

**Electronic word of mouth on Instagram and purchase confidence among first time buyers:
A systematic literature review**

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Abstract

Social media platforms have fundamentally altered how consumers gather product information and form purchase decisions, with Instagram emerging as a particularly influential environment for electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Despite a growing body of research on eWOM and purchase intention, comparatively little attention has been directed toward purchase confidence, defined as the degree of certainty a consumer experiences when making an unfamiliar purchase, particularly among those buying a product for the first time. This study addresses that gap through a systematic literature review conducted using the PRISMA framework, drawing on 31 peer reviewed studies retrieved from Scopus and Google Scholar and published between 2016 and 2025. Thematic analysis of the selected studies identified five recurring themes: eWOM credibility and consumer trust, influencer marketing and Instagram content strategies, social engagement and social proof, eWOM and purchase intention, and purchase confidence among first time buyers. The findings indicate that credible online reviews, authentic influencer endorsements, and visible engagement signals such as likes and comments collectively reduce purchase uncertainty and build consumer confidence, most notably among individuals with limited prior product experience. Word cloud analysis of study abstracts further confirmed that trust, engagement, and social influence are the dominant constructs shaping this field. The study contributes to digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by synthesizing fragmented evidence across multiple dimensions of Instagram based eWOM and by repositioning purchase confidence as a theoretically distinct and practically meaningful outcome that extends beyond purchase intention. The findings offer actionable guidance for brands, marketers, and policymakers seeking to design credible and confidence building social media communication strategies.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth, Instagram Marketing, Purchase Confidence, Consumer Trust, Influencer Marketing, First Time Buyers, Social Proof

JEL Classification: M31, M37, D12

1. Background of the Study

Digital technologies have transformed how consumers find information and make purchasing decisions. Social media platforms now serve as key spaces where consumers interact with brands, exchange opinions, and share experiences related to products and services (Kanimozhi, 2023; Patnaik et al., 2023). As digital communication continues to grow, consumers increasingly rely on online platforms to evaluate products and gather information before making purchasing decisions (Bedi, 2021). Among the various social media platforms available today, Instagram has emerged as one of the most influential platforms for digital marketing and consumer engagement (Gross & Von Wangenheim, 2022). The platform allows users to share visually rich content in the form of photos, videos, and stories, enabling brands and consumers to communicate product experiences interactively and engagingly (Bharathi & Kanade, 2025). Due to its visual nature and high user engagement, Instagram has become an effective medium for promoting products and influencing consumer perceptions (Kanimozhi, 2023). Recent statistics indicate that Instagram has more than two billion active users worldwide, highlighting its global influence as a major social networking platform (Statista, 2025). India represents one of the largest markets for Instagram usage, with a rapidly growing number of users actively engaging with content related to fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and consumer products (Statista, 2025). This widespread adoption has encouraged businesses to increasingly integrate Instagram into their marketing strategies in order to reach potential consumers and strengthen their online brand presence (Bedi, 2021). One of the most important mechanisms through which Instagram influences consumer behavior is eWOM, which refers to the sharing of consumer opinions, experiences, and product recommendations through digital platforms (Kanimozhi, 2023). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth communication, which is limited to personal interactions, eWOM spreads rapidly across social media networks and can influence a much larger audience (Patnaik et al., 2023). These forms of interaction allow consumers to exchange experiences and evaluate products collectively (Bharathi & Kanade, 2025). Previous studies suggest that user-generated content and peer recommendations on social media platforms significantly influence consumer perceptions, brand credibility, and purchase intentions (Patnaik et al., 2023; Kanimozhi, 2023).

Influencer marketing (Jin et al, 2019) has also become an important component of Instagram-based promotion. Influencers often act as opinion leaders who provide product information and share personal experiences with their followers, which can shape consumer attitudes toward brands (Bedi, 2021). Existing research indicates that influencer recommendations can increase consumer trust and positively influence purchasing behavior, particularly among younger social media users (Bharathi & Kanade, 2025). Despite the growing academic interest in social media marketing and eWOM, several important gaps remain in existing literature. Most previous studies have primarily focused on purchase intention, consumer engagement, or brand awareness rather than examining purchase confidence, particularly among first-time buyers (Patnaik et al., 2023). Purchase confidence refers to the level of certainty consumers experience when making a purchasing

decision, especially when they have limited prior experience with a product (Kanimozhi, 2023). Therefore, this review paper aims to examine how eWOM on Instagram influences the purchase confidence of first-time buyers in India. By analyzing existing literature related to Instagram marketing, influencer communication, and online consumer behavior, this study seeks to identify key factors that contribute to consumer trust and confidence during the purchasing process.

2. Methodology

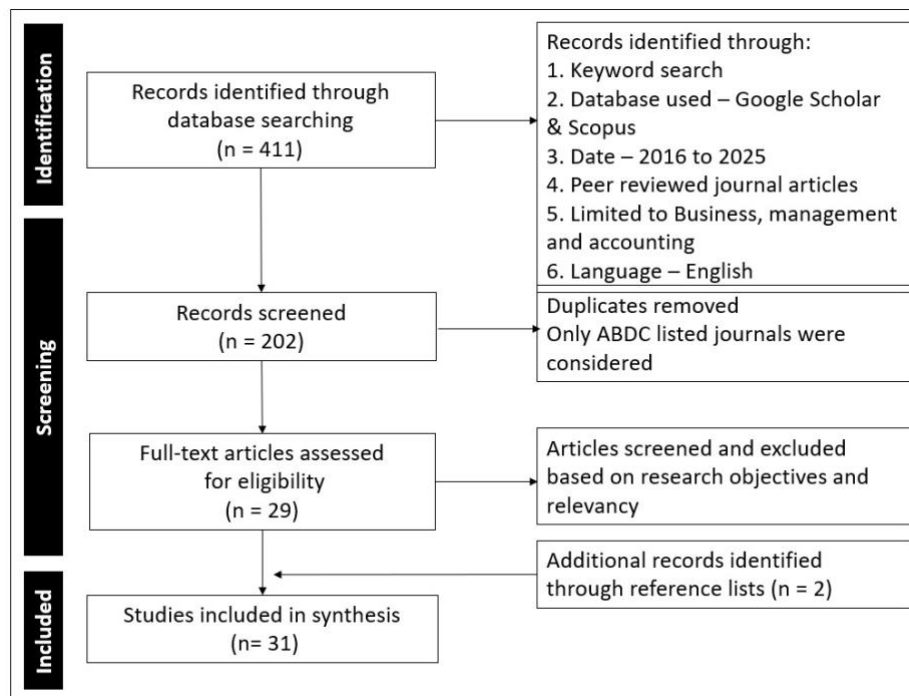
This study adopted a structured literature review approach using the PRISMA flowchart to examine how Instagram-based eWOM influences consumer purchase confidence. A structured review method helps systematically identify, select, and analyze existing research related to a specific topic (Ekka, 2024). This approach is widely used in review papers to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research area and to identify emerging themes and research gaps. Following the standard literature search, we have used two major databases, namely Google Scholar and Scopus (Harzing & Alakangas, 2016). The objective was to identify studies that examine the relationship between Instagram marketing, eWOM, and consumer purchase behavior. The search focused on research published between 2016 and 2025 in order to capture recent developments in social media marketing and digital consumer behavior. A set of keywords was used to identify relevant studies. These keywords included a combination of “Instagram”, “Electronic word of mouth”, “eWOM”, “Social media marketing”, “purchase intention”, “consumer trust”, and “online reviews.” These search terms were selected because they are widely used in the literature related to social media marketing and online consumer behavior. The initial search generated a large number of studies, which were later refined through a systematic screening process.

2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure that the review focused on relevant and reliable research, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied (Stern et al., 2014). Only peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers that examine eWOM or social media marketing in the context of Instagram or similar social media platforms were included. The selected studies also needed to discuss consumer decision-making factors such as trust, purchase intention, online engagement, or purchase confidence. Studies that focused solely on traditional advertising, offline word-of-mouth communication, or topics unrelated to social media consumer behavior were excluded from the review. In addition, articles published in languages other than English were not considered. Only studies published between 2016 and 2025 were included based on predefined criteria so that the review reflects the most recent research developments in this field (see Figure 1).

Following the application of these criteria, the titles and abstracts of the identified papers were screened. Articles that appeared relevant were then examined through full-text analysis. After completing this process, 31 studies met the inclusion criteria and were selected for detailed analysis.

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart



(Source: Moher et al, 2009)

Selection Procedure

The study selection process involved several stages to ensure transparency and objectivity. First, duplicate records identified during the database search were removed. The remaining studies were screened based on their titles and abstracts in order to identify whether they were directly related to Instagram marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, or consumer purchase behavior. After the initial screening stage, the remaining studies were reviewed through full-text analysis. This step ensured that each selected paper clearly addressed the research focus of social media marketing and eWOM. Studies that did not directly examine consumer behavior in digital environments were excluded at this stage.

Through this screening and evaluation process, 31 studies were finally selected for detailed review and analysis. These studies represent a variety of research methods, including survey-based quantitative studies, experimental research, and qualitative investigations, which together provide a comprehensive understanding of Instagram-based eWOM and consumer behavior (Bedi, 2020; Herzallah et al., 2022; Rosli et al., 2024).

Data Extraction

After selecting the final set of studies, relevant information from each article was extracted systematically in order to allow comparison across studies. The extracted information included the

research objectives, theoretical frameworks, research methods, sample characteristics, variables examined, and major findings related to Instagram marketing and eWOM.

This structured extraction process made it possible to identify similarities and differences across studies. For instance, Abdullah et al. (2023) examined how brand awareness, price perception, and eWOM influence purchase intention on Instagram. Similarly, Kanade (2025) applied the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework to explain the mediating role of purchase intention in online marketplace environments. Recording these elements helped create a consistent basis for analysing the selected literature.

Quality Assessment

The selected studies were also reviewed to ensure that they were based on credible research methods and reliable academic sources. The majority of the studies were published in peer-reviewed journals and followed established research methodologies. Many studies used quantitative survey methods and statistical analysis techniques to examine relationships between social media factors and consumer behavior.

For example, Shen (2021) developed and validated a model explaining how persuasive eWOM increases consumer engagement on social media platforms. Ho, Phan, and Le-Hoang (2021) examined the impact of eWOM on purchase intention in the context of Instagram using empirical analysis. Some studies also provided qualitative insights into consumer behavior on Instagram, including interview-based investigations of user engagement and impulse purchasing behavior (Bedi, 2021).

Thematic Analysis

Following the data extraction stage, a thematic analysis was conducted in order to identify recurring concepts and research patterns across the selected studies (Naeem et al., 2023). Thematic analysis is widely used in literature reviews to organize research findings into broader conceptual categories (Ekka & Bhardwaj, 2024). Through this process, several key themes emerged across the reviewed studies. One major theme relates to the role of eWOM credibility and trust in influencing consumer decision-making. Many studies highlight that consumers are more likely to rely on online reviews and peer recommendations when evaluating products on social media platforms (Kanimozhi, 2023; Sharma, Agarwal, & Malati, 2024).

Another important theme focuses on Instagram marketing strategies and content engagement. Research shows that visual content, influencer collaborations, and interactive features on Instagram can significantly affect user engagement and brand perception (Talreja & Chaturvedi, 2024; Chaumal & Mahajan, 2025). The literature also highlights the relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase intention. Several studies indicate that positive online reviews and recommendations can increase the likelihood that consumers will consider purchasing a product promoted on Instagram (Abdullah et al., 2023; Parulian & Tannady, 2023). In addition, studies

emphasise the role of social engagement signals such as likes, comments, and shares, which act as indicators of social proof and influence consumers' perceptions of product credibility (Rosli et al., 2024; Ravishankar & Dhekle, 2021).

Data Synthesis

The final stage of the methodology involved synthesizing the findings from the thematic analysis in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of how Instagram-based electronic word-of-mouth influences consumer behavior. This synthesis allowed the study to identify patterns, agreements, and differences across the reviewed literature. Many studies consistently report that eWOM credibility positively influences consumer trust and purchase intention, suggesting that online reviews and recommendations play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions (Kanimozhi, 2023; Sharma et al., 2024). Other research highlights the importance of social proof and influencer endorsements, which can further strengthen consumer confidence in products promoted on social media platforms (Rosli et al., 2024; Talreja & Chaturvedi, 2024).

While few studies focus on purchase intention, the findings also indirectly highlight the role of consumer confidence and trust in online purchase decisions. Research indicates that credible information sources, positive user experiences, and peer recommendations can strengthen consumers' confidence when making purchase decisions on Instagram (Shen, 2021; Herzallah et al., 2022). However, this study also identifies research gaps. Although many studies analyse purchase intention, relatively few studies explicitly examine purchase confidence among first-time buyers, particularly in the context of Instagram marketing. This gap highlights the need for further research focusing specifically on how eWOM shapes the confidence of new consumers when purchasing products through social media platforms.

3. Result and Discussion

After completing the structured literature review and analysing the selected 31 studies, several recurring patterns were observed regarding the role of Instagram-based eWOM in influencing consumer behavior. While the reviewed literature focuses broadly on social media marketing, consumer trust, and purchase intention, a closer analysis of these studies reveals deeper relationships that explain how Instagram interactions contribute to consumer purchase confidence. The analysis shows that Instagram is not only used as a promotional platform but also functions as a social information environment where consumers evaluate products through reviews, comments, influencer recommendations, and engagement indicators. Across the reviewed studies, consumers were found to rely heavily on information shared by other users, influencers, and brand communities when forming opinions about products and services (Kanimozhi, 2023; Shen, 2021; Ho, Phan, & Le-Hoang, 2021). To better understand these relationships, a thematic analysis was conducted by grouping studies that discuss similar concepts and research findings. Instead of analysing each paper separately, the studies were categorized into broader themes that repeatedly appeared across the literature. This approach helps reveal the major research directions within the

field and highlights how different factors collectively shape consumer decision-making on Instagram. Through this process, five major themes emerged from the analysis of the 31 studies. These themes represent the key mechanisms through which Instagram-based eWOM influences consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. It is vital to note that some studies appear in more than one theme because they examine multiple aspects of social media marketing simultaneously, such as trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior. This overlap reflects the interconnected nature of Instagram marketing and consumer decision-making.

Table 1. Thematic Classification of Reviewed Studies

Theme	Key Focus	Supporting Studies
eWOM Credibility and Consumer Trust	How online reviews, user recommendations, and perceived credibility influence consumer trust and product evaluation	Kanimozhi (2023); Patnaik et al. (2023); Juita & Abror (2025); Sharma et al. (2024); Abdullah et al. (2023); Babic Rosario et al. (2020); Onofrei et al. (2022); Syauta & Hermawan (2023); Dewi & Puspita (2025); Muda & Hamzah (2021)
Influencer Marketing and Instagram Content	Role of influencer endorsements, visual storytelling, and branded content in shaping consumer attitudes	Shen (2021); Bedi (2020); Kanade (2025); Talreja & Chaturvedi (2024); Chaumal & Mahajan (2025); Yulizar et al. (2024); Rabier (2024); Jhinkwan et al. (2024); Suciati (2018)
Social Engagement and Social Proof	Influence of likes, comments, shares, and user interaction signals on perceived popularity and product credibility	Rosli et al. (2024); Ravishankar & Dhekle (2021); Usman & Wijaya (2024); Onofrei et al. (2022); Rabier (2024); Kwakye et al. (2024); Blasco et al. (2016); Bohra & Bishnoi (2016)
eWOM and Purchase Intention	Relationship between online reviews and consumers' intention to purchase products promoted on Instagram	Ho et al. (2021); Abdullah et al. (2023); Parulian & Tannady (2023); Herzallah et al. (2022); Kwakye et al. (2024); Sharma et al. (2024); Syauta & Hermawan

(2023); Dewi & Puspita (2025);
Muda & Hamzah (2021)

Purchase Confidence among First-Time Buyers	How trust, social proof, and influencer recommendations reduce uncertainty for new consumers	Patnaik et al. (2023); Babic Rosario et al. (2020); Usman & Wijaya (2024); Yulizar et al. (2024); Juita & Abror (2025); Dewi & Puspita (2025); Syauta & Hermawan (2023)
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3.1 eWOM Credibility and Consumer Trust

One of the most frequently discussed themes in the literature is the role of eWOM credibility and consumer trust. Since consumers cannot physically evaluate products online, they often rely on reviews, recommendations, and user experiences shared on social media platforms. When such information is perceived as credible, it helps build trust in the product and the brand. Several studies highlight the importance of this relationship. For instance, Patnaik et al. (2023) found that emotionally appealing and persuasive Instagram content increases the credibility of eWOM messages. Similarly, Kanimozhi (2023) showed that online word-of-mouth significantly influences consumer trust within social commerce platforms. Abdullah et al. (2023) also reported that brand awareness combined with positive eWOM communication strengthens consumer trust and purchase behavior. Research on online reviews further supports these findings. Syauta & Hermawan (2023) found that online customer reviews significantly influence women's buying interest in beauty products. Dewi & Puspita (2025) also highlight that social media communication and eWOM together play an important role in shaping skincare purchasing decisions. In addition, Muda & Hamzah (2021) emphasize that the credibility of user-generated content strongly affects the persuasive power of eWOM and ultimately influences purchase intention. Conceptual research by Babic Rosario et al. (2020) also explains that online reviews provide valuable diagnostic information that helps consumers evaluate products before purchasing. Juita & Abror (2025) also emphasize that trustworthy electronic word-of-mouth significantly improves consumer confidence, as buyers rely on other users' experiences to judge the reliability and quality of products shared on social media platforms. Similarly, Onofrei et al. (2022) argued that credibility and engagement on social media platforms jointly influence consumer decision-making. Overall, these studies suggest that credible eWOM reduces uncertainty and helps consumers feel more confident about their purchase decisions.

3.2 Influencer Marketing and Instagram Content Strategies

Another important theme identified in the literature is the role of influencer marketing and Instagram content strategies. Instagram's visual nature allows influencers and brands to communicate product information in a more engaging and relatable way. Influencer endorsements, creative storytelling, and visual demonstrations often make promotional content appear more authentic to consumers. Shen (2021) proposed a persuasive eWOM model showing that well-designed influencer content can increase consumer engagement and influence attitudes toward brands. Similarly, Kanade (2025) used the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework to explain how social media content stimulates emotional responses that can lead to stronger purchase intentions. Other studies also highlight the impact of influencer marketing. Bedi (2021) observed that authentic influencer recommendations can increase impulse buying behavior among young consumers. Talreja & Chaturvedi (2024) found that creative advertising strategies on Instagram significantly improve consumer engagement. Likewise, Chaumal & Mahajan (2025) reported that influencer collaborations help skincare brands increase consumer awareness and interest. Rabier (2024) also highlights that influencer marketing on Instagram plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. The study suggests that when influencers share authentic experiences and product recommendations, consumers perceive the information as more trustworthy and relatable.

Recent research also emphasizes the role of digital advertising and marketing techniques on Instagram. Jhinkwan et al. (2024) found that influencer-based digital advertising strongly influences consumers' online buying behavior. Similarly, Suciati (2018) showed that visual presentation, product storytelling, and interaction with followers are effective marketing techniques for online stores on Instagram. Together, these studies suggest that influencer marketing and creative content strategies make eWOM more persuasive and help consumers develop positive perceptions about promoted products.

3.3 Social Engagement and Social Proof

The third theme focuses on social engagement and social proof, which refer to visible interaction signals such as likes, comments, and shares on Instagram posts. These engagement indicators often influence how consumers evaluate products and brands. Rosli et al. (2024) found that products receiving a large number of likes and positive comments generate higher purchase intentions among consumers. Similarly, Ravishankar & Dhekle (2021) reported that social media engagement with organic beauty brands increased consumer interest among young female users. Studies also highlight that engagement creates a perception of product popularity. Usman and Wijaya (2024) explain that user-generated content and discussions among consumers strengthen brand communities and encourage trust. Onofrei et al. (2022) also demonstrate that engagement works together with content quality and source credibility to influence purchase intention. Earlier research also supports the importance of engagement platforms. Blasco-Arcas et al. (2016) found that emotions generated through interactive media platforms can strengthen customer engagement

and improve brand perception. Similarly, Bohra & Bishnoi (2016) highlighted that Instagram has become an important platform for online retailing because it allows brands to interact directly with consumers and create product awareness through social interactions. Overall, these studies suggest that engagement indicators act as social proof, helping consumers judge whether a product is popular, trusted, or widely accepted by other users.

3.4 eWOM and Purchase Intention

Another major theme identified in the literature is the relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase intention. Studies also demonstrated that positive discussions, reviews, and recommendations shared on Instagram can significantly influence consumers' willingness to buy products. For example, Ho et al. (2021) found that different eWOM factors on Instagram have a strong positive effect on purchase intention. Similarly, Parulian & Tannady (2023) reported that consumer engagement through social media interactions increases the likelihood of purchasing products promoted online. Sharma et al. (2024) also found that electronic word-of-mouth on social networking sites significantly influences consumer purchase intention by improving brand awareness and brand image. Kwakye et al. (2024) further explain that eWOM on social media platforms significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Their findings indicate that positive online discussions and recommendations increase consumers' confidence in evaluating products before making purchasing decisions. Abdullah et al. (2023) also emphasize that brand awareness, price perception, and eWOM communication collectively influence consumer purchase decisions. Herzallah et al. (2022) further highlight that social influence and consumer involvement on social media platforms can encourage impulse buying behavior. Research on online reviews also supports this relationship. Syauta & Hermawan (2023) found that online customer reviews strongly influence consumers' buying interest in beauty products. Dewi & Puspita (2025) similarly report that social media communication and eWOM significantly affect skincare purchasing decisions. Muda & Hamzah (2021) also demonstrate that credible user-generated content increases both eWOM effectiveness and purchase intention. These findings indicate that eWOM plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' purchase decisions by providing information, recommendations, and reassurance about product quality.

3.5 Purchase Confidence among First-Time Buyers

The final theme focuses on purchase confidence among first-time buyers, which is particularly relevant in online environments where consumers may have little or no prior experience with a product. Studies show that Instagram interactions can help reduce perceived risk and uncertainty for new consumers. Patnaik et al. (2023) explain that persuasive Instagram content helps consumers understand product features and benefits. Similarly, Abdullah et al. (2023) highlight that transparent communication about products through social media improves consumer confidence. Research on online reviews also supports this idea. Juita & Abror (2025) also found that positive eWOM on social media significantly influences consumers repurchase intention for

skincare products. Their findings suggest that when consumers are exposed to favourable experiences shared by other users, it increases their trust in the product and makes them feel more confident about purchasing it. Syauta & Hermawan (2023) found that Customer reviews play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions for beauty products, especially among new buyers. Dewi & Puspita (2025) also emphasize that positive social media discussions help consumers feel more confident when selecting skincare products. Conceptual insights by Babic Rosario et al. (2020) further explain that positive eWOM provides useful information that helps consumers evaluate product quality before purchasing. In addition, Usman & Wijaya (2024) highlight the role of user-generated content in strengthening brand perception and trust. Influencer credibility also plays a role in this process, as shown by Yulizar et al. (2024), who found that credible influencer recommendations can improve consumer confidence in promoted products. Overall, the findings suggest that Instagram eWOM creates a supportive information environment for consumers. Reviews, influencer recommendations, and social engagement signals together reduce uncertainty and help first-time buyers feel more confident about their purchase decisions. To further understand the dominant concepts discussed in the reviewed studies, a word cloud analysis was conducted using the abstracts of all 31 selected research papers. This visual representation highlights the most frequently occurring terms within the literature and helps identify the central topics explored by previous researchers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Word Cloud from abstracts



(Source: Worditout)

The word cloud indicates that terms such as Instagram, social media, consumer, engagement, marketing, and eWOM are among the most frequently occurring terms across the reviewed studies. This indicates that a large portion of the literature focuses on understanding how Instagram, as a social media platform, influences consumer behavior and marketing communication. Words like consumer, intention, purchasing, and decisions further highlight that many studies examine how online interactions and digital information affect consumers' buying decisions. Since the word

“social” in this analysis represents social media, its high frequency reinforces the idea that social media platforms play a central role in shaping modern consumer behavior.

In addition, terms such as influencer, reviews, trust, information, and engagement appear repeatedly, suggesting that these elements are key mechanisms through which eWOM operates on Instagram. The presence of words like brands, content, skincare, and products also reflects the practical application of Instagram marketing across different industries, particularly in beauty and personal care sectors. Overall, the word cloud supports the thematic findings of this review by visually confirming that most studies focus on the relationship between Instagram interaction, eWOM, and consumer purchase behavior.

4. Conclusion, Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

This review paper examined the growing role of eWOM and Instagram marketing in shaping consumer purchase decisions. By analysing 31 academic studies from different years and research contexts, the study aimed to understand how online reviews, influencer content, and social engagement influence consumer trust and buying behavior. The findings show that social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have become important environments where consumers search for product information, observe others’ opinions, and form purchase intentions. The thematic analysis conducted in this review identified five major themes: eWOM credibility and consumer trust, influencer marketing and Instagram content, social engagement and social proof, eWOM and purchase intention, and purchase confidence among first-time buyers. Across the reviewed studies, trust and credibility consistently emerged as key factors influencing consumer decision-making. Consumers often rely on the experiences shared by other users, and when reviews or recommendations appear genuine and reliable, they significantly influence product evaluation. Influencer marketing was also found to play an important role, as influencers help translate brand messages into relatable experiences that consumers can easily understand and trust. Another important insight from the review is the strong impact of social engagement signals such as likes, comments, and shares. These visible indicators act as forms of social proof, helping consumers judge the popularity and credibility of products or brands. As a result, consumers often perceive products with higher engagement levels as more trustworthy. The analysis further highlights that positive eWOM not only increases purchase intention but also reduces uncertainty among first-time buyers. For many consumers, especially those purchasing online for the first time, reviews and influencer recommendations help build confidence and reduce perceived risk. The word cloud analysis conducted from the abstracts of the reviewed studies further supports these findings. Frequently appearing terms such as “social”, “consumer”, “influence”, “reviews”, “purchase”, and “trust” demonstrate that the current research landscape strongly focuses on the interaction between social media communication and consumer decision-making. These recurring keywords indicate that digital conversations and user-generated content have become central elements in shaping modern marketing strategies and consumer behavior. Overall, this review contributes to existing

literature by providing a structured understanding of how different elements of Instagram-based eWOM collectively influence consumer purchase behavior. Unlike many individual empirical studies that focus on a single factor, this review integrates multiple perspectives and highlights how trust, influencer communication, engagement signals, and consumer confidence work together in the digital marketplace. The study, therefore, provides a clearer conceptual picture of how social media marketing operates in practice. In conclusion, the findings suggest that businesses and marketers should focus not only on promotional content but also on building authentic engagement and credible communication on social media platforms. Encouraging genuine customer reviews, collaborating with trustworthy influencers, and maintaining active interaction with consumers can significantly strengthen brand perception and purchase intention. As social media continues to evolve, future research can further explore new forms of digital influence and consumer interaction to better understand how online communities shape purchasing behavior in an increasingly connected marketplace.

4.1 Implications of the Study

The Implications part of this research explains the significance of our findings and their potential applications in practice, theory, or subsequent research efforts. It also links the results to the wider domain and demonstrates the significance of our research topic. This study adds some important new ideas to the knowledge on eWOM and how consumers make decisions on social media platforms. First, the study adds to what is known about eWOM by showing that it has a big effect on Instagram users' trust in their ability to make purchases. Extensive research has examined how online reviews and eWOM affect consumers' plans to buy, but this study shows that buying confidence is an important psychological effect of seeing eWOM on social media platforms. By doing this, the current study adds to our knowledge of how information created by consumers affects not only their plans to behave but also how sure they are about their choices when they buy something.

Second, this study contextualizes eWOM in the Instagram ecosystem, adding to social media marketing literature. Instagram is visual and interactive, allowing users to connect with content through photographs, videos, comments, and influencer endorsements. By showing how visually oriented social media platforms boost eWOM credibility and persuasiveness, this study's findings complement digital consumer behavior theories. This insight strengthens theoretical frameworks that emphasize social influence and informational cues in customer perceptions and attitudes.

Third, the study shows that social proof and peer influence reduce purchase choice uncertainty. The research supports consumer trust, information processing, and social impact theories in online environments by showing that positive eWOM boosts consumers' purchase confidence. These findings imply that customers use social media peer-generated content to evaluate various products and services.

Finally, this study implies that interactive platforms shape customer confidence in new social media platforms, adding to the literature on digital consumer behavior. Focusing on Instagram users provides theoretical insights into how platform-specific features affect eWOM communication. This perspective motivates future studies to study eWOM dynamics across social media platforms and customer subgroups to improve theoretical knowledge of online consumer decision-making.

4.1.1 Practical Implications

First, the results show how important it is to promote and control eWOM on social media sites like Instagram. Businesses should actively encourage happy customers to share reviews, experiences, and material related to their products online because positive eWOM makes consumers much more likely to buy. Testimonials, product demos, and customer reviews that are created by users can help potential buyers trust a business more and feel better about their purchase choices.

Second, marketers should work together with social media content makers and influencers in a planned way. Influencers often shape the opinions of the consumers who follow them by sharing their own experiences with products and suggesting others try them. When influencers share honest reviews or experiences with using a product, it can make eWOM much more reliable and lower potential buyers' doubts, which makes them more likely to buy.

Third, businesses should keep an eye on and respond to online reviews and conversations about their goods and services. If they don't deal with negative eWOM the right way, it can hurt buyer confidence. So, businesses should use social media listening tools to keep track of what customers are saying, reply quickly to complaints, and show they care about making customers happy. Managing online comments well can help a brand keep a good image and build trust with customers.

Finally, this study also provides useful implications for consumer researchers and policymakers by identifying key research themes and behavioral patterns for online social media literature. Since visuals influence consumer views on image-driven platforms like Instagram, the current study advises companies to create visually appealing and informative content. High-quality photos, brief films, product demos, and real-life usage scenarios can enhance eWOM and assist potential buyers in evaluating items. Companies that effectively integrate eWOM management with appealing visual material are more likely to boost consumer purchasing confidence and marketing effectiveness.

4.2 Limitations and Future Research Avenues

Despite providing useful insight into the role of eWOM and Instagram marketing in influencing consumer purchase behavior, this study has certain limitations. First, the study is based entirely on secondary data collected from existing academic literature. The findings rely on previously published studies rather than primary data collected directly from consumers. While literature

reviews help in identifying broader research patterns, they may not fully capture real-time consumer behavior or recent changes in social media usage. Second, the study mainly used a qualitative thematic analysis approach to identify common patterns across the selected research papers. Although this approach helps to organize the literature into meaningful themes, the study does not apply quantitative analytical tools such as meta-analysis, statistical modelling, or bibliometric techniques. As a result, the strength of relationships between variables such as influencer credibility, consumer trust, and purchase intention could not be statistically measured. Another limitation relates to the scope of the literature reviewed. This study analysed 31 research papers that were selected based on their relevance to Instagram marketing and eWOM. While these studies provide valuable insights, there may be additional relevant research available in other databases or newer publications that were not included in the analysis. Finally, the review mainly focuses on Instagram as the central platform of analysis. Consumer behavior may differ across other social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, or emerging social commerce platforms. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent consumer behavior across all social media environments. The limitations of this study open several opportunities for future research. Future studies can conduct primary research using surveys, interviews, or experimental methods to better understand how consumers actually respond to influencer marketing and online reviews on social media platforms. Such studies can provide real-time insights into consumer attitudes and purchase behavior. Researchers can also apply quantitative methods such as meta-analysis or statistical modelling to examine the strength of relationships between variables such as eWOM credibility, consumer trust, social engagement, and purchase intention. This would help in providing stronger empirical evidence to support the patterns identified in this review.

Another important area for future research is the comparison of different social media platforms. While this study focuses mainly on Instagram, future studies can examine whether similar patterns exist on platforms like TikTok, YouTube, or Facebook, where influencer marketing and user-generated content are also rapidly growing. Future research may also explore demographic differences in consumer responses, such as how age groups, gender, or cultural backgrounds influence trust in online reviews and influencer recommendations. Understanding these differences can provide deeper insights into how social media marketing strategies affect different segments of consumers. Overall, expanding research in these areas will help develop a more comprehensive understanding of how social media communication and eWOM influence consumer decision-making in the evolving digital marketplace.

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