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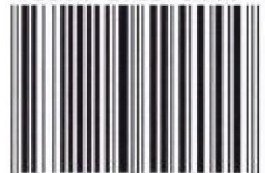
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A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL VERSUS ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH AS MARKETING TOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the word of mouth (WOM) is taking place through spoken communication shared in a face to face context involving two parties. It is characterized by its synchronicity and the relatively short delay in word and response exchange. Word of mouth can influence consumers to make a decision making, representing the interpersonal influence between sender and receiver, whether positively or negatively influencing the recipient's attitudes (Yang 2017). This can be contributed to the receiver's perception of the sender's neutrality, increasing the perception of reliability of the message above any company communications.

Word of mouth as informal communication that can be used by private parties to determine products or services and did not consist of formal communications or interaction between customers and a business (Oh & Ki, 2019). This form of communication can be considered an element of product decision making or an outcome of the buying process. The general consensus is that consumers place more faith in word of mouth than in traditional media, especially when looking for product or service. Through WOM, consumer behaviour can be attributed to knowledge asymmetry that manifests itself in the evaluation of alternatives or simply in the attempt to meet their needs.

ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (eWOM)

Word of mouth also takes place in the online world, and customer comments are open to everyone with access to the Internet. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) usually occurs through written word and is more asynchronous than traditional WOM due to breaks that may occur during the communication process. According to Siqueira (2019) three aspects can be described by eWOM which is finding an opinion, giving an opinion and passing an opinion. Opinion seeking intensity is determined by the effort associated with customers' opinion-seeking behaviour when searching for information, as well as by other advice before making a purchase decision. Opinion-giving behaviour is more frequently observed in opinion leaders who may influence attitudes and behaviour of other customers. Opinion-passing behaviour is characterized by the digital transmission or passing of information which enhances the flow of eWOM resulting in multidirectional interaction that allows the word to be transmitted more quickly. Opinion gathering and sharing as aspects of the typical word of mouth has been well researched yet less for eWOM.

The recent most and perhaps the most popular addition in internet utilities is the online social media. Online social media is a set of internet applications, for example like blogs, social networking sites, content communities, collaborative projects, virtual game worlds and social worlds that offer people the opportunity to interact with other members by creating profile sites, group communities, uploading pictures and sending instant messages. Social media enables the internet users to share, send and receive content with each other. Thus, from the social media allowing the electronic word of mouth to happen.

Online communicators behave differently than communicators face to face. Online communicators show fewer inhibitions, are more willing to share personal information and are more willing to be honest about their views. By comparison with face-to-face encounters, these activities could be due to the greater privacy offered by the Internet. The perception of reduced privacy by social media has had a positive impact on the confidentiality of eWOM information. Online communication from using the social media also allows information to be sought at different times and at different paces, as the transmitted information loses little of its intended meaning.

Major characteristics that distinguish electronic word of mouth from traditional word of mouth and contribute to its popularity for the organizations to use social media as the marketing platform and increasing use is the opinions and information shared can immediately reach a wide audience, electronic word of mouth recipients can seek information from multiple review sites, then it immediately available and has a persistent digital footprint, the anonymous nature of electronic word of mouth, where writers often cannot be identified or held accountable for their comments encourages people to publish it, individuals can build up social networks and status within those networks by writing electronic word of mouth, and consumers increasingly rely on other consumers' electronic word of mouth based opinions because electronic word of mouth generally has a clear negative or positive valence. Product or service data from friends, family, or an online community is perceived as being more authentic, accurate, and reliable than that given through the websites and advertising of merchants (Nam, 2019).

For brand or product comparisons, individuals often read the electronic word of mouth. The consumers also check for negative information using electronic word of mouth. This electronic word of mouth is also sometimes used to help previously the customers to make purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

With the help of electronic word of mouth, customer can easily collect information and be knowledgeable about a product, mostly from social media platform or feedback from people who has experience in online medium about product or services without face to face with each other. All information obtain will influence customer purchase decision. It shown that eWOM becomes effective tools to influence customer in decision making.

By the improvements in online shopping facilities, eWOM has gained more and more importance. When consumers get suggestions from their friends or acquaintances on social media, they can visit the websites which provide the products or services. In other words, if consumers take recommendations into consideration, it can be turn into purchase action instantly. This is one of the prominent features which make eWOM superior over traditional WOM.

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