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The impact of word-of-mouth communication on purchasing cosmetic products in social media

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Abstract. The spread of social media has altered consumers' purchasing behaviour, with social media posts playing a significant role in influencing consumers' decisions to buy or not to buy a product. The aim of this research is to examine the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through the Instagram platform on the intention to purchase cosmetic products. The study is anchored on consumer behaviour theory. The hypotheses proposed in this research were tested on 505 consumers who had engaged in cosmetic product transactions on Instagram. To analyse the collected data, structural equation modelling and confirmatory factor analysis were used. The results indicate that perceived eWOM credibility and information quality significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards eWOM and their purchase intentions. Product involvement was also found to mediate the effects of eWOM credibility and information quality on attitudes towards eWOM. Specifically, as consumers' involvement with cosmetic products increases, the effects of eWOM credibility and information quality on attitudes towards online recommendations become stronger. These findings provide practical insights for cosmetic retailers seeking to better understand consumer preferences and purchase intentions and strengthen their competitive position.

Keywords: electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM); social media; cosmetic products; communication; purchase intention.

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Влияние сарафанного маркетинга на потребительский выбор косметических товаров в социальных сетях

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Аннотация. Распространение социальных медиа трансформировало поведение потребителей и превратило публикации в социальных сетях в один из ключевых инструментов управления покупательскими предпочтениями. Цель исследования – на примере платформы Instagram¹ изучить влияние электронного сарафанного маркетинга (eWOM) на решение пользователей о приобретении косметических продуктов. Методологическая основа работы представлена теорией потребительского поведения. Методы исследования – моделирование структурными уравнениями, подтверждающий факторный анализ. Эмпирическая база сформирована на основе данных онлайн-опроса 505 покупателей косметических товаров в Instagram. Результаты анализа показывают, что воспринимаемая надежность и качество электронных рекомендаций оказывают статистически значимое влияние на отношение потребителей к eWOM и на их намерение приобретать косметическую продукцию. Личная заинтересованность потребителей в продукте выполняет опосредующую (медиаторную) роль во взаимосвязи между надежностью и качеством электронных рекомендаций и отношением к ним. Таким образом, чем выше потребительская вовлеченность в продукт, тем сильнее надежность и качество eWOM способствуют формированию положительного отношения к электронным рекомендациям. Выводы исследования могут быть полезны ритейлерам косметической продукции, стремящимся повысить свою конкурентоспособность на рынке за счет более глубокого понимания потребительских предпочтений и покупательских намерений.

Ключевые слова: электронный сарафанный маркетинг (eWOM); социальные медиа; косметические продукты; коммуникация; покупательское намерение.

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¹ Instagram принадлежит компании Meta, признанной экстремистской организацией и запрещенной в Российской Федерации.

INTRODUCTION

Social networks have become a new virtual reality in an increasingly integrated and technological world. Their popularity has encouraged the growth of content creation, which forms the basis of social interactions, motivating individuals to shape and share opinions on the Internet [Filiari et al., 2021; Çelik, 2021]. The emergence of online media channels supported by mobile devices has reduced interest in traditional media channels [Chatterjee, Kar, Dwivedi, 2022]. The number and popularity of social networking sites are rapidly increasing, with a notable and common feature being that users span all age groups [Çelik, Bora, 2021]. Social networking sites play a central role in how people communicate with each other and form connections, among other reasons are communication, entertainment, learning, social interaction, and emotional support [Alan, 2019]. Social media facilitates interpersonal communication, enabling individuals to engage in interactive discourse with a diverse range of connections. The content shared by users, showcasing the positive aspects of their lives, can significantly influence the perceptions of others regarding personal or brand identities [Çelik, Taş, 2021b].

While the motivations of consumers engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication may not always be commercial, it is widely accepted that these activities often include brand / product / place / business names, influencing the perception of commercial entities or their products [Wolny, Mueller, 2013, p. 564]. Word-of-mouth communication is a crucial source of information for consumers and forms the basis of interpersonal communication. Consumers are significantly influenced by WOM communication in the process of evaluating and deciding to purchase products [Zorlu, Uzgören, 2020]. The primary benefit of such communication is providing information generated by users about products and services [Jain, Dixit, Shukla, 2022]. Electronic WOM communication is a significant force that guides consumers' attitudes and behaviours, playing a crucial role in every stage of the purchasing decision process, especially in information search, alternative evaluation, and decision-making stages [Özbay, 2013, p. 90]. Word-of-mouth is considered one of the most powerful methods for making quick decisions and dominating the market. In marketing, the fundamental success lies in influencing customers' decisions in the process of purchasing products and services. Quick decision-making influences positioning in the marketing process, image creation, value addition, customer satisfaction, warranty, and leaving a product behind [Silverman, 2007].

Instagram has recently become a platform, where sellers conduct marketing activities for their products. Businesses can share visuals and videos of their products on Instagram, reaching audiences with shared product features and information. Through the tagging method, users can search for products of interest, contribute to

their spread by sharing on other users' pages, and reach wider audiences [Yilmazsoy, 2019]. Instagram is a preferred social network for anyone interested in beauty and personal care content, constantly updating to cater to this audience. It allows users to view products and brands through photos, videos, direct messages, live broadcasts, stories, and tags [Herrando, Martín-De Hoyos, 2022]. Due to numerous cosmetic-related comments on social networks, it is difficult for consumers to consider all recommendations provided by other users, and information conveyed through WOM communication may not influence them [Onofrei, Filiari, Kennedy, 2022]. Taking care of one's appearance is a daily necessity that directs consumers to search for cosmetic products [Choi, Lee, 2019].

Consumer behaviour refers to those decisions and activities of consumers related to the purchase and use of economic products and services. Consumer activities in this process can have physical, mental, and emotional qualities. The study of consumer behaviour focuses on how consumers use their limited resources, such as money, time, and energy, to meet their needs [Odabaşı, Barış, 2014, p. 29]. Understanding consumer motivation, which explains why people make purchases, is essential in a changing world with changing consumer behaviours. Consumer behaviours evolve at different life stages, and the fundamental consumer personality that guides these behaviours develops over time [Karakuş, 2022].

Instagram, one of the most popular mobile applications, has recently become very popular worldwide for shopping as well. According to the research conducted by We Are Social¹, the global population spent an average of 12 hours per month on the Instagram application in 2023. For Türkiye, it was identified as 21.4 hr, Argentina – 17.6 hr, India – 14.9 hr, Russia – 9.6 hr, the USA – 7.7 hr, South Africa – 6.1 hr, worldwide – 12.0 hr.

The cosmetic industry exhibits a diverse and complex structure. Content creators with a significant following on Instagram frequently share numerous posts, particularly related to cosmetic products. Considering the investigation of consumers' purchasing intentions towards these posts and their inclusion within the scope of eWOM communication, it is recognized as a relevant research topic. Additionally, understanding how comments made by Instagram users about cosmetic products influence the purchasing intentions of other users constitutes an important area of research. Furthermore, individuals tend to explore products they consider purchasing by discovering them on social media platforms such as Instagram. Therefore, examining the impact of Instagram on the purchasing intentions of cosmetic products is considered an important research subject. In light of all this information, this study aims to analyse the influence of eWOM

¹ We Are Social. (2023). The changing world of digital in 2023. <https://wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2023/01/the-changing-world-of-digital-in-2023/>.

on the purchasing intentions of cosmetic products on Instagram. It also determines how the credibility and quality of eWOM affect consumers' attitudes and purchasing intentions. The impact of eWOM credibility on cosmetics purchase intention is examined in relation to the variables of eWOM information quality, cosmetic product involvement, and attitude towards eWOM.

In the study, the introduction provides general information about social networks and online shopping. The subsequent section discusses relevant studies in the literature, followed by the presentation of the designed model and associated hypotheses. Finally, the research concludes by explaining the methodology, findings, and results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of gender or social class, the increasing self-esteem and self-love contribute to the growing interest in cosmetic products. This outcome can be associated with social networks [Septianto, Kemper, Choi, 2020]. Social media has become a significant means of integrated communication, facilitating news and information exchange and production, and enhancing connections among friends [Dong, Lian, 2021]. Online consumer purchase intention, limited to the context of online shopping, has been approached by disregarding hedonic and utilitarian features in the literature [Zanjani, Milne, Miller, 2016]. Consumers' perceptions and positioning of products sold in online social media marketing vary. Purchase desires and intentions are stimulated by numerous factors: through online social media marketing, hedonic value, emotional responses during product trials, attitude formation, and future usage have a significant impact. For instance, a study conducted on 257 TikTok consumers in China concluded that hedonic value and utilitarian value are positively related to consumer purchase intention [Zhang, Zhang, Daim, 2023]. The majority of studies focus on measuring and exploring the direct impact of online social media marketing on buyer behaviour in terms of interaction, perceived risk, personalization, urgency, information, entertainment, and trendiness [Seo, Park, 2018]. Research has shown that consumers using online platforms are prone to eWOM communication [Sharipudin et al., 2023]. Some studies suggest that in information-intensive environments like the Internet, consumers may tend to seek the opinions of other consumers to identify and manage potential risks related to their purchase decisions [Bayraktaroğlu, Aykol, 2008, p. 62].

In the literature, it has been found that eWOM is effective on the intention to purchase fashion products [Saleem, Ellahi, 2017], the reliability of reviews affects purchasing behaviour [Durmaz, Yüksel, 2017], brand image positively influences consumers' word-of-mouth communication behaviour [Anggraeni, Rachmanita, 2015], the attitude towards using mobile shopping applications affects the intention to continue using these applications

[Çelik, Taş, 2021a], the emotional and symbolic messages conveyed by brands strongly affect positive communication [Kurtoğlu, Sönmez, 2016], and electronic word-of-mouth communication influences purchase intention [Yusuf, Che Hussin, Busalim, 2018].

These studies are generally focused on social networks and have been included in the proposed model to provide theoretical background. Unlike the mentioned studies, this research combines WOM communication with Instagram for purchase intention and is presented through a structural equation model.

Conceptual model. Attitude can be defined as an individual's tendency to respond positively or negatively to an object or situation based on their knowledge and experience [Zainal, Harun, Lily, 2017]. If consumers have positive attitudes, the information on Instagram can play a significant role in their preferences and predict their purchase interests [Nosita, Lestari, 2019]. Accuracy refers to the user's perception of the accuracy of information. Completeness indicates the level of completeness and detail in the review. However, various factors such as the informativeness and clarity of the reviews are also seen as elements determining the quality [Zorlu, Uzgören, 2020]. In other words, when consumers find information reliable and secure, they tend to develop a positive attitude towards cosmetic products.

H1: *eWOM credibility on cosmetics on Instagram significantly and positively affects attitude towards eWOM.*

It is indicated that when there is limited information about a product, eWOM information obtained from other consumers can be more persuasive and successful [Munukka, Uusitalo, Toivonen, 2016]. The quality of information shared on social networks can determine the success of communication between the sender and the receiver when found useful [Tien, Rivas, Liao, 2019]. eWOM information about cosmetic products that require high consumer involvement may have an impact on the attitudes of cosmetic consumers. Clear and accurate information can define a consumer's attitude towards a specific cosmetic product.

H2: *eWOM information quality regarding cosmetic products on Instagram significantly and positively affects attitudes towards eWOM.*

The level of interest in a product is thought to create persuasive communication that can influence the attitudes of other consumers [Choi, Lee, 2019]. In certain industries, such as cosmetics, an individual's opinion is considered effective in reaching the target audience and conveying credibility. Through continuous experiences and interactions with a product, it can meet consumer expectations [Hsu, 2022]. Source credibility encompasses expertise, trustworthiness, and source experience. Expertise represents the professional knowledge that the information source possesses regarding products or services. Trustworthiness is the degree of trust and approval developed by the message recipient towards the source of

the message. Source experience refers to the perception of the recipient regarding the extent to which the communicator has created information about products or services based on real experiences [Teng et al., 2014, p. 749]. Reliable information often triggers increased engagement and can provide a more comprehensive experience with cosmetic products.

H3: *eWOM's credibility on Instagram significantly and positively impacts cosmetic product involvement.*

Recommendations can encourage a tendency to engage more with a product and, thus, motivate consumers to purchase the product by improving the way information is processed [Dwivedi, Nayeem, Murshed, 2018]. If customers believe that a recommendation is reliable, they are more willing to accept and use word-of-mouth communication in electronic environments to make purchase decisions [Saydan, Dülek, 2022]. Research on word-of-mouth communication has shown that consumers trust the recommendations of others in the decision-making process for purchasing; people are motivated to spread their opinions about a service, and WOM communication has varying degrees of influence on friends, colleagues, and family members [Trusov, Bucklin, Pauwels, 2009]. The more accurate the information about a specific cosmetic product is, the more consumers can identify with that product.

H4: *eWOM information quality regarding cosmetic products on Instagram significantly and positively affects cosmetic product involvement.*

Consumer interaction with a product can increase the desire to spontaneously share their experiences through eWOM [Kang, He, Shin, 2020]. When a consumer is interested in specific products, the volume of information search tends to increase, especially in situations, where there are many alternatives, such as cosmetic products [Munnukka, Uusitalo, Toivonen, 2016]. Showing interest in a product can be viewed as a motivating factor for consumption that influences the perceptions of other consumers [Garg, Joshi, 2018]. When a consumer is interested in and trusts a cosmetic product, they may exhibit a more positive attitude towards that product.

H5: *Cosmetic product involvement significantly and positively influences attitude towards eWOM.*

Attitude, defined as the tendency to respond positively or negatively to information, can influence purchase intention [Matute, Polo-Redondo, Utrillas, 2016]. The cosmetic purchasing process is also related to perceptions that affect attitude, such as the consumer's relationship with a product, the reliability and quality of eWOM information [Ringim, Reni, 2019]. A consumer's attitude towards information shared about a cosmetic product through eWOM can directly influence purchase intention, and attitude can positively impact purchase intention.

H6: *Attitude towards eWOM significantly and positively influences cosmetics purchase intention.*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Procedure for collecting samples and data. The empirical part of this study was conducted through a survey method in Türkiye. The data were collected between February and June 2023. The survey was administered to individuals who had purchased cosmetic products at least once through Instagram. To reach this target audience, individuals following pages that sell cosmetic products on Instagram were contacted via direct message. Additionally, a request to fill out the survey was sent to individuals who had made at least one cosmetic product purchase through Instagram via social media.

The first question in the survey was, "Have you ever purchased cosmetic products through Instagram?". Those who answered "No" (38 individuals) were excluded from the analysis. The remaining 505 participants had purchased cosmetic products through Instagram at least once.

The initial section of the survey explained the main purpose of the study. The second section included demographic questions, while the final section focused on the main constructs of the research. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the main constructs, and the scale statements were adapted from previous studies.

The scales and preparation of the questionnaire. The statements pertaining to the intention to purchase

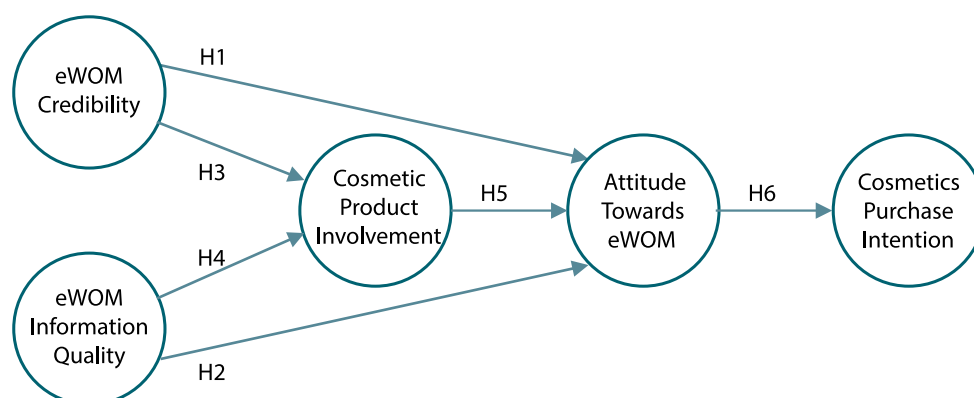


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of the study

Рис. 1. Концептуальная модель исследования

cosmetic products and the quality of eWOM information were borrowed and adapted from Erkan and Evans [2016]. Statements concerning the reliability of eWOM were adapted from Matute, Polo-Redondo and Utrillas [2016], while those addressing cosmetic product involvement were drawn from Lin, Wu and Chen [2013]. Additionally, statements related to attitudes towards eWOM were adapted from Zainal, Harun and Lily [2017]. The expressions related to the scales are presented in Appendix.

Given that the official language in Türkiye is Turkish, the survey underwent translation into Turkish utilizing the back-translation method as recommended by Brislin [1976], aiming to mitigate the potential impact of cultural and language disparities. Furthermore, the Turkish version of the survey underwent scrutiny by two experts specializing in Management Information Systems and Marketing.

A pilot study involving 14 master's students at Bartın University was also conducted, revealing that the language employed in the survey was perceived as highly clear and comprehensible by the majority of participants.

RESULTS

In this section, first, the demographic data of the participants will be analysed. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) will be conducted. The R programming language has been utilized for both CFA and SEM analyses. This choice is attributed to R's open-source nature and user-friendly features [Çelik, Özköse, Güleriyüz, 2018].

Demographic statistics. Table 1 illustrates that the study involved 505 participants. When examined in terms of gender, it is observed that almost half of

Table 1 – Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents
Таблица 1 – Социально-демографические характеристики респондентов

Demographic profile		Number of respondents (N = 505)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	253	50
	Women	252	50
Age	18–21	159	32
	22–25	213	42
	26–29	76	15
	30+	57	11
Educational level	High school	235	47
	Associate degree	70	13
	Bachelor's degree	185	37
	Postgraduate degree	15	3
Monthly income	Less than 1 minimum wage	258	51
	Less than 2 minimum wages	132	26
	3 minimum wages and above	115	23
Daily average Instagram usage time	Less than 1 hour	97	19
	1–3 hours	223	44
	3–5 hours	143	28
	5 hours and above	42	9
Frequency of reading Instagram comments about cosmetic products	Very rarely	182	36
	Occasionally	188	37
	Frequently	135	27
Frequency of using cosmetic products	Very rarely	138	27
	Occasionally	190	38
	Frequently	177	35
How often do you search for recommendations regarding cosmetic products?	Very rarely	149	30
	Occasionally	215	43
	Frequently	141	27
How often do you recommend cosmetic products?	Very rarely	177	35
	Occasionally	218	43
	Frequently	110	22
Frequency of purchasing cosmetic products	Very rarely	130	26
	Occasionally	228	45
	Frequently	147	29
Total		505	100

the participants are male, and the other half are female. Regarding age, most participants (42%) fall within the 22–25 age range. Participants were asked about their educational levels, with the majority (47%) indicating they were high school graduates. Monthly average incomes were also queried, revealing that more than half of the participants (51%) have an income of less than one minimum wage. Participants were asked about the average daily time spent on Instagram, and the majority (44%) reported spending 1–3 hours on the platform.

Participants were questioned about the frequency of reading comments related to cosmetic products: 36% of participants indicated "very rarely," 37% – "occasionally," and 27% – "frequently." When asked about the frequency of cosmetic product use, most participants (38%) responded with "occasionally." Regarding the frequency of recommending cosmetic products, most participants (43%) responded with "occasionally." Participants were also asked about the frequency of purchasing cosmetic products, with 26% responding "very rarely," 45% – "occasionally," and 29% – "frequently."

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This segment involves assessing the adequacy of the research model through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A range of goodness-of-fit indices has been scrutinized, encompassing key measures such as the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Chi-Square (CMIN/DF), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) [Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick, Fidell, 2007]. The outcomes of these assessments are detailed in Table 2. The results unequivocally reveal that all goodness-of-fit indices exhibit a commendable fit, aligning with acceptable thresholds.

Various criteria have been adopted to test the reliability and validity of the constructs, including composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity [Fornell, Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010]. As seen from Table 3, the AVE values for all the constructs are above 0.50. These findings align with the recommended values by Fornell and Larcker [1981] and Hair et al. [2010]. The highest AVE value was recorded for CRE (0.711), while the lowest AVE value was observed for CPI (0.608). Furthermore, CR val-

Table 2 – Results of the confirmatory factor analysis
Таблица 2 – Результаты подтверждающего факторного анализа

Fit indices	Measurement model
CMIN/DF	424.715/179 = 2.37
CFI	0.969
TLI	0.964
NNFI	0.964
RFI	0.939
NFI	0.948
IFI	0.969
RNI	0.969
RMSEA	0.052
GFI	0.927
AGFI	0.905

ues were calculated, and all latent structures have a CR value exceeding 0.70, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker [1981] and Hair et al. [2010]. CPI has the highest CR value (0.935), whereas the lowest CR value is attributed to IQ (0.833). Similarly, Cronbach's alpha values for all the constructs are above 0.70. The highest Cronbach's alpha value was recorded for CPI (0.935), and the lowest was identified for IQ (0.833). These results indicate satisfactory reliability and internal consistency across all the constructs.

Table 4 displays the correlation matrix among the constructs. Additionally, the values in parentheses represent the square root of the respective variable's AVE. A comparison, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker [1981], was made between inter-correlation values for latent structures and the square roots of their AVEs. As seen from Table 7, the values in parentheses are larger compared to the inter-correlation values. Upon examining the correlations between constructs, it is evident that there is a significant and positive correlation among all the constructs. The highest correlation is observed between CRE and IQ ($r = 0.752$; $p < 0.01$). On the other hand, the lowest correlation is identified between INT and CRE ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics of all the expressions for each structure. According to the re-

Table 3 – Construct validity and reliability testing
Таблица 3 – Проверка конструктивной валидности и надежности

Latent construct	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	CR
CRE	0.881	0.711	0.881
IQ	0.833	0.624	0.833
CPI	0.935	0.706	0.935
AT	0.893	0.619	0.890
INT	0.859	0.608	0.860

Note: CRE is eWOM credibility; IQ is eWOM information quality; CPI is cosmetic product involvement; AT is attitudes towards eWOM; INT is cosmetics purchase intention.

Table 4 – Correlation matrix and discriminant validity
Таблица 4 – Корреляционная матрица и дискриминантная валидность

Latent construct	CRE	IQ	CPI	AT	INT
CRE	(0.843)	–	–	–	–
IQ	.752**	(0.789)	–	–	–
CPI	.655**	.673**	(0.840)	–	–
AT	.717**	.700**	.743**	(0.786)	–
INT	.614**	.629**	.692**	.742**	(0.927)

Table 5 – Descriptive statistics
Таблица 5 – Описательная статистика

Items		Latent construct	Mean	Estimate	Std. error	Std. deviation	z-value
CRE1	<—	CRE	2.87	.831	0.043	1.157	22.284
CRE2	<—	CRE	2.95	.843	0.043	1.165	22.774
CRE3	<—	CRE	2.88	.855	0.041	1.128	23.287
IQ1	<—	IQ	3.19	.809	0.044	1.152	21.146
IQ2	<—	IQ	3.15	.774	0.045	1.160	19.848
IQ3	<—	IQ	3.02	.787	0.045	1.159	20.295
CPI1	<—	CPI	3.31	.820	0.034	1.262	19.234
CPI2	<—	CPI	3.31	.828	0.035	1.288	19.436
CPI3	<—	CPI	3.31	.850	0.035	1.276	20.036
CPI4	<—	CPI	3.28	.839	0.035	1.300	19.754
CPI5	<—	CPI	3.39	.849	0.034	1.259	20.008
CPI6	<—	CPI	3.38	.854	0.034	1.251	20.148
AT1	<—	AT	3.09	.789	0.026	1.197	15.975
AT2	<—	AT	3.18	.827	0.027	1.213	16.618
AT3	<—	AT	3.12	.787	0.027	1.203	15.941
AT4	<—	AT	3.15	.768	0.025	1.157	15.611
AT5	<—	AT	3.11	.762	0.027	1.218	15.498
INT1	<—	INT	3.18	.833	0.032	1.176	15.293
INT2	<—	INT	3.34	.840	0.033	1.206	15.354
INT3	<—	INT	2.98	.720	0.032	1.224	13.781
INT4	<—	INT	3.07	.716	0.033	1.255	13.717

sults, standardized regression weights for all the expressions related to the structures are above 0.50, as suggested by Hair et al. [2010].

Structural model. After CFA, in the second stage, the hypotheses of the research model were analysed with SEM. Firstly, it was determined that the goodness-of-fit values for the structural model were at recommended levels: CMIN/DF = 2.46; CFI = 0.967; RMSEA = 0.054; TLI = 0.962. This supports the adequacy of the structural model [Hair et al., 2010]. The predictive validity of the research model also indicates that a significant amount of variance is explained for cosmetic product involvement (0.59), attitude toward eWOM (0.80), and cosmetics purchase intention (0.75).

Regarding testing research hypotheses, the results of path coefficient analyses are presented in Table 6. Accordingly, cosmetic product involvement is significantly predicted by eWOM credibility ($\beta = 0.214, p < 0.047$) and

eWOM information quality ($\beta = 0.574, p < 0.000$). Furthermore, attitude towards eWOM is significantly predicted by eWOM credibility ($\beta = 0.293, p < 0.000$), eWOM information quality ($\beta = 0.211, p < 0.024$), and cosmetic product involvement ($\beta = 0.464, p < 0.000$). Lastly, cosmetics purchase intention is significantly predicted by attitude towards eWOM ($\beta = 0.866, p < 0.000$). The path diagram is given in Fig. 2.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that all the hypotheses were supported; therefore, a positive attitude that tends to favourably influence purchase intention may be formed by reliable and high-quality recommendations shared through Instagram and engagement with cosmetic products.

Theoretical contribution. According to the fact that, based on the analyses conducted, there are significant re-

Table 6 – Results of hypotheses testing
Таблица 6 – Результаты тестирования гипотез

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesized path			Std. β	Std. error	z-value	p
H1	AT	<—	CRE	0.293	0.188	3.481	***
H2	AT	<—	IQ	0.211	0.209	2.256	0.024
H3	CPI	<—	CRE	0.214	0.168	1.990	0.047
H4	CPI	<—	IQ	0.574	0.186	4.826	***
H5	AT	<—	CPI	0.464	0.081	8.215	***
H6	INT	<—	AT	0.866	0.070	11.046	***

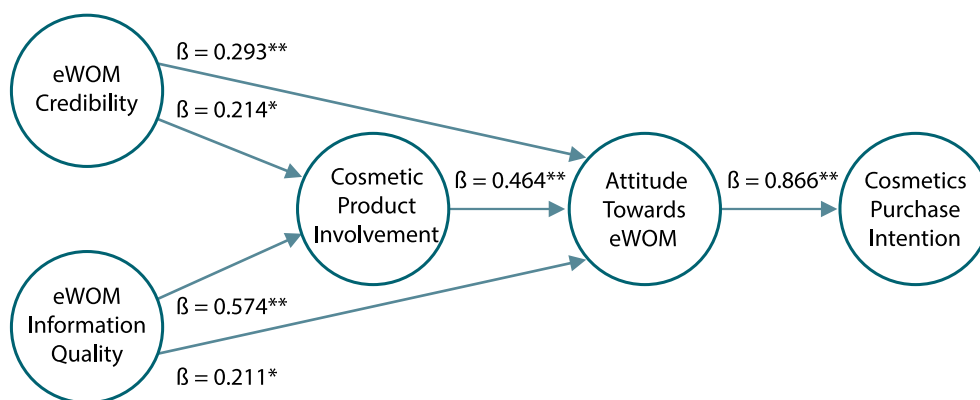


Fig. 2. Path diagram¹

Рис. 2. Диаграмма пути

relationships among the variables, the existence of eWOM communication regarding consumers' perceptions and cosmetic products has been substantiated. From this perspective, the visibility provided by Instagram has made cosmetic consumers aware of their behaviours and facilitated the generation of data. Overall, this study contributes to theoretical and practical knowledge in the literature and is believed to contribute to the results of other studies. Additionally, it may guide businesses, individuals, and potential entrepreneurs towards better marketing strategies.

Practical implications. This research expands the theoretical understanding of the impact of eWOM on cosmetics purchase intention on Instagram. According to the results, the standardized regression weights of statements related to all the structures are above 0.50, aligning with the values recommended by Hair et al. [2010]. It contributes to a new approach emphasizing the importance of information shared through eWOM in the context of the Instagram social network. The determined AVE values for all the structures are above 0.50, in line with the values recommended by Fornell and Larcker [1981]. The findings of the study can assist companies actively promoting their products on Instagram by identifying information through eWOM that helps understand consumer purchase behaviour and controlling the content of comments made through eWOM.

CONCLUSION

This research indicates a tendency for the credibility of eWOM, the quality of eWOM information, and cosmetic product involvement to influence attitudes towards eWOM, which, in turn, can affect consumers' purchase intentions. The results also suggest that the credibility and quality of eWOM may influence cosmetic product involvement. Additionally, we demonstrate that cosmetic product involvement can have a mediating effect on the relationship between eWOM credibility and attitude and on the relationship between eWOM information quality and attitude. The findings reveal that participants spend an average of 1–3 hours daily on Instagram and occasionally recommend cosmetic products. Moreover, the model's indices show good fit, and there is satisfactory reliability and internal consistency among all the constructs. The model's adequacy is supported by the significance of cosmetic product involvement, attitude towards eWOM, and cosmetics purchase intention variables. Looking at the acceptance status of the hypotheses, it is concluded that 4 out of the total 6 hypotheses are accepted.

Limitations and future research directions. Participants in the study generally come from a specific demographic profile. This situation may limit the generalizability of the findings to the overall population. For instance, a study conducted only with users from a specific age group or a particular geographical region may struggle to represent general Instagram users. Instagram shopping is often dependent on individuals' subjectivities and

¹ Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

attitudes. Evaluating the impact of participants' personal experiences, expectations, and shopping habits can be challenging. Social media platforms, especially Instagram, are subject to rapidly changing features and algorithmic updates. Results valid during the study period may lose their relevance shortly due to changes on the platform. A study assessing the effects of shopping processes, especially digital shopping, should quickly adapt to technological developments. New features, payment systems, or other factors influencing the shopping experience should be taken into account. Concerns about the reliability and security of online shopping exist. User concerns about sharing personal and financial information can influence shopping behaviours. The sample size and diversity of the study can affect the strength of generalizations. A limited participant group or a sample predominantly weighted towards a specific demographic may struggle to fully represent general Instagram users. Users are often selective when sharing information

on social media. Differences between actual shopping behaviours and what is shared on social media can impact the study's results. Various independent variables affect the shopping experience on Instagram. Full control over these factors may be challenging, influencing the process of establishing accurate causal relationships. Understanding these limitations and being cautious about the specified constraints is crucial for interpreting the study's results.

Our results suggest a positive impact of eWOM, particularly when there is limited information about cosmetic products. Future studies may explore other product categories to expand the literature on the influence of eWOM on purchase intention. Encouraging consumers to share their experiences can be a significant advantage for cosmetic brands. Therefore, future research could investigate the influence of eWOM on customer impact when businesses using social media as a tool to promote their products seek to leverage eWOM. ■

Appendix – Questionnaire's expressions
Приложение – Опросник исследования

Variables	Expressions of scales
eWOM credibility	CRE1 – I think consumer recommendations shared on Instagram about cosmetics are legitimate
	CRE2 – I think consumer recommendations shared on Instagram about cosmetics are acceptable
	CRE3 – I think consumer recommendations shared on Instagram about cosmetics are reliable
eWOM information quality	QUA1 – I think the information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics is understandable
	QUA2 – I think the information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics is clear
	QUA3 – Overall, I think the quality of the information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics is high
Cosmetic product involvement	INV1 – When cosmetics are important to me, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
	INV2 – When cosmetics are meaningful to me, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
	INV3 – When cosmetics are useful to me, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
	INV4 – When cosmetics are valuable to me, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
	INV5 – When a cosmetic appeals to me, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
	INV6 – When I am interested in a cosmetic, I look for reviews and comments on Instagram
Attitude towards eWOM	AT1 – I have a positive opinion about other consumers' information on Instagram about cosmetics
	AT2 – I find it beneficial to follow other consumers' information on Instagram about cosmetics
	AT3 – Overall, I find my attitude toward information from other consumers on Instagram about cosmetics favourable
	AT4 – I like the information from other consumers on Instagram about cosmetics
	AT5 – I think it is good for me to follow other consumers' information on Instagram about cosmetics
Cosmetics purchase intention	INT1 – After considering the positive information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics, I am likely to purchase the product
	INT2 – After considering the positive information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics, I will purchase the product the next time I need it
	INT3 – After considering the positive information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics, I will definitely try the product
	INT4 – After considering the positive information shared by consumers on Instagram about cosmetics, I will recommend the product to other consumers

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