

# The Impact Of Electronic Word Of Mouth On Intention To Travel

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**Abstract:** the purpose of this study is to identify the impact of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on intention to travel in tourism field. Three main dimensions were considered to represent the e-WOM (Quality, Quantity, and Trust). The research used quantitative method and analytical descriptive approach which was executed through distributing a research questionnaire designed through google drive forms tool, dedicated for the followers and active users of social platforms (Facebook, twitter, and Instagram). 522 responses were submitted for the questionnaire, 484 questionnaires were accepted, which constitute a response rate of 93% were used in the statistical analysis, and (38) questionnaires were found to be invalid. The research used the following statistical analysis methods which included: Mean and standard deviation, Simple regression, multiple regression, Person correlation (R), ( $\beta$ ) value, (T) value, (F) value analysis, Multicollinearity test, and Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The research results showed that the e-WOM (quality, quantity, and trust) has a positive impact on the intention to travel, the highest impact was for the e-WOM quantity, and the lowest impact was for the e-WOM trust.

**Index Terms:** E-WOM, E-WOM quality, E-WOM Quantity, E-WOM Trust, Intention to Travel.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the nature of tourism it is considered a complex sector for customers because of the difficulty of determining and measuring the level of products quality unless they tried it. Furthermore, this fact leads to increase the doubts of customers in choosing and deciding the options and locations of travel places (Liu and Park, 2015). Companies started to have new digital channels for communicating with their customers based on the growth and development of the internet, information and communication technology (Salehi et al., 2012). Most of firms agreed that electronic marketing (e-marketing) is playing a main role on enhancing business overall performance because of it is impact directly on customers (Eid and El-Gohary, 2013). E-marketing became one of the most popular and important sectors of electronic commerce (e-commerce) because of its ways in showing and representing firms' products and services. Most of researches defined the e-marketing main types as: content marketing, social media marketing, and the marketing of affiliating, etc. (Hudak M. et al., 2017; Hanandeh A, 2017). Word of mouth is one of the most important and efficient tools sought out by firms with the goal of increasing the customer's attention to their products and services (Skudiene V. et al., 2015). In our days, electronic word of mouth is defined as one of the most important information resources for firms, and valuable, and certified resources of information for customers (Abu-Bakr M. and Ilkan M., 2016). E-WOM has the capability to decrease threats, and any doubt related to goods, products, and services (Casaló et al., 2015). Most firms started to focus on using e-WOM as an efficient tool that affects sales and marketing performance because of the positive and strong impact of e-WOM on fields of industries such as: restaurants,

telecommunications, entertainment, tourism etc. (Casaló et al., 2015). A lot of researches focused on tourism field; because it is a strong sector that affects the country's GDP (gross domestic product) (Casaló et al., 2015; Abubakar and Ilkan, 2016). Tourism firms started to pay attention to providing information about touristic locations for customers in order to make the process of choosing a location easier (Abu-Bakr M., 2016). Abu-Bakr M. (2016)., summarized that more than 67% of travelers in United States use internet websites and mobile applications in order to get all of the needed information about the places they are intending to visit. A lot of researchers suggested making more studies in the field of tourism especially regarding the intention to travel because of the unclear and ambiguous parts in the field of travel hence the need for more researches and studies (Casaló et al., 2015; Abu-Bakr M., 2016; Yan Q. et al., 2016). In addition, other researches give more recommendations to study the electronic word of mouth and the reason lies on the field of e-WOM which is still scarce, and they need to pay more attention to it in order to provide comprehensive information for future research, experts and users (Albarq A., 2014). Therefore, researchers suggest to measure the impacts of e-WOM on the capabilities of intention to travel. Finally, tourists acquire information about travels from their relatives, families, and friends' who exist on social networks (Casaló et al., 2015). This research starts through focusing on the impact of electronic word of mouth on the customers' intentions to travel by taking into account the interactions between users on social platforms. In addition, the impacts of electronic word of mouth on social websites is presented in this research as the main key point to measure their impacts on the intention to travel. The impact of electronic word of mouth on travel sector has been the subject of several studies before (Albarq A., 2014; Abu-Bakr M. and Ilkan M., 2016; Gomaa A. and El-Masry A., 2016; Qiang Y. et al., 2018). Previous studies had been studying the electronic word of mouth variables impact on the tourism sector, and they all suggested in their future recommendations that this field stills need more research because of its complex nature.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Today's internet revolution plays a main role in changing people's way of living. The revolution started when the usage of Web 2.0, Web 3.0 has become Web 4.0. Mainly, Internet

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gave users the ability to share with others their information, life styles, opinions, experiences, and demands (Vernuccio, 2014). The business sector understood the role and effectiveness of using internet in order to improve their relationship with their customers based on the fact that more than 51% started to use internet digital life as a method for achieving business goals (Vernuccio, 2014). Most of researches defined the internet as set of communication tools, methods, and strategies which used to improve the relationship between users (Hanandeh A. et al., 2015). Using social media recently spread widely between users as a new digital information portal which is used for answers and explanations regarding any new queries (Hanandeh A. et al., 2015). Ramsaran F. and Fowdar (2013), defined the e-marketing concept as the using digital methods, tools, applications, and websites for managing the relationships with customers through making the processes of exchanging and communications easier in the goal of increasing the customer's satisfaction and retention. Recently firms started to focus in using e-marketing as an effective method for being close to their customers especially for firms because they need to be always available when their customers' needs help. (Anjum et al., 2012). Firms understood the importance of the fifth generation of the Internet in enhancing the digital economy and contribute in the improvement of most sectors (Awwad M. and Al-Jaafreh S., 2015).

## 2.1 Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM)

E-WOM is set of channels which are used for communicating with people who send negative and positive feedback about firm's products and services. (Weerawit L. and Panjakajornsak V., 2014). Gupta and Harris (2010), explained that firms started to use e-WOM based on the revolution, growth, and development of internet technology. E-WOM became a portal for most of people which has been used for sharing, their opinion, feedback, suggestions, recommendations, and complains about their products and services which effects changed the using of WOM to the use of e-WOM (Weerawit L. and Panjakajornsak V., 2014). Focusing on e-WOM can effect on customers behavior and attitudes which is increases the percentage of buying some categories of products (Casalo et al., 2015). The usage of e-WOM focuses heavily on the applications and platforms of social media based on using tools for interacting online, and on the reports that most users are directly affected by online reviews and comments in the most sectors such as: Restaurants, retail, real estate, fashion, technology, accessories, and tourism (Ladhari R. and Michaud M, 2015). By taking to the strength and power of using e-WOM as an example, recent studies claimed that the benefits of customer's feedback and comments were more impressive than the companies itself based on the proportion of credibility, integrity and impartiality (Ladhari R. and Michaud M, 2015). The strength and power of e-WOM lies on the fact that each day more than one million people tune in to read any online review about specific products and they interact with each other's which affects and influences their decision making process (Erkan I. and Evans C., 2016). All credit goes back directly to the usage of e-WOM which gave users the ability to understand the reliability of the information that they read daily, and enhance their self-knowledge (Hanandeh A., 2018). According to Hennig T. et al. (2004), marketing professionals need to pay more attention to e-WOM communications. Moreover, the e-WOM concept seems to be the cornerstone of

the promotional mix (Kim et al., 2017). A lot of customers preferred reading suggestions given by experienced customers before buying certain types of products or services, especially those related to product information in general, opinions given by experienced customers were found to significantly have an effect on new customers' purchasing and decision-making (Senecal S. and Nantel J., 2004). While many customers search for comments about products and services online during pre-purchasing stage, a lot of customers also share opinions both positive and negative about their experience of using the product or service online at the post purchasing stage (Frambach R. et al., 2007). Throughout direct and continuous interaction with customers; marketers can drive customers to carry out more effective e-WOM behaviors from different platforms (Taylor D. et al., 2011; Hanandeh A, 2017).

### 2.1.1 E-WOM Quality

Bhattacharjee A. (2006), defined the e-WOM as the convincing power of comments rooted in an informational message. the information quality that is available online in the goal of it is related to the objective, the percentage of understanding and accuracy, and the level of significance which gives most users the ability to build their plans based on the information usefulness (Delone H. and McLean R., 2003; Lizbeth L., 2016). The importance of e-WOM quality appears in the quality of user's reviews, most users study the measures of how the reviews quality is logical, can be trusted, and real (Park et al., 2008).

### 2.1.2 E-WOM Quantity

Lizbeth L., (2016), described e-WOM quantity as the total number of reviewers and comments which posted online. The amount of information customers received effect on customers' decisions to purchase products and services (Lee et al., 2008). The importance of e-WOM quantity is considered an evidence for representing product's performance within the market (Chevalier A. and Mayzlin D., 2006; Chinho L. et al., 2013).

### 2.1.3 E-WOM Trust

The concept of e-WOM trust is one of the most important and critical online variables which refers to defining and verifying online users identity, digital products, and the protection of users (Brenngman M. and Karimov P., 2012). Customers perceive interpersonal communication about products and services as more dependable sources of information than marketer-generated content (Mangold G. and Faulds J., 2009).

## 2.2 Intention to Travel

intention to travel is the appearance of the desire to visit specific place, calculating the travel expenses, and collecting all the information based on opinions of strangers collected either from online-WOM of the social interaction between users on social websites, or from travel agencies and blogs (Yu-Chen C., 2014). According to the literatures, purchase intention is one of the most prominent and popular variables resulting from e-WOM communication (Sher J. and Lee H., 2009; Lee, J. et al., 2009).

## 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research aims to measuring the impact and effects of e-WOM (quality, quantity, and trust) on the intention to travel.

Previous studies had been studying the electronic word of mouth variables impact on the tourism sector, and they all

**TABLE 1**

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS BASED ON SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, AND TWITTER).

	TYPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE
1	FACEBOOK	349 - 72.1%
2	INSTAGRAM	73 - 15.1%
3	SNAPCHAT	39 - 8.1%
4	TWITTER	23 - 4.8%

suggested in their future recommendations that this field stills need more research because of its complex nature. In order to solve the research main problem, the following questions are suggested:

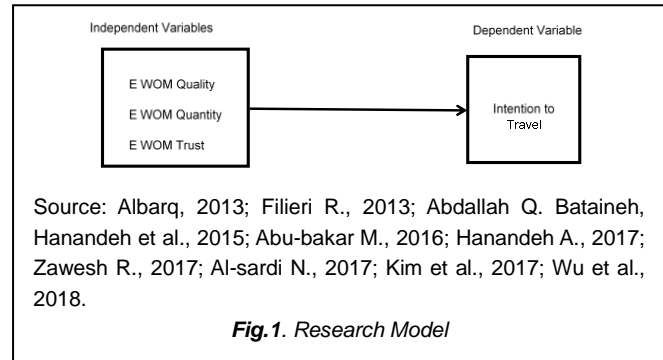
- Q1. Is there an impact of e-WOM quality on intention to travel?
- Q2. Is there an impact of e-WOM quantity on intention to travel?
- Q3. Is there an impact of Trust on intention to travel?

**TABLE 2**

LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS FOR THE FIRST MAIN (FIRST SUB HYPOTHESIS)

Model	Independent Variable	Person Correlation (R)	(β) Value	t value	Sig. t	F value	p-value Sig. F	Hypothesis Support
Model	e-WOM Quality	0.452 Sig. = 0.000	0.478	11.111	0.000	123.454	0.000	Reject H0-sub1
$R^2=0.204$								

Based on the fact that there are huge researches in this field and a good knowledge related with the impact of e-WOM on the travel sector. But it is clear that there is a lack of researches in Arab studies. This research will enter deeply in studying the impact of e-WOM (Quality, Quantity, and trust) on the intention to travel. The elements of e-WOM before are representing the independent variables of this research, and the intention to travel is representing the dependent variable. This research conducted and applied in Jordan, because the research in travel sector especially the impact of social networking interaction and e-WOM impact still need more attention and cares. For that, student have to think before choosing the place for making the case study if there are any researches. Finally, the research chose the followers and active users on social websites (Facebook, twitter, and Instagram) to be the population of this research. Based on thorough literature review related to electronic word of mouth theories and practices through social networking sites; the researcher suggested this conceptual model to define and establish the relationship between the research variable:



**4 RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used quantitative paradigm e.g., survey and quantitative analysis as well as descriptive and analytical approach in order to examine the impact of the independent variables e-WOM quality, e-WOM quantity and trust, on the dependent variable intention to travel. The population of this research was all individuals in Jordan who are followers and active in using social websites (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). This research converted the research questionnaire to become an online one through using google drive forms, and then it published on Facebook, twitter, and Instagram. The study concerned the opinions of people in Jordan who are interested in the tourism sector and who use social networking sites as a source of information for travel. The research uses a sample which consist of 522 responses were submitted for the questionnaire, 484 questionnaires were accepted, which constitute a response rate of 93% were used in the statistical analysis, and (38) questionnaires were found to be invalid. The research questionnaire guaranteed to all respondent that there answers will be confidential and will be used only for analyzed and reported. Any question not related to the subject of the research has been cancelled and eliminated in the goal of getting accurate results. Furthermore, this research used the following tools for testing, proving or disproving the research's main hypothesis: 1. Mean and standard deviation for explaining the answers of respondents for each questionnaire. 2. Simple regression for measuring the direct impact of each independent variables in this research on the dependent variable. 3. Multiple regression for measuring which factor of all factors has the greatest impact on the dependent variable. 4. Person correlation (R), (β) value, (T) value, F value analysis techniques which are used for proving or disproving hypothesis. 5. Multicollinearity test which is used to determine the similarity between independent variables of this research. Lastly the SPSS application has been used for analyzing all respondents' answers. The research responses to questionnaires were divided as shown in the table below:

**5 DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTS**

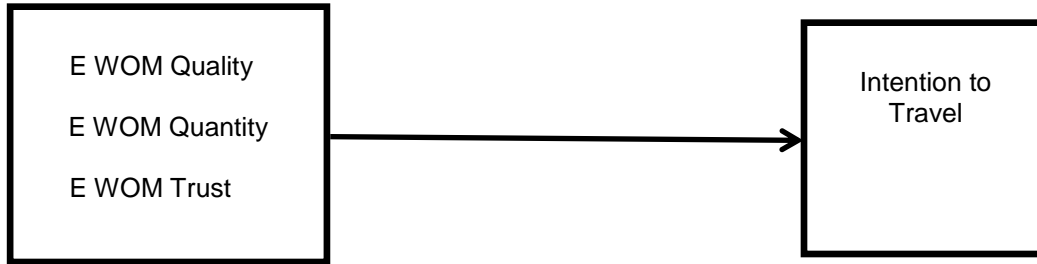
The researcher applies linear regression to test the hypothesis, and the results were as follows:  
 H0-sub1: There is no significant direct impact of e-WOM quality on the intention to travel at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).  
 Ha-sub1: There is a significant direct impact of e-WOM quality on the intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

The results from table 2 shows that:

-The relationship between the independent variable e-WOM Quality and the dependent variable Intention to Travel was a

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



**Figure (1): Research Model**

Developed by the researcher based on previous studies (Albarq, 2013; Filieri R., 2013; Abdallah Q. Bataineh, Hanandeh et al., 2015; Abu-bakar M., 2016; Hanandeh A., 2017; Zawesh R., 2017; Al-sardi N., 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018).

medium positive significant relationship where the value of person correlation was equal to (0.452).

-The value of determination coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>=0.204), which means that the e-WOM Quality can explain 20.4% of the change in the dependent variable Intention to Travel and that is a weak percentage. (Note that a determination coefficient of 0.60 or higher is considered "big percentage" in most social science research situations).

-Also there is a significant direct impact of the independent variable e-WOM Quality on the dependent variable Intention to Travel, with the p-value equals to 0.000 which is less than 5% (the significant level), so we reject the null hypothesis.

H0-sub2: There is no significant direct impact of e-WOM quantity on the intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

Ha-sub2: There is a significant direct impact of e-WOM quantity on the intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

The results from table 3 shows that:

-The relationship between the independent variable e-WOM Quantity and the dependent variable Intention to Travel was a strong positive significant relationship where the value of person correlation was equal to (0.656).

-The value of determination coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>=0.430), which means that the e-WOM Quantity can explain 43% of the change in the dependent variable Intention to Travel and that is a good percentage.

-Furthermore, there is a significant direct impact of the independent variable e-WOM Quantity on the dependent variable Intention to Travel, with the p-value equals to 0.000 which is less than 5% (the significant level), so we reject the null hypothesis.

H0-sub3: There is no significant direct impact of e-WOM trust on the intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

Ha-sub3: There is a significant direct impact of e-WOM trust on the intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

The results from table 4 shows that:

**TABLE 3**

*LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS FOR THE FIRST MAIN HYPOTHESIS (SECOND SUB-HYPOTHESIS)*

Model	Independent Variable	Person Correlation (R)	( $\beta$ ) Value	t value	Sig. t	F value	P-value Sig. F	Hypothesis Support
Model	e-WOM Quantity	0.656 Sig. = 0.000	0.689	19.087	0.000	364.312	0.000	Reject H0-sub2
R <sup>2</sup> =0.430								

The relationship between the independent variable e-WOM Trust and the dependent variable Intention to Travel was a strong positive significant relationship where the value of person correlation was equal to (0.606).

-The value of determination coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>=0.367), which means that the e-WOM Trust can explain 36.7% of the change

**TABLE 4**

*LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS FOR THE FIRST MAIN HYPOTHESIS (THIRD SUB-HYPOTHESIS)*

Model	Independent Variable	Person Correlation (R)	( $\beta$ ) Value	t value	Sig. t	F value	P-value Sig. F	Hypothesis Support
Model	e-WOM Trust	0.606 Sig. = 0.000	0.612	16.728	0.000	279.927	0.000	Reject H0-sub3
R <sup>2</sup> =0.367								

in the dependent variable Intention to Travel and we can say that is a good percentage.

-Also there is a significant direct impact of the independent variable e-WOM Trust on the dependent variable Intention to Travel, with the p-value equals to 0.000 which is less than 5% (the significant level), so we reject the null hypothesis.

The results based on tables 5 shows that:

-There is a statistically significant direct impact of e-WOM quality, e-WOM quantity and e-WOM trust on intention to travel at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ , and the p-value was equal to 0.000 which is less than 5% (the significant level), so we reject the null.

-The independent variable can explain 49.9% of the change in

**TABLE 5**

LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS FOR THE FIRST THREE MAIN HYPOTHESIS

Model	Independent Variable	Person Correlation (R)	( $\beta$ ) Value	t value	Sig. t	F value	P-value Sig. F	Hypothesis Support
Model	e-WOM Quality	0.452 Sig. = 0.000	-0.021	-0.460	0.645	159.567	0.000	Reject $H_{0-main1}$
	e-WOM Quantity	0.656 Sig. = 0.000	0.486	10.792	0.000			
	e-WOM Trust	0.606 Sig. = 0.000	0.341	7.603	0.000			

the dependent variable Intention to Travel and that is a medium percentage, where the value of determination coefficient ( $R^2=0.499$ ).

-The table above shows that each of the independents variables (e-WOM Quality, e-WOM Quantity and e-WOM Trust) has a significant positive relationship with dependent variable Intention to Travel, and the highest relationship was with the e-WOM Quantity.

-The e-WOM Quantity has also the highest impact on Intention to Travel, were B value is 0.486, then comes (e-WOM Trust and E-WOM Quality) respectively, with B values (0.138, 0.341 and 0.021).

## 9 DISCUSSION

The research results indicates that there is significant impact of e-WOM (quality, quantity, and trust) on the intention to travel in tourism field for followers and active users of social media networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) in Jordan. The most effective dimension among e-WOM dimensions in effecting the intention to travel based on the statistical analysis was the e-WOM Quantity, then the e-WOM Quality, then the e-WOM trust.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Studying the impact of e-WOM factors on intention to travel successful is essential to help travelers to have more specific and accurate information about places, travel expenses, which collected either from online-WOM of the social interaction between users on social websites, or from travel agencies and

blogs. The research contributions is: given future research with more information about the role of e-WOM factors on intention to travel. The outcome of this research is considered reliable and consistent with many other studies and reviews conducted in the same field. Finally, the research recommended other studies to focus more on studying the impact of other dimensions of e-WOM instead of (quality quantity, and trust) in the intention to travel, focusing more in studying the impact of travel costs in the intention to travel, and entering deeply on measuring the impact of quality and information, the destination of travel place, and the flexibility of the information on the intention to travel.

## 8 APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The research questionnaire aims to know your opinions about the impact of electronic word of mouth on intention to travel. Kindly note: all the collected information given by respondents have been used for academic purpose in order to make respondents feel free to fill up the questionnaire.

1.	In social media, the quality of online comments about tourism are clear.
2.	In social media, the quality of online comments about tourism can be helpful.
3.	In social media, the quality of online comments about tourism is understandable.
4.	In social media, the quality of online comments should be up-to-date.
5.	In social media, the quality of online comments are accurate.
6.	In the field of tourism the number of online comments on social media is large.
7.	The number of comments in the field of tourism on social media websites are increases the customer's attraction to a specific place.
8.	The number of online comments enhances travelers' confidence in his decision making.
9.	The number of online comments about travel decreases mistakes of choosing place to travel
10.	The number of online comments help in choosing the best place to travel.
11.	In social media, people who posted comments in the field of tourism are trustworthy.
12.	In social media, people who posted comments in the field of tourism have already travelled to these tourist sites.
13.	Social media gives people the ability for writing their comments and opinions impartially.
14.	In social media, feedback from individuals who travel reduces the percentage of doubt for individuals who planning to travel.
15.	In social media, the EWOM could increase the willing to discover new places for travelling.
16.	In social media, the EWOM could encourage people for traveling.
17.	Based on online comments in social media, the EWOM could help people for spend their vacations with best cost.
18.	In field of tourism, the EWOM on multimedia play a main role in increase the intention to travel for people.

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