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The Influence Of Electronic Word Of Mouth Information On Social Media On Game Top Up Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on social media on consumer purchase intention for game top-ups. A total of 177 respondents who actively play games and use social media completed a questionnaire, which was analyzed using SmartPLS 3 with purposive sampling techniques. The results showed that Information Quality, Information Credibility, and Needs of Information had a significant positive effect on Information Usefulness. Information Usefulness also had a significant positive effect on Information Adoption, and Information Adoption had a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention. However, Information Task Fit and Attitude Toward Information did not have an effect on Information Usefulness. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to digital marketing strategies in the gaming industry, particularly regarding the use of eWOM to enhance consumer purchase intention.

Keywords: ***Electronic word of mouth, Information quality, Attitude toward information, Information usefulness, Purchase intention.***

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, entertainment has become an important part of life, and one form of it is playing video games. Video games, defined as games with digital visual information that involve player input (Kirriemuir & Mcfarlane, 2004), are played for various reasons, such as fun, challenge, social interaction, and entertainment value (Kirriemuir & Mcfarlane, 2004). The video game industry has grown into a multi-billion dollar entertainment sector (Sharabati et al., 2023) with high innovation and dynamics, and can

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be accessed via consoles, computers, and mobile devices (Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013). Indonesia itself is one of the largest markets, with 94.5% of internet users aged 16-64 years actively playing video games in 2022 (WeAreSocial, 2022). This shows the importance of understanding purchasing behavior in the video game industry, especially with the increasing purchase of virtual content and items in games. Developers now focus not only on artistic quality, but also on profits from the sale of additional content (Hamari et al., 2017), which is usually done through third-party top-up services.

The trend of third-party game top-ups is gaining popularity among video game players, driven by several key factors. First, third-party platforms often offer more competitive prices than direct in-game purchases, through discounts, promotions, or attractive bundling packages, which benefit players in terms of costs (Newzoo, 2021). Second, the flexibility of the payment methods offered makes the transaction process easier, especially in countries with limited access to digital payment methods, such as Indonesia, which faces challenges in financial inclusion (Statista, 2022). Security and convenience factors are also important reasons, as many third-party platforms have built a reputation as safe and reliable services (Hamari et al., 2017). In addition, in-game items, which are often desired for their aesthetics and exclusivity, are increasingly in demand by players to enhance their gaming experience (Syahrizal et al., 2020). Game developers are also increasingly investing in creating attractive virtual goods, along with the increasing consumption of virtual goods in games, where players are willing to pay for items that strengthen their digital identity (Syahrizal et al., 2020). This phenomenon strengthens the business model of the video game industry, which now also relies on the sale of virtual goods in addition to the sale of games themselves.

Most consumers, when they want to buy items and top up, tend to search for information online first, because searching for information in cyberspace has become a common habit. The rapid development of online communication through platforms such as social media, websites, and blogs has made word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) increasingly important and widely used (Hussain et al., 2017). eWOM refers to positive or negative opinions conveyed by consumers about products or services and disseminated via the internet (Gremler et al., 2004). Consumers can now share their experiences playing video games and purchasing items with other consumers through eWOM. eWOM activities, especially related to information and experiences of purchasing items in video games, are very suitable for social media platforms, which allow users to provide opinions through text, images, and videos. According to dataindonesia.id

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(2022), in January 2023, there were around 212 million active social media users in Indonesia, an increase of 3.85% from the previous year which reached 205 million users. Through social media, eWOM becomes an important means for consumers to exchange opinions and experiences regarding products or services (Chu et al., 2011).

According to previous research, Sussman (2003) through the Information Adoption Model explains that information quality, source credibility, usefulness, and information acceptance are the four main characteristics in disseminating information. However, information on social media, which is easily accessible and sometimes without clear identity, often does not guarantee its quality and credibility. In addition, the way consumers respond to information that is relevant to them is also important in predicting purchase intentions. According to Ajzen (1991), consumers tend to adopt information that is useful and easily accessible. Erkan & Evans' (2016) research criticized that IAM only focuses on information characteristics without considering consumer behavior. Therefore, they expanded the model by combining the TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action) theory and creating the IACM (Information Adoption and Consumer Behavior Model), which considers quality, credibility, information needs, attitudes towards information, usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intentions. Knoll (2015) supports the idea that the influence of eWOM on social media depends on information characteristics and consumer behavior. Based on this, the study seeks to explore purchase intentions by taking both factors into account. In addition, Leong et al.'s (2021) research shows that the suitability of information to consumers' specific needs (information task fit) also has a positive effect on purchase intentions, which is an additional focus in the context of video games.

Several studies have discussed the influence of information characteristics and consumer behavior on purchase intention. Erkan & Evans (2016) developed an IACM model to test the impact of eWOM on social media on consumer purchase intention, and the results showed that the quality, credibility, need, and usefulness of information have a significant effect on information adoption and purchase intention, although consumer attitudes towards information do not affect its usefulness. This is because many consumers receive information from friends or relatives, so they already consider it useful without considering their personal attitudes towards the information. Gianto's (2020) study also found that the quality, credibility, need, usefulness, and adoption of information have a positive impact on purchase intention, in line with the findings of Erkan & Evans, where consumer attitudes towards information do not significantly affect purchase intention. In

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addition, Leong (2020) examined consumer interest in buying bubble tea drinks through social media and found that the quality, credibility, appropriateness, usefulness, and adoption of eWOM information, as well as consumer attitudes towards information, affect purchase intention, but information needs do not significantly affect eWOM usefulness because respondents only look for information that is relevant to their specific needs.

Previous studies have shown inconsistent results regarding the influence of information on consumer purchase intention, including the impact of eWOM on social media. Although there have been several studies discussing this relationship, in-depth analysis of the influence of eWOM information on purchases in video games is still rare. This study adds the variable "information task-fit" to examine the influence of information fit on purchase intention in the context of video games, thereby expanding the Information Reception Model (IACM) theory. This study is highly relevant for practitioners and marketers, especially considering the growth opportunities of the competitive video game market and the increasing use of eWOM due to the decline in consumer visits to physical stores. Therefore, this study aims to explore purchase intention in video games by considering the characteristics of information and consumer behavior towards information.

THEORETICAL BASE

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) explains that attitudes toward behavior and subjective norms play an important role in forming intentions, which then influence behavior. Attitude is an individual's evaluation of the goodness or badness of an action, while subjective norms refer to the perception of social pressure. Both of these factors influence intentions, which directly influence individual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Park, 2020). TRA has been applied in various contexts, including consumer behavior, with research by Smith & Hogg (2022) showing that positive attitudes and social norms support virtual purchases in games, predicting purchase intentions. This theory emphasizes the importance of internal and external factors in forming intentions (Mladenović et al., 2023).

Information Adoption Model (IAM)

The Information Adoption Model (IAM) was introduced by Sussman and Siegal (2003) by combining the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Elaboration

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Likelihood Model (ELM). TAM, according to Davis (1989), focuses on Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use as the main factors in technology adoption. Meanwhile, ELM, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), distinguishes two persuasion routes: the central route, which involves deep processing, and the peripheral route, which is shallower. IAM combines the principles of TAM related to usefulness and ELM in the information adoption process on computer-based communication platforms, such as eWOM, which involves the influence of argument quality and source credibility (Cheung et al., 2018; Liao et al., 2019). For example, positive reviews from game influencers can increase purchase intentions through central and peripheral routes (Zhou et al., 2021).

Information Acceptance Model (IACM)

Information Acceptance Model (IACM) was introduced by Erkan and Evans (2016) as a development of the Information Adoption Model (IAM), by integrating IAM and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to better understand how eWOM affects consumer behavior. IACM not only considers information characteristics such as quality and credibility, but also considers psychological factors, such as attitudes and subjective norms, which influence consumer intentions to purchase products based on eWOM (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Shu & Scott, 2014). According to Erkan and Evans (2016), consumer behavior towards information must also be considered to understand the decision-making process more comprehensively, supported by Knoll (2015).

Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM)

eWOM is the process of continuous exchange of information between consumers about products, services, or brands, which can be accessed by many people via the internet (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Social media is an ideal platform for eWOM, facilitating conversations between users and enabling product promotion through text, images, videos, or applications (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Through social media, consumers can easily find reviews and recommendations, which help them make more informed decisions, making eWOM an effective tool for influencing purchase intentions.

The influence of information quality on the usefulness of information

Erkan & Evans' (2016) research shows that information quality has a positive effect on the usefulness of information in the context of eWOM, which then affects consumer purchase intentions. These results are supported by Leong et al. (2022), who found that

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eWOM information quality is significantly related to information usefulness, confirming the importance of quality information in shaping purchasing decisions.

H1: There is a positive influence between the quality of information and the usefulness of information.

The influence of information credibility on the usefulness of information

Gianto (2020) found that information credibility has a positive effect on information usefulness. This finding is reinforced by Sardar et al. (2021), which shows that information credibility significantly affects usefulness, which ultimately affects eWOM adoption and consumer purchasing decisions.

H2: There is a positive influence between the credibility of information and the usefulness of information.

The influence of information according to needs with the usefulness of information

Nurhandayani et al. (2024) found that information that is in accordance with consumer needs on TikTok social media has a positive effect on the usefulness of information in purchasing interest in hair care products. Research by Leong et al. (2022) also supports this finding, showing that information relevant to consumer needs increases the usefulness of information, which ultimately affects adoption and purchasing decisions.

H3: There is a positive influence between information according to needs and the usefulness of the information.

The influence of information needs on information usefulness

Mladenović et al. (2023) found that information needs are positively related to their usefulness in older adults' interactions with misinformation on social media. Park (2020) also supports this finding, showing that information needs influence information usefulness, which impacts customer loyalty through eWOM and the information acceptance model (IACM).

H4: There is a positive influence between information needs and information usefulness.

The influence of attitudes towards information on the usefulness of information

Rizal et al. (2020) found that attitude toward information has a positive effect on the usefulness of information in the context of eWOM on Instagram and patients' intention

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to undergo IVF programs. Yaseen & Jusoh (2021) support this finding, showing that attitude toward information significantly influences its usefulness, which plays an important role in consumer purchasing decisions in Jordan.

H5: There is a positive influence between attitudes towards information and the usefulness of information.

The influence of information usefulness on information adoption

Ngo et al. (2024) examined the relationship between information usefulness and information adoption using IAM and IACM, focusing on eWOM factors such as credibility and attitude towards information in online purchase intention. The results showed that information usefulness has a positive effect on information adoption. This finding is in line with the research of Cheung et al. (2018) and Shu & Scott (2014), which emphasized that useful and credible information increases adoption in purchasing decision making, especially in the context of eWOM.

H6: There is a positive influence between the usefulness of information and the adoption of information.

The influence of information adoption on purchase intention

Prasetio et al. (2024) examined the relationship between information adoption and purchase intention in Indonesian e-commerce using IACM. The results showed that the quantity, need, attitude, and usefulness of information, as well as information adoption, all played a significant role in influencing purchase intention. Consumers tend to adopt information that is considered relevant and reliable, increasing purchase intention. This study is in line with the findings of Cheung et al. (2018), which emphasizes the importance of information adoption in consumer decision making, especially in eWOM and digital platforms.

H7: There is a positive influence between information adoption and purchase intention.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on the description and explanation of theoretical investigations and hypotheses, a research model can be created which is used in this research. This research model is shown in the following figure:

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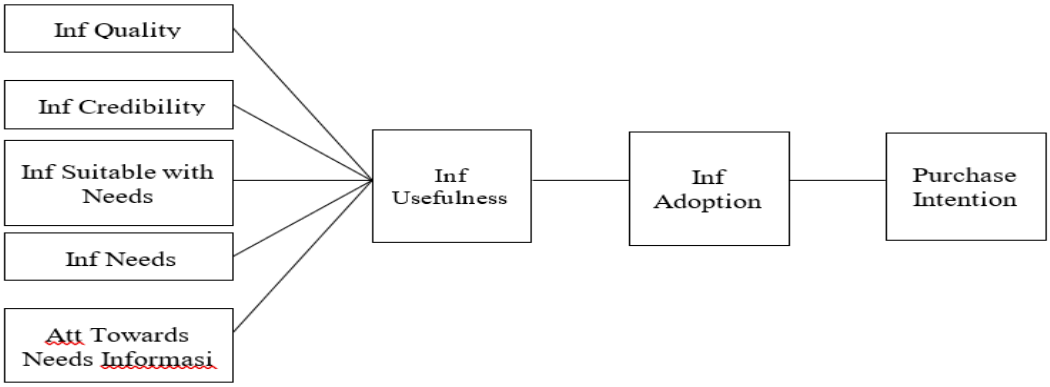


Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a quantitative approach, which utilizes numerical data to produce conclusions based on statistical analysis. This study aims to understand how various variables influence purchase intentions, with data collected through questionnaires distributed to 177 respondents who are active social media users and gamers. The variables studied include information quality, information credibility, information suitability to needs, information needs, attitudes towards information, and usefulness of information. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who met specific criteria, and data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method to obtain valid and generalizable results.

RESULTS

From the results of the questionnaires distributed, 177 respondents were obtained. From a number of respondents, data analysis was then carried out using model evaluation. The evaluation of the measurement model was tested using several indicators, including:

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Descriptive Analysis
Respondent Profile

Table 1. Details of the research respondent profile

No.	Categories	Details	Amount	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	108	61,01%
		Female	69	38,98%
2.	Age	12-16 Years old	14	7,90%
		16-20 Years old	42	23,72%
		20-24 Years old	97	54,80%
		> 24 Years old	23	12,99%
3.	Latest Education	Junior High School	11	6,21%
		Senior High School	71	40,11%
		Diploma	11	6,21%
		Undergraduate	82	46,33%
		Magister	0	0%
		Vocational High School	1	0,56
4	Average	< Rp100.000	61	34,46%

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.	spending on games per month	Rp100.000 - Rp250.000	53	29,94%
		Rp250.001 - Rp500.000	40	22,60%
		Rp500.001 - Rp750.000	14	7,91%
		Rp750.001 - Rp1.000.000	4	2,26%
		> Rp1.000.000	4	2,26%

Statistics Analysis
Outer Model Analysis
Convergent Validity

Table 2. Convergent Validity Testing Results

Variabel	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Information Quality (KUI)	0,611
Information Credibility (KRE)	0,866
Information According to Needs (ISK)	0,784
Information Needs (KI)	0,641
Attitude Towards Information (STI)	0,627
Information Usefulness (KEI)	0,714

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Information Adoption (AI)	0,806
Purchase Intention (NB)	0,676

From the table, it can be seen that each indicator has an AVE value above the minimum limit of 0.50. Thus, all indicators are considered capable of explaining more than 50% of the variance of the existing variables, and can be considered valid in measuring each variable.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Results of discriminant validity test (cross loadings value)

Indicator	KUI	KRE	ISK	KI	STI	KEI	AI	NB
KUI1	0.719	0.189	0.508	0.575	0.566	0.563	0.522	0.64
KUI2	0.815	0.344	0.591	0.644	0.674	0.814	0.615	0.804
KUI3	0.758	0.122	0.359	0.56	0.608	0.586	0.385	0.529
KUI4	0.83	0.255	0.520	0.696	0.665	0.868	0.548	0.691
KRE3	0.315	0.955	0.319	0.299	0.272	0.391	0.346	0.332
KRE4	0.240	0.905	0.268	0.253	0.252	0.271	0.293	0.278
ISK1	0.563	0.234	0.875	0.543	0.535	0.553	0.877	0.647
ISK2	0.570	0.327	0.895	0.560	0.596	0.601	0.872	0.649
KI1	0.697	0.251	0.608	0.834	0.657	0.706	0.631	0.738
KI2	0.644	0.164	0.408	0.79	0.603	0.627	0.436	0.547
KI3	0.647	0.324	0.561	0.806	0.807	0.662	0.576	0.637
KI4	0.555	0.215	0.398	0.772	0.568	0.582	0.424	0.461
STI1	0.632	0.314	0.547	0.760	0.800	0.640	0.553	0.634
STI2	0.695	0.172	0.476	0.641	0.818	0.652	0.506	0.620

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STI3	0.586	0.184	0.498	0.554	0.756	0.598	0.514	0.618
KEI1	0.697	0.313	0.531	0.693	0.667	0.842	0.561	0.688
KEI2	0.836	0.268	0.528	0.711	0.677	0.878	0.556	0.703
KEI3	0.815	0.344	0.591	0.644	0.674	0.814	0.615	0.804
AI1	0.604	0.271	0.877	0.586	0.591	0.598	0.896	0.677
AI2	0.598	0.352	0.895	0.584	0.598	0.631	0.899	0.665
NB1	0.652	0.230	0.602	0.643	0.650	0.636	0.612	0.803
NB2	0.791	0.341	0.578	0.625	0.652	0.797	0.604	0.798
NB3	0.670	0.273	0.594	0.584	0.680	0.679	0.599	0.837
NB4	0.722	0.249	0.629	0.619	0.610	0.744	0.641	0.850

In this study, the cross loadings criterion was used to test whether each construct met the discriminant validity. This test serves to ensure that the correlation between the indicator and its own construct is higher than the correlation of the indicator with other constructs. All variables studied were declared valid, because the loading value of each indicator exceeded 0.7, which is the minimum limit for assessing the validity of cross loadings (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that all variables have been well explained by the indicators used, so that all variables meet the discriminant validity criteria with satisfactory results.

Reliability

Tabel 4. Reliability Testing Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Information Quality	0.791	0.815	0.862
Information Credibility	0.849	0.933	0.928
Information According to Needs	0.724	0.728	0.879

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Information Needs	0.814	0.818	0.877
Attitude Towards Information	0.702	0.704	0.834
Information Usefulness	0.799	0.800	0.882
Information Adoption	0.759	0.759	0.892
Purchase Intention	0.840	0.841	0.893

Based on the results of the reliability test presented in the table, all variables show reliability values above 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs or variables in this study are declared reliable.

Inner Model Analysis

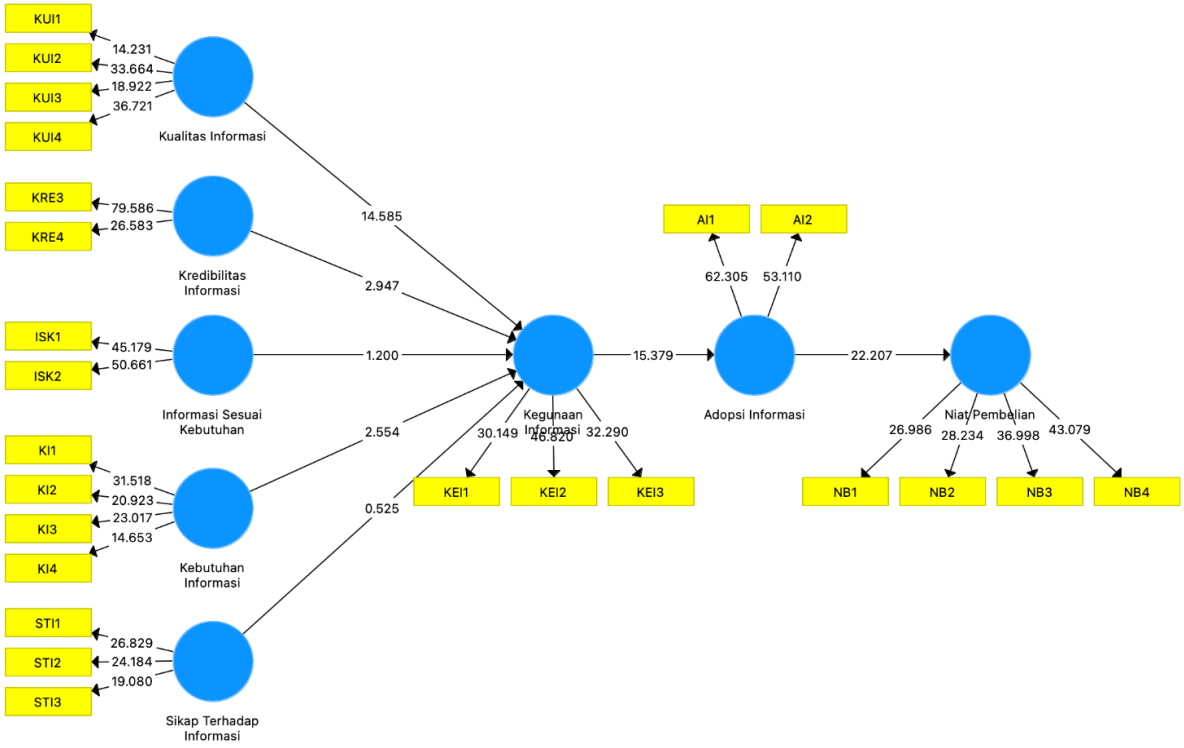


Figure 2. Structural model testing (inner model)

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R-Square

Table 5. R-Square Results

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Information Usefulness	0.885	0.881
Information Adoption	0.468	0.465
Purchase Intention	0.559	0.556

This means that 11.5% of the information usefulness variable can still be explained by other variables not discussed in this study. Furthermore, the information adoption variable obtained an R-Square value of 0.468 which is classified as moderate (46.8%), indicating that 53.2% of the variable can still be explained by other variables outside this study. On the other hand, the purchase intention variable has an R-Square value of 0.559 which is classified as moderate (55.9%), indicating that 44.1% of this variable is influenced by other factors not included in the study.

Predictive Relevance (Q-Square)

Table 6. Predictive relevance test results

Variables	Q-Square predict
Information Usefulness	0,614
Information Adoption	0,374
Purchase Intention	0,373

The results of the Q-Square test in the table show that the three endogenous (dependent) variables, namely information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention, have a Q-square value of more than zero (Q2 ≥ 0), so that they can be stated to have predictive relevance. The information usefulness variable has a Q-square value of 0.614 (strong), which means that this variable is predicted by 61.4% by the variables of information quality, information credibility, information according to needs,

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information needs, and attitudes towards information. Meanwhile, the information adoption variable has a Q-square value of 0.374 (strong), which shows that 37.4% of this variable is predicted by the information usefulness variable. Furthermore, the purchase intention variable has a Q-square value of 0.373 (strong), which means that 37.3% of this variable is predicted by the information adoption variable. Thus, it can be concluded that this model fits the data and has good predictive ability.

Hypotesis Testing

Table 7. Hypothesis testing results

Hypoteses	β	T-Statistics	P-Value	Results
KUI -> KEI	0.739	14.585	0.000	H1 supported and significant
KRE -> KEI	0.075	2.947	0.003	H2 supported and significant
ISK -> KEI	0.047	1.200	0.231	H3 not supported and not significant
KI -> KEI	0.136	2.554	0.011	H4 supported and significant
STI -> KEI	0.037	0.525	0.600	H5 not supported and not significant
KEI -> AI	0.684	15.379	0.000	H6 supported and significant
AI -> NB	0.747	22.207	0.000	H7 supported and significant

The relationship between variables in this study is indicated by the β value of the path coefficient and the results of the hypothesis test. The direction of the relationship between variables can be understood from the path coefficient value, where the positive or negative relationship is between +1 and -1. To test the hypothesis, the T-statistic value and p-value are used as the basis for decision making. The hypothesis is accepted if the T-statistic value is more than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, which indicates significant results. The following are the results of the hypothesis testing analysis shown in table 7.

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DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that information quality has a significant influence on the usefulness of information in the context of eWOM on social media. This is in line with Zhou et al.'s (2019) study which revealed that high-quality information, characterized by accuracy, relevance, and clarity, allows consumers to more easily understand and utilize it. Wu and Liu's (2017) study also emphasized that complete and representative information is considered more useful by consumers, especially because it provides a comprehensive and accurate view of the product or service being reviewed.

Thus, companies that want to maximize eWOM as a marketing strategy need to ensure that the information presented is of good quality in order to increase the perception of the usefulness of information by consumers. In addition, the credibility of information also plays an important role in determining the usefulness of information. According to Ismagilova et al. (2020), credibility includes consumers' perceptions of the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information they receive. Cheung and Thadani (2012) showed that consumers are more likely to consider information useful if they trust the source, while Chang and Wu (2014) added that the credibility of information increases consumer trust, which ultimately strengthens the usefulness of the information. In this context, companies need to ensure that the information they convey through eWOM on social media has high credibility so that it can be adopted by consumers and have a positive impact on their purchase intentions.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) information on social media on game top-up purchase intentions, involving 177 respondents as a sample. The results of the study indicate that information quality and information credibility have a positive effect on the usefulness of information, while information that is in accordance with needs and attitudes towards information does not have a significant effect on the usefulness of information. In addition, information needs are proven to have a positive effect on the usefulness of information. The usefulness of information then has a positive effect on information adoption, and finally, information adoption has a positive effect on purchase intentions.

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RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Based on the research that has been conducted, there are several limitations that need to be considered so that they can be improved for further research. This is related to the results of the hypothesis testing which have insignificant results so that the hypothesis is not accepted. In addition, this study focuses on the specific context of eWOM on social media related to game top-up purchase intentions. The results of this study are not fully applicable to other contexts outside the gaming industry or other types of products/services. Finally, the sample used in this study has limitations in terms of number and demographic representation. This can affect the ability to generalize the findings to a wider population.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research results, discussion, and limitations of this study, there are several suggestions that can be given. Suggestions for further research are to increase the number and representation of samples by involving respondents from various demographics, such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, and more diverse geography. This will help ensure that the research results are more reflective of a broader population and relevant in various contexts. Further research can also explore additional data collection methods, such as interviews, to gain deeper insight into the reasons behind the insignificant hypotheses, so that other variables that may influence the relationship between eWOM and purchase intentions can be identified. By addressing these limitations, it is hoped that future research can produce more comprehensive and relevant findings to be applied in various contexts.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study provides significant theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the development of digital marketing theory, especially regarding the influence of eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) on social media on consumer purchase intentions. The findings reveal how variables such as information quality, credibility, information needs, information usefulness, and information adoption play an important role in influencing purchase intentions, especially in the context of game top-ups. This study also tests and validates the information acceptance model related to eWOM, and shows the positive impact of information quality, credibility, and information needs on information usefulness and adoption, which in turn affect purchase intentions,

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thus strengthening the basic assumptions in theoretical models such as the Information Adoption Model (IAM) and Information Acceptance Model (IACM) (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Practically, this study provides insight into the use of eWOM on social media as an effective marketing strategy. By emphasizing the importance of information quality, credibility, and relevance, companies can focus on creating quality eWOM content, which can involve collaboration with influencers, prominent gamers, or gaming communities to promote top-up services. This study also has important implications for social media platform managers and gaming companies, who can increase the credibility of information on their platforms, thereby encouraging user adoption of information and ultimately increasing purchase intentions.

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