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## Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Brand Image and Brand Trust of Tourist Destinations and Hospitality Establishments in Egypt

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### Keywords

E-WOM

Purchase Intention

Brand Image

Brand Trust

Mediating role

Egypt

### Abstract

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) through social media networks has grown significantly in relevance to the purchase intention (PI) of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments. Now, tourists can share their opinions and experiences of various brands with other potential customers, this will facilitate their decision-making. This study aims to determine the impact of E-WOM on purchase intention (PI) of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments, and to investigate the mediating roles of brand image and brand trust in the relationship between e-WOM and PI. A quantitative approach was applied. The targeted population was the foreign tourists in Egypt. A questionnaire was used to collect the primary data, which was distributed in Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh, Luxor, and Aswan from July to September 2022. A total of 750 forms were distributed, but only 682 questionnaires were returned. SPSS, V. 24 and AMOS, V. 24 were used. The findings indicate that there is a significant and positive impact of E-WOM on PI, brand image (BI), and brand trust (BT). The results showed that BT and BI played a significant mediating effect between e-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality services in Egypt. Therefore, the study presents a few recommendations for tourist destinations and hospitality establishment managers to take into account the importance of the positive relationship and the significant impact of WOM on PI. They must develop policies and procedures to deal with the dimensions of e-WOM and PI of tourist destinations, tourism and hospitality establishments.

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## 1. Introduction

Egypt's tourism and hospitality sector is a key factor in the country's economic growth (Elshaer & Marzouk, 2019). Management and tactics in the hospitality and tourism industry have been affected by technological expansion (Nusair, 2020). Technology plays an important part in everyone's daily existence (De Mooij, 2019). The great power of the internet allows for the vast sharing of information limitlessly to a vast number of people in different parts of the world (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lily, 2022). Travelers can easily share their experiences or knowledge with others when using the internet for communication (Nusair, 2020).

Changing the traditional way of communication with consumers from traditional WOM to online WOM was an important feature in the hospitality and tourism industry (Reham & Dina 2016; Mohammed, 2019). Travellers make the decision to travel based on the knowledge gained through information and communication technology (Becken et al., 2019). E-WOM is the primary source of information that customers use to decide where to visit. (Kim and Hwang, 2022;). Travelers entree EWOM via numerous networks, such as social media (Mariani & Borghi, 2021; Kim & Hwang, 2022).

E-WOM is a type of interactive behavior coined by social media users (Alboqami et al., 2015). In addition e-WOM has become a controlling element that controls Internet users' future decisions and actions (Natasha & Tina 2021). Online reviews in which people share their purchase experiences with prospective consumers, which has become an important element in the search process, have become so powerful that they have changed the face of the industry, especially through social media (Anupam 2020;). Online reviews can therefore direct customer attitude (Jalilvand et al., 2012) , influence (BI) perception and control their buying intention (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015).

It is clear in the tourist and hotel sector that the intangible qualities of their products make human behavior patterns more complex, enhancing the influence of online WOM (Sirma et al., 2009; Wu, 2013). Articles published on EWOM and purchase intension have recently increased due to its significance (Reham, 2016; Goker & Ayar, 2020; Faisal et al., 2021; Aprilia & Kusumati, 2021; Natasha & Tina 2021; Nurjamila et al., 2022; Anna & Alan 2022. There is just few research conducted the use of brand image as mediator but there is no research done using and merge brand image and brand trust as mediators in hospitality and tourism industry in Egypt. So the purpose of this study is to examine how e-WOM influences purchase intention, with brand trust and image serving as mediating factors.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the impact of e-WOM on PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt, and to investigate the mediating role of brand image and trust in the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention, the objectives of this current study are as follows:

- Shedding light on the relationship between e-WOM and PI.

- Identifying the effect of e-WOM on PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.
- Exploring the mediating role of brand image in the link between e-WOM and PI.
- Investigating how brand trust mediates the relationship between e-WOM and PI.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)

Traditional (WOM) referred to "all casual visitor communications pointed in which they express their experiences, recommendations, and opinions about a product or service quality directly to their relatives and friends (Ko`seoglu et al. 2020). This definition has advanced in recent years into electronic word of mouth (Levy & Gvili, 2019). Customers are greatly benefited by electronic word of mouth recommendations for knowing the value of goods and services (Anshu Rani 2020).

According to Rani and Shivaprasad (2021) e-WOM is a crucial source of client acquisition through a variety of channels and has an influence on customer acquisition, retention, and post-purchase evaluation. Reham & Dina (2016) stated that positive eWOM communications can also improve consumer perceptions of good or service and boost sales, Negative e-WOM on the other hand, can cause the company considerable, and perhaps even irreparable, harm. Benedict et al., (2021) added that e-wom is a good or bad announcement through probable and real customer.

EWOM is defined as "any good or bad statement made by probable, actual, or former customers about a product, which is made obtainable to a mass of people and institutions via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). EWOM is the term used to describe the dissemination of information via internet media, when consumers share information with other customers (Schiffman & Kanuk,2012). According to Schiffman & Wisenblit (2015) e-WOM refers to communication that occurs online and on social media. EWOM is described as consumer-to-consumer communication that discusses a company's goods or services. Since this communication occurs online, it is simpler (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016). E-WOM refers to a continual flow of information about a product, brand, service, or company that is made available online between prospective, existing, or experienced consumers (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

Personal motives including compassion, self-improvement, extraversion, minimizing dissonance, and social rewards also have an impact on e-WOM (Kwok and Xie, 2016) According to Bronner and de Hoog (2011), e-WOM is mostly motivated by self-directed, social advantages, such as assisting other tourists, assisting businesses, and empowering consumers.

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is divided into two categories: "organic/intrinsic" and "amplified/extrinsic" (also known as "exogenous WOM"). In

the first scenario, word-of-mouth (WOM) spreads naturally among consumers, but in the second scenario, the business encourages customers to speed up the transmission of WOM (Giampaolo et al., 2016).

## **2.2 The Importance of e-WOM:**

The significance of e-WOM as a cause of information can be due to customers tend to accept e-WOM as a source of information because they believe it is free from any profitable or marketing intent, which contributes to its significance as a source of information, because of this, it was inevitable that it would have an important effect on customers and brands (Pongjit and Beise-Zee, 2015). It became clear that this was true when it was discovered that e-WOM affected brand engagement, and brand image (El-Baz et al., 2018).

EWOM provided by peers is growing in significance for tourist destinations, tourism, and hospitality establishments (El-Baz, et al 2018). Furthermore, when prospective visitors read negative reviews of a place, their confidence in that location and their intentions to visit are diminished (Benedict et al., 2021). Therefore, tourism manager must quickly deal with offended visitors who are detrimental to the reputation and image of the place, so destination marketing managers must establish a system that can swiftly compile and analyses bad feedback from visitors and suggest remedies. Managers must make sure to answer every review, including unfavorable ones. It's imperative to thank the visitor for their feedback, give a sincere apology, and offer to collaborate with them to resolve the issue if they leave undesirable note (Lujun et al, 2021)

According to Oliveira et al. and Pourfakhimi et al. (2020), customers enjoy posting comments and reviews about their experiences online to assist other travellers, hoteliers, and service providers in improving the operations, these comments and reviews are genuine expressions of the customers' satisfaction and service appreciations or dissatisfaction and service complaints towards a company.

Tourism marketing managers should encourage visitors to provide good online evaluations as this can improve opinions about tourist sites and travel ambitions, one tactic is to provide visitors a choice of places to post evaluations. (i.e., appealing guests to offer their opinions on their experiences (Ismagilova et al., 2017). Marketers for destinations should be careful to disseminate the favorable e-WOM they have obtained. Posting favorable reviews on the used social media sites can help inform potential visitors about the good places, destination marketers and managers must remember that prospective visitors won't simply look for evaluations on the destination's own websites, so finding and monitoring other related websites will be essential. (Lujun et al, 2021)

### **2.3 Purchase Intension (PI)**

According to Spears and Singh (2004) PI is the planning of the consumer to willingly try to purchase a product. Reham (2016) stated that purchase intention is considered an integral controller of the cognitive behavior of the consumer as it shows the intention of the customer to buy a certain product or a particular service.

Purchase intention is the behavior of consumers as evidenced by their desire to find and purchase particular goods or services (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016). Schiffman & Kanuk (2007) define (PI) as a consumer's need for a product and their attempts to acquire more about it. A consumer is more likely to buy a product if they have a higher purchasing intention (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2018). According to Briliana & Silaen (2019) purchase intention refers to how strongly people want to buy a thing. Purchase intention measures how strongly a buyer wants to buy things from a specific brand or business as a result of the

PI is the process of making a choice to buy something, during which the buyer takes into account a number of factors and justifications (Shah et al., 2012). By reading online evaluations from other customers, buyers can build a perceived impression about the quality, performance, and after-sales service, but they are unable to acquire about the real product experience and after-sale services before buying product or service (Natasha & Tina 2021).

### **2.4 Brand Trust (BT)**

BT is defined as customers who trust a brand are often ready to rely on that company's ability to explain how its products work (Lin et al., 2019). Brand dependability is implied by brand trust, according to customer perception (Gensler et al., 2013). If a customer wants to rely on the brand, willingness is less important (Bougie and Sekaran, 2013). According to Pratiwi et al. (2015) BT is the sense of security a consumer has while interacting with a brand because they believe the company can be trusted and cares for their needs. Lee and Kim, (2019) identified brand trust as a vital aspect in defining an individual's attitude in a business partnership. Brand trust is unquestionably one of the most effective methods to interact with clients online (Akhmad & Riko 2021).

Trust is a very important factor in shaping purchase intention and e-WOM intention (Zainudin et al, 2020). Trust has to do with brand relations because the better experience the consumers have in transactions, the more loyalty it will cause (Ngoc Phan & Ghantous, 2013). Trust has the greatest effect in long-term relationships (Eisignerich & Bell, 2007). Previous studies have found that e-WOM are important indicators of trust (Akhmadet al., 2021).

### **2.5 Brand Image (BI)**

Reham and Dina (2016) stated that brand has long been seen as an essential element in marketing, helping consumers identify the products and services of the industries

and differentiate them from other competitors. (Keller, 2009). According to Kotler (1997) a brand is made of a name, term, logo, or symbol, or any mixture of them, that makes the advantages (whether product or service) the company can provide unique, in terms of attributes, value, and culture. Thus, brand image is “how a consumer perceives the brand”. Furthermore, BI is described as "perceptions about a brand as characterized by the brand associations preserved in customer memory."”(Keller, 2009).

BI is defined number of brand participations stored in customer's thoughts. Brand image has to do with the perception of a brand: it is made in consumers' memories through brand associations (Keller, 2011). Brand image is how a consumer perceives a brand. Brand image depends on the actual image of company in consumers' minds (Arslan, 2014), Additionally, BI offers a sensitive value, which highlights the need of effective brand setting . Luong, et al., (2017) stated that a brand image should finally convey the mission and vision of the whole business. In addition Mohammed (2019) added that brand image has its great role supporting a company's performance as it can indirectly change consumer buying behavior. A strong BI can lead to a positive buying intention, and it is an essential competitive advantage that helps add a important worth for establishments (Keller 2009), and demonstrates its capacity to carry out the social role of self-expression and self-presentation, and crucial component in structure brand loyalty (Reham& Dina, 2016), Consequently, a favorable BI influences customer purchase intention, whilst a poor brand image has the opposite effect. (Natasha & Tina 2021)

## **2.6 The Relationship between E-WOM and PI :**

E-WOM is an online collaboration between individuals exchanging information about certain products (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016). In the present time, most consumers tend to believe what other consumers who have experienced the same service or about the same product say or recommend over what the company says or advertises (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). Good e-WOM can increase customer intention to purchase and decrease consumer reluctance (Pratiwi & Yasa, 2019). The more positive e-WOM there are, the more likely buyers are to purchase a product. (Candra & Suparna, 2019). Research conducted by Pentury et al. (2019) and Nurcaya & Dewi (2020) found that e-WOM has a positive and integral effect on purchase intention.

Every customer who consumes a product will provide their own evaluation of the product, which cannot be manipulated because it is generated by the consumer themselves. If a client is delighted or dissatisfied with the goods they have purchased, they will share their opinion online through social media or other digital channels. Additionally, the findings of additional study by (Koubova & Buchko, 2017) indicate that e-WOM and customer purchasing interest are significantly related.

Research conducted by (Nuseir, 2019) aimed to evaluate the influence of e-WOM on BI and on online PI .Consumers' purchasing decision is influenced by the outcome of

the electronic word of mouth through evaluations and they compare between products advantages to make the appropriate decision (Natasha and Tina 2021)

### 2.7 BI and BT Relationship in Mediating E-WOM with Purchase Intension

Positive e-WOM communication is influenced by a company's strong brand image, which ultimately affects customer interest in making purchase (Adriyanti & Indriani 2017). Model of research from (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016) demonstrated how trust effectively mediates between e-WOM and purchase intention. (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018) discovered a positive relationship between purchase intension and e-WOM that was mediated by trust. Additionally, the results of the (Matute et al., 2016) study showed that e-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase intentions both directly and indirectly through trust. (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018) discovered a positive relationship between purchase interest and e-WOM that was mediated by trust.

#### Hypotheses of the research:

- H1: e-WOM affects significantly and positively PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.
- H2: e-WOM affects significantly and positively brand image of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.
- H3: e-WOM affects significantly and positively brand trust.
- H4: Brand image affects significantly and positively PI.
- H5: Brand trust affects significantly and positively PI.
- H6: Brand image mediates the relationship between e-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality services in Egypt.
- H7: Brand trust mediates the link between e-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.

#### Research Model

Figure (1) illustrates the researchers proposed model, which consists of the four interconnected components e-WOM, purchase intention, brand image, and brand trust.

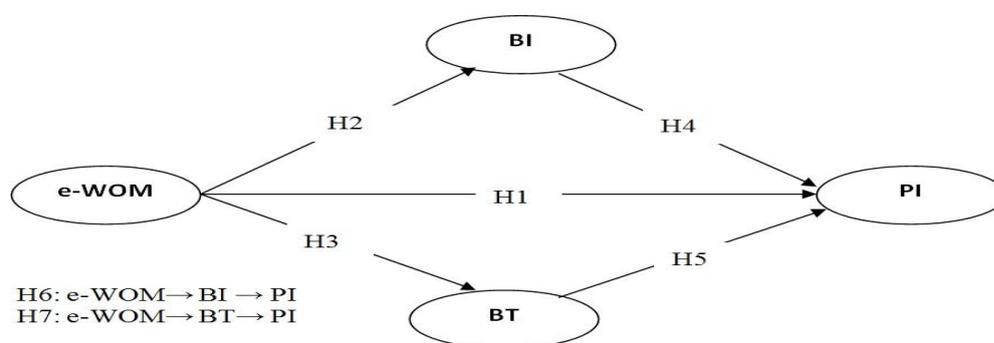


Figure (1) Model of the study

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Population and Sample:

This study's target population was foreign tourists in Egypt. A questionnaire was used to select the primary data from July to September 2022 and was distributed in Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh, Luxor, and Aswan as vital touristic cities in Egypt. A random sample of respondents was chosen from tourists in Egypt. A total of 750 forms were distributed (online and offline). Only 682 questionnaires were returned from the sample of the study (representing a 91.1% response rate).

#### 3.2 Survey Instrument

The survey consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire included questions on demographic data of the sample of foreign tourists in Egypt and information related to the uses and online behaviors of social media networks by the sample of the study. The second part of the questionnaire consists of the dimensions and instruments of the model of the study (E-WOM, BI, BT, and PI). E-WOM section was measured using six items, which were adapted from the study of Farzin & Fattahi (2018). BI was assessed by adopting six items used by Martnez Salinas and Pina Pérez (2009). The six-item scales were used to measure PI, which was adapted by Farzin and Fattahi (2018), and Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012). Finally, trust was measured by adopting five items used by Rodriguez et al. (2022) and Su Lujun and Chen (2021). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 as strongly disagreed to 5 as strongly agreed, was used for the measurement.

#### 3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data and test hypotheses were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS, V. 24) and AMOS V. 24. The following statistical tests were used:

- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): used to assess validity and reliability.
- Descriptive Statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation) are used to describe the characteristics of the sample and to determine the responses of the sample members towards all the axes of the study tool.
- Model fit indicators: to determine the extent to which the proposed study model matches the sample data.
- Path analysis: identifying the direct impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable as well as the indirect impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable via the mediating variable.
- To determine whether the mediating variable has a role in the link between independent variable and dependent variable.

#### 3.4 Measurement Model (Validity and Reliability)

Table (1) illustrated that loadings of all items in the final measurement model met the minimal cut-off value of 0.60, indicating that internal consistency was attained. Cronbach's alpha exceeded 0.70, Nunnally's minimal dependability threshold. All CR values were larger than the minimal cut-off point of 0.80 in terms of convergent validity, and all AVE values were greater than the 0.50 cut-off point. As a result, the measurement model was determined to be adequate regarding reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table (1) Factor loading, Cronbach Alpha, CR, and AVE

Construct	Factor loading	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
e-WOM		.830	.860	.632
e-WOM1	.693			
e-WOM2	.813			
e-WOM3	.796			
e-WOM4	.771			
e-WOM5	.844			
e-WOM6	.753			
<b>BI</b>		.853	.891	.711
<b>BI1</b>	.767			
BI2	.785			
BI3	.663			
BI4	.856			
BI5	.691			
BI6	.711			
<b>PT</b>		.839	.864	.663
PT1	.887			
PT2	.842			
<b>PT3</b>	.801			
PT4	.797			
PT5	.725			
<b>PI</b>		.766	.813	.601
PI1	.669			
PI2	.822			
PI3	.819			
PI4	.769			
PI5	.775			
PI6	.659			

After verifying the fit and validity of each measurement model, the full measurement model was validated. The overall measurement model was tested. The goodness of fit indices ( $\chi^2/df = 1.569$ , GFI = .937, IFI= .959, CFI= .932, TLI= .964, RMSEA = .037) all suggested that the model and data were fairly good fit. The reliability of each construct varied from .766 to .853, as seen in Table (1), with all values exceeding .70. All factor loadings ranged from .659 to .887 and were statistically significant (i.e. all greater than .60). Each construct's AVE value exceeded .50 and was frequently higher than the squared correlation. As a result, convergent validity and discriminant validity were both sufficient (see table 2).

Table (2) Discriminant validity

Construct	e-WOM	BI	PT	PI
e-WOM	(.795)			
BI	.629	(.843)		
PT	.553	.699	(.814)	
PI	.703	.671	.597	(.775)

## 4. Results

The sampled group consisted of a total of 682 participants. Results and statistical analysis of the field study were mentioned as follows:

### 4.1 Demographic data analysis

Table (3) demographic profile of respondents

Variables	demographic profile	Frequencies	Percentage
<b>Nationality</b>	Germany	165	24.2%
	Romanian	11	1.6%
	Serbian	11	1.6%
	French	88	12.9%
	Italy	165	24.2%
	Russian	132	19.4%
	Sweden	11	1.6%
	British	77	11.3%
	Spanish	22	3.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Age</b>	less than 20 years	0	0
	21-40 years	253	37.1%
	41-60 years	363	53.2%
	Over 20 years	66	9.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Educational level</b>	Secondary education	99	14.5%
	Bachelor/ license	484	71%
	Master/PHD	99	14.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	352	51.6%
	Female	330	48.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings of the demographic information gathered from respondents are shown in Table 3. The top three nationalities were Germany (24.2%), Italy (24.2%), and Russia (19.4%). In terms of the ages of the respondents, those between the ages of 20 and 40 made up the largest group (37.1%), followed by those between the ages of 41 and 60 (53.2%). The majority of responders (71%) held a bachelor's degree or other credential. Furthermore, roughly 51.6% of respondents identified as male.

### 4.2 The social network or websites that were used frequently for Reviews:

Table (4) Social networking or websites that were used frequently for reviews

social networking site	Frequencies	Percentage
Facebook	638	27.6%
Trip Advisor	429	18.6%
Twitter	407	17.6%
YouTube	363	15.7%
WhatsApp	253	11%
Instagram	220	9.5%

According to the previous table, Facebook (27.6% of respondents) was the most popular social networking site they frequented regularly for reviews, followed by TripAdvisor (18.6%) and Twitter (17.6%).

### 4.3 Visiting the social networking site on an average day

Table (5) number of daily social networking sites visiting

No of visiting	Frequencies	Percentage
once	11	1.6%
twice	11	1.6%
third	55	8.1%
fourth	220	32.3%
Five or more	385	56.4%
total	682	100%

Table 5 showed that the average number of social networking sites visited by respondents was five or more (56.4%), followed by four times a day (32.3%).

### 4.4 The most activity is usually conducted by the respondents on this social networking site.

Table (6) Activities on social networking sites

Activities	Frequencies	Percentage
Posting Posts	616	20.4%
Searching products/services	572	18.9%
For General Knowledge	561	18.5%
Posting comments	528	17.5%
Making new friends	385	12.7%
Chatting	363	12%

According to Table 6, the most common activities of the respondents on social media sites are posting posts (20.4%), followed by searching for products/services (18.9%), and then general knowledge (18.5%).

### 4.5 Reasons for reading online e-WOM to select tourist destination/services

Table (7) Reasons of reading online e-WOM to select tourist destination/services

Reasons	Frequencies	Percentage
Obtaining useful information about destination/services	671	21.7%
Obtaining previous experience of tourists about destination	638	20.6%
Obtain up-to-date information	528	17.1%
Organize the trip according to my leisure expectations	495	16%
Save time	429	13.9%
Save money	330	10.7%

From the previous table, it can be inferred that the top three reasons for reading online reviews before selecting a tourist establishment or destination are: (21.7%) to obtain useful information about the destination or services; (20.6%) to obtain about travellers' prior experiences with the destination or services; and (17%) to obtain the most recent information available.

#### 4.6 Descriptive statistics of the study dimensions:

The descriptive statistical analysis and results of the study dimensions (EWOM, purchase intention, brand image, and brand trust) are presented below.

##### 4.6.1 Descriptive Statistics of the E-WOM:

Table (8) Mean and SD of the e-WOM

Items	Mean	SD
I publish my experiences with brands and products on social networks on request of other members	4.23	.711
To choose the right products or brands, I often consult online reviews of products and brands provided by other fellow members in social media	4.15	.743
Information that I spread in social media concerning the products and brands usually affects the opinion of other members	4.19	.720
To make sure that I buy the right products or brands, I often read online e-WOM of written by other fellow members in social media	4.16	.890
I am keen to share my experiences with brands on social networks	4.06	.884
I try to share my experiences more effectively with products on social networks	4.13	.949
<b>Total mean and SD</b>	4.15	.707

According to the statistical results in the preceding table, there was a high level of agreement among all e-WOM phrases, with the overall mean of these phrases being (4.15) and the standard deviation of these phrases being (0.707). The findings revealed that "publishing my experiences with brands and products on social media on request of other members" (M = 4.23, SD =.711), "Information that I spread in social media concerning the products and brands usually affects the opinion of other members" (M = 4.19, SD =.720), and "To make sure that I buy the right products or brands, I often read online e-WOM of written by other fellow members in social media" (M = 4.16, SD =.890) were ranked in that order

##### 4.6.2 Mean and SD of Brand Image

Table (9) Mean and SD of the brand image

Items	Mean	SD
The brand has a high quality	4.16	.890
The brand has better characteristics than its competitors	4.06	.798
The brand was a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors	3.97	.788
The brand is a brand that does not disappoint its customers	4.05	.920
The brand is one of the best brands in the sector	4.08	.874
The brand was stable in the market	4.03	.848
<b>Total mean and SD</b>	4.06	.768

According to the statistical results in the preceding table, there was a high level of agreement among all brand image phrases, with the overall mean of these phrases being (4.06) and SD (0.768). The findings revealed that "This brand has a high quality" (M = 4.16, SD =.890), "This brand is one of the best brands in the sector" (M = 4.08, SD =.874), and "This brand has better characteristics than its competitors" (M = 4.06, SD =.798) were ranked in that order.

### 4.6.3 Mean and SD of Brand Trust

Table (10) Mean and SD of brand trust

Statements	Mean	SD
I believe that the same situation mentioned by different reviewers verifies the actual experience with the tourism satisfaction	4.13	.778
I believe the reviewers provide honest reviews of their experience	4.11	.811
I trust e-WOM written by customers who travel the same way that I travel	3.98	.735
I trust e-WOM written by tourists who have the same interests as I have	4.03	.788
I think e-WOM are believable, accurate, trustworthy and impartial	4.08	.815
<b>Total mean and SD</b>	4.07	.704

According to the statistical findings in the preceding table, all brand trust phrases had a high level of agreement, with an overall mean of 4.0 and a SD of 0.704. The results showed that "I think the reviews are believable, accurate, trustworthy, and impartial" (M = 4.08, SD =.815) was the first ranked, then "I believe the reviewers provide honest e-WOM of their experiences" (M = 4.11, SD =.811), and "I believe the reviewers provide e-WOM that accurately reflect their experiences," which was ranked third (M = 4.13, SD =.778).

### 4.6.4 Mean and SD of Purchase Intention

Table (11) Mean and SD of the purchase intention

Items	Mean	SD
I will buy this brand /product rather than any other product available	4.10	.953
I am willing to recommend others to buy this brand /product	4.02	.877
I intend to buy this brand /product in the future	3.98	.914
I will buy brand and product presented by my friends on social media more than the other existing (competing) products and brands	4.08	.928
I would like to recommend the products or brands introduced by my friends on social networks to other people	4.06	.920
I would like to buy the brand and product following their introduction by friends on social networks	4.16	.926
<b>Total mean and SD</b>	4.08	.850

According to the statistical findings in the preceding table, all purchase intention phrases had a high level of agreement, with an overall mean of 4.08 and a SD of 0.850. The results showed that "I would like to buy the brand and product following their introduction by friends on social networks" (M = 4.16, SD =.926) was the first ranked, followed by "I will buy this brand /product rather than any other product available" (M = 4.10, SD =.953), and "I will buy brand and product presented by my friends on social media than the other existing (competing) products and brands" which was ranked third (M = 4.08, SD =.928).

### 4.7 Test of hypotheses

To test all hypotheses, a structural model was estimated. The goodness-of-fit statistics revealed that the model fit the present data fairly well. The hypothesized model's RMSEA score was .043, indicating a high level of precision (MacCallum et al., 1996). Figure 2 shows the completed structural model with direct path values. As indicated in Table 12, the path coefficient values and the significance level demonstrated that

the structural paths were both positive and significant, implying that all direct positive links were supported.

The results showed that e-WOM has a significant effect on PI ( $\beta = .518$  and  $P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, e-WOM has a significant influence on BI ( $\beta = .690$  and  $P < 0.01$ ). Additionally, e-WOM had a significant impact on BT ( $\beta = .796$  and  $P < 0.01$ ). Hence, **H1, H2 and H3 are supported**. While BI had a significant influence on PI ( $\beta = .407$  and  $P < 0.01$ ). Thus, **H4 is supported**. Moreover, BT had a significant impact on PI ( $\beta = .751$  and  $P < 0.01$ ). Thus, **H5 is supported**. From figure (2), it can be concluded that BI is explained 47.6% by e-WOM, and BT is explained 63.4% also by e-WOM. As well, e-WOM, BI, and BT explain 58.6% of PI.

Table (12) path estimate, SE and critical ration (CR) of structural model

Hypotheses	Estimate ( $\beta$ )	SE	C.R t value	p-value
H1: e-WOM $\rightarrow$ PI	.518	.109	4.752	.000
H2: e-WOM $\rightarrow$ BI	.690	.133	5.188	.000
H3: e-WOM $\rightarrow$ BT	.796	.124	6.419	.000
H4: BI $\rightarrow$ PI	.407	.093	4.376	.000
H5: BT $\rightarrow$ PI	.751	.111	6.766	.000

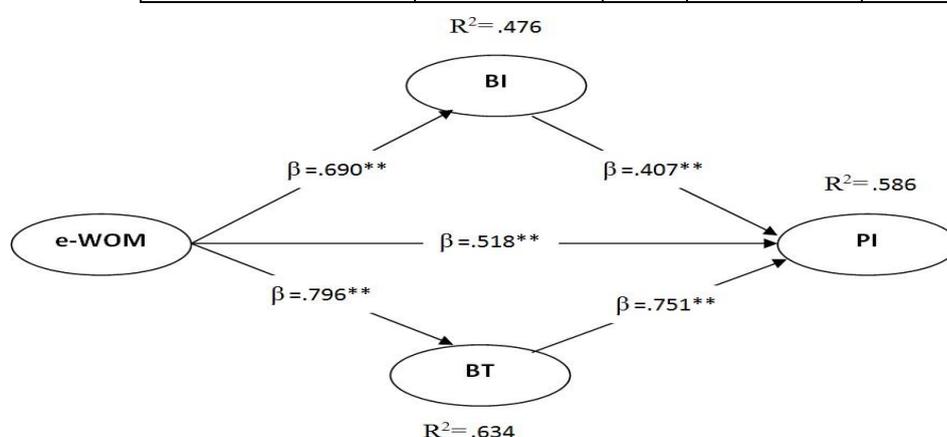


Figure (2) structural model with direct path results

### Mediating role BI and BT on the relationship between e-WOM and PI:

To know if the mediator variable plays a full or partial role in the link between independent and dependent variables (Al-Romeedy, 2019):

- A) If the indirect relationship between independent variable and dependent variable is significant, there is a mediating role for the mediator variable.
- B) If the indirect link between independent variable and dependent variable is insignificant, there is no mediating role for the mediator variable.
- C) If the direct relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is significant, there is a partial mediating role for the mediator variable.
- D) If the direct relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is insignificant, there is a full mediating role for the mediator variable.

The bootstrapping approach was used to test the effect of BI and BT on the relationship between e-WOM and PI (Taylor et al., 2008). Two different types of mediation exist. First, the independent and dependent constructions' relationship ceases to be significant when the mediating construct is taken into account, signaling the completion of the mediating effect. Second, the mediating effect is only partially present if, after the mediating construct, there is still a strong link between independent and dependent constructs (baron and Kenny,1986). Additionally, Table 13 showed that the **H6, H7 are supported** by the results of the mediating role of BI and BT. Table (13) reveals that e-WOM and brand image explain the variance in purchase intention by 32%. E-WOM and BT explain the variance in PI by 41 %. These results confirm the mediating role of BI and BT in the link between e-WOM and PI. The indirect impact coefficients were all significant and positive (p 0.01), and BI and BT partially mediate the link between e-WOM and PI.

Table (13) indirect effect

Hypothesis/path	Estimates	Bootstrapping 5,000 times				p
		Bias-corrected		Percentile		
		95% CI		95% CI		
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	
H6: e-WOM→ BI → PI	.354	.06	.19	.06	.16	***
H7: e-WOM→ BT → PI	.414	.07	.31	.07	.26	***

## 5. Discussion and Recommendations

This research aims to determine the impact of e-WOM on PI of tourist destinations and hospitality services, and to explore the mediating roles of brand image and brand trust in the relationship between e-WOM and PI. A quantitative approach was applied to achieve the objectives of the study. The targeted population was the foreign tourists in Egypt. A questionnaire was used to collect the primary data, which was distributed in Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh, Luxor, and Aswan from July to September 2022. A total of 750 forms were distributed, but only 682 questionnaires were returned from the sample of the study and were analyzed. The collected data and test hypotheses were analyzed using SPSS, V. 24 and AMOS, V. 24. According to demographic data, the findings revealed that respondents between the ages of 41 and 60, as well as those with a bachelor's or license degree and the gender male, have the most characteristics of the study samples.

The findings showed that Facebook, Trip Advisor, and Twitter are the most popular social networking sites, frequented regularly by the respondents. This result agrees with the study of Bataineh, A. (2015). In addition, the most common activities of the respondents on social media sites are posting posts, followed by searching for products/services, and then general knowledge. Moreover, the top reasons for reading online e-WOM before selecting tourist destinations or services are: to obtain useful information about the destination or services; to obtain information about travellers' prior experiences with the destination or services; and to obtain the most recent information available. This result agrees with the studies of González-Rodríguez (2022) and Bataineh, A. (2015). There was a high level of agreement among all phrases of e-WOM, purchase intention (PI), brand image (BI), and brand trust (BT).

The findings showed that BI and BT played a significant mediating effect in the relationship between e-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt. The findings showed that there is a significant and positive effect of e-WOM on PI. This result was consistent with previous studies by Andrian, (2022), Ulan et al. (2022), Lujun et al. (2021), Bhat, and Bhat,( 2020), Hassan et al (2020), Harahap and Dwita(2020), Alrwashdeh et al 2019, Abdullah, (2019), Al Halbusi, and Tehseen. (2018), El-Baz, et al (2018) and Bataineh, A. (2015), which proved that there was a significant effect of e-WOM on PI.

The results indicated that e-WOM significantly affected brand trust. This result agrees with the findings of the studies of Lujun et al. (2021), Abdullah, (2019), and Abubakar (2016). The results also showed that e-WOM significantly affected brand image (BI). This finding has been supported by previous studies by Andrian, Nadia, (2022), Alrwashdeh et al 2019, Al Halbusi, and Tehseen (2018). Additionally, BI had a significant impact on purchase intention (PI). This result is agreed with previous studies by Ulan et al. (2022), Hassan et al. (2020) and Harahap and Dwita (2020). But this result is not agreed with the study of Alrwashdeh et al 2019 which indicated a negative impact of BI on PI. Additionally, brand trust (BT) had a significant impact on purchase intention (PI) This finding is agreed with the findings by Suprpto et al. (2022) and Abdullah, (2019). This demonstrates that online trust has a significant impact on online PI. Furthermore The results showed that e-WOM impacts PI through the mediating of the trust dimension, and trust significantly affects consumer PI, This result was consistent with the studies of Firman et al. (2021) and El-Baz et al. (2018).

### **Recommendations:**

This study presents a few recommendations for marketers and managers of tourist destinations, tourism and hospitality establishments as follows:

- They should consider the importance of the positive relationship and the significant impact of e-WOM on the purchase intention.
- They must create policies and procedures to deal with the aspects of both positive and negative e-WOM as well as the purchase intention of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments.
- They must consider how to build and develop brand trust among tourists towards tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.
- They must work to improve the brand image of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments in Egypt.
- They must follow and analyze both positive and negative e-WOM of tourists about Egyptian tourist destinations and hospitality establishments.
- They should encourage tourists to post positive online reviews as well, as they can follow and analyze negative comments from visitors and find suitable means to solve problems.

### **Limitations and future research:**

This research has numerous limitations, as well as some suggestions for further research. Because the research only included specific dimensions such as BI and BT in the relationship between E-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments, Moreover, one of the additional points for future research is to examine other factors that might have both direct and indirect relationships with E-WOM on PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments. Also, the research

only included a few locations in Egypt, such as Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh, Luxor, and Aswan, so the number of replies is likely to be low. For further research, it is suggested to explore the mediating roles of other dimensions such as satisfaction, loyalty, and service quality in the relationship between E-WOM and PI of tourist destinations and hospitality establishments

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