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## Exploring Significance of Word-of-Mouth Marketing: A Systematic Review Analysis of Sustainable Marketing Strategies from an Islamic Perspective

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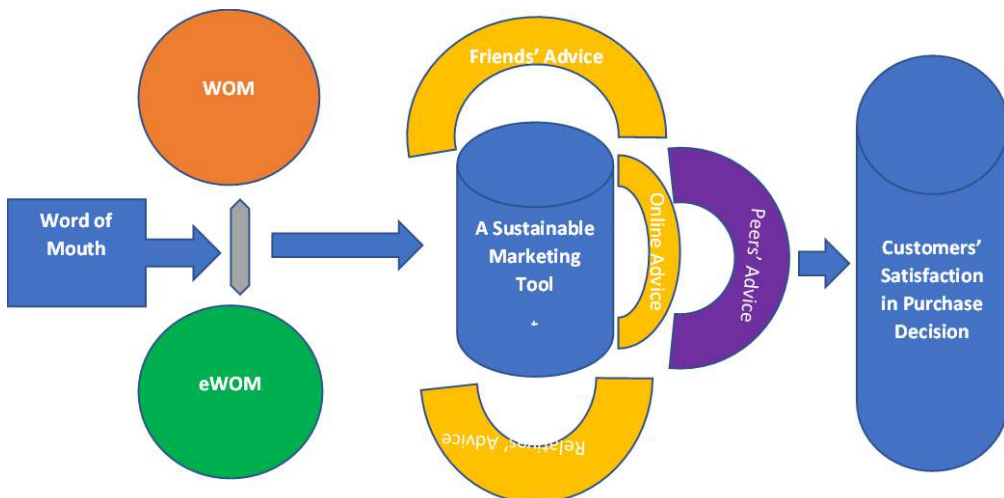
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### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Marketing is a powerful instrument to promote goods and services, and word-of-mouth is used as a marketing strategy. This article aims to develop a theme from existing literature by systematically reviewing the literature. This paper also explores the ethical and Islamic dimensions of the word-of-mouth marketing.

**Methodology:** The authors used the best-known Science Direct database to search online literature, including 1,164 research and 69

review articles available in peer-reviewed journals between 2019 and 2022, and to shape the paper after conducting a thorough literature review and setting exclusion criteria. The studies proved it is a simple and easy way of marketing communication.

**Finding:** The findings uncover the efficacy of this modern way of marketing. The study concluded that this way of marketing is a sustainable tool of marketing that provides the guidelines to be implemented by researchers, academicians, and policymakers in the future. Furthermore, a wide range of overlapping dimensions have been found between sustainable, ethical and Islamic perspectives.

**Novelty:** The novelty of the paper is that very few studies on the topic are available on science direct database sites. Furthermore, few studies have discussed the ethical implications of word-of-mouth marketing.

**KEYWORDS:**

*Sustainable, effective, matters, target, online, novelty, ethics.*

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- *WOM helps us in decisions making.*
- *It is the easiest way of communication.*
- *It saves our time for decision-making.*
- *It is the cheapest way of marketing.*
- *It is an effective tool of marketing.*
- *We trust to conversate with peers.*
- *We prefer well-known brands.*
- *It motivates customers.*
- *Ethics should be catered in WOM.*

**ACRONYMS**

<i>WOM</i>	= <i>Word- of- mouth</i>
<i>eWOM</i>	= <i>Electronic word-of-mouth</i>
<i>WOMM</i>	= <i>Word-of-mouth marketing</i>
<i>WOMMA</i>	= <i>Word-of-mouth marketing association</i>
<i>SLR</i>	= <i>Systematic Literature Review</i>
<i>SD</i>	= <i>Science Direct</i>
<i>Batt</i>	= <i>Brand attitude</i>
<i>WTPp</i>	= <i>Willingness of customers to pay premium prices</i>
<i>SM</i>	= <i>Social Media</i>
<i>SN</i>	= <i>Social Network</i>
<i>OSN</i>	= <i>Online Social Network</i>
<i>OFB</i>	= <i>Online Feedback</i>
<i>IOP</i>	= <i>Influence of Peers</i>
<i>PBUH</i>	= <i>Peach be Upon Him</i>

## Introduction

Word-of-mouth (WOM) means an act of a consumer recommending another person to buy a soft good or service. It is a free marketing tool for customers' interactions with their friends and family to promote, to motivate for the products and services which are in their experiences.<sup>1</sup> The development of technology and internet-based networks has played a positive role in spreading the word-of-mouth technique, business personnel speak directly with clients and receive instant feedback in the form of likes, clicks, and comments. Customers can it's of the product and service through online forums, such as blogs, peer networking sites, social media platforms, and e-commerce websites, they can use share their experiences about a product or service. The eWOM may be used for comments, ratings, reviews, video testimonials, tweets, photographs, and blog posts. Marketers develop their relationship by this technique with customers.<sup>2</sup> This tool of marketing is very helpful in publishing, software, electronics, clothes, and food businesses to introduce new items, and is more effective marketing strategy than any other. The increasing use of internet and online purchasing also increase the trust of customers, and this trend is increasing continuously. In the digital age, the reasons for its flourishing day by day because it saves time and makes ease for the real customers. Most of the companies use this tool due to its effective and prompt results. The micro and small enterprises may get more benefits from this technique because they have budget constraints.<sup>3</sup> If all the producers take care of their quality and service, this technique will work more effectively. Marketing managers prefer eWOM through paid advertising such as online by TV, radio, or using other social media platforms, is a natural conversations and recommendations for particular goods and services. The Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association (WoMMA) believes that authentic, credible, social, repeatable, measurable, and polite word-of-mouth marketing strategies are the best<sup>4</sup> because people

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1. Sara Rezaee Vessal, Pietro De Giovanni, and Alborz Hassanzadeh, "Technology and Service Investments in the Presence of Feature Fatigue and Word-of-Mouth," *European Journal of Operational Research* 301, no. 3 (September 2022): 923–41, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2021.11.035>.
  2. Yung-Chuan Huang, "How Marketing Strategy, Perceived Value and Brand Image Influence WOM Outcomes—The Sharing Economy Perspective," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 68 (September 2022): 103071, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103071>.
  3. Kyung Yul Lee and Hojoon Choi, "Predictors of Electronic Word-of-Mouth Behavior on Social Networking Sites in the United States and Korea: Cultural and Social Relationship Variables," *Computers in Human Behavior* 94 (May 2019): 9–18, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.12.025>.
  4. Sven-Olaf Gerdt, Elisa Wagner, and Gerhard Schewe, "The Relationship between Sustainability and Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality: An Explorative Investigation

like to hear from their peers, friends, and relatives who have experienced the recommended products. Accordingly, the different expected marketing functions, such as, sharing the product experience, customers' emotions, needs, information, and awareness may easily be achieved through this way of marketing communication, see figure 1:



Figure 1: Functions of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

### Association with the Theory of Word-of-Mouth

The theory of WOM is oral communication between a speaker and a listener.

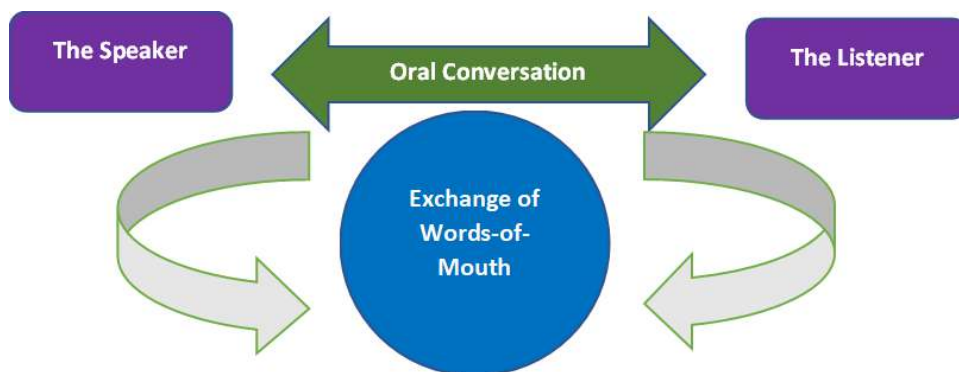
**The speaker:** The speaker is motivated due to self-involvement and self-experience in using the product, the brand, or the service and recommends it to others.

**The listener:** The listener is motivated due to hearing about the product, the brand, or the service from those who already have used them.

It is generated when a speaker and a listener exchange their words about a product or service, see figure 2:

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Using EWOM as a Data Source," *Tourism Management* 74 (October 2019): 155–72, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.010>.



*Figure 2: Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework indicates that the speaker and the listener both share their experiences to develop a level of trust about a product or service available in the market.

### **Focus of Research**

This research focuses on two important points, a trust creator, and a tool of marketing. First, it creates trust in the mind of customers through the post purchase behaviour of old customers. Second, it is an effective and sustainable tool of marketing due to its easy use. People do trust in their relatives, friends, and peers, and they act upon their advices. It is an effective tool of marketing, because it establishes brand loyalty among consumers, it affects the sales positively, and it motivates the new customers.<sup>5</sup>

This paper has the following research objectives:

1. The word of mouth is the easiest tool of marketing.
2. The word of mouth is an effective tool of marketing.
3. Marketing sustainability is possible through word-of-mouth.
4. The customers get motivated through word of mouth.
5. The ethical considerations in the word-of-mouth marketing.
6. The complementary aspects between contemporary word of mouth marketing and Islamic traditions.

The following research questions may be developed considering the research objectives:

1. How does a word-of-mouth act effectively?
2. Why does a word-of-mouth work easily?
3. What driving forces make marketing activities sustainable?
4. How do marketing activities motivate customers?
5. What are the ethical considerations in Word-of-Mouth Marketing?
6. What is the Islamic perspective of Word-of-Mouth Marketing?

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5. Alexa Drake, "Why Word of Mouth Marketing Is So Effective (+How You Can Use It)," 2019, <https://learn.g2.com/word-of-mouth-marketing>.

To review the literature systematically, the WOM seems to be the best technique of marketing.

### **SLR Procedure Adopted:**

The steps of the key procedure were meticulously followed, planned out, and carried out in this systematic literature review (SLR).<sup>6</sup> The aim of the literature review was to compile a list of primary papers that would address the study's research questions. Science Direct (SD) was employed as the source for the literature review's identification and selection. The following steps were adopted for the research methodology: (i) choosing a topic, (ii) formulating research questions, (iii) identifying a research statement, (iv) identifying sources, (v) formulating inclusion and exclusion criteria, (vi) screening and sorting relevant data. Data had to be integrated in accordance with the study aims and questions in the last step.

The study questions were related to the subject of word-of-mouth and its suitability in this sustainable framework. Several research papers, reviews, case studies, and observational studies. They were pertinent to "word-of-mouth or electronic word-of-mouth". First, the titles and abstracts were examined. It was desired to read the entire English-language paper. Then, for further debate, only original research papers and review papers that were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2019 and 2022 were chosen. The study was expanded to include all research looking at the impact of word-of-mouth or electronic word-of-mouth in online marketing and communication. By identifying fresh patterns within the research field, this strategy can help to display comprehensive, trustworthy, and diverse facts. Because it is a systematic review of already published information, ethical approval was not needed. Information from previously published articles was cited in this SLR along with the appropriate publication. The systematic literature review provides the maximum authenticity of the review papers to make the authenticity of the study. It provides the best knowledge regarding the use of word-of-mouth in Pakistan, and it provides the best guidance about the positive and negative impact of word-of-mouth on a business.

### **Literature Collection**

The most well-known database for scientific peer-reviewed literature, Science Direct (SD), was used to conduct online literature search. To assemble a significant amount of literature data, nominated and screened relevant publications, including journal papers, conference papers, and book chapters, were reviewed. The selection of keywords was made with the topic

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6. Nicola McMeekin et al., "How Methodological Frameworks Are Being Developed: Evidence from a Scoping Review," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 20, no. 1 (December 30, 2020): 173, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-020-01061-4>.

in mind and included words that are frequently seen in research publications. As a result, the literature was located using the authorized Science Direct (SD) database.

Since 2019 to 2022, several article kinds have been found in the Science Direct (SD) database, including review articles (69), research articles (1,164), encyclopedia (10), book chapters (114), discussion (2), editorials (8), mini reviews (2), news (1), Brief communications (5), and other (17). Publishing in this field is growing yearly, except for a little decline in 2022. The papers that were chosen to have closed linked of word-of-mouth. Then, for a more proper review, only original research publications that were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2019 and 2022 were included. In addition, an evaluation of published review papers is done carefully. After a careful search, only one review paper found the database of "Science Direct". Mathematically, it is said that there is a 50% research gap, that clearly indicates a huge area of research in the in the field for a systematic review. It encourages the author to write a systematic review. The appropriate data was screened and organized, those studies which were identified but whose complete texts were not available were excluded from further examination. The same author's duplicate papers and studies based on the same research questions and datasets were also disregarded. Similarly, all the irrelevant studies of marketing were also not considered for this research. An exclusion criterion was used to guide the review after examining the literature survey. Table 1 summarizes the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Finally, after reviewing the data from the Science Direct (SD) database, a preliminary search was carried out. This produced many papers that were curtailed and evaluated for relevance by examining the abstracts, significantly reducing the size of the sample. The shape of the review was started from chosen review and research articles following an extensive literature evaluation and exclusion criteria. Research gaps were identified, and suggestions for additional research were made, including several methods for using word-of-mouth as a sustainable marketing technique.

**Table 1:** *The Criteria in the SLR for Inclusion and Exclusion, adapted from Adro and Leitao (do Adro and Leitão, 2020)*

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Related materials to word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth in titles, abstracts, and keywords in the SD database from the start of indexation from 2019 until 2022; abstracts from	Duplicate papers and inaccessible full text are both issues. grey literature is any writing that doesn't immediately connect to web marketing or word-of-mouth marketing.



conferences, research papers, and book chapters.	
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### **Review Article Trends:**

The examination of the review articles demonstrated that since 2019, the number of publications has been rising annually. This conclusion indicates that the study of word of mouth is a sustainable tool of marketing is receiving an up down trend in specific four years. A total of 69 review articles were found to be relevant to the key terms provided above and were published in various journals between 2019 and 2022. These journals contain the majority of publications relating to the aforementioned search terms: Journal of Cleaner Production, Tourism Management, Trends in Food Science & Technology, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, The Lancet, Journal of Business Research, Industrial Marketing Management, Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy, Energy Research & Social Science, Heliyon, Journal of the Neurological Sciences, Journal of Controlled Release, Agricultural Systems, Food Research International, International Journal of Biological, Macromolecules, Food Quality and Preference, Fisheries Research, Chemico-Biological Interactions, Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications, The Journal of Strategic Information Systems, International Journal of Information Management, International Journal of Production Economics, Technovation, Computers, Environment and Urban Systems, Aggression and Violent Behavior.

### **Research Article Trends:**

The research articles' analysis found a zigzag publication tendency starting in 2019. From 2019 to 2022, 1164 research publications were published and related to the keywords. These journals contain most publications: Journal of Business Research, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Tourism Management Perspectives, Tourism Management, Journal of Cleaner Production, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Industrial Marketing Management, International Journal of Information Management, Heliyon, Computers in Human Behavior, Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity, Information & Management, Technology in Society, International Journal of Research in Marketing, Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, Energy Policy, Procedia Computer Science, Telematics and Informatics, Annals of Tourism Research, Research in Transportation Business & Management, Journal of Rural Studies, Evaluation and Program Planning.

A summary of reviewed articles with key factors of a systematic literature review of the selected papers between 2019 and 2022 covering

the research findings, and references. For this purpose, eighteen relevant papers were selected that cover the word-of-mouth as a marketing tool to convince the potential customers for products and services of different brands, see table 2.

**Table 2:** Summary of findings of the selected articles.

S. No	Findings	Citation	S. No	Findings	Citation
1	Customer testimonials show that e-servicescape has a favorable impact on trust, which in turn has a beneficial impact on eWOM and customer loyalty.	7	10	The results demonstrated that eWOM improves a company's performance and popularity on social media.	8
2	The findings indicated that consumer conventional WOM intention is more influenced by in-person customer experience than by online consumer experience.	9	11	The results indicated the platform's accessibility, prior eWOM experience, and hotel attribute performance.	10
3	The results of music festival experience with the 5Es, the Gen Y	11	12	Based on the research the remarkable results achieved using eWOM.	12

7. Gina A. Tran and David Strutton, "Comparing Email and SNS Users: Investigating e-Servicescape, Customer Reviews, Trust, Loyalty and E-WOM," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 53 (March 2020): 101782, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.03.009>.
8. Tahir M. Nisar et al., "Up the Ante: Electronic Word of Mouth and Its Effects on Firm Reputation and Performance," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 53 (March 2020): 101726, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.12.010>.
9. Jose Ribamar Siqueira et al., "Spreading the Word: How Customer Experience in a Traditional Retail Setting Influences Consumer Traditional and Electronic Word-of-Mouth Intention," *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 37 (September 2019): 100870, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2019.100870>.
10. Chih-Lun Alan Yen and Chun-Hung Hugo Tang, "The Effects of Hotel Attribute Performance on Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) Behaviors," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 76 (January 2019): 9–18, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.006>.
11. Kelly J. Semrad and Manuel Rivera, "Advancing the 5E's in Festival Experience for the Gen Y Framework in the Context of EWOM," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 7 (March 2018): 58–67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.08.003>.
12. Qing Sun et al., "Exploring EWOM in Online Customer Reviews: Sentiment Analysis at a Fine-Grained Level," *Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence* 81 (May 2019): 68–78, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.engappai.2019.02.004>.

	attendees provided positive eWOM.				
4	It is found that with the same features the producers can sale their goods in the market through eWOM.	13	13	Based on results it reveals that customers remain more satisfied by online dealings followed by eWOM.	14
5	A negative eWOM caused a decline in sales of luxury fashion products.	15	14	The results show the peers impact on adolescents' buying decisions due to eWOM.	16
6	The results guided the retailers, wholesalers, and producers for understanding the market demand of the products as per genders' need through eWOM.	17	15	It demonstrates the beneficial effects of eWOM employing OSN on the management and operation of contemporary businesses.	18
7	Physica negotiations are more effective than that of eWOM.	19	16	The results showed that WTPp uses the	20

13. Peiqin Zhang et al., "An Empirical Investigation of EWOM and Used Video Game Trading: The Moderation Effects of Product Features," *Decision Support Systems* 123 (August 2019): 113076, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2019.113076>.
14. Paulo Duarte, Susana Costa e Silva, and Margarida Bernardo Ferreira, "How Convenient Is It? Delivering Online Shopping Convenience to Enhance Customer Satisfaction and Encourage e-WOM," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 44 (September 2018): 161–69, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.06.007>.
15. Cesare Amatulli et al., "An Investigation of Unsustainable Luxury: How Guilt Drives Negative Word-of-Mouth," *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 37, no. 4 (December 2020): 821–36, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2020.03.005>.
16. Anubhav Mishra et al., "Adolescent's EWOM Intentions: An Investigation into the Roles of Peers, the Internet and Gender," *Journal of Business Research* 86 (May 2018): 394–405, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.04.005>.
17. E. Teso et al., "Application of Text Mining Techniques to the Analysis of Discourse in EWOM Communications from a Gender Perspective," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 129 (April 2018): 131–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.12.018>.
18. Jiakun Wang, Xinhua Wang, and Yun Li, "A Discrete Electronic Word-of-Mouth Propagation Model and Its Application in Online Social Networks," *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and Its Applications* 527 (August 2019): 121172, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physa.2019.121172>.
19. Safdar Hussain et al., "Consumers' Online Information Adoption Behavior: Motives and Antecedents of Electronic Word of Mouth Communications," *Computers in Human Behavior* 80 (March 2018): 22–32, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.09.019>.
20. Mário Augusto and Pedro Torres, "Effects of Brand Attitude and EWOM on Consumers' Willingness to Pay in the Banking Industry: Mediating Role of

				transforms BATT and eWOM.	
8	The findings may aid in our comprehension of the mechanisms behind trust in eWOM communities.	21	17	There is an interlink between mobile social media users and eWOM.	22
9	The findings suggested that marketers could collaborate with SNSs to create C2C eWOM marketing campaigns for consumers to enhance purchase intentions.	23	18	The correlation between social presence and eWOM was shown to be larger the more interpersonal influence there was.	24

### Commentary on Literature Review:

It covers the overall review commentary of eighteen articles focusing on their findings with their citation records as indicated in table 2. Accordingly, online consumers' comments matter because peers impact positively our buying behaviour. Electronic word-of-mouth is a way of sharing the information, it is an easy way of products sales but it may not use for selling the comfort products and it is also a source of proper guidelines, messages are more trustworthy received by it. Physical communication is considered more effective than electronic way of communication that is why negotiation is more effective than online communication. Customer to customer marketing campaigns may be successful on social networking sites<sup>25</sup>. The

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Consumer-Brand Identification and Brand Equity," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 42 (May 2018): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.01.005>.

21. M.R. Martínez-Torres et al., "Identifying the Features of Reputable Users in EWOM Communities by Using Particle Swarm Optimization," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 133 (August 2018): 220–28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.04.017>.
22. Amit Shankar, Charles Jebarajakirthy, and Md Ashaduzzaman, "How Do Electronic Word of Mouth Practices Contribute to Mobile Banking Adoption?," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 52 (January 2020): 101920, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101920>.
23. Duong Hanh Tien, Adriana A. Amaya Rivas, and Ying-Kai Liao, "Examining the Influence of Customer-to-Customer Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Purchase Intention in Social Networking Sites," *Asia Pacific Management Review* 24, no. 3 (September 2019): 238–49, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2018.06.003>.
24. Carla Ruiz-Mafe et al., "Does Social Climate Influence Positive EWOM? A Study of Heavy-Users of Online Communities.," *BRQ Business Research Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (January 2018): 26–38, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brq.2017.12.001>.
25. Madhurima Deb and Ewuukgem Lomo-David, "Determinants of Word of Mouth Intention for a World Heritage Site: The Case of the Sun Temple in India," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 19 (March 2021): 100533, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100533>.

authenticity of marketing and customer-based is more effective, it shows the stronger interpersonal influence, because it affects the customers' willingness to brands. It may check the performance of an organization, and it improves a firm's status through social media and it also influences consumers' purchase decisions. Similarly, it may demand the expected brands and it may give the remarkable results. It makes the customers more satisfied, and the work may be speedier, and dealing with customers become easy when they are satisfied by word-of-mouth communication. Physical dealing gets help from it<sup>26</sup>, it may achieve general information, because it is a platform for facilitating the customers. It gets support from the mobile phone in every field of business, internet and word-of-mouth communication support each other, that is why it can manage for communication of customer to customer. The ways of marketing online reviews for available products and services are easy, because it helps the concept of sustainability, and satisfaction is achievable. It may use for multidimensional purposes<sup>27</sup>. Hence, proper use of this technique is for the improvement of departmental services.

Overall, 1402 selected articles from the "science direct" database, which consists of 69 papers from the review articles belonging to the Review Article Section and 1164 articles belonging to the Research Article Section. In the next section, the review of the twenty most cited papers reflected the importance of word-of-mouth in marketing and its impact on the sales of businesses. Word-of-mouth is a target-oriented way of marketing because customers have more trust in their peers, their friends, and their relatives who advise for purchasing of certain products and services which are in their past experience, see table 3.<sup>28</sup> The peers conversations create a good and encouraging environment and it generates new customers. Normally, these customers get advice from their friends through online by e-mails, WhatsApp, phone, and any other way of marketing communication. It has acknowledged that social networks for electronic word-of-mouth has an impact on how consumers make purchasing decisions.<sup>29</sup> Consumers always

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26. Joon Soo Lim and Jun Zhang, "The Impact of Message Appraisals of Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty on Information Seeking and Electronic Word-of-Mouth Intentions of US Female Consumers," *Telematics and Informatics* 61 (August 2021): 101594, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101594>.
  27. Thomas Reimer and Martin Benkenstein, "Not Just for the Recommender: How EWOM Incentives Influence the Recommendation Audience," *Journal of Business Research* 86 (May 2018): 11–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.01.041>.
  28. Eran Manes and Anat Tchetchik, "The Role of Electronic Word of Mouth in Reducing Information Asymmetry: An Empirical Investigation of Online Hotel Booking," *Journal of Business Research* 85 (April 2018): 185–96, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.019>.
  29. Jian-Jun Wang, Ling-Yu Wang, and Meng-Meng Wang, "Understanding the Effects of EWOM Social Ties on Purchase Intentions: A Moderated Mediation Investigation,"

share to others all the benefits and drawbacks that they have faced from the products which they have purchased in past.

In the next section, a detail of most cited papers is given, see table 3:

**Table 3:** The most cited articles

Rank	Author, Year	Title	Journal	Citation
A1	<sup>30</sup>	Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015 statement.	Systematic Reviews	<u>146703</u>
1	<sup>31</sup>	How convenient is it ? Delivering online shopping convenience to enhance customer satisfaction and encourage eWOM.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	371
2	<sup>32</sup>	Examining the influence of customer-to-customer electronic WOM on purchase intention in social networking sites.	Asia Pacific Management Review	197
3	<sup>33</sup>	Consumers' online information adoption behavior: Motives and antecedents of electronic WOM communications.	Computers in Human Behavior	191
4	<sup>34</sup>	Effects of brand attitude and eWOM on consumers' willingness to pay in the banking industry: Mediating role of consumer-brand identification and brand equity.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	184

*Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 28 (March 2018): 54–62, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2018.01.011>.

30. David Moher et al., "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015 Statement," *Systematic Reviews* 4, no. 1 (December 1, 2015): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1186/2046-4053-4-1>.
31. Duarte, Costa e Silva, and Ferreira, "How Convenient Is It? Delivering Online Shopping Convenience to Enhance Customer Satisfaction and Encourage e-WOM."
32. Tien, Amaya Rivas, and Liao, "Examining the Influence of Customer-to-Customer Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Purchase Intention in Social Networking Sites."
33. Hussain et al., "Consumers' Online Information Adoption Behavior: Motives and Antecedents of Electronic Word of Mouth Communications."
34. Augusto and Torres, "Effects of Brand Attitude and EWOM on Consumers' Willingness to Pay in the Banking Industry: Mediating Role of Consumer-Brand Identification and Brand Equity."

5	35	Electronic WOM and hotel performance: A meta-analysis.	Tourism Management	180
6	36	How do electronic WOM practices contribute to mobile banking adoption?	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	180
7	37	Adolescent's eWOM intentions: An investigation into the roles of peers, the Internet and gender.	Journal of Business Research	165
8	38	Electronic WOM and the brand image: Exploring the moderating role of involvement through a consumer expectations lens.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	127
9	39	Comparing email and SNS users: Investigating e-servicescape, customer reviews, trust, loyalty and eWOM.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	117
10	40	An empirical investigation of eWOM and used video game trading: The moderation effects of product features.	Decision Support Systems	97
11	41	Not just for the recommender: How eWOM incentives influence the recommendation audience.	Journal of Business Research	73

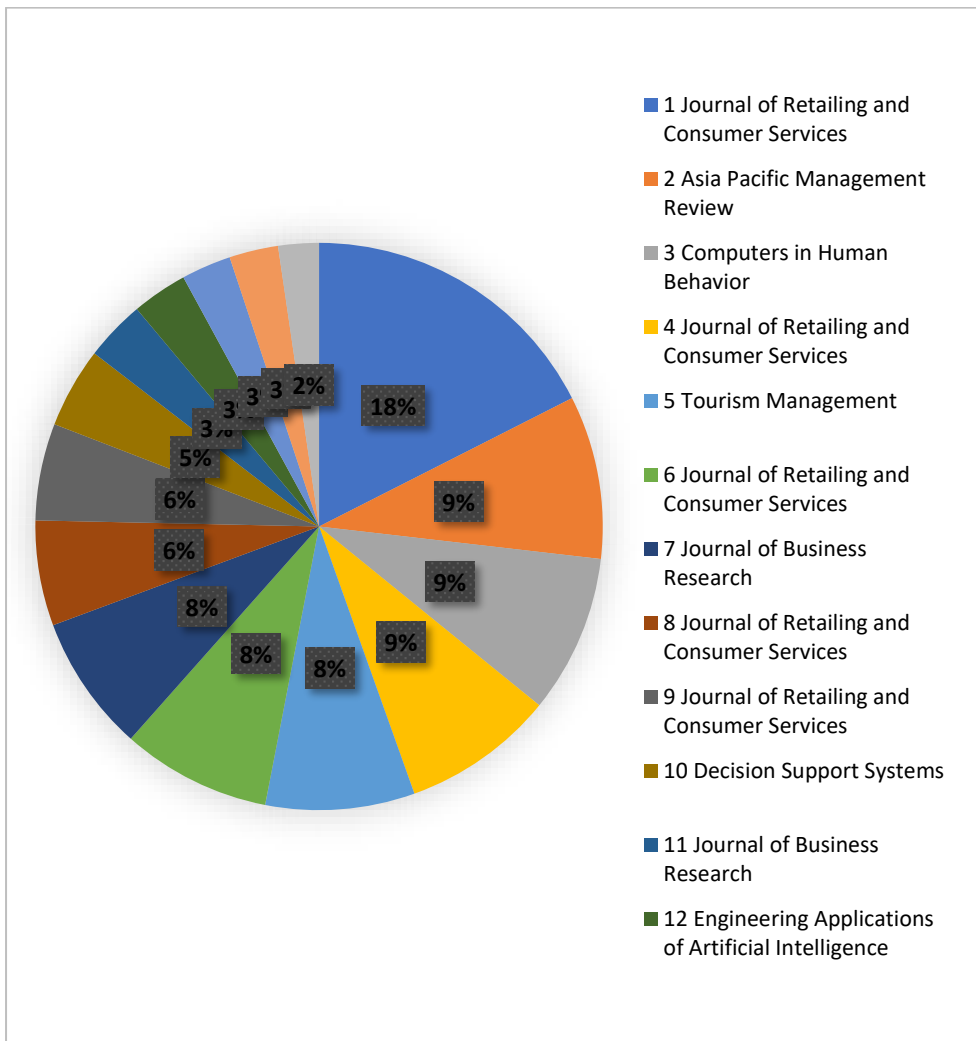
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36. Shankar, Jebarajakirthy, and Ashaduzzaman, "How Do Electronic Word of Mouth Practices Contribute to Mobile Banking Adoption?"
37. Mishra et al., "Adolescent's EWOM Intentions: An Investigation into the Roles of Peers, the Internet and Gender."
38. Anup Krishnamurthy and S. Ramesh Kumar, "Electronic Word-of-Mouth and the Brand Image: Exploring the Moderating Role of Involvement through a Consumer Expectations Lens," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 43 (July 2018): 149–56, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.03.010>.
39. Tran and Strutton, "Comparing Email and SNS Users: Investigating e-Servicescape, Customer Reviews, Trust, Loyalty and E-WOM."
40. Zhang et al., "An Empirical Investigation of EWOM and Used Video Game Trading: The Moderation Effects of Product Features."
41. Reimer and Benkenstein, "Not Just for the Recommender: How EWOM Incentives Influence the Recommendation Audience."

12	<sup>42</sup>	Exploring eWOM in online customer reviews: Sentiment analysis at a fine-grained level.	Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence	67
13	<sup>43</sup>	Up the ante: eWOM and its effects on firm reputation and performance.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	60
14	<sup>44</sup>	Spreading the Word: How Customer Experience in a Traditional Retail Setting Influences Consumer Traditional and eWOM Intention.	Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	59
15	<sup>45</sup>	Application of text mining techniques to the analysis of discourse in eWOM communications from a gender perspective.	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	49

In the next section, it is shown a pictorial view of most cited 15 articles concerning with the topic as per the available record of google scholar. The first article in the record that is marked “A1”, not included in the most cited article because it provides the base of systematic review research and it is not relevant with the topic. A pictorial view of most cited papers is given here, see figure 3.

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42. Sun et al., “Exploring EWOM in Online Customer Reviews: Sentiment Analysis at a Fine-Grained Level.”
43. Nisar et al., “Up the Ante: Electronic Word of Mouth and Its Effects on Firm Reputation and Performance.”
44. Siqueira et al., “Spreading the Word: How Customer Experience in a Traditional Retail Setting Influences Consumer Traditional and Electronic Word-of-Mouth Intention.”
45. Teso et al., “Application of Text Mining Techniques to the Analysis of Discourse in EWOM Communications from a Gender Perspective.”





*Figure 3: Pictorial View of Most Cited Articles*

### **Sustainable Marketing Concepts Developed from Reviewed Articles**

Based on the reviewed articles it is pointed out that only the quality and services a business may promote the WOM that is a marketing sustainability.<sup>46</sup> Graphically, is presented in the following section, see figure 4:

46. Kevin Giang Barrera and Denish Shah, "Marketing in the Metaverse: Conceptual Understanding, Framework, and Research Agenda," *Journal of Business Research* 155 (January 2023): 113420, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113420>.



**Figure 4: Sustainable Marketing Concepts**

**Saving of Promotional Budget:** WOM saves the promotional budget because new customers gain trust from their peers, relatives, and friends about some sort of products and services available in the market and after that they do not bother for getting further information form any other promotional activities.<sup>47</sup>

**Creating Customers' Loyalty:** WOM creates loyalty of customers for products and services after having confirmation regarding them from their peers and friends.<sup>48</sup> All new customers become loyal to such products and services because now they have confirmation of their quality and characteristics from their dears and nears.

**Creating Marketing Sustainability:** WOM creates a sustainable system of marketing because when peers tell for purchasing of the products or services which they have already used in past, the listeners make their firm and positive belief for such products, and it creates a marketing sustainability, and now it is not easily removed from the listeners' minds and they continue with such products and services. Hence, new concepts may be developed by reviewing of the existing literature and such concepts can be applied for further development in the marketing field.<sup>49</sup>

47. Kui Yi et al., "Appeal of Word of Mouth: Influences of Public Opinions and Sentiment on Ports in Corporate Choice of Import and Export Trade in the Post-COVID-19 Era," *Ocean & Coastal Management* 225 (June 2022): 106239, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2022.106239>.

48. Shaked Gilboa, Tali Seger-Guttmann, and Judith Partouche-Sebban, "Increasing Customer Loyalty and WOM in an Age of Terror: Cross-Cultural Development and Validation of the Customers' Reactions to Terror Scale (CRTS)," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 64 (January 2022): 102785, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102785>.

49. Adam Lindgreen et al., "How to Develop Great Conceptual Frameworks for Business-to-Business Marketing," *Industrial Marketing Management* 94 (April 2021): A2-10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.04.005>.

**The Journey of WOM through different marketing paths:** It highlights the paths of marketing associated with WOM regarding the activities done for consumer buying behavior reviewed in the literature. For the first step, from the literature selected seven articles at random to find out its paths that link it to online marketing. Accordingly, the word of Influence of Peers (IOP) has noted for one time, and it constitutes 13% of the total share of WOM , Online Feedback (OFB) has used for 12%, Online Social Network (OSN) for 13%, Social Network (SN) for 25%, and social media (SM) for 37%. It means that the use of social media for sharing of word-of-mouth is on the highest side that of social network is on the second number. It is the novelty of the use of word-of-mouth that can motivate potential buyers easily as compared to other tools of marketing. According to this procedure as indicated in this study, the use of word-of-mouth through its paths or routes is very effective and successful. It is, therefore, disclosed that the effectiveness of word of mouth in online marketing to convince customers to purchase the products and services of a certain brand is very essential for marketing strategies. In the next section, a list of cited papers has been given to indicate the paths of word-of-mouth for understanding the importance of WOM that is used as the result oriented and sustainable tool of marketing, see table 4:

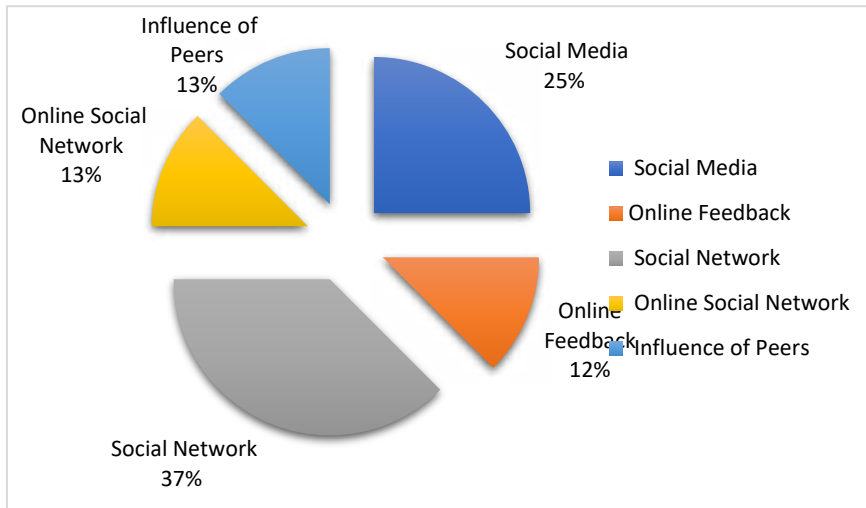
**Table 4:** Marketing Paths associated with WOM.

S. No.	Media Used	Citation
1	OSN	50
2	SN, IOP	51
3	SM	52
4	OF	53
5	SN	54
6	SM	55

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50. Wang, Wang, and Li, "A Discrete Electronic Word-of-Mouth Propagation Model and Its Application in Online Social Networks."
51. Mishra et al., "Adolescent's EWOM Intentions: An Investigation into the Roles of Peers, the Internet and Gender."
52. Sann Ryu and JungKun Park, "The Effects of Benefit-Driven Commitment on Usage of Social Media for Shopping and Positive Word-of-Mouth," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 55 (July 2020): 102094, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102094>.
53. Wang, Wang, and Wang, "Understanding the Effects of EWOM Social Ties on Purchase Intentions: A Moderated Mediation Investigation."
54. Sang-June Park, Yeong-Ran Lee, and Sharad Borle, "The Shape of Word-of-Mouth Response Function," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 127 (February 2018): 304–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.10.006>.
55. Susan A.M. Vermeer et al., "Seeing the Wood for the Trees: How Machine Learning Can Help Firms in Identifying Relevant Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Social Media," *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 36, no. 3 (September 2019): 492–508, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2019.01.010>.

7	SM	56
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These marketing paths have been shown pictorially here, see figure 5:



**Figure 5: Marketing Paths Associated with WOM**

It is noted that different social media sites and search engines are used for spreading the word-of-mouth marketing activities for increasing the sales as it is shown in theoretical framework, see figure 2. It is a goal-oriented way of communication, and especially, the small enterprises find this way of marketing very beneficial.<sup>57</sup> It works in a sustainable way to maintain the quality of the products and services.

### **Comparison of the Islamic teachings relevant to Sustainable Marketing Concepts**

In the previous heading of “Sustainable Marketing Concepts Developed from Reviewed Articles” of this paper, the authors conducted systematic review of literature to extract the sustainable concepts related to the subject. To incorporate relevant Islamic concepts, this study further explore and brings in the relevant principles found in the Qur’an and Hadith that emphasize trust, honesty and ethical business practices related to Sustainable WoMM.

#### **Trustworthiness and Quality**

The Quranic concept: “And fulfill every covenant. Indeed, the covenant is

56. Carola Strandberg, Maria Ek Styvén, and Magnus Hultman, “Places in Good Graces: The Role of Emotional Connections to a Place on Word-of-Mouth,” *Journal of Business Research* 119 (October 2020): 444–52, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.044>.

57. Apol Pribadi Subriadi and Habi Baturohmah, “Social Media in Marketing of Ride-Hailing: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Procedia Computer Science* 197 (2022): 102–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.12.123>.

accountable.”<sup>58</sup>

Hadith: The Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) emphasized the importance of fulfilling covenants and obligations. “The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he talks, he lies, Whenever he promises, he breaks his promise. Whenever he makes a covenant he proves treacherous.”<sup>59</sup>

In the context of WOM marketing, trust is built on the quality and reliability of products and services, in line with Islamic values of honesty and commitment. As explained in the previous headings, WOM marketing demands a sense of loyalty and a sense of fulfilment towards the consumers. Therefore, the concept of marketing about the quality and reliability of products is directly in line with the Islamic Principles.

### ***Sustainable Marketing***

The Quranic concept: “And do not be extravagant, for He does not like the extravagant.”<sup>60</sup>

Islam focuses on sustainable and economic use of handling every aspect of life. When we talk about sustainable marketing, saving the food, gas, electricity from wastage is directly in line with the Islamic teachings. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) strictly prohibited wastage in every aspect of one’s lives. Even if a Muslim were to be washing on the banks of a river, he should not waste water. “Abdullah ibn ‘Amr Ibn Al-Aas (Ra) that the Prophet (PBUH) passed by Sa’d when he was Making ablution (Wudoo)’, and he said, “What is this extravagance, O Sa’d?” He said: Can there be any extravagance in Wudoo (ablution)? He said, “Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.”<sup>61</sup>

The concept of creating marketing sustainability through WOM is consistent with Islamic teachings that encourage responsible and sustainable use of resources. WOM reduces the need for extensive promotional budgets, in keeping with the Islamic principle of avoiding extravagance.

### ***Ethical Marketing Paths***

The Quranic concept: “And do not consume your wealth among yourselves unjustly and lead it to the rulers so that they may help you to consume a group of people’s wealth unjustly while you know.” [It is

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58. Qur’an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:34

59. Muhammad ibn Isma’il Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar Al-Tuq Al-Najah, n.d.), Kitāb al-’imān, Bāb ‘alāmah il-Munāfiq.

60. Qur’an, Surah Al-Anaam, 6:141

61. Muḥammad Bin Yazīd bin Mājah Al-Qazwīny, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Shu’aib Al-Arna’uṭ (Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-’ālmīyah, 2009), Abwāb ut-Tahārah wa Sunanuhā, Bāb mā jā fil Qaṣd fil wuzū wa karāhiyati at-ta’addi fihī.

illegal].”<sup>62</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) forbade injustice in trade and business matters. As discussed in the previous paragraph, WoMM requires strict guidelines and ethical marketing practices to be adopted in contemporary studies. Islamic teachings also emphasizing the necessity of ethical behavior. Once Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was passing by a seller who was selling grains. Prophet PBUH put his hand in the heap of grains and found that the grains hidden deeper inside the heap were wet. The Prophet PBUH angrily directed the seller to show off the faults and problems in the product to the consumers before selling. In another Hadith, “*Abu Sa’id reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The honest and trustworthy merchant will be with the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs.” Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1209, Hasan*”. Hence, Islamic teachings against illicit consumption of wealth are consistent with ethical considerations in marketing processes. Incorporating these Islamic concepts into academic discussion enriches the narrative by emphasizing the compatibility of WOM marketing with Islamic values of trust, loyalty, sustainability, and ethical business practices.

## Results

The results constituted the two basic concepts of WOM, the targets-oriented, and sustainable marketing concepts.

**Target-oriented:** It means how the word-of-mouth is effectively used to get the marketing targets. It is an easy and useful way of communication, when peers and friends inform their buddies about the products available in the market. The peers share their experience with their lovers. The new customer get satisfaction due the use of their dears. E-commerce businesses use a range of online channels to maximize product sales and consumer value, that is why the word-of-mouth is very essential regarding dealings of e-commerce. The way of marketing that has been discussed here is very influential consumer buying behaviour.<sup>63</sup> The use of electronic word-of-mouth links with development of modern technology and internet that is why it is target oriented way of marketing in this era. It is one of the driving forces behind the growth of online retailing. The online awareness is very helpful in purchase behavior. The literature discloses the famous platforms of online shopping that consists of blogs, discussion forums, shopping platforms, and websites for customer reviews. The number of people are

62. Qur’an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:188

63. Lane T. Wakefield and Robin L. Wakefield, “Anxiety and Ephemeral Social Media Use in Negative EWOM Creation,” *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 41 (February 2018): 44–59, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2017.09.005>.

increasing day by day who choose to communicate their ideas through this way of communication and dealing.<sup>64</sup> Knowing the customers viewpoints become easy with this way of marketing and decision making. The product assessment and choice method become easy and cheaper. The internet and social media provide a platform to customers for discussion and easy selection of their desired products. The required targets are selected with the use of this concept.<sup>65</sup>

**Sustainable Tool:** Marketing campaigns motivate the customers for purchasing, and the proper such campaigns put the positive impact on sales. The WOM may be used in publishing, software, clothing, food, electronics, etc. industries, under this, people discuss with peers and friends and get the advice for buying decision and find it more effective than getting information from advertising. The e-business expands its activities and services utilizing digital platforms and attracts and retains customers.<sup>66</sup>

**Merits of WOM:** It is a general practice of people who before a purchase consult with their peers, friends, and relatives and get their views, in this way the customers may take the right decisions, and they may keep them safe from the relevant unseen losses and may get the benefits of the old experienced customers. Other associated advantages, such as, it increases the understanding, trust, brand recognition; and it is the fastest, the cheapest, the simplest, and most effective way of marketing communication,<sup>67</sup> see figure 6 below:

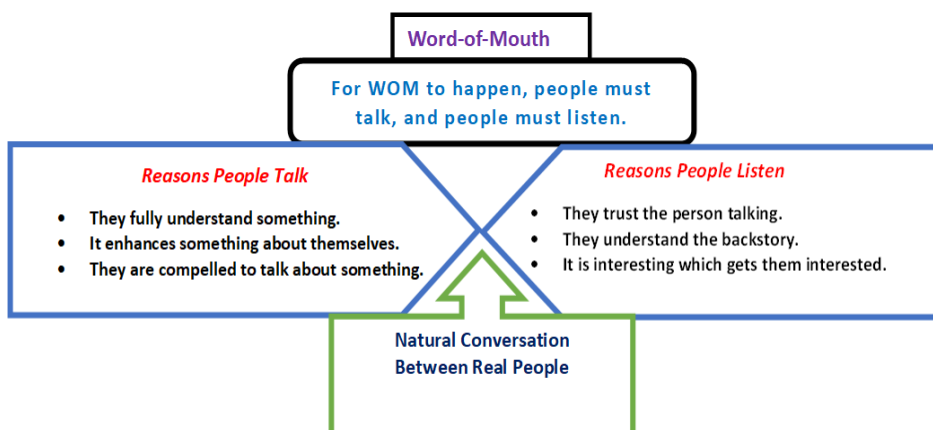
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64. Marcello M. Mariani and Franco Visani, "Embedding EWOM into Efficiency DEA Modelling: An Application to the Hospitality Sector," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 80 (July 2019): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.01.002>.

65. Martin A. Pyle, Andrew N. Smith, and Yanina Chevtchouk, "In EWOM We Trust: Using Naïve Theories to Understand Consumer Trust in a Complex EWOM Marketspace," *Journal of Business Research* 122 (January 2021): 145–58, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.08.063>.

66. Jeannette A. Mena et al., "Competing Assessments of Market-Driven, Sustainability-Centered, and Stakeholder-Focused Approaches to the Customer-Brand Relationships and Performance," *Journal of Business Research* 95 (February 2019): 531–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.038>.

67. Rajesh Iyer and Mitch Griffin, "Modeling Word-of-Mouth Usage: A Replication," *Journal of Business Research* 126 (March 2021): 512–23, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.12.027>.



**Figure 6: Merits of WOM**

All the enterprises may enjoy these benefits, because the loyalty of customers may increase.

**Management of Negative WOM:** The negative WOM on social media about service blunders, product recalls, a bad e-commerce site interface, product unavailability, disputed brand marketing, and poor customer service experiences may significantly harm businesses and organizations. It travels faster as compare to the positive WOM, and to overcome it, a proper management response is required, and necessary knowledge and skills, and customers' education can make the environment positive.<sup>68</sup>

### **Ethical Considerations in Eord-of-Mouth Marketing**

The ethical aspects of word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) have received considerable attention in the marketing literature due to its powerful influence on consumer behavior and brand perception. While WOMM can be a powerful tool for businesses to build trust and credibility, it also raises important ethical considerations. An ethical concern is the credibility and transparency of WOMM's efforts. As Leiser (2016) noted, some companies engage in deceptive practices through astroturfing, which involves creating false reviews or testimonials to manipulate public opinion. Such actions not only undermine trust, but also violate ethical standards. Additionally, WOMM campaigns can sometimes coerce consumers into sharing their opinions or endorsing products, which could undermine their autonomy (Moller, Ryan, and Deci, 2006). These ethical dilemmas highlight the need for companies to ensure the transparency and credibility of their WOMM initiatives.

68. Soobin Seo and SooCheong (Shawn) Jang, "A Negative or Positive Signal? The Impact of Food Recalls on Negative Word-of-Mouth (N-WOM)," *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 47 (June 2021): 150–58, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.03.008>.



Besides authenticity, confidentiality is another key ethical dimension of WOMM. Because consumers share their experiences and preferences with others, their personal information may be shared without consent. This raises concerns about data breaches and data security. Researchers such as Litvin et al., (2018) have highlighted the importance of protecting consumer privacy in WOMM campaigns. They argue that companies should establish clear guidelines and obtain express consent when collecting and sharing consumer-generated content to maintain ethical integrity. Additionally, the emergence of social media and online platforms has blurred the lines between personal and public discourse, requiring marketers to comply with laws regarding privacy and protection of user data (Gillespie, 2018). WOMM's ethical considerations extend beyond the content itself and encompass the broader ethical environment of consumer trust, autonomy, and data protection.

### **Islamic Perspective about WOMM**

Islamic ethical considerations in word-of-mouth marketing offer a unique perspective grounded in the principles of honesty, integrity and fairness dictated by Islamic teachings. In the context of Islam, word-of-mouth marketing must adhere to Quranic injunctions that emphasize truthfulness and the avoidance of deception in all forms of communication.<sup>69</sup> A fundamental principle is the concept of "Taqiyyah," which encourages truthfulness and transparency in relationships.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the prohibition of "Ghiba" (gossip) and "Namimah" (malicious gossip) highlights the importance of ethical communication and avoiding the dissemination of false or harmful information.<sup>71</sup> These principles align with the ethical considerations of word-of-mouth marketing, emphasizing the importance of authentic, transparent, and honest communication. To navigate these ethical waters, businesses engaged in word-of-mouth marketing in Islamic contexts must be vigilant in upholding these principles, ensuring that their marketing practices are consistent with the ethical teachings of Islam.

### **Discussion**

The findings of the SLR explain the functions of WOM. The study's limitations, study gaps, and recommendations for future research are presented at the end. From the conclusions of the reviewed publications, it is indicated consulting the previously well-defined research topics and the relevant issues in detail. A focus on research consists of trust creator and sustainable marketing tool. Both the sub-headings have been explained well. Using the online reviews by customers to make well-informed buying

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69. Al-Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:42

70. Al-Quran, Surah An-Nahl, 16:91

71. Al-Quran, Surah Al-Hujraat, 49 :12

choices,<sup>72</sup> the word-of-mouth has been proved as the best tool of marketing. In continuation of objectives of studies and research questions, the collection of literature discussed in detail based on a systematic review and dealt with the articles with their justification in terms of “The Criteria in the SLR for Inclusion and Exclusion” for understanding the reasons of keeping some articles in the study as mentioned in table 2. Then, a periodic trend of review articles from 2019 to 2022, a four years, year-wise trend in the SLR consisting of “review article trends” and “research article trends” and highlighted the chosen factors to show the effectiveness of WOM to convince the readers. After that, is provided the summary of eighteen articles consisting of research findings of the research articles. The SLR commentary on the reviewed articles covers the findings of selected articles. In the modern corporate environment, marketing scholars and practitioners have established the value of WOM. Customers believe on suggestions they receive from friends and family in making purchases.<sup>73</sup> It impacts the consumers attitude, buying intention, and sales. For internet transactions, eWOM is used to inform and communicate technologies the peers. The term WOM or eWOM may impact as positive or negative, depends upon its use. The prudent businesses get the maximum benefits as mentioned in figure 6. This article guides the whole business community to use it positively to promote their goods and services. It is a target oriented and sustainable tool that is especially recommended for micro and small enterprises.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

To determine the influence of WOM as a sustainable marketing technique and how it affects the selling activities. This study gives a thorough examination of the international literature. Unfortunately, due to its wrong use, it could have a negative effect on a business's reputation. In addition to discussing the effects of word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth, online shopping, selling, and purchasing activities, customer responses via electronic media, the most cited papers, research trends, and topics, this paper provides a thorough overview of the marketing literature that is currently available. The paper offers recommendations for private and public policymakers. However, the SLR maintains restrictions on its usage of

72. Elvira Ismagilova, Yogesh K. Dwivedi, and Emma Slade, “Perceived Helpfulness of EWOM: Emotions, Fairness and Rationality,” *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 53 (March 2020): 101748, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.02.002>.

73. Felix Septianto and Tung Moi Chiew, “The Effects of Different, Discrete Positive Emotions on Electronic Word-of-Mouth,” *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 44 (September 2018): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.05.006>.

74. Xun Xu and Chieh Lee, “Utilizing the Platform Economy Effect through EWOM: Does the Platform Matter?,” *International Journal of Production Economics* 227 (September 2020): 107663, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2020.107663>.

a single database and its rejection of grey literature, and to provide room for future research, the focus of this work was limited to two key factors, the effects of word-of-mouth, and the success of marketing applying this tool. Small industries, such as publishing, software, electronics, clothing, and food, commonly use this marketing tool to launch new products. People take interest in peers suggestions that is why it is more effective tool of marketing. It is a sustainable tool of micro and small enterprises because they have budgetary constraints, and it is tool that fulfills that gap. Only one review article has been discovered through the Science Direct database for literature review of this study. Therefore, based on this fact, it is the novelty of this study to have at least 50% grey area to do research.

### **Recommendations**

The concept of word-of-mouth is recommended especially for micro and small enterprises because it is a cheap and easy way of marketing, and such businesses cannot afford heavy marketing expenditures. Experienced business personnel always pay attention to the quality of their products, and to the services they offer. Good quality and service are the two factors to achieve the targets.

### **Future Implication**

The outcome of this research may be applied by private and government sector, and all the policymakers, researchers, practitioners, customers, and/or other stakeholders concerned with field of the marketing may get the benefits from this research.

### **Limitations**

To keep the originality of the research, inclusion, and exclusion criteria were used for conducting this research. There is a minimum systematic review research is available on the selected topic with the database site of science direct, that itself is a limitation of this study.

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