# Evaluating Factors Impacting E-Wom: Online Customer Insights On Durable Products In Tamilnadu

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**Abstract**

The research aims to ascertain the relationships between key factors and e-WoM while uncovering distinct clusters within these factors. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 407 respondents who regularly make online purchases. Structured online questionnaires were employed for data collection, utilizing a convenience sampling technique. Correlation analysis unveiled robust and statistically significant positive relationships between various factors and e-WoM. These factors include social media engagement and cultural adaptation, product uniqueness and accessibility, innovation and perception, recency, reliability, and recommendation, local cultural influence and trust, engagement and positive motivation, brand choices and authenticity, and information and engagement with e-WoM. Further exploration of these factors elucidated specific insights. Cultural adaptation was deemed essential, with a strong belief in the importance of products adapting to cultural contexts. Product uniqueness played a pivotal role in influencing online customer behavior, especially in decisions guided by e-WoM. Perceived innovation significantly affected the likelihood of sharing e-WoM about products. Trust in e-WoM, notably from expert reviewers and within social networks, emerged as a critical factor. Local cultural elements and active engagement were powerful motivators for e-WoM generation, as was the authenticity of brands. Information and active engagement with e-WoM reviews also wielded substantial influence. Cluster analysis partitioned respondents into three distinctive groups. "Cautious Traditionalists" (Cluster 1) prioritized traditional values and cultural adaptation but exhibited reluctance toward innovation. "Balanced Explorers" (Cluster 2) displayed a more balanced approach and were receptive to exploring various aspects of e-WoM. The largest group, "Innovative Engagers" (Cluster 3), placed a strong emphasis on innovation, engagement, and trust in e-WoM. These individuals were likely early adopters who actively engaged with e-WoM and considered innovation and trust pivotal in their online purchasing decisions.

**Keywords**: e-WoM, online customer behavior, durable products, correlation and cluster analysis, marketing strategy

## Introduction

In today's digital age, electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) has emerged as a powerful driver of consumer purchasing behavior in the online marketplace. The advent of social media and e-commerce platforms has given rise to a dynamic and interconnected online ecosystem where consumers actively seek and share information about products and services. Understanding the factors that influence e-WoM and its impact on consumer decision-making is crucial for businesses operating in the e-commerce sector (Christodoulides, G., Michaelidou, N., &Argyriou, E., 2012). This article presents an empirical study conducted in Tamil Nadu, India, aiming to identify and analyze significant factors influencing e-WoM and its relationship with the purchasing behavior of online customers for durable products.

One of the primary factors influencing e-WoM in Tamil Nadu is the level of social media engagement and cultural adaptation. The widespread use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provides a channel for consumers to share their experiences and opinions about products. Cultural adaptation plays a significant role, as consumers are more likely to engage in e-WoM when they perceive content as culturally relevant and relatable.The uniqueness of a product and its accessibility online are essential factors that influence e-WoM. Consumers are more likely to share their experiences when they come across products that stand out in terms of design, features, or value proposition(Yaylı, A., &Bayram, M., 2012). Additionally, easy access to the product through e-commerce platforms enhances the likelihood of e-WoM generation.

Innovation in product design, functionality, or technology significantly impacts e-WoM. When consumers perceive a product as innovative and superior, they are more inclined to share their positive experiences. Perceptions about product quality and value for money also influence e-WoM, as consumers tend to discuss their perceptions with others(Srivastava, D., & Sharma, R. W., 2017).The timeliness of e-WoM is crucial. Recent reviews and recommendations hold more weight in influencing consumer decisions. Moreover, the reliability of the source of e-WoM plays a critical role. Consumers are

more likely to trust and act on recommendations from reliable sources, such as friends, family, or influencers.Local cultural influences and trust are significant factors in the Tamil Nadu context. Consumers often rely on recommendations and reviews from individuals who share their cultural background or preferences. Trust is built over time through consistent positive e-WoM.Engagement with e-WoM is driven by positive motivations, such as a desire to help others make informed decisions or to be part of a community. Factors that motivate consumers to engage with e-WoM, such as the feeling of being heard or valued, play a role in its generation.

Brand choices and authenticity are crucial for e-WoM. Consumers are more likely to share their experiences with reputable brands and products they perceive as authentic. Brands that align with consumer values and principles are more likely to generate positive e-WoM.The availability of detailed information and ease of engagement with e-WoM platforms influence the extent of e-WoM generation. Online customers are more likely to share their experiences when they have access to comprehensive information about products and can easily participate in discussions(Srivastava, D., & Sharma, R. W., 2017).The study found a strong correlation between e-WoM and considered factors among online customers in Tamil Nadu. Consumers who were exposed to positive e-WoM were more likely to make purchases, while negative e-WoM had the opposite effect. This underscores the importance of managing and promoting positive e-WoM for businesses in the e-commerce sector.

## Review of Literatures

In the digital age of today, people have a lot of knowledge, products to choose from, and ways to buy them. In this situation, electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WoM) has become a strong force that affects how people act. E-WoM includes sharing reviews, recommendations, and opinions about goods and services online. Consumer decisions are based on trust, and Rahman, M. S., and Mannan, M. (2018) say that e-WoM plays a key part in building and shaping trust. When consumers see e-WoM in the form of online reviews, suggestions, or testimonials, they often see it as more real and trustworthy than traditional advertising. E-WoM is seen as the knowledge of friends and unbiased people who have used a product or service for themselves. Because of this, people tend to trust e-WoM more than marketing texts from companies. (Hamdani, N. A., &Maulani, G. A. F., 2018) Many studies have shown that positive e-WoM makes people more likely to believe a product or service. When potential buyers read good reviews or recommendations from their peers, they are more likely to think positively about the product and trust the brand. On the other hand, bad e-WoM can make people doubt the business and turn away potential buyers. (Sa'ait, N., Kanyan, A., and Nazrin, M. F., 2016) Because of this, businesses have a reason to encourage positive e-WoM to build and keep customer trust.

E-WoM is more than just trust; it has a big impact on how consumers see goods and services. Positive e-WoM can improve the image of a product, making it seem more appealing and desirable. When consumers read about how their friends liked a product and what made it stand out, they are more likely to think the product is good. This affects things like quality, price, and general satisfaction (Badir, M., and Andjarwati, A. L., 2020). On the other hand, bad e-WoM can hurt a product's image and make people less likely to buy it. Consumers may think that bad reviews mean the product is of low quality, isn't reliable, or won't give them a good experience, so they look for other choices. So, e-WoM can change how people think about a product, either making it look better or worse (Tanprajna, R. F., and Ellyawati, J., 2020).

E-WoM is a very important source of information for consumers when they are trying to decide what to buy. When customers have to make a choice, they often use e-WoM to learn more, confirm their choices, and reduce uncertainty. (Duarte, e Silva, S. C., and Ferreira, M. B., 2018) E-WoM can be especially helpful for complicated purchases or investments, such as electronics, travel accommodations, or health care services. Consumers use e-WoM to judge the features of a product, compare different choices, and judge real-world experiences. Positive e-WoM can encourage people to make a buy, especially if it fits with their needs and wants. Negative e-WoM, on the other hand, can make people doubt their decisions and cause them to look for other options (Yusuf, A. S., CheHussin, A. R., and Busalim, A. H., 2018).

E-WoM doesn't just bring in new users; it's also a key part of making people loyal to a brand. Customers who are happy with a product or service often become brand supporters who tell others about their good experiences through e-WoM. This helps build brand loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing. Also, brands that use e-WoM and react to customer feedback show that they are honest and care about making their customers happy. This interaction makes people feel like the brand cares about them and is sensitive (Ruangkanjanases, A., Jeebjong, P., Sonata, N., and Sanny, L., 2021). Businesses have changed their marketing tactics and customer relationship management in response to how e-WoM is changing things. They actively look for and promote positive e-WoM by giving their customers great products, services, and experiences. Also, they keep an eye on e-WoM channels so they can reply quickly to customer questions, concerns, or bad reviews, which could hurt their reputation. In the age of social media and online communities, companies have added e-WoM to their marketing campaigns. They work with influencers and talk to customers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to spread good e-WoM. Also, companies have used data analytics to learn more about e-WoM trends, which helps them improve their products and strategies all the time.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study intends to identify the level of relationship that exists between the considered factors and e-WoM. Further the study have explored the clusters that exists among the considered factors.

**Methodology**

For the study descriptive research design was adopted. The data was collected from 407 respondents, who prefers regularly purchasing through various online platforms. The data was collected using structured online questionnaire. Herein the researcher had adopted convenience sampling technique.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

Herein the demographic profile of the respondents considered for the study were analyzed using percentage analysis.

**Table No. 1:** Demographic Profile

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 208 | 51.1 |
|  | Female | 199 | 48.9 |
|  | Total | 407 | 100.0 |
| Age | Less than 25 | 19 | 4.7 |
|  | 25 - 35 | 190 | 46.7 |
|  | 35 - 45 | 168 | 41.3 |
|  | Above 45 | 30 | 7.4 |
|  | Total | 407 | 100.0 |
| Education | HSC and Diploma | 18 | 4.4 |
|  | Graduate | 195 | 47.9 |
|  | Post - Graduate | 171 | 42.0 |
|  | Professional Degree | 23 | 5.7 |
|  | Total | 407 | 100.0 |

**Source:** (Primary data)

- **Gender:**
  o Male: There are 208 respondents in the study, accounting for 51.1% of the total sample.
  o Female: There are 199 female respondents, making up 48.9% of the total sample.
  o Total: The total number of respondents in the study is 407.
  o Interpretation: This table shows the gender distribution of the respondents in the study. It indicates that the sample is fairly balanced, with slightly more male respondents than female respondents.

- **Age:**
  o Less than 25: There are 19 respondents (4.7%) in this age group.
  o 25 - 35: The largest age group comprises 190 respondents (46.7%).
  o 35 - 45: There are 168 respondents (41.3%) in this age group.
  o Above 45: 30 respondents (7.4%) fall into the category of age above 45.
  o Total: The total number of respondents in the study is 407.
  o Interpretation: This table presents the age distribution of the respondents. It shows that the majority of respondents are in the age range of 25 to 35, making up almost half of the total sample. The distribution across age groups provides insight into the demographics of the study participants.

- **Education:**
  o HSC and Diploma: 18 respondents (4.4%) have completed high school (HSC) or hold a diploma as their highest level of education.
  o Graduate: The largest group consists of 195 respondents (47.9%) who have completed a bachelor's degree.
  o Post-Graduate: 171 respondents (42.0%) have pursued post-graduate education.
  o Professional Degree: 23 respondents (5.7%) possess professional degrees.
  o Total: The total number of respondents in the study is 407.

○ Interpretation: This table displays the educational background of the respondents. The majority of respondents have completed a graduate degree, with post-graduates being the next largest group. This information helps to understand the educational diversity of the sample and provides context for analyzing their responses in the study.

The table shows Pearson correlation coefficients and associated p-values for the relationships between various factors and e-WoM (Electronic Word of Mouth) in the context of online customers for durable products in Tamil Nadu.

**Table No. 2:** Correlation Analysis – Factors Considered with e-WoM

| Correlations | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | EWOM |
| Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation | Pearson Correlation | .800[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Product Uniqueness and Accessibility | Pearson Correlation | .864[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Innovation and Perception | Pearson Correlation | .844[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation | Pearson Correlation | .842[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Local Cultural Influence and Trust | Pearson Correlation | .841[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Engagement and Positive Motivation | Pearson Correlation | .852[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Brand Choices and Authenticity | Pearson Correlation | .829[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |
| Information and Engagement with e-WoM | Pearson Correlation | .758[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 407 |

**Source:** (Primary data)

- Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation: The correlation coefficient between social media engagement and cultural adaptation with e-WoM is 0.800, which is a strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant. This suggests that there is a robust relationship between social media engagement, cultural adaptation, and e-WoM. In other words, as social media engagement and cultural adaptation increase, e-WoM also tends to increase.
- Product Uniqueness and Accessibility: The correlation coefficient for product uniqueness and accessibility with e-WoM is 0.864, indicating a very strong positive correlation. The associated p-value of 0.000 suggests that this correlation is statistically significant. This means that as the uniqueness of products and their accessibility online increase, e-WoM tends to increase significantly.
- Innovation and Perception: The correlation coefficient between innovation and perception with e-WoM is 0.844, indicating a very strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is statistically significant. This implies that as perceived innovation in products increases, e-WoM is likely to increase as well.
- Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation: The correlation coefficient for recency, reliability, and recommendation with e-WoM is 0.842, showing a very strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 signifies statistical significance. This means that recent, reliable recommendations have a substantial influence on e-WoM.
- Local Cultural Influence and Trust: The correlation coefficient between local cultural influence and trust with e-WoM is 0.841, indicating a very strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 reinforces the statistical significance of this correlation. This suggests that trust and local cultural factors play a vital role in driving e-WoM.
- Engagement and Positive Motivation: The correlation coefficient for engagement and positive motivation with e-WoM is 0.852, showing a very strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 underscores the statistical significance. This implies that engaged and positively motivated consumers are more likely to engage in e-WoM.

- Brand Choices and Authenticity: The correlation coefficient for brand choices and authenticity with e-WoM is 0.829, indicating a strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 confirms statistical significance. This suggests that consumers are inclined to engage in e-WoM when they perceive brands as authentic and make choices based on brand reputation.
- Information and Engagement with e-WoM: The correlation coefficient between information and engagement with e-WoM is 0.758, indicating a strong positive correlation. The p-value of 0.000 verifies statistical significance. This means that consumers who are well-informed and actively engage with e-WoM are more likely to generate e-WoM themselves.

All the factors examined show very strong positive correlations with e-WoM, and these relationships are statistically significant. This suggests that these factors have a substantial impact on the generation of electronic Word of Mouth among online customers for durable products in Tamil Nadu. Businesses should take these findings into consideration when formulating their marketing and engagement strategies in the online marketplace.

The descriptive statistics for various factors and their related variables in the context of e-WoM and online customer behavior for durable products in Tamil Nadu. The table includes the mean and rank for each factor and its associated variables, as well as the factor mean and factor rank.

**Table No. 3:** Descriptive Statistics – e-WoM factors and Variables Considered

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factors** | **Variables** | **Mean** | **Rank** | **Factor Mean** | **Factor Rank** |
| Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation | Convenience of social media platforms for accessing e-WoM. | 4.1081 | 18 | 4.0821 | 7 |
| | Confidence in making purchases on platforms with rating and review systems. | 4.1032 | 20 | | |
| | Actively following or joining online communities related to durable products on social media. | 4.0319 | 40 | | |
| | Belief in the importance of durable products adapting to the cultural context. | 4.1106 | 15 | | |
| | Trust in e-WoM posted on well-known e-commerce platforms. | 4.0565 | 38 | | |
| Product Uniqueness and Accessibility | Reliability of online marketplaces with customer review sections. | 4.0663 | 37 | 4.0899 | 6 |
| | Belief in the importance of online platforms verifying e-WoM authenticity. | 4.0688 | 36 | | |
| | Opinion on brands actively engaging with e-WoM on social media. | 4.1032 | 23 | | |
| | The uniqueness of a durable product impact decision to purchase it based on e-WoM | 4.1327 | 10 | | |
| | The accessibility of e-WoM reviews on mobile devices influence engagement with them. | 4.0786 | 33 | | |
| Innovation and Perception | The extent does the innovative nature of a durable product influence likelihood to share e-WoM about it | 4.1032 | 21 | 4.1096 | 3 |
| | More inclined to share e-WoM for durable products that offer unique features or functionality | 4.1081 | 19 | | |
| | Influence of the number of positive e-WoM reviews on product perception. | 4.1278 | 11 | | |
| | Impact of negative e-WoM about a brand on switching to a competitor. | 4.1229 | 12 | | |
| | Belief that online reviews significantly influence purchasing decisions for durable products. | 4.0860 | 27 | | |
| Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation | Trust in e-WoM from expert reviewers. | 4.0958 | 24 | 4.1061 | 5 |
| | Impact of negative e-WoM on discouraging durable product purchases. | 4.1327 | 9 | | |
| | Trust in e-WoM from people within one's social network. | 4.1376 | 7 | | |
| | Importance of the credibility of the person or source posting e-WoM. | 4.0835 | 30 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Motivation from positive e-WoM to try new durable products. | 4.0811 | 31 | | |
| Local Cultural Influence and Trust | Trust in online reviews and recommendations for durable products. | 4.1032 | 21 | 4.0776 | 8 |
| | Belief that e-WoM provides valuable insights about durable products. | 4.0762 | 35 | | |
| | Consideration of the recency of e-WoM when evaluating a durable product. | 4.0344 | 39 | | |
| | Belief that e-WoM is a reliable source of information for durable product purchases. | 4.0860 | 29 | | |
| | Likelihood of recommending a brand with positive e-WoM. | 4.0885 | 26 | | |
| Engagement and Positive Motivation | Frequency of reliance on e-WoM when researching durable products. | 4.1204 | 13 | 4.1106 | 2 |
| | Trust in e-WoM reflecting local preferences and practices. | 4.0811 | 32 | | |
| | Role of local cultural factors in decision to share e-WoM. | 4.1548 | 4 | | |
| | Impact of social media recommendations on durable product purchases. | 4.1106 | 16 | | |
| | Likelihood of writing e-WoM reviews for satisfying durable products. | 4.0860 | 27 | | |
| Brand Choices and Authenticity | Influence of local culture and traditions on product perception. | 4.0958 | 25 | 4.1086 | 4 |
| | Use of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) for sharing and seeking e-WoM. | 4.1425 | 6 | | |
| | Significance of e-WoM in brand choices for durable products. | 4.1106 | 16 | | |
| | Encounters with fake e-WoM reviews when shopping online. | 4.0786 | 34 | | |
| | Response to negative e-WoM in changing purchase decisions. | 4.1155 | 14 | | |
| Information and Engagement with e-WoM | Influence of positive e-WoM about a brand on remaining loyal. | 4.2236 | 1 | 4.1867 | 1 |
| | Preference for durable products aligned with local cultural values. | 4.2015 | 3 | | |
| | Consideration of overall e-WoM sentiment in durable product choices. | 4.2162 | 2 | | |
| | Attention to social media posts about durable products. | 4.1548 | 5 | | |
| | E-WoM reviews provide practical information on where and how to purchase durable products locally | 4.1376 | 8 | | |

**Source:** (Primary data)

- Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation:
o The factor mean for this category is 4.0821, indicating that, on average, respondents find social media engagement and cultural adaptation factors moderately important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.
o Within this factor, the variable with the highest rank is "Belief in the importance of durable products adapting to the cultural context" (Rank: 15). This suggests that respondents consider cultural adaptation as an influential aspect.

- Product Uniqueness and Accessibility:
o The factor mean for this category is 4.0899, indicating that respondents find product uniqueness and accessibility factors moderately important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.
o The variable with the highest rank within this factor is "The uniqueness of a durable product impacts the decision to purchase it based on e-WoM" (Rank: 10). This implies that product uniqueness is a key driver of online customer behavior.

- Innovation and Perception:
o The factor mean for this category is 4.1096, indicating that respondents find innovation and perception factors relatively important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.

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o The variable with the highest rank within this factor is "The extent to which the innovative nature of a durable product influences the likelihood to share e-WoM about it" (Rank: 3). This suggests that respondents perceive innovation as a significant influencer of e-WoM.

- Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation:
o The factor mean for this category is 4.1061, indicating that respondents find recency, reliability, and recommendation factors moderately important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.
o The variable with the highest rank within this factor is "Trust in e-WoM from expert reviewers" (Rank: 5). This indicates that expert reviews are considered important for influencing e-WoM.

- Local Cultural Influence and Trust:
o The factor mean for "Local Cultural Influence and Trust" is 4.0776, indicating that respondents find these factors moderately important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior for durable products in Tamil Nadu.
o Within this factor, the variable with the highest rank is "Trust in online reviews and recommendations for durable products" (Rank: 8). This suggests that respondents place a significant level of trust in online reviews and recommendations, particularly when related to local culture.

- Engagement and Positive Motivation:
o The factor mean for "Engagement and Positive Motivation" is 4.1106, indicating that respondents find these factors relatively important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.
o The variable with the highest rank within this factor is "Role of local cultural factors in the decision to share e-WoM" (Rank: 4). This implies that local cultural factors play a substantial role in motivating individuals to engage in e-WoM.

- Brand Choices and Authenticity:
o The factor mean for "Brand Choices and Authenticity" is 4.1086, indicating that respondents consider these factors moderately important in influencing e-WoM and online customer behavior.
o Two variables share the highest rank within this factor: "Influence of local culture and traditions on product perception" and "Significance of e-WoM in brand choices for durable products" (Both Rank: 16). This suggests that local culture has a notable influence on how respondents perceive brands and make choices based on e-WoM.

- Information and Engagement with e-WoM:
o The factor mean for "Information and Engagement with e-WoM" is 4.1867, indicating that respondents find these factors relatively important and have a relatively higher factor mean compared to other factors.
o The variable with the highest rank within this factor is "Influence of positive e-WoM about a brand on remaining loyal" (Rank: 1). This highlights the strong influence of positive e-WoM on customer loyalty.

These interpretations provide insights into how respondents perceive the importance and influence of different factors and variables in the context of e-WoM and online customer behavior for durable products in Tamil Nadu.
The table contains information related to cluster analysis, including initial cluster centers, final cluster centers, ANOVA results, and the number of cases in each cluster.

**Table No. 4:** Cluster Analysis – e-WoM Factors

| Initial Cluster Centers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Cluster | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation | 4.80 | 2.60 | 3.20 |
| Product Uniqueness and Accessibility | 2.60 | 2.40 | 5.00 |
| Innovation and Perception | 1.40 | 3.40 | 4.80 |
| Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation | 2.80 | 2.00 | 4.60 |
| Local Cultural Influence and Trust | 3.00 | 2.80 | 4.80 |
| Engagement and Positive Motivation | 2.60 | 2.40 | 4.20 |
| Brand Choices and Authenticity | 2.80 | 3.40 | 4.60 |
| Information and Engagement with e-WoM | 4.80 | 1.60 | 4.40 |
| Final Cluster Centers | | | |
| | Cluster | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation | 3.35 | 2.99 | 4.39 | | | | |
| Product Uniqueness and Accessibility | 2.98 | 2.93 | 4.43 | | | | |
| Innovation and Perception | 2.57 | 3.08 | 4.41 | | | | |
| Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation | 3.10 | 3.01 | 4.40 | | | | |
| Local Cultural Influence and Trust | 2.84 | 3.09 | 4.40 | | | | |
| Engagement and Positive Motivation | 2.88 | 3.05 | 4.40 | | | | |
| Brand Choices and Authenticity | 3.06 | 3.14 | 4.40 | | | | |
| Information and Engagement with e-WoM | 4.07 | 2.86 | 4.43 | | | | |
| **ANOVA** | | | | | | | |
| | Cluster | | Error | | | | |
| | Mean Square | df | Mean Square | df | F | Sig. | |
| Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation | 56.331 | 2 | .171 | 404 | 328.939 | .000 | |
| Product Uniqueness and Accessibility | 75.238 | 2 | .175 | 404 | 428.811 | .000 | |
| Innovation and Perception | 82.308 | 2 | .152 | 404 | 541.196 | .000 | |
| Recency, Reliability, and Recommendation | 62.918 | 2 | .153 | 404 | 410.558 | .000 | |
| Local Cultural Influence and Trust | 68.361 | 2 | .168 | 404 | 407.650 | .000 | |
| Engagement and Positive Motivation | 69.093 | 2 | .152 | 404 | 455.776 | .000 | |
| Brand Choices and Authenticity | 57.281 | 2 | .168 | 404 | 341.500 | .000 | |
| Information and Engagement with e-WoM | 56.871 | 2 | .122 | 404 | 464.853 | .000 | |
| **Number of Cases in each Cluster** | | | | | | | |
| Cluster | 1 | 33.000 | | | | | |
| | 2 | 54.000 | | | | | |
| | 3 | 320.000 | | | | | |
| Valid | | 407.000 | | | | | |
| Missing | | 0.000 | | | | | |

**Source: (Primary data)**

I
nitial Cluster Centers:
- The "Initial Cluster Centers" section displays the initial means for each factor within each of the three clusters (Cluster 1, Cluster 2, and Cluster 3).
- These initial means represent the starting points for the cluster analysis.

Final Cluster Centers:
- The "Final Cluster Centers" section displays the final means for each factor within each of the three clusters (Cluster 1, Cluster 2, and Cluster 3).
- These final means represent the centroids of each cluster after the clustering process is complete. They provide insight into how each cluster is characterized in terms of the factors considered.

ANOVA:
- The ANOVA table presents statistical information about the clustering process.
- "F" represents the F-statistic, and "Sig." represents the significance level.
- The F-statistic tests whether there are statistically significant differences between the clusters in terms of the factors.
- The low p-values (all zeros) indicate that there are significant differences between the clusters with respect to the factors, meaning that the clusters are distinct from each other based on these factors.

Number of Cases in each Cluster:
- This section provides the number of cases (respondents) assigned to each of the three clusters.
- Cluster 1 has 33 cases, Cluster 2 has 54 cases, and Cluster 3 has 320 cases.

Cluster Interpretation and Names:
Based on the cluster analysis results, we can provide names and interpretations for the three clusters:
- Cluster 1 - "Cautious Traditionalists":
- o This cluster consists of 33 cases.
- o Members of this cluster tend to prioritize traditional values and cultural adaptation, as reflected in their higher initial means in the "Social Media Engagement and Cultural Adaptation" factor.

- o They have relatively lower initial means in factors related to innovation and engagement.
- o These individuals may be cautious in adopting new trends and innovations, preferring to rely on familiar and culturally aligned information sources.

- Cluster 2 - "Balanced Explorers":
- o This cluster consists of 54 cases.
- o Members of this cluster have a balanced approach, with moderate initial means across several factors.
- o They are open to exploring various aspects of e-WoM and online customer behavior, as indicated by their relatively even distribution of initial means across different factors.
- o These individuals are likely to consider a mix of factors when making online purchasing decisions.

- Cluster 3 - "Innovative Engagers":
- o This cluster consists of 320 cases, the largest among the three clusters.
- o Members of this cluster are characterized by their strong emphasis on innovation, engagement, and trust in e-WoM.
- o They have higher initial means in factors related to innovation, trust in e-WoM, and engagement with e-WoM.
- o These individuals are likely to be early adopters, actively engage with e-WoM, and consider innovation and trust as essential factors in their online purchasing decisions.

**Discussion**

The findings from this empirical study on the factors influencing electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) and online customer behavior for durable products in Tamil Nadu offer valuable insights for businesses operating in the digital landscape. One noteworthy observation is the balanced gender distribution among the study's respondents, highlighting the importance of targeting both male and female online customers. This gender neutrality underscores the need for businesses to adopt marketing approaches that resonate with a diverse audience. Furthermore, the study's demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents fell within the 25 to 35 age group, signifying the significance of understanding the preferences and behaviors of this age cohort, which constitutes a substantial portion of online customers. These demographic insights underscore the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to cater to the unique characteristics of the target audience.

The robust positive correlations between various factors and e-WoM are of particular significance. These correlations suggest that businesses must pay close attention to factors such as social media engagement, cultural adaptation, product uniqueness, innovation, trust, engagement, brand authenticity, and information dissemination when crafting their online marketing strategies. The strong statistical significance of these correlations underscores their critical role in shaping e-WoM generation. In practical terms, this means that businesses should actively engage with these factors to enhance their online marketing initiatives.

A closer examination of the individual factors provides additional depth to the study's findings. The emphasis on cultural adaptation suggests that businesses must align their products and marketing campaigns with the cultural values and preferences of the local audience in Tamil Nadu. For instance, incorporating cultural elements into advertising and product design can help create a sense of resonance with the target customers. Similarly, the influence of product uniqueness on e-WoM implies that highlighting the distinctive features of products and making them easily accessible online can significantly impact customer behavior. This finding underscores the importance of product differentiation in a competitive digital marketplace.

The study's findings also underscore the significance of perceived innovation, trust in e-WoM, active customer engagement, and brand authenticity in shaping online customer behavior. Recognizing the role of local cultural factors in motivating e-WoM engagement is essential, as customers are more likely to share experiences that align with their cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the importance of positive motivation and engagement emphasizes the need for businesses to actively engage with customers, encourage their participation, and create a positive online environment.

The insights gained from the clustering analysis further enhance our understanding of the diverse online customer landscape. The "Cautious Traditionalists" group, characterized by their preference for cultural adaptation and caution toward innovation, calls for targeted marketing efforts that respect cultural traditions and values. On the other hand, the "Balanced Explorers" are open to a range of e-WoM factors, making them adaptable to various marketing strategies. Finally, the "Innovative Engagers," representing a substantial portion of the sample, prioritize innovation, trust, and engagement. Businesses should actively innovate, foster trust, and encourage engagement to capture the attention of this group.

## Findings and Conclusion

The study examined several key aspects related to e-WoM and online customer behavior for durable products in Tamil Nadu. The demographic analysis revealed that the sample of 407 respondents was fairly balanced in terms of gender, with slightly more male participants (51.1%) than females (48.9%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents fell within the 25 to 35 age range (46.7%), indicating a diverse age distribution. Regarding education, a significant portion of respondents had completed a graduate degree (47.9%), followed by post-graduates (42.0%).

The correlation analysis yielded insightful results, indicating strong positive correlations between various factors and e-WoM. Social media engagement and cultural adaptation exhibited a robust relationship with e-WoM ($r = 0.800$), as did product uniqueness and accessibility ($r = 0.864$), innovation and perception ($r = 0.844$), recency, reliability, and recommendation ($r = 0.842$), local cultural influence and trust ($r = 0.841$), engagement and positive motivation ($r = 0.852$), brand choices and authenticity ($r = 0.829$), and information and engagement with e-WoM ($r = 0.758$). These correlations were all statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), highlighting the significant impact of these factors on e-WoM generation.

Further analysis of the factors revealed specific insights. For instance, respondents considered cultural adaptation important, with beliefs in the importance of products adapting to cultural contexts ranking high within this factor. Product uniqueness played a key role in influencing online customer behavior, particularly in decisions based on e-WoM. Perceived innovation significantly influenced the likelihood of sharing e-WoM about products. Trust in e-WoM, especially from expert reviewers and within social networks, was crucial. Local cultural factors and engagement were important motivators for e-WoM generation, as was the authenticity of brands. Information and active engagement with e-WoM reviews were also found to be influential.

Cluster analysis categorized respondents into three distinct groups. "Cautious Traditionalists" (Cluster 1) prioritized traditional values and cultural adaptation but were less inclined toward innovation. "Balanced Explorers" (Cluster 2) had a more balanced approach and were open to exploring various aspects of e-WoM. "Innovative Engagers" (Cluster 3) emerged as the largest group, characterized by a strong emphasis on innovation, engagement, and trust in e-WoM. These individuals were likely early adopters who actively engaged with e-WoM and considered innovation and trust as essential factors in their online purchasing decisions.

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