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The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth in Social Media on Yemeni Consumers' Purchase Intentions(*)

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أثر الكلمة المنطوقة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على نوايا الشراء لدى المستهلكين اليمينيين

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الملخص

الكلمة المنطوقة الإلكترونية من أبرز مصادر معلومات المستهلك في العصر الرقمي، فقد شهدت توسعاً وتنوعاً ملحوظين عبر مختلف الأشكال والمنصات، وقد أثبتت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي فعاليتها بوصفها منصات رئيسة لتبادل هذه المعلومات، مما يجعلها من أهم القنوات المؤثرة في سلوك المستهلك، وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإسهام في دعم مجموعة المعارف الحالية المتعلقة بتأثير الكلمة المنطوقة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على نية الشراء لدى المستهلكين في الدول النامية، وبشكل خاص، تركز الدراسة على تحليل تأثير ستة أبعاد رئيسة للكلمة المنطوقة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (الإيثار وقوة العلاقة ومصداقية المعلومات والحاجة إلى المعلومات والاتجاهات نحو المعلومات وتبني المعلومات). استخدمت الدراسة إستراتيجية العينة الميسرة لاختيار مفردات العينة، وركزت على مستخدمي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في اليمن الذين بلغت أعمارهم (18) عاماً أو أكثر، وتم توزيع الاستبانة إلكترونياً في مختلف منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وكان إجمالي الاستبانات التي استُعيدت (428) استبانة، منها (344) فقط كانت صالحة للتحليل الإحصائي باستخدام Jamovi, 2.3 (SPSS 27)، وأظهرت نتائج التحليل الوصفي أن للمستهلكين اليمينيين انطباعات إيجابية تجاه الكلمة المنطوقة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ودورها المهم في التأثير في نوايا الشراء، أما نتائج تحليل المسار لنموذج (SEM) فقد خلصت إلى وجود تأثيرات ذات دلالة إحصائية للإيثار والحاجة للمعلومات والاتجاه نحو المعلومات وتبني المعلومات في نية شراء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نية الشراء، الكلمة المنطوقة، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الكلمة المنطوقة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth in Social Media on Yemeni Consumers Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

As a leading source of consumer knowledge, eWOM has been expanding and diversifying across various formats and platforms; yet social media has proven to be an especially effective platform for eWOM and remains one of the most significant sources of information. This study, therefore, reinforces the existing body of knowledge related to the impact of eWOM on consumer purchasing intentions in least developed countries. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of eWOM in SM determinants (i.e., altruism, tie strength, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, and information adoption) on purchase intentions. To do so, the study employed convenience sampling, concentrating on Yemeni participants aged (18) and above who engage in social media. Online survey invitations were disseminated over various social media platforms. A total of 428 questionnaires were collected; yet only (344) were usable for statistical analysis using SPSS (27) and Jamovi (2.3). The findings indicated that Yemeni consumers demonstrated favourable impressions of eWOM in SM and recognised its significant role in altering their purchase intentions. The results of path analysis within the SEM indicated that altruism, needs of information, attitudes towards information, and information adoption exert positive effects on purchase intentions.

Keywords: Purchase intention, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), social media, eWOM in SM

Introduction

In an unprecedented manner, modern life has become deeply intertwined with technological advancements that define the current era, reshaping our understanding of speed, accessibility, efficiency, and convenience across various domains (Moslehpour et al., 2022). Within this landscape, the widespread adoption of the marketing/customer-centred philosophy has drawn both academic and practitioner interest to primarily focus on how emerging technologies influence consumer behaviour (Tueanrat et al., 2021).

Indeed, customer behaviour and marketing were derived from the marketing concept, which asserts that the essence of marketing centres on meeting consumers' needs, creating value, and fostering customer loyalty (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). The concept posits that customers' needs and wants primarily shape a business; thereby, knowing customers upside down and inside out as a basis to guide all business strategies is the best way to build and manage profitable relationships (Pride & Ferrell, 2022). Unfortunately, such a comprehensive examination is not as easy as it may seem; it's getting harder, riskier, and full of surprises to accurately predict buying behaviour (Kawade, 2020). Still, ongoing knowledge of customers is no longer an option or a luxury; it is an imperative and the cornerstone of businesses (Kotler et al., 2023; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Roy and Datta (2022), the classical decision-making process model is widely acknowledged as the dominant paradigm that illustrates what and how customers act before, during, and after making a decision. In regard to predicting consumer behaviour, many scholars (e.g., Malter et al., 2020; Reina Paz & Rodríguez Vargas, 2023; Santos & Gonçalves, 2021) mentioned that the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) are the clearest theoretical explanations and, possibly, the most accurate predictors of consumer behaviour. TRA and TPB argue that an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour predicts that behaviour (Makudza et al., 2020). Plentiful empirical investigations support this assertion, and it has been effectively implemented in hundreds of studies (Hollan, 2022; Sheeran & Webb, 2016). Purchase intention, therefore, seems essential to comprehending, and it can be used to predict future purchasing behaviours (Moslehpour et al., 2022; Renu et al., 2020).

Customer purchase intention generally refers to a deliberate evaluation of their willingness to purchase a product or service, which does not always or

necessarily result in an actual purchase choice (Renu et al., 2020). At any given time, there are myriad personal, psychological, cultural, and social factors that may affect and shape how consumers act and behave (Kotler et al., 2023). However, even though consumers can obtain information from a variety of sources, personal and social forces continue to be the most powerful influences on consumer behaviour. These interpersonal exchanges of information among customers in a way that is informal and not commercial or overtly promotional are known as word-of-mouth (WOM) (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Not yet, but the expansion of the digital era has given rise to a new perspective known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Abedi et al., 2020; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). This new electronic form of traditional word of mouth has been coined to describe the posts, comments, or even replies created by consumers based on their personal experiences and evaluation of a specific brand or item (Alrayyes & Taşkın, 2022).

Significantly, the meteoric emergence of social media (SM) over the last several years has brought a new perspective, showcased the power of eWOM and consumers alike, and an extensive array of empirical evidence has depicted that social media are truly an appropriate platform for eWOM and one of the most prominent and preferred online activities (Akbiyık & Uğur, 2020; Shi & Ismail, 2021). The influence mechanism of such an empowerment communication form has piqued the interest of professionals and scholars seeking a better understanding of relevant aspects of marketing, such as brand (awareness and loyalty), consumer (decisions and intentions), and so on (Nuseir, 2019).

In the light of existing literature, previous studies on the impact of eWOM mostly focused on either consumers' behaviour towards eWOM information or the characteristics of eWOM information (Erkan, 2016). Bhat (2020) and Lee and Choi (2019) argue that evaluating the influence of eWOM in SM depends not only on eWOM information characteristics but also on consumers' behaviour and social relationship variables. However, the findings of the systematic literature analysis by Yaseen and Jusoh (2021) and Sardar et al. (2021) revealed that although there is a wealth of information about eWOM, the influence of eWOM in SM on consumers' purchase intentions has not been studied extensively. In the same vein, Bhat (2020) also claims that the lack of empirical evidence and sufficient research about the topic proves that this is an under-researched area that has received less attention, as it is a relatively recent arrival and researchers have not yet thoughtfully considered this area enough.

Overall, according to the researcher's literature review, it was found that, aside from the lack of empirical evidence and sufficient research, less attention has been paid to exploring this relationship depending on more than one aspect, prominently in Third World countries and the Middle East. Furthermore, as social media platforms have evolved beyond single-purpose use and users now engage across multiple platforms, it would be critical to examine eWOM within this interconnected digital environment—especially in less developed nations, where consumers are relatively new to these platforms and may lack awareness of their historical evolution. Accordingly, this study seeks to give a clear picture and build on the lack of empirical evidence by examining the influence of eWOM in SM underexplored and inconsistent determinants (i.e., altruism, tie strength, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, and information adoption) on consumers' purchasing intentions.

Research Objectives

Specifically, this study aims at:

- 1- Exploring Yemeni consumers' social media usage habits (purpose of use, preferred platforms, and visits frequency).
- 2- Determining Yemeni consumers' perspectives of eWOM determinants and its impact on purchase intentions.
- 3- Investigating the influence of eWOM determinants (i.e., altruism, tie strength, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, and information adoption) on Yemeni consumers' purchase intentions.

Research Questions

Based on the discussion above, the following questions were established to define the focus of the study:

- 1- What are the social media usage habits of Yemeni consumers (purpose of use, preferred platforms, and visits frequency)?
- 2- What are the perspectives of Yemeni consumers regarding eWOM determinants and its impact on purchase intentions?
- 3- To what extent does eWOM in SM determinants (altruism, tie strength, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, and information adoption) influence consumers' purchase intentions?

Significance of the Study

In light of the rapid growth of eWOM in SM and the need for research in this area, this study seeks to examine the influence of eWOM in SM insufficient and inconsistent determinants on purchase intentions from an interactive perspective in Third World countries. Findings from this study will assist marketers in grasping the dynamics of eWOM in SM, providing valuable evidence to develop more tailored and representative marketing strategies.

Review of Literature

▪ Consumers Behaviours

Consumers are typically intricate beings susceptible to an array of psychological and social exigencies that vary significantly among different consumer segments (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Their purchasing behaviours are broadly recognised as a result of an ongoing interaction between a comprehensive synthesis of the discernible decisions that can be directly observed (e.g., purchasing a product) and many cognitive processes that take place within a consumer's mind (e.g., preference, attitude, and intention), in addition to the context in which these elements exist (economic environment, competitive offers, and situation) (Redler, 2022; Tuten, 2020). However, as demonstrated in most definitions of consumer behaviour in the literature (e.g., Kotler et al., 2023; Hoyer et al., 2023; Smith & Zook, 2020), discerning the precise particulars of what, when, where, how, whether, and why customers make purchases is the foremost way to get a comprehensive understanding of purchasing behaviour.

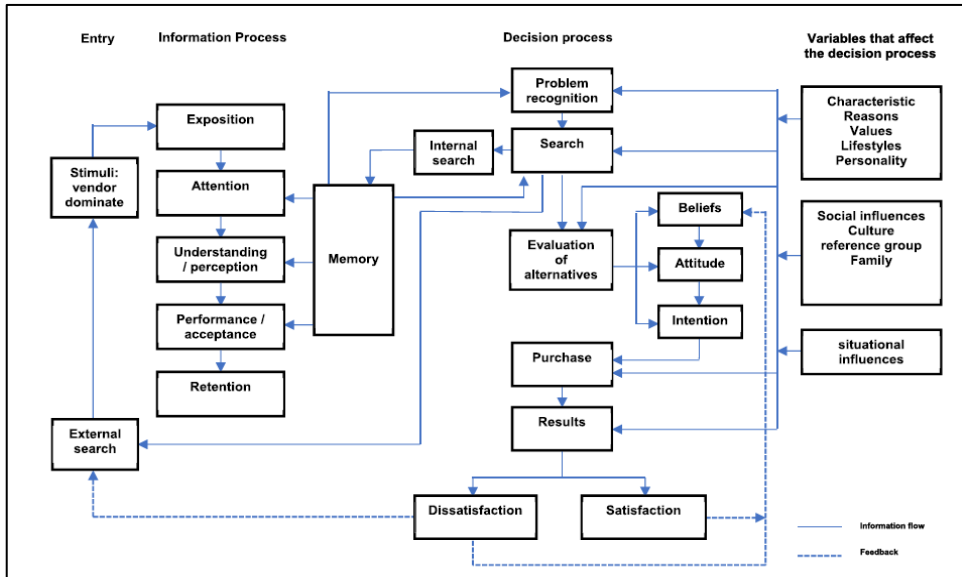
Admittedly, Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell's (EKB) consumer behaviour and decision-making model is one of the most cited and representative illustrations of consumer purchasing behaviour (Reina Paz & Rodríguez Vargas, 2023; Roy & Datta, 2022; Santos & Gonçalves, 2021). As shown in Figure 1, such a noteworthy contribution strives to provide as inclusive illustrations of decision-making as possible by consisting of various components and their intricate interplay: entry, information processing, decision process, and both internal and external influencers.

In today's omnichannel context, however, numerous scholars have emphasised that the consumer purchasing process is a multifaceted and dynamic construct (e.g., Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Solomon, 2020). Either in offline and/or online environments, this

procedure is often far from straightforward, deliberate, sequential, or automated, as it varies from person to person and is contingent on the complexity and the specific circumstances surrounding the decisions. Consequently, scientists have identified different types of buying behaviour processes (e.g., extended, habitual, and limited), and the consumer purchasing processes have been condensed into three stages: pre-purchase (problem recognition, information search, and evaluation), purchase, and post-purchase. Moreover, a modified model of the classic models, known as the customer decision journey, was proposed to illustrate all offline and online touchpoints and processes that customers undergo and constitute their experience.

Figure 1

EKB Consumer Behaviour and Decision-Making Model



Source: Adopted from Reina Paz & Rodríguez Vargas (2023, p. 33)

▪ Purchasing Intention

The consumer's purchasing process, whether viewed as the customer journey or the classic consumer decision-making process, does not occur instantly or in isolation. This constructive process, as mentioned earlier, incorporates a synthesis of direct and indirect processes that are complex and contingent on numerous variables. However, contrary to the strong belief held by behavioural and social scientists that human behaviour is complex and must be understood through a web of interconnected causes, the Theory of Reasoned Action highlights the pivotal role of behavioural intentions as the

immediate drivers of behaviour, especially when individuals have control over their actions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Apart from the directed criticisms, Fishbein and Ajzen's significant contributions to the understanding of consumer behaviour cannot be disputed. Like most of the references mentioned herein, several theories and studies have remarkably continued to use purchase intention as a critical immediate precursor for understanding and predicting actual behaviour in both offline and online environments. Moreover, their theoretical frameworks illuminate certain variables that heretofore had only been examined in isolation, facilitating a better understanding of behavioural determinants (Reina Paz & Rodríguez Vargas, 2023). Thus far, such substantial contributions have attracted considerable attention as a well-established theoretical explanation and, maybe, the most focal and accurate predictor of consumers behaviour.

▪ **Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)**

Undoubtedly, a wide range of external and internal forces can impact consumer behaviour; still, social influence constantly remains the most important force. In fact, interpersonal interactions with parents, siblings, associates, and mentors have always been a part of humans' lives and remain the most important source of knowledge. The exchange of information associated with these interactions typically takes place within a social context, where individuals are mentally and emotionally ready to participate in conversation, presumed to be free from any incentive to present insincere or careless evidence. This kind of information sharing among acquaintances about an offer is known as Word-of-Mouth (WOM), which is considered the most ancient, legitimate, and prominent means of acquiring information and influencing behaviours throughout the customer journey (Chu & Kim, 2018; Park, 2020).

Indeed, it is important to mention that eWOM, as the counterpart of WOM, maintains a few characteristics with WOM and does not serve as a substitute; both are complementary rather than mutually exclusive (Liu et al., 2022; Zaraket, 2020). Still, the constant advancements on the internet and in digital technologies have facilitated the sharing of consumers' opinions and experiences with some unique characteristics of WOM and expanded the scope of eWOM. Various inventions and technologies have been integrated to cultivate a vigorous information landscape and optimise the utilisation of eWOM, and it has been expanding and diversifying across various formats and platforms. Synchronous or asynchronous, consumers can conveniently employ a diverse array of means to acquire information and articulate their

experiences and thoughts both within and outside their social private sphere. Not only in bidirectional conversations or human-to-human interactions but also in unidirectional conversations and AI tool interactions. Whatsoever, while eWOM among real or virtual acquaintances remains the most influential, social media has proven to be a particularly suitable platform for eWOM and one of the most significant sources of information (Mu, 2023; Ng & Goh, 2022; Sohaib et al., 2018).

Explicitly, eWOM research is still fairly new and continues to evolve; hence, it is acknowledged that eWOM remains a debated topic, and many scholars from several academic backgrounds have been striving to develop models and theories that significantly enhance the comprehension of such intricate, multifaceted, and dynamic phenomena (Babić Rosario et al., 2020; Dada, 2021; Verma et al., 2023). However, from a crossbreed perspective, Liu et al. (2022, pp. 142-145) summarise the theories adopted in prior eWOM studies into four main categories:

Table 1

eWOM's Theory Categories

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Key Theory</i>
Integrated behavioural theories	Theory of reasoned action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Attribution Theory, Motivation, Opportunity and Ability Theory (Moa).
Information processing-related theories	Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Information Processing Theory.
Technology and media-related theories	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT).
Social relationship related theories	Social Network Theory (SNT), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Social Identity Theory (SIT).

Source: Adopted from Liu et al. (2022, p. 142)

In fact, while it may seem that such early theories and models were not specifically established for interpreting digital consumer behaviour, these works were essential to the advancement of the fields of eWOM and digital consumer behaviour hitherto. In this respect, for example, to predict the antecedents of informational usefulness under varying processing settings, Sussman et al. (2003) introduced the Information Adoption Model (IAM) by integrating components of TRA, TAM, and ELM. This model has further served as a foundation for Cheung and Thadani's (2012) integrative framework for examining the effects of eWOM, which is a highly referenced study in these years and has been applied in a range of studies

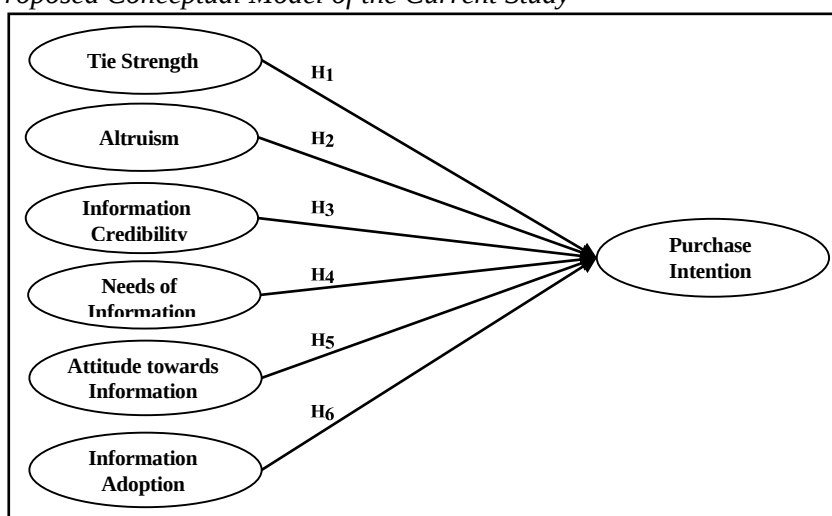
(e.g., Khwaja et al., 2020; Ng & Goh, 2022; Ngo et al., 2024). Likewise, ample researchers have also employed, extended, or combined some other theories and models in their exploration of eWOM and purchasing intention (e.g., Alsoud et al., 2022; Bilal et al., 2021; Dada, 2021; Iqbal et al., 2022; Zayed et al., 2022).

Conceptual Models and Hypothesis

Indeed, the significant empowerment, expanded reach, and substantial impact of eWOM drove many scholars to dive deeper and adopt, adapt, combine, or even develop an alternative theory that more effectively explains the phenomena. This examination, like many prior studies, tackles those determinants of eWOM in SM that have not been adequately examined or exhibit contradicting results in earlier models rather than developing an alternative theory, as the current literature indicates a deficiency in empirical evidence and a continual inclination to apply existing models in varied contexts or enhance them by incorporating additional variables (e.g., Abedi et al., 2020; Bartschat et al., 2022; Bhat, 2020; Ilieva & Boteva, 2023; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2022; Mahmood et al., 2019; Mehryar et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2024; Sánchez Torres et al., 2018; Sohaib et al., 2018; Stone, 2020; Tien et al., 2019; Yaseen & Jusoh, 2021). The study's conceptual model was thus proposed based on prior models (Erkan, 2016; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018; Sardar et al., 2021) and the literature suggestions, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Proposed Conceptual Model of the Current Study



Methodology

In this explanatory research, a mono-quantitative approach was selected as the most appropriate due to its alignment with positivist philosophy and a deductive approach, which suits the study's nature, scope, and aims. Also, a cross-sectional time horizon and an online survey strategy were deemed appropriate to provide a clear overview of the influence of eWOM in SM determinants on purchase intentions. Moreover, while the target population contains Yemenis between the ages above 13 years who are social media users in some way or another, a convenience sampling strategy was employed to recruit respondents aged 17 and above who engage in SM.

For this study, the research instrument development process began by reconsidering the relevant literature to identify, define, and assign the measurement constructs for each variable. Thereupon, a draft of the questionnaire was prepared, formulated, translated into Arabic, and designed. Then, the questionnaire was reviewed, pre-tested, judged, and statistically tested (a pilot test). Finally, the final version was finalised, and the process of gathering data started with disseminating survey invitations on social media platforms (URLs and QR) to recruit respondents based on their convenient availability and ability to provide the necessary data.

A total of 428 completed questionnaires were collected and underwent several data preparation steps, including validation, editing, handling of missing values, coding, data entry, and transformation. This was succeeded by a range of statistical analyses aimed at screening and exploring the entered data, including evaluating normality and identifying outliers (both multivariate and univariate). However, only 344 questionnaires were usable for statistical analysis. While IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used for the data screening procedure and provided a comprehensive descriptive glimpse of the collected data in a concise and understandable manner, the SEM was then conducted using Jamovi 2.3 to evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement model, as well as to fulfil the third objectives/questions and its related hypotheses.

Data Analysis

▪ Demographic Profile

To present an overview of the study participants the questionnaire comprised five factual questions to ascertain participants' demographic profiles, which were designed as radio button questions (single multiple-

choice). All these category questions were designed as single multiple-choice, which helped determine the participant's background.

Table 2

Demographic Profile

	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	266	77.3%
	Female	78	22.7%
Age	18 - 24 years	81	23.5%
	25 - 31 years	53	15.4%
	32- 38 years	155	45.1%
	39- 45 years	36	10.5%
	Above 46 years old	19	5.5%
Education Level	Secondary school or below	12	3.5%
	Diploma (after Secondary school)	23	6.7%
	Bachelor's degree	213	61.9%
	Master's degree	74	21.5%
	Doctoral degree	22	6.4%
Occupation	Student	88	25.6%
	Employee (government or private)	162	10.2%
	Businessman\ Businesswoman	35	47.1%
	Daily wage worker	24	7.0%
	Unemployed	35	10.2%
City OF Residency	Sana'a	66	19.2%
	Aden	30	8.7%
	Taiz	194	56.4%
	Hadramout	17	4.9%
	Ibb	7	2.0%
	Outside	23	6.7%
	Other.....	7	2.0%

As shown in Table 2, the study's sample included 344 Yemeni social media users of diverse ages, professions, genders, and cities of residence. Most of the participants were male (266 respondents), and 78 of the respondents were female. Regarding the age distribution of the participants, 45.1% fell within the range of 32 to 38 years, 38.9% were aged between 18 and 31 years, and 16% represented those aged 39 and older. The majority of respondents (61.9%) possess a bachelor's degree, 21.5% hold a master's degree, 6.7% have a diploma, 6.4% have a PhD, and 3.5% have an education level of secondary school or below. Among the participants, 24 were daily wage workers, 70 of them were evenly businesspeople and unemployed, 88 were students, and the bulk, 162, were employees (government or private). Considering the respondents' cities of residence, 56.4% were from Taiz, 19.2% were from Sana'a, 8.7% were from Aden, 6.7% were immigrants, 4.9% were from Hadramout, and 4% were equally from Ibb and other Yemeni cities.

▪ The Measurement Model's Validity and Reliability

In accordance with the suggestions put forth by Hair et al. (2019), Sathyanarayana & Mohanasundaram (2024), and drawing upon prior research, this study (as shown in Table 3) employed Jamovi 2.3 to evaluate the quality criteria of the collected data.

The values of the measurement model's convergent validity and reliability are shown in Table 3 affirm that all the items exhibited an acceptable quality criterion of latent variables, wherein Cronbach's alpha (α) was between 0.89 and 0.71, composite reliability was between 0.89 and 0.71, and average variance extracted was between 0.73 and 0.52. The results of evaluating discriminant validity in Table 4 indicate that the Heterotrait-Monotrait values for all latent variables were below the threshold of 0.90.

Table 3
Reliability and Convergent Validity

Latent Variables		No.	α	CR	AVE
eWOM in SM "Independent Variable"	Tie Strength	3	0.83	0.83	0.62
	Altruism	3	0.89	0.89	0.73
	Information Credibility	4	0.80	0.81	0.51
	Needs Of Information	4	0.86	0.87	0.61
	Attitude Towards Information	3	0.88	0.88	0.71
	Information Adoption	3	0.71	0.71	0.52
Purchase Intentions "Dependent Variable"		4	0.86	0.87	0.62

Table 4
Discriminant Validity

	TS	ALT	IC	NOI	ATI	IA	PI
TS	1						
ALT	0.045	1					
IC	0.066	0.322	1				
NOI	0.083	0.522	0.323	1			
ATI	0.090	0.501	0.675	0.677	1		
IA	0.080	0.509	0.510	0.756	0.822	1	
PI	0.101	0.487	0.435	0.663	0.734	0.883	1

▪ Research Objective One

This study was initiated with the objective of discovering social media usage patterns in Yemen. Thereupon, the researcher formulated a research question—what are the social media usage habits of Yemeni consumers (purpose of use, preferred platforms, and frequency of visits, activities), which was conveyed by four general questions in the online questionnaire.

Table 5 demonstrates that WhatsApp emerged as the most-used social

media platform, with Facebook next in line at 27.2%. Snapchat (3.9%) and TikTok (4.9%) were by far the lowest-used social media platforms. The analysis results also indicate that 212 respondents were active social media users (engaging more than five times daily), 29.7% of respondents used social media 3–4 times per day, and 30 participants used social media platforms once or twice daily. However, reading newsfeeds was the most frequently engaging activity for 89.5% of respondents. Chatting was next in line, as reported by 65.4% of respondents, followed by watching videos, with a total percentage of 57.6%. Lastly, creating and resharing/forwarding posts showed the lowest engagement rates.

Table 5
Social Media Usage Habits

		Responses	
		N	Percent
<i>Preferred Social Media Platforms</i>	Facebook	277	27.20%
	TikTok	50	4.90%
	Telegram	156	15.30%
	WhatsApp	337	33.00%
	Snapchat	40	3.90%
	Twitter	77	7.50%
	Instagram	83	8.10%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1020</i>	<i>100.00%</i>
<i>Visiting Frequency</i>	Once or twice	30	8.70%
	3 – 4 times	102	29.70%
	More than 5 times	212	61.60%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>344</i>	<i>100.00%</i>
<i>Regularly Social Media Activities</i>	Create Post	86	7.50%
	Reading Newsfeed	308	26.90%
	Watching Videos	198	17.30%
	Chatting	225	19.60%
	Resharing/Forwarding Post	83	7.20%
	Interacts (Liking)	139	12.10%
	Interacts (Posting Comments)	108	9.40%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>100.00%</i>

Research Objective Two

The study used the statistical measures of central tendency and dispersion to provide a descriptive overview of Yemeni consumers' impressions regarding eWOM in SM determinants and its impact on purchase intentions. All indicators pertaining to these abstract conceptions were assessed using linear scale inquiry. As shown in Table 5, descriptive statistics, such as means, medians, relative importance index (R.I.), deviations (S.D.), and coefficients of variation (C.V.) were utilised to furnish a descriptive glimpse.

Table 6
Descriptive Analysis

		Mean	R.I	SD	C.V
Tie Strength (TS)	TS1	3.17	63.4%	1.33	42%
	TS2	3.4	68%	1.41	41%
	TS3	3.15	63%	1.44	46%
	TS	3.24	64.8%	1.16	37%
Altruism (ALT)	ALT1	4.09	81.8%	0.98	24%
	ALT2	4.26	85.2%	0.87	20%
	ALT3	4.15	83%	0.94	23%
	ALT	4.17	83.3%	0.75	18%
Information Credibility (IC)	IC1	2.95	59%	0.93	31%
	IC2	3.36	67.2%	0.79	24%
	IC3	2.93	58.5%	0.85	29%
	IC4	3.06	61.2%	0.81	27%
	IC	3.07	61.5%	0.67	22%
Needs of Information (NOI)	NOI1	3.38	67.6%	1.06	31%
	NOI2	3.87	77.3%	0.87	23%
	NOI3	3.77	75.4%	0.84	22%
	NOI4	3.82	76.3%	0.86	22%
	NOI	3.71	74.2%	0.77	21%
Attitude Towards Information (ATI)	ATI1	3.58	71.5%	0.89	25%
	ATI2	3.56	71.3%	0.84	24%
	ATI3	3.24	64.9%	0.89	27%
	ATI	3.46	69.3%	0.74	21%
Information Adoption (IA)	IA1	3.37	67.4%	0.95	31%
	IA2	3.34	66.9%	0.81	24%
	IA3	3.2	64%	0.91	28%
	IA	3.30	66.1%	0.64	20%
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	3.32	66.5%	0.93	28%
	PI2	3.47	69.4%	0.92	26%
	PI3	3.33	66.7%	0.86	26%
	PI4	3.44	68.8%	0.89	26%
	PI	3.39	67.8%	0.76	22%

Comprehensively, the analytical results in Table 6 revealed that altruism was the most prioritised dimension, with an 83.3% relative importance index and 18% coefficient of variation. That was followed by needs of information with 74.2% R.I. and 21% C.V., attitude towards information with 69.2% R.I. and 21% C.V., purchase intention with 67.8% R.I. and 22% C.V., and information adoption with 66.1% R.I. and 20% C.V. The least prioritised dimension was information credibility, with 61.5% R.I. and 22% C.V., followed by tie strength, with 64.8% R.I. and 37% C.V.

▪ Research Objective Three

As already stated, this investigation addresses the determinants of eWOM in SM that have been insufficiently explored or yield conflicting results in earlier models, rather than proposing a new or alternative.

Thereupon, the third objective of this study was directed to provide a comprehensive overview of the extent to which eWOM in SM determinants influence Yemeni consumers' purchase intentions. For this purpose, six questions and six hypotheses were established to meet this objective.

Table 7

Structural Model Path Analysis

Path	Estimate	Standard Error	95% Confidence Intervals		β	Z	P-values
			Lower	Upper			
TS $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.047	0.032	-0.016	0.111	0.057	1.453	0.146
ALT $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.063	0.029	0.006	0.121	0.083	2.159	0.031
IC $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.031	0.078	-0.121	0.183	0.027	0.400	0.689
NOI $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.263	0.080	0.107	0.419	0.300	3.296	<.001
ATI $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.197	0.096	0.009	0.386	0.225	2.050	0.040
IA $\Rightarrow$ PI	0.360	0.106	0.153	0.567	0.347	3.405	<.001

The structural model path analysis in Table 7 showed positive correlations between the predictor variables (i.e., tie strength, altruism, information credibility, needs of information, attitude toward information, and information adoption) and the dependent variable (purchase intention). Nevertheless, while these positive relationships between tie strength, information credibility, and information adoption were insignificant, the parameter estimates indicated significant (<0.05) effects of altruism, needs of information, attitude toward information, and information adoption on purchase intention. Consequently, it can be deduced that H1 and H3 are rejected, whereas H2, H4, H5, and H6 are accepted.

Findings Discussion and Conclusion

▪ Social Media Usage Habits

To uncover Yemeni consumers' social media usage habits, the results revealed a striking similarity trend. By far, while most Yemeni consumers were active social media users, WhatsApp and Facebook emerged as the predominant preferred social media platforms for all Yemeni consumers. Likewise, reading newsfeeds, chatting, and watching videos were the most frequently engaging social media activities, whereas information seeking, social interaction, and entertainment were the most dominant reasons behind using social media platforms.

Indeed, the popularity and minimal technological requirements are the main reasons behind the predominance of WhatsApp and Facebook in

Yemen. However, despite being active on social media, Yemeni consumers remain silent spectators, and they primarily focus on activities with the lower social (bad social image) or political (bang up) concerns. Thereupon, rarely do they use social media for influence building or self-expression.

▪ eWOM in SM and Purchase Intention Perspectives

To respond to the second question in this inspection, the analytical results revealed that Yemeni consumers generally had a positive perspective of eWOM in SM determinants and its impact on purchase intentions. Altruism was by far the most prioritised dimension, followed by the needs of information, attitude towards information, purchase intention, information adoption, tie strength, and lastly information credibility.

Indeed, altruism is normally inherent in Yemeni consumers and is one of the fundamental principles of Islamic religions; hence, it is customary to occupy the highest prioritised dimension even in cyberspace. Given the fact that social media often represents authentic experiences, the high favourable perceptions of needs of information, attitude towards information and purchase intention demonstrated that most Yemenis have embraced this trend. Nonetheless, the prioritising of information adoption, tie strength, and information credibility as the last determinants, respectively, may reflect their escalating suspicions regarding eWOM in SM.

▪ The Influence of eWOM in SM on Yemeni Consumers' Purchase Intention

Explicitly, although tie strength and information credibility maintained consistent positive associations with purchase intentions, the empirical outcomes demonstrated that their influences were insignificant; H1 and H3, thus, are rejected. This finding is not odd, as it has been indicated by prior studies (e.g., Farzin & Fattahi, 2018; Lee & Choi, 2019; Stone, 2020; Iqbal et al., 2022; Mehryar et al., 2020; Mohsen, 2017; Ng & Goh, 2022; Yaseen & Jusoh, 2021). However, this may be ascribed to the fact that they can now interact with any identifiable (strong ties) or anonymous (weak ties) entity, the deliberate effort to exploit eWOM, and the proliferation of social media content outside of private spheres.

In alignment with a wide range of empirical research, the study confirmed that several factors significantly influenced Yemeni consumers' purchase intentions. These include altruism—the desire to help and support other social media members without expecting or receiving anything in return (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018; Mahmood et al., 2019; Sohaib et al., 2018);

the needs of information—motivational forces driving the acquisition of eWOM in SM (Erkan, 2016; Sánchez Torres et al., 2018; Sardar et al., 2021; Yaseen & Jusoh, 2021); attitude—the persistent, overarching assessment that conveys the consumer's beliefs and feelings (Abedi et al., 2020; Dada, 2021; Iqbal et al., 2022; Mohsen, 2017; Ng & Goh, 2022; Sánchez Torres et al., 2018; Stone, 2020; Zayed et al., 2022;); and information adoption—the intentional and purposeful use and consumption of eWOM in SM (Abedi et al., 2020; Bilal et al., 2021; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018; Ilieva & Boteva, 2023; Khwaja et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2024; Sánchez Torres et al., 2018; Sardar et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2019; Yaseen & Jusoh, 2021). In conclusion, such results suggest that utilising altruism motivation, addressing the needs of information, and fostering positive attitudes towards information and eWOM adoption can effectively increase Yemeni consumers' purchase intentions.

Research Contributions

From a theoretical standpoint, the current study provides important contributions to the body of knowledge in a variety of ways. Notably, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind in the Yemeni context and one of the few studies in the Arab homeland and least developed countries that inspected the influence of eWOM in SM determinants on purchase intentions. While the study aimed to provide additional evidence to bridge the existing gap in the literature regarding these insufficient and inconsistent determinants of eWOM based on various dimensions. Finally, the findings reinforce the view that consumer behaviour and social relationship factors, alongside information characteristics, significantly shape the impact of eWOM in SM.

With the growing use of social media among Yemeni consumers, the findings help marketers understand broad consumer behaviours rather than focusing on specific platforms or groups. Key takeaways include the importance of utilising altruism motivation, addressing consumers' information needs, and fostering positive attitudes to enhance eWOM and influence purchase intentions. Marketers are encouraged to support authentic, user-generated content by engaging with consumers respectfully, responding to feedback (even negative), and subtly encouraging eWOM participation. These organic strategies are more effective and sustainable than commercial incentives. Finally, while the study identifies several key eWOM determinants, marketers should also consider other influencing factors to fully capitalise on social media's potential.

Research Limitations & Future Direction

This study identified eWOM in SM adoption (seeking) as the most relevant behaviour, closely linked to the formation of purchase intentions. Thereupon, the study advocates for future research to clarify the validity of the identified determinants as factors impacting consumer behaviours related to eWOM in SM giving or passing. Future studies could also examine the mediating role of eWOM in SM information adoption. One more limitation lies in the non-probability sampling procedure, so this study, like many online surveys, has limitations regarding the generalisation of its results. Future studies are thus encouraged to develop probability strategies that enable surveying the entire online population. The final limitations of this study are related to the challenging circumstances under which it was conducted. However, more research should be replicated using documented eWOM in SM determinants to provide further evidence from Arab regions and least developed countries. Moreover, focusing on specific genders, product categories, or brand perceptions could also provide significant insights.

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