

eWord of Mouth via Social Media: Role of Source and Message Credibility Cues on Social Networking Site Facebook

Payal S. Kapoor

Assistant Professor
FORE School of Management
New Delhi 110 016
e-mail: payal@fsm.ac.in

Jayasimha K. R

Associate Professor
Indian Institute of Management
Indore
e-mail: jayasimha@iimdr.ac.in

Ashish Sadh

Professor
Indian Institute of Management
Indore
e-mail: ashish@iimdr.ac.in

Abstract

New media has brought customers closer; they indulge in eWOM and facilitate the diffusion of brand-related information to a much larger audience. Unlike Face to Face WOM, which originates from known and trustworthy sources, eWOM may originate from sources where no significant prior relationship exists and also lacks nonverbal cues. Therefore, the influence of eWOM towards Brand Attitude is likely to be moderated by credibility perceptions derived from both, the source and the content (message) of the eWOM.

This study, with the help of an extensive factorial design experiment, examines whether credibility, derived from various cues of source and message embedded in the social media interface, moderates the influence of eWOM. Utilising the Facebook interface, a total of 124 experiments were conducted. Results of our study confirm the moderating role of credibility and also identify self-shared and system-generated source and message cues that help establish an overall perception of credibility. Results also suggest that source and message credibility have a significant interaction effect and only overall high perceived credibility significantly influences brand attitude. Study recommends caution to marketers while selecting online influencers for 'induced eWOM' campaign as believability may be moderated by all the manifestations of credibility pointed out in current research.

Key words: Credibility; eWOM; Source Credibility; Message Credibility; Social Media.