



A Study on Impact of Electronic and Visual Word of Mouth on Customer Engagement and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Word of mouth is defined as a marketing communication tool for increasing the customer engagement and purchase intention of the previous, existing and potential customers. For them it's a source of information which is informal or casual communication between customers to customer about a product. It is considered as a process where interpersonal communication between sender and receiver influences behavior, perception or attitude of receiver. In this study electronic word of mouth and visual electronic word of mouth is treated as communication mode that takes place through various electronic media such as social network websites for the customers and by the customers.

Very few researches has been done for studying the effect of VeWOM on purchase intention and customer engagement. Based on theoretical framework, seven hypotheses were proposed addressing the differential effect of quality of review (high & low) and valance (positive & mixed) of VeWOM and eWOM

on purchase intention and customer engagement, out of which two hypotheses got rejected. To test these hypotheses a study was conducted, among students of different managements colleges. Experimental researches with the help of eight different scenarios were conducted, with 48 subjects/respondents for each scenario i.e. total 384 subjects for each study. Quantitative methodology was applied to collect data and statistical tool (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Analysis demonstrated that VeWOM has a higher impact on purchase intention than eWOM but not on customer engagement. It is also seen that high quality reviews generate higher Purchase Intention and higher Customer Engagement as compared to low quality counterparts. When the quality of review is high in VeWOM, it manages to generate higher purchase intention as well as on customer engagement, as compared to eWOM, even if the valence of the content is mixed. However if the quality of review is poor, VeWOM still generates higher purchase intention, but not customer engagement.

Students are not the true representatives of customers and hence there can be problem of external validity in generalizing the results. There might be some difference in outcome if the respondents would have been customers for different online portals. There is huge difference in expectation, personality and choices of students and customer

Keywords: Electronic word of mouth, visual electronic word of mouth. purchase intention, customer engagement.

Introduction

Customers are main stakeholders of any business activity. Customer engagement is one of the main objectives of the companies and for this, the best place is social networking platform, online shopping portals etc. However, the decision of consumer about what to buy depends on the purchase intention and purchase intention is in-turn dependent on the product knowledge that they have. For carrying out these various types of marketing activities companies use some tools, such as advertisement, internet etc. (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013) because information and media play a great role in learning, decision making, shaping attitude and behavior, etc. (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). These sources of information are of two types, one is organisation dependent (e.g. company web site, advertisement etc.) and other is

organisation independent (e.g. publicity, word of mouth information etc.) which also play crucial role in creating the purchase intention. This WOM influence is further enhanced by the development of internet (Cheung & Thadani, 2010) and network technology, on-line discussion forums where thousand and millions of individuals are registered and share their information as well as experiences (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009). This new preferred form of WOM communication is referred as electronic word-of-mouth (Cheung and Thadani, 2010; King, Racherla & Bush, 2014). The phenomenal growth in social computing has enabled the users in high degree of engagement, communication through various blogs, social networking web sites, wikis, etc. (Metzger, Flanagin, & Medders, 2010), which have high impact on individual's decision making while purchasing. VeWOM and eWOM play different roles in purchase intention and customer engagement, hence on product knowledge due to difference in their level of credibility and effectiveness (Wathen and Burkell, 2002). There are many web based platform such as Twitter, a micro blogging web site, which plays very unique role as a platform for facilitating e-WOM (Kim et al., 2014) for product related information sharing. Similarly there are various online discussion forums which serve as very suitable platform for sharing information and experiences which ultimately influence other readers (Cheung et al., 2009) or potential customers.

King et al., (2014, p 3) recommended in his extensive study that, no research is available with regard to quality of reviews, potential of VeWOM, effect of eWOM on purchase intention and consumer engagement. Many researchers have examined factors leading to using any product or availing any services, and customers sharing their experiences. I argue that the unique nature of VeWOM leads to purchase intention with several interesting dynamics and make customers self - interested to indulge in it. Surprisingly, very few researches have gone into understanding the effects of VeWOM on its receiver i.e., after reading the post what a potential customer feels and the intervening processes that drive their purchase intention. Few studies delve into this important phenomenon but they also show that the traditional WOM and eWOM have differential effects on buying behavior. Some studies examined the negative valence but none of the studies show the effect of mixed valence neither on purchase intention nor on customer engagement.

Theoretical background and literature review

Communications has always been integral to the world of marketing. Having a great product can fetch the desired profits, only if it reaches to the consumer who knows about the product and its specifications. This type of communication is the responsibility of the marketing team which uses various tools to effectively convey their messages to the consumer. In this regard, word-of-mouth is one of the very old leading tools. It has been used extensively, deliberately, and/or unintentionally to create a buzz about a product or a build up for a brand.

There is existing literature on WOM which defines it as an organic way of information propagation primarily through unpaid interpersonal communication between individuals (Sun et al., 2006). WOM differs from other marketing tools of communication because of its inherent genesis lying in original and authentic reviews about various products and services. Thus, it is considered as an effective way to reduce perceived risk in getting information about various entities. Trust is an essential component in the processing of messages that WOM propagates. Compared to oral communications, written communications are found to be more impact (Higie et al., 1987). With the advent of internet and social media, it is perceived that VeWOM will easily triumph over the eWOM and brands have started treating it as the future of customer relationship management tool (Eisingerich, et.al., 2015).

It is believed that eWOM provides alternative sources of information to consumers, hampering companies' ability to influence such consumers through eWOM modes of communication (Jalilvand, et.al. 2010). Majority of consumers are influenced by online reviews and recommendations while making their purchase decisions. Technological flexibility and accessibility options (smartphones/desktops/notebooks/tablets, etc.), provide consumers many choices and a powerful medium to voice their opinions in the form of eWOM on different channels and social media platforms. Any consumer with access to internet can play the role of a critic (Piller, 1999). The line of distinction between real expert opinion and normal users' opinion disappears when it comes to influencing the consumer's choice as they are more likely to get influenced by the reviews of people close to them as compared to reviews by experts as they associate greater credibility to people they trust (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). eWOM influences consumer decision and also impacts firm profits as it can generate value through market expansion and market acceleration (Libai et al., 2013). However, quality of reviews may be subjected to self-selection biases that impact customer purchase

behavior. The characteristic preferences of early buyers can affect long-term consumer purchase behavior as well as social welfare created by the review systems (Li & Hitt, 2008). Early adopters of the products have a self-bias, thus, influencing ratings and reviews online. Quality of review (high or mixed) trend has an impact on potential consumers. The technological characteristics of the internet and social media enable eWOM to spread like wildfire within a very short span of time. In reaction to any questionable statement or activity, the social media users can create waves of outrage within just a few hours referred to as online firestorms (Pfeffer et al., 2014). These firestorms pose new challenges for marketers to control the damage and rebuild reputation. Researchers have also made a clear distinction between volume (quantity) and content (quality) of eWOM.

Pieters et al. (2004, p 9) divided the content of print advertisements into brand, textual and pictorial contents. VeWOM consists of brand, text, and pictorial elements with the primary carrier of information being visual, which is a combination of brand and pictorial elements. Hennig-Thurau (2004) defined VeWOM as: “Any message where the main carrier of information is visual which consist of brand plus pictorial elements, created by potential, actual, former customers about a product, brand or company, which is made available to a large number of people and institutions via Internet”.

There has been much written about the increasing usage and importance of images in communication (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001). Various explanations have been put forth for such inclination towards consumption of visual content. Images are much better at creating a direct emotional connect with the receiver while text appeals only for logical analysis (Arnheim, 1997). Bolter and Grusin (2000) attribute it to the innate fascination with reproducing the visual part of our experiences to bring a sense of immediacy.

Just like information processing theory helps marketers in understanding how consumers process the visual presence of a product reviewer (Bettman & Park, 1980), similarly companies engaging in online communication need to explore visual form of communication. Along with the decreasing attention spans, visual images are likely to be better at communicating the information as intended. Applying information processing theory could make better understanding about how consumers process the visual presence of a product reviewer (Bettman and Park 1980). Visual signs are used and analyzed such avenues which are suitable for research. Credibility has been researched in the context of written form of reviews (e.g., Mackiewicz 2010), but never in the visual and pictorial context. Theories on source credibility could also aid in understanding what makes individuals more or less credible in the video context.

In this interactive era and dynamic business environments it is well accepted, customer engagement is a strategic imperative which determines sustainable competitive advantage (Brodie et al. 2011). By definition, customer engagement behaviors “go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (Van Doorn et al. 2010, p 254). Customer engagement is a dynamic, iterative process that has a basis in various contexts and sometimes is even removed from product/service experiences. As consumers shift from a traditional, passive role to a more active role, eWOM and consumer to consumer (C2C) communities become central to the development of marketing strategies (Pralhad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Several studies, especially those involving brand communities (e.g., Algesheimer et al. 2010; Nambisan and Baron 2007; Schau and Muniz 2002), show that extended C2C interactions heighten participants' engagement and loyalty. It is also known that individuals who seek eWOM have a greater propensity to post their own reviews and participate in eWOM.

Hypothesis development

Internet-based electronic commerce is growing rapidly with the proliferation of commercial websites and the increasing acceptance of online transactions by consumers (Hong & Thong, 2004). As a new marketing channel, the world wide web differs from traditional retail formats in many ways (Alba, 1997). Consumers shopping online cannot touch or smell products, as would be possible in traditional retail outlets, so their purchase judgments must be based on the product information presented on the website. Online sellers seek to overcome this limitation by giving consumers the opportunity to share product evaluations online (Chatterjee, 2001 and Chen, 2004). This consumer-created information is helpful in making purchase decisions because it provides indirect experiences of products. In contrast to a traditional seller, an online seller generally provides consumers with two types of product information. It can offer seller-created product information via its website or other traditional communication channels such as advertisements, and it can also offer consumer-created product information by allowing consumers to post comments on its website. Consumer-created information, an online consumer review, is new information presented from the

perspective of consumers who have purchased and used the product. It includes their experiences, evaluations, and opinions. The user-oriented information provided in this way is, in effect, a new kind of word of mouth communication. As an independent product information resource, online reviews are increasing in popularity and importance, and it is seen that reviews on VeWOM are more appealing than eWOM (Chen, 2004 & Henning, 2004). So, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: VeWOM will have higher effect on purchase intention than eWOM

WOM plays a major role in consumer buying behavior decisions and it is the process of exchanging information between people typically through conversation and usually between those who know each other (Kawakami et. al., 2013). WOM includes consumer sharing of attitudes, reactions about businesses, opinions, products or services to people. It is also known as buzz marketing, viral marketing, social media marketing and guerilla marketing. WOM can be positive or mixed, the mixed WOM helps companies to improve themselves and positive WOM is unconscious promotion given from customers to companies. The function of WOM is mainly related to spreading awareness for the new products in a market. WOM is the world's most effective but least understood method in marketing strategies. WOM is considered as informal, unpaid, oral, noncommercial and interpersonal communication between two or more people who are connected by any verbal communication channel (Petrescu & Korgaonkar, 2011; Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009). For nearly half a century, WOM has been designated as "one of the most important, if not the most important source of information for the consumer" (Arndt, 1967). With the rapid development of Internet, electronic WOM came up as a developed form of WOM. eWOM is a type of WOM with slight difference; it can be observed in different online social channels, in the form of a product review, emails and discussion forums. It plays a pivotal role in the way consumers are interacting with each other on online platforms (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007). Social networks are a great opportunity for online consumers for exchanging their information with their networks of friends and family (Petrescu & Korgaonkar, 2011); even their individual opinions and experiences about companies' brands, products, and services. Others have defined eWOM as the ability of consumers to exchange information online (Liu, 2006). Vivek (2009) suggested a scale of consumer engagement and posited that consumer engagement is three dimensional construct, which are of second-order, composed of enthusiasm, conscious participation and social interaction. Vivek (2009) also differentiated other constructs which are similar to engagement i.e. customer

participation, co-creation and co-production, brand communities, involvement, attachment and consumer devotion. Reitz (2012) studied about online consumer engagement and behavioral process of consumers in comprehending features on companies' in social networking sites and how it leads them to loyalty and repurchase of products. Brodie, Ilic, Juric and Hollebeek (2011) studied consumer engagement in virtual brand communities and according to them dimensions of consumer engagement are cognitive, emotional and behavioral. There is a huge market for social media in India and growing population of youth is using social media to discuss and share opinions about products and services and are also them getting influenced in the process through eWOM. An even more engaging form of Word of Mouth is Visual Electronic Word of Mouth or VeWOM, which involves describing products with graphic mediums like images, video, etc.

After reviewing literature to check the effect of VeWOM on customer engagement, we hypothesized that

Hypothesis 2: VeWOM will have higher effect on customer engagement than eWOM

Vroom defined valence as “affective orientations toward particular outcomes” (p. 15). According to Vroom (1964, p. 15), “an outcome is positively valent when the person prefers attaining it to not attaining it” and “an outcome has a valence of zero when the person is indifferent to attaining or not attaining it, and it is negatively valent when he prefers not attaining it to attaining it”. There can be a discrepancy between the anticipated satisfaction from an outcome (valence) and the actual satisfaction from an outcome (value).

This term refers to the positive or mixed or negative rating assigned by consumers on Likert scales of 1 to 5 or 1 to 7 when they review products. The information provided by the sender has the chances of misinterpretation of the message, whereas in eWOM with an assigned numerical rating, there is less issue with interpreting the valence of a sender's opinion (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). The findings on the effects of valence have been equivocal at best. Some studies (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Li and Hitt 2008) find a positive relationship between valence and product sales and the external influence propensity of online reviews. Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) find evidence of confirmatory bias that drives consumers to look for affirmative evidence supporting an already-made product choice. On the other side, studies also indicate an evidence for negativity bias (Cui, Lui, and Guo 2012; Mizerski 1982), suggesting that when consumers are neutral, negative reviews tend to be more salient than positive reviews. Valence is another key characteristic of eWOM effects, although previous research findings have been understood at best. Few studies (Chevalier

and Mayzlin 2006; Li and Hitt 2008) found a positive relationship between valence and product sales and the external influence propensity of online reviews. Clemons and Gao (2008) found that sale cannot be actually predicted by the star rating, and even if they do, the reviews of the upper quartile (4 and 5 ratings) considered as more accurate predictors than the reviews in the lower quartile. On the other hand, studies also found evidence for negativity bias (Mizerski 1982), i.e., when consumers are neutral or give mixed review, negative reviews tend to become more salient than positive reviews (Ba and Pavlou 2002). Although various numerical features of eWOM have been studied extensively, it is only recently that researchers have started paying attention to the moderating effects of eWOM quality. As Mudambi and Schuff (2010) note, as eWOM becomes more mainstream and pervasive, it is now time to focus on quality rather than quantity and VeWOM steps up to meet this need as it is a more engaging source of information. So, after reviewing this literature it has to be examined that whether word of mouth (VeWOM vs. eWOM) with mixed valence will affect the customer engagement and purchase intention and to check the effect of valence, whether it is higher or not on purchase intent and customer engagement. So, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3 a: VeWOM with mixed valence content will have higher effect on purchase intention than eWOM with positive valence

Hypothesis 3 b: VeWOM with mixed valence content will have higher effect on customer engagement than eWOM with positive valence

Quality of review based on the experience which consumer gets from the product. Online reviews exert even more influence in the case of products whose utility can only be evaluated upon consumption. Intuitively, it is clear that this is the case for experience goods. Concept of experience is well defined by Nelson (1970), experience is good as a product or a service where the quality and utility for a consumer can only be determined upon consumption. This implies that in order for consumers to decide to consume or purchase this product or service, they must rely on previous experiences which provide an indicator of whether this product or service is worthy of purchase or not. Another effect to consider is that reviews by individual consumers often express a personal view of their experience with the product, and this may differ from the expectations of the interested buyer. A preliminary assumption was that submitted reviews reflected consumers' experience of product use. Therefore, the underlying assumption was that the individual submitting the review had consumed the product and was in a position to report his or her own personal

experience and/or judgment of the product, since he/she had prior experience of the product (mixed or positive, depending on the value of the review rating).

Quality of information describes the usage situations and product advantages from the consumer's perspective. It can be easily understood and taken into the consideration because it represents consumers' personal feelings or satisfaction about the product (Chen, 2004). Customer given reviews are more impactful because it has a dual role; it has dual functions of information as well recommendation. As information, it provides user-oriented product information, while as recommendation; it provides recommendations by previous consumers in the form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The main problem that arises is of the trustworthiness of the information source. The trust worthiness of an information source is often positively related to information credibility (Bickart, 2001). Some studies suggest that consumer-created information is more credible than seller-created information from the perspective of trustworthiness (Dellarocas, 2003). When the information is presented by the seller, his main focus on the good aspects of the product and it tends to hide inferior aspects of a product. Consumer provides honest evaluations of the product from the user's viewpoint. Thus, on-line consumer reviews are likely to be more trustworthy than seller-created information (Korfiatis & Alonso, 2012). The quality of consumer-created information will tend to be considering more because it is consumer-oriented information (Bickart, 2001). Seller-created information is product-oriented and objective, focusing on product attributes for many and unspecified persons which are quality wise cannot be considered as good. An online consumer review is a new form of word-of-mouth communication as a recommender. It is similar to traditional word-of-mouth as a messenger of other consumers' opinions (Chatterjee, 2001; Chen, 2004).

Low-quality reviews are emotional, subjective, and vacuous, offer no factual information, and simply make a recommendation (Park & Lee 2007). Some consumers treat eWOM reviews as a source of information. After reviews are posted by customers in question, even subjective and emotional reviews, Park & Lee (2007) defined as low-quality reviews in this study provide important and useful information when they are positive. If a review contains more understandable and objective comments with sufficient reasons of recommendation, it is relatively more persuasive than a comment that expresses feelings and recommendations without specific reasons. Since previous buyers are anonymous on the Internet, people generally will not easily accept or believe a review posted on a website if it does not provide enough information (Chen, 2004).

The number of online consumer reviews (review quantity) of a product represents the product's popularity as the online word-of-mouth effect because it is related to the sales volume of the product (Chatterjee, 2001 and Chen, 2004). The more reviews there are, the more popular and important the product is. In addition, the number of reviews is likely to lead consumers to rationalize their purchasing decisions by telling themselves, "Many other people also bought the product." Reference to word-of-mouth (other people's comments) is a risk-reduction strategy that can do much to reduce or eliminate the uncomfortable feeling of risk exposure (Buttle, 1998). So, after reviewing this literature it has to be seen whether high quality of review will effect purchase intention and customer engagement.

High quality of reviews are in which the quantity of content is high message very effective and efficient , due to HQR products attraction is much more high to the consumers and they also perceived it more sincere, more valuable, more reliable (Korfiatis & Alonso, 2012). Online consumer reviews are more impactful can reach far beyond the local community, because consumers anywhere in the world can access reviews on the Internet (Chen, 2004). An online seller can license consumer reviews from intermediaries, and decide when to post them on its Web site (Chen, 2004). In addition, an on-line seller can select "remarkable" reviews and post them in front of its Web site, thereby leading consumers to concentrate on the reviews. Thus, the content of an online consumer review is an important element in overcoming the lack of message credibility. If an online review is persuasive and logical, consumers are more likely to believe the message. In addition, if a great many consumers recommend a product, other consumers, in conformity with their views, are likely to believe the recommendations and have a favorable attitude toward the product. This body of research finds that the better and more extensive the information is, the greater the consumer satisfaction. In addition, as consumer satisfaction increases, so too do consumers purchase intention. Therefore, information quality can have a positive effect on purchasing intention. Much research on the quality of messages in marketing literature focuses on the message contents. There is no standard information format for consumers posting reviews, and as a result, each online consumer review is different from others. An online consumer review is an important factor in product sales (Chen, 2005). Other online sellers in many product categories are adopting the same strategy of providing a venue where consumers can voice their opinions. Half the consumers who visit online shopping malls consider consumer reviews important in their buying decisions (Piller, 1999). The quantity and quality of online consumer reviews are important characteristics affecting consumer information processing. The number of online reviews of a

product (review quantity) may be taken as representing the product's popularity, since it is reasonable to assume that the number of reviews is related to the number of consumers who have bought the product (Chatterjee, 2001 and Chen, 2004). Since there is no standard format, the content of online reviews (review quality) varies from short to long and from subjective to objective (Chatterjee, 2001). A high quality review is one that is more logical and persuasive, and supports its evaluation with reasons based on the facts about a product

So, after reviewing this literature to check the effect of high- and low-quality reviews, whether it is higher or not on purchase intention and customer engagement, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4 a: High quality review will generate higher purchase intention than low quality review.

Hypothesis 4 b: High quality review will generate high customer engagement than low quality review.

Earlier literature shows that eWOM is better than VeWOM, but now impact of VeWOM is much higher than anything else. In this study I have taken few variable to examine the impact of these variables on the purchase intention of the customers and customer engagement in different ways the variables which have been taken are WOM is further dived into two parts eWOM and Visual eWOM, quality of review; high and low quality of review and valence; positive and mixed , in this study only positive and mixed valence has been taken because earlier some studies had been proved that effect of negative valence will negatively affect the consumer buying behavior i.e.; purchase intention and customer engagement.

An online consumer review is an important factor in product sales (Chen, 2005). Other online sellers in many product categories are adopting the same strategy of providing a venue where consumers can voice their opinions. Half the consumers who visit online shopping malls consider consumer reviews important in their buying decisions (Piller, 1999). The quantity and quality of online consumer reviews are important characteristics affecting consumer information processing. The number of online reviews of a product (review quantity) may be taken as representing the product's popularity, since it is reasonable to assume that the number of reviews is related to the number of consumers who have bought the product (Chatterjee, 2001 and Chen, 2004). Since there is no standard format, the content of online reviews (review quality) varies from short to long and from subjective to objective (Chatterjee, 2001). A high-quality review is one that is more logical and persuasive, and supports its evaluation with reasons based on the facts about a product, so by concluding this, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 5a: VeWOM with high quality of review and mixed valence will have high purchase intention than eWOM with high quality review and mixed valence.

Hypothesis 5b: VeWOM with high quality of review and mixed valence will have high customer engagement than eWOM with high quality review and mixed valence.

The VeWOM is attractive and retains the customers' attention especially when it's a matter of customer engagement for creating purchase intention, but when compared to its electronic counterpart on uneven terms that is when eWOM with positive valence while VeWOM with mixed valence, and quality of review with high for both (VeWOM and eWOM), it is interesting to know whether it would still remain as a more effective medium. Thus, it is hypothesized as:

Hypothesis 6a: High quality review with mixed valence communicated through VeWOM will have greater effect on purchase intention compared to high quality review with positive valence communicates through eWOM

Hypothesis 6b: High quality review with mixed valence communicated through VeWOM will have greater effect on customer engagement compared to high quality review with positive valence communicates through eWOM.

The test of effectiveness becomes even more stringent when the quality of review drops down to low. The visual medium of word of mouth is attractive and retains the customers' attention, but when compared to its electronic counterpart on uneven terms that is when eWOM with positive valence while VeWOM with mixed valence, and quality of review was low for both (VeWOM and eWOM), it is interesting to know whether it would still remain as a more effective medium. Thus, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 7a: VeWOM having mixed valence and low-quality review will have high effect on purchase intention and customer engagement than eWOM having positive valence with low quality review.

Hypothesis 7b: VeWOM having mixed valence and low-quality review will have high effect on purchase intention and customer engagement than eWOM having positive valence with low quality review.

Methodology

Study design

In this research, the study was conducted by using, factorial design of 2x2x2, with three factors each having two level. The variables were electronic word of mouth (eWOM and VeWOM), quality of review (high & low) and message valance (positive & mixed).

Here factorial design was between subjects. Thus, total eight scenarios were developed. The scenario was representing the VeWOM and eWOM from strangers.

Sample

In order to make the experiment more extensive, the whole study was conducted into 8 scenarios (4 VeWOM and 4 eWOM). Participants were informed that the present study aims to study the impact of electronic vs. visual word of mouth on customer engagement and purchase intention, followed by a brief introduction and VeWOM respondents were requested to come with their smartphone along with ear phones. Firstly, 4 different scenarios were uploaded on Youtube and contact details (WhatsApp number, email Id) of students were taken prior from the faculty or class representative. Secondly, the link was distributed to the randomly selected respondents (bachelor and master course students from various reputed engineering and management colleges across India) . As shown in factorial table above among 384 students, randomly were divided into two groups of 196 each one was for VeWOM and other are for eWOM. Among 196 students in each group then further it was divided into 4 sub- groups of 48 respondents each for each scenario.

Measure

Respondent Profile

Gender	322 – Male, 62- Female
Mean Age	22 years for both male and female
Education Graduation	All respondents are in Post-Graduation
Monthly income	< Rs. 25,000

Mode of online shopping	a) Smart Phone - 309 b) Laptops - 30 c) Desktops – 09 d) 36 some other mode
Friends on Facebook	a) <50 - 16 b) 51-100 - 74 c) 101- 250 - 86 d) 251-500 - 68 e) 501- 1000 - 68 f) >1000 - 24 No Facebook account - 37
Social media usage time	a) < 30 minutes/day - 16 b) 31 minutes-2hrs / day - 65 c) 2.1 hrs – 4 hrs - 122 d) > 4hrs – 6

Manipulation checks

The three independent variables used in this study are word of mouth (visual electronic word of mouth and electronic), quality of review (high and low) and message valance (positive and mixed). These variables were manipulated in eight different scenarios. Various statements and pictures were included in these scenarios such as message in the form of eVOWM and VeWOM received from a person about product. The eight different conditions were given to eight groups of respondents having forty members in each group. Each independent variable had two different levels; hence total eight conditions were developed which are as follows:

1. Visual electronic word of mouth having positive valance and high quality of review
2. Visual electronic word of mouth word of mouth having positive valance and low quality of review
3. Visual electronic word of mouth word of mouth having mixed valance and high quality of review

4. Visual electronic word of mouth having mixed valance and low quality of review
5. Electronic word of mouth having positive valance and high quality of review
6. Electronic word of mouth having positive valance and low quality of review
7. Electronic word of mouth having mixed valance and instrument quality of review
8. Electronic word-of-mouth having mixed valance and low quality of review.

In these ways the three independent variables were manipulated to create eight different situations. All these eight different scenarios depict the different condition in which word of mouth messages are received by respondents and their responses were noted down.

Result

The dependent variables used in the study are purchase intention and customer engagement. It shows adequate reliability. The value of Cronbach's α coefficient for purchase intention is 0.895 and for customer engagement is 0.838. This signifies that different seven item statements which were used in measuring dependent variable are consistent in measuring the purchase intention and customer engagement.

Table 3: Value of Cronbach's alpha for dependent variable and control variable

Type of Variables	Variable Name	Cronbach's alpha
Dependent variable	Purchase Intention	0.895
	Customer Engagement	0.838
Control variable	Source Credibility	0.808
	Product Information	0.719
	Perceived Informativeness	0.772

Mean and Standard Deviation of Purchase Intention

The table shows the mean and standard deviation of Purchase Intention of responses for the eight different scenarios.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Purchase Intention for eight different scenarios

Scenario	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. VeWOM*HQR*Positive Valance	4.91	0.55
2. VeWOM*LQR * Positive Valance	5.33	0.60
3. eWOM*HQR * Positive Valance	5.20	0.85
4. eWOM*LQR* Positive Valance	5.30	0.86
5. VeWOM*HQR* Mixed Valance	4.38	0.37
6. VeWOM*LQR * Mixed Valance	3.95	0.17
7. eWOM*HQR * Mixed Valance	4.21	0.67
8. eWOM*LQR * Mixed Valance	3.21	0.91

Standard deviation helps in understanding how the population vary from the mean i.e., smaller value of the standard deviation signifies that the population is concentrated around mean and higher value of standard deviation shows that population is scattered and does not concentrate around mean (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation for the purchase intention.

The three independent variable used in this study are word of mouth (visual electronic word of mouth and electronic), quality of review (high and low) and message valance (positive and mixed). These variables were manipulated in eight different scenarios. Various statements and pictures were included in these scenarios such as message in the form of eVOWM and VeWOM received from a person about product. The eight different conditions were given to eight groups of respondents having forty members in each group. Each independent variable had two different levels, hence total eight conditions were developed which are as follows:

VeWOM had positive valance and high quality of review is having mean (4.91) and standard deviation (0.55). VeWOM having positive valance and low quality of review is had mean (5.33) and standard deviation (0.60). VeWOM having mixed valance and high quality of review is had mean (4.38) and standard deviation (0.37). VeWOM with mixed valance and low quality of review is had mean (3.95) and standard deviation (0.17). eWOM with positive valance and high quality of review is had mean (5.20) and standard deviation (0.85). eWOM with positive valance and low quality of review is had mean (5.30) and

standard deviation (0.86). eWOM with mixed valance and high quality of review is had mean (4.21) and standard deviation (0.67). eWOM with mixed valance and low quality of review is had mean (3.21) and standard deviation (0.91).

ANOVA or analysis of variance is used in this study to test the hypothesis by investigating if there is any statistical significant difference in mean different groups (scenarios), exist or not (Zikmund et al., 2013), by comparing their means. In this study, total respondents were categorized in eight groups, on the basis of eight different scenarios, each group having 48 respondents.

In these ways the three independent variables were manipulated to create eight different situations. All these eight different scenarios depict the different condition in which word of mouth messages are received by respondents and their responses were noted down.

Table 5: ANOVA results for effects on Purchase Intention

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	199.924 ^a	11	18.175	29.802	0.000	0.468
Intercept	33.015	1	33.015	54.135	0.000	0.127
Main Effect						
WOM	2.641	1	2.641	4.330	0.038	0.012
RQ	3.649	1	3.649	5.983	0.015	0.016
VAL	137.341	1	137.341	225.200	0.000	0.377
Interaction effect						
WOM * RQ	6.079	1	6.079	9.969	0.002	0.026
WOM * VAL	8.879	1	8.879	14.559	0.000	0.038
RQ * VAL	22.973	1	22.973	37.670	0.000	0.092
WOM * RQ * VAL	0.711	1	.711	1.166	0.281	0.003
Error	226.868	372	.610			

Total	8429.420	384				
Corrected Total	426.792	383				

a. R Squared = 0.468 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.453)

Note: WOM: word of mouth, RQ: review quality, VAL: Valance

Main effect of independent variables on dependent variable

In Table 5 it is shown that main effect of VeWOM on purchase intention is no significant ($p=0.38$). The second independent variable was review quality which has significant main effect on purchase intention ($p=0.15$). Valance and has significant main effect on purchase intention ($p=0.000$). Hence it indicates that there is insignificant effect of visual electronic word of mouth on purchase intention

Interaction effect on purchase intention: Two – way

The interaction effect of word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and review quality on purchase intention is significant ($p=0.002$). This signifies from Figure 1 and Table 6 that VeWOM and HQR had mean (4.65) and eWOM and HQR had mean (4.70) which suggests that HQR have higher impact with eWOM than VeWOM. VeWOM and LQR had mean (4.64) and eWOM and LQR had mean (4.25) which clearly shows that LQR have higher impact with VeWOM than eWOM on purchase intention.

Table 6: ANOVA output for two-way interaction of word-of-mouth & quality of review on purchase intention

Word of Mouth	Quality of Review	Mean
VeWOM	HQR	4.65
VeWOM	LQR	4.64
eWOM	HQR	4.70
eWOM	LQR	4.25

Effect of word of mouth (visual & electronic) and valance (positive and mixed) on purchase intention is significant ($p=0.000$). This indicates from Figure 2 and Table 7 that VeWOM and positive valance had mean (5.12) and eWOM and positive valance had mean (5.25) which signifies that positive valance have higher impact with eWOM than on VeWOM; VeWOM and mixed valance had mean (4.17) and eWOM and mixed valance had mean (3.71) which clearly shows that mixed valance has higher impact with VeWOM than eWOM on purchase intention.

Table 7: ANOVA output for two way interaction of word-of-mouth & valance on purchase intention

Word of Mouth	Valance	Mean
VeWOM	Positive	5.12
VeWOM	Mixed	4.17
eWOM	Positive	5.25
eWOM	Mixed	3.71

Effect of review quality (high & low) and Valance (positive and mixed) on purchase intention is significant ($p=0.000$). Figure 3 and Table 8 reveals that HQR and positive valance had mean (5.05) and LQR and positive valance had mean (5.34) which signifies that positive valance have higher impact on LQR than HQR, which means that positive valance message has a significant role in building purchase intention ; HQR and mixed valance had mean (4.30) and LQR and mixed valance had mean (3.39) which signifies that mixed valance have higher impact on HQR than LQR, which means that mixed valance message with HQR is more preferable in building purchase intention.

Table 8: ANOVA output for two-way interaction of quality of review & valance on purchase intention

Quality of Review	Valance	Mean
HQR	Positive	5.05
HQR	Mixed	4.30
LQR	Positive	5.34
LQR	Mixed	3.39

This signifies that the two independent variables review quality (high & low) and valance (positive and mixed) have significant effect on purchase intention, which means these two independent variables

together affects the level of purchase intention. But the effect of word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and valance (positive & mixed) and review quality (high & low) on purchase intention is not significant ($p=0.281$). This signifies that the three independent variables word of mouth (visual & electronic) and review quality (high & low) and Valance (positive and mixed) do not have significant effect on purchase intention, which means these two independent variables together do not affects the level of purchase intention as two can affect the purchase intention.

Table 9: Mean and Standard Deviation of Customer Engagement

Scenario	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.VeWOM*HQR*Positive Valance	4.67	0.55
2.VeWOM*LQR * Positive Valance	4.74	0.65
3.eWOM*HQR * Positive Valance	4.99	0.56
4.eWOM*LQR* Positive Valance	4.73	0.64
5.VeWOM*HQR* Mixed Valance	5.04	0.53
6.VeWOM*LQR * Mixed Valance	4.44	0.55
7.eWOM*HQR * Mixed Valance	4.48	0.62
8.eWOM*LQR * Mixed Valance	4.20	0.92

VeWOM with positive valance and high quality of review had mean value of 4.67 and standard deviation of 0.55. VeWOM of mouth with positive valance and low quality of review had mean value of 4.74 and standard deviation of 0.65. VeWOM with mixed valance and high quality of review had mean value of 5.04 and standard deviation of 0.53. VeWOM with mixed valance and low quality of review had mean value of 4.44 and standard deviation of 0.55. eWOM with positive valance and high quality of review had mean value of 4.99 and standard deviation of 0.56. eWOM with positive valance and low quality of review is had mean value of 4.73 and standard deviation of 0.64. eWOM with mixed valance and high quality of review had mean value of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.62. eWOM with mixed valance and low quality of review had mean value of 4.20 and standard deviation of 0.92.

Table 10: ANOVA results for effect on Customer Engagement

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	26.603 ^a	7	3.800	9.179	0.000	0.146
Intercept	8348.673	1	8348.673	20164.532	0.000	0.982
Main Effect						
WOM	1.438	1	1.438	3.474	0.063	0.009
RQ	6.853	1	6.853	16.553	0.000	0.042
VAL	5.583	1	5.583	13.483	0.000	0.035
Interaction effect						
WOM * RQ	0.002	1	0.002	0.005	0.943	0.000
WOM * VAL	7.454	1	7.454	18.003	0.000	0.046
RQ * VAL	2.819	1	2.819	6.808	0.009	0.018
WOM * RQ * VAL	2.454	1	2.454	5.928	0.015	0.016
Error	155.674	376	0.414			
Total	8530.950	384				
Corrected Total	182.277	383				

a. R Squared = .146 (Adjusted R Squared = .130)

Note: WOM: word of mouth, RQ: review quality, VAL: Valance

Main effect of independent variables on dependent variable

Table 10 shows that main effect of WOM on customer engagement is not significant ($p=0.063$). The second independent variable is review quality which has significant main effect on customer engagement ($p=0.000$). The third independent variable is valance and has significant main effect on customer engagement ($p=0.000$). Hence it indicates that there is insignificant effect of visual electronic word of mouth on customer engagement.

Interaction effect on customer engagement: Two - way

The interaction effect between word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and review quality on customer engagement is not significant ($p=0.943$).

The interaction effect of word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and review quality on purchase intention is significant ($p=0.002$). This signifies from Figure 4 and Table 11 that VeWOM with HQR had mean value of 4.8 and eWOM with HQR had mean value of 4.73 which implies that HQR have higher impact on VeWOM than eWOM; VeWOM with LQR had mean value of (4.59) and eWOM with LQR had mean value of 4.46 which clearly shows that LQR have higher impact with VeWOM than eWOM on customer engagement

Table 11: ANOVA output for two way interaction of word-of-mouth & quality of review on customer engagement

Word of Mouth	Quality of Review	Mean
VeWOM	HQR	4.85
VeWOM	LQR	4.59
eWOM	HQR	4.73
eWOM	LQR	4.46

Effect of word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and Valance (positive and mixed) on customer engagement is significant ($p=0.000$).

This signifies from Figure 5 and Table 12 that VeWOM with positive valance had mean (4.70) and eWOM with positive valance had mean value of 4.86 which signifies that positive valance have higher impact with eWOM than on VeWOM ; VeWOM with mixed valance had mean value of 4.74 and eWOM and mixed valance had mean value of 4.34 which shows that mixed valance have higher impact with VeWOM than eWOM on customer engagement.

Table 12: ANOVA output for two way interaction of word-of-mouth & valance on customer**engagement**

Word of Mouth	Valance	Mean
VeWOM	Positive	5.70
VeWOM	Mixed	4.74
eWOM	Positive	4.86
eWOM	Mixed	4.34

Effect of review quality (high & low) and Valance (positive and mixed) on customer engagement is significant ($p=0.009$).

This signifies from Figure 6 and Table 13 that HQR with positive valance had mean value of 4.80 and LQR with positive valance had mean value of 4.73, which signifies that positive valance have higher impact on LQR than HQR; HQR with mixed valance had mean value of 4.76 and LQR with mixed valance had mean value of 4.32, which signifies that mixed valance have higher impact on HQR than LQR, which means that mixed valance message with HQR is more preferable in building customer engagement.

Table 13: ANOVA output for two-way interaction of quality of review & valance on customer**engagement**

Quality of Review	Valance	Mean
HQR	Positive	4.80
HQR	Mixed	4.76
LQR	Positive	4.73
LQR	Mixed	4.32

The effect of word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and Valance (positive & mixed) and review quality (high & low) on customer engagement is significant ($p=0.015$). This signifies that the three independent variables word of mouth (Visual & electronic) and review quality (high & low) and Valance (positive and mixed) have significant effect on customer engagement, which means these three independent variables together can affects the customer engagement.

Table 14: Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement of hypothesis	Level of Significance	Conclusion
H1	<i>VeWOM will have higher effect on Purchase Intention than eWOM</i>	0.038	Supported
H2	<i>VeWOM will have higher effect on Customer Engagement than eWOM</i>	0.063	Not – Supported
H3	<p><i>H3a: VeWOM with Mixed Valence content will have higher effect on Purchase Intention than eWOM with positive valence</i></p> <p><i>H3b: VeWOM with mixed valence content will have higher effect on customer engagement than eWOM with positive valence</i></p>	0.000	Supported
H4	<p><i>H4a: High quality review will generate high Customer Engagement than low quality review.</i></p> <p><i>H4b: High quality review will generate higher Purchase Intention than low quality review.</i></p>	0.000 0.015	Supported Supported
H5	<i>H5a: VeWOM with high quality of review and mixed valence will have high purchase intention than eWOM with high quality review and mixed valence.</i>	0.000	Supported

	<i>H5b: VeWOM with high quality of review and mixed valence will have high customer engagement than eWOM with high quality review and mixed valence.</i>	0.000	Supported
H6	<i>H6a: High quality review with mixed valence communicated through VeWOM will have greater effect on purchase intention compared to high quality review with positive valence communicates through eWOM</i> <i>H6b: High quality review with mixed valence communicated through VeWOM will have greater effect on customer engagement compared to high quality review with positive valence communicates through eWOM</i>	0.000	Supported
H7	<i>H7a: VeWOM having mixed valence and low quality review will have high effect on purchase intention than eWOM having positive valence with low quality review.</i> <i>H7b: VeWOM having mixed valence and low quality review will have high effect on customer engagement than eWOM having positive valence with low quality review.</i>	0.281 0.015	Not Supported Supported

Findings

Thus it can be summarized that reviews of high quality are more likely to lead customers to a decision to purchase than a review of low quality, and when the quality is high, customers are more likely to engage with the reviews, rather than when the quality is low. It is also seen that VeWOM with high quality review and mixed valence has a greater chance to lead customers to a decision to purchase and to generate customer engagement than eWOM with high quality review and mixed valence. VeWOM, when the quality of review is high and valence is mixed, it has a greater chance to influence customers to engage in deciding to make a purchase, and to engage them with the reviews than eWOM with high quality reviews, even with positive valence. However, VeWOM with low quality review and mixed valence has a greater potential to engage customers with reviews but a lower chance to lead a customer to decide to purchase than eWOM with low quality reviews with positive valence.

This study contributes to the literature as follows: first, it examines impact of quality of review and valence on purchase intention and engagement of customer. Insights are provided about the consumer buying behavior towards valence (positive and mixed) and quality of review (high and low); second, findings of this study can help practitioners, managers, researchers, and scholars in this field to understand consumer responses to the relative importance of valence and quality of review in purchase intention and customer engagement ; third, particularly, from a managerial standpoint, this study has a significance for both developing and developed countries, where dependence of purchase intention and customer engagement increasing on the basis of review mainly in the form of VeWOM ;fourth, this study help companies for providing better understanding about VeWOM, customers purchase intention can be build up and it also helps in increasing the engagement of a customer; fifth study also signifies that VeWOM help companies in promoting their products and services.

Both WOM (i.e.VeWOM and eWOM) have merits in attracting and retaining the customer. However, in order to increase purchase intention, VeWOM is more effective than eWOM; quality of review also plays a very vital role in building purchase intention and customer engagement; if the message is shown to the customer in visual form it will be more impactful, and is more likely to lead them to a decision to

purchase, rather than in texted form that if the message is shown to the customer in visual form it will be more impactful, and they are more likely to engage with the reviews, rather than in texted form.

Conclusion

Word of mouth is defined as a marketing communication tool for increasing the customer engagement and purchase intention of the previous, existing and potential customers. For them it's a source of information which is informal or casual communication between customers to customer about a product. It is considered as a process where interpersonal communication between sender and receiver influences behavior, perception or attitude of receiver. In this study electronic word of mouth and visual electronic word of mouth is treated as communication mode that takes place through various electronic media such as social network websites for the customers and by the customers.

Limited researches have been done for studying the effect of VeWOM on purchase intention and customer engagement. Based on the theoretical framework, hypotheses were proposed addressing the differential effect of quality of review (high & low) and valance (positive & mixed) of VeWOM and eWOM on purchase intention and customer engagement, out of which two hypotheses got rejected. To test these hypotheses, the study was conducted, among students of different management colleges. Experimental research with the help of eight different scenarios was conducted, with 48 subjects/respondents for each scenario i.e total 384 subjects for each study. Quantitative methodology was applied to collect data and statistical tool (statistical package for the social sciences) was used for data analysis. From analysed data it was observed that VeWOM has a higher impact on purchase intention than eWOM but not on customer engagement. It is also seen that high quality reviews generate higher purchase intention and higher customer engagement as compared to low quality counterparts. When the quality of review is high in VeWOM, it manages to generate higher purchase intention as well as on customer engagement, as compared to eWOM, even if the valence of the content is mixed. However if the quality of review is poor, VeWOM still generates higher purchase intention, but not customer engagement.

Limitation

Student as subjects

Students are not the true representatives of customers and hence there can be problem of external validity in generalizing the results. There might be some difference in outcome if the respondents would have been customers for different online portals. There is huge difference in expectation, personality and choices of students and customer.

Artificiality

One of the main limitations in experimental research design is that the situations are created not in natural settings but in artificial one, which some time do not give the required result (Kothari, 2004). There would be huge difference in the outcome if the research is conducted in natural setting than more appropriate result would come out as the artificial situation can't help in depicting the real situation effect of one variable on other.

Manipulation of variables

The basis of experimental research is manipulation of variables, which some time not considered as an objective method. In this study the three independents variables were manipulated.

Future Research

The current study can be replicated through a qualitative research design to gain a more in depth understanding of the phenomenological experiences of the users and customers of online marketing. Future study can explore other population groups and draw comparisons. The developments of the study offer opportunities for marketers and academicians to carry out researches to have a better understanding of social media usage behavior in India. This can go a long way in developing better market segmentation strategies and may also help researchers in adopting right methodology and suggest better measurement scales.

Practical Implication for this Study

The findings of my study have the following implications on publicity of the products or services:

Product Promotion: VeWOM, is one of the very appealing ways to get connected with customers, it helps in developing the positive perception via., positive as well as mixed valance with both high and low quality of review about products, which in turn provide better understanding about features, specifications, etc., of the products of particular brands the recognition and it will increase the probability of purchase intention.

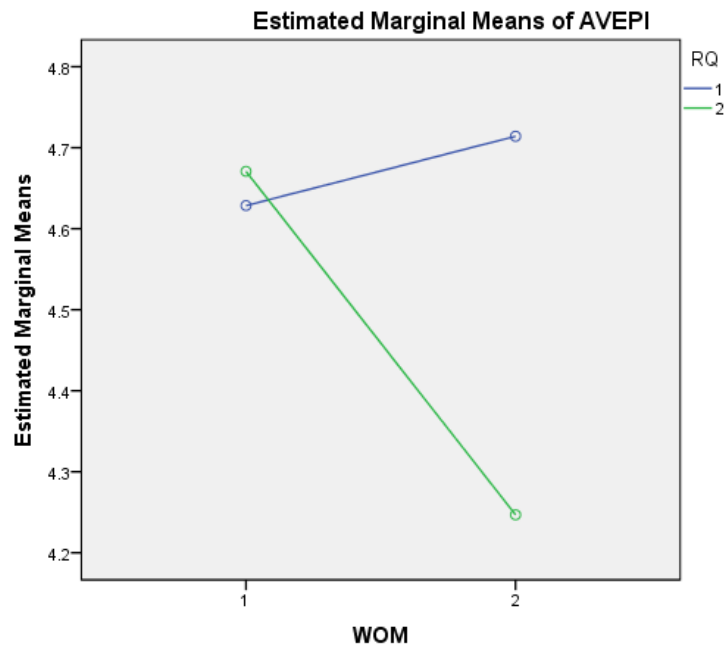
Brand Recognition: VeWOM, which are more appealing to the customers, make products of particular brands adopting VeWOM more visible, which in turn boosts the recognition and possibility the credibility of the brand.

Quality Improvement: Managers can get better feedback in order to get positive results, which in-turn can be used to improve the product to better suit the needs of the customers.



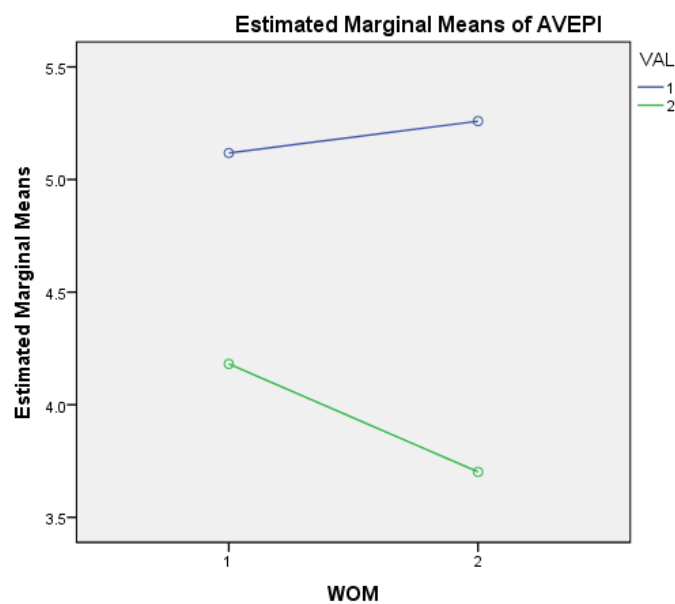
Appendix 1

Figure 1: Interaction effect of review quality and WOM on purchase intention



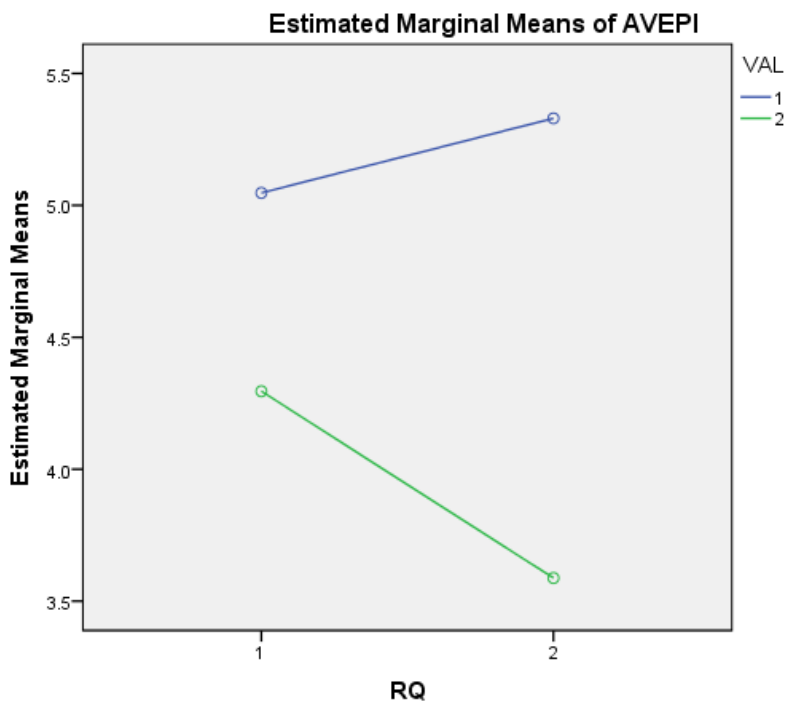
Note: WOM (1: VeWOM, 2: eWOM), RQ (1: high, 2: low)

Figure 2: Interaction effect of valance and WOM on purchase intention



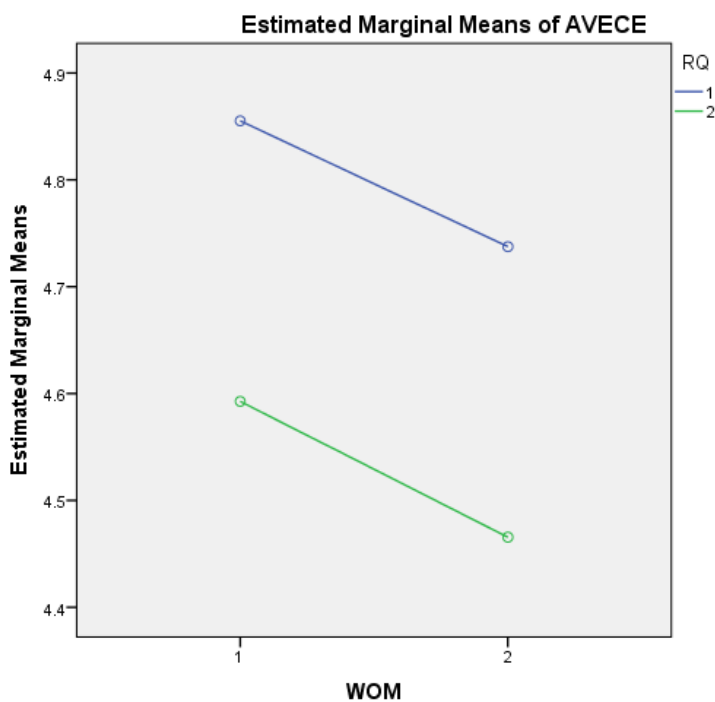
Note: WOM (1: VeWOM, 2: eWOM), VAL (1: positive, 2: mixed)

Figure 3: Interaction effect of valance and review quality on purchase intention



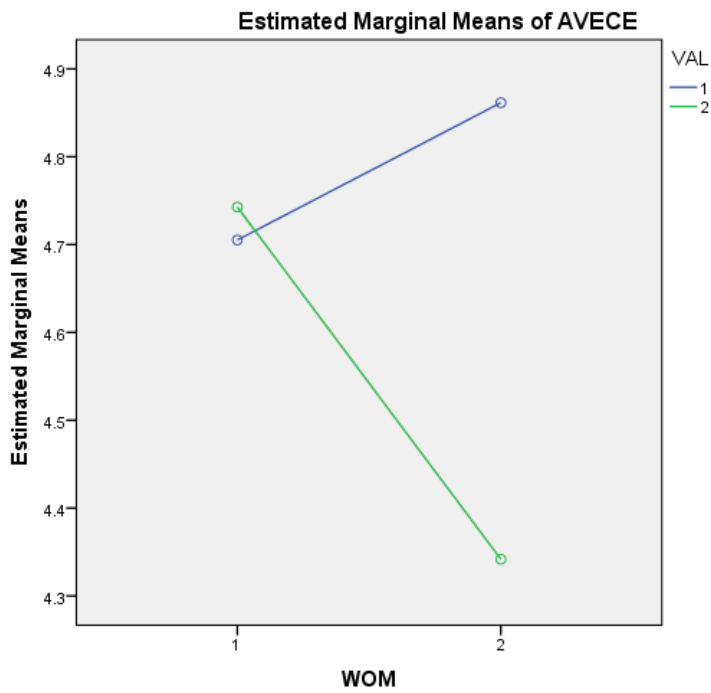
Note: RQ (1: high, 2: low), VAL (1: positive, 2: mixed)

Figure 4: Interaction effect of review quality and WOM on customer engagement



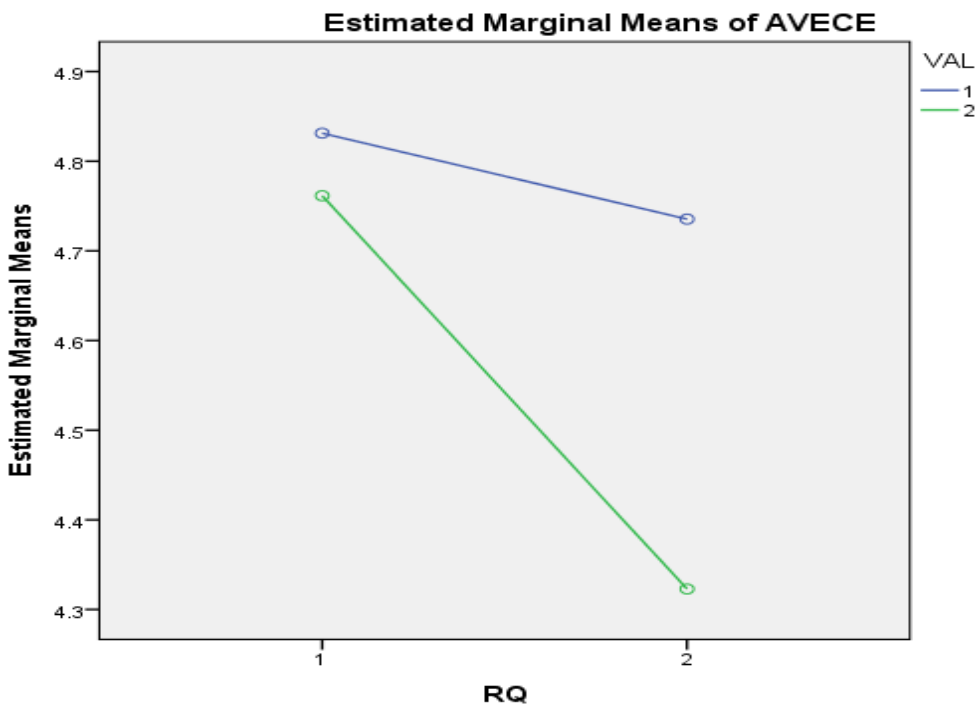
Note: WOM (1: VeWOM, 2: eWOM), RQ (1: high, 2: low)

Figure 5: Interaction effect of valance and WOM on customer engagement



Note: WOM (1: VeWOM, 2: eWOM), VAL (1: positive, 2: mixed)

Figure 6: Interaction effect of valance and review quality on customer engagement



Note: RQ (1: high, 2: low), VAL (1: positive, 2: mixed)

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