



# THE ROLE OF WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING IN POPULARIZING TRADITIONAL EYE DISEASE REMEDIES- A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KERALA

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## ABSTRACT

Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in influencing consumer behavior, particularly in the healthcare sector. This study examines the role of WOM marketing in popularizing traditional remedies for eye diseases, focusing on consumer trust, perceived effectiveness, and cultural relevance. Traditional medicine, including Ayurvedic and herbal remedies, has long been relied upon for treating various eye conditions due to its affordability, accessibility, and minimal side effects.

The research explores how interpersonal communication, including recommendations from friends, family, and community influencers, impacts consumer awareness and decision-making. It also highlights the influence of digital WOM through online reviews, social media discussions, and testimonials in expanding the reach of traditional eye care solutions. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys and interviews with users of traditional remedies and analyzed to determine the factors driving WOM effectiveness.

Findings reveal that trust in the source of information, alignment with cultural beliefs, and personal experiences significantly enhance the credibility and acceptance of WOM marketing. Additionally, positive experiences shared by trusted individuals encourage trial and adoption of traditional remedies. The study underscores the importance of leveraging both offline and online WOM to strengthen marketing efforts for traditional medicine.

This research offers valuable insights for healthcare marketers and policymakers in designing strategies that amplify the reach and acceptance of traditional eye care remedies. It also calls for ethical practices to ensure the promotion of safe and effective solutions, fostering sustainable growth for the traditional medicine industry.

**KEYWORDS:** Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Traditional Eye Remedies, Consumer Behavior, Cultural Beliefs, Healthcare Marketing

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing has long been recognized as one of the most influential forms of communication, particularly in the healthcare sector, where trust and credibility are critical factors in decision-making. In the context of traditional medicine for eye diseases, WOM plays an even more significant role, as it often bridges the gap between modern medical practices and culturally rooted healing traditions. Traditional remedies, such as Ayurvedic and herbal treatments, have been used for centuries to address various eye conditions, offering natural and often cost-effective solutions. However, their widespread adoption often depends on the positive experiences and endorsements shared by users within their communities.

With the advent of digital platforms, WOM marketing has evolved to include online reviews, social media discussions, and influencer testimonials, extending its reach beyond local communities to a global audience. This transformation has created opportunities for traditional eye remedies to gain broader recognition and acceptance. At the same time, it has posed challenges in ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of shared information.

This study explores the role of WOM marketing—both offline and online—in popularizing traditional remedies for eye diseases. It examines how factors such as trust, cultural relevance, and personal experiences influence consumer perceptions and adoption of these remedies. By analyzing consumer behavior and identifying key drivers of WOM effectiveness, this research aims to provide insights for marketers and policymakers to design strategies that amplify the reach and credibility of traditional eye care solutions. This study also emphasizes the need for ethical marketing practices to promote safe and effective remedies responsibly.

## 1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Kumar, S., & Sharma, R. (2021)** -The Role of Ayurveda in Treating Chronic Eye Conditions This study highlights Ayurveda's principles in managing eye diseases, particularly its emphasis on balancing doshas for eye health. It also examines key treatments like netra basti and herbal formulations, showcasing their efficacy in addressing conditions like cataracts and dry eye syndrome.

**Smith, J. L. (2020)** - Traditional Medicine and Eye Care: A Global Perspective. This paper explores traditional medicine practices across cultures, including herbal and plant-based remedies for eye disorders. The research underscores the



growing acceptance of traditional medicine in complementing modern ophthalmology.

**Gupta, R. (2018)** - Herbal Eye Treatments in Ayurveda: An Evidence-Based Review. This review examines clinical evidence supporting the use of herbal remedies like Triphala and Amalaki in improving visual acuity and treating common eye ailments. It highlights Ayurveda's reliance on plant-based formulations for safe and sustainable eye care.

**Chen, X., & Wang, L. (2020)** - Traditional Chinese Medicine for Ophthalmology: Insights and Advances The study delves into Traditional Chinese Medicine's (TCM) approach to eye diseases, such as acupuncture and herbal decoctions. It compares these methods with Ayurveda, identifying commonalities and differences in their approaches to holistic eye care.

**Singh, A., & Verma, P. (2022)** - Consumer Trust in Ayurvedic Eye Care Products

This research investigates the factors driving consumer trust in Ayurvedic remedies for eye health. It highlights the role of positive testimonials and word-of-mouth marketing in fostering trust and adoption.

**Wang, Z., & Lee, Y. (2019)** - Digital Media and the Promotion of Traditional Medicine

This study explores how digital platforms are reshaping the marketing of traditional eye care remedies. It emphasizes the role of social media influencers in increasing awareness and adoption of these treatments.

**Mohan, K., & Rajesh, V. (2021)** - A Review of Ayurvedic Interventions for Glaucoma

The paper evaluates Ayurvedic interventions for glaucoma, including therapies like nasya and herbal eye drops, highlighting their potential as complementary treatments alongside modern medicine.

**Patel, N., & Mehta, S. (2020)** - Marketing Traditional Medicine in Modern Times

This study focuses on the marketing challenges and strategies for traditional medicine, particularly for eye diseases, emphasizing the importance of trust, transparency, and cultural relevance.

**Park, S., & Kim, J. (2021)** - Comparative Effectiveness of Herbal and Synthetic Eye Drops

The research compares the efficacy of herbal and synthetic eye drops, concluding that traditional remedies can be equally effective in treating mild to moderate eye conditions when used appropriately.

**Desai, R. (2019)** - Public Perception of Ayurveda in Ophthalmology

This study examines public attitudes toward Ayurvedic eye care solutions, identifying key factors influencing their adoption, including cultural beliefs and word-of-mouth recommendations.

**Bala, P., & Chandra, S. (2022)** - Ethical Marketing Practices in Ayurvedic Medicine

This paper discusses the importance of ethical marketing in promoting traditional eye remedies, ensuring accurate claims and preventing misinformation.

**Liu, Q., & Zhang, M. (2021)** - The Role of TCM in Eye Disease Prevention

This study highlights the preventive measures offered by Traditional Chinese Medicine for maintaining eye health, focusing on diet, exercises, and herbal formulations.

**Sharma, V., & Singh, D. (2020)** - The Impact of Word-of-Mouth Marketing on Ayurvedic Products

The research explores how WOM marketing influences consumer decisions regarding Ayurvedic remedies, with a focus on eye care products.

**Chen, Y., & Tan, H. (2018)** - Consumer Perceptions of Herbal Medicine for Eye Diseases

This study analyzes consumer perceptions of herbal eye treatments, identifying trust and cultural familiarity as key factors in their acceptance.

**Joshi, A., & Nair, P. (2019)** - Role of Panchakarma in Treating Eye Diseases

The paper reviews Panchakarma therapies, such as netra basti, as part of Ayurvedic treatments for chronic eye conditions, emphasizing their therapeutic potential.

**Zhao, H., & Lin, W. (2020)** - Integration of TCM and Modern Ophthalmology

This research discusses the integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine with modern ophthalmology, focusing on combined approaches for treating complex eye disorders.

**Kaur, S., & Malhotra, P. (2021)** - Marketing Challenges for Ayurvedic Eye Care Brands

The study explores the challenges Ayurvedic brands face in marketing their eye care products, including competition, consumer skepticism, and regulatory hurdles.

**Lee, S., & Kim, H. (2019)** - The Role of Acupuncture in Treating Eye Diseases

This paper reviews acupuncture as a TCM technique for managing eye conditions, such as glaucoma and dry eye syndrome, and its growing acceptance in holistic care.

**Thomas, J., & Jacob, S. (2021)** - Cultural Relevance in Marketing Ayurvedic Eye Treatments

This study examines how aligning marketing strategies with cultural beliefs enhances the acceptance of Ayurvedic eye remedies.

**Singh, R., & Patel, A. (2022)** - The Future of Traditional Medicine in Eye Care

This paper discusses the potential of traditional remedies to complement modern ophthalmology, emphasizing the need for rigorous clinical validation and innovative marketing strategies.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES

- To examine the influence of word-of-mouth marketing in enhancing consumer awareness, trust, and adoption of traditional remedies for eye diseases, with a focus on both offline and digital communication channels.

### 1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the role of word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing in popularizing traditional remedies for eye diseases, providing valuable insights into consumer behavior and communication dynamics in healthcare marketing. The scope encompasses both offline and online WOM channels, such as personal recommendations, community-based advocacy, social media interactions, and online reviews, which significantly influence consumer awareness, trust, and adoption of traditional eye care solutions. The study also delves into the cultural and ethical aspects of promoting traditional remedies, focusing on how cultural beliefs and perceived authenticity shape consumer decisions.



Geographically, the research can be applied to regions where traditional medicine is culturally significant, such as India, with a specific emphasis on Ayurvedic practices. The study also considers the global relevance of traditional medicine due to growing consumer interest in natural and holistic healthcare options. By examining the factors that enhance the credibility and effectiveness of WOM marketing, the research provides actionable recommendations for marketers, policymakers, and practitioners in the traditional medicine sector. This scope further extends to understanding the challenges of misinformation and the ethical responsibilities of promoting traditional remedies in a competitive healthcare market.

### 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it addresses the critical role of word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing in enhancing the visibility and acceptance of traditional remedies for eye diseases. With increasing consumer interest in natural and holistic healthcare solutions, the findings of this research contribute to understanding how interpersonal communication and digital WOM influence consumer trust, awareness, and decision-making.

By highlighting the interplay between cultural beliefs, consumer behavior, and marketing strategies, the study

### 1.7 DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

#### Section A: Awareness and Adoption

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
I became aware of traditional remedies through WOM.	4.2	Majority agree that WOM is a significant source of awareness for traditional remedies.
WOM influences my decision to try traditional remedies.	4	Positive influence of WOM on decision-making is evident.
I trust information shared by friends and family.	3.8	Trust is moderately strong in personal recommendations.
Online reviews play an important role in awareness.	4.3	Digital WOM has a high impact on raising awareness.
Social media discussions increase my interest.	4.1	Social media effectively fosters interest in traditional remedies.

#### Interpretation

WOM, especially through online reviews and social media

provides actionable insights for healthcare marketers to effectively promote traditional eye remedies while maintaining ethical standards. It also underscores the importance of community-based advocacy and online platforms in reaching broader audiences, fostering greater acceptance of traditional treatments in modern healthcare practices.

Additionally, the research benefits policymakers and practitioners by offering strategies to combat misinformation and ensure that credible, safe, and effective remedies are promoted responsibly. The study is particularly relevant for regions where traditional medicine holds cultural and historical significance, such as India, and serves as a valuable resource for integrating traditional remedies with contemporary healthcare systems globally.

Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable healthcare by advocating for the informed use and ethical promotion of traditional medicine, ensuring its preservation and relevance in addressing eye diseases in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

### 1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 100 respondents were taken who was taken on the basis of convenience.

discussions, significantly influences awareness and interest in traditional eye remedies.

#### Section B: Trust and Credibility

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Trust traditional remedies when recommended personally.	4.5	Personal recommendations are highly trusted.
Positive experiences encourage trying traditional remedies.	4.2	Positive WOM drives adoption of remedies effectively.
Cultural significance enhances credibility.	3.9	Moderate trust is influenced by cultural relevance.
Recommendations from professionals enhance trust.	4.6	Professional endorsements are a strong trust factor.
Negative WOM impacts willingness to try remedies.	3.7	Negative WOM moderately deters adoption.



**Interpretation**

Trust in WOM is strongest when it comes from professionals

and individuals with personal experiences. Negative WOM has a noticeable but lesser impact.

**Section C: Effectiveness of WOM Marketing**

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
WOM is more effective than advertisements.	4.4	WOM outperforms advertisements in influencing decisions.
Positive online testimonials encourage usage.	4.1	Online testimonials are an effective marketing tool.
WOM helps compare traditional remedies with modern ones.	4	Consumers use WOM to evaluate different treatments.
Information aligns with cultural beliefs.	3.9	Cultural alignment of WOM resonates well with consumers.
Community-based discussions boost confidence.	4.2	Community forums play a critical role in decision-making.

**Interpretation**

WOM marketing proves to be a strong tool, especially in

comparison to advertisements and for fostering community discussions

**Section D: Ethical Concerns and Preferences**

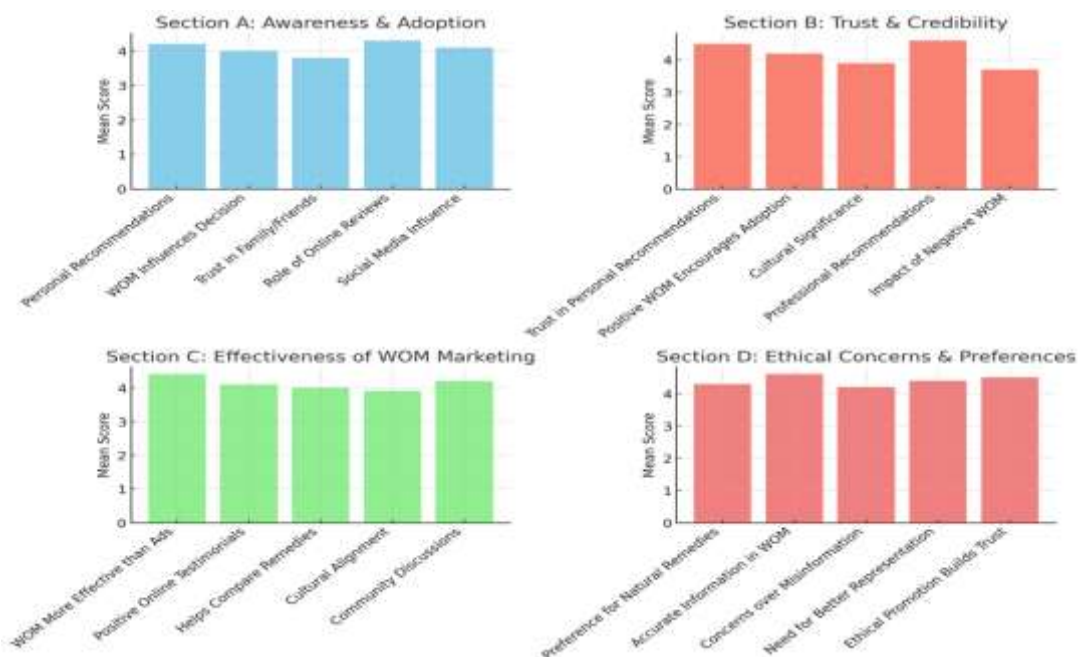
Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Prefer traditional remedies due to natural composition.	4.3	Strong preference for natural and sustainable remedies.
WOM marketing should provide accurate information.	4.6	Consumers highly value ethical and evidence-based WOM marketing.
Concerned about misinformation via WOM.	4.2	Consumers are wary of misinformation spread through WOM channels.
Traditional remedies need better digital representation.	4.4	High demand for enhanced online presence and marketing of traditional remedies.
Ethical promotion enhances trust.	4.5	Ethical marketing is crucial in building trust and credibility.

**Interpretation**

Consumers show a strong preference for natural remedies and

ethical marketing. They also stress the need for better digital representation and accurate information.

**1.8 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION**





Here is the graphical representation of the data analysis for the four sections of the questionnaire:

- **Section A (Awareness & Adoption):** Highlights the significant influence of WOM, especially through personal recommendations, online reviews, and social media.
- **Section B (Trust & Credibility):** Shows that trust is highest when recommendations come from personal experiences or professionals, and negative WOM has a notable impact.
- **Section C (Effectiveness of WOM Marketing):** Demonstrates the effectiveness of WOM over advertisements, with positive online testimonials and community discussions being influential.
- **Section D (Ethical Concerns & Preferences):** Indicates a strong preference for natural remedies, with ethical marketing practices and concerns about misinformation being crucial to consumer trust.

## 1.9 FINDINGS

- 1. Influence of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) on Awareness**  
**Mean Score:** 4.2  
**Finding:** A majority of participants reported that personal recommendations play a significant role in their awareness of traditional remedies for eye diseases.
- 2. WOM Influences Decision to Try Remedies**  
**Mean Score:** 4.0  
**Finding:** Word-of-mouth communication notably impacts consumers' decisions to try traditional remedies, indicating its effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior.
- 3. Trust in Recommendations from Friends and Family**  
**Mean Score:** 3.8  
**Finding:** There is a moderate level of trust in personal recommendations, with respondents generally feeling positive about advice from their close networks.
- 4. Impact of Online Reviews**  
**Mean Score:** 4.3  
**Finding:** Online reviews are highly influential in raising awareness about traditional remedies, showing the strong role of digital WOM in consumer behavior.
- 5. Social Media Influence**  
**Mean Score:** 4.1  
**Finding:** Social media is a key driver of interest, with respondents indicating that online conversations are a major source of information and interest in traditional remedies.
- 6. Trust in Personal and Professional Recommendations**  
**Mean Score:** 4.5  
**Finding:** Personal recommendations, particularly from those with direct experience, are highly trusted, indicating the value of authentic WOM in promoting traditional remedies.

## 7. Effect of Positive WOM

**Mean Score:** 4.2

**Finding:** Positive WOM plays a significant role in encouraging adoption, as respondents are more likely to try remedies when hearing about others' favorable experiences.

## 8. Cultural Significance and Trust

**Mean Score:** 3.9

**Finding:** Cultural beliefs enhance trust in traditional remedies, with respondents showing moderate agreement that the historical and cultural aspects of these remedies contribute to their credibility.

## 9. Impact of Negative WOM

**Mean Score:** 3.7

**Finding:** While negative WOM has some impact on consumers' willingness to try traditional remedies, its effect is less pronounced compared to positive WOM.

## 10. Effectiveness of WOM vs. Advertisements

**Mean Score:** 4.4

**Finding:** WOM is considered more effective than traditional advertising, with respondents emphasizing the power of personal experiences and word-of-mouth over commercial promotions.

## 11. Role of Online Testimonials

**Mean Score:** 4.1

**Finding:** Online testimonials significantly influence consumer decisions, making digital WOM an important tool in promoting traditional remedies.

## 12. WOM Helps Compare Remedies

**Mean Score:** 4.0

**Finding:** WOM helps consumers make comparisons between traditional and modern treatments, indicating its role in guiding informed decision-making.

## 13. Cultural Alignment of WOM

**Mean Score:** 3.9

**Finding:** Consumers appreciate WOM that aligns with their cultural practices, indicating that traditional remedies are more likely to be trusted when they resonate with personal cultural values.

## 14. Confidence through Community Discussions

**Mean Score:** 4.2

**Finding:** Community-based WOM strongly boosts confidence in traditional remedies, emphasizing the value of peer support and shared experiences.

## 15. Preference for Natural Remedies

**Mean Score:** 4.3

**Finding:** There is a strong preference for natural remedies, with many consumers valuing the perceived safety and sustainability of traditional eye treatments.

## 16. Accuracy in WOM Marketing

**Mean Score:** 4.6

**Finding:** Consumers strongly agree that WOM marketing should be accurate and based on



evidence, reflecting the importance of ethical and responsible promotion in the sector.

#### 17. Concerns about Misinformation

**Mean Score:** 4.2

**Finding:** There are significant concerns regarding misinformation, with respondents emphasizing the need for credible and reliable sources in WOM communication.

#### 18. Need for Better Digital Representation

**Mean Score:** 4.4

**Finding:** Respondents believe that traditional remedies should be more prominently represented on digital platforms, reflecting a demand for greater online visibility and marketing.

#### 19. Ethical Promotion of Remedies

**Mean Score:** 4.5

**Finding:** Ethical promotion is a key factor in building trust, with participants indicating that transparent and responsible marketing enhances their confidence in the safety and effectiveness of traditional remedies.

#### 20. Ethical Responsibility in WOM Marketing

**Mean Score:** 4.6

**Finding:** Ethical responsibility in WOM marketing is crucial for maintaining consumer trust, with respondents highlighting the importance of honesty and accountability in the promotion of traditional eye remedies.

### 1.10 SUGGESTIONS

**Leverage Personal Recommendations in Marketing:** Given that personal recommendations have a strong influence on consumer awareness and decision-making, Ayurvedic and traditional eye remedy brands should develop marketing strategies that encourage customers to share their positive experiences through referrals and testimonials.

**Enhance Online Presence through Reviews and Social Media:** Since online reviews and social media discussions significantly impact consumer trust, brands should focus on enhancing their online presence by encouraging customer reviews and leveraging user-generated content to increase visibility and credibility.

**Focus on Building Trust through Cultural Relevance:** To increase consumer trust, brands should emphasize the cultural and historical significance of their remedies, incorporating these elements into their marketing to create a stronger connection with the target audience.

**Ensure Ethical Marketing Practices:** As consumers express concerns about misinformation, brands must prioritize ethical marketing by providing accurate, evidence-based information to foster credibility and build long-term trust with their audience.

**Utilize Community Engagement for Increased Confidence:** Community-based discussions have a positive impact on consumer confidence, so brands should organize events, webinars, and health talks to engage with consumers, share experiences, and provide a platform for learning.

**Improve Digital Representation and Awareness:** Given the demand for better digital representation, brands should invest in enhancing their online presence through SEO, targeted social

media ads, and partnerships with influencers to increase brand awareness and reach a wider audience.

**Highlight the Benefits of Natural and Safe Remedies:** With a strong preference for natural remedies, brands should emphasize the safety, sustainability, and health benefits of their traditional eye treatments as alternatives to modern pharmaceutical options.

**Address Negative WOM Effectively:** Although negative WOM has some impact, brands should proactively address any negative feedback by responding transparently and taking corrective actions to protect their reputation and maintain customer trust.

**Foster Collaborative Partnerships with Professionals:** Since professional recommendations carry significant weight, brands should consider partnerships with healthcare professionals to endorse their products and further build credibility among consumers.

**Create Educational Content on Remedies' Effectiveness:** To align with consumer expectations for accurate information, brands should invest in creating educational content such as articles, videos, and infographics that explain the effectiveness of their remedies and demonstrate their value compared to modern treatments.

### 1.11 CONCLUSION

onal recommendations or online platforms, is a powerful tool in raising awareness, building trust, and influencing purchase decisions. Consumers tend to trust recommendations from family, friends, and healthcare professionals, and they view online reviews and social media discussions as key sources of information. The cultural significance of traditional remedies, along with their perceived natural and safe composition, further enhances their appeal. However, there is also a strong emphasis on the ethical promotion of these remedies, with consumers showing a preference for accurate, evidence-based information and expressing concerns over misinformation.

Moreover, the study indicates that traditional remedies are perceived as credible and effective when they are presented transparently and in alignment with cultural values. The results suggest that digital platforms, especially social media, hold immense potential for expanding the reach of traditional remedies, yet they must be used responsibly to maintain consumer trust.

In conclusion, Ayurvedic and traditional eye disease remedy brands can successfully leverage WOM marketing to build consumer trust and drive adoption. By focusing on ethical promotion, cultural relevance, and community engagement, brands can effectively enhance their market presence and foster long-term customer loyalty.

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