

**LINKING WORD OF MOUTH COMMUNICATION TO CONSUMER DECISION  
MAKING PATTERNS IN THE MARKETPLACE.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is aimed at highlighting the significance of Word-of-Mouth communication for a company's sales as well as determining the negative and positive influences it has on consumer behaviour with special focus on the purchase environment. Further, this research intends to find out the influences that word of mouth communication has on the likelihood of a new product to be paid attention to/ go as far as filling a gap in the market. The study employs the use of 595 accepted Decision-Making Questionnaire (DMQ) which were distributed to a population of 300 students from 8 different universities and schools, and 200 individuals who were in the labour force as well as 100 which went to baby boomers. A physical observation and survey was conducted in 3 random university shops and 3 company canteens to monitor purchase behaviour of students and employees. Another set of 200 questionnaires was distributed to a number of grocery suppliers in random institutions and schools. From this batch, only 195 returned forms were accepted and used for this purpose. The results recommended the reinforcement of word of mouth for both marketing and advertising teams of firms. Given that these departments emphasize face to face word of mouth and a backup of e-Word of mouth, the sales and revenue of the companies are expected to hoist. This study discovered and concluded that the most effective, cost free form of consumer-supplier communication is Word-Of-Mouth-Communication (WOMC) especially when consumer-consumer strategy is employed.

**Keywords:** word-of-mouth; communication; buzz; e-word of mouth; marketing; advertising; consumer decisions; purchase process.

**INTRODUCTION**

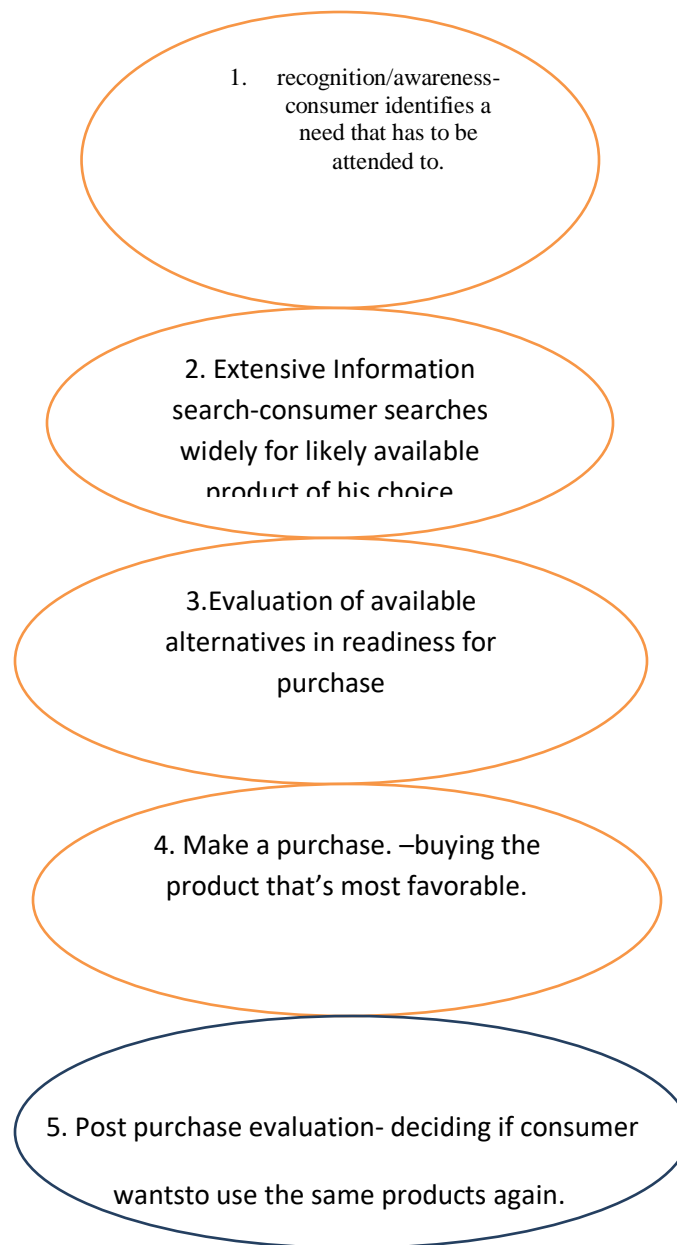
Word-Of-Mouth communication is highly influential as it is the most trusted source of product, content, and experience information for nearly every consumer in the world. Consumers always trust the opinions of peers and like-minded individuals over marketing campaigns geared to make people purchase. Word-of-mouth started with people interacting in person and sharing

preferences, then people writing letters and a few more other forms till finally, people exchanging views over online platforms.

Word of Mouth interaction procedure is one of the known greatest, effective and persuasive influences in the market place. This is primarily because customers solely depend on not so formal modes of communication as well as private sources in making buying choices as opposed to more formal or organizational sources such as advertising campaigns and official websites. In recent years, the marketing/advertising world seems to be predominant in attaining deeper knowledge of Word-of-Mouth and harnessing it into their daily growth strategies owing to the fact that old-style forms of communication have become ineffective.

Consumers get dazed by numerous amounts of product choices on the market. In this regard, an outstanding way for marketers to tackle this shortcoming and grab their attention is through Word Of Mouth Communication as it rapidly cuts through the noise of all other formal non-traditional methods successfully. For any transaction to occur; whether in business or any other kind of humanly situation, communication should take place between two or more parties. Wide availability of any commodity/product/service of the same disposal demands the need for a choice to be made by the consumer concerning which one best befits their needs efficiently at that specific time of disposal. According to common knowledge and indisputable truth of word-of-mouth communication, consumers feel freer and tranquil in the presence of someone to talk to at the time of purchase or during decision making and they tend to be more confident in referrals from peers and family members.

For the purpose of this research, Word of mouth marketing will be defined as the specific deeds that firms embark on with the hope of appealing to buyers and eventually make sales. This is the casual face to face interaction from one individual to another about a trademark, a good, a firm or even a facility offered. [1][2] It exists in two different practices: Positive Word-Of-Mouth (PWOM) and Negative Word Of Mouth (NWOM). PWOM involves referencing and indorsing of a product/ service/ company from an individual to another during approval relational debates and negotiations concerned with pleasant, real, authentic or original talks. The latter, (NWOM) is usually accompanied by the defamation of the product as a result of pathetic knowledge's and secluded talks of dissatisfaction. [3] Consumers are often involved in Word-Of-Mouth interactions through different public channels which may be constructively positive, terribly negative, petitioned or unsolicited. The core issue is having reliable and trusted views. [4] It is important for sellers to recognize trusted product ambassadors with attained public honour when it comes to who must send marketer's message across to the desired audience on their behalf. Here is an illustration to point out when the message is desired by consumers



**FIGURE 1: sourced from researchers own findings.**

The first step for a marketer is to understand that consumers go through several stages before the decision making stage: for a start, an individual recognizes the need for a product, this leads them to the next stage; to define the objectives they need to attain from the decision thereof.

They then create options and get potential suggestions which are directed towards accomplishing the intended objectives, analyze and assess them to keep in check of their expected goals. Finally, they tend to choose the option for their preference at the time. [5]

It is vital for policymakers to comprehend consumers' side of the concept of word of mouth and the role it plays in purchase behaviour. Understanding the diagram above and when to strike with WOMC can help trigger the company revenues through good sales. Second and third levels of the diagram above are where WOM fits in perfectly owing to the fact consumers ought to be persuaded above all other forms of approach that competitors may strike with. The third level here is effective particularly for impulse buyers. Imagine a company produced an entirely new product, nicely packaged and fixed on store shelves without any sort of communication to attract customers, also imagine an effortless marketing team making billboards with a thumbs up sign beside the picture of the product to symbolize that the product is great? On the other hand, imagine another new product from a new firm that appears on the market with all the hype and necessary information and a surplus of an individual or group of individuals uttering all sorts of incentives, making pleasant commentary and saying how beneficial this product is and praising it?

It is natural for a well satisfied consumer to talk about a given company, product or service to a friend or third party. This type of marketing does not practically cut into the marketing budget. [6] Individuals are fond of involving and letting loved ones in on every single detail of their daily purchase encounters. For example, the lipstick they just bought, the hotel room they booked, the 5D film they watched, the gadget they bought, the list goes on. Once these experiences were satisfactory, endorsements escalate success.

Finding ways of convincing clients to try new products/services is the most difficult task that relatively small firms face especially because first impressions are extremely vital for a product. In order to fulfil the marketer's dream of making a product fill a gap in the market, it is their responsibility to create influential accompanying messages for their product. Marketers must strive to get knowledge on how to pitch the most favourable way of conveying messages to their crowds. Furthermore, it is important for marketers to comprehend that the idea of marketing carries more than just an introduction of the product or how the product can best be used.

Today, word of mouth has become more efficient as well as effective for its cause with the aid of technology. As an added advantage, advertisers/marketers/suppliers or any individual with an intention of reaching an audience or another individual may do so with the use of internet in the comfort of their home, office, or even in their car. Because there are countless products on the market and an infinity of great accompanying messages attached to them, consumers frequently

face challenges of making choices between wide varieties of available products on the market to match their need. This makes them doubtful about relatively outmoded (traditional) company-driven way of advertising as well as marketing. Consumers tend to greatly favour basing their purchase decisions solely on what firms directly say to them concerning products. WOM consumer-supplier communication has for a long time in history been a way through which consumers satisfactorily attain surplus information about a product before or during purchase. It has been very useful particularly for customers willing to make a choice to buy where there appeared to be lack of product knowledge, seemingly doubtful situation, less or minimum product information or generally where there is longing for more knowledge. Regardless of the economic situation, product's position in the market, the company's image, or the commodity in question, word of mouth is extremely useful in all sorts of business environments. As technology advances, other forms of word of mouth are being brought into inception for example e-word of mouth and buzz. In this era, traditional word of mouth is seen to be transitioning with the help of the internet. With the introduction of BUZZ, a few campaigns can be cited here on how word of mouth communication can make a fixed and stable thread that surrounds a brand. A campaign on GoPro can be noted as a suitable example of how effective e-word of mouth can be [7] The above movement provided enthusiasts with the chance of handing in pictures in order to be included in the GoPro publicizing supplies. A percentage of 66 of customers who were under the age of 34 were definitely expected to give product recommendation once they gained fame on social media.

**The objectives of this study are to find out;**

- ☐ The most influential, fast and cost effective type of conveying any piece of communication to the intended audience.
- ☐ Generally how effective word of mouth is as a marketing tool.

Consumers often seek opinions from individuals they are to dispose a given product/service with; family members, colleagues or friends. This implies that regardless of the fact that only one person is present at the time of purchase, he/she is representative of several other consumers and a final decision is to be made after disposal.

As Milan Zeleny rightly put it;

“No individual decision making is completely independent of the social or collective framework in which it takes place” [8]

## **1.2 KEY FINDINGS**

It is extremely vital for marketers to minimize the assumption that the information they provide on their websites is sufficient for consumers to make positive purchase decisions as most consumers don't have time to visit official websites. Most clients overlook the posts online, may be lazy to read long posts, or pressed the "skip ad" button.

### **SUMMARY**

- There is a stronger bond between consumers and brands whose suppliers' main form of marketing is WOMC.
- Marketers whose main form of communication is WOM certainly enjoy the luxury of long term customer loyalty.
- Making purchase decisions based on WOM is way too pliable and cannot be well tracked in case of having dissatisfactory results during disposal.
- Firms have higher returns once they venture into WOM as their marketing tool.
- Word-of-mouth is valuable particularly when consumers were buying a product for the first time or when the product was somewhat expensive.
- WOMC is the most effective but less costly form of communication.

A certain analysis reported that consumer behaviour concerning marketing messages and adverts tumbled around the years 2002 in Sept and 2004 in June. It was reported that 40% fewer people agreed that advertisements are a good way to learn about new products, 59% fewer people reported that they bought products because of their advertisements, and 49% fewer people find that advertisements are entertaining. [9] In the recent past, e-word of mouth has been seen as a much better and innovative as well as convenient version of traditional word of mouth communication as it involves the internet and reaching out to multitudes of people in different parts of the world at the same time. Word of mouth seems to have grown and gained more power broadly over all forms of communication in the recent past as it is no longer necessarily one on one basis, but it has also become one-to-many. Marketers have seen e-word of mouth to be of great use as they can easily use a blogger, to reach their targets on social forums like YouTube. A good example here is a makeup artist praising a given lipstick brand on their channel therefore influencing their followers and fans. Consumers usually leave reviews and opinions of products online which are spread through social media. Blogs and websites are created to either give tribute or tarnish the image of a named brand. [10] It was observed that the

most sincere and dependable type of marketing is the one that originates directly from individuals that we are familiar with as well as those we rely on. 83% of netizens in 60 nations gave a response that they trust the recommendations endorsements from the peers as well as family members. [11] Word of mouth seems to be a very easy topic, if not carefully considered, it might not be totally misunderstood. Much as it might be considered the world's most effective means of interaction, WOMC is at the same time the most misread selling tactic. [12] WOM has some setbacks attached to it; for instance traditional WOM does not usually spread or blowout quickly because it comes with limitations of the number of consumers in reach as opposed to advertising. This is where e-word of mouth improves the speed of the thread. [13]

If used with expertise and much attention, Word-of-mouth communication becomes an engine of sales boost and acts as a wheel that pedal on the vehicle of company revenues. WOMC has for a long time been recognized as revenue generation, poverty alleviation and wealth creation for a company. In some cases, word of mouth may seem to be a long process as marketers should wait for consumers to stretch the stream of good news to their acquaintances, families and friends when in the actual sense, it is an easy and budget friendly way of marketing. Some companies have managed to successfully use it to boost their sales. Apple Company for instance, had a sequence of good sales originally from the iPod all the way into iPhone which enabled its consumers utilize it with more mobile phone functions that other phones lacked. Regardless of the previous imperfection of the ipod, the iPhone gained recognition through a buzz stream and rose to the top of phone sales by 2015 with more than 700,000,000 sold [14].

### **1.3 WOM and DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS.**

Just like other issues concerning human psychology, sex and age also tend to be among the issues that have an impact on decision making. This entails that Word-of-Mouth-Communication practitioners should pay particular attention to sex and age, among other variables at the time of its inception. It was noted that marketers need to realize that consumers' beliefs, religions and cultures, on top of the sex and age issue, have another impact of the purchase decisions. [15] As mankind continues to embrace civilization and as technology takes over, humanity also advances in the pursuit of equality between male and female. This should not lure marketers into thinking it is safe to do away with the consideration of gender issues when dealing with consumer decision making behavior [16]. It was said that a wide range of advertising and marketing tools influence buyers from different generations differently. [17] The table below shows some main resemblances and dissimilarities in line with purchase behaviors, inclinations, as well as effects between Millennials and Boomers. A wide range of advertising and marketing tools influence buyers from different generations differently. The table below shows some main resemblances

and dissimilarities in line with purchase behaviors, inclinations, as well as effects between millennials and boomers.

**AGE DIFFERENCE AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR**

<b>APPAREL</b>		<b>PACKAGED GOODS</b>	
<b>MILLENNIALS</b>	<b>BABY BOOMERS</b>	<b>MILLENNIALS</b>	<b>BABY BOOMERS</b>
<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>	<b>ONLINE SHOPPING SITES.</b>	<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>
<b>ONLINE SHOPPING SITES</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SALES REPRESENTATIVES</b>
<b>SEARCH ENGINES</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SALES REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>SEARCH ENGINES</b>	<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>
<b>FINANCIAL PRODUCT</b>		<b>BIG TICKET PURCHASE (E.G TRAVEL, ELECTRONICS)</b>	
<b>MILLENNIALS</b>	<b>BABY BOOMERS</b>	<b>MILLENNIALS</b>	<b>MILLENNIALS</b>
<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>	<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>	<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>	<b>WORD OF MOUTH</b>
<b>COMPANY WEBSITES</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>SEARCH ENGINES</b>	<b>COMPANY WEBSITES</b>
<b>SEARCH ENGINES</b>	<b>COMPANY WEBSITES</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>

**FIGURE 2. SOURCED FROM: RADIUS GLOBAL MARKETING RESEARCH.2014**



It was reported that the younger generation is easily influenced by WOM and fall prey to the very idea as opposed to the older generation. Baby boomers are more reliant on tradition always of advertising than millennials though not completely [18]. All in all, the above study reveals that Word Of Mouth triggers all age groups at a certain time.

#### **1.4 WHY WORD OF MOUTH?**

Should marketers just relax and simply expect discussions to take place gradually concerning their product or services? The nature of marketing demands persuasion and thus the introduction of brand buzz and ambassadors. To be a captor in brand exposure and outsmart competition, marketers should be equipped to make good use of word of mouth extensively. [19]

According to a study, a percentage of 92 of customers rely on the knowledge that referrals done by peers and members of the family are more dependable compared to other means of attaining product information. Another study showed that a percentage of 64 in the marketing community trusted WOM as the most reliable way of brand exposure. Unfortunately barely 6% confirmed that they grasped its concept and put it into practice. [20]

Word of mouth is the cheapest but valuable form of marketing that does not require the marketer to cut into his marketing budget or funds. Further, WOMC does not require any extra inducements, for instance customer recommendation programs [23]. WOM remains the most effective, yet cost free form of communication. If all marketers were to maintain and put into practice what has been discovered as the most intense, direct and valuable form of marketing which customers have belief in, regardless of the rest, one that's most definitely going to drive the sales of the firm higher— would they use it or choose to forgo? Marketers strive to build reasonable trust with their clients that they begin to create legitimate relationships with them and thus generating a crowd of brand ambassadors who are netizens and have a will to share the benefits of a given product or service within their network. Some literatures show that a percentage of 92 buyers commonly believe and rely on referrals that originate from familiar people. Further, it was noted that random people get about 70% belief from consumers when they post or blog about a product. [21] Trust is an ultimately difficult gem to earn but is undoubtedly the most important characteristic that customers look forward to when dealing with a new supplier. Regardless of whether or not a business is b2b or b2c, word of mouth communication rises the chances that consumers who are already dealing with a given firm will continue depending on it future purchases. Companies find it very challenging to attain fresh consumers of their goods but they always escape this awful experience with the use of customer referral programs. Consumers that attained product knowledge through their friends, family or acquaintances in general stay loyal to it longer as opposed to those who discovered the product

using other means. Humanity feels bonded more with their peers if they use the same product hence they stick to that product.

Today, the topic of word-of-mouth communication cannot successfully be discussed without the inception of buzz. This refers to a widespreada certain skill or technique in marketing that is usually concentrated on making the most of word-of-mouths 'possible great outcomes of a particular service or product. This might be through discussions between family members and friends of a consumer or larger groups of people such asdebateson podiums online. Companies these days have embarked on getting consumers of good stance on their blog site(with many followers) to chat about how tremendous their products and services are. By doing this, firms hope to increase their publicity, reaching huge numbers of people as everyone is always on the internet. Marketers can be enabled to forecast the blowout of buzz through the examination of the ways in which varieties of clientele network as well as impact each other. [22]

Naturally, very famous people are known to attract lots of responsiveness from consumers. It should be mentioned here that marketers should be very cautious when picking the person to deliver the message to their intended audience. If a public figure is to be picked for that cause, it should be an appropriately accepted individual. In that spirit, they always work best in the course of pursuing successful marketing through word of mouth. It is vital to put into consideration who is involved in delivering that "word" to the intended segment. As seen from a social perspective, fans of a celebrity usually take interest in updates and follow up on the smallest details of their star of interest i.e. Personal, social and spiritual life of theirs. A practical example would be the use of a renowned popstaricon to advertise for body lotion. This act will lure the demographic group that is highly connected to the pop star in question into having an attraction towards the lotion being advertised and consequently want to try what he/she recommends. Fans tend to feel "closer" to their icon by using the products they are made to believe he/she uses.

Numerous benefits come with the use of society icons as an advertising tool no matter which category of business at hand. The most important factor about this strategy is that relatively small firms need to ensure that the public figure or home-grown super star of their choice is pertinent as well as making sure that he has wide petition and vast influence in the area. On the other hand, regardless of the amount of fans they have, the celebrity strategy is more effective when the initiative is used with a product or service they are most likely to relate to in real life. The whole

idea of using a celebrity should be made as believable as possible to consumers, for example, a local model wearing a brand of eye shadow from a local firm and praising it.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative methods were employed in this research. Non-random sampling was conducted with 600 questionnaires which were distributed to 300 university students from 8 different universities, schools, and 300 individuals who were in the labor force as well as baby boomers. Out of the 600 questionnaires initially distributed, 595 were returned and valid upon completion to some extent. DMQ surveys were distributed among consumers of diverse products from a variety of suppliers. The researchers aimed at tackling all demographic groups i.e. the population consists of primary school students, high school students, university students, newly employed workers, individuals slightly below middle age and middle aged) from several start-up firms as well as baby boomers. The questionnaires were distributed in no particular order or procedure. The reason for the use of this kind of audience in this research is that the researchers believed that all individuals are consumers and these mentioned groups are repeatedly found in need of making serious purchase decisions and there was a need to know the difference in respect to different advertising and marketing ideologies.

This research made use of descriptive method to analyze its available data in terms of level of passiveness of the population. Questions were designed in an unbiased responses design. Responses thereof were in averages which were shown by the 4 point likert which consisted of 1 as OFTEN, 2 as VERY OFTEN, 3 as ALWAYS and 4 as NEVER.

Most of the questions were designed mainly to assess how passive an individual may be when it comes to influences from peers or family members.

### **2.1 DANGERS**

Even if Word-Of-Mouth is in the position of being the most reliable, cost effective way of communication, it has the ability to either set a product to a good spot in the industry, or to set it on fire. As a result of this possibility, it is significant to be careful about WOMC in general and how a firm uses it. Here are some of the disadvantages that it brings along: Firstly, Old-style or traditional word of mouth is based on one on one conversations between teams, groups or

individuals who are familiar with each other as it is extremely easy to form dependability based on the level of knowledge that one party has on the other; implying that knowledge attained from known people is likely to be employed in buying. [23] Referring to the online situation of word of mouth advertising and marketing through BUZZ and e-word of mouth in general, the message that the recipient gets from the message dispatcher ought to have the same impact that traditional word of mouth has on purchase decisions. [24] Lack of message control is also a factor in this aspect. In the case where a business creates an advert, the company itself chooses what exactly it wishes its consumers to know about the product. On the other hand, word of mouth allows a free choice of what is to be said and that is between a customer and a prospective customer. This means that the company has no power of what their future customer will hear. In this vein, the brand/product or service might be tagged with a bad name in case the information provided is false or damaging. [25]

.It was revealed that customers with and abilities are able to make abrupt assessment as well as the right owing to the existence of the plentiful brand information and knowledge; as a result, helping these products to have information readily available for other customers who might not possess enough product and service knowledge. [26] Another research stated that there is a positive impact that comes with message senders who possess expertise and great experience. [27]

The receiver's extent of research is another issue. Despatchers and recipients of Word-Of-Mouth are self-determining members. As part of the communication procedure, message recipients frequently recruit product discussion using a way of inquiring for information from the message dischargers. Therefore, the recipient's deed that involves inquiring about statistics is presumed to be a significant aspect in Word-Of-Mouth communication. A study shows that Word-Of-Mouth hunters are somehow made accessible to word of mouth communications; as such, they become inclined to messages like these. [28] Owing to this, word of mouth messages possess a positive impact on the buying choices of recipients that are more aggressively looking for product knowledge.

Marketers/advertisers and suppliers as a whole must master this concept about BUZZ; for a single product to gain recognition, it should use a long channel of communication from one consumer, to many more who are unaware of but might really be willing to try the product. If the marketing message chain is too short for example just 2 to 3 people, an error may occur and therefore, sellers will not get the best results from this strategy.

Further, the message sender is expected to have a certain level of expertise as this has an impact on the results of word of mouth. If this is not the case, word of mouth might not be seen to be useful and may be deemed harmful in this respect. It was reported that customers more than often resort to surfing the internet or looking up for product knowledge from social sites as opposed to commercial websites and this is due to the fact that they trust any amount of product knowledge attained from social media. Consumers think this knowledge is more reliable and worthy taking more seriously than when they actually get the information from the business pages. In that regard, Information from the internet bloggers is more substantial as well as influential.[29]

In all, WOMC gives customer satisfaction through 3 variables and it is important to remember that satisfaction could be achieved through expectancy and relevant rewards. The 3 variables involved are:

**1)Product oriented**

**2)Customer centered**

**3)Value driven[30]**

### **3. RESULTS**

195 completed and approved questionnaires which were distributed into firms of the suppliers were carefully analyzed and most of the marketers were found to be ignorant about important aspects of marketing like buzz (especially those from relatively small organizations. Questionnaires meant for suppliers were initially not supposed to be separated in any way, but after the collection of data, the results were confusing and thus the researchers wanted to know exactly which segment was connected to which flaw. This led to the division of respondents according to their company's size and position in the market.

Below is a table illustrating the form of questions asked in the survey and on average the answer given by a certain approximated demographic group. The results that are in the response from section and are conclusions drawn (by average) from the way respondents answered the questions.

Results from the questionnaires show that on average, all demographic groups are passive to some extent when it comes to peer / family influence. The percentages given in brackets are according to the number of questionnaires of that age group distributed, accepted and returned, and the response obtained thereof. Individuals from all demographic groups (with approximated age in this respect) rely on and trust in first hand word of mouth information. Further, the results stipulate that baby boomers are torn between word of mouth and other sources of information. Question 3 said “if you had an exam/exam on Monday morning, and your friend invites you for a drink on a Sunday night, how often would you decline that offer?” Most demographic groups had “NEVER” for a response apart from primary school students and baby boomers, who had “sometimes” as an average response. This was most probably because primary school students are not independent persons who are capable of making independent decisions and boomers are highly risk averse. (authors’ thinking).

Question number 5 saw all averages having the response “always” and this could mean that individuals are often comfortable to shop with the aid of an inspiring voice and also implies that people trust the opinions of their loved ones and are confident in a product at the time of purchase with the aid of familiar company.

Question number 7 was achieved by inferential statistics which were used as an online survey tool. This looked at how socially influential word of mouth is. It was reported that people tend to be extremely passive when it comes to dealing with people they love and care about i.e. Family and friends. This phenomenon was only concerned with the adults in the population.

The last question was aimed at knowing where exactly the consumers preferred digging for product knowledge online. It confirmed that a 100% of the population don’t bother to go to the official websites of manufactures to get information.

As seen, none of the averages gave the answer “never” under the question that asks about how often the respondents went to social media for product information.

The survey indicated that more than average population of students were not necessarily ok with just the basic information written on description on the menus in their school canteens and many other shops around the campus as they were observed following up on the workers consulting for more product information before making any actual purchase.

Demographic group (approximate age)	How often do you decline invitations from peers?	How often do you make purchases based on adverts you run into on the street?	If you had an exam/meeting the preceding morning and a friend invites you to a party, how often would you turn them down?	Have you ever been in a situation where a stranger's advice influences you to actually buy something?	How often do you Go shopping with Your friends / Family members?	Have you ever Made purchase Decisions Without the Consent of Your best Friend?	How often does the influence of a friend actually make you purchase something?	Have you ever Gone onto a Corporate/ Professional/ Company page or website For product Information Search on the Internet?	Have you Visited a Social forum On sites Like YouTube Or Facebook For more Information On a Product/ Service?
Primary school pupils	NEVER (87%)	VERY OFTEN (90%)	SOMETIMES (80%)	VERY OFTEN (65%)	ALWAYS (99%)	NEVER (90%)	Always (93%)	Never (100%)	OFTEN (99%)
High school students	NEVER (89%)	VERY OFTEN (94%)	NEVER (80%)	VERY OFTEN (70%)	ALWAYS (99%)	SOMETIMES (56%)	Always (94%)	Never (99%)	VERY OFTEN (95%)
college-university students	NEVER (60%)	VERY OFTEN (89%)	NEVER (89%)	ALWAYS (81%)	ALWAYS (95%)	NEVER (99%)	Always (96%)	Never (100%)	VERY OFTEN (90%)
Newly Employed workers/ Interns	SOMETIMES (56%)	VERY OFTEN (80%)	NEVER (57%)	ALWAYS (90%)	ALWAYS (90%)	NEVER (98%)	Always (80%)	Never (98%)	VERY OFTEN (87%)
Middle aged	SOMETIMES (50%)	VERY OFTEN (90%)	NEVER (65%)	ALWAYS (95%)	ALWAYS (91%)	NEVER (95%)	Always (89%)	Never (95%)	OFTEN (99%)
Baby Boomers	SOMETIMES (60%)	SOMETIMES (80%)	SOMETIMES (53%)	SOMETIMES (55%)	ALWAYS (90%)	VERY OFTEN (58%)	Sometimes (67%)	Never (100%)	SOMETIMES (90%)



#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The finding in this research match with the anticipated results. The channel taken by decision making tends to be part of a long trail of compound dealings that concerns human rationale, when a variety of aspects plus sequences pertaining deed intrude there in, having diverse consequences.

This research, Word of mouth communication method has been deemed to be the most influential and effective form of marketplace communication as it deals directly with consumers and tends to be extremely convincing. This research further discovered that word of mouth is highly operational and this owes to the fact that customers generally solely depend on individually delivered pieces of communication as opposed to the more formal ones (for example brochure and advertising campaigns) during the times of making purchase decisions.

Observations from the survey suggests that most students were not totally satisfied with the description on the menus in the school canteens and many other shops around the school as they were seen following up on the workers finding out more about food supplied therein before they actually made any purchases even when considerably enough information was readily made available.

Word of mouth has been deemed a good way of saving on company funds and resources as the “effort” used in word automatically replaces the “expenses” that might be needed in; for example printing out brochures and making bill boards which are likely to be given minimum attention.

Buzz is one of the main components of word of mouth. Marketers have the knowledge of it but are sceptical in trying its inception. The respondents in this research , when asked about opinion son buzz, more than 75% of the population showed no confidence about the idea and simply take it as just destiny, they say, or sheer luck.

The survey results also concluded that baby boomers are not “shaken” by what is uttered by marketers but tend to fall prey to other forms of advertising especially traditional ones.

Marketers have enough knowledge about the efficiency of Word-Of-Mouth but tend to pay less attention to its implementation as it may be cost free but certainly needs constructive efforts and the use of appropriate measures to give pleasant results.

This research there has proven to have similar results with many other previous researches on the topic.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS.**



Based on the finding above, it can be highly recommended that for further research pertaining the right timings to deliver word of mouth to ensure that it does not turn out to be an annoyance to the targeted audience.

Secondly, sellers/marketers/suppliers should make it a priority to have readily available: more polite and accommodative crew members to make the purchase environment more bearable in order to convince impulse buyers.

From here, further research is encouraged to find out on the kinds of firms are likely to benefit more from the use of word of mouth. For instance firm size or ownership.

It can further be recommended that firms should consider introducing frequent training for their marketing teams to be updated on how best to actually deliver this “word-of-mouth” to the intended audience without misfiring.

Confidence is a great deal of business reality, marketers should choose to make efforts in making facial contact contrary to pushing in more money towards other modes of communication which can be used in other demands of the company’s growth.

Since firms are different and deal with situations differently, marketers are advised to put into consideration, the disadvantages that word of mouth has so that it enables them weigh accordingly the benefits and dangers it might bring to the company before deciding to fully employ it in their system.

As it was discovered that different sex and age are influenced differently by word of mouth, marketers should therefore make it a point to know the best mode of marketing to use in order to strike an audience successfully.

Marketers may frequently conduct face to face word of mouth marketing campaigns in places where their audience is likely to be found. This will give them a chance to embark on stronger relationship journeys with consumers and automatically enable them to harness the real needs of their customers. This might look time consuming worthwhile as they will not only be giving out information about products, but at the same time attaining knowledge of consumer preferences.

It is important for marketers to use celebrities and public figures appropriately i.e. the situation or products assigned to a celebrity for advertisement should fit them perfectly. This is a core requirement in getting what a firm pays for in this regard.

Flooding an official website with marketing messages and advertisements might bring little or no benefit to marketers as not so many consumers may think it is necessary to open these websites in search of product information.

Marketers should focus a little more on using bloggers and brand ambassadors on social sites like YouTube and Facebook because that is where most consumers opt for when it comes to brand/product information or recommendations.

Individuals are capable of influencing others positively or negatively based on their purchase experiences.

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