

2021 eWOM Research Virtual Symposium Programme

Day 1 – Welcoming and Introduction

9:45-10:00, 6th May 2021 (UK time)

Day 1 – Presentation Session 1: eWOM in (New) Consumer Behaviour

10:00-11:30, 6th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: Bringing marketing communications back to its roots: innovation through word of mouth

Authors: Anna Bianchi

Abstract: Despite the ongoing attention of academics and practitioners devoted to eWOM, the expansive and rapid changes driven by digital technologies result in the implementation of new eWOM practices and strategies that require further investigation. There is an emerging trend related to the use of brand ambassador programs in which brand followers and ordinary individuals are encouraged to spread eWOM. This study presents types of WOM programs, clarifies the differences between WOM marketing and other similar practices and illustrates two case studies of brand ambassador programs. It shows new trends in WOM marketing how to incorporate them in innovative marketing communications.

Title: Organic and electronic WOM pathways used by innovators of electric vehicles: An exploratory study

Authors: Madhavan Parthasarathy, Walfried M. Lassar and Sanjit K. Roy

Abstract: The proliferation of new age technologies has amplified the role of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) plays in influencing customers' buying behavior. This research studies the antecedents of e-WOM, both positive and negative, initiated by innovators of electric vehicles, and compares them to organic, traditional WOM also initiated by the very same innovators. However, this study goes beyond merely studying positive or negative WOM and e-WOM in an innovation diffusion context. Rather, it focuses on whether a modern innovator uses a synergistic combination of various opinion leadership pathways, both organic and digital, to amplify the impact of their influence, simultaneously both positive and negative, on subsequent adopters.

Title: eWOM, Co-Creation and Brand Loyalty: A Study of Guitars and Online Fan Engagement

Authors: Qing Shan Ding, Hanqun Song and James Hirst



Abstract: Recent eWOM research mostly focused on the influence on attitudes and purchase intentions. This study aims to investigate the differences between the open forum and closed community eWOM platforms. It proposed a new highest level of Co-Creation – Customer Leadership that is characterised by two key qualities: proactive engagement and psychological ownership. The impact of different types of Co-Creation on attitudinal brand loyalty is tested and it measures offline engagement as well as purchase intentions. The electric guitar industry is chosen as the research context and an online survey will be distributed in multiple eWOM platforms.

Day 1 – Presentation Session 2: eWOM and (sub)cultures

12:30 – 14:30, 6th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: The effects of eWOM on legitimacy and CSR perceptions: A longitudinal study

Authors: Katie Dunn and David Harness

Abstract: Organisations increasingly use social media to communicate corporate social responsibility (CSR). Such channels enable users to participate, share content and generate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) about the company and their CSR. This can dramatically affect the perceived legitimacy of the brand and consumers' perceptions of their CSR. The past decade has witnessed rapid evolution of eWOM, with the rise of a 'post-truth era' and increased proliferation of fake news. This study adopts qualitative longitudinal inquiry, interviewing the same participants in two studies over an eight year period, to examine the impacts of eWOM in a CSR context over time.

Title: Look Who's Talking: Exploring Older Adults' Organic Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Authors: Carolyn Wilson-Nash

Abstract: An increasing number of older adults are using the Internet. As a result, online communities have become a popular and beneficial outlet for older adults to share stories and connect with each other. This generates copious eWOM relating to products and services, however, there is no research on older adults and their organic creation of and exposure to eWOM. This paper therefore analyses 622 threads and 42,318 replies from a social online community for older adults. This is with the intention to re-conceptualise existing eWOM frameworks to account for this under-researched consumer group and provide marketers with a holistic understanding.

Title: Exploring the Antecedents of E-WOM Providing Behaviour in Mobile Shopping: A Multi-Country Study



Authors: Sunil Sahadev, Sean Chung, Mustafeed Zaman, Indria Handoko, Tan Vo-Thanh, Nguyen Phong and Rajeev Kumra

Abstract: The study looks at the antecedents of eWOM providing behaviour in the m-commerce domain, a topic which has not yet received adequate attention in the literature. Using the SOR framework, the study considers personalization as an antecedent for eWOM providing behaviour in m-commerce and explores the role of mediating variables like functional value, hedonic value and personal identification. Using a large scale survey among m-commerce customers in five different countries: UK, France, India, Indonesia and Vietnam, the study finds support for most of the hypothesized relationships. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Title: The Impact of Self-disclosure by Travel Influencers on Consumer Outcomes

Authors: Ben Marder, Sara AlRabiah, David Marshall and Rob Angell

Abstract: Social media influencers (SMIs) regularly disclose deeply about their personal lives in posts while promoting products. Though self-disclosure is well known to shape the impressions of others and this effect differs in sales vs. non sales settings, no research to date has examined the impact of personal self-disclosure of SMIs on key consumer outcomes. We address this gap through a series of experiments, with the addition of follow up interviews. Our findings support that heightened personal self-disclosure is viewed as less appropriate leading to reduced trust and purchase intention. Theoretical contributions and a future research agenda are outlined.

Day 1 – Keynote

15:00-16:00, 6th May 2021 (UK time)

Tentative Title: Revisiting eWOM and publishing in Journal of Business Research

Keynote Speaker: Professor Naveen Donthu

Day 1 – Presentation Session 3: eWOM and Interactive marketing

16:30-18:30, 6th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: Investigation of the Interactive Effects of the Utilitarian and Hedonic Benefits Gained from Online Reviews on Review Sites and Businesses

Authors: Iman Raoofpanah, Chris Groening and Robert Jewell

Abstract: Consumers' motives to read online reviews include many utilitarian goals such as obtaining purchase-related information. However, consumers may read online reviews for non-utilitarian or hedonic reasons like fun and enjoyment. In our research, the focal constructs are

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review usefulness and humor in a review that represent utilitarian and hedonic benefits of online reviews. The research address the following questions: a) how are the outcomes (likelihood to return to the review-hosting website & go to the business) affected by review usefulness, humor, and their interaction? b) what is the mechanism through which perceived humor affects the outcomes? Overall, the results suggest the review can be either funny or useful to affect the likelihood to revisit review websites. However, the review must be useful to affect the likelihood to visit the business under review.

Title: The Role of Managerial Mimicry in Online Interactions

Authors: Milad Mohammadi Darani, Hooman Mirahmad, Iman Raoofpanah, Mobi Singh and Chris Groening

Abstract: Mimicry—the imitation of verbal expressions or non-verbal behavior— is pervasive in human interactions and can bring a host of positive outcomes for the mimicker. In this study, we investigate a mimicry scenario, with important marketing implications, that has not been studied yet. That is where a manager engages in verbal mimicry through word echoing when responding to customers comments on social media. Using two studies, we show that when mimicry happens, observers perceive the manager as more attentive and as a result have more trust in her and show higher intentions of purchasing the brand represented by the manager.

Title: Is your review cool and funny? Gender moderation effects in online reviews

Authors: Georgiana Craciun, Wenqi Zhou and Hong Chen

Abstract: Past eWOM research has highlighted the importance of examining review readers' hedonic reactions because they play a critical role in product evaluations and increase readers' engagement with the review platform. We demonstrate that the effects of review valence and reviewer's Elite status on Cool and Funny votes diverge, showing that "review enjoyment" is a more complex phenomenon. We further examine the moderating impact of reviewer gender on cool and funny evaluations.

Title: Does Situated WOM Lower Retail Infidelity? Insights from QSR Brands

Authors: Syagnik Banerjee and Argha Sen

Abstract: The proliferation of location-sharing through microblogs and social media has become a growing trend. Despite the vast expanse of WOM literature, there has been little research on how Situated WOM (SW), or social media content posted in-store with product-brand mentions affects the future customer journey. In this manuscript, authors examine the impact of situated engagement from in-store tweets on Retail Infidelity (RI), or future competitor store visits. Results show SW predicts RI mediated by social media responsiveness (SMR) to posts, but the direction of effect depends on competitor dominance in the region.

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Day 2 – Presentation Session 1: New Perspectives of Online Reviews

9:30-11:30, 7th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: Product Reviews and Rating Statistics: Together How They Affect Consumer Product Evaluation

Authors: Chong Guan and Shun Yin Lam

Abstract: Online product review forums commonly provide consumers with averages of product ratings given by reviewers. Provision of the average rating statistic enhances or reduces the effect of reading reviews on product evaluation through confirmation or disconfirmation of their expectancies about the product in question. The confirmation or disconfirmation experience could be dampened when the rating frequency distribution is displayed in the review section. An eye-tracking experiment that simulated a forum visit demonstrates these moderating influences. It also shows that expectancy disconfirmation could make review reading more influential in product evaluation than pre-search attitude under certain circumstances.

Title: Review manipulation in the textual content of verified vs. non verified online reviews: changes over a product life cycle

Authors: Jong Min Kim, Chungil Chae and Marcello Mariani

Abstract: Companies have incentives to leave very positive reviews for their products on online review platforms, while writing poor reviews with low ratings for competitors. This type of manipulation behavior greatly diminishes the reliability of online consumer reviews, which in turn lowers their reliability. Due to the significance of the perceived reliability of online reviews, prior eWOM research endeavored to uncover what drives companies to engage in such manipulation. As the textual characteristic differences between reliable and suspicious reviews have not yet been explored, we examine these differences using structural topic modelling on online review data.

Title: Valuable Information in Online Reviews

Authors: Zhao Du, Fang Wang and Shan Wang

Abstract: The innate value of online reviews lays in the information they provide to prospective customers in product/service evaluation and purchase decision. However, the information content of online reviews has not been systematically explored. Building on psycholinguistic literature, this research decomposes and examines three fundamental information components of online reviews: sensory information, cognitive information, and affective information. Analyzing data from Amazon.com and a MOOC platform, it empirically investigates these

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information components in online reviews and their differential effects on review helpfulness across various product and e-learning scenarios. The new conceptualization and results provide a sound base for online review content analysis.

Title: Incentivized eWOM: The Psychological Process, Incentive Characteristics, and Service Experience Level

Authors: Ruolan Chen, Ruizhi Yuan and Martin J. Liu

Abstract: This research looks at the phenomenon that service providers offer incentives to customers in exchange for positive reviews on online review platforms. Specifically, the timing of the incentive offered to customers and incentive relevance are investigated. Service experience level is considered to be a moderator that influence the effects of incentive strategies on the psychological process and behavioral consequences of customers. When service experience level is consistent with the positive rating, customers would generate feelings of gratitude and equity, thus lead to positive eWOM giving behavior. However, if the service experience level is perceived as lower than the positive rating, customers may feel regret or guilt for the positive rating given on online review platforms. This research highlights the importance of eWOM incentive strategies with an emphasis on exploring the bright side and dark side of incentivized eWOM.

Day 2 – Presentation Session 2: eWOM in B2B and Strategy

13:30-14:30, 7th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: Employee Electronic Word-of-Mouth: Employees' Coping Responses to Stressful Reviews on Employer Rating Sites

Authors: Sonja Christ-Brendemühl, Mario Schaarschmidt, Tobias Krämer and Raoul Könsgen

Abstract: Online reputation systems (ORS) are large-scaled internet platforms that collect, distribute, and aggregate feedback and word-of mouth (WOM) about products, services or companies as such. Although there is a wide range of research on ORS, the vast majority of extant studies neglects reviews about employers by employees. However, WOM on employer rating platforms also reaches the company's current employees and could severely influence employees' perceptions of their job, their coworkers and the entire organization. Against this background, we aim to explore how employees cope with fear of interpersonal conflicts at work as a consequence of negative employee reviews.

Title: The Role of Social Media Support Group Peer Referrals in Small Micro-Business (SMB) Buying Decisions: Insights from Signalling Theory

Authors: Philip Megicks, Fenfang Lin and Philip Alford



Abstract: This study considers the role of social media support group peer referrals in small micro-business (SMB) buying decisions. It investigates how B2B buyers use information solicited from peers in an invitation-only group to influence their buying decision making in relation to suppliers of goods and services. Signalling theory is used to explain the process of buying in this context, depicted by a signalling timeline. An integrated qualitative methodology comprising a netnographic investigation of site post data and semi-structured interviews with group members is adopted to provide insights into how peer referrals, together with other information sources, affect supplier selection decisions.

Title: Delighting the B2B customers through online word of mouth in the omnichannel environment: An empirical study

Authors: Bidit L. Dey, Mujahid Mohiuddin Bab, Shahriar Akter, Tasnim M Taufique Hossain and Sanjit K Roy

Abstract: Despite the origin of word of mouth, as a marketing concept, few decades ago, it has received renewed interest in the current age of digital technology as it enables the customers to engage in Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) (Brooks Jr., 1957; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004). Naturally, eWOM takes place in the consumer setting, whether B2C or C2C. Whilst WOM has been proven to be the most effective marketing strategy for consumer markets, there is a paucity of research on how to manage WOM across channels in industrial markets despite its critical impact on performance outcomes (Iankova et al., 2019; Swani et al., 2017; Villanueva, Yoo & Hanssens, 2008). However, the impact of eWOM is also being observed in the context of B2B, and plays a key role in selling-purchasing mechanism in the industrial marketplace (Steward, Narus & Roehm, 2018).

Title: It's the Wine Not the Bottles: Firm Factors Drive Influencer eWOM over Marketing

Authors: Kirsten Cowan, Tea Palo, Yiwei Zhang and Duncan Chapple

Abstract: Despite the importance of influencers in B2B decision-making, there is a paucity of research on the topic. Influencers often exchange information with supplier marketing teams in order to generate eWOM, though what factors prompt influencer eWOM? This exploratory study examines what factors motivate eWOM recommendations in professional channels. Using longitudinal secondary data from a consulting firm surveying IT industry influencers, the results show these marketing teams ineffective in encouraging eWOM. Though, they can help build trust and customer-orientation perceptions for laggards and followers. Industry leadership and innovation are key drivers of influencer eWOM. The findings contribute to theory and practice.

Day 2 – Keynote

15:00-16:00, 7th May 2021 (UK time)



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Tentative Title: An eWOM journey: From the early days of digitalization to today and beyond

Keynote Speaker: Professor Thorsten Hennig-Thurau

Day 2 – Presentation Session 3: Cyberpsychology and online reviews

16:30-18:30, 7th May 2021 (UK time)

Title: Understanding N-WOM and N-EWOM from the consumer regret perspective: a two-step study

Authors: Carlos Flavián, Sergio Barta and Raquel Gurrea

Abstract: Negative comments have a strong impact on the attitudes and behaviours of future buyers. These comments may occur in a private or public context (N-WOM and N-EWOM). Focusing on impulse purchases, this study aims to understand the mechanism through which consumer regret generates these types of comments. Through a two-step methodology, data was collected from consumers on Amazon, allowing to know the actual behaviour carried out by them. The results show that intentions are translated into actual behaviour, with a preference for N-WOM rather than N-EWOM. Theoretical and managerial contributions are discussed.

Title: Mining the Text of Online Reviews to Explore Brand Positioning: Emotional and Psychological Brand Associations

Authors: Miriam Alzate, Marta Arce and Javier Cebollada

Abstract: Despite the study of eWOM textual content is starting to get interest, the research procedures and text mining techniques used are quite heterogeneous, which can create confusion between scholars and companies willing to reproduce the analyses. This paper aims to propose and illustrate a unified and structured research procedure to uncover emotional and psychological brand associations from online reviews, with the goal of analyzing brand positioning and identifying brand segments. A set of 62,496 online reviews belonging to 44 brands of the product category of “blush” was collected from a cosmetic’s online retailer. The lexicon-based tool Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIW) was used to conduct the text mining analysis.

Title: Beyond the consumer perspective on review-based eWOM

Authors: Nika Hein, Tatjana Maria König and Vivien Nimsgern

Abstract: Online reviews (ORs), typically managed by Online Review Platforms (ORPs), have become a standard for generating eWoM in B2C companies. OR research predominantly focuses

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on the consumer end. Conversely, this study takes a platform-to-business perspective and analyzes company preference structures of ORPs, that differ for company type and degree of digitization. A comprehensive ORP competitor analysis reveals more than 70 design options offered. Two conjoint studies show differing company preference structures for online shops (n1=135) and traditional companies (n2=115). Traditional companies prefer distribution of review results via Search Engine Integration, whereas online shops favor integration into online ads.

Title: Sharing is not caring: Revisiting eWOM motivations and the role of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation

Authors: Xiaoming Lu and Denitsa Dineva

Abstract: The dual model proposed in this study is designed to address the following two interrelated issues using SEM (Structural Equation Modelling). First, few studies in the eWOM domain have examined e-WOM communications utilizing these two distinct perspectives-intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An objective of the present study, therefore, is to identify the antecedents behind these motivations that are necessary during the transmission process of eWOM. Second, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have taken both factors into account to explain consumer's information-sharing behaviours and examine differential effects of intrinsic aspiration and extrinsic motivations on various behavioural outcomes.

