

# Economic and Business Horizon

ISSN: 2963-2765

Economic and Business  
Horizon

Volume: 04  
Issue: 02  
Year: 2025  
Page: 79-94

## Citation:

Azzahra, a., Ramadhan, N, D., Yoestini., & Dirgantara, I. M. B. (2025). The Integration of Digital Transformation and e-WOM on Consumers in the Religious Tourism Industry. *Economic and Business Horizon* 4(2), 79-94.

## The Integration of Digital Transformation and e-WOM on Consumers in the Religious Tourism Industry

Alifya Azzahra<sup>1\*</sup>, Novitha Dwiperмата Ramadhan<sup>1</sup>, Yoestini<sup>1</sup>, I Made Bayu Dirgantara<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: Alifya Azzahra ([alifyaazzahraa@students.undip.ac.id](mailto:alifyaazzahraa@students.undip.ac.id))

### Abstract

The rapid advancement of digital technology has catalyzed transformation across various sectors, including the religious tourism industry, particularly in Umrah and Hajj services. One key adaptation to this digital shift is the implementation of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) as a strategic marketing tool aimed at influencing consumer purchase intention. This study seeks to explore the interrelationship between digital transformation, eWOM, and purchase intention within the context of religious tourism by employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. A comprehensive analysis of both national and international scholarly literature was conducted to identify core concepts and examine their interlinkages. Through a thorough theoretical examination, this study aims to contribute to the development of sustainable digital marketing strategies and provide a conceptual foundation for future research in this domain. The findings reveal that eWOM exerts a significant influence on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of brand image and trust. These insights highlight the strategic importance of integrating digital innovation with sustainable marketing practices to enhance the competitive advantage of Umrah and Hajj travel agencies in the digital era.

### Keywords

eWOM, Purchase Intention, Digital Transformation, Religious Tourism.

## 1. Introduction

Digital transformation is a process propelled by digital technologies that cause disruption in organizations and greatly influences value generation, strategic orientation, and structural frameworks (Feroz et al., 2021). Due to shifts in consumer behavior and the intensifying competition in the market, many companies have made this a strategic priority (Suhairi et al., 2024). As per a report by Fortune Business Insight (2024), the worldwide digital transformation market projects to increase from USD 2.71 trillion in 2024 to USD 12.35 trillion by 2032, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.9%. It suggests that adopting technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics is essential in transforming how businesses engage with customers. In the past few years, two significant factors have altered the business environment: the progress of digital technologies (Puslitbang et al., 2018) and the increasing focus on sustainability (Yosefina Andia Dekrita et al., 2024). Different industries have recognized that sustainable growth cannot be attained only through technological advancement; it also necessitates the implementation of sustainable marketing practices. One sector that has faced unparalleled opportunities and difficulties in the digital age is the tourism sector (Heliany, 2019). Due to the extensive use of the internet and social media, numerous elements currently affect travelers when selecting travel spots or buying products and services, including electronic word of mouth (eWOM), costs, destination attractiveness, and others (Nabila et al., 2025).

The digital transformation promotion also necessitates the incorporation of sustainability values, which today's consumers are prioritizing more than ever. As environmental, social, and ethical issues gain greater prominence, companies are expected not only to maintain a digital presence but also to demonstrate social responsibility towards the environment. The sustainable marketing concept has emerged as a response, wherein marketing activities aim to create long-term value without depleting natural resources or harming surrounding communities. Sustainable marketing strategies can enhance corporate reputation, foster customer loyalty, and support more stable and competitive business growth. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is a digital communication form that influences consumer behavior through information-based and emotion-based content (Babić Rosario et al., 2019; Daowd et al., 2021). It significantly shapes perceptions and purchasing decisions, fostering trust and loyalty (Hasna & Irwansyah, 2019; Soni et al., 2025). In the umrah and hajj travel industry, digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are used to share testimonials, experiences, and live consultations. These eWOM strategies effectively engage Millennials and Gen Z, who rely heavily on online information, thus playing a vital role in influencing consumer interest and purchase intentions for religious travel services.

The integration of eWOM with digital transformation and sustainable marketing strategies is considered an effective combination to achieve long-term business growth (Fadilah Nasution et al., 2024). In today's digital era, where individuals are constantly connected and increasingly selective in brand or product choices, companies must maintain a digital presence while also showcasing a commitment to sustainability. However, the relationship between digital transformation and eWOM in influencing consumer purchase intentions—particularly in religious tourism, which is characterized by unique emotional and spiritual dimensions—remains insufficiently understood. Previous studies have yielded mixed findings; some suggest that eWOM has a significant effect on purchase intention, while others find that its impact is only significant when mediated by variables such as brand image and trust. The aim of this study is to examine and detail the connection between digital transformation, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and consumer purchase intentions within the religious tourism field, specifically focusing on the umrah and hajj services sector. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to uncover trends and results from earlier studies that examine how

eWOM influences consumer perceptions and impacts buying choices. This study seeks to improve comprehension of the impact of eWOM on consumer buying intention by synthesizing information from current literature, thereby directing more efficient marketing strategies and identifying key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of eWOM.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation refers to the fundamental reconfiguration of business operations through technological advancements (Chirumalla et al., 2025). This evolution is typically driven by transformations in consumer behavior resulting from the digital era (Verhoef et al., 2021). The focus of this transformation is data, which empowers organizations to make evidence-based, real-time decisions rather than relying on intuition or historical patterns (Carreiro Santos & Martinho, 2020). Moreover, digital transformation redefines how firms collect and interpret market demands and transforms innovation approaches to be more aligned with consumer expectations, thus improving a firm's agility in responding to market dynamics (Liu, 2025).

Essential technological enablers such as Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) significantly contribute to enriching customer experiences and boosting internal efficiencies (Nam & Kim, 2025; Mohsen et al., 2025). A tangible example of this is the utilization of digital platforms such as Online Travel Agents (OTAs), like Booking.com and Traveloka, which ease the process for consumers in travel planning and purchasing. This emphasizes how digital transformation can generate competitive edges by enhancing current capabilities or encouraging the growth of new strategic strengths.

### **2.2. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)**

Sustainable marketing is a strategic approach aimed at creating long-term value not only for companies but also for consumers, society, and the environment as a whole (Belz & Peattie, 2012). In the age of digital transformation, this approach has developed by utilizing digital technologies to convey messages that are increasingly transparent, personalized, and focused on value. A marketing approach that reflects sustainable values and is ideal for digital transformation is electronic word of mouth (eWOM). eWOM enables consumers to willingly and genuinely share their experiences, which can enhance trust among other consumers, decrease reliance on resource-heavy traditional advertising, and encourage more informed and deliberate decision-making (Babić Rosario et al., 2019; Daowd et al., 2021). In the religious tourism industry, eWOM is particularly important, as consumer decisions are often shaped by the testimonies and spiritual experiences of previous pilgrims.

eWOM takes conventional face-to-face or word-of-mouth (WOM) communication into the online space, where people share information via digital platforms (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). It refers to the dissemination of opinions, recommendations, and personal experiences regarding products or services through digital media (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). eWOM not only assists individuals in making purchasing decisions but also affects key business performance metrics such as sales, revenue, and brand equity (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). WOM is recognized as an effective and attractive promotional medium (Buchori, 2021) due to its ability to combine various elements into a low-cost yet persuasive influence on consumer behavior (Trusov et al., 2009). eWOM dimensions—such as credibility, message quality, and review volume—play critical roles in shaping consumer trust toward a brand or service (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

eWOM has a considerable impact on people's travel choices and directly shapes how travelers view and select their travel alternatives (Stamolampros & Nikolaos, 2018; Huang et al., 2023). One key driver for consumers seeking eWOM is the desire for credible information (Siregar, 2024). The growing prevalence of social media has

further enabled individuals to share both positive and negative daily experiences in digital spaces (Anggraini et al., 2023). eWOM has the potential to boost trust and loyalty since consumer reviews can significantly impact perceptions and buying choices (Soni et al., 2025). The perceived value of eWOM information is crucial for its acceptance; consumers tend to embrace and utilize information they consider advantageous (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2024).

eWOM is divided into positive and negative. Satisfied consumers create positive eWOM by voluntarily sharing their experiences with others. Positive eWOM helps reduce potential concerns by providing social proof that a product is trustworthy and reliable (Kameswara & Respati, 2022). Conversely, when consumers express dissatisfaction or negative experiences, it is referred to as negative eWOM. Positive expressions by consumers not only benefit other potential buyers but also contribute positively to the company's image, as such reviews can encourage others to engage with the product or service.

Beyond influencing consumer behavior, eWOM also generates strategic implications for businesses. Understanding its impact is crucial for companies to effectively manage their reputation and maximize the potential of digital marketing (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Credible eWOM sources contribute to descriptive power in the online information acceptance process (Lis, 2013). Consumers generally trust peer reviews and recommendations more than corporate endorsements (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Honest reviews from previous consumers help build trust among new customers—especially in the tourism industry (Al-Adwan et al., 2020).

The details communicated via eWOM affect several phases of the consumer decision-making process. Shoppers frequently evaluate multiple reviews prior to reaching a conclusion, and favorable eWOM can hasten this process (Park et al., 2007). This positions eWOM as a strategic and indirect marketing instrument that successfully boosts sales (Zhang et al., 2010). Nevertheless, eWOM must be carefully evaluated by investors, policymakers, and regulators, due to its notable impact on consumer behavior shown in various contexts (Haj Khalifa et al., 2024).

### **2.3. Purchase Intention**

The success of a company's product can be measured by one of its key indicators: the extent to which consumer purchase intention increases toward the product (Sutantio, 2004, as cited in Latief, 2018). Another perspective suggests that purchase intention is one of the most significant aspects in fulfilling consumers' desires, thus serving as an important indication of a product's success (Mittal et al., 1999). Purchase intention turns to a consumer's desire to satisfy their needs and wants, as perceived in their thoughts and internal motivations (Laksmi & Oktafani, 2016). Intention often remains hidden and cannot be directly observed, causing challenges in precisely identifying what a consumer desires or requires (Malik et al., 2013). Purchase intention typically arises after an evaluation of alternatives, during which consumers consider several product options based on brand preferences, personal desires, or motivations (Kotler et al., 2017). The awareness of needs, external influences, and evaluation of alternatives are key triggers of purchase intention (Abdul et al., 2022). Purchase intention is closely linked to emotional responses; when individuals experience happiness or satisfaction with a product or service, this can influence others to develop similar purchase intentions (Latief, 2018).

#### **a. Factors Influencing Purchase Intention**

Several factors contribute to the purchase intention development (Kotler, 2008), including:

- The influence of others  
The extent to which others affect a consumer's choices depends on how strongly they oppose the preferred alternatives and the consumer's motivation to comply with others' preferences.
- Unanticipated situational factors  
Unexpected circumstances can alter a consumer's intentions or beliefs, potentially influencing their decision not to proceed with a purchase.
- b. Indicators of Purchase Intention  
There are several indicators that can be used to assess consumer purchase intention (Ferdinand, 2002, as cited in Latief, 2018), including:
  - Exploratory Intention  
It turns to the behavior of seeking information around a desired product. Consumers with exploratory intention actively search for supporting evidence or reviews to guide their decisions.
  - Preferential Intention  
This reflects a strong preference for a particular product or brand, which is unlikely to change unless the preferred product becomes unavailable or experiences issues.
  - Transactional Intention  
This describes a consumer's desire or tendency to purchase a product or service, indicating a strong readiness to engage in a transaction.
  - Referential Intention  
It turns to a customer's readiness to suggest or endorse a product or service to others, often based on positive personal experience or satisfaction

#### **2.4. Hajj and Umrah Travel Agency**

In Indonesia, Hajj and Umrah travel agencies operate in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. To legally offer pilgrimage services, companies must obtain official licenses as Providers of Umrah Pilgrimage Travel (PPIU) or Special Hajj Travel (PIHK). These agencies typically deliver comprehensive travel packages that encompass flight bookings, visa processing, accommodations in Makkah and Madinah, local transportation, guidance from religious facilitators (mutawwif), and a range of additional support services (Wulan et al., 2024). The main sources of income for these businesses are profit margins from package offerings and commissions received from affiliated service providers such as airlines and hospitality establishments.

In recent years, technological advancements have reshaped the business landscape for these agencies. By integrating digital tools and platforms, many have gained a strategic advantage in accessing broader markets and enhancing operational workflows. Developments like mobile apps and online reservation systems have simplified key processes—including registration, payment, and itinerary coordination—thereby elevating the overall customer experience (Amanda & Mudjahidin, 2024).

## 2.5. Transformation of eWOM on Purchase Intention of Hajj and Umrah Travel Agencies

Many empirical investigations have examined the influence of eWOM on purchase intention through mediating elements such as brand perception and trustworthiness. For instance, Gupta and Savita (2024) found that the traits of eWOM have a more significant impact on brand perception than consumers' purchasing intentions in the travel sector. This indicates that online reviews are more impactful in developing a favorable brand perception for travel agencies rather than in directly boosting purchase intent. In a similar vein, Purnama and Indayani (2023) showed that brand image and trust serve as significant mediators in the connection between eWOM and purchasing choices. Sirojuddin et al. (2023) also emphasized that eWOM and social media marketing positively influence brand trust, which in turn enhances consumers' purchasing intentions.

Nonetheless, research regarding religious tourism, especially concerning hajj and umrah travel services, reveals more diverse outcomes. Haryono and Albetris (2023) and Farizy, (2024) found in their research on umrah travel agencies that eWOM did not directly influence the interest in acquiring hajj/umrah services. Considerably, factors like brand perception and cost had a better impact on shaping purchase intent. These findings suggest that the eWOM impact on consumers' purchase intention for Umrah services might be indirect, moderated by factors such as brand trust or image. Overall, the research indicates the subsequent relational model: eWOM (e.g., digital endorsements) → brand perception and reliability → buying intention. For instance, in the realm of tourism, a strong reliance on online reviews correlates with diminished perceived risk and increased purchase intention.

Fuady et al. (2022) demonstrated that an Indonesian pilgrimage travel agency evaluated the effects of eWOM, pricing, and brand perception on consumers' purchase intentions after COVID. The findings showed that eWOM significantly influenced purchase intention positively, whereas price did not show a notable impact. Research also showed that brand image acts as an intermediary in the connection between eWOM and purchase intention. To put it differently, online testimonials and endorsements boost trust in the agency, which in turn increases consumers' readiness to buy hajj/umrah packages. Consequently, in the age of digital transformation, hajj and umrah travel agencies should regard eWOM as a strategic avenue—an approach to enhance brand image and trust through favorable reviews and online interaction—to boost purchase intentions among potential pilgrims.

## 3. Methods

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach combined with qualitative descriptive analysis to examine the integration of digital transformation, eWOM, and sustainable marketing in the religious tourism service industry, specifically Umrah and Hajj. The aim is to analyze the relationship among digital transformation, eWOM, and digital marketing within this unique sector. The Systematic Literature Review approach enables a systematic and transparent identification, evaluation, and interpretation of relevant research (Sugiyono, 2019). It enables the combination of different empirical insights to deliver a broader understanding of the examined phenomenon.

Data collection relied exclusively on secondary sources, notably peer-reviewed journal articles. Although such literature is accessible through various academic platforms such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Scopus this study confined its search to the Scopus database to ensure a consistent level of academic rigor and quality across all sources. Inclusion criteria were defined to encompass publications from the most recent five-year period (2019–2025), thematic alignment with the keywords “digital transformation,” “eWOM,” and “religious tourism,” and compliance with scholarly standards.

The literature search was guided by a keyword combination strategy grounded in the PICO framework (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome), as

proposed by Liu et al. (2021). Boolean operators (AND, OR) were utilized to refine the search process and improve its precision. The specific search query employed was: (“eWOM” OR “electronic word of mouth”) AND “purchase intention”

Following the initial data gathering through Scopus, the PICO framework and PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines were utilized across three primary phases of literature filtering. The research question was developed using the PICO framework to direct the literature search approach. It further specified the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, as outlined in Table 1:

**Table 1.** PICO Framework

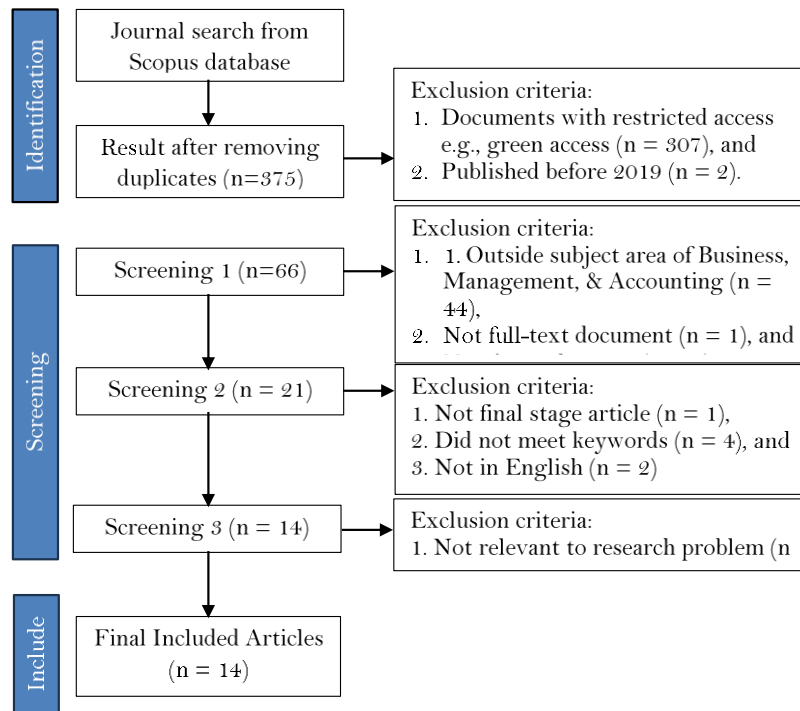
PICO	Description
Population	Consumers in the religious tourism industry (umrah and hajj)
Intervention	Use of eWOM
Comparison	Consumers without eWOM or using traditional marketing
Outcome	Purchase intention, decision to choose a travel agency

This table details the criteria used to screen literature from the Scopus database. These criteria are divided into two categories in table 2, namely:

**Table 2.** PICO Framework Inclusions and Exclusions

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Open access	Documents with Gold Access.	Documents other than Gold access.
Time period	Published in the period 2019 – 2025.	Published before 2019.
Field	eWOM, purchase interest, digital marketing, tourism, religious tourism.	Physical products, manufacturing industry.
Document Type	Journal articles.	In addition to journal articles.
Publishing stage	Final.	Before the final.
Keywords	eWOM, digital transformation, digital marketing, tourism, religious tourism, purchase intention.	Apart from those specified.
Language	Indonesian, English.	Besides Indonesian and English.

These criteria ensure the reviewed literature is academically relevant, recent, and academic reliable. Following the PICO process, articles were further filtered using the PRISMA diagram, which illustrates the literature selection process from the initial to the final stage.



**Figure 1.** Journal Quality Evaluation

The article selection process is presented in a PRISMA diagram that illustrates the identification steps up to the final article used:

- Identification Stage: A total of 375 articles were identified from the Scopus database. After removing duplicates, the number remained 375.
- Screening 1: Initial screening was conducted based on access and year of publication. A total of 307 articles were excluded because they were not Gold Access, and 2 articles because they were published before 2019. The remaining 66 articles.
- Screening 2: Of the 66 articles, 44 were eliminated because they were not from the specified fields of study (Business, Management, & Accounting), 1 was not a journal article, and none came from non-journal sources. This left 21 articles.
- Screening 3: Next, 7 articles were excluded because they were not final (n=1), not relevant to the keywords (n=4), and not in Indonesian or English (n=2). There were 14 articles left.
- Final Results: The 14 articles that passed met all inclusion criteria and were considered relevant to the problem formulation, so they were used as the main material for analysis in this study.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Previous Journals Research Table

With the article publication limit of 2019-2025, as well as the specifications of the fields of economics, business, and management, and a focus on gold access, there were 14 articles found which are described in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Articles Review

Writer	Title	Research Subject	Results
Cuong Nguyen, Sam Pham, & ly Nguyen. 2025.	The mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between E-WOM and purchase intention: the case study of FOREO skin-care devices	This study uses consumers in Vietnam as research subjects, namely individuals who have experience or knowledge about FOREO skin care products.	The three main aspects of eWOM — credibility, volume, and message quality — significantly influence brand perception and affect consumers' purchase intentions. A strong brand image can boost consumer buying capacity by elevating trust and perceived worth. When people encounter eWOM, either intentionally or unintentionally, this encounter can positively influence their buying choices and intentions.
Nguyen, Dao Thi Bich; Nguyen, Van Thi Khanh. 2024.	The Impact of Electronic Word-of-Mouth on the Purchase Intention of Tourists on Online Hotel Booking Applications	tourists in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, who make online hotel reservations.	The adoption of eWOM information, driven by product ratings and the amount of information available, significantly influences consumers' intention to book hotels online. The implementation of eWOM positively affects consumers' attitudes and perceived social pressures, thus enhancing their intentions to purchase online. The research further remarks that attitudes do not have a significant impact.
Vjollca Visoka Hasani, Jusuf Zeqiri, Teodora Todorovik, Dhouha Jaziri, Asdren Toska. 2023.	Digital Content Marketing and EWOM: A Mediation Serial Approach	Consumers in North Macedonia used a well-structured questionnaire over six weeks.	Digital content marketing has an indirect impact on consumer purchase intentions, mainly by boosting customer engagement, increasing brand awareness, promoting customer loyalty, and facilitating the spread of eWOM.
Modi, Shailavi; Balaji, Vedha; Mathew, Sonia; Kishore, Krishna. 2024.	Navigating Brand Equity in Personal Care: Examining the influence of direct-to-consumer brands and the mediating power of brand image.	Consumers of personal care products interacting with DTC brands.	The appeal of a website, along with efficient eWOM marketing, enhances direct-to-consumer (DTC) brand performance and simultaneously lowers traditional advertising costs, resulting in a greater return on advertising investment.
Indiani, Ni Luh Putu; Amerta, I Made Suniastha; Sentosa, Inspiration. 2024.	Exploring the moderating effect of consumers'	Consumers who shop online to test the modified Theory of	The intention to buy online, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer confidence all have a considerable influence on online shopping behavior. Significantly, the impact of eWOM and trust on real purchases is entirely mediated by online purchase

	demographics in the online purchase behavior	Planned Behavior (TPB) model by considering demographic variables as moderating factors.	intention. Although demographic factors do not affect the link between purchase intention and buying behavior, they do have an impact on the connection between trust and purchasing. Moreover, trust operates as a moderating variable within the framework.
Farzin, Milad; Shababi, Hooman; Sasi, Golnoosh Shirchi; Sadeghi, Marzie; Makvandi, Rosha. 2023.	The determinants of eco-fashion purchase intention and willingness to pay	Consumers who have experience in buying eco-friendly clothing. Data were collected through a survey and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method.	The results demonstrate that social influence is the key predictor of PIEF. Furthermore, concern for the environment and selflessness also significantly influence. Additionally, the desire to buy sustainable fashion enhances consumers' inclination to participate in electronic word-of-mouth and to pay higher prices.
Zainuddin, Muhammad Shaleh; Sudirman, Indrianty; Lasise, Sumardi; Sanusi, Abdullah. 2023.	Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Interest MS Glow in Makassar City	Consumers who want to buy and use MS Glow cosmetic products in Makassar City, Indonesia.	The research shows that eWOM, endorsements, and brand awareness together affect consumer interest in purchasing Ms Glow products. On their own, endorsement and brand awareness demonstrate a notable and positive influence, whereas eWOM does not notably affect purchase interest among Indonesian consumers.
Shinta Rahmani, Rizal E. Halim, Gita Gayatri, Asnan Furinto. 2021.	The Role of Company Reputation in Mitigating Negative Word of Mouth	Students in Indonesia as social media consumers are exposed to negative eWOM.	This study demonstrates that corporate reputation effectively mitigates the negative impact of eWOM. In the presence of high negative eWOM, a strong reputation sustains purchase intentions by fostering positive consumer attitudes, mediated enhancing favorable consumer attitudes, facilitated by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. The results bolster the Theory of Planned Behavior and highlight reputation-building as a strategic defense against negative eWOM.
Robert Zinko, Helene de Burgh-Woodman, Zhan Zhang Furner, Soo Jung Kim. 2021.	Seeing is Believing: The Effects of Images on Trust and Purchase Intent in eWOM for Hedonic and Utilitarian Products	Online consumers reading product reviews (hedonic and utilitarian) with or without images.	This study finds that incorporating images in online consumer reviews (eWOM) enhances perceived trust and purchase intention, particularly for hedonic products. Images enrich information, boost review appeal, and strengthen trust, even when not fully aligned with the text. These observations provide important implications for visual-oriented digital marketing strategies.

Juan José Camou Viacava, Gabriela Cluber Mercurio de Andrade, Ysmaim Adilson de Lima. 2023.	Hard to Read, Hard to Believe”: (Dis)Fluency Effects on eWOM Credibility and Purchase Intentions	Consumers reading online reviews (eWOM) with varying reading ease/difficulty.	eWOM significantly influences purchase intention via brand image, with product type acting as a moderating factor between eWOM, purchase intention, and brand image.
Saxena, Anoop Krishna., Siddiqui, Jaziba Haroon. 2021.	Creating Electronic Word of Mouth Credibility Through Social Networking Sites and Determining Its Impact on Brand Image and Online Purchase Intentions in India	Consumers using social media in India.	This study examines how processing fluency affects eWOM credibility and purchase intention. Findings indicate that negative eWOM in a disfluent format is perceived as less credible, reducing purchase intention. In contrast, positive eWOM retains its persuasive impact even when disfluent. These results underscore the role of cognitive perception and visual presentation in shaping digital marketing effectiveness.
Ülfet Işçi and Hakan Kitapçı. 2020.	Responses of Turkish Consumers to Product Risk Information in the Context of Negative eWOM	Automotive consumers in Türkiye with a focus on risk in negative eWOM.	This study finds that eWOM credibility on social media significantly influences brand image and online purchase intention. User engagement, message content, and peer recommendations shape this credibility, positively affecting brand perception. The results confirm that strategic social media marketing can boost brand trust and influence purchasing choices in the Indian digital marketplace.
Muhammad Asghar Ali, Ding Hooi Ting, Lina salim, Muhammad Ahmad-Ur-Rehman. 2021.	Influence of servicescape on behavioral intentions through mediation and moderation effects: A study on Malaysia's full-service restaurants	Full service restaurant customer in Malaysia.	This study examines Turkish consumers' responses to risk information in negative eWOM within the automotive sector. Findings show that financial risk increases eWOM credibility, particularly among prevention-focused consumers. On the other hand, performance risk considerably lowers purchase intention for consumers who are either prevention- or promotion- focused. These results highlight that the type of risk conveyed in eWOM critically shapes consumer perception and purchase decisions, with performance risk being a key driver of purchase avoidance.
Muneer Alrwashdeh, Okechukwu Lawrence Emeagwali, & Hasan Yousef Aljuhmani. 2019.	The effect of electronic word of mouth communication on purchase intention and brand image: An applicant smartphone brands in North Cyprus.	Generation Y and Z consumers using smartphone brands in Northern Cyprus.	This study reveals that servicescape elements both physical (ambience, layout, interior design) and social (customer–staff interaction) directly influence repurchase intention and eWOM. Customer satisfaction serves as a partial mediator in this relationship, whereas perceived crowding enhances the connection between servicescape and satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of an integrated method to restaurant design in improving customer experience. (Asghar Ali et al., 2021).

## 4.2. Research Findings

This study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology by analyzing 14 peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2025, obtained from the Scopus database. The selected literature highlights eWOM, purchase intention, digital transformation, and religious tourism. The study originates from various countries and encompasses several service sectors, including tourism, beauty, hospitality, and digital services.

The results indicate that the majority of studies demonstrated a positive and significant link between eWOM and consumer buying intention. This connection happened either directly or via mediating factors like brand reputation and brand confidence. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2025) discovered eWOM features (credibility, quantity, and quality) significantly improve brand image, which subsequently boosts purchase intention. In the same vein, (Indiani et al., 2024) demonstrated that electronic word-of-mouth and consumer confidence significantly influence online purchasing behavior.

However, some research did not confirm a direct influence of eWOM on purchasing intention. Zainuddin et al., (2023) discovered in their study concerning MS Glow cosmetic items that although brand awareness and endorsements greatly influenced purchase intention, eWOM did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect. A comparable result was noted in research by Haryono & Albetris (2023) regarding Umrah travel services, indicating that brand image and pricing had a greater impact than eWOM.

An interesting insight from the review highlights the influence of information presentation. Camou Viacava et al. (2023) discovered that positive eWOM maintains its persuasive power even when presented in a disfluent (hard-to-read) format, while negative eWOM with poor presentation is perceived as less credible and lowers purchase intention.

The results emphasize the crucial role of digital transformation in enhancing the efficiency of eWOM. The integration of social media, online reservation systems, and interactive digital content enables businesses, including Hajj and Umrah travel agencies to communicate messages, testimonials, and spiritual narratives in an accessible, affordable, and authentic manner. This approach has proven particularly effective in engaging digital-native consumers, especially Millennials and Generation Z, who rely heavily on online reviews when making purchasing decisions.

## 5. Discussion

From the findings, it could be reaffirmed that (eWOM) is a strategic and influential marketing instrument in building consumer purchase decisions in the digital era, including in the religious tourism sector, which is characterized by unique value-based and experiential dimensions (Dianti, 2023). Consumer reviews, pilgrim testimonials, and user-generated content shared via social media serve as forms of social trust, reinforcing consumer perceptions of the credibility of umrah and hajj travel services.

However, eWOM does not operate in isolation. Its effectiveness is largely dependent on trust and brand image, which must be proactively built by the company. In many cases, eWOM has a significant impact only when consumers perceive the reviews as credible, relevant, and coming from trusted sources. Therefore, travel agencies must actively manage their digital reputation, ensure high service quality, and encourage honest and positive customer feedback.

Digital transformation represents a central act in amplifying the impact of eWOM. Without sufficient digital readiness—such as social media presence, online booking systems, or the use of visual content like video testimonials and live sessions—the potential of eWOM cannot be fully realized. Therefore, religious tourism providers should see digital transformation not just as a technical

enhancement but as a crucial change in their communication and interaction with customers.

Moreover, a sustainable marketing strategy must be developed. In the context of religious tourism, sustainability goes beyond operational efficiency or financial gain and encompasses values such as trust, honesty, and social responsibility. Therefore, an eWOM approach that is ethical, transparent, and centered on spiritual experiences will be more effective in building long-term loyalty and purchase intention (Ramadhani, 2024).

In summary, this research affirms that the combination of digital transformation, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer buying intent can establish a strong and flexible marketing structure, especially in sectors that connect profoundly with the spiritual and emotional dimensions of consumers, like umrah and hajj services.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research illustrates that in the religious tourism sector (especially regarding Umrah and Hajj services), digital transformation and eWOM significantly influence purchase intentions. Digital transformation has enabled travel agencies to expand their reach to prospective pilgrims more broadly and efficiently through diverse digital platforms, including social media, online booking applications, and interactive content. eWOM acts as an effective marketing tool to build consumer trust and foster positive service perceptions, particularly through reviews, testimonials, and personal recommendations from previous customers.

The literature review indicates that while eWOM can directly affect purchase intention, its impact is often influenced by brand image and brand trust. Key success factors for eWOM effectiveness consist of message trustworthiness, the quantity of reviews, and the quality of shared information. As a result, sustaining a robust and effectively managed eWOM presence serves as a strategic advantage in digital marketing for the travel agency industry.

In conclusion, the combination of digital transformation and eWOM should be viewed not just as a marketing strategy but as a strategic basis for creating a sustainable marketing model that aligns with changing consumer behaviors. Thus, travel agencies for Hajj and Umrah must consistently evolve by utilizing digital technologies and building a strong online presence to boost consumer trust, encourage loyalty, and ultimately increase purchase intention.

## **References**

- Abdul, M., Septyadi, K., Salamah, M., Nujiyatillah, S., Manajemen, M. S., Bhayangkara, U., & Raya, J. (2022). *Literature Review Keputusan Pembelian dan Minat Beli Konsumen Pada Smartphone: Harga dan Promosi*. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial*, 3(1).
- Al-Adwan, A. S., Kokash, H., Al Adwan, A., Alhorani, A., & Yaseen, H. (2020). Building customer loyalty in online shopping: The role of online trust, online satisfaction and electronic word of mouth. *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, 11(3), 278–306.
- Alrwashdeh, Muneer., Emeagwali, Okechukwu Lawrence., and Aljuhmani, Hasan Yousef. (2020). The effect of electronic word of mouth communication on purchase intention and brand image: An applicant smartphone brands in North Cyprus. *Management Science Letters*, 9(4).
- Anggraini, D., Wardi, Y., Abror, & Dwita, V. (2023). *Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) dan Sosial Media Marketing Untuk Layanan Transportasi Online Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis*. (Vol. 22, Issue 2).
- Asghar Ali, Muhammad., Ting, Ding Hooi., Salim, Lina., and Ahmad-Ur-Rehman, Muhammad. (2021). Influence of servicescape on behavioral intentions through mediation and moderation effects: A study on Malaysia's full-service restaurants. *Cogent Business and Management*, 8(1).

- Babić Rosario, A., de Valck, K., & Sotgiu, F. (2019). Conceptualizing the electronic word-of-mouth process: What we know and need to know about eWOM creation, exposure, and evaluation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(3), 422–448.
- Belz, F. M., & Peattie, K. (2012). *Sustainability marketing: A global perspective*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Buchori, B. (2021). Words of Mouth (WOM) sebagai penentu keputusan pembelian (sebuah studi literatur). *Buletin Ekonomi: Manajemen, Ekonomi Pembangunan, Akuntansi*, 18(2), 159–166.
- Camou Viacava, Juan Jose., de Andrade, Gabriela Kluber Mercurio., and de Lima, Ysmaim Adilson. (2023). “Hard to read, hard to believe”: (Dis)fluency effects on e-WOM credibility and purchase intentions. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, 22(1).
- Carreiro Santos, R., & Luís Martinho, J. (2020). An Industry 4.0 maturity model proposal. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*.
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461–470.
- Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D. (2006). The Effect of Word of Mouth on Sales: Online Book Reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(3), 345–354.
- Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D. (2018). Online reviews and word-of-mouth: Implications for marketing strategy.
- Daowd, A., Hasan, R., Eldabi, T., Muhammad Rafi-ul-Shan, P., Cao, D., & Kasemsarn, N. (2021). Factors influencing eWOM credibility, information adoption and purchase intention on Generation Y: A case from Thailand. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 34, 838–859.
- Dianti, A. R. (2023). Enhancing Financial Risk Management in the Digital Age: A Systematic Review. *Arthatama: Journal of Business Management and Accounting*, 7(2), 79–91.
- Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, 47–55.
- Esparza-Huamanchumo, R. M., Quiroz-Celis, A. V., & Camacho-Sanz, A. A. (2024). Influence of eWOM on the purchase intention of consumers of Nikkei restaurants in Lima, Peru. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*.
- Fadilah Nasution, N., Prasetya, H., Khohar, A., Communication Science, F., Muhammadiyah Hamka, U., & Special Capital, D. (2024). The role of electronic word of mouth as a marketing communication strategy for Avoskin products. *Indonesian Journal: Informatics and Communication Management (JIMIK)*, 5(3).
- Farizy, N. (2024). Strategic Managerial Economics: Enhancing Financial Resilience and Business Growth. *Arthatama: Journal of Business Management and Accounting*, 8(2), 75–84.
- Farzin, Milad., Shababi, Hooman., Shirchi Sasi, Golnoosh., Sadeghi, Marzie., and Makvandi, Rosha. (2023). The determinants of eco-fashion purchase intention and willingness to pay. *Spanish Journal of Marketing*, 27(3).
- Feroz, A. K., Zo, H., & Chiravuri, A. (2021). Digital transformation and environmental sustainability: A review and research agenda.
- Gupta, A., & Savita, U. (2024). Do eWOM and Brand Image Drive Purchase Intention of Online Travel Shoppers: A Case Study of Delhi - NCR. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 54(3), 44–60.
- Haj Khalifa, A., Najaf, K., Atayah, O. F., & Dhiaf, M. (2024). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth on corporate performance during COVID-19. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 24(1), 655–674.
- Hasani, Vjollca Visoka., Zeqiri, Jusuf., Todorovik, Teodora., Jaziri, Dhouha., and Toska, Asdren. (2023). Digital content marketing and eWOM: A mediational serial approach. *Business Systems Research*, 14(2).
- Hasna, S., & Irwansyah. (2019). Electronic words of mouth as a public relations strategy in the digital era. *Journal of Communication Science*, 8(1), 18–27.
- Heliany, I. (2019). Wonderful digital tourism Indonesia and the role of the industrial revolution in facing the era of the digital economy 5.0. *Destinesia: Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 1(1), 21–35.
- Huang, H., Liu, S. Q., & Lu, Z. (2023). When and why Language Assertiveness Affects Online Review Persuasion. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 47(6), 988–1016.

- Indiani, N. L. P., Amerta, I. M. S., & Sentosa, I. (2024). Exploring the moderation effect of consumers' demography in the online purchase behavior. *Cogent Business and Management*, 11(1).
- Isci, Ulfet., and Kitapchi, Hakan. (2020). Responses of Turkish consumers to product risk information in the context of negative eWOM. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 21 (6).
- Kameswara, I. G. A. R., & Respati, N. N. R. (2022). *Brand Image Dalam Memediasi Pengaruh eWOM Terhadap Niat Beli Konsumen Pada Sepeda Moor Honda ADV*. *E-Jurnal Manajemen Universitas Udayana*, 11(5), 1009.
- Kotler, P. (2017). Philip Kotler: some of my adventures in marketing. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*.
- Laksmi, A. A., & Oktafani, F. (2016). *Pengaruh Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) Terhadap Minat Beli Followers Instagram Pada Warunk Upnormal*. *Jurnal Computech & Bisnis*, 10(2), 78–88.
- Latief, A. (2018). *Analisis Pengaruh Produk, Harga, Lokasi dan Promosi terhadap Minat Beli Konsumen pada Warung Wedang Jahe (Studi Kasus Warung Sido Mampir di Kota Langsa)*. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Keuangan*, 7(1), 90–99.
- Lis, B. (2013). In eWOM We Trust. *Wirtschaftsinformatik 2013 55:3*, 55(3), 121–134.
- Liu, B. (2025). How does digital transformation enhance enterprise technological innovation? Evidence from Chinese manufacturing listed companies. *Technology in Society*.
- Liu, X., Anstey, J., Li, R., Sarabu, C., Sono, R., & Butte, A. J. (2021). Rethinking PICO in the Machine Learning Era: ML-PICO Background and Significance. *Applied Clinical Informatics*, 12, 407–416. <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0041-1729752>
- Malik, M. E., Ghafoor, M. M., Iqbal, H. K., Ali, Q., & Hunbal, H. (2013). *Impact of Brand Image and Advertisement on Consumer Buying Behavior*.
- Mittal, V., Kumar, P., & Tsiros, M. (1999). Attribute-Level Performance, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions over Time: A Consumption-System Approach. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(2), 88–101.
- Modi, Shailavi., Balaji, Vedha., Mathew, Sonia., and Kishore, Krishna. (2024). Navigating brand equity in personal care: Examining the influence of direct-to-consumer brands and the mediating power of brand image. *International Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 13 (2).
- Mohsen, S. E., Hamdan, A., & Shoaib, H. M. (2025). Digital transformation and integration of artificial intelligence in financial institutions. *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting*.
- Nabila, I., Wahdah, NB, Suharto, Bambang, & Isnaini, S. (2025). Analysis of e-WOM and prices on tourist visiting decisions to Dunia Fantasi Ancol. *Scientific Journal of MEA (Management, Economics, and Accounting)*, 9 (1).
- Nam, S., & Kim, S. (2025). Deciphering the digital evolution: Strategic insights into the Korean fashion industry through advanced analytical perspectives. *Fashion and Textiles*, 12, 6.
- Nguyen, Cuong., Pham, Sam., and Nguyen, Ly. (2025). The mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention: The case study of FOREO skin-care devices. *Cogent Business and Management*, 12 (1).
- Nguyen, Dao Thi Bich., and Nguyen, Van Thi Khanh. (2024). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth on the purchase intention of tourists on online hotel booking applications. *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management*, 15 (1).
- Park, D. H., Lee, J., & Han, I. (2007). The Effect of On-Line Consumer Reviews on Consumer Purchasing Intention: The Moderating Role of Involvement. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 11(4), 125–148.
- Prihardini Wibawa, D., Yanto, Y., & Zulkarnain, A. (2025). How destination image and trust mediate e-WOM's impact on halal tourism intentions. *Journal of Islamic Economics & Finance*, 11 (1), 29–46.
- Rahmani, Shinta., Halim, Rizal E., Gayatri, Gita., and Furinto, Asnan. (2021). The role of company reputation in mitigating negative word of mouth. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 22 (1).
- Ramadhani, R. (2024). Big Data in Digital Transformation of Corporate Marketing Strategy. *Economic and Business Horizon*, 3(1), 24–28.
- Saxena, Anoop Krishna., Siddiqui, Jaziba Haroon. (2021). Creating electronic word of mouth credibility through social networking sites and determining its impact on brand image and online purchase intentions in India. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16 (4).

- Siregar, A. I. (2024). Studi Literature: Hubungan E-WOM dan Keputusan Pembelian. *Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin*, 3(1).
- Soni, S., Kampooowale, S., Krishnan, I., Ab Yajid, G., Khatibi, M.S., Minhas, A., & Khurana, D. (2025). Customer perceived ethicality and electronic word of mouth approach to customer loyalty: The mediating role of customer trust. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 41 (1), 258–278.
- Stamolampros, & Nikolaos. (2018). This is a repository copy of Exploring the behavioral drivers of review valence: The direct and indirect effects of multiple psychological and Nikolaos, K (2018) Exploring the behavioral drivers of review valence: The direct and indirect effects of multiple psychological distances. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metodelogi Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif Dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Suhairi, S., Nurhazizah, N., Syanda, S., & Nasution, RA (2024). Digital transformation of global marketing research with the integration of the latest technology to develop responsive strategies to global market changes. *As-Syirkah: Islamic Economic & Financial Journal*, 3 (2), 637–647.
- Trusov, M., Bucklin, R. E., & Pauwels, K. (2009). Effects of Word-of-Mouth versus Traditional Marketing: Findings from an Internet Social Networking Site. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(5), 90–102.
- Verhoef, P.C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., Dong, J.Q., Fabian, N., & Michael, H. (2021). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 889–901.
- Yosefina Andia Dekrita, Afrianti, M., Febrian Cresantos Della, M., Rasian Devance, M., Febrian Seka, G., Claudian Nunuhitu, P., Apriliance Plewang, Y., Yosepha Raja, M., Yulianti, M., & Agustina VNBunga, M. (2024). The importance of tax knowledge and awareness for MSMEs in order to create sustainable economic development in Bangkook Village, Talibura District. *Community Development Journal: Journal of Community Service*, 5 (5), 9942–9947.
- Zainuddin, M. S., Sudirman, I., Lasise, S., & Sanusi, A. (2023). Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Interest MsGlow in Makassar City. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 8(4).
- Zhang, J. Q., Craciun, G., & Shin, D. (2010). When does electronic word-of-mouth matter? A study of consumer product reviews. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(12), 1336–1341.



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).