

## THE EFFECT OF SOURCE CREDIBILITY AND ARGUMENT QUALITY IN SMARTPHONE REVIEWS ON YOUTUBE TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTION

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of argument quality and source credibility on attitude, e-wom adoption, and purchase intention, and to evaluate the influence of attitude and e-WOM on purchase intention in the smartphone industry. The population of this study consists of individuals residing in Jakarta who have watched smartphone reviews on YouTube. This study employed a non-probability sampling technique using purposive sampling. A total of 250 respondents were included, and SmartPLS 4 was used to analyze the data. The results of this study indicate that argument quality does not influence attitude; that argument quality and source credibility have a positive influence on e-WOM adoption; that argument quality, attitude, and e-WOM adoption have a positive influence on purchase intention; and that source credibility does not influence purchase intention. The theoretical implications of this study are that it successfully confirms the Information Adoption Model, and TRA. The managerial implications of this study are as follows: smartphone industry players need to improve the quality of arguments, the credibility of sources, attitude, and e-WOM adoption, as these factors influence purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Argument Quality; Source Credibility; Attitude; e-WOM Adoption; Purchase Intention; Influencer; Smartphones, YouTube

## INTRODUCTION

The global smartphone industry has evolved into one of the most dynamic technology sectors of the 21st century. According to data from the International Data Corporation (IDC), total global smartphone shipments increase by 2.4% year-on-year to 336.9 million units in the fourth quarter of 2025. The total number of smartphones shipped reached 1.26 billion units in 2025 (IDC Global, 2026). In addition, the global smartphone market value was valued at USD 566.90 billion in 2024 and expected to continue growing at a CAGR of 7.40% to reach USD 1.077 trillion by 2033 (MarketDataForecast, 2025).

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia stands out as one of the most promising smartphone markets. Data shows that the number of active smartphone users in Indonesia has surged from 54 million in 2015 to 209.3 million users in 2023, representing approximately three-quarters of Indonesia's total population (Andalas, 2024). This trend is reinforced by a report from Bardono (2024), which reveals that the Indonesian smartphone market grew by 15.5% year-over-year in 2024, reaching nearly 40 million units, with total sales revenue for the first half of 2024 amounting to Rp48.9 trillion, which grew by 3.8% compared to the same period last year. (Wiraraja, 2025).

A notable phenomenon that has caught researchers' attention is the transformation in consumer behavior during the smartphone purchasing decision-making process. In the digital age, consumers no longer rely solely on conventional advertising but have shifted to user reviews, YouTube review videos, social media discussions, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) as their primary sources of information before making a purchase. The adoption of 5G technology in Indonesia, which surged from 17.1% in 2023 to 25.8% in 2024, has also driven greater consumer sophistication in accessing and evaluating product information digitally (Pratomo & Riyanto, 2025). This situation creates an increasingly complex information ecosystem in which the quality of arguments in reviews and the credibility of information sources become crucial determinants of purchase intent and the intent to share information.

According to the 2025 Digital Index Popular Brand Award (IDPBA) study on trends in the number of product reviewers on Indonesian social media, there are a total of 477.9 million reviews online. Smartphones dominate significantly, accounting for 85.1 million reviews. Cosmetics reviews rank fifth, with 14.8 million reviewers (InfoBrand, 2025a). Although smartphones rank highest in terms of the number of reviewers, cosmetic products lead the top 10 in terms of transactions (InfoBrand, 2025b). This indicates that a large number of reviews does not necessarily lead to customers purchasing a product.

According to previous research, several key factors in reviews can influence purchase intent, such as argument quality (Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023), professionalism/expertise (Ki & Kim, 2019; Zhao et al., 2024; Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023; Khurana et al., 2025), source credibility (Zhao et al., 2024; De Cicco et al., 2020), trustworthiness (Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023; Khurana et al., 2025), interactivity (Ki & Kim, 2019; Zhao et al., 2024), attractiveness (Khurana et al., 2025; Ki & Kim, 2019; Zhao et al., 2024). In the meta-analysis study by Qiu and Zhang (2024) *it was found that review valence has the strongest influence on purchase intention. However, research on the mechanisms through which argument quality and source credibility influence purchase intention via attitude remains very limited, particularly in emerging markets such as Indonesia. Therefore, this study focuses on argument quality and source credibility.*

Furthermore, this study focuses on smartphones because most previous research has been conducted in the context of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) (Daowd et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2022), tourism (Alsheikh et al., 2021; González-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2024),

or financial services (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2023) Specific research on high-involvement products such as smartphones in the Indonesian market, which possesses unique characteristics, including high demographic heterogeneity, diverse brand preferences, and varying levels of digital literacy, remains very limited. This underscores the urgency of research that explicitly positions smartphones as the subject of study within the Indonesian market context. Based on the above description, this study aims to investigate the influence of argument quality and source credibility on attitude, e-WOM adoption, and purchase intention, and to evaluate the influence of attitude and e-WOM on purchase intention in the smartphone industry.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Purchase Intention

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) focuses on theoretical structures about individual motivation factors as determinants of the likelihood of performing specific behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Purchase intention arises when a customer is likely to consider purchasing a product or service.

### Argument quality

Argument quality refers to as the effectiveness of a message in persuading customers to make a purchase (Ngo et al., 2024). The quality of the argument is crucial in influencer marketing, as a convincing, well-crafted message can significantly boost an influencer's credibility, making their recommendations more persuasive.

Prior research found that argument quality has a positive effect on attitude and purchase intention (Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023; Selem et al., 2023; Verma et al., 2023). Argument quality also has a positive effect on e-WOM (Chahal et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2024; Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021).

H1. Argument quality has a positive effect on Attitude

H2. Argument quality has a positive effect on e-WOM adoption

H3. Argument quality has a positive effect on Purchase Intention

### Source credibility

Source credibility refers to the level of trust that the message recipient places in the message sender, where the sender acts like a communicator in the traditional communication process (Li & See-To, 2024). In the context of social media, source credibility refers to the perception that a reviewer or influencer possesses sufficient knowledge and honesty in conveying their experiences. Source credibility influences consumer attitudes (Ngo et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2025; Torres et al., 2019), e-WOM adoption (Anastasiu et al., 2021; Ngo et al., 2024; Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021), and purchase intention (Pan et al., 2025; Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023).

H4. Source credibility has a positive effect on Attitude

H5. Source credibility has a positive effect on e-WOM adoption

H6. Source credibility has a positive effect on Purchase Intention

### Attitude

Attitudes are formed when consumers process and evaluate arguments and information sources, leading to positive or negative views that, in turn, influence purchasing decisions and information-sharing behavior. Consumers' attitudes are crucial for understanding their

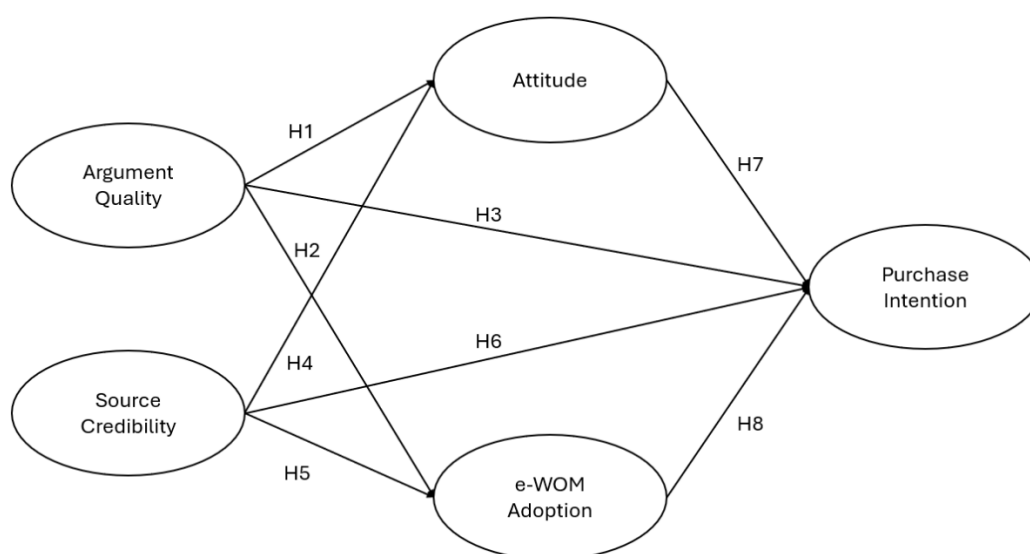
behavioral intentions. Prior research has emphasized these concepts to investigate the link between attitudes and purchase intentions (Pan et al., 2025; Torres et al., 2019; Ünalmiş et al., 2024).

H7. Attitude has a positive effect on Purchase Intention

### e-Word of Mouth Adoption

e-WOM adoption refers to the extent to which consumers incorporate digital reviews from other users into their decision-making process, which is influenced by their perceptions of the quality, credibility, and relevance of that information. Prior research found that e-WOM adoption has a positive effect on purchase intention (Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021; Ngo et al., 2024).

H8. e-WOM adoption has a positive effect on purchase intention



**Figure 1. Research Model**  
Source: Developed for this research (2026)

## RESEARCH METHOD

The population of this study consists of individuals who have watched smartphone reviews on YouTube. This study employed a nonprobability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling. The study exclusively targeted individuals aged 18 or older residing in Jakarta who have watched smartphone reviews. The sample was selected exclusively from Jakarta because Jakarta has the highest internet penetration rate and digital content consumption in Indonesia (Research, 2024). The target sample size is 170 respondents, calculated by multiplying the total number of indicators by ten (Hair Jr et al., 2019). Data collection took place over three months, from September 2025 to December 2025. Argument quality was assessed using four items, attitude toward information with four items and source credibility with three items, e-WOM adoption with three items from (Putra & Suprapti, 2020). This study employs partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) as a statistical analysis technique.

## RESULTH AND DISCUSSION

Of the 170 planned respondent samples, 250 respondents were successfully obtained. The demographic profile of Respondents is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Demographic Characteristics	Total	Percentage (%)
<u>Gender</u>		
• Male	92	37%
• female	158	63%
<u>Age:</u>		
• 18- 21	51	20%
• 21 – 30	162	65%
• 31 – 50	21	8%
• Above 50	16	
<u>Education</u>		
• below Undergraduate	53	21%
• Undergraduate	195	78%
• Graduate	1	1%
• Post Doctoral	0	0%
<u>Occupation</u>		
• Students	53	21%
• Entrepreneur	28	11%
• Employee	165	66%
• Others	4	2%
<u>Domicile</u>		
• Jakarta	250	100%
• Other	0	0%

Source: Primary data (2026)

### Measurement Model

To ensure the model's accuracy, Table 2 shows that all indicators of all constructs have factor loadings above 0.7, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.5, Composite Reliability values above 0.7, and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7. Thus, this model meets the requirements for convergent validity.

**Table 2. Convergent Validity Results**

Constructs & item	<i>Outer Loading</i>
<i>Argument Quality (CA= 0.861, CR= 0.863, AVE= 0.783)</i>	
AQ1. The information provided by YouTubers about smartphones has helped me	0.876
AQ2. The information provided by YouTubers about smartphones has convinced me	0.895
AQ3. The information provided by YouTubers about smartphones is valuable	0.881
<i>Source Credibility (CA= 0.901, CR= 0.914, AVE=0.833)</i>	
SC1. Generally, YouTubers who review smartphones are experts in the field of smartphones	0.922
SC2. Generally, YouTubers who review smartphones are trustworthy	0.903
SC3. Generally, YouTubers who review smartphones have a good understanding of smartphones	0.914
<i>Attitude (CA= 0.849, CR=0.854, AVE=0.688)</i>	
AB1. I like the smartphone information shared by YouTube reviewers	0.798
AB2. Smartphone information provided by YouTube reviewers is good	0.826
AB3. The smartphone information provided by YouTube reviewers satisfies me	0.872

AB4. I enjoy the smartphone information shared by YouTube reviewers	0.820
<i>Purchase Intention (CA= 0.826, CR= 0.838, AVE= 0.657)</i>	
PI1. I will likely buy the product	0.828
PI2. I will buy the product next time I need it.	0.744
PI3. I will definitely try the product.	0.848
PI4. I plan to buy the brand of product	0.817
<i>e-WOM adoption (CA= 0.836, CR= 0.843, AVE= 0.752)</i>	
WI1. The information available on YouTube makes it easier for me to make a decision.	0.861
WI2. The information on YouTube allows me to make decisions more effectively.	0.874
WI3. I consider the information on YouTube when making purchase decisions.	0.867

*Notes: CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.*

Source: SmartPLS output (2026)

Discriminant validity measures how distinct (discriminatory) one construct is from another. Table 3 shows that the discriminant validity results in this study were  $\leq 0.9$ , indicating strong discriminant validity.

**Table 3. Evaluation of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio**

	Argument Quality	Attitude	e-WOM	Purchase Intention	Source Credibility
Argument Quality					
Attitude	0.186				
e-WOM	0.366	0.263			
Purchase Intention	0.317	0.656	0.459		
Source Credibility	0.627	0.316	0.344	0.336	

Source: SmartPLS Output (2026)

### Structural Model

VIF measures the extent to which the variance of the regression coefficient estimates "inflates" due to high correlation among predictors. The higher the VIF, the stronger the indication of multicollinearity. The VIF values in this study are below 3, as shown in Table 4. This indicates that there are no multicollinearity issues in this study.

**Table 4. Evaluation of Multicollinearity**

	Argument Quality	Attitude	e-WOM	Purchase Intention	Source Credibility
Argument Quality		1.437	1.437	1.49	
Attitude				1.112	
e-WOM				1.166	
Purchase Intention					
Source Credibility		1.437	1.437	1.545	

Source: SmartPLS output (2026)

Table 5 evaluates the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Attitude has a coefficient of determination of 0.08 ( $R^2 = 7.9\%$ ), indicating that attitude can be explained by the constructs of argument quality and source credibility to the extent of 7.9%. In comparison, the remaining 92.1% is explained by other constructs not included in this study. The e-WOM adoption construct can be explained by the constructs of argument quality and source credibility to the

extent of 12.2%, while other constructs explain the remaining 87.8%. Finally, the constructs of argument quality, source credibility, attitude, and e-Wom adoption explain 39.6% of purchase intention. In comparison, the remaining 60.4% is accounted for by constructs outside the scope of this study. Finally, Hair et al. (2019) categorized the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) values for endogenous constructs as substantial ( $R^2 = 0.75$ ), moderate ( $R^2 = 0.50$ ), or weak ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ). Table 7 below shows that all endogenous constructs fall into the moderate category.

**Table 5. R-Square**

	R-square	Remarks
Attitude	0.079	Weak
E-WOM	0.122	Weak
Purchase Intention	0.396	Moderate

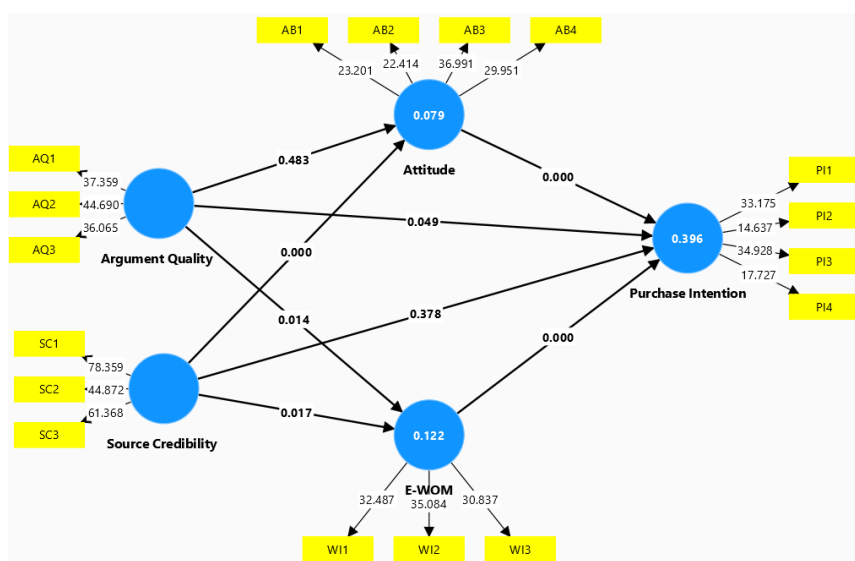
Source: SmartPLS output (2026)

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6. Of the eight hypotheses formulated, two were not supported (H1 and H6), and five were supported (H2, H3, H4, H5, H7, and H8). A hypothesis is considered supported if it has a t-statistic value greater than 1.645 (one-tailed) and a p-value less than 0.05

**Table 6. Hypotheses Testing**

H	Path	Original Sample	t-statistik	P value	Result
H1	Argument Quality → attitude	0.004	0.042	0.483	Not supported
H2	Argument Quality → e-WOM adoption	0.212	2.205	0.014	Supported
H3	Argument Quality → purchase intention	0.102	1.652	0.049	Supported
H4	Source credibility → attitude	0.279	3.649	0.000	Supported
H5	Source credibility → e-WOM adoption	0.183	2.115	0.017	Supported
H6	Source credibility → purchase intention	0.022	0.31	0.378	Not Supported
H7	Attitude → purchase intention	0.482	8.807	0.000	Supported
H8	e-WOM adoption → Purchase Intention	0.241	4.117	0.000	Supported

Source: SmartPLS output (2026)



**Figure 2. Results of the Structural Model Analysis**

Source: SmartPLS output (2026)

## Discussion

The study found that argument quality does not affect attitude. These findings indicate that although YouTube smartphone reviewers already demonstrate high argument quality in their reviews, and customer attitudes toward smartphones are already positive, reviewers' argument quality does not influence customer attitudes toward smartphones.

The results of hypothesis 1 indicate that Argument Quality does not affect attitude. These results indicate that although the quality of the arguments presented by YouTubers in their smartphone reviews is helpful, convincing, and valuable to viewers, this does not influence viewers' attitudes towards the information. While argument quality significantly influences consumer attitude, it is often heavily mediated by the viewer's trust in the influencer and the perception of the information's usefulness, rather than the logical strength alone (Ibrahim et al., 2024). According to The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), consumers don't always process arguments deeply (the central route). When motivation or cognitive ability is low, argument quality is ignored, and attitudes are more influenced by peripheral factors such as source credibility. This can also be caused by information overload. In the digital age, consumers are exposed to so many reviews that the quality of a single argument isn't strong enough to change their attitudes. Furthermore, attitudes are more affective/emotional, so audiences are more responsive to who is speaking than what is being said.

The results of Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 indicate that argument quality positively affects e-WOM adoption (effect size = 0.212) and purchase intention (effect size = 0.102). These findings are supported by previous research on e-WOM adoption (Chahal et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2024; Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021) and on purchase intention (Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023; Selem et al., 2023; Verma et al., 2023). These findings indicate that customers need high-quality reviews that can help and reassure them about smartphones. Thus, when such arguments convince them, they are willing to adopt those reviews and buy smartphones.

The results for H4 and H5 indicate that source credibility positively affects attitude (effect size = 0.279) and e-WOM adoption (effect size = 0.183). These findings are supported by previous research on attitude (Ngo et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2025; Torres et al., 2019) and on e-WOM adoption (Anastasiei et al., 2021; Ngo et al., 2024; Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021). These findings indicate that when smartphone companies use expert, trustworthy, and knowledgeable reviewers, customers develop a positive attitude toward the products and are more likely to take those reviews into account when making purchasing decisions.

The results of Study H6 indicate that source credibility does not affect purchase intention. These findings indicate that although YouTube smartphone reviewers are experts in their field, trusted, and knowledgeable, this does not lead customers to purchase smartphones. Consumers may trust a review source but still delay purchasing. Consumer decision-making in the tech sector is not exclusively driven by expert opinion. This implies that while YouTube reviewers are trusted, consumers are likely to require additional factors, such as specific prices, product features, or emotional engagement, to convert information into a purchase. Furthermore, smartphones are high-involvement products that require more than source credibility to persuade customers to purchase. Thus, purchase intention is influenced not only by trust in the source but also by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

The results of Studies H7 and H8 indicate that attitude and e-WOM adoption have positive effects on purchase intention, with effect sizes of 0.482 and 0.241, respectively. These findings are supported by previous research on attitude (Pan et al., 2025; Torres et al., 2019; Ünalmiş et al., 2024) and on e-WOM adoption (Putra & Suprapti, 2020; Sardar et al., 2021; Ngo et al., 2024). This indicates that when customers have a positive attitude toward

smartphones and intend to follow YouTube reviewers' advice, they are more likely to purchase that smartphone.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are as follows: Argument quality does not affect attitude because, based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Cacioppo et al., 1986), consumers tend not to process arguments deeply when cognitive motivation is low, so that attitudes are more influenced by peripheral factors such as source credibility than by the content of the argument itself; argument quality and source credibility have a positive effect on e-WOM adoption; argument quality, attitude, and e-WOM adoption have a positive effect on purchase intention; and source credibility does not affect purchase intention, because the influence of source credibility on purchase intention is indirect, namely fully mediated by attitude and e-WOM adoption, in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which emphasizes that purchase intention is influenced by a combination of more complex psychological factors, not solely trust in the source of information. Argument quality has a greater influence on e-WOM adoption than source credibility. Attitude has the greatest influence on purchase intention, followed by e-WOM adoption and argument quality.

The theoretical implications of this study are that it successfully confirms the Information Adoption Model, which posits that argument quality and source credibility are predictor constructs of e-WOM adoption, particularly in the smartphone industry. This study also confirms The Elaboration Likelihood Model, Theory of Reasoned Action and The Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggest that attitudes can drive customer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, this study provides additional evidence that e-WOM adoption can influence purchase intention.

The managerial implications of this study are as follows: First, argument quality influences e-WOM adoption and purchase intention. This implies that to increase e-WOM adoption and purchase intention, smartphone businesses need to improve argument quality by creating reviews that describe the product well, in detail, and clearly so that the information helps customers; persuasively conveying their message to convince customers; and providing valuable reviews that emphasize the product's benefits and drawbacks. Second, enhance the source's credibility by involving YouTube reviewers who are smartphone experts, have a trustworthy reputation, and possess a solid understanding of the field. Third, improve customer attitudes toward smartphone products by producing smartphones with excellent performance that align with the target market and the promises made in marketing campaigns; create satisfying products where the benefits customers receive outweigh the sacrifices they make; creating smartphones that are easy to use and more than just communication tools so that customers enjoy using them, and building brand awareness and a positive brand image so that the smartphone brand becomes one that customers prefer.

There are several limitations to this study, namely that the influence of argument quality and source credibility on attitude and e-WOM adoption remains low. Future research could explore other variables that might increase e-WOM adoption in the context of influencer characteristics. The influence of argument quality, source credibility, attitude, and purchase intention remains relatively low, even though it falls within the moderate category. Therefore, it is necessary to identify other variables that can increase purchase intention in the smartphone industry. This study was limited to the Jakarta area. Future research could be conducted on a broader scale. The respondents in this study were mostly women, who tend to be less active in reviewing smartphones. They only watch YouTube smartphone videos when they intend to

purchase a product, not in their free time. Future research could focus more on men, who are generally more interested in smartphones.

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