

BAB V

PENUTUP

5.1. Kesimpulan

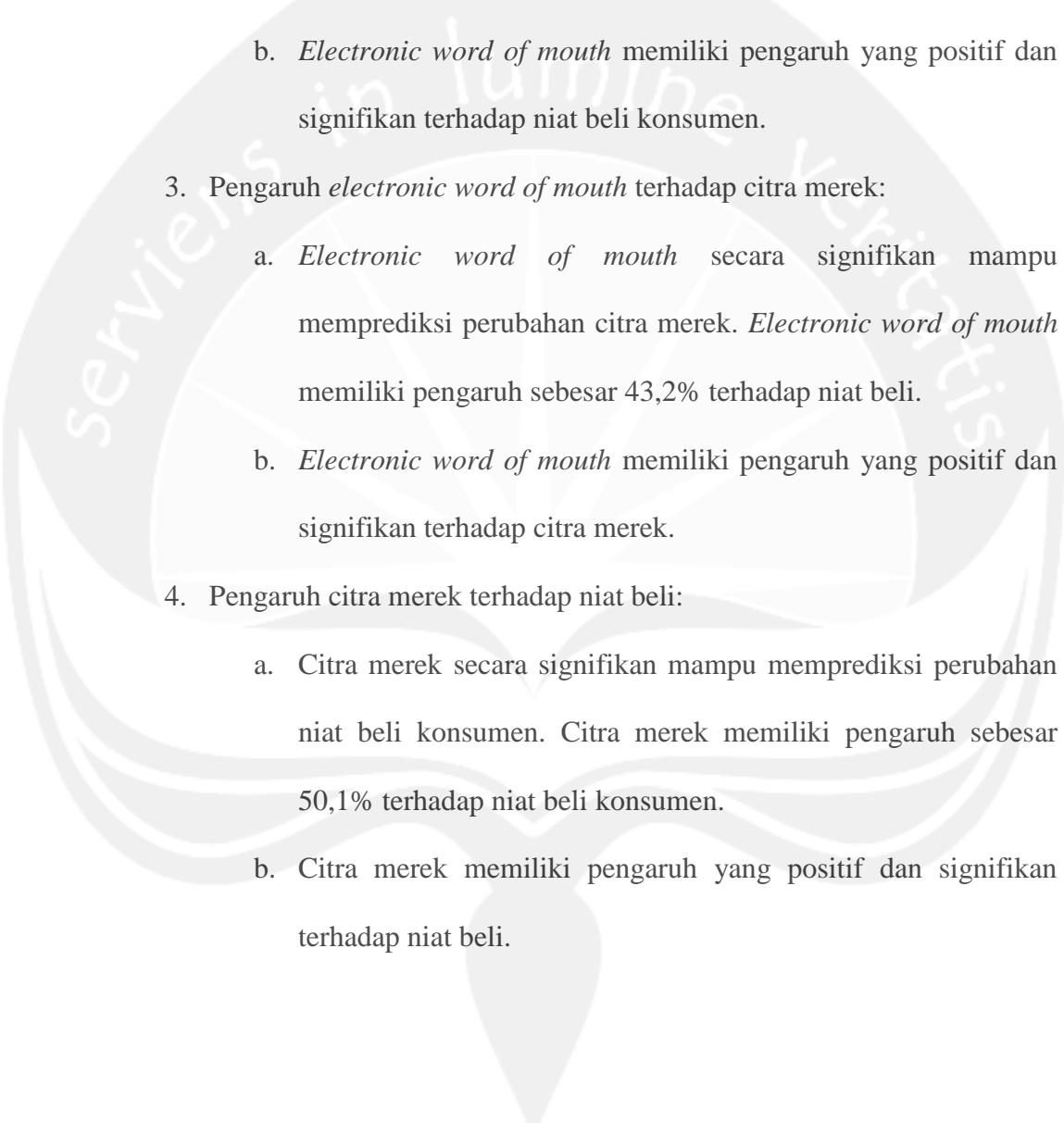
Berdasarkan penelitian yang telah dilakukan kepada 215 responden secara *online* yang merupakan konsumen Tokopedia. Didapatkan hasil yang telah dipaparkan pada bab 4, sehingga diperoleh kesimpulan sebagai berikut:

1. Citra merek sebagai variabel mediasi antara *electronic word of mouth* dan niat beli konsumen.

Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa citra merek sebagai variabel mediasi komplementer antara *electronic word of mouth* dan niat beli.

Variabel citra merek saling melengkapi dengan *electronic word of mouth* atau akan lebih berpengaruh apabila digabungkan dengan variabel *electronic word of mouth*. Jika variabel citra merek digunakan sendirian, maka variabel citra merek tidak dapat berpengaruh secara maksimal.

Pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap niat beli lebih efektif (lebih kuat/besar) saat terjadi secara langsung tanpa melalui citra merek. Namun perlu diketahui bahwa, total efek (pengaruh) akan menjadi lebih efektif (besar) saat Tokopedia meningkatkan citra merek.

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2. Pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap niat beli:
 - a. *Electronic word of mouth* secara signifikan mampu memprediksi perubahan niat beli konsumen. *Electronic word of mouth* memiliki pengaruh sebesar 50,4% terhadap niat beli.
 - b. *Electronic word of mouth* memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap niat beli konsumen.
 3. Pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap citra merek:
 - a. *Electronic word of mouth* secara signifikan mampu memprediksi perubahan citra merek. *Electronic word of mouth* memiliki pengaruh sebesar 43,2% terhadap niat beli.
 - b. *Electronic word of mouth* memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek.
 4. Pengaruh citra merek terhadap niat beli:
 - a. Citra merek secara signifikan mampu memprediksi perubahan niat beli konsumen. Citra merek memiliki pengaruh sebesar 50,1% terhadap niat beli konsumen.
 - b. Citra merek memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap niat beli.

5.2. Saran

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, pembahasan, dan kesimpulan yang diperoleh, maka saran yang dapat diberikan sebagai berikut.

1. Bagi Perusahaan

Penelitian ini diharapkan mampu memberikan wawasan bagi perusahaan mengenai adanya pengaruh *electronic word of mouth*, citra merek terhadap niat beli konsumen yang akan memberikan panduan bagi perusahaan untuk mengembangkan strategi-strategi dalam pemasaran Tokopedia. Selain itu, Tokopedia lebih meningkatkan lagi aktivitas *electronic word of mouth* merka agar mampu meningkatkan niat beli konsumen. Tokopedia juga harus meningkatkan citra merek salah satunya dengan menggunakan strategi *electronic word of mouth*.

2. Bagi Peneliti Selanjutnya

Untuk penelitian selanjutnya, peneliti menyarankan agar penelitian dilakukan dengan lebih mendalam dan dengan jumlah responden yang lebih banyak. Diharapkan juga peneliti selanjutnya pada variabel *electronic word of mouth* menambah beberapa indikator yang bersifat tidak hanya positif saja, tetapi juga indikator *electronic word of mouth* yang bersifat negatif .

5.3. Implikasi Manajerial

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap citra merek dan niat beli konsumen pada tokopedia Sampel pada penelitian ini adalah pengguna internet yang pernah melakukan pembelian *online* pada situs jual beli *online* Tokopedia. Penelitian ini menggunakan variabel *electronic word of mouth* (eWOM) sebagai variabel independen dan variabel citra merek dan niat beli konsumen sebagai variabel dependen.

Melalui hasil analisis penelitian dapat diketahui bahwa *electronic word of mouth* (eWOM) mempengaruhi citra merek 43,2% dan *electronic word of mouth* (eWOM) mempengaruhi niat beli konsumen 50.4%. Selain itu dari penelitian ini didapat informasi tentang *electronic word of mouth* berpengaruh signifikan secara langsung maupun tidak langsung melalui citra merek terhadap niat beli konsumen. Pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap niat beli lebih efektif (lebih kuat/besar) saat terjadi secara langsung tanpa melalui citra merek. Akan tetapi citra merek tidak dapat diabaikan begitu saja. Karena citra merek juga menjadi variabel mediasi *electronic word of mouth* dan niat beli yang artinya citra merek juga membantu memperkuat hubungan antara *electronic word of mouth* yang dirasakan konsumen dan niat beli konsumen itu sendiri.

Dari pemaparan tersebut, penelitian ini berimplikasi manajerial bahwa situs jual beli *online* Tokopedia harus tetap mempertahankan dan meningkatkan kualitas sistem dan kualitas service terhadap konsumen. Dengan demikian, konsumen yang merasa puas akan membicarakannya dan merekomendasikan situs jual beli *online* Tokopedia kepada orang lain. Pemberdayaan konsumen

merupakan sesuatu yang harus diperhatikan. Tokopedia harus memiliki pemahaman yang baik terhadap opini yang dimiliki konsumennya, dalam hal ini konsumen yang bersedia memberikan *electronic word of mouth* positif mengenai situs jual beli *online* Tokopedia. Pada dasarnya keterlibatan konsumen (*customer engagement*) yang tinggi antara konsumen dengan pihak Tokopedia dapat dijadikan acuan utama oleh Tokopedia untuk mengembangkan hubungan jangka panjang dengan konsumen dan juga dapat menarik konsumen baru, serta berdampak pada citra Tokopedia yang baik. Tokopedia harus jeli menangkap fenomena ini dan memanfaatkan kesempatan yang ada serta turut serta melakukan pemberdayaan konsumen. Walaupun hasil penelitian yang dilakukan oleh peneliti menunjukkan bahwa *electronic word of mouth* (eWOM) memiliki pengaruh yang positif terhadap niat beli konsumen dimana para konsumen yang merasa senang dengan Tokopedia dan membicarakannya dalam bentuk *review online*. Tetapi masih ada faktor lain diluar *electronic word of mouth* yang berpengaruh pada citra merek dan niat beli. Oleh karena itu, jika situs jual beli *online* Tokopedia ingin meningkatkan niat beli konsumen terhadap Tokopedia, maka *electronic word of mouth* yang positif ini harus lebih diperhatikan serta diusahakan agar terus meningkat dan stabil. Salah satu cara yang dapat dilakukan oleh Tokopedia untuk membuat *electronic word of mouth* yang positif adalah dengan melakukan penyaringan komentar komentar buruk pada sosial media yang dimiliki Tokopedia dengan begitu dapat terjaga hanya *electronic word of mouth* yang positif saja yang dapat dirasakan oleh pengikut (*follower*) pada social media Tokopedia. Tokopedia juga dapat menambah fungsi penyaringan (*filtering*) *review* produk

yang telah dibeli pada situs jual beli Tokopedia. Hal tersebut dapat membuat review yang baik saja yang akan tertampil pada *website* Tokopedia. Selain hal tersebut citra merek juga harus ditingkatkan, karena diketahui bahwa citra merek memiliki peran sebagai pemediasi antara *electronic word of mouth* dan niat beli konsumen pada Tokopedia.

5.4. Keterbatasan Penelitian

Penulis menyadari bahwa dalam melakukan penelitian memiliki keterbatasan. Keterbatasan tersebut berkontribusi pada kelemahan hasil penelitian ini. Variabel yang digunakan untuk memprediksi niat beli konsumen terbatas pada variabel *electronic word of mouth* dan citra merek. Sedangkan untuk variabel *electronic word of mouth* hanya menggunakan indikator yang bersifat positif saja, tanpa menggunakan indikator negatif.

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LAMPIRAN



LAMPIRAN 1

KUESIONER



tokopedia

PENGARUH E-WOM TERHADAP CITRA MEREK DAN NIAT BELI KONSUMEN PADA TOKOPEDIA

Nama saya Thomas Hendri Hananto, mahasiswa tingkat akhir program studi Magister Manajemen, Program Pascasarjana Universitas Atmajaya Yogyakarta, sedang melakukan penelitian tentang pengaruh eWOM terhadap citra merek dan niat beli pada Tokopedia, maka dari itu saya memohon bantuan saudara untuk mengisi kuesioner ini dengan lengkap.

Terima kasih

* Required

BAGIAN 1: KARAKTERISTIK RESPONDEN

1. Jenis Kelamin Anda *

- Pria
- Wanita

2. Usia Anda *

- < 18 Tahun
- 18 - 24 Tahun
- 25 - 30 Tahun
- 31 - 36 Tahun
- > 36 Tahun

3. Anda pernah mengunjungi situs jual beli tokopedia.com dalam 1 tahun terakhir? *

- Ya
- Tidak

4. Apakah Anda pernah bertansaksi online di [tokopedia.com](#) dalam 1 tahun terakhir? *

- Ya
- Tidak

5. Berapa kali Anda mengunjungi situs jual beli [tokopedia.com](#) dalam 1 tahun terakhir? *

- < 5 kali
- 5 - 10 kali
- 11 - 15 kali
- > 15 kali

6. Dari mana Anda mengetahui tentang situs jual beli [tokopedia.com](#)? *

* Boleh pilih lebih dari satu.

- Keluarga
- Teman
- Iklan TV
- Internet
- Other:

7. Dimanakah Anda melakukan transaksi online selain pada situs jual beli [tokopedia.com](#)? *

* Boleh pilih lebih dari satu.

- [olx.com](#)
- [bukalapak.com](#)
- [elevenia.co.id](#)
- [lazada.co.id](#)
- Other:

BAGIAN 2: DAFTAR PERTANYAAN E-WOM

Pertanyaan tentang E-WOM

1. Saya membaca review online konsumen lain, untuk mengetahui apakah Tokopedia membuat kesan baik.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

2. Untuk memastikan saya membeli pada Tokopedia, saya membaca review online dari konsumen lain.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

3. Saya berkonsultasi tentang situs jual beli online dengan konsumen lain melalui internet, untuk membantu memilih situs jual beli online Tokopedia.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

4. Saya mengumpulkan informasi dari review online konsumen lain, sebelum saya membeli pada Tokopedia.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

5. Jika saya tidak membaca review online dari konsumen lain, saya khawatir tentang keputusan saya untuk membeli pada Tokopedia.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

6. Review online dari konsumen lain membuat saya percaya diri dalam berbelanja pada Tokopedia.

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

BAGIAN 2: DAFTAR PERTANYAAN CITRA MEREK

Pertanyaan tentang Citra Merek

1. Dibandingkan dengan situs jual beli online lain, Tokopedia memiliki kualitas baik. *

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

2. Situs jual beli online Tokopedia memiliki nilai sejarah yang bagus.*

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

3. Saya bisa dengan tepat memprediksi bagaimana kualitas situs jual beli online Tokopedia. *

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

BAGIAN 3: DAFTAR PERTANYAAN NIAT BELI

Pertanyaan tentang Niat Beli

1. Saya akan membeli pada situs jual beli online Tokopedia daripada situs jual beli online lain. *

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

2. Saya bersedia untuk merekomendasikan orang lain untuk membeli pada situs jual beli online Tokopedia. *

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

3. Saya berniat untuk membeli pada situs jual beli online Tokopedia lagi di masa depan. *

- Sangat Tidak Setuju (STS)
- Tidak Setuju (TS)
- Netral (N)
- Setuju (S)
- Sangat Setuju (SS)

LAMPIRAN 2

UJI VALIDITAS

No	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3	TOTAL
1	4	4	4	4	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	39
2	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	51
3	5	5	3	2	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	52
4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	46
5	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	43
6	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	37
7	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	42
8	5	5	4	5	5	5	1	4	4	1	3	4	46
9	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	3	2	3	3	4	46
10	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	45
11	4	4	5	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2	35
12	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	39
13	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	60
14	5	5	2	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	45
15	4	5	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	42
16	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	40
17	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	46
18	3	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	45

LAMPIRAN 3

UJI RELIABILITAS ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

Scale: eWOM

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	33	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	33	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.803	6

LAMPIRAN 4

UJI RELIABILITAS CITRA MEREK

Scale: Citra Merek

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	33	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	33	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.707	3

LAMPIRAN 5

UJI RELIABILITAS NIAT BELI

Scale: Niat Beli

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	33	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	33	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.817	3

LAMPIRAN 6

TABULASI DATA RESPONDEN

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	2	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	4
Pria	> 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	< 5 kali	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	5	5	1	4	4	1	3	4
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	3	2	3	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	2	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	5	2	4	4	3	4	4	5	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	1	5
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	5	1	5	3	3	3	3	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	3	4	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	4	5	5	3	3	5	4	5	5
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	4	5	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	< 5 kali	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	< 5 kali	3	4	4	4	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	3	5	5	4	3	3	3	2	4	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5	5	3	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	2	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	2	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	5	5	2	5	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
Pria	> 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	5	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	3	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	1	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	4	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	3	2	3	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	5	2	4	3	3	3	5	5	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	2	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	< 5 kali	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
Pria	> 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	1	5	3	5	3	3	5	5	5	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	2	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	3	3

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	2	1	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	4	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	3	2	4	1	3	2	3	2	4	2	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	3	4	2	3	2	1	4	2	2	1	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	2	1	4	4	2	2	2	1	2	2	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	4	2	4	2	5	2	1	4	1	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	2	5	4	4	5	4	2	4	3	4	2
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	4	2	5	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	3	1	4	5	4	2	2	4	2	2	2
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	2	1	4	4	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	3	2	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	3	2	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	3
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	4	2	2	5	4	5	2	2	4	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	3	2	4	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	5	4	4	1	2	4	4	2	2	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	2	4	5	3	2	4	3	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	3	2	2	3	5	2	4	3	4	3	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	3	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	5	5	4	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	5	3	2	3	4	4	4	3	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	5	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	5	4	5	4	2	4	4	4	5	4	4
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	< 5 kali	2	2	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	3	4	3	3	5	3	4	2	3	2	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	5	4	4	3	3	5	2	4	5	5	5	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	3	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	5	4	4
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	3	4	4	2	2	4	5	5	4	4	4
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	3	2	4	5
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	2	3	2
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	3	4	5	2	4	5	3	4	3	2
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	5	5

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	2	3	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	2	4	5	4	4	5	2	4	5	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	3	2	2	3	4	4	3	3	2	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	2	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	2	3	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	5	4	4	4	3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	4	5	3	4	2	3	4	5	4	4
Wanita	> 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	5
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	2	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	5	3	5
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	2	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	2	2	2
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	3	4	4	5	2	2	4	3	2	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	2	4	3	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	2	5	5
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	5
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	< 5 kali	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	5
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	3	2	5	4	4	4	4	5	5
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	3
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	2
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	3	5	3	3	4	2	5	2	5	5
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	4	5	4	3	2	4	5	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	5
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	5	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	5	5	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	5	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	5	4	5
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	4	5	2	4	4	5	3	4	5
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	> 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4
Wanita	> 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	2	3	1	5	4	2	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	3	2	3	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	3	4	4	2	5	4	4	3	4	5	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	3	2	4	5	5	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	3
Wanita	< 18 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	3	3	1	1	2	4	4	4	5	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	4	4	3	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	4	3	2	2	4	5	4	5	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	3	4	4	3	3	4	5	4	3	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	3	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	2	4	2	4	4	3	3	5	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	3	3	3	2	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	2	2
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	4	3	4	3	4	2	5	5	3	4	4
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	5	2	4	3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	3	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	5	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	3
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	3	2	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	5	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	2	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	3	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	5 - 10 kali	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	5	4	5	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	5	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	5
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	3	3	2	1	4	3	4	4	4	5
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	3	1	2	4	2	4	5	4	2	4	2
Pria	25 - 30 Tahun	> 15 kali	2	4	1	5	4	2	2	4	5	5	4	4

JENIS KELAMIN	USIA	FREKUENSI KUNJUNGAN	EWOM 1	EWOM 2	EWOM 3	EWOM 4	EWOM 5	EWOM 6	CM 1	CM 2	CM 3	NB 1	NB 2	NB 3
Pria	31 - 36 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	2	2	4	4	1	3	2	2	4	2	3
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	< 5 kali	4	4	5	2	5	4	2	4	3	4	4	2
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pria	18 - 24 Tahun	> 15 kali	5	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	5
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wanita	18 - 24 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	< 5 kali	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wanita	31 - 36 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Wanita	25 - 30 Tahun	11 - 15 kali	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3

LAMPIRAN 7

Hasil Regresi Linier Sederhana *Electronic Word Of Mouth*

Terhadap Niat Beli

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	EWOM ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: NB

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.711 ^a	.506	.504	1.901

a. Predictors: (Constant), EWOM

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	789.165	1	789.165	218.323	.000 ^b
	Residual	769.924	213	3.615		
	Total	1559.088	214			

a. Dependent Variable: NB

b. Predictors: (Constant), EWOM

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients			
1	(Constant)	2.931	.557	.711	5.263	.000
	EWOM	.368	.025			

a. Dependent Variable: NB

LAMPIRAN 8

Hasil Regresi Linier Sederhana *Electronic Word Of Mouth* Terhadap Citra Merek

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	EWOM ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: CM

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.659 ^a	.435	.432	1.963

a. Predictors: (Constant), EWOM

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	631.206	1	631.206	163.857	.000 ^b
	Residual	820.515	213	3.852		
	Total	1451.721	214			

a. Dependent Variable: CM

b. Predictors: (Constant), EWOM

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.330	.575	5.792	.000
	EWOM	.329	.026		

a. Dependent Variable: CM

LAMPIRAN 9

Hasil Regresi Linier Sederhana Citra Merek Terhadap Niat Beli

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	CM ^b	.	. Enter

a. Dependent Variable: NB

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.710 ^a	.504	.501	1.906

a. Predictors: (Constant), CM

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	785.465	1	785.465	216.260	.000 ^b
	Residual	773.623	213	3.632		
	Total	1559.088	214			

a. Dependent Variable: NB

b. Predictors: (Constant), CM

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.220	.540	5.958	.000
	CM	.736	.050		

a. Dependent Variable: NB



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www.emeraldinsight.com/0263-4503.htm

MIP
30,4

460

Received 25 April 2011
Revised 4 July 2011
1 October 2011
30 November 2011
Accepted 18 January 2012

The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention

An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran

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Abstract

Purpose – Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been recognized as one of the most influential resources of information transmission. Advances in information technology and the emergence of online social network sites have changed the way information is transmitted. This phenomenon impacts consumers as this easily accessible information could greatly affect the consumption decision. The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which e-WOM among consumers can influence brand image and purchase intention in the automobile industry.

Design/methodology/approach – Measurement items are adapted from existing scales found in the marketing literature. Academic colleagues reviewed the items for face validity and readability. The scales are evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using data collected in a survey of Iran Khodro's prospective customers in Iran. A structural equation modeling procedure is applied to the examination of the influences of e-WOM on brand image and purchase intention. The research model was tested empirically using a sample of 341 respondents who had experience within online communities of customers and referred to Iran Khodro's agencies during the period of research.

Findings – The paper found that e-WOM is one of the most effective factors influencing brand image and purchase intention of brands in consumer markets.

Research limitations/implications – The paper outlines ways to promote a brand effectively through online customer communities, as well as general tips for website and forum moderators for facilitating such presentation in a manner useful to the members of their online communities. While there is a substantial research stream that examines the branding of consumers goods and an increasing literature on product brands, little is known about brand image in the context of online communications. This paper extends existing measurement of brand image to a new setting, namely e-WOM.

Originality/value – This paper provides valuable insight into the measurement of e-WOM, brand image, and purchase intention in the automobile industry and offers a foundation for future product branding research.

Keywords Internet, Consumer behaviour, Word of mouth, Brand image, Social networks, Iran

Paper type Research paper



Marketing Intelligence & Planning
Vol. 30 No. 4, 2012
pp. 460-476
© Emerald Group Publishing Limited
0263-4503
DOI 10.1108/02634501211231946

The authors would like to thank the Editor and the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive suggestions and insightful guidance; their input has resulted in the development of a much stronger paper.

1. Introduction

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is generally acknowledged to play a considerable role in influencing and forming consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions (e.g. Chatterjee, 2001; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Herr *et al.*, 1991; Kiecker and Cowles, 2001; Sen and Lerman, 2007; Smith and Vogt, 1995; Weinberger and Dillon, 1980; Xia and Bechwati, 2008). Research has shown that WOM communication is more influential than communication through other sources such as editorial recommendations or advertisements (e.g. Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 2005; Trusov *et al.*, 2009) because it is perceived to provide comparatively reliable information (Gruen *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, this type of communication is considered as having a great persuasiveness through higher perceived credibility and trustworthiness (e.g. Chatterjee, 2001; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Mayzlin, 2006). Whereas WOM communication initially referred to the idea of person-to-person conversation between consumers about a product (Chatterjee, 2001; Sen and Lerman, 2007), the worldwide spread of the internet brought up a less personal but more ubiquitous form of WOM communication, so-called online WOM communication (e.g. Brown *et al.*, 2007; Chatterjee, 2001; Davis and Khazanchi, 2008; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Kiecker and Cowles, 2001; Xia and Bechwati, 2008). This new type of WOM communication has become an important venue for consumer opinions (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Mayzlin, 2006) and it is assumed to be even more effective than WOM communication in the offline world due to its greater accessibility and high reach (Chatterjee, 2001). Product reviews that consumers post on the internet constitute one of the most important forms of online WOM communication (Schindler and Bickart, 2005; Sen and Lerman, 2007), and for consumers it is increasingly common to look for online product reviews when gathering pre-purchase product information (Adjei *et al.*, 2009; Zhu and Zhang, 2010) and forming purchase intentions (Zhang and Tran, 2009). Furthermore, the issue of branding has been deemed as primary capital for many industries. Strong brands can increase customers' trust in the product or service purchased and enabling them to better visualize and understand intangible factors. According to Yoo and Donthu (2001), brand image can influence a company's future profits and long-term cash flow, a consumer's willingness to pay premium prices, merger and acquisition decision making, stock prices, sustainable competitive advantage, and marketing success. Based on the argument that especially vividly presented WOM communication has a strong impact on product judgments (Herr *et al.*, 1991), we argue that online WOM communications that are posted in such a vivid and interactive medium as the internet might have strong effects on brand image and as a result, purchase intention. Brand image is the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Brand image stems from all of a consumer's consumption experiences, and perceived service quality is a function of these consumption experiences. Thus, customer perception about service quality directly affects brand image (Aydin and Ozer, 2005). Intangibles such as after sale services cannot be evaluated before the consumption experience; therefore, purchasing intangible products and services brings a higher risk, so customers are more dependent on the interpersonal influence of e-WOM (Lewis and Chambers, 2000; Litvin *et al.*, 2008). Despite the significant impact of e-WOM in the manufacturing segment, little research has been done to investigate e-WOM in this field. Based on these findings in

the literature, we understand that e-WOM messages can affect the brand image and purchase intention. Since no relevant explanation has been proposed to explain these effects, this study applied experimental design methodology to explore:

- the impact of e-WOM communications on image brand;
- the impact of e-WOM communications on purchase intention; and
- the impact of brand image on purchase intention.

The rest of this paper is organized as below. First, we provide a review on the literature related to e-WOM and brand image. Second, we introduce hypotheses and the research model. Next, we describe the research methodology and discuss the statistical results. Finally, we summarize the findings and discuss the implications for both research and practice.

2. Empirical background

As no studies exist on the link between online WOM communications, brand image, and purchase intention, we will provide separate literature reviews of the research streams on the effects of e-WOM and brand image.

2.1 Previous research on the effects of electronic word of mouth

With the advancement of internet technologies, increasing numbers of consumers are using the internet to seek information about a product or a company, and e-WOM has emerged as a result. Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) defined e-WOM as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet”. Researchers are interested in investigating the motives for seeking e-WOM (e.g. Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006) and for sharing or articulating the e-WOM (e.g. Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2006), providing implications for marketers to better understand online consumer behavior. Stauss (1997, 2000) discussed the threats and opportunities for businesses brought about by the rise in online customer articulations. A recent survey found that most consumers perceive online opinions to be as trustworthy as brand websites (ACNielsen, 2007). Rowley (2001) also proposed that commercial enterprises should try organizing online communities rather than to simply advertise on the internet. These studies indicate how great of a potential impact e-WOM can have on the consumer decision process. Senecal and Nantel (2004) examined how e-WOM influences product choice using an experimental study of consumers’ use of online recommendation sources. The various platforms themselves that facilitate e-WOM, such as discussion boards and other online communication tools, are also increasingly being recognized for how they influence the adoption and use of products and services (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003). Gilly *et al.* (1998) indicated that the lack of effective information to distinguish products raises the risk of purchase. At this moment, a WOM message will be a very important reference for consumers to establish their purchasing decision-making process. Some related studies have also indicated that e-WOM messages are an important means whereby consumers can obtain information about product or service quality (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Moreover, this kind of message can effectively reduce the risk and uncertainty recognized by consumers when purchasing products or services, so that their purchase intention and decision-making can be further influenced (Chatterjee,

2001). Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) examined the effects of online product reviews on the relative sales of two online bookshops based on publicly available data from two leading online booksellers. The results of their study showed that such online communications significantly affect other consumers' purchase behavior. In spite of the rich literature on the effects of e-WOM on purchase intention, to date no research has been conducted in order to investigate which e-WOM has strong effects on brand image. To our knowledge, only one study exists in this area that is related to our purpose. Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011) examined the effects of negative online product reviews, a specific type of word-of-mouth communication, on consumer-based brand equity. The results of their empirical study supported the assumed detrimental effect of negative online product reviews on consumer-based brand equity. The above studies spell out the reality that e-WOM has become a permanent element of the online marketing mix by contributing a great deal to the brand image and the purchasing decisions of online consumers.

2.2 Previous research on brand image and its effects

Over the last decade, firms have markedly increased their investments in the creation and development of brands. The creation of a brand implies communicating a certain brand image in such a way that all the firm's target groups link such a brand (and thus the services sold using its name) with a set of associations. Aaker (1991, p. 15) conceptualizes brand equity as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". Building on Aaker's work, Keller (1993) develops the behavioral concept of customer based brand equity (CBBE), which consists of the two dimensions of brand awareness and brand image and is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on customer response to the marketing of the brand. Brand image comprises the attributes and benefits associated with a brand that make the brand distinctive, thereby distinguishing the firm's offer from competition (Webster and Keller, 2004). Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them (Keller, 1993, 1998). In firm-customer relationships, every interaction between a firm and its customers becomes an input to brand image. Because a service brand communicates a commitment to provide a certain kind of experience, it is critical that service firms assure that everyone in the organization understands the importance of delivering consistent, predictable, high quality performance to the customer (Webster and Keller, 2004). In B2C exchanges, customers face serious disruptions if product/service providers fail to meet expectations. Consequently, customers typically rely on a small number of trusted product/service providers that consistently deliver high quality precuts or services (Cousins and Menguc, 2006). At the same time, product/service providers depend on a handful of key customers for a significant portion of their revenues. The underlying goal is for the brand is to evoke feelings of trust, confidence, security, strength, durability, speed, status, and exclusivity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Ultimately, a strong product/service brand conveys the core value proposition of both the organization and its product/service in a way that resonates with customers. Although empirical evidences indicated that brand equity can affect purchase

intention in the various contexts (Ashill and Sinha, 2004; Chang and Liu, 2009), the number of studies which measure the effect of brand image on purchase intention is limited. Wang and Yang (2010) investigated the impact of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention focusing on China's automobile industry. They proposed that brand awareness and brand image play a moderating role in this relationship. However, Bian and Moutinho (2011) examined the impact of perceived brand image, direct and indirect effects (mediator and moderator effects) of product involvement and product knowledge on consumer purchase intention of counterfeits in the context of non-deceptive counterfeiting. Their results indicated that brand image is not a mediator of the effects of involvement/knowledge on purchase intention. Wu *et al.* (2011) also investigated the direct effects of store image and service quality on brand image and purchase intention for a private label brand. Their study revealed that store image has a direct and positive effect on brand image and purchase intention. Additionally, they showed that service quality has a direct and positive effect on brand image. Shukla (2010) indicated that interpersonal influences and branding cues shape consumer luxury purchase intentions. The results of his study showed that while normative interpersonal influences were found to be significant across nations, the role of informational interpersonal influences was significant among consumers. Moreover, brand image was a significant moderator between normative interpersonal influences and luxury purchase intentions. Davis *et al.* (2009) also suggested that brand awareness, brand image, and brand equity scales are valid and reliable in the context of logistics services. The arguments presented above lead to our research hypotheses:

- H1. Electronic word of mouth has a significant impact on brand image.
- H2. Electronic word of mouth has a significant impact on purchase intention.
- H3. Brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention.

2.3 Conclusion of the literature reviews

An overview of studies in the field of the effects of online WOM communication has led to the insight that e-WOM can have effects on variables such as brand image or purchase intention. In this section we will develop the research model that provides a basis for the assumed effect and test this effect in a new empirical study. The assumed link between e-WOM and brand image has not previously been examined empirically and will be analyzed in the empirical study presented subsequently (Figure 1).

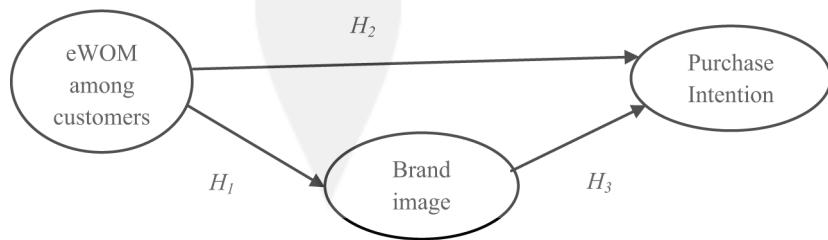


Figure 1.
Research model

3. Methodology

3.1 Measurement

To achieve the study objectives, a self-administered survey questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised. The survey consisted of four parts covering the following issues:

- (1) e-WOM;
- (2) brand image;
- (3) purchase intention; and
- (4) demographics.

In the e-WOM section, with six items, respondents were asked about using online WOM communications (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011). In the brand image section, with three items, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on the importance of brand image regarding automobile X (Davis *et al.*, 2009). In the purchase intention section, with three items, respondents were asked about their intention to purchase this automobile (Shukla, 2010). Measurement of "Electronic word of mouth", "Brand image" and "Purchase intention" were carried out using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). The advantage of using an interval scale is that it permits the researchers to use a variety of statistical techniques that can be applied to nominal and ordinal scale data in addition to the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, product-moment correlations, and other statistics commonly used in marketing research (Malhotra, 1999). The measures are presented in Table I. The last section of the questionnaire gathered demographic information regarding the respondents, such as age, gender, education, and monthly income.

3.2. Data collection and analyses

The questionnaires were distributed based on a cluster sampling method and collected at Iran Khodro's (a well-known automobile brand in Iran's automobile industry) agencies in Isfahan during the month of March 2011. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed and 341 usable samples were obtained after excluding incomplete questionnaires, yielding an 85 percent response rate from those who agree to participate. Cronbach's α was used to verify the internal consistency reliability. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics using SPSS and structural equation modeling using the AMOS structural equation program. AMOS is designed to estimate and test structural equation models (SEMs). SEMs are statistical models of linear relationships among latent (unobserved) variables and manifest (observed) variables. Its purpose is estimating the coefficients in a set of structural equations. For this research AMOS is used to investigate the causal relationships, where the path coefficients are tested for significance and goodness-of-fit. The overall model fit measures were used to evaluate the fit of the structural model. In estimating the goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) for measurement and structural models, the χ^2 test was used. In addition, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was used as an absolute fit index. The incremental fit index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI) were used as incremental fit indices. Standardized estimates were used in reporting the causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous constructs.

Table I.
Measures

Electronic word of mouth (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011)	(e-WOM1) I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know what products/brands make good impressions on others (e-WOM2) To make sure I buy the right product/brand, I often read other consumers' online product reviews (e-WOM3) I often consult other consumers' online product reviews to help choose the right product/brand (e-WOM4) I frequently gather information from online consumers' product reviews before I buy a certain product/brand (e-WOM5) If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision (e-WOM6) When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand
Brand image (Davis <i>et al.</i> , 2009)	(BI1) In comparison to other products/brand, this product/brand has high quality (BI2) This product/brand has a rich history (BI3) Customers (we) can reliably predict how this product/brand will perform
Purchase intention (Shukla, 2010)	(PI1) I would buy this product/brand rather than any other brands available (PI2) I am willing to recommend others to buy this product/brand (PI3) I intend to purchase this product/brand in the future

The path diagram of the structural model specified (Figure 1) is proposed based on the past literature discussed in section 2.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1 Sample profile

Of a total sample of 341 respondents, 64.8 percent (221) were male and 35.2 percent (120) were female. A large majority of respondents' ages were in the ranges 26-35 (32.3 percent), 36-45 (36.7 percent) and 46-55 (24.9 percent). The majority of the respondents (41.1 percent) had a monthly income of more than 600 dollars. In addition, the majority of the respondents' education (53.1 percent) was a two year college or associate's degree. Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table II.

4.2 Measurement model

The proposed structural model was estimated by structural equation modeling (SEM), which included a test of the overall model fit and individual tests of the significance of the relationships among the variables. These tests indicated the relationship between e-WOM communication, brand image and customers' purchase intention. The estimations of the parameters and the overall fit index of the measurement model are

Table II.
Demographic
characteristics of
respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	CF (percent)
<i>Age</i>			
25 or under	12	3.5	3.5
26-35	110	32.3	35.8
36-45	125	36.7	72.4
46-55	85	24.9	97.4
Above 55	7	2.3	100
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	221	64.8	64.8
Female	120	35.2	100
<i>Monthly income</i>			
Under \$200	21	6.2	6.2
\$200-\$299	56	16.4	22.6
\$300-\$600	124	36.4	58.9
Above \$600	140	41.1	100
<i>Education</i>			
Below high school graduate	5	1.5	1.5
High school	25	7.3	8.8
Two-year college or associate's degree	181	53.1	61.9
Bachelor's degree	91	26.7	88.6
Postgraduate	39	11.4	100

based on the maximum likelihood (ML) method. The basic conditions assumed for the use of ML estimation (Byrne, 2001) are met or closely approximated in the study. Further, the sample is sufficiently large ($n = 341$ cases), over the recommended size of 200 cases (Medsker *et al.*, 1994), the scale of observed variables is continuous, and no violations of multivariate normality are found in the survey responses. As presented in Table III, the reliability of the measurement items was verified using Cronbach's α to assess the internal consistency of the constructs in the applied model. The level of internal consistency for each construct was acceptable, with the value of α ranging from 0.727 to 0.788, which exceeded the minimum hurdle of 0.60 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). All measurement items had standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranging from 0.518 to 0.702) at the α level of 0.05, indicating the convergent validity of the measurement model. Construct reliability was verified to estimate convergent validity; each construct had acceptable construct reliability, with the estimates ranging from 0.801 to 0.836 (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

In addition, because the average variance extracted (AVE) from all three constructs exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.5 (ranging from 0.593 to 0.670), convergent validity was assured (Hair *et al.*, 1998). To test the discriminant validity among the constructs, we estimated correlations among the constructs to determine whether they were significantly different from 1; the confidence intervals of the correlations, calculated as correlations $\pm 1.96 \times$ standard error of estimate, did not contain 1, so these results indicated the discriminant validity of the measurement model. The correlations for the constructs are shown in Table IV. Overall, these measurement results are satisfactory and suggest that it is appropriate to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model.

Construct	Item	Standardized loading	t-statistic	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Electronic word of mouth (CR = 0.836, AVE = 0.631)	EWOM1	0.702	9.483	4.72	1.202	0.788
	EWOM2	0.591	8.464	4.33	1.175	
	EWOM3	0.590	8.454	4.65	1.081	
	EWOM4	0.627	8.820	4.41	1.302	
	EWOM5	0.614	8.693	4.39	1.177	
	EWOM6	0.573	–	4.38	1.189	
Brand image (CR = 0.813, AVE = 0.593)	BI1	0.653	9.040	5.35	1.135	0.760
	BI2	0.567	8.184	5.32	1.194	
	BI3	0.604	–	4.86	1.298	
Purchase intention (CR = 0.801, AVE = 0.670)	PI1	0.518	–	6.16	0.801	0.727
	PI2	0.627	7.551	6.22	0.852	
	PI3	0.520	6.790	6.11	0.828	

Table III.Psychometric properties
of measures

Notes: CR, construct reliability; AVE, average variance extracted; EWOM, electronic word of mouth; BI, brand image; PI, purchase intention

4.3 Structural model

Figure 2 shows the overall explanatory power, the standardized path regression coefficients that indicate the direct influences of the predictor upon the predicted latent constructs for the model, and associated t-values of the paths of the research model. The model fit indices of the structural model and the cut-off value of those fit indices are presented in Tables V and VI. The goodness-of-fit statistics show that the structural model fit the data reasonably well. The three-item model produced a χ^2 of 83.2 (df = 51, $p = 0.003$). While the overall χ^2 for this measurement model was significant ($p < 0.05$), it is well established that this statistic is sensitive to large sample sizes (e.g. Hair *et al.*, 1998). To alleviate the sensitivity of the χ^2 statistics, the value of χ^2 is commonly divided by the degrees of freedom. The re-estimated χ^2 value was 1.631 and this new value is within an acceptable cut-off value range, from 1.0 to 3.0. The goodness of fit index (GFI = 0.961, with 1 indicating maximum fit), comparative fit index (CFI = 0.969, 1 = maximum fit), the comparative fit index (NFI = 0.925, with 1 indicating maximum fit), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI = 0.960, 1 = maximum fit) and the incremental fit index (IFI = 0.970) met the proposed criterion of 0.90 or higher. Finally, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.043, with values < 0.08 indicating good fit), one of the indices best suited to our model with a large sample, indicated that the structural model was a reasonable fit.

Table V presents the results of the individual tests of the significance of the relationship among the variables. Among the three relationships tested, one was found to be significant at the α level of 0.01, and two relationships were significant at the α level of 0.05. e-WOM had a significantly positive impact on brand image, with $\beta = 0.866$, $t = 7.842$, and $p = 0.000$, indicating that customers' e-WOM communication was an important antecedent of brand image. e-WOM also had a strong positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.574$, $t = 2.224$, $p = 0.026$). These results suggest that compared to other promotional media, e-WOM communication

	EWOM1	EWOM2	EWOM3	EWOM4	EWOM5	EWOM6	BI1	BI2	BI3	P1	P2	P3
EWOM1	1.00											
EWOM2	0.356	1.00										
EWOM3	0.408	0.371	1.00									
EWOM4	0.396	0.395	0.381	1.00								
EWOM5	0.424	0.321	0.415	0.398	1.00							
EWOM6	0.387	0.352	0.347	0.408	0.402	1.00						
BI1	0.470	0.403	0.299	0.420	0.277	0.266	1.00					
BI2	0.316	0.342	0.306	0.275	0.269	0.244	0.335	1.00				
BI3	0.421	0.393	0.288	0.264	0.273	0.243	0.411	0.361	1.00			
P1	0.478	0.269	0.255	0.323	0.332	0.342	0.329	0.299	0.327	1.00		
P2	0.369	0.297	0.292	0.347	0.373	0.310	0.332	0.368	0.307	0.201	1.00	
P3	0.321	0.317	0.289	0.270	0.255	0.176	0.280	0.274	0.173	0.199	1.00	

Note: All of the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level. EWOM, electronic word of mouth; BI, brand image; PI, purchase intention

Table IV.
Correlation matrix

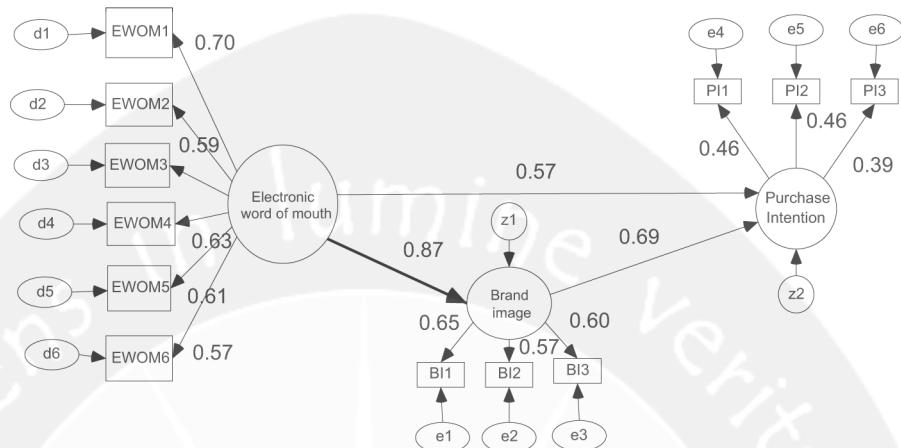


Figure 2.
Standardized regression
coefficients proposed
model

Notes: ————— = Significant at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)
————— = Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table V.
Maximum likelihood
estimates for research
model ($n = 341$)

Independent variable	Dependant variable	Estimate	Standardized estimate	Standard error	t-statistic	p
Electronic word of mouth	Brand image	0.997	0.866	0.127	7.842	**
Electronic word of mouth	Intention to purchase	0.312	0.574	0.140	2.224	0.026*
Brand image	Intention to purchase	0.325	0.690	0.129	2.518	0.012*

Notes: *Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed); ** significant at the $p < 0.001$ level (two-tailed)

Table VI.
Model fit statistics

Structural model	Fit statistics	Cut-off value
χ^2	83.2	
df	51	
p-value	< 0.05	
Normed χ^2	1.631	1.0-3.0
GFI	0.961	>0.90
NFI	0.925	>0.90
CFI	0.969	>0.90
TLI	0.960	>0.90
RMR	0.48	<0.50
RMSEA	0.043	<0.08 ^a

Note: ^aIndicates good fit

plays a major role as an important antecedent of customer's behavioral intentions. Finally, brand image influenced purchase intention, with $\beta = 0.690$, $t = 2.518$, and $p = 0.012$, indicating that brand image was an antecedent of purchase intention. The statistical results, summarized in Table IV, generated three major findings:

- (1) e-WOM communication has a positive impact on brand image;
- (2) e-WOM communication has a strong positive impact on purchase intention; and
- (3) brand image influences purchase intention.

In addition, 45 percent of respondents said they used e-mail for their e-WOM, 40 percent relied on company websites, and 30 percent used other media (e.g. Facebook.com) for e-WOM communication.

To examine the interplay between the two variables that affect intention to purchase, an analysis of the standardized direct, indirect and total effects was conducted (see Table VII). Of particular interest is the direct effect of e-WOM on intention to purchase (0.574). The analysis also indicates that e-WOM has an indirect impact on purchase intention (0.597) through its impact on brand image.

5. Conclusion and implications for further research

The starting point of this paper was the observation that virtual communities (e.g. Facebook.com) where consumers can disseminate their product/service experience become increasingly popular. Moreover, both practical experience and previous research suggested that in an online WOM context, consumers are especially interested in writing and reading pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Consequently, from a marketer's perspective, the question arose of what effects online WOM might have on response variables that are relevant in marketing. A response variable that plays an important role in marketing but has not been considered in the context of effects of online WOM communication yet, is brand image. Therefore, it stood to reason to extend the existing body of research in the field of effects of online WOM communication by introducing the concept of brand image in this context and examining possible effects of e-WOM. This research builds on prior studies and explores the unique contribution of interpersonal influences on brand image and purchase intention in automobile industry. Our empirical study shows that e-WOM has considerable effects on brand image and indirectly leads to intention to purchase, particularly in the automobile industry. In addition, we showed that e-WOM has a strong direct effect on purchase intention. This point has been established by numerous studies prior to our study (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), but not in the automobile industry. Our results have several important implications. The finding that online WOM communication can cause purchase intention is particularly important for automobile manufacturers. Through mobile internet, which is becoming increasingly

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Electronic word of mouth	Brand image	0.866	0.866	0.000
Electronic word of mouth	Purchase intention	1.172	0.574	0.597
Brand image	Purchase intention	0.690	0.690	0.000

Table VII.
Decomposition of total
effects for research model
($n = 341$)

popular, customers can read online recommendations for the product they are interested in directly at the point of purchase, which might have strong effects on their purchase decisions. Therefore, managers could initiate point-of-sale activities in the form of product trials with the objective of motivating online WOM communication by enabling consumers to form their own impressions. Many studies have investigated customers' perceptions of service quality as a predictor of customers' behavior intentions, such as WOM communication. Boulding *et al.* (1993) indicated that service quality positively affects behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and positive WOM. Zeithaml *et al.* (1996) proposed a model of the behavioral consequences of service quality and suggested that perceived service quality was related to positive behavioral intentions including WOM, purchase intentions, complaining behavior, and price sensitivity. Based on Zeithaml *et al.*'s study, Alexandris *et al.* (2002) indicated that service quality explained 93 percent of the variance in WOM. In addition, managers can improve the brand image by increasing product variety, enhancing product quality, offering the products in the price worthy of value, and pleasantly providing after sale services. These improvements directly increase the purchase intention of the products. However, companies with high equity brands should not rely on the benefits of high brand image such as customer loyalty that can be found in the literature (Aaker, 1991; Agarwal and Rao, 1996; Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Instead, such companies should be aware of the risks of negative online WOM communication, because even high brand equity can be significantly diluted by negative online WOM and because such detrimental effects will become even more important with increasing improvements in, and spread of, network technology. In addition, the accessibility, reach, and transparency of the internet allow marketers and organizations to monitor the online WOM communication about their brands continuously (Kozinets *et al.*, 2010). Marketers could develop appropriate communication tools to make consumers more knowledgeable about specific brand or bank characteristics and try to change some of the negative associations that consumers have about the brand or the product through online WOM. It is important to say that positive WOM and e-WOM play an important role in increasing customers' purchase intentions, creating a favorable image of the company and its brand, and reducing promotional expenditures. Furthermore, it would be interesting to analyze the effects of online WOM communication on brand image for more brands and in other product categories such as financial services because WOM communication may have a particularly important influence on consumers' perceptions of products/services that have high credence qualities (Sweeney *et al.*, 2008). Finally, it would be useful to test an expanded model that more fully examines brand image by including functional, experiential, and attitudinal dimensions of brand image (Keller, 1993). In addition to testing this construct within internet networks, exploring the antecedents to brand image would provide guidance for managers who want to strengthen their products' brands.

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