provider I deal with will perform.	3.36	1.136		
BI3	The mobile and Internet services of the provider I deal with come to mind immediately when I want to purchase these services.	3.51	1.130		
BI4	I feel connected to the mobile and internet services of the provider I deal with.	3.243	1.181		
	<i>Purchasing intention</i>	3.453	1.051	-0.468	-0.419
P1	I would buy the mobile and internet services of the provider I deal with rather than any other services available.	3.40	1.205		
PI2	I am willing to recommend others to buy the mobile and internet services of the provider I deal with.	3.44	1.194		
PI3	I intend to purchase the mobile and internet services of the provider I deal with in the future.	3.53	1.147		

The questionnaire's content (measures) were mainly selected and adopted from relevant previous studies. With regards to the measures used in this study, the mediating variable, 'perceived brand image', was measured using a five-point items scale (Assael, 2005; Nielson, 2012; Davis et al., 2009; Cho and Sagynov, 2015; Smith, 2016) and had an 86.2% Cronbach's alpha. The independent variable, 'E.WOM', was measured using a five-point items scale developed by Wangenheim and Bayón (2004), Wallace et al. (2009) and Goyette et al. (2010) and had an 81.2% Cronbach's alpha. The dependent variable, 'purchase intention', was measured using a five-point scale developed by Pandey and Srivastava (2016) and had an 82.9% reliability. For a validation purpose, the questionnaire content was modified to the practice of Jordanian culture context based on the results of a pilot study and feedback from five professional academic staff in this field. With regards to the sample of the study, 50.6% of the sample were females, 74.9% were bachelor degree students, 57% were between 18–30 years old. Moreover, 86% of the sample was heavily using social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the number of Internet usage hours weekly, the highest percentage (45.2%) was for eight hours or above, followed by 40% for less than six hours.

Furthermore, the mean, standard deviation (SD), kurtosis and skewed results were also calculated for all the measurements. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 indicated a positive disposition towards the measured items. The SD values ranged from 0.104 to 1.180, which indicated a narrow spread around the mean. The mean values of all items were greater than the midpoint (3.000) and ranged from 3.240 to 3.530. However, after a careful assessment using skewness and kurtosis measures, the data were found to be normally distributed. Indeed, both skewness and kurtosis results were normally distributed since most of the values were inside the adequate ranges of normality (that is, -1.000 to $+1.000$) for skewness, and less than 10 for kurtosis (George and Mallery, 2010). These outcomes confirm the ability to generalising the study's outcomes on customers of the telecommunication sector.

5 Hypotheses testing results

5.1 Testing direct relationship (single regression)

For the purpose of testing the direct relationships between the variables and decide whether to accept or reject the hypothesis, this research firstly uses the 'simple single regression' model to test the hypotheses H_1 , H_2 and H_3 . The results are summarised in Table 1 and they show that the Pearson correlation coefficient [R] and its values range from -1 to $+1$. The 'zero' value indicates the non-existence of any linear correlation between the variables, and the 1 value means full positive correlation, in contrast, the value of -1 indicates a full negative correlation (Hair et al., 2011). Furthermore, the analysis shows the coefficient of determination [R^2]; which indicates how much an independent variable (eWOM) could explain the variation of the dependent variable (purchase intention). R^2 values range from zero to one. Better values of R^2 means a better-quality regression model (Salkind and Frey, 2019). Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the model summary, ANOVA and the β coefficients for relationships.

The presented outcomes in Table 2 for the hypotheses H_1 , H_2 and H_3 indicate robust positive relationships between variables. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the hypotheses testing results as follows:

- R values of these hypotheses (H₁, H₂ and H₃) are 0.530, 0.664 and 0.719 respectively. The relationship is considered moderate and positive. These results indicate that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention of services and products (internet and mobile) by 71.9%. It means that a good product and brand image for telecommunication companies' services for social media followers is very important in influencing their availability to create an intention to buy Internet or mobile services.
- The R² values show that the independents of H₁, H₂ and H₃ could explain 28%, 44% and 52% of the variation of the dependent variable respectively. The values show the robustness of the model.
- The adjusted R² values (as a difference between the population and the sample) show very close values to R². For instance, the adjusted R² value of H₁ is [0.281–0.279 = 0.003]. Thus, if the study evaluates the 'model fitting' for all customers of telecommunication companies, the higher variances in expected results are the difference between R² and adjusted R², which equals (0.003) for H₁.

Table 2 Model's summary

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
H ₁	0.530	0.281	0.279	0.892653
H ₂	0.664	0.441	0.439	0.67311
H ₃	0.719	0.517	0.515	0.62573

Table 3 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
H ₁	Regression	109.706	1	109.706	137.67	0.000
	Residual	280.484	352	0.797		
	Total	390.191	353			
H ₂	Regression	125.598	1	125.598	277.21	0.000
	Residual	159.482	352	0.453		
	Total	285.080	353			
H ₃	Regression	147.257	1	147.257	376.09	0.000
	Residual	137.823	352	0.392		
	Total	285.080	353			

Tables 3 and 4 show the probability of F-value at $\alpha = 5\%$ of H₁, H₂ and H₃, all reported results are significant; this leads to accept the null hypotheses and reject the alternatives ones at F-values of 137.67, 277.21 and 376.09 respectively. For the coefficients table, all T-values are also significant as a confirmation of the F-test. Besides, β values explain that one unit increase in the independent variable will increase the dependent variable by beta values of 64.5%, 69% and 61.4% in turn. In simple words, when the eWOM enhanced with one unit then the intention to purchase increases by 65%.

Table 4 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
	B std.	Error	Beta		
H ₁ (Constant)	1.202	0.198		6.083	0.000
Avg. eWOM	0.645	0.055	0.530	11.73	0.000
H ₂ (Constant)	0.099	0.149		6.685	0.000
Avg. eWOM	0.690	0.041	0.664	16.65	0.000
H ₃ (Constant)	1.284	0.114		11.22	0.000
Avg. BI	0.614	0.032	0.719	19.39	0.000

5.2 Testing the indirect relationship hypothesis

The mediating role can be examined using four steps approach. The mediating effect in step 1 shows that there is a direct effect of eWOM on purchasing intention ($\beta = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$), this effect decreased and turned to be insignificant (in the fourth step, $p > 0.05$). This infers that brand image has fully mediated the relationship between eWOM and purchasing intention. Therefore, the H₄ will be accepted.

Table 5 Four steps results

	Step 1 eWOM	Step 2 B. image	Step 3 eWOM	Step 4 eWOM
P. intention	0.645	0.614		0.084
B. image			0.690	
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	
R	0.53	0.719	0.664	0.391
R ²	0.281	0.517	0.441	0.153
Adjusted R ²	0.279	0.515	0.439	0.149
F-value	137.678	376.093	277.213	44.605

6 Discussion

This study aims to examine the impact of eWOM on the customer's purchase intention via the brand image as a mediating variable in the telecommunication sector (mobile and internet) in Jordan. The findings show that the eWOM has a positive significant impact on purchase intention and brand image, and these results were incompatible with prior studies results (Kala and Chaubey, 2018; Kazmi and Mehmood, 2016). The positive significant impact of brand image on purchase intention is also found in other research studies, which also showed a significant positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention (Shukla, 2011; Wu et al., 2011; Lien et al., 2015). In particular, the analysis also indicates that eWOM has an indirect impact on purchase intention through its impact on brand image; and brand image fully mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention, whereas some previous studies results show that brand image has a partial mediating role between eWOM and purchase intention (Kala and

Chaubey, 2018; Pham and Ngo, 2017; Yunus et al., 2016). This might be attributed to the Jordanian culture context, in which brand image is highly associated with the eWOM whether it is positive or negative comments.

As a result, brand image affects Jordanian consumers' attitudes and choices. Whenever choosing a telecommunication service (internet or mobile), customers choose the brand that has a better image. In addition to other factors such as quality, price of services, consumers also depend on online evaluations from other customers.

7 Implications and limitations

This study confirms the important role of eWOM and brand image on a consumer's purchasing intention of services and products. The results of this study will provide insightful information for managers and marketers. The implications of the study derived from the finding that eWOM has a significant influence on purchase intention and brand image for the sector of telecommunication (mobile and internet) in Jordan. The mobile and internet service providers should pay attention to the influence of eWOM to build brand image, and increase purchase intention. So, this can be the basis for the telecommunication providers to consider in their marketing programs in order to obtain efficient and reasonable cost.

As the analysis of this study indicates that eWOM has an indirect impact on purchase intention through its impact on brand image. This result implies that building a good brand image through eWOM will fully impact the purchase intention, which is a good step to attract the attention and trust of customers, hence helping to increase sales and competitive advantages. The telecommunications service companies should pay attention to the most influential people on social media platforms and follow up on what they post, whether positive or negative and deal with them appropriately. The vitality of positive eWOM should be promoted. Negative comments and reviews from consumers would disseminate widely on the Internet if the companies do not take any appropriate action or response.

Even though the important findings of this study, there are some limitations should be considered in any attempt to generalise these findings since the sample was limited to the service sector in Jordan as a developing country. Since this study has a cultural context, it is recommended, as for future studies, to be extended to other types of service sectors. So, we could see the differences between the impacts of eWOM on purchase intention and brand image on new entry companies and incumbent companies.

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