

e-WOM Bubble as the Key Moment of Digital Activation

Dianta Hasri Natalius Barus*

Program Vokasi, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract: The World Wide Web has changed the way individuals purchase and consider their purchases. This, of surely, drives marketers to become more aggressive and imaginative in their messaging, especially when it comes to aspects of how they intend they utilize trends to offer efficient resource in selecting the general theme and concept for the communication that is going to be carried out. This article is going to look at how trends in society can be leveraged to create an effective communication strategy for a brand. The study has been carried out by collecting information on five popular issues in Indonesia, using Google Trends to acquire data, followed by evaluating and normalizing all the information received. A viral issue on social media appears rapidly, but it also evaporates rapidly from user interactions. It takes around three weeks to reach the apex of a topic. This provides an opportunity for marketers to capitalize on the optimal week to meet communication goals, as the issue will begin to fall after the specified period and will never rebound to its maximum. Despite a short lifespan, a marketing project must be straightforward for the audience that is being reached to comprehend as well as offer its own distinctness to pique its clients' interest. Because no subject becomes popular for a full calendar year, this spurs creativity, resulting in the creation of a fresh and topical marketing content on every quarter to remain in the minds of customers.

Keywords: e-WOM, google trend, digital marketing.

1. Introduction

Establishing an electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) inside an online community is an essential social commerce method that carries weight for companies [1]. Numerous earlier study projects have shown that electronic word-of-mouth, also known as e-WOM, has a substantial importance as a source of information for customers who are active in online shopping [2]. According to Cheung and Thadani [3] a substantial majority of users, namely 91%, have indicated that they prefer to check online reviews, blog entries, and other forms of user-generated content before making purchases of new products or services. This preference was revealed by the users in response to a question on how they decide what to buy. In addition, the research discovered that 46% of users admitted that the forms of content do have an influence upon the way in which they make decisions. Despite this, a recent study concluded that the procedures used for evaluating or appraising anything lacked total reliability and openness. Therefore, the effectiveness of their performance is subject to a substantial amount of doubt [4].

The development of the Internet has changed and simplified several kinds of interpersonal communication, making them much more accessible. One significant benefit is the increased simplicity with which individuals can share their opinions and experiences with one another. WOM has been given a fresh and innovative perspective because of recent technological developments. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. [5] the term e-WOM refers to the spread of positive or negative words about a service or business by persons who are either future, current, or previous customers of that service or business.

Marketers can also make use of e-WOM. In most cases, the spread of information regarding the Internet is made easier by marketers making use of websites that were built by businesses. On the other hand, online communities provide users with the ability to produce their own media content, which may take the form of images, videos, or textual content and may then be distributed to other users. There are several distinct categories of e-WOM platforms, some of which include discussion forums, shopping portals, consumer feedback websites, and social networking websites [6]. Blog entries and consumer feedback web pages are also included in this category.

Users can more easily create content and communicate with one another through the usage of social networking sites [7], which are an essential part of new media. Social networking sites are comprised of a technological software framework with its roots in Web 2.0. Because social media platforms offer users access to a wealth of information, they play an essential part in the decision-making process behind customers' day-to-day purchases [8]. In its position as an expanding information channel and communication system, social media is currently exerting a revolutionary influence on the way businesses interact with the potential customers they seek to attract. The current circumstance places a considerable burden on the enterprises that serve the industrial sector.

Customers can receive and share content related to a variety of firms, goods, or brand names using online social networking networks. Because it enables the collection and analysis of WOM content found online, this accessibility has the potential to have a substantial influence on the purchasing decisions of end users [9].

The development of the internet had a significant impact on the shopping habits of consumers and the decision-making processes they use. This phenomenon unquestionably

*Corresponding author: dianta.hasri@unpar.ac.id

encourages marketers to adopt a strategy that is even more assertive and imaginative when developing their various modes of communication [10]. In addition to this, it highlights how important it is to effectively monitor trends as a useful source of information that can be used to decide the conception and topic components of the outreach programs that are going to be carried out in the future.

This paper will examine the utilization of societal trend changes as a valuable input in formulating a brand's marketing plan. The study was conducted by watching information on 5 popular subjects in Indonesia, gathering data through Google Trends, and afterwards processing and standardizing the acquired data.

2. Literature Review

Electronic word-of-mouth (also known as e-WOM) has evolved as a powerful and significant determinant within the realm of the travel and tourist industry [11]. This phenomenon can be attributed to the rapid development of modern technology. E-WOM has an important role in strengthening relationships with consumer purchasing decisions [12]. In the hospitality industry, infomediaries, which are individuals or organizations that assist the transfer of information through e-WOM, have gained substantial importance, particularly during the advance purchase period [13]. A previous study indicated that most participants, totaling 73%, prefer to read internet comments from other people regarding hotels rather than relying just on the hotel's self-description [14]. One study found that a sizeable portion of prospective hotel customers, which the researchers estimated to number in the dozens of millions, look at internet reviews [15].

When it comes to making decisions about their purchases, most internet users, particularly 78%, are influenced by online reviews, according to the body of research that already exists. Internet feedback from customers has consequently evolved as a substantial resource of information for those who are traveling, and they hold an important place in the domains of social research and the acquisition of services related to transportation [16]. During the same period, tourism has been undergoing a steady growth over the course of the preceding decades, establishing itself as one of the most significant and quickly developing economic fields around the world. It is anticipated that by the year 2030, there would be a 57% surge in arrivals from other countries, which will equal to more than 1.8 billion individuals [17], as stated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Because of this, tourism is considered as an ever evolving and tremendously competitive worldwide business that encompasses various industries all over the world.

The trust factor is very important in the relationship between consumers and companies [18]. The development of a trustworthy relationship between customers and the businesses that supply their goods or services has the potential to alleviate customers' worries about the dangers and uncertainties of making a purchase [19]. The evaluation of the trustworthiness of information sources has been used extensively in academic studies on consumer behavior, with a particular emphasis on

evaluating the influence of WOM communication in comparison to offline word-of-mouth communication. Moreover, social ties comprise the period spent together, the depth of feelings, and the degree to which consumers have equal confidence in one another [20]. When coupled with powerful social interactions, the dissemination of knowledge has an opportunity to possess higher effect, reliability, and trustworthiness [21]. According to this argument, it is extremely important to understand the impact that WOM both offline and online can have. When it comes to the dissemination of information amongst clients, there are two main classifications that may be made.

An empirical concept known as "the intention of customers to buy" depicts the propensity of consumers to engage in a specific shopping activity since it indicates the customers' "intention" to make a purchase. This inclination is impacted by both the external circumstances and how feasible it is considered to get a particular product or service. One possible deciding element is the consumer's intent to make a purchase soon. According to the findings of earlier studies [22], the process by which customers make their purchasing decisions contains this factor as a substantial component.

Numerous research has investigated the usefulness of online social media platforms in terms of WOM communication and the significance of information diffusion. These studies have been carried out in a variety of contexts. In addition to this, it can be accessed by a wide variety of users of the internet, which makes it much easier to disseminate content across a variety of digital platforms. There have been several studies conducted on how e-WOM positively influences consumer purchasing decisions [23]. Accordingly, the link between the effects of social media as well as WOM in connection to the transmission of knowledge can influence customers' propensity to buy reconditioned products. This is because social media and WOM are both forms of word-of-mouth communication.

3. Results and Discussion

The data utilized in this study was sourced from Google Trend during a period of 36 consecutive weeks. The analysis focused on five viral subjects, namely referred to as the "BTS Meal," "Dalgona Coffee," "Es Kepal Milo," "Latto-latto," and "Citayam Fashion Week." Data normalization is performed to simplify analysis as the data is sourced from several years or months.

The data were subjected to normalization procedures based on their respective start times, followed by sampling over a period of 36 weeks. The duration in weeks is determined by the endpoint of a viral topic in the Google search engine. In contrast, employing comparisons after the process of data normalization facilitates the author's ability to conduct weekly analyses pertaining to these five subjects.

The data is further segmented into intervals of four weeks or approximately one month. The purpose of this analysis is to observe and analyze the patterns and fluctuations in trends over a span of one month. The analysis procedure additionally utilizes the monthly average value and the changes that transpire between months as points of reference.

According to the findings shown in Table 1, this research identifies six distinct stages. These stages are as follows: the first stage is referred to as the Introduction stage, the second stage is known as the Hyper Growth stage, the third stage is labeled as the Peak stage, the fourth stage is referred to as the Slowing Down stage, the fifth stage is known as the Bottom Line stage, and the sixth and final stage is referred to as the End of the Cycle stage. The categorization of each step is determined by the index that is subjected to analysis. The initial phase, known as the Introduction stage, commences during the first week and is characterized by a rating of 4.2. During this stage, preliminary discussions pertaining to the topic are in their nascent phase. However, it is crucial to note that this stage plays a significant role in the ongoing progression of the issue throughout the subsequent weeks. Following a good introduction of the topic in the initial week, a notable increase in the index to 16.8 (indicating hyper growth) was observed in the second week. Subsequently, the index reached its highest point in the third week, registering at 52.8 (indicating a peak). This statement elucidates the rapid pace at which discussions on a certain issue unfold in the realm of digital media, necessitating the necessity for expeditiousness to effectively seize this chance.

Table 1
Data trends observed (Google Trend)

Week	BTS Meal: (Indonesia)	citayam fashion week: (Indonesia)	Dalgona coffee: (Indonesia)	es kepal mlo: (Indonesia)	latto latto: (Indonesia)	AVR	Month	AVR/ Month	Difference	Q	Stages	
1	4	4	9	2	2	4,2	I	30,40			I	Introduction
2	3	19	50	5	7	16,8					II	Hyper Growth
3	100	42	100	14	7	52,6					III	Peak
4	19	100	62	53	6	48	II	33,95	11,68%	IV	Slowing Down	
5	4	26	37	92	13	34,4						IV
6	2	11	10	100	25	29,6						IV
7	1	7	6	99	44	31,4	III	19,25	-43,30%	V	Bottom Line	
8	1	5	5	91	100	40,4						IV
9	1	5	4	52	99	32,2						IV
10	1	3	4	34	78	24	IV	6,00	-68,83%	V	Bottom Line	
11	1	3	4	22	29	11,8						V
12	1	2	4	18	20	9						V
13	1	3	5	16	13	7,6	V	3,65	-39,17%	VI	End Cycle	
14	1	2	5	14	9	6,2						V
15	1	2	4	15	5	5,4						V
16	1	2	3	14	4	4,8	VI	2,05	-43,84%	VII	End Cycle	
17	1	1	3	13	3	4,2						V
18	1	1	2	13	2	3,8						V
19	1	1	2	11	1	3,2	VII	1,40	-31,71%	VIII	End Cycle	
20	1	1	2	11	2	3,4						V
21	1	1	1	10	1	2,8						V
22	1	1	1	6	1	2	VIII	1,25	-10,71%	IX	End Cycle	
23	1	1	1	5	1	1,8						V
24	1	1	1	4	1	1,6						V
25	1	1	1	4	1	1,6	IX	1,15	-8,00%	VI	End Cycle	
26	1	1	1	3	1	1,4						V
27	1	1	1	3	1	1,4						V
28	1	1	1	2	1	1,2	VI			VI	End Cycle	
29	1	1	1	2	1	1,2						VI
30	1	1	1	2	1	1,2						VI
31	1	1	1	2	1	1,2	VI			VI	End Cycle	
32	1	1	1	2	1	1,2						VI
33	1	1	1	2	1	1,2						VI
34	1	1	1	2	1	1,2	VI			VI	End Cycle	
35	1	1	1	2	1	1,2						VI
36	1	1	1	1	1	1						VI

Upon examining the monthly data, it was observed that the highest point was identified in the second month. In the initial month, the index recorded a value of 30.4, which then rose to 33.95 in the next month. This finding indicates that during the second month, the subjects under observation achieved a state of conversational stability among digital users. This specific crossroads provides an advantageous opportunity for marketers to make the most of the time that is currently at their disposal. From the very first month all the way through the third month, the topic stays at a significant level of representation in terms of the voices that are being heard. The data that was gathered from the index reveals the following values for the first three months: 30.4, 33.95, and 19.25, respectively. The data was filtered to levels 10 and above. During the period beginning in

the fourth month and ending in the ninth month, every index had values that were less than 10.

Table 2
Data Analysis & Normalized

Month	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
AVR	30,40	33,95	19,25	6,00	3,65	2,05	1,40	1,25	1,15
Difference	0	11,68%	-43,30%	-68,83%	-39,17%	-43,84%	-31,71%	-10,71%	-8,00%
Peak Point	52,6	40,4	32,2	7,6	4,2	2,8	1,6	1,4	1,2
Peak Week	3	8	9	13	17	21	25	29	33
Bottom Point	4,2	29,6	9	4,8	3,2	1,6	1,2	1,2	1
Bottom Week	1	6	12	16	19	24	28	32	36

According to the findings of the analysis of the data, the bottom-line cycle began at week 10 and continued until week 22. There was a considerable drop in quantity. This suggests that individuals are becoming less interested in digital media and conducting fewer queries related to it.

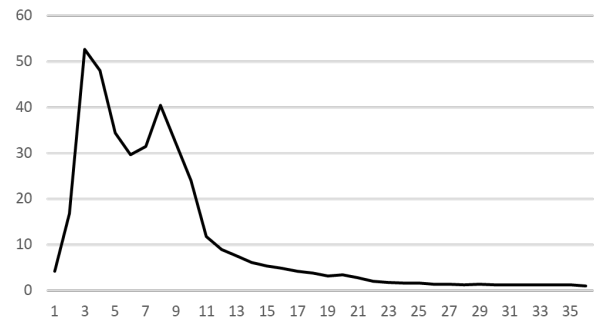


Fig. 1. Trend chart accumulated

As can be shown in Figure 1, the index volume that was achieved to be the highest was found to be in the first through the twelfth weeks. During the sixth week, there was a drop, but during the seventh week, the themes that were researched had a bounce to the index in the 40s. On the other hand, it was unable to achieve the summit like it did in the third week. When we look at the changes that took place over the course of each month, we see that there was a rise of up to 11.68% from the first month to the second month. However, after that, there was a progressive decrease over the course of the subsequent months. The fourth month saw the greatest percentage drop, which was 68.83%. This underlines that the first three months are the maximum time span for marketers to be relevant in carrying out activation, and that after that point, the golden moment will have passed. Figure 1 provides a clearer image of this phenomenon.

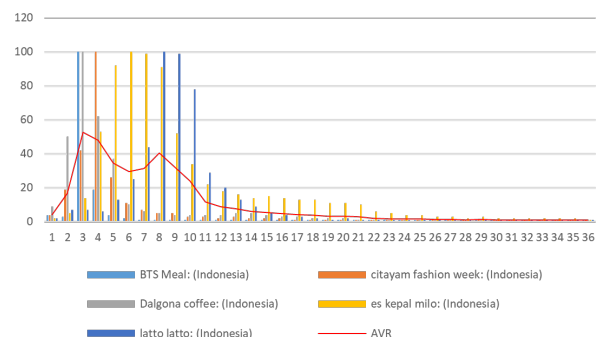


Fig. 2. Trend chart

In Figure 2, the author tries to analyze the index changes that

occurred from the first week to the 36th week. It was found that the topics "Latto-latto" and "Es Kepal Milo" had a longer viral duration than the other three topics. This indicates that these two topics have great appeal to the Indonesian people.

Latto-latto is a type of stress relief game that is popular among children and adults. The uniqueness of the game and the sounds it produces are the main attraction. On the other hand, Es Kepal Milo is a product innovation that occurred on an MSME scale, going viral through the concept of user generated content (UCG).

Both topics gained widespread attention thanks to the powerful and long-lasting UCG concept. This demonstrates that the participation of digital UCG users is the single most crucial step to take to ensure that improvements in communication can support large expansion.

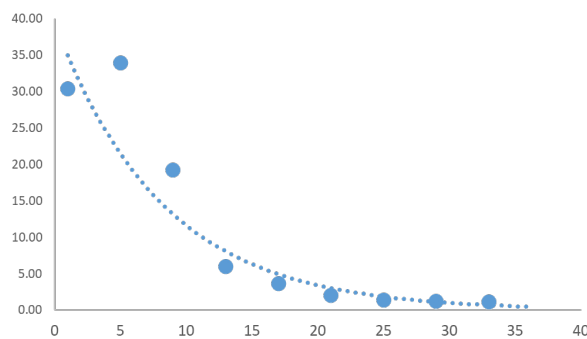


Fig. 3. Monthly average movement chart

In Figure 3, the author tries to examine the changes in the monthly index by utilizing trend lines as a tool to visualize the movements that take place. Along the same lines as the trend line that was formed in Figure 3, it resembles the weekly movements that were illustrated in Figure 1.

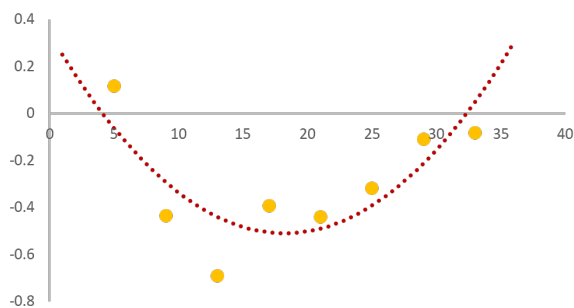


Fig. 4. Monthly trend movement

During the process of analyzing the oscillations that were detected in both the ascending and descending trends, a fascinating discovery was made. Figure 4 shows that there was an observed increase of 11.68% during the second month of observation. On the other hand, a steady declining trend was seen beginning in the second month and continuing until the ninth month. The fourth month showed the most significant drop, specifically one that amounted to 68.83% less than the previous month. It was discovered that the rate of decline had a lowering tendency over the time spanning from the fifth month

to the ninth month, which ultimately resulted in a recovery in the decline curve. This revelation was made after it was revealed that. Inferences can be drawn from this indicating, beginning with the fifth month, there has been a gradual decline in interest in topics that are connected. There was a considerable reduction in the percentage during the fifth month, with it going from 68.83% during the fourth month to 39.17% during the fifth month. This suggests that the rate of decline in attitudes on topics pertaining to the sphere of digital media in Indonesia has slowed down. The shape of the trend line has some similarities to an inverted parabola, as can be seen in the graph.

In addition, the author did a comparison analysis between the monthly changes and the weekly trends, which can be seen in Figure 5. According to the findings of the current research, there is an important turning point that takes place roughly between weeks 18 and 20, during which time the observed trend continues to be substantial over the course of a total of 36 weeks.

This observation lends credence to the notion that digital users have reached a point of equilibrium in terms of the replies they provide to content that is going viral. It has been seen that the topic is either reaching a state of higher stability or requires the addition of supplemental news or related things to maintain or increase the viral nature or index value of the content. Both outcomes are possible.

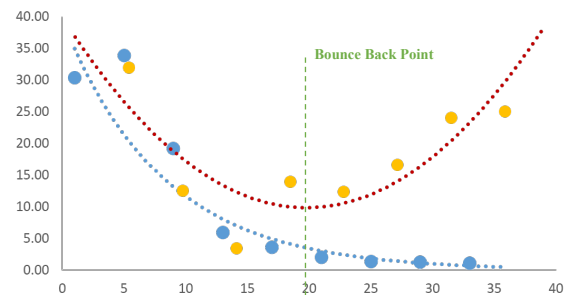


Fig. 5. Trend indicator and Trend analysis

The relationship between the fall in the weekly trend index and the change in the percentage decline in the trend that happens monthly at a specific time is shown to be inversely proportional. This discovery holds significant importance as it has the potential to advance research on the influence of possibilities that marketers may leverage in employing viral subjects as a highly effective "organic" marketing technique.

4. Conclusion

Due to the pervasive utilization of digital media within contemporary society, the completion of the Introduction Stage can be accomplished within a relatively little timeframe. In the past, the process of communication involved several sequential stages that consumed a significant amount of time.

However, because of the proliferation of internet-based technology and the ever-changing nature of customer behavior, marketers now have the capacity to instantly communicate vital information to their target audience by utilizing buzz or viral advertising methods. This is a significant advancement from

previous years.

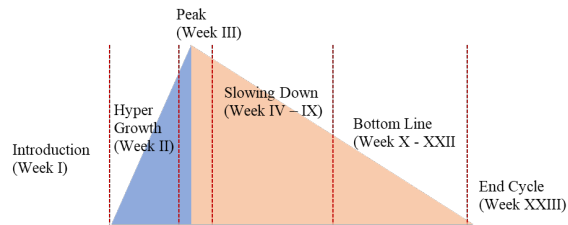


Fig. 6. Trend curve stages

The rapid spread of discussion in digital media can be attributed to the numerous capabilities of digital penetration. In the subsequent stage. Each of the five research object subjects reached their highest point of interest over the subsequent week. This exemplifies the ease with which a piece of content may attain viral status, as well as the rapidity with which consumer interest can diminish.

During the Slowing Down phase, there is a possibility of observing intermittent disputes on digital media regarding the fading nature of this subject. This indicates that the user is deliberating on the significance of the problem for the advancement of subsequent debate. If it is determined that the subject matter lacks informative or valuable content, it will promptly transition to the concluding phase, indicating that the topic is approaching its conclusion.

Furthermore, it is essential for marketers to have the flexibility to adjust their strategies in response to the phenomena of bounce back. The claim that there has been a fall in the trend index is, in fact, one that may be supported by the data. On the other hand, on the other hand, there has been an increase in the regularity of the monthly variations. This gives a possible opportunity for marketers to investigate additional communication tactics that might be utilized to extend the subject matter's relevance in the arena of digital media.

5. Limitations

This study will require further developments, particularly in conducting case investigations on the prevalent topic being examined and how firms might utilize them to enhance the amplification effects resulting from the discourse feature in digital media. If it is determined that the subject matter lacks substantive content or significance, it will expeditiously transition into the final phase, known as the bottom-line phase, when a topic is nearing its conclusion.

References

- [1] Kozinets, R. V., De Valck, K., Wojnicki, A. C., & Wilner, S. J. (2010). Networked narratives: Understanding word-of-mouth marketing in online communities. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(2), 71–89.
- [2] Liu, S., Jiang, C., Lin, Z., Ding, Y., Duan, R., & Xu, Z. (2015). Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: A domain-aware approach. *Information Sciences*, 306, 34–52.
- [3] Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461–470.
- [4] Hausemer, P., Rzepecka, J., Dragulin, M., Vitiello, S., Rabuel, L., Nunu, M., Gysen, S. (2017). Exploratory study of consumer issues in online peer-to-peer platform markets. Brussel, Belgium: European Commission.
- [5] Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 38–52.
- [6] Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M. (2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 31–40.
- [7] Kaplan, A.M. social media, the digital revolution, and the business of media. *Int. J. Media Manag.* 2015, 17, 197–199.
- [8] Shawky, S.; Kubacki, K.; Dietrich, T.; Weaven, S. A dynamic framework for managing customer engagement on social media. *J. Bus. Res.* 2020, 121, 567–577.
- [9] Wang, J.J.; Wang, L.Y.; Wang, M.M. Understanding the effects of eWOM social ties on purchase intentions: A moderated mediation investigation. *Electron. Commer. Res. Appl.* 2018, 28, 54–62.
- [10] Grubor, A., & Jaksa, O. (2018). Internet Marketing as a Business Necessity. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 16(2), 265–274 (2018).
- [11] Papathanassis, A.; Knolle, F. Exploring the adoption and processing of online holiday reviews: A grounded theory approach. *Tour. Manag.* 2011, 32, 215–224.
- [12] Pai, M.Y.; Chu, H.C.; Wang, S.C.; Chen, Y.M. Electronic word of mouth analysis for service experience. *Expert Syst. Appl.* 2013, 40, 1993–2006.
- [13] Papathanassis, A.; Knolle, F. Exploring the adoption and processing of online holiday reviews: A grounded theory approach. *Tour. Manag.* 2011, 32, 215–224.
- [14] Saura, J.R.; Reyes-Menendez, A.; Palos-Sanchez, P. Un análisis de sentimiento en Twitter con machine learning: Identificando el sentimiento sobre las ofertas de Black Friday. *Rev. Espacios.* 2018, 39, 16.
- [15] Saura, J.R.; Reyes-Menendez, A.; Filipe, F. Comparing data-driven methods for extracting knowledge from user generated content. *J. Open Innov. Technol. Mark. Complex.* 2019, 5, 74.
- [16] Mauri, A.G.; Minazzi, R. Web reviews influence on expectations and purchasing intentions of hotel potential customers. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 2013, 34, 99–107.
- [17] World Tourism Organization. UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2017 Edition.
- [18] Hussain, S.; Ahmed, W.; Jafar, R.M.S.; Rabnawaz, A.; Jianzhou, Y. eWOM source credibility, perceived risk and food product customer's information adoption. *Comput. Hum. Behav.* 2017, 66, 96–102.
- [19] Lazaroiu, G.; Negurița, O.; Grecu, I.; Grecu, G.; Mitran, P.C. Consumers' decision-making process on social commerce platforms: Online trust, perceived risk, and purchase intentions. *Front. Psychol.* 2020, 11, 890.
- [20] Ismagilova, E.; Slade, E.L.; Rana, N.P.; Dwivedi, Y.K. The effect of electronic word of mouth communications on intention to buy: A meta-analysis. *Inf. Syst. Front.* 2020, 22, 1203–1226.
- [21] Wang, P.; Kuah, A.T. Green marketing cradle-to-cradle: Remanufactured products in Asian markets. *Thunderbird Int. Bus. Rev.* 2018, 60, 783–795.
- [22] Vergura, D.T.; Luceri, B.; Zerbini, C. The effect of social EWOM on consumers' behaviour patterns in the fashion sector. In *The Art of Digital Marketing for Fashion and Luxury Brands*; Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, Switzerland; Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2021; pp. 221–242.
- [23] Liao, Y.; Wang, J.; Jaehnig, E.J.; Shi, Z.; Zhang, B. WebGestalt 2019: Gene set analysis toolkit with revamped UIs and APIs. *Nucleic Acids Res.* 2019, 47, 199–205.