



Exploring the Definition of WOM, Word of Mouth Communication Media, and Influencer Marketing

Arum Wahyuni Purbohastuti^(✉), Ratih Hurriyati^(ID), Bambang Widjajanta,
and Vanessa Gaffar^(ID)

Faculty of Economic and Business Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung,
Indonesia
arum_wp@upi.edu

Abstract. The definition of word of mouth (WOM) has developed from time to time along with the development of information and technology advances, in which WOM is currently being carried out more using online media. In addition, influencer marketing is part of the spread of word of mouth to introduce various types of products to consumers. The purpose of this study was to determine the various variables used in influencer marketing and Word of Mouth (WOM) research, the definition of WOM and e-WOM, and the media used by WOM. The method used in this study was a literature review on the Scopus, EBSCO, and ProQuest websites using advanced search. The analyzed documents were limited to the types of research articles from 2012 to 2022, English-language articles in the field of social science, and open access. From the results of the literature review process, the articles collected from Scopus, EBSCO, and ProQuest were 1,049. After that, it was specified based on documents, social science, and open access with a total of 20 articles. The 20 articles were analyzed one by one and the articles that fit the limits to be analyzed were 11 articles. The 11 articles were analyzed based on the variables taken in the research; the definition of WOM and e-WOM, and the communication media used by influencers and companies to spread word of mouth.

Keywords: e-WOM · Influencer marketing · Literature review · Word of Mouth (WOM)

1 Introduction

Currently, influencers are often involved to introduce products to consumers through various social media [1, 2]. Many companies use the services of influencers to attract consumers. Usually, the influencers endorsed by companies are artists and YouTubers who already have a lot of subscribers. Thus, the words of an influencer can affect the psychology of consumers which will lead to word of mouth (WOM). In the 1990s, word of mouth was mostly done directly without using online media. Nowadays, social media is considered the most effective tool to support WOM because almost every individual

has involvement with social media [3] such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Thus, word of mouth is done more using social media as a means of recommending a product. As a result, the definition and the term word of mouth have also developed and changed, which is better known as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) [4].

Literature reviews of several articles have been carried out by previous researchers [5]; In [6] researchers conducted SLR using the limits set so that the results contributed to certain fields of science. In previous studies, some researchers carried out literature using the bibliometric method to parse in terms of researchers as well as themes taken from several years determined by the researchers [7]. However, previous researchers also used literature reviews with the help of advanced searches on journal websites such as Scopus, ProQuest, Ebsco, etc. [8, 9]. This is a novelty in the field of research, where since the Covid-19 pandemic it is difficult for researchers to conduct direct surveys and interviews with informants.

This literature review research tried to answer three questions, including: first (RQ1) What variables are used in influencer marketing research and Word of Mouth (WOM) and e-WOM? Second Question (RQ2) What is the definition of word of mouth (WOM) or e-WOM? Third question (RQ3) What communication media is used by influencers and for word of mouth?

To answer the research question, the systematics of the literature review was limited. The year factor is one of the considerations for the data analysis needed in this study [9, 10]. The limitations set included the documents used for the last eleven years from 2012 to 2022 with the theme of influencer marketing and word of mouth taken from three data sources, namely on the Scopus web, EBSCO, and ProQuest on filetype articles in the field of social science and open access. From the open access articles, the variables were analyzed, including the definition of word of mouth, e-WOM, and social media used as a means of word of mouth by influencers, both traditionally and online. A literature review process like this was also carried out by previous researchers [10, 11, 12].

This study analyzed the variables taken from previous research, provided information about the development of the definition of word of mouth and electronic word of mouth, then provided information about social media which is often used as a means of communication from influencers to produce WOM. The results of the analysis were summarized using a table so that they can be easily understood. In the final stage, limitations of the research were also provided which then can be developed for future research.

2 Methods

This literature review research aims to analyze and evaluate the literature related to the theme that has been determined by utilizing a comprehensive method that can be audited [13, 14]. This research is a literature review with advanced search on Scopus, Ebsco, and Proquest webs. On Scopus web searches, it used title-abs-key (influencer OR influence AND marketing AND WOM OR e-WOM), while on Ebsco it used advanced search with keywords influencer marketing OR Influence AND the word of mouth OR WOM AND social science which is limited from 2012 to 2022. The literature review process can be seen in Fig. 1.

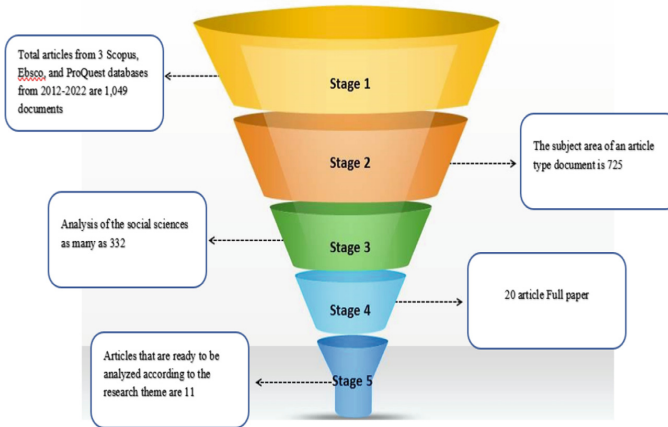


Fig. 1. Systematic literature review process

3 Results and Discussion

The results of the literature review were taken from using a database with the help of advanced search Scopus, EBSCO, and ProQuest on articles that have been filtered based on open access articles from 20 articles, which was then filtered again to avoid double articles into 11 articles that were ready to be analyzed. Table 1 describes the variables used for the study E-WOM [15] is an antecedent variable that affects customer purchase intention through mediating variables perceived usefulness and perceived trust. In line with research conducted by [16] that CSWOM also affected enjoyment with purchase mediated by CPB on social media, the impact of purchase on self, the impact of purchase on interpersonal relationships and moderated by materialism variable. Apart from being an antecedent variable, WOM is also a variable that is influenced by the variables creativity, info completeness, emotional appeal, and social responsibility mediated by purchase intention and moderated by perceived value [17].

From the 11 articles that have been analyzed, the definitions of WOM and e-WOM are found which are presented in Table 2. In 1987, the definition of WOM did not involve electronics but more traditionally, in which people met at a place to carry out recommendation activities about products, services, or organizations [18]. In 2004, the definition of e-WOM was already defined by [4] as positive and negative comments recommended by consumers about brands and products through social media. From the article, it was found that the latest definition of e-WOM in 2018, which is explained by [19] as the transfer of information from the sender of information to the recipient of the information.

Table 3 shows WOM communication media and influencer marketing where influencers use social media more to recommend products from a company. Of the 11 articles, word of mouth currently is spread through Facebook for as many as 8 articles, Instagram for as many as 5 articles, Twitter for 4 articles, and LinkedIn for 2. Influencers and companies work together to create e-WOM to attract consumer interest in the products offered.

Table 1. Influencer marketing and Word of Mouth (WOM) research variables

| No | Authors | Input | Process | Output |
|----|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | [20–22], [23] | marketing activities, e-WOM, WOM, advertising, celebrity effect Social Interaction Number of followers | perceived usefulness, perceived trust | Customer Purchase intention Likeability |
| 2 | [16] [22] | Intrinsic motivation | CPB on social media, | Theory of planned behavior (TPB), Enjoyment with purchase |
| 6 | [1] [24] | Influencer marketing | communication, purchase intention | Innovation launch Purchase behavior |
| 7 | [25] | Facebook trust, source credibility | self-disclosure, information value | Intention Share and comment |
| 8 | [26] | self-efficacy, satisfaction | Generation (X, Y, Z) | customer engagement behaviors |
| 9 | [27, 28] | Creativity, info completeness, emotional appeal, social responsibility Brand | purchase intention perceived value Social Media | WOM |

Table 2. Definition of WOM/e-WOM

| Year | Definition | Authors |
|------|--|---------|
| 1987 | WOM is defined as verbal, informal communication from one individual to another regarding the perceptions obtained about a brand, product, organization, or service. | 18 |
| 2004 | e-WOM can be interpreted as a positive or negative comment made by customers about products or brands that are recommended to others through social media. | 4 |
| 2006 | WOM is a commentary, individual opinion ideas, and transformation between two people and does not intend to market the product and get no reward. | 29 |
| 2008 | Word of mouth is a term that is well known in marketing and is considered to have a strong influence on purchasing decisions by consumers. | 30 |
| 2011 | The definition of e-WOM on the conceptual particular social networking site (SNS) can be done through 3 aspects, namely the process of seeking an opinion, the process of giving an opinion, and finally the submission of an opinion. | 31 |
| 2013 | WOM can be interpreted as an intention to communicate positively about products or services to others. | 32 |
| 2015 | e-WOM is defined as a statement made online to provide information to other consumers. | 23 |
| 2018 | e-WOM is the transfer of information from the sender of information to the recipient of information. | 19 |

Table 3. Word of mouth communication media and influencer marketing

| No | Authors | Media communication |
|----|---------|--|
| 1 | 20 | Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and WeChat |
| 2 | 21 | Instagram |
| 3 | 22 | Traditional WOM |
| 4 | 16 | Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram |
| 5 | 23 | Twitter |
| 6 | 1 | content analysis of blog; posts and Instagram posts |
| 7 | 25 | Facebook |
| 8 | 26 | websites |
| 9 | 27 | Facebook and Linked |
| 10 | 24 | Social group |
| 11 | 28 | Online: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram Offline: television and radio commercials, print advertisements, displays at retail, outdoor advertisements |

4 Conclusion

The definition of WOM was taken from 1987 to 2018. From this definition, it developed from WOM to e-WOM. Online communication media mostly used Facebook. In 2015 e-WOM was carried out using Twitter because in 2015 social media such as Instagram had not yet become a trend. Instagram began to be used as an e-WOM medium since 2017. Every study has limitations, and so does this literature review research. The limitations of the research include limited articles for the last ten years from 2012 to 2022. The documents taken were limited to the fields of social science and open access. Meanwhile, articles with open access were limited. For further research, it is recommended to develop research questions and combine the SLR method with bibliometrics.

References

1. Kristensen, L. B. K. Leveraging Blogger Influence in the Launch of Storytel. *Publ. Res. Q.* **37**, 183–199 (2021).
2. Duffett R.G. Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes. **18(1)**, 19–39 (2017).
3. Kemp. S. Digital 2020 Malaysia. (2020).
4. Hennig-Thurau T, Gwinner KP, Walsh G, G. D. Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet? *J Interact Mark.* (2004).
5. Box, P. O. H. Literature Review on Thesis Entitled a Critical Assessment of Social Media as a New Marketing Communication Media in the Financial Sector in Zimbabwe. **5**, (2021).
6. Tandon, A. & Matti, M. Jealousy due to social media ? A systematic literature review and framework of social media-induced jealousy. **31**, 1541–1582 (2021).

7. Abbas, A. F. *et al.* Cogent Business & Management Bibliometrix analysis of information sharing in social media Bibliometrix analysis of information sharing in social media. *Cogent Bus. Manag.* **9**, (2022).
8. Secundo, G., Vecchio, P. Del & Mele, G. Social media for entrepreneurship : myth or reality ? A structured literature review and a future research agenda. (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEER-07-2020-0453>.
9. Ahmed, Y. A., Ahmad, M. N., Ahmad, N. & Zakaria, N. H. Social Media for Knowledge-Sharing : A Systematic Literature Review. *Telemat. Informatics* (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.01.015>.
10. Aichner, T., Gru, M., Maurer, O. & Jegeni, D. Twenty-Five Years of Social Media : and Definitions from 1994 to 2019. **00**, 1–8 (2020).
11. Bore, I., Rutherford, C., Glasgow, S., Taheri, B. & Antony, J. A systematic literature review on eWOM in the hotel industry : Current trends and suggestions for future. **7**, 63–86 (2017).
12. Suraya Hamid et al. Role of Social Media in Information-Seeking Behaviour of International Students: A Systematic Literature Review. *Aslib J. Inf. Manag.* **68**, (2016).
13. Carver, J.C., Hassler, E., Hernandez, E. and Kraft, N. a. "Identifying Barriers to the Systematic Literature Review Process". *Int. Symp. Empir. Softw. Eng. Meas. Ieee* 203–212. (2013).
14. Levy Y, and Ellis & T.J. "A systems approach to conduct an effective literature review in support of information systems research". *Informing Sci. J.* **Vol 9**, 181–212 (2006).
15. Kumar, A., Syed, A. A. & Pandey, A. Adoption of online resources to improve the marketing performance of SMEs. *Asia Pacific J. Heal. Manag.* **16**, (2021).
16. DUAN, J. the Antecedents and Consequences of Consumption-Related Posting Behavior on Social Media By Jingyi Duan a Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration. (2016).
17. Flabbi, L., Macis, M., Moro, A. & Schivardi, F. Do female executives make a difference? the impact of female leadership on gender gaps and firm performance. *Econ. J.* **129**, 2390–2423 (2019).
18. Higie, Robin A., Lawrence F. Feick, and L. L. P. 'Types and amount of word-of- mouth communications about retailers.' *J. Retail.* 260–278 (1987).
19. Han et al. Evaluating user-generated content in social media: An effective approach to encourage greater pro-environmental behavior in tourism? *J. Sustain. Tour.* 600–614 (2018).
20. Garg, A. & Kumar, J. Social media marketing influence on Boutique Hotel customers' purchase intention in Malaysia. *Tour. Manag. Stud.* **17**, 51–62 (2021).
21. De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V. & Hudders, L. Marketing through instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *Int. J. Advert.* **36**, 798–828 (2017).
22. Leavell, J. P. Intrinsic motivation and planned behavior theory: Explaining banking-service referrals. *Diss. Abstr. Int. Sect. A Humanit. Soc. Sci.* (2017).
23. Jr, W. D. F. CORPORATE FOUNDATIONAL GIVING AND WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION : EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH REPUTATION by. (2015).
24. Sethi, V., Tandon, M. S. & Dutta, K. A path model of antecedents of green purchase behaviour among Indian consumers. *Int. J. Public Sect. Perform. Manag.* **4**, 21–44 (2018).
25. Martínez, P., Herrero, Á. & García-de los Salmenes, M. del M. Determinants of eWOM on hospitality CSR issues. In Facebook we trust? *J. Sustain. Tour.* **28**, 1479–1497 (2020).
26. Bravo, R., Catalán, S. & Pina, J. M. Intergenerational differences in customer engagement behaviours: An analysis of social tourism websites. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **22**, 182–191 (2020).
27. Wisker, Z. L., Kadirov, D. & Bone, C. Modelling P2P Airbnb online host advertising effectiveness: the role of emotional appeal information completeness creativity and social responsibility. *Int. J. Cult. Tour. Hosp. Res.* **13**, 505–523 (2019).

28. Fay, B. & Larkin, R. Why online word-of-mouth measures cannot predict brand outcomes offline: Volume, sentiment, sharing, and influence metrics yield scant online-offline WOM Correlations. *J. Advert. Res.* **57**, 132–143 (2017).
29. Blackwell, R.D., Miniard, P. and Engel, J. *Consumer Behaviour*. (International Student Edition, Thomson Higher Education, 2006).
30. Cheung CMK et al. The impact of electronic word-of-mouth. (2008).
31. Chu, S. C., & Kim, Y. (. Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *Int. J. Advert.* 47–75 (2011).
32. Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S. and Fuller, J. The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on Facebook. *J. Prod. Brand Manag.* **22**, 342–351 (2013).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

