



From Words to Actions: Exploring How e-WOM Drives Green Consumer Decisions in the Digital Age

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received : 1 Desember 2024 Accepted : 15 Desember 2024 Published : 31 Desember 2024	In the digital age, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing green consumer behavior and repurchase intentions. However, the role of e-WOM in shaping sustainable purchase decisions remains underexplored, especially in the context of the green brands. This study aims to explore how e-WOM impacts consumer perceptions of green brands and the factors that drive sustainable purchasing decisions. Using an autoethnographic approach, the research reflects on personal experiences with e-WOM and examines its influence on green consumer behavior. The findings reveal that e-WOM not only provides valuable information but also fosters emotional engagement, trust, and social influence, which play a significant role in driving both initial purchases and long-term repurchase intentions. This study highlights the need for businesses to incorporate authentic e-WOM strategies into their green marketing efforts, focusing on transparency and consumer trust. The results offer practical insights for marketers seeking to leverage digital platforms in promoting sustainable products while also contributing to the broader theoretical understanding of sustainable consumer behavior. Future research could explore the long-term impact of e-WOM and examine its role across diverse cultural contexts.
Keywords: e-WOM Digital Marketing Green Marketing Sustainability Marketing Innovation and Consumer Ethics	
Informasi Artikel	ABSTRAK
Kata Kunci: e-WOM Pemasaran Digital Pemasaran Hijau Keberlanjutan Inovasi Pemasaran dan Etika Konsumen	Di era digital, <i>electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)</i> menjadi faktor penting yang memengaruhi perilaku konsumen hijau dan niat pembelian ulang. Namun, peran <i>e-WOM</i> dalam membentuk keputusan pembelian berkelanjutan masih kurang dieksplorasi, terutama dalam konteks merek-merek ramah lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana <i>e-WOM</i> memengaruhi persepsi konsumen terhadap merek hijau serta faktor-faktor yang mendorong keputusan pembelian berkelanjutan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan autoetnografi, penelitian ini merefleksikan pengalaman pribadi terkait <i>e-WOM</i> dan menganalisis pengaruhnya terhadap perilaku konsumen hijau. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa <i>e-WOM</i> tidak hanya menyediakan informasi berharga, tetapi juga membangun keterlibatan emosional, kepercayaan, dan pengaruh sosial, yang berperan penting dalam mendorong pembelian awal maupun niat pembelian ulang jangka panjang. Studi ini menekankan perlunya bisnis untuk mengintegrasikan strategi <i>e-WOM</i> yang otentik ke dalam upaya pemasaran hijau, dengan fokus pada transparansi dan kepercayaan konsumen. Hasil ini memberikan wawasan praktis bagi pemasar dalam memanfaatkan platform digital untuk mempromosikan produk berkelanjutan sekaligus berkontribusi pada pemahaman teoritis yang lebih luas tentang perilaku konsumen berkelanjutan. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat mengeksplorasi dampak jangka panjang <i>e-WOM</i> serta perannya dalam berbagai konteks budaya.

Introduction

In the digital age, where information flows faster than ever, consumer voices have become powerful catalysts for change. Among these, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has risen as a game-changer in shaping consumer preferences and influencing brand perceptions (Roy et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2024). Simultaneously, a global shift towards sustainability has transformed the marketplace, as consumers increasingly demand eco-friendly products and transparent, responsible business practices. But how do these two forces—e-WOM and sustainability—intersect to drive real-world consumer decisions?

Green marketing, the art of promoting products and services that prioritize environmental well-being, has never been more critical. It holds the potential to bridge the gap between consumer awareness of sustainability issues and their willingness to act, such as by choosing green alternatives (Al Haris et al., 2023; Mansour et al., 2024). Yet, for many businesses, turning this potential into reality remains a challenge. While e-WOM provides a unique opportunity to amplify green marketing efforts through trusted peer recommendations and organic conversations, its true influence on converting digital awareness into tangible actions—such as eco-friendly purchases—remains underexplored.

Despite the growing body of research on e-WOM and digital marketing, the specific role of e-WOM in shaping green consumer decisions has received limited attention. How do digital conversations ignite trust in green brands? What factors determine whether a consumer moves from engaging with sustainability-focused e-WOM to making a green purchase? And how can businesses harness these insights to design marketing strategies that resonate with today's ethically conscious consumers?

This study seeks to answer these compelling questions by delving into the nuanced interplay between e-WOM and green consumer behavior in the digital era. By adopting a qualitative approach, it explores how online narratives influence consumer perceptions, build trust, and ultimately drive sustainable purchasing decisions. The findings aim to shed light on the unspoken dynamics of digital advocacy for sustainability and provide actionable insights for marketers aiming to leverage e-WOM as a strategic tool in green marketing.

As industries navigate the complex landscape of digital transformation and sustainability, this research offers a timely contribution to both academia and practice. By bridging critical gaps in the literature and uncovering the untapped potential of e-WOM, it provides a fresh perspective on how businesses can align their strategies with the values of the modern consumer. In doing so, it invites readers to reimagine the power of words—not just as tools for communication, but as catalysts for meaningful action in the pursuit of a greener future.

Problem Statement

The increasing prominence of sustainability in global consumer markets has necessitated the development of innovative strategies to align business practices with environmentally conscious values (Abel & Kenechukwu, 2024; Kumaat et al., 2024; Srivastava, 2024). Among these strategies, green marketing has gained significant attention for its potential to influence consumer behavior towards sustainable choices. However, achieving this influence is not without its challenges, particularly in the highly dynamic and competitive digital landscape.

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as a critical tool in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions in this digital era. Leveraging the credibility of peer recommendations and the immediacy of digital communication, e-WOM has the potential to amplify the reach and impact of green marketing efforts (Al Haris et al., 2023; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Rachmat et al., 2023). Yet, a persistent gap exists in understanding how e-WOM drives consumers to transition from passive awareness of sustainable issues to active, tangible behaviors, such as purchasing green products or engaging in sustainable practices.

While numerous studies have highlighted the general impact of e-WOM on consumer behavior, limited research has specifically explored its role in fostering sustainable consumption. Existing literature predominantly focuses on quantitative measures of e-WOM effectiveness, often overlooking the deeper, qualitative nuances of how consumers interpret, internalize, and act upon sustainability-related e-WOM. Moreover, the contextual factors that mediate the relationship between e-WOM and green purchase intentions, such as cultural attitudes, trust in green claims, or perceptions of ethical responsibility, remain underexplored.

This gap is particularly concerning in light of growing consumer skepticism towards greenwashing and the ethical responsibilities of businesses in promoting sustainability. As consumers increasingly demand authenticity and transparency, the need to understand the mechanisms by which e-WOM fosters trust and motivates sustainable actions becomes more urgent (Khan et al., 2024; Holloway, 2024; Gvili & Levy, 2023). For marketers, failing to address these dynamics risks undermining the effectiveness of green marketing strategies and missing opportunities to build lasting consumer loyalty.

Addressing these issues, this research seeks to explore how e-WOM influences consumer decision-making in the context of green marketing, focusing on the transition from digital awareness to sustainable purchasing behavior. By examining this process through a qualitative lens, the study aims to uncover actionable insights that bridge the gap between e-WOM discourse and real-world consumer actions, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of sustainable development.

Research Objectives

In response to the growing interplay between digitalization and sustainability, this study is driven by the need to better understand how electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) influences consumer decision-making in the context of green marketing. The overarching aim is to provide a comprehensive exploration of e-WOM's role in shaping consumer perceptions, intentions, and behaviors toward sustainable choices. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **To explore how e-WOM shapes consumer perceptions of green brands and sustainable purchasing decisions.**

This objective focuses on understanding the mechanisms by which e-WOM influences the way consumers perceive the authenticity, trustworthiness, and overall appeal of green brands. By delving into the narratives shared through e-WOM, the research seeks to uncover how these digital interactions impact consumers' cognitive and emotional responses, ultimately influencing their purchasing behavior.

2. **To analyze the factors that make e-WOM effective in driving consumers from awareness to actionable behaviors.**

The second objective examines the critical drivers of e-WOM effectiveness, including the credibility of the source, the content's relevance and emotional appeal, and the role of social norms in reinforcing consumer decisions. This analysis aims to identify the enablers and barriers that determine whether e-WOM successfully motivates consumers to transition from passive awareness of sustainability issues to active participation in sustainable practices.

3. **To provide actionable insights for marketers on integrating e-WOM into green marketing strategies in the digital age.**

Finally, the research aims to bridge academic inquiry with practical application by offering evidence-based recommendations for marketers. By leveraging the insights gained, businesses can design more effective strategies that capitalize on e-WOM as a tool for enhancing brand credibility, fostering consumer trust, and driving engagement with sustainable products and services.

Through these objectives, this study seeks to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of e-WOM's potential to transform green marketing strategies and promote sustainable consumption.

The findings aim to address critical gaps in the literature while equipping businesses with the knowledge to navigate the challenges and opportunities of sustainability in the digital era.

Gap Analysis

Literature Review

The body of research on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has grown significantly in recent years, highlighting its role as a powerful influencer of consumer behavior. Existing studies have predominantly focused on the effectiveness of e-WOM in general marketing contexts, such as brand awareness, trust-building, and purchase intentions (Siregar et al., 2024; Nuseir, 2019; Huete-Alcocer, 2017; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Researchers have explored factors like message credibility, source trustworthiness, and emotional appeal, demonstrating how these elements enhance the persuasive power of e-WOM. In parallel, green marketing has also emerged as a critical area of academic and practical interest, addressing the need for sustainable business practices and consumer engagement. Scholars have examined how green marketing influences consumer attitudes, highlighting challenges such as greenwashing and the authenticity of environmental claims.

Identification of Research Gaps

Despite the progress in understanding e-WOM and green marketing independently, there remains a critical gap at their intersection:

1. **Limited Exploration of e-WOM's Role in Green Marketing:**
While e-WOM has been extensively studied in conventional marketing, its specific application in promoting sustainability and driving green consumer decisions is underexplored (Nga & Khoi, 2024; Roy et al., 2024; Joudeh et al., 2024). Few studies have delved into how e-WOM shapes perceptions of green brands or motivates sustainable purchasing behaviors.
2. **Insufficient Qualitative Insights into Consumer Behavior:**
Most existing studies rely on quantitative methodologies, which, while valuable, often fail to capture the nuanced, narrative-driven aspects of how consumers interpret and act upon e-WOM related to sustainability. A deeper qualitative exploration is needed to understand the lived experiences and decision-making processes of consumers influenced by e-WOM in green marketing contexts (Rajalakshmi et al., 2024).
3. **Lack of Focus on Behavioral Transition from Awareness to Action:**
Although research acknowledges the importance of awareness in fostering sustainable behavior, there is limited investigation into the factors that drive the transition from awareness to tangible actions, such as purchasing green products or engaging in sustainable practices. The role of e-WOM in facilitating this transition remains poorly understood (Etim, 2024).
4. **Contextual Factors and Cultural Variability:**
The impact of cultural attitudes, social norms, and ethical considerations on the effectiveness of e-WOM in promoting green behavior has not been adequately addressed, despite their potential significance in shaping consumer decisions (Filho et al., 2024).

Research Contributions

This study aims to address these gaps and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in several meaningful ways:

1. **Integration of e-WOM and Green Marketing:**
By focusing on the intersection of e-WOM and green marketing, this research bridges two critical yet previously disconnected areas of study, offering new insights into how digital conversations influence sustainability-focused consumer behavior.
2. **Qualitative Exploration of Consumer Narratives:**

Employing a qualitative methodology, the study provides an in-depth understanding of how consumers interpret e-WOM about green products and brands, capturing the complexities of their perceptions, motivations, and decision-making processes.

3. **Focus on Behavioral Transition:**

The research sheds light on the underexplored transition from digital awareness to sustainable action, identifying the enablers and barriers that influence this critical shift.

4. **Practical Implications for Sustainable Marketing Strategies:**

The findings offer actionable insights for marketers seeking to leverage e-WOM as a strategic tool to enhance green marketing efforts, build consumer trust, and drive sustainable purchasing behaviors.

By addressing these gaps, this study not only advances academic understanding but also provides a practical framework for businesses to navigate the challenges of sustainability in the digital age.

Novelty and Research Justification

Novelty of the Research

This study introduces several novel contributions to the academic discourse on green marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), filling critical gaps in both theory and practice. Key elements that distinguish this research include:

1. **Exploration of e-WOM in the Context of Green Marketing**

While e-WOM has been extensively studied within digital and general marketing contexts, its role in shaping green consumer behavior remains relatively unexplored (Nga & Khoi, 2024; Galati et al., 2023; Ahmad & Zhang, 2020). This research breaks new ground by investigating how digital conversations specifically influence consumer perceptions of green brands and their sustainable purchase decisions. By focusing on e-WOM within the green marketing paradigm, the study offers a unique perspective on how digital interactions can propel sustainability efforts forward.

2. **Qualitative Approach to Consumer Decision-Making**

Most existing studies on e-WOM and green marketing rely on quantitative methodologies that prioritize measurable outcomes, such as purchase intentions and brand awareness (Teixeira et al., 2023; Simanjuntak et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2015). In contrast, this study adopts a qualitative research design, providing rich, narrative-driven insights into how consumers interpret and internalize e-WOM related to sustainability. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional processes involved in sustainable decision-making, moving beyond simple cause-and-effect relationships to uncover the subtleties of consumer behavior.

3. **Transition from Digital Awareness to Real-World Action**

While much of the literature focuses on consumer awareness of environmental issues, there is limited exploration of how awareness translates into concrete actions, such as purchasing eco-friendly products or engaging in sustainable behaviors. This study's focus on the behavioral transition from passive awareness to active, sustainable choices fills a critical gap. By examining how e-WOM influences this shift, the research contributes valuable insights into the factors that drive consumers to act on their green preferences in the real world.

4. **Contextual Understanding of Cultural and Ethical Factors**

Another distinctive feature of this research is its emphasis on the contextual factors that may shape e-WOM's effectiveness in driving green consumer behavior. By exploring the role of cultural attitudes, social norms, and ethical considerations, this study adds an important layer to the understanding of e-WOM's impact, acknowledging that consumer decisions are not made in a vacuum but are influenced by a variety of external factors.

Justification of the Research

This study is of significant importance for several reasons, both in terms of theoretical contribution and practical implications:

1. Advancement of Green Marketing Theory

This research makes a meaningful contribution to the field of green marketing by integrating e-WOM into sustainability-driven consumer behavior research. It expands the scope of green marketing theories by addressing the digital transformation of consumer engagement and examining how online interactions shape green brand perceptions and consumer trust.

2. Practical Implications for Marketers

With the growing emphasis on sustainability and consumer demand for ethical and environmentally conscious practices, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies to stay competitive (Waskita et al., 2024). This study offers practical insights for marketers on how to effectively incorporate e-WOM into their green marketing strategies. By identifying the key drivers of e-WOM effectiveness, the research provides actionable recommendations on how businesses can leverage digital word-of-mouth to promote green products, enhance brand credibility, and foster long-term customer loyalty.

3. Addressing the Need for Authenticity in Sustainable Marketing

In an era of growing skepticism towards greenwashing, consumers are increasingly seeking authenticity in the brands they support. This study's focus on how e-WOM influences trust and brand authenticity in the context of green marketing is both timely and highly relevant. It provides a framework for businesses to navigate the ethical challenges of promoting sustainability while maintaining consumer trust.

4. Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals

By exploring how digital platforms can influence consumer behavior towards sustainable practices, this research indirectly contributes to the broader goals of sustainable development (Waskita et al., 2024). It offers insights into how businesses can engage consumers in environmental responsibility through strategic e-WOM campaigns, ultimately fostering a culture of sustainability.

In summary, this study's novelty lies in its integration of e-WOM within the green marketing domain, its qualitative approach to understanding consumer decision-making, and its focus on the behavioral shift from awareness to action. These contributions have significant theoretical and practical implications, advancing the understanding of digital marketing's role in promoting sustainability while offering actionable insights for businesses aiming to capitalize on the power of e-WOM to drive sustainable consumer behaviors.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach through a **Systematic Literature Review (SLR)** methodology to explore the role of **e-WOM in shaping green marketing** and its influence on **repurchase intentions**. The decision to use SLR as the research design is grounded in its ability to synthesize existing studies systematically, provide comprehensive insights into the phenomena under investigation, and identify gaps in the current body of knowledge. SLR allows for a thorough examination of diverse academic sources, offering a holistic view of how e-WOM impacts green consumer behavior and subsequent repurchase decisions.

Research Design: Qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

The use of a systematic literature review in this study allows for an in-depth, structured, and reproducible examination of the current state of knowledge on the role of e-WOM in green marketing. This design is particularly effective for identifying patterns, trends, and theoretical frameworks in the

literature, as well as synthesizing findings across multiple studies. Given the evolving nature of digital marketing and consumer behavior, an SLR provides an opportunity to capture the most recent advancements in the field while mapping the evolution of research on e-WOM, green marketing, and repurchase intentions.

This study focuses on the following key research questions:

1. How does e-WOM shape consumer perceptions of green brands and sustainable marketing strategies?
2. What factors contribute to the effectiveness of e-WOM in fostering green consumer behavior and promoting repurchase intentions?
3. What gaps exist in the current literature regarding the intersection of e-WOM, green marketing, and repurchase behavior?

Procedures and Phases of the Literature Review

The SLR process follows a structured protocol to ensure rigorous and transparent synthesis of the literature. The review process involves the following phases:

1. Literature Search and Selection Criteria:

A comprehensive search of academic databases (such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR) was conducted to gather relevant studies published within the last five years. The search included keywords and phrases such as "electronic word-of-mouth," "green marketing," "sustainable consumer behavior," and "repurchase intentions." Studies were included based on the following criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Focus on e-WOM, green marketing, or sustainable consumer behavior
- Empirical studies or theoretical frameworks discussing e-WOM's impact on green purchase intentions or repurchase behavior
- Publications in high-impact journals, particularly those indexed in Scopus Q1 and related databases

2. Data Extraction and Quality Assessment:

Data extraction involved cataloging key information from each selected study, including research objectives, methodologies, findings, and theoretical frameworks. Each study was assessed for quality based on its methodological rigor, the clarity of its results, and its relevance to the research questions. Studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria or were deemed low in methodological quality were excluded from the final review.

3. Thematic Analysis and Synthesis:

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes and patterns across the selected studies. This analysis focuses on how e-WOM influences consumer perceptions of green brands, the role of trust and authenticity in e-WOM, and how these factors contribute to repurchase intentions. The synthesis aimed to integrate insights from different theoretical perspectives, uncovering the relationships between e-WOM and green consumer behavior, as well as identifying any gaps or contradictions in the literature.

Role of e-WOM in Shaping Green Marketing and Repurchase Intentions

One of the key elements of this research is to understand how e-WOM influences green consumer behavior and the development of repurchase intentions. Several studies in the literature have shown that e-WOM, when perceived as authentic and credible, can significantly shape consumer attitudes toward green brands (Nga & Khoi, 2024). Consumers are more likely to trust peer recommendations and online reviews than traditional advertising, especially when it comes to sustainability-related claims (Chen et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024). Therefore, e-WOM has the potential to:

- **Increase Awareness:** e-WOM serves as a critical mechanism for spreading awareness about sustainable products and green marketing initiatives.
- **Build Trust:** Trust plays a central role in how e-WOM influences green brand perceptions. The credibility of the source, coupled with the alignment of sustainability values, significantly affects consumer trust.
- **Drive Repurchase Intentions:** Positive e-WOM about a green brand can influence consumer loyalty, leading to repeat purchases and long-term engagement with the brand. Furthermore, the reinforcement of ethical values through e-WOM can increase consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

Techniques for Data Collection and Review Process

The primary technique for data collection is an **extensive literature review**, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods across multiple disciplines, including marketing, consumer behavior, sustainability, and digital communications. The following steps are integral to the review process:

1. Database Search:

Databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and JSTOR were used to identify peer-reviewed journal articles. Search strings like "e-WOM and green marketing," "sustainable consumer behavior," and "repurchase intentions" were used to refine results.

2. Manual and Citation Searching:

In addition to database searches, manual searches of key journals in green marketing, digital marketing, and consumer behavior were conducted. Citation tracking was also employed to identify influential studies and seminal works in the field.

3. Review of Published and Unpublished Literature:

In order to present a comprehensive view of the field, both published and unpublished studies (such as conference proceedings and dissertations) were considered if they met the inclusion criteria.

4. Data Analysis:

The collected data were analyzed through thematic coding, organizing findings into themes and sub-themes related to e-WOM's role in green marketing and its impact on consumer repurchase intentions. This synthesis helped to highlight prevailing trends and areas that require further investigation.

Literature Review and Analysis of Recent Works

The literature review focuses on identifying and synthesizing recent empirical and theoretical contributions. By analyzing studies from the last five years, the review incorporates the most up-to-date findings on the role of e-WOM in driving green consumer decisions and repurchase behavior. This contemporary approach ensures that the research reflects the latest trends in digital marketing and sustainability, while offering practical insights for marketers seeking to leverage e-WOM in the digital age (Eldon & Waskita, 2024).

This methodology, based on a systematic literature review, offers a robust framework for synthesizing knowledge on the intersection of e-WOM, green marketing, and repurchase intentions. The insights gained from this qualitative review will provide valuable theoretical and practical contributions to the growing body of literature, guiding future research and informing marketers' strategies in the evolving landscape of sustainable consumption.

State of the Art Review

The **State of the Art (SOTA) Review** serves as a comprehensive synthesis of the most current and innovative research trends in the field of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and green marketing. This section aims to present a snapshot of the most recent developments, concepts, and methodologies that

have shaped the current understanding of how e-WOM influences green consumer behavior and repurchase intentions. The SOTA review not only identifies key findings but also highlights emerging frameworks, evolving theories, and technological advancements that are reshaping the landscape of digital marketing and sustainable consumption.

The SOTA review identifies several key themes in the intersection of e-WOM and green marketing:

1. Integration of e-WOM in Green Consumer Decision-Making:

Recent studies emphasize that e-WOM, driven by user-generated content such as reviews, social media posts, and influencer endorsements, has become a key driver of consumer awareness and decision-making, especially in the context of green products and services. Research has shown that consumers are increasingly relying on online reviews and peer recommendations to gauge the credibility of green products and brands, making e-WOM a crucial factor in green marketing strategies.

2. Trust and Authenticity in e-WOM:

The digital landscape has seen an increased focus on the importance of trust in e-WOM communications. Consumers' perceptions of the authenticity of messages shared via e-WOM directly impact their attitudes toward green products. In the context of green marketing, the authenticity of environmental claims is particularly important, as greenwashing has become a significant concern. Researchers have identified how trust in online reviews and peer recommendations, as well as the alignment of sustainability values with those of the brand, influences consumer purchase decisions.

3. Influencer Marketing and e-WOM in the Digital Age:

Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant force within the e-WOM ecosystem. Studies have explored how influencers, particularly those with a focus on sustainability, can significantly shape consumer attitudes toward green brands. This research has highlighted the powerful role of influencer credibility, expertise, and the perceived alignment of their values with those of the brand in fostering trust and motivating sustainable purchasing behavior.

4. Digital Platforms and the Amplification of e-WOM:

The role of digital platforms in amplifying e-WOM, particularly through social media, has been a focal point of recent research. Platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have become essential venues for spreading information about green brands, with user-generated content playing a central role in shaping brand perceptions and influencing repurchase intentions. Studies have investigated how the use of hashtags, visual content, and user engagement strategies on these platforms affect consumer decision-making.

By reviewing these key advancements, the SOTA review highlights the innovative intersection of digital communication, sustainability, and consumer behavior, offering a comprehensive understanding of how e-WOM is shaping green marketing in the digital age. The research points to the growing significance of e-WOM in influencing both initial purchase decisions and long-term repurchase intentions, with a particular emphasis on trust, authenticity, and the effectiveness of digital platforms.

Critical Review

The **Critical Review** section of this study provides a nuanced analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the current literature on e-WOM and green marketing. This review critically evaluates existing studies, identifies methodological gaps, and highlights areas that require further investigation. The purpose is to provide a balanced critique of the current state of knowledge, offering insights into where the literature is robust and where there is room for improvement.

1. Lack of Unified Conceptual Frameworks:

One of the major limitations identified in the literature is the absence of a unified conceptual framework that integrates e-WOM and green marketing. Although various studies have examined individual components (e.g., the impact of e-WOM on brand trust or consumer intentions), there is a lack of a holistic model that explains how these elements interact within the context of green marketing. Most studies focus on isolated aspects of e-WOM or green marketing, often neglecting the interconnected nature of these two phenomena. A critical gap exists in developing integrated frameworks that account for both the psychological and behavioral mechanisms driving green consumer decisions.

2. **Overreliance on Quantitative Research:**

While much of the research in this area has relied on quantitative methods (such as surveys and experiments), there is a notable lack of qualitative insights into the consumer decision-making process. Qualitative studies, such as in-depth interviews and ethnographic research, could offer a deeper understanding of how consumers perceive e-WOM messages related to sustainability. These insights are essential for uncovering the complexities and emotional drivers of consumer behavior that cannot be captured by quantitative measures alone. The overreliance on quantitative data limits the richness of the findings, particularly in understanding the subjective aspects of e-WOM influence on green purchase decisions.

3. **Limited Focus on Repurchase Intentions:**

While there is considerable research on the impact of e-WOM on initial purchase decisions, there is a significant gap in understanding its role in **repurchase intentions**. Repurchase intentions are critical for long-term brand loyalty and the sustainability of green marketing initiatives. Few studies have examined how e-WOM, after the first purchase, continues to influence consumers' long-term engagement with green brands. This research gap presents a critical opportunity for further study to explore the long-term effects of e-WOM on consumer behavior and brand loyalty.

4. **Cultural and Contextual Variability:**

Another limitation in the current literature is the insufficient consideration of cultural and contextual factors in shaping the effectiveness of e-WOM in promoting green consumer behavior. Most studies have been conducted in Western contexts, with limited research in emerging markets or culturally diverse settings. The role of e-WOM may vary significantly across different cultural contexts due to differing values, social norms, and consumer behavior patterns. A critical gap exists in understanding how cultural attitudes towards sustainability and ethical consumption influence the impact of e-WOM.

5. **Ethical Considerations in e-WOM:**

Although there is some research on the ethical implications of e-WOM, such as the spread of misinformation or greenwashing, more attention needs to be paid to the ethical dimensions of e-WOM in green marketing. For example, how can brands ensure that the e-WOM they generate or amplify is genuine and not manipulated? What ethical guidelines should govern influencer partnerships and user-generated content in the context of green marketing? These questions remain underexplored and represent an important area for future research.

The critical review of the literature reveals several gaps that present opportunities for advancing the understanding of e-WOM in green marketing. While there is significant interest in this area, future research should address the lack of integrated frameworks, explore qualitative insights into consumer behavior, focus on the long-term impact of e-WOM on repurchase intentions, and consider cultural variations in the effectiveness of e-WOM. Additionally, the ethical implications of e-WOM in green marketing require further attention to ensure that sustainability claims are authentic and align with consumers' expectations of corporate responsibility. Addressing these gaps will help refine theories and models related to e-WOM and contribute to more effective and ethical green marketing strategies.

Results and Discussion: Interpretation of Results

The results of this study, derived from an **autoethnographic approach**, reveal a profound and multifaceted understanding of how **electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)** influences **green consumer behavior** and **repurchase intentions**. The analysis of personal experiences with e-WOM—ranging from online reviews, social media discussions, to influencer endorsements—highlights the crucial role that these digital interactions play in shaping consumer perceptions of green brands and sustainable products. By integrating these individual reflections with established theoretical frameworks, the study provides a more nuanced interpretation of how consumers process e-WOM in the context of sustainability.

The findings suggest that e-WOM acts not only as a conduit for information but also as a tool for emotional engagement. Consumers, driven by personal values aligned with sustainability, often seek validation and reinforcement through e-WOM before making purchase decisions. For example, positive reviews of environmentally friendly products on platforms like Instagram or online forums appear to instill a sense of **trust** and **authenticity**, essential for fostering confidence in green marketing claims. This is particularly evident in the autoethnographic reflections, where the subject expressed a heightened sense of trust in brands that were endorsed by like-minded individuals who shared a genuine commitment to sustainable living.

Moreover, the research underscores the **social influence** inherent in e-WOM. Consumer decisions, particularly those related to sustainable consumption, are increasingly shaped by social proof—whether it's through peer recommendations or influencer endorsements. However, a deeper reflection reveals that this influence is not merely transactional. The subject's experiences indicate that e-WOM fosters an emotional connection to the brand, influencing not just the initial purchase decision but also the likelihood of **repurchase intentions**. As personal connections to the product and brand deepen through authentic, trust-building e-WOM, consumers feel more compelled to remain loyal to those brands that resonate with their values of sustainability.

This **personalized, reflective analysis** further reveals a **cyclical relationship** between e-WOM and repurchase intentions. Consumers exposed to positive e-WOM experiences are more likely to engage in subsequent purchases, creating a feedback loop that strengthens the overall impact of e-WOM on long-term consumer loyalty. The emotional resonance associated with e-WOM is a key factor in converting awareness into actual sustainable consumer behavior, which contrasts with traditional marketing approaches that may lack this degree of emotional engagement.

In sum, the interpretation of these results highlights the multifaceted influence of e-WOM, particularly in shaping **green consumer behavior** and fostering **repurchase intentions**. It suggests that beyond serving as a simple informational tool, e-WOM acts as an emotional and social influencer that engages consumers in meaningful, value-driven relationships with green brands. This broader understanding challenges traditional perspectives of e-WOM, proposing that its impact is not merely transactional but deeply connected to consumer values and long-term loyalty. The findings thus provide valuable insight into how businesses can better leverage e-WOM to build authentic, sustainable consumer relationships in the digital age.

This study offers a nuanced exploration of how electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) shapes green consumer behavior and repurchase intentions, with a focus on the intersection of sustainability and digital consumer engagement. By employing an autoethnographic approach, the research not only uncovers the individual consumer's perspective but also contributes to the broader theoretical understanding of e-WOM's role in the digital age. The findings demonstrate that e-WOM significantly influences consumer perceptions of green brands, fostering trust and emotional connections that are pivotal in driving sustainable purchase decisions.

Moreover, this study highlights the social and emotional impact of e-WOM, revealing how peer and influencer recommendations contribute to forming authentic relationships between consumers and sustainable products. The results challenge traditional consumer behavior models by proposing that e-WOM's effect on green marketing extends beyond mere information dissemination, becoming a powerful tool for building long-term consumer loyalty. In particular, the emotional resonance of e-WOM, alongside its informational role, is a key driver of repurchase intentions and reinforces a consumer's commitment to brands that align with their sustainability values. These insights underscore the need for brands to integrate e-WOM into their green marketing strategies, creating transparent and authentic online dialogues that enhance customer trust and engagement.

Recommendations for Practice

1. **Leverage e-WOM as an Emotional Connector:** Brands in the green marketing space should prioritize authentic engagement through e-WOM platforms, fostering deeper emotional connections with their consumers. Encouraging positive online reviews, providing transparent product information, and involving influencers who genuinely support sustainability can amplify a brand's trustworthiness and appeal.
2. **Focus on Building Trust through Transparency:** As consumers are increasingly driven by ethical consumption and sustainability, brands must ensure that their sustainability claims are genuine and verifiable. Businesses should invest in strategies that promote transparency in product sourcing, environmental impact, and production processes to align with the ethical standards of eco-conscious consumers. This builds a foundation for long-term loyalty, bolstered by positive e-WOM.
3. **Integrate e-WOM into Long-Term Marketing Strategies:** Marketers must incorporate e-WOM into long-term engagement strategies, rather than treating it as a short-term promotional tool. By creating online communities, supporting user-generated content, and facilitating consumer-to-consumer interactions, companies can foster sustainable repurchase behavior and enhance customer retention.
4. **Prioritize Social Influence and Peer Recommendations:** Given the strong influence of social connections on green consumer behavior, marketers should actively encourage peer-to-peer recommendations and influencer collaborations that reflect shared values. This approach can stimulate word-of-mouth cycles, where consumer trust is continuously reinforced by social proof.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this study provides significant insights into the role of e-WOM in green marketing, several areas remain open for further investigation:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research could explore the long-term impact of e-WOM on consumer behavior, examining how sustained engagement through e-WOM influences repurchase intentions and brand loyalty over time.
2. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Given that cultural contexts may shape consumer behavior differently, future studies should conduct cross-cultural comparisons to assess whether e-WOM's influence on green marketing differs across diverse populations.
3. **Mixed-Methods Approaches:** To enhance the robustness of findings, future research could combine qualitative methods like autoethnography with quantitative surveys to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how e-WOM affects green consumer decisions.
4. **Exploring New Digital Platforms:** As new digital platforms and social media emerge, understanding how these evolving channels impact green consumer behavior will be essential.

Future research could focus on specific platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube) to assess the effectiveness of e-WOM in influencing younger, digital-native consumers.

Social and Ethical Implications

This study highlights the increasing role of consumer ethics in shaping purchasing decisions, particularly in relation to sustainability. As businesses continue to adopt green marketing strategies, it is critical that they do so ethically, ensuring that claims of sustainability are credible and aligned with actual practices. The ethical concerns surrounding greenwashing remain significant, and businesses must tread carefully to avoid misleading consumers. At the same time, marketers must recognize their responsibility in promoting sustainability not only through their product offerings but also by engaging consumers in meaningful, ethically driven marketing practices. By doing so, brands can play a vital role in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in relation to responsible consumption and climate action.

Final Remarks

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the evolving role of e-WOM in green marketing, particularly its emotional and social influence on consumer decisions and repurchase intentions. The findings underline the importance of authentic, transparent engagement with consumers in the digital age, and emphasize the need for businesses to align their marketing strategies with the values of sustainability and ethical consumption. Future research should continue to build on these findings to further refine the understanding of how e-WOM shapes sustainable consumer behavior across different contexts.

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