



EXPLORING A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL OF SITUATIONAL CONTEXT AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASE INTENTION VIA ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM) A CASE STUDY OF SHOPEE IN WEST JAVA

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Abstract

E-commerce has become one of the most dynamic industries in the digital era, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) greatly influences consumer behaviour. Shopee, as a popular e-commerce platform in West Java, faces challenges in increasing user purchase intention, particularly with an approach based on review communication and brand image. The objective of this research is to examine how eWOM credibility, quantity, and quality impact purchase intention, with brand image as the mediating variable and situational context as the moderating variable in the study of the Shopee application in West Java. This study uses a quantitative approach with the Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) method. Data were collected from 500 respondents who are users of the Shopee application in West Java. The research results show that eWOM quantity has the greatest influence on purchase intention, followed by brand image, which has been shown to be a significant mediator. On the other hand, eWOM credibility and quality do not have a direct impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, situational context as a moderating variable does not have a significant impact on the relationship between eWOM quantity and brand image. This study helps e-commerce businesses create better data-driven marketing strategies. To build trust and encourage customer purchasing decisions, it is important to increase the number of reviews, enhance brand reputation, and improve the quality and credibility of the reviews.

Keywords: EWOM Credibility, Quantity, Quality, Brand Image, Situational Context, Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently undergoing a rapid digital transformation, with the number of internet users reaching over 82 million people, or about 30% of the total national population (Saragih & Widayanti, 2019). One of the tangible impacts of this transformation is the rapid development of the e-commerce sector, which involves the electronic trade of goods and



services that eliminates the constraints of space and time (Mishra et al., 2019). Digital platforms have now become the primary choice for the public because they offer convenience, a wide variety of product options, and high accessibility for shopping anytime and anywhere (Supiyandi et al., 2022b).

Among the regions in Indonesia, West Java recorded the highest e-commerce transaction value in the third quarter of 2021, amounting to IDR 15.02 trillion, with a growth of 59.03% from the previous year (idxchannel.com, 2024). Sectors such as fashion, smartphones, and cosmetics are the main contributors to digital transactions in this province (investor.id, 2024). With significant contributions to the national digital economy, as well as the accelerated adoption of digital platforms by MSMEs, West Java has become a strategic region for research in the field of e-commerce.

On the other hand, Shopee dominates the e-commerce market in Southeast Asia with an average of 342.8 million visits per month, far surpassing competing platforms like Tokopedia and Lazada (Statista Customer Insights, 2024). Shopee has become highly relevant to the age group of 18–35 years, particularly millennials and Gen Z, who collectively contribute more than 75% of the total e-commerce transactions in Indonesia (databoks.co.id, 2024). This age group has a high tendency to seek information before making a purchase, including through reviews and testimonials from other users online or electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

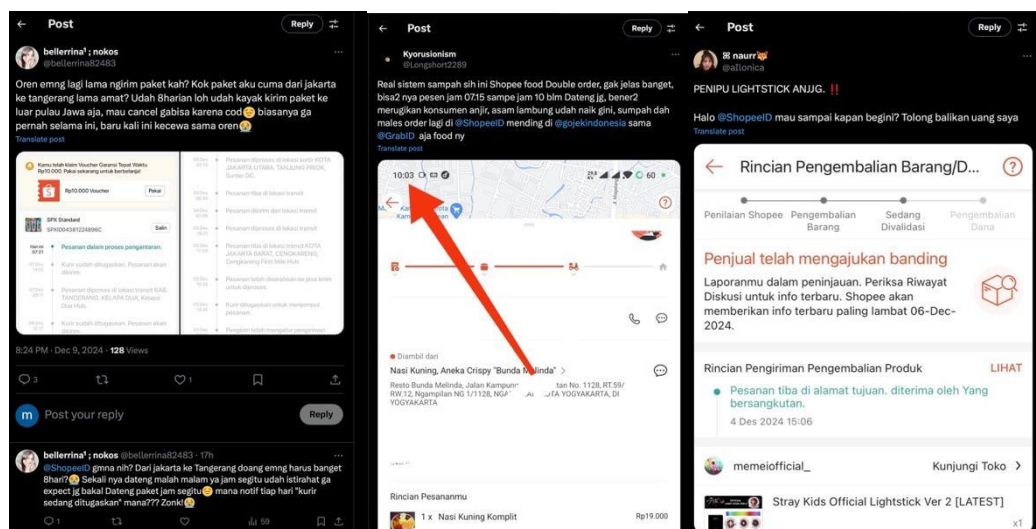


Figure 1. Negative Reviews About the Shopee App

Source: twitter.com

However, not all eWOM is positive. Negative comments, such as complaints about delivery delays, slow refund systems, and poor user experiences, have the potential to damage customer trust and lower a platform's brand image (Ngo et al., 2024). This is in line with the view of Kotler & Keller (2016) that brand perception is greatly influenced by service experience and consumer expectations. Therefore, eWOM can have both positive and negative effects on purchase intentions, depending on the credibility, quantity, and quality of the conveyed information.

In understanding this purchasing behavior, the research refers to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (2011), which states that the intention to perform a behavior is the



most direct predictor of actual behavior, and this intention is formed by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Consumers will consider the available information (including eWOM), evaluate the consequences, and consider social influence and control over the situation before deciding to purchase. Therefore, the influence of eWOM on purchase intention can be mediated by brand image, and contextually influenced by situational context, such as time, urgency, or the consumer's financial condition.

The research conducted by Hoang & Tung (2023a) presents a conceptual framework investigating the influence of eWOM credibility and quantity on purchase intention. Brand image functions as a mediating variable, while the situational context factor acts as a moderator. Meanwhile, the research conducted by Evgeniy et al. (2019) presents a framework investigating the determinants affecting Russian consumers' purchase intention towards Korean automotive brands, with a particular emphasis on eWOM encompassing the dimensions of credibility, quantity, and quality. Additionally, this study considers the mediating effects of brand image and perceived quality. These two studies provide an important foundation but still leave gaps, particularly in the context of local Indonesian consumers in the marketplace sector like Shopee, which have not been extensively explored simultaneously.

From the description provided above, the researcher is interested in conducting further research on the extent of the influence of eWOM credibility, quantity, and quality on purchase intention, mediated by brand image and moderated by situational context on the Shopee application in West Java. Therefore, this study is titled "Exploring a Moderated Mediation Model of Situational Context and Brand Image on Purchase Intention via Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). A Case Study of Shopee in West Java"

This research aims to:

1. Analyzing the direct influence of eWOM on the purchase intention of Shopee users in West Java;
2. Testing the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention;
3. Testing the moderating effect of situational context on the relationship between eWOM and brand image
4. Exploring how the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention through brand image changes at different levels of situational context.

This research is expected to expand the application of TPB in the digital realm, as well as provide practical implications for e-commerce managers in managing brand perception and consumer experience more strategically.

Based on relevant theories and previous findings, the hypothesis proposed in this research is as follows:

H_{1a}: eWOM credibility positively affects purchase intention

H_{1b}: eWOM quantity positively affects purchase intention

H_{1c}: eWOM quality positively affects purchase intention

H_{2a}: eWOM credibility positively affects brand image

H_{2b}: eWOM quantity positively affects brand image

H_{2c}: eWOM quality positively affects brand image

H₃: brand image positively affects purchase intention

H_{4a}: brand image mediates the influence of ewom credibility on purchase intention

H_{4b}: brand image mediates the influence of ewom quantity on purchase intention



H4c: brand image mediates the influence of ewom quality on purchase intention

H5a: situational context moderates the influence of ewom credibility on brand image

H5a: situational context moderates the influence of ewom quantity on brand image

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative methodology and a deductive reasoning process based on the positivist paradigm. The study's descriptive-explanatory goal is to investigate the causal correlations among Shopee users in West Java between eWOM aspects (credibility, quantity, and quality), brand image, situational context, and purchase intention. Additionally, in order to investigate and elucidate the relationship between variables within the suggested theoretical model, this study used a cross-sectional survey as part of an explanatory research methodology. Individual Shopee customers between the ages of 18 and 44 who were chosen through purposive sampling serve as the study's unit of analysis.

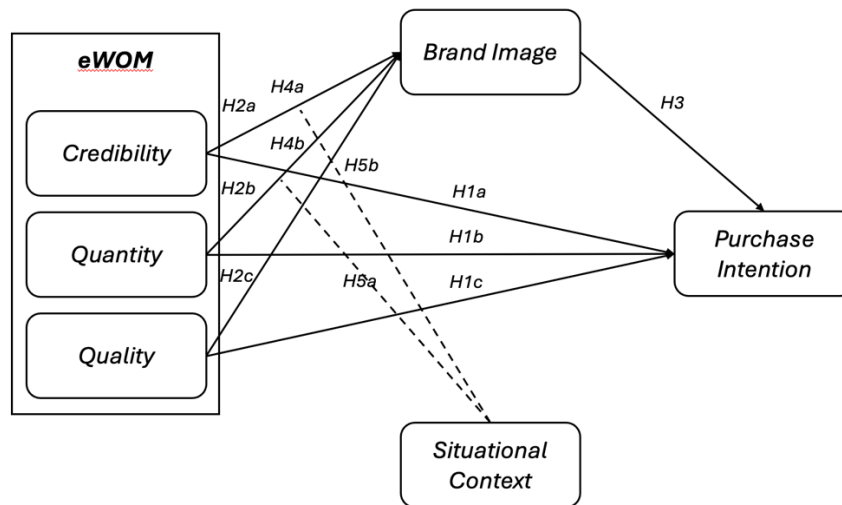
Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 software was used to evaluate the data. Structural model testing (path coefficient, R², and effect size) and measurement model evaluation (validity and reliability) were part of the investigation. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its ability to handle complex models involving mediation and moderation, which is the primary focus of this research (Hair et al., 2019:782–783).

2.2 Population and selection criteria

We obtained the data by distributing structured questionnaires via Google Forms to customers in West Java. Non-probability sampling is a type of purposive sampling; purposive sampling is a technique for identifying samples based on certain criteria (Sugiyono, 2013:85). Respondents have the option to choose to participate or not. If respondents choose to join the questionnaire, they will provide their consent by clicking the 'I agree' button on Google Forms. Authors informed respondents that all data collected is only used for scientific purposes. Data was collected from December 2024 to April 2025. We wrote the survey questionnaire in Indonesian to ensure participants fully understood the content. We sent the Google Forms link to the respondents.

Respondents in this study were individuals who had been involved in transactions or used the Shopee platform, lived in West Java, and were 18 to 44 years old. Data sharing for third parties is not allowed. The questionnaire was composed of 66 items organised into three sections. The first question is a screening question. The second section contains items regarding demographics and individual behavior. 58 items on a 5-point Likert scale comprise the third section, which consists of the main questions used to measure. Based on Hair et al (2019) calculations, the optimal sample size is five respondents for each item studied (5:1). Thus, out of 500 existing questionnaires, 750 are suitable for use in further research.

2.3 Conceptual Model

**Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Source: Developed by the Author (2024)

Figure 2 is a conceptual framework that combines elements from both previous models. This model combines EWOM quantity, quantity & credibility on purchase intention Hoang & Tung (2023a) & Evgeniy et al. (2019), considering the mediation variable of brand image Hoang & Tung (2023a) & Evgeniy et al. (2019), along with the moderating factor Situational Context (Hoang & Tung, 2023a). This research focuses on the influence of eWOM quantity, quantity & credibility on purchase intention, with brand image as the mediation variable and situational context as the moderation variable on the Shopee application in West Java.

2.4 Operational Variable Definitions

The operational definitions, relevant indicators, number of items utilized for measurement, and related references are listed in the following table to give an overview of how each variable in this study was measured. To assure construct validity and reliability, these variables were assessed using a number of items modified from validated instruments in earlier research. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," was used for assessing each item.

Table 1. Operational Variable

Variable	Definitions	Indicators	No. of Items	Reference
eWOM credibility	eWOM credibility as online advice considered a source with a good reputation, which increases the acceptance of online information.	Convincing, Credible, Believable, True, Trustworthy	13	Ngo et al., (2024).



eWOM quantity	eWOM quantity is defined as the frequency or volume of eWOM information or reviews given to consumers.	Usefulness in Understanding Product Performance, Volume of Information	6	Ngo et al., (2024).
eWOM quality	eWOM quality defines the effectiveness of the message in persuading customers to make a purchase.	Understanding, clear, high-quality, relevant to needs	5	Ngo et al., (2024).
Brand image	Brand image, it can be defined as a perception that arises in the minds of consumers when recalling a brand of a particular product.	Brand identity, Brand personally, Brand association, Brand attitude & behavior, Brand benefits & competence	8	Firmansyah, A., (2019:60).
Situational context	Situational refers to everything specific to a place and time of observation but not the result of an object or personal characteristic.	Physical surroundings, social surroundings, temporal perspective, task definition, attendance states	11	Belk, (1975).
Purchase intention	Purchase intention is defined as everything that consumers consider when making decisions related to the purchase of products and services.	Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preference, Conviction, Intention to Purchase	14	Widjaya et al., (2022), Kotler dan Keller (2016:503)

Source: Developed by the Author (2024)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The authors employed structural equation modeling to analyze the survey data and evaluate the hypotheses using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The measuring and structural models were employed to evaluate the direct relationships and the mediating function of brand image. The moderated mediation model was then created to examine.

Of the total respondents, 298 were female respondents (60%) and 202 were male respondents (40%). Among the respondents, 64% were aged 18-27 years, while 36% were aged 28-43 years. The education of respondents was a bachelor's degree for as many as 241 respondents (48%), elementary school/junior high school/high school/equivalent for as many as 38% (190), a master's for as many as 14%, and no doctorate degree. The respondents' income per month was IDR 3,500,001-IDR 4,500,000 for as many as 94 people (18.8%), less than IDR 500,000 and IDR 500,000-IDR 1,500,000 for as many as 82 people (16.4%), and IDR 1,500,000 and IDR 2,500,000 for as many as 88 people (17.6%).

3.2 Evaluation of Measurement Model



The evaluation of the measurement model is conducted to ensure that the indicators used in this study validly and reliably represent the measured construct. Ada tiga aspek utama yang diuji, yaitu validitas konvergen, validitas diskriminan, dan reliabilitas konstruk.

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is evaluated through the loading factor and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Based on the analysis results, all indicators have a loading factor above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5, indicating that the construct has good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4.1 below summarizes the results:

Table 2. Convergent validity

Construct	Question Items (Indicator)	Loading Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Description
eWOM credibility (EC)	13	0.724-0.843	0.957	0.881	0.633	Valid and Reliable
eWOM quantity (EQ)	6	0.740-0.823	0.883	0.957	0.744	Valid and Reliable
eWOM quality (QL)	5	0.827-0.891	0.918	0.883	0.620	Valid and Reliable
Brand image (BI)	8	0.706-0.804	0.881	0.967	0.541	Valid and Reliable
Situational context (SC)	11	0.718-0.818	0.933	0.918	0.582	Valid and Reliable
Purchase intention (PI)	15	0.743-0.859	0.967	0.933	0.677	Valid and Reliable

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is tested using two approaches, namely:

1. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity is met if the square root of the AVE of each construct is greater than the correlation between other constructs. The analysis results show that all constructs meet this criterion, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	Brand Image	EWOM Credibility	EWOM Quantity	Purchase Intention	EWOM Quality	Situational Context
Brand Image	0.736					
EWOM Credibility	0.453	0.796				
EWOM Quantity	0.556	0.432	0.787			
Purchase Intention	0.524	0.355	0.491	0.823		
EWOM Quality	0.410	0.336	0.381	0.317	0.863	
Situational Context	0.422	0.297	0.376	0.229	0.218	0.763

Source: Developed by the Author (2024)

2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

According to Ghazali (2019), discriminant validity is considered fulfilled if the HTMT value is below 0.90. The test results show that all pairs of constructs have HTMT values below that threshold, confirming that there is no overlap between the constructs. This indicates that



there is no excessively high correlation between constructs, which could lead to conceptual overlap or multicollinearity issues. Thus, the measurement structure in this model has met the criteria for discriminant validity based on both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT.

c. Construct Reliability

The reliability of the constructs in this study was tested using two approaches, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Based on the criteria set by Ghazali (2019), Cronbach's Alpha and CR values exceeding 0.70 indicate good internal consistency and reliability among indicators within a construct. The test results in Table 1 show that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and CR values above this threshold, indicating that all indicators have high stability and internal correlation. Thus, the instruments used in this study can be considered reliable for consistently and trustworthily measuring latent variables in subsequent analyses.

3.3 Evaluation of Structural Model

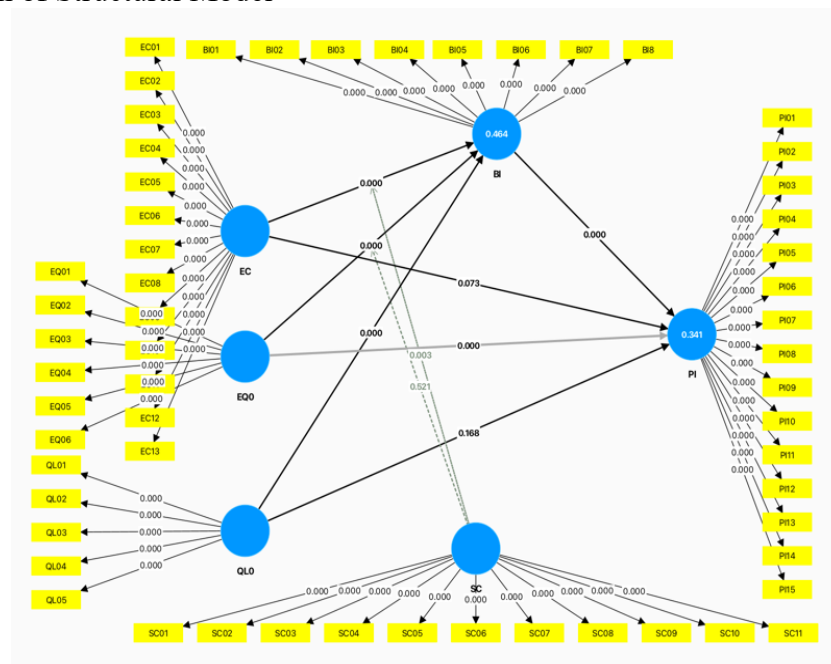


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Structural Model

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

The evaluation of the structural model is conducted to measure the strength of the relationships between constructs and the predictive ability of the research model. The R-Square (R^2) value shows that the Brand Image construct has an R^2 of 0.457 and Purchase Intention has an R^2 of 0.336, both categorized as weak models according to the classification by Hamid & Anwar (2019). However, these results still indicate that some of the construct's variability can be explained by the model. Furthermore, the Q-Square (Q^2) values for brand image (0.244) and purchase intention (0.225) indicate that both constructs have adequate predictive relevance, as both are greater than zero.



The results of the multicollinearity test show that all constructs have a VIF value < 5 , indicating that there is no multicollinearity interfering between constructs in the model. Finally, based on the Goodness of Fit (GoF) calculation of 0.346, this model falls into the moderate category, which means the model structure is quite good at explaining the relationships between latent constructs. Overall, this research model is of good quality and can be trusted to explain how eWOM affects purchase intention through brand image, along with how situational context plays a role for Shopee app users in West Java.

3.4 Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which Brand Image mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention, using a bootstrapping approach for the indirect effect. Based on the calculation of Variance Accounted For (VAF), the type of mediation can be classified as follows: $VAF \geq 80\%$ indicates full mediation, $20\% \leq VAF < 80\%$ indicates partial mediation, and $VAF < 20\%$ indicates no significant mediation.

Table 4. Result of Mediation

Hypothesis	Relationship description	Indirec Effect	T statistics	P values	Total Effect	VAF (%)	Result
H _{4a}	EC → BI → PI	0.057	1.300	0.194	0.189	30%	Significant-partial mediation
H _{4b}	EQ → BI → PI	0.110	6.541	0.000	0.366	33%	Significant-partial mediation
H _{4c}	QL → BI → PI	0.051	1.111	0.267	0.169	30%	Significant-partial mediation

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

Thus, brand image has been proven to significantly mediate the influence of eWOM on purchase intention, although the direct influence of each dimension of eWOM remains significant. This indicates that enhancing brand image is an important mechanism for strengthening purchase intention influenced by the credibility, quantity, and quality of eWOM.

3.5 Moderation Analysis

Moderation testing is conducted to evaluate whether situational context plays a role in strengthening or weakening the relationship between independent variables (eWOM credibility and ewom quantity) and brand image. The analysis is carried out by reviewing the path coefficient values, t-statistics, p-values, and f^2 .

H5a: situational context moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and brand image, with a path coefficient = 0.142, $t = 2.923$, $p = 0.003$, and $f^2 = 0.018$. Although the effect is small, its influence is significant, which means that the situational context can strengthen or weaken the impact of eWOM credibility on brand perception.

H5b: situational context does not significantly affect the moderation of the relationship between eWOM quantity and brand image, with a path coefficient of 0.030, $t = 0.642$, $p = 0.521$, and $f^2 = 0.002$. This means that the quantity of eWOM is not significantly influenced by the situational context in shaping the brand's image.

Thus, the moderating effect is only significant on path H5a, while H5b does not show a significant moderating effect.



3.6 Discussion

1. Direct Effect

The discussion in this section explores the interrelated dynamics between electronic word of mouth (eWOM), brand image, and situational context, and highlights the symbiotic relationships among these variables and their collective impact on consumer purchase intention on the Shopee platform in West Java. The results of this study also connect to earlier research, offering useful insights for people involved in the e-commerce industry, along with contributions to the understanding of digital consumer behavior.

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Results and Significance

Hypothesis	Relationship description	Tstatistics	Pvalues	Result
H _{1a}	EC has a significant effect on PI	1.300	0.194	Not Significant
H _{1b}	EQ has a significant effect on PI	6.541	0.000	Significant
H _{1c}	QL has a significant effect on PI	1.111	0.267	Not Significant
H _{2a}	EC has a significant effect on BI	4.983	0.000	Significant
H _{2b}	EQ has a significant effect on BI	8.838	0.000	Significant
H _{2c}	QL has a significant effect on BI	3.985	0.000	Significant
H ₃	BI has a significant effect on PI	6.301	0.000	Significant

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

H_{1a}: eWOM credibility positively affects purchase intention.

The results of the statistical test show that eWOM credibility does not have a significant impact on purchase intention in the Shopee application in West Java. Thus, the hypothesis H_{1a}, which states that eWOM credibility has a positive impact on purchase intention, is rejected. because no statistical evidence was found to support a positive influence between review credibility and purchase intention. These results indicate that although consumers perceive the credibility of information as something important, their purchasing decisions are not necessarily based on how trustworthy the reviews are but rather might be more influenced by the quantity of reviews or promotional stimuli.

These findings are different from earlier studies (Evgeniy et al., 2019; Hoang & Tung, 2023a), which found that the credibility of online reviews positively affects buying intentions, especially for products that people closely examine or that depend on family recommendations. Local customer characteristics, such as the tendency to use the quantity of reviews or make more impulsive purchase decisions, may be the cause of the insignificance of this relationship in West Java. Therefore, the influence of review credibility on purchase intention is contextual and can vary across platforms and market segments.

H_{1b}: eWOM quantity has a significant effect on purchase intention.

The results of the statistical tests show that eWOM quantity significantly and positively affects purchase intention on the Shopee app in West Java. The positive path coefficient indicates that the more information shared through eWOM on the Shopee app, the greater the impact on consumer purchase intention. This result shows that eWOM quantity has a moderate positive impact on consumer purchase intention. Hypothesis H_{1b}, which states that the amount of information shared on the Shopee platform can increase buyer desire, is accepted.

These findings are in line with the research conducted by Evgeniy et al. (2019), which states that eWOM quantity can influence consumer purchase intentions, especially for high-



involvement products. A large amount of information, particularly in significant quantities, reinforces consumers' perception of product popularity, which in turn increases their confidence in purchase interest (Evgeniy et al., 2019). In this study, although eWOM quantity has a more moderate impact compared to eWOM credibility, the presence of abundant information can still help consumers reduce uncertainty and increase their desire to purchase.

This study also supports the findings by Hoang & Tung (2023), which emphasize that the amount of information shared by users can influence consumer purchasing decisions, especially on e-commerce platforms like Shopee. When consumers see a large number of reviews or recommendations related to a product, they tend to be more trusting and confident in making a purchase. Therefore, companies can leverage eWOM quantity as a strategy to increase purchase intention by encouraging more consumers to share their experiences online, which can ultimately strengthen the purchase decisions of potential consumers.

H1c: eWOM quality has a significant effect on purchase intention.

The results of the statistical tests show that eWOM quality does not affect purchase intention on the Shopee application in West Java. The positive path coefficient indicates a correlation between eWOM quality and purchase intention. However, the impact is very weak and not strong enough to be considered significant. Therefore, the hypothesis H1c that eWOM quality increases purchase intention is rejected. These results indicate that the quality of information contained in the reviews is not yet strong enough to drive purchasing decisions, particularly on the Shopee platform in West Java. This happens because users tend to pay more attention to the quantity of reviews or price/promotional offers rather than the quality of the review content itself.

This is different from previous findings in the study by (Arora & Kumar Sharma, 2018), which showed that the quality of reviews can influence consumer purchase intentions, especially for high-involvement products, where the quality of information becomes the main determining factor in decision-making. However, in the case of the Shopee application in West Java, consumers seem to make decisions more quickly without deeply reading the quality of the review content, and are more responsive to the number of reviews, ratings, or other situational factors. Thus, the influence of review quality cannot stand alone without being supported by other elements that are more dominant in influencing online purchasing behavior.

H2a: eWOM credibility has a significant effect on brand image.

The results of the statistical tests show that eWOM credibility has a positive and significant effect on the brand image of the Shopee application in West Java. This indicates a positive relationship between eWOM credibility and brand image. Therefore, the hypothesis H2a, which states that eWOM credibility impacts brand image, is accepted. The results show that the credibility of information shared through eWOM credibility has a significant influence on consumer perception of the brand on the Shopee application in West Java. Previous research (Nguyen et al., 2025) has demonstrated the impact of eWOM credibility on brand image, asserting that the credibility of reviews (eWOM) enhances the accepted brand image.

These findings indicate that review credibility helps reduce consumer doubt and build brand legitimacy, in line with the research (Nguyen et al., 2025). In the context of Shopee West Java, this indicates that consumers tend to trust credible reviews (for example, from reliable



sources or experienced users) as a basis for assessing brand quality. The implication is that companies need to prioritize the management of credible reviews through strategies such as collaboration with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) or ensuring product information transparency in order to strengthen their brand image on e-commerce platforms.

H_{2b}: eWOM quantity has a significant effect on brand image.

The results of the statistical tests indicate that eWOM quantity has a positive and significant effect on brand image on the Shopee application in West Java. This shows a positive relationship between eWOM quantity and brand image. Therefore, the hypothesis H_{2b}, which states that eWOM quantity impacts brand image, is accepted. The results indicate that the credibility of information shared through eWOM quantity has a significant influence on consumer perception of the brand on the Shopee application in West Java.

In line with previous research showing that eWOM quantity can affect brand image (Nguyen et al., 2025), it states that eWOM quantity has a positive and significant effect on brand image. These findings indicate that a high number of reviews creates a perception of product popularity, but the impact is limited if not supported by the quality of information (Nguyen et al., 2025). These findings are consistent with the research by Hoang & Tung (2023a), which states that the quantity of reviews is effective in certain contexts, such as a health crisis. To maximize its benefits, companies can provide incentives for consumers to leave reviews and create dedicated forums to gather feedback, thereby increasing product visibility on digital platforms.

H_{2c}: eWOM quality has a significant effect on brand image.

The results of the statistical analysis show that eWOM quality has a positive and significant impact on the brand image of the Shopee application in West Java. Hypothesis H_{2c} is accepted, indicating that eWOM quality has a significant positive impact on brand image, as the positive path coefficient shows that the quality of information shared through eWOM has a greater impact on brand image.

These findings are in line with the research conducted by (Nguyen et al., 2025), which states that eWOM quality has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Review quality, such as information clarity, relevance, and content depth, becomes a key factor in building consumer trust (Nguyen et al., 2025). For example, detailed reviews about product benefits or comparisons with other brands enhance positive perceptions, according to the research (Nguyen et al., 2025). As a region with high e-commerce activity, consumers in West Java tend to be selective in choosing products. By prioritizing the quality of reviews, sellers can differentiate themselves from competitors and build a strong brand image amidst the intense competition on the Shopee platform. These findings emphasize that the quality of information is more crucial than just the quantity of reviews, especially in a dynamic market like West Java.

H₃: Brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention.

The results of the statistical tests show that brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention in the Shopee application in West Java. Hypothesis H₃, that brand image has a positive effect on purchase intention, is accepted because this positive and significant path coefficient indicates that brand image has a significant influence on purchase intention. The results show that users' perceptions of the brand on the Shopee app significantly



influence their purchase intentions, affirming the important role the brand plays in influencing users' purchasing decisions on the platform.

The significant positive influence of brand image on purchase interest has also been found in other studies, which similarly show a significant positive relationship between brand image and purchase interest (Al Qaimari et al., 2021; Hoang & Tung, 2023b; Prahasti et al., 2023; Sunandika & Widodo, 2024; Setiawati & Madiawati 2019). Positive perceptions of the product, increased trust, and heightened desire to purchase are all outcomes of a strong brand image (Sunandika & Widodo, 2024). In this case, the Shopee platform can signal to customers that it possesses quality, reliability, and excellence, which attracts them to make purchases. Therefore, efforts to create and maintain a good brand image for the product are expected to stimulate and increase consumer purchase intentions. A solid and trustworthy brand image will increase consumer interest and strengthen their purchasing decisions.

2. Mediating relationships

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results and Significance

Hypothesis	Relationship description	T _{statistic} s	P _{values}	Result
H _{4a}	EC → BI → PI	1.300	0.194	Significant
H _{4b}	EQ → BI → PI	6.541	0.000	Significant
H _{4c}	QL → BI → PI	1.111	0.267	Significant

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

H_{4a}: Brand image mediates the influence of ewom credibility on purchase intention

The earlier path analysis results show that the amount of eWOM positively affects purchase intention through brand image on the Shopee app in West Java. Thus, the hypothesis H_{4a}, which states that eWOM credibility affects purchase intention through brand image as a mediator, is accepted.

The relationship between eWOM credibility and purchase intention on the Shopee application in West Java is not strong, because its mediation strength is weak. The results indicate that, although eWOM credibility can influence brand reputation, its impact on customer purchase intention is not significant. Previous studies have shown that eWOM credibility can affect purchase interest mediated by brand image on other platforms, depending on the type of product or market being studied (Evgeniy et al., 2019; Hoang & Tung, 2023a). Brand image positively facilitates the relationship between eWOM credibility and purchase intention (Evgeniy et al., 2019; Hoang & Tung, 2023a). The findings suggest that brand image plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between eWOM credibility and purchase intention. The more credible the eWOM received by consumers, the more positive the brand image becomes, which in turn increases consumers' purchase intentions. This indicates that credible eWOM strengthens a positive brand image, which influences purchase decisions (Hoang & Tung, 2023a). In this study, the insignificant results were caused by the differences in Shopee consumer behavior in West Java.

H_{4b}: Brand image mediates the influence of eWOM quantity on purchase intention.



Based on the path analysis results in the table presented earlier, the influence of eWOM quantity on purchase intention is positively mediated through brand image (H4b) in the Shopee application in West Java. Thus, the hypothesis H4a, which states that eWOM quantity affects purchase intention through brand image as a mediator, is accepted. In this case, it aligns with the research conducted by (Evgeniy et al., 2019; Hoang & Tung, 2023a) which states that eWOM quantity has a positive effect on purchase intention, mediated by brand image. If there is eWOM in greater quantities (such as reviews and recommendations), the brand image will improve, which in turn increases purchase interest (Evgeniy et al., 2019).

H4c: Brand image mediates the influence of eWOM quality on purchase intention.

Based on the path analysis results in the table presented earlier, the influence of eWOM quality on purchase intention is positively mediated through brand image (H4c) in the Shopee application in West Java. Therefore, the hypothesis H4c, which states that eWOM quality affects purchase intention through brand image as a mediator, is accepted. In this case, it is in line with the research conducted by (Evgeniy et al., 2019) which states that eWOM quality has a positive effect on purchase intention, mediated by brand image. The quality of eWOM (such as more detailed, relevant, and useful reviews or recommendations) enhances the brand image formed in the minds of consumers (Evgeniy et al., 2019). Positive eWOM quality will strengthen a better brand image, which in turn increases consumer purchase intention toward the Shopee platform in West Java.

3. Moderating Relationship

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results and Significance

Hypothesis	Relationship description	T _{statistic} s	P values	F ²	Result
H5a	SC x EC → BI	2.923	0.003	0.018	Significant
H5b	SC x EQ → BI	0.642	0.521	0.002	Significant

Source: Developed by the Author (2025)

H5a: Situational context moderates the influence of eWOM credibility on brand image.

The analysis results in the effect of situational context and eWOM credibility on brand image (H5a) in the Shopee app in West Java is confirmed. Thus, the hypothesis H5a, which states that situational context moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and brand image, is accepted. In this case, these findings are consistent with the research conducted by Hoang & Tung (2023a), which shows that situational context (such as disease avoidance pressure during the pandemic) significantly weakens the influence of eWOM credibility on brand image.

The analysis shows that the situational context (like few promotions or urgent needs) has a moderation coefficient value (β) of 0.142, with T-statistics of 2.923 and a P-value of 0.003, meaning that while this moderation effect is statistically significant, it is not very strong. This means that the situational context only has a limited influence in strengthening or weakening the relationship between review credibility (eWOM credibility) and brand image perception (brand image). As explained by Hoang & Tung (2023a), in high-pressure situations, consumers tend to shift their focus from review credibility to heuristic factors (such as review quantity or time urgency), thereby reducing the role of eWOM credibility in shaping brand image.



Thus, although situational context has been proven to moderate the relationship between eWOM credibility and brand image, its influence is not strong enough to serve as the main basis for strategy. The company needs to prioritize improving service quality or product transparency to maximize the impact of brand image through credible reviews, especially among Shopee consumers in West Java.

H5b: Situational context moderates the influence of eWOM quantity on brand image.

Based on the earlier analysis results, the idea that situational context affects how eWOM quantity influences brand image (H5b) in the Shopee app in West Java is not supported. The analysis results show an original sample value (β) = 0.030, T-Statistics = 0.642, and P-Value = 0.521, indicating that this interaction is not statistically significant. Thus, the H5b hypothesis, which states that situational context moderates the relationship between eWOM quantity and brand image, is rejected.

These results indicate that, although the number of reviews has a significant direct impact on brand perception, situational variables such as time pressure or promotions are not strong enough to strengthen or weaken the relationship with the brand. These findings differ from the research by Hoang & Tung (2023), which found a significant moderating effect of situational context during the COVID-19 pandemic, when consumers heavily relied on the quantity of reviews as a way to reduce health risks. In this study, the situational context focuses more on time-limited deals and promotions, which probably don't create enough pressure or strong emotions to improve how consumers view the brand based on the number of reviews.. Therefore, the effectiveness of moderation from the situational context highly depends on the type of psychological pressure or external situation faced by consumers.

This research emphasizes the important role of eWOM in shaping the purchase intention of Shopee app users in West Java, particularly through brand image as a mediating variable. The findings indicate that eWOM quantity has a significant direct influence on purchase intention, while the dimensions of eWOM credibility and eWOM quality do not show a significant direct influence. Nevertheless, both dimensions still play an important indirect role through the perception of brand image. This reinforces the idea that in the context of e-commerce, the quantity of reviews often influences consumer confidence more than the quality or credibility of the individual review content.

This finding broadens how we can use the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in online settings by introducing both mediation and moderation aspects. Brand image has proven to be an important bridge in explaining the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. Meanwhile, situational context acts as a significant moderator but with relatively small influence. The presence of this contextual variable indicates that purchase intention is not only shaped by internal individual factors but also by external conditions such as the purchasing situation, social environment, or availability of promotions. These results reinforce the importance of a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior dynamics that are more adaptive to changing situations.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this research provide strategic implications for e-commerce platform managers, particularly Shopee. Increasing the number of reviews is a key factor in driving users' purchase intentions. Therefore, Shopee needs to encourage more customers to leave post-purchase reviews through strategies such as providing incentives or using a gamification system. Additionally, strengthening brand image remains a crucial aspect,



especially in building customer trust and loyalty. A strong and communicative brand image can foster positive consumer associations with Shopee's products and services.

Although the credibility of reviews does not directly affect purchase intention, these findings indicate that this aspect remains important in shaping brand image. Therefore, Shopee is advised to continue improving the validity of review content through purchase verification, filtering out fake reviews, and educating users to write honest and informative reviews. Quality review information is also a concern, considering the many reviews that are not optimal in terms of clarity and depth of content. Shopee can facilitate a review format or template to make it more structured and easier to understand. On the other hand, although the influence of situational context on purchase intention is not dominant, this aspect can still be utilized in promotional strategies tailored to specific moments, such as the holiday season, the month of Ramadan, or the end-of-year discount season.

This research certainly has several limitations. The geographical focus is only on Shopee users in West Java, and the majority of respondents are from the younger generation (18–35 years old), which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the SEM-PLS approach used is exploratory and conducted cross-sectionally, thus it has not yet been able to reveal causal relationships in depth. Therefore, future research could consider a longitudinal or experimental approach, expand the study locations to other provinces, and add new variables such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, or risk perception to enhance the complexity of the model being studied. Additionally, exploring alternative moderators such as customer loyalty or psychographic factors could also open new opportunities in expanding the literature in the field of digital marketing.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the influence of the dimensions of eWOM, namely credibility, quantity, and quality on the purchase intention of Shopee app users in West Java, with brand image as the mediating variable and situational context as the moderator. The findings indicate that eWOM quantity has a significant and positive direct effect on purchase intention, affirming that the more information available, the greater the tendency for consumers to make a purchase. Conversely, eWOM credibility and eWOM quality do not show a significant direct effect on purchase intention, indicating that the reliability and quality of reviews alone are not sufficient to drive purchase decisions without support from other dimensions such as quantity or visual aspects.

However, the three dimensions of eWOM have a positive and significant impact on brand image, which plays an important role as a partial mediator in the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. This indicates that brand perception strengthens the influence of eWOM on purchasing decisions. These findings reinforce that although the credibility or quality of reviews does not directly impact purchase intention, both still contribute indirectly by shaping a positive brand image in the minds of consumers.

Furthermore, this research also proves that brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention, reinforcing the central role of brand perception in influencing consumer behavior in the digital era. Mediation by brand image in the relationship between the three dimensions of eWOM and purchase intention is proven to be significant and falls into the category of partial mediation, meaning that eWOM still has a direct contribution, albeit smaller than the indirect contribution through brand image.



From the moderation perspective, situational context only significantly moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and brand image, although its influence is small. This indicates that in certain situations, the perception of credible reviews can be reinforced by situational contexts such as time, promotions, or the user's financial condition. Meanwhile, moderation by situational context was not proven significant in the relationship between eWOM quantity and brand image, indicating that the quantity of reviews does not necessarily enhance brand image under various conditions.

Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of considering the strategic role of brand image in bridging the influence of eWOM on purchase intention. Although some dimensions of eWOM do not have a direct impact, their strategic value remains significant in building a strong brand perception, which ultimately enhances consumer purchase intention.

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