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The Effect of eWOM on Social Media in Purchasing Decisions: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study examined, in some way, the Millennial and Z Generation's use of previously owned goods. Just a sprinkle of focus on eWOM, a topic not easily visible, has been made. This eWOM, just to clarify, stands for electronic word-of-mouth, a concept circulating on social network platforms that influences purchase choices. Eco-friendliness is under scrutiny in our current environment; therefore, the younger demographic's inclination is leaning towards purchasing secondhand items due to their green attributes. A survey of literature has been undertaken, which strangely uncovers observations like worries over the environment, the impact of society, and product quality judgment. These discoveries are somewhat correlated to information absorption and prospective buying inclination. One cannot ignore the finding relating to eWOM—that it holds a significant influence over the MZ Generation's transaction habits. Recommendations received from comrades or critiques present in the online realm assist in garnering trust and influencing their perspectives concerning product quality. Environmental awareness and the societal mark of approval bear significance in their decision-making process. Through grasping these layers of complexity, marketing strategies may need modification; most likely, it will promote better engagement with this MZ generation to encourage sustainable consuming practices.

Keywords

eWOM, Environmental Concerns, Information Adoption, Purchase Intention, Secondhand Goods, Social Influence

1. Introduction

Preluding the current era, the marketplace for pre-owned commodities found itself in an abnormal increase (Husnah & Ichwan, 2023). This fluctuation is largely due to the transmuting habits of consumers paired with a rising consciousness of the environment. Previously, commodities that were used and owned often found themselves associated with economically inferior classes, now finding acceptance in a broader clientele, particularly Generation MZ. Both youthful cohorts, including Millennials and Generation Z, are part of this blurring line. These younger consumers have distinct characteristics shaped by their strong environmental concerns, reliance on social media, and value-driven purchasing decisions (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Asif 2021). Second-hand consumption, therefore, is not only motivated by economic factors but also by ethical and social considerations, especially sustainability and environmental responsibility (Hamari et al., 2016; Segarwati et al., 2022).

Generation MZ exhibits unique consumption behaviors. They tend to prioritize products that align with their values, particularly those concerning environmental sustainability (Kim et al., 2021; Anggraeni, 2020; Darmawan & Indriani, 2024). Furthermore, the social influence also peer recommendation is extremely controlling the generation in this era. Gen MZ consumer seems find much validation from people in social circles also online communities before obtaining fracture (Wang et al., 2012; Suprapti & Suparmi, 2022). Additionally, their approach to consumption emphasizes product quality, even when purchasing secondhand goods. They are more critical and discerning, expecting high standards despite buying pre-owned items, which reflects a shift in consumer expectations (Castellano & Ivanova, 2020; Syarifah et al., 2024).

The rise of eWOM (electronic word of mouth) on social media has further shaped the purchasing patterns of Generation MZ. eWOM, which refers to the online exchange of opinions and recommendations about products and services, plays a pivotal role in the decision-making process of this generation. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become vital spaces where users share their experiences and reviews about secondhand goods (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Marpaung et al., 2024). This form of peer-to-peer communication is trusted more by consumers than traditional advertising, making it a key driver in information adoption, where consumers incorporate this shared knowledge into their purchasing decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Based on research, online consumer persuades have much effect on business enforcement, brand recommendations, and purchase intentions (Goyette et al., 2010; Wibowo, 2021).

Several studies have demonstrated that factors such as environmental concerns, social influence, and perceived product quality significantly impact information adoption and, consequently, purchase intention (Park & Lee, 2009; Akar & Nasir, 2015). The term environmental issues describe how manufacturing and distribution methods affect the environment (de Lenne & Vandenbosch, 2017). Fashion can be understood as an industry which polluting environment, with negative effects on the environment including excessive use of natural resources, it is like energy also water, carbon emissions from the manufacture, sale, also consumption of fashion items, contains toxic and infection from the addition of many chemicals along production (Blasi et al., 2020). Consumers with heightened environmental awareness are more inclined to adopt sustainable consumption habits, such as buying secondhand goods, as they see it to reduce waste and contribute to environmental preservation (Cervellon et al., 2012). Buying secondhand goods appeals to both eco-conscious fashionistas and shoppers looking to cut costs. It also slows down the production of fast fashion while using 10–20 times less energy (Fletcher, 2008).

Mamat et al. (2016) defines social influence as the relationship that a customer has with the outside world. According to Varshneya et al. (2017), social influence could be concluded by the effort of personal to modify their attitudes, emotions, even behaviors in reaction with their community or social relationships. According to Farzin et al. (2020), individuals who want to purchase eco-fashion may change their behavior to align with their peers' preferences. Additionally, social influence through eWOM can amplify this adoption by encouraging consumers to trust and act upon the information shared within their social networks (Lin et al., 2011).

Customers will be highly driven to repurchase and to refrain from switching when the product they have purchased meets or exceeds their expectations for quality. Focus on quality model, consumers base their assessments and perceptions of brand quality on both intrinsic (performance and durability) and extrinsic (image, prices, also origin place of elegance brand) signals (Yoo et al., 2006). According to Armstrong and Kotler (2003), consumers' purchase intentions and brand loyalty are directly impacted by perceived quality when they know little or nothing about the things they want to buy. Product quality, even for secondhand goods, remains a critical factor as it affects consumer perceptions and ultimately their intention to purchase (Kim & Lennon, 2013).

Based on the opinion of Shen et al. (2014), information adoption is the way how the recipient absorbs also obtain the information from outside sources, including how the information advances their ability and enhances their ability to make decisions. The information adoption model is mainly utilized to gain a deeper comprehension of the way messages received over eWom communication shape intentions (Sardar et al., 2021). Information's utility in the decision-making process is primarily evaluated by consumers based on its quality. To evaluate the quality and efficacy of products and companies, consumers require access to high-quality information. (Yones, 2023)

This study shall attempt to examine the influence of environmental worries, social sway, and caliber of products on the information acceptance via eWOM on social networks. In return, one can see how such influences affect buying intentions of secondhand items, especially focusing on the young group labeled Generation MZ. Clarifying these interconnections will give those in sales and commerce high-value information, which they wish for, as there is a desire to focus on this group of youngsters with strength by utilizing the ever-expanding market field dealing with used goods and the might of advice coming from social media.

2. Methods

The research method uses a literature review, adopting findings from prior studies to investigate variables such as environmental concerns, social influence, and perceived product quality that significantly impact information adoption and purchase intention. To investigate the theories, techniques, models, control variables, and mediators that used and included in the prior research, we conducted a systematic review. Researchers can evaluate the topic of study in the existing literature and create a plan for future research by using Systematic Literature Reviews (SLRs) (Hazaee et al., 2022). Paul & Criado (2020) claim that the systematic review relies on repeatable techniques that make it easy to map and assess the prior research that is being reviewed, hence aiding in a development of an agenda. For the safety also sustainability, documenting of seeking action is guaranteeing of this research.

In the Figure 1, a diagram shows the steps for the literature review search. The methods of searching scientific journals are adopting the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) standards is shown in the diagram. This diagram illustrates the process of literature screening, from identification, filtering, feasibility, to the inclusion of studies to be included in the

analysis (Moher, 2010). The diagram helps to understand how many articles were screened and the reasons for the exclusion of certain articles from the review. The search process utilized ScienceDirect and Emerald. Reading the article's title and related keywords came first, followed by reading the abstract and the entire article. Ten journal articles that fulfilled the research requirements were selected. Non-related article documents were removed to raise the relatedness of the study.

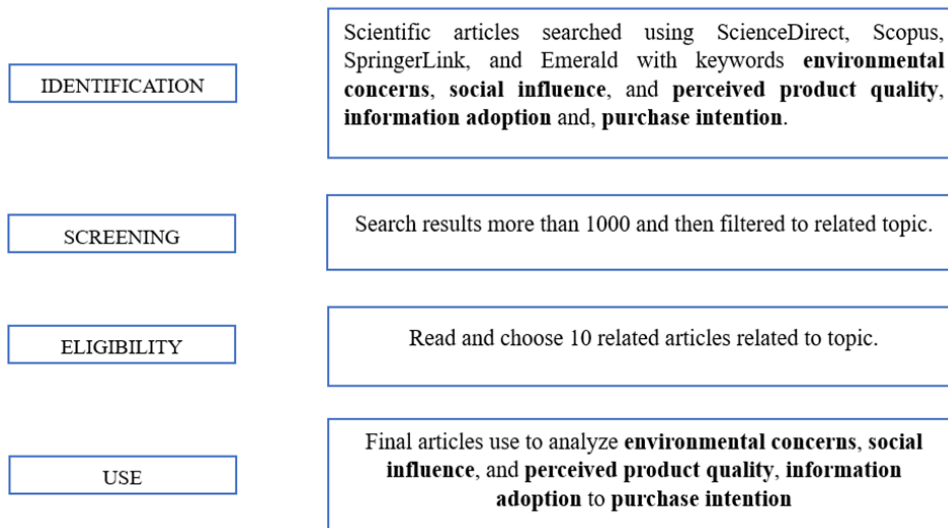


Figure 1. Literature Review process

3. Results and Discussion

This research's results are deepening comprehension quite a bit about the MZ Generation and their behaviors regarding secondhand products. Particularly impressive has been the attention to the effects of eWOM, fraught with social media platforms, on their buying choices. Environmental worries feature strongly here; Cervellon et al. (2012) provide evidence of this resonance with the youth of today, who are seeking vigorously to lessen their planetary impact. Hamari et al. (2016) corroborate that the notion of sustainable concepts is very important too in consumption behaviors based on collaborative nature. Aligned, you'd see, though with a bit of disjointedness, they are altogether.

Based on the literature review, it is evident that environmental concerns, social influence, and perceived product quality significantly impact information adoption, and, consequently, purchase intention. Each factor will be explained individually according to its variable. Concerning the environmental concerns factor, research by Farzin et al. (2023) shows that environmental consideration contains a good impact on eco-fashion investment purpose. The consideration of consumers to the environmental issues tend to favor eco-friendly fashion products, similarly the brand or product that manufactured from recycled materials by sustainable processes. This study suggests that consumers' understanding of effect the fashion products to the environmental plays a key role in motivating them to choose greener and more sustainable options. Malhotra & Shaiwalini (2023) contends that environmental concern substantially affects the purchasing intention of secondhand luxury fashion items, both directly and indirectly via the mediation of the aspiration for sustainable fashion. Nevertheless, the correlation between the desire for sustainable fashion and environmental concern is diminished by the moderating effect of attitude intensity. On the other hand, research by Xu et al. (2023) presents a contrasting view, indicating that environmental concern does not significantly affect consumers'

interest in sharing secondhand clothing in China. This study outlines several reasons for the failure of this hypothesis. First, it reveals that consumers in China, especially among the younger population, may have a relatively shallow understanding of the environmental impact of clothing production. For them, sharing or purchasing secondhand clothing may be viewed more as a simple form of recycling rather than an in-depth awareness of how this practice can help reduce carbon emissions, textile waste, and excessive water consumption in the fashion industry.

Another crucial factor impacting purchase intention is social influence. Farzin et al. (2023) indicates that social influence is the most significant factor shaping eco-fashion purchase intentions. Consumers are strongly influenced by the opinions and behaviors of their social groups when making purchasing decisions for eco-friendly products. In this context, social influence is especially significant among consumers in countries with collectivist cultures, such as Iran, where the pressure to conform to social environments and social norms is high. Soh et al. (2017) explains that social factors, such as peer pressure and social media influence, play a major role in shaping purchase intentions and behavior. Generation Y individuals in social environments that prioritize luxury goods tend to be more motivated to purchase these items to meet social standards or expectations. Herjanto et al. (2023) notes in his research that Generation Z is also drawn to experimenting with style through secondhand clothing, viewing it to express their identity and creativity without high costs. The drive to create unique styles that align with their personal identity increases their purchase intention. Cuong (2024) explains from his research findings that subjective norms, or the influence of consumers' social environment, also have a substantial impact. If consumers feel that those around them (friends, family, or society) support or encourage purchasing secondhand clothing, this will enhance their intention to make such purchases. In contrast Xu et al. (2023) found that in China, social influence does not significantly affect consumers' intentions to share secondhand clothing. This could be since clothing sharing is still a relatively new concept in China, and many consumers are unfamiliar with the practice. Additionally, younger generations, who participated in the study, tend to have more independent views and prioritize personal preferences, such as convenience and affordability, over social approval.

Perceived product quality is also an important factor. Based on the literature review of 10 journals, 5 of them indicate that perceived product quality is a significant factor in purchasing decisions. According to Kim et al. (2023), the factors influencing purchase intentions for secondhand clothing related to the perceived product quality include the sales platform (B2C vs. C2C) and duration of ownership. Consumers demonstrate a higher purchase intention for secondhand items from B2C platforms compared to C2C. This indicates that consumers have more trust in the management of goods by companies rather than individuals, as companies are perceived to have the capability to clean items thoroughly before selling them. Sales platforms may provide supplementary cleaning or inspection capabilities for customers apprehensive about contamination or the potential for inferior quality in pre-owned products. Furthermore, research shows that the duration of ownership is also a factor, with consumers being more willing to purchase items that have been owned for a shorter period. They believe that the shorter the usage time of the secondhand clothing, the lower the likelihood of contamination, which can influence their purchase intentions. Llach et al. (2023) shows perceived product quality emerged as the strongest driver of loyalty, as it directly affects customer satisfaction and fulfills expectations. When products meet or exceed expected quality, customers are more likely to engage in repeat purchases, making product quality a crucial factor in loyalty. Rosillo et al. (2017) demonstrates that perceived product quality exerts a direct positive influence on purchase intention, as customers are more inclined to acquire things they regard as high-quality. Soh et al. (2017) explains that a high perception of quality regarding luxury products enhances purchase intentions and

behaviors. Generation Y consumers view luxury fashion items as high-quality, durable, and prestigious goods, which increases their likelihood of purchasing.

According to Cuong (2024), reviews, recommendations, and discussions about secondhand clothing circulating on social media serve as significant stimuli. Favorable electronic word-of-mouth improves consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control over secondhand apparel. When consumers see positive reviews or recommendations from others, it encourages them to consider purchasing secondhand clothing more seriously. Yones & Muthaiyah (2023) information adoption strongly correlates with purchase intention, as users who internalize and accept the eWOM content are more likely to consider purchasing products. The study highlights that TikTok's platform dynamics, along with credible influencer reviews, offer a strategic advantage by effectively engaging potential customers through social media marketing.

Table 1. Summary of Research Result

Authors	Journal Publications	Study Subjects	Research Result
Kim et al. (2023)	International Marketing Review, 40(6), 1509-1530.	Participants from diverse cultural backgrounds were recruited to study how cultural differences affect their perceptions and behaviors toward secondhand fashion.	Purchase intentions for secondhand clothing are influenced by perceived product quality, sales platform (B2C vs. C2C), and ownership duration. Consumers prefer secondhand items from B2C platforms over C2C.
Farzin et al. (2023)	Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC, 27(3), 348-366.	The research hypotheses were tested using the structural equation modeling technique.	The findings reveal that environmental considerations positively impact eco-fashion investment and highlight social influence as the most significant factor in shaping eco-fashion purchase intentions.
Xu et al. (2022)	Sustainability, 14(15), 9566	Collected data is analysed using statistical methods to uncover patterns and relationships influencing consumer behaviour.	The author offers a contrasting view, stating that environmental concern has little impact on consumers' interest in sharing secondhand clothing in China, and social influence does not significantly affect their sharing intentions.
Malhotra & Shaiwalini (2023)	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics.	Respondents who had previously purchased or intended to purchase pre-owned luxury fashion goods	The findings from this study clarify the elements that draw consumers to secondhand luxury fashion items, offering key insights for luxury brands aiming to venture into the pre-owned market.
Llach et al. (2023)	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 40(9), 2064-2082.	Respondents who had purchased secondhand products via an online platform during 2020 were used to test the model.	The findings confirm both the satisfaction-loyalty framework and the mediating role of expectation fulfillment between perceived quality and satisfaction. They further reveal that customer fulfillment of expectations relies solely on the perceived quality of the product.
Yones & Muthaiyah (2023)	Asia Pacific Management Review, 28(2), 174-184.	The study includes a diverse group of TikTok users who have been exposed to eWOM about various products.	The findings show a strong correlation between information adoption and purchase intention, as users who accept eWOM content are more likely to consider purchasing.
Rosillo-Díaz et. (2024)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 81, 103980.	Electronic commerce consumers from the United States and Spain.	The findings show that review quantity, source credibility, review relevance, and prior brand experience positively influence perceived product quality, which significantly enhances purchase intention.

Soh et al. (2017)	Young Consumers, 18(2), 180-204.	Generation Y consumers who wear luxury fashion clothes, accessories and shoes or carrying luxury handbags from several universities in Malaysia.	The findings reveal that social factors, like peer pressure and social media influence, significantly shape purchase intentions and behavior, while a high perception of luxury product quality further enhances these intentions and behaviors.
Herjanto et al. (2023)	Journal of Global Responsibility, 15 (1), 53-72.	Generation Z participants between 19 and 27 years old, had previous SHC consumption experience, and were proficient in English.	The findings indicate that Generation Z is drawn to experimenting with style through secondhand clothing to express their identity and creativity. The drive to create unique styles that align with their personal identity increases their purchase intention.
Cuong (2024)	Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity.	Respondents who expressed the desire to buy secondhand clothing in Vietnam.	The results suggest that pricing and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) have a substantial positive influence on the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control of consumers.

4. Conclusion

Generation MZ gives a nod to secondhand treasures and goods. What moves them? The Earth's well-being, they say, is one aspect. The green ethos lights their path to sustainability; that's the setting for valuing pre-owned products. The influence of their social circles digitally also makes waves, like a stone thrown in water, creating ripples of eWOM in the progressive world of social platforms. Peers and those in the limelight—their words mold decisions regarding purchases. And the subjective value of the product also plays its role in shaping views; it's the product quality perceived through the lens of the buyer. When there's cheer in reviews and prosperity in discussions about any product's worth, it raises curiosity, getting them to click that buy button. As a result, Generation MZ is moving toward the whys and purchasing goods secondhand—kinds of impacts only they truly know. In addition, intention to buy relates closely to adopting sets of information, and further, credible eWOM makes the likelihood of electing to purchase secondhand goods even greater. These kinds of dynamics are ones that businesses are aware of, so they are focusing strategically on sustainability promotion. eWOM, stemming from a focus on product quality, helps draw in Generation MZ, which is strategic; hence, it drives engagement to occur in the secondhand market.

The literature review provides valuable insights into the factors affecting secondhand fashion consumption, several limitations should be considered. First, the findings are not universally applicable, as they are often region-specific. For instance, the lack of significant social influence in China, as found by Xu (2023), contrasts with studies from other regions where social norms play a stronger role. Additionally, the studies reviewed primarily focus on younger generations (Millennials and Generation Z), meaning that the findings may not be applicable to older demographics or other cultural groups with different attitudes toward secondhand goods. The varying levels of environmental concern across different populations also suggest that the impact of sustainability on consumer behavior may differ depending on cultural and socio-economic factors.

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