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The Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on Consumer Purchase Intention in Saudi Arabia E-Commerce Fashion Market: Exploring Trends, Credibility, and Social Media Influence

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the impact of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) on consumer purchase intention (CPI) in Saudi Arabia's fashion e-commerce sector. It also investigates whether brand image and social media characteristics mediate the EWOM-CPI relationship. A quantitative survey of 600 online fashion consumers across Saudi Arabia was conducted, using R statistical software for analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient assessed direct relationships, while the Large Sample Wald Test and General Linear Model examined mediating effects. Results showed significant correlations between EWOM factors—credibility, perceived quality, consumer engagement, and trust—and CPI. Brand image and social media features were found to mediate the EWOM-CPI relationship. This study contributes to existing literature by highlighting the mediating roles of brand image, social media attributes, and engagement in EWOM and CPI, providing new insights from Saudi Arabia's e-commerce landscape. Given the scarcity of similar studies in the Arab region, the research is significant and proposes a framework for future studies. The findings offer valuable implications for marketers and consumer behavior analysts, aiding in the development of effective digital marketing strategies that leverage EWOM to enhance CPI in Saudi Arabia, along with practical recommendations for fashion sector professionals.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth, Consumer Purchase Intention, Brand Image, Social Media Influence, Consumer Engagement
JEL Classifications: M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital landscape, consumer behavior is increasingly shaped by Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) through Social Media platforms (SMPs) like blogs, and review sites, allowing individuals to share opinions on products and services (Cheung et al., 2008). Study by Rahaman et al. (2022) revealed that the quality, credibility, usefulness, and ease of use of (EWOM) significantly impact online consumers' intentions CPI to engage with (EWOM), thereby influencing their purchasing behaviors on social media. Additionally, Hussain (2024) emphasizes that consumer endorsements and reviews shared via social media, whether through (EWOM) or other means, greatly affect buying decisions, as consumers often view social media as a reliable source for their purchasing choices. SMPs have transformed the ways in which EWOM is shared, allowing consumers to interact directly with content through actions such as likes, shares, and comments. The previous studies have emphasized the credibility and quality of EWOM content (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hussain, 2024), this paper intends to further explore how interactions, including likes, shares, and comments, can either enhance or reduce the effectiveness of EWOM, particularly in Saudi Arabia's fashion e-commerce market. The findings will provide valuable insights for fashion e-commerce businesses to improve their social media marketing strategies by leveraging consumer engagement to build trust and boost conversion rates.

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The Saudi fashion industry has seen significant growth, primarily driven by the Vision 2030 initiative, which seeks to diversify the economy and enhance digital transformation. With internet penetration in Saudi Arabia at an impressive 98% and 93% of the population accessing online platforms via mobile devices, the digital landscape is thriving (Saudi Communications and Information Technology Commission, 2023). Additionally, the Central Bank of Saudi Arabia reported in 2024 that 24% increase in digital transactions through the national payment system which has laid the government prioritizes the e-commerce sector under Vision 2030. With over 70% of the population under 35 years old (Saudi Central Bank, (2023), SAMA Publishes Financial Stability Report (2024). Given the demographic and economic landscape, the e-commerce fashion sector is a vital area and relevant for research on EWOM and (CPI). Exploring the influence of EWOM on purchasing decisions in this sector can provide valuable insights into local consumer behavior. This study aligns with the goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative, which promotes digital transformation and economic diversification (Saudi Vision 2030). In the Saudi Arabia, consumers increasingly rely on social media for fashion purchasing decisions, yet the impact of EWOM on CPI is unclear. While e-commerce is growing, businesses struggle to effectively use EWOM to influence consumer choices and increase sales, this research aims to address this gap by examining how consumer interactions with EWOM on social media affect CPI in Saudi Arabia's fashion e-commerce sector. It will focus on the interactive role of likes, shares, and comments in enhancing EWOM credibility and its influence on buying behavior.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)

EWOM refers to "the online sharing of information, opinions, and experiences about products or services, primarily through social media, online reviews, and discussion forums" (Chaffey et al., 2016). In the realm of (SMPs), EWOM includes user-generated content such as insights, recommendations, and evaluations related to various offerings. These platforms facilitate the exchange of information through reviews, comments, and endorsements, which collectively constitute EWOM. As more consumers rely on SMPs for information, EWOM significantly influences decision-making and fosters virtual communities where users actively share knowledge. This environment not only shapes consumer perceptions and guides choices but also promotes consumer-driven discussions and interactions (Long, 2022; Daowd et al., 2021).

2.2. Social Media Platforms (SMPs)

Social media platforms (SMPs) are essential for connecting individuals and groups, enabling the exchange of values, ideas, and information. In these digital spaces, consumer behavior is heavily shaped by social interactions, leading to shifts in attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing choices. Businesses leverage social media to boost user engagement and establish a robust online presence, creatively marketing their products to attract consumer interest (Aspasia and Ourania, 2014; Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014; Felix et al., 2017). Acknowledging its significance, businesses are increasingly leveraging SMPs as an effective means to communicate about their products and services (Daowd et al., 2021). The development of SMPs has transformed EWOM, allowing consumers to interact with content through likes, sharing, and comments, which enhances the credibility of EWOM and significantly influences purchasing decisions (Rahaman et al., 2022, Hussain, 2024). However, there is still a notable lack of research on how social media interactions affect the effectiveness of EWOM in driving PI.

2.3. Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI)

Purchase intention (PI) measures a consumer's eagerness to buy a product, shaped by psychological, social, and informational factors (Oosthuizen et al., 2015). It reflects both consumer interest and readiness to purchase, serving as an indicator for predicting future sales. Accurate forecasting of consumer behavior is crucial for businesses, necessitating improved estimations (Baabdullah et al., 2019). A consumer's overall attitude towards a product significantly impacts their PI, with positive attitudes increasing the likelihood of purchase (Manzoor et al., 2020).

2.4. Hypothesis Development

2.4.1. EWOM's credibility and impact on consumer purchase intentions (CPI)

In the context of EWOM, Ngarmwongnoi et al., 2020 defined EWOM credibility as "the extent to which one perceives other consumers' recommendations or reviews as believable, true, or factual." According to several studies (e.g., Ismail et al., 2024; Aghakhani et al., 2023; Khan and Khan, 2024), consumers' confidence in the information is influenced by the reliability of the source of EWOM, such as reviews from friends, family, or specialists. According to Aghakhani et al. (2023) research indicates that individuals are more inclined to trust online reviews that come from reliable and esteemed sources, such as friends, influencers, or family members. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a significant relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth Credibility (**C**) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).

2.4.2. The perceived quality of EWOM and consumer purchase intentions

Information quality refers to "the capacity of a message to effectively influence consumers' purchasing decisions" (Yeap et al., 2014). Two important aspects affecting consumer attitudes and PI are the quality and usefulness of the information disseminated through EWOM. Customers are far more likely to use information that is relevant, thorough, and of high quality when making judgments. According to (Ismail et al., 2024, Ngo et al., 2024) for EWOM to have an impact, it must be not only reliable but also helpful and pertinent to the needs of the customer. Therefore, marketers need to concentrate on producing content that satisfies these requirements. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a significant relationship between Perceived Quality of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (PQ) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).

2.4.3. Consumer engagement and interactive nature of EWOM

Research by Hollebeek (2011) highlights that consumer engagement encompasses the emotional connections, attachment, and commitment individuals develop within a specific context. (SMPs) with interactive features, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, allow users to engage more deeply with EWOM content, increasing its credibility and effectiveness in shaping PI. Although numerous studies have focused on the content-related aspects of EWOM, such as quality and credibility, there remains a significant gap in understanding the role of consumer engagement, indicating a need for further investigation (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hussain, 2024). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a significant relationship between Consumer Engagement with Electronic Word-of-Mouth (CE) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).

2.4.4. Consumer trust in EWOM

Consumers are more likely to rely on EWOM when they perceive it to be credible, trustworthy, and relevant to their needs (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Higher trust in EWOM correlates with a greater likelihood of consumers using it for purchasing decisions, as well as that trust and attitudes toward EWOM reviews significantly impact PI and review rankings (Torres et al., 2019). Numerous studies confirm that trust mediates the relationship between EWOM credibility and PI, with Mahmud et al. (2024) and Senanayake and Mudiyanse (2022), emphasizing trust in online reviews as vital for converting EWOM into sales. Matute et al. (2016) also demonstrated that trust mediates the link between EWOM and purchase probability. Accordingly, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a significant relationship between Consumer trust in Electronic Word-of-Mouth (T) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).

2.4.5. The impact of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) on consumer purchase intention (CPI)

The connection between EWOM and PI is crucial in understanding modern consumer behavior, especially in online shopping. Research by Dewi et al. (2023) indicates that positive EWOM can significantly enhance PI by improving product perceptions. Furthermore, while EWOM may not directly impact PI, it significantly influences brand image and brand trust, which are critical mediators in this relationship (Tafolli et al., 2025). Thwe (2025) highlighted that the credibility of information and favorable perceptions of EWOM play crucial roles in shaping consumer purchasing behavior, underscoring the significance of trust and active consumer involvement in online interactions. Previous research has emphasized the importance of the credibility and quality of EWOM content in influencing CPI (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hussain, 2024). This dynamic has become a powerful tool for influencing consumer attitudes and intentions. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a significant relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).

2.4.6. Brand image as a mediator

Brand image is the perception individuals form about a brand based on their past consumer experiences, encompassing the beliefs associated with it, as highlighted by Dewi et al. (2023) and Kotler and Armstrong (2018). Research by Zain and Vania (2024) shows that EWOM positively impacts brand image and online PI. Furthermore, Raditya and Kerti (2022) emphasize the significant link between EWOM and PI, with brand image acting as a mediating factor. Dewi (2024) also reveals that a strong brand image, bolstered by positive EWOM, enhances consumer trust and increases the likelihood of purchases. Therefore, brands must focus on cultivating a strong, positive image that aligns with favorable EWOM to effectively influence consumer buying behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: There is a significant indirect relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) through Brand Image (BI).

2.4.7. Social platform features and engagement on EWOM (PFE)

Platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tick Tock possess unique characteristics that shape consumer interactions with EWOM content, ultimately enhancing the quality of such communications. Peer-to-peer communication and user-generated content are two features of social media that foster EWOM and increase its influence on purchasing decisions (Salsabila and Indrawati, 2024; Kohler et al., 2023). Research by (Kohler et al., 2023) shows that platform-specific characteristics (such Instagram's visual emphasis, TikTok engaging videos, Snapchat "self-destructing" photos and videos) might increase the impact of EWOM on customers' PI. These platforms-specific features enhance the efficacy of EWOM quality, as varying content types and interaction styles contribute to increased PI (Filieri, 2015; Rahaman et al., 2022). The interactions that mediate the impact of EWOM on consumer choices warrant further exploration, as suggested by (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hussain, 2024). However, there is still a notable research gap regarding how these social media interactions affect EWOM's effectiveness in driving PI (Hussain, 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be put forward:

H_7: There is a significant indirect relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) through Platform Features and Engagement on Electronic Word-of-Mouth (PFE).

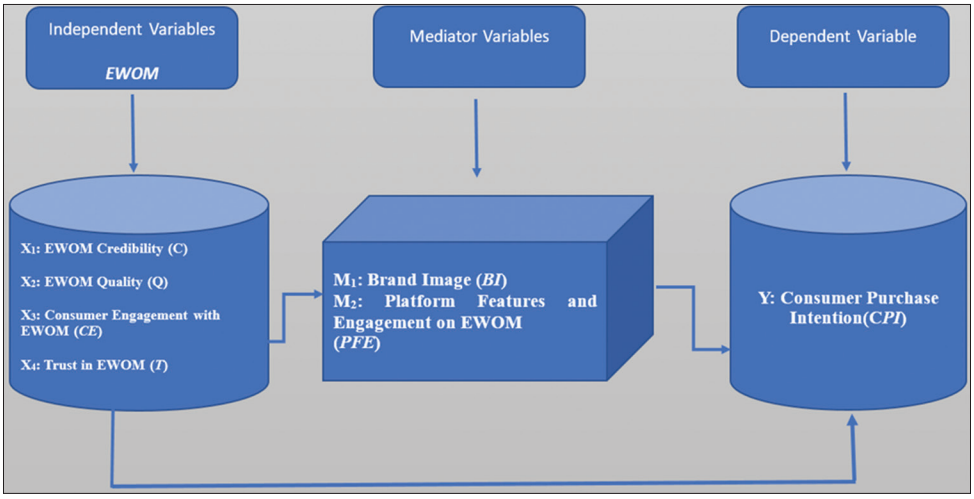
Regarding research framework, this research explores the effects of EWOM Credibility, Perceived Quality, Consumer Engagement, and Trust on (CPI). It also examines how brand image and social media platform characteristics mediate the relationship between EWOM and (CPI), as outlined in the research hypothesis. Figure 1 illustrates the research's framework and objectives.

3. RESEACH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample Designing and Data Collection

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyze the population and sample while exploring relationships among variables. The target population consists of social media users aged 18 and above engaged in fashion e-commerce in Saudi Arabia. A purposive convenience sampling technique was employed, inviting Saudi social media users to participate via Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and fashion promotion groups across the country regions. This method has been used in various studies to gather similar consumer

Figure 1: Research framework



Source: The researcher

data (e.g., Guan et al., 2021; Yadav and Pathak, 2016). The research aimed at a sample size of 600 respondents, which was successfully achieved, with demographic information provided in Table 1.

3.2. Measurement Instrument

The data collection methods involved an online questionnaire consisting of two sections, Section one focused on demographic data including age, gender, education level, income level, the most platforms getting information from and the most platforms marketing from. Section two includes statements describing the variables of the study, that consisted of the dimensions and instruments of the study. Existing scales in the relevant literature were adapted to measure the constructs. EWOM Credibility (Erkan and Evans, 2016; Ngo et al., 2024; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Aghakhani et al., 2023), EWOM Perceived Quality (Ismail et al., 2024; Erkan and Evans, 2016), Consumer Engagement with EWOM (Rahaman et al., 2022; Hollebeek, 2011), Trust in EWOM (Ali and Cai, 2022; Matute et al., 2016; Senanayake and Mudiyanse, 2022), Brand Image (Aghakhani et al., 2023; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), Platform Features and Engagement on EWOM (Erkan and Evans, 2016; Kumar and Pandey, 2023) and Consumer Purchase Intention (Erkan and Evans, 2016; Ali and Cai, 2022; Filieri, 2015).

The researcher conducted a pilot study by distributing 75 questionnaires to assess the clarity of the questions and ensure that respondents could easily understand them. Adjustments were made based on the feedback, and the final version of the questionnaire was prepared.

Table 1: Respondents' demographic information and SMPs usage

Demographics	Classification	Percentage of respondents
Age	18-24 year	25
	25-34 year	24
	35-44 year	22
	45-54 year	20
	More than 54 year	9
Gender	Male	34
	Female	66
Education level	High school	21
	Undergraduate	39
	Postgraduate	25
	Others	15
Income levels	<5000 SAR	8
	5000-10,000 SAR	32
	10,000-15,000 SAR	34
	More than 15,000 SAR	26
The most platforms getting information from	Instagram	15
	Snapchat	11
	Tick-Tok	17
	YouTube	26
	Others (14 Facebook, 17 WhatsApp)	31
The most platforms marketing from	Instagram	14
	Snapchat	10
	Tick-Tok	17
	YouTube	25
	Others (15% Facebook, 19% WhatsApp)	34

Source: Researcher

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The survey questionnaire contained four demographics questions and two questions for social platforms usage as shown in Table 1. In terms of age distribution, most respondents, 25% fell within 18-24 age, and those over 54 age represent the least of the sample respondents accounting for 9 %. Regarding gender distribution, most of the participants identified as female (66%), while 34% identified as male. For education level, most of the respondents identified as undergraduate (39%), followed by postgraduate 25%, high school represent 21% of the sample and others comprising 15% of the sample. Regarding the income levels, many respondents fell in 10,000-15,000 SAR, comprising 34% of the sample, and 8% of the respondents fell within <5000 SAR. Among the most platforms getting information from by participants, YouTube emerged as the most frequently used platform, with 26% of respondents, while Snapchat exhibited smaller user bases, with 11% of participants. Finally among the most platforms marketing from by respondents, YouTube emerged as the most frequently used platform, with 25% of respondents. Snapchat exhibited smaller user bases, with 10% of participants.

Table 2: Compilation of research variables, associated statements, and their respective symbols

Independent variables: Electronic Word-of-Mouth EWOM (X)		Statements	# of statements
C (X_1)	EWOM credibility	From S1 to S4	4
PQ (X_2)	EWOM perceived quality	From S5 to S8	4
CE (X_3)	Consumer engagement with EWOM	From S9 to S12	4
T (X_4)	Trust in EWOM	From S13 to S15	3
Mediator Variables			
BI (M_1)	Brand Image	From S16 to S18	3
PFE (M_2)	Platform features and engagement on EWOM	From S19 to S24	6
Dependent variable			
CPI (Y)	Consumer Purchase Intention	From S25 to S29	5

Source: Researcher

4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

The questionnaire included 29 items grouped into seven variables based on a five-point Likert scale. Table 2 displays the study variables, the related statements for each variable and the type of each variable.

Reliability and validity assessments are conducted to evaluate the consistency and accuracy of questionnaire items. Reliability measures the inter-consistency of the items, while validity assesses how well the statements represent the target population's traits. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine reliability, producing values between zero and one (Salkind, 2017, Raykov, 1997). Table 3 presents the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and Validity coefficient for each item in the questionnaire, as well as for each variable listed in the questionnaire.

From Table 3; The minimum observed value for Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.645, while the lowest Validity coefficient recorded was 0.843. This indicates, with a 95% confidence level, the collected data is both reliable and valid.

Table 4 summarizes the frequency distribution for each statement, organized by the five levels of the Likert scale. The researcher labeled the variable statements from S_1 to S_{29}.

Figure 2 shows the Path diagram of the model.

Regarding tests and measurements, the t-test was conducted to analyze the trends in respondents' opinions for each statement of the questionnaire. Table 5 shows that the P-value is below the 5% significance level for all questionnaire items. The researcher now has statistical evidence, at a 95% confidence level, indicating that responses lean towards the positive end of the scale (Agreement side), as supported by the t-test value. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents generally express agreement.

The t-test was also used to test the trend of respondents in the population for each variable of the study. Table 6 clearly indicates that participants generally agree or strongly agree with the questionnaire statements at 95% significance level for all variables studied.

4.2. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing evaluates the significance of the influence between the study variables. It is clear from Table 7 the Correlation Coefficient among dependent, independent and Mediator variables are below the 5% threshold, indicating a significant positive correlation between them at a 95% confidence level.

This is further illustrated in Figure 3.

4.3. Testing Mediation with Regression Analysis

The Large Sample Wald Test was used to test the Mediated Effect between the dependent and independent variables (Sobel, 1982) while the Bootstrap method was used to test the direct, indirect, and total effects between the dependent and independent variables (Tibshirani and Efron, 1993). The model is depicted in Figure 4 which shows direct and indirect effects of independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y).

In the following section, the researcher analyzes the variance of regression models that include mediator variables, evaluating the significance of each model. The regression coefficients will be examined to determine the direct and indirect effects of the mediators, along with the direct, indirect, and total effects for each model. Table 8 summarizes the analysis of variance for each estimated regression model.

From Table 8, the researcher presents the following findings:

All the models at a 95% confidence level, the independent variable EWOM (X) significantly impacts the dependent variables CPI (Y) as well as the influences of the mediator BI (M_1) and PFE (M_2), with a coefficient of determination given in Table 8 for each model (Table 8).

According to the previous results, the researcher applies GLM technique (General Linear Model) using the two mediator variables in between the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Figure 5 shows the results.

From Figure 5; the researcher concludes the following results:

- As BI increased by one-unit EWOM will increase by 0.87 units
- As PFE increased by one-unit EWOM will increase by 0.78 units
- As BI increased by one- unit CPI will increase by 0.88 units
- As PFE increased by one unit CPI will increase by 0.88 units.

Table 9 shows the total effect, direct effect and indirect effect of the mediator variable, using Bootstrap method.

From Table 9 the researcher has achieved the following results:

There is statistical evidence with 95% confidence level that the mediator variable has effect on the dependent variable.

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha and validity coefficients of each statement and each variable

Statement	Cronbach's alpha	Validity	Rank
S1: I trust the opinions of online reviewers when considering fashion products.	0.841	0.917	Good
S2: I find reviews from other consumers (e.g., peers, influencers) to be reliable.	0.890	0.943	Good
S3: I believe that online reviews provide honest and authentic information about fashion products.	0.921	0.960	Excellent
S4: The source of the EWOM (e.g., family, friends, online reviews) affects my trust in the information shared:	0.864	0.930	Good
X_1	0.873	0.934	Good
S5: I find EWOM reviews about fashion products to be detailed and informative.	0.845	0.919	Good
S6: The quality of the information provided in online reviews influences my perception of the product.	0.752	0.867	Acceptable
S7: The relevance of online reviews to my personal preferences affects my purchasing decisions.	0.841	0.917	Good
S8: The review content (e.g., images, descriptions) helps me make better purchasing decisions.	0.759	0.871	Acceptable
X_2	0.784	0.885	Acceptable
S9: I engage with fashion-related EWOM content on social media (e.g., likes, shares, comments).	0.748	0.865	Acceptable
S10: I often follow and interact with influencers who share fashion-related EWOM content.	0.985	0.992	Excellent
S11: My interactions with EWOM content on social media affect my confidence in making a purchase.	0.908	0.953	Excellent
S12: I trust reviews that have high engagement (likes, comments, shares) on social media platforms.	0.847	0.920	Good
X_3	0.921	0.960	Excellent
S13: I trust the information I receive from social media influencers regarding fashion products.	0.911	0.954	Excellent
S14: I trust reviews from previous customers about the fashion brand or product.	0.875	0.935	Good
S15: The trustworthiness of a review significantly influences my decision to purchase a fashion product online.	0.766	0.875	Acceptable
X_4	0.883	0.940	Good
S16: I prefer to buy fashion products from brands with a positive online reputation.	0.794	0.891	Acceptable
S17 The overall image of the fashion brand influences how I perceive EWOM about its products.	0.843	0.918	Good
S18: A strong brand image increases my trust in EWOM about the brand's products.	0.821	0.906	Good
M_1	0.874	0.935	Good
S19: Interactive features (e.g., likes, comments, shares) on social media platforms make EWOM content more trustworthy when deciding to purchase fashion products.	0.892	0.944	Good
S20: The algorithms of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook's News Feed, Instagram's Explore page) increase the visibility of EWOM content, making it easier to find relevant fashion product reviews.	0.749	0.865	Acceptable
S21: The type of content on social media (e.g., images, videos, reviews) influence my decision to purchase fashion products.	0.859	0.927	Good
S22: Influencers and peers on social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, YouTube) play a major role in shaping my opinions about fashion products based on EWOM.	0.904	0.951	Excellent
S23: I trust fashion product reviews on social media more when I perceive the content to be genuine and unbiased	0.645	0.803	Questionable
S24: The use of Instagram Stories or YouTube videos with interactive features (e.g., polls, questions) makes me more likely to trust EWOM and purchase fashion products.	0.821	0.906	Good
M_2	0.892	0.944	Good
S25: After reading positive online reviews, I am more likely to purchase a fashion product.	0.711	0.843	Acceptable
S26: EWOM has a significant influence on my decision to purchase fashion products online.	0.953	0.976	Excellent
S27: I am more likely to buy fashion products from e-commerce platforms where I see positive reviews.	0.958	0.979	Excellent
S28: I am more likely to make a fashion purchase based on EWOM content shared on social media	0.832	0.912	Good
S29: online reviews and ratings influence my final decision to purchase a fashion product.	0.935	0.967	Excellent
Y	0.902	0.950	Excellent

Source: Researcher

Table 4: Frequency distribution of each statement of the variables

Statement	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Natural		Agree		Strongly agree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Independent variable: EWOM credibility X_1										
S1	87	14.26	86	14.10	80	13.11	180	29.51	177	29.02
S2	74	12.13	87	14.26	132	21.64	155	25.41	162	26.56
S3	78	12.79	91	14.92	112	18.36	159	26.07	170	27.87
S4	77	12.62	67	10.98	99	16.23	168	27.54	199	32.62
Independent variable: EWOM perceived quality X_2										
S5	49	8.03	54	8.85	99	16.23	171	28.03	237	38.85
S6	61	10.00	66	10.82	107	17.54	168	27.54	208	34.10
S7	70	11.48	73	11.97	110	18.03	171	28.03	186	30.49
S8	56	9.18	54	8.85	118	19.34	180	29.51	202	33.11
Independent variable: Consumer engagement with EWOM X_3										
S9	43	7.05	58	9.51	106	17.38	205	33.61	198	32.46
S10	51	8.36	60	9.84	120	19.67	195	31.97	184	30.16
S11	45	7.38	55	9.02	134	21.97	177	29.02	199	32.62
S12	39	6.39	41	6.72	158	25.90	191	31.31	181	29.67
Independent variable: Trust in EWOM X_4										
S13	29	4.75	45	7.38	122	20.00	178	29.18	236	38.69
S14	34	5.57	51	8.36	145	23.77	191	31.31	189	30.98
S15	36	5.90	57	9.34	167	27.38	173	28.36	177	29.02
Mediator variable: Brand image M_1										
S16	61	10.00	71	11.64	116	19.02	175	28.69	187	30.66
S17	58	9.51	64	10.49	134	21.97	160	26.23	194	31.80
S18	48	7.87	72	11.80	158	25.90	181	29.67	151	24.75
Statement	**Strongly disagree**		**Disagree**		**Natural**		**Agree**		**Strongly agree**	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Mediator variable: Platform features and engagement on EWOM M_2										
S19	82	13.44	91	14.92	114	18.69	142	23.28	181	29.67
S20	75	12.30	82	13.44	102	16.72	156	25.57	195	31.97
S21	89	14.59	58	9.51	89	14.59	181	29.67	193	31.64
S22	79	12.95	68	11.15	123	20.16	151	24.75	189	30.98
S23	84	13.77	74	12.13	121	19.84	167	27.38	164	26.89
S24	48	7.87	88	14.43	147	24.10	182	29.84	145	23.77
Dependent variable: Consumer purchase intention Y										
S25	48	7.87	54	8.85	105	17.21	201	32.95	202	33.11
S26	55	9.02	49	8.03	112	18.36	188	30.82	206	33.77
S27	58	9.67	51	8.50	124	20.67	163	27.17	204	34.00
S28	47	7.70	61	10.00	132	21.64	178	29.18	192	31.48
S29	52	8.52	66	10.82	128	20.98	169	27.70	195	31.97

Source: Researcher

The researcher concludes the regression equations for the models as follows:

$$\underset{(R^2=74.60\%)}{CPI} = \underset{(0.000)}{0.087} + \underset{(0.000)}{1.802}\, EWOM \quad (1)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=75.49\%)}{BI} = \underset{(0.034)}{0.056} + \underset{(0.000)}{1.224}\, EWOM \quad (2)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=70.42\%)}{PFE} = \underset{(0.040)}{0.057} + \underset{(0.000)}{1.071}\, EWOM \quad (3)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=78.09\%)}{CPI} = \underset{(0.041)}{0.084} + \underset{(0.000)}{0.651}\, BI \quad (4)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=79.02\%)}{CPI} = \underset{(0.044)}{0.079} + \underset{(0.000)}{0.405}\, PFE \quad (5)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=91.45\%)}{CPI} = \underset{(0.036)}{0.087} + \underset{(0.004)}{0.604}\, BI + \underset{(0.000)}{0.651}\, EWOM \quad (6)$$

$$\underset{(R^2=94.66\%)}{CPI} = \underset{(0.002)}{0.051} + \underset{(0.001)}{0.542}\, PFE + \underset{(0.000)}{0.607}\, EWOM \quad (7)$$

Findings and test ofhypotheses:

According to the previous statistical analysis and the study hypotheses, Table 10 summarizes the results regarding the hypotheses.

5. DISCUSSION

This research aims to investigate the influence of EWOM on CPI in the Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce sector, The proposed research model rested on particular attention to the roles of EWOM credibility, EWOM perceived quality, consumer engagement, consumer trust on CPI and the mediating roles of brand image and social media platform feature and Engagement on EWOM, on CPI. The findings of this study generally support this research model. The results of the study are consistent with some previous studies and were applied in a different market sector and a different region, and some of them differ with other previous studies and represent an addition to what was proposed for future studies, as it represents a real addition to theoretical aspects in the field of research.

Table 5: Results of T-test for each statement of the questionnaire

Statement	t-test value	P-value	Statement	t-test value	P-value
S1	31.19	0.004	S16	42.58	0.006
S2	34.20	0.003	S17	37.68	0.004
S3	35.74	0.000	S18	39.52	0.000
S4	29.54	0.005	S19	37.72	0.008
S5	33.57	0.020	S20	37.62	0.007
S6	38.43	0.007	S21	40.59	0.010
S7	34.59	0.009	S22	42.87	0.040
S8	47.42	0.030	S23	39.68	0.007
S9	44.73	0.040	S24	41.84	0.000
S10	39.48	0.008	S25	46.52	0.000
S11	44.61	0.001	S26	39.67	0.008
S12	47.02	0.010	S27	38.94	0.004
S13	34.94	0.020	S28	42.69	0.000
S14	37.11	0.007	S29	38.25	0.009
S15	38.37	0.000			

Source: Researcher

Table 6: Results of t-test for study variables

Variables	t-test value	P-value
EWOM Credibility (X_1)	42.76	0.000
EWOM Perceived Quality (X_2)	44.01	0.000
Consumer Engagement with EWOM (X_3)	41.52	0.001
Trust in EWOM (X_4)	45.67	0.000
Brand Image (M_1)	47.57	0.005
Platform Features and Engagement on EWOM (M_2)	42.68	0.004
Consumer Purchase Intention Y	50.48	0.000

Source: Researcher

Table 7: Correlation Coefficient among dependent, independent and mediator variable

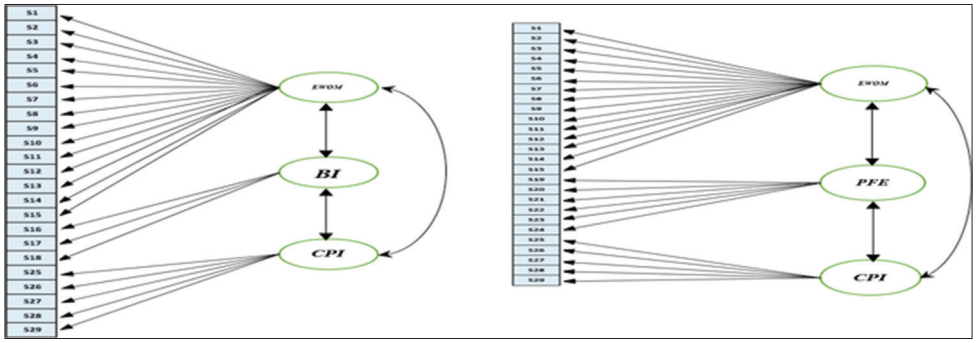
Variables	Y
EWOM credibility (X_1)	
R	87.20%
Significant value	0.000
EWOM perceived quality (X_2)	
R	84.80%
Significant value	0.000
Consumer engagement with EWOM (X_3)	
R	82.30%
Significant value	0.002
Trust in EWOM (X_4)	
R	74.60%
Significant value	0.000
Brand image (M_1)	
R	81.50%
Significant value	0.000
Platform features and engagement on EWOM (M_2)	
R	80.70%
Significant value	0.001
Consumer purchase intention Y	
R	100.00%
Significant value	0.000

Source: Researcher

One of the major findings of this research is that it identifies the EWOM credibility, EWOM perceived quality, consumer engagement, consumer trust and empirically tests their effects on CPI. First, some of the proposed EWOM factors emerged in the literature review were validated in a quantitative analysis by establishing discriminant validity. Next, the significant relationships between EWOM factors and CPI were confirmed. This result is in harmony with those of earlier research (Ali and Cai, 2022; Ismail et al., 2024; Aghakhani et al., 2023; Khan and Khan, 2024) which concluded that when EWOM credibility strengthens, it increases consumer confidence in their purchasing decisions. Further support was seen in the study of Ismail et al. (2024) and Ngo et al. (2024) who reported that the quality and usefulness of the information disseminated through EWOM have a significant impact on CPI. Moreover, the finding regarding consumer trust in EWOM validates and supports studies of Torres et al., 2019 who identifies that there is a significant relationship between Consumer trust in EWOM and CPI, while other numerous studies of Mahmud et al. (2024) and Senanayake et al. (2022) confirm that trust mediates the relationship between EWOM credibility and purchase intentions. Also, regarding Brand Image as a mediator between (EWOM) and (CPI) Further support was seen in the study of Raditya and Kerti (2022) and Dewi (2024) studies who highlighted the significant relationship between EWOM and PI, with brand image acting as a mediator. Further support was seen in the study of Dewi et al., 2023 who concluded that favorable EWOM significantly influences PI. Moreover, this study concluded that there is a significant relationship between Consumer Engagement with EWOM and CPI while extensive studies have focused on the content-related dimensions of EWOM, including its quality, credibility, and usefulness as highlighted by Rahaman et al. (2022) and Hussain (2024), this study is different because it focused on the interactions such as likes, shares, comments, and responses to EWOM content serve to enhance the perceived legitimacy of the information, thereby amplifying its influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Finally, finding regarding the significant indirect relationship between EWOM and CPI through Platform Features and Engagement on EWOM as suggested by Rahaman et al. (2022), and Hussain (2024) who suggested a notable research gap regarding how these social media interactions affect EWOM's effectiveness in driving purchase intentions. This study has worked to close this research gap by focusing on how consumer interactions on SMPs such as likes, shares, comments, and replies—influence EWOM's reputation and purchasing decisions which has provided vital information about how interactive social media components strengthened the effectiveness of EWOM. SMPs with interactive features, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Tick-Tok in Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce sector, provided users with opportunities to engage more deeply with EWOM content, thereby augmenting its credibility and effectiveness in shaping Saudi CPI. By looking at the Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce context, it can be seen most of the buyers prefer browsing through social media channels to look for fashion products and interact with one another. Due to these facts, social media has been regarded as the most viable option for connecting and interacting with current as well as prospective customers.

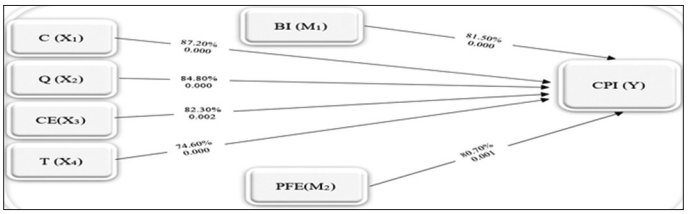
This research aimed to provide a significant theoretical advancement to the empirical body of work by examining and validating the influence of EWOM content and interactions on

Figure 2: Path diagram of EWOM and CPI through each mediator variables



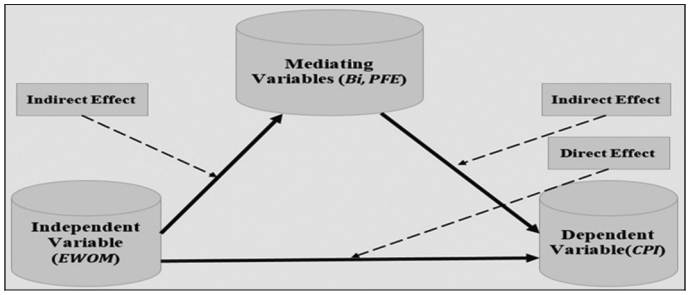
Source: The researcher

Figure 3: Correlation coefficient among dependent, independent and mediator variable



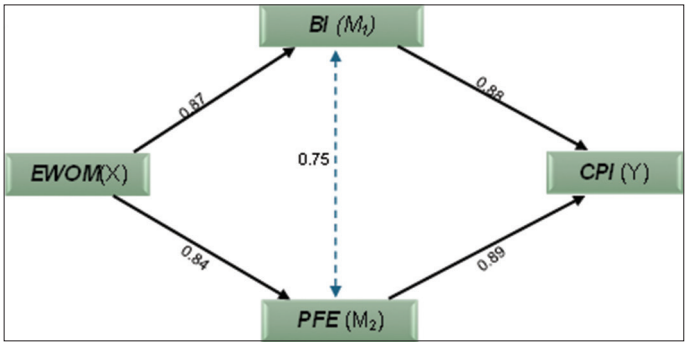
Source: Researcher

Figure 4: Representation of the mediators within the structural model



Source: Researcher

Figure 5: GLM of the relationship between EWOM and CPI through BI and PFE



Source: Researcher

SMPs in forecasting (CPI) within the context of the Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce sector. A review of the existing literature reveals that numerous studies have concentrated on the content-related aspects of EWOM, such as its quality, credibility, and utility, as noted by Rahaman et al. (2022) and Hussain (2024). This study specifically explores how the features and interactions

Table 8: Summary of analysis of variance for regression models involving mediator variables

Models	Dependent variable	Independent variables	R^2 (%)	Significant
Model 1: Y=f (X)	CPI (Y)	EWOM (X)	74.60	0.000
Model 2: M_1=f (X)	BI (M_1)	EWOM (X)	75.49	0.000
Model 3: M_2=f (X)	PFE (M_2)	EWOM (X)	70.42	0.000
Model 4: Y=f (M_1)	CPI (Y)	BI (M_1)	78.09	0.000
Model 5: Y=f (M_2)	CPI (Y)	PFE (M_2)	79.02	0.000
Model 6: Y=f (X, M_1)	CPI (Y)	EWOM (X)	10.25	0.004
		BI (M_1)	81.20	0.000
Model 7: Y=f (X, M_2)	CPI (Y)	EWOM (X)	09.36	0.001
		PFE (M_2)	85.30	0.000

Source: Researcher

Table 9: Direct, indirect, and total effects using bootstrap

Type of effect	Coefficient	SE $S_{b(i)}$	H_0: $\beta_{(i)}=0$	Significant value	LL of $\beta_{(i)}$	UL of $\beta_{(i)}$
Total	1.802	0.023	47.260	0.000	1.325	1.904
Direct (X→Y)	1.198	0.072	6.868	0.000	0.926	1.236
Indirect (X→M_1→Y)	0.604	0.452	1.021	0.035	0.390	0.809
Indirect (X→M_2→Y)	0.542	0.452	1.021	0.028	0.305	0.761

Source: Researcher

of SMPs enhance the effectiveness of EWOM in influencing CPI. Consumers with strong online social networks prioritize the social aspects of EWOM when shopping for fashion products. This leads them to value EWOM's social elements and recognize its significant link to their PI, reinforcing their fashion buying choices. Additionally, features of SMPs and user engagement mediate the relationship between EWOM content and (CPI). Research shows that social media features and engagement greatly affect this relationship, with interactive elements like likes, comments, and shares boosting EWOM credibility and influencing fashion purchases. Encouraging customers to share experiences and engage on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat can enhance engagement with fashion products and increase PI.

Table 10: Conclusion of research hypothesis

No.	Hypothesis	Decision
H_1	There is a significant relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth Credibility (C) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	Accept
H_2	There is a significant relationship between The Perceived Quality of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (PQ) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	Accept
H_3	There is a significant relationship between Consumer Engagement with Electronic Word-of-Mouth (CE) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	Accept
H_4	There is a significant relationship between Consumer trust in Electronic Word-of-Mouth (T) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	Accept
H_5	There is a significant relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	Accept
H_6	There is a significant indirect relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) through Brand Image (BI).	Accept
H_7	There is a significant indirect relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) through Platform Features and Engagement on Electronic Word-of-Mouth (PFE).	Accept

Source: Researcher

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study offer both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study results will contribute to the understanding of the impact of EWOM on customers' PI. The results exhibited that all the Independent Variable: EWOM Credibility, EWOM Perceived Quality, Consumer Engagement with EWOM, Trust in EWOM have significant direct relationships with the dependent variable CPI. The analysis further indicated that, brand image and SMPs feature and Engagement on EWOM have significant indirect relationships with the dependent variable CPI regarding the Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce sector. The findings of this study provide important insights for marketing professionals, highlighting the critical role of SMPs in the fashion e-commerce sector. Practitioners should utilize these channels to create engaging content and communicate key marketing messages to meet their strategic objectives. Effectively managing EWOM on social media is essential for enhancing consumer engagement and PI. Marketers should focus on crafting appealing advertisements that elicit positive emotions towards the service provider and deepen consumer connections with fashion products. When developing social media content, prioritizing quality and specific attributes is vital for building brand trust and influencing purchasing decisions. Additionally, marketing experts must understand the types of brand information consumers seek on social media and identify content that can enhance consumer interactions. Tools like Google Analytics can aid marketers in tracking consumer responses to online content.

This study recognizes several limitations that future research should address. The data was collected via a survey to evaluate the influence of EWOM on CPI in the Saudi Arabian fashion e-commerce sector. Future studies could benefit from qualitative or longitudinal methodologies. Additionally, the data was sourced solely from this specific market, indicating the need for replication in varied contexts to broaden understanding. The research concentrated on the convenience sampling method used suggests that future research should adopt random sampling techniques to enhance the generalizability of results. This study also examines the impact of EWOM on consumer buying intentions with a mediator. Future researchers may explore the moderating effects of brand image and social media platform features on EWOM engagement.

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