



# The Impact of eWOM on Trust Inclination and Information Adoption in the Sociolla Platform

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on the Sociolla platform, affecting Information Adoption and the role of trust inclination. A quantitative approach was employed with data collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 270 respondents. The non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was used for sample selection, which was then processed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in the AMOS program. The findings reveal that perceived information quality, information usefulness, and argument quality positively impact trust inclination. Meanwhile, perceived risk has a negative impact on trust inclination. Additionally, the study shows that trust inclination has a positive influence on information adoption. Theoretically, this research contributes to the discussion of trust inclination and eWOM information adoption. From a managerial perspective, the study suggests marketing managers manage marketing strategies through eWOM concerning information quality, information usefulness, and argument quality. Marketers also need to consider the level of perceived consumer risk and

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reduce it to ensure that consumers express trust inclination toward information they subsequently adopt. In this context, marketers need to ensure their eWOM strategies remain natural, high-quality, and beneficial for marketing success.

*Keywords: Information adoption; eWOM; information quality; information usefulness; argument quality; perceived risk; trust; social media.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era, the Internet has become an integral part of society's lifestyle. According to a report from [1], the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 213 million people as of January 2023, equivalent to 77% of the country's population at the beginning of this year. This figure has increased by approximately 5.44% from the previous year, with 202 million users in Indonesia at the beginning of 2022. This surge is closely tied to technological advancements and correlates with changes in business marketing, such as the utilization of digital marketing through social media.

Social media facilitates users in sharing information, including opinions, experiences, and thoughts on a product or service, through reviews and motivational content influencing decision-making [2]. Reviews or motivations offered on social media are leveraged for online marketing, now commonly known as Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). eWOM encompasses both positive and negative reviews provided by customers who have made purchases or prospective customers regarding products or services on social networking sites [3]. These reviews serve as considerations and can influence consumer trust tendencies toward the offered products or services. In this context, consumers only adopt reviews and product information that are most relevant to their desires, signifying the influence of information usefulness on information adoption. Supported by a study conducted by [4], information has proven to be useful in consumer information adoption as a fundamental consideration in decision-making.

EWOM can be found on various digital platforms, including blogs, online shopping sites, discussion forums, and others [5,6]. One of the platforms frequently used as a reference for shopping due to its eWOM factor is Sociolla. Sociolla (SOCO) is a beauty social media platform owned by PT Social Bella Indonesia, which was established in 2015. The platform provides members with the freedom to share interesting experiences and

information about the latest beauty products, offering access to reviews and articles within a single platform. Sociolla also has physical stores widely spread across major cities. The reviews available on this platform represent eWOM in social media, and the presented reviews on the website prioritize the quality aspect of the provided information. Thus, this helps consumers build trust and aids in the adoption of information about the products being reviewed.

The success of eWOM in enhancing consumer trust inclination can be evaluated from several aspects, including information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, and argument quality [7]. Previous research has validated the relationship of these aspects with the success of eWOM in influencing consumer trust inclination [7,8,9]. The study of [7] examined several variables, namely trust inclination and information adoption, sequentially mediating the relationship between information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, argument quality, and purchase intention. This study modifies the variables, indicating that trust inclination and information adoption sequentially mediate the relationship between information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, argument quality, and information adoption. [8] found that information adoption and trust satisfaction with repeat purchase intentions significantly influenced social media users as consumer actors. [10] found that information adoption precedes and positively influences purchase intentions on social media. [11] found that information adoption toward purchase intentions has a positive and significant influence on Shopee marketplace users in Surabaya. [12] found that Information Adoption, purchase intention, information quality, information credibility, and information needs have a positive and significant impact on Ewom Innisfree in Jakarta.

Previous research has validated the positive relationship between the quality of information adopted by consumers on eWOM and the tendency to form trust in online buyers in Pakistan [7,13]. Furthermore, the same study

topic concerning social media users in Pakistan also indicates that the quality of information adopted by social media users has a positive and significant impact on their trust inclination [7]. Research by [14] proposed four essential attributes of information regarding eWOM adoption: quality, clarity, reliability, and usefulness. Individuals choose valuable information and utilize it in decision-making. People exhibit varied responses regarding the helpfulness of these opinions and their potential to aid in making the optimal choice. Hence, when users perceive that a comment within online communities is utilized, they are more likely to embrace and trust the information [15].

Several studies on the aspects of eWOM information adoption and its impact on the tendency of consumer trust toward online platforms have been conducted [7,12,13,15]. However, this research is scarce in examining specific platforms, such as beauty-specific platforms like Sociolla. Therefore, to fill this gap, this topic is interesting and should be studied more deeply. In this case, the Sociolla platform is a specific beauty platform that has a significant impact on its users in Indonesia, making it a suitable subject for this research. This study aims to analyze the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) on the Sociolla platform regarding information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, and argument quality on Information Adoption with the mediating role of trust inclination. The results of this study are expected to help explain the framework of the theory regarding elements of digital marketing, eWOM, consumer to consumer, especially on Sociolla, which includes information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, and argument quality that influence consumer trust inclination to strengthen consumer adoption of the product. Additionally, this research can assist business practitioners in increasing consumer engagement through consumer-to-consumer digital marketing elements, especially Sociolla, which includes information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, and argument quality used to build consumer trust inclination to strengthen consumer adoption of the product.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Information Adoption Model (IAM)

The information adoption model serves as a tool employed to ascertain how intentions towards information or messages are formed. This model

also investigates the extent to which an individual accepts messages or information following an assessment of their accuracy [16]. Rabjohn et al. [4] elaborate on how individuals are willing to accept and adopt information in comments on social networking sites. In the same content, the influence of information can yield different understandings among individuals. Based on the information adoption model, this study will explore the impact of communication on consumer decisions on social media platforms [17].

### 2.2 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) refers to both positive and negative statements provided by customers who have made a purchase or prospective customers regarding products or services on social networking sites [3]. According to [18], consumers use eWOM to mitigate risks associated with online product purchases. Meanwhile, [19] states that electronic word of mouth comprises positive or negative statements made by customers about products or companies through the internet.

EWOM is a crucial aspect of marketing programs in developing consumer expressions toward brands. The online branding effect indicates that current purchases are influenced by the strong role of eWOM in building and activating brand images [20]. The eWOM process begins when consumers recognize their needs or desires and understand the challenges they face. Online media, as a social media platform, can assist consumers in sharing their experiences related to products or services acquired during the purchasing process. eWOM is becoming increasingly important for the effectiveness of consumer decision-making and evaluating consumer purchasing behavior. Positive eWOM can significantly influence consumer decision-making. Purchasing decisions have an impact on consumers, leading them to spread positive news about their experiences with a product voluntarily. As a result, eWOM will experience an increase in the positive spread of information about a product on social media. Information received by consumers about a product can influence future transactions [21]. eWOM serves as a means for customers to provide opinions and reviews, indicating satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product.

At this stage, eWOM enables consumers to compare alternatives regarding products or

services after an information search. In the final stage of the purchasing decision, which includes product or service selection, brand choice, and retailer selection, eWOM reduces risks that have a significant impact on consumer decisions [22]. The following is an explanation of Electronic Word of Mouth indicators [23]:

1. Intensity is someone expressing their opinion about a product they have consumed and then disseminating the opinion through their social media. It allows other consumers to view the shared information.
2. Valence of Opinion refers to positive and negative reviews given by consumers about a product, typically in the form of reviews or comments on social networking sites.
3. Content is information typically used by companies through social media to convey information about a product or service owned by the company.

### **2.3 Information Quality**

Completeness of information is one of the factors that can support an individual in acting based on what they hear or see. Quality information provides something relevant, comprehensive, clear, and accurate and is delivered or displayed in a timely manner [24]. Information quality is defined as customers' perception of the quality of information about a product or service tailored by a website [25]. Information quality refers to when consumers appreciate trustworthy information; they are more willing to engage in various forms of communication.

EWOM continues to be one of the most powerful marketing tools in building consumer trust [26]. Customer trust encompasses all information held by customers and all conclusions made by customers about the goods, features, and benefits. Information quality also determines the tendency of trust leading to purchasing decisions for a product or item. Customer trust is the customer's knowledge of a product or service believed to have quality and benefits [27]. Trust is a foundation in a business process. A transaction between two or more parties will occur when both parties trust each other [28].

Satisfaction, in this context, can also be considered as customers' evaluation of products or services against their needs and expectations [29]. In the online environment, users can

express their feelings freely without personal experience, so general guidelines on information credibility do not apply. Information quality becomes a precedent for the bottom line as it is referred to as persuasive information [5]. Information quality is highly important in directing customer trust in information, even if the information tends to portray the company negatively on the Internet.

### **2.4 Information Usefulness**

The perceived usefulness of information refers to the perception of the messages in eWOM being beneficial [5]. Perceived usefulness has a strong and significant impact on consumer decisions to adopt information in online communities [4]. Perceived usefulness is a highly relevant factor in making decisions to adopt information on social media [30]. The variable of perceived usefulness is derived from the construct of perceived usefulness in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), defined as the extent to which an individual believes that using a specific system will enhance performance [31]. This concept is then applied to the Information Acceptance Model (IAM). It is defined as the level of individual perception that the information will enhance their performance and can be assumed as a predictor of information adoption.

The impact of eWOM is challenging to control (similar to traditional word of mouth), although it provides opportunities for marketers to sell products effectively and engage consumers appropriately [32,33,34]. eWOM continues to be one of the most powerful marketing tools, even though it tends to portray the company negatively on the Internet [26]. The perceived usefulness of information from eWOM to an individual is also influenced by the quality of content and source credibility [35]. The perceived usefulness of information is considered a primary predictor of information adoption because people are inclined to engage with information when they believe it can be useful [6]. The transmission of useful information is also a concern for users. Decision-making to trust or not is based on the essence of the message. If the message lacks credible and authentic information, it is considered valueless. Information processing through the central route requires motivation, ability, and cognitive resources of the receiver, such as time and energy. Through the central route, the message recipient will carefully consider the arguments in the presented information and elaborate on it based on what they already know [36].

## 2.5 Perceived Risk

Risk generally accompanies every decision-making process, including purchasing decisions. The presence or absence of this risk is often not entirely objective; rather, it is subject to individual perception. Especially when making online purchases, consumers typically perceive higher risks compared to buying directly from a store, as observed in students who exhibit a significant level of risk perception when shopping for clothing online [37]. Understanding the importance of risk perception is crucial when consumers engage in online purchases. An individual's assessment of a subject with negative impacts can evoke concerns, and the accepted risk can be interpreted as the perceived risk. Uncertainty and the consequences to be faced are two essential dimensions of risk perception [38].

Perceived risk is acknowledged as a subjective construct in the literature, with its intensity varying across different contexts [7,13]. The impact of perceived risk on trust inclination is a dynamic factor in the realm of eWOM acceptance [7,13,15,39]. A study indicates that risk-taking is linked to self-confidence, meaning that the stronger one's belief in one's abilities, the greater one's confidence in influencing outcomes and one's willingness to try what others perceive as risky [40]. Based on research by [41], perceived risk positively influences the tendency to trust, suggesting that higher perceived risks on online marketplace sites correlate with an increased likelihood of users trusting the platform for online shopping. From these perspectives, risk-taking related to self-confidence or an individual's belief system can affect their trust inclination.

Argument quality refers to information that is worthy of use and has the potential to build trust [42,43] which states that, for information users, knowing the source of credible information is crucial. The credibility of eWOM is also grounded in objective information that lacks commercial intent, proving more successful in influencing consumer trust.

## 2.6 Argument Quality

Argument quality is defined as a factor that accepts information based on validity judgments during systematic processing, depending on the perception of whether it will be lower or higher [44]. According to the research by [10], accuracy,

relevance, understanding, completeness, currency, dynamics, personalization, and variation are measures for the quality of information in e-commerce studies. The style of online reviews, the expertise of the reviewer, and the timeliness of online reviews are determining factors for the successful adoption of conveyed information.

Argument quality is similar to information quality, which is found to determine initial trust significantly [45]. Information on online sites needs to be considered and evaluated through consumer reviews to find highly supportive arguments; thus, the quality of arguments requires significant consumer effort. According to [46], in arguments, aspects are needed to measure the persuasive strength embedded in the informational message. Thus, argument quality can influence efforts to increase consumer trust. According to [47], information needs can be interpreted as a situation where individuals require information in making purchase decisions. In the information adoption model, individuals searching for information on social media imply that they believe the information is beneficial [6].

## 2.7 Trust Inclination and Information Adoption

Tendencies or desires are qualities or behaviors that represent one's will, desire, liking, intention towards something, or other aspects. According to [48], the tendency is a discussion in the field of psychology regarding an individual's behaviour based on will, actions, and effort symptoms. The tendency also refers to desires or preparedness directed towards concrete objects, repeatedly emerging in an individual [49]. Various tendencies and forces underlie a set of beliefs and new practices within business organizations. Trust is a crucial factor that can overcome challenges and difficulties among business partners, serving as a significant asset in developing long-term relationships between organizations [20]. Trust reflects the extent to which an individual is willing to relinquish control or accept vulnerability related to others or groups.

Trust in the business world and everyday relations with the surrounding environment differ slightly. In the business realm, trust involves weighing risks and benefits. Therefore, besides being fundamentally based on trust, business relationships are often grounded in economic

calculations. There is a delicate balance and an art to doing business. Trust is built gradually, gaining more significance after going through a series of experiences tested over time. To earn full trust, a process must be undergone [50].

In a broader sense, trust is the belief that others will respond predictably and as expected. In the transaction context, trust between two parties is largely considered a commitment to the integrity, competence, and virtue of transaction partners [51]. Given that all online transactions occur without face-to-face interactions and rely on a trustworthy service system for mutually beneficial processes to function smoothly, trust is crucial in the business world.

According to [52], there are five dimensions in building trust: integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness. These dimensions are as follows:

1. Integrity: Honest and moral behavior; honesty is a crucial component in communication events with members.
2. Competence: Relevant ability to perform tasks effectively.
3. Consistency: Firmness of stance even in risky situations; inconsistency between words and deeds, promises, and evidence can erode trust.
4. Loyalty: Willingness to protect, save, and comply with instructions.
5. Openness or transparency: Awareness to provide trust for sharing ideas and information freely.

From the above definitions, the tendency of trust itself is the state or consumer reaction in acting and encouraging consumers to make decisions after receiving information from a shopping site.

Meanwhile, information adoption is defined as the extent to which people accept the message content and believe in meaningful information after evaluating its validity [16]. Information adoption is an underlying concept supporting decisions to support or oppose something [7, 13]. Information adoption arises from customer trust models originating from theoretical models and based on the theory of planned behaviour concerning attitudes, subjective norms, intentions, and behaviour as crucial goals for companies because information adoption is one of the key factors in consumer decision-making regarding products or services offered by the company's marketing. Therefore, this variable is

used for research in marketing-focused management studies.

The doctrine underlying the information adoption process extols information that cannot be achieved without specific core metrics, namely, argument quality, source credibility, and information usefulness [53,54]. The systematic dissemination of these three components will eventually lead to the information adoption protocol. ELM assumes that information adoption is the result of information processing, which is determined by two processing routes: the central route and the peripheral route [55]. Information processing through the central route requires motivation, ability, and cognitive resources of the recipient, such as time and energy. Through the central route, message recipients will carefully consider the arguments in the presented information and elaborate on it based on what they already know [36].

### **3. METHODS**

#### **3.1 Measurement**

This research is a replication study of a previous investigation conducted by [7] utilizing a causal relationship study to examine the proposed hypotheses. A quantitative research approach was adopted by administering an online questionnaire. According to [56], quantitative research is a method based on concrete or positivistic data from a specific sample or population, with data presented in numerical calculations and measured using statistical tools to draw conclusions related to the researched problem. The questionnaire for this study consists of two parts: respondent profile questions and questions related to variables. Respondent evaluations were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). All variable measurement items, including information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk, argument quality, trust tendency, and information adoption, were adapted from [7].

#### **3.2 Sampling and Data Collection**

The types of data used in this research are primary data and secondary data. Primary data were acquired from an online survey, and secondary data were extracted from the reports and references of prior research (eg. Academic journal and reports). The research sample consists of the entire community in Yogyakarta

using the Sociolla (SOCO) platform. The choice of this location is due to the researcher residing in Yogyakarta, facilitating data collection. Additionally, there is a significant number of SOCO users in Yogyakarta, easing the researcher's access to these SOCO users. The sampling technique employed in this study is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, where the selection of sample units is based on the researcher's judgment or convenience [57]. It is because the sampling is based on characteristics that align with the specifications of the sample members.

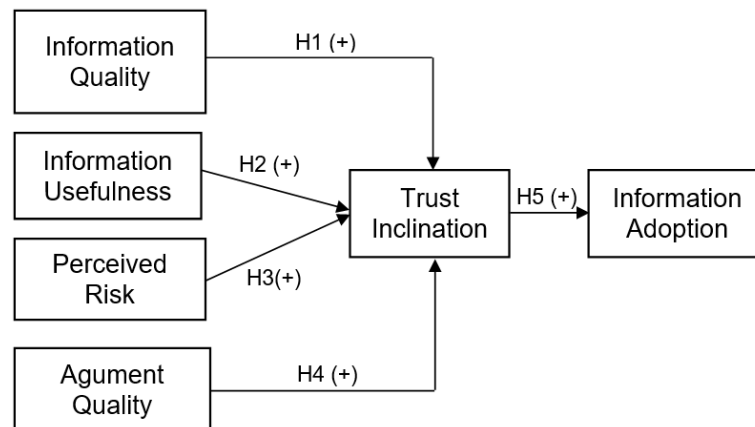
The determination of the research sample size utilizes the [58] method, which involves adding the total number of indicators and variables multiplied by 2. The result is then multiplied by 5 for the minimum sample size and multiplied by 10 for the maximum sample size. Consequently, the number of respondents in this study is a minimum of 270 samples and a maximum of 540 samples. This formula is employed to facilitate researchers in determining the required sample size for the study. Furthermore, this quantity has met the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM data analysis. The research questionnaire was distributed through social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Line to reach respondents more easily from December 6 to December 13, 2023. Ultimately, this research

successfully obtained a sample of 270 respondent data for further analysis.

### 3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

A pilot test was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of data with 50 respondents. This testing aimed to determine the validity of the questionnaire indicators in measuring and obtaining respondent data, as well as the relative consistency of the measurement results when repeated [57]. The pilot test results indicated that all research indicators were valid and reliable for dissemination to the actual respondents of this study.

The data analysis method for this research involved both descriptive analysis and statistical analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model as the decision-making foundation. Descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS 27 to obtain a comprehensive overview of the observation data for easy understanding as information [59]. Meanwhile, the statistical analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model was performed with the assistance of AMOS version 25. This analysis technique was chosen because it allows researchers to model and predict complex relationships involving multiple independent and dependent variables simultaneously [59].



**Fig. 1. Research framework**

*The research framework is adopted by Khawa, Mahmood, and Zaman (2020)*

Based on Fig. 1, this study posits five hypotheses as follows:

- H1: Information quality influences trust tendency.
- H2: Information usefulness influences trust tendency.
- H3: Perceived risk influences trust tendency.
- H4: Argument quality influences trust tendency.
- H5: Trust tendency influences information adoption.

Firstly, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Research items were considered valid if their loading values were greater than 0.5 (> 0.5) [59,60]. Meanwhile, research variables were considered reliable if the construct reliability value exceeded 0.7 [59,60]. Secondly, a flow diagram model was developed and converted into a structural equation. Next, a test of data normality was performed using the critical ratio (C.R.) of skewness and kurtosis values with a critical value criterion of  $\pm 2.58$  at a significance level of 0.01 [60].

The identification of the structural model was carried out by examining the degrees of freedom (df). The assessment of Goodness of Fit criteria was performed to determine the extent to which the hypothesized model fits the data sample by examining the GoF index results. Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted for the hypothesized causal relationships between variables. Hypotheses were accepted if the CR value was greater than 1.96 (CR >1.96) and the P value was less than 0.05 (P < .05) [60]. The hypotheses of this research are summarized in the adopted research model from [7], as illustrated in Fig. 1.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Respondent Profile

The analysis of respondent profiles is based on characteristics gathered from the questionnaire distribution, including gender, age, and the frequency of SOCO usage. The results of the

respondent profile analysis are presented in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1 presents the results of the respondent profile analysis in this study, dominated by female respondents (83%) who are users of SOCO. From the table, it is evident that the majority of SOCO users participating in this research are aged between 18 and 28 years (84.8%), with a usage frequency ranging from 2 to 4 times (68.1%).

### 4.2 Validity and Reliability Testing

Before the data was further processed and analyzed, validity and reliability tests were conducted again on the entire dataset collected from the respondents. In this study, the collected data amounted to 270 respondents. The purpose of this testing is to measure the validity of the questionnaire and assess the extent of the questionnaire's consistency. The results of the validity and reliability tests are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the results of the validity test indicated by loading values and the reliability test indicated by the construct reliability (CR) values. The validity test results for the 21 questionnaire items show that all question items have loading factor values that meet the criteria, i.e., exceeding 0.50, and all items are considered valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test results indicate that the CR values for the six research variables each have CR values greater than 0.7, meeting the established criteria. Thus, the entire research instrument is considered reliable.

**Table 1. Respondents Profile**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	46	17
Female	224	83
<b>Age</b>		
< 18 Years	7	2,6
18 - 28 Years	229	84,8
> 28 Years	34	12,6
<b>Frequency of SOCO Usage</b>		
Only once	25	9,3
2-4 times	184	68,1
More than 4 times	61	22,6

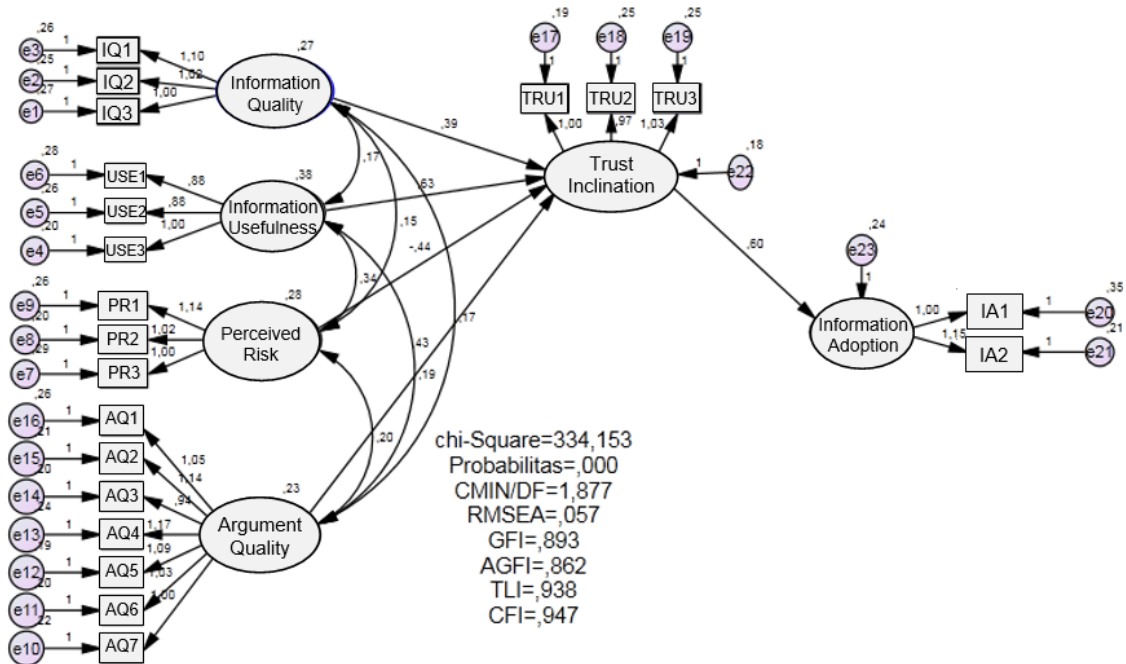
Source: Primary data (2023)



**Table 2. Validity and Reliability of Data**

Variable	Item	Loadings	CR
Information Quality	IQ1	0,742	0,769
	IQ2	0,728	
	IQ3	0,705	
Information Usefulness	USE1	0,711	0,795
	USE2	0,729	
	USE3	0,810	
Perceived Risk	PR1	0,763	0,789
	PR2	0,772	
	PR3	0,698	
Argument Quality	AQ1	0,706	0,893
	AQ2	0,768	
	AQ3	0,709	
	AQ4	0,751	
	AQ5	0,767	
	AQ6	0,742	
	AQ7	0,719	
Trust Inclination	TRU1	0,828	0,842
	TRU2	0,778	
	TRU3	0,794	
Information Adoption	IA1	0,725	0,761
	IA2	0,840	

Source: Primary data (2023)



**Fig. 2. Structural equation model**

The research framework is adopted by Khwaja, Mahmood, and Zaman (2020).

Notes: Information Quality (IQ), Information Usefulness (USE), Perceived Risk (PR), Argument Quality (AQ), Trust Inclination (TRU), Information Adoption (IA)

**Table 3. Results of normality test for data**

Item	Min	Max	Skew	C.R.	Kurtosis	C.R.
IA2	1,000	5,000	,057	,383	-,238	-,799
IA1	1,000	5,000	-,151	-1,013	-,475	-1,594
TRU3	2,000	5,000	,200	1,343	-,481	-1,614
TRU2	2,000	5,000	,205	1,378	-,354	-1,188
TRU1	2,000	5,000	,128	,861	-,404	-1,355
AQ1	1,000	5,000	,135	,905	,107	,360
AQ2	2,000	5,000	,200	1,343	-,367	-1,229
AQ3	2,000	5,000	,307	2,059	-,135	-,453
AQ4	2,000	5,000	,257	1,726	-,378	-1,269
AQ5	1,000	5,000	,232	1,559	,367	1,232
AQ6	1,000	5,000	,236	1,586	,429	1,439
AQ7	1,000	5,000	,088	,589	,283	,949
PR1	2,000	5,000	,079	,529	-,637	-2,137
PR2	2,000	5,000	,370	2,482	-,376	-1,262
PR3	2,000	5,000	,127	,854	-,435	-1,458
USE1	1,000	5,000	,272	1,823	-,317	-1,063
USE2	2,000	5,000	,138	,923	-,435	-1,460
USE3	2,000	5,000	,115	,773	-,514	-1,723
IQ1	2,000	5,000	,287	1,925	-,712	-2,389
IQ2	1,000	5,000	,007	,050	-,034	-,114
IQ3	2,000	5,000	,349	2,339	-,725	-2,431
<b>Multivariate</b>					<b>-,299</b>	<b>-,079</b>

Source: Primary data (2023)

Notes: Information Quality (IQ), Information Usefulness (USE), Perceived Risk (PR), Argument Quality (AQ), Trust Inclination (TRU), Information Adoption (IA)

### 4.3 SEM Analysis Results

In the SEM test using AMOS version 25 in this study, the research model was first converted into a structural equation (Fig. 2). The research model was adopted from [7].

Fig. 2 illustrates the visualization of the research model that has been converted into a structural model. Based on the image, the Information Quality variable consists of 3 indicator items, Information Usefulness consists of 3 indicator items, Perceived Risk consists of 3 indicator items, Argument Quality consists of 7 indicator items, Trust Inclination consists of 3 indicator items, and Information Adoption consists of 2 indicator items. The figure explains that the relationships between variables have a strong influence, depicted by bold lines.

Normality tests were conducted by examining the z-value (critical ratio or C.R) from the skewness and kurtosis values of the data distribution. The results of the normality test data can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 presents the results of the multivariate normality test. In this examination, the critical value used is  $\pm 2.58$  at a significance level of .01 [60]. The results indicate that the normality assumption is met as the value of -0.079 falls within the range of  $\pm 2.58$ .

Subsequently, structural model identification was conducted. One way to determine the presence of identification problems is by examining the estimation results. SEM analysis can only be performed if the model identification results indicate that the model falls into the over-identified category. This identification is done by examining the df value of the created model, as shown in Table 4.

Based on Table 4, the output of AMOS shows a model's degrees of freedom (df) value of 178. This result indicates that the model falls into the category of over-identified because it has a positive df value. Therefore, data analysis can proceed to the next stage, which is the evaluation of the Goodness of Fit criteria.

The assessment of Goodness of Fit (GoF) is one of the main objectives in SEM to determine how well the hypothesized model “fits” the data sample. The results of the GoF evaluation are presented in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5 indicates that the research model is close to being a good fit. Based on the GoF test, seven criteria fit, namely Chi-Square, Probability, CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, TLI, CFI, and one marginal criterion, AGFI. Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted to analyze the causality relationships proposed in this study. The analysis

of hypothesis results can be seen from the standardized regression weight values indicating the coefficients of influence between variables in the following table (Table 6).

Table 6 presents the results of the hypothesis testing in this study. A hypothesis is accepted if the C.R. value is greater than 1.96 and the *P* value is less than .05 [60]. The testing results indicate that all hypotheses meet the criteria and are supported, except for H3, which is rejected. This result rejects the causality relationship between the perceived risk variable and trust inclination.

**Table 4. Identification of Structural Model**

Number of distinct sample moments:	231
Number of distinct parameters to be estimated:	53
Degrees of freedom (231 - 53):	178

Source: Primary data (2023)

**Table 5. Goodness of fit evaluation**

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off value	Model Penelitian	Model
Chi-square	≤ 210,129 (df=178)	334,153	Tidak Fit
Significant probability	≥ 0.05	0,000	Tidak Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0,057	Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0,893	Marginal
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0,862	Marginal
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.0	1,887	Fit
TLI	≥ 0.90	0,938	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0,947	Fit

Source: Primary data (2023)

**Table 6. Hypothesis testing**

Hipotesis		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P value	Hasil
IQ → TRU	H1	0.392	0.129	3.027	0.002	Supported
USE → TRU	H2	0.631	0.313	2.015	0.044	Supported
PR → TRU	H3	-0.41	0.419	-1.052	0.293	Not Supported
AQ → TRU	H4	0.428	0.191	2.242	0.025	Supported
TRU → IA	H5	0.598	0.084	7.085	0.000	Supported

Source: Primary data (2023)

Notes: Information Quality (IQ), Information Usefulness (USE), Perceived Risk (PR), Argument Quality (AQ), Trust Inclination (TRU), Information Adoption (IA)

**4.3.1 Influence of information quality on trust inclination**

The evaluation results of the first hypothesis state that information quality has a significantly

positive influence on trust inclination (Estimation = 0.392; CR = 3.027; *P* value = .002), H1 supported. It indicates that the quality of eWOM information obtained by SOCO users has an impact on their trust inclination. In other words,

the better the quality of eWOM information obtained by SOCO users, the higher their tendency to trust that information. This finding is in line with the study conducted by [30], which asserts that information quality significantly influences trust inclination. It demonstrates that consumers pay close attention to information quality on the SOCO platform. The quality of information on social media platforms should hold significant and valuable content for others. Reliable information is expected to build trust in customers.

#### **4.3.2 Influence of information usefulness on trust inclination**

The results show that information usefulness has a positive and significant influence on trust inclination (estimation = 0.631; CR = 2.015;  $P$  value = .044). Thus, H2 is accepted. It implies that better information usefulness will increase trust inclination. This result aligns with the study conducted by [7], stating that information usefulness has a significant positive impact on trust inclination. It proves that consumers use the information provided by the SOCO platform to seek needed information, impacting their trust. Trust is depicted through decision-making based on the core of the obtained message. If the message lacks credible and authentic information, it is deemed worthless, and vice versa.

#### **4.3.3 Influence of perceived risk on trust inclination**

The results indicate that perceived risk has a negative influence on trust inclination (Estimation = -0.041; CR = -1.052;  $P$  value = .293); thus, H3 is rejected. It shows that the lower the perceived risk by consumers, the higher their trust inclination. Conversely, the higher and worse the perceived risk, the lower the trust inclination. In the context of this research, SOCO users who perceive a high level of risk on the SOCO platform will find it challenging to give their trust, even if they only adopt the available information. This result aligns with the study conducted by [13], stating that perceived risk has a negative influence on trust inclination. It proves that consumer behavior sometimes takes risks that help the company grow. [7] argues that the magnitude of the bet and subjective feelings can be configured through perceived risk. The importance of products in the customer's mind, pricing, functionality, and determination of characteristics are known to be inherent risks.

#### **4.3.4 Influence of argument quality on trust inclination**

The results show that the influence of argument quality has a positive and significant impact on trust inclination (Estimation = 0.428; CR = 2.242;  $P$  value = .025); thus, H4 is accepted. The better the quality of eWOM arguments, the higher the trust inclination of consumers. It is supported by research conducted by [61], stating that there is a significant positive influence between the quality of arguments and trust inclination. Previous research has identified how eWOM facilitates the increase in product and service sales in organizations. The volume of interactions between the company and customers is another important feature that needs to be determined. Researchers have highlighted that reviews posted by consumers on the SOCO platform on the company's page or website determine the company's future sales. For example, in cases where customers make many negative comments, the company's sales will undoubtedly decline. However, if customers give many positive comments and there are no neutral comments, this sometimes makes customers feel confident about making purchases of that product. Argument quality is considered a crucial precursor to eWOM, which is highly needed and considered by consumers.

#### **4.3.5 Influence of trust inclination on information adoption**

The results show that trust inclination has a positive and significant influence on information adoption (Estimation = 0.598; CR = 7.085;  $P$  value = .00); thus, H5 is accepted. It means that the better the trust inclination towards information, the higher the decision to adopt information. This is in line with the research conducted by [62], which found that there is a significant positive influence between the formation of trust inclination and information adoption. Consumers highly prioritize trustworthy or credible information. Therefore, the source of information obtained greatly influences trust and also in adopting information. Trusted information, such as eWOM, is considered more honest and valid, as perceived by users through reviews.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This research aims to analyze the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on the Sociolla (SOCO) platform regarding information quality, information usefulness, perceived risk,

and argument quality on Information Adoption with the mediating role of trust inclination. The study findings reveal that almost all hypotheses were accepted except for the relationship between perceived risk and trust inclination (H3). The positive influence of perceived risk on trust inclination produced a negative figure, contradicting previous replicated research [7,13]. Despite this, referencing other research results [63,64], it was noted that perceived risk is significantly negatively correlated with trust. Marketers are advised to prioritize loyalty programs to establish trust and confidence, mitigating perceived risks hindering trust inclination and purchase decisions. In this context, SOCO should pay attention to consumer-perceived risks. The lower the level of risk accepted by consumers, the better. In this regard, consumers will find it easier to trust the eWOM information they receive. SOCO must regularly update reviews on its platform so that consumers are informed and more discerning in decision-making, especially regarding information related to price, functionality, and determining characteristics that pose risks for consumers when purchasing products or services.

The research findings validate the positive influence of information quality, information usefulness, and argument quality on the trust inclination of SOCO users toward eWOM on the platform. It indicates that reviews on the SOCO platform will be analyzed by users based on the quality of information, usability, and the argument quality of the reviews according to their standards. While individual perspectives and standards on information may vary, the quality of information and arguments has a similarly assessed effect. Meanwhile, the usefulness of information to individuals is based on their respective needs. With these three standards fulfilled, users will begin to be confident and tend to trust a review. Subsequently, they will use the trusted information as a basis for transaction decisions to loyalty decisions regarding products or the SOCO platform.

Theoretically, this research enriches references related to information adoption and trust inclination toward eWOM, particularly in the study of unique platforms like beauty-specialized platforms such as SOCO. From a managerial perspective, this research provides insights for SOCO marketing managers and other platforms about the importance of managing eWOM in a business process. In this case, marketers need

to pay attention to the quality of information, information usefulness, and argument quality in eWOM to gain consumer trust in adopting that information. This information adoption will lead to consumer intentions to make transaction decisions up to loyalty. Based on the research findings, marketers need to manage user platform risk perceptions and reduce them for user comfort in making further decisions, such as trust inclination and eWOM information adoption.

Further research is expected to develop and address the limitations of this study, such as data collection conducted only once, preventing the researcher from observing changes in respondent attitudes that would undoubtedly influence future research findings. Subsequent research is expected to re-examine the influence of eWOM on trust inclination and information adoption, providing a more comprehensive and accurate overview, such as conducting longitudinal research to observe the percentage of changes in respondents' perceptions of the platform under study.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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## APPENDIX

The measurement items used in the questionnaire were adapted from Khwaja, Mahmood, and Zaman (2020) (Table 7).

**Table 7. Item Scale of the Measurement**

Variables	Item	Scale
Information Quality	IQ1	Information about products shared by my friends on the SOCO or Sociolla social media can be understood.
	IQ2	Product information shared by my friends on the SOCO or Sociolla social media is clear.
	IQ3	In general, I believe the information has high quality.
Information Usefulness	USE1	Information on the SOCO or Sociolla social media platform is valuable and informative.
	USE2	Information on the SOCO or Sociolla social media platform is informative.
	USE3	Information on the SOCO or Sociolla social media platform is very helpful.
Perceived Risk	PR1	Reading reviews on the SOCO or Sociolla social media helps me reduce uncertainty about online shopping.
	PR2	Reading reviews on the SOCO or Sociolla social media reduces my concerns about unpleasant experiences that may occur while I shop online.
	PR3	Reading reviews on the SOCO or Sociolla social media boosts my confidence in my online shopping choices.
Argument Quality	AQ1	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media are relevant.
	AQ2	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media are accurate.
	AQ3	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media can be applied.
	AQ4	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media are up-to-date.
	AQ5	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media can be relied upon.
	AQ6	The arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media sufficiently meet your needs.
	AQ7	Arguments provided on the SOCO or Sociolla social media cover all the necessary values.
Trust Inclination	TRU1	Online shopping sites on the SOCO or Sociolla social media can be relied upon.
	TRU2	Online shopping on the SOCO or Sociolla social media is trustworthy; there is no uncertainty.
	TUR3	Anyone who trusts online shopping on the SOCO or Sociolla social media will not encounter problems.
Information Adoption	IA1	I carefully follow recommendations from positive comments and visit the online retail store further recommended.
	IA2	I agree with opinions expressed about the online retail store in comments on the internet.

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