



## A survey of the role of social media platforms in viral marketing: The influence of eWOM

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**Abstract.** The main objective of this paper is to highlight the importance of social networking platforms in viral marketing and the word spoken electronically. The revolution of modern technology with social media platforms offers new opportunities for communication between consumers and marketers. Organizations need to always have a way to stay in touch with customers and achieve this through the platforms of social communication, which is still the first in the world about disseminating information and communication. Therefore, the importance of social communication platforms increased with their impact on customers through the electronic word of mouth and viral marketing. The results of this study provide insights for decision-makers, marketers, and organizations to focus on the social communication platforms and the opinions shared between consumers to stay updated for any comment. It also emphasizes the effectiveness of marketing through social networking platforms, especially if it is a piece of information or advertising among consumers. This study will contribute to the development of broad lines for the future to help decision-makers in marketing plans and strengthening academic literature in this field.

**Keywords:** *Social media platforms; viral marketing; eWOM.*

### 1. Introduction

Millions of people in the world are witnessing a major development of the communications revolution, which has a great impact in all sectors (Alghizzawi, Salloum, & Habes, 2018; Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, & Ahmad, 2018; Salloum, Maqableh, Mhamdi, Al Kurdi, & Shaalan, 2018). Communication between people has become easier through this modern technology so that people become connected with each other from any location (Al-Qaysi, Mohamad-Nordin, & Al-Emran, 2018; Alshurideh, Salloum, Al Kurdi, & Al-Emran, 2019; Habes, Salloum, Alghizzawi, & Alshibly, 2018; Mhamdi, Al-Emran, & Salloum, 2018). Modern technology has become a mean to search for information, not just to communicate (Motteh saleh al-shibly, 2018; Rahi, 2018; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2018). Currently, modern technology means are multiple and one of the most important social networking platforms (Habes, Salloum, et al., 2018; Salloum, Al-Emran, Abdallah, & Shaalan, 2017). So, it plays a large role in terms of the number of users and from the impact side. The number of Internet users is increasing significantly on social media platforms (Allcott, Braghieri, Eichmeyer, & Gentzkow, 2019). So, marketers and companies in all sectors rely on these modern means to market their products and services (Alghizzawi, 2019; Gulbahar & Yildirim, 2015). Especially with the spread of the global competition in marketing, marketers and decision-makers rely on social media platforms (Richardson & Domingos, 2002). The Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) became more important with the new social media networking because it helps customers in promoting products or services in their personal account on social media with fast spread (Al-Abdallah & Bataineh, 2018; Yoo, Kim, & Sanders, 2015). This paper will discuss the social media platforms effect on effective viral marketing for service and products.

### 2. Critical analysis of previous related studies

Providing a critical literature review could help in establishing the grounds for any research study (Al-Emran, 2015; Saa, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2019). In this study, the relevant studies were reviewed

(Alghizzawi, 2019; Alghizzawi, Ghani, et al., 2018; Allcott et al., 2019; Gulbahar & Yildirim, 2015; Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, Salloum, & Abd. Ghani, 2018; Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, et al., 2018; Habes, Salloum, et al., 2018; Motteh saleh al-shibly, 2018; Penni, 2015; Stephen, 2016; Yoo et al., 2015) to make general perception to social media and influence on viral marketing. The social media platforms link between consumer and decision-makers to know all details about the product or service. So, social media platforms can use to make extra support in viral marketing through eWOM. In Figure 1, the chart explains the types of (eWOM) on social media platforms.

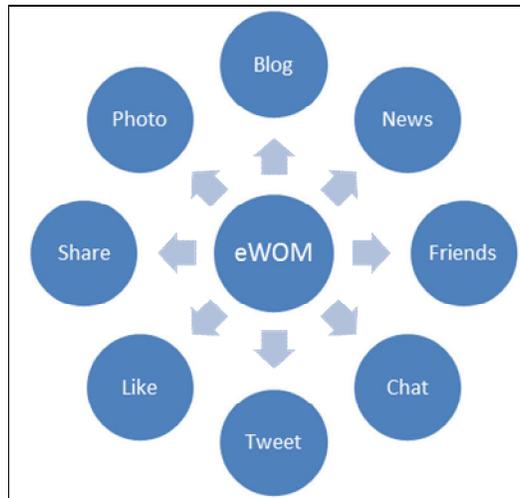


Figure 1. The type of eWOM on social media platforms.

## 2.1 social media platforms

Social networking platforms are networks and sites designed to provide multiple services and most importantly the presentation of information, acquaintance, communication between people and participation in different ways, such as video and images (A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017b; Salloum, Mhamdi, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017). Social media platforms based on public relations, people present themselves and form their own identity on these networks through the work of the personal account. People can exchange views and information through these platforms (Al-Qaysi & Al-Emran, 2017; Habes, 2019; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017a; Smith, 2010). The means of social communication have led to an explosion in the world in terms of the mechanism of communication and sharing between people easily (Habes, Salloum, et al., 2018; Salloum, Mhamdi, Al Kurdi, & Shaalan, 2018). Social networks in the world are many such as (Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Instagram) (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social networks are based on the internet and its interested in social communication, which combines press, marketing, and participation among individuals. There are many blogs for photos, videos, and messages. Its important advantages are the possibility of communication between individuals at low cost, easily and quickly (Sajid, 2016). Many have defined it as a communication channel between individuals (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Howard and Parks (2012) divided social networks into three sections to include (information infrastructure, digital communication between individuals, digital content of organizations). Social media users are increasing in numbers every day and they help in increasing its influence. So, organizations and governments are becoming interested to employ this networking in different sectors. Many people search for information and follow trademark pages through social media and companies pay huge sums on social networking pages (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012; A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012). The number of social media users worldwide in 2019 reaches 2.77 billion which is expected to reach 3.02 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2018). In Figure 2, the chart explains the top 5 most famous social network sites worldwide as of April 2019 (Statistics, 2019).

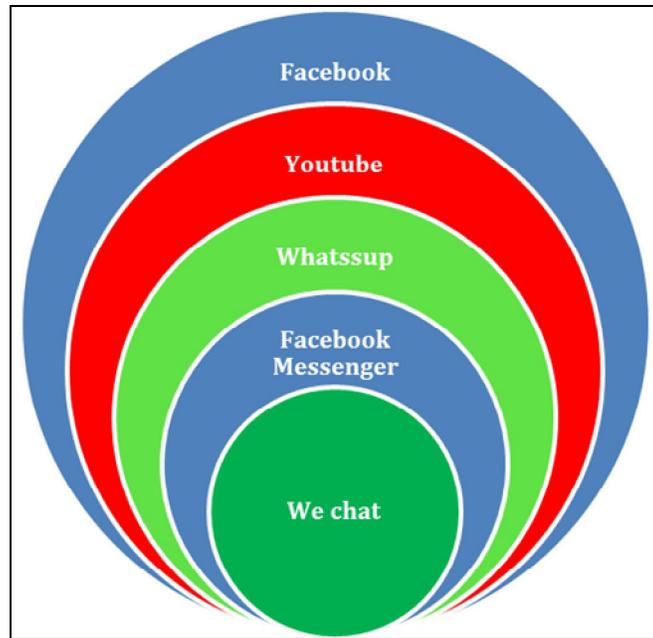


Figure 2. The top 5 most famous social network sites worldwide as of April 2019.

## 2.2 Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

The word of mouth is transferring the word or sharing information between individuals or friends about a particular product or service (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), WOM is defined as communication between customers about goods or service in person without commercial intervention. The influence of the word of mouth increases with increasing communication. This makes social network platforms an important factor in disseminating the word transmitted electronically. The electronic word of mouth includes a positive or negative content transformation between old or new people about the service or goods. Individuals through the web can publish any information and give views freely (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Increasing the interest of decision-makers, marketers, organizations, and governments in the knowledge of the electronics word of mouth due to the increasing interest of customers to see the views of others traded on any goods or service (Chu & Kim, 2011). Many industrial and service sectors have become affected by the electronically word of mouth (Furner, Zinko, Zhu, McDowell, & Dalton, 2014; S. Kim, Baek, Kim, & Yoo, 2016; Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008; Minazzi, 2015; Palka, Pousttchi, & Wiedemann, 2009; Silverman, 2001; Yoo et al., 2015), Customers reduce the risk by evaluating the goods and services used on many sites so that there is a consensus between the search for information electronically before the consumption of the service or goods. While customers have no difficulty in searching for the quality of the goods especially now in their sites there is an evaluation system for goods and services (Steffes & Burgee, 2009). Based on the study of Lusky (2012), customers all over the world trust in online trading opinions about services and products. It also notes that there has been a 15 percent increase over the last four years on the views shared across social networking platforms and the web. According to Chu and Kim (2011), social networking sites are now important for marketers in influencing their customers at low cost and ease by means of the word spoken electronically.

## 2.3 The relationship between social media platforms and viral marketing

Viral marketing, based on many studies, is the transmission of product information or service to others (Knight, 1999; Modzelewski, 2000; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004). Viral marketing is the transmission of the word electronically quickly as a virus (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). However, viral marketing is part of the social process and the process of communication between individuals. It cannot be assumed that the process of purchasing any product is done only through the transmission of information about it. Certainly, there are networks that play a large role in the transmission of information and communication between others. Also, viral marketing can be considered the process of

accurately conveying information about certain goods or services (Phelps et al., 2004). Viral marketing is a word of mouth, and also transfer information about the market to each other. This is important now with modern technology in which communication with others is easy and fast (Salloum, Al-Emran, Khalaf, Habes, & Shaalan, 2019). Therefore, social networking platforms are an important factor in the viral marketing process, which helped decision-makers to rely on social networks.

In order to rely on the transmission and dissemination of information about any product or service, social networking platforms have helped people to have communication and marketing channels but are more reliable because they are not commercial but personal. Organizations now are looking forward to the long relationship with the customers and the distinctive service instead of advertising marketing because in the case of customer satisfaction information will be transferred about the product or service provided to him/her electronically on his channel, which leads to marketing the company (Miller & Lammass, 2010).

In addition to social networking platforms, it's possible to segment the segments of the target individuals and market them in different ways so that the information, videos, pictures or text are transferred (Bolotaeva & Cata, 2010). According to Fisher (2009), 70% of people rely on information search through social networking platforms. The power of viral marketing depends on communication and on the responses of recipients through social networking platforms (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). It is confirmed that social networking platforms are effective in marketing and influencing customers, especially if they are not commercial purposes, but rather news among consumers (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana, & Islam, 2019). Therefore, organizations are based on viral marketing through social networking platforms for simple cost, speed, and connectivity anywhere and at any time (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015).

### 3. Conclusion

Social media platforms are the new communication channels and information source for all the world (Abd Al-sameeM, 2012; Al-Emran & Malik, 2016; Alghizzawi, 2019; Alghizzawi, Salloum, et al., 2018; Allcott et al., 2019; Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, et al., 2018; Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014; Salloum, Mhamdi, et al., 2017). Therefore, it plays an important role in viral marketing and eWOM (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Richardson & Domingos, 2002). Recently viewed, the competition is high in all sectors which increases the importance of developing marketing methods and how to influence consumers with modern technological means especially in social media platforms. This plays an important role in the choice of consumers for product and services (Al-Abdallah & Bataineh, 2018; Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Shareef et al., 2019). Finally, viral marketing and eWOM by social media platforms affect the consumers' behavior and choice. The results of this study along with the previous studies in this field emphasize on the importance of decision-makers, marketers, and organizations focus on the social communication platforms and the opinions shared between consumers to stay updated for any comment. It also emphasizes the effectiveness of marketing through social networking platforms, especially if it is a piece of information or advertising among consumers.

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