Chapter 7
The Relationship Between E–WOM from SNS or Internet and Purchase

F. Javier Rondán-Cataluña
University of Seville, Spain

Jorge Arenas-Gaitán
University of Seville, Spain

Patricio E. Ramírez-Correa
Catholic University of the North, Chile

ABSTRACT
The main proposal of this chapter is to analyze the influence of eWOM and Internet referrals across different product types, including gender as a moderator variable. In addition, some sub-objectives that drive to the main one are the following: 1) to analyze how important are the recommendations for the buying process, in the Internet and in SNS; 2) to study the gender effect on the importance of recommendations for the buying process; and 3) to examine the role of product types in the relationship between eWOM and purchase. Results pointed out that, in general, consumers prefer recommendations collected from the Internet to those picked up from their friends in SNS, but gender moderates the importance of SNS and Internet recommendations. In addition, the percentage of online purchase is significantly higher for men than for women.

INTRODUCTION
Humans are social animals and group influence is a key motivation for many of our individual behaviors, including the purchase behavior. Consumer behavior has been strongly impacted by the Internet and particularly by Web 2.0 in last ten years. In fact, new business models have emerged because of the development of Web 2.0, such as social networks sites (SNS).

The influence of WOM in buying behavior has been widely studied in the academic literature.
Nevertheless, there is a lack of published studies about the relationship between eWOM from SNS or Internet and purchase. This study intends to make a contribution to the understanding of this phenomenon. In order to do this, this research separates eWOM arisen from the Internet and the eWOM arisen from SNS, and it includes gender as a moderator variable.

SNS remain a novel phenomenon, but their impact on consumer behavior is likely to be enormous. The core of an SNS site is a collection of user profiles where registered members can post information that they want to share with others. The majority of users are involved in two types of activities on SNS: 1) creating new content by editing their profiles (e.g., adding pictures, uploading music, writing blogs and messages); 2) consuming content that others create (e.g., looking at pictures, downloading music, reading blogs and messages).

SNSs increase the possibility of finding people with similar interests, enrich the interaction and enhance the speed of communication among consumers. In addition, this phenomenon make easier to find more consumers of a product that provide purchase recommendations online. As associated with this technology new patterns of consumption are emerging, leaving out traditional intermediaries and allowing a more open and direct relationship between people. Today, companies should try to have prosumers. Taking into account that prosumer is an acronym formed by the combination of the words producer and consumer (Toffler, 1980). They are users who are potential purchasers and/or advisers.

Young people are the main users of SNS, this group of individuals in a few years will have an enormous capacity of consumption. In addition, these new generations have a set of specific characteristics that should be deeply analyzed (Nusair, Parsa, & Cobanoglu, 2010). We can conclude the relevance of understanding their behavior as consumers.

Otherwise, literature indicates that because of the special features of the Internet, its suitability for marketing depends on the characteristics of products and services commercialized (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). If we consider the particular context of SNS, does it possible to confirm this statement?

In short, the main proposal of this study is to analyze the influence of eWOM and Internet referrals across different product types, including gender as a moderator variable. In addition, some sub-objectives that drive to the main one are the following: 1) to analyze how important are the recommendations for the buying process, in the Internet and in SNS; 2) to study the gender effect on the importance of recommendations for the buying process; 3) to examine the role of product types in the relationship between eWOM and purchase.

**Background**

WOM is an important research topic. The result of the literature review shows that there are two main research streams in the last decade with regard to the Internet. The first is related to how individuals accept and use this technology. These studies are associated with psychological models of individual behavior, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Venkatesh and Davis, 1996; Venkatesh, 2000) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003). And the second is related to consumer behavior on the Internet, and especially the development of phenomena such as the “word of mouth” in this technological context.

**WOM**

In the marketing literature, word-of-mouth (WOM) is a widely studied topic, but nowadays it is particularly important for its application in Web 2.0 and online social networks (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). “eWOM” can overcome the