Role of social media and Digital marketing Strategies to develop Intention to Use Government organizations: What is mediating role of E-WOM?

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Abstract— **The purpose of present research is to analyze the impact of digital marketing and social media marketing on e-WOM and Intention to Participate in Government organizations. Mediating role of electronic word of mouth was also assessed in present research. The research used quantitative methods via questionnaire distribution among 350 citizens of UAE. Present research used purposive sampling to reach the respondents. Hypothesis testing and data processing of this research is conducted in the bases of structural equation modelling. On the basis of the results, it is reported that e-WOM, digital marketing and social media marketing have direct effect on intentions. Moreover, social media marketing and digital marketing also influenced e-WOM as well. Implications and future recommendations are also discussed in the study as well.**

Keywords— *Digital Marketing, social media Marketing, E-WOM, Government, Public Intentions*

Introduction

Behavioral intention measures the relative strength of the intention in order to perform a certain behavior. Behavioural intention is one of the most important determinants or predictor of behaviour [1]. It is highly likely that the individual with high intention will be engaged in a certain behaviour. On the other hand, the person with weaker intention will have less probability to be involved in particular behavior [2]. Intentions of the public citizens are key determinant of the success of the services provided by the government [3].

Online government is referred as the delivery of the services of the government via digital mediums to the different stakeholders including employees, business partners, citizens and other agencies [4]. The transactional and informational services are the main factors the services of e-government. Informational services are referred as delivery of the information through websites of the government. It is also used to create interaction among citizens and governments [5]. Limited intentions of the citizens to be engaged in the e-services of the government are one of the main and important obstacles to achieve success in e-initiatives of the government [6]. According to scholars' projects of e-participation play key role to develop intentions among the customers. Such governments struggle with low level of acceptance of citizens for the e-services [7]. Therefore, governments have increased use of social media platforms so they can reach their citizens for a number of different purposes [8]. The usage of social media by the governments is very common [6].

The digitalization of the information across the globe has changed the way media is used by the general public [9]. The new media has emerged and provided different services to the customers because of the internet availability. The number of internet connections has increased and networks have improved at the global level [10]. Because of digitalization, governments are able to access the data of the citizens as well. They can assess the preference of the citizens also on the basis of information gathered from internet sources [11].

In late 1990s the concept of digital marketing was introduced first time. It has changed the way different brands market their products [12]. The market plans of different products are increasingly using different digital marketing platforms. It is because people around the globe prefer to use online platforms instead of going to physical shops. Thus, the digital campaigns of the products are becoming increasingly efficient. The tool of digital marketing plays critical role to reach the customers [13].

Whereas, social media is also an important tool by which relationships among different users can be maintained even they are ay distance [14]. The users of the social media are from different backgrounds and social structures. The aim of social media is to engage the customers from different backgrounds in order to get generalized feedback from them [15]. The major part of social media is the review of the customers that bring the issues of authenticity, credibility and quality of the information. With the help of

communication through social media, large number of people is able to communicate with each other successfully. The people with similar goals, and interest remain in contact with each other through different social media tools [16].

The concept of word of mouth is recognized by the market researchers and marketers since long. It is an important vehicle to deliver the message [17]. In present digital era, some market practitioners have preferred to use electronic word of mouth also known as e-WOM. This platform is used as it is one of most effective platforms. It is comparatively easy to spread e-WOM as there are a number of platforms that can be used to spread e-WOM [18]. These platforms include blogs, web forums and emails etc. In order to shape the attitude of the customers and users, WOM plays very important role. Users prefer to purchase the brand and develop trust on the basis of e-WOM. Whereas, the reputation is also badly effected by negative e-WOM [19]. Governments need to find the ways by which they can develop intentions among the public to use services of the government [20]. So, present research is designed to assess the effect of social media and digital media tools to shape e-WOM and intentions among UAE public. This research also explored mediating role of e-WOM. This framework is underpinned by Technology acceptance model.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Technology acceptance model

Technology acceptance model was introduced by Fred Davis [21]. It is one of the classical examples that explain the behaviour of the users in response to different technology. The base of technology acceptance model is the theory of planned behaviour. The basic logic behind technology acceptance model is that behavioural intentions of the customers are influenced by the use of new technology. The two important factors namely perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness effects the intentions of the user [22]. TAM defines that performance of the person behavior to use anything is determined through the intentions. It means usage of different products is determined by the intentions to use the computer. In the context of present study, intention to use government services is determined by the technological factors like digital media, social media and e-WOM.

B. Intention to Use Government Services

Behavioral intention is referred as the level to which an individual has desire to perform certain actions or activity. The reaction of the person in certain situation defines the intention to perform certain behaviours. Abstract standards and standardizing norms has direct effect on the behavioral intention of the users [23].

The studies of information system suggest that different models of intentions are determinant of the behavior of the user. As discussed in literature, adoption of e-government services are effected by the intentions to use services of e-government [24]. The acceptance and success of e-government initiatives are affected by the intentions of the citizens to use e-services. Thus, system usage is largely effected by the intention to use system [25]. System

adoption is because of the behavioral intention among their users [24].

C. Word of Mouths (WOM)

Past studies have defined word of mouth as communication in the form of person to person regarding a certain service, product or brand [26]. This communication takes place among communicator and receiver as the non-commercial sharing of information. Word of mouth is the verbal as well as interpersonal communication among the receiver and giver. It is believed by the receiver that the information provided by the giver is non-commercial [27]. Later researcher mentioned that word of mouth can be the negative as well as positive views. The concept of word of mouth was increasingly used since the late 1990s. It has large impact on the choice of the customers [28].

D. WOM and Behavioural intention

Past studies have mentioned that word of mouth is key antecedent of behavioural intention. It is important for the sustainability of the will as well. The feature of word-of-mouth variable is critical because information regarding products and services involving personal experience in the form of views and comments. It has positive relationship with purchase intention of the individual. The research by [29] also explained positive relationship among e-WOM and purchase intention. According to scholars, effect of e-WOM on intention to use services is always increasing. It becomes easier for the customers to buy the products [30].

H1: E-WOM has significant positive effect on behavioural intention of public

E. Digital marketing: Relationship with WOM and Behavioural intention

Scholars have defined digital marketing as collection of techniques on the basis of internet that are used to persuade the users to purchase a service or product. Digital marketing is also referred as digital media that promotes the service or a product in relevant, personal, and timely manner. Additionally, usage of data helps in decision making and to get actionable and knowledgeable insights from the data sets of the environment of digital marketing [31].

Digital marketing is one if the strategic way to influence and cultivate the content recognition and promotion of trust by sharing the digital platforms. Marketers and individuals are encouraged to share different kind of information and share word of mouth [32]. It is important to create the content that can spread recognition of the customers and encourage customers so they can take part in sharing information so the positive e-WOM can be created and effect the purchase behavior of the customers. In other words, Digital marketing have significant positive effect on the purchase behavior and positive WOM [33]. The consumer behavior is influenced by different channels of digital marketing. As a result, purchasing decision is inspired as well. Similarly, the study of [34] also confirmed the effect of digital marketing on behavioral intentions.

H2: Digital marketing has significant positive effect on behavioral intention of public.

H3: Digital marketing has positive effect on e-WOM.

F. Social media marketing: Relationship with WOM and Behavioural intention

Social media marketing is one of the materials of online marketing which is directly created by the company or businesspeople so they can keep consumers engaged in different marketing activities by displaying online information. In literature Social media marketing is explained as usage of company's blog marketing, social networks and online communities in order to introduce and persuade its services, products and brands to the consumers [35]. Applications developed based on web 2.0 help in exchanging the content among different stakeholders. The content includes brand sales, promotion, and public relations. With the help of social media, people have capability to communicate with large set of people including those who are not targetable through traditional media [36]. Past scholars have assured that information spread through social media is often considered as useful and credible among certain members and groups showing positive reaction towards e-WOM [37]. It is also revealed by [38] that the interaction among the customers through social media helps in socialization and brand awareness is created as well among the stakeholders as well. It leads towards development of purchase intention. Presently, organizations have capability to understand the way by which they can survive in current competitive market conditions. Therefore, they use different strategies that can help in spreading positive WOM.

A number of new opportunities, challenges and corporate communications are generated through social media marketing because purchase intention can be affected by different factors of social media marketing. Scholars explained that organizations can get feedback by using social media marketing effecting the purchase intention of the customers directly [39].

H4: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on e-WOM.

H5: Social media marketing has significant positive effect on behavioral intention of public,

H6: E-WOM mediates among digital marketing and behavioral intention of public,

H7: E-WOM mediates among social media marketing and behavioral intention of public.

II. METHODS

This research used cross sectional research design and quantitative method. The questionnaire was used to collect the data from the UAE government service users. This questionnaire was developed in 7-point Likert scale from the literature review of the past studies. In this questionnaire, the scale of Intention to Participate in Government organizations were adapted from [40], items of e-WOM were adapted from [41,65], items of social media were

adapted from [42] and items of digital marketing were adapted from [43].

The questionnaire was distributed among the 350 targeted respondents using purposive sampling. In response, 192 responses were received which were further used for analysis. For testing the hypothesis and data collected from the respondents, we used Structural equation modelling (SEM) through Smart PLS according to [44], by using this tool, user has the capability to assure the reliability of the data through calculation of Cronbach Alpha and CR. Moreover, SEM also helps in assessing the proposed model and hypothesis of the study. PLS can analyze both formative and reflective models. PLS-SEM is also helpful when the proposed model is complex. In this research, the proposed model has one mediator and IVs are affecting on mediator and dependent variable. Therefore, it is suitable for the study to use PLS for the further study.

It is key to mention that SPSS was used to for descriptive statistics of the data and demographic information gathered from the respondents. According to the demographic information gathered from the respondents of the study, 74.21% of the respondents were male where 25.79% of the respondents were fameless. Moreover, 47.28% of the respondents mentioned that they were married whereas remaining respondents of the study were not married. In the end, 21.21% of the respondents had the degree of Bachelors, 51.17% of the respondents had the master's degrees, and remaining was having degree higher than the master's level. Later, this data was used for analysis through PLS.

III. RESULTS

The measurement model analysis is the beginning of result assessment through PLS [45]. This analysis is carried out through testing of reliability and validity to ensure that the data being used is reliable to use for hypothesis testing. Reliability index shows the level to which the results of measurement are consistent to other variables of and their items [46]. The reliability measurement is based on coefficient of numerical index. Internal consistency reliability assures the quality of the data. Assessment of convergent validity is based on AVE and factor loading. If the value of AVE is more than 0.50 [47] and value of factor loading is more than 0.40 [48], it is said that convergent validity is achieved. The values of table 1 and table 2 shows that convergent validity is achieved as AVE values are more than 0.50 [49] and values of factor loading are also more than 0.40 [50].

Table 1: Factor Loading

	BI	DM	E-WOM	SMM
BI1	0.846			
BI2	0.834			
BI3	0.859			
BI4	0.879			
DM1		0.832		
DM2		0.874		
DM4		0.827		
DM5		0.854		

E-WOM1			0.792	
E-WOM2			0.768	
E-WOM3			0.684	
E-WOM4			0.705	
SMM1				0.799
SMM2				0.838
SMM3				0.836
SMM4				0.855
SMM5				0.843

On the other hand, reliability and validity is achieved if CR is more than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha is more than 0.60 [44]. The results mentioned in table 2 show that the data is reliable and valid for further analysis.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
BI	0.877	0.916	0.731
DM	0.869	0.910	0.717
E-WOM	0.723	0.827	0.545
SMM	0.891	0.920	0.696

Discriminant validity test is conducted by using HTMT approach and fornell and Larker criteria [51, 52]. The 1st test that was examined was Fornell and Larker criteria in which the values at the diagonal of the matrix is the square root of AVE which should be more than the remaining value of the matrix [53]. The values at the diagonal of table 3 are more than the remaining values, showing there is no issue of discriminant validity. Later, HTMT test was conducted for which the values of the matrix must be less than 0.90. the HTMT values in table 4 are less than 0.90 as proposed by [54].

Table 3: Fornell and Larker

	BI	DM	E-WOM	SMM
BI	0.855			
DM	0.649	0.847		
E-WOM	0.609	0.529	0.738	
SMM	0.668	0.550	0.509	0.834

Table 4: HTMT

	BI	DM	E-WOM	SMM
BI				
DM	0.742			
E-WOM	0.757	0.660		
SMM	0.752	0.622	0.619	

Hypothesis testing was carried out after successful evaluation of measurement model. For the testing of proposed hypothesis, structural model procedure is used. The results of the hypothesis testing are considered significant on the basis of the t value, and p value [53]. Moreover, Beta value shows the nature of relationship among the variables of the study. At the stage of structural model, the values of R square are also examined. In order to carry out the hypothesis of the study, bootstrapping method under structural model was adopted [55]. The relationship is considered as significant if t-value is more than 1.96 and p value is less than 0.05 [56,65].

Table 5 shows the direct results of the study. It shows that BI is positively affected by E-WOM. Similarly, DM has positive effect on E-WOM and BI both. Statistical findings show that SMM has a significant effect on E-WOM and BI. Thus, H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 are confirmed and the results in table 6 also confirm the mediating role of E-WOM as well.

Table 5: Direct Results

		B	SD	T value	P Values	Status
H1	E-WOM -> BI	0.258	0.059	4.379	0.000	Confirmed
H2	DM -> BI	0.312	0.055	5.659	0.000	Confirmed
H3	DM -> E-WOM	0.358	0.075	4.746	0.000	Confirmed
H4	SMM -> E-WOM	0.312	0.068	4.574	0.000	Confirmed
H5	SMM -> BI	0.365	0.065	5.604	0.000	Confirmed

Table 6: Mediating Results

		Beta	SD	T value	P Values	
H6	DM -> E-WOM -> BI	0.092	0.027	3.386	0.000	confirmed
H7	SMM -> E-WOM -> BI	0.080	0.027	2.942	0.002	confirmed

R square is evaluated under the structural model. It shows the predictable power of the structural model. According to [57], the value of R square of 0.25 is considered as weak, 0.50 is considered as moderate and value of 0.75 is strong [58]. The R square value of this study is moderate as mentioned in the results of table 7.

Table 7: R square

	R Square
BI	0.603

E-WOM	0.348

This study examined predictive relevancy of the proposed model. The predictive relevancy is considered as good if value of Q square is non zero [53]. According to results in table 8, the model used in this research can examine relationship among variables.

Table 8: Q square

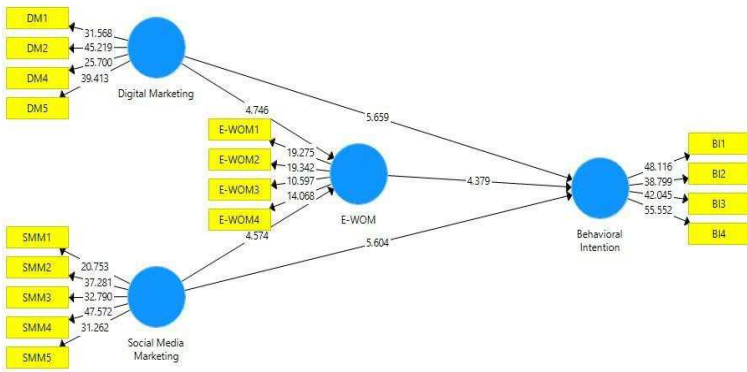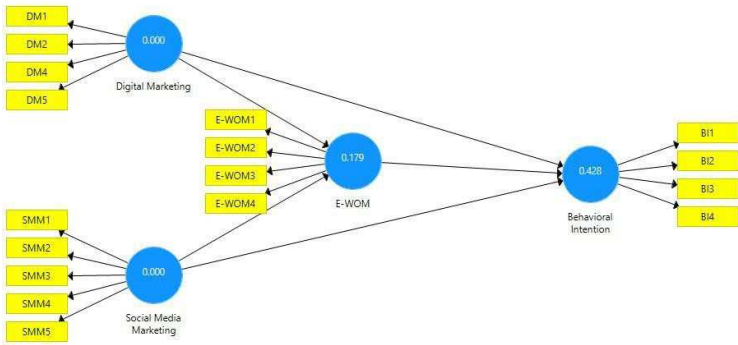|	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
BI	0.428
E-WOM	0.179

Figure II. STRUCTURAL MODEL

Figure III. Q SQUARE

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In present research analysis was conducted using smart PLS based on objectives of the study. This study examined the impact of social media marketing, digital marketing and e-WOM on the intentions of public to use government services. Results of the study show that digital marketing has a significant effect on e-WOM. People of UAE use different digital media tools to share their views and opinions. This result is similar to the findings of [31]. Moreover, intentions of the public to use the government services are also positively affected through digital marketing. It is easy for the government to spread their message and awareness regarding their services through

different digital media tools. In past, [59] also presented the same findings.

Moreover, results also supported the claim that social media marketing tools have positive effect on electronic word of mouth. It is because sharing opinions is very easy through different social media marketing. Also, shaping the opinion of the UAE citizens is also based on the reviews of the citizens as well. When opinions are shared through friends and family members, it helps in changing the intentions of others as well. In past, [38] and [37] also reported same findings in their study as well. Additionally, electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on the intentions of citizens to use government services. Government can spread messages and develop intentions among citizens through electronic sources as well. The findings of [30] also revealed same results in their studies.

Present research has both theoretical and practical implications. This study is among very few research that have examined mediating role of e-WOM in the context of government of UAE. Moreover, this research also shed light of digital tools for the governments to shape the intentions of the public. In terms of limitations, other technological tools like artificial intelligence can be part of present model in future studies as well. This study examined the mediating role of e-WOM. Whereas the moderating role of e-WOM should also be examined by introducing satisfaction as mediator in present framework. In the end, academicians can use these findings for their future studies. Policy makers of the government sectors can also use these findings to reach the public as well.

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