

THE APPLICATION OF THE ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL IN EXPLAINING E-WOM ADOPTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to apply the elaboration likelihood model in explaining the behaviors in online shopping through social media. This study examined the influence of argument quality, source credibility, and sources attractiveness on e-WOM adoption, and the influence of e-WOM adoption on repurchase intention. The research sample was determined using a non-probability sampling method with a total of 140 people, who are active users of social media in Bali. The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS). The analysis results showed that argument quality, source credibility, and attractiveness have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM adoption and e-WOM adoption also has a positive and significant influence on repurchase intention.

Keywords: *elaboration likelihood model, e-wom adoption, repurchase intention, social media.*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors that greatly contribute to the rapid development of information technology is related to the speed and ease offered as a result of internet technology innovation itself (Hatta and Salman, 2016). The development of this technology has also changed the attitude of consumers in shopping. The majority of consumers in this globalization era tend to find information related to a particular product through the internet, instead of conventional media.

The development of the internet provides a new world for customers to communicate and influence one another (Putranti and Pradana, 2015). According to a survey conducted by the Association of Internet Service Providers in Indonesia (APJII), the internet usage in Indonesia has increased every year. The survey data obtained from the association is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Total Number of Internet Users in Indonesia

No	Year	Total Users (Millions of People)	Percentage (%)	Increase each Year (%)
1	2013	71,2	28,6	
2	2014	88,1	34,9	24
3	2015	110,2	41,8	25
4	2016	132,7	51,7	20
5	2017	143,3	54,7	8
6	2018	171,2	64,8	19

Source: APJII (2018)

The data in Table 1 shows that every year, there is an increase in internet users in Indonesia. The largest increment, by 11%, occurred in 2018. By the end of 2018, the total internet users in Indonesia reached 171.2 million people. The increase in internet usage also led to the increase in online shopping activities. However, most internet users in Indonesia still have doubts about making online purchases. According to the survey by APJII in 2017, internet users who search for information about products and services on the internet are frequently unsure whether they will buy the product or not. This technological trend demands companies to adapt to the situation. Internet medias can be used for promotional purpose which will develop the customers' purchase intentions and at the same time improve sales (MarkPlus Institute, 2015).

In this research, social media is the research object, while the focus is on the sales of fashion items, specifically the shirts made from flannel. To obtain information regarding what products are often searched by consumers via the internet, a preliminary research was conducted in February 2020. The preliminary research examined 30 consumers who were in the millennial age range and were familiar with online shopping. The preliminary research results revealed that social media is the most frequently used tool to find information about a product with a percentage of 80% of the 30 respondents. 50% of the 30 respondents chose fashion products as their most desired product in online shopping. Flannel-based shirt products were chosen as the research subject because its market fit the criteria of millennial respondents. Quoted from the business website bali.com, shirts made from flannel, or often called flannel shirts are still popular in 2020. The preliminary research results also supported APJII's data, in which 67% of the 30 respondents were uncertain whether they would purchase the products online even though they have searched for information about these products. This means that companies must adapt to improve consumer's purchase intentions, and at the same time increase sales.

Considering the significant impact of e-WOM adoption through internet media on the purchase intention of consumers, marketers must understand the factors that influence the trust of consumer towards opinions and recommendations shared through persuasive e-WOM messages (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a theory that explains about changes in attitude and is deemed to be able to provide a framework for organizing, categorizing, and understanding the basic processes that underlie the effectiveness of persuasive communication (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

This study adopted the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). Petty and Cacioppo (1986) stated that there are two routes for persuasive messages, namely the central route which considers the argument quality of the message, and the peripheral route which considers the credibility of the source and attractiveness of the message. The aim of this study is to explain: (1) the influence of argument quality on e-WOM adoption, (2) the influence of source credibility on e-WOM adoption, (3) the influence of the source attractiveness on e-WOM Adoption, and (4) the influence of e-WOM adoption on repurchase intentions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model describes how individuals are persuaded, which varies depending on the extent they are willing to be engaged in the persuasive elaboration (Wang, 2015). This theory is used to explain the persuasive power of e-WOM between consumers (Filiari and McLeay, 2013) and show how different consumer perspectives process information (Li, 2013). The ELM states that there are many processes of attitude change that move along the elaboration continuum (Petty and Briñol, 2014).

There are two relatively different routes of persuasion, namely (1) the central route, in which information is processed rationally and not affected by peripheral signals (Choi and Salmon, 2013) and (2) the peripheral route, in which the decisions are made based on cognitive processes that are less thorough or more superficial. Consumers tend to pay less attention to the contents of a message (Andri, 2012). Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that ELM is a process that describes people's perspective in processing information. In this study, argument quality is the central route because it focuses on the contents of the message, while the peripheral route of this research is the credibility and the attractiveness of the source because the two variables are not related to the content of the message, but rather to the character that shared the message.

Argument Quality

An argument is an action that expresses an idea, in the attempt to influence others. The argument becomes important if its contents have qualities that are appropriate to the context of the problem. Some experts define the quality of argument as the persuasive power of the argument (Xu and Yao, 2015). The quality of an argument is defined as the persuasive power of the argument embedded in the message's information. It can also be described as the extent to which recipients consider the argument in maintaining their stance (Teng et al. 2014). Another research showed that the quality of an argument has a positive influence on online reviews adoption (Xi and Zhong, 2015), but the research conducted by Yang and Mai (2010) revealed that the argument quality has a negative influence on e-WOM message. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis is as follows.

H1: Argument quality has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM Adoption.

Source Credibility

Source credibility refers to the degree to which a source is trusted and considered to have reliable expertise. The credibility of the information source is viewed to have an important role. Credible sources are more likely to be trusted by the information recipient (Sangadji and Sopia, 2013: 216). Readers evaluate the credibility of sources based on various signals, such as the author ratings given by the forum administrators, or by examining the author's profile to get more detailed information (for example, the recommendation of other

authors or the review by other group members' regarding the author) (Luo et al., 2013). Cheung et al. (2012); Fan et al. (2013); and Teng et al. (2014) found that source credibility has a positive influence on the persuasion of e-WOM messages. Lee and Koo (2012) also viewed that source credibility should be considered to determine whether an information (eWOM) is worth reading and adopting. However, Fan and Miao (2012) revealed that source credibility does not have an influence on e-WOM message. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H2: Source credibility has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM adoption.

Source Attractiveness

Source attractiveness refers to the extent to which recipients identify a source as interesting (Khong and Wu, 2013). Teng et al. (2014) have proven that the attractiveness of the source has a positive influence on e-WOM. The appeal of online reviews affects the acceptance of the information contained. Kiecker and Cowles (2001) found that source attractiveness has a positive influence on the persuasive e-WOM message. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H3: Source attractiveness has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM Adoption

e-WOM Adoption

The information adoption theory (Sussman and Siegel, 2003) describes the process of when people decide to do an activity for the first time (which is distinguishable from the continuous usage behavior). Cheung et al. (2008) stated that the adoption of information is the process in which people intentionally involve themselves in using the information. Adoption of information from online reviews can be defined as the process in which people intentionally involve themselves in using information (Cheung et al. 2008, and Park and Lee; 2009). Related to this definition, other research stated that an online review is the online information produced by consumers and consumers can access this information through two types of sources, namely: marketing development and consumer review sites (Bailey, 2005).

Syafaruddin et al. (2016) stated that the use of e-WOM has a significant influence on the intention to purchase a product. The review conducted by Jalilvand and Samiei in Putranti (2015: 104), stated that E-WOM communication has a positive influence on brand image and purchase intention, and brand image also influences consumer' purchase intention. Thus, the hypothesis developed is as follows.

H4: e-WOM Adoption has a positive and significant influence on repurchase intention..

Repurchase Intention

According to Andre as quoted in Yesi Apriani (2013: 3), repurchase intention is the desire of consumers to re-use the same product in the future. Meanwhile, according to Hawkins, Mothersbaugh and Best as quoted in Yesi Apriani (2013: 3), repurchase is the act of making a repeated purchase of a product with the same brand without any significant feelings towards the product. There are two possibilities that can cause someone to repurchase a product. First, consumers are satisfied with their purchase. Second, customers are dissatisfied, yet they still repurchase it.

Based on the literature review, results of previous studies, as well as the line of thought discussed earlier, the conceptual framework developed in this study is displayed in the figure below.

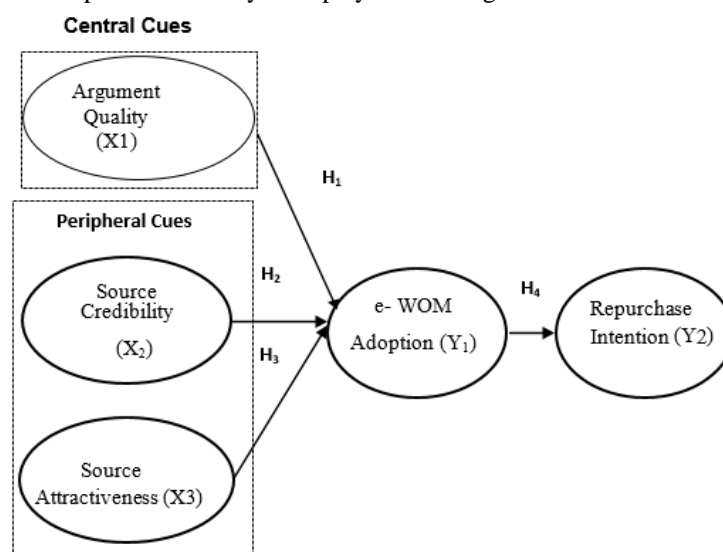


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model

III.

RESEARCH METHOD

The variables and their respective measurement indicators are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Indicators of the Research Variable

Variables	Indicators	Reference
Argument Quality (X1)	Relevant Information	Cheung and Thadani, (2012) and Xu and Yao, (2015)
	Actual Information	
	Accurate Information	
	Comprehensive Information	
Source Credibility (X2)	The author is knowledgeable about fashion products	Teng et al. (2014).
	The online review author can be trusted	
	The author has experiences in purchasing fashion products	
	The author frequently wrote reviews about fashion	
Source Attractiveness (X3)	likeable to the audience (likeability)	Shrimp (2003: 468)
	Similarity to the personality preferred by product users	
	Familiarity with the audience	
e-WOM Adoption (Y1)	Makes decision making easier	Xu dan Yao (2015) and Sussman and Siegal (2003)
	Effective decision making	
	Materials to be considered in decision making	
Repurchase Intention (Y2)	Intend to repurchase the fashion product through social media	(Ferdinand, 2002:129)
	Recommend others to shop through social media platforms	
	Have the desire to visit and search information about the product that I have purchased before.	

Source: Review of Previous Studies

The population examined in this study is the whole population in Bali. The research sample was determined using the purposive sampling method because the exact size of the population is not known. The samples were selected based on several criteria, namely they must be active social media users, at an age of 18 – 45 years old, active internet users in Bali, and have purchased fashion products through a social media platform.

The sample size was determined based on the formula of 5 – 10 times the research parameters, therefore the size ranges from 85 – 170 people. After the questionnaires were distributed, only the data from 140 people were deemed as valid. Thus, the total number of research sample is 140.

The data was collected using a research instrument, namely the questionnaire. Before it was distributed, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire must first be examined. The test results are displayed in Table 3 and 4.

Afterwards, the collected data is analyzed using the descriptive statistics analysis to describe the profile of respondents and the opinion of respondents regarding the research variable, and an inferential statistics analysis, namely the SEM method with the PLS approach is used to examine the hypotheses.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An instrument is deemed as valid if the correlation between the factor score and total score is positive and has a value of greater than 0.30 ($r > 0.3$). The results of the validity test is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Recapitulation of the Instrument Validity Test Results

No.	Variable	Question Item	Total Correlation	Correlation
1.	Argument Quality (X_1)	$X_{1.1}$	0,923	Valid
		$X_{1.2}$	0,874	Valid
		$X_{1.3}$	0,914	Valid
		$X_{1.4}$	0,921	Valid
2.	Source Credibility (X_2)	$X_{2.1}$	0,939	Valid
		$X_{2.2}$	0,838	Valid
		$X_{2.3}$	0,923	Valid
		$X_{2.4}$	0,920	Valid
3	Source Attractiveness (X_3)	$X_{3.1}$	0,918	Valid
		$X_{3.2}$	0,892	Valid
		$X_{3.3}$	0,901	Valid
4.	e-WOM Adoption (Y_1)	$Y_{1.1}$	0,937	Valid
		$Y_{1.2}$	0,900	Valid
		$Y_{1.3}$	0,946	Valid
5.	Repurchase Intention (Y_2)	$Y_{2.1}$	0,943	Valid
		$Y_{2.2}$	0,922	Valid
		$Y_{2.3}$	0,921	Valid

Source: Computed Data, 2020

The reliability test is a tool used to determine the accuracy of the answers to the questionnaire in different time periods. The results of the reliability test is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Recapitulation of the Instrument Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Argument Quality (X_1)	0,926	Reliable
Source Credibility (X_2)	0,926	Reliable
Source Attractiveness (X_3)	0,882	Reliable
e-WOM Adoption (Y_1)	0,915	Reliable
Repurchase Intention (Y_2)	0,915	Reliable

Source: Computed Data, 2020

The profile of respondents are displayed based on several demographic variables. The detailed profile of respondents are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Profile of Respondents

No.	Variable	Classification	Total (people)	Percentage (%)
1.	Age (Year)	19 to 25	86	61,4
		26 to 30	37	26,4
		31 to 40	13	9,3
		41 to 45	4	2,9
Total			140	100
2.	Gender	Male	72	51,4
		Female	68	46,8
Total			140	100
3.	Education Level	High School/ Equivalent	46	32,9
		Undergraduate Degree	84	60
		Postgraduate Degree	10	7,1
Total			140	100
		Student	32	22,9

4.	Occupation	Private Employee	58	41,4
		Public Employee	14	10,0
		Entrepreneur/Self-Employed	20	14,3
		Housewife	16	11,4
Total			140	100

Source: Primary Data, 2020

The summary in Table 5 shows that the sample is dominated by respondents who were at an age of 19 to 25 years old. This means that this age group is very familiar with technology, especially with social media, as well as more familiar with online shopping activities compared to the other age groups. Based on the gender, most of the respondents were male, but not to a significant extent, as many as 51.4 percent of the total. This means that men and women are equally active in online shopping activities. In terms of recent education, a majority of the respondents have an undergraduate degree, which means that a good level of education enables people to use the technology better, especially in terms of social media and online shopping. The majority of the respondents in this study work as private employees, which could mean that private employees with a high level of work activity would prefer to shop online because of the ease of the process allows it to be done anywhere.

The descriptive analysis is conducted to determine the characteristics and the response of respondents towards each statement item. All the variables are described using the mean average value, and this is displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Description of the Answers of Respondents

Variable	Statement	Average Answer	Remarks
Argument Quality	Online reviews provide information about the product I want to find	4.04	Good
	The available online reviews or comments provide me with up-to-date information.	3.95	Good
	The available online reviews or comments provide me with accurate information.	3.90	Good
	Online reviews provide me with in-depth and extensive information.	3.94	Good
Source Credibility	The author of the online review in social media platforms have extensive expertise in the areas of fashion.	4.09	Good
	The author of online reviews or the comments given to the review author in social media platforms can be trusted.	3.83	Good
	The author of the online reviews in social media platforms is experienced in online shopping fashion products.	3.92	Good
	The author of the online review has frequently reviewed fashion products.	3.98	Good
Source Attractiveness	The appearance and personality of the review writer is attractive.	4.03	Good
	The similarity in characteristic that I have with the online reviewer has an influence on my purchase intention.	3.88	Good
	The introduction of the reviewer also increases my purchase intention.	3.96	Good
e-WOM Adoption	The information provided in the social media platform makes it easier for me to make a decision.	4.08	Good
	The information in the social media platform allows me to make decisions more effectively.	3.86	Good
	I consider the information in making purchase decisions.	4.10	Good
Repurchase Intention	I think I will repurchase the fashion product through the social media platform after I read its online reviews.	3.96	Good

	I will recommend the product that I have purchased to others through social media.	3.96	Good
	I have the intention to find more information about the product that I have purchased.	3.93	Good

Source: Computed Data, 2020

The average value of the argument quality variable is 3.96; for source credibility it is 3.96; for source attractiveness it is 3.96; for e-WOM adoption it is 4.01; and for repurchase intention it is 3.95. Thus, respondents view that the information available on social media has good argument qualities, credible source credibility, attractive source attractiveness, has persuasive e-WOM, and respondents in general show that they have the intention to repurchase good fashion products.

The significance value of the parameters is estimated to provide very useful information about the relationship between the research variables. The hypotheses are examined based on the path coefficients presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Path Coefficients

Construct	Path	t Statistics	Remarks
Argument quality (X_1)→e-WOM Adoption (Y_1)	0,302	2,616	Accepted
Source credibility (X_2)→ e-WOM adoption (Y_1)	0,335	2,737	Accepted
Source attractiveness (X_3)→ e-WOM adoption (Y_1)	0,329	2,776	Accepted
e-WOM Adoption (Y_1)→ Repurchase intention (Y_2)	0,914	54,702	Accepted

Source: Computed Data,2020

The hypothesis was tested by assessing the t-statistics. If the t-statistics value is \geq t-table value (1,96), H_0 is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted. By referring to Table 6, it can be concluded that all the research hypotheses are accepted.

The data in Table 6 shows that argument quality has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM adoption. This means that the higher the quality of arguments posted in the social media, the higher the adoption rate of the e-WOM by social media users. This statement is supported by the good influence values of each of its indicator, namely relevance, actuality, accuracy and comprehensiveness. In addition, these values are also not significantly different relative to one another, which can be interpreted as all of the dimensions have the same magnitude of influence. The research conducted by Zhang and Watts (2008) provided evidence that one of the determinants of e-WOM adoption in an online environment is the quality of the argument. Xu and Yoa (2015) stated the same thing, in which argument quality has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM adoption.

The influence of source credibility on e-WOM adoption can be interpreted to be positive and significant. This explains that users prioritize the credibility of the source in adopting the e-WOM available in social media as a reference for online shopping. Readers of online reviews expect the e-WOM to provided by credible sources, in line with their area of expertise, and really have the experience of purchasing the product or service. Utami et al. (2015) stated that credibility is an important factor to consumers, therefore there is a need to consider consumer's need related to the information about the online review writer. This indicates that source credibility is significant considered by consumers before they adopt the e-WOM.

The influence of source attractiveness on e-WOM adoption is shown to be positive and significant. This means that the greater the appeal of the review author, the higher the rate of information adoption. This is consistent with the results obtained by Teng et al. (2014) which proved that source attractiveness has a positive influence on the persuasive power of e-WOM messages in QQ social group (a community with members who actively discuss matters related to school abroad). Respondents perceive a source or writer as attractive if there are many authors who recommend the source, like the character of the source, and when the respondents feel that they have the same opinion with the author of the review.

The influence of e-WOM adoption on repurchase intention can be interpreted to be positive and significant. The path coefficient indicates that e-WOM adoption has a positive influence on repurchase intentions. This is indicated by the high influence value of each e-WOM adoption indicator, namely useful, recommended, and has a high search rate. These values are also not much different from each other, which indicate that all the dimensions have equal influence. This means that the more frequent respondents adopt e-WOM in social media, the greater their intention to repurchase the product. This result is consistent with the research conducted by Syafaruddin et al. (2016) which found that e-WOM has a significant influence on the purchase intention in zafertech.com. This finding is also consistent with a review conducted by Cheung and Thadani (2012) which stated that e-WOM communication is considered to be a type of social influence that

influences consumer's purchasing decisions, meaning that the use of e-WOM has a direct influence on purchase intentions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATION

This study concludes that argument quality, source credibility, and source attractiveness have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM Adoption. This means that the better the quality of the arguments, the credibility of the source, and the attractiveness of the source, the higher the rate of adoption of e-WOM posted in the social media. The e-WOM adoption variable also has a positive and significant influence on repurchase intentions, which means that the higher the rate of information adoption by social media users, the higher their intention to repurchase the product.

The e-WOM adoption variable was found to have a positive and significant influence on repurchase intentions. This indicates that the purchase intention of social media users do not immediately grow after reading the information, but the users will firstly analyze whether the information is credible by assessing the quality of the information itself.

Based on the conclusions, the research results are expected to be able to enrich the marketing management science literature related to consumer behavior, communication, and become a reference for other empirical studies related to the influence of argument quality, source credibility, and source attractiveness on e-WOM adoption and the repurchase intentions of social media users. Furthermore, because the source credibility variable has the greatest influence in determining the adoption of e-WOM compared to argument quality and source attractiveness. Thus, management may attempt to reflect and improve their efforts to consistently provide good quality and credible information, as well as try to relate to users, before finally improving the intention to repurchase fashion products through social media.

VI. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study is only limited to examining the variables of argument quality, source credibility, source attractiveness, e-WOM adoption, and repurchase intention, while other variables are not examined. Others researchers can examine the variables not included in this study such as the type of reviews, homophilous sources, framing recommendations, recommendations sidedness, usefulness of information, and purchasing decisions which is stimulated after the consumers adopt the information they obtained.

This study highly depends on the results of the questionnaire, thus there is a possibility that respondents gave answers that are considered to be in accordance with certain values that are accepted in their social environment. This may distort the average value of each variable. Furthermore, this study used a cross-sectional time design or conducted at a certain point of time, but the actual condition may change dynamically in a different period of time. Thus, it is important to re-conduct this study again in the future.

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