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## MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Exploring the Influence of Seller Reputation on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM): Emphasis on Consumer Trust and Satisfaction on E-Commerce Platforms

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### Abstract:

**Background:** The development of e-commerce has been reported to influence consumer behavior in conducting transactions. In this context, direct interaction between buyers and sellers was very limited. Therefore, the seller's reputation was the primary factor used by consumers to assess the credibility and reliability of the e-commerce platform.

**Purpose:** This research aimed to explore the influence of seller reputation on electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) with trust and satisfaction as mediators.

**Method:** An online survey method was adopted, targeting a sample of 300 consumers who had experience transacting on e-commerce platforms in the Greater Jakarta area, and was determined using purposive sampling. Furthermore, the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling statistical method provided answers to the research hypothesis.

**Findings:** The results showed that all research hypotheses were accepted. Trust and satisfaction are complementary mediators of the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM.

**Conclusions:** Based on the results, seller reputation has a positive impact on e-WOM and strengthens the e-commerce ecosystem.

**Research implication:** Sellers who proactively manage consumer reviews increase satisfaction and minimize the impact of negative e-WOM. For e-commerce platforms, implementing a stricter verification system for sellers provided credibility assurance.

**Keywords:** e-commerce, e-WOM, retail, satisfaction, seller reputation, trust

**JEL Classification:** M31, L81



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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Understanding e-WOM behavior in e-commerce is very important because it can improve seller reputation, consumer trust, and satisfaction, thus helping businesses and sellers to formulate effective e-WOM strategies. This study explores the influence of seller reputation on e-WOM behavior with consumer trust and satisfaction as mediators. The main obstacle in this study is the low predictive value of the model for assessing the predictive power outside the sample as an option in the multivariate method. However, the findings of this study still provide valuable insights into how consumers behave when involved in e-WOM after they make transactions in e-commerce.

This study proves that the seller's reputation positively impacts the satisfaction and trust of consumers who transact in e-commerce. In addition, satisfaction can increase consumer trust in sellers and e-commerce. Consumer satisfaction and trust can shape positive e-WOM behavior. Satisfaction and trust mediate the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM. These findings provide valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and stakeholders in the e-commerce industry in creating a more transparent and customer-satisfaction-oriented digital trading environment.



## 1. Introduction

E-commerce platforms are revolutionizing the retail sector by eliminating geographical boundaries and providing consumers with broader access to various products and services without leaving the homes. This advancement allows consumers to explore and transact with local and international vendors. Features such as recommendations based on consumer preferences (Jansen et al., 2024), customer reviews (Ikhsan et al., 2024), and tools for comparing prices and product specifications (Deng et al., 2022) enhance the ease of shopping. These features improve the efficiency of consumer decision-making. In addition, e-commerce has increased competition among retailers, impacting more competitive price offerings (Zhou et al., 2022) and improved consumer service quality (Maziriri et al., 2023).

Each e-commerce platform provides faster delivery services, flexible return policies, and 24-hour consumer support (Haq et al., 2021). The development of mobile-based trading applications has also increased the growth of the online retail sector, enabling consumers to shop. The growth of e-commerce has changed people's consumption patterns and promoted conventional stores to adapt by integrating online sales strategies. Therefore, e-commerce has become a significant factor in the evolution of the modern retail industry and continues to shape market dynamics in the digital age. In Indonesia, Statista (2024) reported that the number of people in the e-commerce market was expected to continue increasing between 2024 and 2029, reaching a total of 33.5 million. In addition, the growth of e-commerce is among the highest in the world, at 30.5%, almost triple the global average in 2024. This research is important because it provides valuable insights into how sellers can improve their business performance. Regulators can use the result as a reference in formulating relevant policies and strategies in the digital market.

Understanding the factors influencing electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) in e-commerce platforms, such as seller reputation, satisfaction, and trust, is crucial for sellers to improve their reputation and attract more consumers (Alnoor et al., 2024). E-WOM has a strategic role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions (Handoyo, 2024). This form of communication generally manifests through consumer reviews, rating systems, and discussions on social media (Roel et al., 2023). The concept is consistent with Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980) and Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT) (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) as the basis for creating e-WOM in e-commerce. ECT explains that the initial expectations and actual experiences influence consumer satisfaction. Seller reputation shapes consumer expectations, affecting satisfaction and trust.

Positive e-WOM can increase consumer trust and conversion rates, as well as strengthen loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2024). Negative promotions adversely affect the seller's reputation and reduce the potential intentions of consumers (Alnoor et al., 2024). Therefore, a deep understanding allows sellers to design strategies to promote positive feedback, proactively resolve consumer issues, and optimize the role of satisfied consumers as brand advocates. Effective management of e-WOM information can provide valuable insights into consumer preferences and market trends (Verma & Yadav, 2021). In this context, sellers can refine marketing strategies, adjust product or service offerings, and remain competitive in the evolving e-commerce ecosystem.

Previous research showed that a seller's reputation system was essential for building trust in an e-commerce environment. This system helps consumers avoid untrustworthy sellers and increases transactional trust (Fauzan et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2010). Reputation is formed through consumer reviews, rating systems, and a seller's presence in the digital marketplace. This factor is crucial in building trust, which is a fundamental element in online transactions. Consumers tend to view high-reputation e-sellers as more reliable

entities (Rasool & Pathania, 2025), which can increase the tendency for consumers to make transactions. A good reputation can encourage consumer to pay a premium price to obtain products or services from trustworthy sellers.

The impact of an e-retailer's reputation is limited to individual purchasing decisions and affects various aspects of consumer behavior. Consumers explore various product offerings, spend more time on seller's platform, and consider options before transacting with a reputable seller. In addition, a positive reputation increases consumer loyalty, purchase frequency, and e-WOM recommendations, strengthening sellers' market position (Picot-Coupey et al., 2023). The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM promotion is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that warrants further research. Although previous research has identified a relationship between the two variables, there remain gaps in understanding the intermediate role of trust and consumer satisfaction. The limited exploration opens opportunities for a more comprehensive investigation to understand the effects of intermediate factors on the conversion of seller reputation into e-WOM promotional behavior among consumers.

In e-commerce, seller reputation shapes consumers' initial perceptions of quality and credibility. However, the influence of the variable on post-purchase behavior, such as the intention to convey e-WOM, is mediated by psychological factors, including trust and satisfaction. Trust is formed when a positive reputation gives consumers confidence that the seller is reliable, honest, and maintains integrity in online transactions. This increases the likelihood of consumers recommending the seller to others through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Conversely, satisfaction arises as an evaluative result of a purchase experience that matches or exceeds the expectations formed by seller reputation. Satisfied consumers tend to express these positive experiences through e-WOM as a form of appreciation or social contribution. Therefore, trust and satisfaction are important mediators explaining the effects of seller reputation on encouraging consumers to engage in positive online information dissemination. Understanding this mediating role is important for developing effective reputation-based marketing strategies in the digital environment.

Analyzing the mediating effects of trust and consumer satisfaction provides deeper insights into the mechanisms driving positive e-WOM promotion in e-commerce. Consumer trust and satisfaction are fundamental elements in online transactions and have the potential to become the main connection between seller reputation and the tendency of consumer to recommend or speak positively about the experiences (Kaur, 2020; Morey et al., 2023).

By examining the mediating factors more closely, academics and practitioners can gain a more comprehensive understanding of strategies for strengthening seller reputation. Different analyses have contributed to increasing positive consumer behavior and improving overall market performance in competitive e-commerce. Therefore, this research aimed to explore seller reputation towards e-WOM and the role of trust and satisfaction as mediators.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Expectation-Confirmation Theory**

Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) actively explains consumer satisfaction by comparing initial expectations with perceived performance after using a product or service. Oliver (1980) introduced this theory and asserted that "satisfaction was developed when actual performance met or surpassed expectations, while dissatisfaction occurred when performance fell short." The theory relies on four key constructs, namely expectations,

perceived performance, confirmation, and satisfaction. Consumer actively form satisfaction when experiences confirm or exceed prior expectations, driving future attitudes and behaviors.

Ampadu et al. (2023) confirmed the relevance of ECT in e-commerce. This research connects directly to seller reputation, trust, and e-WOM. A strong seller reputation actively shapes initial expectations about product or service quality. Trust can be increased by reputation and e-WOM in actively enhancing perceptions of performance. Meanwhile, e-WOM validates or challenges the confirmations, influencing satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

## **2.2 Seller Reputation**

Seller reputation refers to the perception of seller's reliability and trustworthiness, often based on past transactions and feedback from other buyers (Chen et al., 2017; Fauzan et al., 2019). A good reputation can increase sales, higher prices, and broader market reach. Conversely, a poor reputation can deter potential buyers and reduce sales volume (Cai et al., 2014). Most systems form seller reputation based on buyer feedback, such as ratings, reviews, and comments (Liu et al., 2021; Thakur, 2019). Platforms may use incentives to encourage buyers to leave honest reviews. Some systems connect reputation of buyers to the feedback provided, ensuring that dishonest transaction negatively impacts reputation (Liu et al., 2021; Thakur, 2019). Seller reputation is a multifaceted concept that plays a crucial role in e-commerce. Effective reputation systems can enhance market efficiency by providing reliable information to buyers and promoting trust and fair trade practices. However, these systems must be carefully designed to mitigate manipulation and ensure the accuracy of reputation information (Bar-Isaac & Tadelis, 2008; Chen et al., 2017).

## **2.3 Trust**

Trust is a key element in consumer interactions and decision-making within e-commerce. As online shopping becomes more prevalent, the variable grows in importance due to the lack of direct interaction, concerns over data privacy, and doubts about the dependability of service providers (Soleimani, 2022). In the context of e-commerce, trust signifies consumers' confidence in the honesty and dependability of online vendors, including transaction security and the safeguarding of personal data (Handoyo, 2024). This is important for lowering consumers' perceived risk and promoting engagement in e-commerce activities.

Trust is a fundamental construct in conventional commerce and is increasingly relevant in online commerce. The sustainability and increase of digital platform transactions rely heavily on consumers' trust in the system (Al-kfairy et al., 2024). Previous research established that trust plays a crucial part in shaping online consumer behavior, significantly impacting the success or failure of e-commerce platforms (Gefen et al., 2003). This influences consumer mindsets and preferences in online trades (Harrison McKnight et al., 2002). In e-commerce, consumer trust has been proven to decrease the perceived risk associated with online transactions, increasing the tendency to make purchases. Some main factors contributing to online trust formation include platform reputation, previous user experience, website quality, and third-party verification stamps (Kim et al., 2008).

## **2.4 Satisfaction**

Consumer satisfaction is a fundamental concept in marketing and business management, reflecting the extent to which a product or service fulfills or exceeds expectations. This

variable is a critical metric for assessing the success of a company's offerings and the ability to retain consumers. Furthermore, consumer satisfaction is evaluated based on an experience with a product, service, label, or business. The evaluation is deeply personal, shaped by the expectations and performance of the product or service (Chowdhury, 2020). Liu and Kao (2022) described satisfaction as the pleasure or dissatisfaction an individual experiences when comparing a product's performance to their expectations. Consumers will feel dissatisfied when performance does not meet expectations. Zaghloul et al. (2024) reported that overall consumer satisfaction was either an attitude toward the service provider or an emotional response to the gap between expectations and the actual service received. This variable appears in the form of perceptions regarding the value consumers perceive. Consumers will feel satisfied when expectations are met or exceeded.

## **2.5 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)**

Consumers have numerous methods to engage with businesses and each other through various platforms, including social media, facilitating the creation of e-WOM (Ai et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2022). Furthermore, e-WOM and conventional dialogues about products with others have evolved into e-newsletters, blogs, e-chat discussions, reviews, and social networking websites (Hussain et al., 2020). The connection refers to consumer exchanges with a trademark (Abbas et al., 2020; Itasari & Hastuti, 2023). Ismagilova et al. (2020) defined e-WOM as “the dynamic and continuous process of information exchange between potential, actual, or former consumers about a product, service, brand, and company, available to many individuals and institutions through the Internet”. Businesses use e-WOM to entertain consumers, assemble an online existence, influence intentions, and earn income (Halim et al., 2022).

## **2.6 Seller Reputation, Trust and Satisfaction**

Seller reputation refers to entities in online markets whose trustworthiness and reliability are assessed through a system significant for improving trust and confidence among buyers. Reputation system helps buyers gain seller trust, reducing the risks associated with online transactions (Fauzan et al., 2019). Empirical evidence consistently explains that seller reputation directly affects consumer trust (Beyari & Abareshi, 2019; Meilatinova, 2021). Higher reputation scores lead to increased trust and better sales results. In addition, seller reputation can help buyers assess trust, which is very important in anonymous online markets (Przepiorka, 2013). Trust in intermediaries can shift to individual sellers, stating the interconnected nature of the e-commerce ecosystem.

A reputation system is critical in building consumer trust to avoid untrustworthy sellers and increase transactions (Fauzan et al., 2019; Kusuma et al., 2020). Furthermore, trust formed through the reputation system directly impacts purchase intention and satisfaction (Kusuma et al., 2020). In this context, a good reputation will build consumer satisfaction because the product can meet or exceed expectations.

Meilatinova (2021) proved that reputation significantly affected consumer satisfaction in social commerce. Furthermore Kusuma et al. (2020) explained that reputation affected consumer satisfaction. Khan et al. (2022) and Haghighinasab et al. (2025) showed that a good reputation increased consumer perception and trust, leading to higher satisfaction.

H1: Seller reputation is directly proportional to consumer satisfaction in e-commerce transactions

H2: Seller reputation is directly proportional to consumer trust in e-commerce transactions



## **2.7 Satisfaction and Trust**

The success of information technology is primarily determined by consumer satisfaction (Jang et al., 2013). In e-shopping, consumer satisfaction is an outcome of the shopping experience, which can influence subsequent purchasing behavior (Pham & Ahammad, 2017). Empirical evidence has shown that satisfaction is important in shaping satisfaction and influences repeat purchases (Tinezia et al., 2021).

Maintaining consumer satisfaction is more challenging than gaining trust (Ikhsan et al., 2023). Empirical evidence has shown a positive connection between trust and satisfaction (Idrus et al., 2025). Satisfaction of consumers with the purchasing experience on an e-commerce platform can develop trust, which leads to repeat purchases.

H3: Consumer satisfaction is directly proportional to trust in e-commerce transactions

## **2.8 Satisfaction, Trust and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)**

Trust directly influences the likelihood of consumers to engage in e-WOM. Consumers who trust platform or service are more likely to share experiences and recommendations online (Kaur, 2020; Morey et al., 2023; Rifaningtyas et al., 2022). Trust can be built through consistent service quality and positive consumer experience. This variable encourages consumers to participate in e-WOM, sharing trusted opinions with others (Kaur, 2020; Morey et al., 2023; Rifaningtyas et al., 2022).

Managing and maintaining consumer trust through consistent and reliable service can significantly increase e-WOM activity (Kaur, 2020; Morey et al., 2023; Rifaningtyas et al., 2022). Encouraging satisfied consumers to share experiences can strengthen positive e-WOM, increasing trust and loyalty to influence potential consumers (Kaur, 2020; Morey et al., 2023; Rifaningtyas et al., 2022). Satisfaction and trust are closely interrelated and play an important role in encouraging positive e-WOM. High service quality leads to satisfaction and builds trust. These elements encourage consumers to share positive experiences online.

H4: Consumer satisfaction is directly related to participation in e-WOM

H5: Consumer trust is directly related to participation in e-WOM

## **2.9 Mediating Effect**

The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM, mediated by consumer satisfaction and trust in e-commerce, is limited. Some research stated that consumer satisfaction significantly affected trust in sellers. Satisfied consumer during transactions perceive seller as having a good reputation due to positive e-WOM behavior (Liefia & Zhang, 2011; Luong et al., 2020; Meilatinova, 2021; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). Moreover, satisfaction also acts as a precursor to trust, creating the foundation for a positive relationship between consumers and seller (Meilatinova, 2021). Trust mediates between seller reputation and consumer behavior, including e-WOM (Bulut & Karabulut, 2018; Rao & Rao, 2019). Trust in seller increases the likelihood of consumers engaging in positive e-WOM (Kaur, 2020; Liefia & Zhang, 2011; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012).

Trust and satisfaction are essential to generate positive e-WOM. Sellers with positive reputation can increase consumer trust and satisfaction. This can form positive e-WOM behavior by sharing experiences during transactions with online sellers (Kaur, 2020; Meilatinova, 2021; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). Understanding the role of satisfaction and trust in mediating the relationship can help sellers improve reputation and promote positive consumer reviews online.

- H6: The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM is mediated by consumer satisfaction  
 H7: The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM is mediated by consumer trust

### 3. Conceptual Framework

Seller reputation influences e-WOM both directly and indirectly, affecting consumer satisfaction and trust in e-commerce transactions. Additionally, satisfaction can also foster consumer trust in e-commerce platforms (Figure 1).

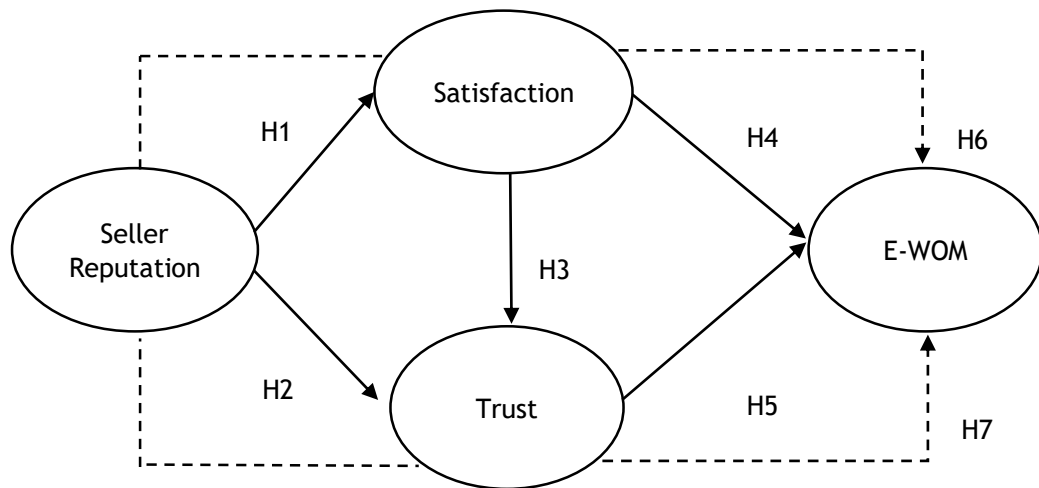


Figure 1. The conceptual model of e-WOM in e-commerce

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 yields a hypothesis as follows:

- H1: Seller reputation is directly related to consumer satisfaction in e-commerce transactions.  
 H2: Seller reputation is directly related to trust in e-commerce transactions.  
 H3: Consumer satisfaction is directly related to trust in e-commerce transactions.  
 H4: Consumer satisfaction is directly related to participation in e-WOM.  
 H5: Consumer trust is directly related to participation in e-WOM.  
 H6: The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM is mediated by consumer satisfaction.  
 H7: The relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM is mediated by consumer trust.

### 4. Methods

#### 4.1 Research Design

This research used a cross-sectional method to collect primary data from consumers residing in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. The location was determined based on the number and value of e-commerce transactions in Java, including the Greater Jakarta area. These cities account for 51.1% and 56.8% of the total transactions and value of national e-commerce transactions (Katadata, 2023).

#### 4.2 Sampling

This population is Indonesian consumers who have experience transacting in e-commerce. Therefore, the specific population size is infinite, and determining the minimum sample size refers to Hair et al. (2019), which is "10 times the number of

indicators." In this context, the number of indicators of the four constructs is 15, with a minimum target sample size of 150. During the data collection process, 300 responses were obtained, and all met the sample benchmarks. Furthermore, the purposive sampling method was used because the sample was selected based on two criteria. First, respondents must come from Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. Second, purchases should have been made through an e-commerce platform.

### 4.3 Measurement

All construct measurements are adopted from Meilatinova (2021) using a semantic differential five-point scale. The indicators are translated into a questionnaire structured in several parts, such as screening questions, respondent profiles, and a list of questions (Table 1).

Table 1. Operational definitions and items of e-WOM determinants in e-commerce

Variables	Operational Definition		Items
Seller Reputation	Consumer perception of a seller's credibility and reliability is based on previous transaction experience and evaluation of other users.	REP.1	E-commerce sellers have a good reputation.
		REP.2	E-commerce sellers have an honest reputation.
		REP.1	I recognize the names of e-commerce sellers.
Trust	Consumers trust that platform and seller will deliver the product as expected.	TRU.1	My chosen e-commerce is trustworthy.
		TRU.2	My chosen e-commerce will keep its promises.
		TRU.3	I trust the information provided by my chosen e-commerce.
		TRU.1	My selected e-commerce aims to establish trust as a company that consistently fulfills its promises and obligations.
Satisfaction	The level of consumer satisfaction after a transaction in e-commerce is based on expectations and the experience gained.	SAT.1	My chosen e-commerce meets my expectations.
		SAT.2	I have had an excellent experience with my chosen e-commerce.
		SAT.3	My chosen e-commerce offers what I need.
		SAT.4	My overall feeling when using e-commerce makes me feel happy.
Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	Indirect communication occurs when consumer share experiences about seller or products through digital platforms.	WMI.1	I will share the positive things about my chosen e-commerce with others.
		WMI.2	I will provide information about my chosen e-commerce to others.
		WMI.3	I will recommend my chosen e-commerce to friends and family.
		WMI.1	I tend to encourage others to consider my chosen e-commerce.



#### 4.4 Data Collection

This research applied a quantitative method using data from an online questionnaire distributed through social media platforms in Greater Jakarta, Indonesia. The survey was conducted over three months (June-September 2024) and focused on consumer who have experience in transactions using e-commerce platforms.

#### 4.5 Data Analysis

This research tests the hypothesis with multivariate statistical method "partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)" analysis. PLS-SEM consists of two measurements, namely "outer and inner model". The outer model tests the validity and reliability of the research questionnaire. The inner model tests the goodness of the model and hypothesis (Hair Jr et al., 2022). In addition, this research tests the mediation hypothesis in the structural model by referring to Zhao et al. (2010).

### 5. Findings

#### 5.1 Respondent Characteristics

Based on gender, the majority of respondents are women, totaling 192 (64%). The most extensive age range was 26-34, containing 207 (69.00%). Regarding occupation, the respondents were dominated by private employees, totaling 146 (48.67%). Meanwhile, the highest level of education was S1, accounting for 167 students (55.67%). A total of 216 (72.00%) respondents had an average monthly income of IDR 4,000,001 - IDR 8,000,000. Based on domicile, the largest number of respondents from Tangerang was 72 (24.00%). The electronics category ranked highest in terms of the type of product most often purchased, with 74 respondents (24.67%). The most frequently used e-commerce platform was Tokopedia, totaling 107 (35.67%).

#### 5.2 Common Method Bias

Common method bias is a distortion of research results when data is collected using a single method, resulting in variable misdirection (Kock et al., 2021). Since this research is survey-based, all data is collected simultaneously, and CMB analysis needs to be carried out to avoid data bias. The data is considered biased when the variance inflation factor (VIF) value is  $< 3.3$  (Kock, 2015). Based on Table 2, the VIF value for each construct is  $< 3.3$ ; hence, the data collected from the survey is free from bias.

Table 2. Assessment of common method bias

Latent Variable Score	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Seller reputation	2.015
Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	2.245
Satisfaction	1.961
Trust	2.547

#### 5.3 Nonlinear Effects

In estimating path models, research typically presumes that the connections between constructs are linear. Even though linear relationships often provide a good approximation of established patterns, the concept does not hold (Ahrholdt et al., 2019). This research used a quadratic method to detect nonlinear effects. A significant interaction effect shows that influence of the exogenous construct becomes stronger or weaker as the value increases. Conversely, insignificant interactions suggest strong linear

effects (Sarstedt et al., 2020). According to Table 3, all relationships within the structural model are insignificant since the linear effect model is robust.

Table 3. Assessment of nonlinear effects

	STD	STDEV	t-statistics	P values
QE (Seller Reputation)→Satisfaction	-0.042	0.053	0.803	0.422
QE (Seller Reputation)→Trust	0.029	0.041	0.704	0.481
QE (Trust)→ Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	-0.081	0.043	1.901	0.057
QE (Satisfaction)→ Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.014	0.042	0.343	0.732
QE (Satisfaction)→Trust	-0.042	0.033	1.276	0.202

Note: QE (quadratic effect), STD (standardized), STDEV (standard deviation)

#### 5.4 Convergent Validity and Reliability

The first stage in PLS-SEM analysis involves evaluating validity and reliability. Convergent validity refers to a loading factor (LF) value > 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.50 (Hair Jr et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the reliability evaluation refers to the values of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) > 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2022). Based on Table 4, all items in each variable have produced a loading factor value greater than 0.70 and an AVE greater than 0.50. The reliability value in each variable has produced a CA and CR value > 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2022). The questionnaire used to measure the variables is valid and reliable.

Table 4. Convergent validity and reliability

Construct	Item	Loading Factor	AVE	CA	CR
Seller reputation	REP.1	0.709	0.622	0.703	0.740
	REP.2	0.848			
	REP.3	0.802			
Satisfaction	SAT.1	0.804	0.643	0.815	0.816
	SAT.2	0.781			
	SAT.3	0.818			
	SAT.4	0.803			
Trust	TRU.1	0.825	0.655	0.824	0.825
	TRU.2	0.794			
	TRU.3	0.825			
	TRU.4	0.793			
Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	WMI.1	0.802	0.646	0.817	0.819
	WMI.2	0.835			
	WMI.3	0.765			
	WMI.4	0.812			

#### 5.5 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct in the model empirically differs from others. This research used the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) method to measure the correlation between constructs based on the multitrait-multimethod (Hair Jr et al., 2022). Based on Table 5, the correlation value between variables is < 0.90 (Ringle et al., 2023). and this shows good discriminant validity.

Table 5. Discriminant validity with heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

	Seller reputation	e-WOM	Satisfaction	Trust
Seller reputation				
Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.775			
Satisfaction	0.692	0.783		
Trust	0.861	0.829	0.770	

## 5.6 Inner Model

The second phase includes assessing the inner model, which is broken down into five steps. The first step is to evaluate the multicollinearity issue in the structural model with a VIF value limit of  $< 5$  (Hair Jr et al., 2022). Based on Table 6, the relationship between variables produces a VIF-inner value of  $< 5$ . Therefore, the structural model is free from multicollinearity problems. Furthermore, this research concludes that all hypotheses are supported because each relationship between variables produces a p-value of  $< 0.05$ . A seller's reputation has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction and trust. Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on trust and e-WOM.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing and the power of explanatory models

Direct effect	STD	VIF	STDEV	T stats	Sign	R <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>
Seller reputation → Satisfaction	0.549	1.000	0.048	11.557	$< 0.001^*$	0.301	0.431
Seller reputation → Trust	0.475	1.431	0.049	9.744	$< 0.001^*$	0.557	0.356
Satisfaction → Trust	0.371	1.431	0.053	7.002	$< 0.001^*$		0.217
Satisfaction → Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.349	1.664	0.070	5.008	$< 0.001^*$	0.538	0.158
Trust → Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.461	1.664	0.060	7.660	$< 0.001^*$		0.276

Note: \* Significant at  $< 0.001$  (df = 95%, alpha = 5%), STD (standardized), STDEV (standard deviation), VIF (variance inflation factor)

Based on Table 6 and Figure 2, seller reputation contributes 30.1% ( $R^2 = 0.301$ ) to consumer satisfaction in e-commerce transactions, with a substantial effect ( $f^2 = 0.431 > 0.35$ ) (Hair Jr et al., 2022). In addition, seller reputation and consumer satisfaction explain 55.7% ( $R^2 = 0.557$ ) of the variance in trust. Seller reputation has a strong influence on consumer trust ( $f^2 = 0.356 > 0.35$ ), while consumer satisfaction shows a moderate influence ( $f^2 = 0.217$  in the range of 0.15-0.34) (Hair Jr et al., 2022). Consumer satisfaction and trust contributed 53.8% ( $R^2 = 0.538$ ) to e-WOM behavior, exerting a moderate influence. These results demonstrate the significant role of seller reputation in shaping satisfaction and trust, which in turn influences e-WOM behavior.

This research analyzes the mediating effects of trust and satisfaction in the structural model. Based on Table 7, the effect of seller reputation on e-WOM is mediated by trust and satisfaction (supports H6 and H7). In the first pathway, the direct ( $\beta = 0.371$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.219$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) show high significance with the same direction of the relationship. In the second path, the direct ( $\beta = 0.349$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and indirect effects ( $\beta = 0.192$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) are also significant and positive. According to Zhao et al. (2010), the mediation patterns are complementary since the mediating and direct effects are significant in the same direction. Therefore, trust and satisfaction function as partial mediators and simultaneously strengthen the direct influence of seller reputation on e-WOM. These results provide empirical support for the importance of trust and satisfaction in enhancing the impact of seller reputation on e-WOM behavior.

Table 7. Hypothesis testing (indirect effect)

Indirect effect	STD		STDEV	T stats	Sign	Mediation
	Direct	Indirect				
Seller reputation → Trust → Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.371	0.219	0.040	5.439	<0.001*	Complementary
Seller reputation → Satisfaction → Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)	0.349	0.192	0.047	4.039	<0.001*	Complementary

Note: \* Significant at < 0.001 (df = 95% and alpha = 5%), STD (standardized), STDEV (Standard deviation)

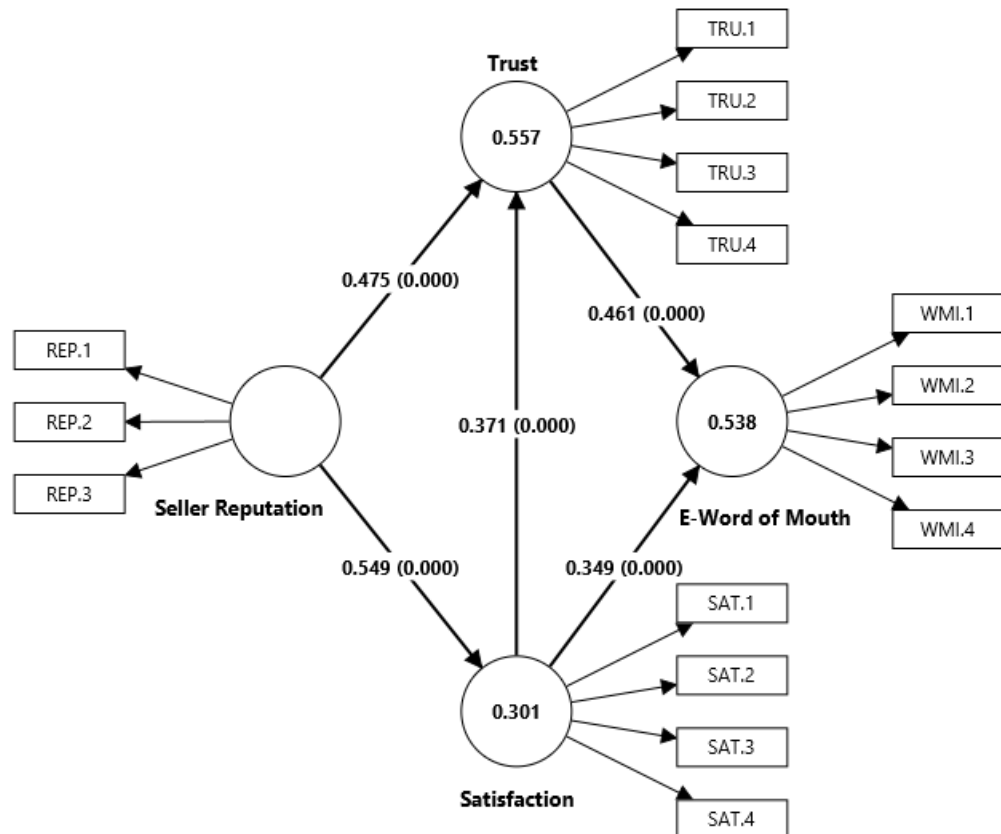


Figure 2. Structural model of e-WOM in e-commerce

## 5.7 PLS-Predict

The final step of PLS-SEM testing is the predictive power of the structural model. This research uses the PLS-predict method with a mean absolute error (MAE) and  $Q^2$  prediction to explain the strength of the prediction model (Shmueli et al., 2019). Based on Table 8, the PLS-SEM value is proportional to the linear model (LM). Only a few are negatively signed since most of the indicators are  $LM > PLS-SEM$ . Therefore, the predictive power of the structural model is weak and the endogenous indicator is  $> 0$ , referring to the  $Q^2$  prediction. The structural model has weak and strong predictive power for out-of-sample and in-sample, respectively.

Table 8. Assessment of PLS-predict

	Q <sup>2</sup> predict	MAE		
		PLS-SEM	LM	PLS-SEM < MAE
WMI.1	0.195	0.528	0.534	-0.006
WMI.2	0.255	0.529	0.529	0.000
WMI.3	0.198	0.587	0.587	0.000
WMI.4	0.238	0.560	0.562	-0.002
SAT.1	0.170	0.591	0.577	0.014
SAT.2	0.157	0.594	0.586	0.008
SAT.3	0.226	0.544	0.540	0.004
SAT.4	0.192	0.567	0.561	0.006
TRU.1	0.337	0.594	0.592	0.002
TRU.2	0.313	0.591	0.586	0.005
TRU.3	0.298	0.602	0.586	0.016
TRU.4	0.238	0.613	0.612	0.001

Note: LM (Linear Model), MAE (Mean Absolute Error)

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 The Effect of Seller Reputation On Consumer Satisfaction and Trust

This research has demonstrated that seller reputation has a positive and significant impact on consumer satisfaction in e-commerce transactions, as evidenced by the acceptance of H1. The result is consistent with Meilatinova (2021) and Kusuma et al. (2020). Ratings and reviews from previous consumers measure a seller with a good reputation. In this context, positive consumer reviews correlate with better sales performance (Fauzan et al., 2019). Seller reputation plays a crucial role in shaping consumer satisfaction, as it reflects the credibility, reliability, and quality of the service. Consumers often rely on consumer reviews, ratings, and seller track records to ensure the right purchasing decision (Ikhsan et al., 2024). A good reputation shows product quality that matches the description and responsive service, increasing trust and reducing perceived risk. Therefore, satisfaction increases and a poor reputation can cause dissatisfaction, encouraging consumer to switch to other sellers.

Seller reputation positively and significantly affects consumer trust in e-commerce transactions since H2 is accepted. These results are consistent with several previous research conducted by (Al-Adwan & Al-Horani, 2019; Meilatinova, 2021). The results explain that seller reputation greatly influences consumer confidence when transacting in e-commerce as an indicator of credibility and reliability. Consumers tend to trust sellers with a good reputation, supported by positive testimonials, a history of satisfactory service, and consistency in product quality and return policies (McLean-Arthur & Sinha, 2024). Conversely, a poor reputation erodes consumer confidence and increases transaction hesitation.

### 6.2 The Effect of Consumer Satisfaction On Consumer Trust

This study proves that consumer satisfaction positively and significantly affects consumer trust in e-commerce transactions. Therefore, H3 is accepted. This finding is consistent with several previous researchers (Cuong & Khoi, 2019; Hidayat & Idrus, 2023; Islam et al., 2021; Nainggolan et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2025). Trust plays an important role in online transactions because consumer cannot physically interact with sellers. In e-commerce, seller proactively reach out to potential consumers. Satisfied consumers develop a sense of reliability and increase trust in future interactions and transactions (Kim & Yum, 2024).



Therefore, building trust in e-commerce can maintain a competitive advantage and ensure long-term success.

### **6.3 The Effect of Consumer Satisfaction on Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)**

Consumer satisfaction positively and significantly affects e-WOM since H4 is accepted. Therefore, consumer who are satisfied with the service, product, and response from seller will be encouraged to give positive reviews. These results are consistent with previous research (García-Salirrosas et al., 2024; Meilatinova, 2021; Velnadar et al., 2024). Consumer who are satisfied with the products tend to share positive experiences on e-commerce platforms. This growing tendency to engage in e-WOM can have a ripple effect, influencing potential consumers and shaping perceptions in the digital marketplace. Satisfied consumers become repeat buyers, act as advocates, and voluntarily promote seller through online interactions. Therefore, seller who prioritize consumer satisfaction can benefit from increased positive e-WOM and overall business growth.

### **6.4 The Effect of Consumer Trust on Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM)**

This research reports that consumer trust positively and significantly affects e-WOM since H5 is accepted. Consumers with a high level of trust in seller share positive experiences through reviews, recommendations, or discussions on social media and other digital platforms (Tseng et al., 2022). Strong trust increases the perception of the credibility of the information shared, encouraging consumers to be more active in providing authentic e-WOM. In contrast, consumers tend to be more hesitant to recommend or may spread negative e-WOM, potentially damaging seller reputation in the digital marketplace when trust is low. Recent research reports the interaction between the constructs. For example, Chen et al. (2021) explained that consumer trust significantly influenced the willingness to engage in e-WOM. Trust in a product allows consumers to share positive experiences online, resulting in e-WOM (Rao & Rao, 2019).

Shi and Chow (2015) proved that trust developed through social commerce platforms could be transferred to e-WOM, increasing the effectiveness. Previous positive experiences can strengthen the transfer of trust. These dynamics show the role of trust as a precursor and a result of e-WOM engagement. Collectively, consumer trust is an important factor in determining the success and reach of e-WOM in the digital marketplace.

### **6.5 Mediating Effect**

This research proves that satisfaction mediates the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM since H6 is accepted. Khoa (2022) explained that a strong seller reputation positively impacts e-WOM. Consumers are more likely to share positive reviews when seller is trusted. Reputation system helps capture and disseminate consumer feedback, influencing future behavior and satisfaction (Chang et al., 2005). In addition, Kaur (2020) also explained that satisfaction mediated the relationship between service quality and e-WOM. High quality of service leads to higher satisfaction and positive e-WOM. This mediation effect implies that a positive seller reputation may not directly lead to an increase in e-WOM. However, satisfaction gained from the purchasing experience encourages consumers to share opinions and experiences online. These results show the importance of maintaining a strong reputation and ensuring consumer satisfaction levels during the purchasing process.

Trust mediates the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM since H7 is accepted. In e-commerce, trust system is often reflected in seller reputation scores to

help buyers make decisions. However, this system is vulnerable to manipulation, such as the "value imbalance problem," where sellers build a good reputation with low-value transactions and then deceive buyers with high-value (Zhang et al., 2015).

Positive e-WOM can increase consumer trust in seller. Trust can turn a positive experience into e-WOM, strengthening seller reputation (Khoa, 2022; Khwaja & Zaman, 2020). In addition, Khoa (2022) explicitly proved that trust was a mediator between seller reputation and e-WOM. A good reputation builds trust and encourages positive e-WOM. This feedback loop can significantly improve seller position in the market. A strong reputation can strengthen the e-WOM effect. Consumers share positive reviews when seller is trusted, improving reputation and attracting more buyers.

## 6.6 Managerial Implication

In a rapidly growing e-commerce ecosystem, seller reputation is crucial in building consumer trust. Consumers judge credibility based on reviews, ratings, and performance track records. A good reputation, supported by product quality, on-time delivery, and responsive communication, increases confidence. Therefore, e-commerce business managers must prioritize a positive reputation through operational excellence and quick responses to complaints. In fierce competition, a strong reputation can provide a competitive edge, encourage repeat purchases, and increase consumer loyalty.

Seller reputation in the Indonesian e-commerce ecosystem affects consumer trust and the level of satisfaction. Consumers will have high expectations for the quality of products and services when seller has a good reputation. Satisfaction increases when these expectations are met or exceeded. For example, sellers who consistently deliver products as described and implement clear return policies can reduce consumer concerns, specifically amid concerns about fraud in online transactions. Therefore, e-commerce managers need to maintain a positive reputation by keeping promises and encouraging positive reviews since satisfied consumers tend to relate the experience to the image of seller in the decision-making process.

Trust built through seller reputation plays an important role in e-WOM in the Indonesian e-commerce sector. Trustworthy sellers obtain positive reviews, social media recommendations, and consumer support through organic promotions. Satisfied consumers voluntarily share experiences with a large number of active users on digital platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, increasing exposure without additional marketing costs. To support the process, e-commerce managers must invest in transparency, such as providing a clear refund policy and building good relationships with consumers to spread positive information about seller.

Consumer satisfaction influenced by seller reputation can be a significant driving factor in e-WOM. Satisfied consumers leave positive reviews or recommend seller to others, specifically in cultures highly valuing community opinion. Smooth shopping experiences, such as fast delivery and responsive consumer service, can encourage consumers to share experiences online, influencing purchasing decisions. Therefore, e-commerce managers need to focus on improving the quality of service at every stage of interaction with consumers to ensure that e-WOM positively impacts brand image and increases seller appeal.

Trust is not only the result of the seller's reputation but also an intermediary concerning e-WOM. Reputable sellers can foster customer trust, ultimately increasing customers' likelihood of sharing their positive experiences. Conversely, even if customers have had a satisfactory personal experience, they may be reluctant to recommend a seller with a

dubious reputation for fear of service inconsistencies. Therefore, e-commerce managers need to ensure that they build trust through transparent business practices, such as presenting accurate product descriptions and providing secure payment systems, so that the reputation that has been built can contribute to the effective expansion of e-WOM.

Trust is the result of seller reputation and intermediary concerning e-WOM. Reputable sellers can enhance consumer trust, increasing the likelihood of sharing positive experiences. Consumers may have a satisfactory personal experience and be reluctant to recommend seller with a dubious reputation for fear of service inconsistencies. Therefore, e-commerce managers need to ensure that trust is built through transparent business practices, such as presenting accurate product descriptions and providing secure payment systems. In this context, reputation can contribute to the effective expansion of e-WOM.

Consumer satisfaction mediates the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM in the Indonesian e-commerce market. A positive seller reputation impacts consumer satisfaction and motivates positive experiences. However, seller risk losing positive e-WOM momentum with a good reputation when the service provided does not meet the required standards. E-commerce managers should actively monitor consumer satisfaction through indicators such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) or post-purchase surveys.

E-commerce managers must implement a comprehensive strategy that includes improving quality control, logistics efficiency, and engagement through various communication channels to optimize the relationship between reputation, trust, consumer satisfaction, and e-WOM. Encouraging consumers to provide reviews and offering incentives for feedback can strengthen e-WOM, while transparent handling of criticism can maintain trust. In addition, collaboration with influencers and trust badge features on e-commerce platforms can enhance seller credibility. Seller reputation can be converted into a sustainable competitive advantage by integrating the strategy holistically, strengthening trust and satisfaction, and driving positive e-WOM growth.

## **6.7 Theoretical Contribution**

This research contributes to e-commerce literature by strengthening the theoretical relationship between seller reputation and consumer trust. Based on signaling theory (Ikhsan et al., 2024; Spence, 1973), seller reputation is an indicator of credibility and reliability, which helps reduce the perception of risk in online transactions. In an uncertain e-commerce environment, reputation is a heuristic used by consumers to assess seller trust. This contribution expands on previous research by emphasizing that a strong reputation built through consistent performance and positive feedback directly increases consumer trust. Therefore, insights are provided concerning the effects of intangible cues on consumer behavior in digital markets.

Based on the description above, this research deepens the understanding of influence of seller reputation on consumer satisfaction through the integration of ECT (Oliver, 1980). A good reputation creates high expectations of product quality, speed of delivery, and service standards. This research adds a new perspective since reputation reduces transaction risk and serves as the primary benchmark used to evaluate the shopping experience. By establishing the relationship, this research enriches the literature on consumer satisfaction by stating the role of reputation as a decisive factor in shaping positive post-purchase evaluations in e-commerce sector.

Theoretical contributions are made by examining the role of trust as a key factor in driving e-WOM based on social exchange theory. Consumers who trust seller due to a

positive reputation share experiences through reviews or recommendations. This expands previous research on e-WOM by emphasizing that trust is a motivating factor promoting voluntary advocacy. The results show the importance of trust in transforming individual experiences into collective influences, an increasingly relevant mechanism in the digital age. Furthermore, this research connects consumer satisfaction with e-WOM through influence-as-information framework. Consumers who feel satisfied because the experience meets or exceeds the expectations from seller reputation tend to experience positive emotions. This contribution deepens the understanding of e-WOM by stating the function of consumer satisfaction as an emotional trigger for online advocacy. In e-commerce ecosystem, consumer opinions have a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions. This is because satisfaction is a key factor in spreading organic promotions of virtual communities.

The main theoretical advancement is the exploration of trust as a mediator between seller reputation and e-WOM. Based on the theory of trust transfer, this research shows that a good reputation promotes trust, facilitating e-WOM behavior. Trust formed becomes a bridge that connects reputation with e-WOM. Therefore, a deeper understanding is provided regarding the effects of reputation cues on online communication through consumer trust. This research also emphasizes the role of satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM concerning the cognitive-affective model in consumer behavior. A good reputation creates high expectations and increases consumer satisfaction. The mediation effect shows that influence of reputation on e-WOM is highly dependent on the level of consumer satisfaction. This result enriches the research of e-commerce by showing the translation of cognitive evaluations of reputation into behavioral actions through affective responses.

This research presents a comprehensive theoretical framework by integrating seller reputation, trust, consumer satisfaction, and e-WOM, as well as providing a holistic perspective on the relationship between the factors in e-commerce. Reputation, trust, satisfaction, and e-WOM are understood by combining signaling, expectation confirmation, and social exchange theories, as well as cognitive-affective models. This contribution bridges the gap in previous research and opens opportunities to explore similar dynamics in various e-commerce contexts, strengthening the theoretical foundation regarding consumer behavior.

## **6.8 Limitations**

Concerning the limitations, this research only discussed seller reputation as a precursor to trust, satisfaction, and e-WOM. Furthermore, only consumer from the Greater Jakarta area were considered and the products purchased by consumer were not specifically examined. The research model had weak predictive power from the PLS predictive measure.

## **7. Conclusions**

Based on the research and discussion results, seller reputation positively and significantly affected consumer trust and satisfaction, which influenced the creation of e-WOM. Consumer trust and satisfaction mediated the relationship between seller reputation and e-WOM. Therefore, seller prioritized building and maintaining a positive reputation, which could impact consumer trust and satisfaction. This could be achieved with strategies such as ensuring product quality and addressing consumer issues immediately. In addition, e-commerce platforms implemented robust systems to show seller reputation, such as consumer reviews and ratings. This transparency enhanced trust in

e-commerce and sellers. In addition, sellers focused on increasing consumer trust and satisfaction during purchasing, which was critical to generating positive e-WOM. The mediating role of trust and satisfaction suggested that seller adopted a holistic method to consumer experience. A positive feedback loop was created by improving reputation, building trust, and ensuring satisfaction, enabling consumers to share experiences and strengthening market position.

## 8. Recommendation

Based on the limitations, this research provides recommendations for further analyses. First, the constructs of information quality are added as antecedents of satisfaction and trust. Second, future research can compare consumer behavior in urban and rural areas as well as examine products, such as cosmetics, electronics, and fashion.

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