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Relationships among Source Credibility of Electronic Word of Mouth, Perceived Risk, and Consumer Behavior on Consumer Generated Media

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**RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SOURCE CREDIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC
WORD OF MOUTH, PERCEIVED RISK, AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON
CONSUMER GENERATED MEDIA**

A Thesis Presented

by

Mei-Hsin Wu

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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February 2013

Hospitality and Tourism Management

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ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SOURCE CREDIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH, PERCEIVED RISK, AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON CONSUMER GENERATED MEDIA

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As technology advances, the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) surpasses the influence of traditional face-to-face WOM communication on consumers' decision making. Since the hospitality and tourism products and services contain more interpersonal interaction that needs to be experienced by consumers, the influence of eWOM in the hospitality industry is more significant than in other industries.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among source credibility of eWOM, customers' perceived risk, and their behavior intentions to use consumer generated media. The result provides evidence about the influence of eWOM on overall perceived risk and how consumers use eWOM to manage and reduce the potential risks when making their lodging decisions. Academically, it confirms the

significance of eWOM influence and connects the gap in the previous literatures between source credibility of eWOM and perceived risk research. Practically, hoteliers can set their marketing strategies precisely aimed to consumers' needs and are able to build good reputations through those online travel forums or hotel review sites.

Keywords: Source credibility, eWOM, perceived risk, consumer behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

As the social media become an indispensable part of people's daily lives, the speed of information transfer increases and the power of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) grows more rapidly. A positive recommendation or compliment in an online discussion forum may bring a lot of business for an organization in a short time, but a negative complaint in a personal blog also can quickly cause other consumers' mistrust of the product or service, and result in a huge loss to a firm. Since the hospitality and tourism products and services contain more interpersonal interaction that needs to be experienced by consumers, the influence of eWOM in the hospitality industry is more significant than in other industries (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

Nowadays, when travelers search for their lodging and travel information for their upcoming trips, they tend to rely more on sources from the Internet than before. According to the research conducted by the U.S. Travel Association, the number of American adults who use the Internet to plan travel was over 105 million in 2008, increasing from 90 million in 2007 (Fesenmaier & Cook, 2009). One reason for people

searching travel information online is that it is easier and faster to get updated information. The information seeker can reach abundant travel information online without the restriction of time and place. Moreover, the voluntary opinions and reviews from experienced travelers' points of view are much more persuasive to those information searchers (Jeong & Jeon, 2008).

However, when consumers obtain plenty of information and a variety of opinions on their future travel online, their overall perceived risk toward the products or services might be changed. Thus, the criteria consumers use to judge the factuality of information and to make their final decision is important for industry practitioners to know to meet their needs in this competitive and dynamic Internet environment.

1.2. Problem Statement

The main purpose of the study is to examine the relationships among source credibility of eWOM, customers' perceived risk, and their behavior intentions to use consumer generated media (CGM). Since Bauer (1960) first launched the concept of perceived risk, many studies have adopted it to examine its relationships with customer behavior (e.g. Cox & Rich, 1964; Mitchell, 1992; Mitra, Reiss, & Capella, 1999; Ross, 1975; Taylor, 1974). These studies revealed that perceived risk plays a critical role in

consumers' decision making processes and influence their behavior.

In order to reduce the risk associated with a purchase decision, information search is a common strategy consumers use (O'Connor, 2008; Smith, Menon, & Sivakumar, 2007). Among the five information sources, Andreasen (1986) proposed that personal independent source has been viewed as a credible and trustworthy one. Particularly, the influence of word-of-mouth (WOM) on consumer behavior attracts scholars' attention. Mitchell and Greatedorex (1993) found that asking advice from family and friends is a useful way to reduce perceived risk in most service purchases. Studies (i.e., Arndt, 1967a; Lutz & Reilly, 1974) also proposed that WOM was the most important source of information in reducing risk, and the degree of initial perceived risk and the importance of personal source information had a positive relationship with a purchase decision.

As technology advances, consumers are able to easily obtain information about products and services through eWOM before they purchase. The influence of eWOM such as blogs, forums, and consumer review sites surpasses the influence of traditional face-to-face WOM communication on consumers' decision making (Cheng & Zhou, 2010). Although research in eWOM is still in its initial stages, the power of eWOM transmission and its influence on consumer behavior makes this subject a spotlight in the recent literature of marketing, management, and information research. Nevertheless, most

eWOM research focuses on its impact on communication and consumers' behaviors (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Only a few studies have been conducted to evaluate the causal relationship between perceived risk and eWOM transmission. For example, Huang, Chou, and Lan (2007) examined the influence of inherent perceived risk of service, negative eWOM transmission, and message types on consumer behavior in their study. However, since the overall perceived risk is a critical determinant in consumer decision making processes, disclosing the variation of overall perceived risk affected by the source credibility of eWOM would be principal in eWOM research.

This study plans to make contributions in both academic and practical perspectives. Academically, it bridges the theoretical gap by clarifying the relationship among source credibility of eWOM and overall perceived risk. Practically, both independent travelers and hotel managers will be benefited knowing what cues consumers use to assign trust and what criteria consumers view most important when choosing a hotel for their future stay. The independent travelers can better be informed about the service qualities of certain hotels from other experienced consumers, make the best decision matching their needs and expectations, and reduce the possibility of being disappointed when they actually go. The hotel managers can have a better understanding of consumers' decision making processes. Knowing the critical factors that lead to consumers' final purchase

decisions, the hotel managers can form precise marketing strategies aiming their potential customers and adjusting their operation to fulfill consumers' expectations.

1.3. Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions have been developed to achieve its objectives:

1. What are the characteristics of the independent travelers who use eWOM as their main information source?

Personal factors such as age, gender, and education affect consumers' online information search and travel patterns. People who use eWOM as their information source may share the same characteristics. Moreover, the effect of eWOM may also be influenced by the receiver's prior knowledge and experience (Cheng & Zhou, 2010).

2. What factors influence the level of consumers' perceived risk to eWOM?

The source credibility of eWOM may affect consumers' perceived risk. Identifying what criteria independent travelers use to judge the source credibility of eWOM will be helpful in solving the puzzle of factors that influence the consumers' perceived risk.

3. How does consumers' perceived risk and trust influence their behavioral intentions?

Consumers act differently according to the degree of perceived risk and trust they

have toward the information they obtained. Trust enhances consumers' willingness to purchase and influence their degree of involvement to eWOM communication.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The result of this study could provide evidence about the influence of eWOM on overall perceived risk and how consumers use eWOM to manage and reduce the potential risks when making their lodging decisions. From the academic viewpoint, it not only confirms the significance of eWOM influence, but also connects the gap in the previous literature between source credibility of eWOM and overall perceived risk research. Practically, by knowing what criteria those independent travelers use to judge the factuality of eWOM information, hoteliers are able to set their marketing strategies precisely aimed to consumers' needs and build good reputations through those online travel forums or hotel review sites.

1.5. Definitions of Terms

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) Communication

eWOM is the Web-based interpersonal communication between strangers to deliver the information about a product, service, or company without commercial purpose

(Cheng & Zhou, 2010; Litvin et al., 2008). eWOM transfers via E-mail, blogs, forums, chat room, instant messages, newsgroups, electronic bulletin boards, social network sites, and review sites (Cheng & Zhou, 2010; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is how consumers feel about the possibility of uncertainty and the unpleasant consequence toward a purchase (Cunningham, 1967a). The overall perceived risk of the current research measured is the unavoidable risk with a product choice consumers perceive after risk reduction processes.

Independent Travelers

Independent travelers are individuals who arrange their travel itinerary by themselves. Instead of relying on the package offered by the travel retailer, they search information from the travel guidebooks or the Internet to book their own transportation and accommodation (Hyde & Lawson, 2003).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, key theoretical constructs in the previous studies such as word-of-mouth (WOM), source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and consumer behavior are reviewed. The first section will define the nature of WOM, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication, and the influence of WOM on consumer decision-making. The second section will present the existing studies on source credibility and the four dimensions developed to measure the source credibility in this study. The following section will describe the flow of research in perceived risk, its relationship with WOM, and the importance of perceived risk in consumer decision-making. And, finally, the role of trust in consumer decision-making will be addressed along with its influence on consumers' behavior intentions.

2.2. Word of Mouth (WOM) Communication

WOM, the interpersonal communication between consumers to deliver the information about a product, service, or company without commercial purpose (Litvin et

al., 2008), has been recognized as a powerful determinant that has a greater influence than personal sale or commercials on consumers' purchase decision (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). As the hospitality and tourism product consumption involves more customer participation and the service quality is affected by the interaction between service providers and consumers, it is difficult to anticipate the purchase outcome precisely before experience. However, consumers are able to roughly imagine the performance of a service provider from WOM information and set their expectation to the service quality before actual consumption. The information exchange between experienced and inexperienced customers decreases the degree of uncertainty that a new buyer perceived.

Previous research shows that a negative WOM spreads faster and wider than a positive WOM. Swanson and Hsu (2009) confirm that most consumers would discuss their travel and tourism consumption experience with others and the unsatisfactory service encounter distributes wider in their social network. Although companies are glad to take advantage from positive WOM to advertise their products or services, they also take the risk of being threatened by the negative WOM. Thus, a way to manage the influence of WOM and prevent the reputation of product and company from decreasing is always a critical issue for industry practitioners.

2.2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

As technology advances, the format of WOM transfers from the face-to-face communication to the Web-based platforms such as blogs, forums, and review sites between strangers (Cheng & Zhou, 2010). Although the eWOM differs from WOM in the way it transmits, the power of influence to consumers does not decrease. The importance of the influence of eWOM on consumers' decision-making process has been proved in various studies (Litvin et al., 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). With the help of new technology, consumers are able to actively participate in and spread out WOM promptly. For example, consumers can simultaneously share their experience about the performance of a restaurant service by the Smartphone Apps while they are enjoying their meal.

In general, independent travelers hope to have more control over their trip. They may use eWOM information as their first information resource when they start to plan their trip or search for the eWOM information when they need a third party opinion to verify the factuality of information they get from other sources (such as advertisements) (Gretzel, Hyan-Yoo, & Purifoy, 2007; O'Connor, 2008).

2.2.2 Effect of WOM on Consumer Decision Making Process

Decision making is a complex process that researchers and marketers are interested

in and make an effort to understand consumer behavior for a long time (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998; Zeleny, 1982). Many factors such as individuals' personality, personal experience, convincing advertisements, persuasive salespersons, information accessibility, and even the third party opinion may have direct, indirect, or interactive influence to a consumer's final purchase choice (Bettman et al., 1998; Sirakaya & Woodsideb, 2005). In the marketing literature, the five stages model of consumer decision process is the most well-known and has been applied to the consumer behavior studies to illustrate consumer behavior (Sirakaya & Woodsideb, 2005). The process of problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation illustrates most consumers' purchase behaviors.

WOM plays a critical role in the decision making process. It is involved in both pre-purchase and post-purchase stages and affects consumer behaviors. First, before the decision making and purchasing stage, (in the information search and alternative evaluation stages) consumers intend to seek for information to maximize the value of their money. Second, the satisfied or unhappy experiences motivate consumers to share their opinions with others (the post-purchase evaluation). Figure 1 shows Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan's (2008) conceptual model of word-of-mouth transfer.

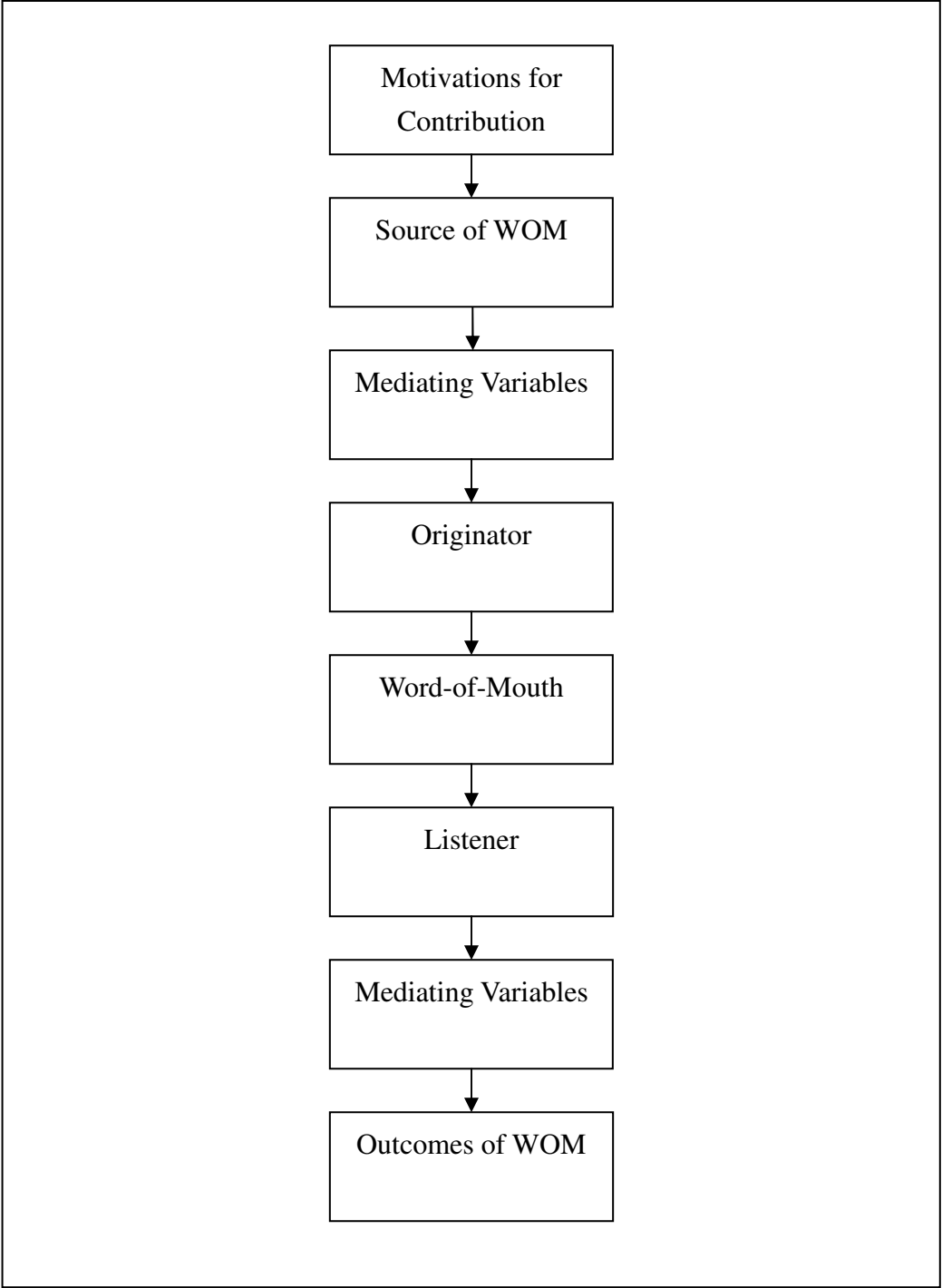


Figure 1 A conceptual model of word-of-mouth (Litvin et al., 2008)

In general, independent travelers search for their lodging information online rather than booking their hotel through a travel retailer in order to find an accommodation that

has the best value to them. The difference between purpose and needs results in the different degree of their risk perception and influences their purchase decision. Backpackers are looking for the most economic place to save money and some independent travelers may want to stay in a traditional accommodation to experience a unique culture. Through an online traveling forum or review site, they can collect information provided by other experienced travelers and find an accommodation that meets to their demands and expectations. As a result, the consumer-generated content (CGC) becomes one important information source for travel planning, especially for travelers' accommodation decisions (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

2.3. Source Credibility

Source credibility refers to the information receivers' perceived trust toward the source of information (Ohanian, 1990). Existing literature identifies source expertise and source trustworthiness as two major determinants to measure the credibility of information (e.g., Applbaum & Anatol, 1972; Wiener. & Mowen, 1986; Whitehead, 1968). In addition to the dimension of expertise and trustworthiness, views differ from researchers about other dimensions of source credibility in the influence on consumers' attitude change. Considering the nature and circumstance of eWOM, source credibility is

measured from four dimensions in the present study: expertness, trustworthiness, objectivity, and homophily.

2.3.1 Expertness

Expertness indicates the extent of skillfulness, authoritativeness, competence, and qualification a person has about the specific knowledge (Applbaum & Anatol, 1972; Whitehead, 1968). Information from an expert source is more persuasive and has positive influences on receivers' attitude change (Ohanuan, 1990). Three indicators are used to evaluate the extent of expertness of the review in the current research: website reputation, reviewers, and information.

A website is the platform of eWOM distribution. Information from a professional forum or a reliable review site is more credible and may change reviewers' perceived risk. According to Park and Lee (2009), the reputation of a website influences the information credibility consumers perceived. For example, TripAdvisor.com is a well-established review site that has 50 million unique individuals visiting each month and over 60 million reviews and opinions posting on its site (www.tripadvisor.com). Consumers perceive TripAdvisor.com as a specialized travel website. Thus, the travel information from TripAdvisor.com is viewed as a higher expert than from an unknown website.

Since the hospitality and tourism products are more experience-oriented, the information seekers do not expect to obtain information from an expert who has professional or specialized knowledge about the hotel industry. Thus, a recommendation from a former consumer who has actual experience is more persuasive than a comment from an industry expert. The difference in details (such as photo numbers or description detail) the reviewer offer might be a cue for information receivers to determine whether the information providers are knowledgeable and experienced. For example, when consumers want to know if a hotel meets their demand, the opinion from a former hotel guest actually staying in the same hotel is more helpful.

To evaluate the degree of experience for a reviewer, the contribution and the duration are two indicators. Contribution refers to how many reviews a reviewer wrote and the duration reflects how long a reviewer involves in sharing and exchanging information. Both of them can show reviewers' experience of hotel choice. One way to judge the expertness of eWOM information is from the reader's point of view. If the reader thinks a review is helpful, it means the content targets to his/her concerns.

Based on the previous studies, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H1: The higher the expertness of eWOM is, the lower degree of the perceived risk the consumer has.

2.3.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the eWOM is another factor which may affect the information receivers' perceived risk. Yoo and Gretzel (2009) confirm the existence of a relationship between structure of content and trustworthiness. The reveal of information providers' personal identifying information (PII) has positive influence on receivers' trust (Xie, Miao, Kuo, & Lee, 2011). Also, the information providers' active participation in the online forum may result in the information receivers' trust. How much time the providers devoted to the online discussions, how fast they respond to information seekers' inquiries, and how frequent they share information might be the standards the information seekers use to judge the degree of information providers' participation.

Distinguishing between truthful and deceptive reviews in the online environment is a main concern to travelers while choosing their lodging place. The influence and importance of customer-generated opinion increases the interest in exploring the dissimilarity of a truthful and deceptive message. Burgoon, Blair, Qin, and Nunamaker (2003) and Zhou and Sung (2008) suggest that a deceptive message is different from a truthful message in the aspect of quantity, non-immediacy, lexical complexity, and language diversity. In their studies, the researchers collect deceptive messages made by

the participants and then do the content analysis to compare the differences between truthful and deceptive reviews.

It is a common notion that people prefer to spend their time and energy to do things they have passion for or they can get a benefit from doing it. Most reviews are contributed by volunteers. Thus, the quantity of content may reflect a reviewer's opinion. Because the review is based on the reviewer's personal experience, self-reference such as the use of first person pronouns is unavoidable but the lexical complexity of word usage may not be necessary. In addition, the consistency between reviews from different reviewers is a strong support to the factuality of the information. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: The higher the trustworthiness of eWOM is, the lower degree of the perceived risk consumer has.

2.3.3 Objectivity

People often assign their trust to information sources according to the objectivity of the content. It is an important cue to judge the fairness of a statement because subjective opinions may cause bias and affect the judgment. Concrete and impartial descriptions in a review are considered more objective because it leaves space for readers to make their

own judgment. While describing the complimentary breakfast a hotel offers, naming what kind of food it has is more clear and objective than just saying “it is adequate”.

Information receivers’ perceived risk changes along with the information objectivity they perceived, not only by the direction of opinions (positive or negative), but also by the sentiment of words. For example, they may recognize certain products or services as high risk according to the expression of the content. An emotional complaint and a neutral comment cause different results to their perceived risk. If the content of eWOM is describing a unique circumstance, there may be different judgment than toward a normal situation.

Personal emotion influences the objectivity of judging the performance of service. When people are in a hurry, normally they are less patient. For the hotel guests who rush to catch the flight, waiting for one minute to check out may feel like forever. They may complain about how inefficient the front desk clerk is in the hotel reviews. In addition, the difference of reviewers’ role affects the reader’s perception. For example, although the editor of a review site is professional and experienced traveler, the review he/she wrote may cause doubt to readers whether it implies some commercial purpose.

If a review is written from objective perspective, it is more trustable and reduces the risk consumers perceived. Based on the above argument, the following hypothesis

reveals.

H3: The higher the objectivity of eWOM is, the lower degree of perceived risk consumers have.

2.3.4 Homophily

People incline to bond themselves with others who are similar to them (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). In the sociology research, homophily is viewed as an important factor which influences the human communication. The perceived homophily reduces the uncertainty, enhances good feeling, and reinforces safety of the interpersonal relationship (Prisbell & Andersen, 1980). The homophily influences information receivers' judgment to the information they receive. For example, the information receiver may trust the eWOM information from information providers who have similar backgrounds or interests with them.

Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) distinguish the similarity between sources and receivers into status homophily and value homophily. The status homophily refers to the external similarity among individuals such as the age, the gender, or the social class. The value homophily emphasizes from the internal perspective such as the similar belief, thought, or life style among individuals.

In traditional WOM, the receiver knows the credibility of an information provider since they have an existent social tie to each other. The strength of ties between sender and receiver is a basis to judge the degree of source credibility. Brown and Reingen (1987) find that the level of tie strength has different influence on the receiver's decision making because a strong tie to the referral source is more creditable.

Unlike offline WOM communication, eWOM message transfers between strangers who have non-existent tie. The nature of anonymous in eWOM communication increases the difficulty of judging the credibility of source and the authenticity of the information (Cheng & Zhou, 2010). Steffes and Burgee's study (2009) reveals that in the online environment, the source credibility is not correlated positively with the intensity of social relationship. However, information gathering from non-existent tie but homophily source in an online forum is viewed as a credible source. In the receivers' decision-making process, the homophily source is more influential than a referral source that the communicator has a strong or weak tie to.

When people search information online, the degree of homophily between themselves and the sources affects their perceived risk and their behavior intentions. Steffes and Burgee (2009) argue that information from a source that is similar in age, gender, education, and social status to the receiver is more creditable and is more

influential in consumers' decision-making process, regardless of the intensity of social relationship between individuals.

Even though lacking of social ties between information providers and receivers in the online environment, the presence of communicators' personal identifying information (PII) increases the credibility of online review (Xie et al., 2011). The presence of communicator's personal identifying information also reveals the degree of individuals' homophily, and thus reduces the risk information the receiver perceived. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been derived:

H4: The homophily between information providers and information receivers negatively correlates to the perceived risk.

2.4. Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is defined as how consumers feel about the possibility of uncertainty and the unpleasant consequence toward a purchase in consumer research (Cunningham, 1967a). As risk aversion is one of the human instincts, perceived risk plays a critical role and influences every stage of the consumer decision making process (Mitchell, 1992). In general, people hope to manage and reduce the possibility of unpleasant consequences before they actually confront that uncertainty. When facing a large number of alternatives,

most consumers will seek information about the product and service from different sources to help them to minimize the risk and make a decision (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). Thus, the information accessibility influences the relationship between the source credibility and perceived risk. If the information receivers can easily get information about the product or service from media or they are familiar with particular brand, it helps to reduce the perceived risk they have.

Bauer (1960) considers consumer behavior as risk taking and the perceived risk is subjective judgment which varies from person to person. Cox (1967) argues that the amount at stake and the feeling of subjective certainty are two major factors determined by the amount of perceived risk. Cunningham (1967a) also proposes that uncertainty and consequences are two components of perceived risk and five possible losses involved: financial loss, physical loss, time loss, performance loss, and psycho social loss. Bettman (1973) divides risk into two parts: inherent risk and handled risk. The inherent risk is the original risk consumers perceived toward a product itself. It exists along with its product class. The difference of price, function, and the importance to a buyer of a product results in different inherent risk consumers perceived. For example, the inherent risk along with a wedding dress purchase is higher than that of a pajama purchase because of the difference of the occasion people wear them. The inherent risk along with a house

purchase is higher than that of a clothes purchase because of the difference of the amount of spending and the influence duration of that purchase. Whereas, the handled risk is the unavoidable risk with a product choice after risk reduction processes. It may be low when consumers are confident with their purchase through a brand choice or an information search. The overall perceived risk of the current research measured is the same as the handled risk Bettman (1973) proposes.

Compared with a product purchase, a service purchase contains more uncertainty due to its four characteristics: intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and inseparability. Affected by these innate characteristics of service, consumers perceive higher risk in a service purchase than in a product purchase (Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1993). For example, consumers normally behave in a more cautious manner to a hotel room purchase decision because the duration of the product is comparatively much shorter than other merchandise, but the cost is relatively high.

As the population of Internet usage increases, the online platform becomes an efficient channel for businesses to advertise and distribute their merchandise. Recent research in perceived risk focuses on its influence on online shopping (e.g., Cases, 2002; Crespo, Rodríguez del Bosque, & García de los Salmones Sánchez, 2009; Kim, Kim, & Leong, 2005; Pires, Stanton, & Eckford, 2004). In addition to the six dimensions

(financial risk, performance risk, psychological risk, social risk, physical risk, and time risk) in perceived risk recognized by most studies (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Roselius, 1971; Stone & Gronhaug, 1993), the security risk emerges and becomes one critical concern to consumers along with their purchases of online shopping (Kim et al., 2005).

2.4.1 The Relationship between Perceived Risk and WOM

Seeking WOM information is one normal strategy to reduce risk (Arndt, 1967b; Roselius, 1971). Previous research (Arndt, 1967b) reveals that the degree of perceived risk affects consumers' WOM information seeking behavior and purchase decision. Cunningham (1967b) argues that high risk perceivers are more likely to involve in WOM and the discussion may change their initial inclination of cautious or risky behavior. Particularly, consumers pay more attention to unfavorable comments while they perceived higher risk (Arndt, 1967b).

2.5. Trust

The relationship between perceived risk and trust is inconsistent in the literature (Lim, 2003). Some researchers suggest that trust is the antecedent of perceived risk and there is a negative relationship between two of them (Cheung & Lee, 2001; Kaibir & Nart,

2009; Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008). However, Kim and Prabhakar (2000) propose that the balance of initial trust in electronic channel and perceived risk determines consumers' trust behavior. In this study, trust is defined as the trusting behavior which is a consumer's confidence to accept the uncertain consequence to the purchase.

Consumers act differently according to the degree of trust they have toward the eWOM information. The overall perceived risk influence consumers' trusting behavior. If consumers perceive a higher degree of risk, they may participate in the discussion or ask more questions to verify the factuality of the eWOM information. If the lower risk is perceived, the possibility of their willingness to purchase the product or service is higher.

While the information seekers are looking for lodging, there are two factors directly affecting the degree of their trust. One is the degree of information detail. Another is the degree of the information providers' participation. In the process of online information searching, security is one of the concerns for travelers (Morosan & Jeong, 2008). A travel blog which has photos of accommodation facilities and detailed descriptions of the interactions between the workers and customers can help the information seekers to draw a whole picture of how comfortable the accommodation is and what kind of service it offers.

The difference of traveling experiences may affect independent travelers' trust to the

same eWOM content, too. The experienced independent travelers may quickly scan the online review and distinguish between deceptive and truthful information subconsciously. In contrast, inexperienced independent travelers may spend more time examining those contents and using information from other sources to verify the factuality of eWOM information. On a travel forum, if the information providers are experienced travelers who share their lodging experiences more often, actively join the discussion about lodging places, and answer other people's questions, the information they provide and the opinions they give are viewed as more valuable for the information seekers.

Since the overall perceived risk is the combination of consumers' judgment to a purchase decision and their willingness to accept the consequence, it may predict the consumers' trust behavior. Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H5: The lower degree of perceived risk the consumer has, the higher consumers' trust is.

2.6. Consumer Behavior Intention

As the information seekers believe the information they get from the eWOM is reliable, their expectations of getting at least the same service in the lodging place increases. When consumers have higher expectations of a particular product or service,

the possibility of buying the product or service also increases. In other words, customers' expectations and their willingness to purchase have a positive relation. For example, if the information providers compliment a certain hotel, the information seekers will expect they can get the same service the hotel offered the information providers, and increase their willingness to stay in the same hotel. In contrast, if the information seekers receive negative information, the chance of getting dissatisfactory service is high, so their willingness of purchasing the product or service decreases.

When the information seekers' willingness to purchase is high, the possibility of actually making a purchase will increase. While the information seekers experience the service by themselves, they may subconsciously compare the differences between the information they get from eWOM and their own perception. When the information seekers build a stronger relationship with the information providers (for example, both of them have similar experiences in the same accommodation), their willingness to share their experiences increases. Eventually, these information seekers contribute their experiences and become the information providers who offer useful information to later information seekers.

H6: The higher consumers' trust is, the higher purchase intention is.

H7: The higher consumers' trust is, the higher eWOM involvement is.

H8: The higher consumers' purchase intention is, the higher eWOM involvement is.

The conceptual model of the present study is summarized as follows.

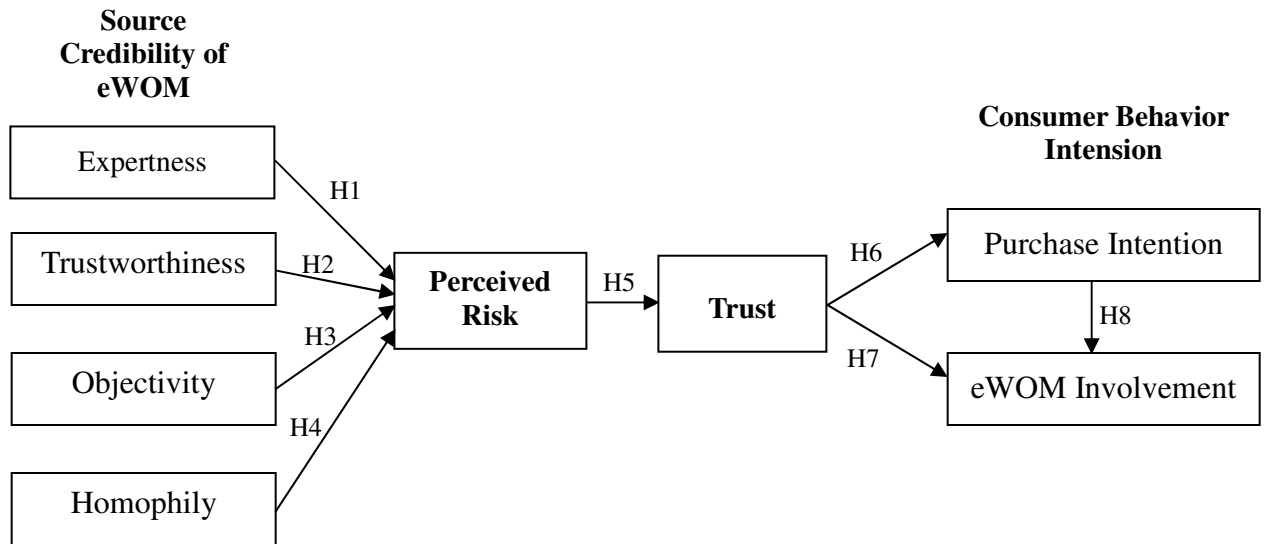


Figure 2. The conceptual model of the present study

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The present study intends to identify the relationships among source credibility of eWOM, perceived risk, and consumers' behavior intentions. In order to make a general overview of consumer behavior, conducting a survey with potential travelers is an efficient way to gain representative information about how consumers' behaviors are influenced by the eWOM.

3.2. Sampling Procedure

As this study focuses on potential travelers' online information searching behavior, the sample of this study was those who have or are going to have experienced to search for information online. As a result, the online travel forum site is a good setting for the study since users and visitors are qualified for this purpose. Backpacker.com (<http://www.backpackers.com.tw/forum/>) was contacted to obtain the permission to post the questionnaire link on its website to recruit potential respondents. Backpackers.com is the biggest Chinese travel forum which offers an online platform for independent

travelers to seek, transfer, and discuss travel information and share experiences. This website has almost 600,000 members who can be potential participants in this study.

3.3. Instrument / Questionnaire Design

Qualtrics, Web-based survey software, was used to gather the online survey data. The questionnaire was divided into three parts and the closed format questions that have already predetermined responses were used in the questionnaire. The first section was the socio-demographic questions that aim to know the basic information of these respondents, such as their gender, age, and education. The second section of the questionnaire focused on understanding the attendants' traveling preferences and information searching patterns. The example questions were what the main purpose of their trip is, what kind of information they are interested in, and where they gain the information. The third section of questions was used to measure the relationships among the variances in research questions 2 and 3. Those questions were presented by a 5-point Likert scale, 1 being from strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree. The main measurements included the expertness, trustworthiness, objectivity, and homophily of source credibility, information receivers' overall perceived risk to the eWOM information, their trust to purchase, their willingness to purchase, and their willingness to involve in the eWOM.

3.4. Data Collection

An online self-administered survey was developed on Qualtrics. Before actually collecting data from the target participants, a pilot test was conducted with thirty potential independent travelers to evaluate the clarity of the questionnaire in the wording, order, and layout. Then, the questionnaire link was posted on Backpackers.com to collect data. The formal survey was conducted from August 20, 2012 to September 30, 2012 to collect data.

The online survey has pros and cons. Benefits of the online survey are time-saving, cost-reduction, and target-accessibility, while potential disadvantages are low response rates and sampling issue (Wright, 2005). However, considering the purpose of the current research is to investigate the influence of eWOM to consumers' behavior intentions, the online survey is appropriate to aim the specific group. In order to increase the response rate, one 2 GB Apple iPod shuffle was offered as an incentive for the respondents. Every participant who attended this survey had an equal chance to win the prize.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter demonstrates the result of this study. The data was analyzed by using SPSS 18.0 to test the hypotheses of the relationships among source credibility of eWOM, perceived risk, and consumers' behavior intention. First, the descriptive analyses were conducted to identify respondents' demographic profile as well as their information search behavior and travel pattern in general. Second, exploratory factor analysis and reliability tests were conducted to confirm the factor structure of the measurement items and ensure reliability of each construct. Third, the relationships among variables were examined by multiple regression analysis.

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

An online survey was conducted from August 20, 2012 to September 30, 2012 in collaboration with backpackers (www.backpackers.com.tw) to collect data. The total of 378 participants responded to the online questionnaire. Out of the 378 responses, 117 responses have been eliminated for the further analysis: 49 incomplete responses and 68 unqualified due to no intention to plan or book their own travel. Thus, 261 valid respondents are obtained.

4.1.1. Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the result of the respondents' demographic profile. Out of the 261 respondents, 33% are male. Eighty-six percent of respondents were between 18 to 35 years old, which shows the majority of the participants were young. Regarding the education, 47.9% of the respondents had bachelor's degrees and 41.8% had Master's degrees. In terms of nationality, the majority of respondents were from Taiwan, which accounts for 88.5 % of total respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=261)

Demographic Variable		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	86	33.0
	Female	175	67.0
Age	18 – 25	38	14.6
	26 – 35	187	71.6
	36 – 45	14	5.4
	46 – 55	5	1.9
	56 – 65	12	4.6
	Older than 65	5	1.9
Highest Education	High school or less	6	2.3
	Associate degree	7	2.7
	Bachelor's degree	125	47.9
	Master's degree	109	41.8
	Ph. D. degree	14	5.4
Nationality	Taiwan	231	88.5
	China	8	3.1
	Hong Kong	1	0.4
	USA	17	6.5
	Turkey	1	0.4
	India	1	0.4
	Canada	1	0.4
	New Zealand	1	0.4

4.1.2. Respondents' Information Search and Travel Pattern

Tables 2 shows respondents' information search and travel pattern. About sixty percent of respondents reported that they spent at least one to three hours on the Internet daily for leisure-related purposes. Seventy-five percent of respondents planned to book for both national and international travel. The main reason for them to plan and book their own travel is to customize their trip based on their needs. Ninety-nine percent of respondents traveled at least once in the past year and eighty-five percent of respondents plan to travel within one year. Seventy-one percent of respondents have experienced using hotel review sites or travel forums to obtain information for planning their trip. However, only fourteen percent of respondents have posted their own experience on hotel review sites or travel forums.

Table 2. Respondents' Information Search and Travel Pattern (n=261)

	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Time spend on the Internet per day		
Less than 1 hour	27	10.3
1 hour - 3 hours	157	60.2
4 hours - 5 hours	46	17.6
More than 5 hours	31	11.9
Plan their own travel for		
Both foreign and domestic travel	196	75.1
Foreign travel only	11	4.2
Domestic travel only	54	20.7
Reason for planning their own travel		
I can save time	2	0.8
I can save money	17	6.5
I can customize my trip based on my needs	236	90.4
Other (Convenient, privacy, for fun)	6	2.3
Trips took during the past year		
Never	1	0.4
1 – 2	110	42.1
3 – 5	116	44.4
6 – 10	23	8.8
More than 10	11	4.2
Travel plans in the near future		
Yes, within 1 month	72	27.6
Yes, within 3 months	72	27.6
Yes, within 6 months	53	20.3
Yes, within 12 months	27	10.3
Not yet	37	14.2
Experience of using review sites		
Yes	186	71.3
No	75	28.7
Experience of posting reviews		
Yes	38	14.6
No	223	85.4

Hotel review sites (20.2%), word-of-mouth (18.8%), travel forums (18.4%), personal travel blogs (17.4%), and hotel websites (14.6%) are the major sources where respondents get hotel information to plan their trips. The main purposes of browsing hotel review sites or travel forums are to get useful information (31.3%), to obtain updated information (21.1%), and for convenience (17.7%). The key factors respondents consider when choosing a hotel are price (29.0%), location (28.9%), and service quality (17.7%).

4.2. Factor Analysis

This study adopted items from the different studies (Applbaum & Anatol, 1972; Ohanian, 1990; Steffes & Burgee, 2008; Whitehead, 1968) and modified questions to fit the identity of eWOM to measure the source credibility. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation method was employed to confirm the factor structure and ensure the valid measurement of the variables.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted to confirm if the factor analysis is appropriate to the measurement. As shown in Table 3, the KMO of source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and consumer behavior intention are more than 0.7 and the Bartlett's Test of them are all in a significant level of 0.001, which indicates it is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Variables	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
		Approx. Chi-Square	Sig.
Source Credibility	0.774	1056.339	0.000
Perceived Risk	0.703	214.390	0.000
Trust	0.713	269.035	0.000
Behavior Intention	0.738	1329.391	0.000

As shown in Table 4, four factors were extracted from 15 items of source credibility. Q22 and Q29 were discarded from later analyses because their factor loadings are lower than 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1992). The result of factor analysis shows that items in expertness and trustworthiness were re-categorized into Factors 1 and 3. Factors 2 and 4 are consisted with the literature that Factor 2 is defined as homophily and Factor 4 was defined as objectivity. According to the result of factor analysis, thirteen items were used to measure source credibility. The Cronbach's alpha of source credibility is 0.788.

Table 5 demonstrated the result of factor analysis of perceived risk and trust. One factor has been extracted from three items of perceived risk and one factor extracted from three items of trust. As a result, six factors are used for the regression analysis. The Cronbach's alpha of perceived risk and trust are 0.777 and 0.814, which are within the acceptable level of reliability.

Table 4. Results of Factor Analysis of Source Credibility

Factor (Eigen Value)	Items	Mean (Std.)	Factor Loading	α
Factor 1 (4.283)	● I believe the use of first person pronouns (i.e. “I” or “We”) in a review represents the reviewer’s actual experience.	3.63 (.75)	0.703	0.723
	● I believe the longer a reviewer has registered on a review site, the more travel experiences he/she has.	2.93 (.94)	0.684	
	● I believe the reviewers must provide honest reviews of their experience.	3.56 (.77)	0.636	
	● I believe the number of reviews written by the reviewer represents his/her knowledge in evaluating his/her hotel experience.	3.67 (.92)	0.598	
	● I believe the length of content in a review demonstrates the degree of a reviewer’s effort.	3.45 (.93)	0.571	
Factor 2 (1.539) Homophily	● I rely on the reviews written by people who have the same interests as I have.	3.72 (.72)	0.813	0.792
	● I rely on the reviews written by people who travel in the same way that I travel.	3.82 (.69)	0.799	
	● I rely on the reviews written by people who are in my age group.	3.35 (.81)	0.703	
	● I rely on the reviews written by people who have my same gender.	3.12 (.87)	0.651	
Factor 3 (1.392)	● I believe the same situation mentioned by different reviewers verifies the actual service level of the hotel.	4.19 (.53)	0.760	0.453
	● I believe popular review sites or forums such as backpackers.com.tw, TripAdvisor, and Expedia provide me with helpful information.	4.23 (.59)	0.671	
Factor 4 (1.175) Objectivity	● I believe the reviewers’ emotions affect their perception of the service level or quality of the hotel.	4.11 (.60)	0.795	0.501
	● I believe unusual events (e.g. natural disaster or labor strike) can affect the service level or quality of the hotel.	4.05 (.66)	0.781	
Cumulative variance explained (%)			55.93%	

Table 5. Results of Factor Analysis of Perceived Risk and Trust

Factor (Eigen Value)	Items	Mean (Std.)	Factor Loading	α
Factor 1 (2.084) Perceived Risk	● Reading the reviews increases my confidence in hotel choice.	1.90 (.573)	0.842	0.777
	● Reading the reviews helps me reduce the uncertainty of my hotel selection.	1.80 (.520)	0.837	
	● Reading the reviews decreases my concerns about unpleasant experiences that may happen when staying in the hotel I choose.	1.91 (.623)	0.822	
Factor 2 (2.193) Trust	● I believe the hotel must offer the same service level as described by the reviews.	3.51 (.797)	0.872	0.814
	● I believe the reviews demonstrate the true service level or quality of the hotel.	3.68 (.747)	0.857	
	● The reviews are trustworthy for me to choose the hotel.	3.74 (.663)	0.835	
Cumulative variance explained (%)		69.48	73.10	

The result of factor analysis of consumer behavior intention was summarized in the Table 6. Two factors of consumer behavior intention were extracted from nine measurement items. Factor 1 is named as eWOM Involvement and Factor 2 is purchase intention. One item was removed from further analysis due to low factor loading score (Hair et al., 1992). Eight items were used to measure consumer behavior intention. The Cronbach's alpha of purchase intention and eWOM Involvement are 0.735 and 0.951.

Table 6. Results of Factor Analysis of Consumer Behavior Intention

Factor (Eigen Value)	Items	Mean (Std.)	Factor Loading	α
Factor 1 (3.453) eWOM Involvement	● When I believe the reviews are true, I am willing to participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication.	3.39 (.860)	0.951	0.951
	● When I believe the reviews of the hotel are valuable, I am willing to participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication.	3.43 (.868)	0.945	
	● When I believe the reviews of the hotel reduce my potential concerns about the hotel, I will participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication more actively.	3.38 (.867)	0.913	
Factor 2 (1.970) Purchase Intention	● When I want to make a reservation at a hotel, I search information about it online more actively.	4.41 (.530)	0.730	0.735
	● When I believe the hotel offers the same good (bad) service as the reviews described, I am (not) willing to make a reservation.	4.05 (.477)	0.718	
	● When I believe the good (bad) reviews of a hotel are true, I am (not) willing to make a reservation at the hotel.	4.12 (.531)	0.712	
	● When I want to make a reservation at a hotel, I read more reviews about the hotel.	4.36 (.608)	0.677	
	● Previous reviews on the hotel affect my willingness to make a reservation.	4.08 (.528)	0.599	
Cumulative variance explained (%)			60.26	

The eigenvalues of all factors are greater than one and the variances for source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and behavior intentions are 55.93%, 69.48%, 73.10%, and 60.26%, respectively.

4.3. Hypotheses Test

Multiple regression analysis was employed in this study to explore the relationship among source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and behavior intention. The sum of items in each dimension was calculated to a single variable to perform the regression analysis.

The correlation coefficient between variables was showed in Table 7.

4.3.1. Relationship between Source Credibility and Perceived Risk

The regression analysis of the relationship between source credibility and perceived risk is presented in Table 8. The overall multiple regression model was significant ($F=18.448$, $p<0.05$). 22.4% of perceived risk can be explained by the source credibility. Expertness, trustworthiness, and objectivity are significant at the $p=0.000$, $p=0.018$, and $p=0.004$ level and are negatively related with perceived risk. However, homophily was not a significant predictor of perceived risk.

Table 7. Correlations Matrix

		Sum of EX	Sum of TR	Sum of OB	Sum of HO	Sum of PR	Sum of Trust	Sum of PI	Sum of eWOM
Sum of EX	Pearson Correlation	1	.538**	.127*	.410**	-.399**	.530**	.338**	.376**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.040	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of TR	Pearson Correlation	.538**	1	.139*	.380**	-.355**	.455**	.292**	.249**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.024	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of OB	Pearson Correlation	.127*	.139*	1	.170**	-.235**	.127*	.128*	.124*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.024		.006	.000	.040	.038	.045
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of HO	Pearson Correlation	.410**	.380**	.170**	1	-.290**	.493**	.085	.251**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006		.000	.000	.173	.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of PR	Pearson Correlation	-.399**	-.355**	-.235**	-.290**	1	-.458**	-.496**	-.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of Trust	Pearson Correlation	.530**	.455**	.127*	.493**	-.458**	1	.271**	.307**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.040	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of PI	Pearson Correlation	.338**	.292**	.128*	.085	-.496**	.271**	1	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.038	.173	.000	.000		.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Sum of eWOM	Pearson Correlation	.376**	.249**	.124*	.251**	-.272**	.307**	.239**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.045	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8. Regression of Source Credibility and Perceived Risk

Independent Variable	Coefficients		t Value	Hypothesis Test
	Unstandardized	Standardized		
Source Credibility				
Expertness	-.193	-.252	-3.722***	H1 Support
Trustworthiness	-.114	-.159	-2.377**	H2 Support
Objectivity	-.228	-.164	-2.925***	H3 Support
Homophily	-.058	-.098	-1.573	H4 Reject
$R^2(\text{Adjusted } R^2)=.224 (.212)$				

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

4.3.2. Relationship among Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, and Trust

Table 9 presented the regression analysis of the relationship among source credibility, perceived risk, and trust. The overall multiple regression model was significant ($F=39.398$, $p < 0.05$). 43.6% of trust can be explained by the source credibility and perceived risk. Perceived risk ($\beta = -.235$, $t = -4.407$, $p < 0.05$) is very significant at the $p = 0.000$ level and negatively related with trust. Expertness ($\beta = .255$, $t = 4.290$, $p < 0.05$), trustworthiness ($\beta = .134$, $t = 2.325$, $p < 0.05$), and homophily ($\beta = .274$, $t = 5.135$, $p < 0.05$) are significant and positively related with trust, but objectivity ($\beta = -.026$, $t = -.524$, $p > 0.05$) did not appear significantly related to trust.

Table 9. Regression of Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, and Trust

Independent Variable	Coefficients		t Value	Hypothesis Test
	Unstandardized	Standardized		
Source Credibility				
Expertness	.257	.255	4.290***	
Trustworthiness	.127	.134	2.325**	
Objectivity	-.047	-.026	-.524	
Homophily	.213	.274	5.135***	
Perceived Risk	-.311	-.235	-4.407***	H5 Support
$R^2(\text{Adjusted } R^2)=.436 (.425)$				

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

4.3.3. Relationship among Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, Trust, and Purchase Intention

Table 10 presented the regression analysis of the relationship among source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and purchase intention. The overall multiple regression model was significant ($F=17.418$, $p < 0.05$). 29.2% of purchase intention can be explained by the source credibility, perceived risk, and trust. Perceived risk ($\beta = -.428$, $t = -6.878$, $p < 0.05$) is very significant at the $p = 0.000$ level and negatively related with purchase intention. Expertness ($\beta = .167$, $t = 2.424$, $p < 0.05$) and homophily ($\beta = -.157$, $t = -2.498$, $p < 0.05$) are significant, but trustworthiness ($\beta = .100$, $t = 1.525$, $p > 0.05$), objectivity ($\beta = .017$, $t = .316$, $p > 0.05$), and trust ($\beta = .017$, $t = .237$, $p > 0.05$) did not appear to be significantly related to purchase intention.

Table 10. Regression of Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, Trust, and Purchase Intention

Independent Variable	Coefficients		t Value	Hypothesis Test
	Unstandardized	Standardized		
Source Credibility				
Expertness	.167	.167	2.424**	
Trustworthiness	.094	.100	1.525	
Objectivity	.031	.017	.316	
Homophily	-.121	-.157	-2.498**	
Perceived Risk	-.559	-.428	-6.878***	
Trust	.016	.017	.237	H6 Reject
$R^2(\text{Adjusted } R^2)=.292 (.275)$				

*p<.10. **p<.05. ***p<.01.

4.3.4. Relationship among Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, Trust, Purchase Intention, and eWOM Involvement

Table 11 presented the regression analysis of the relationship among source credibility, perceived risk, trust, purchase intention, and eWOM involvement. The overall multiple regression model was significant ($F=7.879$, $p<0.05$). 17.9% of eWOM involvement can be explained by the source credibility, perceived risk, trust, and purchase intention. Expertness ($\beta=.239$, $t=3.165$, $p<0.05$) is significant, but other variables were not found significantly related to eWOM involvement.

Table 11. Regression of Source Credibility, Perceived Risk, Trust, Purchase Intention, and eWOM Involvement

Independent Variable	Coefficients		t Value	Hypothesis Test
	Unstandardized	Standardized		
Source Credibility				
Expertness	.316	.239	3.165***	
Trustworthiness	-.003	-.003	-.037	
Objectivity	.106	.044	.745	
Homophily	.081	.079	1.157	
Perceived Risk	-.102	-.059	-.805	
Trust	.111	.085	1.115	H7 Reject
Purchase Intention	.125	.095	1.399	H8 Reject
$R^2(\text{Adjusted } R^2)=.179 (.156)$				

*p<.10. **p<.05. ***p<.01.

According to the result of hypothesis tested, the outcome was summarized in Table 12.

The result supports the hypothesis that consumers' perceived risk is negatively affected by the source credibility of eWOM. In the four dimensions of source credibility this study tested, expertness, trustworthiness, and objectivity are confirmed to be significant to predict consumers' perceived risk. However, the result differs from previous studies viewing expertness and trustworthiness as two separate dimension of source credibility; one finding from the factor analysis is that the dimensions of expertness and trustworthiness of source credibility in eWOM are crossing borders. It could be explained by the characteristic of anonymous of information senders in the eWOM communication. Because the information receivers do not personally know the information senders, it is

hard to determine the information senders' expertness and trustworthiness. Therefore, if the wording in a review demonstrates the information senders' expert, the information would be considered much more trustworthy.

Surprisingly, although previous study found that information from homophilous sources are more credible and more influential in the consumer's decision making process (Steffes & Burgee, 2009), the result of this study did not reach a significant level to support the hypothesis that homophily between information providers and information receivers negatively correlates to the perceived risk. It might be speculated that because the writers of the reviews are anonymous, the information receivers would rather pay more attention on what the review said instead of who said it. To sum up, H1, H2, and H3 are supported, but H4 is rejected.

The fifth and sixth hypotheses are conducted to discover the relationship between perceived risk, trust, and purchase intention. The result indicated that perceived risk has negative relation with trust and purchase intention. While the reviews decrease information receivers' uncertainty and concerns about their hotel choice, their trust to the information accuracy about the hotel increase. However, the relation between trust and purchase intention was not supported. Even though the information receivers believe the review truly demonstrate the service level of a hotel, they may not be willing to book that

hotel because the service level is differ from the information receivers' needs and expectations.

Regarding to eWOM involvement, findings indicate that both trust and purchase intention are not good predictors to information receivers' eWOM involvement behavior. No matter if information receivers trust or distrust the reviews, it did not significantly influence the degree they involve in eWOM communication. Also, the strength of information receivers' purchase intention is not positive relate to their willingness to participate in eWOM communication. To conclude, H5 is supported, while H6, H7, an H8 are not supported.

Table 12. Summary of Hypotheses Test Result

Research Hypotheses	Outcome
H1: The higher the expertness of eWOM is, the lower degree of the perceived risk the consumer has.	Support
H2: The higher the trustworthiness of eWOM is, the lower degree of the perceived risk consumer has.	Support
H3: The higher the objectivity of eWOM is, the lower degree of perceived risk consumers have.	Support
H4: The homophily between information providers and information receivers negatively correlates to the perceived risk.	Reject
H5: The lower degree of perceived risk the consumer has, the higher consumers' trust is.	Support
H6: The higher consumers' trust is, the higher purchase intention is.	Reject
H7: The higher consumers' trust is, the higher eWOM involvement is.	Reject
H8: The higher consumers' purchase intention is, the higher eWOM involvement is.	Reject

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter first summarizes and discusses the hypotheses tested and the result of this study. The implication and the limitation are presented along with the recommendation for future research.

5.1. Discussion

This study explored the criteria consumers use to judge the factuality of eWOM information and factors that influence consumers' perceived risk. Expertness is critical to judge the factuality of eWOM information. Information from popular review sites or forums (93.1%), verifiable information (96.6%), and rational reviews (91.2%) is more convincing to informed readers.

Through the channel of consumer generated media, such as hotel review sites or travel forums, independent travelers are able to obtain updated information about hotel performance and feedback from former guests. Results of this study indicated that young and well-educated people in Taiwan are willing to plan their own trip and rely on eWOM as their main source to obtain hotel information. The credibility of information source negatively influences consumers' perceived risk, so that the higher the expertness,

trustworthiness, and objectivity of eWOM, the lower degree of perceived risk consumers have.

In addition, perceived risk negatively related with purchase intention. As the reviews reduce consumers' uncertainty about their hotel selection, their willingness to make a reservation increases. The lower degree of perceived risk the consumer has, the higher purchase intention is.

Although the result of this study consists with literature (Kim et al., 2008) that trust has negative relationship with risk, the relationships among trust, purchase intention, and eWOM involvement were rejected. As consumers' purchase decision is a comprehensive process, many factors (such as price, location, and service quality) other than trust to eWOM information can affect their final choice of a hotel. In addition, individual's personal factors, such as age, income, family composition, and culture background influence their eWOM involvement behavior (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Fong & Burton, 2008). Thus, trust to eWOM information about the hotel's performance is still not able to predict consumers' purchase intention and eWOM involvement behavior.

5.2. Implications

The present study contributes to the literature on disclosing the role of perceived risk between source credibility of eWOM and purchase intention. Consumers' perceived risk

toward a hotel selection influences by eWOM information they obtain and then affects their purchase decision. Adding perceived risk as a consideration to study the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention integrates the research of consumer behavior.

Since reading online review becomes a popular way for travelers to obtain the accommodation information before booking a place to stay, it would be an efficient way for hotels to increase their brand awareness and build good reputations, especially for independent hotels. Encouraging customers to write reviews and share their experiences in travel forums or hotel review sites after their stay by offering discounts for next visits might be a good strategy for hotels to attract new customers as well as retain returning guests.

On the other hand, since travelers consider popular hotel review sites and travel forums as an expert and credible information source, the hotel review site and travel forum operators should play the role of monitoring to avoid false postings and helping reviewers to objectively share their experiences. For example, the hotel review site and travel forum operators can improve the design of review layout and segment the comment to different items (such as price, location, cleanness, service quality, etc.) according to consumers' consideration for the hotel choice. Thus, it can help reviewers change the words from emotional complaints to useful information to the readers.

Independent travelers should consider participating in eWOM communication more often. Sharing their lodging experiences is not only a good way to help potential travelers select a hotel but also can accelerate the transfer of information that benefits themselves. After all, the more reviews are posted, the more different opinions will be voiced.

5.3. Limitations

One limitation of the present study is that the participants are mainly from one specific sampling pool. After querying several well-known travel forums, such as LonelyPlanet, Tripadvisor, and Independent Traveler, most of those travel sites refuse surveys to be posted because they consider the invitation to participate in survey a solicitation. Backpackers is the only forum which permitted posting survey link on the forum. Since Backpackers is a travel forum based in Taiwan, the majority of respondents are Taiwanese. Compared with travelers in the western country, the way Taiwanese travel is different from Americans or Europeans. The trend of independent travel is still in the primitive stage and just started to become more popular since last two decades in Taiwan. As a result, interpreting the research findings and generalizing the result to independent travelers' behavior all over the world may not be appropriate.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Source credibility studies have been conducted in the marketing and communication

research for many years. As consumers nowadays rely on the Internet as the information source, the potential influence that eWOM has to consumers' decision making could not be neglected. In recent years, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace has become an important channel for people to share and transfer news and information. The environment of social media differs from other types of eWOM that information providers and receivers may have some link to each other. Thus, consumers' perceived risk toward eWOM information from social media may differ from review sites or travel forums as well. Studies should conduct to discover the determinant that consumers use to judge the source credibility of information in social media and how hoteliers can use it as a channel to efficiently communicate with their potential customers. In addition, research can further explore the influence of other moderators such as consumers' trust inclination and culture differences to consumers' perceived risk and eWOM involvement studies.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

Dear Respondent:

You are invited to participate in a study examining how electronic word-of-mouth, such as information available on customer review sites, (e.g. tripadvisor.com), affects people's perceived risk about their choice of a lodging accommodation and their behavioral intentions.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and it will take about 10 minutes for you to complete this survey. You may skip any questions if you feel uncomfortable answering. Anonymity will be assured, and the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

As a token of my appreciation for your participation, you are encouraged to provide your email at the end of this survey in order to enter the drawing to win a 2 GB Apple iPod shuffle. Again, your email will be used only to inform you when you are selected for the iPod shuffle.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me at meihsin@som.umass.edu or call me at (413) 461-1260.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Mei-Hsin (Katy) Wu

Graduate Student in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Isenberg School of Management
University of Massachusetts Amherst
107 Flint Lab, 90 Campus Center Way

Q1 Gender

- Male
- Female

Q2 Age

- 18 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 65
- Older than 65

Q3 Highest Education

- High school or less
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Ph. D. degree
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q4 Nationality

- Taiwan
- China
- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q5 How many hours a day do you spend on the Internet for leisure-related purposes (to relax or enjoy yourself)?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1 hour - 3 hours
- 4 hours - 5 hours
- More than 5 hours

Q6 Do you plan and book your own travel?

- Yes, for both foreign and domestic travel.
- Yes, for the foreign travel only.
- Yes, for the domestic travel only.
- No, I have a travel agency plan and book my travel.

- No, I only take group tours that I purchase from a tour company or book through a travel agency.
- No, I don't travel.
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q7 Why do you plan and book your own travel?

- Because I can save time.
- Because I can save money.
- Because I can customize my trip based on my needs.
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q8 How many trips did you take during the past 1 year?

- Never
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

Q9 Do you plan to travel in the near future?

- Yes, within 1 month
- Yes, within 3 months
- Yes, within 6 months
- Yes, within 12 months
- Not yet

Q10 What is your main source to get the hotel information? (check all that apply)

- Hotel's website
- Hotel review sites
- Travel forums
- Personal travel blogs
- Brochures or flyers
- Travel agency
- Word-of-mouth
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q11 Have you ever used hotel review sites or travel forums (e.g. TripAdvisor, Expedia, Lonelyplanet, backpackers.com.tw) for your trip planning?

- Yes
- No

Q12 Have you ever posted your own experience on hotel review sites or travel forums

(e.g. TripAdvisor, Expedia, Lonelyplanet, backpackers.com.tw)?

- Yes
- No

Q13 What is your main purpose of browsing hotel review sites or travel forums (check all that apply)?

- To save time
- To save money
- For convenience
- To obtain updated information
- To get useful information
- I don't browse travel forums or hotel review sites
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q14 What is your key factor to be considered when you choose a hotel (check all that apply)?

- Price
- Location
- Amenities
- Service quality
- Ambiance
- Loyalty programs
- Eco-Friendliness
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q15-18 Please check the most appropriate item that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q15 I use previous customers' reviews of the hotel for selecting a hotel for my upcoming trip.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q16 I believe reviewing previous customers' comments on the review website can help me save money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q17 I believe reviewing previous customers' comments on the review website is a good way to get updated information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q18 I believe reviewing previous customers' comments on the review website is an efficient way to get the information I need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19-22 Expertise

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q19 I believe popular review sites or forums such as backpackers.com.tw, TripAdvisor, and Expedia provide me with helpful information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q20 I believe the number of reviews written by the reviewer represents his/her knowledge in evaluating his/her hotel experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q21 I believe the longer a reviewer has registered on a review site, the more travel experiences he/she has.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q22 I rely on the reviews which other readers believe useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23-26 Trustworthiness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q23 I believe the same situation mentioned by different reviewers verifies the actual service level of the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q24 I believe the use of first person pronouns (i.e. "I" or "We") in a review represents the reviewer's actual experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q25 I believe the reviewers must provide honest reviews of their experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q26 I believe the length of content in a review demonstrates the degree of a reviewer's effort.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27-29 Objectivity

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q27 I believe the reviewers' emotions affect their perception of the service level or quality of the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q28 I believe unusual events (e.g. natural disaster or labor strike) can affect the service level or quality of the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q29 I believe the reviews written by normal people contain less bias than the reviews written by the editors of that site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q30-33 Homophily

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Q30 I rely on the reviews written by people who are in my age group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q31 I rely on the reviews written by people who have my same gender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q32 I rely on the reviews written by people who have the same interests as I have.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q33 I rely on the reviews written by people who travel in the same way that I travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34-36 Overall Perceived Risk

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q34 Reading the reviews helps me reduce the uncertainty of my hotel selection.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q35 Reading the reviews decreases my concerns about unpleasant experiences that may happen when staying in the hotel I choose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q36 Reading the reviews increases my confidence in hotel choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q37-39 Trust

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q37 I believe the reviews demonstrate the true service level or quality of the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q38 I believe the hotel must offer the same service level as described by the reviews.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q39 The reviews are trustworthy for me to choose the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q40-42 Purchase Intention

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q40 Previous reviews on the hotel affect my willingness to make a reservation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q41 When I believe the hotel offers the same good (bad) service as the reviews described, I am (not) willing to make a reservation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q42 When I believe the good (bad) reviews of a hotel are true, I am (not) willing to make a reservation at the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q43-45 eWOM Involvement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q43 When I believe the reviews are true, I am willing to participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q44 When I believe the reviews of the hotel are valuable, I am willing to participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q45 When I believe the reviews of the hotel reduce my potential concerns about the hotel, I will participate in electronic word-of-mouth communication more actively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q46-48 Purchase Intention and eWOM Involvement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q46 When I want to make a reservation at a hotel, I search information about it online more actively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q47 When I want to make a reservation at a hotel, I read more reviews about the hotel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q48 When I want to make a reservation at a hotel, I ask more questions about it in the online discussion forum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q49 If you would like to enter into the drawing to win a 2 GB Apple iPod shuffle, please provide your email here.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE (CHINESE VERSION)

親愛的受訪者您好:

這是一份有關網路口碑(例如消費者評價網站 [tripadvisor](#) 上的資訊)對消費者飯店選擇的知覺風險及行為意圖影響的研究,我希望能邀請您參與我的研究,完成這份問卷。

此份問卷是志願性的,將花費您十分鐘左右的時間。您可以跳過任何的問題。問卷採匿名回答,您所提供的資料都將嚴格保密。但我誠摯的希望您能參與,並提供您寶貴的意見。

爲了感謝您的參與,您可以在問卷的最後填上您的 email,您將有機會抽中一個 2 GB 的 Apple iPod shuffle。

如果您對這個研究有任何的疑問,您可以透過 meihsin@som.umass.edu 或(413) 461 1260 與我連繫。

謝謝您的協助。

研究生 巫美忻

Mei-Hsin (Katy) Wu

**Graduate Student in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Isenberg School of Management
University of Massachusetts Amherst
107 Flint Lab, 90 Campus Center Way**

Q1 性別

- 男性
- 女性

Q2 年齡

- 18 - 25 歲
- 26 - 35 歲
- 36 - 45 歲
- 46 - 55 歲
- 56 - 65 歲
- 超過 65 歲

Q3 最高教育程度

- 高中職以下
- 技專院校
- 大學院校
- 碩士
- 博士
- 其他 (請說明) _____

Q4 國籍

- 台灣
- 中國
- 香港
- 新加坡
- 馬來西亞
- 其他國家 (請說明) _____

Q5 您一天花多少小時上網瀏覽休閒相關的資訊(放鬆或娛樂自己)?

- 不到 1 小時
- 1 - 3 小時
- 4 - 5 小時
- 超過 5 小時

Q6 您是否自行規劃及預訂您的旅遊行程?

- 是, 我自行規劃國內及國外的旅行。
- 是, 但我只自行規劃國外的旅行。
- 是, 但我只自行規劃國內的旅行。
- 否, 我請旅行社替我規劃及預定行程。
- 否, 我只透過旅行社購買參加旅行團。

- 否, 我不旅行。
 - 其他 (請說明) _____
- Q7 您自行規劃及預訂旅遊行程的原因是?
- 因為我可以節省時間。
 - 因為我可以節省金錢。
 - 因為我可以根據我的需求量身打造我的旅程。
 - 其他 (請說明) _____
- Q8 過去一年中您旅行多少次?
- 沒有
 - 1-2 次
 - 3-5 次
 - 6-10 次
 - 超過 10 次
- Q9 您在近期內是否有旅行的計畫?
- 是, 在 1 個月內。
 - 是, 在 3 個月內。
 - 是, 在 6 個月內。
 - 是, 在 12 個月內。
 - 否, 我沒有旅行的計畫。
- Q10 您獲取飯店資訊的主要來源為何? (可複選)
- 飯店網站
 - 飯店評價網站
 - 旅遊論壇
 - 旅遊達人部落格
 - 旅遊宣傳手冊或傳單
 - 旅行社
 - 親朋好友推薦
 - 其他 (請說明) _____
- Q11 您是否曾使用飯店評價網站或旅遊論壇(例如 TripAdvisor, Expedia, Lonelyplanet, backpackers.com.tw 等)來規劃您的行程?
- 是
 - 否
- Q12 您是否曾將您的旅行經驗分享在飯店評價網站或旅遊論壇上(例如 TripAdvisor, Expedia, Lonelyplanet, backpackers.com.tw 等)?
- 是

否

Q13 您瀏覽飯店評價網站或旅遊論壇的主要目的為何? (可複選)

- 節省時間
- 節省金錢
- 方便
- 獲得最新的資訊
- 獲得有用的資訊
- 我不瀏覽飯店評價網站或旅遊論壇
- 其他 (請說明) _____

Q14 您在選擇飯店時主要考慮的因素為何? (可複選)

- 價格
- 地點
- 飯店設施
- 服務品質
- 飯店氣氛
- 飯店的常客計畫
- 飯店是否環保
- 其他 (請說明) _____

Q15-18 請勾選最能表達您意見的選項

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q15 我參考以前顧客對飯店的評論來選擇飯店。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q16 我認為瀏覽評價網站上的評論可以幫助我省錢。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q17 我認為瀏覽評價網站上的評論可以得到最新的資訊。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q18 我認為瀏覽評價網站上的評論可以有效率的得到我所需要的資訊。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19-22 專業性

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q19 我相信受歡迎的評價網站或論壇(例如背包客棧, TripAdvisor 及 Expedia)可以提供我有用的資訊。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q20 我相信評論者所發表過的評論數量，可以代表他對選擇飯店經驗的知識。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q21 我相信評論者在旅遊評價網站上註冊的時間越久，表示他的旅遊經驗越豐富。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q22 我信任其他人認為有用的資訊。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23-26 真實性

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q23 我相信從不同的評論者所發表出相同的內容，可以驗證飯店實際的服務情況。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q24 我相信在評論中使用第一人稱(如"我"或"我們")描述，可以代表評論者的實際經驗。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q25 我相信評論者會在評論中誠實的提供他們的經驗。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q26 我相信評論內容的長度可以展現出評論者的用心程度。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27-29 客觀性

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q27 我相信評論者的心情好壞會影響他們對飯店服務品質的判斷。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q28 我相信特殊不尋常的事件(例如天然災害或罷工)會影響飯店的服務表現。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q29 我認爲普通人與評價網站作家寫的內容相比，普通人寫的內容比較不會有偏見。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q30-33 同質性

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q30 我信任與我同年齡層的評論者所發表的評論。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 我信任與我有相同興趣的評論者所發表的評論。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Q34-36 整體知覺風險

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q34 瀏覽飯店評價可以幫助我減少選擇飯店時的不確定性。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q35 瀏覽飯店評價能夠減少我對可能發生的不愉快住宿經驗的擔憂。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q36 瀏覽飯店評價讓我對我所選擇的飯店更有信心。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q37-39 信任

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q37 我相信評價內容可以顯示出飯店實際的服務表現。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q38 我相信飯店能提供與評價中所描述的相同服務。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q39 我選擇飯店而言，評價內容是值得信賴的。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q40-42 購買意圖

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q40 以前顧客的評價會影響我預定該飯店的意願。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q41 當我相信飯店能提供與評價中所描述的一樣好(壞)的服務時，我(不)願意預訂該飯店。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q42 當我相信飯店好(壞)評價是真實的，我(不)願意預訂該飯店。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q43-45 網路口碑參與

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q43 當我相信飯店評價的內容是真實的，我願意參與網路口碑的討論。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q44 當我相信飯店評價的內容是有用的，我願意參與網路口碑的討論。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q45 當我相信飯店評價的內容能減少我對該飯店的擔憂時，我會更積極參與網路口碑的討論。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q46-48 購買意圖與網路口碑參與

	非常不同意	不同意	無意見	同意	非常同意
Q46 當我想預定某家飯店時，我會更積極地在網路上搜尋關於該飯店的資訊。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q47 當我想預定某家飯店時，我會閱覽更多關於該飯店的評價。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q48 當我想預定某家飯店時，我會在網路論壇上提出更多關於該飯店的問題。	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q49 如果您想參加 2 GB Apple iPod shuffle 的抽獎，請在此填上您的 email

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION OF POSTING SURVEY LINK IN BACKPACKERS

Michael Chen 新增至連絡人 2012/4/17
收件者: Katy @ 背包客棧自助旅行論壇 回覆

我們已新增此寄件者至您的安全名單，往後您都可以看見此寄件者寄給您的郵件。

您好

請您張貼於廣告區內

謝謝
rcchen

Katy @ 背包客棧自助旅行論壇 <katyv0109@hotmail.com> 於 2012年4月15日上午8:55 寫道:

下面的資訊是 Katy 通過 背包客棧自助旅行論壇 的聯繫表單發送的。

版主您好，
您好我是Katy，現在在美國UMass讀書，主修飯店旅遊管理。目前正在進行畢業論文的研究，主題是關於網路訊息對自主旅行者的影響(Relationships among Source Credibility of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Perceived Risk, and Consumers' Behavior)。希望能徵得您的同意，讓我將論文問卷連結po在論壇中。謝謝您。

Katy

提交頁: <http://www.backpackers.com.tw/forum/>
IP 位址: 97.80.122.118
會員名稱: 未註冊
會員 ID: 0
Email: katyv0109@hotmail.com

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