



ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH: THE MODERATING ROLES OF PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AND BRAND IMAGE

Chinho Lin, Institute of Information Management, National Cheng Kung University,
Taiwan,
linn@mail.ncku.edu.tw

Yi-Shuang Wu, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan
pair0406@gmail.com

Jeng-Chung Victor Chen, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan,
victor@mail.ncku.edu.tw

ABSTRACT

Purpose: *As an Internet-based version of word of mouth, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), the new information presented from the perspective of consumers who have purchased and used the product, have become a major informational source for consumers. The purpose of this paper aims to investigate the influence of eWOM on purchasing intention. Moreover, this study examines the moderating effect of product involvement and brand image in the relationship between the effects of electronic word of mouth and purchase intention.*

Design/ methodology/approach: *The target samples of this study are people who have ever searched for opinions or reviews through the Internet before buying the product. The survey is consisted of three parts covering the following issues, including eWOM searching experience, measurement items of each variable, as well as demographics and Internet using experience. A structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to assess the relationships of the research model.*

Findings: *Viewing online reviews or comments is helpful for consumers because it makes consumers feel more confident on purchase decision. The results indicate that eWOM quality, eWOM quantity and sender's expertise have positive effect on purchase intention. Most importantly, product involvement and brand image have moderating effect in the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention.*

Originality/ value: *This study provides new insights into the eWOM, which in turn affects customer purchase intention.*

Keywords: Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), Product involvement, Brand image, Purchase intention, Structural equation modeling (SEM)

Paper type: Research paper

INTRODUCTION

As a new marketing channel, the World Wide Web differs from traditional retail formats in many ways. Consumers shop online cannot touch or smell the products, as would be possible in traditional retail stores, so their purchase judgments must be based on the product information presented on the website. On-line sellers seek to overcome this limitation by giving consumers the opportunity to share product evaluations on online platform. This consumer-created information is helpful in making purchase decisions because it provides indirect experiences of products.

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as “all informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services or their sellers (Westbrook, 1987).” While WOM has been traditionally spread among acquaintances through personal “contagions,” its value has also been recognized and used in practice. Pioneered by the seminal Bass (1969) paper, WOM is widely considered as a major driver of new product diffusion for non-adopters. Additionally, the concept of positive word of mouth has been largely used by marketing professionals as it can serve both the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of the marketing tools like advertising and also at the same time be used as a credible source for gaining information relating to the product (Li and Zhan, 2011).

The rapid development of the Internet with its enhanced communication capabilities has dramatically increased the scale and scope of word-of-mouth communication. As an Internet-based version of word of mouth, online reviews, the new information presented from the perspective of consumers who have purchased and used the product, have become a major informational source for consumers. Online reviews have very important implications for a wide range of management activities, such as brand building, customer acquisition and retention, product development, as well as quality assurance. Companies such as Amazon.com and Circuitcity.com, provide convenient access for the customers to read and write review for the products sold on their websites. Reichheld (2003) claimed that a customer's propensity to recommend a product to others – termed referral value - was the most important success measure in business today. Reichheld argued that referral value has a higher correlation to firm performance than such traditional measures as customer

satisfaction.

As an Internet-based version of word of mouth, eWOM has become a major informational source for consumers before they buy the products. Whereas many studies have examined the importance and roles of online product reviews on sales (e.g., Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006, Godes and Mayzlin 2004, Dellarocas, Awad and Zhang, 2004, Judith and Dina, 2006), few studies pay attentions on eWOM's influences on consumer purchase intention, and this reason motivates this study to conduct the research. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of eWOM (including quality and quantity of eWOM as well as sender's expertise) on purchasing intention. Additionally, this study examines the moderating effect of product involvement and brand image on the relationship between the effects of electronic word of mouth and purchase intention.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Historically, word of mouth is widely considered as a powerful influence in consumer marketplace, especially on consumers' information search and subsequent decision making (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998; Silverman, 1997). With the rapid growth of the Internet, electronic communication has become a critical phenomenon. According to Buttle (1998), computer-mediated communication such as blogs, message boards, and emails can also be included in the definition. Following the notion, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) described electronic word of mouth as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (p. 39)". Comparing with WOM, Bickart and Schindler's (2001) showed that eWOM may have higher credibility, empathy and relevance to customers than marketer-created sources of information on the Web.

In this study, eWOM is viewed from three dimensions, including eWOM quality, eWOM quantity, as well as sender's expertise. Quality of eWOM refers to the persuasive strength of comments embedded in an informational message (Bhattacharjee, 2006). Consumer buying decision can be based on some criteria or requirement that meet their needs and to determined their willingness to buy it will be based on their perceived of quality of information they received (Cheung 2008). Therefore, it is important to determine consumer's perception of information quality as element for assessing their potential buying decision. In addition,

quantity of eWOM refers to total number of posted comments (Cheung and Thadani, 2010). The popularity of the product is determined by quantity of online comments because considered could represent the market performance of product (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2003). Consumer also need reference to strengthened their confidence to reduce the feeling making mistake or risk while shopping, and online comment quantity represent the product popularity and importance. In other words, consumers may perceive that more reviews represent higher product popularity and importance (Lee, 2009). Furthermore, expertise is aptitude, required training and experience and is domain specific. On the other hand, expertise can be viewed as “authoritativeness,” “competence,” and “expertness” (Hung and Cheng 2006). It is considered that the expertise of sender when they made a comment in consumer review will attract user to adopt the information and make decision to purchase.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to consumer’s intention to purchase a particular product or service. Purchase intention, was cited by Fishbein and Azjen (1975), as the single most accurate predictor of actual purchase behavior. Several studies have been conducted in this regard, and have found statistically significant relationships between purchase intention and actual purchase behaviors. It has been found that, particularly in the consumer durable goods category, purchase intention is a reliable measure of actual purchase behavior (Kalwani and Silk, 1982). Research conducted by Godes and Mayzlin (2009) tried to focus on the ways a firm should try to use the exogenous word of mouth to foster the sales. The research result showed that exogenous word of mouth accounts for the higher level of sales for the organizations.

Word of mouth could be one of the most believable form (Henricks, 1998) and affect consumer’s choices of products in the WOM spread by other consumers (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991). Moreover, the Internet allows peoples’ opinions can be more easily and quickly accessible to other consumers. Advices and product using experiences from online users become influential for their behavior (Thompson, 2003) and eWOM is regarded as a critical source for consumers making a buying decision. Some related studies have also indicated that eWOM messages are an important means whereby consumers can obtain information about product or service quality (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Moreover, this kind of message can effectively reduce the risk and uncertainty recognized by consumers when purchasing products or services, so that their purchase intention and decision making can be further influenced (Chatterjee, 2001).

eWOM quality is defined as the quality of a review’s contents from the perspective of

information characteristics (relevance, understandability, sufficiency, and objectivity). Since previous buyers are anonymous on the Internet, people generally will not easily accept or believe a review posted on a Web site if it does not provide enough information (Ratchford, Talukdar, and Lee, 2001). Other things being equal, reviews that are more persuasive have a greater positive effect on consumers' purchasing intention. Besides, the number of on-line consumer WOM (eWOM quantity) of a product represents the product's popularity as the on-line word-of-mouth effect because it is related to the sales volume of the product (Chatterjee 2001; Chen and Xie 2004). It is likely to lead consumers to rationalize their purchasing decisions by telling themselves, "Many other people also bought the product." Additionally, consumers usually have belief in expert due to experts represent the individuals who have more professional knowledge (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Therefore, this study proposes that :

H1: The quality of electronic word-of-mouth positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.

H2: The quantity of electronic word-of-mouth positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.

H3: Sender's expertise positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.

Product Involvement

Product involvement, as defined by Zaichkowsky (1986), refers to "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interest." Involvement is associated with the motivation to process information, and prior knowledge (expertise) is associated with the ability to process information (Celsi, and Olson 1988; Petty and Cacioppo 1984). Issue-relevant arguments and product-relevant attributes were more influential under high-involvement conditions; while peripheral cues, such as the characteristics of information sources or number of arguments, were more influential under low-involvement conditions (Chaiken 1980; Petty and Cacioppo 1984; Petty et al. 1983). Therefore, this study proposes that :

H4a: Product involvement moderates the relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.

H4b: Product involvement moderates the relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.

H4c: Product involvement moderates the relationship between sender's expertise and purchase intention.

Brand Image

Keller (1998) conceptualized brand image as a perception of consumers when they see a brand and reflected by brand associations in their mind. And these associations of brand image are multidimensional and contain the emotional dimension or the attitudes regarding the brand and the perceived quality dimension. From consumers' overall picture of their experiences, brand image is important because through this technique, brand image will create the consumer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses as an outcome (Padgett and Allen, 1997). Moore (1981) argued that image is a mental estimate of a general degree of satisfaction from an organization's activities and performances. And through image investigation, organizers will know the attitudes from customers tend to their companies, indeed, how well customers understand and what they prefer of companies.

Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis (1986) advanced that brand image is one strategic technique with the goal of helping the concept of a brand to be completed by means of an exercise in brand management. The objective of companies is to establish favorable and positive connection about the brand which the outcome in a positive image of the brand. The consumer may have more desire with one brand simply because this brand has the different image from other competitor's brands (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1994). Engel et al. (2001) indicated that consumers will make the decision based on the existing and external information. When there is the conflict between brand image and information content, consumer's decision will be hard to make. Therefore, this study proposes that :

- H5a: Brand image moderates the relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.
- H5b: Brand image moderates the relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.
- H5c: Brand image moderates the relationship between sender's expertise and purchase intention.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Assumption

Base on the literature review in chapter two, the research model of this study is shown in Figure 3-1.

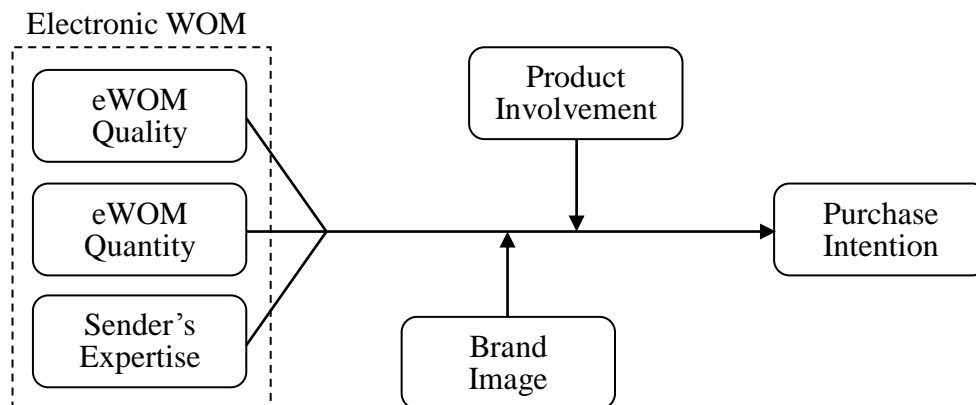


Figure 3-1 The Research Framework of This Study

After reviewing the literature in chapter two and basing on the research objectives and framework, the research hypotheses were proposed as shown in table 3-1:

Table 3-1 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Content
H1	The quality of electronic word-of-mouth positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.
H2	The quantity of electronic word-of-mouth positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.
H3	Sender's expertise positively affects consumers' purchasing intention.
H4a	Product involvement moderates the relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.
H4b	Product involvement moderates the relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.
H4c	Product involvement moderates the relationship between sender's expertise and purchase intention.

Table 3-1 Research Hypotheses (cont.)

Hypothesis	Content
H5a	Brand image moderates the relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.
H5b	Brand image moderates the relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.
H5c	Brand image moderates the relationship between sender's expertise and purchase intention.

Research Design

To achieve the study objectives, a self-administered survey questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the literature review. The survey consisted of three parts covering the following issues: (1) eWOM searching experience, (2) measurement items of each variable, and (3) demographics and Internet using experience.

In the first section, respondents were asked to answer their eWOM searching experience, including the channel (ex. BBS, Forum, Blog...etc.) they used, the product they usually search for (ex. 3C product, food, cosmetics product...etc.), and the reasons they search comments via Internet. The second section is for the measurement items. Regarding the electronic word of mouth, to measure eWOM quality, initially 7 items were adapted from the studies of Park et al. (2007) and Bailey and Pearson (1983), however, 1 item was deleted because its factor loading is less than 0.7. Four items were adapted from Park and Lee (2008) as well as Do-Hyung and Band (2008) to measure eWOM quantity, in which, 1 item was deleted because of lower factor loading (<0.7). As for sender's expertise, 7 items were adapted from Gilly et al. (1998), but 2 item were deleted because the factor loading are less than 0.7. Besides, initially 9 items were adapted from Zaichkowsky (1986) 's research to measure product involvement, and 9 items were adapted from the study of Dodds et al. (1991) to measure brand image, however, 3 items of product involvement and 4 items of brand image were deleted because the factor loading are less than 0.7 Furthermore, in order to measure purchase intention, 5 items were adapted from the study of Baker and Churchill (1977). All the measurement questions of eWOM, product involvement, brand image and purchase intention were carried out by a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "1=Extremely disagree" to "7= Extremely agree". In the last section of the questionnaire gathered respondents' demographic information, such as gender, age, education, monthly income, and

their Internet using experience.

The target samples of this study are the people who have ever searched for opinions or reviews through the Internet before buying the product. Online questionnaire sampling is the major way in this study by using the online survey website- mySurvey. Meanwhile, the address link of online questionnaire was posted in personal website such as facebook, and also spread by friends. In the end, 182 responses were received and valid. Data analysis involves descriptive statistics using SPSS 20 and structural equation modeling using AMOS 20 structural equation program. AMOS is designed to estimate and test structural equation models (SEMs). SEMs are statistical models of linear relationships among latent (unobserved) variables and manifest (observed) variables. Its purpose is estimating the coefficients in a set of structural equations. For this research AMOS is used to investigate the causal relationships, where the path coefficients are tested for significance and goodness-of-fit. The overall model fit measures were used to evaluate the fit of the structural model. In estimating the goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) for measurement and structural models, χ^2 (chi-square) test was used. In addition, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was used as an absolute fit index. The incremental fit index (IFI) and the comparative fit index (CFI) were used as incremental fit indices. Standardized estimates were used in reporting the causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous constructs.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

54.6% of the respondents were male and 45.4% were female. The 21–30 age group occupied 72.8% of the total sample respectively. For the education level, 58.3% of respondents are with college/university degree and 37.6% of respondents are with master or doctoral degree. Regarding the experience of Internet usage, 75.5% of respondents said they have used Internet for more than 8 years. The majority of respondents use Internet everyday (82%). When people search for the product review or comment, the major platform that respondents use is the forum (41.6%) to search the 3C product (38.2%) and food (30.6%).

Measurement of Validity and Reliability

As shown in the Table 1, the result of CFA indicates that convergent validity represented by construct reliability (CR) and average variance extract (AVE) are greater than 0.7 and 0.5 respectively.

Table 4-1. CFA Outcome for the Measurement Model

	Factor Loading	CR Construct Reliability	Eigen-value
eWOM Quality			
The online review/comment is clear.	0.863	0.876	1.752
The online review/comment is understandable.	0.871		
The online review/comment is helpful.	0.860		
The online review/comment is credible.	0.752		
The online review/comment has sufficient reasons supporting the opinions.	0.782		
In general, the quality of each online review/comment is high.	0.755		
eWOM Quantity			
The number of online review/comment is large, inferring that the product is popular.	0.873	0.853	1.746
The quantity of online review/comment information is great, inferring that the product has good sales.	0.846		
Highly ranking and recommendation, inferring that the product has good reputations.	0.768		
Sender's Expertise			
The persons who provided online reviews/comments, I think they are experienced.	0.882	0.850	1.684
The persons who provided online reviews/comments, I think they have abundant knowledge toward the product.	0.876		
The persons who provided online reviews/comments, I think they have the ability on judgment.	0.812		
This person provided some different ideas than other sources.	0.761		
This person mentioned some things I had not considered.	0.752		
Purchase Intention			

	Factor Loading	CR Construct Reliability	Eigen-value
After reading online review/comment, it makes me desire to buy the product.	0.884	0.869	1.728
I will consider buying the product after I read online review/comment.	0.879		
I intend to try the product/service discussed in the online review/comment.	0.872		
In the future, I intend to seek out the product/service discussed in the online review/comment.	0.860		
In the future, I intend to buy the product discussed in the online review/comment.	0.844		
Product Involvement			
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I think the product is important to me.	0.873	0.842	1.673
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I think the product is meaningful to me.	0.870		
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I think the product is useful to me.	0.867		
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I think the product is valuable to me.	0.849		
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I think the product is attracting to me.	0.765		
When I am looking for the online reviews/comments, I am interested in the product.	0.820		
Brand Image			
The brand is safe.	0.817	0.784	1.569
The brand is reliable.	0.824		
The brand has good quality.	0.808		

	Factor Loading	CR Construct Reliability	Eigen-value
The brand is interesting.	0.739		
The brand can make me feel happy.	0.746		

The Goodness of Fit Test for the Structure Model

The model was estimated using AMOS. Table 4-2 shows the result of goodness fitting indexes for the structure model and provides a reasonably good fit for the data ($\chi^2 = 367.891$, degrees of freedom (df) = 2.485, $p < 0.000$; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.914; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.909; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.057). All of these fit indices are acceptable, suggesting that the overall structural model provides a good fit.

Table 4-2. The Goodness of Fit for Structure Model

Model goodness fitting	Preferred value	Value
CMIN/DF	< 3	2.835
GFI	> 0.9	0.902
AGFI	> 0.8	0.883
RMR	<0.05	0.036
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.057
NFI	[0,1] and approaches 1	0.909
RFI	[0,1] and approaches 1	0.902
IFI	[0,1] and approaches 1	0.914
CFI	[0,1] and approaches 1	0.914

Hypotheses Test

The result demonstrates that paths representing H_1 , H_2 , and H_3 are supported as shown in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3. The Result of Hypothesis Test

	Estimate weight	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
H1: eWOM Quality →Purchase Intention	0.452	0.051	8.626	***
H2:eWOM Quantity →Purchase Intention	0.436	0.045	7.947	***
H3: Sender's Expertise →Purchase Intention	0.385	0.047	5.563	**

*** p -value <0.001, ** p -value <0.05, * p -value <0.1;

The Moderating Effect

As for moderating effect, Table 4-4 demonstrates the result of Hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c as well as Hypothesis 5a, 5b, and 5c. In conclusion, product involvement and brand image can moderate the effect the relationship of eWOM and purchase intention.

Table 4-4. The Moderating Effect of Product Involvement and Brand Image

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
eWOM Quality	0. 508***	0.487***	0.442***
eWOM Quantity	0.427***	0.351**	0.406
Sender's Expertise	0.258	0.198	0.205
Product Involvement		0.283**	
eWOM Quality x Product Involvement		0.177**	
eWOM Quantity x Product Involvement		0.092	
Sender's Expertise x Product Involvement		0.049*	
Brand Image			0.278***
eWOM Quality x Brand Image			0.196**
eWOM Quantity x Brand Image			0.105*
Sender's Expertise x Brand Image			0.063*
R ²	0.537	0.298	0.362
ΔR ² (Changed R ²)	0.526	0.288	0.335
F-value	29.361***	22.714***	18.683**
Durbin-Watson (D-W)	2.348	2.153	2.217

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Considerable previous research has studied the effects of offline WOM on consumer behavior. With the substantial growth in electronic word of mouth, there is a need for marketers to better understand how electronic word of mouth might influence consumer's purchase intention. The major objective of this study is to investigate the relationship among electronic word of mouth and purchase intention by adopting Structural Equation Model (SEM). This study also evaluates the moderating effect of product involvement and brand image on the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchase intention. The research results indicate that, first of all, consumers who feel uncertainty toward the product tend to search for the online comments. Viewing online comments is helpful for consumers because it can make consumers feel more confident on purchase decision. Comments that are clear, logical and persuasive, with sufficient reasons based on specific facts about the product, have a strong positive effect on the purchase intention. Most importantly, this study finds a moderation effect of product involvement and brand image on the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchase intention

This study makes several practical contributions. The major results emphasize the importance of properly managing online consumer reviews. Since online word of mouth function both as informants and recommenders, they can be used strategically as a communication channel. For example, online sellers can provide a review format that enables reviewers to post high-quality reviews focusing on the informant role of online consumer reviews (providing user-oriented information to improve consumers' understanding of a product). Furthermore, this research brings several new insights for corporations to use electronic word of mouth as part of their strategic marketing campaign in gaining new consumers and holding onto the ones they already have.

Mitchell (2001) stated that people to people communication is indeed more relevant than traditional marketing. Communication brings forth exchange of goods, ideas, opinions and other information. More importantly, communication is able to help people form relationships that include "ties of loyalty and feelings of obligation", as well developing supportive ties with other people. Peppers and Rogers (2000) proposed that knowledge can build relationships between a firm and its customers, and when a customer volunteers information, it is the firm's duty to act upon this information. While Selnes and Sallis (2003), identified relationship learning as a vital way to create differential advantage for the firm. Corporate blogs or online spaces can develop this awareness to their advantage, by providing factual information and encouraging consumer to consumer knowledge exchange, marketers would

be able to get real time feedback from their consumers, thus building customer loyalty and generating sales (Senecal and Nantel, 2004; Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006). As Scoble and Israel (2006) said, electronic word of mouth as a marketing tool can also help leverage the competitive advantages of small businesses, enabling them to compete among the more established enterprises. Electronic word of mouth can significantly influence consumer behavior, so marketers should not ignore the proliferation of online consumer-to-consumer communication. In all of this, marketers need to remember that electronic word of mouth is consumer-generated and, in principle at least, marketers are on the sidelines. As Brown has pointed out (Brown et al. 2007), marketers need to be aware of the risks involved in attempting to influence electronic word of mouth.

REFERENCE

1. Alba, J. W., & Hutchinson, J. W. (1987). "Dimensions of consumer expertise." *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.13, pp.411-454.
2. Bagozzi, R. P. (1979). "Toward a formal theory of marketing exchanges, conceptual and theoretical developments in marketing." O.C. Ferell, S.W. Brown & C. W. Lamb Eds., Chicago: American Marketing Association, pp.431-447.
3. Bailey, J.E. & Pearson, S.W. (1983). "Development of a tool for measuring and analysing computer user satisfaction." *Management Science*, Vol.29 No.5, pp.530-545.
4. Baker, Michael J. & Gilbert A. Churchill, Jr. (1977). "The impact of physically attractive models on advertising evaluations." *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.14, pp.538-555.
5. Bass, F. M. (1969). "A new product growth model for consumer durables." *Management Science*, Vol.15 No.5, pp.215-227.
6. Bhattacharjee, A. a. S. (2006). "Influence process for information technology acceptance: an elaboration likelihood model." *MIS Quarterly*, Vol.30 No.4 pp.805-825.
7. Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. (2001). "Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information." *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol.15 No.3 pp.31-40.
8. Bourdeau, J. Chebat & C. Couturier. (2002). "Internet consumer value of university students: E-mail-vs.-web users." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol.9 pp.61-69.
9. Brown, J. J. & Reingen, P. (1987). "Social ties and word-of-mouth referral behavior." *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.14 pp.350-362.
10. Brown, J., Broderick, A. & Lee, N. (2007). "Word of mouth communication within online communities: Conceptualizing the online social network." *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol.21 No.3 pp.2-20.

11. Buttle, F. A. (1998). "Word of mouth: Understanding and managing referral behavior." *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol.6 No.3 pp.241-254.
12. Celsi, R.L., & Olson, J.C. (1988). "The role of involvement in attention and comprehension processes." *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.15 No.2 pp.210-224.
13. Chaiken, S. (1980). "Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.39 No.5 pp.752-766.
14. Chatterjee, P. (2001). "Online reviews: Do consumers use them?" *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol.28 pp.129-133.
15. Chen, Y., & Xie, J. (2004) "Online consumer review: A new element of marketing communications mix." Working Paper. University of Arizona.
16. Cheung, C. M. K. and Thadani, D. R. (2010). "The state of Electronic Word-of-mouth Research: A literature Analysis." *Proceedings of the Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems*, pp.1580-1587.
17. Cheung, E. a. (2008). "The impact of electronic word-of-mouth: The adoption of online opinions in online customer communities." *Internet Research*, Vol.18 No.3, pp.229-247.
18. Chevalier, J. & Mayzlin D. (2006). "The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews." *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.43, pp.345-354.
19. Chevalier, J. A. and Mayzlin, D. (2003). The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews. National Bureau of Economic Research Cambridge, Mass, USA.
20. Chevalier, J.A. and Mayzlin, D., (2006), "The effect of word of mouth on sales: online book reviews", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 345-354.
21. Chiarelli, N. (2006). "The global rise of word of mouth." *Brand Strategy*, October, pp.42-43.
22. Dellarocas, C., Awad, N., & Zhang, X. (2004). "Exploring the value of online reviews to organizations: Implications for revenue forecasting and planning." In J.I. DeGross (ed.) *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Conference on Information Systems*. New York: ACM Press: 379-386.
23. Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B., & Grewal, D. (1991). Effects of price, brand, and store information on buyers' product evaluation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.28, pp.307-319.
24. Doh, S.M.S. & Hwang, J. (2009). "How consumers evaluate eWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) messages." *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, Vol.12 No.2, pp.193-197.
25. Do-Hyung Park, S. K. and Band, W. (2008). "The effect of consumer knowledge on message processing of electronic word-of-mouth viaonline consumer review." *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Vol.7, pp.399-341.
26. Eagly & Chaiken (1993). *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace

Jovanovich.

27. Engel, J. R., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (2001). *Consumer behavior*. Orlando Florida: Harcourt Inc.
28. Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). "Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research." Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
29. Gardner, B. B. & Levy, S. J. (1995). *The Product and the Brand*. Harvard Business Review, 33, pp.33-39.
30. Gilly, M. C., Graham, J. L., Wolfinbarger, M. F., & Yale, L. J. (1998). "A dyadic study of interpersonal information search." *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol.26 No.2, pp.83-100.
31. Godes, D. & Mayzlin, D. (2009). "Firm-created word-of-mouth communication: Evidence from a field test." *Marketing Science*, Vol.28 No.4, pp.721-739.
32. Godes, D., & Mayzlin, D. (2004). "Using online conversations to study word-of-mouth communication." *Marketing Science*, Vol.23 No.4, pp.545-560.
33. Gruen TW, Osmonbekov T, Czaplewski AJ. (2006). "eWOM: The impact of consumer-to-consumer online know-how exchange on customer value and loyalty." *Journal of Business Research*, Vol.59 No.4, pp.449-456.
34. Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). "Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet?" *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol.18 No.1, pp.38-52.
35. Henricks, M. 1998. "Spread the word." *Entrepreneur*, Vol.26 No.2 pp.120-125.
36. Herr, Paul M., Frank R. Kardes, & John Kim (1991). "Effects of word of mouth and product attribute information on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnostics perspective." *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.17 (March) pp.454-462.
37. Huang, J. H. and Chen, Y. F. (2006). "Herding in online product choice." *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol.23 No.5 pp.413-428.
38. Judith, A. C. & Dina, M. (2006). "The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews." *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.43 No.3, pp.345-354.
39. Kalwani, M.U. & A.J. Silk (1982). "On the reliability and predictive validity of purchase intention measures." *Marketing Science*, Vol.1 No.3, pp.243-286.
40. Keller, K. L. (1998). *Strategy Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 2nd edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
41. Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing Management* (11 ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice Hall.
42. Laurent, G. and J. N. Kapferer (1985) "Measuring Consumer Involvement Profiles," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.22, pp.41-53.
43. Lee, M. & Youn, S. (2009). "Electronic word of mouth (eWOM): How eWOM platforms

- influence consumer product judgement.” *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol.28 No.3, pp.473-499.
44. Lee, S. H. (2009). “How do online reviews affect purchasing intention?” *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol.3 No.10 pp.576-581.
 45. Li, J. & Zhan, L. (2011). “Online persuasion: How the written word drives WOM, evidence from consumer-generated product reviews.” *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol.51 No.1, pp.239- 257.
 46. Money, R. B., Gilly, M. C., & Graham, J. L. (1998). “Explorations of national culture and word-of mouth referral behavior in the purchase of industrial services in the United States and Japan.” *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.62 No.4, pp.76-87.
 47. Moore, H. F. (1981). *Publish relations: Principles, cases and problems*, 8th edition. Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
 48. Oliver, R. L. & DeSarbo, W. S. (1988). “Response determinants in satisfaction judgments.” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.14 No.4, pp.495-508.
 49. Padgett, D. & Allen, D. (1997). “Communicating experiences: A narrative approach to creating service brand image.” *Journal of Advertising*, Vol.26 No.4, pp.49-62.
 50. Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J. & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept-image management. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.50 No.4, pp.135-145.
 51. Park, D.H., Lee, J., and Han I., (2008). “eWOM overload and its effect on consumer behavioral intention depending on consumer involvement”, *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*.
 52. Petty, R.E., & Cacioppo, J.T. (1984). “The effects of involvement on response to argument quantity and quality: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.46 No.1 pp.69–81.
 53. Petty, R.E.; Cacioppo, J.T.; & Schumann, D. (1983). “Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of involvement.” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.10 No.2 pp.135–146.
 54. Ratchford, B.T., Talukdar, D., & Lee, M.-S. (2001). “A model of consumer choice of the Internet as an information source.” *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol.5 No.3, pp.7–22.
 55. Ratchford, B.T., Talukdar, D., & Lee, M.-S. (2001). “A model of consumer choice of the Internet as an information source.” *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol.5 No.3, pp.7-22.
 56. Reichheld, F. F. (2003) “The one number you need to grow.” *Harvard Business Review*, pp.1-9.
 57. Schiffman, L. & Kanuk, L. (1994). *Consumer Behavior*, 5th edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

58. Scoble, R. & Israel, S. (2006). *Naked conversations: How blogs are changing the way businesses talk with customers*. John Wiley & Sons.
59. Selnes, F. and Sallis, J. (2003). "Promoting relationship learning." *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.67 No.3 pp.80-96.
60. Senecal, S. & Nantel, J. (2004). "The influence of online product recommendations on consumers' online choices." *Journal of Retailing*, Vol.80, pp.159-169.
61. Silverman, G. (1997). "How to harness the awesome power of word of mouth." *Direct Marketing*, Vol.60 No.7 pp.32-37.
62. Söderlund, M. & Rosengren, S. (2007). "Receiving word-of-mouth from the service customer: An emotion-based effectiveness assessment." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol.14 No.2, pp.123-136.
63. Spears, N. & Singh S. N. (2004). "Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions." *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, Vol.26 No.2, pp.53-66.
64. Trusov, M., Bucklin, R.E. & Pauwels K. (2009). "Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: Findings from an Internet social networking site." *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.73 No.5, pp.90–102.
65. Vilpponen, A., Winter, S., & Sundqvist, S. (2006). "Electronic word-of-mouth in online environments: Exploring referral network structure and adoption behavior." *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol.6 No.2, pp.71-86.
66. Westbrook, R.A. (1987). "Product/consumption-based affective responses and post purchase processes." *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.24 No.3, pp.258-70.
67. Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1986) "Conceptualizing Involvement," *Journal of Advertising*, Vol.15, pp.4-14.