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# THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASING INTENTIONS IN JORDAN

**Sharf Yaseen**, [sharafanwaryaseen@gmail.com](mailto:sharafanwaryaseen@gmail.com)

**Normal Jusoh**, [normal@utm.my](mailto:normal@utm.my)

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**Abstract-** The emergence of Social Media has provided an electronic word of mouth (eWOM) with a new perspective by allowing users to share their opinions and experiences about products or services with familiar people who they know already such as acquaintances and friends. This new way of eWOM is likely to have a more massive consumer impact. In the Middle East countries, minimal studies have determined what makes particular online reviews to have more impact than others. This study aims to explore the determinants of eWOM information on social media which influence the purchasing intentions of consumers in Jordan. For exploring these determinants, the information acceptance model (IACM) which developed by Ismail Erkan (2016) was adopted and used in this research. The data has been gathered using a questionnaire and was checked and analysed by using both SPSS and Smart PLS Software. The sample consists of 300 social media (Facebook) users in Jordan. Facebook was chosen because it is the most social media platform frequently used in Jordan. The data analysis results provided that information quality, attitude towards information and need of information affect significantly information usefulness, which affects information adoption significantly. However, there is no relationship between information credibility and information usefulness. An information adoption and attitude towards information were found to effect consumers' purchasing intentions. In terms of practicality, this study helps marketers for understanding eWOM dynamics on social media platforms and consequently developing better strategies of marketing.

**Keywords:** Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Social Media, Purchase Intention, Jordan.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The term of Word of Mouth has been known for a long time, but it has changed dramatically with the emergence of the Internet era. Customers these days have the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions with millions of people across the Internet. These online conversations about services or products is called electronic word of mouth (eWOM) (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Electronic WOM (eWOM) has known since past decade to be the most marketing tool which influence consumers (Tiwa, 2020). Consumers usually look for information which was posted via prior customers to be comfortable before buying products or services (Erkan, 2016). Tata, Prashar and Gupta, (2020). Contrary to WOM, eWOM is not necessary to be oral or face-to-face ; it could be communicated through multimedia messages (e.g. photos, words, videos, audio ,rankings and ratings online) and in aggregated or individual forms (Pourfakhimi, Duncan and Coetzee, 2020). The Internet offers many proper platforms for eWOM like: consumer review websites, blogs, shopping websites , discussion forums and recently social media websites (Haibin, 2018). Social Media defined as online websites which was developed to enable users or consumers creating their semi-public profiles to communicate with others and share their experiences or opinions inside the virtual environment (Kunja and Acharyulu, 2018). Recently, many studies indicated that consumers tend for using Social Media in order to obtain information on products or services (Ismail, 2017 ; I. Erkan and Evans, 2018). Social Media have given eWOM a new aspect by allowing users to communicate with their existing networks ; unlike other platforms, Social Media enables users to share their experiences and opinions about products or services with familiar people e.g. acquaintances and friends, who they already know (Erkan, 2016). Social Media platforms (Such as Facebook, Instagram ,Twitter and YouTube) are revolutionizing how consumers interact with companies and brands (Bianchi and Andrews, 2018). Purchase intention is defined as "the probability that customers will aim or be disposed to buy any service or product in future" Sulthana and Vasantha (2019). It is regarded as the basic step for rewarding the real purchasing behaviour (Pauzi *et al.*, 2017). Purchase intention in Social Media is the same thought of traditional means of buying.

## **1.2 Issue/Problem**

Consumers are exposed to an enormous amount of information on Social Media and online, therefore it is hard to anticipate that all eWOM information can influence consumer. eWOM determinations between Social Media and customers purchasing intentions have not yet been clarified. More specifically, the effect of eWOM on purchase intention of consumers in various internet platforms have been studied by many researchers, such as Shopping Websites Rahman et al. (2018) ; Nuseir (2019), as well as, many different fields such as Hospitality field Yuan, Tsao, Chyou and Tsai (2019) ; Agag and El-Masry (2016), the Business Sector Hamdani, Abdul and Maulani (2018) and Education field (Balroo and Saleh, 2019). However, because it is relatively new, the influence of eWOM on the purchasing intention of consumers via Social Media has been given much less attention. Even though the research still on-going and very few prior studies have found that effect of eWOM on Social Media Ismail Erkan (2016); I. Erkan and Evans (2018) , But there is still a lack of research about the eWOM information determinants among Social Media and consumers purchasing intentions especially in the Middle East . Additionally, according to Tien, Rivas and Liao (2019), the relation among the adoption of eWOM in Social Media and the purchasing intention of consumers still unclear because the empirical finding are limited. Consequently, the question for this study was addressed as the following:

RQ1. What are the determinants of eWOM information on social media which influence consumers' purchasing intentions?

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study provides marketers with a frame of reference for understanding the influence of eWOM in Social Media on the purchasing intentions of consumers. It also offers for marketers many valuable insights; the determinants which were introduced by this study help marketers in understanding the eWOM dynamics on Social Media, therefore better strategies and marketing plans on social media can be developed in order to create more opportunities and thus higher investments.

## II. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

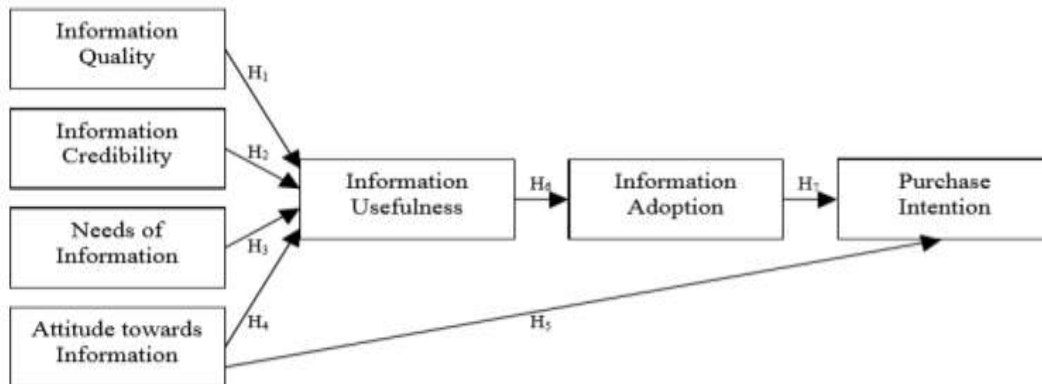
To answer the research question, a systematic literature analysis was conducted. published research findings were tracked by using a certain search string in various popular databases : (a) Scopus Preview; (b) Google scholar; (c) Emerald Insight; (d) SpringerLink and (e) ScienceDirect. A total of 155 related articles matched the given search criteria. It was further limited to those directly related to the eWOM information determinants on Social Media which impact the purchasing intentions of consumers. The duplicates from using various literature databases were removed. The remaining subset consists of 127 publications. To determine the most relevant articles to answer the question of research, the articles were analyzed based on its content. After applying this criterion, the final dataset comprised a shortlist of 32 articles from 16 countries that were published between 2016 and 2020. afterward, the most related articles were classified into two main categories. Firstly, countries that the eWOM Studies Were Conducted; we can notice that few and Limited studies in the Middle East (24%) and Jordan (15%) had conducted related to "the eWOM determinants on Social Media. Secondly, the Determinants (Factors) of eWOM Examined in the Literature; by reviewing The Determinants (Factors), which were studied in the literature , we noticed that researchers focused on specific factors to test and examine, which are the most important factors to focus on and examine it in this research. Regarding eWOM Message: Information Credibility, Information Quality, and Information Usefulness. Regarding the receiver of eWOM: Attitude Towards eWOM, Information Adoption, and Need for Information.

### **2.1 Related Framework :**

This study agrees with the argument that eWOM information characteristics are not enough for studying the effect of eWOM on the purchasing intentions of consumers; the behavior of consumers towards eWOM information must also be considered in the assessment (Knoll, 2016 ; Ismail Erkan, 2016). Consequently, this study will adopt and use the information acceptance model (IACM) which was adopted from (I. Erkan and Evans, 2016 ; Ismail Erkan, 2016) in order to identify eWOM determinants on Social Media which effects purchasing intentions of consumers in Jordan. the (ICAM) Model consists from extension of (IAM) the information adoption model by (Sussman and Siegal, 2003) besides the related components of (TRA) the theory of reasoned action by (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It displays that the impact of eWOM on Social Media

not only based on eWOM information characteristics, e.g. the information quality and credibility, but also it based on the behavior of consumers towards eWOM information e.g. attitude toward behavior. Moreover, throughout reviewing the literature, the needs of information are noticed as customers behavior towards eWOM information (Ali and Hussin, 2019 ;Tiwa, 2020 ;Abedi, Ghorbanzadeh and Rahehagh, 2019). Therefore, the research model (IACM) examines the relations among the subsequent components: information quality, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, information usefulness, information adoption and purchase intention. The below Figure explains the research model (IACM).

Figure 1. Research Model: The Information Acceptance Model (IACM)



Source:(I. Erkan and Evans, 2016 ;Ismail Erkan, 2016)

### III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose which was chosen for this research is explanatory and causal. The deductive approach was selected for this research as deductive approach begins with looking at the theory then forming hypothesis out of it, after that testing the theory in related context to confirm or reject them. As Bell et al. (2018) mentioned that deductive approaches are more appropriate for quantitative researches. Consequently, in this study quantitative research method was used. In addition to the quantitative nature for this research, a large number of responses is needed to be analyzed by using the statistical method. So, this study has used a survey as data collection methods for research strategy. In this study, a primary data was collected through an online survey questionnaire that was adopted from previous studies questionnaires in order to use it in the empirical investigation ; accordingly , the data collection Method was the questionnaire. Regarding selecting sampling, a non-probability sample was used (Leavy, 2017). Between strategies of a non-probability sampling, the convenience sampling was applied in this study due to its high efficiency related to time, effort and money. The selected sample for this study includes respondents who are Social Media (Facebook) users in Jordan , who aged (18-44) from both genders. Facebook was chosen because Facebook is the most popular social media platform used in Jordan with 5.50 million monthly active users (<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital2019-jordan>). A sample size of 300 respondents was determined by convenience sampling. Lastly, related to data analysis, the data was checked and analyzed by using both SPSS and Smart PLS. In order to detect outliers and to check data normality, SPSS was used. Then, data analysis was implemented using the two-step SEM PLS path model assessment.

#### IV. ANALYSIS

Figure 2. Measurement model for Social Media

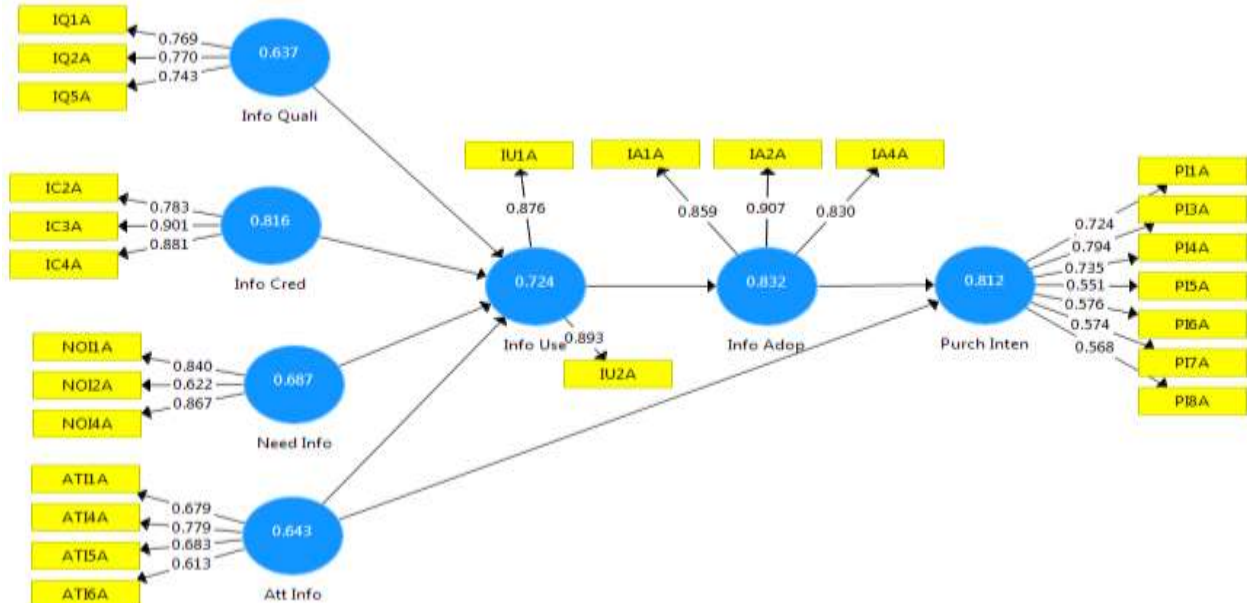
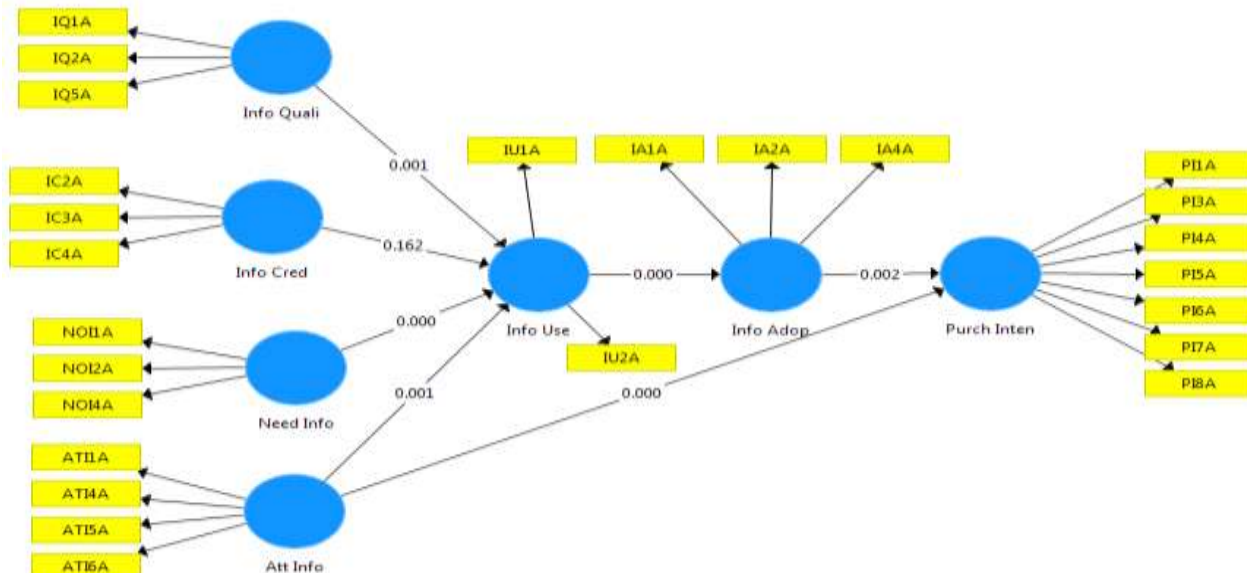


Figure 3. Results of PLS Bootstrapping Analysis for Social Media



*Table 1. Results of Hypothesis Testing for this Research*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>For Social Media</b>
<b>H1:</b> Quality of eWOM information is positively related to the usefulness of eWOM information.	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H2:</b> Credibility of eWOM information is positively related to the usefulness of eWOM information.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H3:</b> Needs of eWOM information are positively related to the usefulness of eWOM information.	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H4:</b> Attitude towards eWOM information is positively related to the usefulness of eWOM information.	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H5:</b> Attitude towards eWOM information is positively related to consumers' purchase intention.	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H6:</b> Usefulness of eWOM information is positively related to the adoption of eWOM information.	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H7:</b> Adoption of eWOM information is positively related to consumers' purchase intention.	<b>Accepted</b>

## V. DISCUSSION& CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Discussion

**H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7** are accepted. This is not a surprising finding, these findings are in line with many previous studies in literature. (AL-Ja'afreh and AL-Adaileh, 2020; Abedi et al., 2019; I. Erkan and Evans, 2018; I. Erkan and Evans, 2016; Yusuf and Busalim, 2018; Choi, 2018; Ismail Erkan, 2016; Adi, Wihuda, and Adawiyah, 2017; Tiwa, 2020; Wang, 2019; Johnson Jorgensen and Ha, 2019; Ayeh, 2015; Madli, Annuar, Jr and Totu, 2018; Tien, Rivas and Liao, 2019; Zhang, Liang and Qi, 2020). This study therefore had validated the stated relations. On the other hand, **H2** is rejected, regarding information credibility, This finding is considered new to literature of eWOM because a big group of researchers has argued that Social Media sites are more useful for eWOM as the less anonymity has probable for making eWOM more credible, their prior studies have shown that information credibility has significant a positive influence on consumer purchase intentions (Ismail Erkan, 2016; Yusuf and Busalim, 2018; Choi, 2018; Naynthara, 2019; Adi et al., 2017; Abedi et al., 2019). However, the result of H2 in this study is consistent with a very few past studies by (AL-Ja'afreh and AL-Adaileh, 2020; I. Erkan and Evans, 2018; Yan et al., 2016). This could be due to one possible reason which is those few researchers consider the anonymity of eWOM source in other platforms (such as shopping websites) to be an advantage for eWOM because it allows consumers exchanging their opinions more comfortably. Accordingly, the mentioned relation may be affected and might cause alternative findings for this hypothesis.

### 5.2 The Study Contributions

In Theoretical Level This research contributes for future research through empirically testing the argument of existing eWOM studies by Knoll (2016) and Ismail Erkan (2016) which suggests that both eWOM information characteristics and behavior of consumers towards eWOM information should be evaluated together for understanding the impact of eWOM. findings confirmed in this study support the suggested argument and therefore future studies can begin with a more comprehensive perspective via knowing the significance of both the behavior of consumers towards information and the information characteristics. Moreover, this study presents a better understanding of eWOM in Social Media through highlighting the eWOM information determinants on Social Media which influence the purchasing intentions of consumers. The validated

determinants are significant not only for researchers in the same field, but also for researchers who study the purchasing intention in different contexts of research.

Practically, this study provides marketers with a frame of reference for understanding the impact of eWOM in Social Media on the purchasing intentions of consumers. It also offers for marketers many valuable insights; the determinants which were introduced by this study help marketers in understanding the eWOM dynamics on Social Media, therefore better strategies and marketing plans on social media can be developed in order to create more opportunities and thus higher investments.

### **5.3 Limitation of the Study**

Even though this study offers a significant amount of both practical and theoretical contributions, the below limitations should be noted. Firstly, this study has employed a non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling) for collecting the data. Therefore, it is carried out with participants who aged (18-44). Even though they represent the majority users of Social Media, they do not accurately constitute the entire population. 76 Another limitation is since the study was carried out in one country only which is Jordan, it may be difficult to generalize the results to other countries. Additionally, this study focused on one specific social media website (Facebook) not all social media websites together; the findings may vary according to the website.

### **5.4 Future Research**

Researchers in this field can use another sample or extend the scope to fully investigate user's behavior from various cultures and groups. They also can focus on eWOM on all Social Media websites not only Facebook to have better understanding about characteristics of each platform which effect consumers decision making. moreover, they can focus on other types of eWOM in Social Media, e.g. YouTube word-of-mouth (vWOM).

### **5.5 Conclusion**

To conclude, this study was carried out with the aim of finding the eWOM information determinants on SM that impact the purchasing intentions of consumers. Related to the research question, the main findings of this study show that information quality, attitude towards information and need of information affect significantly information usefulness, which affects information adoption significantly. However, there is no relationship between information credibility and information usefulness. An information adoption and attitude towards information were found to effect consumers' purchasing intentions. In terms of practicality, this study helps marketers for understanding eWOM dynamics on social media platforms and consequently developing better strategies of marketing. Practically, this study will be helpful for marketers, it offers valuable insights and provides them with framework for understanding the effect of eWOM in Social Media on the purchasing intention of consumers besides developing better marketing plans and strategies on Social Media in order to create more opportunities and therefore higher investments.

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