

The Influence Of Electronic Word-Of-Mouth On Online Hotel Booking Purchasing Intention In Online Travel Agent

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Abstract

This study looks into the influence of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on Indonesian consumers' hotel booking intentions through Online Travel Agents (OTAs). It showcase the role of eWOM in shaping consumer trust as well as decision-making in online travel markets, emphasizing factors such as reviewer expertise, information credibility, and the recognized quality of shared content. The study formulates its research problem, objectives, and contributions while grounding the analysis in established theoretical frameworks, namely the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Information Adoption Model (IAM). A review of prior studies on consumer behaviour, online travel marketing, and eWOM provides the foundation for examining issues such as social influence, information accuracy, and the mechanisms by which digital platforms foster consumer trust. Methodologically, the study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to assess the causal relationships between eWOM dimensions and purchase intention. PLS-SEM is chosen for its suitability in exploratory and predictive research, as it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of both measurement and structural models. To ensure the robustness of findings, the analysis incorporates key statistical assessments, including path coefficients, reliability indices, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. By leveraging the strengths of PLS-SEM, this study produces empirical evidence that offers strategic insights for OTAs seeking to strengthen customer engagement and refine eWOM-based marketing approaches in Indonesia's increasingly competitive digital tourism industry.

Keywords: *Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Online Travel Agents (OTAs), Purchasing Intention In Online Travel Agent*

I. INTRODUCTION

The way people choose hotels in Indonesia has changed drastically alongside the sprouting of the tourism division. The emergence of internet-based services and technological innovation has significantly reduced reliance on conventional hotel booking practices. Online Travel Agents (OTAs) have surfaced as the primary platforms, offering travelers a more efficient and user-friendly approach to reserving accommodations. Within this digital booking environment, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) has become a central determinant of consumer choice. Faced with an abundance of hotel alternatives, consumers frequently turn to reviews, ratings, and recommendations as reliable sources of guidance. In Indonesia, prominent OTAs such as Traveloka, Agoda, Booking.com, and Tiket.com combine comprehensive hotel listings with user-generated content—ratings and customer feedback—to create a seamless booking experience. This underscores the necessity of examining how eWOM influences booking behaviour, enabling OTAs to refine their services and sustain competitiveness.

Among the key determinants of online booking behaviour, trust emerges as more decisive than promotional offers or discounts. Elements such as transparent pricing, accurate hotel descriptions, secure payment systems, and responsive customer support are integral in establishing credibility. Positive user feedback on platforms like the App Store and Google Play Store further strengthens consumer trust, fostering long-term loyalty. For Indonesian OTAs, cultivating credibility and trust remains imperative, particularly as eWOM continues to shape consumer perceptions and attitudes.

At the same time, OTAs have reshaped the tourism landscape by delivering extensive accommodation options and streamlined booking processes. However, this success is accompanied by challenges. Issues related to refunds, booking modifications, and dynamic pricing during peak seasons frequently undermine customer confidence. Instances such as complicated cancellations or sudden price increases often discourage travelers, highlighting the importance of transparent pricing structures and robust customer service systems. Previous studies reinforce these observations: while promotional strategies, flash sales, and loyalty programs strongly influence purchase decisions (Lak, 2019; Syahriyanti, 2021), trust consistently serves as the fundamental basis for customer engagement and brand loyalty within digital business contexts (Sugara & Dewantara, 2021).

In making hotel booking decisions, travelers typically assess factors such as service quality, reliability, and credibility—dimensions that are increasingly accessible through the transparency offered by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Within the Indonesian context, eWOM holds particular importance in fostering trust and influencing purchasing behaviour, as consumers frequently depend on word-of-mouth when evaluating experience-based products such as travel services. While prior research has emphasized the role of eWOM in the tourism and hospitality industries, investigations that specifically address the Indonesian market remain limited. Consumer preferences in Indonesia are shaped not only by individual considerations but also by socio-economic and cultural dynamics. For instance, Indonesian travelers often place high value on recommendations from trusted social circles and community-based sources, reinforcing the function of eWOM as a significant determinant of hotel booking intentions through Online Travel Agents (OTAs).

The study specifically investigates the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and consumers' intentions to make hotel reservations through Indonesian OTAs. This focus stems from a broader phenomenon: the rapid digital transformation of the hospitality and tourism industries, in which consumer decisions are increasingly shaped by online reviews and ratings. Platforms such as Traveloka, Agoda, Booking.com, and Tiket.com have become leading choices for Indonesian travelers, reflecting the growing penetration of the internet and smartphone technologies. These OTAs actively encourage user-generated content through ratings and reviews, which constitute eWOM and serve as a critical driver of subsequent consumer decision-making.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumer behaviour has been widely validated. Cheung et al. (2008) and Ismagilova et al. (2020) showed that review quality, credibility, and reviewer expertise strongly shape information adoption and purchase intentions. Similarly, Iskanto et al. (2025) identified eWOM as a key driver of product awareness, while studies by Lamba and Aggarwal (2014) and Khoirunnisa and Albari (2023) confirmed its role in reducing risk and fostering trust. In collectivist contexts like Indonesia, eWOM exerts greater influence than traditional advertising due to the value placed on peer opinions. This research is grounded in the Information Adoption Model (IAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which together explain how information quality, credibility, attitudes, and social norms drive behavioural intentions. The study addresses a gap by examining how specific eWOM dimensions—credibility, quality, quantity, and reviewer expertise—affect trust and purchase behaviour in Indonesia's OTA sector, a context often overlooked despite its cultural and economic distinctiveness.

III. METODOLOGY RESEARCH

This study employs a quantitative causal research design to examine the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumers' hotel booking intentions via Online Travel Agents (OTAs). Quantitative research emphasizes numerical data and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and identify relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), while causal design analyzes the impact of independent variables on dependent variables (Saunders et al., 2019). Data were collected through surveys of OTA users, with individuals as the unit of analysis. Using a cross-sectional approach, the study captures relationships at a single point in time (Zikmund et al., 2020).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines respondents' perceptions of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) as the independent variable (X) and Online Hotel Booking Purchase Intention as the dependent variable (Y). Data were collected via questionnaires using Likert-scale indicators and analyzed to capture how eWOM influences booking intentions. Descriptive analysis provides an initial overview of response patterns before proceeding to validity, reliability, and structural model testing.

1. Analysis of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

This study applies Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine interdependent relationships among latent constructs represented by multiple indicators. As a confirmatory approach, SEM requires a strong theoretical basis and allows simultaneous testing of complex variable relationships while accounting for measurement error, thereby improving reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2022).

1) **Outer Model**

The measurement model—often referred to as the outer model—specifies the relationship between latent constructs and their corresponding observed indicators. These relationships may be reflective, in which the indicators represent the manifestations of a latent construct, or formative, in which the indicators collectively shape or define the construct. Partial Least Squares (PLS) offers a flexible and powerful approach for examining complex data structures, especially when the analysis involves multiple interrelated variables (Setiabudhi et al., 2025).

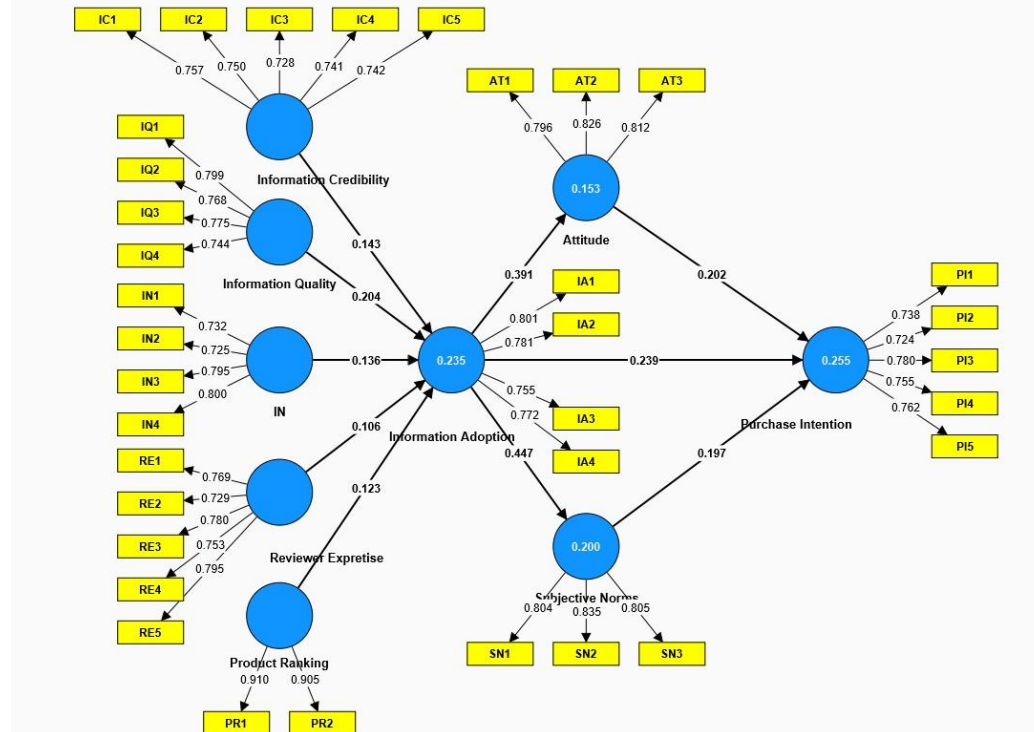


Figure 4. 1 Outer Model
Source: Processed by the author (2025)

a. **Convergent Validity**

Convergent validity tests whether indicators consistently represent the same construct, assessed through factor loadings (>0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50). Results show all indicators meet these thresholds, confirming strong convergent validity and supporting the suitability of the measurement model for further PLS-SEM analysis.

b. **Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity ensures each construct is distinct from others, commonly assessed through cross-loadings (>0.70) and the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of AVE exceeds correlations with other constructs. The analysis confirms these conditions are met, indicating all constructs in the model are empirically distinct.

c. **Reliability**

Reliability testing evaluates the internal consistency of measurement instruments, typically using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with values >0.70 indicating adequacy. The results show all constructs exceed these thresholds, confirming strong reliability and consistent measurement across indicators.

2) **Inner Model**

a. **R-Squared R²**

R-Squared (R²) indicates the variance in dependent variables explained by predictors, with thresholds of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25. Results show weak explanatory power for Attitude (0.153), Subjective Norms (0.200), and Information Adoption (0.235), while Purchase Intention (0.255) borders weak–moderate, suggesting modest but meaningful explanatory strength.

3) **Hypothesis Test**

Hypothesis testing used a 0.05 significance level, with hypotheses supported when $p \leq 0.05$ and $t > 1.65$. Results show all ten hypotheses (H1–H10) are significant. Information Credibility, Quality, Quantity, Reviewer Expertise, and Product Ranking (H1–H5) all positively affect Information Adoption. In turn, Information Adoption strongly influences Purchase Intention (H6), Attitude (H7), and Subjective Norms (H8). Finally, Attitude and Subjective Norms significantly affect Purchase Intention (H9–H10). These findings confirm that all proposed relationships are statistically supported.

2. Discussion

The study investigates the effect of eWOM on Online Hotel Booking Purchase Intention via OTAs, with data from 350 respondents. Results show:

1) The effect of information credibility on information adoption on the OTA platform.

The test result ($t = 3.136$, $p = 0.002$) confirms H1, showing that credible information significantly increases consumer adoption on OTA platforms. This aligns with Rafi & Roostika (2020), who found that source credibility strongly influences information adoption. User-generated reviews on OTAs act as trusted references, reducing risk and uncertainty in hotel booking decisions.

2) The effect of Information quality on information adoption on the OTA platform.

H2 is supported ($t = 3.923$, $p = 0.000$), showing that information quality significantly enhances information adoption. Consumers are more likely to rely on accurate and relevant information, which reduces uncertainty and strengthens decision-making on OTA platforms (Jiang et al., 2021).

3) The effect of Reviewer expertise on information adoption on the OTA platform.

H3 is confirmed ($t = 2.299$, $p = 0.022$), demonstrating that reviewer expertise has a significant effect on information adoption. This result indicates that consumers are more inclined to trust and utilize reviews from individuals perceived as knowledgeable or experienced, as such expertise enhances the credibility and usefulness of the information.

4) The effect of Information quantity on information adoption on the OTA platform.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) is also accepted, supported by a t-statistic of 2.556 and a p-value of 0.011. This result highlights that the quantity of available information—such as the volume of reviews or detailed descriptions—positively influences users' decision to adopt the information. A larger quantity of information can help consumers better compare and evaluate alternatives, leading to a more informed adoption of the presented content.

5) The effect of Product rankings on information adoption on the OTA platform.

H5 is supported ($t = 2.276$, $p = 0.023$), indicating that product rankings significantly influence information adoption. Such evaluative cues, including star ratings, act as heuristics that simplify decision-making and shape consumer perceptions in choice-rich contexts such as OTA platforms.

6) The effect of Information adoption on OTA platforms on purchase intentions.

H6 is supported ($t = 3.695$, $p = 0.000$), showing that information adoption significantly increases purchase intention. Consumers who absorb online reviews and ratings are more likely to book through OTAs, as adoption reduces uncertainty and builds trust (Nadira, 2021).

7) The effect of Information adoption on OTA platforms on Consumer attitudes.

Hypothesis 7 receives strong support, evidenced by a t-statistic of 7.735 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant relationship between information adoption and consumer attitudes. This suggests that the process of adopting relevant, credible, and high-quality information leads to the formation of positive attitudes toward OTA platforms. A favorable attitude is often a precursor to behavioral outcomes, such as intention to purchase or recommendation.

8) The effect of Information adoption on OTA platforms on Subjective norms.

With a t-statistic of 9.082 and a p-value of 0.000, the impact of information adoption on subjective norms is likewise significant, supporting H8. This finding suggests that information adoption influences users' perceptions of social norms or expectations in addition to their own attitudes. Users' perceptions of what is socially acceptable or advised behaviour in the context of OTA usage are shaped when they accept information shared by others (friends, online communities, etc.).

9) The effect of Consumer attitudes on purchase intentions on OTA platforms.

H9 is supported ($t = 3.256$, $p = 0.001$), showing that positive consumer attitudes toward OTA platforms significantly increase purchase intention. Favorable perceptions of eWOM build trust and confidence, while negative attitudes reduce reliance on the information (Nadira, 2021).

10) The effect of Subjective norms on purchase intentions on OTA platforms.

H10 is confirmed ($t = 2.866$, $p = 0.004$), showing that subjective norms significantly shape purchase intentions. Support from family, friends, or influencers increases the likelihood of booking through OTA platforms.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study investigated the impact of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on online hotel booking purchasing. This study examines purchase intention on Online Travel Agent (OTA) platforms, considering the roles of information adoption, attitudes, and subjective norms. Using structural equation modeling (SEM) with 350 respondents, ten hypotheses were tested. Results indicate that information credibility significantly enhances information adoption, as consumers tend to rely on trustworthy sources. Similarly, information quality, reviewer expertise, and information quantity positively influence adoption, emphasizing the importance of reliable and consistent content. Product rankings also serve as key decision-making cues.

Information adoption was found to significantly affect purchase intention, attitudes, and subjective norms, with favorable attitudes and social influence further reinforcing booking intentions. For practical implications, OTAs should strengthen consumer trust by highlighting reviewer expertise, presenting clear product rankings, and improving the credibility, quality, and volume of eWOM. Additionally, integrating sharing features or influencer collaborations can foster eWOM adoption and leverage social influence.

Theoretically, this research contributes by positioning information adoption as a mediator linking eWOM antecedents to behavioral outcomes. The findings align with Ramadhan & Millanyani (2024), who demonstrated that eWOM positively influences purchase intentions, particularly through customer reviews. To enhance generalizability, future studies are encouraged to explore these dynamics across broader digital service contexts within the tourism economy.

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