

# THE INFLUENCE OF eWOM AT @PAIMONFESS ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF VIRTUAL ITEM ON GENSHIN IMPACT IN INDONESIA

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## Abstract

The research background explores how game industries have evolved with free to play game model. Genshin Impact also has gained global attention with its gameplay. In-app purchases have become the main revenue of free to play game model. The big of online community and eWOM have led to the intention of purchasing in-game virtual items. The objective of this research is to measure how much eWOM influence the purchase intention of virtual item in Genshin Impact. This research adopts a quantitative approach by collecting data through surveys via a questionnaire from representative samples. This research found that mediating effects of eWOM Adoption on the influences of eWOM Usefulness and eWOM Credibility on Purchase Intention are all significant. Based on this result to increase the purchase intention of virtual item on Genshin Impact they need to utilizing the role of online community. In order to strengthen the eWOM of Genshin Impact.

*Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth, eWOM, Purchase Intention, Virtual Item*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (2024) shows the increase of internet users in Indonesia by 73.3%. 14.23% of Respondent of the APJII survey state that internet content that is often accessed is online games. This is supported by the frequency of online game players in Indonesia. 46% of people play online games every day. 21% of people play for 3 to 6 days a week. 14% of people play online games sometime in a month (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). The global gross of the mobile gacha game reached approximately 567 million US dollars in the 1st quarter of the year 2022, with Genshin Impact ranked 1st in this category. Genshin Impact, published in 2020 by miHoYo now known as HoYovers has attracted the global market since its launching. As a gacha-based game, Genshin Impact offers a monetization model with virtual item purchases and premium content for players. The success of Genshin Impact is not only because of the attractive gameplay but also because of the digital marketing strategy that utilizes electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to build a good relationship with customers and push players' purchase intention (Angelia et al., 2021).

Research by Chen et al. (2021) state that 93% of customers read online reviews before making a purchase choice, demonstrating the tremendous influence of eWOM in influencing consumer behavior. 85% of people trust internet reviews more than personal recommendations from relatives and friends (Chen et al., 2021). This highlights how powerful peer reviews and recommendations can be, which is especially important in domains like gaming, where player experiences and reviews are widely shared online. In the gaming industry, user-generated material, like as reviews and forum discussions, has a direct impact on purchasing decisions. A study indicated that evaluations with high trustworthiness, helpfulness, and professionalism are more likely to lead to a purchase (Chen et al., 2021). These qualities are common in discussions regarding in-game purchases in Genshin Impact, as players routinely seek opinions on the worth of gacha draws and products before committing money.

The first Genshin Impact community in Indonesia is @paimonfess at X with a total of 115 thousand followers. This community has been active since 2020 and consists of many Genshin Impact players sharing their personal experiences. Gamers use this platform to follow developments in-game news, discuss the strategies of fellow Genshin Impact players, and discuss the latest items in the game. The phenomenon of persistent interest in Genshin Impact, despite a decline after the initial hype, is the

result of the interaction between the periodic content released by the developer and the contributions of active online communities on social media platforms such as Twitter. This community not only functions as users, but also as the main supporter in promoting the game through continuous interaction, user-generated content, and creating hype when new updates are released (Zhao & Shi, 2022). Social media, especially Twitter, has changed the way people interact with games, where they not only play but also build social networks and emotional attachments to the games (Khairunnisa, 2024). This phenomenon reflects how the power of online communities and social media can maintain the popularity of a product over a long period, especially in the gaming industry. Research by Winarno & Indrawati (2022) shows that there is influence of social media marketing and eWOM on consumer purchase intention. In line with research by Indrawati et al. (2023) and Hadi & Indrawati (2024)

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Marketing**

Marketing involves the creation, communication, delivery, and exchange of items that have value for both customers and the company. Customer needs are well defined and there are ways and means adopted to meet the identified needs successfully (Kotler & Armstrong Gary, 2018). According to Kotler & Armstrong Gary (2018) Marketing involves the process of identifying markets, communication, communicating with the market, selling, and building a relationship with the market.

### **2.2 Digital Marketing**

Kannan & Li (2017) stated that digital marketing is characterized as a dynamic, technology-driven process through which companies engage with consumers and partners to collaboratively generate, convey, provide, and maintain value for all stakeholders. They have expanded the meaning of the term from a narrow view of using digital devices in promoting products and services in the markets to a wider meaning of using technologies to acquire customers, branding, and sell them. Digital marketing harnesses value through new customer experiences and interactions with other customers leveraging the numerous digital contacts (Kannan & Li, 2017).

### **2.3 Digital Marketing Communication**

According to Chaffey & Chadwick (2016) digital marketing communication entails the use of technology to convey marketing communication messages to customers. Generally, digital communication is less a one-way process of pushing information by businesses to customers, like traditional media usually is.

### **2.4 Electronic Word of Mouth**

According to Akbari et al. (2022) eWOM or electronic word of mouth refers to an activity of online sharing of opinions and experiences regarding certain products or services. eWOM contains comments, likes, ratings, reviews, tweets, and blog posts that consumers make regarding their satisfaction with a product or service. The rise of internet users has had a big influence on the spread of eWOM where most internet users have social media, that situation allowed eWOM to be shared globally with no time and location constraints.

### **2.5 Information Adoption Model**

According to Cheung et al. (2008) The information Adoption Model (IAM) provides a view of the information presented on the platform that utilizes CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication), which makes it both relevant and fitting for the eWOM research. IAM is a commonly used model to analyze the relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase intention.

### **2.6 Consumer Behavior**

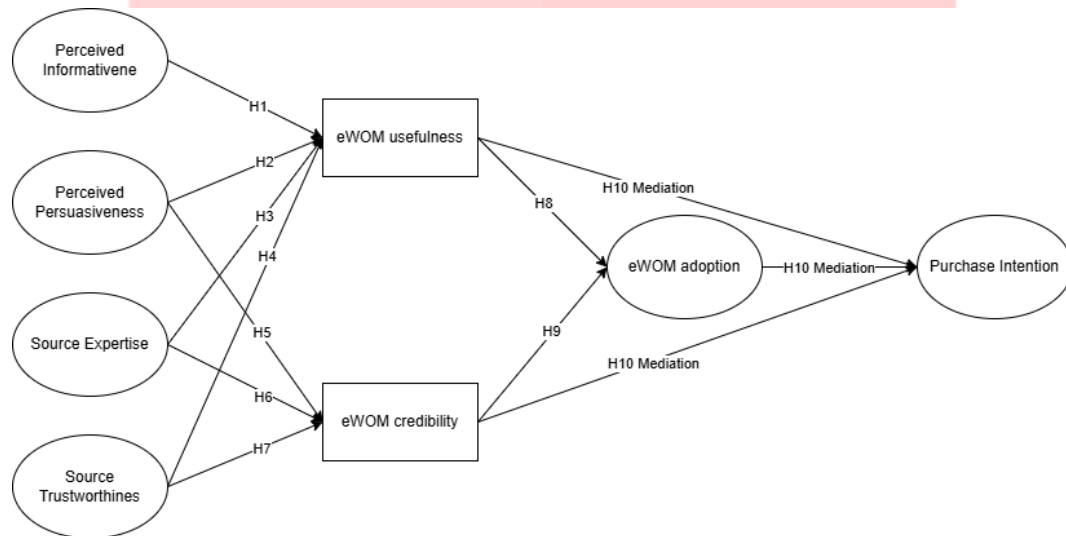
According to Kotler et al. (2022), consumer behavior is understanding how consumers find, decide on, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs. Cultural, social, and personal factors have become some factors that influence customer purchase behavior. Understanding

consumer behavior requires critical psychological processes in which consumers respond to marketing stimuli.

## 2.7 Purchase Intention

According to Mirabi et al., (2015) purchase intention constitutes a component of the decision-making process that examines the rationale for acquiring a certain product. Purchase intention refers to a consumer's desire to acquire a certain goods under given circumstances. Purchase intention works as a predictor of customer behavior and helps marketers make the most efficient strategies to reach their potential customers. The decision to purchase is not only based on spontaneous acts but results from several factors

## 2.8 Theoretical Framework



Author chose to replicate the framework by Tien et al. (2019) in their study titled “Examining the influence of customer-to-customer electronic-word-of-mouth on purchase intention in social networking sites”. The framework is an improvement from Information Adaption Model (IAM). This framework explores how consumers process the information they encounter on Twitter as social media to analyze the relationship between eWOM and the purchase intention of virtual items in Genshin Impact. Therefore, this research will replicate the framework proposed by Tien et al. (2019)

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with questionnaire as the research instrument. Google form are spread towards respondents. Based on the purpose this research is using a causal approach. According to Indrawati (2015) causal research is research conducted to understand which variables are the cause and which variables are the effect and to see the nature of the relationship between the cause and effect variables. The investigation type of this research uses a survey to collect data from respondents using Google Forms. The author didn't intervene in data collection since the author used a questionnaire as a data collection technique. Based on the research setting the research is conducted in a non-contrived setting. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2016) a non-contrived setting is where a study was done in the natural environment and defines how activities operating under it are conducted as is typical. Based on the time horizon, the research is cross-sectional research. According to Indrawati (2015) cross sectional research is when data collection is carried out in one period, then the data is processed, analyzed, and then conclusions are drawn. The population of this research is 115.000 followers of @paimonfess. This research is using purposive sampling in order to meet specific respondent and SEM-PLS as data analysis technique.

According to Hair et al. (2019) PLS-SEM data processing implies a number of steps which have been developed to provide structure and validation to the model. The first step is defining research objectives and selecting constructs. The research process begins by defining the research objectives and selecting constructs, where theoretical models and corresponding indicators are chosen based on the goals of the study. Once the constructs are identified, the next step is to design the study for data collection, considering important factors such as the type of data, whether it is metric or non-metric, how

to handle missing data, and ensuring statistical power, which is influenced by the sample size and model used. PLS-SEM is particularly effective in dealing with non-normal data and can accommodate various types of data. Afterward, the measurement and structural models are specified, with constructs being categorized as exogenous (independent) or endogenous (dependent), and the corresponding indicators (variables) are defined for each latent variable. Unlike CB-SEM, PLS-SEM allows for simultaneous proposal of both measurement and structural models. To assess the validity of the measurement model, reliability analysis, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are conducted to ensure the indicators effectively measure the constructs. PLS-SEM enables the CCA to verify these measurement models through reflective and formative constituents. The next step involves assessing the structural model, where path coefficients are analyzed using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, along with explanatory criteria like  $R^2$ , which indicates the determination or predictive power, and  $Q^2$ , which assesses prediction relevance. Additional analyses, such as mediated, moderated, and multi-group analysis, can be performed to provide further elaboration using PLS-SEM.

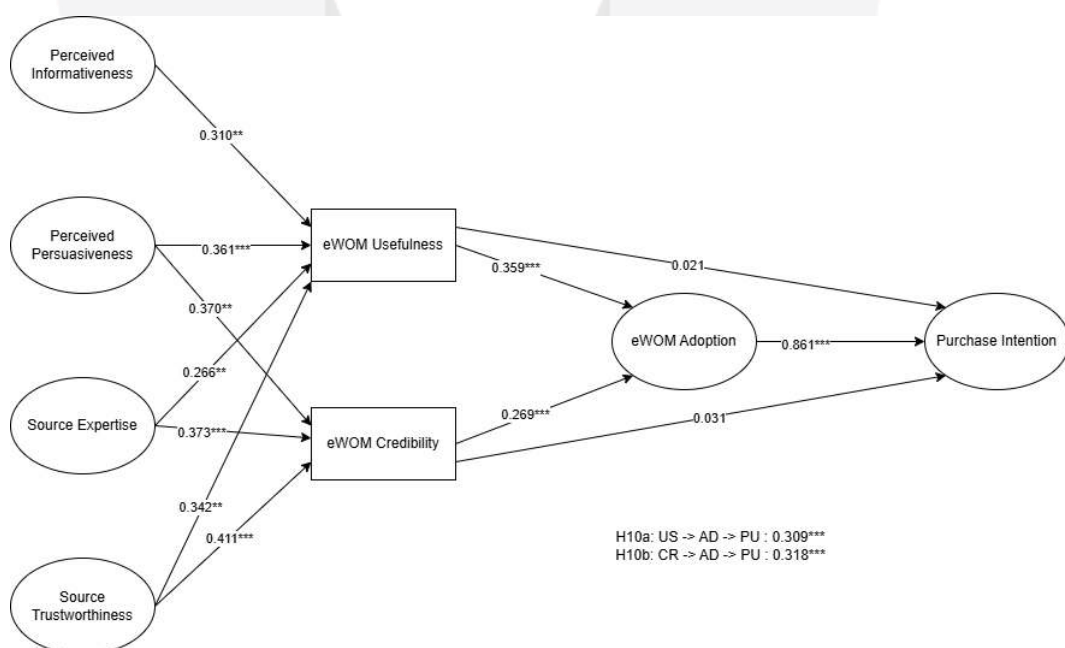
## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Research Characteristics

Respondents of this research are the players of Genshin Impact who follow @paimonfess at Twitter. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 306 respondents. The questionnaire was distributed via a Google Form link which consists of three parts, namely, first, a screening question to ensure that respondents are Genshin Impact players who follow @paimonfess on Twitter. The second is demographic sections contain the respondent's personal data in the form of gender, age, highest level of education, annual income, and estimated Twitter usage. The third part contains a statement regarding the review on @paimonfess which covers several aspects. Respondents were asked to rate the statement on a Likert scale in the form of numbers 1 to 7 with the following conditions: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, and 7= totally agree. Below are the percentage of each demographic result:

- 50,2% female
- 57,8% 18-25 years old
- 69.9% Bachelor Degree
- 33.3% Annual income around IDR 36 million -IDR 60 million
- 58,8% spend 2-5 hours on Twitter
- 53,7% read online review 4-6 times

### 4.2 Result



Perceived Informativeness towards eWOM Usefulness, which shows a T-Value of 3.368 where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.310, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-Value is 0.001 which means significance. Perceived Persuasiveness towards eWOM Usefulness, which shows a T-Value of 3.567 where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.361, which means a positive correlation. Source Expertise towards eWOM Usefulness, which shows a T-Value of 3.374, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.266, which means a positive correlation. Additionally the P-Value is 0.001 which means significance. Source Trustworthiness towards eWOM Usefulness, which shows a T-Value of 3.802, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.342, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-Value is 0.000 which means significance. Perceived Persuasiveness towards eWOM Credibility, which shows a T-Value of 3.390, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.370, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-value is 0.001 which means significance. Source Expertise towards eWOM Credibility, which shows a T-Value of 5.225, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.373, which means a positive correlation. : Source Trustworthiness towards eWOM Credibility, which shows a T-Value of 4.865, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.411, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-Value is 0.000 which means significance. eWOM Usefulness towards eWOM Adoption, which shows a T-Value of 3.565, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.359, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-value is 0.000 which means significance. eWOM Credibility towards eWOM Adoption, which shows a T-Value of 3.389, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.369, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-value is 0.001 which means significance. The first one is eWOM Usefulness to eWOM Adoption to Purchase Intention, which shows a T-Value of 3.367, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.309, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-value is 0.001 which means significance. It can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between eWOM Usefulness to eWOM Adoption to Purchase Intention. The second one is eWOM Credibility to eWOM adoption to Purchase intention, which shows a T-value of 3.553, where indicating its statistical significance. The original sample shows a value of 0.318, which means a positive correlation. Additionally, the P-value is 0.000 which means significance.

### 4.3 Discussion

Hypothesis testing in this study reveals several significant relationships within the @paimonfess community on Twitter, demonstrating the impact of key factors such as Perceived Informativeness, Perceived Persuasiveness, Source Expertise, and Source Trustworthiness on eWOM Usefulness and eWOM Credibility. The findings show that when content shared within the community is considered highly informative, persuasive, and comes from credible or expert sources, it significantly enhances the perceived usefulness and credibility of the eWOM. This, in turn, positively influences the likelihood of adoption by community members. For instance, when the information shared about game tips, character builds, or updates is perceived as valuable and credible, it strengthens the players' trust and engagement within the community. The more relevant and credible the information is, the more likely it is to be adopted by others, reinforcing a cycle of information sharing that drives user participation and engagement. This aligns with the research by Tien et al. (2019) and other studies, emphasizing that source trust, expertise, and the persuasive nature of content play crucial roles in shaping user behavior and interactions within online communities.

In addition to eWOM Usefulness and eWOM Credibility influencing eWOM Adoption, the study also reveals that these factors indirectly affect Purchase Intention. While eWOM Usefulness and eWOM Credibility alone may not directly drive users' purchasing decisions, their influence is mediated by eWOM Adoption. Once community members trust and adopt the shared content, they are more likely to make in-game purchases based on the recommendations and tips shared by others. For example, if a player adopts a recommendation about a new character or item based on credible content from the community, it increases their likelihood of making a purchase. This finding underscores the importance of fostering trust and engagement within the community before expecting tangible effects on purchasing behavior. The mediation effect of eWOM Adoption serves as a bridge that connects useful and credible information to the decision-making process of users, thus playing a critical role in influencing

purchasing intentions. The results also highlight how social influence and community dynamics on platforms like @paimonfess contribute significantly to users' choices, particularly in online communities where personal recommendations and shared experiences hold considerable weight.

Building on these findings, several strategic recommendations can be made to further enhance eWOM within the @paimonfess community and increase user engagement. One effective approach would be implementing an ambassadorship program. By identifying influential players within the community through Social Network Analysis (SNA) and offering them incentives such as in-game currency, early access to new content, or even financial compensation, Genshin Impact could encourage them to generate more content, promote in-game events, and engage with players more effectively. Additionally, an affiliate marketing program could further incentivize influential community members by providing them with unique referral codes or links, rewarding them for driving new players or purchases through their promotions. Another opportunity lies in the creation of exclusive bundles or promotional offers, where Genshin Impact could release special character or weapon bundles that are only available through specific links shared by @paimonfess or other community leaders. This would not only generate excitement within the community but also create a sense of urgency and exclusivity that could drive more purchases.

Moreover, optimizing Twitter campaigns to leverage hashtags and interactive features can increase visibility and foster deeper engagement. Launching official hashtag campaigns such as #GenshinImpactTips or #PaimonfessRecommends would encourage players to share their experiences, recommendations, and tips related to in-game purchases, character builds, and strategies. Offering incentives, like exclusive access or in-game rewards for the best posts, could further drive participation. Twitter's features such as Polls and Threads can also be used to stimulate conversation and engagement. For example, a poll asking the community, "Which character is best for beginners?" could help guide users' decisions and further promote relevant content. These interactive discussions would provide opportunities to direct users toward affiliate links or special offers, reinforcing the adoption of recommendations and potentially driving up sales. Through these strategies, Genshin Impact can enhance its relationship with the @paimonfess community, strengthen its role as a trusted source of information, and further encourage user engagement, ultimately benefiting both the community and the brand.

## 5. SUGGESTION

Based on the findings that eWOM Credibility have highest influence on purchase intention through eWOM Adoption, here are some suggestions that Genshin Impact can do to take advantage of these findings:

Genshin Impact can increase eWOM (electronic Word of Mouth) through ambassadorship programs or affiliate marketing within the community. One step that can be taken is to create an Ambassador program that involves influential players in the community, such as @paimonfess. This program could provide additional benefits or incentives for players who successfully invite others to buy or adopt products or characters in the game. In addition, Genshin Impact could organize special events or offer exclusive bundles that can only be accessed or purchased through links shared by influencers or players trusted by the @paimonfess community. Programs like these will make community members feel more compelled to buy, as they feel they are getting an exclusive offer.

In addition, Genshin Impact can optimize this campaign on Twitter by using hashtags that make it easier for players to share their experiences in purchasing or using items in the game. For example, hashtags such as #GenshinImpactTips or #PaimonfessRecommends can be used to collect various player recommendations and experiences that can become useful eWOM for other players. In this way, Genshin Impact not only expands its marketing reach but also encourages active involvement from the community in promoting products or content they love.

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