Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on Customer Purchase Intention: Moderating Role of Social Risk and Mediating Role of In-person Word of Mouth. A study of the Gaming Industry of Pakistan

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Abstract

Customer's mostly prefer to make purchases on buzz marketing technique popularly known as word of mouth. The word of mouth can include electronic medium or face to face interactions. The present study has focused on the independent role of electronic word of mouth, usage of electronic mediums and self-brand connection with the mediating role of in-person word of mouth along with the moderating role of social risk on consumer purchase intention. The current research was causal and cross-sectional in nature. Data was collected through convenience sampling technique from 400 respondents out of which 359 questionnaires were fully attempted with a response rate of 89.75%. The study analyzed the responses through correlation, regression and mediation analysis. The findings of the study illustrate positively significant relationships of electronic word of mouth, online media use and self-brand connection with in-person word of mouth which highly encourages customer purchase intention. The study has also demonstrated the moderating effect of social risk between electronic word of mouth, online media use and self-brand connection with in-person word of mouth which was also found positively significant among all the four variables. Limited studies have been carried out to address purchase intention of gaming consumers in Pakistani context.

Keywords: Customer purchase intention, Electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online media use, Self-brand connection, Social risk, In-person word of mouth, gaming industry.

1.   Introduction

In today's fast paced economic growth and technological advancements, the internet with its various capabilities has changed the views of the traditional customers through electronic word of mouth (Bataineh, 2015). Every organization encourages its loyal customers to communicate and promote its brands to their friends, peers and acquaintances (Reichheld & Markey, 2011) in order to create hype for its brand (Kawasaki, 2015). Merlo et al. (2014) found that word of mouth is the best forecaster of purchase intention by conducting a survey among 30 senior officials of different industries which resulted

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in 82% of the officials systematically and actively encouraging customers in order to recommend the company and products to others for usage. The idea of word of mouth and purchase intention is exclusive part of the marketing literature in recent times. With the latest and new advancements in internet, a new meaning has arrived for the concept of word of mouth which has made marketers even more interested in the activities related to buzz marketing (Kozinets et al., 2010). Population all around the world are occupied by the usage of social networking websites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook and people mostly make purchase on behalf of the usage experience shared or posted by fellow users of a specific product or brand. On the other hand, companies do encourage customers to write reviews on their social media pages and groups to share their experiences which in turn might motivate new customers towards purchases. Emarketer (2014) elaborated that individuals, before making a purchase, prefer to view reviews and seek friend's or peer's suggestions in order to reach a final conclusion. Customer's share product information, quality, durability and performance via blogs, review sites, online discussion forums and social networking websites (Pang & Qiu, 2016). Traditional marketing activities seem to be quite less effective after such practices from consumer's end (Argan, 2016). Electronic word of mouth concept was introduced a decade ago but is not considered as a formal approach for academicians and students (Martin & Leug, 2013). In this regard, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of electronic word of mouth.

Rise of social media usage has provided an advantage to the marketers to involve their shareholders and boost their promotional practices. The use of social media is now widely accepted by marketers as an essential part of promotional activities. Online marketers spent $5.18 billion on advertising in 2014 but the investment on videos crossed $9.59 billion in 2016 (eMarketer, 2017). Customer's sometimes feels an emotional attachment, attraction and relationship with a specific brand or product to some extent. A strong attachment between the user and the brand is created when these associations are used to build one's personality or to buzz a customer to others (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). A customer will feel more attached towards a product or a brand if it helps fulfill the psychological need (Moore & Homer, 2008). Developing emotional attachment or feelings for a brand can eventually increase purchase intention and in turn will result in positive word of mouth as well as long-term relationship. Limited number of researches have reconnoitered the prominence of social risk on eWOM, media usage and self-brand connection with in-person word of mouth which can further influence purchase intention. On the other hand, a few studies have found conflicts among analysis (Almousa, 2011; Hong & Cha, 2013; Masoud, 2013; Yokoyama et al., 2014).

The central purpose for this research is to address existence as well as importance of eWOM, usage of social media and attachment with a brand along with inter-personal word of mouth and social risk affecting purchase intention of gaming consumers in Pakistan. Furthermore, the research has focused on independent role of eWOM, online media use and self-brand connection with in-person word

of mouth as a mediator while social risk as a moderator between the independent and moderating variables and its effect on the dependent variable i.e. customer purchase intention. The current study intends to provide a comprehensive understanding in order to increase customer purchase intention through electronic and in-person word of mouth with the involvement of social risk that is of fundamental significance in the gaming industry. Limited research has been carried forward in studies related to gaming industry in the marketing environment, therefore the current study serves as a reference and correspondence for upcoming studies. The study also provides an interactive deal of information regarding the gaming industry trends in Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth, In-Person Word of Mouth and Customer Purchase Intention

With advancement and improvement in every phase of human life, the electronic word of mouth has improved from previous years. The idea of eWOM has emerged from the concept of traditional word of mouth which involves communicating the positive and negative aspects of any specific product or brand via online forums, blogs and social networking websites (Lis & Neßler, 2014). With the technological advancements, the internet provides a fruitful environment for electronic word of mouth. Customers use blogs, forums and social networking websites in order to exchange or share product or brand-related information (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The number of online reviews has stretched up to 250 million and this number has been gradually increasing with the passage of time (eMarketer, 2017). Currently, consumers admit their 91% of shopping decisions are highly influenced by eWOM (eMarketer, 2017). Recently, electronic word of mouth has been deliberated as a powerful and effective marketing tool. Previous studies have witnessed and explored the importance of electronic word of mouth communication (Chu & Kim, 2011; Cheung & Lee, 2012) but these studies have not provided sufficient evidence to support their claims.

Electronic word of mouth carries extra-ordinary speed and scalability of distinction with an intention to reach a maximum number of audience. Contrariwise, traditional word of mouth is only shared between a groups of people or individuals (Avery et al., 1999; Li & Hitt, 2008; Chu & Kim, 2011; Minazzi, 2015) while electronic word of mouth encompasses multiple ways to share information in a metachronous manner (Chu & Kim, 2011). Secondly, eWOM communication tends to be more accurate, persistent and accessible. The information available online on blogs, forums and social networking websites is available for an infinite period of time (Chu et al., 2018). Thirdly, eWOM communication is easily measureable as compared to traditional word of mouth and the format of presentation, persistency and quantity of eWOM have made it more perceivable (Liu et al., 2018). Furthermore, information shared and obtained via eWOM is more comprehensive in quantity as paralleled to information shared and obtained through traditional word of mouth (Ahmad & Laroche, 2017). Quite often the traditional word of mouth originates from a trusted sender, therefore the reliability of the sender and the message is well-known at receiver's

end. Contrarily, eWOM in most cases lessens the capability to analyze the reliability of the sender's message at the receiver's end. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_1: eWOM has a positive association with in-person WOM.

H_2: eWOM has a positive association with customer purchase intention.

H_3: In-person WOM mediates the relationship between eWOM and customer purchase intention.

2.2   Online Media Use, In-Person Word of Mouth and Customer Purchase Intention

Social media reviews are widely available for almost every product or service that generate great deal of value for customers and as well as companies (Roberts & Dinger, 2018). Customers are actively motivated by various organizations to review and rate their products and services on the web (Wang & Yu, 2017). Such activities encourage and result in eWOM and this eWOM produced via social media facilitates purchase intentions of the consumers (Kim & Peterson, 2017). Amazon.com, Alibab.com, ebay.com and daraz.pk have almost 50 million reviews drawn by customers (Filieri et al., 2018). Previous studies have identified that potential customers are more interested in other user's reviews rather than information shared by companies or vendors (Carlson et al., 2018). Thus, such interactions shared via social media help to increase WOM while facilitating customer purchase intention.

With the increase social media usage where users can easily post information and share their experiences, the content quality is compromised which remains a big dispute (Chen et al., 2011). The identity of a few users stand suspicious about the information shared (Chen et al., 2011). Whenever people join social media, they explore friends and seek social support (Carlson et al., 2018). Social support is defined as the perceived support, affection and love from the members of a group (Wang & Yu, 2017). Studies have provided evidence that online interaction with others result in emotional and informational support (Xu et al., 2017). Informational and emotional support are considered as the two essential dimensions of online media's social support (Ahmad & Laroche, 2017). Facebook and Twitter are good examples where users provide social support to others (Gray et al., 2017). It has the capability to attract new users to look for the kind of information they are searching for (Gray et al., 2017). Such social communications assist in-person word of mouth that can further influence customer's purchase intention. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_4: Online media use has a positive association with in-person WOM.

H_5: Online media use has a positive association with customer purchase intention.

H_6: In-person WOM mediates relationship between online media use and customer purchase intention.

2.3   Self-Brand Connection, In-Person Word of Mouth and Customer Purchase Intention

Self-brand connection can be explained as the extent to which an individual associates himself/herself to a specific brand (Lin et al., 2017). Effectively, self-brand connection emphasizes connection among consumers and brands and the connection between personality of the consumer and

the brand itself. Consumers acquire products or brands in order to fulfill their anticipated identity (Banister & Cocker, 2014). Self-brand connection increases whenever a product or brand satisfies a need. When a customer is highly attached towards a gaming brand, it would generate a positive WOM and would increase the chances of actual purchase decision. Connotation among self-brand connection and customer purchase intention has gained a vital importance in the marketing literature. For instance, self-brand connection influences word of mouth both traditionally and electronically (Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Sicilia et al., 2016). Self-brand connection is assumed to positively affect consumer behavior along with word of mouth (Sicilia et al., 2016).

Most of the times, customers prefer products due to the positive word of mouth attached to those products (Schmitt et al., 2015). It involves goal-oriented and rational feedbacks about a brand, emotional attachment and future buying intention of customers (Rose et al., 2011). Self-brand connection is considered as an effective, interactive, emotional and psychological element, which demonstrates the overall value of any brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Positive experience with a brand generates positive WOM both traditionally and electronically along with buying intention and psychological relationship (Dwivedi et al., 2013). The number of years a product or brand has been consumed also increases WOM (Manthiou et al., 2018). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_7: Self-brand connection has a positive association with in-person WOM.

H_8: Self-brand connection has a positive association with customer purchase intention.

H_9: In-person WOM mediates the relationship between self-brand connection and customer purchase intention.

2.4 Moderating role of Social Risk between Electronic Word of Mouth, Online Media Use, Self-Brand Connection and In-Person Word of Mouth

Social risk is defined as the extent of risk involved in how a social group will perceive a product or a brand with the level of embarrassment or excitement involved (Maziriri & Mokoena, 2016). Self-image risk is an alternative name used for social risk (Walsh et al., 2017). The state of ambiguity in the acquisition of an inferior brand is known as social risk (Yap et al., 2012). Consumer's buying intention tends to decrease mistakes and avoid risk before making a purchase (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016). Ambiguities are considered as one of the main issues for consumers before making a purchase (Yang et al., 2015). The degree of social risk escalates whenever buyers feel that their social status is harmed while acquiring any brand at lower price largely attributed to a common perception that high price equivalents high prestige. Social risk also depicts the personality and thinking process of individuals and the social group they represent (Joynt et al., 2017). The present study has emphasized on the moderating effect of social risk among electronic word of mouth, online media use and self-brand connection with in-person word of mouth.

Over the electronic medium, individuals might not care about social risk as the users have opportunity to share experiences anonymously, but social risk carries certainties when it comes to physical interaction. The customer or user might take pride in consuming a product due to its higher quality and price. Similarly, the usage of online media such as social media, blogs, and forums might involve the risk of social status. At last, customers might think that connection with a brand might result in an increase or decrease in physical word of mouth with their social status at risk. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_{10}: Social risk moderates the relationship between eWOM and in-person WOM.

H_{11}: Social risk moderates the relationship between online media use and in-person WOM.

H_{12}: Social risk moderates the relationship between self-brand connection and in-person WOM.

2.5   Theoretical Model
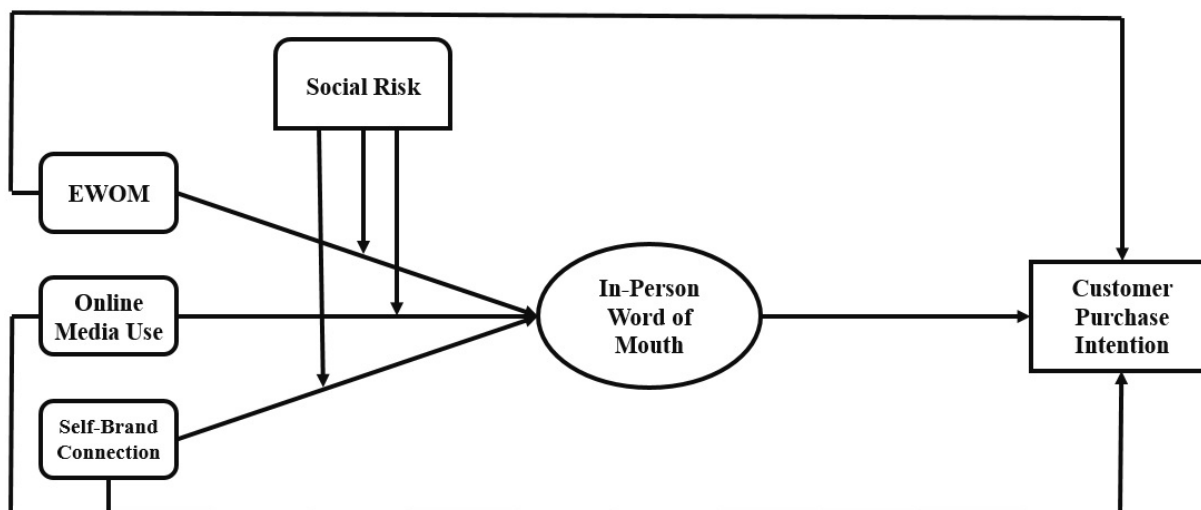
3.   Methodology

In order to investigate the impact of eWOM on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person WOM and moderating role of social risk, data was gathered using structured questionnaire distributed through convenience sampling technique. The final questionnaire comprised of 33 items with 6 demographic questions and 27 items for measuring variables of the study. Items measuring the independent, moderating, mediating and dependent variables were adapted from generalized sources. The number of items and their respective sources have been summarized in Table 1. All of these items were accounted for on a 5 point Likert scale with choices ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. 400 questionnaires were distributed among the consumers of famous gaming brands in Pakistan out of which 359 were returned completely filled indicating response rate of 89.75%. The data congregated was analysed through reliability, correlation,

regression, moderated regression and structural equational modelling technique for mediation analysis. The data was analyzed in SPSS version 20 and AMOS 18 for structural equational modelling.

4.   Data Analysis and Results

4.1   Demographics

Demographics indicate that questionnaires were distributed between both genders consisting of 68.2% males and 31.8% females. Most of the respondents' age comprised of 26-30 years with 32.3%, while 21-25 years comprised 27.6%, 31-35 years comprised 15.9%, 16-20 years comprised 13.6%, 36-40 years comprised 8.4% and 41 years comprised 2.2% of the total sample. 38.2% of the sample were MS/M.Phil. degree holders, 22% were Master's degree holders, 21.2% were bachelor degree holders, 14.5% were at intermediate level and 4.2% of the sample comprised of doctorate degree holders. Most of the respondents' income comprised of PKR 26,000-50,000 with 34.3%, 32.6% of the sample's income was less than PKR 25,000. 22.6% of the sample's income was between PKR 51,000-75,000 while 6.4% of the sample's income was between PKR 76,000 to 100,000 and 4.2% of the sample's income was above PKR 100,000. 57.1% of the respondents were full time employed while 23.7% of the respondents were studying. 13.9% of the respondents was self-employed and 3.1% of the respondents were part time employed and 2.2% of the sample was unemployed. 56% of the respondents were unmarried, 43.7% were married and 0.3% were separated. 29.8% of the respondents usually played games on laptops while 23.7% of the respondents owned Xbox 360. 22% of the sample were Nintendo users while 15% were PlayStation 3 and 4 users and 9.5% of the sample were users of other gaming devices.

Table 1: Reliability of Variables, Number of Items and Sources

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Items Source
Customer Purchase Intention	3	.616	Jaafar et al., 2012
Social Risk	3	.714	Eisingerich et al., 2015
Online Media Use	6	.826	Eelen et al., 2017
Self-brand Connection	5	.765	Escalas & Bettman, 2005
Electronic Word of Mouth	7	.668	Muntinga et al., 2011
In-person Word of Mouth	3	.744	Park et al., 2010

Table 1 specifies the reliability analysis for customer purchase intention, social risk, online media use, self-brand connection, eWOM and in-person WOM. Reliability for customer purchase intention is .616 with 3 items, for social risk is .714 with 3 items, for online media use is .826 with six items, for self-brand connection is .765 with five items, for electronic word of mouth is .668 with seven items and for in-person word of mouth is .744 with three items respectively. The reliability default value should be above 0.5 which indicates an average reliability, 0.6 designates better reliability, 0.7 specifies good reliability, 0.8 shows best reliability and 0.9 or above signposts excellent reliability respectively (Gliem & Gleim 2003).

Table 2: Correlation

Variables	IPWOM	EWOM	SBC	OMU	SR	CPI
IPWOM	1	-	-	-	-	-
EWOM	.424**	1	-	-	-	-
SBC	.569**	.529**	1	-	-	-
OMU	.586**	.550**	.708**	1	-	-
SR	.446**	.433**	.538**	.686**	1	-
CPI	.593**	.619**	.650**	.839**	.552**	1

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows that a significant relationship exists between eWOM and in-person WOM possessing significant positive relationship of .424 at 0.000 level, a positively significant relationship of .569 at .000 level exists between self-brand connection and in-person WOM while a positive relation of .529 exists between self-brand connection with eWOM statistically significant at .000 level respectively. A positively significant association of .586 at .000 level exists between online media use and in-person word of mouth, a positively significant connection of .550 at .000 exists with electronic word of mouth and .708 positively and statistically significant at .000 relationship exists with self-brand connection respectively. Positive and significant association of .446 at .000 level occurs between social risk and in-person word of mouth, .443 significant at .000 level occurs with electronic word of mouth, .538 significant at .000 level occurs with self-brand connection and .686 significant at .000 level occurs with online media use respectively. At last, customer purchase intention has a positively significant correlation of .593, .619, .615, .839 and .552 with in-person WOM, eWOM, self-brand connection, online media use and social media statistically significant at .000 respectively.

Table 3: Regression

Impact of electronic word of mouth on in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
EWOM	IPWOM	.547	.180	.177	.000

Table 3 describes the effect of independent variable i.e. eWOM on in-person WOM. Electronic word of mouth has an effect of .547 on in-person word of mouth which is statistically significant at .000 level respectively. The results and significance specify a clear effect of the independent variable on dependent variable.

Table 4: Regression

Impact of online media use on in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
OMU	IPWOM	.624	.343	.341	.000

Table 4 indicates the effect of independent variable i.e. online media use on in-person word of mouth. Online media use has an effect of .624 on in-person WOM which is statistically significant at .000 level respectively. The results and significance show a vibrant effect of the independent variable on dependent variable.

Table 5: Regression

Impact of self-brand connection on in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
SBC	IPWOM	.604	.323	.321	.000

Table 5 points to the effect of independent variable i.e. self-brand connection on in-person WOM. Self-brand connection has an effect of .624 on in-person WOM which is statistically significant at .000 level respectively. The results and significance signpost a certain influence of independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 6: Regression

Impact of in-person word of mouth on customer purchase intention

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
IPWOM	CPI	.580	.352	.350	.000

Table 6 elaborates the effect of independent variable i.e. in-person WOM on customer purchase intention. In-person WOM has an effect of .580 on customer purchase intention which is statistically significant at .000 level respectively. The results and significance designate an assured influence of independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 7: Moderated regression

Impact of social risk (as a moderator) between electronic word of mouth and in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
EWOM	IPWOM	.367	.180	.177	.000

		.320	.264	.260	.000
SR					

Table 7 particularizes the effect of moderator i.e. social risk on eWOM and in-person WOM. Social risk has an effect of .320 which is statistically significant at .000 level between eWOM and in-person WOM. The results and significance show a clear moderation of social risk on eWOM and in-person WOM.

Table 8: Moderated regression

Impact of social risk (as a moderator) between online media use and in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
OMU	IPWOM	.563	.343	.341	.000
SR		.083	.347	.343	.155

Table 8 signposts the effect of moderator i.e. social risk on online media use and in-person word of mouth. Social risk has an effect of .083 which is statistically insignificant at .155 level between online media use and in-person word of mouth. The results and insignificance specify no moderation of social risk on online media use and in-person word of mouth.

Table 9: Moderated regression

Impact of social risk (as a moderator) between self-brand connection and in-person word of mouth

Variables	DV	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig.
SBC	IPWOM	.492	.323	.321	.000
SR		.195	.351	.347	.000

Table 9 depicts the effect of moderator i.e. social risk on self-brand connection and in-person word of mouth. Social risk has an effect of .195 which is statistically significant at .000 level among self-brand connection and in-person WOM. The results and significance indicate a clear moderation of social risk on self-brand connection and in-person WOM.

Figure 2: Path diagram through SEM (Impact of electronic word of mouth on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person word of mouth)
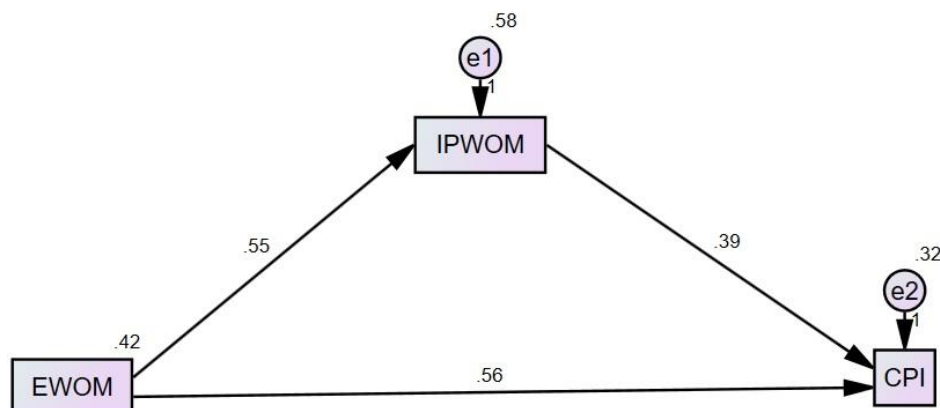

Table 10: Analysis of path diagram through SEM

Variables	β	R^2	Sig.
*EWOM => CPI	.780	.608	.001
**EWOM => CPI	.564	.318	.001
***EWOM => IPWOM => CPI	.216	.046	.001

*Total Effect

**Direct Effect

***Indirect Effect

Table 10 illustrates that eWOM has a positively significant total, direct and indirect effect on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person WOM. The total effect between eWOM and customer purchase intention is .780 with an R^2 value of .608 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The direct effect between eWOM and customer purchase intention is .564 with an R^2 value of .318 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The indirect effect between eWOM and customer purchase intention is .216 with an R^2 value of .046 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The value of R^2 indicates the effectiveness of the model, thus accepting the proposed hypothesis respectively. Thus the analysis proves a partial mediation.

Figure 3: Path diagram through SEM (Impact of online media use on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person word of mouth)
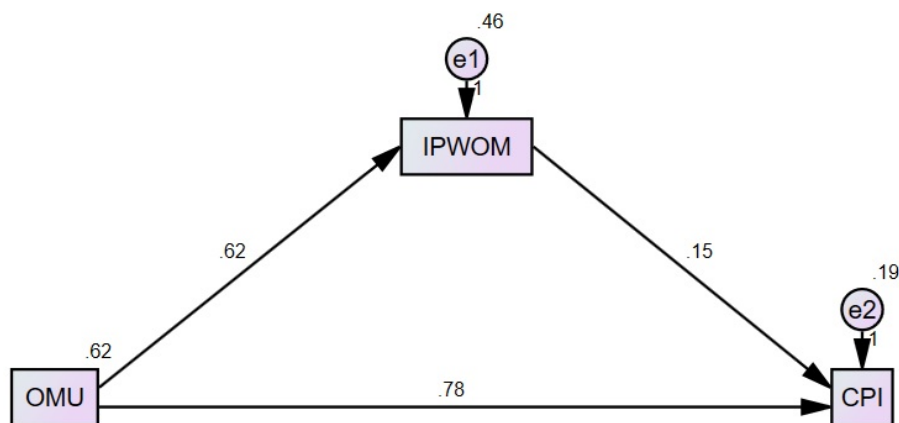

Table 11: Analysis of path diagram through SEM

Variables	β	R^2	Sig.
*OMU => CPI	.874	.763	.002
** OMU => CPI	.779	.606	.001
*** OMU => IPWOM => CPI	.095	.009	.001

*Total Effect
**Direct Effect
***Indirect Effect

Table 11 illustrates that online media use has a positively significant total, direct and indirect effect on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person WOM. The total effect between online media use and customer purchase intention is .874 with an R^2 value of .763 statistically significant at .002 respectively. The direct effect between online media use and customer purchase intention is .779 with an R^2 value of .606 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The indirect effect between online media use and customer purchase intention is .095 with an R^2 value of .009 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The value of R^2 indicates the effectiveness of the model, thus accepting the proposed hypothesis respectively. Thus the analysis proves a partial mediation.

Figure 4: Path diagram through SEM (Impact of self-brand connection on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person word of mouth)
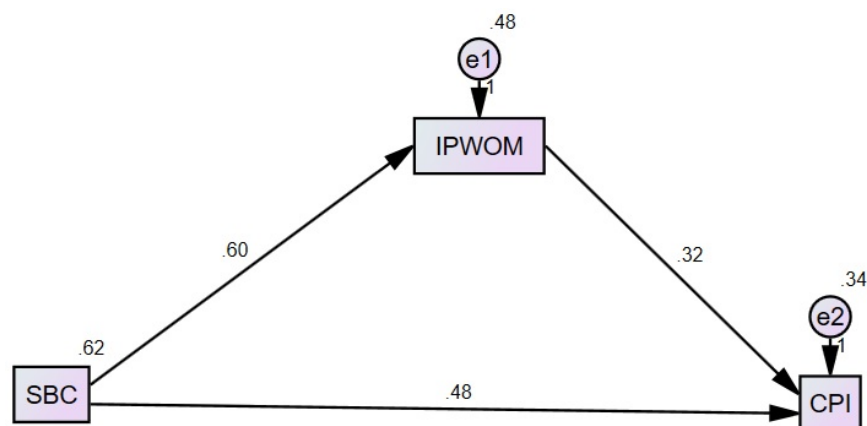

Table 12: Analysis of path diagram through SEM

Variables	β	R^2	Sig.
*SBC => CPI	.675	.455	.001
** SBC => CPI	.480	.230	.001
*** SBC => IPWOM => CPI	.195	.038	.001

*Total Effect

**Direct Effect

***Indirect Effect

Table 12 illustrates that self-brand connection has a positively significant total, direct and indirect effect on customer purchase intention with the mediating role of in-person WOM. Total effect among self-brand connection and customer purchase intention is .675 with an R^2 value of .455 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The direct effect between self-brand connection and customer purchase intention is .480 with an R^2 value of .230 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The indirect effect among self-brand connection and customer purchase intention is .195 with an R^2 value of .038 statistically significant at .001 respectively. The value of R^2 indicates the effectiveness of the model, thus accepting the proposed hypothesis respectively. Thus the analysis proves a partial mediation.

5. Discussion

The results of the present research have revealed that electronic word of mouth, social media usage and self-brand connection exceptionally influence purchase intention The current study has look at the usage of eWOM, online media usage and self-brand connection of game brands in creation of purchase intention. The outcomes illustrate that electronic word of mouth, online media use and self-brand connection has considerable influence over customer purchase intention while results indicate that

social risk moderates among eWOM, self-brand connection and in-person WOM, respectively. Generally, when gaming consoles or such electronic gadgets and devices were not available in the market for sale purposes, consumers still possessed intention to purchase via customer to customer interaction or reviewing information online.

Previous literature suggests the precedence of customer purchase intention in marketing genre, while new phenomenon and theories are under research phase that can lead towards effective customer relationship building techniques (Laroche et al., 2013) and how these drivers determine customer purchase intention (Lu et al., 2016). Dimensionally, a dire need for the importance of electronic word of mouth, online media usage and self-brand connection on the creation of customer purchase decision is developing (Bonetti et al., 2018). The current study, to some extent, attempts to fill this gap (Bonetti et al., 2018). Additionally, there is a need to advance the measurement scales for online media use and eWOM (Chu et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2018) whereas scales for customer purchase intention, social risk, self-brand connection and in-person word of mouth are already available in the marketing genre. The present study has already utilized all these scales and stands close to the reliabilities with the previous (Eelen et al., 2017; Tang, 2017; Gelper et al., 2018; Seiler et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2018).

6.   Conclusion and Managerial Implications

The current study presented the role of eWOM, online media usage and self-brand connection in the creation of customer purchase intention. The current study used two indicators as a mediator and moderator i.e. in-person word of mouth and social risk to determine whether these in any aspect affect the relationship of eWOM, online media usage, self-brand connection and customer purchase intention. It is explored that eWOM, online media usage and self-brand connection impacts customer purchase intention, while social risk does not statistically significantly moderate the relationship of online media usage and in-person WOM while moderates between eWOM and self-brand connection with in-person WOM.

It can be presumed from the results that eWOM, online media use and self-brand connection affects customer purchase intention as customer can get an insight of a product the brand offers with full reviews, dimensions, advantages, uses and disadvantages as well. The customer needs to be literate enough to handle with smart devices and applications. As smart devices and applications are user friendly and compatible, one does not find difficulty in developing a familiarity. It is an understood fact that the customer cannot control the amount of information or reviews about a specific brand or a product available online. Neither the customer can change the information currently displayed nor design any product of a specific brand according to their need.

Javornik (2016) undersigned the need of technological advancement i.e. electronic word of mouth and online media use to recognize the improvement and enhancement of brands. The current study's model in this way is an exploratory undertaking to fulfill these gaps in the discourse. (Carmigniani et al., 2011; Javornik, 2014; Javornik, 2016). Word of mouth whether face-to-face interaction or through electronic mediums play an effective role in customer purchase intention (Chu et al., 2018). The study has confirmed and suggests a vital move for brands repositioning by means of technological developments that were encountering limited sales because of fierce rivalry. Repositioning brands can assist brands with gaining such a market share and win a handsome amount of profit. Such practices cannot just impact electronical word of mouth activities but can additionally influence face-to-face interactions as well. Past studies have discovered positive outcomes of positive word of mouth whether electronically or through face-to-face collaborations (Rese et al., 2014; Jung et al., 2015). Marketers and decision makers ought to concentrate and adopt new technological innovations as customers today prefers to surf and shop online.

Marketing gurus should develop such approaches that can undoubtedly handle customers for their organizations to win a lump sum amount of market share. Administrators ought to be dynamic on the web based life and react to customer inquiries through a group of internet based specialists. Generally, whenever a client's question is replied in a wonderful way, the client won't just make the purchase but will further promote to peers as well. In such manner, the client will create a business for the organization and can likewise present business contributions on the web to the general population. A large amount of customer reviews are available which ingrains trust in new customers to purchase any specific item or brand. Such procedures and strategies will empower organizations to contend in the market for quite a while.

6.1   Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The framework used in this study has been tested through a self-administered questionnaire. Partial feedbacks might have been recorded by few respondents (Tax et al., 1998). Some additional surveys should be piloted to overcome unfairness. The sampling frame of the current study involved consumers of gaming consoles in Pakistan. The results of this research may not be generalized to other sectors or other services. Convenience sampling of the non-probability sampling technique was used rather than probability sampling. The sampling frame indicates gaming console users in Pakistan. Although this limits the researchers to generalize their findings, it is recommended to carry out probability sampling technique to improve validity of the findings of this study.

Nevertheless, role of social risk has been used as a moderator between the independent and mediator variables which with online media use proved insignificant. Therefore, certain other indicators i.e. familiarity can be used as a moderator in future studies. Several other factors can be used between to

indicate what factors lead in enhancing purchase intention. As in the case of this study, the hypothesis generated in the study were accepted while one was rejected but may vary in other contexts. It is believed that future studies which address these limitations can easily develop deeper understanding of electronic word of mouth, social media usage besides self-brand connection accompanied by social risk as well as other determinants as very limited studies are available in this context.

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