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    INTRODUCTION

    REVIEW OF LITERATURE

    NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

    STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

    OBJECTIVES

    HYPOTHESES

    RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

    RESULTS & DISCUSSION

    FINDINGS

    RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

    CONCLUSIONS

    SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

    ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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    APPENDIX/ANNEXURE

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*   Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS
*   Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

JOURNAL AND OTHER ARTICLES
*   Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

CONFERENCE PAPERS
*   Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–22 June.

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*   Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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WEBSITES
*   Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Natural Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp

E-WOM AND SIMILAR EMERGING TERMS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Emergence of electronic communication via mobile and internet has multiplied the effect and reach of traditional WOM (Word of Mouth) marketing. This new form of word of mouth marketing is known as electronic- word of mouth (e-wom) marketing. Though this area has remained focus for many studies in the past but still it is not easy to confine it into certain limits because of involvement of technology and related innovations. This is a review paper based upon available literature in the area. Secondary sources of data are used like journals, books and websites. This work aims at understanding the concept and working of e-wom; and e-wom's relationship with similar emerging terms. Various merits of using e-wom have been identified along with related issues. Finally some critical factors for e-wom success have been mentioned.

JEL CLASSIFICATION
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KEYWORDS
Internet marketing, social network marketing, viral marketing**,** word of mouth marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION
Due to the development of information and communication technologies (like the Internet), consumers' communication environment has been changed and enriched (Vilpponen et al., 2006). Online communication appears important as more websites offer user-generated content like blogs, video and photo sharing, and social networking options like twitter, facebook etc. Traditional word of mouth has become more speedy and widespread due to availability of electronic communication medium, whether it is mobile based communication or the internet. Companies have adapted to these trends by shifting their budgets from above-the-line (mass media) to below-the-line (e.g., promotions, direct mail, viral) marketing activities (Hinz et al., 2011). These new marketing techniques are cost efficient also as compared to traditional marketing. This is evident from the Hotmail campaign which can be seen as one of the oldest example of online marketing campaign. It generated 12 million subscribers in just 18 months with a marketing budget of only $50,000, largely because the product included an advertisement link for their service at the bottom of every email and offered a compelling service (Hinz et al., 2011; and Thevenot and Katherine 2001). This shows the importance of spreading word of mouth via electronic means.

1.1 NEED OF THE STUDY
The area of word of mouth has always remained the area of attention for researchers and academicians. While the existing word of mouth (hereafter WOM) literature can inform us about E-WOM, it is important to note that electronic referrals differ from their "offline" counterparts. First, there is no face to face communication in electronic referrals and second, these referrals are usually unsolicited, that is, they are sent to recipients who are not searching for information, and hence are not necessarily willing to pay attention to them (Bruyn and Gary 2008). Moreover, due to involvement of technology, this is still a rapidly evolving area and further research is clearly needed (Woerndl et al., 2008). Therefore, for above mentioned reasons, despite an abundant literature, attention has been given to E-WOM (Bruyn and Gary 2008).
This work will add to the existing literature and will provide a base for beginners in this area. It is an attempt to sum up important literature in a single study.

1.2 OBJECTIVES
Objectives of this study are threefold. First, it aims at understanding the concept and working of E-WOM Marketing. Second objective is to study the relationship of E-WOM with similar emerging terms. Third aim is to identify the merits of E-WOM marketing and key issues related to it.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
This is a conceptual paper reviewing the existing literature. Source of data used is secondary like journals, books and websites. Literature is collected mostly online from websites like jstor.org, emeraldinsight.com, sciencedirect.com, scholar.google.com etc accessed from e-library of Ram Lal Anand College (Eve), University of Delhi. This work is based upon my understanding of the subject. Authentic works of various authors have been quoted where required.

2. MEANING AND DEFINITION
This section studies the meaning and definition of E-WOM. But first of all we need to understand traditional WOM.

2.1 WOM
To study E-WOM, one cannot neglect traditional WOM. As Nyilasy, 2006 suggested that some might think that WOM is something new but it is not. In actual fact, the term has been used for a long time – probably much longer than any other term in marketing. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first written occurrence of the term "word-of-mouth" dated back to 1533. The dictionary defines the long-standing term as 'oral communication', 'oral publicity', or simply 'speaking', in contrast with 'written and other method[s] of expression' (referred in Lindholm, 2009).
In 1967, Johan Arndt defined WOM as "Oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, product, or a service" (referred in Lindholm, 2009). Nyilasy, 2006 clarifies the above definition consists of three essential parts:

1. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
This element sets word of mouth apart from mass communication (such as advertising) and other impersonal channels available for consumers (e.g. third-party sources of consumer information such as Consumer Reports).

2. COMMERCIAL CONTENT
The WOM is about commercial entities, products, brands and marketers including even their advertising.

3. NON-COMMERCIALLY MOTIVATED COMMUNICATORS
It means that though the message is commercial in nature but the communicators are not motivated commercially, or at least they are perceived not to be. They talk at their own will and not because they are hired by the company.
In 2006, Marsden defined WOM as "the promotion of a company or its products and services through an initiative conceived and designed to get people talking positively about that company, product or service"**.** Again in 2008, Litvin et al., defined WOM as the communication between consumers about a product,

service, or a company in which the sources are considered independent of commercial influence. All the above definitions are in tandem with the explanation given by Nyilasy, 2006 which is depicted in the Fig 1.

FIG 1: THE NATURE OF TRADITIONAL WOM

Source: Lindholm, 2009.

2.2 E-WOM

In simple words one can define E-WOM as WOM electronically over most commonly medium internet and other medium like mobile. Vilpponen et al., 2006 viewed that the literature review on electronic word of mouth behaviour revealed that the terminology for this relatively new phenomenon has not yet been established because of emergence of new terms. Based on the definition of WOM by Westbrook, 1987; Litvin et al., 2008 defined E-WOM as all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004 has defined E-WOM as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet." Lindholm, 2009 further analysed this definition and discovered 5 elements of E-WOM. These are:

1. Statement: positive, negative or neutral
2. Communicator: statement creator i.e. potential, actual or former customer
3. Object: product, service or/and company
4. Receiver: multitude of people and institutions
5. Environment: the Internet, particularly the social media

The statement, communicator and object are same as in traditional, non-electronic word of mouth but the nature of receiver and environment have changed in consequences of Internet and social media. The receiver in EWOM is not a single person; rather it consists of multitude of people and institutions. The statement passing process has shifted from oral, person to person communication to electronic and written form, in many cases from person to unknown person communication. The whole environment has changed from face to face context to the extensive Internet and social media. This is shown in Fig 2.

FIG 2: THE ELEMENTS OF E-WOM
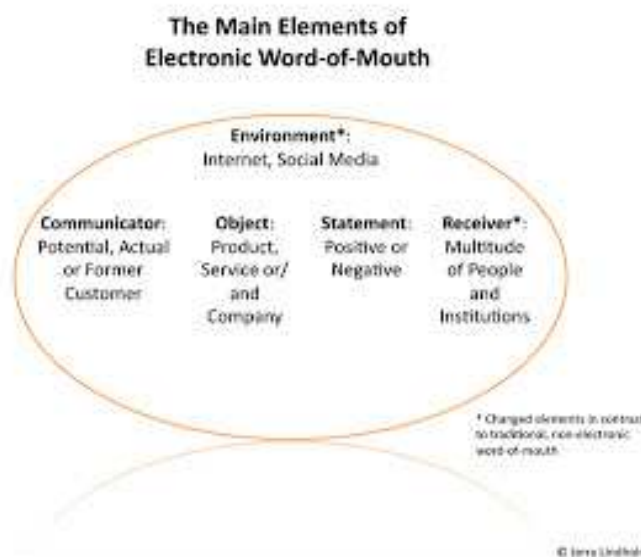
Source: Lindholm, 2009.

3. E-WOM AND SIMILAR EMERGING TERMS

The research on electronic communication is relatively new and still developing. Since the advent of information technologies and the Internet, word-of-mouth has acquired several new names. Various competing and overlapping definitions have been used to describe the phenomenon. Authors refer to interactive marketing, viral marketing, Internet communication, Internet word of mouth and word of mouse, word of modem online feedback mechanisms, stealth marketing, buzz marketing, electronic word-of-mouth communication, interactive or electronic word-of-mouth advertising, and electronic referral marketing, email marketing when they describe the phenomenon (Goyette 2010; Thevenot and Katherine 2001; Vilpponen et al, 2006).

3.1 SIMILARITY BETWEEN E-WOM AND THE RELATED TERMS

Though E-WOM has many closely related terms but it is frequently used as synonyms for viral or buzz marketing. Thevenot and Katherine, 2001 mentioned that *viral marketing* naturally integrates on-line and off-line techniques through *word of mouth* and word of mouse. Fundamentally, *viral marketing* on the Internet is the simple technological extension of *word-of-mouth* marketing. A virally marketed product is often said to have *buzz*. Viral marketing relies on human psychology and the power of social networks to create *buzz*.

Wilson, 2005 explained that off the internet, *viral marketing* has been referred to as *word of mouth, creating a buzz*, etc. But on the Internet it's called *viral marketing*. Brands big and small launch *viral videos* via YouTube, post new product information on their MySpace pages, court the blogosphere and send forth armies of evangelists to spread the gospel by *word of mouth* (Ferguson 2008).

Viral marketing is associated with *word of mouth* through electronic media. In addition, the concept of *buzz marketing* which resembles *viral marketing* is known as a new marketing strategy derived from *word of mouth* (Goyette 2010).

Kaplan, 2011 also defined *viral marketing* as *electronic word of mouth* whereby some form of marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially growing way, often through the use of social media applications. He said that when WOM gets the advantage of exponential growth of the message over a social media it becomes E-WOM.

3.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN E-WOM AND THE RELATED TERMS

Though E-WOM, viral marketing, and buzz marketing seems to be same terms, Mardsen, 2006 clarified the difference between these terms.

Marsden, 2006 stated that viral marketing is derived from 'viral' and hence it is meant to be *spread,* especially in *person to person* context. He defined viral marketing as "the promotion of a company or its products and services through a persuasive message designed to spread, typically online, from person to person."

He defined WOM marketing as "the promotion of a company or its products and services through an initiative conceived and designed to get people talking positively about that company, product or service". If we see this definition of WOM in online context to make it E-WOM, we won't find any difference between E-WOM and viral marketing.

He defined buzz marketing as "the promotion of a company or its products or services through initiatives conceived and designed to get people and the media talking positively about that company, product or service." This definition shows that buzz marketing is not in the context of *person to person* communication only, but to the *media as well*.

Therefore as per Marsden, 2006; viral marketing and E-WOM are same things but these are different to buzz marketing as later involves personal as well as media communication.

He also mentioned about 'connected marketing' coined to include all the terms related with E-WOM. He defined connected marketing as an "umbrella term for viral, buzz and word of mouth marketing. It means any promotional activity that uses word of mouth connections between people, whether digital or traditional, as communications media to stimulate demand".

Goyette, 2010 defined the three concepts as follows:

Word of Mouth is defined as a verbal informal communication occurring in *person, by telephone, email, mailing list, or any other communication* method regarding a service or a good. A recommendation source may be personal or impersonal.

Viral Marketing is defined as a rapidly spreading informal *online* communication between individuals regarding a service or a good.

Buzz Marketing is defined as a *catalyst for a WOM* conversation to occur in *person or online* derived from a formal corporate strategy with a view to creating an *illusion of spontaneity.*

He explained that the difference between viral marketing and WOM is one of *cause and effect.* Viral marketing is the cause which takes the form of message (marketing programs, community-building portals, viral videos and street-level guerrilla campaigns) builds awareness and buzz. Whereas the effect is positive WOM which leads to trial and acquisition.

Buzz marketing is explained as the *catalyst* for WOM conversation. For example, a classic buzz catalyst is to place interesting people who know what they are talking about, in locations on the Internet or in the real world where they are able to share reflections and their personal ideas on one product or another. Buzz marketing provides incentives to persons to speak favourably about the good/service. There is an illusion of spontaneity of conversational exchange so that consumers do not suspect that there is a company behind entire communication.

Viral marketing and buzz marketing are differentiated in the terms of electronic connectivity. Where viral marketing is always via online medium, buzz marketing is not at all associated with the internet or any other electronic communication medium. It does sometime happen that the word "Internet" crops up in explanations of buzz marketing. So buzz marketing may or may not be linked with internet.

Vilpponen et al., 2006 concluded this debate by quoting that available literature shows that these terms are separate but related. Therefore, following Vilpponen et al., 2006; this study will consider E-WOM and viral marketing as same concepts for further study.

4. WORKING OF E-WOM

It would not be right to study E-WOM working without studying the working of traditional WOM.

4.1 WORKING OF TRADITIONAL WOM

On the basis of available literature, Nyilasy, 2006 explained the working of WOM. As per his study, there exist two separate groups of studies. One view WOM working in the context of receiver (acquisition and processing of information) and communicator (information provision). This is known as input (receiver) versus output (communicator) word of mouth. The other group of study looks into antecedents (causes behind the WOM phenomenon) and its consequences (effects of occurrence of WOM phenomenon). The relationship between both the groups of studies is shown in Fig 3.

FIG 3: FOUR AREAS OF WOM WORKING

Unit of analysis	Main focus of study	
	Antecedents to word of mouth (causes)	*Consequences of word of mouth (effects)*
Receiver of communication (input word of mouth)	**QI:** 'Why do people listen?' *Related variables*: external information search, product category (perceived risk), type of relationship with source (tie strength)	**QII:** 'The power of word of mouth'. *Related variables*: key communication effectiveness variables (awareness, attitude change, behavioural intention, purchase behaviour)
Communicator (output word of mouth)	**QIII:** 'What makes people talk?' *Related variables*: opinion leadership, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, promotional activities/direct influence of advertiser	**QIV:** 'What happens to the communicator after the word of mouth event?' *Related variables*: cognitive dissonance, ego-enhancement

Source: Nyilasy, 2006.

Quadrant I: Antecedents of input word of mouth

This quadrant deals with the antecedents of word of mouth and focus on the receiver. It tries to identify factors that influence the probability that consumers will use (seek out or be exposed to) word of mouth. One of the important factors is *perceived risk*, the subjective assessment of potentially negative outcomes of

using the product. More risky the consumer perceives the purchase decision, the more likely he/she would be exposed to word of mouth. Another important factor is the kind of social relationships the receiver has with potential communicators (preceding the communication event). The stronger the relationship between the members of a social network, the more likely that these strong-tie relationships will be used for word of mouth communication.

Quadrant II: Consequences of word of mouth for the receiver

This quadrant studies the power of word of mouth. It examines the effects of word of mouth once consumers have been exposed to it. Word of mouth is a much more important factor influencing brand awareness and favourable attitude change than paid for messages. It has a positive influence on brand awareness, positive attitude change toward the brand, brand evaluations, service quality expectations and purchase intentions.

Quadrant III: Antecedents of output word of mouth

This area investigates the factors influencing the likelihood and extent to which communicators engage in positive or negative word of mouth. One of the factors is opinion leadership. Opinion leaders are interested in the product category and they spend a lot of time with these products. It is because they are involved with the category that they talk about it so much. Others are 'innovators', consumers who are first to try new products and sometimes talk about these products. There may be 'purchase pals' who even accompany you to the store, giving useful information while shopping. And finally there are 'surrogate consumers' also who charge for their information provision services about products. One of other incidental factors is product usage and derived satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Numerous studies have shown that satisfaction causes an increased likelihood of engaging in positive WOM while dissatisfaction causes negative WOM behaviour. A number of other antecedents have also been identified, such as: surprise as an emotional state, consumer participation in the service, promotional efforts, and incentives and deal proneness.

Quadrant IV: Consequences of word of mouth for the communicator

Word of mouth has an effect on the communicator also. The most important effects are ego enhancement and the reduction of cognitive dissonance. A word of mouth episode reassures the communicator that he/she has made the right purchase decision. He/she can get rid of negative feelings associated with cognitive dissonance. On the other hand, the communicator might also feel good about him/herself that he/she is knowledgeable and competent in something. These forms of ego enhancement due to word of mouth can be powerful emotional effects on the communicator.

4.2 WORKING OF WOM IN ELECTRONIC CONTEXT

Here is the concept that is specific to the electronic WOM by Stewart et al., 2009. He explains the process of E-WOM in context of spreading of 'viral message'. He specifically talks about the 'virus' i.e. message being spread in viral marketing process. He used commonly used terminology in epidemic theory to describe the transitional states of individuals as the disease travels the population of interest is 'susceptible', 'infective' and 'immune'. Individuals are susceptible before receiving the virus, infective before passing it on, after which they are immune. This terminology fits directly to a viral marketing context where a member of a target audience is initially susceptible (receptive) prior to receiving the marketing message, infective (reached) upon receipt of the message and immune (removed) once they choose not play a further role in the transmission of the message or the campaign is terminated or expires.

Bampo et al., 2008 used the concept of generations, rather than time, to explain the transmission of message. They define generation by the number of transmissions required to reach a member along a chain of communication initiated by a single seeding of the message. They viewed that a lengthy campaign can be due to the long time taken by members to pass the message on, rather than the message being passed on many times (generations). Thus, in viral contexts, the notion of generation better captures the transmission of the message from one individual to the next. Campaign duration is not necessarily an indicator of success

Bruyn and Gary, 2008 explained that the message transmission can either be intentional or unintentional. In the latter situation, consumers are not intentional actors in the message transmission process. For example, users sending e-mails from a Hotmail account automatically promote the service to every person they send a message. Intentional transmission occurs when consumers willingly become promoters of the product/service and spread the word to their friends. They do so either because of an explicit incentive (e.g., financial incentives) or simply out of a desire to share the product benefits with friends (e.g., fun, intriguing, valuable for others etc.).

5. ADVANTAGES PROVIDED BY E-WOM

A significant advantage provided by E-WOM over traditional mass marketing is the 'self selection' within the message (Stewart et al., 2009). Those forwarding the messages will be more likely to know which of their friends, family members, and colleagues have similar interests. Therefore, the message can be more effectively targeted (Dobele et al., 2005).

Effective targeting increases the likelihood of the message effectively reaching interested individuals and reduces the likelihood of the message being spread to uninterested individuals. It may even reach beyond the core target market (Kirby, 2006). One-to-many reach makes E-WOM more influential (Phelps et al., 2004).

An electronic viral process also increases the speed with which the message is transmitted. E-WOM marketing can also be highly cost effective. It incurs very little expense since the individual passing on the referral carries the cost of forwarding the brand message which is almost negligible (Dobele et al., 2005; Stewart et al., 2009).

E-WOM maintains the trust and integrity of the message. Whereas consumers are quick to delete messages from marketers, a message from a known person is less likely to be deleted (Phelps et al., 2004). Moreover as the act of forwarding electronic messages is voluntary rather than a paid testimonial or a mass ad campaign, it may be viewed more favorably by the recipient (Dobele et al., 2005).

E-WOM campaigns have also been used successfully not only to build widespread brand awareness (Abedniya and Sahar, 2010), but also to help generate sales. These campaigns can provide accountability when tracked, thereby measuring and proving ROI. Moreover, have no fixed cut-off point, so they can provide an ever-increasing ROI (Kirby, 2006).

E-WOM also dramatically lowers the cost of promotion and boosts the speed of adoption, a critical concern for new product launches (Abedniya and Sahar, 2010; Dobele et al., 2005). Other benefits may include creation of buzz around the product, reinforcing existing advertising messages, extend other marketing communications activities, capturing recipients' attention, triggering interest, and eventually leading to adoption or sales (Bruyn and Gary, 2008; Kirby, 2006).

6. KEY ISSUES RELATED TO E-WOM

One of the biggest issues with viral marketing is spam. If a message is being sent to large number of people it becomes a spam message. Therefore companies should be vigilant that the motivation they give to spread the message should not be so large to lead to spamming (Thevenot and Katherine, 2001).

Privacy is another related issue. Some persons who are referred to companies by their friends do not like companies keeping their personal information, such as e-mail address. Therefore companies should not retain personal information of persons referred; rather it should ask those persons to opt in for the service voluntary (Thevenot and Katherine, 2001).

Viral marketing overkill is another major problem. Companies should not risk annoying or alienating their target audience by executing the E-WOM campaign poorly. Therefore companies should maintain the control over the campaign (Stewart et al 2009; Thevenot and Katherine, 2001).

Where speed is the advantage, it also acts as key issue some times. Thevenot and Katherine, 2001 identified that because of speed even negative words spread too fast.

There are also some technology related issues to consider. Viral marketing involves substantial programming. It also assumes that the target audience will have the technology and skills to participate (Thevenot and Katherine, 2001).

7. CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS OF E-WOM CAMPAIGN

In Marsden, 2006 provides a checklist before planning E-WOM campaign. There should be a *right product* which is new, better and can be sampled. It should be targeted to *right people*. Right people, here means opinion leaders. Then there should be *right action* like giving the say to trial participants in marketing campaign. Finally there should be proper *measurement* mechanism to measure the effectiveness of the campaign.

Kirby, 2006 provided three key factors to increase the likelihood of a successful online viral marketing campaign:

- Specialist *strategic planning* to ensure that viral marketing is used to deliver tangible, measurable, ongoing brand benefits.
- Appropriate *'wow' factor* material that users want to seek out, talk about and pass on of their own freewill.
- Appropriate *specialist seeding* of the buzz story and the viral agent to places where viral and brand influencers already gather.

Kaplan, 2011 conclude with five points of caution that managers should heed while launching E-WOM marketing campaign:

- Viral marketing is only as good as the *remaining marketing mix*.
- Viral marketing needs to be *backed up by traditional forms* of communication.
- Excessive planning and *intervention kills* any viral marketing campaign.
- Highly provocative and edgy *messages are a tricky* business.
- Successful viral marketing requires a little bit of *luck and gut feeling*.

8. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this literature analysis provides an overview of the current status of knowledge in the domain of E-WOM research. It provides basic insights into E-WOM and related aspects. With the advent of technology, many terms emerged along with E-WOM such as viral marketing, buzz marketing, network enhanced marketing, email marketing etc. As these concepts differ to each other minutely, therefore can be considered related. Connected marketing is the single term used to cover all these concepts. E-WOM is much beneficial over traditional WOM but it involves some issues like spamming, privacy etc. A company needs to take care of these issues to make the campaign successful. E-WOM, because of its ever evolving nature, provides ample scope for future research. More empirical studies are required to finally ascertain what makes a viral marketing campaign successful

It is believed that this study stimulates future research on E-WOM communication by drawing attention to the variables and linkages that need further investigation.

9. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATIONS

First and most important limitation is that it is not an empirical study. It is a conceptual work based upon researches of other researchers. But this research provides its own managerial and research implications.

This research suggests marketing managers to further analyze the role of E-WOM marketing and related upcoming technologies. As past research shows the role of viral marketing on brand awareness, sales, ROI, credibility of the company, it may be considered as an option for marketing strategies. The essence of E-WOM communication is to know what customers and potential customers are saying about the brand (Jansen et al. 2009). Marketing practitioners can use it favourably to impact their brand image.

Further this research motivates scholars to do more empirical studies on this area as one cannot be sure about the factors on which success of E-WOM marketing depends. Other upcoming forms of E-WOM marketing like blogs, tweets, sms, need to be explored more.

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