

CREATING EWOM IN SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how Malaysian micro-SMEs, specifically food truck (FT) businesses, can digitally leverage positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for their products and services, as well as to generate significant customer value in order to compete in the local competitive market. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is critical for Malaysian SME food truck (FT) operators to generate favourable eWOM via social media message content, more specifically through what is posted on their social media page. Thus, we evaluated many facets of eWOM message content on social media. The SME food and beverage service business was investigated using a qualitative technique utilizing semi-structured interviews. Additionally, interviews with independent FT founders and owners were done in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This study discovered respondents' interest in generating eWOM through social media channels. Developing a good physical brand identity eWOM that is recognized by its clients via social media has become a critical activity for FT operators looking to digitally express their brand.

Keywords: eWOM, social media, SME, food truck, Covid-19

Introduction

Arndt (1967) has defined word-of-mouth (WOM) as oral, person to person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial concerning a brand, a product, or a service. In the age of the internet, word-of-mouth has taken on a whole new meaning. The internet has made this type of communication easier by allowing customers to communicate their personal ideas and experiences in ever-increasing amounts of space. Because of content, accessibility, and speed, the internet has also prompted more and more people to use the internet to search for information rather than rely on traditional methods (Erkan, 2014).

However, before the existing of social media, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) was a way for anonymous users to express their thoughts and experiences about the company's brands, products, or services. The ability to communicate on these sites with familiar people rather than anonymous ones is another possibility that adds to the diversity of word-of-mouth. Internet users eagerly seek social networking websites, thus moving eWOM to a new level and on these sites, consumers can talk about brands, products, and services with their friends and acquaintances through visual instruments (Erkan, 2014). Erkan (2014) identify three types of word-of-mouth diversification where food truck (FT) consumers regard word-of-mouth as an efficient approach to decrease perceived risk by receiving brands and product information.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the SME community is under greater pressure than ever to adapt and thrive in the new normal. As is the case with most businesses in today's competitive environment, Malaysian SMEs are constantly on the hunt for novel strategies to boost their brand's awareness among potential clients. Social media connection and consumer engagement are key marketing strategies for small businesses, as they help them to increase brand awareness, extend their client base, and communicate with current and prospective clients. Malaysian SMEs, particularly food

truck owners and operators, should ensure that their physical brand identity and marketing message content on social media obtain excellent eWOM features.

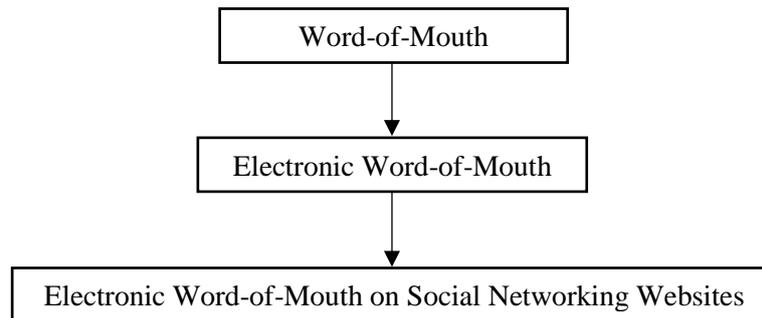


Figure 1: Word-of-Mouth Diversification (Erkan, 2014)

Countries throughout the world have been influenced and reshaped by the pandemic, from increased health concerns to economic slowdown, financial imbalance, disrupted social life, and political ramifications (SME Corp, 2020). The outbreak has had a considerable impact on demand and supply in both the local and global economies, jeopardizing businesses' short-term economic prospects. Despite the fact that the majority of business activities began operations in the second half of 2020 under Malaysia Recovery Movement Control Order (MCO), they continue to face a poor rate of consumer demand recovery and high operating costs (SME Corp, 2020). Malaysian SMEs are struggling to stay afloat as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has also impacted members of the B40 group who are struggling to make ends meet due to job and income loss. Similarly, since Malaysia's Movement Control Order, food trucks (FT) in the F&B industry have witnessed major declines in business (MCO). They are likewise subject to the same pressures as other sectors.

Given the distinctiveness of Malaysia's cuisine, beverages, and food traditions, the country can easily be described as a gastronomic paradise (Abubakar, 2010). Gastronomy covers a respect for a variety of social, cultural, and historical facets, as well as literature, philosophy, economics, and religion, all of which are concentrated on food. The night market's street food vendors and hawkers have continued to grow in recent years as a result of a more attractive business strategy with a more promising revenue. The physical trucks typically have their own personality. Gourmet food trucks have become a popular dining option due to the originality of the food they offer, and a fusion of flavours is the best way to define the imaginative food inventions that food trucks are known for (Ibrahim, 2011). The term "food truck" refers to a motorized vehicle that is frequently customized and from which an operator serves food to consumers. These trucks normally feature cooking facilities that the operator uses to prepare food, which is occasionally personalized to a specific consumer's request (Linnekin, 2011).

Literature Review

In the digital age, WOM is central to many social media marketing activities, as user-generated and brand-related messages are a highly valued and strongly encouraged outcome of social media engagement, particularly as recommendations amongst friends are the most trusted source of brand-related information Dahl (2018). Marketing practitioners have recognized a need to measure customer-generated media in addition to the traditional marketing metrics (Dwyer, 2007). This section discusses the most powerful sorts of messages made and shared by users and customers in relation to brands. With the proliferation of user-generated media, eWOM has become increasingly popular due to its ability to be created and shared through a number of digital media. eWOM communication is certainly one of the most influential drivers of purchase decisions (Shamhuyenhantzva et al., 2016).

In the restaurant and eating context, where there is a limited promotional budget, word-of-mouth is highly dependable. Jalilvand et al. (2017) found that food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value influence the WOM behaviour of customers in an indirect way through relationship quality. As spreading information about service experiences continues to grow, it is important that researchers continue to investigate eWOM from both the poster's and the

potential customer's points of view, to advance the theoretical understanding of this construct (Line et al., 2020). Thus, Bughin et al. (2010) have identified a new way to measure WOM marketing: experiential, consequential, and intentional, which is also associated as a basic notion with current trends in eWOM. WOM Equity matrices were proposed to assess the impact of WOM brand messages on a company's sales and market share for brands and campaigns. That impact, in other words, is the ability of any one WOM recommendation or dissuasion to change behaviour based on what is said, who says it, and where it is said across all product categories (Bughin et al., 2010).

Experiential

As discussed earlier, consumers share their consumption experiences with others with the intention of aiding the receiver in making a satisfying purchase decision (Sundaram et al., 1998) and assisting other consumers in their purchasing selections that prevent other consumers from having a bad experience (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Experiential word-of-mouth is the most common and effective form, accounting for 50 to 80 percent of word-of-mouth activity in any given product category (Bughin et al., 2010). Experiential WOM can also be referred to as experiential marketing that connects small and low-budget businesses with their customers in an authentic and relatable way, while increasing brand awareness and loyalty through deep customer insights.

The reason experiential marketing is so simply linked to word-of-mouth promotion is simple: people enjoy talking about what they do. When done effectively, experiences can be engaging or one-of-a-kind enough to be passed down from person to person. Thus, positive WOM was more effective and positive WOM messages had a greater effect on people's willingness to use a service than did negative WOM (Sweeney et al., 2014). Yang (2016) study results indicate that (1) individuals' altruistic needs trigger positive eWOM, (2) the perceived usefulness of the website has a significant main effect on eWOM intentions, and (3) the perceived usefulness significantly moderates the relationships between satisfaction/egoistic needs and eWOM intentions.

Across most product categories, we found that the content of a message must address important product or service features if it is to influence consumer decisions (Bughin et al., 2010). Thus, in the F & B industry, researchers propose that motives for experiential social media eWOM participation may very well be triggered by the whole experience the customer gets at the restaurant and eateries, i.e., menu, food quality, value for money, location, ambience, entertainment, staff behaviour, and service time. In addition, WOM and eWOM are more effective when they are presented with images and text simultaneously (Yoon & Han, 2012). By sharing personal experiences, feelings about products and services, and exchanging product information online with other consumers, online users tend to accept and use online information in their decision-making processes (Teng et al., 2014).

Bughin et al. (2010) suggest that in order to harness experiential WOM, building buzz around products before launch and working to have early, highly influential adopters by involving consumers in product development, supported by online communities, are essential. Consistently updating the product experience also helps harness experiential word-of-mouth; consumers are more inclined to speak positively about a product early in its life cycle, which is why product launches and enhancements are critical for producing positive word-of-mouth. In addition, Cheung et al. (2009) study found that positive eWOM strengthens the relationship between consumers' emotional trust and purchase intention. Thus, to create positive word-of-mouth that actually has an impact, the customer experience must not only deviate significantly from expectations but also deviate from the dimensions that matter to the customer and that he or she is likely to talk about (Bughin et al., 2010).

Consequential

Consequential word-of-mouth occurs when consumers directly exposed to traditional marketing campaigns pass on messages about them or brands they publicize (Bughin et al., 2010). Radio, broadcast television, cable and satellite television, print (banner, graphic), and billboards are all examples of traditional media. For many years, organizations have had success with traditional media campaigns. According to Bruhn et al. (2012), traditional media has a greater impact on brand awareness, whereas social media communications have a strong influence on brand image and overall brand equity. In

addition, a key difference between eWOM and traditional forms of WOM is the longevity of messages, i.e., once a message has been posted, it remains visible for an extended period of time, whereas traditional WOM tends to be short-lived (Dahl, 2018). Thus, firms also recognize the value of firm-generated and user-generated social media communication as brand image is strengthened amongst customers via social media platforms.

Consequential WOM is relevant to this research, as the researchers seek to understand how consumers are impacted by official brand material in text and visual messages on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The impact of those messages on consumers is often stronger than the direct effect of advertisements, because marketing campaigns that trigger positive word-of-mouth have comparatively higher campaign reach and influence (Bughin et al., 2010). In the F & B industry, food truck (FT) operators can equip customers to distribute marketing messages and increase their reach and impact by knowing the eWOM effects of the variety of channels and messages used and directing marketing activities appropriately on social media.

Additionally, consequential WOM is primarily reliant on advertising campaigns that employ creative, smart, and coordinated online and offline marketing strategies to increase consumer interaction and purchases. Two things supercharge the creation of positive consequential word-of-mouth: interactivity and creativity (Bughin et al., 2010). As discussed earlier, the dynamic, ubiquitous, and often real-time interaction enabled by social media significantly changes the landscape for brand management, and a deep understanding of this change is critical since it may affect a brand's performance substantially (Gensler et al., 2013).

Creative traditional marketing campaigns are required to create significant and consequential WOM brand engagement among the customers on the social media platform eWOM. Creative strategies are the executional factors and message strategies used to bridge the gap between what the marketer wants to say and what the consumer needs to hear (Ashley & Tuten, 2014). However, limited knowledge of literature and empirical research on creative message content dimensions contributed to customers' consequential WOM and eWOM. Thus, in the F&B industry, food truck (FT) operators may prioritize aligning their brand with consumer desire (image), insights and experiences (resonance, experiential), and emotions (including love, sexual desire, fear, guilt, and joy/humor). How far the FT brand uses creative message strategies in social media that create eWOM is still to be explored.

Intentional

A less common form of word-of-mouth is intentional, where marketers use celebrity endorsements to trigger positive buzz for product launches (Bughin et al., 2010). Endorsement is a form of brand communication in which a celebrity serves as the business's spokesman and vouches for the brand's claim and stance by lending his or her personality, popularity, social standing, or competence in an area to the brand. As previously discussed, extensive social media research has shown that celebrity, instafamous, and influencer endorsements attract attention and increase brand promotion because they are publicly recognized, attractive, and trustworthy, and they have a more positive attitude toward the endorsed brand and a stronger social presence (Lim et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Jin et al., 2019; Weismueller et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Loureiro and Sarmiento (2018) discovered that women appear to be more influenced by celebrity endorsement on consumers' word-of-mouth and decision behaviour, which leads to higher purchase intentions when exposed to an endorsement by a celebrity who promotes a brand. Thus, intentional word-of-mouth campaigns revolve around identifying influential people who become brand and product advocates (Bughin et al., 2010). Intentional WOM and eWOM may also refer to the activity of encouraging people to recommend a brand or product to their family, friends, and acquaintances, which is directly called referral marketing. Referral marketing is similar to viral marketing in that it uses social networks to spread the message and offers specific incentives for engaging in WOM-related activity (Dahl, 2018).

According to a study conducted by Danniswara et al. (2020), there is a significant positive correlation between eWOM referral, brand satisfaction, and purchase intention. Many studies have also examined the benefits of celebrity and influencer endorsement in brand dimension: brand credibility (Spry et al., 2011; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017), brand image (Chan et al., 2013; Malik et al., 2018; Adiba et al., 2020), brand enhancement (Dwivedi & Johnson, 2013), brand awareness (Chan et al.,

2013; Rahman, 2018) and brand equity (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2020). In addition, celebrity and influencer endorsement is also contributed to brand source credibility in social media eWOM that effects consumers' purchase behaviour (Gupta et al., 2020).

As discussed earlier, the brand source credibility in social media dimension included: competence, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and technology affordance. The new measures of source credibility in social media suggested that in the new media environment, the dimensions of source credibility increased with the new considerations and interventions. Intentional WOM and eWOM may also referred to next section discussion on user generated content eWOM antecedent: self-enhancement, product-knowledge, altruism, and need for social interaction / social tie.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. It entails the collection and analysis of non-numerical data (text, audio, and images) for the purpose of comprehending concepts, opinions, and experiences. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the process of building positive eWOM on social media platforms among Malaysian food truck (FT) owners, since the transformation and use of digital and social media have garnered great critical attention.

In this study, Bughin et al. (2010) eWOM approaches were used to evaluate the eWOM building process of Malaysian SME food truck (FT) operators. Given the phenomenon-based nature of this study, the primary argument against using a quantitative research approach is its inability to adequately explain the underlying meaning and provide a fruitful explanation in this context of research. The realism paradigm was used in conjunction with a qualitative research approach to gain a better understanding of how small businesses establish positive brand identity eWOM on social media platforms. Phenomenology qualitative research design was also chosen as it is a useful tool to examine, comprehend, and illustrate the experience of an individual or a group with a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2003).

For this study, the creation of brand identity positive eWOM in the food and beverage industry is the main focal point of the study. Since the phenomenological perspective is tied to a broad range of theoretical frameworks and schools of thought in the social sciences (Taylor et al., 2016). The views of Malaysian micro-SMEs food truck operators motivated the researchers to look deeper to comprehend the positive eWOM building process phenomena.

The qualitative portion of the sample was drawn evenly from Malaysian SME foodtruck proprietors operating in the Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur. The researcher meets with the organizer of TAPAK Urban Dining and seeks assistance in choosing sample participants. Sampling and participant's selection is also based on snowball sampling method. Researcher gathered data using instruments such as face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The researcher used these tools to ascertain why specific behaviors and experiences occurred and how they occurred in the context of creating positive eWOM on social media platforms.

The qualitative sample was drawn evenly from Malaysian SME foodtruck owners operating in and around Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur. This study included 12 food truck operators (founder/owners) from various TAPAK areas. Interview session were conducted during Malaysia 2021 Movement Control Order (MCO) from January 2021 to March 2021. All interview session was voice recorded between 45 minutes to an hour each session. Majority of interviews were conducted in the local language (Bahasa Melayu), with only a handful conducted in English. The researchers assigned pseudonyms to each participant in order to preserve their privacy and identify. A random alphabetical human name, such as Mr. A, and a numerical number for a food truck, such as FT1, are provided. This is done to ensure that the personal information of participants is secure and protected. The researchers gained an understanding of why specific behaviors and experiences happened and how they occurred in the research setting of creating brand identification on social media platforms by using these instruments. In this study, the researcher used Creswell's (2014) qualitative data analysis steps to analyze and interpret the qualitative data, which included data transcription, coding, and theme and content analysis.

Table 1: Participants Background

Food Truck	Pseudonyms	Gender	Position	Types of Product
FT1	Mr. A	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT2	Mr. F	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT3	Mr. N	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT4	Mr. J	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT5	Ms. E	Female	Founder/Owner	Beverages
FT6	Mr. H	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT7	Mr. K	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT8	Mr. D	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT9	Ms. A	Female	Founder/Owner	Beverages
FT10	Mr. I	Male	Founder/Owner	Beverages
FT11	Mr. B	Male	Founder/Owner	Food
FT12	Mr. R	Male	Founder/Owner	Food

Findings

While word-of-mouth is undeniably complex and has a multitude of potential origins and motivations, Bughin et al. (2010) have identified three forms of word-of-mouth that marketers should understand: experiential, consequential, and intentional. These forms of word-of-mouth are also associated as basic notions with current trends in electronic word-of-mouth. The most prevalent and effective type is experiential word-of-mouth, which generally accounts for 50% to 80% of all word-of-mouth activity in any product category. It results from a consumer’s direct experience with a product or service, largely when that experience deviates from what’s expected. Thus, consumers rarely complain about or praise a company when they receive what they expected (Bughin et al., 2010). On the other side, positive word-of-mouth may promote food truck (FT) brands, products or services. One participant commented:

That is one of the benefits of this word-of-mouth promotion. This will bring others to try our menu. Sometimes, without tagging their friends, they will tag our account and as soon as we will be known by more people (Mr. J., FT4).

Written communication encourages individuals to mention more intriguing goods and companies than oral communication, with consumers sharing face-to-face WOM via social media and through a variety of other communication channels. As another interviewee added:

Yes, it does. It happens on social media when they start uploading pictures and tagging our accounts, mentioning us in the comments section and so on (Mr. H., FT6).

This happens when social media becomes viral among the community. Each individual starts to share their reviews and opinions by using their own identities on the internet, and this results in bringing social media into a new era and offering a great perspective among the community (Zulkiffli et al., 2018). As engaged members and their word-of-mouth behaviour are inextricably linked to thriving brand communities, customer experience fosters community involvement and further increases word-of-mouth intention.

The interaction between food truck (FT) businesses and their customers in social media promotes effective customer engagement and experience towards their brands' products and services. Therefore, food truck (FT) online marketing activities in social media can also trigger word-of-mouth. Consequential word-of-mouth, which occurs when consumers directly exposed to traditional marketing campaigns, pass on messages about them or the brands they publicize (Bughin et al., 2010). The influence of those messages on customers is frequently greater than the direct effect of ads, because marketing efforts that generate good word-of-mouth have a proportionally larger reach and influence. For example, one interviewee said:

People usually see our Instagram or Facebook ads and tag their friends inviting them to come to our food trucks. We are consistent with our daily postings, people will know that we are open and insha Allah people will look for us (Ms. A., FT9).

This finding is consistent with that of Teng et al. (2014), who examined the effectiveness of persuasive eWOM messages and found that argument quality, source credibility, source attractiveness, source perception, and source style are critical antecedents of consequential eWOM messages. Customer prior experience and acquaintance positively affect user engagement with eWOM, and these effects differ across communities for products and services and across their influence on "likes" and "comments" (Rossmann et al., 2016). According to another interviewee:

Usually at the food truck parks people would share us because they had seen us on FB and they would ask their friends to come and check out our roasted milk tea (Mr. I., FT10).

The innovation of the internet has led to the revolution of consumer behaviour and purchase intention throughout the consumer decision making process where social media becomes a vital part of people's daily life, the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) surpasses the influence of traditional face-to-face WOM communication on consumers' decision making (Zulkiffli et al., 2018). Food truck (FT) advertisements and traditional marketing campaigns on social media also create "share" activity among online customers that encourages friends and family to try out. Consumers get to know the product offered and engage with their food truck (FT) social media page through likes, comments, and shares. Comments and shares can be seen as a more reliable source of measuring engagement with users (Patel et al., 2019).

A less common form of word-of-mouth is intentional, where marketers use celebrity endorsements to trigger positive buzz for product launches (Bughin et al., 2010). The wide spread of food truck buzz or viral marketing content and videos positively increases social interaction, which also leads to food truck (FT) customer word-of-mouth. As one interviewee said:

Like I mention just now, sometimes those who come are influencers, adding up to the customers, there are hosts, Jalan-Jalan Cari Makan. There are many celebrities who come to our food truck. So, it spreads very fast (Mr. R., FT12).

Consumers were most likely to recall a celebrity endorsement who was beautiful, humorous, or outspoken. (Chan et al., 2013). Chan et al. (2013) argue that identified popularity, a good image, and congruence between the celebrity's image and that of the brand as important factors for marketers to consider in selecting celebrity endorsers. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that customers perceive a brand to be highly interactive on social media (vs inactive), they are more willing to buy brand offerings, refer the brand in exchange for monetary incentives, inform their family and friends about the brand on social media and provide feedback and suggestions for improving the brand (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

However, only few companies invest in generating intentional word-of-mouth, partly because its effects are difficult to measure and because many marketers are unsure if they can successfully execute intentional word-of-mouth campaigns (Bughin et al., 2010). Marketers need to be aware of potential risks connected to viral marketing campaigns because it is impossible to further control once a message spreads as a virus over the web (van der Lans & van Bruggen, 2010). Many marketers are risk adverse and experience has taught them to be reticent about consumer-generated media due to their inability to

control the message (Miller & Lammas, 2010). Van der Lans & van Bruggen, (2010) also argue that consumers are free to forward any message. It is difficult to control what message consumers are writing to their peers.

Ngarmwongnoi et al., (2020) investigate customers' motives to engage with electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), as well as the effect of eWOM on customer behaviour, both at the purchase and post-purchase stages and information validation, product evaluation, purchase and post-purchase validation are key motives for consumers to search for eWOM. Engaging social media customers is not a simple undertaking. It takes the appropriate strategy, a profound understanding of the audience, and content results that match this understanding. Therefore, it was suggested that during the purchase and post-purchase stages, food truck (FT) businesses also encourage customers to support their business through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media. A few participants stated that:

We would ask them to like, comment and follow our Instagram (Mr. A., FT1).

All the comments from customers, we ask them to tag our account or make a hashtag Kaya Raya Kafe (Ms. E., FT5).

Amidst customer willingness to engage in eWOM through social media, a few food truck (FT) owners find that it is hard and difficult. Perhaps online customers assume that the feedback is not private, and because it is written down, it can sometimes be viewed by anyone and at any time. A few participants commented:

Right now, to those word-of-mouth, hard to engage (Mr. N., FT3).

No, actually, this is the problem, you know? People nowadays don't. Very few people tag their friends. I don't know why it is but majority, no (Mr. B., FT11).

Online customers are not very concerned about having a relationship with a company's brands, products, or services, despite the great and positive experience. Alternatively, on social media platforms, food truck (FT) owners need to engage with the customer on a real-time and frequent basis as well as promote their brand's valuable content consistently.

Physique brand electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media platforms shows a significant relationship and impact on food truck (FT) business performance. This study suggests that almost 70% of food truck (FT) owners are able to improve their business through positive eWOM with their customers on social media platforms by following the three forms of word-of-mouth: experiential, consequential, and intentional. Gastronomic consumers have great confidence in social media networks that create valuable customer experiences and that they create a certain brand and attitude on the basis of which consumers will choose a catering facility or type of food (Gajic et al., 2020). In addition, consumers that have gained confidence and trust from their positive eWOM experience will continue to buy food truck (FT) products at odd times and on odd days. As one interviewee commented:

In this day and age, yes. Very important. However, it is up to us how we want it. Yes, we have made improvements. Like during the MCO, we offer free delivery charges to the Cyberjaya area. So, every day there would be delivery orders taken through WhatsApp (Mr. A., FT1).

In summary, it is important for food truck (FT) owners to deal with current pandemic challenges by responding quickly and practically through digital technologies to deliver their products. Digital technologies have revolutionized the way consumers search for products and services, seek reviews from current and past consumers, and eventually decide whether or not to purchase them (Moran & Muzellec, 2014). The credibility of eWOM is determined according to how a consumer sees the eWOM message as believable, true, and actual, which gives more confidence in adopting the eWOM recommendation in social media and using it for decision making.

Moran & Muzellec (2014) proposed the new 4Cs eWOM credibility in the online environment, which better enables marketers to leverage true consumer engagement communication: *community* (relates to the relationship between the sender and the receiver), *competence* (relative expertise levels

of both the sender and the receiver pertaining to the brand), *content* (manifests the clarity and valence of the communication), and *consensus* (a believable message that complies with the consumer's own judgement). Additionally, social networking sites (SNS) offer brands the ability to spread positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for the purposes of building awareness and acquiring new customers (Moran & Muzellec, 2014). For example, few participants commented:

Tuesday and Wednesday are very slow, but I think since we started posting more on Instagram, highlighting that we start on Tuesday, we can see our sales for Tuesday are going up to be around like 20 - 30 percent like that (Mr. F., FT2).

Such a promotion is a good thing in us continuing our business. This is because, we can be seen as a business with high credibility because of the evidence through such promotions. When our regular customers buy, they can also promote us at the same time because they have tried it (Mr. K., FT7).

Furthermore, Verma & Dewani (2020) proposed comprehensive antecedents and moderators of eWOM credibility that increase the trust and loyalty of the customer to e-commerce vendors: content, communication, context, and consumer. Consumers' trust in eWOM's credibility can also be enhanced by the attractiveness of the eWOM itself. eWOM credibility attractiveness influences brand trust that can reinforce food truck (FT) business, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brand engagement and eWOM intention have been found to be critical factors driving competitive advantage for companies, as the evolution of social networking sites has changed the perspective of how companies engage with customers (Phan et al., 2020). Respondents were asked to indicate whether eWOM credibility is an effective method of capturing and retaining consumers since it demonstrates a high degree of trustworthiness in building long-term value connections. Few participants stated:

Yes, it is important to strengthen our business. It is very good for our business. The importance of this word-of-mouth promotion, it will attract more customers to come and try our dishes. So when they come, it depends on us to serve them and from there we can retain customers as well as business. If this word-of-mouth promotion does not happen, our business will just stay that way, not growing (Mr. J., FT4).

In my opinion, it is very possible to strengthen because these returning customers bring another customer, which they have recommended and they will talk like this, like this, come, and will come again (Mr. K., FT7).

Food truck (FT) business models compete in a very competitive market to retain their customers. Measuring customer perceived quality is vital since the food truck (FT) business model is very customer-focused. Sanyal et al. (2021) suggest that trust has the maximum impact on e-satisfaction, followed by technology acceptance factors and website service quality. Undeniably, food truck (FT) customer trust also shows the significant influence of e-satisfaction on repurchase intention. Given that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has developed into a significant source of information for digital customers who make purchases, it is critical to understand how eWOM influences consumers' online repurchase intentions. Bulut & Karabulut (2018) indicate two ways in which eWOM positively and significantly influences online customer trust and repurchase intention: eWOM quality and eWOM quantity. As one interviewee said:

As long as we maintain quality, do our best, surely new customers will become our regular customers. What I can conclude is that those who have never tasted our products will continue to be regular customers once they have tried them (Ms. E., FT5).

This study also found that almost all food truck (FT) operators believe that their sustainable business model and products offered, significantly influence consumers' online repurchase intentions. This result may be explained by the fact that food truck (FT) consumers were satisfied and enjoyed their past purchase experiences. As a few participants put it:

Yes, I am confident. So, when they try, they will know it is delicious, people will try. When people have tried this, they can confirm it is delicious. So, I have no problem in this regard (Mr. R., FT12).

Slowly but surely. People are bound to stay with us and like us (Mr. I., FT10).

Conclusion

The internet has made eWOM communication easier by allowing customers to communicate their personal ideas and experiences in ever-increasing amounts of space. The social media platform elevates eWOM to a new level by allowing consumers to converse with their friends and acquaintances about brands, goods, and services. Current trends in eWOM basic notions include experiential, consequential, and intentional.

Experiential eWOM was generated as a direct result of a consumer's interaction & experience with a product or service. Consumers initiate experiential eWOM by sharing photographs and tagging food truck (FT) social media pages that promote the businesses, products, or services they encountered. This also occurs when it becomes popular within the social media community and individuals begin sharing their experiences, reviews, and opinions under their own social media accounts.

Consequential eWOM happens when customers are exposed directly to traditional marketing campaigns, resulting in positive eWOM and a disproportionately larger campaign reach and influence. Advertisements for food trucks (FTs) and traditional marketing campaigns on social media also generate "share" activity among online customers, encouraging friends and family to try it out. Through likes, comments, and shares on his food truck (FT) social media profile, consumers learn about the brands and goods offered.

Intentional eWOM refers to the widespread dissemination of food truck buzz or viral marketing content and videos, which positively impacts social interaction and ultimately results in food truck (FT) customer eWOM. Consumers were most likely to recall an attractive celebrity endorser, and celebrity endorsements help build positive buzz about brands and products offered. Customers consider a brand to be highly engaging on social media and are more ready to purchase the business's offerings when a celebrity endorses it. Thus, it is important for food truck (FT) owners to deal with current pandemic challenges by responding quickly and practically through digital technologies to promote their brand identity and deliver their products.

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