The Effect of Medium, Endorsement Styles, and Valence on Consumer Attitude

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF MEDIUM, ENDORSEMENT STYLES, AND VALENCE ON CONSUMER ATTITUDE

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This research studies the impact that valence and endorsement styles have on attitude formation in narrowcasting and broadcasting online mediums. The purpose is to determine if messages delivered in the narrowcasting medium has a significantly higher impact on attitude than in the broadcasting medium. It also aims to explore how endorsement styles (explicit vs. implicit) and message valence (positive vs. neutral) impact on attitude across mediums (broadcasting vs. narrowcasting). The results demonstrated that individuals reported a higher attitude formation when receiving implicit endorsement messages in narrowcasting medium than in broadcasting medium. Neutral narrowcasting messages were found to have a significantly higher impact on attitude than neutral broadcasting messages. The research findings suggest that marketers should highlight the use of positive and explicit endorsement in broadcasting medium but switch attention to the use of neutral and implicit endorsement in narrowcasting medium.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays consumers cannot visit their various social media platforms without being inundated with messages and posts from their friends and acquaintance about their purchases, event experiences, travel destinations and even what they ate for lunch. The enthusiasm of integrating social media in marketing among campaigns is beyond popular. Chiou and Lee concluded that consumers could communicate with friends by either sharing posts (one-to-many communication) (e.g., Chiou, & Lee, 2013) or sending messages individually (one-to-one communication) (e.g., Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). Therefore, companies apply that communication attributes and engage in the electronic word of mouth communication (eWOM) by running different focused eWOM campaigns. Some campaigns can have a broadcasting focus, some can have a narrowcasting focus, and some can use both methods. For a broadcasting focused campaign, Marc Jacobs launched the "Tweet Shop" on Tweeter during New York Fashion week in 2014 (Ramona Sukhraj, 2017). They encouraged fans to post product related content on their twitter account to earn discounts or samples from their posts. Similarly, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) launched a #LastSelfie campaign that sent nine-second Snapchat pictures of endangered animals to their followers. Within a week, there were 40,000 tweets with #LastSelfie, spreading to 120 million users and reached more than half of all Twitter users (Ju, Chen, He, Shen, & Sar, 2017). For narrowcasting focused campaigns, Uber encouraged users to share a personal discount code through a text message and Coca-Cola invited consumers to "Share a Coke" with a friend or family member by finding a person's name in a one-to-one communication (Ju, Chen, He, Shen, & Sar, 2017). Moreover, companies like Airbnb embrace both focuses and encourage users to share their travel credit with their friends by either sending a direct message or posting on social media.
When consumers are reacting to different eWOM campaigns, they will choose a medium accordingly, either posting (broadcasting) or sending a message (narrowcasting). According to Barasch and Berger (2014), audience size influences sharing focus: self-focus and other-focus, and different focus will lead to different content sharing. They revealed that a high proportion of individuals would share positive (negative) eWOM messages in the broadcasting (narrowcasting) medium (Barasch & Berger, 2014). Since attention is limited for every individual, consumers will not be able to focus on others when they are focusing on themselves at the same time (Gilovich et al. 2000; Trommsdorff and John 1992; Chiou and Lee 2013). Therefore, in broadcasting focused campaigns, consumers are more likely to focus on themselves and the content of their posts will be more self-presentational. While in narrowcasting focused campaigns, consumers are more likely to focus on others and their messages will contain more second-person pronoun and useful contents which serve as a sign of being "altruistic" (Barasch & Berger, 2014).

In a recent empirical study about eWOM, 15% of the messages contained an explicit endorsement style (e.g., using the word "recommend") and around 20% of the messages contained an implicit endorsement style (e.g., using the word "like") (Packard & Berger, 2017). While positive or negative messages can influence people's attitude towards products, Packard and Berger (2017) found that the effect of endorsement styles varies differently. Compared to an implicit endorsement style (e.g., "I like it"), an explicit endorsement style (e.g., "I recommend it") is more likely to increase consumers product choice.
Some companies prefer broadcasting focused eWOM campaigns, others prefer narrowcasting focused eWOM campaigns, and some engage in both. The purpose of this study is to investigate how valence and endorsement styles within mediums influence consumer attitude. However, there's little known about the interaction effect among these three variables on the receivers’ attitude. To address this gap, we will extend on the previous research by investigating how medium and endorsement styles impact the effects of electronic word-of-mouth communication on consumer attitude formation.

Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication literature suggests that message valence, content and the way it is delivered influence the receiver's response towards the messages (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, 2012). Narrowcasting messages have a higher impact of sales than broadcasting posts (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009); positive messages have a more significant impact on attitude than negative or neutral messages (Marchand, Hennig-Thurau, & Wiertz, 2017; Lee, Park, & Han, 2008); explicit endorsement messages have a more significant impact on choice decision than implicit endorsement messages (Packard et al., 2017). Therefore, we predict that the main effect of three independent variables: medium, endorsement styles, and valence will have similar patterns of effect on attitude from existing literature. We also predict that there will be interaction effects between medium and endorsement styles, medium and valence. Individuals exposed to explicit (implicit) endorsement style messages in the narrowcasting medium will have higher (similar) levels of attitude than (compare to) those exposed to implicit endorsement styles messages in the broadcasting medium. Individuals exposed to positive (neutral) messages in the narrowcasting medium will have higher (similar) levels of attitude than (compare to) those exposed to neutral messages in the
broadcasting medium. The three-way interaction prediction will be: 1) when exposed to positive messages, individuals in the narrowcasting medium with explicit (implicit) endorsement style will report higher levels of attitude formation than those in the broadcasting medium; 2) When exposed to neutral messages, individuals in the narrowcasting medium with explicit (implicit) endorsement style will report higher levels of attitude formation than those in the broadcasting medium.

The results demonstrated that the main effects of medium and valence align with the existing literature as individuals reported higher attitude scores when exposed to the narrowcasting message than to broadcasting posts (to positive messages than to neutral messages). Our study also revealed that the medium helps to differentiate the different effects of the neutral message on attitude formation. This study predicted that the effect of both implicit and explicit messages would have a higher formation in attitude in narrowcasting conditions than in broadcasting conditions. However, the results only find this supported in the broadcasting condition. In the narrowcasting condition, implicit endorsement messages has a higher formation in attitude than explicit endorsement messages, although this was not statistically significant. This research not only further expands on the research from Hou Wee et al. (1995) but also reveals that only in narrowcasting conditions, the neutral message will increase the effect on attitude formation. It also provides insight on endorsement styles as the words “like” and “recommend” impacted attitude formation differently under the various mediums.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The objective of this literature review is to investigate the causal relation between communicators (message senders) and receivers (message receivers and action reactors) in the electronic word-of-mouth context. This chapter will review the various outcomes of the communication (consumer attitude). This chapter will also review the various factors that influence attitude such as valence (positive, negative, and neutral), endorsement style (implicit and explicit), medium (broadcasting and narrowcasting).

2.2 eWOM Communication

2.2.1 Definition

According to the definition from the American Marketing Association, WOM “occurs when people share information about products or promotions with friends” (“Dictionary A”, n.d.). When this information is communicated via the Internet, on platforms such online review systems, or social media (Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, etc) it is called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Rosario, Sotgiu, De Valck & Bijnolm, 2016). Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazzarol, further expand the eWOM by stating that it could occur as either a favourable (positive eWOM) or unpleasant experience (negative eWOM) from messages givers (2012).

2.2.2 Dependent Variables: Consumer Attitude

Hovland (1948) systematically summarized four significant elements of communication theory: the communicator, stimulus (message), receiver, and response. In order for these four elements to interact, a communicator must transmit a stimulus (message) to the receiver, who will then
respond and react to the message. Recently, Cheung and Thadani (2012) proposed a framework of the impact of eWOM communication with an emphasis on its effect on direct and indirect relationships. They proposed that in eWOM communication, consumers’ attitudes toward the message are the antecedent of purchase intention. As previously mentioned, in the process of eWOM communication, a receiver is the individual who responds to the eWOM message. In the existing literature, electronic world-of-mouth communication can influence consumers’ belief, attitude, and purchase intention because of social influence (Arndt, 1967; Hanna and Wozniak, 2001). According to Cheung & Thadani (2012), the two most commonly examined dependent variables of eWOM communication are attitude and purchase intention. To further determine how these variables affect eWOM communication, Lee, Park, & Han (2008) examined how valence of reviews influence consumers’ attitude towards products after they are exposed to the review. They found out that high involvement consumers who are exposed to a higher proportion of negative reviews are more likely to search for high-quality reviews and create a judgement based on these, whereas low-involvement consumers tend to believe the negative reviews, regardless of their quality. Moreover, Doh and Hwang (2009) also found out that the ratio of positive to negative reviews would influence consumers' attitude: the more positive the reviews, the higher the attitude the consumer will have. One interesting finding demonstrated that groups with the ratios of 10:0, 9:1, and 8:2 (positive: negative) showed no statistical difference from each other. This result implied that showing all positive messages to consumers will not improve their attitude towards the products; a few negative messages within a larger group of positive reviews will not demolish the positive effects of the positive reviews.
On the other hand, Herr, Kardes, and Kim (1991) found that consumers will form a favourable attitude toward a product even when a single eWOM is presented to them. They also demonstrated that a vivid eWOM is heavily associated with attitude judgment, because it is easier to remember the presented eWOM from memory. Cheung and Thadani (2012) examined how a single message can impact attitude and found that attitude is positively associated with purchase intention, which is positively associated actual purchase behaviour. Moreover, there is a direct positive relationship between information usefulness and eWOM adoption (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009; Liu & Zhang, 2010). Cheung et al. (2009) examined various antecedents of eWOM credibility such as argument strength, recommendation sidedness, source credibility, ratings. The results from their study indicated that individuals who are exposed to positive eWOM messages are more likely to agree with the reviews and are more comfortable with making a purchasing decision (Cheung et al., 2009). Two-sided messages have higher perceived credibility than the one-sided message; higher source credibility and message argument have higher perceived credibility (Cheung et al., 2009). Moreover, Cheung et al. captured eWOM adoption by measuring consumes’ attitudes based on how helpful and easy the eWOM messages to help them make a purchasing decision in the future. Liu and Zhang (2010) also found that information usefulness is positively and directly influences eWOM adoption. They found out that trust is a crucial factor that influences perceived usefulness of messages.

2.3 Valence in eWOM Communication

2.3.1 Definition

Positive eWOM will include positive emotions such as “good” and “happy”, while negative eWOM will include negative emotions such as “bad” and “fear” (Berger & Milkman, 2012).
Tang, Fang, and Wang (2014) clarified neutral messages into two forms: mixed and indifferent. The mixed form of neutral message includes the same amount of positive and negative attributes, whereas the indifferent form of neutral message will contain no positive or negative attributes. For this study we decided to focus on the mixed form of neutral message because it includes both positive and negative attributes within one message.

2.3.2 The Effect of Valence on Attitude

Note that electronic word-of-mouth communication includes the volume and valence of the message. The effect of volume towards sale is quite straightforward, in a pre-release movie period, the volume of eWOM messages is positively associated with the box office (Marchand, Hennig-Thurau & Wiertz 2017). Movies with a higher volume of eWOM will result in higher sales. However, the effect of volume will not change over time, while the effect of valence will significantly increase over time. Marchand et al. (2017) explained that in the pre-release period, individuals will be motivated by the amount of people who are interested in the movie; the larger the amount of people who are discussing the movie, the higher the interest to go and watch the movie. This study also demonstrated that valence of the eWOM is a critical factor that influences consumer attitudes towards movies (Marchand et al., 2017). Lee, Park, and Han (2008) examined the relationship between quality of messages on consumer attitude and they found that consumers reported lower attitude formation after viewing high-quality negative reviews than those viewing low-quality reviews. Moreover, they revealed a three-way statistically significant model: quality, proportion, and involvement on attitude. The results indicated that under high-involvement, the effect of the proportion of negative reviews is stronger for high-quality negative reviews compared to low-quality ones. Regarding the source of reviews, Lee and Youn (2009)
revealed that the source (eWOM platform vs. brand's website) of the eWOM will not influence consumers to report attitude formation. However, they found that positive eWOM on review platforms and personal blogs had a more significant impact on product judgements than those on the brand's website.

Therefore, the volume and valence of the message will influence attitude formation (Lee, Park, & Han, 2008; Lee, & Youn, 2009; Park, & Lee, 2009; Park, Lee, & Han, 2007). Many studies have manipulated eWOM messages in experimental settings to successfully investigated the outcomes associated with different eWOM messages. For instance, Park, Lee, and Han (2008) confirmed the causal relationship between the quality and quantity of eWOM messages and revealed a moderation of involvement. According to Charlett, Garland, and Marr (1995), positive eWOM messages resulted in the highest attitude, followed by no-eWOM messages, and then negative eWOM messages. Therefore, for this study, we will also utilize the previously successful experiment methods to present manipulated eWOM messages to individuals.

Based on the studies mentioned above, when examining from eWOM from a macro level, volume has been proved to significantly influence sales. When there is a higher volume of eWOM messages among social media platforms or review websites, more consumers will come across the reviewed products or services, which will in turn cause an increase in sales (Thurau, & Wiertz, 2017). However, after consumers are exposed to product reviews, it is now the valence that significantly influences the decision-making process of consumers. Whether the message is positive, negative or mixed will also have impact on consumers attitudes towards the products.
Recently, sentiment research on text is using mega-data analysis to investigate how posts on Twitter influence new movie adoption by consumers (e.g., Hennig-Thurau, Wiertz, & Feldhaus, 2015). The result indicated that negative tweets dominate the effect of positive tweets in the pre-release period, and that there was no significant effect of positive tweets on box office results. They summarized this phenomenon as negativity bias, which stood out and influences consumers much more than the positive information available from the market (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2015). Additionally, Tang, Fang, and Wang (2014) found that neutral (mixed-form) eWOM messages with the same amount of positive and negative content within one review influenced sales differently, compared to indifferent eWOM messages without any positive or negative content related to the product or service. Neutral messages were found to amplify the effect of positive (negative) messages and increase sales when consumers can readily access these positive (negative) messages.

As stated above, the valence of a message (positive, negative, or neutral) will have different levels of attitude among consumers. Positive reviews lead to favourable attitudes and negative reviews lead to unfavourable attitudes (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). Since there will be negative bias from the negative eWOM messages, it can be expected that attitude will be the lowest in the negative conditions. Since narrowcasting medium will trigger other-focus motive and broadcasting medium will trigger self-focus motive, there are higher proportion of negative (vs. positive) messages transmit via narrowcasting medium (vs. broadcasting medium) (Dichter 1966; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell 1969; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). Recipients will report a slightly lower attitude formation when they are exposed to negative messages in narrowcasting medium than in broadcasting medium. Individuals perceived a message to be more credible and
take it more personal when receiving a message via narrowcasting medium because they are more likely to believe this personal message is helping them to avoid making a bad purchase decision. In contrast, individuals come across the negative messages via broadcasting medium will have similar feelings as the reviews from online review platforms. Moreover, since most studies have focused on negative messages, the effect of neutral messages need further investigation. Therefore, we decide to focus on finding different effect of neutral messages cross mediums and to compare only two levels of the valence that require further investigation: positive and neutral messages.

In addition to message valence, message content itself, especially looking at message linguistics, has become an interesting topic for researchers. Researchers started to explore the impact of eWOM messages at an individual level. A set of articles has considered different linguistic aspects of an eWOM messages and examined how perception and adoption of the messages can be explained based on the language-based properties (Kronrod and Danziger, 2013; Moore, 2015; Tang et al., 2014; Ludwig et al., 2013; Chen & Lurie). For instance, Kronrod and Danziger (2013), demonstrated that consumer attitudes and product choices are positively associate with the use of figurative language in online reviews. Moore (2015) revealed a causal relationship between the use of explanatory language and attitude predictability. The results indicated that the extent of confidence individuals reported in the study would help in predicting consumers attitude before using the product. They also found out that when consumer explained actions or reactions, the attitude predictability would increase, which means that explained language is helpful for individuals to predict their attitude towards the product. Based on this information,
this study chose to explore how the content of the message will influence attitude in the following section.

2.4 Implicit and Explicit Endorsement Styles

2.4.1 Definition

Villarroel et al. (2017) defined explicit sentiment expression as the level of activation in emotion-based words (e.g., good vs. awesome, Russell and Barret 1999), boosters (e.g., very good, Packard and Berger 2016), and attenuators (e.g., kind of good). Villarroel et al. (2017) defined implicit sentiment expression as using language to convey ideas without explicit, emotion-laden words. Based on the definition of sentiment expression, Packard and Berger (2017) outlined two different endorsement styles: explicit endorsement and implicit endorsement. For example, the statement "I like that hotel" is an implicit endorsement style, and the statement "I recommend that hotel" is an explicit endorsement style. Implicit endorsement style is when consumers use explicit sentiment expression to declare their personal approval towards the products or services, while explicit endorsement is when consumers use implicit sentiment expression to declare not only their personal approval, but also their support of certain products or services.

2.4.2 Implicit Endorsement and Explicit Sentiment Expression

Explicit sentiment analysis is used as a tool for content analysis. Villanrhoel et al. (2017) summarized that prior research on the valence of eWOM mostly used sentiment analysis techniques to classify words and sentences into three categories: positive, negative and neutral. Following the flow of content analysis, many studies have differentiated the effects of positive
and negative eWOM messages on sales. For instance, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2015) used sentiment analysis techniques to detect single words and word groups to classify the valence of tweets and demonstrated that positive and negative movie-related tweets have a different impact on the release day revenue. Negative tweets are a stronger influencer, and more based on these reviews more consumers would refrain from watching a movie. The results from this study also indicated that volume, the valence ratio of tweets, and positive tweets are not statistically significant. However, they did not investigate whether different levels of valence among tweets will influence the outcome of eWOM, which has been proved to be a significant influencer for sentiment strength analysis (Villanroel et al., 2017; Packard, & Berger, 2017). Before the study of Henning-Thurau et al. (2015), Berger and Milkman (2012) have used LIWC 2007 word-categories: positive emotion (e.g., good, happy), and negative emotion (e.g., bad, fear), to examined emotion and social distribution focus (e.g. self-presentation versus helping others). This study is an extensions of explicit sentiment analysis, since they used emotional words as one of their independent variables. The results indicated that among online posting content, the more positive content posted, the more viral it will be. On the other hand, Kim (2015) examined what factors influenced virally shared content and demonstrated that virally shared articles contain more useful and positive content in health-related news.

Other than virality, explicit sentiment might not be as persuasive as we believe. In fact, Villarroel et al. (2017) studied the strength of explicit sentiment expression in online reviews by including various emotional words (e.g., good vs. awesome), boosters (e.g., very good), and attenuators (e.g., kind of good). They found that reviews that contained a higher activation level and/or booster elements had a higher effect on overall sentiment strength as well as a higher effect on
sales performance. Common explicit sentiment content from reviews is mostly evaluative content, such as "The hotel room was clean and nice looking." (Packard and Berger, 2017). According to LIWC 2007, this is a positive emotional review. Packard and Berger (2017) found that when recipients encounter sentiments such as "I like that hotel", they would infer that the review was a personal evaluation. Hence adding, "I like that hotel" into a positive emotional message would have little effect on persuasion relative to explicit sentiment expression. By collecting book-review data from amazon.ca, Ludwig's study demonstrated that there is a significant effect of increasing levels of positive (negative) affective reviews on increasing (decreasing) conversion rate (Ludwig et al. 2013). The difference can be explained by speech act theory (SAT), a theory that states that readers can reveal intentions of text messages through language with advanced linguistic features (Holmes 1984; Sbisa 2001).

2.4.3 Explicit Endorsement and Implicit Sentiment Expression

According to Perrault and Allen (1980), a speaker’s intention can indirectly convey to readers without using an illocutionary act (Autin, 1962). For instance, Packard and Berger (2017) outlined that the use of "I recommend that hotel" (explicit endorsement style) in consumer reviews resulted in a higher personal approval and recommendation intention, making other consumers more likely to choose a product that has been recommended, rather than liked (Packard et al., 2017). This finding also consistent with what Gershoff, Broniarczyk, and West (2001) argued, that a sender’s preference is essential for receivers to decide whether or not to follow the information from word-of-mouth. Therefore, consumers perceive higher willingness to recommend a product from senders who use implicit sentiment expression such as "I
recommend that hotel", compare to explicit sentiment expression such as "I like that hotel", which also signals more positive attitudes toward the product.

Before Packard and Berger (2017) differentiated the impact for this direct and indirect way of declaring product and experience evaluation to the receiver side, Kronrod and Danziger (2013) discovered that, compare to literal language used in a review, the act of using figurative language will increases the choice of hedonic consumption over utilitarian one when both are available. An example of this figurative language includes statements such as "The view will blow your mind away!", as opposed to making a literal statement such as "The view is excellent!". Based on the characteristics of figurative language, it aligns with the definition of implicit sentiment expression. Kronrod and Danziger (2013) also revealed that after reading figurative reviews in hedonic consumption goal scenario, such as a trip for vocation, consumers report a higher attitude formation towards a hotel than in utilitarian scenario, such as a trip for business. However, there is no interaction between the effect on goal of hedonic consumption and the use of literal language. Based on this information, we can summarize that figurative language contains no emotional words and acts conditionally stronger than reviews with emotional words when it comes to influencing receivers' product choices and attitude formation. Furthermore, Villanroel et al. (2017) also compared the directive implicit expression, such as "I recommend that you go to this hotel", and the commissive implicit expression, such as "I will come back to this hotel", on the impact of conveyed sentiment strength. They found that including implicit sentiment expression into the original explicit sentiment expression model will enhance the model fit of examining the overall sentiment strength among reviews, both positive and negative.
directive variables are statistically significant but only negative commissive variable is statistically significant on sales performance (2017).

2.5 Communication Medium: Two Forms of eWOM Campaign

2.5.1 Definition

Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert defined one-to-many communication as users sharing social activities in social media, and defined one-to-one communication as sending private messages between friends (2009). Barasch and Berger (2014) further expand one-to-many communication as broadcasting and one-to-one communication as narrowcasting communication. They defined that broadcasting communication as communication that involves talking to two or more people, and narrowcasting communication as communication that involves talking to only one person (Barasch & Berger, 2014). For example, Facebook would be defined as a one-to-many communication platform, as the information posted can be simultaneously accessible to many Facebook users (Chiou & Lee, 2013).

There are two forms of the eWOM campaign: broadcasting focus and narrowcasting focus. The broadcasting focus is a one-to-many communication, while the narrowcasting focus is a one-to-one communication (Barasch & Berger, 2014; Ju, He, Chen, He, Shen & Sar, 2017). The difference between broadcasting and narrowcasting communication is whether or not the audience is salient to the senders. According to Duan and Dholakia (2017), posting purchases on social media is a form of broadcasting consumption experience. Note that broadcasting can reach more massive potential consumers, while narrowcasting leads to a higher interpersonal conversation (Barasch and Berger 2014). Studies suggest that broadcasting will encourage
people to focus on themselves, while narrowcasting will encourage them to focus on others (Barasch and Berger 2014; Duan & Dholakia, 2017).

2.5.2 Motives Between Broadcasting and Narrowcasting

Attention resources character in two focus: self-focus and other-focus (Carver and Scheier 1978; Mor and Winquist 2002). Helping others and self-presentation focus are two fundamental drivers associated with narrowcasting and broadcasting behaviour (Dichter 1966; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell 1969; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). When consumers are reacting to different kinds of eWOM campaigns, they will choose the medium accordingly. The audience size will be larger (smaller) in broadcasting (narrowcasting), resulting in more a self-focus (other-focus) attention. This is because there is a direct trade-off between the focus on self or others, and the increase in one will subsequently cause a decrease in the other (e.g., Gilovich, Medvec, and Savitsky, 2000; Barasch & Berger, 2014). Based on difference in audience size, the motives for sharing eWOM will change accordingly. In a larger audience size, such as in broadcasting medium, senders are more likely to focus on self-presentation, while in a smaller audience size such as in narrowcasting medium, motives will shift to focus on helping others (Barasch & Berger, 2014). Because people naturally tend to focus on themselves, only a change in environment will cause their focus to change towards others, such as an environmental change from broadcasting medium to narrowcasting medium (Zhang & Epley 2012).

Additionally, when compared to oral communication, written communication provides more reaction time, and thus benefits from the editing processes. Berger and Iyengar (2013) examined how communication asynchrony and self-enhancement concerns influence what people share.
They found out that timing helped people to think considerately, and self-enhancement motivated people to mention more interesting things in their reviews. Similarly, Duan and Dholakia (2017) summarized four different characteristics of social media posting compared to traditional WOM: asynchronous, archived personal lives, indirect communication manner, and one-to-many communication. They mentioned that asynchronous allows consumers to write with a higher quality post by editing photos and wording (Duan et al., 2017). This aligns with Walther’s research (2011) that asynchrony triggers self-presentation on posting. Since posts are archived in their social account timelines and followers can check and revisit their posts even months after the initial post, consumers do not directly communicate with all their social connections, and people post images as a record of their personal life experience, mainly focusing on themselves (Duan et al, 2017; Berger, et al, 2013; Lampel and Bhalla, 2007).

Since an alternation in motives exists, the use of subjectivity is different in a message delivered via broadcasting and窄cast medium. Barasch and Berger (2014) suggested that in broadcasting conditions, consumers would use a first-person pronoun, such as “I” or “We” to reflect their self-focus and personal involvement, which results in an overall higher sentiment strength in the statement. This study also found that when senders are creating posts via a broadcasting medium, they are more likely to focus on themselves and thus the use of first-person pronoun, such as "I," "my," "mine", will be more often (Davis & Brock, 1975). In contrast, when senders are creating personal messages via narrowcasting medium, they are more likely to use second-person pronoun, such as, "you," "your" (Ickes, Reidhead, & Patterson, 1986). The way people choose to share their lives or consumption experience influence their sharing motives and therefore, in turn, influence their personal subjectivity usage.
2.5.3 Audience Sizes and eWOM Valence

The message was, however, found to be a significant variable to influence consumers behavioral intention. Negative messages were found to have the strongest adverse effect on behavioural intention when compared to positive or neutral messages, while neutral messages were found to have a stronger effect on behavioural intention than the positive messages (Hou Wee, Luan Lim, & Lwin, 1995).

Audience size can influence not only the sharing motives, but also the sharing of valence (Barasch and Berger, 2014). For example, in their study, individuals were asked to talk freely about a recent restaurant experience to either a larger audience size (broadcasting) or a smaller audience size (narrowcasting), where their talks were recorded in text for content analysis (Barasch and Berger, 2014). The results illustrated that more negative emotional expression was used in narrowcasting conditions while there was no difference in the positive emotional words usage in both conditions. This phenomenon was explained by Goffman (1959), whereby consumers are more likely to promote their favourable impressions and avoid unfavourable one when the talking to a large audience size. However, when consumers are talking with a small audience or in a one-to-one communication, according to an interview data, approximately 20% of conversations from the electronic word-of-mouth about products or services consumption experiences is motivated by "altruistic" desires (Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster 1998). Moreover, a way that people help others is to share useful information such as discounted products or restaurants with positive reviews (Dichter 1966; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004) as a means to help others to avoid making poor consumption decisions (Dubois, Bonezzi, & Angelis, 2016).
2.5.4 Interpersonal Closeness and eWOM Valence

Gino and Galinsky (2012) defined interpersonal closeness (IC) as the “perceived psychological proximity” between individuals. The degree of IC is decreasing from friends, acquaintance, and strangers (Dubois, Bonezzi, & De Angelis, 2016; Zablocki, Schlegelmilch, & Houston, 2018). Individuals reported a perceived higher interpersonal closeness with a person they felt a sense of connection (Dubois, et al., 2016). Previous sections discussed how audience size and motives would influence the eWOM valence, Dubois, Bonezzi, and De Angelis (2016) demonstrated that more negative information was shared among friends, while more positive information was shared among acquaintances. Consistent with how medium trigger self or other focus motives (Barasch & Berger, 2014), Dubois, Bonezzi, and De Angelis (2016) further explained the logic behind their findings was that higher perceived interpersonal closeness triggered the motive of protecting others, and then lead to more negative information shared; lower perceived interpersonal closeness triggered the motive of enhancing self, and then lead to more positive information shared.

Individuals can share eWOM on review platforms (e.g., Amazon.com) with strangers or on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) with closer friends (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Duan, & Dholakia, 2017). This study addressed the interpersonal closeness by asking participants to imagine receiving messages from their friends. In this case, the results from this study would only apply to high interpersonal closeness.
2.5.4 Different eWOM Campaign Effects

Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens examined a web hosting company's customer lifetime value and revealed that customers from eWOM channels doubled the long-term value to the firm, while marketing-induced customers (e.g., advertisement) added more to the short-term value (2008).

Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels (2009) demonstrated that eWOM referrals excel traditional marketing channels by affecting new customer acquisitions, resulting in both more substantial immediate response for new sign-ups (2 versus 1), and longer carryover effect (21 days versus 3 to 7 days). Moreover, this study revealed that immediate response was 8.5 times higher in eWOM referrals than in traditional marketing; substantial growth was 20 times higher in eWOM referrals than traditional marketing. In general, the estimated elasticity of eWOM is .53, a number that surmounts the values for reported advertising elasticities among literature (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009).

Additionally, Aral and Walker also examined two promotions for new product adoption from peers (2011). One promotion was the automated broadcast notification, which enables peers from the social networking sites to receive notifications of product reviews. The other promotion was personalized referrals via the direct message function of the social networking sites. In this method, receivers would get a personalized message from senders in a one-to-one communication condition (narrowcasting medium). Based on the results from the study, adoption time from the first adopter to the fourth adopter was significantly faster in the narrowcasting conditions than in the broadcasting conditions. The number of peer adopters in the narrowcasting conditions is seven times greater than that in the broadcasting conditions. Compare to baseline
treatment group, in which there is no broadcasting and narrowcasting treatments, broadcasting treatment claims for 450% increase while narrowcasting treatment claims for 750% increase.

Theoretically, a referral behavior is a type of eWOM in narrowcasting medium. Online referral behaviour is defined as a consumer who refer other potential consumers via their social contacts as a way to persuade others to either join a membership on a website or complete a sale (Guo, Z, 2012). According to the audience size effect, consumers are more other-focus when they talk to single individuals. It appears that strong ties are more authoritative than weak ties in eWOM sharing at the micro level, such as between small groups or one-to-one communication, of referral behaviour. However, weak ties are more authoritative than strong ties in information shared at the macro level, such as the flow of communication across groups or posting on social media (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973). Since audience size affects sharing focus, consumers are more likely to enjoy the thought of being needed and valued from others in narrowcasting condition and are more likely to share useful and enjoyable pieces of advice (Price, Feick, and Guskey, 1995). Therefore, the theory behind strong ties explains the reason behind the success of referral marketing, and the theory behind weak ties explains the success of broadcasting in eWOM campaign (Smith, Coyle, Lightfoot, Scott, 2007).

2.6 Summary of Gaps in Literature

Above all, there is an increasing amount of research that is focusing on text classification. This research focuses on: (1) classic classification of positive, negative and neutral message; (2) sentiment strength measurement (e.g. very negative to very positive; Wilson, Wiebe, and Hoffmann, 2009); (3) implicit and explicit endorsement styles (e.g., like or recommend;
Villarroel et al, 2017 and Packard & Berger, 2017). Positive and negative emotional words have varying argumentative strength (e.g., good vs. awesome; Russell and Barret 1999). Phrases with exaggerated adverb terms would increase the strength of the sentiment (e.g., "the food is super good"), while using uncertainty terms (e.g., "it was kind of nice") would eliminate the positive effect of the reviews. However, the differential effect of endorsement styles has yet been investigated (Packard and Berger 2017). The effect of a mixed form of neutral messages was originally reported to enhance the positive effects of eWOM and decrease negative eWOM effects when reading a group of reviews. However, the effect of consumers only reading one mixed neutral message remains to be examined. Based on this information, we decided to study how neutral messages may influence attitude differently across different medium.

Despite whether the eWOM message is shared with a larger group of people or with a specific individual, the role of the eWOM sender is defined as a "content curator" (Lamberton, & Stephen, 2016) who helps other consumers to effectively understand overcrowded online information, which allows them to reach satisfactory outcomes faster (Goldenberg, Oestreicher-Singer, and Reichman, 2012).

The most exciting attribute of social media is that it allows consumers to engage with each other in different ways other than online ratings and reviews. Social media allows consumers to engage and interact with brands and other consumers in unique ways, by posting either their thoughts to platforms with public connections or by sending direct messages to close friends. Srinivasan, Rutz, and Pauwels demonstrated that earned media (Facebook) is positively associated with an increase in sales (2016). However, research related eWOM has been focused
on online ratings and reviews, yet little has been studied of these new forms of online eWOM and has not yet been linked with consumer attitude. However, as a recent noteworthy exception, refer to Srinivasan, Rutz, and Pauwels (2016).

Research completed by Villanroel et al. (2017) has shed light on how consumers can use language to spread electronic word-of-mouth without using explicit, emotion-laden words. As it has been discussed, different levels of emotion expressed from the text are more likely to spread on the Internet, which indicates that the strength of different statements have various outcomes on consumer attitude. Also, according to Packard et al. (2017), adding "I like that hotel" to a review of "The hotel room was clean and nice looking" will have little or less influence on the persuasiveness for product choice and purchase behaviour. Therefore, we can expect that "recommend" in a review will have a more persuasive effect on attitude than "like". Study also proved that when senders are in broadcasting condition, they are more likely focus on themselves and thus use first-person pronouns, such as "I," "my," "mine" (e.g., when in front of a mirror; Davis and Brock 1975), while in the narrowcasting condition, they are more likely to use second-person pronoun, such as "you," "your" (e.g., when in peer interactions; Ickes, Reidhead, and Patterson 1986). Nevertheless, current research on sentiment expression about eWOM communication mainly relies on emotional words to determine the valence of a message. Gopaldas (2014) pointed out that this oversimplification neglects the fact that consumers use a more extensive range of both explicit and implicit expression in their text message. In turn, how consumers engage in different expression has a different impact on receivers regarding product evaluation and attitude (Ludwig et al. 2013). Hence, the goal of this research is to investigate the effect of endorsement styles (explicit vs. implicit), medium (broadcasting vs. narrowcasting), and
valence (positive vs. neutral) on consumer attitude. This study also works to extend eWOM communication theory, and more specifically enrich in computer-mediated communication.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The goal of this research project is to investigate under two mediums (broadcasting vs. narrowcasting), how endorsement styles (explicit vs. implicit) and the message valence (positive vs. neutral) will influence consumer attitude. We proposed a linear regression model:

\[
\text{Attitude} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Broadcasting}) + \beta_2(\text{Positive}) + \beta_3(\text{Explicit}) + \beta_4(\text{Broadcasting} \times \text{Positive}) + \beta_5(\text{Broadcasting} \times \text{Explicit}) + \beta_6(\text{Positive} \times \text{Explicit}) + \beta_7(\text{Broadcasting} \times \text{Positive} \times \text{Explicit}) + \text{Error}
\]

Where,

Broadcasting = 1, if it is the broadcasting condition

= 0, if it is the narrowcasting condition

Positive = 1, if valence is positive

= 0, if valence is neutral

Explicit = 1, if it is the explicit endorsement style

= 0, if it is the implicit endorsement style

Hence, we can say if coefficient of Broadcasting is not equal to zero, the hypothesis will be supported.
3.1 Broadcasting Focus vs. Narrowcasting Focus

There are two forms of the eWOM campaign: broadcasting focus and narrowcasting focus. The broadcasting focus is a one-to-many direct or indirect communication, while the narrowcasting focus is a one-to-one communication (Barasch & Berger, 2014; Ju, He, Chen, He, Shen & Sar, 2017). Aral and Walker examined how two promotional methods (broadcasting vs. narrowcasting focus) influenced new product adoption from peers (2011). One promotional method was automated broadcast notifications, which enabled peers from social network sites to get product adoption notifications from senders (Aral & Walker, 2011). The other one was personalized referrals from senders via private messages, and receivers would get a personalized message from senders (narrowcasting condition) (Aral & Walker, 2011). The result shown that adoption time from the first adopter to the fourth adopter was significantly faster in the narrowcasting conditions than in the broadcasting conditions. The number of peer adopters in the narrowcasting conditions was seven times greater than in the broadcasting conditions. Compared to baseline treatment group, in which there is no broadcasting and narrowcasting treatments, both experiment treatments resulted in an increase in new adoption. However, broadcasting medium claimed a 450% increase while narrowcasting medium claimed a 750% increase. Hence, narrowcasting condition exceeded in spreading information on products and services and results in a higher product adoption. In this case, we can assume that other than new product diffusion, narrowcasting medium will a higher impact on attitude than broadcasting medium.

H1: $\beta_1 \neq 0$, Individuals exposed to a message from narrowcasting medium will have higher levels of attitude than that from the broadcasting medium.
3.2 Endorsement Styles: Explicit vs. Implicit

Based on the sentiment expression classification (Villarroel Ordenes et al, 2017), explicit endorsement style is a part of implicit sentiment expression that contains words such as "should" and "recommend". According to Packard, and Berger (2017), these endorsement styles make senders appear to be more knowledgeable, and to make their statements more persuasive. In decision-making theory, consumers tend to infer the source of expertise to decide whether or not to follow the message from eWOM (Gershoff, Broniarczyk, and West 2001; Gershoff and Johar 2006; Naylor, Lamberton, and Norton 2011). When expertise cues are available (e.g., reviewer badges, job titles; Ghose and Ipeirotis 2011; Karmaker and Tormala 2010), consumers use them as criteria to trust or follow who seem to be more knowledgeable (Petty and Wegener 1998; Pornpitakpan 2004). Cues such as job titles, job status, or other similar information that conveyed similar cues should also be considered (Chaiken, Liberman, and Eagly, 1989). Besides that, Brown and Reingen (1987), verified that the frequency of making a recommendation is one of the criteria for consumers to determine the level of expertise. In other words, consumers who make more recommendations are perceived to be more knowledgeable about the products and services they recommended. Therefore, an act of recommendation is connected to perceived expertise (Packard, and Berger, 2017; Dichter 1966; Duhan et al. 1997), and higher perceived expertise comes with greater persuasion (Petty and Wegener 1998; Pornpitakpan 2004). Based on this information, we can assume that consumers will report a higher attitude formation when they see the cues of recommendation.

Following Reichheld (2003), willingness to recommend is one of the best predictors of product repurchase. Packard and Berger (2017) stated that explicit endorsement style (vs implicit
endorsement style) is more persuasive because the statements for this expression not only convey positive emotions, but also act as a sign that endorsers like the products or services more. In Packard's study, individuals assert implicit endorsements style such as, "I enjoyed this wine", for personal feelings only, while explicit endorsement style such as, "I recommend this wine", delivers senders' personal feelings while also accrediting them to others (2017). Hence, given the different sentiment strengths of endorsement styles, we can expect that:

H2: $\beta2 \neq 0$, Individuals exposed to explicit endorsement style messages will have higher levels of attitude than those exposed to implicit endorsement style messages.

3.3 Valence of the Message: Positive vs. Neutral

According to prior marketing research, messages with one-side opinions or two-side opinions have different impact on eWOM communication. A one-sided message relays either positive or negative emotion, whereas a two-sided message contains both a positive and negative emotion (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009), which is also deemed as a mixed form of a neutral message (Tang et al., 2014). According to the definition from Tang et al (2014), a mixed form of neutral message contains same amount of positive and negative attributes, whereas an indifferent form of neutral message contains zero amount of positive and negative attributes. Recently, Tang et al., (2014) found out that neutral messages have a greater impact on sales, compared to indifferent messages. In their study, neutral eWOMs were found to amplify the effect of positive (negative) eWOMs and increase sales performance when there is more positive (negative) eWOM accessible for consumers.
In the context of eWOM communication, individuals read reviews from other consumers whose motives and abilities are unknown to them. Therefore, they have to rely on message content to determine the credibility of the senders (Dubrovsky, Kiesler, and Sethna, 1991). Given that sources with higher credibility are more persuasive (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999), consumer-generated information is often perceived as more credible (Bickart & Schindler, 2003; Cheung et al., 2009). This study controls friends conditions by asking participants to imagine the presented information is from their friends. Therefore, the credibility of both messages should be the same, as friends' eWOM have been deemed to be the most credible source.

According to attribution theory (e.g., Jones and Davis, 1965), perceptions towards the message from communicators are crucial in arbitrating persuasiveness of a message (Schlosser, 2011). As proposed by Rosenberg (1956), evaluative-cognitive consistency theory presented that holding only either favourable or unfavourable beliefs about a product should lead to either entire good or bad evaluation among receivers, on the other side, a mixture of pros and cons will lead to moderate evaluations. In Schlosser's study (2011), two-sided arguments enhanced perceived helpfulness, but would not lead to higher persuasiveness. Therefore, based on the research above, we can predict that negative bias in neutral eWOMs will be moderate, but not completely disappear.

H3: $\beta3 \neq 0$, Individuals exposed to positive messages will report a higher attitude formation than those exposed to neutral messages.
3.4 Interaction: Medium, Endorsement Styles, and Valence

3.4.1 Two-way Interaction

As Aral (2011, p. 217) stated, "Peer influence is about how peer behaviors change one's expected utility and thus change the likelihood that or the extent to which one will engage in the behavior." In order to maximize the effect of influence, there must be caused to behaviour change in the network rather than merely passing information to people. This means that a variety of conversation loops are essential. The influencing process can be to raise awareness of a product or feature, or to change one's utility expectations of the product or feature the way one aware of (e.g., examples from Aral, 2011). For examples, a friend may try to influence their friends to try a new Italian restaurant by convincing friends that Italian food is an excellent choice.

As stated above, personal conversation can enhance the effectiveness of persuasion. Therefore, a personal message will increase a receiver’s influence because it is more personal and a more comfortable way to continue the conversation. Moreover, Moore (2015) argued that linguistic attributes influenced attitude and helpfulness. Extending the research of endorsement styles on attitude (Packard & Berger, 2017), and the different effect of medium on new sign-ups (Aral & Walker, 2011), we predict that medium will influence the effect of the endorsement style on attitude differently:

H4: $\beta_4 \neq 0$, Individuals exposed to explicit endorsement style messages in the narrowcasting medium will have higher levels of attitude than in other conditions.
Based on previous research, positive message are positively associated with attitude and, according to Schlosser's study (2011), the effect of a neutral messages will be moderated but not negatively associate with attitude. Charlett, Garland, and Marr (1995) demonstrated that positive eWOM have the highest attitude formation, followed by no-eWOM and then negative eWOM. Hence, we predict that:

H5: $\beta_5 \neq 0$, Individuals exposed to positive messages in the narrowcasting medium will have higher levels of attitude than in other conditions.

3.4.2 Three-way Interaction

Given the interactions between medium and valence, as well as medium and endorsement style, we predicted that narrowcasting medium would result in higher levels of attitude; positive and explicit eWOM will result in higher levels of attitude. Therefore, we predict that:

H6: $\beta_7 \neq 0$, When exposed to positive messages, individuals in the narrowcasting medium with explicit (implicit) endorsement style will report higher levels of attitude than in other conditions.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the discussion above, it is expected that medium, endorsement styles, and valence affect attitude formation. We predict that there will be three-way interaction and two-way interactions between medium and endorsement style, medium and valence. Figure
CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Pre-test

A pretest (N= 12) was conducted before the main study commenced. The pretest was intended to achieve the following two main goals: 1) to confirm the manipulation of broadcasting and narrowcasting scenario; 2) to confirm the valence (positive or neutral) of presented eWOM messages.

Unlike Facebook, Instagram has both functions of broadcasting and narrowcasting within one mobile application. Therefore, we decided to use Instagram as the medium treatments. In the pretest, participants were asked to finish two sections of the study. In each section, they were required to answer a series of multiple-choice questions related to the presented content. In section one, they would read eight different messages along with images from a restaurant. In the second section, they would be presented with four different images: two of them were posts from
Instagram, and the other two were personal messages. The initial purpose of section one was to determine whether the eight experimental messages differentiate from each other regarding valence, motive focus, endorsement styles as well as perceived attitude. The second purpose was to determine whether with the presence of images would influence participants decision making. In section two, we tested how the presence or absence of the Instagram layout would influence the participant imagining browsing and receiving a personal message.

4.2 Pre-test Findings

We coded valence in a 7-scale ("1=extremely negative", "7=extremely positive"); focus ("1=self", "2=others"), endorsement style ("1=explicit", "2=implicit"), decision ("1=Image", "2=Review", "3=Both"), attitude in a 7-scale ("1= Not at all", "7= Very much"). According to Table 1, the means of positive messages is higher than the means of neutral messages, individual generally report higher attitude formation with positive messages than with neutral messages. Regarding the endorsement styles, the mean of endorsement styles is higher in implicit conditions than those in explicit conditions, indicating participants can successfully differentiate recommendation or personal opinions. Participants can successfully recognize that messages delivered via broadcasting medium is self-focused, and messages delivered via narrowcasting medium is other focus.
The results from one-way ANOVA analysis is presented in table 2. The results indicated that individuals can differentiate valence, motive focus, endorsement styles, therefore the manipulations are successful.

Table 2. One-way ANOVA for Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Between Treatments</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valence * Treatments</td>
<td>11.429</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus * Treatments</td>
<td>10.371</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsement * Treatments</td>
<td>6.912</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision * Treatments</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude * Treatments</td>
<td>17.468</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To better visualize each mean difference between groups, we used Excel to generate the following four bar charts. Figure 1-4 provide a visual representation among means difference between eight experimental treatments and confirmed the success of our manipulation of valence, endorsement style, attitude and the share-focus.
Figure 2. Mean Scores for Valence by Treatments

Figure 3. Mean Scores for Endorsement Styles by Treatments
Figure 4. Mean Scores for Attitude by Treatments

Figure 5. Mean Scores for Motives Focus by Treatments
In Section 2, there were 75% of participants (9 out of 12) preferred Instagram layouts in the broadcasting medium, while 50% of them (6 out of 12) preferred with Instagram layouts in the narrowcasting medium (details in table 3). From these results, we were confident about using Instagram layouts in our main study.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Instagram Layouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With Instagram layouts</th>
<th>Without Instagram layouts</th>
<th>No difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrowcasting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Discussion

As stated above, only decision manipulation was not successful. This can be explained by the design of the pretest, which was also general feedback from participants. Participants were asked to rate eight treatments at the same time, and those images to them were too similar that they could not tell the difference from short period of time, even though the images were in fact slightly different from each other. However, in the main study, this was not an issue, because participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight treatments and would not see the same image twice during the study.
4.2 Main study

4.2.1 Design

The main study design was a 2 (Medium) x 2 (Endorsement Styles) x 2 (Valence) between-subjects factorial design, resulting in eight treatments. The two levels of medium were broadcasting and narrowcasting; the two levels of endorsement style are the explicit endorsement and implicit endorsement, and the two levels of valence are positive and neutral. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental treatments by the ‘Randomizer' feature provided on Qualtrics, a website that is used to create and distribute online survey. According to Chevalier and Mayzlin, positive reviews would lead to a favourable attitude; negative reviews would lead to an unfavourable attitude (2006). Because negative eWOM has negative bias, it can be expected that attitude will be the lowest in the negative treatment. And based on the different motives of helping others in narrowcasting medium and self-presentation in broadcasting medium (Dichter 1966; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell 1969; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004), a negative narrowcasting message will make recipients to believe that the movie from senders is to help them from making bad decisions. In this case, they will have a slightly lower attitude than a negative broadcasting message, because the messages are more personal. Also, considering the large body of research on negative eWOM, neutral eWOM has not received enough attention from academic. Therefore, we decided to compare only two levels of the valence: positive and neutral message in this study.
4.2.2 Stimuli

According to Alicke and Govorun (2005), motive could switch from self-focus to other focus if individuals were requested to think about a specific friend. Barasch and Berger (2014) asked participants to think about a specific person's name vs. a group of friends and successfully manipulated the broadcasting and narrowcasting conditions. Therefore, by asking participants to type in their friend's name before completing our experimental scenarios should make them easier to follow the narrowcasting treatment scenario. An example of a neutral message was "It has great ambience but slow service. The food was amazing. Prices were high, but it was well worth it. I kind of like it!"; and an example of positive message was "It has great ambience and excellent service. The food was amazing and worth the price. I really like it!" (see examples from Chen, Z., 2017).

For the subjectivity difference in two mediums, broadcasting communication naturally encouraged consumers to focus on themselves and related to self-enhancement. Therefore, their message was focus on making them look good, but not trying to help others. Moreover, sharing focus was by default self-presentation in broadcasting communication but helping others in narrowcasting communication (Barasch & Berger, 2014). Therefore, when consumers were naturally sending messages in different medium, their focus would switch accordingly and hence the shared content would be different. Theoretically, in the broadcasting medium, consumers were more likely to send the message related to themselves, using words such as "I" rather "you". Contrarily, in the narrowcasting medium, more use of second-person pronoun and less use of first-person pronoun could be expected. Therefore, in this study, we used more first-person
pronoun in broadcasting medium and more second-person pronoun in narrowcasting medium to manipulate actual conversation.

4.2.3 Procedure

Cheema and Kaikati successfully manipulated participants to imagine themselves talking with friends and found that participants report product attitude formation differently (2010). Adopted this manipulation from Cheema and Kaikati (2010), we randomly assigned half of the participants to the broadcasting medium where they were required to read Instagram posts and half to the narrowcasting medium where they were required to read direct messages.

At the beginning of the study, participants received a brief introduction and provided their consent. In this study, participants were required to complete three sections: one experimental treatment section and two control treatment sections. In each section, participants followed a different scenario and read one Instagram post (broadcasting medium)/direct message (narrowcasting medium), which consisted of an image and a review about three different restaurants. Participants in the broadcasting medium were instructed to imagine scrolling their Instagram news feed and coming across a post from one of their friends. Participants in the narrowcasting medium were instructed to write down one of their friend's name and imagine the following message was from their friends (see examples from Chen, Z., 2017). After that, they completed a series of multiple-choice questions related to the content.
4.2.4 Participants

To determine the number of participants that would be adequate for the study, the statistical software G-Power was used to calculate an a priori sample size. The sample size was calculated based on a 0.80 power (the standard power for social sciences), an alpha level of $p < 0.05$ and for an effect size of 0.25 (medium effect). The result indicated at least 210 samples were required for this study.

Participants were drawn from the student research pool (SONA-Marketing & Consumer Studies) at the University of Guelph and Mturk platform. The research pool from university consisted of students registered in the following Marketing and Consumer Studies (MCS) courses: MCS*1000 Introductory Marketing, MCS*2020 Information Management, MCS*2600 Fundamentals of Consumer Behaviour. Students who were willing to participate in the study could do so by visiting the SONA website at a time that was convenient for them. Advertisements for the study appeared on SONA and the respective course website. Students were offered a course credit worth 2% in exchange for their participation. There were no restrictions regarding gender or age. Participants conducted the survey online through Qualtrics. Because this study is about media use, there is a restriction for a participant who needs to be familiar with Instagram. Therefore, participants who were recruited from Mturk platform had to pass a screening survey, before granted certification to participating in this main study. Each participant was awarded USD 0.03 for screening question and USD 0.5 for the main study.
4.2.5 Dependent Measures: Attitude

All scales and questionnaires used to capture the dependent measures relevant to the current study were gleaned from extant marketing literature (see Appendix B for the full questionnaire). We captured individuals’ attitudes towards restaurant from the measures of Packard & Berger (2017). The scale consisted of two questions: "On a scale of 1-7, How much do you think you would [like, enjoy] the restaurant, according to the previous post (message)? (1= "Not at all," and 7 = "Very much").

4.2.6 Manipulation Checks

Developed from Chen (2017), participants reported whether they feel like browsing Instagram post or getting a direct message from friends by answering the manipulation check question: "Does it feel like you are reviewing your Instagram news feed/ personal message from your friend? (Click yes or no): a) Yes, b) No".

CHAPTER 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In total, we had 421 individuals participated in our main study. Table 4 indicates that in broadcasting, 186 participants reported that they found the experimental image looked like from their Instagram news feed from one of their friends. In the narrowcasting treatment, 186 participants reported that they found the experimental image looked like a message from one of their friends.
Table 4. Medium Manipulation Check

Medium * Manipulationcheck Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Manipulationcheck</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrowcasting</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants were randomly assigned to one of eight experimental treatments. A Qualtrics built-in randomizer was used to randomly assigned participants into one of eight treatments, and from the result, the randomizer worked successfully and evenly assigned participants. Table 5 summarized the sample size from eight treatments in the main study. In each condition, sample size was even, although not equal.

Table 5. Experimental Treatments Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endorsement</th>
<th>Broadcasting</th>
<th>narrowcasting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1 Two-way ANOVA Analysis

A Two-way ANOVA was run to confirm preliminary analysis and pattern between each treatment. Independent variables were medium, valence and endorsement style; the dependent variable was consumer attitude. Generally, ANOVA analysis is used to detect means difference between treatments, and whether the differences are statistically significant.

The univariate test (Appendix 4) indicated that there was a statistically significant main effect of medium ($M_{Broadcasting}=5.250$, $M_{Narrowcasting}=5.522$, $F(1, 419)=4.600$, $p=0.033$) and valence ($M_{Positive}=5.592$, $M_{Neutral}=5.179$, $F(1, 419)=10.598$, $p=0.001$) on attitude. There were significant interaction effects between medium and endorsement styles on attitude ($F(1,417)=8.150$, $p=0.005$); medium and valence on attitude ($F(1, 417)=4.971$, $p=0.026$). However, there was no three-way interaction ($F(1,413)=1.308$, $p=0.253$). Since there were two-way interaction effects between medium and valence, as well as medium and valence, we furthered our analysis by analyzing the univariate interaction effects, i.e., the interaction effects of independent variables on dependent variable separately.

5.2 Main Effect

We predicted that $\beta_1 \neq 0$, narrowcasting messages would have a higher level of attitude than broadcasting messages. According to Figure 6, $\beta_1=-0.270$; Figure 7, ($M_{Broadcasting}=5.250$, $M_{Narrowcasting}=5.522$, $F(1, 419)=4.600$, $p=0.033$), the result supported our prediction, Hypothesis 1 is supported. A similar result was found in endorsement styles that explicit messages has a higher attitude than implicit messages ($M_{Explicit}= 5.401$, $M_{Implicit}=5.370$, $F(1, 419)=0.007$, $p=0.934$, $\beta_2=0.025$), but was not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.
Moreover, according to Figure 6, positive valence messages has a higher attitude than neutral messages ($M_{\text{Positive}}=5.592$, $M_{\text{Neutral}}=5.179$, $F(1,419)=9.320$, $p=0.002$, $\beta_3=0.401$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

**Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>5.316</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>41.681</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>-.270</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-2.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude

**Figure 6.** Linear Regression Model 1

**Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude**

![Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude](image)

Error bars: 95% CI

**Figure 7.** The Effect of Medium on Attitude
We predicted that individuals exposed to explicit endorsement style messages in the narrowcasting medium would have higher levels of attitude than those exposed to implicit endorsement styles messages in the broadcasting medium. Because both medium and endorsement styles were positively associated with attitude. Therefore, we assumed there would not be negative effect of implicit endorsement on medium. The two-way ANOVA result indicated a statistically significant interaction between medium and endorsement style on attitude ($M_{B-Explicit}$=5.446, $M_{B-Implicit}$=5.054, $M_{N-Explicit}$=5.356, $M_{N-Implicit}$=5.687, $F(1,417)$=7.481, $p$=0.006). According to Figure 9, $\beta_4$=0.855, Hypothesis 4 is supported. Figure 10 provides a visual representation of the differences in mean attitude among the four treatments. According to Figure 10, explicit endorsement style messages in the narrowcasting medium and implicit endorsement style messages in broadcasting medium has a similar effect on attitude ($M_{N-Explicit}$=5.356, $M_{B-Implicit}$=5.054). Implicit endorsement style messages in the narrowcasting medium and explicit
endorsement style messages in broadcasting medium has a similar effect on attitude (\(M_B^{Explicit} = 5.446, M_B^{Implicit} = 5.687\)).

### Coefficients\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (Constant)</td>
<td>5.770</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>32.939</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>-.626</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>-.235</td>
<td>-2.479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>-.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>-1.061</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>-.398</td>
<td>-4.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting*Positive</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>2.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting*Explicit</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>2.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive*Explicit</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>1.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting<em>Positive</em>Explicit</td>
<td>-.580</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-1.144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Dependent Variable: Attitude

Figure 9. Linear Regression Model 2

### Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude

![Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude](image)

Figure 10. Two-way Interaction: Endorsement Styles and Medium
For interaction between medium and valence, we predicted that individuals exposed to positive eWOM in the narrowcasting medium would have higher levels of attitude than those exposed to neutral eWOM in the broadcasting medium; individuals exposed to neutral eWOM in the narrowcasting medium would have similar levels of attitude compare to that positive eWOM in the broadcasting medium. The two-way ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant interaction between medium and valence on attitude ($M_{B\text{-positive}}=5.598, M_{B\text{-Neutral}}=4.902, M_{N\text{-positive}}=5.587, M_{N\text{-neutral}}=5.457, F(1, 417)=4.893, p=0.028$). According to Figure 9, $\beta_5=1.014$. Hypothesis 5 is supported. To further visualize the different effect of medium and valence on attitude, we conducted a bar chart presented in Figure 11. Based on result, positive messages in the narrowcasting medium has higher levels of attitude than neutral messages in the broadcasting medium ($M_{N\text{-positive}}=5.587, M_{B\text{-Neutral}}=4.902$). Neutral messages in the narrowcasting medium has the similar levels of attitude compare to that positive messages in the broadcasting medium ($M_{N\text{-neutral}}=5.457, M_{B\text{-positive}}=5.598$).

![Figure 11. Two-way Interaction: Valence and Medium](image-url)
5.4 Three-Way Interaction Effect

We predicted that when exposed to positive eWOM, individuals in the narrowcasting medium with explicit (implicit) endorsement style would report higher levels of attitude than those in the broadcasting medium. When exposed to neutral eWOM, individuals in the narrowcasting medium with explicit (implicit) endorsement style would report the similar levels of attitude than those in the broadcasting medium. According to the ANOVA test, the means difference were not statistically significant from each other \((M_{B-Exp-Po}=5.796, M_{N-Exp-Po}=5.569, M_{B-Imp-Po}=5.399, M_{N-Imp-Po}=5.605, F(1,413)=1.308, p=0.253)\). The results indicated that there was no three-way interaction among medium, endorsement styles, and valence. Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

However, from Figure 12, in the control of neutral messages, we visualized different means between the narrowcasting and broadcasting medium \((M_{B-Exp-Ne}=5.096, M_{N-Exp-Ne}=5.144, M_{B-Imp-Ne}=4.708, M_{N-Imp-Ne}=5.770)\). Neutral messages with implicit endorsement style in the narrowcasting medium have the highest attitude than other treatments.

![Figure 12. Three-Way Interaction: Valence, Endorsement Styles, and Medium](image-url)
5.5 Control Treatments Analysis

We designed our study with two control groups and one experimental group. Participants were presented with two identical images and reviews and were asked to answer a same set of questions over three sections (see, Appendix 7). Mean scores of attitude between broadcasting A post and narrowcasting A message has a similar value, as well as that between broadcasting B post and narrowcasting B message. We also conducted one-way ANOVA among treatments ($M_{broadcasting-A}=4.500$, $M_{broadcasting-C}=4.256$, $M_{narrowcasting-A}=4.381$, $M_{narrowcasting-C}=4.230$, $F(3,870)=1.636$, $p=0.180$), and did not find statistically significant result. Therefore, adding two control treatments in the main study did not influence the effect of experimental contents on attitude.

![Graph showing mean attitude scores for different treatments]

Figure 13. Control Treatments Analysis
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to determine whether messages delivered in the narrowcasting medium has a significantly higher impact on attitude than in the broadcasting medium and if endorsement styles and valence can have different impacts on attitude formation under various mediums. Our goal was to understand the main effects and interaction effects of the three investigated independent variables: medium, endorsement styles, and valence on attitude. The ANOVA analysis revealed four critical findings discussed below.

Firstly, the results demonstrated that the main effect of the broadcasting medium and narrowcasting medium was consistent with the existing literature. Individuals reported higher attitude scores when exposed to the narrowcasting messages than to broadcasting messages. Because a message is more personalized by using “you” instead of “I”, the narrowcasting message indicated an other-focus motive and revealed an attempt to help others (Barasch et al., 2014). From the result of this research, the reason individuals reported higher attitude formation after receiving a message in the narrowcasting medium can be explained by the logic behind senders’ motives. Individuals believe that the message senders are trying to help them to make a better decision by telling them the true experience about the restaurant. Therefore, even if the content of the message is the same, the types of medium used can change ones’ attitude toward a product or service.

Secondly, we also found that a single neutral (mixed form) message has a lower attitude than a single positive message. However, in a two-way ANOVA analysis, the neutral messages in the narrowcasting medium have a higher attitude than that in the broadcasting medium, but the mean
variation between positive and neutral messages on attitude is more significant in the broadcasting medium than in the narrowcasting medium. The results indicated that how neutral messages impact on attitude in various mediums, but this relationship was not applicable in positive messages. Hou Wee et al. (1995) demonstrated that neutral messages were determined to have a stronger effect on behavioral intention than the positive ones. This study further expands their research and revealed that only in the narrowcasting medium, the neutral message would increase its effect on attitude.

Thirdly, according to Packard and Berger (2017), the explicit endorsement style will have a higher attitude formation than implicit endorsement style. We predicted that the effect of both implicit and explicit endorsement messages would have a higher attitude in the narrowcasting medium than in the broadcasting medium. However, we only found this in the broadcasting medium. Doh and Hwang (2009) revealed that increasing ratio of positive reviews did not statistically improve attitude formation. We added either explicit endorsement style, such as “I highly recommend it”, or implicit endorsement style, such as “I really like it” after the manipulated message (“The food was amazing and worth the price. It has great ambience and excellent service.”). Adding endorsement style increases the positive level of the manipulated message which already conveyed a positive emotion. Hence, that might be the reason why we did not find a significant main effect in our study. According to Packard and Berger (2017), the endorsement styles they studied did not include exaggerated adverb terms, such as “really” and “highly”. This could be the reason why we did not find support of the main effect. Future research should consider the overall positivity and exaggerated adverb terms usage among manipulated reviews.
Fourthly, we did not find any significant three-way interaction effects. However, this result still provides some insights for future research on neutral messages. In contrast to the argument from Schlosser (2011) that the effect of a neutral message will be moderated but not negatively associate with attitude, our study suggests that neutral message amplifies the effect of attitude. Charlett, Garland, and Marr (1995) claimed that positive messages result in the highest attitude, followed by no-eWOM messages and negative messages. However, neutral messages in our experiment have the highest attitude with implicit endorsement style especially in the narrowcasting medium. We believe consumption goals might be the reason that we did not find a three-way interaction. According to Kronrod and Danziger (2013), after reading figurative reviews, consumers have a higher favourable attitude towards a hotel in a hedonic consumption goal scenario (a trip for vacation) than in an utilitarian one (a trip for business). Similar to their study, we also examined the effect of linguistics perspective of messages on attitude. Since we did not control consumption goals among participants, different participants might have different consumption goals in their mind when reading our experimental messages. Therefore, future research of eWOM communication should control consumption goals among individuals in order to exclude its effect on attitude.
CHAPTER 7. CONTRIBUTIONS

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

This research has made several contributions to eWOM communication. This study demonstrates the significance of eWOM expression among individuals and a conditional relationship in various mediums. Consistent with Packard and Berger (2017), explicit endorsement style (i.e., “I recommend it”) has a greater significant impact on eWOM recipients than implicit endorsement style (i.e., “I like it”). However, this research suggested that that relationship is conditional and can only found in the broadcasting condition. Contrarily, implicit endorsement styles were found to have higher attitude scores than explicit endorsement styles in the narrowcasting medium. As such, this research adds to a growing literature of language use in consumer settings (e.g., Moore 2015).

This work also offers insights into research on neutral (mixed-form) message on consumer attitude. Tang et al., (2014) found that neutral messages will amplify (eliminate) the effect of positive (negative) messages on sales when more positive (negative) messages are more accessible for consumers. Extending the study of Tang et al. (2014), this study revealed that a single neutral (mixed-form) message results in higher attitude formation in the narrowcasting medium than in the broadcasting medium. The reason why neutral messages have a different effect in the different medium can be explained by Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen (2009). They revealed that two-sided messages (mixed form of neutral message, i.e., Tang, et al., 2014) have higher perceived credibility than one-sided message (i.e., Tang, et al., 2014); higher credible source and argument strength also have higher perceived credibility (Cheung, Luo, et al., 2009). In the narrowcasting medium, direct message from friends is deem as a higher credible source. A
neutral message, which contains two sides of positive and negative attributes, is deemed as a more credible review. Therefore, neutral messages have a higher effect on attitude in narrowcasting communication than in broadcasting communication.

Finally, the results indicated that how neutral messages impact on attitude in various mediums, but this relationship was not applicable in positive messages. Hou Wee et al. (1995) demonstrated that a neutral message has a stronger effect on behavioral intention than a positive message. This study further expands their research and revealed that only in the narrowcasting medium, a neutral message would increase its effect on attitude formation.

7.3 Managerial Contributions

Our findings also offer significant implications for managers. Firstly, the findings revealed that endorsement styles impact attitude formation across mediums. This study was consistent with Goffman (1959) which found that consumers are more likely to promote their favourable impressions and avoid unfavourable impressions when talking in a large audience size. Therefore, when a company is running a broadcasting eWOM campaign, marketers should focus more on posts that include explicit endorsement styles and less on the use of implicit endorsement expression. Furthermore, when a company is running a referral campaign, marketers should be more concerned about consumers’ use of implicit endorsement styles, since implicit endorsement styles excel the impact of explicit styles on attitude formation in narrowcasting medium.
Secondly, this study also indicated that explicit endorsement style messages had higher impact on attitude formation in the broadcasting medium than in the narrowcasting medium. Packard and Berger (2017) revealed that explicit endorsement styles served as a sign of expertise making the statements to be more persuasive. In decision making, consumers tend to infer the source of expertise to decide whether or not to follow eWOM (Gershoff, Broniarczyk, and West 2001; Gershoff and Johar 2006; Naylor, Lamberton, and Norton 2011). Consistent with existing literature, our study suggests that social media websites, such as Facebook or Instagram can increase persuasiveness when they change “likes” into displaying the number of people who “recommended” the posts. In this way, the website can maximize the use of explicit endorsement expression on attitude. Marketers can also encourage consumers to use explicit endorsement styles when creating posts in the broadcasting medium.

Thirdly, this research demonstrated that neutral messages form a higher attitude formation in the narrowcasting medium than in the broadcasting medium. Positive messages have a higher attitude formation in broadcasting medium, but neutral messages have a higher attitude formation in narrowcasting medium. The use of one-sided positive messages has a statistically significant impact on the increase of attitude than two-sided neutral messages in the broadcasting medium. This study suggests that marketers should focus on positive messages only in a broadcasting medium, where they will have a stronger impact on attitude than neutral (mixed-form) messages. However, in a referral campaign, managers can encourage consumers to speak of both positive and negative sides of the products or services when referring to their friends. We believe credibility and involvement across two mediums can further explain our findings. Cheung and Luo et al. (2009) demonstrated that sidedness of message influence credibility: two-
sided messages (the mixed form of a neutral message, i.e., Tang, et al., 2014) have higher perceived credibility than the one-sided message (i.e., Tang, et al., 2014). Neutral messages characterized with both sides of positive and negative attributes, hence increase the credibility. According to Zaichkowsky (1985) that involvement is “a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests” (p. 342). Browsing Instagram news feed is a relaxing and hedonic activity. Therefore, individuals on Instagram are in the low-involvement condition and are more likely to rely on peripheral cues (Petty et al., 1981) which will lead them to adopt the attitude from eWOM (i.e. the simple acceptance or rejection of a cue, Petty et al., 1981, Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In narrowcasting communication, individuals are more involved in the conversation. Therefore, individuals are in a higher level of involvement condition, leading them to evaluate information carefully and to be more critical about the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

CHAPTER 8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite efforts being made to develop reliable research on eWOM communication, the current study does have some limitations. To begin with, this study was conducted through online surveys distributed to University of Guelph undergraduate students and through the Mturk platform. Students received a 2% course credit. Participants recruited from Mturk platform were restricted to North America, but ages are varied. However, not every participant was familiar with Instagram, so we had screening questions before the main study to reduce the concern of Instagram unfamiliarity.
Besides, another limitation of this study is that we tried to reproduce the same activity when people are messaging with their friends or browsing their own Instagram news feed. For the personal message part, because of the experiment and technology problem, we cannot ask their actual friend to send them a personal message. Therefore, some participants reported that the message was too formal and did not seem like a message from their friends. Barasch & Berger (2014) asked individuals to write down actual messages under broadcasting or narrowcasting medium. Future studies can refer this method in studying the effect of messages in the narrowcasting medium on eWOM communication outcomes.

In addition, this study did not concern whether each participant in this study has similar amount of Instagram followers. According to Smith, Coyle, Lightfoot, and Scott (2007), compared to less connected users, more connected users are more likely to create posts and product reviews. Therefore, for those less connected Instagram users, participants might not be deeply involved in this type of social media platform. They might not use the personal message function as frequently as others, and may not be familiar with the layouts of the direct message. In regards to the experimental image, we chose an image with both meat and vegetables, and some participants reported that their friends are vegetarians and would not send them the message like that. Future study on recipients should consider individual characteristics and dietary habits.

Furthermore, this studies lack of a comparison among different Linguistic perspectives (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013; Moore, 2015). For example, figurative language (e.g., The view blows your mind away!", Kronrod & Danziger, 2013) contains no emotional words but acts conditionally stronger than reviews with emotional words when it comes to influencing receivers' product
choice and purchase decision. Moreover, the endorsement style only explains 35% of eWOM in language (Packard, & Berger, 2017), and 65% of eWOM has not yet been compared, therefore, researchers can focus on completing the comparison in different language use settings.

Finally, dropping the negative valence in this study impede us to examine the negative eWOM effect on both broadcasting and narrowcasting medium. We are not able to provide a complete effect of how different levels of valence will influence attitude in a different medium. However, this study highlights the need for future research to investigate how different characteristics of eWOM and computer-mediated communication will influence consumer attitude differently. This research suggests future research to continue examine the effect of negative eWOM in a different medium.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

The current research tested the effects of three independent variables: medium, valence, and endorsement style on consumer attitude, and provided theoretical and managerial contributions. This study provided insights on how researchers and marketers should focus on the different effects of valence, endorsement styles, medium on attitude. Both researchers and marketers should pay more attention to neutral messages it might have a surprising effect on consumer attitude. Current study demonstrated that the choice of medium can influence receivers’ attitude towards the eWOM message; however, the effect of narrowcasting messages on attitude is conditional. Therefore, a further in-depth study on medium, valence, and endorsement styles is necessary.
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Criteria of eWOM Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech act features</th>
<th>Distribution Channel</th>
<th>Endorsement style and sentence patterns</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Representative articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implicit endorsement</td>
<td>broadcasting</td>
<td>Personal opinion: first-person pronoun + declaration of approval for self; use of High/low activation words</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>The food was amazing and worth the price. It has great ambience and excellent service. I really like this restaurant!</td>
<td>Searle (1976); Holmes (1982); Sbisa (2001) Packard &amp; Berger (2017); Chen, Z., 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>narrowcasting</td>
<td>Personal suggestion: first-person pronoun + declaration of approval for specific others (second-person pronoun); use of High/low activation words</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>The food was amazing and worth the price. It has great ambience and excellent service. I am sure you will like this restaurant.</td>
<td>Searle (1976); Holmes (1982); Sbisa (2001) Packard &amp; Berger (2017); Chen, Z., 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The food was good. Prices were high but worth it. It has good ambience but slow service. I kind of like the restaurant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit endorsement</td>
<td>broadcasting</td>
<td>General suggestion: first-person pronoun + declaration of approval for others; use of conditional or directive verbs</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>The food was amazing and worth the price. It has great ambience and excellent service. I highly recommend it!</td>
<td>Pinker, Nowak, and Lee (2008); Searle (1975, 1976); Van Dijk (1997); Auramaki, Lehtinen, and Lyytinen (1988); Fonic (2003) De Saussure (2007); Chen, Z., 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>narrowcasting</td>
<td>Personal suggestion: first-person pronoun + declaration of approval for specific others (second-person pronoun); use of conditional or directive verbs</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>The food was amazing and worth the price. It has great ambience and excellent service. I highly recommend you to check it out!</td>
<td>Pinker, Nowak, and Lee (2008); Searle (1975, 1976); Van Dijk (1997); Auramaki, Lehtinen, and Lyytinen (1988); Fonic (2003) De Saussure (2007); Chen, Z., 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The food was good. Prices were high but was worth it. It has good ambience and slow service. I kind of recommend you to check it out!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Main Study Pictures

Broadcasting vs. Narrowcasting

The food was amazing and worth the price. The restaurant has great ambience and excellent service. I am sure you will like this restaurant.
Appendix 3: Pre-test Samples of Questions

Section 1

In this section, you will be presented with eight sets of content, and each set consists of one message and an image from a restaurant named Arabesque. The image features a kebab plate with grilled beef, fries, onion, and a salad.

1. On the scale below, please select the following option which best describes your feelings towards the image and review.

   - Great ambience and excellent service. The food was amazing and worth the price.
   - I really like this restaurant!

   - Extremely negative (1)
   - Moderately negative (2)
   - Slightly negative (3)
   - Neither positive nor negative (4)
   - Slightly positive (5)
   - Moderately positive (6)
   - Extremely positive (7)
Section 2-part one

1. In this part, you will be presented with two sets of content, and each set consists of both an image and a review from a restaurant. After looking at all the images and reviews, you will answer a series of multiple-choice questions related to the content.

Which of the following options made it easier for you to imagine yourself browsing Instagram and coming across the post above?

- With Instagram layouts (1)
- Without Instagram layouts (2)
- No difference (3)
On the scale below, please select the following option which best describes your feelings towards the review and image.

- Extremely negative (1)
- Moderately negative (2)
- Slightly negative (3)
- Mixed (4)
- Slightly positive (5)
- Moderately positive (6)
- Extremely positive (7)

Section 2-part two

1. In this section, you will be asked to write down one of your friend's first name or nickname, and imagine you are getting a personal message from that person.

2. After looking into the message, you will answer a series of multiple-choice questions related to that message.

3. When observing the content, please pay attention to all the images and reviews presented.
Which set of message content did you find easier to imagine yourself receiving from your friend?

- With Instagram layouts (1)
- Without Instagram layouts (2)
- No difference (3)

On the scale below, please select the following option which best describes your feelings towards the review and image.

- Extremely negative (1)
- Moderately negative (2)
- Slightly negative (3)
- Mixed (4)
- Slightly positive (5)
- Moderately positive (6)
- Extremely positive (7)
Appendix 4: Univariate Test for Attitude

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>50.827a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.261</td>
<td>4.303</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>12185.025</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12185.025</td>
<td>7220.583</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>17.884</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.884</td>
<td>10.598</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorse</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med</td>
<td>7.762</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.762</td>
<td>4.600</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS * Endorse</td>
<td>2.357</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.357</td>
<td>1.397</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS * Med</td>
<td>8.389</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.389</td>
<td>4.971</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorse * Med</td>
<td>13.753</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.753</td>
<td>8.150</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS * Endorse * Med</td>
<td>2.207</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.207</td>
<td>1.308</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>696.954</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>1.688</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13016.222</td>
<td>421</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>747.781</td>
<td>420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .068 (Adjusted R Squared = .052)

Appendix 5: Medium Treatments in Main Study

Participants who were randomly assigned to the narrowcasting medium were asked to read this description before viewing the review:

Please imagine the following message and pictures are sent to you directly from a friend you often talk to. The post features a dish from a restaurant: Arabesque restaurant.

Participants who were randomly assigned to the broadcasting medium were asked to read this description before viewing the two images:

Please imagine while looking through posts on your Instagram, you come across the following post. The post features a dish from a restaurant: Arabesque restaurant.
Appendix 6: Main Study Sample Questions

Scenario: You are browsing through your own Instagram as usual, and come across a post from your friend who just went to Arabesque Restaurant.

Post description: The post features a review and an image of a kebab plate with grilled beef, fries, onion, and a salad.

When reading this post, do you feel your friend is thinking about self or others?

Self (1)  
Others (2)
Is the post about a recommendation or a personal opinion?
Recommendation (1)
Personal opinion (2)

On each of the scales below, please select the option which best describes your opinions towards the post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The post is factual (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The post is accurate (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The post is credible (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think your friend liked the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think your friend enjoyed the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think you will like the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think you will be satisfied with the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think you will favour the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, please indicate your intention of going to this restaurant. (1 = Strongly NOT intend to go, 7 = Strongly intend to go).

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how strongly do you feel about going to this restaurant? (1 = Strongly consider Not going, 7 = Strongly consider going).

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

Please indicate whether image, review or both most influenced your decision.

- Image (1)
- Review (2)
- Both (3)

Section 2

1. Please think about a friend you recently texted with and write down a name or a nickname in the following box.

2. Please imagine yourself getting a message from this person.

Please take your time to look at the following information.

Scenario: The person you just wrote down previously sent you a direct personal message, telling you something about the Arabesque restaurant.

Message description: The message features a review and an image of a kebab plate with grilled
beef, fries, onion, and a salad.

The food was amazing and worth the price. The restaurant has great ambience and excellent service. I am sure you will like this restaurant.

Does it feel like you are getting a direct message from your friend? (Click yes or no)

○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

Please indicate (in 1-2 lines) why the above image doesn’t make you feel like getting a message from your friend?

________________________________________________________________

When reading the message, do you think your friend is thinking about self or others?

○ Self (1)
○ Others (2)
Is the message about a recommendation or a personal opinion?

- Recommendation (1)
- Personal opinion (2)

On each of the scales below, please select the option which best describes your opinions towards the message you just saw.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The message is factual (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The message is accurate (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The message is credible (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think your friend liked the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think your friend liked the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think your friend enjoyed the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think you will be satisfied with the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how much do you think you will favour the restaurant? (1= Not at all, 7= Very much)

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

On a scale of 1-7, please indicate your intention of going to this restaurant. (1 = Strongly NOT intend to go, 7 = Strongly intend to go).

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
On a scale of 1-7, how strongly do you feel about going to this restaurant? (1 = Strongly consider Not going, 7 = Strongly consider going).

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)

Please indicate whether image, review or both most influenced your decision.

- Image (1)
- Review (2)
- Both (3)