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The Mediating Role of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Tourist Decisions Using (TAM) Model

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived ease of use) on the mediator electronic word of mouth (e-wom) on Tourist decision in Jordan. Based on the literature and review of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The population of this study is tourists who use e-WOM for tourism decisions in Jordan. A random sampling technique was used to collect data from both Jordanian and non-Jordanian tourists. The questionnaire was validated, and a pilot study was conducted prior to data collection. The data was collected from 504 **tourists** who use electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) for making tourism decisions in Jordan. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0 and Partial Least Square (PLS) version 3.2.7. The findings revealed that perceived usefulness had significant positive effects on tourist decision-making, while perceived ease of use did not. Additionally, these factors were found to significantly enhance e-WOM communication. Importantly, e-WOM was shown to have a strong positive influence on tourist decisions and acted as a mediator in the relationships between the aforementioned factors and tourist decisions, Discussion of the findings as well as the limitation and direction of future work were given.

Keyword: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Tourist Decisions, (TAM) Model, Jordan

Introduction

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as a critical factor in shaping contemporary travel decisions. The growing influence of e-WOM in the tourism industry has led to its development as both a scientific field of study and a domain of professional practice in modern organizations (Li et al., 2019). Travel decisions, being high-stakes and often complex choices, are particularly susceptible to the impact of e-WOM. Online user reviews about destinations, accommodations, and tourism services have become invaluable sources of information for travelers, significantly influencing their decision-making processes (Li et al., 2019)

Social media has ingrained itself into the lives of most people worldwide it was reported by Hootsuite that, with an annual growth rate of 1.0 percent, the world's population, which was 7.91 billion in January 2022, is expected to reach 8 billion people by the middle of 2023. Currently, over half (57%) of the world's population lives in urban regions, also by the beginning of 2022, there will be 5.31 billion unique mobile phone users, or more than two-thirds (67.1%) of the world's population. (Digital 2022). the middle east present as an excellent case study for understanding the evolving dynamics of e-WOM in emerging digital markets. The region has seen a substantial increase in internet users, which has implications for how tourists' access and use online information for travel decisions.

Over 8 million people in Jordan, representing more than 80% of the population, are internet users, with this number continuing to rise steadily (Al-Adwan et al., 2020). This high internet penetration rate has significant implications for the tourism industry in Jordan, as it provides a robust platform for travel-related e-WOM. The internet's rapid expansion and improved communication tools have dramatically enhanced the reach and effectiveness of various tourism marketing initiatives, creating a fertile ground for travel-focused e-WOM. framework of tourism, e-WOM communications spread swiftly both locally and internationally, transcending time and location restrictions. This is particularly beneficial for Jordan's tourism sector, allowing potential visitors from around the world to access real-time, user-generated content about Jordanian travel experiences.

The perceived usefulness and ease of use of online travel information are additional crucial factors in shaping tourist decisions. Research has consistently shown that tourists are more inclined to use and trust online travel information that they perceive as both useful and easy to navigate(Amani, 2022; Faqih, 2011; Mensah, 2020; Mohammed Habes et al., 2018; J. Sweeney et al., 2012). This finding underscores the importance of not only providing valuable content but also ensuring that it is presented in an accessible and user-friendly manner.

Travelers increasingly rely on online reviews, comments, and ratings to inform their decisions about destinations and experiences. However, the specific factors influencing the impact of e-WOM on tourist decisions in the Jordanian context remain poorly understood (Pop et al., 2022). To illustrate the significance of this issue, consider a recent scenario where negative e-WOM spread rapidly concerning a popular hotel chain in Petra, Jordan. Following a series of critical online reviews about service quality and cleanliness, the hotel experienced a sharp decline in bookings, with occupancy rates dropping by 30% within a month. This case highlights the immediate and substantial impact that e-WOM can have on tourism businesses and the broader industry in Jordan, there is a limited understanding of the antecedents of e-

WOM and their impact on tourist decision-making processes in Jordan. While numerous studies have examined the influence of e-WOM on consumer behavior, purchase intention, travel intention, and other related factors, few have focused specifically on the tourism context and the unique characteristics of tourist decision-making processes in Jordan (Alghizzawi, 2019; Baber et al., 2022; Balroo & Saleh, 2019; Berné Manero et al., 2022; Filieri, Lin, et al., 2021a; Gosal et al., 2020; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Laesser et al., 2019; Lai et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2022; Mohammed & Al-Swidi, 2020; Nilashi et al., 2022a; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2023; Verma & Yadav, 2021; Yadav et al., 2021; Zarifah Dhabitah Mahat & Hafiz Hanafiah, 2020).

This research is timely and crucial for several reasons. Firstly, as Jordan continues to invest in its tourism sector as a key driver of economic growth, understanding the digital factors influencing tourist decisions becomes paramount. Secondly, the unique cultural and historical context of Jordan necessitates a specific study on how e-WOM operates within this environment, as findings from other regions may not be directly applicable. Lastly, by addressing the identified gaps in the literature, this study will contribute valuable insights to both academic discourse and practical tourism management in Jordan and similar contexts.

Literature Review

Tourist Decision

The Tourist Decision is the primary outcome variable in this study. It encompasses the process and outcome of choosing a travel destination, accommodations, activities, and other aspects of a trip. This decision-making process is complex and influenced by various factors, including those measured as independent variables in this study. The measurement of Tourist Decisions in this study is based on scales adapted from Yan et al., (2018),Thrash et al., (2014), Nilashi et al., (2022), and Filieri et al., (2021). The items assess the perceived ease of making travel decisions, the intention to make well-thought-out decisions, and the likelihood of recommending decisions to others. Understanding the factors that influence travel decisions is crucial for destination marketers, tourism businesses, and policymakers. In the age of e-WOM, these decisions are increasingly shaped by online information and peer recommendations, making it essential to study how different factors contribute to the decision-making process (Filieri & McLeay, 2014).

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

The emergence of the internet and social media has significantly influenced the tourism sector, leading to the rise of electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), which shapes consumer choices and marketing strategies in travel.(Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) define e-WOM as any positive or negative statement made by customers about a product or company, shared via the internet, highlighting its expansive reach. e-WOM is user-generated content shared on social media platforms, influencing the tourism industry with the rise of review sites and travel-focused networks. Its defining features include its digital nature, global reach, persistence, and multimedia format, all of which make it a powerful tool in consumer decision-making. Platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking.com have become essential in the travel planning process, allowing tourists to share experiences and influence potential travelers (Pan et al., 2007).

Perceived Usefulness

A major factor influencing the intention to use technology is perceived usefulness, which refers to the user's belief that adopting new technologies will enhance their job performance (Davis, 1989). Statistics show that 90% of online consumers look for recommendations from others before making a purchase decision (Kim et al., 2017), so word-of-mouth (WOM) is thought to be the most effective marketing communication tool. The potency of WOM should be assessed, among other things, by the perceived usefulness of WOM messages to receivers (Sweeney et al., 2014). The amount to which recipients believe the WOM message helps make decisions is implied by the perceived usefulness of WOM communications in this context. But little is understood about the variables affecting the recipients' reactions to WOM communications (Sweeney et al., 2012).

Through the study, Mensah (2020), investigated the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), revealing that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communications played a significant role in moderating the perceived usefulness and ease of use of mobile government services, According to Davis (1989). these factors are crucial determinants in users' intention to adopt technology. Furthermore, the study's findings indicated that both perceived usefulness and ease of use were strong predictors of the intention to use mobile government services, which this study's empirical findings have shown. Additionally, Mohammed Habes et al. (2018), investigate a cutting-edge model aimed at confirming the relationship between students' academic performance and social media use, perceived usefulness, social bookmarking, and YouTube features. A study of the data using Smart PLS, and structural equation modelling was used to confirm the correctness of the proposed model (SEM). The various study levels at the university were covered by the data gathered from Yarmouk University in Jordan. The report also suggests that social media managers and legislators concentrate on the key elements that are crucial for encouraging digital learning in Jordan.

Research by Faqih (2011). has demonstrated that behavioural intention to utilize online buying is not adversely affected by perceived risk. This finding conflicts with much earlier research. However, the current study found that perceptions of risk have a detrimental indirect impact on consumers' behavioural intentions to shop online through the intermediary effect of trust. Furthermore, it has been noted that one of the main barriers to Jordanians' acceptance of online buying is a lack of trust in online transactions.

Perceived Ease of Use

Davis (1989) defined perceived ease of use as an individual's assessment of how easy it is to interact with new technology, influencing both its adoption and usage. In online purchasing, ease of use is vital, as systems perceived as easy to use are more frequently utilized (Nadir et al., 2022). In social media (SM), perceived ease of use refers to the convenience of engaging with SM platforms. User-friendly sites enhance the overall experience, while complex ones may be avoided. Users fall into two categories: those who quickly adapt to SM features and those who find them overwhelming and difficult to use, potentially leading to abandonment (Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

Perceived ease of use, along with the reliability and utility of online consumer reviews (OCR), positively impacts customer satisfaction and continued usage of UGC platforms, which influences future purchase intentions (Filieri, Acikgoz, et al., 2021). Eneizan et al., (2020),

found a significant relationship between e-WOM, ease of use, while usefulness and trust had an insignificant and opposite relationship. Moreover, trust in online shopping was positively associated with ease of use. Al-Okaily et al., (2021), explored the adoption of FinTech services in Jordan, finding that perceived usefulness and enjoyment positively influenced the decision to use FinTech services, with e-WOM moderating this relationship.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM (Technology Acceptance Model), developed by Fred Davis in 1986, is an adaptation of the Theory of Reasoned Action. The model suggests that the decision to adopt technology is influenced by cognitive processes, aiming to satisfy the user or maximize the technology's usefulness. TAM is used to examine and measure the factors influencing decisions about whether to accept or reject information technology. Grounded in psychological theory, the model asserts that user behavior is determined by beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and their relationships with actual behavior (Davis et al., 1989), TAM predicts and clarifies system usage by focusing on two main variables: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

- Perceived usefulness: According to Davis, perceived usefulness is the belief that using technology will bring benefits to the user. It refers to the subjective perception of future users, who think that using a specific application system will enhance organizational performance. Essentially, it measures the degree to which a person believes that adopting a particular technology will lead to positive outcomes or improvements for the user.
- Perceived ease of use: Davis defines perceived ease of use as the degree to which a person believes that a system is simple to understand and operate. Jogiyanto adds that it refers to the extent to which someone feels that using technology will make tasks easier. If a person perceives an information system as easy to use, they are more likely to adopt it, while those who find it difficult to use are less likely to do so (Israel et al., 2019).

Davis Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely employed framework for estimating user adoption of new technology, particularly electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in tourism. According to the model, users' intentions for adopting a new system are influenced by their assessments of the system's usefulness and ease of use (Khwaja et al., 2020).

Thus, the TAM can serve as a theoretical framework for investigating the elements that influence tourists' adoption and use of e-WOM (Xia et al., 2018). You can obtain greater understanding of how these elements influence tourists' decisions and how e-WOM can be used to promote tourism by investigating perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use. Studies in e-WOM that have adopted TAM model (Singh & Srivastava, 2019; Yuan et al., 2021; Xia et al., 2018; Rahaman et al., 2022; Bilal et al., 2020; Rahimizhian et al., 2020; Khwaja et al., 2020; Sabapathy & Selvakumar, 2018; Mensah, 2020; Al-Okaily et al., 2021), and the studies in decision have adopted TAM (Suleman et al., 2019; Juniansyah et al., 2023; Rouidi et al., 2022; Indrawati et al., 2022).

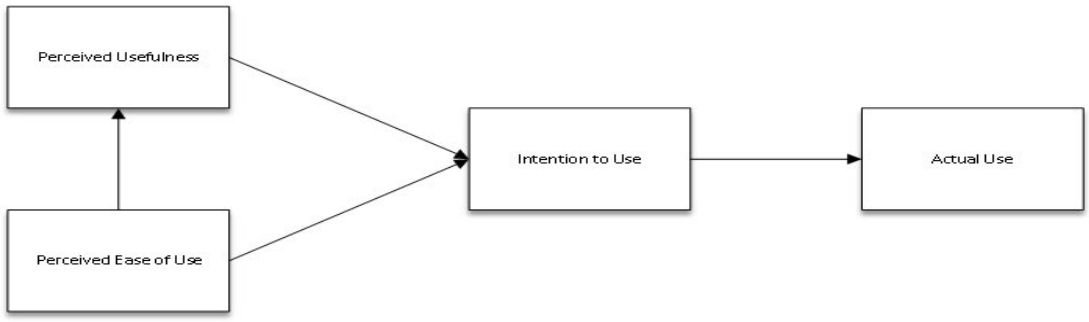

Figure 0.1 The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
Source: Davis (1986).

Theoretical Research Framework

The theoretical research framework illustrated in Figure 2.4 provides an integrative model for examining the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on tourist decision-making, this framework synthesizes elements from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), these theory offers distinct perspectives on the factors and processes that shape e-WOM's role in tourism, creating a comprehensive and nuanced lens through which to analyze tourist behavior in the context of digital interactions.

The Technology Acceptance Model focuses on the technological aspects, explaining how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence the adoption and continued use of e-WOM platforms in tourism. the conceptual framework offers a robust and multidimensional approach to investigating the complex interplay of factors influencing the impact of e-WOM on tourist decisions. This integration allows for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, taking into account the motivational, technological, persuasive, and psychological aspects involved in the decision-making process. The framework recognizes that tourist decision-making in the digital age is a complex process influenced by various factors. It acknowledges that tourists are not only pushed by internal motivations and pulled by destination attributes but are also influenced by the technological platforms they use to gather information, the level of trust they have in online sources, and the way they process persuasive messages.

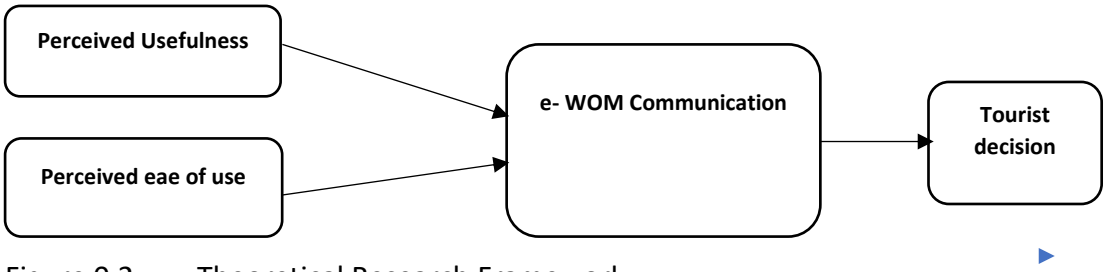

Figure 0.2 Theoretical Research Framework

Hypothesis Development

Perceived Usefulness

Mensah (2020) and Davis et al. (1989) discovered that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communications significantly influence the relationship between the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of mobile government services. Their findings also highlighted that

these two factors are important determinants of the willingness to engage with mobile government services. Additionally, Habes et al, (2019) introduced a new model aimed at examining the link between students' academic performance, social media use, perceived usefulness, social bookmarking, and YouTube features. Amani (2022) also discovered that the delivery of Word-of-Mouth messages has a significant positive effect on the perceived usefulness of (WOM).

According to several experts, perceived risk refers to consumers' perceptions of likelihood and unfavorable consequences since they have a big impact on the decision-making process (Cunningham, 1967), Before resisting their fears, people attempt to control their consequences. In addition, although there are many options or substitutes, customers seek information from various sources to lower their risk and make better purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2012), Hussain et al. (2017) found that comprehensiveness and the relevance of information are the most dynamic elements that can impact online consumers buying behavior. Companies should manage better strategies to improve the usability of online communities, provide all related information about companies, and encourage customers to share their experiences to attract the users, Additionally, according to Park & Gretzel, (2010), the perceived utility of comparison-shopping tools depends on consumers' propensity for doing so, which is affected by their online decision-making preferences. The findings imply that while some consumer decision-making style traits do not affect comparison shopping propensity, others do. Comparison shopping propensity and several of the online decision-making style traits have a direct impact on the perceived utility of comparison-shopping tools.

H1a: ***perceived usefulness has a positive and significant relationship with tourist decision***.

H1b: ***perceived usefulness has a positive and significant relationship with e-WOM.***

Perceived Ease of Use

Earlier studies concentrated on the connection between ease of use and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Based on the findings of a recent study conducted by Bilal et al. (2020), several factors, including egoism, sense of belonging, and internet usage, have a beneficial influence on e-WOM. Furthermore, the study shows that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, two core elements of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), have a significant moderating role in estimating the relationship between egoism, sense of belonging, and e-WOM. The study also identified informational and normative internet usage as crucial mediators in the relationship between internet usage and e-WOM, these findings contribute to a deeper comprehension of internet usage behavior among young Chinese consumers, and they hold important implications for both academicians and managers operating in this domain, several studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of e-WOM, usefulness, ease of use, and trust on customer behavior toward purchasing products online, with the online shopping experience acting as a moderator. According to the findings of (Eneizan et al., 2020), discovered that there is a positive and significant connection between electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and trust, as well as between ease of use and trust. However, their study revealed that the relationship between usefulness and trust was negative and not statistically significant. Additionally, the research showed a strong positive association between trust and online purchasing behavior. These findings underscore the importance of the link between ease of use and e-WOM, prompting further investigation into this relationship in the current study.

Finally, Numerous scholars have studied the impact of social media networks on consumer decision-making, particularly in aspects of ease of use. Indarwati et al., (2023), conducted a recent study on the impact of technology ease on online shopping and purchase decisions, concentrating primarily on the numerous services available within the TikTok Shop application. The findings shown a significant positive effect, indicating that the convenience provided by the TikTok Shop application's technological features contributed to an improved online shopping experience and facilitated consumer purchasing decisions.

H2a: ***perceived ease of use has a positive and significant relationship with tourist decision.***

H2b: ***perceived ease of use has a positive and significant relationship with e-WOM.***

E-WOM Communication and Tourist Decision

One of the first studies to use Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986; 1991) to assess how the verbal and visual components of e-WOM affect consumers' intention and behavior is the one by Filieri et al. (2021b), They theoretically enhance Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986; 1991) by using it to examine consumers' choices in the context of travel-related e-WOM. the conceived nonverbal system, which includes visual cues like user-generated images and performance visual heuristics, and the verbal system, which includes written review messages and popularity heuristics. Our two research provide evidence that e-WOM influences consumers' intentions and decisions, mostly through the visual system.

Decision-making and recommender systems are in constant evolution, with certain thematic areas, such as the Internet, eCommerce, and user-generated concepts, exhibiting a sinusoidal progression. To gain a detailed understanding of the evolution of e-WOM research, Verma and Yadav (2021) created strategic maps for each subperiod, illustrating the significance of emerging themes over time. Initially, the Internet was a dominant focus, with numerous studies linking the rise of e-WOM to its expansion. Over time, online social networking emerged as a central theme, while more recently, social media has become a foundational subject of research. Meanwhile, e-WOM and user-generated content have transitioned into overarching themes cutting across various studies, Hao et al. (2010), highlighted the significance of marketers giving adequate attention to negative e-WOM, regardless of the product type. Although negative e-WOMs tend to be less numerous than positive ones, their ability to influence consumer decisions should not be overlooked. E-WOM managers can track high-quality negative reviews on popular WOM platforms promptly. This feedback can then be utilized to improve product quality by addressing the issues highlighted in the reviews.

H3: ***E-WOM has a positive and significant relationship with tourist decision***.

Research Methodology

This study aimed to explore the mediation impact of e-WOM between the relations of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, among Jordanian and non-Jordanian tourist, and employs a quantitative cross-sectional approach to investigate the relationships between factors influencing tourist decisions, as well as the mediating role of e-WOM. The instrument design for this study involved the development of a structured questionnaire to measure the variables identified in the research framework. The questionnaire was designed to be comprehensive yet concise, ensuring that all key constructs were adequately measured while minimizing respondent fatigue. The instrument was primarily based on established scales from previous studies, which were adapted to fit the specific context of e-WOM in tourism decision-making. The questionnaire was structured into two sections, each corresponding to

a specific construct in the research model, To ensure that the study population accurately represents the target group, the respondents were selected from individuals who were actively engaged in travel planning and seeking online information about their intended destinations.

According to Sekaran. (2016), the sample size of any descriptive research is determined by the level of accuracy and confidence sought. The study's sample size consisted of 504 participants, comprising 70% Jordanian tourists (353 individuals) and 30% non-Jordanian tourists (151 individuals). This sample composition aligns with the study's aim to investigate the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on tourist decisions, in the context of Jordan's tourism industry, the data analysis process began with data entry and an assessment of missing data to ensure data cleanliness. Following this, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed descriptively. The study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data and test the hypotheses. The field study revealed a high response rate of 95.04%, with 453 usable questionnaires out of the 504 distributed. The research findings and outcomes are discussed in detail in this chapter, offering insights into the relationships between the study's key variables.

Data Analysis

The main goal of this study is to explore the mediating impact of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on the relationships between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use influence on tourist decisions. To achieve this, the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach will be employed as a quantitative method for testing and evaluating the proposed causal links based on empirical data and theoretical assumptions.

Perceived usefulness, as shown in Table 1, has mean scores ranging from 4.04 to 4.40 for the four measurement items, with an average score of 4.24. The standard deviation values range from 0.761 to 0.838, with an average of 0.796. These results indicate that respondents perceive the information as relatively useful, with some variation in the level of agreement across the measurement items (Ayeh et al., 2013).

Table 1
Perceived Usefulness

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PU1	4.04	0.838	1	5
PU2	4.3	0.761	1	5
PU3	4.22	0.823	1	5
PU4	4.4	0.765	2	5
Average Score	**4.24**	**0.796**		

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for perceived ease of use. The mean scores for the four measurement items range from 4.17 to 4.36, with an average score of 4.24. The standard deviation values range from 0.672 to 0.765, with an average of 0.727. These results suggest that respondents perceive the information as relatively easy to use, with relatively high levels of agreement across the measurement items (Rondović et al., 2019).

Table 2
Perceived Ease of Use

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
PEU1	4.21	0.732
PEU2	4.22	0.765
PEU3	4.17	0.742
PEU4	4.36	0.672
Average Score	**4.24**	**0.727**

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for e-WOM communication. The mean scores for the five measurement items range from 4.13 to 4.40, with an average score of 4.29. The standard deviation values range from 0.638 to 1.582, with an average of 0.887. These results suggest that respondents engage in e-WOM communication to a relatively high extent, with some variation in the level of agreement across the measurement items (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016).

Table 3
e-WOM Communication

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
EWOM1	4.35	1.582
EWOM2	4.4	0.638
EWOM3	4.29	0.738
EWOM4	4.27	0.724
EWOM5	4.13	0.756
Average Score	**4.29**	**0.887**

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for Tourist Decision. The mean scores for the four measurement items range from 4.18 to 4.47, with an average score of 4.33. The standard deviation values range from 0.596 to 0.834, with an average of 0.693. These results suggest that respondents generally have a positive perception of their Tourist Decision, with relatively high levels of agreement across the measurement items (Walle, 1997).

Table 4
Tourist Decision

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
TD1	4.47	0.596
TD2	4.4	0.65
TD3	4.27	0.692
TD4	4.18	0.834
Average Score	**4.33**	**0.693**

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a powerful statistical technique used to analyze the relationships among latent variables and their observed indicators (Hair et al., 2019a). In this study, the authors employed SEM to assess the proposed research model, which investigates the effect of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on tourist decisions in Jordan. The analysis began with the assessment of the reflective measurement model, focusing on internal consistency reliability.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability is a crucial aspect of assessing the quality of a measurement model in structural equation modeling (SEM). It evaluates the extent to which the items within a construct are intercorrelated and measure the same underlying concept (Hair et al., 2019). In this study, the authors employed three widely used measures to assess internal consistency reliability: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_a), and composite reliability (rho_c).

Table 5 presents the results of the internal consistency reliability assessment. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.734 to 0.911, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items within each construct. According to Nunnally & Bernstein, (1994), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 are considered satisfactory. The highest Cronbach's alpha value was observed for the construct "Tourist Decision" (0.911), suggesting that the items measuring this construct were highly interrelated and consistent in capturing the underlying concept.

Composite reliability (rho_a) and composite reliability (rho_c) are alternative measures of internal consistency that take into account the outer loadings of the indicators (Hair et al., 2019). The composite reliability (rho_a) values ranged from 0.769 to 0.913, while the composite reliability (rho_c) values ranged from 0.824 to 0.937. Both measures exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019), providing further evidence of the reliability of the measurement model. It is worth noting that the constructs "Perceived Ease of Use" and "Perceived Usefulness" had relatively lower Cronbach's alpha values (0.734 and 0.735, respectively) compared to the other constructs. However, their composite reliability (rho_a) and composite reliability (rho_c) values were above the recommended threshold, suggesting that the items within these constructs still exhibited satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 5
Results of Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha	**Composite Reliability (rho_a)**	**Composite Reliability (rho_c)**
EWOM	0.816	0.846	0.867
PEU	0.734	0.769	0.832
PU	0.735	0.769	0.824
TD	0.911	0.913	0.937

Convergent Validity

In this study, the authors evaluated convergent validity using factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values. Table 6 presents the results of the convergent validity assessment. The factor loadings of the indicators ranged from 0.607 to 0.910, with most values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). High factor loadings indicate that the indicators are strongly related to their respective constructs and contribute significantly to the measurement of the underlying concept (Sarstedt et al., 2017), The AVE values for each construct ranged from 0.539 to 0.789, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019), The construct "Tourist Decision" had the highest AVE value (0.789), suggesting that a substantial portion of the variance in its indicators was explained by the construct. On the other hand, the construct "Perceived Usefulness" had the lowest AVE value (0.539), indicating that a relatively smaller portion of the variance in its indicators was

accounted for by the construct. Nonetheless, the AVE value for "Perceived Usefulness" still exceeded the recommended threshold, supporting the convergent validity of the construct.

Table 6
Results of Convergent Validity

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	AVE
e-WOM Communication			0.567
	EWOM1	0.853	
	EWOM2	0.762	
	EWOM3	0.796	
	EWOM4	0.668	
	EWOM5	0.669	
Perceived Ease of Use			0.555
	PEU1	0.734	
	PEU2	0.852	
	PEU3	0.699	
	PEU4	0.683	
Perceived Usefulness			0.539
	PU1	0.687	
	PU2	0.708	
	PU3	0.795	
	PU4	0.743	
Tourist Decision			0.789
	TD1	0.887	
	TD2	0.880	
	TD3	0.910	
	TD4	0.877	

Assessment of Structural Model

Table 7 presents the results of the hypothesis testing without the mediator and moderator variables. The path analysis revealed that most of the hypothesized relationships were supported, except for the relationship between perceived ease of use and Tourist Decision (H1d). Starting with the direct effects on Tourist Decision, Perceived Usefulness demonstrates a significant positive impact on Tourist Decision ($\beta = 0.130$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1c. This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which posits that perceived usefulness is a key determinant of technology adoption and use, Interestingly, Perceived Ease of Use does not show a significant effect on Tourist Decision ($\beta = 0.036$, $p > 0.05$), failing to support. This unexpected result contrasts with some previous studies (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000) and the predictions of TAM. It may suggest that in the context of tourism decision-making in Jordan, the ease of use of information sources is less important than their perceived usefulness or credibility. This could be due to the high stakes involved in travel decisions, where tourists might be willing to navigate less user-friendly platforms if they believe the information is valuable, turning to the effects on e-WOM Communication, all hypotheses are supported. Perceived Usefulness ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$) and Perceived Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.222$, $p < 0.01$), all have significant positive effects on e-WOM Communication. These findings underscore the complex nature of e-WOM generation and dissemination in the tourism context, the significant effects of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use on e-WOM Communication support the applicability of TAM in understanding e-WOM behavior. This

suggests that tourists are more likely to engage in e-WOM when they find the platforms useful and easy to use, which aligns with findings from studies such as (Chen et al., 2015).

Finally, the significant positive effect of e-WOM Communication on Tourist Decision (β = 0.155, p < 0.001) supports. This relationship can be interpreted through the TAM Model, where e-WOM acts as a stimulus that influences the tourist's decision-making process. The finding is consistent with numerous studies that have established the importance of e-WOM in shaping consumer decisions in the tourism sector (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Table 7
Significance of Path Coefficient (Without Mediator)

Hypotheses	Path Analysis	Beta Value	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Conclusion
H1d	Perceived Ease of Use -> Travel _Tourist Decision	0.036	0.039	0.913	0.361	Not Supported
H2c	Perceived Usefulness -> e-WOM Communication	0.279	0.038	7.315	0.000	Supported
H2d	Perceived Ease of Use -> e-WOM Communication	0.222	0.066	3.381	0.001	Supported
H3	e-WOM Communication -> Tourist Decision	0.155	0.043	3.600	0.000	Supported

Coefficient of Determination

Table 8 presents the coefficient of determination results for the two endogenous constructs in the model: e-WOM communication and Tourist Decision. The R-squared value for e-WOM communication is 0.846, indicating that 84.6% of the variance in e-WOM communication can be explained by the exogenous constructs in the model, namely perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use. This high R-squared value suggests that the model has substantial explanatory power for e-WOM communication (Hair et al., 2019), Similarly, the R-squared value for Tourist Decision is 0.851, indicating that 85.1% of the variance in Tourist Decision can be explained by the exogenous constructs and e-WOM communication. This high R-squared value also suggests that the model has substantial explanatory power for Tourist Decision (Hair et al., 2019). The adjusted R-squared values for e-WOM communication (0.844) and Tourist Decision (0.848) are very close to their respective R-squared values, indicating that the model's explanatory power is not artificially inflated by the inclusion of irrelevant predictors (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 8
Coefficient of Determination Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
E-WOM Communication	0.846	0.844
Tourist Decision	0.851	0.848

Predictive Relevance

Table 9 presents the results of the predictive relevance analysis for the endogenous constructs in the model: Tourist Decision and e-WOM communication, The Q2 value for Tourist Decision is 0.659, indicating that the model has a large predictive relevance for this

construct (Hair et al., 2019). This suggests that the exogenous constructs (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and e-WOM communication) effectively predict Tourist Decision. The high predictive relevance underscores the model's ability to capture the key factors influencing tourist decision-making processes (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019) Similarly, the Q2 value for e-WOM communication is 0.460, indicating a moderate to large predictive relevance for this construct (Hair et al., 2019). This suggests that the exogenous constructs (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use) predict e-WOM communication to a considerable extent. The moderately high predictive relevance highlights the model's ability to capture the factors driving e-WOM engagement (Chen & Yang, 2019; Chu & Kim, 2011), the predictive relevance results have important implications for the interpretation of the study's findings. The high Q2 value for Tourist Decision demonstrates that the proposed model not only explains a substantial portion of the variance in this construct (as indicated by the high R2 value) but also has strong predictive power. This lends credibility to the study's findings and suggests that the identified relationships among the constructs are not merely associative but also predictive (Hair et al., 2019), the moderately high Q2 value for e-WOM communication indicates that the model has good predictive power for this construct, in addition to its explanatory power (as indicated by the high R2 value). This further validates the study's findings and highlights the importance of the identified predictors in shaping e-WOM engagement (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019).

Table 9
Result of Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Dependent Variables	**Q^2**
Tourist Decision	0.659
e-WOM Communication	0.460

Mediating Analysis

In this study, the authors investigated the mediating role of e-WOM communication in the relationships between various factors (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use) and Tourist Decision using the indirect method, Table 10 presents the results of the mediation analysis using the indirect method. The tow hypotheses (H4c to H4d) were supported, indicating significant indirect effects of the predictor variables on Tourist Decision through e-WOM communication.

Hypothesis H4c examined the mediating role of e-WOM communication in the relationship between perceived usefulness and Tourist Decision. The results showed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.043$, $t = 3.165$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H14. This finding is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived usefulness influences individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards technology adoption and usage (Davis, 1989). Previous research has also demonstrated the mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between perceived usefulness and tourist decision-making (Chong & Ngai, 2013; Liang et al., 2019), Hypothesis H4d investigated the mediating role of e-WOM communication in the relationship between perceived ease of use and Tourist Decision. The results indicated a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.035$, $t = 2.206$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H15. This finding is also consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived ease of use influences individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards technology adoption and usage

(Davis, 1989). Prior studies have provided evidence for the mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between perceived ease of use and tourist decision-making (Ayeh et al., 2013).

Table 10
Moderation Results Using Indirect Method

Hypotheses	Path Analysis	Beta Value	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Conclusion
H4c	Perceived Usefulness -> e-WOM -> Tourist Decision	0.043	0.014	3.165	0.002	Supported
H4d	Perceived Ease of Use-> e-WOM -> Tourist Decision	0.035	0.016	2.206	0.027	Supported

Discussion of the Results

The relationship between, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and tourist decisions in Jordan. The findings support the hypothesis that perceived usefulness has a significant positive impact on tourist decisions (H1a). This finding is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived usefulness is a key determinant of individuals' adoption and use of technology (Davis, 1989). In the context of e-WOM, perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which tourists believe that the information provided through online platforms will enhance their decision-making process. When tourists perceive e-WOM as useful, they are more likely to rely on it when making travel decisions. The usefulness of e-WOM can be determined by factors such as relevance, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of the information provided (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

Contrary to expectations, the study found that perceived ease of use does not have a significant impact on tourist decisions (H2a). This finding deviates from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived ease of use is a significant predictor of technology adoption and use (Davis, 1989). In the context of e-WOM, perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which tourists believe that accessing and using online information is free of effort. The non-significant relationship between perceived ease of use and tourist decisions may be attributed to the increasing familiarity and proficiency of individuals with online platforms and technologies. As online information search becomes a common practice among tourists, the ease of use may no longer be a critical factor in shaping their decisions (Ayeh et al., 2013), and relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) in the context of Jordan's tourism industry. The findings of this study support the hypotheses (H1b, H2b), indicating that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, have significant relationships with e-WOM communication. These results align with the concepts of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which provide theoretical foundations for understanding the factors influencing individuals' acceptance and use of technology, as well as their information processing and decision-making processes, it is important to note that while the study found significant relationships between the examined factors and e-WOM communication, the strength of these relationships varied. For example, perceived usefulness had stronger relationships with e-WOM communication. This suggests that the impact of these factors on e-WOM engagement may not be uniform, and that certain factors may play a more crucial role in shaping tourists' attitudes and behaviors towards e-WOM.

The relationship between e-WOM and tourist decisions in Jordan. The results support hypothesis (H3), indicating that there is a significant relationship between electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communication and tourist decisions. This finding aligns with the growing body of research highlighting the influential role of e-WOM in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in the tourism industry (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Litvin et al., 2008; Ye et al., 2011), the significance of e-WOM in influencing tourist decisions can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, e-WOM provides a wealth of information about destinations, accommodations, attractions, and services from the perspective of fellow tourists (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). This user-generated content is often perceived as more credible and trustworthy than traditional marketing messages, as it reflects the genuine experiences and opinions of other travelers (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Sparks & Browning, 2011). Consequently, tourists are more likely to rely on e-WOM when making travel-related decisions, as it helps them reduce uncertainty and mitigate potential risks associated with their choices (Bronner & De Hoog, 2011).

The study's findings also highlight the importance of e-WOM for both Jordanian and non-Jordanian tourists. This suggests that the influence of e-WOM on tourist decision-making transcends cultural boundaries and is relevant to both domestic and international visitors. Previous research has shown that cultural factors can influence the way individuals perceive and respond to e-WOM (Fong & Burton, 2008; C. Park & Lee, 2009). However, the consistent impact of e-WOM on tourist decisions across both groups in this study indicates that its influence is pervasive and not limited to specific cultural contexts, It is important to note that while e-WOM plays a significant role in shaping tourist decisions, it is not the sole determinant. Other factors, such as personal preferences, past experiences, and situational constraints, also contribute to the decision-making process (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Additionally, the effectiveness of e-WOM may vary depending on the specific characteristics of the message, such as its valence (positive or negative), volume, and source credibility (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Future research could explore these nuances further to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between e-WOM and tourist decisions.

The findings of this study have important implications for tourism marketers and destination managers in Jordan. Given the significant influence of e-WOM on tourist decisions, it is crucial for these stakeholders to actively monitor and manage their online reputation. This involves encouraging satisfied customers to share their positive experiences through various online platforms, promptly addressing any negative feedback or concerns raised by tourists, and leveraging e-WOM as a valuable source of market intelligence to improve their offerings (Litvin et al., 2008; Ye et al., 2011) , The mediating effect of e-WOM in the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and tourist decisions in Jordan, considering both Jordanian and non-Jordanian tourists. The results of the study provide support for the hypothesized mediating role of e-WOM in these relationships (H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, and H3).

Furthermore, the results indicate that e-WOM mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and tourist decisions (H1a), as well as the relationship between perceived ease of use and tourist decisions (H2a). These findings are in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of technology adoption and usage (Davis, 1989). In the context of e-WOM,

perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which tourists believe that the information obtained through e-WOM will enhance their decision-making process, while perceived ease of use pertains to the effort required to access and utilize e-WOM. When tourists perceive e-WOM as useful and easy to use, they are more likely to engage with it and incorporate the information into their decision-making process. This finding highlights the importance of ensuring that e-WOM platforms are user-friendly and provide relevant and valuable information to tourists (Ayeh et al., 2013).

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study on the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on tourist decisions, contribute to the existing body of knowledge in several ways and have important theoretical implications for researchers in the fields of tourism, marketing, and consumer behavior. First, the study contributes to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by demonstrating the relevance of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in the context of e-WOM and tourist decisions. The results indicate that tourists are more likely to engage with and be influenced by e-WOM when they perceive the online platforms and content to be useful and user-friendly. This finding suggests that researchers should continue to explore the role of technological factors in shaping consumer behavior and decision-making, particularly in the tourism industry, where online information and booking systems are becoming increasingly prevalent.

The study contributes to the literature on e-WOM by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between various factors and tourist decisions. The results show that e-WOM partially mediates the effects of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use on tourist decisions. This finding highlights the central role of e-WOM in the tourist decision-making process and underscores the need for researchers to consider the indirect effects of various factors on consumer behavior through the lens of e-WOM, on the managerial Implications, Managers could ensure that their online platforms, such as websites and social media channels, are user-friendly, informative, and visually appealing. They should provide relevant and up-to-date information about destinations, attractions, accommodations, and transportation options, along with clear instructions and helpful tips. Additionally, managers should invest in mobile-friendly platforms and applications that enable tourists to easily access information and make bookings on the go, also, the study confirms the direct relationship between e-WOM and tourist decisions. Managers should actively monitor and analyze e-WOM across various online platforms, such as review websites, social media channels, and forums, to gain insights into tourists' preferences, expectations, and concerns. They should use this information to improve their offerings, address any issues or complaints, and tailor their marketing messages to specific segments and needs, and reveals the mediating effect of e-WOM in the relationship between various factors (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use) and tourist decisions. Managers should adopt an integrated approach to managing these factors, recognizing their interconnectedness and synergistic effects. For example, they should ensure that their online platforms are not only useful and easy to use but also feature credible and engaging content from trusted sources and satisfied customers.

Lastly, the study has implications for the development of theoretical models and frameworks that aim to explain the impact of e-WOM on consumer behavior. The results suggest that

existing models, such as the TAM Model, can be effectively adapted and extended to the context of e-WOM and tourist decision-making. However, the study also highlights the need for new or revised models that can better capture the complex and dynamic nature of e-WOM and its antecedents and consequences. For example, future research could explore the potential feedback loops between e-WOM and tourist experiences, the role of social influence and network effects in shaping e-WOM, and the impact of e-WOM on long-term consumer loyalty and advocacy.

Conclusion

This study revealed that perceived usefulness had a significant positive impact on tourist decision-making, while perceived ease of use had no direct effect. However, both factors were found to significantly enhance electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) communication. Furthermore, e-WOM was shown to have a strong positive influence on tourist decisions, acting as a key mediator between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and tourist decision-making, based on these findings, tourism providers and destination marketers in Jordan should prioritize improving the perceived usefulness and ease of use of online information to generate positive e-WOM and influence tourist decisions. Additionally, strategies should be developed to encourage tourists to share their experiences online, as e-WOM plays a crucial role in shaping travel choices. Finally, the study recommends further research to explore additional factors that may influence the effectiveness of e-WOM in tourism, with a broader focus on other tourist destinations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing tourist decision-making in the context of Jordan's tourism industry, the primary limitations of the study is the random sampling technique employed. While this non-probability sampling method allowed the researchers to focus on a specific subset of the population (i.e., tourists who actively seek and use online information and e-WOM before making tourism-related decisions in Jordan), it may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader tourist population. Random sampling can introduce bias, as the sample may not be representative of the entire population of interest. Future research should consider employing probability sampling techniques, such as stratified random sampling or cluster sampling, to ensure a more representative sample and enhance the external validity of the findings, another limitation stems from the cross-sectional nature of the study. The data were collected at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the relationships between e-WOM, and tourist decisions. However, the tourism industry and the online environment are dynamic and constantly evolving. Tourist behaviours, preferences, and decision-making processes may change over time, influenced by various factors such as technological advancements, shifts in consumer trends, and global events. Future research should consider adopting a longitudinal approach, collecting data at multiple points in time to capture the temporal dynamics of e-WOM and tourist decisions. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these relationships evolve and how they are affected by changes in the broader context.

The study's focus on Jordan's tourism industry may also limit the generalizability of the findings to other geographical and cultural contexts. While the inclusion of both Jordanian and non-Jordanian tourists in the sample provides some level of diversity, the results may not

be directly applicable to other countries or regions with different cultural norms, technological infrastructures, or tourism landscapes. Future research should replicate this study in various cultural and geographical settings to assess the robustness and transferability of the findings. Cross-cultural comparative studies could also shed light on how the relationships between e-WOM, and tourist decisions vary across different societies and how cultural factors moderate these relationships, the study's focus on e-WOM, while important, may not capture the full complexity of factors influencing tourist decision-making in the digital age. Other variables, such as online advertising, social media marketing, virtual reality experiences, or the influence of artificial intelligence-based recommender systems, may also play a significant role in shaping tourist behaviors and preferences. Future research should consider incorporating a broader range of variables and exploring their interactions with e-WOM to develop a more comprehensive model of tourist decision-making in the digital era, future research could extend the scope of the investigation to include post-purchase evaluations, satisfaction, loyalty, and the likelihood of generating further e-WOM. Understanding how e-WOM influences the entire tourist journey, from pre-purchase information search to post-purchase behaviors, can provide valuable insights for tourism providers and destination marketers in developing targeted strategies to enhance tourist experiences and foster long-term relationships.

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