



The Role of Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Online Purchase Intention in Vietnam

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Received: June 17, 2025. Revised: July 30, 2025. Accepted: September 05, 2025.

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the influence of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on consumers' online purchase intentions, focusing on its mediating mechanisms via argument quality, source credibility, and customer involvement. It further examines the implications for distribution channels, e-commerce logistics, and supply chain management in Vietnam's rapidly evolving digital trade environment. **Research Design, Methodology, and Approach:** Drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Purchase Behavior Theory (PBT), an online survey was conducted with 240 valid responses from Vietnamese consumers. The measurement model was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and hypotheses were tested via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS and AMOS. **Results:** Argument quality and source credibility significantly affect eWOM effectiveness, whereas customer involvement demonstrates no significant impact. EWOM strongly predicts online purchase intentions, accounting for 59.2% of its variance. **Conclusions:** eWOM is pivotal for building consumer trust and shaping purchasing behaviors in digital marketplaces. These findings enrich ELM and PBT, and provide practical insights for enterprises to enhance distribution efficiency, logistics responsiveness, and customer engagement through credible eWOM strategies. This research underscores how eWOM analytics can support logistics planning and supply chain agility, ensuring improved product availability and delivery performance in competitive e-commerce environments.

Keywords: EWOM, Customer involvement, Digital trade, E-commerce, Purchase behavior.

JEL Classification Code: C30, L81, M30, O30

1. Introduction

In the era of rapid Internet development, traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) communication has evolved into a new form. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), this digital transformation has profoundly influenced consumer behavior, with eWOM becoming a pivotal factor in online purchase intentions (Mudaim & Dirgiatmo, 2024).

According to Ismagilova et al. (2017), the rise of eWOM has brought about substantial shifts in the dynamics between organizations and consumers. Compared to traditional WOM, eWOM spreads more rapidly and extensively. This phenomenon not only directly affects sellers but also significantly influences the intentions of other potential buyers. Specifically, the likelihood of purchasing a product with positive reviews is 270% higher than for a product with no reviews (Mumuni et al., 2020). This suggests that online

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reviews are a powerful source of influence on consumer purchase intentions and behaviors in Vietnam, a fertile ground for developing e-commerce businesses (Statista, 2025), 59% of consumers trust social networks to research product information before making purchasing decisions (Nguyen, 2024). Furthermore, 93% of consumers acknowledge that online reviews shape their purchase decisions, while 84% consider them an essential element of the shopping process (Licata, 2022). EWOM is thriving and positively impacting customers' online purchase intentions. Its importance has intensified post-COVID as consumers increasingly rely on eWOM, perceiving it as a significant and unbiased source of information for decision-making (Ngo et al., 2024).

In addition to influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors, eWOM has significant implications for distribution systems in e-commerce. Online reviews and discussions on social media provide valuable insights that help businesses optimize their logistics and trade operations. Because eWOM enables faster and broader information dissemination, it allows companies to predict demand fluctuations, adjust inventory levels, and streamline supply chain activities to meet customer expectations effectively. This is especially crucial in Vietnam's rapidly growing e-commerce sector, where efficient logistics and trade networks are vital for ensuring timely product delivery and customer satisfaction (Alsudairi et al., 2012; Ridwan et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2025). Beyond influencing consumer purchase intentions, eWOM insights are valuable for improving distribution operations. Positive or negative reviews often point to issues such as delivery speed, product availability, and packaging quality, which directly impact logistics efficiency. E-commerce firms can leverage eWOM data for demand forecasting, inventory management, and optimizing last-mile delivery, all critical for maintaining competitiveness in Vietnam's growing digital trade environment.

The concept of "eWOM" by Thureau et al. (2004), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), and the purchase behavior theory by Kalwani and Silk (1982) are closely related to consumers' online purchase intention and behavior. According to Erkan and Evans (2016) and Teng et al. (2017), argument quality and source credibility are key determinants of eWOM. Furthermore, Alhidari et al. (2015) assert that customer involvement is also a significant factor affecting eWOM, particularly in the context of social media. Wang et al. (2018) emphasized that argument quality, source credibility, and customer involvement are crucial elements positively associated with eWOM. Recent research underscores that argument quality shapes information usefulness, whereas source credibility bolsters the perceived credibility and adoption of eWOM (Larasati & Kerti, 2018; Marsha &

Susanto, 2022; Syam & Ramadhan, 2023). The younger generation, having been exposed to the digital environment from an early age, represents a key segment of future online consumers (VECOM, 2024), and studies have begun specifically examining the impact of eWOM on Gen Z consumers' online purchase intention on e-commerce platforms (Ngo et al., 2024).

Despite the well-established influence of eWOM on online purchasing behavior, the precise roles of its key dimensions, most notably customer involvement, are still underexplored within Vietnam's unique market setting. Furthermore, the extent of eWOM's influence on the online purchase intentions of the younger generation, a crucial demographic in the burgeoning e-commerce landscape, requires further clarification. This leads to the following explicit research question: How do argument quality, source credibility, and customer involvement influence eWOM, and how does eWOM, in turn, affect online purchase intention among consumers in Vietnam? Research Objectives: (1) To determine the extent to which argument quality, source credibility, and customer involvement influence eWOM. (2) To evaluate the impact of eWOM on consumers' online purchase intention. (3) To provide theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for e-commerce businesses in Vietnam on leveraging eWOM to improve their marketing strategies and customer engagement.

2. Literature Review and Research Model

2.1. Literature Review

E-commerce refers to the use of electronic media and digital information to facilitate business transactions that generate value between organizations and between organizations and individuals (Gupta, 2014). E-commerce is broadly defined as the exchange of goods and services through the Internet or any transaction entailing the transfer of ownership or usage rights facilitated by a computer network (Gupta, 2014). Additionally, according to Laudon & Traver (2024), e-commerce involves utilizing the Internet and the web to execute business transactions between organizations and individuals.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) is considered one of the most influential sources of information, providing consumers with effective and useful insights for decision-making. It centers around the prior experiences of customers and peer evaluations of products or services rather than company-generated content (Erkan & Evans, 2016). EWOM encompasses a range of platforms, including social networking sites, blogs, community forums, review websites, newsgroups, and e-commerce platforms (Cheung

et al., 2012). According to Thureau et al. (2004), eWOM refers to positive or negative statements made by past, current, or prospective customers about a product or company, which are disseminated through the internet within communities, organizations, or groups.

Purchase Behavior Theory (PBT) highlights purchase intention as one of the most commonly examined outcomes of eWOM communication (Sher & Lee, 2009). Purchase intention reflects the individual's awareness and willingness to engage in a buying activity and is considered one of the most reliable predictors of actual buying behavior (Kalwani & Silk, 1982). Besides, Thomas et al. (2019) define purchase intention as a specific consumer behavior that expresses a conscious plan or willingness to purchase a product or service. Moreover, according to Mehraj and Qureshi (2022), purchasing behavior relates to customers' actual buying activities. When customers have a pleasant consumption experience, they are more likely to form a positive attitude, resulting in repeat purchases. According to Hanna et al. (2011), social media has influenced consumer behavior from the information search phase to post-purchase sharing behavior regarding products and services.

2.2. Related Works

The proliferation of eWOM has made it a central topic in consumer behavior research, extending beyond traditional marketing to influence every stage of the consumer journey (Cheung et al., 2009; Khan et al., 2023). Its pervasive nature across various online platforms, from e-commerce sites to social media, underscores its growing significance in shaping attitudes and decisions (Hanna et al., 2011; Laudon & Traver, 2024).

High-quality arguments are typically perceived as clear, accurate, timely, relevant, and sufficient to inform a purchase decision (Lin et al., 2013; Cheung et al., 2014). Research consistently shows that argument quality directly impacts consumers' perceptions of information usefulness and their subsequent adoption of eWOM (Larasati & Kerti, 2018; Hajli et al., 2018; Marsha & Susanto, 2022). The clarity and completeness of review content are crucial for consumers to assess product merits and risks, thereby influencing their purchase intentions (Xiao et al., 2024).

Consumers are more likely to accept and act upon information from sources they deem reliable and knowledgeable (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). This factor is particularly salient in online environments where anonymity can be high, making the perceived honesty and competence of the reviewer critical (Chih et al., 2013; Syam & Ramadhan, 2023). Studies demonstrate that higher source credibility leads to increased eWOM credibility and greater influence on purchase decisions (Hong & Park, 2012; Lee & Hong, 2019; Susilo & Prasetio, 2020).

While some studies, like Alhidari et al. (2015), highlight customer involvement as a significant driver of eWOM, suggesting that highly involved consumers are more likely to seek out and engage with online reviews, the direct relationship between customer involvement and eWOM has yielded mixed results in the literature. For instance, some research supports a positive impact (Sohaib et al., 2018; Abbasi et al., 2024), while other studies, particularly those focusing on low-involvement products or certain demographic groups, indicate a non-significant or mediated influence (Ismagilova et al., 2020). This indicates that the role of involvement might be more complex, potentially interacting with other variables like product type or platform characteristics (Park & Lee, 2008; Lee & Koo, 2012; Luo & Zhong, 2015).

EWOM exerts a significant impact on online purchase intention by enhancing consumer trust and lowering perceived risks through positive digital recommendations, which in turn facilitate purchasing decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021). The collective impact of argument quality, source credibility, and the reach of eWOM ultimately shapes this intention (Poturak & Turkyilmaz, 2018; Rosara & Luthfia, 2020).

2.3. Research Model

Based on the theoretical foundation of the eWOM concept by Thureau et al. (2004), purchase behavior theory by Kalwani and Silk (1982), and related studies by Erkan and Evans (2016); Sohaib et al. (2018); Ismagilova et al. (2020); Dam (2023); Xiao et al. (2024); Yoo and Lim (2025), the authors propose the research model (Fig. 1) with the following constructs:

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM): One of the most influential informal communication tools for consumers, businesses, and online users in general (Thureau et al., 2004). Most studies focus on how eWOM affects attitudes and purchase intentions. The term refers to the dissemination of feedback about a service or product via social media platforms (Khan et al., 2023). eWOM spreads rapidly to large audiences through social networks (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Rosara & Luthfia, 2020).

Argument Quality (AQ): The persuasiveness of online reviews, posts, or comments (Ratchford et al., 2001). Given the anonymity of online platforms, consumers are often reluctant to trust reviews unless they perceive the information provided as sufficiently detailed and credible (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). High argument quality is positively correlated with message persuasiveness (Khan et al., 2023), encouraging recipients to consider these arguments in forming their viewpoints (Lee & Hong, 2019). According to Lin et al. (2013), argument quality denotes the

extent to which reviews from previous consumers on e-commerce platforms are perceived as high in content quality.

Source Credibility (SOC): Refers to consumers' evaluation of the trustworthiness and expertise of online reviews (Hong & Park, 2012). It is considered a peripheral route that significantly influences customer attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and helps reduce uncertainty in decision-making on social media (Wathen & Burkell, 2002).

According to Moran and Muzellec (2017), message credibility is demonstrated through content and its influence on recipients. Hussain et al. (2021) define source credibility as the trustworthiness and honesty of content shared on social networks. Higher credibility leads to more positive attitudes and increased customer trust in eWOM related to products/services (Chih et al., 2013).

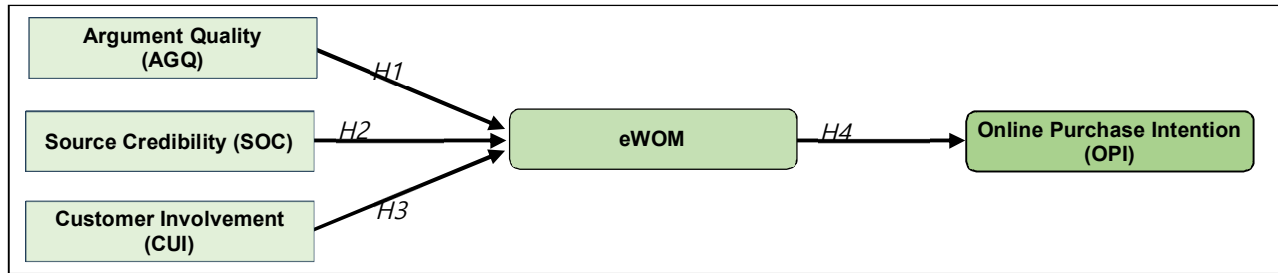


Fig. 1: Research Model

Customer Involvement (CUI): Defined as the perceived relevance of a product based on individual values, needs, and benefits (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Higher levels of involvement drive consumers to engage more deeply with information, thereby increasing the persuasive impact of messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Whether passive or active, customer involvement has a direct and indirect positive effect on eWOM through brand-self connection (Fernandes & Castro, 2020). Strong engagement leads to increased sharing of eWOM (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018), especially among highly involved customers who invest more time and effort on social media (Alhidari et al., 2015).

Online Purchase Intention (OPI): Defined by consumers' behavior and awareness of online goods and services (Laroche et al., 1996). Customer confidence in online shopping is directly related to purchase intention (Salisbury et al., 2001). eWOM messages are a major source of relevant product or service information and serve as trustworthy reference points for potential customers (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Luo & Zhong, 2015). Ilhamalimy & Ali (2021) note that consumers gain trust and product perceptions through eWOM. Poturak and Turkyilmaz (2018) and Saait et al. (2016) confirm that eWOM significantly affects purchase intentions.

2.4. Research Hypotheses

Ratchford et al. (2001) proposed a positive relationship between argument quality and eWOM. According to Cheung et al. (2014), reviews of higher quality are regarded as both more trustworthy and more informative than their lower-quality counterparts. As a result, high-quality reviews are more effective in influencing consumers' purchase

intentions. In addition, empirical studies by Lin et al. (2013); Lee and Hong (2019); Khan et al. (2023) also demonstrated that argument quality has a positive impact on both eWOM and purchase intention. Thus, in the context of online shopping, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Argument quality has a positive effect on eWOM.

Wathen and Burkell (2002); Hong and Park (2012) identified a relationship between source credibility and both eWOM and purchase intention. Empirical studies by Cheung et al. (2009); Fan and Miao (2012); Lee and Koo (2012) also confirmed that when consumers perceive high source credibility in eWOM, their likelihood of accepting and acting on the information increases. Similarly, Chih et al. (2013), Moran and Muzellec (2017); Hussain et al. (2021) found that source credibility positively influences eWOM. Hence, in the context of online shopping, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Source credibility has a positive effect on eWOM.

Petty and Cacioppo (1984); Park and Lee (2008) proposed that customer involvement influences eWOM behavior. Additionally, Fan and Miao (2012); Farzin and Fattahi (2018); Fernandes and Castro (2020) empirically confirmed that consumers with higher levels of involvement are more likely to accept and share reviews or comments from other users. Thus, in the context of online shopping, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Customer involvement has a positive effect on eWOM.

Park and Kim (2008) argued that eWOM on social networks is significantly associated with purchase intention. Furthermore, the influence of eWOM on online purchase

intention has been recognized and validated in studies by Erkan and Evans (2016); Khan et al. (2023); Xiao et al. (2024). Hence, in the context of online shopping, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: eWOM has a positive effect on online purchase intention.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection and Measurement Scale

First, a preliminary measurement scale was developed based on theoretical foundations and relevant prior studies, including those by Petty and Cacioppo (1986); Erkan and Evans (2016); Sohaib et al. (2018); Ismagilova et al. (2020); Khan et al. (2023); Xiao et al. (2024). This initial scale was then reviewed and discussed with experts in the fields of information systems and e-commerce to ensure appropriateness and contextual relevance for the Vietnamese market. Based on expert feedback, adjustments were made to improve the scale's validity. Following the expert review, a pilot study was conducted to develop a revised measurement scale, which was then tested for reliability. Based on the analysis, the final measurement scale was formalized and used in the main survey.

The study employed a 5-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree – (2) Disagree – (3) Neutral – (4) Agree – (5) Strongly Agree. Data were collected through an online survey using a convenience sampling method. The target respondents were individuals who had experience with or expressed intentions to shop online, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms. The data collection period lasted for one month. Out of 285 total responses, 240 valid responses were retained for analysis. The data were encoded and analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. The analytical procedures employed in this study comprise reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM).

3.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Regarding gender, 25.8% of participants were male, 72.5% female, and 1.7% identified as other. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (90%) were between 18 and 22 years old, with 6.2% over 22 and 3.8% under 18. For income level, most respondents reported a monthly income between VND 2–5 million (42.5%), followed by those earning less than VND 2 million (38.3%) and those earning over VND 5 million

(19.2%). Regarding the frequency of reading online reviews per week: 54.2% read reviews 1–3 times per week, 33.8% read 4–6 times per week, and 12% read more than 6 times per week. In terms of social media platforms used to gather information, most respondents relied on TikTok and Facebook, followed by YouTube, Zalo, and other platforms.

4. Research Results

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

To assess the underlying structure and dimensionality of the measurement items, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted as an initial step before Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The analysis was performed using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation to identify latent constructs and ensure data suitability.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test produced a value of 0.870, indicating the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming correlations among variables. The total extracted variance was 73.65%, which shows that the measurement scale accounts for a substantial portion of the data variance. Five factors were extracted from 18 observed variables. Factor loadings ranged from 0.538 to 0.835, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all factors ranged from 0.805 to 0.916, indicating good internal consistency (Table 1).

Table 1: Assessment of Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Factor Loading		CR	AVE
		EFA	CFA		
Argument Quality	AGQ1	0.820	0.921	0.922	0.748
	AGQ2	0.846	0.900		
	AGQ3	0.818	0.894		
	AGQ4	0.682	0.880		
Source Credibility	SOC1	0.747	0.713	0.863	0.611
	SOC3	0.611	0.703		
	SOC2	0.538	0.712		
	SOC4	0.807	0.723		
Customer Involvement	CUI1	0.683	0.767	0.805	0.508
	CUI2	0.860	0.780		
	CUI3	0.780	0.811		
	CUI4	dropped	-		
	CUI5	0.747	0.769		
eWOM	WOM1	dropped	-	0.815	0.595
	WOM2	0.773	0.755		
	WOM3	0.777	0.819		
	WOM4	0.726	0.737		
Online Purchase Intention	OPI1	0.746	0.832	0.844	0.644
	OPI3	0.835	0.802		
	OPI2	0.791	0.773		

CFA revealed that all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.5, ranging from 0.764 to 0.998, and were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating convergent validity. The Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.874 to 0.985, confirming scale reliability (Table 1). Model fit indices met the accepted thresholds: CMIN/df = 1.874 (< 2.0); TLI = 0.947; CFI = 0.957; GFI = 0.955 (> 0.9); RMSEA = 0.06 (< 0.08) ($p = 0.000$). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the squared correlations (r^2) for all constructs, indicating discriminant validity (Table 2).

4.2. Structural Model Assessment

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using Maximum Likelihood estimation. The model fit indices were acceptable: CMIN/DF = 2.026 (< 3.0); TLI = 0.938 CFI = 0.948; GFI = 0.946 (> 0.9); and RMSEA = 0.066 (< 0.08); $p = 0.000$. Furthermore, out of the four proposed hypotheses, three were accepted: Argument Quality (AGQ) \rightarrow eWOM; Source Credibility (SOC) \rightarrow eWOM; eWOM \rightarrow Online Purchase Intention (OPI). Only Customer Involvement (CUI) \rightarrow eWOM was not supported by the data. These findings are illustrated in Fig. 2. The findings demonstrate that the factors of Argument Quality (AGQ), Source Credibility (SOC), and Customer Involvement (CUI), as proposed in the research model, collectively explained 59.2% of the variance in eWOM ($R^2 = 0.592$), and eWOM itself explained 47.5% of the variance in Online Purchase Intention (OPI) ($R^2 = 0.475$).

Unlike findings by Sohaib et al. (2018); Abbasi et al. (2024), which confirmed the positive effect of Customer Involvement on eWOM, this study, along with Ismagilova et al. (2020), did not find Customer Involvement to have a significant influence. This inconsistency underscores the need for further research to re-examine the relationship between customer involvement and eWOM, particularly across diverse cultural and generational contexts. Importantly, this study confirms the strong impact of eWOM on Online Purchase intention. Overall, these results validate most hypotheses and confirm the model's robustness (Table 3 and Fig. 2).

Table 2: CFA Results

	CR	AVE	AGQ	CUI	SOC	eWOM	OPI
AGQ	0.922	0.748	0.865				
CUI	0.863	0.611	0.563	0.782			
SOC	0.805	0.508	0.664	0.700	0.713		
eWOM	0.815	0.595	0.636	0.486	0.668	0.771	
OPI	0.844	0.644	0.616	0.489	0.623	0.612	0.80

CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Table 3: SEM and Hypothesis Testing Results

H	Path	Estimate	SE	p-value	Result
H1	eWOM \leftarrow AGQ	0.384	0.076	***	Accepted
H2	eWOM \leftarrow SOC	0.476	0.121	***	Accepted
H3	eWOM \leftarrow CUI	0.023	0.086	0.809	Rejected
H4	OPI \leftarrow eWOM	0.688	0.074	***	Accepted

SE: Standard Error; ***: p -value < 0.001

4.3. Discussion

Table 2 presents the results of hypothesis testing through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), including standardized regression coefficients (β), standard errors, significance levels, and the acceptance or rejection of each hypothesis.

H1 - (AGQ \rightarrow eWOM): The standardized path coefficient from Argument Quality (AGQ) to eWOM is $\beta = 0.384$ with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The result affirms that perceived high argumentative quality in online reviews, characterized by clarity, informativeness, and relevance, enhances consumer trust and engagement in eWOM. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the persuasive impact of high-quality messages on consumer attitudes and behavior (Cheung et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2013).

Moreover, H2 - (SOC \rightarrow eWOM): The path from Source Credibility (SOC) to eWOM is also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.476$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and reliability of the message source significantly enhance the likelihood of eWOM engagement. This supports earlier findings that source credibility is a key peripheral cue in shaping message acceptance within the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chih et al., 2013).

H3 - (CUI \rightarrow eWOM): The relationship between Customer Involvement (CUI) and eWOM was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.023$, $p = 0.809$). This finding diverges from some prior studies (Alhidari et al., 2015; Sohaib et al., 2018; Abbasi et al., 2024), which confirmed a positive impact of CUI on eWOM. However, it aligns with other research, such as Ismagilova et al. (2020) and findings related to low-involvement products, where other factors might be more dominant in driving eWOM engagement. This insignificance could be attributed to the young demographic's pervasive digital information-seeking habits, where aggregated eWOM might overshadow individual product involvement. Cultural factors or the nature of low-involvement product categories typically purchased online by this group could also contribute to this finding. To further elucidate this relationship, future research could investigate the roles of mediating and moderating variables.

Finally, H4 - (eWOM \rightarrow OPI): The most impactful relationship in the model is from eWOM to Online Purchase

Intention (OPI), with a strong standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.688$ ($p < 0.001$). This confirms that eWOM plays a critical role in shaping consumers' intentions to make online purchases. When consumers are exposed to trustworthy and persuasive eWOM, their confidence in the product and readiness to buy increase significantly. This aligns with a robust body of literature that links positive eWOM to purchase behavior (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Xiao et al., 2024).

Specifically, the results suggest that eWOM not only shapes consumer perceptions but also provides real-time feedback on distribution systems' performance. For example, reviews mentioning delivery delays or stockouts signal the need for improvements in supply chain agility and warehouse management. Integrating eWOM analytics into logistics planning could help firms respond faster to demand shifts and improve overall customer satisfaction.

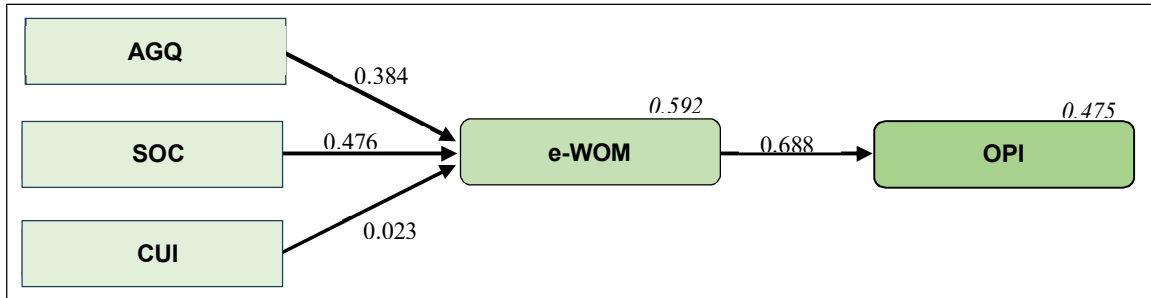


Fig. 2: SEM Results

5. Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical development of the concept of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), purchase intention theory, and related empirical research. The results provide further evidence of the critical role eWOM plays in shaping consumers' online purchase behavior. Furthermore, the findings offer managerial insights not only for consumers but also for sellers. In the current digital era, customers are becoming more informed and discerning. Therefore, sellers must improve the quality of their products and services and refrain from deceptive or exaggerated advertising, as consumers of all ages and from all regions can effectively make purchasing decisions based on eWOM. Besides, eWOM is no longer limited to traditional communication platforms; it has become pervasive on social media, where information can spread at an incredible speed. Anyone can freely express opinions about a product or service online, and others can easily access those posts. However, this also poses risks, while accurate and trustworthy information can enhance online shopping efficiency, misleading or fake posts can have the opposite effect. Thus, source credibility plays a crucial role in eWOM. Consumers must carefully evaluate and verify the information they encounter, seeking trustworthy, reputable sources. While eWOM has many positive aspects, it would benefit from better regulatory policies or guidelines on social media to identify and filter out disguised advertisements or fake reviews that negatively influence online purchase intention.

From a distribution perspective, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating eWOM insights into logistics and trade decision-making processes. As customer feedback and recommendations spread quickly online, they serve as real-time indicators of demand patterns and potential bottlenecks in supply chains. E-commerce businesses can utilize eWOM data to enhance warehouse management, optimize delivery routes, and improve overall distribution efficiency. Furthermore, understanding the dynamics of eWOM allows companies to tailor their trade strategies, ensuring that products reach target markets quickly and cost-effectively.

5.2. Practical Implications

The research findings provide practical implications for strengthening eWOM's influence on online purchase intentions, as most consumers today actively seek reviews and user experiences prior to making online purchases. eWOM facilitates better decision-making by providing access to credible and positive evaluations. Moreover, it helps consumers steer clear of substandard or fraudulent products, alleviates doubts about online shopping, and empowers them to make confident purchases beyond geographical boundaries. Regarding Argument Quality: Customers care about whether the information they receive is helpful and valuable. Well-constructed, logical reviews are persuasive and foster positive attitudes toward the product. In an era where posting reviews is easy and negative content can spread rapidly, consumers need to be vigilant in identifying high-quality content. Regarding Source Credibility: The trustworthiness of the reviewer is

essential. If a reviewer consistently provides accurate and useful evaluations, they are likely to earn higher trust ratings from other users. Since most online interactions involve strangers, users often rely on reviewer ratings and feedback to assess credibility. Regarding Online Purchase Intention: Given two similar products, the one with more credible and positive reviews is more likely to be purchased. Consumers today are increasingly discerning and can filter trustworthy eWOM information to guide their purchase decisions. Moreover, satisfied customers are likely to share their positive experiences via online reviews, social media posts, or direct recommendations. Even consumers without immediate purchase intentions may add products to wish lists or shopping carts for future purchases under the influence of strong eWOM.

When it comes to distribution management, businesses can leverage eWOM to gain valuable insights into customer preferences and logistical challenges. For instance, customer reviews frequently highlight issues related to delivery speed and reliability, which are essential for effective logistics performance. By systematically analyzing eWOM content, e-commerce companies can identify weaknesses in their distribution systems and work with logistics partners to improve service quality. This customer-focused approach not only strengthens the supply chain but also enhances competitiveness in digital marketplaces.

From a distribution perspective, the study emphasizes the potential of eWOM as a strategic tool for enhancing supply chain responsiveness. Businesses can use customer-generated content to identify bottlenecks in delivery processes, adjust trade flows, and optimize their logistics networks. Such insights can drive innovations in inventory allocation, route optimization, and collaboration with third-party logistics providers, which are crucial for sustaining e-commerce growth.

5.3. Limitations and Future Works

This work has some limitations. The sample's restriction to Ho Chi Minh City raises concerns about potential demographic bias, given the overrepresentation of females (72.5%) and the concentration of respondents within the 18–22 age group (90%). These characteristics may limit the broader applicability of the findings. Additionally, the research model only included three antecedents of eWOM: argument quality, source credibility, and customer involvement, leaving other potentially influential factors unexplored.

For future research, it is recommended to diversify the sample to include a wider range of ages and a more balanced gender representation for improved generalizability. Future studies should also consider incorporating contextual variables such as product categories (experience goods vs. search goods), social media platform types (TikTok vs.

Facebook), and review sentiment (positive and negative). Investigating mediating or moderating variables like specific platform types, varying levels of product involvement, or perceived risk associated with online purchases would provide a more nuanced understanding. Longitudinal studies could also capture dynamic changes in eWOM behavior and its long-term effects.

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