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Research Article

What drives e-WOM engagement? Exploring the roles of information quality, credibility, and website quality[1]

E-WOM katılımını ne belirler? Bilginin kalitesi, güvenilirliği ve web sitesi kalitesinin rolü

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Abstract

With the increasing number of users on social media platforms and the increasing amount of time consumers spend on these platforms in their daily lives, social media has become a central focus for business activities. Consequently, the academic examination of activities conducted via social media has gained importance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of information quality, information credibility, and website quality on consumers' e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) engagement, as well as the impact of e-WOM engagement on consumers' purchase intentions. Data were collected from 482 participants through an online survey using convenience sampling. The sample included adults from diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and employment sectors. The collected data were analysed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, reliability tests, and structural equation modelling. The findings indicate that information quality has a significant impact on e-WOM engagement, and e-WOM engagement, in turn, significantly affects purchase intention. However, information credibility and website quality were found to have no statistically significant effect on e-WOM engagement.

Keywords: E-wom Engagement, Social Media, Information Quality, Information Credibility, Website Quality

Jel Codes: M30, M31

Öz

Sosyal medya platformlarındaki kullanıcı sayısının artması ve tüketicilerin günlük yaşamlarında bu platformlarda geçirdikleri sürenin çoğalmasıyla birlikte, sosyal medya işletmeler için merkezi bir faaliyet alanı haline gelmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, sosyal medya aracılığıyla yürütülen faaliyetlerin akademik açıdan incelenmesi de önem kazanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bilginin kalitesi, bilginin güvenilirliği ve web sitesi kalitesinin tüketicilerin e-WOM (elektronik ağızdan ağıza iletişim) katılımı üzerindeki etkilerini ve e-WOM katılımının satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Veriler, kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak çevrim içi anket yoluyla 482 katılımcıdan toplanmıştır. Örneklem, yaş, eğitim ve istihdam durumu açısından çeşitli gruplardan yetişkin bireylerden oluşmaktadır. Toplanan veriler keşifsel ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri, güvenilirlik testleri ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ile analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, bilginin kalitesinin e-WOM katılımı üzerinde anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ve e-WOM katılımının da satın alma niyetini anlamlı şekilde etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Ancak, bilginin güvenilirliği ve web sitesi kalitesinin e-WOM katılımı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkisinin bulunmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: E-wom Katılımı, Sosyal Medya, Bilginin Kalitesi, Bilginin Güvenilirliği, Website Kalitesi

JEL Kodları: M30, M31

Introduction

In the contemporary business environment, there is an observable trend of intensifying competition among commercial entities. In response to the intensified competitive environment precipitated by the proliferation of enterprises, businesses endeavour to cultivate practices they deem conducive to securing a competitive advantage. One such effort involves initiatives aimed at encouraging greater positive engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) among consumers. e-WOM engagement refers to the exchange of information among consumers regarding products (Gvili & Levy, 2018, p. 484).

Customer reviews, particularly those from satisfied customers, are of significant importance for businesses operating in electronic environments, as such reviews can influence potential customers and drive them toward making a purchase. A primary reason for this is the tendency of consumers to form various communities in electronic platforms to evaluate goods and services (Yusuf, Che Hussin & Dahlan, 2020, p. 439). Through such formations, it is believed that consumers prioritise efforts to find the most accurate product at the most reasonable price, whether in traditional or electronic marketplaces.

In the contemporary business landscape, a significant number of enterprises are implementing electronic platforms as a strategic tool to attract consumers and stimulate purchasing behaviour. The primary reason for this strategy is evident in statistical data. According to 2023 data, 64.4% of the global population and 83.4% of Turkey's population were internet users. Moreover, this figure increased by approximately 1.9% compared to the previous year (The Changing World of Digital in 2023, 2023). The statistics demonstrate that a population which is too large for businesses to ignore actively engages with the internet and spends a considerable amount of time across various online platforms. Consequently, this trend has driven firms to place greater emphasis on electronic environments.

This study specifically aims to examine how information quality, information credibility, and website quality influence e-WOM engagement and, in turn, purchase intention within social commerce environments. This addresses a significant shortcoming gap in the literature, as the antecedents of e-WOM engagement in social commerce contexts are still not sufficiently clarified. The objective of this study is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the purchasing behaviours exhibited by consumers who are influenced by electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) while spending time in electronic environments and making purchases through social media platforms. Consequently, a range of data will be furnished to businesses that currently utilise or intend to utilise social media platforms as sales channels. Moreover, it is anticipated that the study will make a significant contribution to the existing body of research on e-WOM engagement. This field is considered underrepresented in the Turkish academic literature.

Furthermore, the variables included in the model of this study were carefully selected based on their theoretical relevance to social commerce environments. Information quality, information credibility, and website quality are recognised as key antecedents of e-WOM engagement in online contexts (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 47; Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 438). However, although these antecedents have been studied extensively in traditional e-commerce or review platforms, their role in social commerce (where peer interactions on social media increasingly influence purchasing decisions) has not been sufficiently clarified. In particular, there is still a need to better understand whether consumers' e-WOM engagement is shaped more by the perceived quality of the information, the credibility of that information, or the overall quality of the platform through which the information is shared. In this regard, this study aims to fill a notable gap in the literature by examining these antecedents of e-WOM engagement in the unique setting of social commerce, as well as their impact on purchase intention. It is believed that this framework will motivate further research and guide practitioners in designing more effective social commerce strategies.

Conceptual framework

To better understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour in digital environments, it is essential to first establish the conceptual framework before discussing specific constructs such as e-WOM engagement.

E-wom engagement

E-wom engagement can be defined as a set of various actions beyond purchasing, such as consumers sharing and conveying their information and experiences about a brand or its products to other consumers in electronic environments, as well as seeking out the experiences and information of others (Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner & Verhoef, 2010, p. 253; Hashim & Ariffin, 2016, p. 87; Gvili & Levy, 2018, p. 484).

There are differing perspectives in the literature regarding how E-wom engagement is addressed. These perspectives are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Dimensions of E-wom Engagement

E-wom Engagement	Studies
Unidimensional	Hashim & Ariffin, 2016 Pang, 2021 Yusuf et al., 2018
Bidimensional (Intention to Send, Intention to Receive)	Gvili & Levy, 2018 Levy et al., 2021 Akın & Öztürk, 2023
Tridimensional (Opinion Seeking, Opinion Giving, Opinion Passing)	Chu & Kim, 2011

Compiled by the author.

Although there are no conceptual differences regarding E-wom engagement in these studies, there are distinctions in the ways consumers engage in E-wom. In various studies conducted on social media sites and social commerce in the literature, E-wom engagement has been assessed as a single dimension without being divided into sub-dimensions, and data have been obtained (Hashim & Ariffin, 2016, p. 87; Yusuf, Che Hussin & Busalim, 2018, p. 493; Pang, 2021, p.1). In these studies, traditional WOM is defined, and the transition to E-wom is explained as occurring as a result of electronic environments, where consumers share information about products, services, and sellers (Pang, 2021, p. 3). Furthermore, it is mentioned that consumers share information and experiences within their own social media networks or search for the experiences of other consumers (Hashim & Ariffin, 2016, p. 87), and that customers, former customers, and potential customers make positive or negative statements to a large audience via the internet (Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 493).

Research has demonstrated that for consumers to engage in E-wom, they must engage in at least one or several of the behaviours of opinion seeking, opinion giving, or opinion passing (Chu & Kim, 2011, pp. 50-51). From this perspective, E-wom engagement is examined under three sub-dimensions. The rationale behind this is that, in offline WOM, opinion seeking and opinion giving behaviours dominate; however, in the internet age, in addition to seeking and sharing opinions, consumers may also play the role of transmitters. By leveraging the opportunities offered by the internet, users of electronic environments assume multiple roles. Through the process known as opinion passing, they disseminate not only their own viewpoints but also the opinions and evaluations of others to both online platforms and their personal networks (Chu & Kim, 2011, pp. 50-51).

In studies where E-wom engagement is assessed as a two-dimensional construct, the two sub-dimensions identified are intention to send and intention to receive. The extant literature indicates that users of electronic environments primarily engage in reciprocal behaviours involving the giving and receiving of opinions. When evaluated alongside studies that assess E-WOM engagement with three sub-dimensions, it is understood that the function of opinion passing is also considered within the intention to send dimension (Gvili & Levy, 2018, p. 485; Levy, Gvili & Hino, 2021, p. 2610).

In this study, the two-dimensional conceptualisation of E-wom engagement, consisting of intention to send and intention to receive, has been adopted. This choice aligns with more recent literature that emphasises these two key dimensions as the primary behaviours observed among electronic environment users (Gvili & Levy, 2018, p. 485; Levy et al., 2021, p. 2610). While earlier studies, such as Chu & Kim (2011), propose a three-dimensional model that includes opinion passing as a separate dimension, the current consensus often integrates opinion passing within the intention-to-send dimension in two-dimensional frameworks. This preference is based on the greater empirical support and contemporary relevance of the two-dimensional model.

The variables that are believed to influence E-wom engagement in the proposed study are as follows, based on previous research and theoretical foundations (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008, p. 101; Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015, p. 174; Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 493, 2020, p. 438);

- Information Quality
- Information Credibility
- Website Quality

Information quality

Information is a variable that plays a significant role in decision-making processes. As Altunışık, Özdemir & Torlak (2020, p. 179) point out, information is integral to the formation of knowledge, which

in turn is critical for decision-makers to reach more accurate conclusions. When information is erroneous or inaccurate, it is considered probable that decision-makers will make flawed decisions.

For consumers, the quality of information refers to their judgments and evaluations regarding the information. This judgment is determined by the degree to which the information can convey what it aims to present (Milan, Bebber, Toni & Eberle, 2015, p. 114). "Content is king" is a slogan frequently used, especially in electronic commerce (Huizingh, 2000, p. 124). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the importance of accuracy in the information presented to users in electronic environments and its impact on E-wom engagement.

A study of B2C revealed that the quality of information is determined by two primary factors: information accuracy and information relevance. As posited by the study, the fundamental purpose of web pages and sites in electronic environments is to provide information about products, services, people, events, and ideas. It is also noted that the presence of inaccurate information on businesses' electronic platforms and websites has the potential to damage the business's image (Cao, Zhang & Seydel, 2005, pp. 650-651).

Moreover, a different study examining consumer behaviours on social media platforms concluded that information quality has a significant impact on E-wom Engagement (Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 448). However, according to the results of another study testing the same hypothesis, information quality was found not to have a statistically significant effect on E-wom Engagement (Waris, D'Costa & Hameed, 2021, p. 13). Additionally, Kim, Park & Lee (2013, p. 160) emphasised the importance of source credibility and message valence, reporting that negative E-WOM messages have a greater impact on consumer purchase intentions and attitudes, which further supports the relevance of information quality in influencing E-WOM engagement.

In this context, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

***H_1**: The information quality affects consumers' E-wom engagement.*

Information credibility

The credibility of information is expressed as consumers' perceptions of the credibility of the information they obtain. It has been demonstrated that consumers are more likely to engage and interact with information if they believe it to be credible (Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 442).

Within the constraints of electronic environments, it is pretty challenging for businesses that cannot interact face-to-face with consumers to build and maintain trust. Therefore, it is believed that determining the credibility of communication in virtual environments is also difficult (Reichelt, Sievert & Jacob, 2014, p. 66).

A study conducted on the prediction of information credibility emphasises that for information on social media platforms to be considered reliable, it must possess specific characteristics. These include (Castillo, Mendoza & Poblete, 2013, p. 571);

- The use of positive or negative emotional expressions related to the topic in the conveyed message,
- Whether the user conveying the message has questioned the information provided to them,
- Whether the message refers to external sources, and whether these external sources are from popular sites or sources,
- The number of followers of the user conveying the message.

In the study by McKnight and Kacmar (2007), it is argued that a website's success depends on consumers' perceptions of it. Consumers will not follow the recommendations or develop loyalty to the site unless they feel confident in the information provided on the website. Furthermore, according to the study's analysis results, it was found that consumers' trust in the information they obtain positively influences their decision to follow recommendations (McKnight & Kacmar, 2007, p. 423).

Additionally, other studies have indicated that information credibility encourages consumers to engage in communication (Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 495). Information credibility is one of the key determinants in consumers' decision-making processes (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008, p. 111). A study has concluded that the credibility of information has a statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement (Waris et al., 2021, p. 13). Based on this, it is believed that information credibility could also influence E-wom engagement in the proposed study.

In this context, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

***H₂**: The information credibility affects consumers' E-wom engagement.*

Website quality

Website quality is defined as the assessments related to the website's ability to meet users' expectations and reflect the overall quality of the site (Aladwani & Palvia, 2002, p. 469). Additionally, website quality can also be defined as users' evaluations of the site's performance in providing and receiving information (Yang, Cai, Zhou & Zhou, 2005, p. 576; Filieri et al., 2015, p. 176).

In the description of website quality, some researchers emphasise features such as the stability of contextual controls and user-friendliness (Olsina, Lafuente & Rossi, 2001, p. 266), while others focus on accuracy, completeness, security, personalisation, and functionality (Liu & Arnett, 2000, p. 23). Furthermore, expectations such as speed, ease of navigation, content layout, interface, and search functionality also determine website quality (Johnson & Misic, 1999, p. 383; Rose, Khoo & Straub, 1999, p. 16). The primary reason for the different definitions is believed to stem from the various types of websites and the varying expectations of users.

One of the hypotheses in the study conducted by Yusuf et al. (2018, p. 500) is that website quality influences E-wom engagement. The results obtained supported this hypothesis. In this context, it can be said that website quality has a statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement. However, a study yielding the opposite result also exists in the literature. This study was conducted through social commerce. According to the data analysis, website quality does not affect E-wom engagement (Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 448).

In addition, Liang, Ho, Li & Turban (2011, p. 69) demonstrated that website quality positively influences users' intentions to engage with social commerce platforms and maintain relationships with social networking sites, suggesting its potential role in shaping online engagement behaviours such as E-wom.

In this context, the following hypothesis has been proposed;

***H₃**: Website quality affects consumers' E-wom engagement.*

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is defined as consumers' intention to purchase a product based on the belief that they need it (Madahi & Sukati, 2012, p. 153). It can also be described as consumers' conscious planning efforts to make a purchase (Spears & Singh, 2004, p. 56).

Purchase intention represents a process. This process involves evaluating a product alongside its alternatives by the consumer, referring to the time leading up to the moment of purchase (Kozak & Doğan, 2014, p. 65). However, in every case, this process does not necessarily result in a purchase (Morwitz, 2014, pp. 183-184).

Purchase intention is a variable that has been used in many studies across various fields in the literature (Spears & Singh, 2004, p. 53; Tsiotsou, 2006, p. 207; Madahi & Sukati, 2012, p. 153; Ali, 2016, p. 213; Hsu & Lin, 2016, p. 42; Chen, Tsai & Ann, 2018, p. 1; Peña-García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela & Siqueira-Junior, 2020, p. 1; Waris et al., 2021, p. 1; Ekyawan & Rahman, 2022, p. 189). Additionally, some studies examine it in association with variables such as E-wom and E-wom engagement (Elseidi & El-Baz, 2016, p. 268; Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 493; Akın & Öztürk, 2023, p. 231).

When these studies are examined, it has been concluded that E-wom engagement has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intentions in the studies by Elseidi and El-Baz (2016, p. 274) and Yusuf et al. (2018, p. 500). Elseidi and El-Baz (2016, p. 274) found that E-wom has a substantial positive impact on brand image, brand attitude, and ultimately purchase intention, suggesting that online buzz marketing can effectively influence consumer behaviour. Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2018, p. 500) reported that e-WOM engagement significantly predicts purchase intention alongside other factors such as website quality and information credibility.

However, a study by Akın and Öztürk (2023, p. 243) found no statistically significant relationship between e-WOM engagement and purchase intention. The authors suggest that this may be due to factors such as trust, individual differences, product characteristics, and cultural or social influences that complicate consumer decision-making processes.

These differing results in the literature indicate that the relationship between e-WOM engagement and purchase intention may depend on contextual factors, further justifying the need for its investigation.

In this context, the following hypothesis has been proposed;

***H₄**: E-wom engagement affects consumers' purchase intention.*

Research methodology

The conceptual framework of the study, as outlined in the previous sections, is presented below.

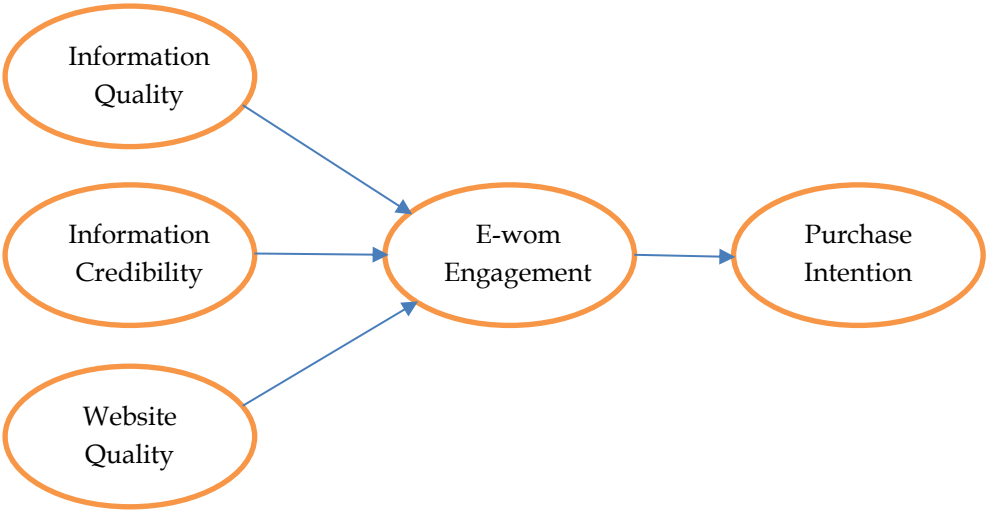

Figure 1: Research Model

The study aims to understand the role of social media and internet environments, which have become increasingly popular in recent times, in the marketing world, with a particular focus on E-wom engagement. More specifically, the study aims to analyse the effects of the variables included in the proposed Research Model (see Figure 1) on E-wom engagement and purchase intention. One of the goals of this study is also to address the gap in the Turkish literature regarding E-wom engagement research.

The universe of this study consists of individuals residing in Türkiye who have made purchases through social media platforms. Due to constraints in reaching the entire population, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. Participants were screened to ensure that they had actual purchase experiences via social media platforms, creating a relatively homogeneous group aligned with the research purpose. The final sample consisted of 482 participants. Although no formal sample size calculation was performed, academic studies of this nature generally accept a minimum of 384 participants to ensure statistical adequacy, and the sample in this study exceeds this threshold.

The scale employed to measure the E-WOM Engagement variable was developed based on the scale created by Gvili and Levy (2018). The scales employed to measure the variables of Information Quality, Information Credibility, and Website Quality were developed with reference to the scales created by Filieri et al. (2015). The scale items adapted for the Website Quality variable in this study were initially designed for web-based environments; however, considering the increasing convergence of social media platforms and e-commerce, they were carefully adapted to the social media commerce context. Additionally, the reliability and validity analyses of the adapted scale were conducted within this research, confirming its suitability. Therefore, although the original scale included items referring to website features, these items were reviewed, adapted, and validated to reflect the evaluation of the social media pages used as sales channels. In conclusion, the scale employed for the Purchase Intention variable was developed by Salisbury et al. (2001).

A pilot test was conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the survey and to test whether the questions asked were correctly understood to measure the desired variables. A pilot test was conducted with 55 participants to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the survey items. Based on the feedback, minor wording adjustments were made to enhance comprehension and remove ambiguities. These revisions ensured that the final survey accurately measured the intended constructs. Survey participants were asked to answer the questions by rating them between 1 and 5. It was indicated that a score of 1 meant "Strongly Disagree" and a score of 5 meant "Strongly Agree," and the participants were requested to complete the survey accordingly.

After the final version was prepared, the survey was deemed ethically appropriate by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at Recep Tayyip Erdogan University, with the evaluation report dated 11.01.2023 and decision number 2023/024.

Data analysis and findings

Under the 'Data Analysis and Findings' section, detailed descriptions of the performed analyses are provided, including exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM). The choice of these methods is based on their suitability for validating measurement models and testing hypothesised relationships. The analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS.

The demographic characteristics of the survey participants, including gender, marital status, age, education level, occupation, and income status, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

		f	%
Gender	Male	281	58.3
	Female	201	41.7
Marital Status	Single	168	34.9
	Married	314	65.1
Age	18-25	51	10.6
	26-33	138	28.6
	34-41	148	30.7
	42-49	63	13.1
	50 and above	82	17.0
Education	High School	69	14.3
	Associate Degree	113	23.4
	Bachelor's Degree	161	33.4
	Postgraduate	139	28.8
Occupation	Not Working	39	8.1
	Retired	38	7.9
	Worker	22	4.6
	Public Sector Employee	170	3.3
	Student	84	1.4
	Private Sector	95	19.7
	Self-employment / Artisan	34	7.1
Income	0-8.000 TRY	58	12.0
	8.001-16.000 TRY	113	23.5
	16.001-24.000 TRY	161	33.4
	24.001-32.000 TRY	84	17.4
	32.001 TRY and above	66	13.7
Total		**482**	**100.0**

TRY: Turkish Lira

When the demographic data obtained is analysed, it is observed that the total number of participants is 482, with 58.3% being male and 41.7% being female. Among the participants, 34.9% stated that they are single, while 65.1% said that they are married. According to the obtained data, 30.7% of the participants are in the 34–41 age range, 28.6% are in the 26–33 age range, 17% are 50 or older, 13.1% are in the 42–49 age range, and 10.6% are in the 18–25 age range. The youngest group of participants is between 18 and 25 years old, while the oldest group is aged 50 and above. When examining the educational status of the survey participants, it is observed that 33.4% hold a bachelor's degree, 28.8% hold a postgraduate degree, 23.4% hold an associate degree, and 14.3% have completed high school. Regarding employment, 35.3% of the participants are public employees, 19.7% work in the private sector, 17.4% are students, 8.1% are unemployed, 7.9% are retired, 7.1% are self-employed/artisans, and 4.6% are workers. The income distribution of the participants is as follows: 33.4% earn between 16.001–24.000 TRY, 23.5% earn between 8.001–16.000 TRY, 17.4% earn between 24.001–32.000 TRY, 13.7% earn 32.001 TRY or more, and 12% earn between 0–8.000 TRY. In terms of income, the lowest group earns between 0 and 8.000 TRY, while the highest group earns 32.001 TRY or more.

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied to determine whether the variables formed a coherent model in the context of the constructed model. Questions 7 regarding Website Quality and six regarding Information Quality were removed from the analysis because they did not fit the factor structure of the data, as these items either loaded on unintended factors or showed high cross-loadings, which could

compromise the construct validity of the measurement model. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factor Analysis Results

	Average Participation	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance
Website Quality			0.883	16.751
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) are easy to use.	3.97	0.752		
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) provide hyperlink functionalities to access relevant sites or posts.	3.83	0.821		
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) offer personalised search functions through filtering options.	3.59	0.719		
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) include features that enable interaction with other consumers.	3.64	0.827		
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) ensure fast page loading and refreshing speeds.	3.54	0.718		
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) can be easily accessed from various media devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets, computers).	4.02	0.766		
Information Credibility			0.921	14.735
Individuals who comment on products on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) are perceived as credible.	2.74	0.951		
Individuals who comment on products on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) are considered experienced.	2.88	0.815		
The opinions of individuals who comment on products on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) are deemed trustworthy.	2.66	0.854		
Individuals who comment on products on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) are regarded as reliable.	2.72	0.819		
Information Quality			0.898	12.858
The information in the comments on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) is up to date.	3.17	0.703		
The information in the comments on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) is relevant to my needs.	3.15	0.679		
The information in the comments on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) fulfils my needs.	3.04	0.649		
The information in the comments on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) is valuable.	3.33	0.707		
The information in the comments on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) is valid.	3.26	0.656		
Purchase Intention			0.897	10.968
I use social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) to purchase products.	3.02	0.837		
Using social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) to purchase products is something I would consider doing.	2.93	0.833		
I can envision myself using social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) to make purchases in the future.	3.00	0.787		
Intention to Send			0.850	10.020
I tend to share my consumption experiences with others on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) after using a new product.	2.80	0.763		
When I receive valuable or helpful information about products or services on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter), I usually share it with others via these platforms.	2.96	0.752		
When I obtain information about products or services on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter), I tend to express my opinion on these platforms.	2.75	0.805		
Intention to Receive			0.861	9.522
I usually read other people's recommendations about products and services on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter.	3.31	0.758		

I often enjoy reading about other people's experiences with products and services that interest me on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter).	3.44	0.776
I am open to receiving others' opinions about interesting products or services on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter).	3.41	0.734

KMO: 931 Total Explained Variance: 74.854%

When examining Table 3, it can be observed that the KMO value is 0.931. For the constructed models, KMO values greater than 0.8 indicate that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis (Coşkun, Altunışık, Bayraktaroğlu & Yıldırım, 2015, p. 258). The Cronbach's Alpha values of the selected variables are above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the results will be reliable. The total explained variance is 74.854%. The value for the degree of explanation, which means the extent to which the model describes the situation, is also above the acceptable threshold of 50% (Coşkun et al., 2015, pp. 124, 275).

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Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural model

After the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with the variables included in the research model. Following the necessary adjustments, the goodness of fit indices were obtained. The resulting goodness of fit indices fall within the acceptable ranges for fit indices (Bentler & Bonett, 1980, p. 599; Doll, Xia & Torkzadeh, 1994, p. 456; Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 449; Mishra & Datta, 2011, p. 40).

Table 4: Fit Indices of the Model

Criteria	Results	Acceptable Fit
$\chi 2/df$	2.283	$0< \chi 2/df \leq 5$
GFI	0.914	$0.80\leq$ GFI ≤ 1
RMSEA	0.052	$0\leq$ RMSEA ≤ 0.08
CFI	0.961	$0.90\leq$ CFI ≤ 1
NFI	0.933	$0.80 \leq$ NFI ≤ 0.95
TLI	0.955	$0.90\leq$ TLI ≤ 1
SRMR	0.053	$0 <$ SRMR ≤ 0.08
AGFI	0.893	$0.80 <$ AGFI ≤ 1

To achieve acceptable model fit indices, covariances were added between the error terms e1 and e2, as well as e11 and e14. The resulting CFA model is presented in the figure below.

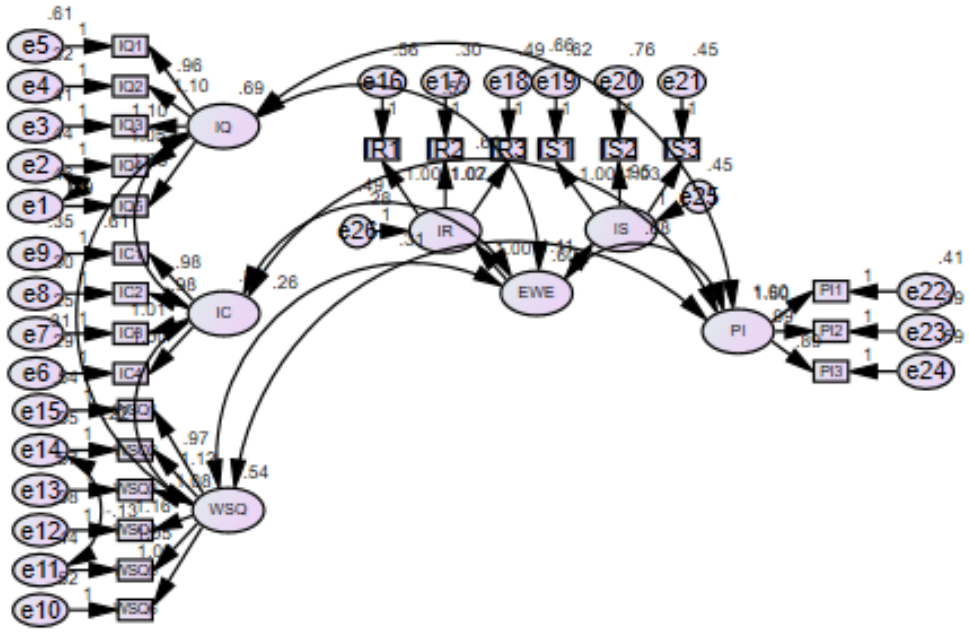

Figure 2: CFA Model of Research

The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) values for the model were also calculated based on the statistical analyses and are presented in the table below.

Table 5: AVE and CR Values of the Model

	AVE	CR
Information Quality	0.6409	0.899
Information Credibility	0.7458	0.921
Website Quality	0.5601	0.884
E-wom Engagement	0.6784	0.923
Purchase Intention	0.7476	0.899

AVE> 0.50, CR> 0.70

When examining the AVE and CR values, it is understood that all values are at the required level. AVE values should be above 0.50, and CR values should be above 0.70 (Hu & Bentler, 1999, pp. 27–28; Hair, William, Barry & Rolph, 2010, p. 679).

Subsequently, structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis was applied to the model as a whole. The resulting structural model is shown below.

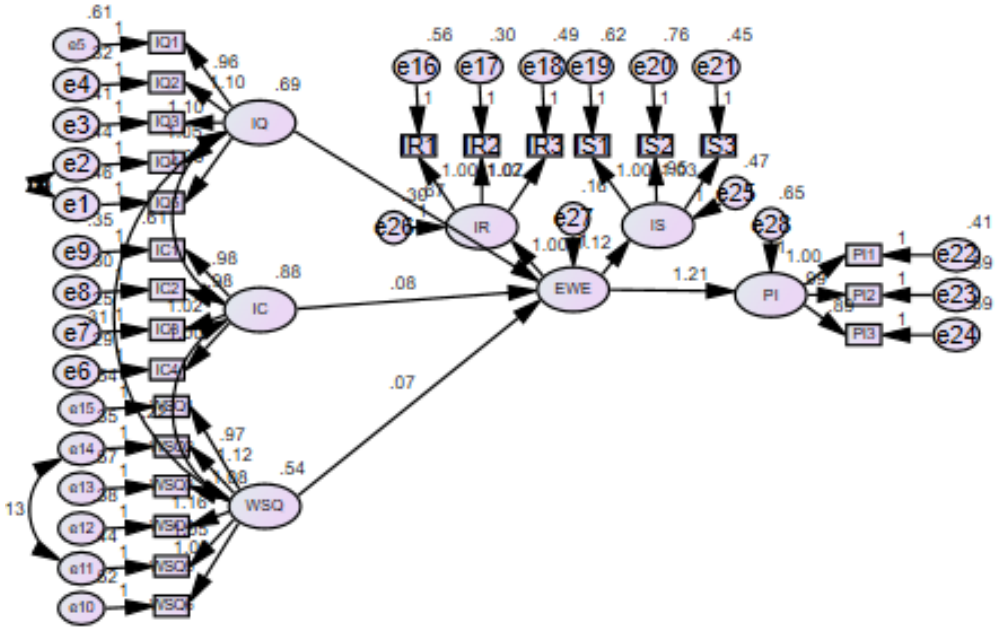

Figure 3: Structural Model

The values obtained as a result of the structural equation modelling are presented in the table below.

Between Variables	Standardised Effect Coefficient (β)	P	Result
E-wom Engagement <--- Information Quality	0.737	***	Accepted
E-wom Engagement <--- Information Credibility	0.095	0.186	Rejected
E-wom Engagement <--- Website Quality	0.067	0.155	Rejected
Purchase Intention <--- E-wom Engagement	0.750	***	Accepted

p < 0.05

The results of the tested hypotheses are visualised below. Green arrows (p < 0.05) indicate accepted hypotheses, while red arrows (p > 0.05) indicate rejected hypotheses.

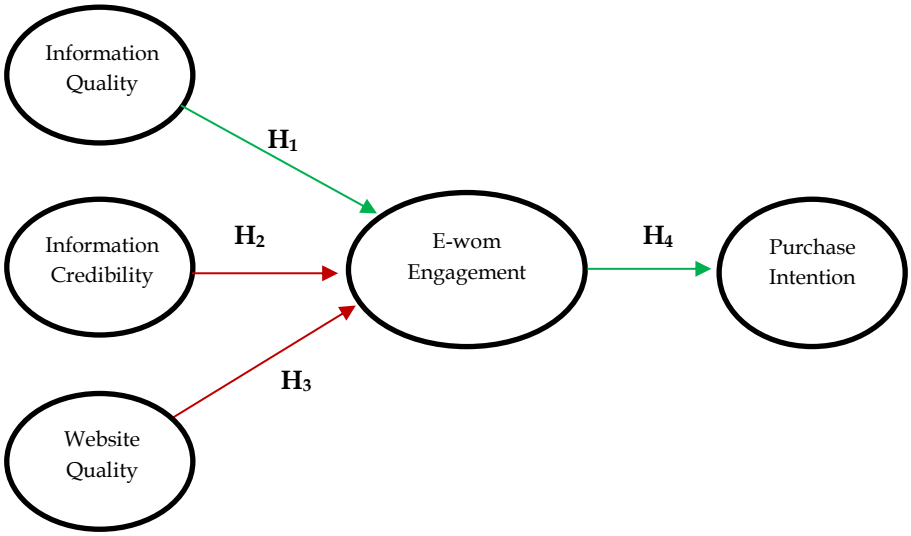

Figure 4: Structural Model

Based on the analysis results;

It has been determined that the quality of information has a statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement. Therefore, the H1 hypothesis is accepted.

It has been determined that the credibility of information and website quality do not have a statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement. Therefore, the H2 and H3 hypotheses are rejected.

E-wom engagement has a statistically significant effect on purchase intention. Therefore, the H4 hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion and conclusion

As technologies such as computers and the internet become more integrated into consumers' lives, their consumption habits and preferences are also changing. In the contemporary business landscape, enterprises are compelled to adapt to the evolving processes and preferences of consumers. Consumers' purchasing processes are undergoing a transformation, shifting from physical environments to online systems. The widespread use of social media platforms in daily life has also prompted businesses to adopt social media as a marketing channel. This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of social commerce (Liang et al., 2011, p. 70). In the context of social commerce, businesses have the capacity to conduct their commercial activities through social media platforms, thereby becoming exempt from numerous expenses, including but not limited to rent, electricity, and water.

With the use of social media and social commerce concepts, word-of-mouth communication (WOM) among consumers regarding products has evolved into electronic word-of-mouth communication (E-WOM). Social media users can freely share their comments and likes about products and engage in electronic word-of-mouth communication (E-WOM) (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004, p. 39).

As the concepts of social media and social commerce are widely used, it is evident that these topics are frequently researched in the literature, with efforts to understand consumer behaviour. Some studies focus primarily on the concept of E-wom (Chu & Kim, 2011; Bataineh & Al-Smadi, 2015; Levy & Gvili, 2015; Hashim & Ariffin, 2016; Gvili & Levy, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2018; Ananda, Hernández-García, Acquila-Natale & Lamberti, 2019; Chu et al., 2019; Baykal & Hesapci Karaca, 2022; Akın & Öztürk, 2023), while others specifically focus on research conducted on specific social media platforms (Kara, 2012; Filieri et al., 2015; Gvili, 2015; Gupta, Dorfman, Saadat & Roostaeian, 2020; Borchers & Enke, 2020; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Vrontis, Makrides, Christofi & Thrassou, 2021).

This study was designed to better understand commercial activities carried out on social media platforms and to reveal the effects of consumers' perceptions of information quality, information credibility, and website quality on E-wom engagement, as well as the impact of E-wom engagement on their purchase intentions.

As a result of the data analyses, the H1 and H4 hypotheses were accepted, while the H2 and H3 hypotheses were rejected. It was found that the quality of information has a statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement, and E-wom engagement has a statistically significant impact on consumers'

purchase intentions. However, the statistical analysis revealed that the credibility of information and website quality do not affect consumers' E-wom engagement. The reason why website quality does not affect E-wom engagement is thought to be because the current study is conducted through social commerce, where users focus more on what other users write rather than the quality of the website during their information searches (Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 451). Furthermore, the fact that social media users engage in E-wom without considering the credibility of the information may be due to the desire to belong to a group and gain social support, or it may stem from trust in the social media users they follow.

When the obtained findings are compared with the literature, it is observed that there are studies that show the quality of information affects E-wom engagement (Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 448), while there is also a study in the literature that found the quality of information does not affect E-wom engagement (Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 500). In this context, it is believed that the literature should be expanded with different time frames and sample groups to allow for a more in-depth examination of the relationship between the quality of information and E-wom engagement.

The finding that the credibility of information does not affect E-wom engagement differs from the literature. In three different studies in the literature, it was found that the credibility of information affects E-wom engagement (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 64; Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 500; Yusuf et al., 2020, p. 448). Similarly, Kim et al. (2013, p. 160) reported that source credibility, including perceived expertise and trustworthiness, significantly influences the effects of E-WOM on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. This discrepancy may arise from the different ways in which the topic is addressed in the studies, as well as the fact that the studies are based on samples with various cultural and demographic characteristics. In Turkish society, there is a strong interest in social media influencers and a tendency to follow and imitate the steps of certain celebrities, who are often seen as role models. Since the sample in this study is based in Turkey, it is thought that this dynamic could have led to the finding that the credibility of information does not affect E-wom engagement.

According to the analysis results, it was found that the quality of the website has no statistically significant effect on E-wom engagement. This partially contrasts with previous findings, such as those of Liang et al. (2011, p. 69), who indicated that website quality positively influences consumers' continued use and engagement on social commerce platforms. However, it is suggested that the effects of presenting the quality of a social media page as a specific variable, tailored to the context of social media, should also be explored as a recommendation for future studies.

It was found that E-wom engagement has a statistically significant effect on consumers' purchase intentions. When examining the literature, one study concluded that E-wom engagement statistically affected purchase intention (Yusuf et al., 2018, p. 500), while another study found that E-wom engagement did not affect purchase intention (Akın & Öztürk, 2023, p. 241). In this regard, it is believed that revisiting the topic in the future, with different analysis methods and sample selections, and conducting new research would be beneficial for the literature.

With these results, it is believed that not only has a contribution been made to the literature, but also progress has been made in understanding consumers, which is valuable for businesses conducting commercial activities. The efforts of companies to understand consumer behaviour will never cease. As each new product and technological innovation continues to shape consumer behaviour in different ways, businesses will also have to continue following these changes, driven by both desire and, above all, necessity.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study helps to deepen the understanding of e-WOM engagement mechanisms in the social commerce context. For researchers, the model and findings can serve as a framework for future studies on online consumer behaviour. For practitioners, the results highlight the importance of monitoring information quality and fostering user engagement to influence purchase intentions. Finally, as a limitation, the study is based on a cross-sectional sample from Turkey, and future research could benefit from longitudinal and cross-cultural comparative designs.

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Author Contributions:

Idea/Concept/Design: **M. S. A., A. Ö.** Data Collection and/or Processing: **M. S. A., A. Ö.** Analysis and/or Interpretation: **M. S. A., A. Ö.** Literature Review: **M. S. A.** Writing the Article: **M. S. A.** Critical Review: **M. S. A., A. Ö.** Approval: **M. S. A., A. Ö.**

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