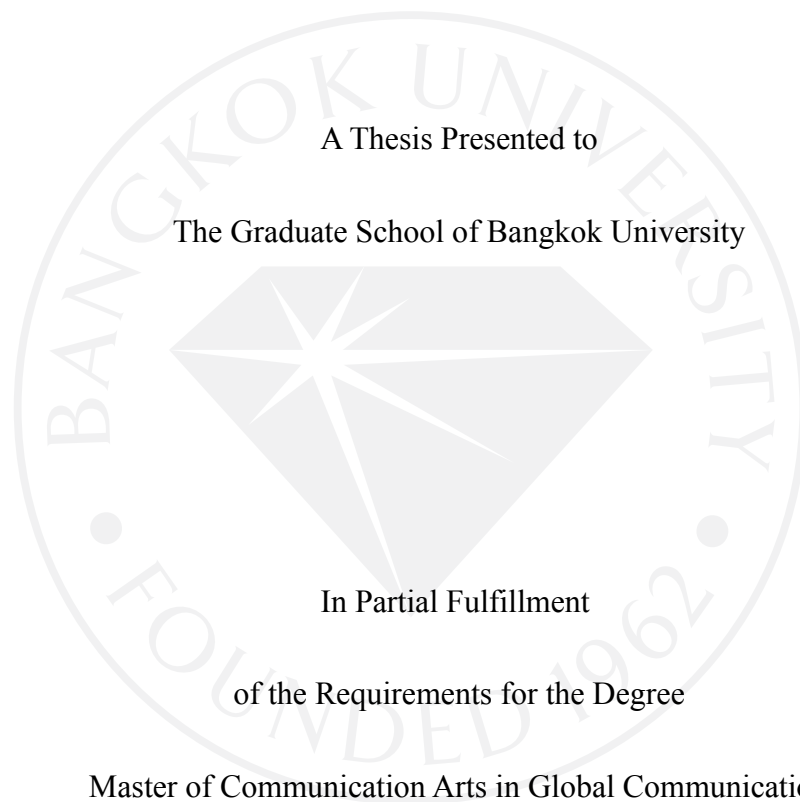


ELECTRONIC WORDS OF MOUTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF
SK-II IN TAIWAN



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SK-II IN TAIWAN



A Thesis Presented to

The Graduate School of Bangkok University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Communication Arts in Global Communication

by

Liang Huang

2016



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This thesis has been approved by
the Graduate School
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131 Jan. 1 2018

Liang, H., M.A. (Communication Arts), January 2016, Graduate School, Bangkok University

Electronic Words of Mouth in Social Media: A Case Study of SK-II in Taiwan (117 pp.)

Advisor of thesis: Asst. Prof. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) of beauty products are communicated by consumers on social media, and how the relevant brand marketer responds to them. Using the Uses and Gratification Theory as a conceptual framework, EWOM content on SK-II products during January 2015 and October 2015 are sampled and analyzed from the SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, a popular beauty online forum in Taiwan. The textual analyses of the EWOM made by Taiwanese consumers on both platforms reveal that consumers engage in EWOM of beauty products for four different purposes -- social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinions, and information sharing. Both platforms are used as product information source. Responses to EWOM given by SKII marketer include replying the posted questions, correcting misperception, and interacting with both potential and loyal consumers. As many artists and creative entrepreneurs rely on online recommendations to support their artistic and business projects' survival and growth, findings of this study can benefit them by showing how consumers engage in EWOM in social media, which in turn enable them to enhance their EWOM stimulation and control to achieve marketing or communication objectives.

Implications for future research are also provided for academicians who investigate the potential roles of EWOM in social media on brand communication.

Keywords: Electronic words-of-mouth (EWOM), social media, Facebook, online forum, Urcosme, SK-II Taiwan, Uses and Gratifications Theory

Approved: _____

Signature of Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to Assistant Professor Dr. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond, my lecturer and academic advisor throughout the process of my study and thesis development. Dr. Punnahitanond is really a wise teacher. As an academic advisor, she spent enormous time on advices and comments for my thesis both day and night, weekday and weekend. This thesis could not be accomplished without her support and terrific guidance.

I also would like to express my special thanks to Professor Dr. James Gomez, my co-advisor, and the external committee members for their inspiring suggestions, directed and valuable comments on the improvement of my thesis.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my classmates and friends at Bangkok university. Thanks to those who entered into my life and made me stronger and who I am today.

Many thanks for Mr. Thanongsak Chongbut, Bangkok University Graduate School officer for his coordination and format checking.

Finally, special and deepest thanks to my parents and family members for their support, love and encouragement. I never feel alone with their love and care.

Thanks to Bangkok University, thanks to Thailand.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides you with the background information of this research including rationale and problem statements, objectives of the study, scope of the study, research questions, significant of the study, and definition of terms.

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

This thesis will research the consumers EWOM behaviors on Facebook and analyze how the EWOM spread on Facebook on SK-II Taiwan Fan page. Several past academic literatures agreed that Word of Mouth (WOM) has a strong influence on judgment of products or service by shaping consumers' attitude (Arndt 1967; Herr et al., 1991; Brown and Reingen 1987), especially when consumers make a purchase decision (Reingen and Kernan 1986; Richins, 1983; Scott, 2003; Lee & Youn, 2009). The growth of the Internet technology combined with the rapid increase number of social media users shifts the offline traditional Word-of-Mouth (WOM) to Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM).

The past research also claim that Word-of-Mouth among consumers is an important and influential source of product information for consumers. Word-of-Mouth is considered when individual sources out of control of marketers' selling intention (Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik, 2010). Therefore, Word-of-Mouth as a personal sources was considered as a highly credible source (Murray, 1991; Neilsen, 2012; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993).

Word-of-mouth (WOM) was defined by Arndt (1967) as oral interpersonal communication with non-commercial purpose. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found WOM seven times more effective than newspaper and magazine advertising, four times more effective than personal selling, and twice as effective as radio advertising in influencing consumers to switch brands. More recently, Word-of-Mouth publicity is viewed as more important than advertising or editorial content.

Traditional (offline) word-of-mouth such as other people's recommendations has played an important role on consumers' search information and purchasing decision (Duhan, Johnson, Wilcox & Harrel, 1997; Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988).

Online consumer recommendations or Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is a new emerging market phenomenon, Word-of-Mouth created by consumers based on personal experiences play a more and more important role when consumers do online review.

Hu (2011) defined that social network sites (SNSs) are viral world "built on the concept of traditional networks." The social networks sites have much in common even if they are named differently, people could share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interest on social network sites.

With the help of the Internet, there is an increasing number rate of online consumers to access new product information without geographic limitations of time and space. On the other hand, compared with traditional information, the sellers offer two types of inflammations online: First, offer information created by seller themselves by traditional communications (such as advertising) channels and web. Second, the sellers could offer the information created by consumers based on consumers' recommendations on the sellers' website (Chen & Xie, 2008).

The rapid development and the growing of social networks bring both opportunities and challenges to the firms. According to the recent report, social networking is one of the most popular online activities (The Statistics Portal, 2015). In order to meet the new challenges of the times, it is necessary that the firms make better use of social network sites for business profit.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Since the rapid development of social network and the big number of global users, EWOM already take a strong role in attracting more marketers and firms attentions. Cosmetics products have widely used social media to communicate product communication with costumers regarding their past experiences and successful samples. Cosmetic is also a product that needs to post new information timely.

This research aims to understand what consumers behave in terms of EWOM. The major purpose of this thesis is to investigate the Taiwanese consumers' comments regarding cosmetic product on SKII Facebook fanpage. In particular, to understand what kind of EWOM and how they were communicated in social media between consumers and brand representatives.

1.3 Scope of the Study

Based on the statistics on global internet users in July 2014 (The Statistics Portal, 2014), it was found that 62 percent global average of internet users agreed that expressing opinions and being heard was an important reason to go online. Social media not only change the pattern of traditional information flowing, make it more social type, but also help developing high brand loyalty. Platforms such as Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram have become significant marketing communication channels

for storytelling, building brand image and establishing brand loyalty. Interactive marketing is the key to brand development. By understanding the brand culture that cultivates consumer loyalty, many companies have incorporated more information into the content of interest among fans, resulting in deepening ties between their target consumers and the brands (Karl Young, 2014).

Accordingly, this research will exclusively focus on Facebook as the most popular type of social media. It is designed to categorize the different types of EWOM on Facebook fan page of one brand of cosmetic product and using them as materials to analyze consumers' EWOM behaviors. Understanding how consumers engage in EWOM will enable marketing communication strategists to achieve the company's goals.

In consideration of relevant factors such as time constraint involving primary data collection, this research chooses SK-II as the case study. Beauty product brands is considered "high involvement product." Most of these brands have their own website and Facebook, as channels for establishing relationship with its current and potential customers. They are interactive tool that combine user reviews and how-to content. Many popular ways to advertise on Facebook include links to the brand homepage or Facebook page (The Statistics Portal, 2015).

In terms of geographical area, this study will analyze fans' reactions on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage.

According to the *Cosmetics & Toiletries Market Overviews (2014)*, personal care products in Taiwan have a promisingly lucrative market. In 2009, its estimated value reaches US\$ 1 billion. Over the years multiple famous products are actively entering Taiwan personal care market and gain a place. Taiwan personal care market

has a distinct polarization distribution, mainly in the premium end or on the lower-priced. Therefore, consumers of Taiwan's cosmetics market are mainly divided into two categories: the first group is those who purchase at low-cost hypermarkets and drugstores whereas another group is those who are shopping luxurious cosmetics at department stores. Although, Taiwan is a small island, imported personal care products reached 85% of local demand in 2009. It has 33.4% share of market in Japan, 15.2% share in US, 13.3% share in France, 3.8% share in South Korea, and 3.5% share in Germany.

Taiwan's personal care products distribution channels include: 1) Department Stores: for high-end and internationally brands, 2) Specialty Stores: mainly composed of drugstores and discount store types, 3) Hypermarkets: Natural/Organic personal care products, 4) Beauty and Skin Care Salons: about 15% cosmetics sold through this channel, and develop the brand loyalty, 5) Direct Sale: this channel is more and more popular in Taiwan, about 22% cosmetics sold through this channel, focus on skin care and cleaning products, 6) Internet: Taiwan is one of the most wired countries in the world, around 70% of households having high speed internet access at home, the 10th largest in per capital internet usage, and 7) Home Shopping/TV Shopping: this channel is very popular in Taiwan specially for skin care and personal care products. There are four major players: EHS (Eastern Home Shopping & Leisure), Momo (Fubon Multimedia Technology), Viva TV Home shopping, and U-Life Shopping Channel on local television. Most of them purchase directly from manufacturers (Cosmetics & Toiletries Market Overviews, 2014).

1.4 Research Questions

This study extends the literature on online consumer behaviors and analyzes

how consumers engage in EWOM. The web 2.0 offers an easy channel for people to make contacts and exchanges information. Many social networking sites have become a link to connect consumers and the firms, allowing consumers to more accurately understand the product information, and more specifically assess whether the product needs to achieve their requirements. Understanding consumer online behavior allows more accurate positioning of the enterprise and engagement with consumers. Therefore, this is really necessary for marketers and companies to better understand how EWOM are communicated.

EWOM in SNS can be examined by three categories: Opinion seeking, opinion giving and opinion passing (Chu & Kim, 2011). The past research have found that when the consumers make a purchase decisions, they get a high level of relay the social networks to get recommendations, evaluations and information (Gershoff, Broniarczyk & West, 2001; Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastman, 1996). Previous research on WOM behavior focused on three directions (De & Lilien, 2008 cited by Chiosa, 2014): *Opinion seeking* involves little expertise in a product category, high risk in decision-making, involvement in purchasing decision; *opinion giving* involves satisfaction or dissatisfaction, relationship with the company, novelty of the product; and *opinion sharing* involves source expertise, tie strength, demographic similarity, perceptual affinity.

Based on the above, the following three research questions are developed:

RQ # 1: How is EWOM communicated on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage?

RQ # 2: How is EWOM communicated on Urcosme?

RQ # 3: How does EWOM communication on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage differ from Urcosme?

RQ # 4: How does SK-II marketer respond to EWOM on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This thesis offers various benefits. Firstly, this study would contribute to marketers' better understanding of consumers' online behaviors in terms of EWOM on social media. Identifying consumers' different EWOM behaviors will help the firms develop better marketing communication strategy to effectively communicate with target consumers in social media. Social media platforms offer useful information such as figures, content in status updates, help to measure the interactions (Akyol, 2013). The brand could get the feedback of the marketing activities on Facebook fan page, consumers talking about the online and offline marketing activities, promotion activities. The feedback of brand marketing activities is kind of free idea for how to make more attractive activities to enhance consumer involvement.

Secondly, this study will help marketers to build effectively and timely EWOM communication on its Facebook fan page as they can easily and immediately get what the consumers think (Haig, 2005). Quick responses from marketers to whether positive or negative comments are necessary as they can turn negative EWOM to a positive one by showing their care about the consumers, rather than ignoring them.

Thirdly, this study will help marketers to enhance consumers' brand loyalty by building and maintaining good relationships with their target consumers through attentively managing EWOM on social media.

Finally, the findings of this study will also benefit academicians in

communication and marketing fields by revealing how the EWOM spread on Facebook, and encouraging more academicians to do further research on other types of high-involvement products such as apparel and health-related products or services.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Word-of-Mouth (WOM): refers to informal interpersonal communication between non-commercial communicators and receivers in real life about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services (Arndt, 1967; Westbrook, 1987).

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM): refers to "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet." (Hennig-Thurau, Qwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004, 39).

Social Network Site (SNS): Boyd & Ellison (2007) define the SNS based on web services. First, the users could communicate to public or semi-public on a website system. Second, the users could share moment with people who are on the connected friend list and share the moment. Third, the users could browse messages publicly posted by other users on that system.

Social Media Users: refers to those who use social media on their daily lives. According to Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu & Tichindelean (2013), social media users can be categorized into four groups as follows:

- a. Engagers: refer to social media users who are the persons who publish articles or information about their Personal lives. They publish contents that are most relevant to their own. They are independent, and have constantly more access to information through the Really Simple

Syndication (RSS).

- b. Expressers and Informers: refer to social media users who always have different views and opinions from other people. They are very actively willing to share their own different views to others on the Internet and get people's attention. They typically read information and find information on different social networks and forums, often participate in discussions, publish unique insights. They get involved in a variety types of sites such as reviews, rate sites, products and services.
- c. Networkers: refer to social media users who are particularly involved in social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace. Social media sites have become a part of their lives. The Networkers regularly upload and share interesting things to record their life, express opinions, interact with friends, and tag photos.
- d. Watchers and Listeners: refer to social media users who have a very low participation on the Internet. They get involved of the Internet merely to follow the entertainment purposes. They are not involved in the discussions or express their personal opinions, but simply watch movies, TV shows, videos, listening to music, and download music or video.

Facebook: refer to an online social networking service that provides users with some different ways of interactions between other users in their network. It allows users to connect with friends and also spread information. With its serving as major communication channel in the contemporary societies, the spread of traditional WOM shift from offline to online channels.

Facebook Fanpage: It is a public profile specifically offer to businesses,

organizations, brand, celebrities, cause, and anyone seeking to promote themselves publicly through social media. Facebook pages has the similar function as a personal pages but they do not get "fans" instead of "friends" by click "Like" the page button. A Facebook page could public online and post such as statuses, links, events, photos and videos. People could browse the public contents on the page itself and also could be seen on their fans news feeds (Rouse, 2010). On the Facebook fan page, the brand could post varies information relevant to the product, such as videos, messages, quizzes, information, and other material (De Vries, Gensler & Leeftang, 2012). Consumers can follow the fan page and become a fan and leave messages to communicate with brand.

SKII: It is the world-known skin care brand by Procter & Gamble, being marketed in 13 Asia countries. In 2012, SK-II has become one of the two skin care brands of sales over one billion dollars. The brand is really good at using social media as a marketing tool to develop strategies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of literature regarding social networking sites (SNS), web 2.0, SNS users, Word-of-Mouth (WOM), electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM), and SKII, which is one of the global brands that has extensively used social networking sites such as Facebook to communicate with their target audiences.

2.1 Social Networking Sites (SNS)

The earliest human dissemination of information relied mainly on oral communication between people. With the development of science and technology dissemination of information via newspapers, magazine, television and radio appeared. During the Internet era, the combined effects of high and Internet technologies enable social networking sites to become the most prominent mass media of the 21st century. They allow message receivers to become message senders and yield electronic Word-of-Mouth more important in today's world.

In 1929 a Hungarian author named Frigyes Karinthy published a volume of short stories titled *Everything is Different*. One of the short stories was titled "Lańczemek" (in English, "Chains," or "Chain-Links."), in that story (Karinthy, 1929) he wrote:

“A fascinating game grew out of this discussion. One of us suggested performing the following experiment to prove that the population of the Earth is closer together now than they have ever been before. We should select any person from the 1.5 billion inhabitants of the Earth – anyone, anywhere at all. He bet

us that, using no more than *five* individuals, one of whom is a personal acquaintance, he could contact the selected individual using nothing except the network of personal acquaintances.”

Karinthy (1929) believes that as the social network between people and people will cross the natural geographical conditions, any two individual persons who are distanced and do not know one another could be connected through five or under 5 acquaintances by friendship links. This friendship links allow people to connect with anyone who never meet up, within six degrees of separation.

In the early 1950s, Kochen and De Sola Pool (1979) studied how many intermediaries are needed to connect two individual random persons under a U.S.-sized population. Their research, which was not published until 20 years later, indicated that any two random individuals probably need two chains to connect one another.

Milgram (1967) conducted experiments to investigate de Sola Pool and Kochen's "small world problem" by randomly selecting people from psychologically distant locations like Kansas or Nebraska, to send a folder through the mail to a target person in places like Cambridge, Massachusetts or Boston. The starters were given information about the target person such as recipient's name, occupation, and general location and written instructions to send the folder through the mail to someone whom they know and may connect with that target person. When that person received the letters, they would send to someone on their friends list who may be closer to the target person, until the folder was finally delivered to the target person. Milgram found out the number of degrees of separation in actual social networks. Their average path length fall around five and a half or six (Albert-László, 2003).

Sixdegrees.com has been seen as the first modern social network based on the six degrees of separation concept and also named it. Sixdegrees.com was a social network service website launched in 1997. It was named after the six degrees of separation concept and helps people connect with one another and send messages to others. It also allowed users to create profiles, list their friends, family members, organize groups, and surf other users' profiles. One cannot exceed six middlemen indirect acquaintance with the world. Individual circles will continue to expand and overlap and ultimately will form a large social network. Through the circle of friends led to the development of the first online social network. Sixdegrees.com lasted from 1997 to 2001.

After that many social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn emerged with a purpose to make friends. MySpace meets the needs of their users and rapidly becomes the largest social network. In subsequent years, many similar emerging social networks rapidly developed.

With the development of information technology and the Internet, social networking sites expand dissemination of information and information exchange among wide range of human beings, in a sense that it changed human's way of thinking and communication as people exchange ideas through this platform.

Social networking sites have become people's essential way of communication. Through a good social networking site, users can do many things such as sharing pictures and life experiences, online dating, educating, online job placement and application.

2.1.1 Definition of SNS

Boyd & Ellison (2007) defined the SNS based on web services. First, the users

could communicate to public or semi-public on a website system. Second, the users could share moment with people who are on the connected friend list and share the moment. Third, the users could browse messages publicly posted by other users on that system. Social network sites was defined by Mislove et al. (2007) as “maintaining social relationships, for finding users with similar interests, and for locating content and knowledge that has been contributed or endorsed by other users.”

According to Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), SNSs help establish linkages or keep in touch with people whom they know offline or make friends with others, particularly to make interaction and communication with people who are in work-related contexts (LinkedIn.com), romantic relationship (Friendster.com), connecting those with shared interests (MySpace.com), or college student population (Facebook.com).

Similar to Westland’s definition of SNS as the structure made up by nodes on network graph, which are social network users who express their interests such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friends, kinship, dislike, conflict, trade, web links, and so forth on the Internet, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argues that social networking sites are applications that allow people to publicize personal information profiles and get people together to share personal profiles (such as photos, video, audio files and blogs). Hu (2011) defines that SNSs are viral world "built on the concept of traditional networks." The social networks sites have much in common even if they are named differently. They also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on friends' pages.

As a new tool, SNSs offer the platform to meet people's need (Chang, Choi, Bazarova, & Löckenhoff, 2015), and provide a better platform for interactive

information and self-disclosure (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). Thousands of people disclose on social networks personal information, personal life, personal views, fuller expression of personal feelings. They are like a diary of their lives shared to other users.

In addition, SNSs are platform to build social relations among people (Scaife, 2014), and are virtual communities (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011) which connect users through a variety of services such as sharing individual profiles and interests, interacting with real-life connections, sending emails and messages.

2.1.2 Types of Web 2.0

We live in a world are connected by only a small number of intermediate connections. The idea has been tested by Milgram. The growing technologies of the Internet made the actual social distance far smaller (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy, & Skiera, 2010).

According to Lehtimäki et al (2009), “Web 2.0 means technologies that enable users to easily communicate, and organize, create and share content.” Web 2.0 refers to a use of web platform where the content is controlled by user (Constantinides et al., 2008). In Web 2.0 mode, the users can freely share information, regardless of time and geographical constraints from their perspectives, can get the information they need, and can publish their views (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2010). In addition, users can get more free space than before, can more freely publish information without restriction, and can participate in the process of information dissemination according to the needs of different people.

Web 2.0 makes the network become more socialization. Networking has become a social and trading platform for connecting people. The Internet connection

has gradually replaced people's traditional mass media activities. More and more people get on the convenient network service. The more people get benefits from the network such as online shopping, dating, communication, learning, entertainment and so on, the more users become more and more dependent on the Internet.

Today's consumers have become accustomed to the active search for information on the Internet, fewer and fewer consumers read hard copy newspapers or magazines or sit in front of TV. They use social networks to share experiences and use the experience of others to buy products or services. They are no longer a passive information "receiver", but became active in the search and in role of a "producer" (Lietsala & Sirkkunen, 2008.) The Internet does have the power to change everything, including marketing. When Web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn became popular Internet platforms, which connect people around the globe.

There are five categories of web 2.0 proposed by Constantinides et al. (2008) as follows:

- a) Blogs: Short for Web logs: online journals, the most known and fastest-growing category of Web 2.0 applications. Blogs are often combined with *Podcasts*, that is, digital audio or video that can be streamed or downloaded to portable devices.
- b) Social networks: applications allowing users to build personal websites accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication.

- c) (Content) Communities: Websites organizing and sharing particular types of content. Examples are applications of video sharing, photos sharing, social bookmarking and publicly edited encyclopedias.
- d) Forums/bulletin boards: sites for exchanging ideas and information usually around special interests.
- e) Content aggregators: applications allowing users to fully customize the web content they wish to access. These sites make use of a technique known as Real Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary (RSS).

2.1.3 Type of Social Networking Sites

Social network or social media take a huge number of opportunities and involved everyone in today's world. More and more people grow up in social media environment, social media offer an exactly easy way to approach people. With the rapid increase of mobile solutions and the help of social media tools people could connect with the Internet every minutes (Heidemann, Klier, & Probst, 2010). Social network sites become a phenomenon and one of mainstream media, always affecting social and economic development.

Social networks enable firms to reach the end-consumers directly and timely with "low cost and higher levels of efficiency," and they offer new opportunities for not only large firms, but also for small companies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Establishing the relationship between traditional social networks are often bidirectional; one party sends a request to another party and waits the request been accepted, but some of relationships are one-way that users can establish a relationship with other users in the systems. Many businesses have used social network sites to

create stronger ties with their customers and increase the lines of communication.

The past article showed the different way of categorizing social network sites. It can be categorized by purposes -- connecting to classmates, connecting in work-related matters, establishing friendship, finding business partners, looking for same interest buddies, communicating with people with shared interests or with people belonging to a certain population, searching for romantic relationships (Hu, 2011; Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In the history of the development of modern social networks, Friendster, MySpace and Facebook have a pivotal position as top three typical social networking sites (Sareah, 2015).

Based on Boyd & Ellison (2007) and Adamic & Adar (2005), there are five types of SNS as follows:

- a. MySpace: It is dedicated to music and entertainment service.
- b. Classmates.com: is a typical social network site designed for keeping contact with friends and acquaintances.
- c. LinkedIn: is more business oriented for self-motivated professionals to get connected with business partner.
- d. Twitter: allows members to post brief messages.
- e. Facebook: focuses more on friendship associates and is very popular on social life connection among younger people.

2.1.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is an online social networking service launched in 2004 by Mark

Zuckerberg who was Harvard undergraduate student. In 2006, as the seventh of the most popular Web site on the World Wide Web, there were approximately 2000 college students in the US used Facebook (Cassidy, 2006). Facebook got more than 21 million registered members and brought 1.6 billion page views every day in 2007. It was considered the fastest growing social network in the world (Needham & Company, 2007). Facebook was the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts. Facebook.com even surpassed Google.com to become the most visited website of the week in the US (Dougherty, 2010). It is the most popular networks worldwide in 2015 ranked by number of active accounts and has become the world's largest social network with an ability to make personal connections (The Statistics Portal, 2014).

Facebook users could set up personal profiles including various information (such as background, demographics, personal interests), then the users build "undirected social links by entering virtual "friendship relationships" (Heidemann, Klier & Probst, 2010).

With a very convenience function of message board called "wall" on the user's profile page, users have the right to browse other users' profile page and the information on the wall. Many people could leave messages on the wall, and more intimate messages through "messages" function which is exclusively delivered to the target users (Benevenuto, Rodrigues, Cha & Almeida, 2009; Wilson, Boe, Sala, Puttaswamy, & Zhao, 2009). Facebook's wall is a message board. Since 2012, it was upgraded to the timeline. Friends can easily and conveniently read past or changed the dynamics.

It usually provides some way interactions between users. For example, friends

can comment on upload photos on personal website. This allows users at any time and place to keep abreast of his friends' dynamics, and easily interact with one another.

According to Nielsen Newswire (2010), more than 40% of consumers go online to check reviews and consumer feedback before purchasing consumer electronics, 60% of those going online have visited a social network, with half going back every day according to Facebook, and 23% of social network users expect companies to listen and respond to what is said online.

Therefore, many of the posts, comments and likes do not have real meaning or conversion to offline action. People like to show support but that does not mean they will act based on their likes. Facebook is no longer the cutting edge medium, increasing the movement is towards apps and mobile devices.

2.2 Types of SNS Users

Due to science and technology development and popularity of the Internet, there are more and more rich networks of information resources, and users' access to information has also undergone a corresponding change in behavior. In particular, users of the Internet age in the network environment will no longer be satisfied with a single acquisition mode and means of expression provided by traditional mass media. Users sitting at home, office or café with the network terminal can access and use network information resources independently.

Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu, & Tichindelean (2013) analyzed social media consumers' activities based on different online platforms and then categorized them into four categories -- Engagers, Expressers and Informers, Networkers, and Watchers and listeners.

a. Engagers

The first category of social network users is defined as the persons who publish articles or information about their personal lives. They publish contents that are most relevant to their own. They are independent, and have constantly more access to information through the RSS (Really Simple syndication).

b. Expressers and Informers

The second category always has different views and opinions from other people. They are very actively willing to share their own different views to others on the Internet and get people's attention. Such people typically read information and find information on different social networks and forum, often participate in discussions, publish unique insights. They get involved in a variety types of sites such as reviews, rate sites, products and services.

c. Networkers

The third category is called “Networkers or Socializers.” They are particularly involved in social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace. Social media sites have become a part of their lives. The Networkers regularly upload and share interesting things to record their life, express opinions, interact with friends, and tag photos.

d. Watchers and Listeners

The fourth category is called “Watchers and Listeners.” This group of people has a very low participation on the Internet. They get involved of the Internet merely to follow the entertainment purpose. They are not involved in the discussions or express their personal opinions, but simply watch movies, TV shows, videos, listening to music, and download music or video.

2.3 Word-of-Mouth (WOM)

2.3.1 Definition of WOM

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) as a major source of influence on consumers' attitudes and behavior has been widely recognized. Westbrook (1987) defines word-of-mouth communication as "informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers." Stern (1994, p. 7) elaborately describes word-of-mouth as follows:

"WOM differs from [advertising. . .] in its lack of boundaries...

WOM involves the exchange of ephemeral oral or spoken messages between a contiguous source and a recipient who communicate directly in real life . . . Consumers are not assumed to create, revise and record pre-written conversational exchanges about products and services. Nor do they ordinarily use poetry or song to discuss consumption. Finally, WOM communication vanishes as soon as it is uttered, for it occurs in a spontaneous manner and then disappears."

Previously, WOM spreads basically in the form of two-step flow of communication. The firms depend on traditional media such as television, magazines, newspapers, and radio, which affect general people who become the early adopters. Some of early adopters act as opinion leaders by continuously disseminating the product information from commercial sources to consumers via a variety of traditional media (Lazarsfeld, 1940).

Based on Anderson (1998), WOM spreads among individuals, the enterprises (including goods and services) informal view of the spread, including the

dissemination of ideas, and it spreads both positive and negative views. Word-of-Mouth is the sum of the term referring to face to face contact with non-commercial purposes (as cited in Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). WOM must be independent of manufacturers, all about a brand-related information and services but not through marketing channels. No private interests of an information exchange (Wu and Wang, 2011).

Kotler, Keller, Ancarani, & Costabile (2014) believe that WOM is without third-party handling, individuals' processing and transmitting information on a particular product, brand, manufacturer, or seller. Any two-way interactive communication behavior can be reminiscent as the target of any organization or individual information, leading the audience to get information, change attitudes, and even affect buying behavior.

For the past decade, WOM is concluded as informal interpersonal communication between non-commercial communicators and receivers in real life about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services (Arndt, 1967; Westbrook, 1987).

2.3.2 Characteristics of WOM

Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins (2007) state that there are two main sources from which ordinary consumers can obtain product information. One is mass media advertising, and the second one is Word-of-Mouth. WOM has made the product information credible, and its persuasion has a negligible effect. A large number of research suggest that when people want to know information about certain products and services, they are more inclined to consult family, friends and other individual experts rather than through traditional media channels (Murray, 1991). Richins's

studies (1983) have shown that, through interactive relationships, WOM generates high confidence, and strong persuasion. Word-of-Mouth happens among friends, relatives, colleagues and other more intimate or close relationship groups. Before Word-of-Mouth process, a special relationship between them were established, as opposed to pure advertising.

However, the survey by Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) and Kotler (2000) reveal that people depend on Word-of-Mouth, which is the best channel for product advice (Swan & Oliver, 1989). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found WOM seven times more effective than newspaper and magazine advertising, four times more effective than personal selling, and twice as effective as radio advertising in influencing consumers to switch brands. More recently, Word-of-Mouth publicity is viewed as more important than advertising or editorial content. WOM reliability is higher than promotions, public relations, merchant referral and other terms. According to Brown and Reigen (1987), word-of-mouth has play a major role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors. With daily invasion of all kinds of advertising, consumers have become numb. Between advertising and WOM, consumers will choose products trusted by their friends (Allsop, et al. 2007).

Different consumer groups have different topics and concerns. Therefore, each consumer constitutes a public not a broken small camp, or certain target market. They have similar consumer orientation, like brand preference. As long as the impact of one or several messages immediately spread this way by means of communication with the infinite variety of age, information will grow in geometric progression rate spread (Phan, et al., 2015). Compared to traditional marketing model, consumers are more

inclined to believe the persons they personally know or admire due to their lack of commercial purposes.

2.3.3 WOM Marketing

Word-of-Mouth is one of the most important marketing elements as it influences customers' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, Word-of-Mouth are likely to become an important marketing tool for influencing customers' purchase behavior and judgment (Bayus, 1985). Rosen (2000) summarized WOM marketing in few words, "First, giving people a reason to talk about your stuff; second, making it easier for that conversation to take place." Mark Hughes (2005) also pointed out that Word-of-Mouth marketing is to "get people to talk about your stuff."

According to Brown and Reingen (1987), Word-of-Mouth marketing is mainly focused on education and the stimulation of only a small part of the public. Via the spread of both public education and the development of Word-of-Mouth by opinion leaders, marketers can reach consumers that many conventional advertising cannot achieve.

In the WOM process, everyone who is not only message sender but also message receiver, influences others and can be influenced by others. Research have found that conversations between acquaintances not only affect the selection and purchase behavior of consumers, but also post-impact assessment of consumers' expectations and comments after purchasing. Positive Word-of-Mouth and sales of products are related to more sales, more sales in turn lead to positive Word-of-Mouth, and causes more Word-of-Mouth and purchase.

Having a good reputation is a guarantee to win repeat customers, but also an important indicator of product and brand loyalty. Consumer who trust and love a good

corporate reputation will have emotional attachment, acceptance of its products and brands, via satisfying experience and rise to dependency and loyalty.

From a business point of view, Word-of-Mouth marketing strategies cannot be ignored. Based on the increasing influences of WOM, more marketers include WOM in their marketing communication strategy (Nail, 2005).

Marketers are particularly interested in better understanding how to use WOM get benefit for Firms. Nail's study (2005) regarding consumer attitudes toward advertising between September 2002 and June 2004 reveal that 40% fewer respondents agree that advertising is a good way to learn about new products, 59% fewer ones say they buy products because of ads, and 49% fewer ones find ads entertaining. Therefore, traditional media marketing are more and more contracting.

Good corporate reputation is not just an honor, but also an efficient, low-cost marketing tool (Trusov & Pauwels, 2009). Compared with advertising, consumer select and accept more easily the products recommended by friends, and get more awareness and trust (Richins, 1983). The clever use of Word-of-Mouth in the process of marketing campaigns makes it not only credible, but also can reduce the cost of market operators (Trusov & Pauwels, 2009; Li & Liang, 2009).

Word-of-Mouth marketing as a new marketing strategy, with traditional pricing strategies, marketing strategy and channel strategy as innovative strategies are aimed at specific market conditions taken (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). Poon and Lock-Teng Low's (2005) research prove that a company's nearly 60% of new customers are affected by WOM.

2.3.4 Positive and Negative WOM

Positive WOM tends to increase corporate profitability while negative Word-of-Mouth tends to reduce it. Positive WOM yields high satisfaction outcome. Having a good reputation in the business often get support from the public, can have high visibility and reputation, and have a good corporate image. Finally, it benefits the firm on product sales and marketing strategy or new product launches.

Desatnick (1987) citing research conducted for the White House Office of Consumer Affairs asserted that if the consumers are not satisfied with the services or products, 90% of people will not buy again the same services, not only that, every dissatisfied customers share their experiences to at least nine people. The study also showed 13% of these dissatisfied consumers share their experiences to 20 personals.

2.3.5 Advantages of WOM

WOM provides an easy access to targeted information. Useful information can create value and significant time savings for consumers. During the WOM process, information receiver can timely know what kind of information they care about, goods, quality, price, through positive responses.

WOM has higher reliability than advertising and sales staff. Advertising and sales staff always use firm's point of view to promote product or services whereas WOM sender is independent from any firm, and will not get benefit in this process. Mostly WOM spread through family members, friendship groups, or people who are sharing the same value judgment, and ideas. It is easier to believe the received information and gain more trust.

Due to low cost and fast spreading, Word-of-Mouth source is highly credible and valuable. Comparing with newspapers and TV advertising, Word-of-Mouth has

no additional cost. Once positive WOM spread, consumers will easily form a stable loyalty. More importantly, people trust WOM more than any other media.

According to the Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages (2012), 84% of consumers in the world trust earned media (such as recommendations from friends and family), that means WOM is the most trustworthy than all other forms of advertising. Brand website is the second most trusted source where 69% of global consumers take the information on brand websites as the trusted source of brand information. In addition, 68% of respondents consider "consumer opinions posted online" as the third trustful source (Nielsen, 2012).

Beside the advantages mentioned above, WOM has also a timely and strong two-way feedback with high frequency. It is flexible method of interpersonal communication that results in brand loyalty.

2.3.6 Effects of WOM

Most researches emphasized effects of WOM by changing people's attitude and behavior. Its impact on sender, receiver and messages is influential in Word-of-Mouth communication (Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, 2008). According to Hovland (1948), social communication involved four factors in role of communication: communicator (sender), the stimuli (message), the receiver and the responses.

In terms of sender, a receiver will be more likely to accept product information from a sender who is celebrity or expert. Celebrity refers to outstanding performance in a particular area, getting the attention of public, which has the prestige or status of individuals over a period of time (Pringle & Binet, 2005). Byrne, Whitehead & Breen (2003) conclude that messages sent by celebrity have high influence on receiver because celebrity has three key qualities to represent an ideal population: credibility,

charm and influence. Credibility results from a spokesperson with relevant knowledge, skills or experience, who is unbiased and provides objective information. Celebrity advertising is through the brand image or reputation with celebrities and expectations linked to enhance value-added advertising. Accordingly, it is generally believed that consumers' purchase decision is made based on two characteristics of senders -- professional knowledge (expertise) and reliability (trustworthiness).

In terms of receiver, his or her tie strength affects Word-of-Mouth to some extent. Mittal, Huppertz, & Khare (2008) suggest that tie strength refers to "the potency of the bond between members of a network." Granovetter (1973) classified social ties as "the strength of weak ties," and explained the bond that linked won behavior and phenomena. By using networking analysis, Brown & Reingen (1987) found that weak ties during the Word-of-Mouth process build a bridge leading the flow of information. Strong ties activated for the flow of information were also perceived by receivers as more influential than weak ties in decision-making. According to Chu (2011, p.39), "strong ties, such as family and friends, constitute stronger and closer relationships that are within an individual's personal network and are able to provide substantive and emotional support. Weak ties, on the other hand, are often among weaker and less personal social relationships that are composed of a wide set of diverse topics."

In addition to tie strength, Lin, Wu & Chen (2013) proposed that customers' product involvement has a positive effect on purchase intention and WOM. Product involvement refers to "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interest" (Zaichkowsky, 1986). People in the purchase of some unfamiliar products tend to feel uncertainty. To eliminate the psychological sense of

insecurity, and to get a psychological self-satisfaction, consumers pay attention to information shared among friends, relatives, or other consumers. However, it is difficult to control and measure effects of MOU messages.

2.4 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM)

2.4.1 Definition of EWOM

Other emerging literature addresses electronic and online Word-of-Mouth delivered via electronic media such as social networking sites where consumers create product information based on personal usage experience to help other consumers identify the products that best match their idiosyncratic usage conditions. When consumers plan to purchase new products, they search online and get relevant information that they want to know as they would like to ensure that they are getting a good value for their money before making their purchase. Not only consumers can search for information online, but also they can share opinions on websites which can be passed to all over the world by the Internet technology. In another way, the firm can also use EWOM to benefit their brands or products (Trusov & Pauwels, 2009).

Over the past decade, the Internet and development of information technology have greatly developed. According to report of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2014, mobile-broadband penetration approaches 32 percent of three billion Internet users. By the end of 2014, there will be almost three billion Internet users, and the network become the fifth-largest medium after television, radio, newspaper, and magazine. More and more product information has been created by users, at the same time it involves low costs of information delivery and search. Therefore, independent product information has become widely accessible and increasingly important for consumers.

In the Internet era, the way people get information is no longer a passive acceptance, but active acquisition. When people have an access to information, action moves reading along and gives power to the message. The passive acceptance puts readers to sleep. The initiative information is often shared whereas the obtained information is always passively forgotten. As consumers have unprecedented access to information channels, they use blogs, online forums, instant messaging tools, and network tools. As a result, power of information transmission exponentially increases. The spread of the Internet is in electronic communication space. It is possible to break a number of objective reality of time and space restrictions and barriers, to open and operate around the clock to achieve timeless asynchronous communication.

At the same time, the Internet is a highly open system, regardless of the system, regardless of national boundaries, regardless of race. Anyone can use this network equal access to information and transmission of information. Two-way interactive computer Internet successfully combines the advantages of mass media and interpersonal communication, to achieve the two-way interaction of large-scale and long distance.

The internet simply provides a good platform and broad development prospects for EWOM (Goodman, 2009). Internet use is relatively cheap. Consumers have a distinct personality in terms of content, production, use and control of the media, or the dissemination and reception of information.

2.4.2 EWOM Marketing

Electronic Word-of-Mouth marketing is even more powerful than traditional Word-of-Mouth marketing. It can reach a multitude of people at the same time.

Therefore, it has a greater potential of becoming viral (Vilpponen, Winter, & Sundqvist, 2006).

A successful marketing strategy targets potential clients and customers. WOM information are often seen as providing information to prospective clients. Marketers want to turn those prospective clients to become profitable. Customers believe that information from Word-of-Mouth communication has higher credibility to reduce risk in product purchase since people's real life experience without commercial purpose is more persuasive than media advertising (Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991).

The EWOM marketing expressions are named by different authors, as internet communication, Internet Word-of-Mouth, buzz marketing, electronic Word-of-Mouth, online marketing, word of mouse (Xia & Bechwati, 2008) or 'online Word-of-Mouth' (Sun, Youn, Wu, & Kuntaraporn, 2006). Now all these names just mean the same thing. That is spreading information of product or services to public, in order to benefit the firm's sales. People write their experiences and comments online due to technology and the Internet, and WiFi makes it possible to connect internet anytime and anywhere. A lot of customers view products information or services online before them, other customers' experiences will help them make decision to purchase a better one. That is traditional WOM, depending on the Internet consumers they can search.

The rapid development of the Internet has changed customer behavior. Customer can solve a lack of information online. Due to low cost of seeking information and service, Word-of-Mouth online will greatly reduce the effect of traditional brand communication (Chungtae, Dongwook & Soonhan, 2006). Through the multiple channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, more information and services offer through-clicks to a larger extent than customers' visit a firm's website.

Hence, the Internet has become a convenient way for organizations to reach out to consumers in an easy and inexpensive way, especially through viral marketing (Nilsson & Svensson, 2009).

2.4.3 Effects of EWOM

With the fast - paced of life, convenience and time-saving, the Internet information are full of people's daily lives. The popularity of e-commerce also makes the Internet become the main source of information and shopping channels. However, the Internet is considered as a virtual world. There is still some uncertainty that leads to distrust. Accordingly, all kinds of products and opened a network platform to increase consumer interaction, and provide more product information.

When people make important decisions, they tend to search some information on the network, generally go to double check the authenticity and reliability of that information. People may communicate with friends or families, and get help or look for other consumers' reviews. The Internet contains a lot of information and reviews of products or services, which can be obtained from various networks. Therefore, many online trading platforms of product launch website and set up review function. Its purpose is to allow users to publish personal real-life experience, thereby affecting potential users who search for product information online.

Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger & Yale (1998) state that the greater the expertise of the opinion leader and the source, the greater will be the influence on the seeker's decision. The greater the similarity of seeker and receiver, the receiver will perceive the information more influential. Due to different characteristics of the receivers (e.g., professional recipients), seekers, and preference for WOM, the impact will differ.

Research by Bansal & Voyer (2000) extend the study of Gilly et al. from the

product purchase decision to service. They found that the sender the more propositional, the tie strength stronger, and the WOM influence of purchase decision more significant.

Word-of-Mouth is important on influencing consumer shopping decisions. Bone (1995) points that the impact of Word-of-Mouth on costumers' evaluation of the products will not only involve short term effects, but also long-term effects. Therefore, the effective use of Word-of-Mouth marketing has become an important marketing questions.

The rapid development of information technology has catalyzed stupendous economic growth through electronic business. Internet used for communications and information greatly improved people's access to information, the speed of development of the Internet also provides a wider range of information search platform. For the firms, the platform can be provided via a network to communicate directly with consumers on their website. The firms depend on the Internet to introduce new products and related information, and to provide consumers with online consultation. For the consumer, prior to the purchase of goods, and other community forums to find relevant product information network platform and services, to understand other people's experience more convenient. Tanimoto & Fujii (2003) suggest that in computer-mediated environment, the Word-of-Mouth experiences provide potential customers with the use of reference source, thereby reducing risk and uncertainty. Accordingly, EWOM Information sources are important for consumers.

Lee and Lee (2009) state that the impact of EWOM communication can be classified into two levels: Market-level and individual-level.

a. Market-Level Impact of Online Product Review

Research findings reveal that EWOM can have an impact on product sales by influencing consumers' products purchasing (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Many social media networks provide consumers with interactive mode, in which they can give online reviews or product ratings through consumer reviews and reviews (such as book sales site, movies site) to make the appropriate purchase decisions. If products aim to get more of product evaluations and reviews, the site will put the product on "a higher market share at that site" (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Under today's new economic and technical background, social network sites influence consumers in an increasingly manner. Firms and marketers can influence or shape consumers' perceptions and drive their behaviors. With the Instant Message and Internet era, the distance between the user and the business becomes ever closer. Consumers' purchasing behavior has been influenced not simply in advances, but by variety of factors affecting their search results.

Instant messaging tools make communication easier than ever. This close relationship weakens the role of traditional Internet advertising. Increasing influence makes the success of a product depend largely on consumers' use of social media networks. The impact of social media networks is widely known for its consumer personal preferences. Social media networks play an increasingly significant role on product sales. People are likely to be more vulnerable to comments from family members and friends.

Online reviews make the marketers pay attention to the feedback mechanisms associated with product sales. Many sites build a platform for consumers to interact with other consumers and express their views. If the firms make better use of

consumers' on-line comments, and facilitate consumers to become brand advocate, future sales should be affected.

Simonson and Rosen (2014) argue that customers' purchase decisions result from three factors which they call "influence mix." They also emphasize that "the greater the reliance on one source, the lower the need for the others." The influence mix consists of the followings:

1. Prior preferences, beliefs, and experiences (P factor)

Prior preferences, beliefs, and experiences play an important role in low-risk purchasing and regular supplies. Consumers do not check product information online before making their purchase. Normally, their purchase is based on personal habit. For example, consumers always follow past experiences and personal preferences to decide what type of milk to be purchased.

2. Information from marketers (M factor)

Based on traditional marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion), marketers regularly deliver product information to target consumers through various channels so as to achieve the purpose of consumers' acceptance, trial, and repeat purchase of their products. Purchase of high involvement products such as luxury products largely depend on marketing information in terms of brand image or corporate image.

3. Input from other people and from information services (O factor)

Word-of-Mouth and social networking site users' reviews are likely to affect consumers' purchase. For example, when consumers purchase electronics products they will pay attention to other users' reviews or comments about the quality and

functionality of the particular electronic products. This is because those factors influence consumers' purchasing decision component. In addition, input from information services such as independent restaurant critic become influencer of gourmet services as consumers get real-life experience of others in order to evaluate whether the service they want to buy meet their expectations.

Every product is naturally influenced by a different influence mix. When buying low-involvement products such as toothbrush, paper towels, detergent, consumers are more dependent on packaging, brand, price and on-site publicity (M factor and P factor). On the contrary, when buying high-involvement products such as hotel, watch, books, movies, consumers are more dependent on the O factor. For example, if a lot of people post positive comments in online reviews about one same place, then that place will become famous and drive people who search online information to go there.

b. Individual-Level Impact of Online Product Review

Whether smart phones, web 2.0, the popularity of wireless networks, etc., not only change the mode of transmission of information, but also change people's purchase habits. That is, more and more people are accustomed to watching social networks of friends and relatives who are discussing trendy products, and then surf the webs to search for products of their interest, and decide to buy those products. In addition, an offline marketing campaign is easy to cause concern and discussion of certain areas of consumer, stimulate the secondary spread on social networks.

Due to the development of the Internet, a great number of people's purchasing decisions are based on online product evaluations and reviews. The Internet offers various platforms such as online discussion forums, consumer review sites, weblogs,

social network sites, which are convenient and shortcuts to exchange product and service information (Lee, Park & Han, 2008). Online Information exchange about products and services is likely to influence consumers. Some research suggest that online review and information exchange could change receivers' attitude and purchase decision (Lee & Youn, 2009; Park & Kim, 2009).

A purchase decision will be made after consumers search for information and evaluate the products. In the past decade many research studies suggest that EWOM plays an important role influencing consumers' choices and purchase decisions. Most of the studies show a positive correlation between the review and product sales (Chen, Fay, & Wang, 2003; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Dellarocas, Zhang & Awad, 2007).

Although, EWOM is a contested notion. Companies have been accused of paying writers to write their own reviews of products and services they have not consumed, by using some fake name comments on website, allowing their product and company image to have a positive effect in EWOM (Chatterjee, 2001). In this research, Facebook is chosen as a case study, it is obvious that people who comment on Facebook are more objective, because Facebook is a platform to show personal information, it is easy to click the link to browse their home page to know the individual people and circle of friends. Therefore, a case study on Facebook fanpage would provide empirical evidences to test whether it is more persuasive than websites.

SK-II is very famous in Asia because it is high quality. The good reputation of SK-II has been spread widely through many Asian countries, although SK-II products price is much higher than other products (Roll, 2005). As Chinese government blocks Facebook, SK-II Taiwan is chosen as a case study due to its similar culture and language.

2.4.4 Traditional vs. Online WOM

First of all, electronic Word-of-Mouth is delivered through the Internet to a faster degree, and reaches more people than traditional Word-of-Mouth. Traditional Word-of-Mouth communication is interpersonal communication through mainly social range of consumers. Traditional Word-of-Mouth makes WOM diffusion limited to consumers' social scope, is affected in a small area and spreads slowly. Online Word-of-Mouth is communication from one to many since the Internet is a special tool with an access to a wide range of readers and high communication speed. Postings on the Internet can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

According to Bickart and Schindler (2001), traditional WOM was seen as face to face exchange of experience by words with friends, but online WOM was viewed as individual exchange of experience or opinion by written words.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth makes consumer higher involved. This two-way communication increases consumer engagement. More and more people get an access to information via the Internet and view it as more important than television, newspapers and other media. The Internet has become essential to everyone's lives through the network platform to share and discuss the product or service information.

Due to the limit of time and space, the traditional Word-of-Mouth only spread in the social range of consumer, and beyond the scope of the social crowd, and online Word-of-Mouth in the open environment of virtual society spread without time and space limit, and can go beyond the margin, geographical restrictions. Many consumers gathered via the Internet platform and network spread Word-of-Mouth. A higher degree of consumer involvement is also reflected the different views on the same issue in different countries, and different areas of consumer can provide a

different perspective for the participants, helps to develop level of understanding and awareness.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth is anonymous in the Internet. In terms of online communication's anonymity, consumers can participate anonymously or create a completely new identity in virtual reality. According to Gelb & Sundaram (2002), electronic Word-of-Mouth people share experience and personal opinion very willingly to reflect individual experience by providing either positive or negative comments. Rogers (2003) noted that online communication conveys more honest expression of personal views.

Anderson (1998) looks at the entire spectrum of WOM communication, from negative to positive. He proposes a utility-based model that gives rise to a U-shaped function: very dissatisfied customers and very satisfied customers are most likely to engage in WOM. He finds support for these hypotheses using a panel data set on customer satisfaction.

Therefore, the credibility of the network is relatively low. Extremely dissatisfied consumers tend to give too low product evaluation whereas extremely satisfied consumers often provide too high product evaluation. Both of them cannot objectively reflect the true quality of the product or service, and potential buyers influenced by the extreme negative Word-of-Mouth effect may delay purchase, or just switching another brand. Therefore, the negative electronic Word-of-Mouth could be long term impact the firms' reputation and future sales.

Many reasons make EWOM marketing powerful. Firstly, people like sharing stories. Word-of-Mouth is the core spirit: sharing and interaction. People's need to share make the social media networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter very

successful. People's sharing behaviors can be explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If our most basic of needs are satisfied, we will start to desire for the higher levels of needs within the hierarchy.

Secondly, the Internet has a large number of audience. People like seeking information online. EWOM can reach vast audiences immediately. Thirdly, people trust EWOM. People trust the individual person's real life opinion more than commercial messages in traditional media. WOM plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Brown & Reingen, 1987). When people make a purchase decision, they seek the product and service information from online search.

The growth and wide acceptance of social media (blogs, social network sites, mobile phones) offers consumers new ways to approach brand and products. It has to admit that the internet has become more and more important today because it is convenient, easy, and low cost. People use internet as a tool to communication, working, doing business, shopping. Today's Internet can do anything you want. EWOM creates a new channel for firms to reach consumers.

Traditional WOM of the product by making the word spread by referrals to friends and family is the most cost effective way to reach new customers. People could be influenced by others' recommendations when making purchase decisions. Due to the Internet access, individual opinions can reach more people some of whom you don't even know. Consumers seek products information or service and also offer personal experience or opinion on website. This phenomenon can be identified as EWOM. Depending on the network forum and community platform, the cost of searching information is lowered when consumers make financial decisions.

2.5 SK-II

Ben-Shabat & Gada (2012) argue that with the online network development, now consumers are actively searching for useful information from the Internet, in order to make more informed purchases. E-commerce is now an integral part of the business of beauty. Almost all cosmetics brands including SKII pay attention to the development of related information and product differentiation to the consumer. If brands and retailers want to continue their business expansion, they should have a dedicated online communication channel built within a brand's sales organization (Ben-Shabat & Gada, 2012).

Many consumers consider the WOM evaluation as an important factor when purchasing cosmetics. Consumers' concern about the cosmetic reputation is gradually increasing. In the Web 2.0 era, the various commodities appear on the network, consumer's behavior is not easily affected by the impact of advertising and promotion but becomes more rational, and consumers like to hear recommendations from friends as a reference. Accordingly, online comments also play an important role in costumers' purchasing behaviors (Riegner, 2007).

With the emergence of social networks, on one hand, the firms establish their own page on Facebook to gather the consumers in groups, provide consumers with an access to published information, get the consumers' voice in time and accept the consumers' proposals (Neff, 2010). On the other hand, the firms interact with the consumers directly, publish brand or product release information getting across to consumers, and take the initiative to convey to consumers the brand concept, product information and so on.

Facebook and other social networks offer the firms and consumers with a direct exchange platform, to enable the firms and consumers to communicate more

conveniently, producing a huge communication value. Social media is most widely used for searching information about products/ services among consumers. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter attract more marketers to communicate with their target consumers via convenient channels (Neff, 2010).

2.5.1 Brief History of SKII

SKII is the world-known skin care product by Procter & Gamble (P&G), which was founded in 1837 by William Procter and James Gamble. P&G has a presence in more than 180 countries with brands that accumulate to in excess of \$25 billion. P&G is very successful to make products catalog and high productivity and can meet with the very different requirements of customers in various market segments. At present, P&G sells more than 300 leading brands all over the world, such as SK-II, Olay, etc. (Anwar, 2012). It has produced goods in six main categories: laundry and cleaning, paper goods, beauty care, food and beverages, feminine care, and health care (Essays, 2013).

A special ingredient called Pitera plays a major role for SKII to achieve successful product differentiation, and to build brand loyalty (A Strategic Analysis of The Procter & Gamble Company, n.d.). SK-II is very popular in Asia, being marketed in 13 countries including Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, the United States, Britain and Spain. It invited celebrity endorsement in different countries (Procter & Gamble, 2006). In 2012, SK-II has become one of the two skin care brands of sales over one billion dollars. This proves that SK-II products have a good market reputation and marketing power (Sake Brewery, Skin Care And the 'Secret' Behind SK-II, 2012). It is integrated into people's lives and influence millions of women's lives (Sake Brewery,

Skin Care And the 'Secret' Behind SK-II, 2012).

2.5.2. Social Media Communication of SKII

2.5.2.1 Procter & Gamble Social Media Strategy

Social media become an important channel for consumers to search for information and service (Phurojsawad, 2014). P & G saw enormous potentials of social networks. The company attaches great importance to its brands to participate in social networks. Therefore, it opened an office in Silicon Valley to help develop social-networking systems and digital-marketing capabilities with the website. In 2010, Procter & Gamble Company's goal is to invest and ensure that each of the company's brands establish a meaningful presence on Facebook (Neff, 2010).

Social network could be a platform so that the firms and consumers can have a direct one to one contact. Fans on the social media platform can interact with a particular brand through messages. They can also ask questions as counseling and provide other ways to interact with the brand.

P & G has treated Facebook fans as friends on Facebook and really pays attention to fans. Its strategy is to find out what the consumers and potential consumers care about and try to match those needs (Phurojsawad, 2014). In addition, the company considers Twitter as a communication platform that is good for 'one-to-many' communication, and makes use of interactive mode on Twitter in terms of one-to-one conversations with customers. When people comment on Twitter, Procter & Gamble show that they are listening and care (Neff, 2010).

P & G hopes to accelerate the rapid growth of the product of e-commerce through Facebook and other social networks. P & G added "shop" or "shop now" buttons on the part of the product's Facebook fan pages. It seems to be the brand for

the first attempt allowing multiple retail partners to complete orders on Facebook (Neff, 2011).

2.5.2.2 SK-II Social Media Strategy

As SK-II did a terrific job on brand-building and advertising on social media such as Facebook. (Phurojsawad, 2014; Neff, 2010), this study is interested in examining if different types of SNS users differently engage in EWOM regarding SKII. Accordingly, the following section reviews nine social media strategies used by SKII.

a) Increasing Activities by Posting Small Updates

By posting engaging activities, SK-II Hong Kong successfully attracts big number of fans to get involved and receives a lot of “Like” on Facebook fan page. Therefore, people are required to click ‘Like’ in SK-II HK’s FB fan page before they can participate in any of its activities (Hong Kong Facebook Fanpage Top Movers-May 2 to May 8, 2014). Social network make involved fans become not only spectators, but also commentators and disseminators of contents. For example, SK-II posted on Facebook, “Writing a short review on SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, shall share with you soon.” This kind of activity makes sure the fans could be a part of the fan page and activity. Fans on Facebook interact with the brand while maximizing their interest to participate and share, and improving consumer recognition of the brand. The more fans to share, the higher the search engine results (Vardhan, 2015).

b) Use of Seasonality Strategy

Contents on Facebook are not rigidly pure advertising, so as not to incur the resentment of fans, but indirectly achieve the purpose of advertising by certain skills. SK-II Facebook takes seasonality strategy by posting the content very carefully every

month, such as prior to and during Songkran Festival in Thailand, advertisement recommended suitable products, at the same time sent holiday greetings, made it much easier to accept the recommendation. The secret weapon of posting content on Facebook is to make sure the fans really care about it (Phurojsawad, 2014).

c) Engaging with Customers' questions

Facebook fans can focus on a common topic to discuss with the brand. They can also ask questions for a particular topic. With full respect for enthusiasm of fans, the brand provides positive answers of questions raised by fans as a marketing strategy (Phurojsawad, 2014). As a high involvement product, consumers' purchase decision of SKII is influenced by external sources or factors (Kotler, 1997). Consumer could ask questions on fan page and more details information before purchase. SK-II treats its fans' questions on Facebook very seriously and makes sure that professional and authoritative persons reply. Brand products recommended by Facebook release a variety of related topics and participate in the discussions to attract the public. When the Digital Agency offers an answer to some fans, other fans who are interested in the same questions have an opportunity to read the answers on Facebook fan page (Phurojsawad, 2014). When people browse the webpage offering useful information to Facebook audience, the brand manager should make sure that the audience could learn from, share, and engage with the brand's Facebook (Donné Torr, 2014).

d) Use of Bloggers and Influencers

SK-II mixes global content with local content with the use of local bloggers and influences. It allows influencers to attract their followers and uses big bloggers' blogs as channels to offer more opportunity for target consumers to come to SK-II Facebook fan page (Phurojsawad, 2014).

e) Posting at the Right Time Period

SK-II takes a specific time period to publish a new post on Facebook in order to ensure maximum views. From Monday to Thursday, SK-II posts new information after 8 p.m. On Friday, SK-II posts new information during 4 – 6 p.m. which is off-duty time. On Saturday and Sunday, SK-II posts new information after 10 a.m. All of these periods were chosen by purpose to ensure that more people have an opportunity to see the new information (Phurojsawad, 2014).

f) Commercializing Page

SK-II recommendations on Facebook is no longer a large number of professional product information uploaded every day. Reducing the amount of daily uploads to avoid information overload, SK-II Facebook uploads new content once a day, approximately 11 to 15 times a month. While taking boots post and sponsored post to advertise on Facebook, Facebook page user who login without getting into the SK-II Facebook page, could still see the advertising messages (Phurojsawad, 2014).

g) Use of Multiple Websites for a Quick Access to Product Information

With the development of e-commerce, SK-II has been involved in new digital marketing campaigns in different parts of the world by using e-commerce as a sales and marketing channel. SK-II also attaches great importance to communication with consumers on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which can be helpful for network marketing (A Strategic Analysis of the Procter & Gamble Company). SK-II integrated use of a variety of social networking sites for product promotion. This is because different social platforms have different audiences. SK-II uploads brief presentation on Facebook while it uploads pretty pictures on Instagram, and publishes product videos on YouTube (Donné Torr, 2014). The official website of

SK-II is equipped with a web portal of Facebook and Instagram. As the Internet would serve as the most important source of information, P&G facilitates their consumers and shareholders with an easy access to all kinds of information through their many websites (A Strategic Analysis of the Procter & Gamble Company, n.d.).

h) Offering Free Samples

SK-II is asking fans to like its page to get free samples of its famous products. Offering free samples is the most direct way to get fans. Of course click 'liking' a FB fan page is an almost zero cost, and fans can get a famous brand's products as a reward for free. Free giveaway is an effective way for SK-II Hong Kong FB as it got a lot of fans (Brands, Facebook Reports, 2013).

i) Use of Celebrity Endorsement

Marketing and advertising are the key factor to success of SK-II. By incorporating famous ambassadors into marketing their products, SK-II took this common forms of persuasion on TV, print, online, and even outdoor media. Their famous ambassadors as celebrity endorsements of the brand include Kate Bosworth, Cate Blanchett, among others who are known for their ageless skin (A Strategic Analysis of the Procter & Gamble Company). SK-II posts celebrity endorsement on Facebook, to promote its goods and achieve the purpose of Word-of-Mouth. Celebrity endorsements of products easily get celebrity's fans to deeply involve with the brand. The brand selects different famous people for product endorsements in different countries, including Hollywood stars, and famous women or actors in Japanese, South Korea, China, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia (Procter & Gamble, 2012).

The number of social media users is increasing year by year. Social media such as Facebook allow firms and marketers to reach a great number of audiences and

to offer them valuable contents. Empirical evidences reveal that social media as a channel enable marketers to establish good relationship with consumers and to build brand loyalty. Examining how to use social media to spread good EWOM will benefit both academic and commercial world. Accordingly, the following research questions are developed for this study.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Uses and gratifications theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. Uses and gratifications theory focuses on "what do people do with media?", which research is from the perspective of the audience, media exposure by analyzing these contacts and motivation audience what they need to meet to examine the effectiveness of mass media (Severin & Tankard, 2010; Katz, 1959).

UGT claim that people actively seek out specific media and specific content to achieve specific satisfaction. TUG view people as active because they are able to examine and evaluate various types of media to accomplish communication goals (Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008).

Whiting & Williams (2013) who developed a list of uses and gratifications from the past research concluded on ten uses and gratifications themes.

(1) Social interaction. 88 percent of the respondents mentioned using social media for social interaction.

(2) Information seeking. 80 percent of respondents reported using social media to seek out information.

(3) Pass time. 76 percent reported using social media to pass the time.

(4) Entertainment. 64 percent of respondents reported that they used social

media as a source of entertainment.

(5) Relaxation. 60 percent of respondents used social media for relaxation purposes.

(6) Expression of opinions. 56 percent of respondents and is defined as using social media to express thoughts and opinions.

(7) Communicatory utility. 56 percent of respondents discussed how they use social media to give them things to talk about with others.

(8) Convenience utility. This type of social media use was mentioned by 52 percent of respondents.

(9) Information sharing. This type of social media use was mentioned by 40 percent of respondents.

(10) Surveillance / knowledge about others. This sort of social media usage was mentioned by 32 percent.

As consumers engage in EWOM in social media with different purposes, the UGT (Whiting & Williams, 2013) is used as a theoretical framework for analyzing the secondary data. Accordingly, the following research questions are developed.

RQ # 1: How is EWOM communicated on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage?

RQ # 2: How is EWOM communicated on Urcosme?

RQ # 3: How does EWOM communication on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage differ from Urcosme?

RQ # 4: How does SK-II marketer respond to EWOM on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage?

How the above research questions will be answered is described in terms of research design and data analysis in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology, population and sample, research procedure, research instruments, and method of data analysis. Validity and reliability of the study are also discussed.

3.1 Research Design

As this research aims to study how EWOM spread on social media and how marketers respond to them, it needs a qualitative research approach that allows an investigator to thematically examine the content of EWOM done by the real consumers and marketers on a particular type of social media. Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world (McKee, 2003). Accordingly, textual analysis is used in this study.

This study desires to analyze how people do EWOM based on their varying actions on the brand's fan page, so that those who want to manage brand communication on social media can make sense of them and respond to them effectively. A case study of one brand of the high-involvement products allows an investigator to examine the natures of EWOM in a deep and elaborative way.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

As a leading skincare brand sold in 13 markets in Asia (P&G Corporate Newsroom, 2012), this research investigated the EWOM on Facebook fan page of SKII. Although SK-II is a Japanese skin care product, the brand is successful in Taiwan. Taiwan as one of priorities of worldwide rollout territories has developed a

loyal user-base in Taiwan market (Bartlett, C. A., 2009). Accordingly, SK-II Taiwan Facebook with 304,480 followers on fanpage is chosen as a case study.

The research period of Facebook content is ten months, from January to October 2015. The current period is chosen due to the availability of the secondary data. The study focuses on two types of contents on SKII Facebook fanpage. One is the EWOM produced by consumers whereas another one is the brand manager's responses to those EWOM made by consumers. Every item in SKII Taiwan Facebook fanpage that relates to consumers' EWOM on SKII product(s) and brand manager's responses to those EWOM during January and October 2015 were included as data analysis materials.

3.3 Research Procedure

The first step involves data collection. In particular, the current data in SKII Taiwan Facebook fanpage from January to October 2015 period were separated from other periods. Then, the data in this selected period were sorted into two categories: 1) consumers' EWOM regarding any products of SKII, and 2) marketer or brand manager's responses to those consumers' EWOM.

The second step involves categorizing EWOM into 10 uses and gratifications themes. Then, brand manager's responses on Facebook gratify two purposes (see details in the research instrument section).

The last step involves conducting a textual analysis of data in both categories. When the analyses are completed, results are reported.

3.4 Research Instrument

The following types of content on SKII Taiwan Facebook fanpage were investigated.

1. EWOM Made by Consumers

This research examined the following 11 types of EWOM made by consumers.

1.1 Sharing Contents

This sub-category involves consumers' sharing information from SKII Taiwan Facebook fanpage to their own or friends' wall.

1.2 Clicking "like" Button

This sub-category involves consumers' clicking "like" button under the SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage contents. Facebook have many difference icon to express difference emotion, but during data collection time, those icon didn't exist.

1.3 Seeking Information

This sub-category involves consumers' asking questions about the product(s) (such as how much about product, how to concomitant use the product, where to buy the product, promotion details, how to join activity to get free sample).

1.4 Sharing Personal Experiences

This sub-category involves consumers' sharing personal experiences about SK-II product(s), either positive, negative, and/or both, which can be:

1.4.1 Complaining when consumers did not get the promotion as advertised.

1.4.2 Complaining that the product(s) did not meet consumers' expectation.

1.4.3 Complaining the counter staffs' bad service and lack of professional knowledge.

1.4.4 Providing positive experiences of purchasing and using SK-II.

1.5 Adding Photos

This sub-category involves consumers' adding photos about product (such as

photos of purchased products).

1.6 Joining Question and Answer Activities

This sub-category involves consumers' answering questions posted in the content.

1.7 Expressing Purchase Decision

This sub-category involves consumers' describing their purchase decision.

1.8 Expressing Desire for Product Trial

This sub-category involves consumers' presenting their desire for trying the product(s).

1.9 Expressing a Plan to Join the Activity

In this sub-category, consumers indicate their plan regarding joining any marketing activities related to SK-II.

1.10 Describing Free Sample

This sub-category involves consumers' participation in the free product sample activity posted on the Facebook fanpage.

1.11 Adding Comments to Other People's Comment

This sub-category involves consumers' commenting the other people's comments such as answering the other people's questions, commenting about meeting the same problem, and expressing personal opinion.

2. Marketer's Responses to EWOM

This research examined the following three types of responses to EWOM given by SK-II marketer or brand manager.

2.1 Replying the Posted Questions

This sub-category involves marketers' answering questions regarding price, product effect, and/or promotion activities.

2.2 Correcting Misunderstanding of the Product(s)

This sub-category involves marketers' correcting consumers' misunderstanding of the product(s).

2.3 Interacting with Consumers

This sub-category involves marketers' showing appreciation to those people who mentioned that they are loyal to SK-II products.

3.5 Data Analysis

Each content of consumers' EWOM regarding SKII on the Facebook fanpage and brand manager's responses to them were analyzed with the use of Comparative Constant Analysis proposed by Glaser (1965) and Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Glaser (1965) states that Comparative Constant Analysis uses an inductive reasoning. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), Comparative Constant Analysis is considered to be a qualitative research approach for social science studies.

Researchers use a careful analysis of secondary or primary data that summed up the significance of the new meaning, which is later developed for use widely. During the analysis process, researcher needs to get the data source, such as interview, statement or theme, and compare the data source with other pieces of data which could be similar or different. Finally, the researcher identifies the reasons why a particular data source is different and/or similar to other data sources.

Based on Use and Gratifications Theory, the textual analysis followed the following process:

1. Collecting the responses below every post during the research period, such

as post responses, like responses, sharing responses.

2. Categorizing the responses into different groups, based on the different consumer behavioral themes indicated by Whiting and Williams's Uses and Gratification Theory. EWOM were made by Taiwanese consumers to gratify for four purposes--- Social interaction, information seeking expression of opinions, and information sharing, whereas marketers responded to EWOM to gratify two purposes --social interaction and sharing information.

3. Discussing the meanings behind the different themes.

4. Comparing the themes and giving the meaningful explanation.

3.6 Validity of the Study

In terms of the content validity of the EWOM made by consumers, EWOM were identified based on the definition of EWOM, which includes all positive or negative statements, and was created by potential, actual or former customers about product or company via the Internet.

In particular, the following three types of behaviors -- opinion passing, engaging with brand, and status posting -- are identified as EWOM for this study.

First, opinion passing behavior on Facebook is considered as one kind of EWOM spreading on Facebook. When consumers engage in social media by commenting, liking or passing opinions to their social connection, they are showing their responses toward the brand they discussed. All these behaviors are accounted to EWOM behaviors based on Svensson (2011).

Second, according to Hu, Ha, Mo & Xu (2014), brands can send links, ads, videos, and texts to their fans and post updates on their fan pages, which allow the consumers to engage with brand. When the fans "Like," "Share," or post on events of

fan pages, it will be automatically shown on the fans' walls visible to their friends. As a result, fans are considered as spreaders of EWOM in social media.

Third, posting status updates, as well as a common phenomenon on Facebook allowing the users to easily spread EWOM (Svensson, A. (2011). Facebook fans could respond to the fanpage updates and join the content which was posted on fanpages. All those responses will be automatically posted on their friends' news feed, becoming an advertisement, which is spread by all these connections on Facebook (Holahan, 2007).

As for the content validity of the EWOM made by SKII marketer, EWOM were identified based on the SK-II marketers as performing a role of message sender. Marketers replies to fans' comments do their best to respond to fan questions, which allows them to better engage with Facebook Fanpage (Mari, 2010). Facebook is a communication channel that lets brand directly communicate with those who like their page by replying to their wall posts, which will help inspire them to post more comments below new contents, and will also help the brand contents visible for the news feed (Josh, 2011).

3.7 Reliability of the Study

To ensure the reliability of this research, another graduate student in Communication field who is Chinese was invited to serve as the second coder of the research data. Approximately 30 percent of the data coded by the primary investigator were randomly selected and coded by the second coder. Then, coding results of both coders were compared. Similarity of the results between the two coders was calculated to determine the inter-coder reliability.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reports results of the textual analyses of EWOM regarding SK-II products on SK-II Facebook Taiwan fanpage and Urcosme, by using the Uses and Gratifications Theory as a theoretical framework. The findings are presented according to the research questions developed in the first chapter. Conclusions are based on the findings.

This chapter presents the textual analysis results of how EWOM spread on SK-II Facebook Taiwan fanpage and an online beauty forum -- Urcosme. The data were gathered from SK-II Taiwan Facebook in ten-month period, between January and October 2015. The data from Urcosme were gathered during the same period, about 3 months. The EWOM on popular SK-II products were chosen as research sample.

The findings presented in this chapter are divided into fourth sections based on research questions. The first section is how people do EWOM on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage. The second section is how people do EWOM on Urcosme. The third section is comparing EWOM on Facebook fanpage and on Urcosme. Finally, the fourth section is how SK-II marketers respond to those EWOM spread by Taiwanese consumers.

Table 4.1 summarizes the number of data of each source of EWOM that were sampled and analyzed in this study.

Table 4.1: Summary of the Sample Data

Source of Data	Number of Post
SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage	80
Urcosme	273
SK-II marketers' responses	299



Figure 4.1: Facebook fanpage of SK-II Taiwan

產品 品牌 輸入關鍵字搜尋 商品 72,351件 · 心得 1,002,814篇 · 會員 429,449人

迷品牌 美妝新訊 排行榜 **Urcosme** 使用心得 美爆誌

2016母親節
特惠組滿額贈輕鬆入手

LANEIGE
韓系裸妝發燒組
人氣彩妝**72折**
看優惠▶

ROYAL COTTON
UNT - 【法國頂級棉花凝粹系列】跟疲弱肌說掰掰!

BOBBI BROWN - 「
膏」摩登上市 專屬

DHC - 五月新品「
液」、「
晚安舒眠

JILL STUART - 浪漫洋

LANCOME - 專櫃第
層萃 搖一搖 超亮

【網友最愛】 粉絲好康活動看這裡>> | 一上市就升火！ 網友精選的超熱門新品 | 網友合力推！ 絕對要入手的必敗品

Figure 4.2: Home page of Urcosme

產品 品牌 輸入關鍵字搜尋 商品 72,351件 · 心得 1,002,814篇 · 會員 429,449人

迷品牌 美妝新訊 排行榜 **Urcosme** 使用心得

全球最有感眼霜 超級雙效
打造年輕超電眼! 填問券得體驗

ESTÉE LAUDER
NEW
超未來立體緊緻
雙效電眼精華

你搜尋了 sk-II

迷品牌 - SK-II
人氣注目TOP 3

1 青春露 5.4

2 青春敷面膜 5.9

3 肌源新生活膚霜 5.9

★ 關注品牌

Figure 4.3: The top three SK-II products on Urcosme

4.1 Research Question # 1

Referring to the first research question, the textual analyses of EWOM on SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage reveal that EWOM is communicated by Taiwanese consumers on Facebook to gratify four purposes -- Social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinions, and information sharing. Details of these findings are presented as followings.

1. Social Interaction

EWOM is communicated for social interaction, consumers could keep in touch with their family and friends, chat with old acquaintances who cannot always meet face-to-face. EWOM on Facebook includes consumers' clicking "like" button, participating in marketing activities of the brand, and responding to others' comments.

1.1 Clicking "like" button

Consumers click "like" button as giving feedback and connecting with things they care about. When consumers click "like" button they will see the list of people on Facebook who liked the content. Facebook help center also claims that they try their best to make sure that the Facebook users are real person who click "Like" on Facebook page.

SK-II TW
11 September 2015 · 🌐

★ SK-II全新R.N.A.超肌能緊緻大揭密★
由美妝達人「柳燕老師」、「李明川老師」現身為你打造全方位立體緊緻肌，分享抗老雙天后—【全新R.N.A.超肌能緊緻系列】。凡參加活動有獎問答，就有機會獲得SK-II精美小禮物一份♥
▶▶我要參加全新R.N.A.超肌能緊緻系列發表會<<http://spr.ly/note0911>>

See translation

全新R.N.A.
超肌能緊緻發表會

Like Comment Share

240 Top comments ▾

1 share

Figure 4.4: Click like “button”

1.2 Joining Marketing Activities

Consumers communicated that they participated in various forms of marketing activities posted on the Facebook fanpage as following:

1.2.1 Answering Questions for Reward

SK-II marketer posted an activity inviting consumers to answer the posed questions for a particular reward. The questions are about the SK-II product.

Examples are shown in Figure 4.5 – 4.6.



SK-II總是帶領每個女性超越DNA極限，讓肌膚晶瑩剔透！
 暨去年大受好評的4瓶花卉限定版青春露後，
 在即將到來的母親節檔期，
 SK-II再度和台灣藝術家黃博志攜手推出專寵女人的極緻盛禮，
 為妳和媽媽獻上全方位晶瑩首選，
 大家猜猜：這款限定版青春露是用象徵愛與智慧的____花創作的呢？
 從今天起，逛逛SK-II就能找到最佳寵愛獻禮！
 ▶No.1極緻盛禮立即看→<<http://spr.ly/n031801>>
 ▶母親節檔期搶先曝光→<<http://spr.ly/n031802>>



超越DNA極限
 亞洲 No.1 精華品牌的母親節盛禮
 —— 青春露限定版 ——

★ 亞洲No.1精華品牌母親節盛禮 & 檔期搶先看! ★
 獻給媽媽&自己的極緻盛禮~盛大開賣!

Figure 4.5: Invitation for answering the posed questions (Posted on March 20, 2015)



Figure 4.6: Consumers answered questions below the activity content.

1.2.2 Joining Activities for Free Sample



Figure 4.7: Consumers posted a photo of the free sample they got from participating activities on Facebook fanpage.

1.3 Responding to Other People's Comments

Consumers provided feedbacks to other social media users such as answering the other people's questions, commenting that they faced the same problems, etc.

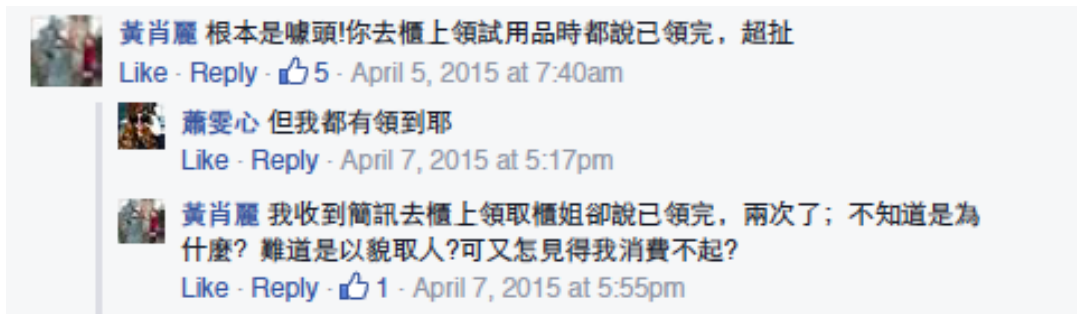


Figure 4.8: Consumers answer the others' question.

2. Information Seeking

In addition to social interaction, EWOM is communicated by consumers' asking for information about sales details, activities, product usage, and feedback about particular products, as shown below.

"I want to buy it, how much and where I could buy?"
(Chen replied on January 25, 2015)

"What's the order of use: Facial treatment essence, R.N.A.Power radical new age cream, Whitening Source Derm-Brightener, Facial Treatment Repair C, Cellumination Aura Essence, Signs Control base."
(Qiu asked on January 13, 2015)

"Purchase eye cream, but didn't get the free "youth magnetic wand", why?" (Hsu replied on March 1, 2015)

"Yesterday I went to Sogo do the skin test, but there are free gift exchange, is that true to exchange free gift?" (Guo replied on February 10, 2015)

3. Expression of Opinions

EWOM is communicated by consumers' describing their personal experiences of purchasing and using SK-II products including both positive and negative experiences, and expressing their desire for product purchase or trial.

3.1 Providing Positive Experiences

Consumers expressed their positive experiences as below.

“I've used 10 years, super good, it should be no alcohol content, I did not smell alcohol taste.” (Lin replied on February 1, 2015)

3.2 Providing Negative Experiences

Consumers expressed different negative experiences as follows:

a) Not getting the promotion as advertised

“Excuse me, is that normal I purchase at store counter but didn't get the BonusCream?” (Chang replied on January 26, 2015)

b) Not meeting consumers' expectation

“I've used SK-II before but the effect is not so good, may it work for others.” (Liu replied on March 7, 2015)

c) Receiving bad service from sales person

“The counter staff's attitude is really bad. The website didn't claim that the test sample is limited, but the counter staff's reaction is like "why you don't know it's limited.” (Jingwen replied on March 30, 2015)

d) Sales persons' lack of professional knowledge

“I want to know the using steps of the four products I purchased: SK-II Essential care, Facial Clear Solution, SK-II R.N.A., and Facial Hydrating UV Cream. Although I purchased them from the same counter, I purchased them separately, and the different sales persons told me differently about their using steps. Could you tell me about the using steps?” (Hongjiachan replied on October 6, 2015)

“Yesterday I purchased the product at Sogo Taipei, but the sales persons said there was no SK-II STEMPOWER Cream 15g individually packaged gift, then she gave me several bags of 2.5g SK-II STEMPOWER Cream. Although I got those bags of 2.5g, it is a different feeling to get 15g within one time..... whatever I asked the sales persons, they said they do not know. Professional expertise is zero. Attitude is not cordial..... this is the first time I purchased at counter and it was very disappointing.” (Ashlyne Chu, posted on January 24, 2015)

3.3 Expressing Desire for Product Purchase

“The effect is really good? I want to buy it.” (Reply on May 16, 2015)

3.4 Expressing Desire for Product Trial

“I went to the shopping mall but didn’t get the test sample, where can I get it, how to change the place to get the test sample.”
(Reply on July 29, 2015)

4. Information Sharing

EWOM on both platforms is communicated as consumers’ information sharing. This usage purpose includes sharing product contents with others and adding product photos.

SK-II SK-II TW
18 September 2015 · 🌐

想要肌膚未來15年持續緊緻嗎?SK-II獨家美肌測量儀, 5分鐘透視肌膚現況, 預知肌膚老化風險, 幫你打造美肌對策! 體驗美肌檢測還可獲得驚喜好禮!

[See translation](#)

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[HTTP://SPR.LY/RNATT0901](http://spr.ly/rnatt0901) [Learn More](#)

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Create Page

Recent

- 2016
- 2015**
- 2014
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009
- 2000
- 1981
- 1980
- 1975

Figure 4.9: Content posted by marketer on Facebook

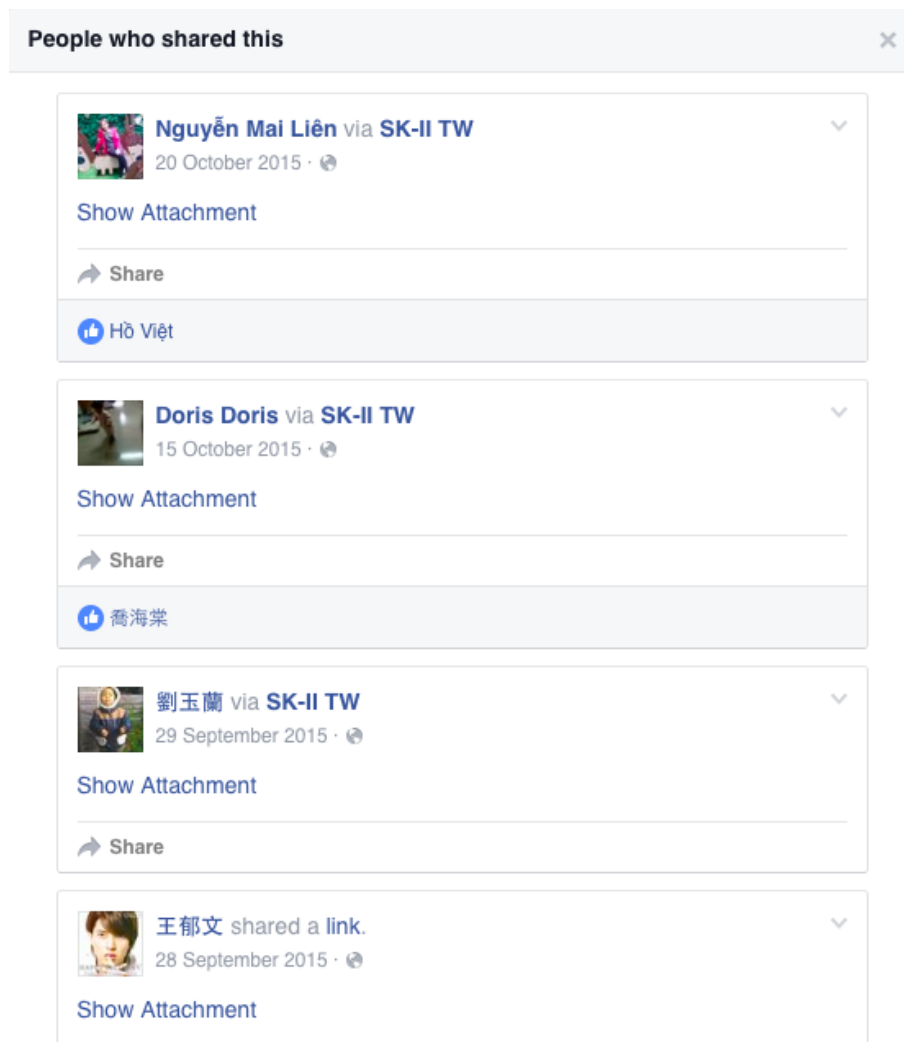


Figure 4.10: The list of consumers who shared SK-II product content

4.1 Sharing Contents

Consumers shared SK-II product content on their own time line, their friend's timeline, share in a group, share on the user's page the users manage, share in a private message. When one clicks the number of share, one will see the list of those people who shared the content on their Facebook wall.

4.2 Adding Photos

Consumers added photos on their own timeline such as photos of their purchased products.



Figure 4.11: Show a photo asking for product using steps.

4.2 Research Question # 2

Referring to the second research question, the textual analyses of EWOM on Urcosme also reveal similar patterns of EWOM on Facebook. They indicate that EWOM is communicated by Taiwanese consumers on Urcosme to gratify four purposes.



Figure 4.12: Consumers discussing usage of SK-II product(s)

1. Social Interaction

Urcosme allows users to meet new friends (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Forum participants posted comments, communicated with big bloggers, and discussed about the usage of the product(s). Examples are shown in Figure 4.12.

2. Information Seeking

Taiwanese consumers use Urcosme to seek information about products, sales promotions, store information, and usage results.

“Who use it will know it’s really good, but it (SK-II Facial Treatment Essence) smell like people’s saliva, is there anyone think so?” (Cheng posted below the forum on SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, April 16, 2015)

And one consumer replied this comment as following:
 “Yes, amazing, it is rather to be thought of than expressed what it smells like, it's (SK-II Facial Treatment Essence) smelly, but my friends said you could get used to after a long time.” (Qqi commented below the forum on SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, April 16, 2015)

3. Expression of Opinions

Taiwanese consumers use Urcosme to express their views and ideas. Examples are shown below.

“There is no rinsing amazing feeling, just a little moisturizer, brighten complexion just a little, I did not feel tight, seems like there is no difference from the low price mask, but the prices are not low.” (Thedoo posted below the forum on SK-II Facial Treatment Mask, May 30, 2015).

“I really want to buy but too expensive.” (Weiyun posted below the forum on SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, September 17, 2015)

Below the original posts, the consumer expressed their fondness on the post.

The number of like will be shown on the page of that post.



Figure 4.13: Forum page show the number of consumers with fondness of products.

4. Information Sharing

Taiwanese consumers share personal information with others through Urcosme.

“You could purchase the small bottle of SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, and don’t use it every day. I use SK-II Facial Treatment Essence one time per two or three days.” (Yang commented below the forum on SK-II Facial Treatment Essence, October 8, 2015)

4.3 Research Question # 3

Based on the third research question, the analyses yield that there is no significant difference between EWOM Taiwanese consumers communicated on Facebook and those communicated on the online beauty forum. However, it should be noted that price and details of brand activities are emphasized to a greater extent on Facebook. In addition, consumers have more freedom on Urcosme to talk about product outcomes and to give personal opinions after using the product, and they can

also numerically express their satisfaction on SK-II products.

4.4 Research Question # 4

Referring to the fourth research question, the textual analyses of SK-II marketers' responses to EWOM on its Facebook fanpage reveal that EWOM in social media were used by the SK-II marketers to gratify two purposes -- social interaction and sharing information.

1. Social Interaction

Marketers showed their appreciation to those people who mentioned that they are loyal to SK-II products as shown below:

“Recently, it seems that I am allergic, there have been rash.”
(Consumer posted on May 31, 2015)

“Hello, thank you for your message. Skin conditions may result in discomfort for many reasons. For example, rainy season may cause some allergies. If you become discomfort, I suggest you to suspend the use of any product, observe and take pictures, and also to seek advice from a specialist. For questions on the use of the product, you can directly call the SK-II Consumer Services hotline 0800-018-866 (Mon-Fri 9: 00-12: 00 and 13: 00-17: 00), please line customer personnel to assist you. Thank you again, should you have any problems, please feel free to leave a message.”
(SK-II Marketer, replied on June 1, 2015)

In addition, SK-II marketer interacted with consumers by answering questions regarding price, product effect, and/or promotion activities. Examples are shown below.

“The reason why you cannot participate in the free sample activity is that the online system was closed before you entered. Thank you for your enthusiasm. Please do not be upset. SK-II is planning the next event, be sure to give everyone the opportunity to participate. Thank you.” (SK-II Marketer, replied on April 22, 2015)

“Hello, Thank you for your support. This is how to use SK-II Facial

Treatment Essence: Apply it both morning and evening after removing make-up and cleaning your face. Re-use SK-II Facial Treatment Essence by following other skin care products. If there are questions about other uses, you are welcome to send private messages to me. Thank you.” (SK-II Marketer, replied on April 23, 2015)

2. Sharing Information

As consumers usually asked questions and some of them have misunderstandings of the SK-II products and marketing activities, SK-II marketer answered their questions and shared accurate information with them in order to correct those misunderstandings as shown below:

“Hello, Thank you for your support for the SK-II. This is to explain about the ‘uploaded your photo with mom to win a free trial installation activities.’ that you are not eligible to participate. You should have uploaded a photo of you and your mom, not you and your child.”
(SK-II Marketer, replied on April 1, 2015)

In summary, the textual analyses of EWOM on social media reveal that Taiwanese consumers use EWOM about beauty products on Facebook SK-II Facebook fanpage and an online beauty forum, Urcosme, similarly in four different purposes: social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinions, and information sharing. In terms of SK-II marketers' responses to EWOM on its Facebook fanpage, EWOM on social media were used to gratify two purposes, which are social interaction and sharing information.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

The increasing number of digital platforms offer consumers more opportunities to communicate with other consumers and get the product information in a form of EWOM. The study examined how EWOM is communicated by consumers on SK-II Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, and how SK-II marketers respond to it. As expected, analysis results identify four themes of EWOM behavior on Facebook and on an online beauty forum: social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinions, and information sharing.

5.1 EWOM on Social Media

In terms of social interaction, by using social media such as Facebook, consumers can target specific groups with their messages, and communicate with those people using the same cosmetics to get more detail information, such as what kind of effect it was when other people use it. When consumers share information on social media, those people will see and comments below the content. Consumers who communicate online may not know one another, but they communicate or get an access to product information without limitations of time and space.

According to Whiting & Williams (2013), use of social networks allows users to meet new friends. People participating in the survey also said that the social network can make them interact with different types of people. Taylor (2008) found that consumers are willing to engage within an online context because of the self-disclosure. Anderson (1998) looks at the entire spectrum of WOM communication, from negative to positive. He proposes a utility-based model that gives rise to a U-

shaped function: very dissatisfied customers and very satisfied customers are most likely to engage in WOM. In this study, consumers' comments on social media were seen by other consumers who got similar product usage situations so that they would motivate other social media users to communicate below those comments. Because of social network, consumers are able to interact with one another online more conveniently by sharing and giving personal opinion based on interpersonal influence (Allsop, Bassett & Hoskins, 2007).

In addition, the Uses and Gratification Theory postulates that social media provide social interaction between people. Majority of people use them to connect with their online community. Some people interact with strangers by using social media (Chung & Austria, 2010). This is consistent with the fact that SNSs offer the platform to satisfy people's need (Chang, Choi, Bazarova, & Löckenhoff, 2015), and provide a better platform for interactive information and self-disclosure (Bazarova & Choi, 2014).

Online beauty forum is a convenient way for consumers to communicate and search for product and service information. Karakaya and Barnes (2010) found that non-socially based sites (such as company websites and search engines) have no significant impact on consumer opinion, but socially-based sites, blogs, rating systems and discussion forums can give consumers a greater voice in affecting changes in consumers' consideration.

In terms of information seeking, social media allow consumers to know more about a product before trial or purchasing. Consumers' seeking other consumers' real experience also helps them to reduce uncertainty and risk resulted from online shopping, and to reassure that they made right purchase decisions. People who make

an informed decision mostly refer to the other people's opinions to guide them. All of those opinions will be more significant when consumers make an important purchase decision. The information they are looking for normally include 1) non-marketer-dominated sources, 2) critiques or product reviews, and 3) WOM (Kim, Lee & Ragas, 2011).

Previous studies have found that consumers tend to trust more user-generated messages, such as consumers' product evaluation or recommendations to a larger extent than advertising (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006). In particular, consumers trust social media information more than traditional mass media one. Consumers' comments about a product (negative or positive) on social media have more effect on other consumers' purchase decision making (Chung & Austria, 2010). Jacobs (2009) claim that social media is an inevitable channel for customer support.

In online forums, people can post questions and also get answers by experts in the field or by others (Desikan, Delong, Beemanapalli, Bose, & Srivastava, 2005). Online beauty forum allows consumers to ask those who posted about the product usage or effect. In addition, the information posted in the forums is the individual consumers' real experiences, which yield credibility to the source of information. Source credibility depends on the credibility status of the sender in the minds and eyes of the receivers (Umeogu, 2012), and also depends on the receiver's perception of the sender's trustworthiness and expertise (Kiecker & Cowles, 2001). On the Urcosme, consumers could browse over a big number of people's real cases about the product usage and effect. This credible product information is likely to generate significant influences on consumers.

Park et al. (2009) found the major uses and gratification factors of Facebook

users to be: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information (p. 731). Their research claims that a large number of Facebook users seek information to gratify through Facebook. Users actively search for information. Their goal is clearly to gain information in order to satisfy their need, when they click on links or employ search engines, suggesting Web (Lin & Jeffres, 1998).

As for expression of opinions, users can freely express their opinions, regardless of time and geographical constraints from their perspectives by publishing their views on social media (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2010). In addition, users can get more free space than before, can more freely publish information with a small restriction, and can participate in the process of information dissemination according to the needs of different people.

Both Facebook fanpage and Urcosme forum own a big number of fans who browse over the Internet everyday. Opinions posted online could benefit those people who are seeking for particular product information. On one hand, opinions given by consumers via online channels will get more people to care about them. On the other hand, other consumers could comment the posted information, agree or disagree with posted opinions. The more consumers involve with the product, the more product information will be created, then the product information will become more significant to the audiences.

In terms of information sharing, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that social networking sites are applications that allow people to publicize personal profiles and enable people to share personal information such as photos, video, audio files and blogs.

This research found out the types of consumers who use social media, which

could help marketers to target the right consumers and develop effective online marketing activities. Social media enable people to become publisher of information from a single information reader (Zai, 2015). According to Nielsen's latest Global Trust in Advertising Report, 92 percent of consumers respond that they trust earned media, such as recommendations from friends and family, above all other forms of advertising. Then in the new media age, each individual has the opportunity to express their individual views on things through social media. Different people brought together different voices from all over. Prior to the emergence of new media, people can only get information from the mainstream media. Constant improvement of the forum, Facebook, blog and other emerging network platforms provides people with an expression of their own channels. Everyone can be an information publisher. The information is released into a new source of information.

A research study by Chris Dyson (n.d.) reveals that people share information because the information can "bring valuable and entertaining content to one another." Social media technologies (such as social networking sites, blogs, forums, wikis) provide people with a timely and broader sharing platform, while the information rapidly spread to the audiences (Osatuyi, 2013). A study conducted by Erickson (2011) also shows that people sharing information to their friends and the general public for maintaining their social connection.

5.2 Differences of EWOM Communication on Two Platforms

Comparing EWOM on two platforms reveals that there are no differences of how EWOM regarding SK-II is communicated by Taiwanese consumers on Facebook and Urcosme. This finding is consistent with a claim by Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) that social networks provide a virtual platform allowing those who have

similar interests to get together, communicate, share, and discuss ideas. Taiwanese consumers use Facebook and Urcosme forum as platforms to share how to seek SK-II product information, to make purchase decision, and to effectively use the products. Both platforms are popular social media in Taiwan. They share several similar functions: 1) post comments and photos online, 2) like, share or push the contents while other consumers could see the number of people who like or share it, and 3) communicate with other consumers who posted contents. Facebook publicizes product information, allowing consumers to search for product information before purchasing, and to directly communicate with marketers. Similarly, Urcosme allows consumers to discuss and share their usage of products.

However, it should be noted that there are several differences between Facebook and Urcosme in terms of functions. Firstly, users cannot post video clips in Urcosme whereas users could do it on Facebook. Secondly, consumers could control comments posted on Urcosme -- everyone could read or only to the person who posted the original content -- while Facebook comments can be seen by friends or public who browse the page. Thirdly, more fans and users are able to comment on Facebook than Urcosme. Urcosme users read the contents but not communicate or comments a lot. Fourthly on Facebook consumers could communicate with marketing managers and other consumers, but Urcosme is a forum that focus on sharing information or communication; and lastly, when users post comments or like on Facebook fanpage, the users' friends on Facebook will see the information on Facebook Wall, but they cannot do so on Urcosme.

According to Whiting & Williams (2013), users share personal information with others through social networks. The biggest difference is that this social network

sharing is a two-way communication sharing process. Such respondents can post pictures and updates on social networks. It can also play the role of corporate information by publishing propaganda. According to Cheung & Lee (2012), reasons drive consumer to spread EWOM are sense of belonging, and enjoyment of helping. Consumers could have a big sense of belonging of the product to spread EWOM. In terms of helping others, users share their usage experiences with others so that others could benefit from their experiences.

Results of this study also support five propositions proposed by McLeod and Becker (1981) that (a) the audience is active, (b) media use is goal directed, (c) media consumption can fill a wide range of needs, (d) people have enough self-awareness to know and articulate their reasons for using the media, and (e) gratification have their origins in media content, exposure, and social context.

5.3 Marketers' Responses to EWOM on Social Media

In terms of SK-II marketers' responses to EWOM on SK-II Facebook fanpage, Shen & Bissell (2013) found that two-way interaction in social media may give brands better engagement control and allow them to react quickly to market developments. SK-II marketer answered consumers' product questions and also corrected the misunderstanding about product or promotion activities. Two-way communication could build trust between consumers and producers, when consumers ask questions on Facebook they believe the producers could give them a satisfied answer; when consumers get an answer they expected, they tend to feel that their voice is valuable for the company. The consumers also need a space to express their emotion and voice. Facebook offers a channel that allows the marketers to timely and rapidly give information which consumers needed. When consumers build trust on

Facebook or with the marketers, it is easy for them to accept the product information and/or advertisements posted on Facebook. Product information spreading depends on the numbers of “fans” who follow access the information marketers posted on Facebook. Two-way communication also could attract more consumers to be fans of product on Facebook.

As for marketing communications perspective, popular SNSs such as Facebook constitute brands in their own right and offer marketers access to substantial information about site members. Furthermore, SNSs offer marketers the facility for engaging in two-way communication with members in terms of personalized messages and content (Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010).

Social networks provide a platform so that consumers’ voice can be heard while marketers can actively listen to their opinions and suggestions, and to react quickly and appropriately. In addition, delivering real time information on new products and promotions is one of the advantages in using social media over traditional media (Chung & Austria, 2010). However, Shen & Bissell (2013) suggest that Facebook was not about promotions or sales as in traditional media advertising but about engagement and community.

The other research found that active interaction and useful information on social media create positive perceptions toward social media marketing messages, and positive social media marketing messages increase online shoppers’ hedonic value (Chung & Austria, 2010).

5.4 Social Seeding

Amid the current digital marketing environments, contents created by

marketers on Facebook can be viewed as social seeding. Mkhmarketing (2011) defines social seeding as “an online marketing process wherein quality content is showcased on highly visible platforms like blogs, social aggregation sites, social communities, portals, email and even messaging services.”

Facebook is an effective platform that helps building brand engagement with consumers who are willing to like and/or share their favorite contents. Consumers are able to share contents on social media because those contents are “interesting, useful, informative, inspiring or entertaining” (Mkhmarketing, 2011). The contents posted by marketers that received attention from consumers could attract more consumers to review the contents.

As for SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage, it creates the contents that are valuable and relevant to the Taiwanese consumers. Those consumers may not be in the same social network, but when they seek product information on Facebook, they may get the answers from other consumers’ conversation with marketers. Accordingly, such branded content will gain more views and likes.

As for Urcosme, it looks like a forum seeding. Its definition is given as follows:

“Forums is a meeting place for people – “netizens” to share about life, learning, experience. Like a chat room, people from different corners of life get into the forum to chat, discuss, look for information or sometimes argue for what they believe. By that way, someone can use forum to promote their brand and bring it to many diverse subjects. Then forum seeding was born – a type of Marketing Online.” (Jack, 2015).

Therefore, forum seeding is also as a kind of WOM marketing strategy. The seeding contents usually give clear information about product and feedback after

product usage. Forum marketing is the most common way of enterprise marketing. Products or brands use the forum as the carrier for the establishment of business and consumer interaction between the forum marketing, dissemination of content, through text and Internet users in the form of network development. The content is not written as advertising. From the user's point of view, it looks like a kind of article the consumers want to read.

On Urcosme, there are many bloggers' sharing that have not only a certain influence, through the blogger's online platform, in attracting a large number of viewers to browse blog information, but can also affect the audience's attitudes and behavior (McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013). It is speculated that some firms secretly hire famous bloggers to review their products or services by providing positive comments about their products or services.

Godes & Mayzlin (2009) claim that the firms tried to "engineer" WOM among their customers to increase the number of conversations among forum users. The WOM marketing could be explained as "firm initiated but customer implemented". Therefore, in WEB 2.0 world, consumers become a publisher of information, and this product information generated automatically through positive word of mouth helps product promotion. On another hand, the firm could use the new platform to increase WOM.

In addition, SK-II marketers can implement four roles proposed by Godes and Mayzlin (2005) in managing social interactions via social media platforms such as Facebook fanpage and online beauty forum.

1) Observer: The firm simply collects social interaction information to learn

about its ecosystem. As observer, the firm observes the online communities and get information from observing social interaction generated by online data. Chen and Xie (2005) state that such observation could affect advertising. In case of SK-II Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, marketers may play this role by browsing online posts and learn feedback from the real consumers who share them their purchase experiences.

2) Moderator: The firm fosters social interactions. As a moderator, the firm fosters conversation by establishing platform for consumers to exchange information and final benefit with the firm as free sales. In case of SK-II Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, the marketers may play this role by stimulating conversations regarding SK-II products, usage, and benefits or limitations among Facebook and forum users.

3) Mediator: The firm actively manages social interactions. As a mediator, the firm controls the information and disseminate it. In case of SK-II Facebook fanpage, the marketers may play this role by posting SK-II product or their advertising and promotion information on the wall. As for Urcosme, SK-II marketers may pay famous bloggers to share positive experiences about SK-II products in the online beauty forum. Accordingly, the marketers can control the SK-II product information. As both Facebook and online beauty forum allow consumers to like and share their contents, product information can be disseminated among potential consumers.

4) Participant: The firm plays the most active role in social interactions. As a participant, the firm creates WOM. In case of SK-II Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, the marketers may play this role by generating EWOM in both platforms which allow marketers and consumers to have active communication regarding SK-II products.

5.5 Hierarchy of Social Media Behaviors

EWOM on social media can be related to the concept proposed by Bernoff (2010) which is called a “Social Technographics Ladder.” This concept could visualize and categorize the state of social technology behaviors. Social Technographics Ladder classifies consumers into seven overlapping levels of social technology participation: Creators, Conversationalists, Critics, Collectors, Joiners, Spectators, and Inactives. On the top of the ladder represents the most positive level of social media participation, from top to bottom in terms of levels of engagement. The hierarchy of consumers’ social media behaviors is presented as follows.

a. Creators (24%): It is the most active social media participants. This group of people publishes content on the Internet through web pages. They also publish blogs, upload content such as videos and articles, or upload audio/music, write articles or stories and share with other people.

Taiwanese consumers’ EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme correspond with this group in terms of expression of opinions and information sharing. On Urcosme forum, consumers posted content as creators created content about the SK-II products. When consumers browse Urcosme, they could read the content as an information source. The consumers who posted on Urcosme could share personal experiences about products and personal feelings after using the products.

b. Conversationalists (33%): This group updates their status on a social networking site and post updates on Twitter. These individuals update on Facebook and Tweeter to converse. They are creating some content but not quite engage.

Taiwanese consumers’ EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme correspond with

this group in terms of social interaction and information sharing behaviors. When consumers posted contents on Facebook, those on friend list will see new posts on their wall. Their friends could “like”, “share” and/or “comment” below the contents. It helps consumers to keep in touch with their friends online, and also share updated information with their friends.

c. Critics (37%): This group of people comment other users’ blogs, or post ratings and reviews, contribute to online forums, and add/edit articles in a wiki.

Taiwanese consumers’ EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme relates to this group in terms of expression of criticism. Both Urcosme forum and Facebook allow consumers to comment below the contents in order to express their thoughts and product reviews. This group of people help the information spread faster. The more comments regarding particular products, the more useful for consumers.

d. Collectors (20%): These individuals use RSS feeds, vote for websites online, add “tags” to web pages or photos.

This group does not relevant to Taiwanese consumers’ EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme.

e. Joiners (59%): It is the second largest group. This group of people is quite active in social networks, take part in social networking sites they are interested in, but not actively adding contents on the Internet, maintain a profile on a social networking site, and visit social networking sites.

Taiwanese consumers’ EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme is associated with this group in terms of information seeking and social interaction. This group of people could interact with other social media users, seek information from online sources

such as Urcosme and Facebook. They browse online to get information they need from other consumers. However, they hardly post contents and not actively comment or express personal opinions online. This kind of people may not help the EWOM spread online as they do not spread information to others.

f. Spectators (70%): It is the largest of the groups. These people read blogs, listen to podcasts, watch video from other users, read online forums, read customer ratings/reviews, and read tweets. They read but not post content.

Taiwanese consumers' EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme correspond with this group in terms of information seeking.

g. Inactives (17%): The starting level of the ladder, this group of people is named inactives as they are not taking part in any social media activities, and not participate in any of the above activities.

This group does not correspond with Taiwanese consumers' EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme due to lack of participation in social network media.

It should be noted that consumers' social technology behaviors overlap. An individual consumer could participate in multiple behaviors at the same time.

In addition, Rozen, Askalani and Senn (2012) differentiate social media users into five groups as below.

1. Passive, Single Network Users

A lower sense of trust users with little desire to control, because the primary purpose is to protect themselves, not highly involved with conversations, do not like to be regarded as an outsider in the conversation. Therefore, this type of the users would not volunteer to join any social networks. This group does not correspond with

Taiwanese consumers in terms of their EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme.

2. Passive, Multi-Network Users

This group usually distrust the Internet, but has a very good perception and control access to information on the Internet. They barely share their personal information on the Internet. This group is irrelevant to Taiwanese consumers in terms of EWOM on Facebook and Urcosme.

3. Active, Single Network Users

They have a high degree of trust in the Internet and lower control. These users are very active in sharing their personal information and live on social networking, but only in their own social network connection circle. These users are extremely strict on their own social network connections.

This group is similar to Taiwanese consumers in terms of information sharing. This kind of people share their real experiences about SK-II products on Urcosme and Facebook, including their own photos and product photos. This kind of information as a source could be reviewed by other consumers.

4. Active, Multi Network Users

The users on the social network have a higher perceived level, and a strong desire to control with a sense of trust. They have a very comfortable integration in the vast space of the Internet. They are very actively involved in the dialogue, freely sharing of personal information and the details of life. This group of the users is major contributor by creating multi-media content in their personal blog, uploading videos, and also sharing in multiple social networks.

This group is highly associated with Taiwanese consumers in terms of social

interaction, information seeking, expression of opinions, and information sharing behaviors. This kind of people engage in all four types of EWOM behaviors on Urcosme and Facebook. They interact with people or SK-II managers on social media, seek information they need on forum and other websites. They also express personal opinions if needed, and also join activities on social media.

5. Non-Users

These people can be described as never used social networks, and in the last 30 days have not logged in any social network. For these people, all social media have almost zero effect on them.

5.6 Limitations

Although series of meaningful conclusions are found, some limitations should be noted. First, the data collection of this study involves only Taiwanese consumers rather than Chinese ones as Facebook has been blocked in China. Second, the data collection is done within ten months from January to October 2015, which is considered quite short. Third, this study analyzed Facebook and one online beauty forum. Other social media were not examined due to time limitation. Lastly, this research only uses one brand of upscale cosmetics as a case study. It may yield different results from other ordinary cosmetics as consumers tend to search information online and review other consumers' comments before making purchase decisions in high perceived risk situations.

5.7 Implications for Scholars

The findings benefit communication scholars by revealing how the EWOM spread on social media, and encouraging them to further their research on other types

of high-involvement products such as luxury and health-related products. Although this study reveals how EWOM is communicated by consumers on such social media as SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage and Urcosme, and how SK-II marketers respond to them, it is still not clear whether EWOM on social media significantly affect consumers' purchase behaviors.

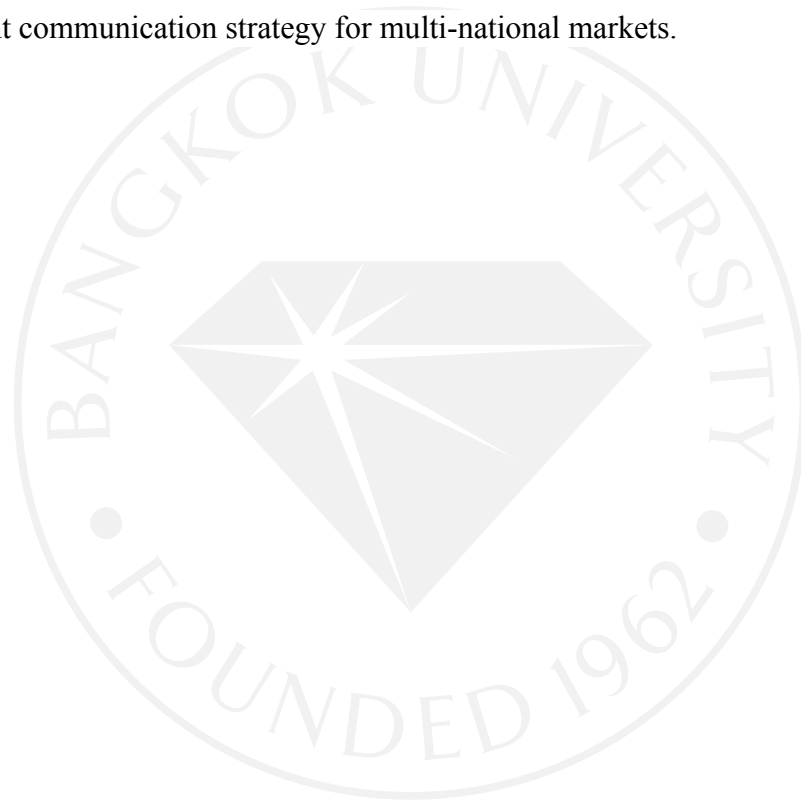
5.8 Managerial Implications

This research offers various implications for marketers. Firstly, it contributes to marketers' better understanding of consumers' online behaviors in terms of EWOM on social media. The brand could get consumers' feedback of the marketing activities on Facebook fanpage. Such feedback is kind of free idea for how to make more attractive activities to enhance consumer involvement. Secondly, this study helps marketers to build effectively and timely EWOM communication on its Facebook fanpage as they can easily and immediately get what the consumers think (Haig, 2005). Thirdly, this study allows marketers to enhance consumers' brand loyalty by building and maintaining good relationships with their target consumers through attentively managing EWOM on social media. Lastly, as many artists and creative entrepreneurs rely on online recommendations to support their artistic and business projects' survival and growth, the findings can benefit them by showing how consumers engage in EWOM in social media, which in turn enable them to enhance their EWOM stimulation and control to achieve marketing or communication objectives. Finally, this study helps marketers to be aware of different social media behaviors that the firms could use for developing marketing communication strategy. Understanding which stage the target audiences belong to in social media allows the

firms to make effective communication.

5.9 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research may examine different social media such as QQ and Renren that shares similar functions with Facebook and Urcosme. Effects of EWOM on brand purchase decision should be a valuable topic to further investigate. Examining EWOM from cultural perspectives would enable global brand managers to develop efficient communication strategy for multi-national markets.



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APPENDIX A: SK-II Taiwan Facebook fanpage

facebook 注册

登录

保持登录状态 忘记密码?

创建主页

SK-II TW
正在使用 Facebook。
要与 SK-II TW 联系, 今天就注册 Facebook。
注册 登录

新年·新美肌

SK-II
SK-II TW
产品/服务

时间线 简介 领取青春露體驗組 视频 展开

搜索主页帖子

人气 >

311,208 位用户赞了

简介 >

SK-II SK-II TW
16 小时 · 公开

大韓媳婦湯唯對抗寒冷秘技!
用SK-II青春露勤保養, 一擦、二拍、三濕敷, 整天肌膚都能水感透亮!
現在立即體驗<<http://spr.ly/gomagic>>

最近

- 2015年
- 2014年
- 2013年
- 2012年
- 2011年
- 2010年
- 2009年
- 2000年
- 1981年
- 1980年
- 1975年

FOUNDED 1962

APPENDIX B: The number of marketer posted on Facebook fanpage from January 2014 to October 2014

Month	Number of Data
January	13
February	11
March	12
April	11
May	7
June	4
July	6
August	3
September	8
October	5
Totally	80

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