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The Effect of Technology Acceptance, Electronic Words of Mouth, and Trust on Airlines Ticket Purchase Decision

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the impact of technology acceptance (UTAUT) variables, Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM), and trust on online airline ticket purchasing decisions in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was employed to collect data from 253 respondents through an online survey. The study utilized structural equation modeling to analyze the data. The findings reveal that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and EWOM significantly influence online purchase decisions, while social influence has no significant impact. Trust emerges as a critical mediator in the relationship between these variables and purchasing decisions. This study contributes to the understanding of online consumer behavior and provides valuable insights for airline companies and online travel agencies to enhance their strategies. By extending the UTAUT model with EWOM and trust, this research offers a deeper understanding of online airline ticket purchasing behavior in the Indonesian context.

Keywords: EWOM, online airline ticket, online purchase, purchase decision, trust, UTAUT.

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INTRODUCTION

Consumers' decision to purchase goods online have given great concern to academic and practitioners as it is considered a critical success factor in online retailing. The advances in technology, fast logistics, easy payments, and trust contribute to the increasing global spending of as much as $1.9 trillion. Millions of consumers shop anytime and anywhere (Kruh, 2017), which makes studying consumer behavior in the digital era and adopting technology beneficial to research fields

The rapid growth of online retailing has made consumer behavior a focal point for researchers and practitioners. Online purchases are increasingly driven by advancements in technology, logistical efficiency,

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and payment systems, collectively contributing to global e-commerce spending, which reached $1.9 trillion (Kruh, 2017). The Gen Z cohort, in particular, demonstrates a strong affinity for digital interactions, as they have grown up immersed in the internet and social media, making them highly reliant on platforms like electronic word of mouth (EWOM) for purchasing decisions (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Dolot, 2018).

Increasingly high internet access and social media allow people to access online reviews or electronic word of mouth (EWOM) for evaluations before purchasing online. The current generation, especially GenZ, grew up and lived with computers, technology, the internet, social media, and online applications (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). They are also up to date with technological developments, refer to reviews in buying products, primarily online which cannot be researched directly, and interact with other sellers and buyers now (Dolot, 2018).

While EWOM provides valuable insights into product quality, its reliability is undermined by challenges such as fake accounts, unverified reviews, and pseudonymous comments, which can erode consumer trust (Lerman & Sen, 2007; Liu et al., 2018). Trust, as highlighted in numerous studies, remains a critical determinant of purchasing decisions in the digital environment (Kim et al., 2012). Moreover, technology adoption theories, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), provide frameworks for understanding how user perceptions, influenced by trust and EWOM, shape the adoption of online platforms (García et al., 2019; Wu & Lin, 2017).

However, studies found that EWOM cannot be a solution because fake accounts or dishonest reviews can do online reviews. Online media also do not provide clear reviews. They do not give opportunities for consumers to consult directly with sellers or consumers who have used these products to discuss which products are suitable for consumers. Reviews given by consumers have also not been able to increase buyer interest due to the use of pseudonyms which affects consumers' trust (Lerman & Sen, 2007; Liu et al., 2018). Literature shows trust is a significant determinant in online purchasing decisions (Kim et al., 2012).

The literature has identified various dimensions of technology adoption by users adopting a new technology (García et al., 2019; Sabah, 2016). These factors affect users' cognitive and affective conditions (Bettiga & Lamberti, 2017; Chu et al., 2019). In addition, the literature has mentioned that other factors, such as electronic word of mouth (EWOM) and trust, influence users' perceptions of technology adoption (Octaviani et al., 2023; Wu & Lin, 2017) That situation has triggered the development of various startups in Indonesia that focus on the travel service business, which makes it easier for buyers to buy travel tickets and accommodation (Alam & Yasin, 2010).

In parallel, sustainable marketing has gained prominence as consumers increasingly prioritize environmentally responsible practices. This shift aligns with the principles of Green Marketing Theory, which emphasizes promoting products based on their ecological benefits. In industries like aviation, where sustainability practices are closely scrutinized, initiatives such as low-emission flights and carbon offset programs are vital for building consumer trust (Jia et al., 2023; Margariti et al., 2024).

Digital platforms play an essential role in this transformation, enabling businesses to engage directly with consumers through social media and EWOM. By showcasing eco-friendly initiatives and leveraging positive testimonials, brands can strengthen their reputation and influence purchasing behaviors. For example, airlines adopting TAM and UTAUT frameworks can integrate tools like carbon calculators into their booking systems, offering consumers accessible and transparent ways to make sustainable choices (Duque Oliva et al., 2024; Jia et al., 2023).

This study aims to explore the intersection of technology, marketing strategies, and sustainability practices to understand their collective influence on consumer behavior in high-impact industries. Insights gained from

this research can help businesses align their operations with sustainability goals, foster trust, and encourage loyalty among eco-conscious consumers.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative, descriptive-verificative approach to examine UTAUT, EWOM, trust, and online buying decisions. Data were collected via a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed to university students in Jakarta through Google Forms, yielding 253 valid responses from 345 distributed.

Validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with a > 0.5 loading factor threshold, while reliability was confirmed with CR > 0.7 and VE > 0.5, meeting all criteria. Descriptive analysis summarized trends using index values and Importance Performance Analysis (IPA), while hypothesis testing employed SEM via Lisrel.

As summarized in Table 1, the sample consisted of Gen Z consumers from five regions of Jakarta, with 36.4% of participants identifying as male (n = 92) and 63.6% as female (n = 161). The respondents of this survey are college students from the Z generation, as described in Table 1.

Table 1 Characters of the respondents

Measure	Items	Frequency	%
Age (years)	17-20	130	51.4
	21-25	123	48.6
Gender	Male	92	36.4
	Female	161	63.6
Origin	East Jakarta	149	58.9
	West Jakarta	15	5.9
	North Jakarta	27	10.7
	South Jakarta	45	17.8
	Central Jakarta	17	6.7
Frequency of flying	Often	53	21.0
	Rare	197	77.9
	Never	3	1.1

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Variance Extracted

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to determine the construct validity of the survey items. It means that whenever the correlation of the items within the same construct is relatively high, it is said to have the construct validity or how well the construct explains the variables under the construct (Hair et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the Average Variance Extracted was used to test the reliability of the survey items. Table 2 revealed that the instruments of this study were valid and reliable and could be used for further research

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Average Variance extracted

Variables	Items	Loading Factor	AVE	Information
Performance Expectancy	Perceived Usefulness	0.740	0.584	Valid
	Extrinsic Motivation	0.740		Valid
	Job-fit	0.810		Valid
Effort Expectancy	perceived ease of use	0.730	0.610	Valid
	complexity	0.820		Valid
	ease of use	0.790		Valid
Social Influence	Subjective Norm	0.860	0.729	Valid
	Social Factors	0.810		Valid
	Image	0.890		Valid
Facilitating Conditions	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.730	0.688	Valid
	Facilitating Conditions	0.850		Valid
	Compatibility	0.900		Valid
EWOM	Intensity	0.770	0.636	Valid
	Content	0.810		Valid
	Positive valence	0.800		Valid
	Negative valence	0.810		Valid
Trust	Competence	0.740	0.695	Valid
	Experience	0.890		Valid
	Fulfilment	0.820		Valid
	Loyalty	0.830		Valid
	Openness	0.860		Valid
	Reliability	0.840		Valid
	Care	0.840		Valid
	Empathy	0.870		Valid
	Belief	0.800		Valid
	Receptivity	0.840		Valid
Purchase Decision	Need recognition	0.840	0.681	Valid
	Information search	0.820		Valid
	Alternative evaluation	0.810		Valid
	Purchasing decision	0.830		Valid

Model Goodness of Fit

The overall model fit test results using the X2 or chi-square test where a value of 546.60 is obtained, a p-value of 0.000 and an RMSEA value of 0.041. When referring to the index value, it can be said that RMSEA has met the fit criteria and other fit indicators such as GFI, AGFI, NFI, NNFI, CFI, and RFI have shown goodness of fit.

Hypothesis Test Result

After testing the model's goodness of fit, the next step is to test the research hypothesis through a structural model.

Table 3 Summary of Path Coefficient estimation results and Statistical Test

Model	Path	Path Coefficient (Standardized)	t	Result	R-square
First	PE → Trust	0.243	2.604	Supported	0.526
	EE → Trust	0.174	2.075	Supported	
	SI → Trust	0.119	1.214	Rejected	
	FC → Trust	0.215	3.204	Supported	
	EWOM → Trust	0.169	2.720	Supported	
Second	PE → PD	0.209	2.207	Supported	0.603
	EE → PD	0.175	2.068	Supported	
	SI → PD	0.060	0.618	Rejected	
	FC → PD	0.140	2.085	Supported	
	EWOM → PD	0.146	2.348	Supported	
	Trust → PD	0.251	3.381	Supported	

It can be seen in that performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI) and facilitating conditions (FC), and EWOM have an influence of 52.6% on the formation of consumer trust. In the second model, it can be seen that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions, EWOM and consumer trust influence 60.3% of online ticket purchasing decisions (PD).

Based on Table 3, it is also found that the result supported most of the hypotheses. One variable has no significant effect, and that is social influences. And the hypotheses are rejected. They are H3 (social influence does not affect trust) and H8 (Social Influence does not affect purchase decision). Other Hypotheses are accepted, which is indicated by the t-statistic value of > 1.96 (significance level 5%), which means the test results are significant.

The Mediating Effects

Table 4 shows the mediation test result and the direct and indirect effects of Trust to mediating personal expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating condition, and EWOM to purchase decision.

Based on the processing results as presented in Table 4, it can be seen that the total effort expectancy path coefficient on online ticket purchasing decisions through consumer trust is 0.219 in a positive direction. The higher the trust-mediated effort expectancy, the higher the online ticket purchase decision. The t-statistical value is 1.768 < 1.96 (5% significance level), which means that the test results are insignificant. Trust can mediate the relationship between effort expectancy and online ticket purchasing decisions. Trust is said to be perfect mediation because the effort expectancy coefficient value directly on shopping decisions (0.175). After adding consumer confidence, the coefficient value decreases (0.044), and the effect of effort expectancy on online ticket purchasing decisions become insignificant.

Table 4 Direct and indirect effect (Mediation)

Model	Path	Direct		Indirect Trust		Total	Conclusion
		β	t-stat	β	t-stat		
First	PE → Trust	0.243	2.604	-	-	0.243	
	EE → Trust	0.174	2.075	-	-	0.174	
	SI → Trust	0.119	1.214	-	-	0.119	
	FC → Trust	0.215	3.204	-	-	0.215	
	EWOM → Trust	0.169	2.720	-	-	0.169	
Second	PE → PD	0.209	2.207	0.061	2.063	0.270	Partial
	EE → PD	0.175	2.068	0.044	1.768	0.219	Perfect mediation
	SI → PD	0.060	0.618	0.030	1.142	-	Non-mediation
	FC → PD	0.140	2.085	0.054	2.325	0.194	Partial
	EWOM → PD	0.146	2.348	0.042	2.119	0.188	Partial
	Trust → PD	0.251	3.381	-	-	0.251	-

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and EWOM affect trust and purchasing decisions. However, it does not apply to Social Influence. It does not have a significant effect on both trust and purchase decisions. Hence, the research model formed from the results of the literature review and previous research has changed

This research highlighted the significant roles of trust as mediators in integrating the UTAUT model and EWOM in the ticket online purchase decision in Indonesia. Trust mediates performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and EWOM on online flight ticket purchasing decisions. UTAUT, with its three variables, has a higher value than EWOM. This shows that consumers will trust to order if they feel the convenience and benefits of booking a flight ticket online. Likewise, with reviews, testimonials, and information from previous users, the data increases trust, affecting trust to buy. The higher UTAUT and EWOM mediated through trust can improve online purchasing decisions.

The value of EWOM on purchasing decisions is higher without mediation. This shows that consumers continue to buy airline tickets through the application even without any element of trust. Buyers only need to read references or reviews from various forms of information related to ticket buyers, where this information can be easily found. It goes along with the research of (Litvin et al., 2008) and (Rong et al., 2007).

Social influence does not have any positive effect on trust and purchase decisions. It contradicts the previous research by Singh et al. (2017) stated that social impact positively influences trust. Social influence usually comes from the inner circle, either families, friends, or colleagues. Individuals tend to seek other information or recommendation before purchasing something from their closest person. Therefore, social influence has become essential in purchasing decisions (Slade et al., 2015). Social influence also has a positive effect on trust before individuals buy stuff. However, several respondents do not use their social circle recommendations or information in online ticketing purchases. The respondents ranged from 17 to 25 or the Z generation. They said

they rarely have advice from the closest people to purchase airline tickets or recommend them to purchase online. Another research also states that social influence significantly contributes to online air flight ticket purchases (Doan, 2020). In this study, the majority of the respondent are young travellers who are free to decide on their airline ticket purchase. They evaluate the rating, read about the airlines' reputation from social media, and read about the online ticket-selling platform. Meanwhile, other hypotheses are supported and in line with previous research (Sharifi et al., 2016; 2017; Di Virgilio & Antonelli, 2017; Lopez & Sicilia, 2014) that performance and effort expectancy facilitate condition, EWOM and trust support the online airline purchase decision.

Sustainability Practices, Consumer Trust, and Technology

Information about an airline's sustainability practices, such as emission reduction initiatives, can significantly influence consumer trust and perceptions (Neureiter et al., 2024). When consumers perceive an airline as environmentally responsible, they are more likely to trust the company, view it favorably, and choose it over competitors (Baumeister et al., 2022). This positive perception can lead to increased brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and ultimately, higher sales (Khan & Fatma, 2023).

Technology plays a crucial role in supporting sustainable marketing (Kalogiannidis et al., 2024). Mobile apps, for instance, can be used to provide real-time updates on an airline's sustainability efforts, such as carbon offset programs or fuel-efficient technologies. This transparency can build trust and enhance the perception of the airline as an environmentally conscious company. Additionally, social media platforms can be used to engage with customers, share sustainability initiatives, and encourage environmentally friendly behavior.

Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) can further amplify the impact of sustainability initiatives. Positive reviews and recommendations from satisfied customers can spread quickly through online channels, increasing brand awareness and attracting environmentally conscious consumers. Conversely, negative reviews about an airline's sustainability practices can damage its reputation and deter potential customers.

By leveraging technology and EWOM, airlines can effectively communicate their sustainability efforts and inspire consumers to make more environmentally friendly choices. For example, airlines can use social media to promote carbon offset programs, encouraging customers to contribute to reducing their carbon footprint. They can also partner with sustainable travel organizations to offer eco-friendly travel packages. By actively engaging with consumers and providing transparent information about their sustainability initiatives, airlines can build trust, enhance their brand reputation, and drive sustainable consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to a slight change in the UTAUT, EWOM, and trust in purchasing decision model. Especially in the element of social influence on trust and purchase decisions. In the Z generation, social influence does not affect trust and purchase decisions on online airline ticket purchasing. The Z generation in the big city depends on social media information and platform reviews. They are also very confident in searching for information about airline tickets and online ticketing platforms.

The result, especially the rejected social influence to support trust and purchase decisions, still needs to investigate further in the following research on the Z generation from different cities or countries. This result also suggests any airline and online ticketing platform maintain their exemplary services, relationship, and communication with users so they will get a positive image and give positive reviews and experiences about the airlines.

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