



Research Article

THE MODERATED MEDIATION EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH (EWOM) COMPONENTS ON PURCHASE INTENTION IN TOURISM: THE CASE OF TURKEY**

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Abstract

Consumers often obtain two identical types of information before making a purchase decision; overall numerical ratings (electronic word of mouth) and individual oral reviews (word of mouth). Both have a specific use on hosts and are important. However, no known research has investigated the use of numerical evaluation cues and websites on the purchase decision. This study examines the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumer behavior in the tourism sector. It focuses on factors influencing eWOM and purchase intent, tourists' perceptions of eWOM, and purchase intention. The study used the quantitative method, and data were collected using a questionnaire. We used 640 questionnaires from Russian and German tourists visiting Antalya. The data were analyzed using statistical analysis programs. Twelve hypotheses developed using related theories were tested by regression analysis. The results of this analysis show that eWOM impacts purchase intention. Purchase intention consists of the components of perceived risk, popularity, usefulness, trust, and information quality. The results show that online consumers' perceptions of trust, risk, popularity, and usefulness depend on the rating score component, the website's familiarity status, and the number of reviews. Perceptions of trust, risk, popularity, and usefulness increase the mediating power of the eWOM effect variable in cases where the website is not recognized. Perceived trust, risk, and usefulness influence purchase intention in cases where the number of reviews is high. These results show that consumers' perceptions of eWOM's popularity depend on the number of reviews. We aim to achieve the objective using a designed scenario. There needed to be more information in the scenarios. Therefore, the methods were limited to the familiarity of the website, the rating level, and the intensity of the stimuli. One of the limitations of the research is the measurement of perceived trust, risk, usefulness, and popularity in the information process. This study differs from the eWOM researches in the field of tourism in two points. The data collection tool of the first point study is different from a classical questionnaire and includes a scenario. Participants are presented with a screenshot of an online review and rating system for a hotel business. The presented image includes comment, rating valance, density, and website familiarity as components of the eWOM. It can be stated that trying to determine the perceptions of the participants about the eWOM presented to them after the scenario allows focusing on the perception that is desired to be measured, and it can be stated that it will provide a more accurate measurement (validity) opportunity compared to the classical questionnaires, which are answered with general thoughts without focusing on a specific event. Another point where the study differs is that it used the eWOM effect as a mediator variable in the relationship between eWOM readers' perceptions of trust, popularity, risk and usefulness, and purchase intention.

Key Words: Word-Of-Mouth, Online Review, Electronic Word-Of-Mouth, Perceived Ewom Effect, Purchase Intention, Online Consumer Behavior

Introduction

With developments in Internet technologies, traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) has transformed into a new form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). People now use eWOM before purchasing (Hussain, Ahmed, Jafar, Rabnawaz, and Jianzhou, 2017). The most important factor in consumers' choice of information sources is previous positive experiences (Gershoff, Broniarczyk, and West, 2001:418). Sources include sellers, acquaintances, and other consumers who have used the product, as well as experts, signs, experience, mass media, and social media. eWOMs are a direct result of familiarity, trustworthiness, and information quality. It influences consumers' purchasing behaviors and perceptions. Online reviews are the most vital source of eWOM in the tourism industry (Hyan-Yoo and Gretzel, 2008; Ip, Lee, and Law, 2012). They are essential for

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the tourism industry because of their strong positive impact on sales (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006). Tourists rate their opinion about the product they buy on different platforms (Ye et al., 2009).

In this study, based on the theory of planned behavior and the technology acceptance model, which are derivatives of the two-stage flow theory and the theory of reasoned action, the causal relationships between the proposed eWOM components and perceived eWOM impact, perceived trust, perceived risk and perceived ease of use were examined. Among other social media channels, online rating and review sites are the most accessible channels for eWOM. According to the two-stage flow theory, word of mouth communication is shown as the spread of information in communication and therefore the spread of innovations (Lau and Ng, 2009). Online reviews are one of the key drivers of consumer choice. Users can research a desired product online, vote, and choose the best product based on consumer reviews. Technology acceptance model, which is an extension of the theory of reasoned action on review sites, was developed by Davis (1989) to determine the factors affecting consumers' online shopping. Consumers who can easily find the best outcome are more likely to purchase. The number of reviews and the content of the reviews are related to product sales. However, it is difficult to clearly define the impact of positive or negative reviews on product sales (Liu, 2006). Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw (1988) state that the theory of planned behavior is considered one of the most effective theories in expanding and predicting behavior. According to Hoch and Ha (1986), the positive or negative effect of WOM is an essential factor if the consumer is undecided. Following the widespread use of social media, many studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of eWOM (Basuroy et al., 2003; Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Cheong and Morrison, 2008; De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Dellarocas et al., 2007; Duan et al., 2008a, 2008b; Evgeniy et al., 2019; Hung and Li, 2007; Owens and Mackman, 2011; Shin et al., 2018). There are many studies analyzing models on different variables such as information direction, website reputation, popularity, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness (Yang, 2017), mobile application download (Oh et al., 2015), eWOM value, volume, willingness to pay (Nieto-García et al., 2017), trust, usefulness (Wu and Lin, 2017), two factors, purchase (Roy et al., 2017) and eWOM value (Erkan and Evans, 2016; M. Lee and Youn, 2009). eWOM has significantly impacted hotel customers' decision-making and purchasing behavior (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009; Wen, 2009; Ye et al., 2009). This study develops a model with eWOM components: perceived popularity, trust, risk, usefulness, and purchase intention. The study follows an experimental approach to test the effect of the three online review variables.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Process Components

People recommend products by interacting with rating and commenting sites. We define interactions as commenting, liking, choosing, or rating. Rating and review sites and their comparisons focus more on customers than firms. Previous research on online review sites has focused on consumers' intentions to purchase. Murray (1991) emphasized the role of pre-purchase information seeking; Hahn et al. (1994) the trial of alternative products; Stephens and Gwinner (1998) post-purchase product loyalty; Anderson (1998) post-purchase satisfaction; and Godes and Mayzlin (2004), in their studies on brand familiarity, the role of WOM communication in the consumer purchase decision process. Hu, Liu, and Zhang (2008) concluded that online consumer reviews reveal product quality, reduce product uncertainty, and thus facilitate the final purchase choice. Bataineh (2015) examined the effect of eWOMs on purchase intent, considering reliability, quality, and quantity as variables. All variables have a positive effect on purchase intention. In addition, the corporate image variable, used as a mediating variable, mediated the other variables and the purchase intention variable. Gretzel's (2007) survey of Tripadvisor users confirms the importance of online reviews in the travel planning process, particularly when deciding where to stay (77.9%). Furthermore, Ye, Law, and Gu (2009), using data from China's largest travel website (www.ctrip.com), found that online reviews can significantly increase hotel reservations. These studies generally show that many consumers make offline purchase decisions based on online information.

Different perceptions are formed in the time process leading to the consumer's purchase intention after reading the information on online reviews and comment sites. Social media has become a powerful tool for sharing information about products and services and reading what others are saying. Previous studies have focused on many different perceptions. These are mostly perceived utility (Kim, 2008), perceived fairness (Taegoo Kim, Woo Gon Kim, and Hong-Bumm Kim, 2009), perceived quality (Kim and Min, 2014), perceived safety (Goedegebure et al., 2020), perceived ease of use (Yang, 2017), perceived usefulness (Li, 2019), perceived risk (Lee, 2009), perceived trust (Yu-Shan Chen and Ching-Hsun Chang, 2012), and perceived popularity (Nieto-García et al., 2017). In the literature, there are several studies that have investigated the impact of

different variables such as perceived usefulness, perceived risk, perceived trust, perceived popularity, and the eWOM effect on consumer behavior. However, none of these studies have applied all the variables to tourism.

Perceived usefulness is an essential determinant of the acceptance of eWOM content and the type of critic (Davis, 1989). Especially on social media, consumers encounter a large amount of eWOM information. Therefore, if they find helpful information, they may be more likely to adopt it (Erkan and Evans, 2016). Online purchase confidence increases with usability and usefulness (Flavián and Guinalíu, 2006; Yaobin and Tao, 2007). Kucukusta et al. (2015) concluded that perceived usefulness is more important than usefulness for consumers who are daily Internet users and purchasers of tourism products online. There is little research on the effect of perceived usefulness on online reviews, purchases, and bookings. Therefore, perceived usefulness was included as one of the variables in this study.

Perceived risk is a subjective assessment of actual or potential threats to one's life or, more generally, to one's psychological well-being (Lifshitz et al., 2016). Since tourism services are experiential products and cannot be evaluated before consumption, consumers tend to rely more on the advice and opinions of others (Senecal and Nantel, 2004). There are studies on tourism related to perceived risk. These include sources of perceived risk and safety in the tourism industry (Zuromskaite, Nagaj, and Daciulyte, 2018), the role of risk and quality in determining perceived value, which influences the intention to purchase tour packages through online rating and review sites (Putri, Shihab, and Budri, 2018), the influence of consumers' perceived risk on their attitudes and behavioral intentions (Miguel Alcantra-Pilar, 2017), the relationship between tourist roles, perceived risk, and international tourism (Lepp and Gibson, 2003), destination image as a mediator between perceived risk and revisit intention (Chew and Jahari, 2014), purchase intention (Mitchell, 1992; Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1992; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998; Tsaur et al., 1997), and perceived travel risks related to terrorism and disease (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009). Before purchasing a product, potential consumers learn about the disappointments of those who have had negative experiences through WOM or eWOM with the widespread use of the Internet, their preferences, whether they encountered the promised features, whether they received the price they paid for, and many other risk factors. Potential consumers can learn about pre-purchase experiences, preferences, promised functionality, and value. Thus, this study tests perceived risk as a variable in the decision-making process in which consumers narrow down the universal alternatives.

WOM is generally independent of marketers' sales intentions. It is considered more reliable and credible (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Lau and Ng, 2009). Consumers trust eWOM to reduce online risk (Kim and Song, 2010:377). Perceived trust is associated with loyalty (Flavián and Guinalíu, 2006), quality, brand, purchase intention, and risk (Chang and Wen Chen, 2008), perceived fairness, WOM, satisfaction, willingness to revisit (Kim, Kim, and Kim, 2009), satisfaction and loyalty (Kim et al., 2011), value, risk, and purchase (Chang Cheng, 2012), positive-negative message content (Pan and Chiou, 2011), risk and purchase attitude (Verhagen et al., 2006), risk and acceptance (Eiser et al., 2002), website quality, and trust (Everard and Galletta, 2005). The creation of the following research question was based on the literature review:

Q: How do eWOM components affect the purchase intention of online consumers in the tourism industry through usefulness, trust, risk, popularity and eWOM effect?

The moderated mediation effect of the eWOM Components

Davis and Khazanchi (2008) analyzed the components of WOM in four dimensions: volume, association value, visible cues, and type of critic. Volume measures the total number of interactive WOM messages (Liu, 2006). The association value corresponds to whether the kind of comment is positive or negative. Visible cues are considered visual evaluation criteria. Finally, the type of critic is divided into two categories according to whether the person making the criticism is an expert. Based on these qualities, this study evaluated rating valence, intensity, website familiarity, and neutral comment content as eWOM components. Familiarity with the website refers to the user's willingness to return and use it (Beaudry and Pinsonneault, 2005). Balabanis, Reynolds, and Simintiras (2006) found that consumers are reluctant to spend energy, time, and effort exploring new websites. McCoy, Loiacono, Moody, and Fernández Robin (2013) concluded in their study that the familiarity of the website is effective in evaluating the advertisements and quality of the website. Although many researchers have concluded that improving ratings leads to increased online sales, some studies conclude that high product ratings do not lead to increased sales (Chen and Wu, 2005; Duan et al., 2008b). This study examines the mediating role of the eWOM effect in the relationship between eWOM information process components and purchase intention. Research suggesting that website familiarity may directly impact purchases supports the idea that website familiarity may have a moderating impact on the "eWOM effect," which is a variable explaining purchase intention. Online shoppers may find shopping risky if they do not

recognize the online rating and review site and if the number of people who have already purchased and reviewed is small. The underlying belief here is that consumers tend to trust information about hotel services that other consumers provide (Senecal and Nantel, 2004). One of the study's variables, whether the website is recognized or not, is evaluated in terms of perceived source security. Adequate source security ensures the credibility of beliefs. This study tries to determine to what extent website familiarity affects the strength of the eWOM effect. For these reasons, website familiarity was used as a variable in the study, and the following hypotheses were formed:

- H1: Website familiarity has moderated mediation effect between perceived usefulness and purchase intention.
- H2: Website familiarity has moderated mediation effect between perceived trust and purchase intention.
- H3: Website familiarity has moderated mediation effect between perceived risk and purchase intention.
- H4: Website familiarity has moderated mediation effect between perceived popularity and purchase intention.

Rating valences are numerical statistics that summarize the reviewer's overall rating of the product, usually displayed at the surface level of the review in the form of five dots, five stars, one to ten ratings, thumbs up, thumbs down, or five face emoji suggestions ranging from pout to smiley. In tourism, rating scores are used to evaluate hotel performance. Clemons, Gao, and Hitt (2006) found that the average of the top ratings has a positive and significant relationship with revenue growth. There are also non-numerical variants of the grading style, such as heart, round, thumbs up, and thumbs down, among others. Thus, this study has assessed scoring styles and designed scenarios accordingly. Based on the above arguments, for one of the variables in the study, the rating valence, the following hypotheses were formed:

- H5: Rating valence has moderated mediation effect between perceived usefulness and purchase intention.
- H6: Rating valence has moderated mediation effect between perceived trust and purchase intention.
- H7: Rating valence has moderated mediation effect between perceived risk and purchase intention.
- H8: Rating valence has moderated mediation effect between perceived fame and purchase intention.

Consumer reviews written in online communities by people with sufficient experience about a product/service are among the elements of eWOM. These reviews are based on reliability. They give the consumer an idea of whether or not to buy the product (Aydın, 2015). Customers' product preference increases with the number of online reviews (Viglia et al., 2014). Therefore, the review number is one of the essential criteria for evaluating reviews (Wei and Leng, 2017). Few or numerous reviews change perceptions (Gretzel and Yoo, 2008). Therefore, intensity was included as a variable in this study. The following related hypotheses were formulated:

- H9: The number of reviews has moderated mediation effect between perceived usefulness and purchase intention.
- H10: The number of reviews has moderated mediation effect between perceived trust and purchase intention.
- H11: The number of reviews has moderated mediation effect between perceived risk and purchase intention.
- H12: The number of reviews has moderated mediation effect between perceived popularity and purchase intention.

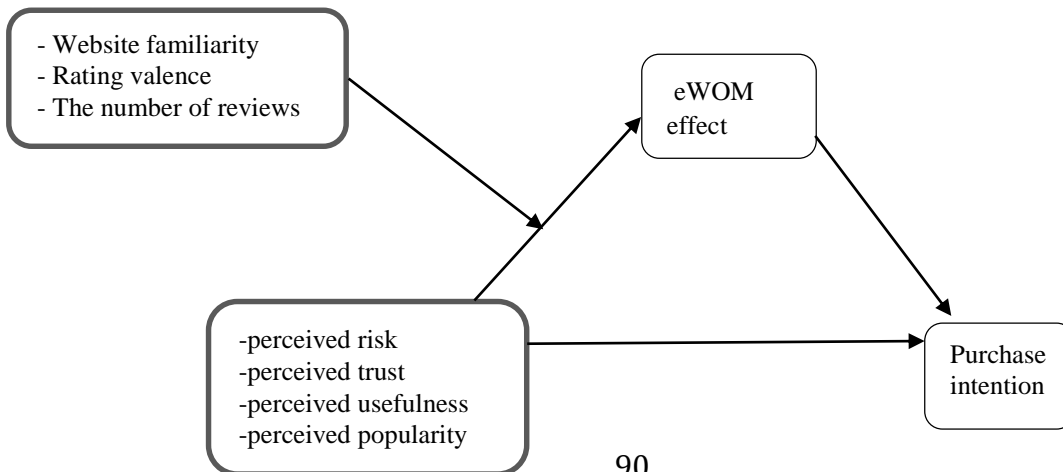


Figure I. Research Model (Source: Authors contribution by considering Model 7, one of the PROCESS macro models developed by Hayes (2017))

Methodology

In order to test the influence of rating and review sites on eWOM and its further influence on purchase, a full factorial design was utilized with three independent variables (rating valence, density, and website familiarity) and four dependent variables (usefulness, risk, trust, and popularity). We asked the participants to answer the survey by adhering to a fictitious rating and commenting on website images prepared within the scope of the research. In addition, many alternatives within tourism rating and review websites, such as Booking.com and Tripadvisor, were evaluated to reduce the uncertainty that might arise in the participants' minds when answering the survey. As a result of the evaluations, language simplification and facilitation drafts have been created.

Sampling, Stimuli, and Pre-Test

Due to the intangible, complex structure of consumption in tourism (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), services can only be experienced post-purchase, and firms often rely on visual representations to compete (Pike and Ryan, 2004). Each participant was randomly assigned several outcomes from the scenarios and asked to respond. The scenarios were evenly distributed across the questionnaires. The questions people answered were the same, but the scenarios they faced were different. Following the questions about the study variables, each respondent was asked to provide demographic information, including age, gender, frequency of Internet purchases, frequency of information gathered from online review sites before making a decision, which hotel review sites they use, and frequency of purchasing or booking a hotel room in the past. The data collection period was between May 2019 and February 2020.

Table I. Scenario Design

Scenario	Rating Valence	The Number of Reviews	Website Familiarity
1	Low	Few	Familiar
2	Low	Few	Not Familiar
3	Low	Many	Familiar
4	Low	Many	Not Familiar
5	High	Few	Not Familiar
6	High	Few	Familiar
7	High	Many	Familiar
8	High	Many	Not Familiar

There were four low-rated scenarios and four highly-rated scenarios, with identical reviews in each scenario. These reviews were neutral and did not contain any remarkable or impressive sentences. Two of the four scenarios with a lower score received a higher number of reviews, and the other two received a lower number of reviews. Similarly, two of the four highly-rated scenarios received a higher number of reviews than the other two, which received a lower number of reviews. Moreover, the site was acknowledged in two of the scenarios with a low rating, while in the other two, it was not. Examples of situations where the site was recognized include Booking.com advertisements. The study involved eight scenarios that were presented to 710 participants, of which 640 questionnaires were deemed suitable for analysis. The study's sample size was calculated at 384, so the 640 participants represent the entire population.

An experimental design is a process of designing and administering the questionnaire for the research. An experiment is useful when one or more variables (independent variables) are manipulated and their effects on other variables (dependent variables) are measured (Ventre and Kolbe, 2020). The stimuli were designed to allow manipulation of the independent variables with highly variable designs. This study focuses on the effect of several reviews, rating valences, and website familiarity on a set of dependent variables (perceived risk, usefulness, trust, the eWOM effect, and popularity) and their effect on the purchase. The experimental design was carried out by preparing eight scenarios. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) emphasized that reviews' effects seem more critical when it comes to lesser-known hotels.

A non-existent hotel was created to avoid the emergence of different factors in the study. Furthermore, moderated reviews were used to ensure the reliability of the designs. While the independent variables were different, an attempt was made to determine the effect of this moderate comment on perception and purchase intention. Booking.com was used for four designs. Online rating and review sites such as Booking.com,

CitySearch, TripAdvisor, Yelp.com, and Restaurant.com have thousands of hotel businesses and millions of users. In addition, the online rating and review sites hotels.com/hotels.ru, tophotels.ru, holidaycheck.de, Airbnb, Expedia, and otzyv.ru were also used in Russia and Germany. A pre-test was conducted to check the appropriateness of the valence and quantity manipulations. First, a group of experts was interviewed, including researcher's familiar with consumer behavior and eWOM literature. The experts had several suggestions for improvements to the online questionnaire. Second, 50 potential travelers who met the online booking experience requirements were asked to complete the questionnaire. They were then interviewed to assess the appropriateness of the manipulations. The results showed that the constant valence and volume levels were practical and realistic.

Measurement Scales

The research scale did not include the components of eWOM (rating valence, number of reviews, and website familiarity). Rating valence, number of reviews, and website familiarity were only included in the visuals. The study adapted the items used by Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, and Yaghoubi Manzari (2012) to measure the impact of eWOM communication, which Abubakar, Ilkan, Meshall Al-Tal, and Eluwole (2017) also utilized. The scale had six items that measured the impact of online reviews on the person's behavior, attitude, and purchase intention. The main source for the eWOM effect items was the study by Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011).

The perceived usefulness scale consisted of three items used by Porter and Donthu (2006) and measured the utility and usefulness of online hotel reviews. The perceived risk scale was adapted from the study by Hussain et al. (2017). The perceived risk was assessed using three items. Two statements on the scale were related to perceived popularity and were developed by Park, Lee, and Han (2007). The perceived trust scale had six items and was adapted from the studies by Seo Kim, Kim, and Park (2017) and Gefen and Straub (1997). One statement on the scale measured the likelihood that a tourist who read a hotel review online would purchase the services. The scale was developed by Li et al. (2001) and used in their study. In addition, there were seven items regarding whether and to what extent the tourist was influenced by eWOM components.

The forms included three sections on tourists' gender, age, and nationality. In addition, there were four questions regarding how often respondents shopped on social platforms, read reviews on online rating and review sites before purchasing a product or service, and which hotel rating and review sites they used. These questions were open-ended.

Perceived eWOM, usefulness, risk, trust, and popularity items were measured using 4-point Likert scales. The scale items were scored as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. In addition, the influence of eWOM was scored as follows: 1 = no effect, 2 = minor effect, 3 = neutral, and 4 = major effect.

The study obtained Ethical Approval from the "Scientific Ethics and Evaluation Committee of Akdeniz University", with the letter numbered 433 and dated 31.10.2023.

Data Analysis and Results

In order to test the hypotheses of the study, a moderated mediation regression model was established, with eWOM components serving as moderators (Figure 1). In line with these hypotheses, Model 7, one of the PROCESS macro models developed by Hayes (2017), was used to determine whether the level of website familiarity had a moderating effect on predicting the purchase by affecting the eWOM effect of information process components (in mediation models). Process macro is a statistical analysis frequently used in studies in the field of tourism (Kement, 2019). The mediating effect was analyzed separately based on whether the website was well-known, whether it was not well-known, whether the rating was high or low, or whether the number of reviews was high or low. While testing these models, a 95% confidence interval and a 5000-resample method were used. According to this method, whether the regulatory mediation is significant or not is determined according to the regulatory mediation index presented as a result of the analysis (Hayes, 2017) (Figure 1).

Reliability and Validity Analysis

The internal consistency of the structures used in the research was tested with the alpha model. In the evaluations made for the alpha coefficient, Craig and Douglas (2005) stated that the alpha coefficient should not be less than 0.60. Hair et al. (2006) considers internal reliability as sufficient for further dimensional analysis when the alpha coefficient is more than 0.70. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated for each of

the variables used in the research (perceived usefulness (0.922), perceived risk (0.898), perceived trust (0.947), perceived popularity (0.868), perceived eWOM effect (0.946)). The alpha coefficient calculated for all items is 0.983. According to this analysis, the reliability of the scale was evaluated as sufficient.

Table II. Confirmatory factor analysis results

Variables	Items	Factor Loadings
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	0.930
	PU2	0.941
	PU3	0.917
Perceived Risk	PR1	0.825
	PR2	0.840
	PR3	0.828
Perceived Trust	PT1	0.904
	PT2	0.886
	PT3	0.912
	PT4	0.861
	PT5	0.890
	PT6	0.886
Perceived Popularity	PP1	0.940
	PP2	0.940
Perceived eWOM Effect	PeWOME1	0.775
	PeWOME2	0.731
	PeWOME3	0.757
	PeWOME4	0.803
	PeWOME5	0.789
	PeWOME6	0.738

Moderated Mediation

Table III. Coefficient for the moderated mediation model

Hypotheses	Direct and indirect Effect of Process Components and Purchase Intention			
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Perceived Usefulness -> eWOM -> Purchase Intention	.4062	.0730	.2628	.5496
Perceived Usefulness-> Purchase Intention	.3914	.0677	5.7776	.0000
Perceived Risk-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	.4671	.0681	.3333	.6009
Perceived Risk-> Purchase Intention	.3538	.0668	5.2967	.0000
Perceived Trust-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	.4285	.0753	.2807	.5763
Perceived Trust-> Purchase Intention	.3965	.0754	5.2564	.0000
Perceived Popularity-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	.6731	.0593	.5568	.7895
Perceived Popularity-> Purchase Intention	.1253	.0535	2.3423	.0195

The direct effect of perceived usefulness on purchase intention was found to be statistically significant (b = .39, p = .00), as well as the effect of perceived usefulness on purchase intention through the eWOM effect (b = .40, CI = .54). Perceived risk also has a significant direct effect on purchase intention (b = .35, p = .000), and this effect is also mediated by the eWOM effect (b = .42, p = .00). Additionally, the direct effect of perceived trust on purchase intention is statistically significant (b = .39, p = .000), as is the effect of perceived trust on purchase intention through the eWOM effect (b = .42, p = .00). Perceived popularity has a statistically significant impact on purchase intention (b = .12, p = .02). The analyses showed a significant direct effect of perceived popularity on purchase intention, mediated by the eWOM effect (b = .67, p = .000). The results indicate that the eWOM effect acts as a mediator between process components and purchase intention.

Table IV. The results of the mediation using respectively bootstrapping

Hypotheses	Bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples				
	eWOM Components	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI

Perceived Trust-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	Website Familiar	.3463	.0617	.2241	.4702
	Website not Familiar	.2974	.0526	.1944	.4011
	Low Rating Valence	.2694	.0486	.1773	.3664
	High Rating Valence	.3739	.0658	.2463	.5038
	Many Reviews	.3148	.0573	.2017	.4287
	Few Reviews	.3676	.0669	.2351	.5007
	Perceived Trust-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	Website Familiar	.4170	.0566	.3070
Website not Familiar		.3430	.0484	.2501	.4411
Low Rating Valence		.3049	.0423	.2234	.3908
High Rating Valence		.4460	.0604	.3287	.5631
Many Reviews		.3868	.0539	.2817	.4921
Few Reviews		.4510	.0628	.3270	.5718
Perceived Trust-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention		Website Familiar	.4178	.0698	.2810
	Website not Familiar	.3578	.0592	.2426	.4751
	Low Rating Valence	.7064	.0286	.6501	.7626
	High Rating Valence	.9863	.0208	.9455	1.0272
	Many Reviews	.3738	.0643	.2512	.5032
	Few Reviews	.4221	.0718	.2845	.5665
	Perceived Trust-> eWOM-> Purchase Intention	Website Familiar	.5494	.0509	.4470
Website not Familiar		.3583	.0372	.2869	.4322
Low Rating Valence		Red			
High Rating Valence		Red			
Many Reviews		.5163	.0478	.4242	.6108
Few Reviews		.5527	.0497	.4567	.6524

When the index of moderated mediation was examined for the significance of the interaction effect of perceived usefulness and the eWOM effect on the website, it was observed that there was no value of 0 in the confidence interval ($b = .34$, 95% CI [.2241, .4702]). When the index of moderated mediation for the significance of the interaction effect between perceived usefulness and the eWOM effect was examined, it was also found that there was no value of 0 in the confidence interval. Hence, the interaction effect was significant ($b = .29$, 95% CI [.1944, .4011]). The significance of the moderating mediation index indicates that website familiarity status is a moderating variable in the indirect effect of perceived usefulness and the eWOM effect on purchase intention. Since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H1 is supported for perceived usefulness.

Website familiarity was assumed to have a moderating effect on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived trust and purchase. The moderating effect of perceived trust and website familiarity status on eWOM and the mediating effect of eWOM effect on purchase intention were significant when the website was not recognized and when it was recognized ($b = .41$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.2810, .5568], $b = .35$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.2426, .4751]). As the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H2 is accepted for perceived trust.

Website familiarity had a moderating effect on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived risk and purchase. When the index of moderated mediation regarding the significance of perceived trust and website familiarity status on the eWOM effect and purchase intention was examined, there was no value of 0 in the confidence interval. Hence, the interaction effect was significant ($b = -.07$, 95% CI [-.1167, -.0368]). In addition, the moderating effect related to the significance of perceived risk, website familiarity status on eWOM, and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were found to be significant when the website was not recognized and when it was recognized ($b = .41$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.3070, .5282] when the website was not recognized and $b = .34$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.2501, .4411] when it was recognized). Therefore, since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H3 is accepted for perceived risk.

Website familiarity has a moderating effect on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived popularity and purchase. As a result of the research conducted according to this assumption, the indirect effect of perceived popularity on purchase intention through the eWOM effect is significant when the website is not recognizable ($b = .54$, 95% CI [.4470, .6486]), as well as when it is recognizable ($b = .35$, 95% CI [.2869, .4322]). Since the situational mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H4 is supported for perceived popularity. As a result, while the eWOM effect mediates perceived popularity and purchase intention, the number of reviews has no moderating effect.

When the rating was low or high, the moderating effect of the rating on eWOM and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were found to be significant ($b = .26$, 95% CI [.1773, .3664] when the rating was low and $b = .37$, 95% CI [.2463, .5038] when the rating was high). The statistically significant moderated mediation index indicates that the rating is a moderating variable in the indirect effect of rating on purchase intention through the effects of perceived usefulness and eWOM. Since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, the H5 hypothesis is supported for perceived usefulness.

The moderating effect of the rating valence on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived risk and the purchase was hypothesized. As a result, the moderating effect of perceived risk on the significance of the rating valence on eWOM and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were found to be significant when the rating valence was low or high ($b = .30$, 95% CI [.2234, .3908] when the rating is low and $b = .44$, 95% CI [.3287, .5631] when the rating is high). The fact that the regulatory mediation index is significant indicates that the rating is a moderating variable in the indirect effect of rating on purchase intention through the effects of perceived risk and eWOM. Since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H7 is accepted for perceived risk.

According to the result of the analysis conducted based on the assumption that there is a moderating effect on the mediating effect of rating on the relationship between perceived popularity and purchase through the eWOM effect, the indirect effect of rating on purchase intention through the eWOM effect of perceived popularity is significant ($b = .21$, 95% CI [.1621, .2769]). Also, the indirect effect of perceived popularity on purchase intention through the eWOM effect is significant when the rating is low ($b = .35$, 95% CI [.2893, .4264]). The indirect effect of perceived popularity on purchase intention through the eWOM effect is also significant when the rating is high ($b = .57$, 95% CI [.4722, .6770]). Since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H8 is accepted for perceived popularity.

In addition, when the index of moderated mediation was examined when the number of reviews regarding the significance of the effect of perceived usefulness and eWOM on purchase intention was high, it was observed that there was no value of 0 in the confidence interval (95% CI [.2351, .5007]). When the index of moderated mediation was analyzed when the number of reviews regarding the significance of the interaction effect between perceived usefulness and eWOM was low, it was also found that there was no value of 0 in the confidence interval (95% CI [.2017, .4287]). In addition, when the number of reviews was low or high, the moderating effect of perceived usefulness, the moderating effect of the significance of the number of reviews on eWOM, and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were found to be significant ($b = .31$, 95% CI [.2017, .4287] when the number of reviews was low and $b = .36$, 95% CI [.2351, .5007] when the number of reviews was high). Since the regulatory mediation index was significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H9 is supported for perceived usefulness.

The moderating effect of the number of reviews on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived trust and purchase was hypothesized. The moderating effect of perceived trust, the moderating effect of the number of reviews on eWOM, and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were significant when the number of reviews was low or high ($b = .37$, 95% CI [.2512, .5032] when the number of reviews was low and $b = .42$, 95% CI [.2845, .5665] when the number of reviews was high). The significant moderating mediation index indicates that the number of reviews is a moderating variable in the indirect effect on purchase intention through perceived trust and the eWOM effect. Since the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H10 is accepted.

Analyses were conducted based on the assumption that there is a regulatory effect on the mediating effect of the number of reviews on the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived risk and purchase. The regulatory effect on the importance of perceived risk, the number of reviews on eWOM, and the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on purchase intention were significant when the number of reviews was low or high ($b = .38$, 95% CI [.2817, .5718] when the number of reviews was low and $b = .45$, 95% CI [.3270, .5718] when

the number of reviews was high). As the regulatory mediation index is significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H11 is accepted.

The moderating effect of the number of reviews on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect on the relationship between perceived popularity and purchase intention was assumed. As a result of the analyses, when the index of mediation moderated regarding the significance of the effect of perceived popularity and the number of reviews was examined, the interaction effect was insignificant, as the confidence interval was 0 (95% CI [-.0223, .1306]). Therefore, the non-significance of the moderating mediation index indicates no moderating variable in the indirect effect of the number of reviews on purchase intention through perceived popularity and the eWOM effect. Therefore, since the regulatory mediation index is not significant according to the bootstrap results, hypothesis H12 is not accepted.

Discussion

The primary objective of this research is to further examine the impact of changing consumer perception on purchase intention when evaluating a particular review with eWOM variables (website familiarity, rating valence, and the number of reviews) when searching for information on online rating and review sites. The empirical study provides evidence for the moderating effect of the eWOM components on the mediating effect of the eWOM effect in the relationship between the process components and the evaluation of purchase intention. The empirical study found that perceived usefulness, risk, trust, and popularity had a more significant effect on purchase intention when the website was recognized than when it was not. In addition, Fan and Miao (2012) found a significant relationship between perceived trust, eWOM acceptance, and purchase intention for female consumers. These results support the results of our study.

The moderating effect of rating is significant for perceived usefulness, risk, and trust but not for popularity. Therefore, a high rating score affects the eWOM effect of the three significant information process components on purchase intention more than when the rating score is low. In the study conducted by AlMana and Mirza (2013), one of the similar studies in the literature, online consumer opinions were examined with the variables of consumers' characteristics and website characteristics. Accordingly, high ratings are the eWOM component that affects the purchase decision the most. In addition, consistency, the number of online opinions, and the recentness of the opinions were essential factors in purchase decisions.

Among the eWOM variables, it was observed that the high and low-intensity conditions also affect the eWOM effect that mediates the components of the information process on purchase intention. However, the effect is more substantial when the intensity is high. Consumers who saw many reviews in the scenario were more influenced than those who saw fewer reviews. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that the number of online reviews positively affects consumers' perceived trust (Fan et al., 2013; Flanagin and Metzger, 2013; Hong and Pittman, 2020; Park et al., 2007; Sher and Lee, 2009). In addition, Goedegebure et al. (2020) show that consumers are more likely to choose healthy products when combined with popularity cues. In contrast, the popularity cue did not influence the choice of regularly consumed alternative products. A similar situation was found in this study, where the number of reviews affected perceived trust, risk, and usefulness but did not have a moderating effect on perceived popularity and the eWOM effect. Therefore, the effect of other eWOM components, such as rating valence and website familiarity status, can be mentioned instead of the number of reviews for perceived popularity. According to the findings of this study, eWOM has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Similarly, Kim, Yoon, and Choi (2019) examined how the impact of eWOM on the film industry affects box office and DVD sales by analyzing eWOM volume and value variables. It seems necessary to focus on other eWOM variables and different perceptions of consumers on rating and review sites. Thus, this study provides a different perspective for future research.

Limitations and Future Directions

Consumers are assumed to pay more attention to visuals than narratives (Chen et al., 2015). Therefore, visual cues related to eWOM were scripted in the empirical study. Tourism managers should use visuals more creatively through social media and encourage consumers to take photos and share them with relatives. This will increase perceived trust and popularity.

According to Martha Barletta, women's decision-making processes differ from men's (Kotler, 2018). In a similar study with different hypotheses, the decision-making process can be evaluated according to gender. Apart from gender, a study presenting the intergenerational difference will present the contribution of demographic characteristics. In the tourism industry, it is important to examine the purchasing intentions of young people, who make up a sizable portion of the global population. In addition, only quantitative research

methods were used in this study. In order to present the findings in a more detailed manner, it is recommended that studies using qualitative research methods be conducted. It would be appropriate for future studies to test the model by adopting other alternative methods, such as structural equation modeling. Examining the impact of hotel managers' responses to consumers' reviews and analyzing their impact on consumers' purchase intentions will contribute to the sector and the literature.

This study provides evidence that perceptions of risk, trust, popularity, and usefulness are sufficient for purchase intention. Therefore, industry managers should pay attention to online hotel reviews and be aware of them by constantly following them. In addition to rating and review sites, the hotel's social media accounts should be opened. The content on these accounts should include up-to-date, reliable information and genuine, unfiltered, photoshopped, high-resolution photographs. All reviews should be considered and answered.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

One of the most important contributions of this study to the literature is to examine how the power of the eWOM effect, which plays a role as a mediator variable in the relationship between consumers' perceptions of trust, popularity, risk and usefulness, and purchase intentions, which affect their purchase intention, varies with regulatory variables. The inclusion of the mediator variable in the model and the inclusion of the regulatory variables on the mediator variable power in the model are an effort to fill an important gap in the literature on eWOM in the tourism sector.

The results of this study provide useful information to tourism managers and academics in terms of understanding online consumer perceptions, attitudes and purchasing decisions, as it aims to investigate the effects of electronic word of mouth on the purchasing behavior of online consumers, especially in the tourism sector. Despite the popularity of studies on the eWOM behavior of tourists, the factors influencing eWOM are still poorly studied (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2020). The finding that it can be a potential factor in influencing consumers' product decision when they browse various rating and review sites for product-related information adds to what is known about consumers' processing of the eWOM. It broadly defined the default factors to predict the purchase intention of online consumers in hotel businesses based on three e-WOM components (rating valance, density, website familiarity). In addition, the study provides evidence for many literature contributing studies investigating the effects of eWOM on purchase intention (eg, Bataineh, 2015; Dellarocas et al., 2007; Chevalier & Maylin, 2006; Clemons et al. , 2006; Hu, Liu & Zhang, 2008; Wen, 2009;). Moreover, this study also identified a direct relationship between perceived eWOM popularity and usefulness on perceived eWOM impact. This definition is supported by the technology acceptance model theory developed by Davis (1989). According to Anderson's (1996) information integration theory, he stated that the most reliable information would have the most important value among different variables, but all variables should be evaluated as a whole. In line with this view, the results of this study revealed that an online consumer's perception of trust is not only dependent on the rating score component, but also on other e-WOM components.

It is assumed that consumers give more importance to visuals than to descriptions (Chen et al., 2015). Tourism business managers should use images more creatively through social media and encourage consumers to take photos and share them with their friends. This will increase perceived trust and popularity. In addition, industry leaders, DMOs, NGOs and universities can come together to develop alternative and international eWOM platforms for the tourism industry, focused on increasing the purchase intention, easy to use, reassuring, and risk factors are minimized.

Our study provides new insights for hospitality managers. Our results show that accommodation operators should consider their perceptions in the eyes of consumers in line with the evaluations included in the reviews of accommodation facilities. This study confirms that the rating, the number of reviews and the reputation of the website are the determining variables that should be considered in the purchasing decision process. Regarding eWOM volume, a large number of reviews are requested only for hotel businesses that have positive reviews that meet their consumers' expectations. The positive impact of eWOM for these hotel businesses can be supported by volume. Therefore, accommodation operators should strive to please their customers and encourage them to comment, rate and like existing reviews. Thus, their perceived trust will increase and this will lead to repeat purchases or potential consumers to buy. However, perceived trust is not the only variable that can be considered for an appropriate purchase intention for services. We have empirically proven that low perceived risk also influences consumers' purchase intention as well as the eWOM effect on its own. The fact that consumers share their recent shopping experiences on the rating and review site affects the purchase intentions of other consumers. Accordingly, accommodation managers should focus on consumer satisfaction and sharing. If a consumer has written a positive review about the hotel they are currently staying at on the

rating and review sites, this can be followed by the business. When this consumer decides to book this hotel again, the business may use options such as the last paid price or a price discount to fix the price for this consumer. Rating consumers with their e-mail addresses or real names and developing an application that can review the comments made on comment sites will make things easier. Apart from big providers such as Tripadvisor booking com, it can be recommended that businesses make applications where they can manage their own data. In addition, it can provide incentives that can provide competition among consumers and provide rewards (discounts or different rewards, etc. when good comments are made). Apart from large evaluation platforms, it would be more beneficial for accommodation businesses to create their own application where they can collect, store and analyze data regularly.

The results of the study are very important to industry managers and can be used to improve online campaigns. In addition, given that consumers who use reviews have easy, fast and free access to online information, industry managers should budget for the production of software that will analyze online reviews. In addition, managers should give them the opportunity to present the demographics of tourists. This detail is not available on many rating and review sites. However, the tourist who intends to buy the touristic product will read the comments of the person he or she finds close to him more carefully.

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