

Doctoral Thesis

The influence mechanism of internet
Word-of-Mouth on Consumer Behavior; A
contrastive study between Japan and China on
tablet marketing

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費者行動へ及ぼす影響のメカニズム：日中タブ
レット市場の対照研究)

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Underscoring its important role in business activities, word-of-mouth is generally the preferred method by most consumers for collecting information when they lack it on a particular topic. According to previous research, as it is the least biased according to consumers, word-of-mouth is more believable versus other information sources (Paul et al., 1991; Richins, 1983). Thanks to this perceived advantage, the Internet plays a critical role in today's economic and social life and has become almost indispensable for daily communication. This phenomenon and the increasing number of Internet users have contributed to the growing influence of networked communications, shifting traditional word-of-mouth to a new form called Internet word-of-mouth (eWOM). Visible eWOM, which supports anonymity and asynchronous communication distribution, attracts a wider range of consumers, thereby becoming important as it affects business performance. Practitioners and marketing scholars increasingly pay attention to eWOM. Since 2000, more and more domestic and foreign scholars have been engaged in the study of eWOM marketing, but the applicability of the results require further development.

Online WOM marketing can succeed by following the “spread” rule, namely, guiding the spread of those in favor of the enterprise. Previous research mainly focuses on the motives behind its spread, the factors associated with this, the influences on consumer psychology and behavior, and business performance. As part of a consumer's psychology and behavioral response, WOM is notably associated with social and cultural backgrounds. In the past, few scholars have undertaken the study of cultural differences in the context of WOM in terms of its influence on procurement. No comparison has been made on differences in WOM between two culturally distinct countries such as China and Japan. However, cultural differences may result in different WOM marketing. Thus, there is need for more research on difference in the acceptance and spread of eWOM between China and Japan to more

accurately direct marketing theory and practice in those countries.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Internet development

A Chinese statistical report on the Internet (China Internet Network Information Center, 2016) illustrates that Chinese Internet users reached 688 million users at the end of December 2015. This is the largest number in the world and represents 50.3% of the national population. The number of Internet users and its growth rate in China increased significantly since 2005. Furthermore, enterprises and individual businesses accessing the Internet through fixed and mobile broadband increased 86.3% and 23.9%, respectively. The online market represents 33.8%. At the same time, online sales rose 32.6%. With the development of 4G communication technology, it is obvious that the Internet will play an increasingly important role in commerce.

East Asia has the most Internet users among all countries. Japan has the third highest number of Internet users in this region at 101 million, according to statista.com 2016. At the end of June 2014, Japanese IP addresses had reached 40 million and average connection speed had exceeded 15 megabits per second. From those data, we see that the Internet in Japan is also very important for businesses and in our daily lives.

An investigation of global statistics indicates that India is the second country with the most Internet users at 375 million, covering 28% of its population.

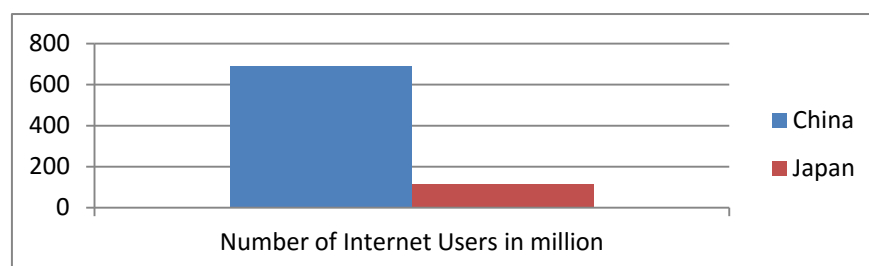


Figure 1-1. Number of internet users in China and Japan

According to recent demographic data, individuals aged 55 years old represent

the largest share of the population using the Internet in Japan, and most of these users are male. In terms of reasons for using the Internet, most Japanese users are searching for information and location services. 73.6 percent of Internet users in Japan watch online video content via different devices.

In 2014, more than 54% of the Japanese users connected to the Internet via their mobile phones. In addition, among those aged 18 to 24, most such young people frequently use smart phone apps in their daily lives. On average, they spend 114 minutes using smart phone apps. The most popular app in Japan is the social network app called LINE. It reached 21.2 million users by the end of October 2013.

Additionally, in 2014, Japanese retailing income from e-business achieved 70.33 billion dollars. This is the strongest e-business market in the world. According to data on industry development, most of the online population (79%) spent money on digital products. Over 50% of Internet consumers compared products when they shopped on the Internet. Books, computer hardware, and apparel are very popular items on the Internet. The most favored website in the e-market in Japan is Rakuten; number two is the U.S. company Amazon.

1.1.2 Internet community and communication

The evolution process of human societies has fully embodied a demand and dependency on interpersonal interactions. In addition, key changes have occurred to such interactions due to the development of the Internet, among which the appearance and rapid growth of a virtual community is a typical one (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996). A virtual community is based on a computer-mediated interaction space among individuals (Lee, Vogel, & Limayem, 2003). Moreover, it is formed through long-term discussions about shared topics among a large number of individuals, in which interpersonal interactions are shaped within the cyberspace, thus sharing emotions among them. The members of the virtual community abide by the same regulations and share a common language, environment, values, and hobbies (Rheingold, 1993). In addition, the virtual community has become a kind of interactive platform in

cyberspace with strong vitality built by computer mediation and exerting an increasingly important effect on human conduct through its speedy development.

With the rapid development of networked technology, community applications have become more and more mature so that the Internet has stepped into an era of community. From well-known community applications such as BBS, Alumni Record, Blog, SNS to Personal Space to the emerging community management topics including the community enterprise, community advertisements, community investments, and community aggregation, academic and entrepreneur circles have been focused on these issues for a long time now. As a significant element of the core competitiveness of a website, the virtual community, supported by Internet technology, has achieved high-speed development, becoming a new emerging environment for human life while providing a wide platform for the spread of eWOM.

Moreover, with the popularity of the Internet and the increase in the number of “netizens,” the influence of the spreading of this network has grown stronger. Additionally, the application of new technology has blurred the concepts of “online” and “offline” such that consumers in this era are fond of continually surfing the Internet, depending significantly on the network in both their work and personal lives. Moreover, the growth in various communication platforms such as review sites, social websites, and micro-blogs and blogs has enabled people to record and share their own experiences and thoughts online anytime and anywhere and to obtain certain self-satisfaction through the echoes of these and the replies from other users. They can acquire relevant spiritual or material rewards through their remarks, thereby arousing their enthusiasm to continue to share their thoughts so that the spread of this information will be faster and faster.

At the same time, final consumer decisions are increasingly influenced by eWOM such that individual consumer information will be processed and arranged through eWOM, which then plays a role as an important indicator for consumers faced with choices and other actions. A global survey on advertising credibility by Nielson in 2014 showed that 91% of Chinese online consumers trust products recommended by others to different degrees; and 78% of consumers investigating

information trust the suggestions shared by others on the Internet, regardless whether the suggestions are from someone familiar or a stranger. The rapid growth of the Web 2.0 has vigorously pushed forward the spread of online reviews on the Internet as these online reviews can effectively express consumers' thoughts and criticisms of products and services. They have widely appeared on the Internet including on retailer websites, online discussion forums, blogs, social networking sites, and online review platforms (Trusov et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2010).

The importance of eWOM has already become evident in that the Internet is now a significant channel in spreading communication media, specifically, as a tool of two-way communication. Moreover, it has been dubbed the fifth media after broadcast TV, advertising, newspapers, and cable (Lv Yilin, 2008). Its development can be seen as one of the science and technology revolutions that have exerted a great effect on humans following the invention of the computer. Since its earliest military application to its current evolution, both academic and e-commerce applications have come together on the shared Internet platform. Thus, with the integration of communication, telecommunications, and new media, people today depend more and more on the Internet in their daily lives. The spreading of eWOM is not limited by time or location, so information can spread at an amazing speed, dwarfing other media channels. Moreover, such information is simultaneously spread to numerous audiences as "rolling snowballs" at the speed of "one to a million"; this speed and its influence is incomparable to traditional media. As a result, eWOM has become a research theme studied by many experts and scholars (Cheung et al., 2009; Park et al., 2007; Zhang & Watts, 2008).

With the approaching era of Web 2.0, consumers have more opportunities to share their shopping experiences while, at the same time, enjoying the convenience of online shopping. They can express their concerns and realize self-value by sharing their consumption experiences, which are often dubbed as eWOM. Because such information is based on consumers' insights about the consumption process and the use of products, it holds more affinity and credibility than advertisements from the sellers and can even replace and surpass the function of relatives or friends'

suggestions in the traditional WOM environment.

A survey based on 58 countries showed that: 68% of consumers trust remarks on the Internet; and more than 40% of the online shoppers in China pay attention to remarks made by other consumers each time before they buy a product. Such product comments can even surpass advice from friends and experts, and have become an important information source in decision-making in the online shopping process. Additionally, a survey based on British and U.S. consumers showed that goods that attained highly positive comments increase by 55% the researcher's willingness to buy them (Econsultancy, 2010). This influence can be directly reflected in the market: a large number of studies have shown that eWOM represented by online reviews can determine the destiny of products and even companies to some degree (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

The large influence of online reviews and the intense competition among shopping websites, has forced companies to recognize that their online reviews can be a valuable information source. At the same time, the growth in the number of online reviews and the variety of venues and review forms, though providing convenience for consumers and creating value for websites and relevant stakeholders, have led to the following challenges:

(1) Excessive information has caused the phenomenon of eWOM overload. High cognitive costs are spent when consumers are searching for information they really need, and the anxiety of consumers in the search process also has increased.

(2) As networked information, such as comments on products exerts direct influence on a brand and the sales of a company, some sellers and companies have begun to control the comments to increase their sales and improve profits. According to scholars studying Amazon.com, about 10.3% of the comments are controlled by the sellers (Hu N et al., 2012). Such manipulative conduct not only lowers consumer satisfaction with shopping but also becomes a serious attack on the image of the shopping website and its brands.

(3) The online review systems of shopping websites largely copy the most famous international e-commerce websites. These sites follow the same process of

revealing and collecting comments and thus lack any adjustment mechanism to address different countries' domestic cultures and consumers' behaviors. Therefore, the effectiveness and rationality of this process design may be questionable. Apart from cultural adjustments, the effectiveness of the review system is often influenced by factors in the system and consumer recognition.

The above challenges have influenced the shopping experiences of consumers as well as raised their suspicions about eWOM and platform operators who are the basis of the online reviews. As objective evidence confirming this trend, in a survey aimed at Chinese consumers by Nielson, the results indicate that although online consumers' comments are still considered credible information, however, incredibility is increasing compared to information from other forms (Nielson, 2014).

1.2. Research gaps and significance of research

1.2.1 Theoretical significance

According to WOM studies, today, WOM is the main factor affecting consumer psychology and behavior. However, other studies have generally neglected WOM, or have focused solely on the analysis of positive and negative WOM, with few studies addressing how multimedia WOM affects consumer behavior, or the transmission mechanism of WOM. Multimedia WOM has become the new form that represents eWOM. In addition, with the popularity of the Internet, it has gradually become the key resource for consumer information. By combining knowledge in the fields of communication, marketing, sociology, and psychology, along with previous study results, a communication effect mechanism model for eWOM can be designed that is conducive to the research and development of theories for WOM marketing and Internet marketing. Although some studies confirm that cross-cultural WOM has a different influence on different consumers, analysis on the specific influencing factors is still needed. The characteristics of the sources of WOM, the information shared,

and the receivers of the information, all have an impact on the WOM communication effect according to communication process theory. However, studies around the aforementioned three variables are still in the early stages and lack a comprehensive discussion, especially regarding eWOM in different countries.

Existing studies agree that culture is a key factor affecting consumers, meaning, that due to different cultures, consumers respond to the same information differently. Currently, studies on eWOM are mainly designed for one country, and there are few transnational studies. Moreover, previous study results may not be applicable in different cultural environments based on individual unique consumption concepts and attitudes toward the Internet. By studying consumer characteristics in different countries, we can verify and improve the theories of previous WOM studies.

One aspect of eWOM is that once accessed consumers may copy the information! They may paste this information on other websites or virtual communities, and may tell their friends. Hence, eWOM communication is an online and offline interaction process; especially, multimedia WOM, which frequently attracts consumer interest, making the drive to communicate stronger. The study of the re-communication drive of eWOM consumers can improve theories around WOM. Online WOM is both a resource and a result, which can be communicated online and offline.

1.2.2 Practical significance

The unique advantage of the Internet as a medium brings out new characteristics of eWOM compared to traditional WOM such as: tangibility, easily copied, timelessness, wide influence. Discussing the effect of eWOM on behaviors of consumers in different countries clearly differentiates the study of eWOM from traditional WOM. This then enables a better understanding of the WOM information enjoyed by consumers in different countries and how eWOM is an attraction among users.

From such analyses, network platforms and virtual communities can strengthen

the management of eWOM to provide a more favorable network platform for consumers. They can thereby better communicate WOM information and enhance its influence. One of the characteristics of the new economy on the basis of networked technology is the interaction between enterprises and their clients that enables one-to-one communications, thus bringing them closer together so enterprises can provide consumers with better service. Thus, the value of the Internet is brought to the forefront among enterprises; however, network marketing activities are still weak and remain largely focused on Internet advertising. By discussing in detail the effect of eWOM on consumer behaviors, enterprises can be motivated to fully supervise and monitor eWOM of their products and business and respond accordingly. Online WOM is regarded as central for an enterprise brand and its goodwill. Critical problems cited through WOM should be identified to carry out effective management.

For the effective management of eWOM, it is important to solve a problem at its source. This means that enterprises will be required to do the work necessary to achieve a minimum of negative WOM caused by the enterprises themselves. Additionally, for negative WOM caused by consumers, enterprises will need to communicate comprehensive information through integrated mediums for consumers' product involvement and information distribution to weaken any negative WOM. In sum, discussing the effect of eWOM and related variables on consumers is useful for enterprises wanting to strengthen their business and consumer communications.

Online WOM is also not limited to the Internet. Consumers not only publish their experiences and emotions online but also spread information received from the Internet offline. Thus, enterprises should realize that although the Internet is just one channel for consumers to obtain information, it can also capture information obtained by consumers from other media. Therefore, a study on the communications effect of eWOM can enable enterprises to include the management of eWOM in its overall framework of marketing communications management.

1.3 Study objective and originality

The study objective of this thesis, focused on electronic retail, is to investigate the mechanism of business interaction and mutual effect between clients and service enterprises in an online e-commerce platform environment. Specifically, from the viewpoint of clients, the study reveals how eWOM influences purchasing behaviors of consumers and identifies the factors influencing eWOM; from the viewpoint of enterprises, the study reveals how enterprises influence client attitudes and behaviors by controlling eWOM to improve sales. Although there are studies that have explored the effect of eWOM on consumers and the effect of culture on consumers, respectively, these have neglected to focus on cross-cultural issues and synergies between them.

This study will address the gaps of current studies:

(1) Existing study conclusions around eWOM and consumer behaviors are not perfect. At present, many studies emphasize the positive effect of eWOM on consumer behaviors, but there are still many different views around the influencing mechanism; there is, in particular, a lack of study on the influencing mechanisms in different cultures; partly the result of different product types and customer groups. This study uses personal consumer electronics as its subject: specifically, the tablet computer. In this way, the study will enable comparability in the assessment of eWOM in different countries and the potential differences in the customers in the two countries. In addition, this study also discusses the overall trend of WOM communication among customers and compares its impact on both countries.

(2) Insufficient research on the impact of Internet multi-media WOM marketing. This study believes that the content of online reviews is not the only standard that influences customers' choices. The manner and methods of information delivery and presentation also shape customers' opinions. This study explores the means of giving an opinion about a personal electronic product and their diversity and influence on different customers in a diversified information context.

(3) Insufficient research on consumer trust. Albeit key to successful marketing,

consumer trust has not been sufficiently studied for its role in online marketing. Consumer trust consists of different dimensions. Some recognition at various sub-levels of a product helps establish a consumer's trust in the product's online reputation. This study analyzes the relationship between eWOM marketing and consumer trust at each sub-level. It further explores the two dimensions of trust, namely, competence-based trust and integrity-based trust, and their effects on purchase intention and WOM communication.

Based on the above, this research tries to answer the following research questions:

1. How does eWOM influence purchase intention and disseminate intention and what is the influence mechanism?
2. What kind of WOM can stimulate consumer's purchase intention?
3. Are there any differences in the responses to the above questions in different countries?

1.4 Research methods and technical approach

1.4.1 Research methods

Given the extensive use of the Internet, WOM advertising is becoming increasingly inevitable for all enterprises, whether or not they are engaged in network marketing. By drawing theories from subjects such as marketing and communications, this study investigates what kind of planned consumer behaviors a product's online reputation could lead to and any specific influencing factors. The research methods can be summarized as follows: 1) establishing the research theme and methods based on understanding the WOM phenomena online and reading related articles; 2) proposing research models and hypotheses based on the theories and practical research of WOM communication; 3) collecting data through surveys and questionnaires; and 4) analyzing and drawing conclusions and suggestions according to the analytical results.

The abundant research on conventional WOM can be used as a reference in the further study of eWOM communications. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to the distinct nature of the Internet and its impact on WOM communications. In most cases, conventional WOM communication is confined to a limited area geographically, whereas eWOM communication is able to transcend the limit of social networks (mainly in the form of one-on-one or group communications). Conventional WOM is intangible and relies on the individual experience and impressions of consumers. The information might be distorted or blurred during the course of transmission. Internet WOM is materialized through various content and is able to convey much more diversified information vividly, increasing its appeal to consumers. As a result, research on eWOM should take into account the intrinsic properties of this media. The quantitative and visual clues employed in eWOM communication are key factors in shaping a consumer's psychology and behavior around a purchase decision. Based on the extent of their exposure to the Internet, consumers will form varied opinions towards products in terms of the above-mentioned aspects.

This study will enrich research on eWOM communication through its analysis of what impact negative WOM could have on consumer behavior based on grounded theories and any specific influencing factors. Interviews with representative consumers indicate that intention to purchase and recommend are the leading consumer behaviors. Research targeted at these two intentions make up the most representative studies of the information spread via WOM. Examining the application of grounded theories, such research shows that communicators, the content of WOM communications, the recipients, and their mutual relations are all factors that influence consumers' purchase and recommendation intentions. Trust is a conduit for eWOM to influence consumer behavior. This study establishes a theoretical model on the basis of relevant papers and research findings applied from grounded theories. This study collects data online and verifies the relations among variables based on data analysis via SPSS15.0, smart PLS, and fsQCA. It further investigates a difference in the impact of WOM communication on consumer intentions between Chinese and Japanese consumers.

The conclusion of the analysis not only supplements studies of eWOM communication but also provides guidance for enterprises to conduct eWOM marketing. Taking into account all influencing factors and their reciprocal relations, the study concludes with management advice to enterprises on potential measures to take to combat negative eWOM communication.

1.4.2 Technical approach

The study investigates the influence of WOM communication on consumer behaviors and intentions and in the process employs theories of management, marketing, communications, psychology, and other related disciplines. Subject to the content and purpose of the study, the objective is to combine theories with practical analysis. Theoretical research is mainly captured based on a literature review and summary of past studies on conventional and eWOM communication, eWOM communication and consumer behaviors, etc., to lay the foundation for practical analysis. Practical analysis is mainly addressed by applying grounded theory and verification to the data collected.

Literature review: This study has compiled Chinese and foreign research related to negative eWOM communication (conventional and eWOM communication, influencing factors, and consumer behavior or intentions, etc.). The studies on eWOM communication have been chosen on the basis of conventional WOM communication, capturing studies on defining concepts and variable selection. In addition, we have collected and read classic and cutting-edge papers in management, marketing, communication, psychology, and other disciplines, to enable a broader understanding and a theoretical framework for the context of this study. On the basis of the literature review and in line with cases in China, the study sets up a conceptual model on the influence of eWOM communication on consumer behavior and intentions. The design of the research variables in the model mainly refers to relevant research findings, with individual correction for representativeness.

Qualitative empirical research: Through the literature review, we know that there is scant literature on cross-culture eWOM. At the same time, we have studied grounded theories to identify the features of consumers in the cultural environments in the two countries. Grounded theories mainly include the following two questions: 1. What are the behavioral intentions of consumers once they experience negative eWOM? 2. What causes such behavioral intentions? The model concept is established on the basis of the literature review and the study of grounded theories. Additionally, during the questionnaire design stage, the questionnaire is revised through small-scale interviews to gain advice on its content and form. With the fuzzy data analysis results, questionnaire answers are converted to Boolean logic symbols to study pattern matching. We obtain macro-conclusions for the qualitative research with this method. Therefore, the qualitative empirical research includes the grounded theory, small-scale interviews, and fuzzy qualitative analysis.

Quantitative empirical research: The quantitative empirical research mainly consists of questionnaire research, information collection, and data processing, as well as the verification of all the hypotheses of the model using statistical analysis tools. The preliminary questionnaire is designed on the basis of the literature review and the questionnaire is pretested through the small-scale interviews for revision. The formal questionnaire is revised again on the basis of the pretest results analysis. Finally, the first hand data are obtained through online surveys. With corresponding data analyzed by statistical software, the hypotheses are confirmed. The methodology used in this quantitative research includes descriptive statistics analysis, factor analysis, regression analysis, PLS-SEM analysis, and fsQCA.

1.5 Chapter structure

This research declared research purpose and research question in chapter 1. Next, chapter 2 analyzed the research background and relevant theories. Research gap are found in this chapters. Based on chapter 2, chapter 3 putted forward hypotheses.

Chapter 4 explained research method and how to collect data. In chapter 5, an illustration about measurement standard is given. This chapter also showed data test results. For chapter 6, results are discussed in detail. Finally, chapter 7 concluded findings and implications.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Definitions of Word-of-Mouth and internet Word-of-Mouth

2.1.1 Traditional Word-of-Mouth

Arndt (1967) characterized Word of Mouth (WOM) as oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product, organization or service. The traditional WOM doesn't mean the product information issued through media from the merchants. It could be either positive or negative. WOM is a formalized marketing trial, from the perspective of marketing, designed to stimulate consumers to discuss brand, product and service. Westbrook (1987) defined WOM as: Informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers. Westbrook's definition expands the scope of WOM communication medium, but merely emphasizing "informal communications" while verbal communication being ignored. Buttle (1998) argued that WOM can be mediated by electronic means. He also noted that "informal communications" might not be all inclusive; arguing the fact that more and more companies had adopted viral marketing practices which blurred the boundary between commercial messages and WOM. According to Helm and Schlei (1998), WOM is used to describe: Various verbal communications between groups such as the product provider, independent experts, family and friends and the actual or potential consumer. The novelty of their definition manifests itself in the examination of WOM from the angle of groups, highlighting the group behavior feature of WOM communication.

Emanuel Rosen (2000) stated WOM pertains to person-to-person communications and reviews about a brand, a given product, service or company in any given time. Rosen's view enriched the WOM content and regarded WOM

communication as a whole, which can be both single and continuous.

2.1.2 Internet Word-of-Mouth

With the prevalence of Internet and progress of information technology, some consumers post and forward various reviews concerning enterprises via the Internet. Virtual interaction between people is rapidly spreading (Goldsmith,2006)as the traditional WOM is transformed into the new form of Internet WOM, the scope and depth of which have also increased. Consumers can transmit and receive Internet WOM information via blog, BBS, product forum, newsgroups, instant messaging, Email, etc. The disagreements concerning the name of computer-mediated WOM in previous literature are shown as below: e.g., Internet Word of Mouth, online Word of Mouth, Word of Mouse, Electronic Word of Mouth, Virtual Word of Mouth, etc. But in general, given that the research of Internet WOM is in still in the preliminary stage and relevant papers are still few in quantity, the definition remains to be unified. Above names can be found in various research essays, all of which will be referred to in this research. In the research of causes and effects of WOM in health care industry, Gelb and Johnson (1995) indicated that information communication via Internet also stays within the range of WOM. This is the early cognition of Internet WOM when the Internet has just spread worldwide.

Stauss (1997, 2000) explored the business opportunities and threats triggered by increased consumer online communication, and this is the earliest research on Internet WOM from the perspective of marketing and management. Stauss (1997) argued that with the exponential growth of the Internet, consumers are able to globally share their perceived service quality, which also constitutes a form of WOM communication. Hanson (2000) defined computer-mediated Internet WOM communication as online WOM or electronic WOM, meaning Internet-mediated WOM communication via email, user groups, online forum, portal discussion areas, etc. He also believed that WOM communication on the Internet creates faster and wider interpersonal WOM

communication effect. Chatterjee (2001) characterized Internet WOM as information exchange between consumers through platforms such as bulletin board or person-to-person chat, etc.

Henning Thureau et al. (2004) pointed out that the emergence of Internet enables previous real and potential customers to browse the webpage to collect product information provided by other consumers, and endows them the opportunity to share their own experience, opinion and relevant knowledge about a specific subject, which produces electronic WOM. Internet WOM can be disseminated through online forum, news group, BBS, etc. It can be seen that previous research on the definition of WOM is similar to traditional WOM in connotation, both pertaining to enterprise operation-related information disseminated among consumers, which will impact other consumers' purchase decisions. The emphasis of Internet WOM refers to the Internet medium as well as its new features arising from the advantage of information spreading via the Internet. Owing to the features of Internet medium, the mode of transmission & manifestation and impact speed & scope of Internet WOM distinguish themselves distinctly from those of traditional WOM.

To sum up, this research will define Internet WOM as: Information regarding organization, brand, product and service released and spread by Internet users through various synchronous or asynchronous Internet communication channels. It is manifested in the form of texts, images, symbols, videos or any of their combination. Internet WOM and traditional WOM are similar in content, but differ significantly in the mode of manifestation.

2.1.3 Platform for online Word-of-Mouth communication

Internet's openness and connectivity enable consumers not only to exchange product information, share experience and knowledge, recommend products and express dissatisfaction, but to search reviews concerning their interested products and enterprises. The platform for online WOM communication also has a variety of forms,

such as E-mail, BBS, brands' official website and comprehensive online shopping website, etc. With the development and popularization of Web2.0 technology, blog, microblog, twitter, facebook and other socialized media also grow into hot WOM communication channels. With the growing number of online WOM communication participants, the form of online WOM is becoming complicated, which can realize different functions. According to Kiecker and Cowles (2001), online WOM is classified into four types:

(1) Spontaneous WOM: Customers use their own medium and technology to build a communication platform to release information. For starters of WOM, it merely takes little cost to effect the purpose of wide spread.

(2) Quasi-spontaneous WOM: Customers use pre-built online platform to release WOM. Typically, for instance, are the customer reviews published on the shopping websites such as Taobao and Jingdong. Although the spread platforms of WOM are limited, customer can still publish their reviews freely. Quasi-spontaneous WOM has strong pertinence, exerting major influence on customer purchase decisions.

(3) Independent or Third Party-sponsored WOM: Online WOM provided by specific interest groups such as evaluation report on specific goods provided by web portals. This kind of WOM may involve product's commercial publicity or promotion, therefore its influence tends to rely on the publisher's professional degree as well as customers' trust to the publisher.

(4) Corporate sponsored WOM: Specialized platform for issuance of WOM funded by the enterprise. The enterprise may use the method of payment to encourage customers to release information, which can produce false reviews with advertising nature.

Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) divided online WOM from two dimensions, i.e. information interaction and information exchange. Based on the dimension of information interaction, online WOM platforms with synchronous interactivity include instant messaging, chat rooms and newsgroup; while online WOM platforms with asynchronous interactivity contain blogs, virtual community, review sites of

shopping websites and email. Based on the dimension of information exchange, many-to-many mode of online WOM platforms include newsgroups, blogs and virtual community; one-to-many model of online WOM platforms include chat rooms and review sites of shopping websites; and one-to-one mode of online WOM platforms contain instant messaging and email. Particularly, online review is an important form of online WOM and its release channels are mainly the official websites for products or third party online shopping sites. Online reviews, compared with other forms of WOM, can be longer preserved and displayed to those with specific needs and preferences; besides, they are readily accessible. Hence online reviews become one of the decisive factors for customers to purchase the goods (Dellarocas C, 2003). Park.D.H (2007) indicated that online review has a dual role: it provides oriented information as information source, and serves as a recommendation for future consumers.

2.1.4 New features of eWOM

While changing the way of human's entertainment, education and work, the Internet has had great effect on the consumers' behavior. And the spreading behavior of consumers' word of mouth is no exception. It is obviously that the development of Internet has brought the revolution of word of mouth. With the emerging of the network technology, the spreading of word of mouth information was no longer limited with the face-to-face contact among people. The consumers can not only look for the various information of the WOM, but also express their own comments, suggestions and experiences through the different network channels such as the instant messaging service and emails. Therefore, the interaction and communication of EWOM are conducted in the open public environment compared with the traditional word of mouth. And both the scope and influence of the spreading cannot be matched by the traditional ones. In other words, the influence factors in the EWOM spreading will be more diverse so that the effectiveness will grow greater.

Dellarocas (2003) put forward that: due to the distinctive characteristic of network, the word of mouth spreading has been attached with new meaning. And because of this, there are some new features showed in the EWOM.

First, the subjectivization and de-massified of EWOM communications. Internet as a new means of communication, each individual node can share the information that flows on the network; and this break the dominance in traditional transmission structure. The platform internet transmission provided can allow the users to express their opinions, even to establish their own web pages or specific topic discussion area, and this means any individual can become a center or individual on the Internet, namely, subjectivization. Such special form of information “decentralization” and “decentralized” lowers the guard degree of Internet information and frees the individual speech without restraint. The advantage is less susceptible to authority or ideology, but its disadvantage is difficult to control and irresponsible remarks more likely to occur. With the development of network these features will be more obvious and it is impossible to appear all-round control center to monitor and select the spread of information.

Second, the anonymity of EWOM subject. Consumer send EWOM information through the network channels and they can send the information to their friends and relatives through instant messaging, e-mail and so on, but more often through all kinds of public network platform such as blog, electronic bulletin boards and virtual communities to send EWOM information. Since such open network platform does not require the users to verify the real name registration or friends, the sender and recipient names generally use undercover ways to communication in this kind of network communication, which means that users can post anonymously to broadcast their opinions to all the net users. The anonymity of EWOM subject can protect the privacy of the sender so that it removes the fear or pressure to obtain the freedom of expression in some degree. The communication content in this condition is more than traditional conversation and the discussion topic is broader than interpersonal communication. The anonymity provides information publishers with more freedom. Gelb & Sundaram (2002) summed up the effects of anonymity as: first, the sender is

more willing to publish negative information; second, the sender is more likely to provide sincere advices and recommendations and not fraud or mislead others; third, both tow sides don't know each other and this eliminate the interest relation and the concern about human relationship so that the sender can freely speak which help to spread more real information and improve the credibility of EWOM. But on the other hand the anonymity of online EWOM also increases the possibility that the sender spreads false information. For consumers, the enterprises can make online reviews pretending consumers to propagate their product quality for enhancing their reputation. And it is possible to send negative EWOM to defame the competitor reputation, and this also reduces the credibility of EWOM information (Smith et al., 2005). Therefore, the influences of anonymity are two sides. Zhang Xiaofei and Dong Dahai (2009) also agreed that because of the anonymity, it is uncertain whether EWOM has the non-commercial property of traditional WOM.

Third, the diversity of the communication channels and forms. Due to the network of EWOM object transmission, EWOM present the diversity in media channel and EWOM forms.

The diversity of media channels. Different from the traditional WOD from ——face to face communication, IWOD realize information exchange by the network media such as MSN, QQ, e-mail, message board, WeChat, Fetion, blogs and online web. The diversity of communication media endows IWOD with synchronism and asynchronism. Consumers can use instant communication tools such as QQ or MSN to achieve the similar synchronous communication with the traditional WOD. And they also can use blogs, online communities, BBS and so on to achieve asynchronous communication, which exchange participants don't have to be synchronous in a communication context, with more flexible distribution of their time. The spread of EWOM has been beyond the limit of time and space and the communication has become more and more convenient. The other hand, EWOM is not subject to the external environment and the communicators and recipients' situation such as their mood, facial expression and behavior.

The diversity of EWOM forms. Most WOM takes the word of mouth oral

language form between the consumers and this kind of mouth information is perishable. But EWOM is essentially a multimedia digital information forms, mainly in the form of sound, images, text, music, video and so on. Digital and multimedia forms of EWOM is not only easy to save but also more vivid, which is good for the consumers multiply and precisely understanding the content of WOM and expand the influence of WOM to a great extent. In addition, the content of written text usually is more logical than word of mouth conversations in face to face (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). And EWOM information can be reused or permanently saved through storage or backup, which provides a great convenience for academic researchers and the measurement of enterprises' WOM. And this also makes the EWOM become the hot issue of marketing.

Forth, the width of EWOM spread. Network is a transmission means without limit and every individual node can share the information that flows on the network. The flow of information is not limited by the geographic boundaries and the speed is very rapid. And it is difficult to avoid spreading for this flow of information, even with regulatory restrictions. Fischer (1984) believed that this technology features can help people to find similar people and form group beyond geographical limit. Most of the interaction formed in this group shows the “weak ties” relation (Granovetter, 1973). “The strength of weak ties” theory (Granovetter, 1973) support that the weak ties formed in virtual network have better effect in information spread compared with the strong ties formed by traditional interpersonal communication.

Meanwhile, due to the digital EWOM contents and asynchronous spread of EWOM based on internet culture, the EWOM contents can be stored for long periods and both sides can send or receive the exchange information without time limit. With the popularization and development of internet and technology, the time cost and opportunity cost for the consumers to spread EWOM has become lower and lower. Because it is easy to copy, reference or share EWOM information, EWOM almost spread to infinite wide range of time and space in “weak ties” virtual network with the speed of spread of virus. Therefore, the EWOM influence expands to unprecedented scale.

Fifth, the interactivity of EWOM. One of the biggest differences between the network and traditional spreading modes is the network's personal interaction and internet interaction, which will influence the participators in the spreading process more accurately effectively and break the absolute boundary between the spreader and receiver originally. Through the network, the users will not only interact with the computer platform, but also communicate with all the wired host computers and other users, which will achieve the functions such as file transfer, changing the limitation in the one-way traditional spreading. This function of interactivity can not only transfer the mastership used in the spreading, but also make the individualization of information possible. In addition, with the interaction of the audio effects, the network users will communicate with the computers directly with their sense and recognition, adding the effect of use. The two-way interaction has changed the distribution of power in the mastership of spreading that it can enable the original information receivers to counter, balance or reverse the unbalanced relationship of spreading modes again with an identity of the publishers. As the science has developed continuously and the loading capacity of the network has become higher and higher, the barriers in the technology of convenience and diversity in the interactivity has been gradually weakened. As a result, a large number of users can conduct their work at the different network ports simultaneously. And the function of interactivity that the network users can make use of will be more evident in the condition that there is no barrier in the time and across the space or in the acquisition of information. (Gualtieri, 1998)

2.2. History of WOM research

As the first person who undertook the academic research on word of mouth, Asch (1956) published an academic paper in relation to the same with Brooks (1957). Over the next decade, no academic works were born. In the decades following the period, although the study of word of mouth continues in marketing, but it is only

taken as a variable of a new product diffusion model in most studies. In the 1990s, there was significant increase of paper concerning word of mouth research. They, however, all focused on client relationship management and customer loyalty. At that time, the knowledge of the essence of word of mouth still conformed to opinions of scholars in the 1950s and 1960s. In recent years, with the development of Internet technology, there is new propagation mode for word of mouth and increasing attention from academic circle on word of mouth on the network. In research field of word of mouth marketing, there is an emerging research trend focusing on word of mouth in virtual community against an Internet environment. Stauss (1997, 2000) discusses about commercial opportunity and threat resulting from boundary less dialogue and communication among consumers through the Internet. This is the earliest research into online word of mouth. Seen from the arrangement of previous literature, the year of 2000 is the watershed in marketing research on online word of mouth. Before that year, scholars scarcely paid attention to online word of mouth; but then relevant articles increase year after year.

Using word of mouth/online word of mouth/ virtual word of mouth/ electronic word of mouth as key words, the author has searched the title of article in ScienceDirect database, and the number of related articles after 2006 is respectively 5602, 2685, 1037 and 1788. In addition, research results from 2006 to date increase year after year. The following figure shows the number of articles concerning word of mouth and electronic word of mouth of each year after 2006. It shows that research on online word of mouth marketing is a hot field.

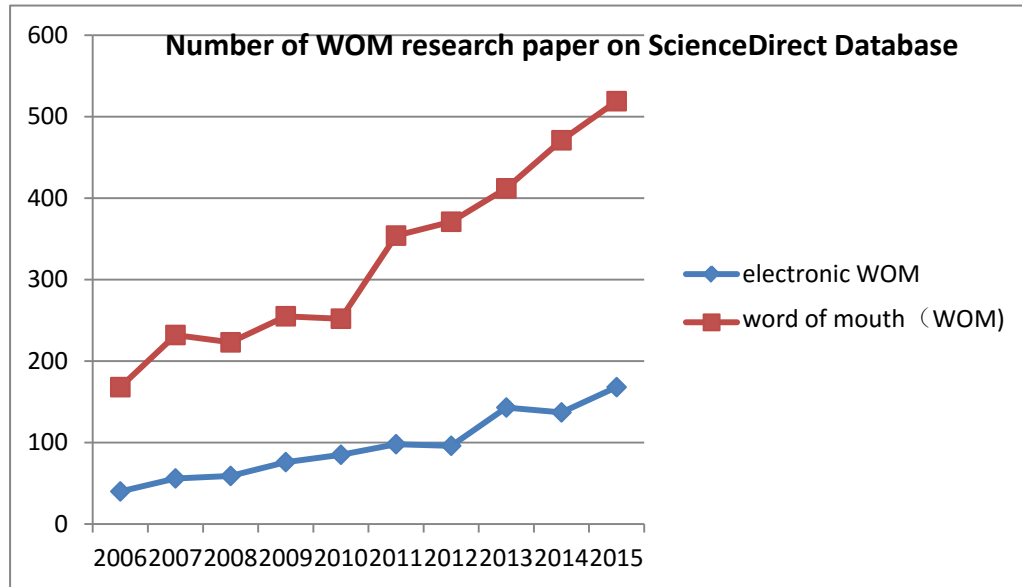


Figure 2-1. Number of WOM research paper on ScienceDirect Database

In relevant research, works done on individual difference of network consumer, measurement of online word of mouth and virtual community account for a certain proportion. Enterprise manager shall continuously supervise the online word of mouth of his company and service (Stauss, 1997). Navid Godes and Dina Mayzlin (2004) research into the measurement of word of mouth communication through thousands of online news groups of different topics. Zhuang Hejun (2007), whose research object is online word of mouth of shopping website against an Internet environment, believes that credit evaluation resulting from uncertainty of online information and anonymity of information dissemination should be the key point in word of mouth research. Wang Tao and Li Yanping (2007), whose research object is participant in virtual community, discuss about how characteristics of recommender in virtual community such as relationship intensity and perceived expertise influence the effect of recommendation. Neveen F, Awad and Arik Ragowsky (2008) pay attention to cultural influence of gender on relationships between online word of mouth and e-commerce trust. In current research on online word of mouth marketing, some focus on the influence upon purchasing behavior and will of consumer. Smith (2002) researches into the influencing mechanism of recommend information by ordinary consumer in virtual community upon consumer's decision. Komiak (2002) researches the influencing mechanism of characteristic cognition of consumer concerning

automatic recommend information in e-commerce (internalization and familiarity) upon his usage intention and purchasing decision. Yang Xuecheng and Qian Minghui (2006) set forth the connotation of online word of mouth and describe its categories, and furthermore analyze the influence of online word of mouth upon consumer's decision. Chen Beilei (2008) discussed the cause and influencing factors for passing messages through virtual platform as a common consumer of virtual community, and influencing mechanisms of the new information formal for purchase decisions of consumers under the new era.

According to the research results of traditional word of mouth and Internet word of mouth, the studies for the spread of word of mouth are more than that of Internet word of mouth, which mainly refer to the research results of traditional word of mouth. In the past, the study of Internet word of mouth referred to theoretical knowledge of Management, Marketing, Sociology, Psychology and Communication. Comparative studies designed for Internet word of mouth by the scholars are few, let alone the study for cross-cultural word of mouth. Therefore, further researches on the studies for the spread of cross-cultural Internet word of mouth, influencing mechanism on consumer behavior and marketing strategy of enterprise word of mouth are needed.

2.3 Theoretical basis for WOM research

2.3.1 Elaboration likelihood model

Put forward by Psychologist Petty and Cacioppo (1981), Elaboration Likelihood Model ("ELM" for short) is the most influential theoretical model in consumer information processing. The variance concerning personal motivation and ability determines the different approaches to information processing. According to Elaboration Likelihood Theory, (Central route) and (Peripheral route) are the two extremes of information processing methods.

Central route holds that a person with high motivation and ability tends to pay

more attention to product-related information and make careful considerations to assess and understand the product; pertinent and persuasive information will lead to better product belief and positive brand attitude.

Peripheral route states that a person with relatively weak motivation and ability tends to lack faith in the product, therefore direct persuasion will not be likely to produce brand attitude and purchase intention. Hence, attitude is mainly decided by emotional clues in the context, rather than pertaining to the thought about information argument. The basic principle of ELM model is: Different persuasion methods rely on the possibility of elaborate processing for disseminated information. When the possibility of elaborate processing is high, central route of persuasion will be particularly effective; but when the possibility is low, peripheral route will work.

ELM has two important contextual variables in Figure 2-2, which may affect the choice of route. One is involvement: whether the receiver self has the motive of information processing; the factor impacting the receiver motivation lies in the degree of correlation between information and receiver, namely, the degree of involvement of the information receiver. The other is self-efficacy: whether the receiver owns the ability to process information, the influencing factor of which lies in the degree of information acquisition by the receiver. When the involvement degree and self-efficacy shows high, the mode of central route is inclined to be employed for information processing, that is, to make decision after careful consideration according to the information content. Therefore when the involvement degree and self-efficacy shows high, the change of cognition leads to the change of belief and attitude, which ultimately results in behavior change. And when the involvement degree and self-efficacy shows low, the information processing is inclined to be conducted based on the peripheral attributes of the product or service. Therefore after the person with low involvement degree and self-efficacy has changed the belief, then the behavior is changed, and finally comes the change of attitude.

This research involves consumers' processing of Internet WOM information, and the content conforms to the theoretical framework of ELM. The influencing process of Internet WOM on consumers' behavior intention is exactly the process for

consumers to receive and process WOM information. Referring to ELM, confronted with Internet WOM, consumers' product involvement, will affect their behavior intentions. But ELM only takes receiver factors into consideration, while ignoring the factors concerning information sender.

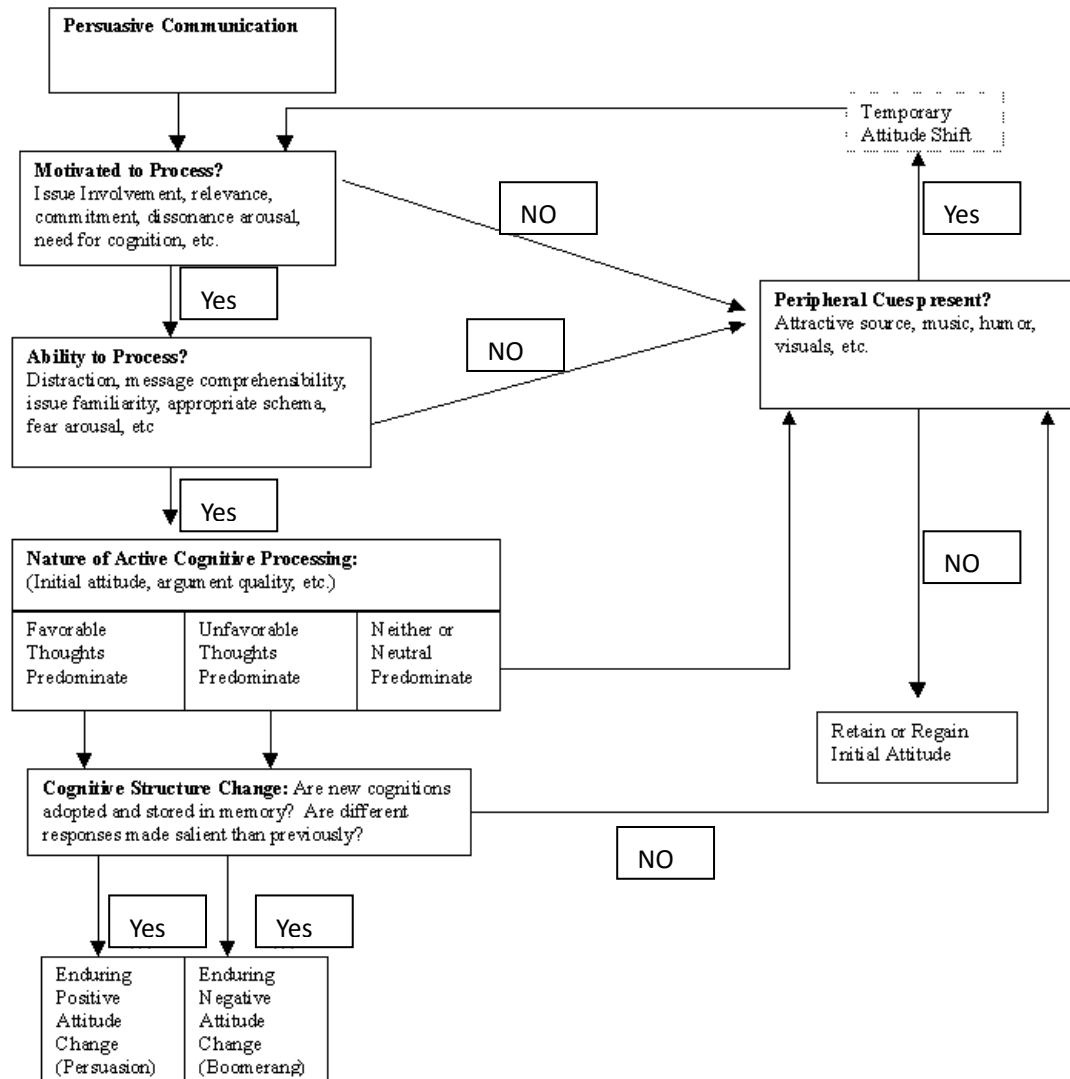


Figure 2-2. ELM model

Source: Petty, R.E., Kasmer, J., Haugtvedt, C. & Cacioppo, J. (1987)

2.3.2 Attribution theory

Deriving from relevant research of social psychology, attribution theory has now evolved into a theory frequently applied to psychological science and even humanistic and social science research, management science research and educational science research with over forty years' development and improvement. Its relevant research results have laid a solid foundation for mankind's social behavior of learning about and understanding themselves.

Heider is the first social psychologist that has explored attribution theory. As the founding father of this theory, he has investigated what motivates people to attribute and how they attribute. In 1958, Heider first proposed the concept of attribution theory in his work "Interpersonal Relation Psychology" and defined himself as the attributer who is able to deduce stable psychological traits in a general sense following observation clues (Heider, F., 1958). The general definition of attribution by social psychologist is: Attribution refers to the process of deducing and explaining the reasons hidden behind the extrinsic behaviors by conducting behavioral analysis on other people or the attributer himself/herself. (David Myers, 2006). As a significant component of social cognition, attribution has always been a much-debated issue in the field of social psychological research. In summary, attribution is the psychological process of explaining and deducing reasons.

Attribution research in its early stage mainly revolves around the prerequisite and process of attribution with its focus on exploring the influential factors behind people's behavior of attributing certain events or behaviors to certain reasons as well as identifying attribution approaches. Heider mainly investigates attribution process in his research on attribution. He only develops interest in observed motivations of a behavior rather than the true motivations. He believes that a critical part of attribution process is confirming that a certain behavior is caused by individuals or external environment.

He also holds that personal determinative factors of one's behavior are personality, character, motivation, emotion, attitude, state of mind, efforts and ability,

etc. While one major environmental determinative factor of one's behavior is situational factor, e.g. difficulty of a task, rewards and punishment of an event and luck, etc. (Heider, F., 1958). Jones and Davis developed Heider's theory in 1965 with an equal emphasis on research of attribution process, expecting to establish a theory that systematically explains the relevant deduction process taking place when the perceiver extrapolates the intention of the actor according to their movement. Kelley's covariance principle and attribution cube model display the internal processing on the result of a certain behavior, which in other words is a detailed process of attribution, by exploring how people make causal judgment according to the consistency, coherency and difference information (Kelley, 1973).

Bernard Weiner (1974) proposed an attribution model, arguing that individual's explanation on success and failure more or less falls into four categories: (1) personal ability; (2) invested efforts; (3) task difficulty; (4) luck. Among these factors, ability and efforts describe the "intrinsic reasons" behind one's characteristics; difficulty and luck, as extrinsic factors, indicate the "extrinsic reasons". Weiner further categorizes the four explanations: Ability and task difficulty are stable factors while invested efforts and luck are unstable factors. Weiner believes that the intrinsic & extrinsic factors and stability as two measuring dimensions of attribution are independent of each other, which impact the creation and quality of achievement motivation respectively.

The stability dimension may greatly influence the expectation or prediction of success in similar situations in the future. If one attributes the success of a certain task to stable factors, i.e. he/she possesses a strong capability or the task is easy for him to complete, he/she will certainly expect to succeed in situations alike in the future. If one attributes the success of a certain task to unstable factors that may vary with the environment, i.e. he/she works hard or is lucky enough, obviously he/she will not be certain of another success in the future. Conversely, if the failure of a certain task is attributed to the stable factors that are hard to change, i.e. one's poor ability or impossible tasks, the person will naturally predict failures for following tasks; if the failure of a certain task is attributed to the unstable factors, i.e. bad luck or insufficient

investment of efforts, the person will be more positive of future success.

Targeted at the effect of Internet word of mouth on consumer behaviors, the study employs attribution theory to analyze the influence of consumers' attribution on their behavioral intentions.

2.3.3 Perceived quality theory

Consumers' opinions on products are based on their perception on the products and service. Grönroos (1988) defines perceived quality as "consumers' comparison on their expected service and the actual service performance they have received". If consumers perceive that the service they have received is higher than their expectation, they would identify it as sound and satisfactory, otherwise as poor and unsatisfactory. Perceived quality originates from the asymmetry of information held by providers and consumers. Generally speaking, providers hold relatively complete information while information held by consumers is incomplete. This is the very reason why enterprises have a better knowledge of their products and service than customers, resulting in the customers' disadvantaged position in the game played between the two parties. If customers don't have complete information of the products, they will perceive the risks engendered by uncertainty and their behaviors will be influenced correspondingly.

To reduce the perception risk created by information asymmetry, customers will assess product or service quality through certain "information clues". Olson & Jacoby (1972) group the clues that reflect product quality into internal clues and external clues. Internal clues are characteristics that are directly related with products, for example, raw materials, specifications, appearance and processes; external clues are not physical components of products and are barely related with product performance, for example, product price, brand and seller reputation, etc. Since it is easier for general customers to judge from external clues than internal clues, customers base their judgment on external clues more when they are provided with insufficient

information (Brucks M.et.al, 2000).

In many cases, customers regard price as a critical criterion for product quality measurement and would believe that a product with a higher price among its competitors would certainly have a superior quality. When choosing specific products, sometimes customers would prefer those with higher price to lower the risk of encountering low-quality products. Dodds.et.al (1991) discovered that when price is the sole clue, consumers would judge the product quality by its price; nevertheless, when other information clues are available, price's influence on quality assessment will be weakened. When customers are relatively familiar with the product and service (when they are in command of much knowledge), they will conduct quality judgment by leveraging other external clues. Thus it reduces the influence of price. Therefore the study has paid extra attention to eliminating disturbing effect of product prices in its design.

2.3.4 Search cost theory

Information economics argue that information contains value. By obtaining information, people are able to judge more reasonably and thus making the right choice and enhancing economic efficiency consequently. Based on the hypothesis of rational behavior, people will seek maximized benefits with limited resources. (Cao, 2011) In the initial stage of information acquisition, the marginal benefits of information searching efforts show an increasing tendency with diminishing resources; when cognitive effectiveness peaks with continuously loaded information, the marginal benefits demonstrate a declining tendency afterwards. When the marginal benefits of information searching efforts equate with those of information acquisition, the searching efforts will pause as it is a critical point where the maximum benefits are achieved.

If Search Cost Theory is applied to online shopping, customers not only need to collect basic product information online, but also other useful information to aid

purchasing decision-making. In this process, the search cost of information should not be ignored. The search cost mentioned in economics refers to that brought about by price dispersion in a free market. The search cost incurred by online shopping has three sources: (1) The information obtained by customers and the information owned by the website are asymmetric, prompting customers to collect more information to eliminate the asymmetry; (2) Different customers may perceive different benefits on the same kind of product and they will adapt their searching process according to their own perceived benefits, giving rise to cost differences; (3) Too much information available online brings uncertainty to customers. The process of risk aversion requires time and efforts to handle and condense information, which are search cost. Generally speaking, search cost can strike a functional equation with time cost, price cost and risk cost and their relation is demonstrated as follows:

$$Cs = f(T, P, R) = Ct + Cp + Cr$$

In the function, Cs represents the search cost, Ct represents price cost; Cr represents risk cost. There is a functional equation between Ct , Cp and Cr and t , the search time. As time is a scarce resource, neither being able to be accumulated or saved yet influencing customers' perceived benefits, it is a major influential factor on information search cost. (Zhang Yahui, 2008) suggests that minimizing search time and shopping risk are effective ways to minimize search cost. Establishing quickly-responsive, highly-efficient and customized websites which provide detailed product profiles to attract customers is one way to provide customers with switching cost and thus attracting a stable customer pool. However, some scholars argue that online shopping channels provide convenience for consumers to search for product information, which reduces the search cost substantially and raise their possibility of shifting to other products and enterprises (Cao Lei, 2011).

2.4 Research about impacts of online Word-of-Mouth on consumer purchasing behaviors

The research about impacts of online word of mouth on consumer purchasing behaviors is mainly divided into 3 aspects:

Firstly, to examine path analysis and intermediate variable between online word of mouth and consumer purchasing behaviors; mainly to employ TAM model and Trust Theory to analyze the impacts of factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived mobility, perceived trust and search initiative. Huang Zhuoling (2002) studies the influence mechanism of online comments on purchase decisions and finds that the consumers' perceived popularity of online comments has a prominent impact on purchase intention while their perceived informativity plays a regulative role here. Bi Jidong (2009) establishes a theoretical model of impacts of word of mouth on consumer acceptance in 3 dimensions, namely consumer individual characteristic dimension, online word of mouth perception dimension and source dimension. He discovers that usefulness of word of mouth can greatly affect consumers' purchase intention and meanwhile, that consumers' perceived usefulness of online comments plays a core role in information acceptance.

Secondly, to investigate into influence factors and regulation factors of online word of mouth in consumers' purchase decisions mainly from three aspects: information source, information and information receiver. Park.et.al (2008) study the impacts of online comments on consumers' attitude and discover that consumers with higher purchase motivation are likely to spend more time closely reading others' comments so as to make optimal product options while those with lower purchase motivation would spend less time reading online comments so that their product options are suboptimum. Awad and Ragowsky (2008) discover that online word of mouth affects consumers' trust so as to affect online purchase intention, yet gender plays a regulative role and influences the intensity of this relation. Thirdly, to research impacts of online word of mouth on consumers' macroscopic purchase behaviors,

generally analyzing and verifying on corporate sales performance level. Discussion of word of mouth influence factors focuses on reliability of those who have made the comments, reputation of website, amount and quality of word of mouth, consistency of word-of-mouth information as well as content and emotional respects of word-of-mouth information, mainly employing dual-factor theory, enlightening theory and systematic theory for analysis.

At present, studies on the third aspect in the foresaid content are still limited. On the one side, product type has a significant influence on the effects of online word of mouth. Some research findings only aim at particular products or only apply under certain circumstances, and therefore new researches are required. On the other side, it is difficult to measure consumers' purchasing behaviors and corporate performance. Especially for service products, there's no uniform standard of performance assessment and the study is confined by data collecting. This research is to explore that issue directed at online word of mouth attributes and combined with service product features.

2.4.1 Information acceptance model

Sussman et.al (2003) put forward the Information Acceptance Model in reference to TAM model. The model based on network environment analyzes how people are affected when accepting information. Then Sussman et.al (2003) in reference to ELM model, incorporate two regulative variables, expertise and involvement degree of the receiver into the model (see Figure 2-2). As regards application, Cheung (2008) takes openrice.com catering review website as the research object and employs TAM model to analyze the impacts of online word of mouth on consumers' information acceptance. His findings suggest that whether consumers accept information depends on their perception of online word of mouth usefulness.

Informatics usually selects indices such as timeliness, creditability, adequacy of amount and objectivity as standards for measuring information quality. Bailey's (1983)

study shows that information quality affects consumers' purchase intention by affecting consumers' satisfaction. The higher information quality is, the easier it is to make consumers satisfied and thus consumers' purchase intention would be enhanced.

In Petty's (1983) research, he uses creditability and objectivity of information to measure whether information is strong or weak. His study also proves that strong information is more effective than weak information in affecting consumers' purchase decisions. Timeliness means that the online word of mouth is released lately and continuously updated and can provide a reference for consumers. Different scholars raised different opinions on timeliness of online word of mouth. Findings of NanHu et.al (2008) suggest that effectiveness of online word of mouth diminishes as time passes by, but some findings demonstrate that effectiveness of online comments has little influence on consumers' purchase decisions. (Zheng Xiaoping, 2008) Since those who have made the comments are anonymous, people generally won't accept or trust this online word-of-mouth information without adequate information. Therefore as regards amount of information, Fiske (1980) observes that consumers are more inclined to trust the information with high informativity.

Since online word-of-mouth information is anonymous to some extent, it is hard to judge whether it is creditable. It is also hard to judge whether the website is in an equitable and objective stance and is aimed at helping others, and won't release false information to cheat others. Reputation is one of the most important and strategic intangible assets of a corporate and it can be used to judge the reliability of a corporate. In the research of Park et.al (2009), websites with high credibility are replaced by those with good reputation and it is displayed that websites with good reputation are exactly websites with high credibility and their online word-of-mouth effectiveness is more than that of little known websites.

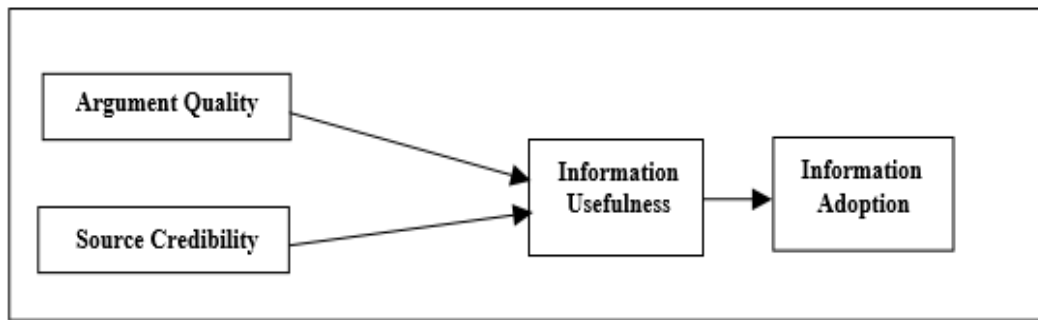


Figure 1. Model of Information Adoption

Figure 2-3. Information Acceptance Model

Source: Sussman & Siegal (2003)

2.4.2 Other Word-of-Mouth communication theory

Gilly.et.al.(1998) believe that 3 factors influence purchase decisions of the receiver: (1)Characteristics of information source, such as expertise of source, opinion leadership; (2) homophily of information source and receiver; (3)attributes of the information receiver, such as expertise of seeker! WOM preference and so on. Research model established by Gilly.et.al. (1998) is shown in Figure2-4

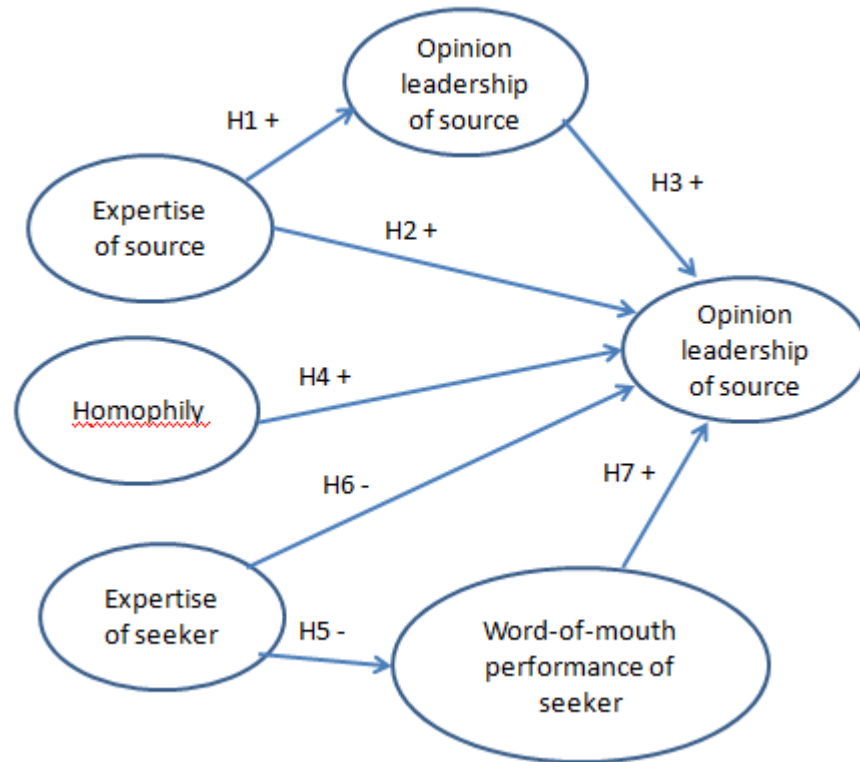


Figure 2-4. Research model of Gilly.et.al

Source: Gilly.et.al. (1998)

Gilly.et.al. (1998) think that the higher expertise the source has, the more dependent consumers will be on the word-of-mouth information. Moreover, if the source is an opinion leader, then it has far greater influence on consumers than non-opinion leader. Gilly.et.al. further point out that the more similarities there are between the information source and the consumer in demographics (age!!Gender and education background), values, preferences and lifestyle, the more impacts there will be on the consumer's purchase decisions. The stronger the seeker's word-of-mouth preference is, the more impacts word of mouth will have on his or her purchase decision. But the stronger the seeker's expertise is, the less impacts his or her word-of-mouth preference and word of mouth will have on his or her purchase decision.

Bansal and Voyer (2000) basing on the research model of Gilly.et.al.(1998), look into impacts of word of mouth on consumers' purchase decisions. Research model of Bansal and Voyer (2000) divides factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions

into two categories, interpersonal source and non-interpersonal source. The research model is shown as Figure 2-4. Interpersonal source factors in the model include: Seeking initiative and relation intensity: Non-interpersonal source factors include: Receiver's expertise, communicator's expertise and receiver's perceived risks.

Study of Bansal and Voyer (2000) proves the opinions of Gilly et al. (1998), as Figure 2-5, which means that receiver's expertise, communicator's expertise and relation intensity between the two have impacts on the receiver's purchase decisions. In reference to studies of former scholars (Arndt, 1967; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996) of perceived risks in word-of-mouth communication, Bansal and Voyer (2000) add perceived risk variable to the research model. The findings prove that the receiver's expertise negatively affects his or her perceived risks, while the receiver's perceived risks positively affect his or her seeking initiative of word of mouth.

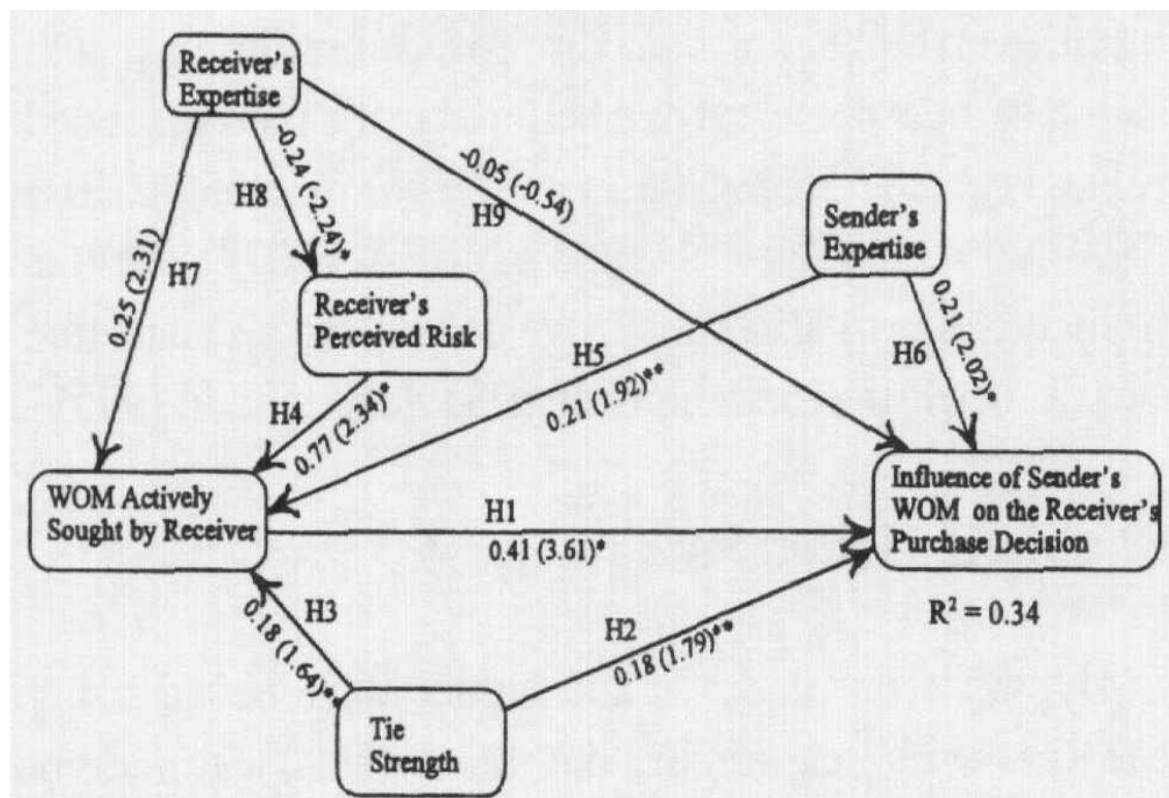


Figure 2-5.explanation of Research Model by Bansal and Voyer

Scouce: Bansal and Voyer (2000)

2.4.3 Studies of culture

In the research methods of cultural clusters, the most widely quoted is the famous Dutch scholar Hofstede. (Aycan et al 2000; Brouthers, Brouthers, 2001; Cheng, Stokdale, 2003). When he put forward the importance and function of national culture, many researchers would quote his five dimensional models in explaining the multi-culture. Sondergaard (1994) made a survey about the quotation frequency of the works written by Hofstede in which he found that the works were cited for up to 1,036 times in the magazines collected by Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) from the 1980s to the year of 1993. This can prove that more and more scholars have become concerned about the country and national culture since Hofstede studied the national culture.

Adler and Bartholomew (1992) made a statistics of the 28,707 essays published on the 74 famous international magazines from October, 1985 to September, 1990 that he found there were 70% of the researches related to organizational behavior management containing the concept of national culture. And in the researches containing national culture, 93.8% would describe the differences between the organizational behavior and the market management due to the differences of the national culture. The four dimensions are respectively: Masculism / Feminism, Uncertainty avoidance, individualism / collectivism and Power Distance. Later, Hofstede added the Confucianism short-term orientation and long-term orientation as the fifth dimension. (Hofstede, Bond, 1988). His initiative research was a questionnaire from more than 116,000 samples from the branches of 72 countries selected by IBM. And the reason that he has been popular lies that he provides strict research design, systematic data collection and theoretical development. And Hofstede and Bond (1988) conducted an investigation on the 100 students (male and female accounts half) from 22 countries with 40 items, 20 countries therein were overlapped with his former researches.

There are two types of national cultural dimensions. The first type is studied similar with Hofstede's four dimensions. Aycan etc .(2000), referencing Hofstede's

dimensional model, put forward four social cultural dimensions: Paternalism, Power Distance, Fatalism and Loyalty Towards Community. These are similar with Hofstede's four dimensions, as well as matching them. They have proved that the degree of Power Distance and Loyalty Towards Community are higher in Romania, Russia, Turkey, China, Pakistan and India.

2.5 Summary of literature review

Through those theories, it is easy to find that one aspect, internet word of mouth needs to be researched urgently from industry view, especial for multimedia word of mouth. It will influence marketing strategy and planning. Another aspect, relevant researches are quite insufficient. This insufficiency was embodied in several points as below: 1. Expression methods are explored seldom in internet WOM. Previous researches focus on contents rather than expression. 2. Trust researches seem mature enough. its relevant achievements never be used in word of mouth researches. So, there are some intervals need to be made up. 3. Scholars have a long term argument about trust and usefulness. Some of scholars think trust is the prime factor for information acceptance. Others think usefulness is the fatal factor for this behavior. This fierce controversy needs a further research on their relationship. 4. Culture differences should be considered also in this topic. 5. Almost all scholars concentrate on impact factor researches. They ignore that factors should be arranged properly, when they effect. That means purchase behavior as systems' result, the totality of every factor' s influence are not equal to the whole effect.

Chapter 3. Hypothesis

3.1 Analysis of factors affecting word-of-mouth acceptance of consumers

In general, recent works on the influencing factors of WOM acceptance mainly focus on four factors: information sender, information receivers, relationship between information sender and information receiver, and information characteristics. Table 1 describes the segmenting factors of the four elements.

Table. 3-1. WOM's Principal influence factors

Factors' type	Influence factors	Literatures	Research method
sender	expertise	Gilly et al (1998), Bansal & Voyer (2000), Cheung et al (2008)	Survey
	credibility	Sussman & Siegal (2003), Cheung et al (2008), Zhang & Watts (2008)	Survey Experiment
	experience	Casielles et al (2013)	Survey
	express strength	Casielles et al (2013)	Survey
receiver	Profession	Gilly et al (1998), Bansal & Voyer (2000), Sussman & Siegal (2003),	Survey
	Risk	Casielles et al (2013) , Bansal & Voyer (2000)	Survey
	Actively sought	Bansal & Voyer (2000)	Survey
	Involvement	Park & Lee (2009), Lee et al (2008), Park et al (2007), Cheung et al (2007)	Experiment
	purpose	Zhang et al (2010)	Experiment
	Disposition of trust	Sussman & Siegal (2003), Kanawattanachai & Yoo (2002)	Qualitative ,survey
	experience	Casielles et al (2013)	Survey
Relationship between sender and receiver	intensity	Bansal & Voyer (2000), Casielles et al (2013), Steffes & Burgee (2009)	Survey
	Trust	Cheung & Thadani (2012), Kanawattanachai & Yoo (2002), Eisingerich (2014), Sussman & Siegal (2003), Ridings (2002), Lee & Turban (2001)	Survey Experiment
	homophily	Gilly et al (1998), Kawakami et al (2013)	Survey
	satisfaction	Brown et al (2005)	Survey
Information traits	Products category	Jiang (2015)	Data mining
	timeliness	Jiang (2015), Cheung et al (2008), Cheung et al (2007)	Survey, data mining

	quality	Jiang (2015), Cheung et al (2007), Cheung et al (2008), Lee et al (2008),Zhang & Watts (2008)	Survey, Data mining, Experiment
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The table.3-1 shows that the specific factors affecting word-of-mouth acceptance mainly consist of four aspects, namely sender, receiver, the relationship between sender and receiver and information characteristic. Therein most of the research papers focus on receivers. There are relatively fewer research papers on senders and information characteristics. Although trust has been verified by many scholars, these researches haven't pointed out that which aspect of trust has influenced the word-of-mouth spreading.

3.2 Disposition to trust

It is the inherent propensity of an individual to trust or distrust others. Rather than varying for specific entities, an individual's disposition to trust is a stable characteristic of their personality, which controls how they think the trustworthiness of individuals. McKnight et al (2002) defines disposition to trust as the extent to which a person displays a tendency to be willing to depend on others across a broad spectrum of situations and persons.

What can affect trust? Where is people's trust from? There was great controversy on this issue among scholars. One perspective is that trust comes from family and genetic connection (Durkheim, 2000), because an easier and reliable trust can be established among the group with close connections of family and genetic. However, Cultural historians and anthropologists believe that trust or social capital is a historical heritage which results from long-term cultural accumulation (Dore, 1987). For example, religion has influence on trust, as people are fear of the punishment after death, who thus would keep faith. However, economists think that trust maybe in relation to culture. But most importantly, trust is always the results of rational choice by people.

Concluding by the previous researches, influence factors for trust are from the following three points: Individual, object and environment. Trust itself features the individual psychological states, hence individual difference can affect the degree of trust. For example, if individual trust tendency differs, even in the same circumstances different trust shall be shown. The message sent by trust object and the degree of familiarity between the individual and it may affect trust level of individual, specifically featuring the condition of trust differences of different object at the same time for the same individual. The factor of trust environment is defined as each scenario and instrument which will affect or restrict each behavior of people, making the behavior of individual or others show homoplasy. However, this homoplasy varies with each individual. Various individual also show different level of trust for the same object in the same environment at the same time.

So, we have made the following hypothesis and Figure 3-1:

H1: disposition to trust can impact on ability trust significantly.

H2: disposition to trust can impact on integrity trust significantly.

H3: disposition to trust can impact on perceived usefulness significantly

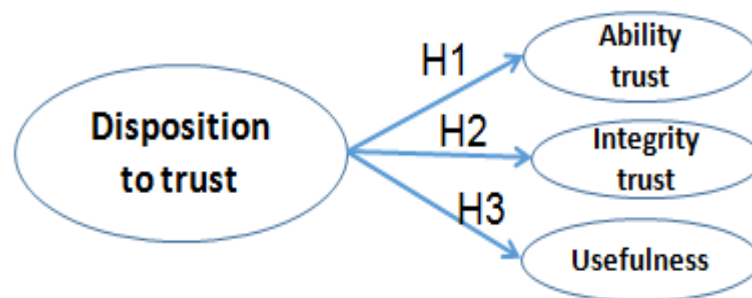


Figure 3-1. Research hypotheses of disposition trust

3.3 Involvement research

Theory of involvement was first proposed by American scholars Sherif and Cantril in 1947 for the research on social judgment theory. Briefly speaking, social judgment theory believes that if the degree of self-involvement to an event by someone is deeper, it is more unlikely to accept an opposite opinion, which is named

as inverse effects; On the contrary, for the same opinion, people with deep self-involvement will not only accept, but also support the opinion, which is called common effects. In the past scholars used individual psychological cognition states to define involvement, considering the degree of involvement as an internal psychological states which is affected by individual, products, scenario or other special stimulation, feeling the importance and relevance of the object on oneself, thus generating various degree of attention paid to the object.

When Krugman (1965) studied the involvement of advertising media, the involvement was defined as: During the comparison of the persuading simulation and individual life (the relevant number) or the specific contrast of the contents of simulation and individual life in consciousness by tester, the words spoke out each minute. Mitchell (1981) believes that the degree of involvement is a variable for psychological states, a degree of concern or drive stimulated by special scenario or stimulation to individual. Engel and Blackwell (1986) support that involvement is defined as the degree of relevance of response decision to individual, which begins from the angle of self-conscious and value for individual basic purposes. The degree of involvement is defined by Zaichkowsky (1985) as the degree of correlation for individual cognition between the products and his inner needs, interests and value. Celsi and Olson (1988) believe that the degree of involvement shall be the degree of feeling of the relevance of the object and oneself in specific time under specific situation. Andrews.et.al. (1990) considers involvement as the state of individual inner disturbance, with natures like strength, directivity and continuity, which determine how individual would respond to the external simulation. Strength shows the degree of individual involvement or motivation level; Directivity represents the kinetogenic object or issue caused by individual; and continuity means the duration of involvement.

The degree of involvement has come into the area of consumer behavior research since 1960s. Since Krugman (1965) proposed low involvement for consumer behavior, the degree of involvement has played an increasingly more important role in explaining consumer behavior, moreover, the degree of involvement for consumers

has been considered as major reference factor for executing marketing strategies (Cohen, 1983).

There are two major kinds of classification for involvement in the past research: The first kind of classification: the involvement of advertisement, products and purchase decision. The second kind of classification: the involvement of scenario, persistence and response (Houston and Rothchild (1978). Product involvement is defined as the degree of attention paid to products by consumers, or the individual subjective meaning given to products by individual consumer, based on individual perception, other than product (Lastovieka, 1979). Consumer product involvement stands for the degree of familiarity to products or the initiative of collecting data with internet by consumers, and also represents the importance of products to consumers. The degree of product involvement can affect consumers in the ability to utilize internet, judgment of the quality of information and one's behavioral intention.

In conclusion, we have made the following three hypotheses and Figure 3-2.

H4: Involvement can impact on ability trust significantly.

H5: Involvement can impact on integrity trust significantly.

H6: Involvement can impact on perceived usefulness significantly

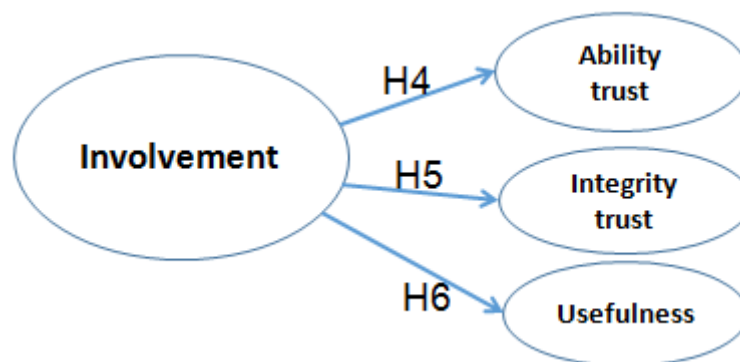


Figure 3-2. Research hypotheses of involvement

3.4 Quantity of positive word of mouth

After contact of comments for specific enterprise or product on the internet, instead of posting direct agreement to the opinion, consumers would consider the

opinion of other netizen or familiar people in the real world before judging the comment. Godes and Mayzlin (2004) pointed out that online chat provides an easy and effective opportunity to measure word of mouth. With more online comments of a product, it's more likely to be told that, or in other word, there would be an opportunity to increase the awareness for the product (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004). Positive comments may increase product sales, while the negative one may decrease the sales. The number of comments in e-commerce refers to the number of comments to specific dealer by various customers. The more positive comments a dealer gets from users, the more trustable the star-rating would be; otherwise, the negative comments would not only lower the trust of consumers, but also increase perceived risk. For example, 200 good comments on the delivery service to the store, of course, would be more reliable than 3 such comments.

Liu (2006) utilized practical word of mouth data collected from yahoo film websites to study the dynamic models of word of mouth and how will word of mouth explain box office returns. The results showed that word of mouth activity becomes most active during pre-release and opening Week, with a very high expectance to the film before its release by audience. Word of mouth plays an important role in explaining box office during early release week. It has been pointed out that the explanatory power of word of mouth comes from the quantity, other than the direction of evaluation. Liu (2006) believes that the volume of word of mouth mainly served as the character of information, which can improve the understanding of consumers, and by more word of mouth information, consumers would be easier to get it. Moreover, the increase of word of mouth cognition of consumers will enhance the purchase psychology and behavior, which thus improve sales.

Duan.et.al. (2005) conducted research on the influence to persuasion effects and cognition effects of daily performance for the film by online comments from consumers, with rating and volume of online comments studying the two effects respectively. The results imply that the volume of online comments will improve the cognition of consumers, thus to greatly affect the box office revenues. Chen.et.al (2004) and Duan.et.al (2005) both believe that the word of mouth from more

consumers will have more influence on consumers than that from fewer consumers.

Zheng Xiaoping (2008) studied the influence of online comments to the decisions of online purchase by consumers, which implies that the more volume of online comments will affect more greatly to the purchase decisions of consumers. The research found that the more comments on specific product, both positive and negative, the more profound and comprehensive knowledge consumers will learn about the product, which can have greater influence on their purchase decisions.

For the concept of the volume of word of mouth, Liu (2006) pointed out that the volume of word of mouth is the measurement of the total interaction volume, which represents the number of comments on specific product and service. Many previous researches have proved that the volume of word of mouth has significant correlation with consumer behavior and market results. (Amblee and Bui,2007; Anderson and Salisbury,2003).

On one hand, the research conducted by Bi Jidong in 2010 was oriented toward negative WOMs. Online shops are extremely sensitive to negative WOMs. Online shops try everything to decrease the quantity of negative WOMs. Most online shops win a far larger quantity of positive WOMs than negative WOMs.

On the other hand, the research conducted by Park et al. in 2007 was oriented toward positive WOMs. However, this research was restricted to not more than six positive WOMs. This scenario, in which consumers have only six or fewer WOM messages available for their reference, is characterized by information deficiency. In a scenario of information deficiency, consumers will surely be extremely sensitive to the quantity of information. The experiment verifies the impacts of the quantity of positive WOMs on purchasing intention. However, the experiment is of little significance because the experimental scenario is an extreme case.

The definition of online word of mouth in the research refers to the opinion of Liu (2006), which represents the volume of comments on products and service of specific enterprise among online consumers. As the past researches haven't focused on how the volume of word of mouth affects the degree of trust, so this study has made the following hypotheses and Figure 3-3:

H7: Quantity of WOM can impact on ability trust significantly.

H8: Quantity of WOM can impact on integrity trust significantly.

H9: Quantity of WOM can impact on perceived usefulness significantly.

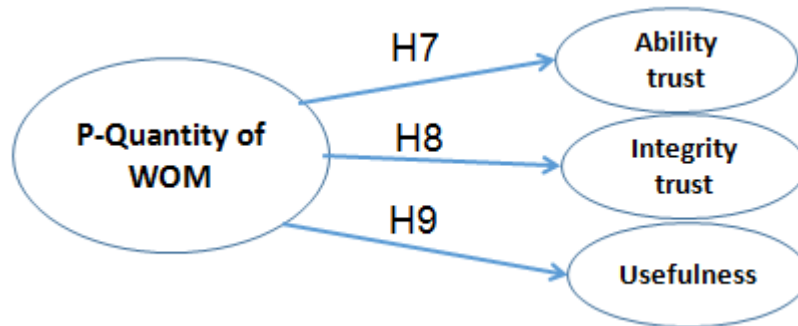


Figure 3-3. Research hypotheses of positive quantity of WOM

3.5 Multimedia expressing

A number of scholars have conducted in-depth research on the forms and types of consumer comments. Park and Lee (2008) classified consumer comments into attribute value comments and simple recommendation comments. Attribute value comments are objective comments on commodity attributes, whereas simple recommendation comments are considered as simple summarizations based perceptual knowledge and emotions. Yap et al. (2012) believed that commodity comments could be classified in terms of cognitive characteristics and emotional characteristics. They also gave examples of cognitive and emotional comments. These studies exactly coincide with the functional analysis of commodity comments made by Berger (2014). Berger (2014) believed that commodity comments provided at least two functions: providing information and sharing emotions. In sum, the categories of cognitive and emotional comments have been accepted by the academia.

Furthermore, some scholars have studied the types of comments from other perspectives. Hamby et al. (2015) discovered that narrative comments were more persuasive than argumentative comments. All of the above studies classify WOMs from the perspective of information organization forms. With constant technical

progress, consumer comments have evolved from being pure text comments into media-rich comments. Comments with a hybrid of texts and pictures can be seen everywhere, and many websites enable consumers to upload the videos on commodity experience. Media richness is defined as an interactive method of information spreading based on words, photos, audios, and videos. Media-rich advertisements are widely discussed in the academia. Heng Xu (2009) discovered that media-rich advertisements could boost the purchasing intention of consumers.

Visual cues can be considered as a kind of impulse by visual perception or motivation, which can bring a cue of environment and emotion to consumers, thus resulting in psychological recognition. In the area of advertising, people's images have been used to increase the positive attitudes towards products or the trust of brand (Riegelsberger, Sasse and McCarthy, 2003).

Macklin (1996) performed a research on the learning of brand name through visual cues by preschoolers, which found that the brand name along with visual cues can be easier for children to memorize. The research on the design of e-commerce websites centered by customers conducted by Fang and Salvendy (2003) pointed out that the photo of product is essential to provide visual cues and abundant information to consumers. Generally, customers prefer graphical Icons and buttons. Too many pictures will slow down the speed of websites, and may distract consumers. A research on Germany Amazon e-commerce website by Riegelsberger and Sasse (2002) shows that it is unwise to show the photo of the staff or employee of the commercial websites when participants have doubts. However, Riegelsberger and Sasse (2002) also pointed out that the negative perception may be partly caused by local cultural scenario. The research above shows that the type and volume of visual cues play an important role in enhancing consumers' impression, and the cultural difference of consumers may affect the perception of visual cues, therefore it is necessary to research on consumer perception of visual cues under various cultural environment.

The study of Pinsky and Wipf (2000) implies that through vivid display of clinical picture and teaching interaction, video tape has served as a very useful tool to students and teachers. The visual cues combined with verbal instruction can greatly

improve recall and retention. The research by Pinsky and wipf (2000) showed that the way of video and cartoon have perceptions on consumers and effects to memory.

Karvonen and Parkkinen (2001) recommended using actual photo online instead of cartoon image, generally high-quality product photo will help consumers establish confidence, which may also be spread to other websites. Walther.et.al. (2001) performed a research on computer media communication which pointed out that the newly built virtual team image by team members can improve emotion and social attraction. The research by Zheng.et.al. (2001) also implied that the interaction of virtual team exposed in front of photos can increase trust, and they had showed the same confidence as face to face communication. But this research haven't included the use of photo can increase whether the integrity trust or the competence trust.

With the actual data of a multi-product e-commercial retailer utilized by Davis and Davis and Khazanchi (2008), how online word of mouth causes different sales results through the influence of consumer perception. With attribution theory, the results have shown that the volume of online word of mouth and visual cues has effects on sales through various perceptions of consumers, and product comments and category have regulating effects. The researches by Davis.et.al. (2008) mainly contributed on studying word of mouth spreading from different characteristics of online word of mouth, which had been ignored by the previous scholars. It is difficult to measure the intangibility of traditional word of mouth, while the advantage of internet has the potential to measure online word of mouth. Davis and Khazanehi (2008) defined visual cues as any image published by observer (a method of communication), which focused on other consumers evaluating the characteristics of specific goods or service.

How do media-rich WOMs affect consumer trust? This issue is seldom discussed among scholars from different countries. In February 2015, the author conducted an in-depth interview of 20 Chinese consumers and 20 Japanese consumers. According to the findings, 90% of Chinese consumers actively stated that pictures and videos were important factors in trusting WOMs. Chinese consumers differed greatly from Japanese consumers in terms of the frequency and general experience of online

shopping. By contrast, 60% of Japanese consumers actively stated that pictures and videos were important factors in trusting WOMs. Hypotheses and Figure 3-4 are summarized as below:

H10: Multimedia expression can impact on ability trust significantly.

H11: Multimedia expression can impact on integrity trust significantly.

H12: Multimedia expression can impact on perceived usefulness significantly

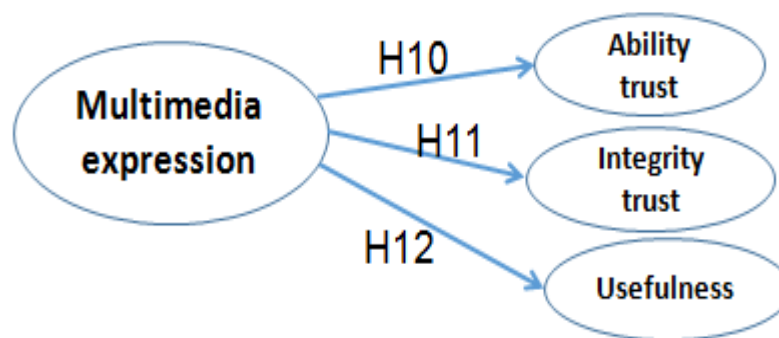


Figure 3-4. Research hypotheses of multimedia expression

3.6 Trust

3.6.1 Definition of trust

Trust defined by Ganesan (1997) and Mcknight et al. (1998) referred to the willing that someone believe and depend on others. Johnson-George and Swap (1982) identified that trust is one of people characteristics, and an action that is willing to take risk under trust environment. Rotter (1967); Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992) pointed out that trust was an expectation of individual or population, which believed the words, promises and statements in word or writing.

According to the difference between truster and trustee, trust in the management field can be divided into the trust between organizations, the trust to organizations by consumers, internal trust of the organizations and the trust between consumers. The study of the trust between organizations focuses on the trust between strategic alliance enterprises and channels and the establishment and maintenance of relationships

between organizations.

The study of the trust to organizations by consumers focuses on the brand image, goodwill and competitiveness of organizations. The study of the internal trust of the organizations focuses on the views and cultures of organizations, organization management and the core abilities of organizations. The study of the trust between the consumers focuses on the interaction of consumers. Dwyer and Lagace (1986) thought that trust was an expectation that believed confidence and transaction transfer and also the basis of future actions. Crosby, Evans and Cowles (1990) thought that trust was an dependency on others, which could provide long-term interests and services for clients or produce confidence for the honesty and integrity of pyramid selling personnel. This study believes that the basic form of trust is still the trust between among humans. The trust to organizations by people and the trust between organizations are the extension of the trust among humans and are on the basis of trust between humans.

Doney and Cannon (1997) pointed out that trust was a reliability and kindness that we feel from others, reputation and degree caring others. Having summarized all the scholars' views gathered, Trust is explained that there were two definitions of trust: (1) One believed others or expect that the other was reliable on the basis of knowledge, behavior intention and reliability of others. (2) One's behavior and attitudes showed that he/she trusted others. Therefore, trust can stabilize, coordinate and harmonize their relationship.

Although many scholars define the definition of trust from different views, their studies are general and fruitful. Among definitions of trust, the definition occur frequently is “(commitment)” (Schurr and Ozanne 1985), many scholar proved that there was outstanding relationship between trust and commitment (Ganesan 1994; Moorman, Morgan and Hunt 1994). Anderson and Weitz (1992) pointed out that commitment bore the requirement of stable development of relationship, which was will to make short term sacrifice to maintain the relationship and kept confidence for the relationship. Ganesan (1994) ; Moorman, Morgan and Hunt (1994) all pointed out that trust was the determine factor of commitment. Although previous studies

describe the positive relationship between trust and commitment, the impact of trust on commitment is determined by level and dimensionality of trust.

Although many scholars have explained their opinions about the definitions of trust, the definition of trust itself is still obscure until today. As an important relationship quality, trust is also linked with risk. Johnson-George and Swap (1982) thought that willing of adventure was likely the common point of trust case. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) queried the risk, which occurred before the occurrence of trust, during the occurrence of trust or after the occurrence of trust.

Whitener et al. (1998) had gathered previous scholars' studies of trust, and concluded the definition of trust in 3 aspects: (1) Trust was the positive expectation or belief that individual produces to others (or organizations), and thought that others can take good actions in its favors. (2) Trust was an individual spontaneous behavior, and the basis that individual was willing to bear the risk of individual (or organization), if the expectation was not fulfilled. (3) Trust had dependence, because the result expected by individual was the behavioral expression of dependence on others (or organizations). Had gathered many scholars' studies, Crosby (2002;) thought that trust, relationship quality, included satisfaction, confidence and commitment at least. He thought trust, generally, referred to the confidence of truster, who believed that trustee could take actions in truster's best interest, or the confidence of customers, who trusted service staff or other consumers are reliable, or organizations could take actions in line with the long-term interests of clients.

Having regard to all the scholars' views gathered, the author believes that trust is (1) the one lying in individuals and organizations, or a multiple dimensional relationship in individual-organization or organization-organization. (2) The occurrence of trust is a "process", which comes from the process after calculation, prediction, judgment or transfer. (3) Trust shows that truster have confidence in commitment (also invisible commitment) of trustee. (4) The process of trust is accompanied with opportunism of trustee.

3.6.2 Effect of trust

Most effect of trust stay on the view of economics research, Erikcsno (1963) pointed out that trust can improve the safety of relationship, reduce the defensiveness and inhibitions in life. The life and work are often mutual interdependence, and humans often rely on others to complete individual or organization's target. Some companies use company system or contract to reduce the occurrence of selfish behavior to bring higher efficiency for company (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, 1995). Ganesan (1994) pointed out that trust has three effects for truster: (1) It reduces the risk of opportunism of trustee. (2) It adds the confidence of trustee in short-term behavior. Reichheld and Schefter (2000) put forward that it shall obtain clients' trust before obtaining their loyalty. (3) It reduces the transaction cost. (4) It can reduce the conflict of contradiction and increase the satisfaction of channel members (Anderson and Weitz 1989; Morgan and Hunt 1994).

Bleecker (1994) in his research mainly focused on virtual organization, which pointed out that virtual organization was an special case in network organization. It belongs to task orientation, there may be no cooperation experience among cooperation partners, but the members must establish inter relationship, and visual organization lacks layered control (Fuehrer and Ashkanasy,2001), therefore, it is hard control members' behaviors, but trust can become the succedaneum of contract and control (Hosmer, 1995) replace of traditional control mechanism. Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999) pointed out that trust can replace the control and coordination function of traditional organizations, moreover, trust has the integration function, which can promote the executive force of members (Jones and Bowie, 1998). Trust can also promote the automatic cooperation of virtual organization, reduce transaction cost and risk of failure (Grabowski & Roberts, 1999) and attract more organization members to joint in.

Morgan and Hunt (1994) thought that when the customers purchased products or services, they often faced many uncertainties, and when the uncertainties and risk were high and could not be guaranteed, it was more important to raise the trust of

customers for trust could reduce or eliminate the risk brought by uncertainties.

3.6.3 Dimensions of trust

It is trust concept fuzziness that leads to various ideas in terms of trust division. Generally speaking, a part of these ideas comes from outside of the truster and the other part comes from the inside. Farris Senner and Butterfield (1973) defined trust as a result that arises from co-effect of personality and minor organizational environment. This definition perfectly tells apart two levels that give rise to trust-the main level comes from one's natural character and personality and the minor part comes from the effect of environment. There are some scholars who divide trust into institutional trust (Lewis and Weigert 1985) and organizational trust (Morgan and Hunt 1994) according to this division manner. Some scholars assign trust with ten characteristics (Butler, 1991). Dony and Cannon (1997) divide trust into following aspects: (1) reliability: It is based on the level of reliability of counterpart in exchange, i.e. one expects the words which the counterpart speaks or writes to be reliable. (2) Benevolence: It is one's level of sincere cooperation towards the other part. Ganesan (1994) directly divide trust into two dimensions that are easy to tell apart: (1) Ability trust (2) benevolence trust. This way is also adopted by Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp (1995). Mayer and others (1995) give a three dimensional structure to trust as Figure 3-5: (1) Ability trust (2) Benevolence trust (3) Integrity trust. Certainly, small dimensional trust division conducted by many scholars aims to explain and illustrate profound meanings included in "trust".

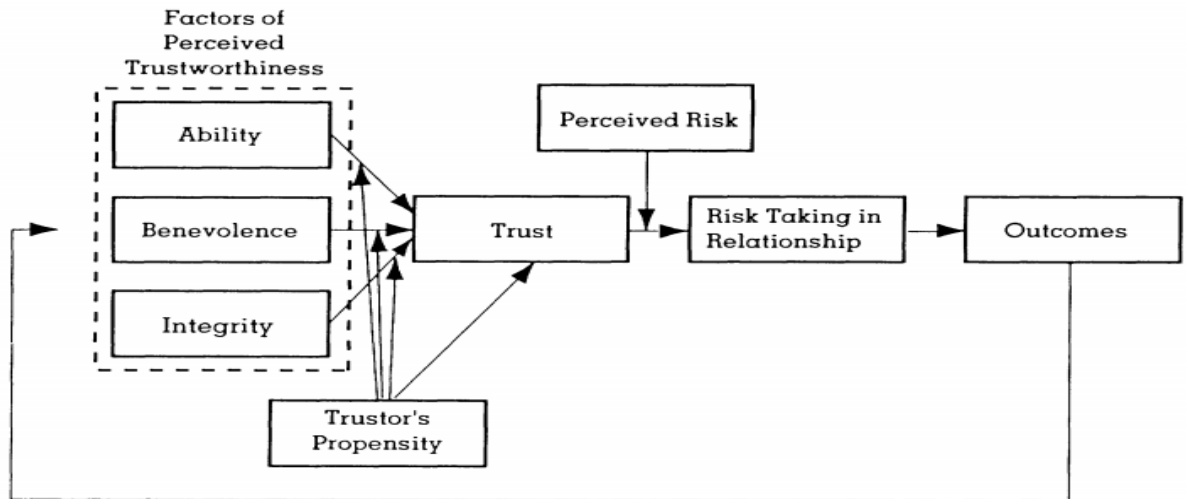


Figure 3-5. Trust model of Mayer. et.al

Source: Mayer. et.al (1995)

3.6.4 Ability trust

Ability is the combination of skills, qualifications and characteristics that endows one with controlling power in specific fields.(Mayer 1995). A trustee tends to be highly capable in the field of his technology when tasks that are related to one specific field are trusted. Therefore, area of this ability is specific. However, a trustee may be lack of qualifications, drills or experiences, for example, interpersonal communication, in other fields. Although these people may be trusted when completing analytical type tasks that are related to his technology field, it is another story when contact with important clients are involved. Therefore, trust is field-specific (Zand, 1972). Some scholars have discussed similar constituents that influence trust using synonyms. Cook and Wall (1980), Sitkin and Roth (1993)all regard ability as the necessary element in trust.

At last, Gabarro (1978) points out 9 bases for trust, they are: practicality/specific skills, interpersonal communication competence, commercial philosophy and judgment. All these bases are similar to ability in previous concept model. However, all these dictions, for example, professional knowledge and skills, stand for a series of skills applied in a specific field. Ability emphasizes task specificity and circumstance

specificity in current model constituents.

3.6.5 Integrity trust

Integrity trust means that consumers believe there exist moral codes and professional standards in providing interactive activities on websites, for instance, they believe that actual commodities are the same with those on website and that website will protect consumer's private information in a good way and so on.

Benevolence means the level of trustee's willing to do good for the truster except self-centralized profit motive.

Solomon (1960) indicates in their researches that benevolence is an important element for trust. Ganesan (1994), Doney and Cannon (1997) define benevolence as the situation that the trustee consider the truster's welfare in his motive an action. Ganesan (1994), Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995) all use reliability and benevolence in analyzing problems in their research which indicate that benevolence has a kind of specific affiliation between trustees and trusters. Benevolence is the perception of trustee's positive attitude towards truster. Many researchers classify characteristics similar to benevolence as the base of trust. Hovland (1953) and his colleagues describe reliability as the trustee's motive. Integrity and benevolence are two aspects of individual personality. In order to reduce co-linearity, integrity and benevolence are consolidated into integrity trust in this research.

To sum up, we are justifiable to assume that trust exerts significant influence towards purchase intention and reputation transmission.

3.7 Usefulness

In researches related to information system, perceived usefulness of information system is defined as the system usefulness perceived by users. For example: Davis (1989) defines system perceived usefulness as the level of belief in system's

promotion of work performance. Davis agrees that usefulness generally correspond to the meaning of information value in pervious researches. Items such as “important”, “related”,

“useful”, “valuable” can be adopted in measurement. Park and Lee (2008) use the concept of comment informativity in their research. In the research, comment informativity refers to the comment’s extent of product information inclusion and the usefulness level of consumer’s understanding of the product. Negash and others (2003) point out that the quality of information is subject to several elements including information correctness, accuracy, durability, timeliness, reliability, intactness, simplicity, correlation, usefulness, understandability, disinterestedness and so on among which usefulness, accuracy, correlation, timeliness and intactness consist the informativity of a website, i.e., the ability to provide information of alternative products. Mudambi and Schuff (2010) define comment usefulness as the helpfulness of consumer’s perceived product comment towards his purchase decision.

All in all, except for usefulness, there are also dimensions such as accuracy, timeliness, correlation and intactness in the concept of informativity. Usefulness perception is adopted in this research to refer to consumer’s subjective perception of whether the product information included in the comment is helpful for product perception and purchase decision.

Research of social psychology indicates that interpersonal social influence includes information influence and standardization influence. Information influence arises when individuals received information from others and standardization influence arises when individuals comply with expectation of other people or group. (M. Deutsch and H. Gerard, 1955) Online comment provides consumers with user-directed product information which constitute a kind of information influence (D. H. Park and J. Lee, 2008). Park and Lee (2008) point out that information structure may have an effect on consumer’s information processing course. The research verifies the relation between of online comment quantity and comment informativity in the way of experiment. When illustrating the reason of online comment quantity influence towards consumer information processing, researchers point out that online

comment quantity increase corresponds to total information quantity increase and that online comment quantity has an effect on consumer's perception of comment informativity

3.8 Relations among trust, usefulness and purchase intention

Usefulness and reliability are two different determinants in information quality (Negash, 2003). Research on the relations between purchase intention and usefulness or reliability dated back to Fishbein and Azjen's (1980) theory of reasoned action. (M. Fisherbein and I. Ajzen, 1980). According to theory of reasoned action, people's cognition of action result and judgment of value have an effect on attitude and a further effect on action intention and action. Consumers may take the information into account in case that he regard the product comments and recommendations provided by other consumers as useful and reliable. Consumers turn positive about the product when product comments and recommendations are positive. Consumers turn negative about the product when product comments and recommendations are negative. Consumer's attitude has a positive impact on his purchase intention.

Influence of usefulness and reliability towards purchase intention are analyzed below respectively. As for usefulness, perceived usefulness and perceived accessibility are two fundamental determinants of user's usage in the technique acceptance mode of Davis (1989). Previous researches indicate that the more the information functions provided by information set are, the more consumer's approval integration are (R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo.1984). As for reliability, Chau (2007) has verified the positive effect of online comment towards seller's reliability and seller's reliability towards consumer's decision. (P. Chau.et.al, 2007).

Although trust has been widely confirmed to have a positive effect on purchase intention, the effect on purchase intention of each sub-dimensions of trust still remains to be researched deeply. Many previous researches put trust as a whole. Hence, the hypothesis that every sub-dimensions affect purchase intention collectively

is in line with previous research result. Based on aforesaid theories and literatures, it is concluded that usefulness perception and reliability perception of online comment have effect on purchase intention. Purchase intention further affect consumer's information sharing action, because most consumers are willing to share the products they deem reliable (Bi, 2010). However, discussion of relation between usefulness and reliability remains inadequate.

Some scholars discovered usefulness can influence trust such as Suh(2002) in internet banking research. Others got opposed results such as Horst.et.al (2006) in e-government research, which illustrates that trust influence usefulness significantly. The question is why previous researches only investigate the influence from one direction?

Based on above analysis, we put forward those hypotheses and Figure 3-6:

H13: Usefulness can influence purchase intention significantly.

H14: Purchase intention can influence dissemination intention significantly.

H15: Perceived usefulness and trust influence each other and this relationship is moderated by gender, income and age.

H16: The combination of ability trust, integrity trust and WOM quantity is the best solution of the three variables for the cultivation of purchase intention.

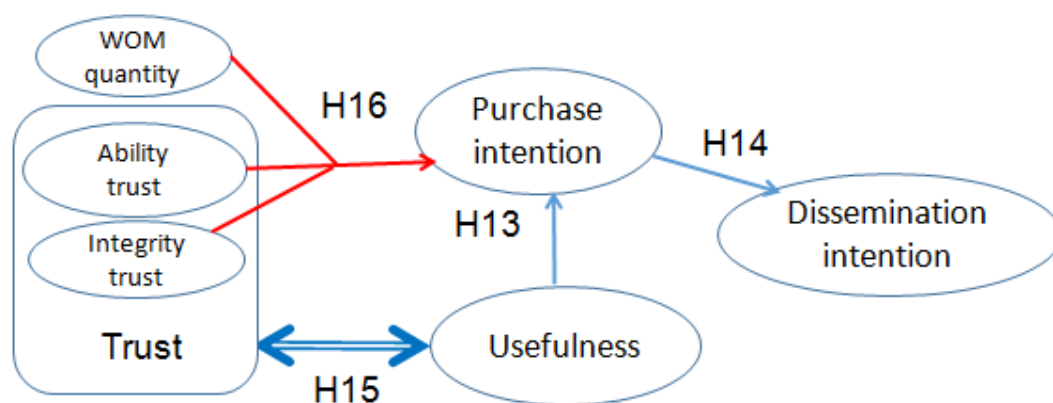


Figure 3-6. Research hypotheses of trust, purchase intention and dissemination intention

3.9 Culture differences

In the research of Hofstede, the collectivism tendency of China gets 20 points, Japan with 46 points. The difference between these two countries is very obvious. In the aspect of Uncertainty Avoidance, China obtains 30 points, while Japan is 92 points. Many researches have shown that these differences would influence the consumers' behavior, especially in trust.

National culture influences consumers' individual decision and communication behavior. Compared individualism nation with collectivism nation, the people of collectivism nation tend to unite. Therefore, collectivism and In-group with internal trust are positively correlated (Wagner, 1995). Wagner (1995) has found that both individualism and collectivism influenced coordination of organizations, but collectivism was more influential than individualism. Many empirical studies support that the people of collectivism nation prefer harmony with other people. On the contrary, members of individualism nation avoid coordination. Huff and Kelley (2003) argues that countries with collectivism tendency are not high in personal trust and external trust. Because collectivism culture may hinder the improvement of the institutionalization of trust. In general, the overall trust of Collectivism nation is not high, the same as Power Distance correlated with collectivism.

Unequal distribution of power between members is the essence of the organization. Hofstede (1980, 2003) found that in the nations with great Power Distance, the trust was not high among employees, neither between employees and managers. Because great Power Distance means that members can threaten the managers' power. Less trust between members cause the crisis of trust. And his research found that the degree of collectivism and Power Distance are positively related, which means the nations with high collectivism possess great Power Distance.

To sum up, we make the following assumptions and all rested hypotheses are showed as Figure 3-7.

H17: All relationships about trust in China and Japan have great differences.

H18: The Relationship between purchase intention and dissemination intention in

China and Japan has great difference.

3.10 Summary of hypothesis

Based on above analysis and illustration we use Figure 3-7 and Table 3-2 to summarize all hypotheses.

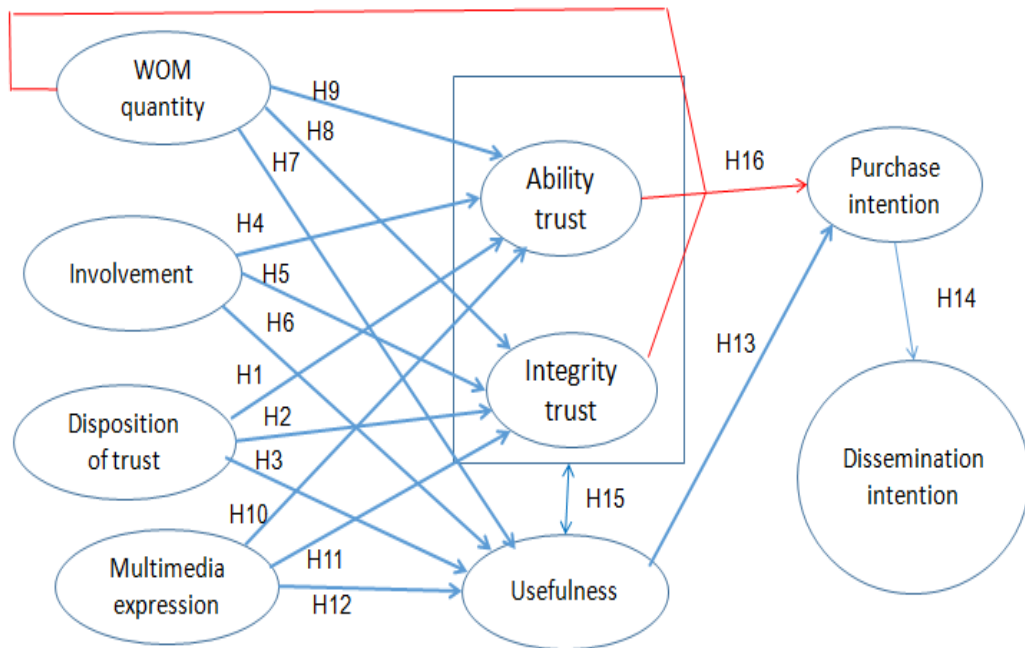


Figure 3-7. All rest hypotheses except H17 and H18

Table 3-2. All hypotheses

H1	Disposition to trust can impact on ability trust significantly.
H2	Disposition to trust can impact on integrity trust significantly.
H3	Disposition to trust can impact on perceived usefulness significantly
H4	Involvement can impact on ability trust significantly.
H5	Involvement can impact on integrity trust significantly.
H6	Involvement can impact on perceived usefulness significantly
H7	Quantity of WOM can impact on ability trust significantly.
H8	Quantity of WOM can impact on integrity trust significantly.
H9	Quantity of WOM can impact on perceived usefulness significantly

H10	Multimedia expression can impact on ability trust significantly.
H11	Multimedia expression can impact on integrity trust significantly.
H12	Multimedia expression can impact on perceived usefulness significantly
H13	Usefulness can influence purchase intention significantly.
H14	Purchase intention can influence dissemination intention significantly
H15	Perceived usefulness and trust influence each other and this relationship is moderated by gender, income and age.
H16	The combination of ability trust, integrity trust and WOM quantity is the best solution of the three variables for the cultivation of purchase intention.
H17	All relationships about trust in China and Japan have great differences.
H18	The Relationship between purchase intention and dissemination intention in China and Japan has great difference.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1 The selection of research methodology, product, and platform.

The literatures show that most previous WOM studies resort to experimentation or questionnaire surveys. Experimentation serves to control for other variables effectively, thus filtering out the bias arising from the interaction of multiple factors. However, experimentation also has obvious defects. First, social experiments differ from natural science experiments; in particular, the objects of experiments tend to play up to the experimental results consciously, thus causing errors in the experimental results. Second, experiments conducted in specific places, at specific times, and toward specific groups of people impose restrictions on the choice space and recognition method of consumers. The advantages of questionnaire surveys in WOM studies lie in the lack of control on the environments, thereby enabling consumers to answer the questionnaires based on their real experience and feelings. The disadvantages of questionnaire surveys lie in the recollection difficulties of consumers (East et al. in 2013), i.e., most surveyed consumers can hardly recollect the quantity and quality of WOMs or even the channels from which they obtained the WOMs. In conclusion, WOM studies should prudently resort to the methods of natural science within a limited extent.

The research method employed in this study is a questionnaire survey. We ask the consumers filling out these surveys to recall their experience as accurately as possible through reviewing their browser history. Although we very carefully conduct the same experiment in both Japan and China, it is difficult to assure that the experimental scenario reflects both countries' reality. Employing different experiments in the two countries would reduce the significance of the results. We use an equally structured questionnaire survey to study consumers in both countries.

In this paper, we investigate a series of products. We never target a specific product or brand as we think that focusing on one special product or brand

undermines the significance of the results. Concurrently, it is difficult to collect enough data on one product. Our research target is tablets in general, without limitation to brands and types.

WOM messages are observed from electronic marketing. In this study, we do not focus on app WOM or WOM on social networks. As the source significantly impacts WOM acceptance, we choose to investigate only one source of WOM communication: e-marketing WOM messages on websites.

4.2 Questionnaire design

In order to reflect the research problem objectively and realistically, the questionnaire items should be designed around the research topic. In this paper, we explore the impact on online consumer purchase intentions and eWOM of six factors: pre-trust, multimedia expression, consumer involvement, the number of eWOM messages, usefulness, and trust. According to our research model, the questionnaire should include eight variables: pre-trust, multimedia expression, consumer involvement, the number of eWOM messages, usefulness, trust, purchase intention, and communication intention.

The questionnaire consists of three main parts: a brief introduction to the questionnaire, the main body, and personal information. In recent years, when choosing the scale, domestic and foreign scholars conducting empirical research have generally opted for the 5-point Likert scale. Therefore, we also use the 5-point Likert scale to measure the variability of the items in the questionnaire and set 5 grades from strong disagreement to strong agreement, corresponding to 1 and 5, respectively. Going from objection to agreement, a higher point represents a higher degree of agreement. In addition, this study was conducted for tablet PC products in general, not for a specific brand, and to ensure the quality of the questionnaire, we required that the respondents had purchased tablet PC products online or intended to buy one. Personal information includes gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly

income.

The biggest disadvantages of the questionnaire are that the respondents randomly fill in the questionnaire and the questionnaire can not truly reflect their inner thoughts, which result in poor quality data and can't get the correct results. For these reason, in order to ensure the authenticity of the data, the study assess the quality of the questionnaire by using detect statements. Dividing detect statements into synonymous and antonymous statements, the quality of the questionnaire filled by respondents can be evaluated through setting the detect statements. If inconsistencies is found in the questionnaires that respondents answer by using detect statements, it means the respondents haven't carefully filled in the questionnaires. So such questionnaires should be deleted in case of influencing the quality of the data. Conversely, it indicates that the respondents seriously fill in the questionnaires to ensure the validity of the survey. On the arrangement of the problem, except the first part of the personal information, other parts follow the random principle to ensure that the answers are not affected by the order of the questionnaire items. In addition, the number of questionnaire items should not be too much, since too much questionnaire items would make the respondents generate cheased sentiment, resulting in failing seriously filling in the questionnaire. Therefore, the number of questionnaire items should be controlled and the time of filling in the questionnaire shouldn't over 15 minutes.

4.3 Questionnaire development

To reach the requirement of the research, improve the incredibility and effectiveness and make it easy to understand the questionnaire, the measurement items are of no ambiguity so that the respondents could fill in them and the data needed in the research would be obtained. And the development process of the questionnaire includes the following steps:

(1) Referring to other relevant scales of the scholars. On the basis of the review of the related studies, the mature scales related to the 7 variables including trust,

consumer involvement, WOM volume, usefulness, trust, purchase willingness and communication purpose are collected. And the author draw up the scale concerned the multimedia expression, develop the scale in accordance with the requirement of the research combining the features of the electronic products, and measure the above variables.

(2) Depth interview. The questionnaire design should be modified through the small-scale interviews in that no one can manage to design the questionnaire simply through the thinking within a small room. The modification through the small-scale interview is an inevitable road in the questionnaire design. To ensure the rationality of the measurement items, depth interview with the experts and scholars in the field of online shopping and the consumers with many experiences of online shopping should be conducted so that the scientificity and operability of the questionnaire design. The specific content of the interviews include that whether the selected variables are scientific, whether there is certain logical relationship among the variables, whether the measurement items can measure the related variables effectively, whether the items are ambiguous that the respondents might feel difficult to understand, and whether the items are repeated; and that the experts and scholars and online consumers are pleased to give some suggestions so that the irrational items should be deleted. Then on the basis of depth interview, the amount of the measurement items should be determined, and the expression should be perfected that the effectiveness of the content of the questionnaire could be improved.

(3)To form an initial questionnaire: as the research refers to the international mature scales, and there are huge differences between the eastern and western cultures that the literal translation of them would make the respondents feel difficult to understand, they cannot be used directly. As a result, based on the mature scales, the combination with the language habits of Chinese and Japanese consumers will be necessary so that the scales can be revised and improved. Later, on such a basis of the depth interview with the experts and scholars and online consumers, the initial questionnaire can be compiled.

(4) Questionnaire pilot test. After the initial questionnaire, the pilot test should

be conducted to ensure the quality of the questionnaire that the initial ones should be distributed in the small scope. And then conduct the analysis on the credibility and effectiveness of the data of the returned questionnaires through the statistical software SPSS20.0 and delete the irrational items to purify the measurement items and guarantee the sound credibility and effectiveness of the questionnaire, thus reaching the requirement of the research.

(5) To compile the large scale questionnaire. On the foundation of the pilot test, to delete the measurement items that can not meet the need and improve the items according to the result of the pilot survey and the feedback from the respondents, thus forming a formal questionnaire suitable for the large scale.

4.4 Collection data

The questionnaire was administered via the Internet. The respondents were mainly those consumers who had bought tablet computers on the Internet or were planning to. The main target of the questionnaire was those consumer groups in all of China and in Japan who had shopped online. To ensure the representativeness of the returned questionnaires, the questionnaires were distributed online to consumers of different occupations, different incomes, and various identities.

We administered questionnaires during four months, from August to December 2015. In China, we collected data from the Taobao website (www.taobao.com), which is the number one e-commerce retailing website. The returned questionnaires in China were 297 in total, among which 251 were valid, passing the trap test; the proportion of valid questionnaires accounts for 84.5% of all returned questionnaires. In Japan, data were collected from two websites: Amazon Japan (www.amazon.co.jp) and Rakuten Japan (www.rakuten.co.jp). There were 288 returned questionnaires in total, among which 264 were valid, passing the trap test; the proportion of valid questionnaires is thus 91.7%. After the questionnaires were collected, they were reviewed and the invalid questionnaires were deleted. One of the ways to identify an invalid

questionnaire is to observe a certain regularity in the choice of items; for instance, the respondents might choose the same item in all questions or make the choices with an evident pattern. Another way to detect invalid questionnaires is to inspect the respondents' statements and choices for inconsistencies. In addition, respondents who had not bought tablet computers on the Internet were asked to skip the questionnaire. Any faulty questionnaires were discarded.

4.5 Data analysis method

4.5.1 Reliability and validity test

In this study, we use the metering method to analyze the data from valid returned questionnaires and test hypotheses. The main components of our analytical method are:

(1) Descriptive statistical analysis: We use descriptive statistical analysis for the sample data. The basic personal information in the questionnaire includes gender, age, educational background, profession, and monthly income. We analyze the number and proportions of respondents as well as the mean value and standard deviation of the variables in our sample, describe the population distribution of the sample, and establish a representative sample.

(2) Reliability analysis: The reliability analysis is used mainly to verify the measurement scales for internal consistency. When the respondents answer the same question, their answers should be the same or similar. Differing answers suggest that the design of the questions in the questionnaire is unreasonable and has low reliability. When testing the internal consistency, researchers generally use the Cronbach's α coefficient. A Cronbach's α larger than 0.7 means that the reliability of the questionnaire is high. If the Cronbach's α is between 0.5 and 0.7, the reliability of the questionnaire is lower, but acceptable. If the Cronbach's α is lower than 0.5, the reliability of the questionnaire is too low for research purposes; in such a case, part of

the questions in the questionnaire should be deleted or the researcher should design a new measurement scale.

(3) Analysis of validity: Validity means that the measuring tool accurately measures the variable. We use exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to test the validity of the questionnaire. Before conducting the exploratory factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test statistic should be calculated. If the two measures have standard values, we proceed to the exploratory factor analysis. Through factoring, we calculate the factor loading coefficients. If the calculated values correspond to the standard ones, we conclude that the questionnaire has good validity. We use the statistical software Smart-PLS 3.0 to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis and further test the validity of the questionnaire.

4.5.2 Calculation methodology of hypothesis 15

Dimensions reduction of data

After pre-testing, consumers answered the questionnaire, and pass the trap test. Because Hypothese 15 test ask to reduce data dimension first. However, the reduction of data dimension often cause information lost. For preventing information lost, an algorithm is developed based on the results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis which is illustrated as below:

$$a_{ij} = (a_{ij}^{(e)} + a_{ij}^{(c)}) / 2$$

$$w_{ij} = \frac{a_{ij}}{\sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij}}$$

$$X_i = \sum_{j=1}^n w_{ij} \cdot x_{ij}$$

$$X = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i$$

Figure 4-1. Data reduction

i=each factor

j=each question

$a^{(e)}$ = the factor score of exploratory factor analysis

$a^{(c)}$ =the factor score of confirmatory factor analysis

x_{ij} = original data

W= Weight

The method considers two factor analysis methods together. Meanwhile, different weights of each factor are calculated into final results. Researchers can set cumulative percentage standard freely when they do reduction of data dimension through this algorithm. Both factor analysis method set 80% cumulative standard to choose factor numbers in this research.

After reducing data dimensions, Two-stage Least Square (2SLS) is used to test H15, which can be summarized as below:

Algorithm 1: Usefulness= $\beta_{20}+\beta_{21}*\text{trust}+\beta_{22}*\text{ plenty of media}+\beta_{23}*\text{adequate media}+\beta_{24}*\text{gender}+\beta_{25}*\text{income}+\beta_{26}*\text{age}+\varepsilon_1$

Algorithm 2: Trust= $\beta_{10}+\beta_{11}*\text{usefulness}+\beta_{12}*\text{perceived number of positive WOM supporter}+\beta_{13}*\text{objectivity of comment}+\beta_{14}*\text{gender}+\beta_{15}*\text{income}+\beta_{16}*\text{age}+\varepsilon_2$

For Algorithm 1, Independent variable is trust. Instrument variables are plenty of media and adequate media. Plenty of media and adequate media show someone know how to use various functions of E-commerce website, which can represent ability.

For Algorithm 2, Independent variable is usefulness. Instrument variables are perceived number of positive WOM supporter and objectivity of comment. One proved and no-prejudice information is valuable information in most situations. Thus, supporter and objectivity can represent usefulness in deed.

Gender, income and age are moderating variables in both algorithms.

4.5.3 Calculation methodology for hypothesis 16

To test Hypothesis 16, the fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is applied. The fsQCA software is based on logical symbols and integrates qualitative and quantitative research. The traditional multiple linear regression (MLR) allows for calculating how independent variables impact the dependent variables. However, the traditional MLR can only explain the symmetric relation between the independent and dependent variables, not the asymmetric relation between them. For example, if the independent variable changes, the dependent variable changes. In other words, the change in the independent variable is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the dependent variable to change. In addition, there are conditions that are sufficient, but not necessary. The MLR is not suitable to capture those asymmetric relations. The fsQCA changes the Likert scale of 1–5 into logical symbols + or -.

The researcher must specify the values of an interval-scale variable that correspond to three qualitative breakpoints that structure a fuzzy set: the threshold for full membership (fuzzy score = 0.95), the threshold for full non-membership (fuzzy score = 0.05), and the cross-over point (fuzzy score = 0.5). These three benchmarks are used to transform the original ratio or interval-scale values into fuzzy membership scores, using transformations based on the log odds of full membership. We note that the two percentages, 5% and 95%, do not represent the percentage of answers, but represent the answers in the real, valid measurement range. Setting the 5% and 95%

benchmarks relies on the researcher's experience. On the five-point scale, researchers usually take 1 as the 5% benchmark and 5 as the 95% benchmark. However, this is not an absolute and the researcher has to verify that 1 and 5 represent a realistic and effective measuring range. If the respondents avoid giving an extreme answer (for example, no one chooses 1), then the researcher should take 2 as the 5% benchmark. The other limitation is that there are many respondents who avoid choosing the extreme answer in a closed questionnaire. It is evident that the variance of data on a five-point scale is then insufficient. Consequently, if the researcher directly chooses 2 as the 5% benchmark, then the benchmark is too high and far beyond the range of 5%. Under these circumstances, adopting the descending dimension method presented above is a good choice. The latter method allows the researcher to avoid the overconcentration of answers caused by the five-point scale. In addition, we advocate designing more questions to retest and generate sufficient variation in the data.

After the data calibrating is finished, the software would give the computational results as following Table 4-1:

Table 4-1. computational theory of fsQCA

Conditions			Results	Frequency
1	2	3		
+	-	+	+	6
-	+	-	+	5
+	+	-	+	2
+	+	+	+	3
+	-	-	-	8
-	-	+	-	5
-	+	+	-	3
-	-	-	-	4

$$\text{result : truth} = 1 \bullet \sim 2 \bullet 3 + \sim 1 \bullet 2 \bullet \sim 3 + 1 \bullet 2 \bullet \sim 3 + 1 \bullet 2 \bullet 3$$

4.5.4 Test methods for the rest hypothesis

Partial least squares regression (PLSR) almost equal to multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis, canonical correlation analysis and principle component analysis (PCA).

Compared to the traditional multiple linear regression model (MLRM), the features of PLSR are: (1) be able to conduct regression and modeling under the condition that the independent variable has extremely high multiple correlations; (2) be able to conduct regression and modeling under the condition that the sample point number is less than the variable number; (3) the PLSR would contain all the original independent variables in the final model; (4) the PLSR is more liable to identify the system information and system noise (even some non-randomness noise); (5) in the PLSR model, the regression coefficient of every independent variable would be easier to explain.

The significance of PLS in application of statistics reflected in the following aspects:

The PLS is a regression and modeling approach when there are multi-independent variables and multi-dependent variables. The PLS is better resolution for those problems which could not be resolved by common MLR.

The reason why the PLS is called the second generation of regression method is also because that it could realize integrated application of multiple data analysis methods.

The fundamental purpose of principal components regression is to extract the relevant information hidden in matrix X , then use the information to predict the value of variable Y . By doing this, we can ensure that the noise would be eliminated solely use those autonomous variables, thus the quality of prediction model would be improved. However, the principle components regression still has some flaws. When the correlation of some useful variables is small, we are prone to leave them out when choosing principle components, therefore the credibility of the final prediction model would decline, but it is difficult to choose every component.

The PLS could resolve this problem. It adopt the method that analytic variable X and Y, extract the component(usually called factor) from variable X and Y at the same time, then arrange those components according to their correlation. If you want to build a model, what you need is to choose several components.

Chapter 5. Data analysis

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Before presenting the results of the data analysis, we present the descriptive statistics in Tables 5-1a and 5-1b.

In Table 5-1a, customers aged 25–34 represent 38.2% of all customers, which is the largest age group of the sample. The second largest age group is the group of customers aged 35–44. This result illustrates that in China, young people are the largest group of e-retailing consumers for digital products. From the occupational point of view, this result reflects social facts. Most people work for a company and have no time for shopping in a brick-and-mortar store. Due to a limited budget, many students choose online shopping. Consumers' incomes follow a normal distribution. In line with the 2015 Japanese Population Report, the Japanese age distribution in Table 5-1b reveals a larger proportion of aged persons. Further, in Japan, there are less government employees than in China. Our survey seems to reflect some social facts.

Table 5-1a. Chinese sample Description

Age	Under 18	7.7%	Sex	Male	49.8%
	18–24	19.3%		Female	50.2%
	25–34	38.2%			
	35–44	27.8%			
	45–55	7%			
Occupation	Student	25.1%	Income per month	No income	22.7%
	Company staff	47.1%		RMB 1,000–4,000	24.5%
	individually-owned business	7.2%		RMB 4,000–8,000	31.7%
	Government employee	13%		RMB 8,000–12,000	19.1%

	Non-profit Organization	7.6%		over RMB 12,000	2%
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Table 5-1b. Japanese sample Description

Age	Under 18	3.0%	Sex	Male	53.8%
	18–24	10.6%		Female	46.2%
	25–34	15.8%			
	35–44	26.3%			
	45–54	21.3%			
	Over 55	23%			
Occupation	Student	18.3%	Income per month	Under 150,000	31.5%
	Company staff	41.8%		150,000-250,000	26.8%
	Homemaker	22%			
	individually-owned business	6.8%		250,000-350,000	22.5%
	Government employee	3.8%		Over 350,000	19.2%
	others	7.3%			

5.2 Reliability and validity test

5.2.1 Reliability

The questionnaire quality mainly measured by two indexes: validity and reliability. The validity means the validity of measurement result; it represents the degree of closeness of repeated measurement results of same measuring object. The validity could be divided into: test-retested reliability, alternate-form reliability and internal consistency reliability. Test-retest reliability and alternate-form reliability mainly considered the consistency (stability) and consistency (equivalence) in the measurement of different objects at different times. The internal consistency takes the relations of measurement classification questions. The measurement classification question in this research adopts five-point Likert scale, while the cronbach a

coefficient is suitable for the reliable analysis of measurement scale with certain scales. Therefore, this research adopts cronbach α to assess the credibility. In regard to the measurement standard of Cronbach α , most of the scholars hold the idea that it should be larger than 0.7(Li Huaizu, 2004), if the Cronbach α is higher than 0.9, then the credibility of the measurement scale is good. There are other scholars believe that the Cronbach α larger than 0.6 is receivable. The closer to 1, the credibility is higher.

Hereafter, this research would evaluate the data quality based on the analysis of validity of sample data. First calculate the value of measurement classification question Cronbach's Alpha, and then analyze the construct validity by analyzing the exploratory factors in order to evaluate its credibility.

Table 5-2a Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability of Japanese sample

Reliability of Japanese sample	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
WOM quantity	0.780	0.858
ability trust	0.691	0.795
disposition trust	0.919	0.943
dissemination intention	0.827	0.881
integrity trust	0.761	0.863
involvement	0.738	0.851
media expression	0.768	0.801
purchase intention	0.764	0.849
usefulness	0.876	0.941

According to Table 5-2a, only the Cronbach's Alpha of ability trust almost reach 0.7, others are quite good.

Table 5-2b Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability of Chinese sample

Reliability of Chinese sample	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
WOM quantity	0.717	0.847
Ability trust	0.729	0.824
disposition trust	0.687	0.786
dissemination intention	0.822	0.875
integrity trust	0.696	0.827
involvement	0.800	0.882
media expression	0.789	0.863

purchase intention	0.780	0.858
usefulness	0.755	0.813

According to this table, two data should be noticed which are the Cronbach's Alpha of integrity trust and disposition trust. Except those two, others seem perfect.

5.2.2 Validity

The validity represents the degree of closeness between measurement result and the objective meant to achieve. The indexes of validity mainly include content validity and construct validity (Li Huaizu, 2004). The content validity refers to the cover degree of aspects and fields to achieve the purpose of research. It is an subjective evaluation index which usually evaluated by document analysis and interview. This research based on document retrospective and rectified by small-scale interview when confirm every measurement classification question. Therefore, this research questionnaire has high content validity. The construct validity refers to the degree of measuring theories reflected by measurement classification questions which mainly contain two indexes: convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity refers to the consistency of different measurement classification question of one research variable; the discriminant validity refers to the discrepancy degree of different researching variable measurements.

For the evaluation of construct validity, this research adopts exploratory factor analysis (EFA). First assess the correlation of variables in order to test whether it is suitable for factor analysis. It mainly adopted KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-olkin Measure of sampling Adequaey) and Battlett test of spherieity. The value of KMO should not lower than 0.5. Closer to 1, fitter for factor analysis.

After the variables accord with the above conditions, this research adopted principle component methods, conducted Varimax rotation, then extract the factor whose eigenvalue larger than 1 to conduct the factor analysis. The evaluation to the construct validity of the measurement project follows four principles: (1) if one measurement object alone is a factor, delete it; (2) if the factor loading of the measurement project is larger than 0.5, then it means that the measurement project has better convergent validity; (3) the factor loading of the measurement project are more

closer to 1, the better. Other factors are closer to 0, the better. It means that the measurement project has better discrimination validity. (4) If the two factor loading of the measurement project are larger than 0.5 which crosses the limit. Delete it in general. If the two dimensions of credibility are similarly high, then keep it.

Here are tables to analyze the construct validity by analyzing the exploratory factors in order to evaluate its credibility. Table 3a and 3b shows Factor loading of Japanese sample and Chinese ones. Table 4a and 4b are AVE result.

Through Japanese AVE in table 4a, due to each root square of AVE is larger than relevant correlation coefficients, the validity of can be accepted. The most closed two data are the AVE root square of dissemination intention and purchase intention. The second nearest pair is the AVE root square of ability trust and integrity trust. On the contrary, in Chinese AVE result, due to each root square of AVE is larger than relevant correlation coefficients, the validity of can be accepted. The most closed two data are the AVE root square of dissemination intention and usefulness. The second nearest pair is the AVE root square of purchase intention and usefulness.

Table 5-3a Factor loading of Japanese sample

	Ability trust	WOM quantity	disposition trust	dissemination intention	integrity trust	involvement	media expression	purchase intention	usefulness
ability-trust1	0.833								
ability-trust2	0.592								
ability-trust3	0.815								
integrity-trust1					0.838				
integrity-trust2					0.822				
integrity-trust3					0.807				
Purchase intention1								0.842	
Purchase intention 2								0.643	
Purchase intention 3								0.765	
Purchase intention 4								0.798	
Involvement1						0.738			
Involvement2						0.830			
involvement3						0.860			
Media expression1							0.798		
Media expression2							0.691		
Media expression3							0.807		
Media expression4							0.519		
dissemi1				0.712					
dissemi2				0.849					
dissemi 3				0.883					
dissemi4				0.822					
dissemi5				0.568					
positive-WOM1		0.743							
positive-WOM2		0.763							
positive-WOM3		0.833							
positive-WOM4		0.763							
disposition trust 1			0.890						
disposition trust 2			0.934						
disposition trust 3			0.875						
disposition trust4			0.891						
Usefulness1									0.812
Usefulness2									0.950
Usefulness3									0.936

Table 5-3b Factor loading of Chinese sample

	Ability trust	WOM quantity	disposition trust	dissemination intention	integrity trust	involvement	media expression	purchase intention	usefulness
ability trust1	0.802								
ability trust2	0.844								
ability trust3	0.770								
disposition trust1			0.678						
disposition trust2			0.685						
disposition trust3			0.636						
disposition trust4			0.766						
integrity trust1					0.807				
integrity trust2					0.784				
integrity trust3					0.760				
involvement1						0.832			
involvement2						0.854			
involvement3						0.849			
media expression1							0.756		
media expression2							0.841		
media expression3							0.753		
media expression4							0.778		
dissemination1				0.848					
dissemination2				0.733					
dissemination3				0.726					
Dissemination4				0.795					
Dissemination5				0.715					
positive WOM 1		0.773							
positive WOM 2		0.767							
positive WOM 3		0.565							
positive WOM 4		0.821							
purchase intention1								0.820	
purchase intention2								0.721	
purchase intention3								0.745	
purchase intention4								0.816	
usefulness1									0.797
usefulness2									0.799
usefulness3									0.711

From Table 5-3a and 5-3b, every concept can be classified clearly through factor loading analysis.

Table 5-4a Validity of Japanese sample

Japanese sample	WOM quantity	ability trust	disposition trust	dissemination intention	integrity trust	involvement	media expression	purchase intention	usefulness
WOM quantity	0.776								
ability trust	0.349	0.754							
disposition trust	0.223	0.208	0.898						
dissemination intention	0.397	0.457	0.163	0.775					
integrity trust	0.442	0.682	0.242	0.439	0.823				
involvement	0.501	0.197	0.226	0.263	0.182	0.811			
media expression	0.636	0.492	0.201	0.518	0.586	0.383	0.713		
purchase intention	0.374	0.458	0.171	0.751	0.435	0.288	0.519	0.766	
usefulness	0.493	0.417	0.158	0.321	0.533	0.361	0.467	0.381	0.943

Through above Table 5-4a, due to each root square of AVE is larger than relevant correlation coefficients, the validity of can be accepted. The most closed two data are the AVE root square of dissemination intention and purchase intention. The second nearest pair is the AVE root square of ability trust and integrity trust.

Table 5-4b Validity of Chinese sample

Chinese sample	ability trust	WOM quantity	disposition trust	dissemination intention	integrity trust	involvement	media express	purchase intention	usefulness
ability trust	0.806								
WOM quantity	0.519	0.738							
disposition trust	0.352	0.417	0.693						
dissemination intention	0.553	0.533	0.364	0.765					
integrity trust	0.666	0.521	0.379	0.654	0.784				
involvement	0.331	0.415	0.345	0.266	0.304	0.845			
media expression	0.534	0.518	0.279	0.550	0.486	0.254	0.783		
purchase intention	0.660	0.583	0.373	0.650	0.671	0.337	0.499	0.777	
usefulness	0.625	0.587	0.290	0.669	0.670	0.238	0.534	0.644	0.770

Through above Table 5-4b, due to each root square of AVE is larger than relevant correlation coefficients, the validity of can be accepted. The most closed two data are the AVE root square of dissemination intention and usefulness. The second nearest pair is the AVE root square of purchase intention and usefulness.

5.3 Results of hypothesis test

Figure 5-1a shows that the largest R square is purchase intention and the largest regression route is between WOM quantity and usefulness. The least route of regression is between involvement and usefulness. Except that, the relationship between disposition trust and usefulness is the second least.

Figure 5-1b shows that the largest R square is dissemination intention and the largest regression route is between purchase intention and dissemination intention. The least route of regression is between involvement and integrity trust. Except that, the relationship between usefulness and dissemination intention is the second least.

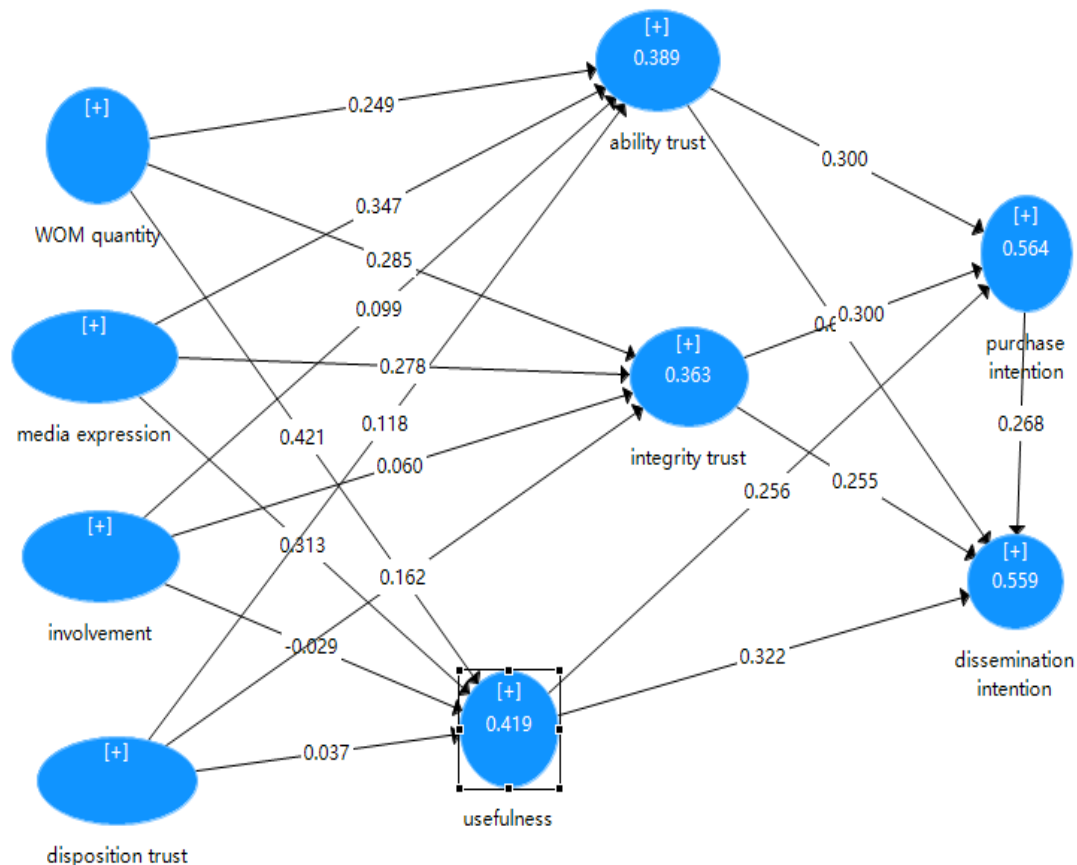


Figure 5-1a. Chinese PLS results of model 1

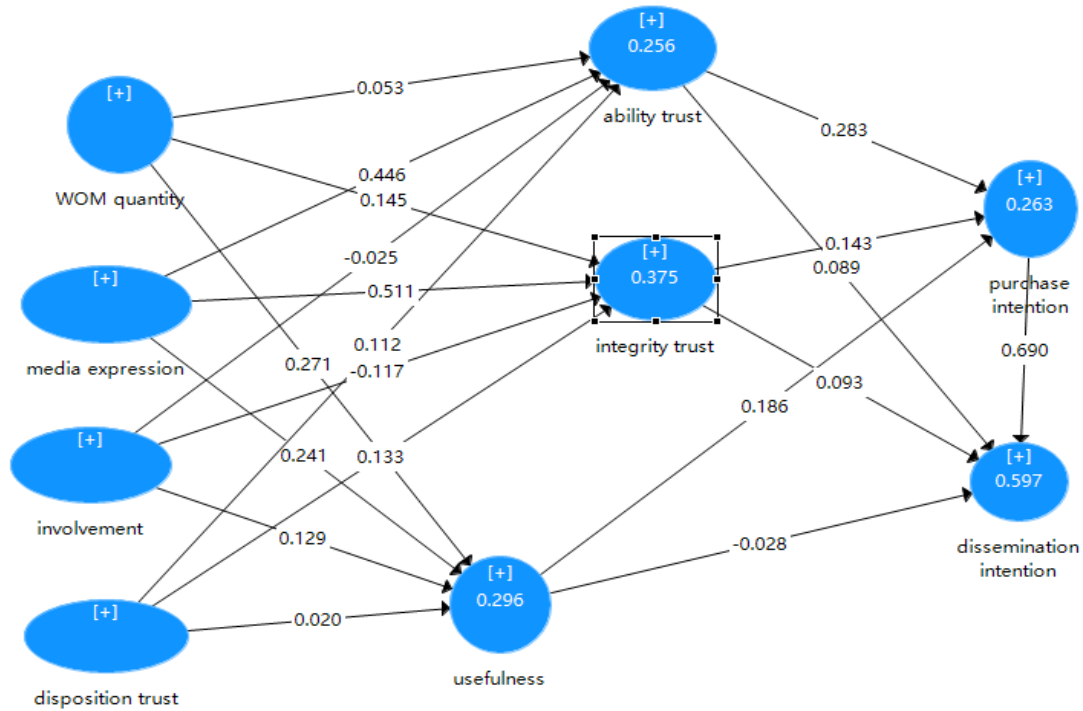


Figure 5-1b. Japanese PLS results of model 1

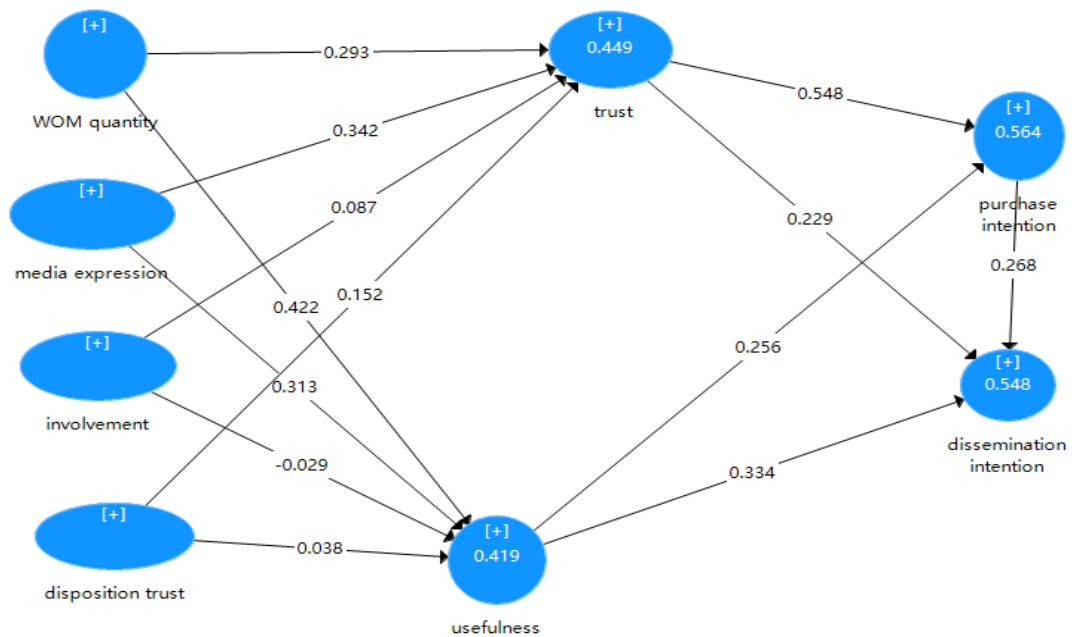


Figure 5-2a. Chinese PLS results of model 2

Figure 5-2a shows that the largest R square is purchase intention and the largest regression route is between trust and purchase intention. The least route of regression is between involvement and usefulness. Except that, the relationship between involvement and trust is the second least.

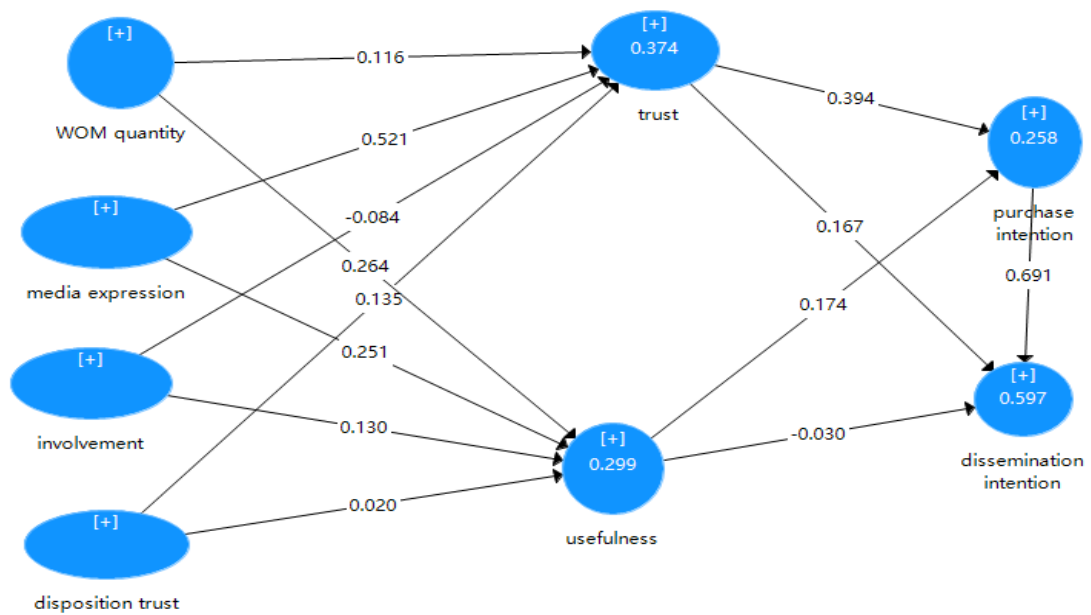


Figure 5-2b. Japanese PLS results of model 2

Figure 5-2b shows that the largest R square is dissemination intention and the largest regression route is between trust and multimedia expression. The least route of regression is between usefulness and dissemination intention. Except that, the relationship between involvement and trust is the second least.

Table 5-5a. Significant results of Japanese

Japanese sample 's P value	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
trust -> dissemination intention	0.167	0.163	0.056	2.991	0.003
trust -> purchase intention	0.394	0.398	0.072	5.492	0.000
WOM quantity -> trust	0.116	0.118	0.066	2.186	0.031
WOM quantity -> usefulness	0.264	0.268	0.075	3.521	0.000
disposition trust -> trust	0.135	0.134	0.054	2.498	0.013
disposition trust -> usefulness	0.020	0.021	0.061	0.327	0.744
involvement -> trust	-0.084	-0.081	0.073	1.143	0.253
involvement -> usefulness	0.130	0.131	0.074	1.743	0.082
media expression -> trust	0.521	0.527	0.072	7.261	0.000
media expression -> usefulness	0.251	0.252	0.087	2.886	0.004
purchase intention -> dissemination intention	0.691	0.695	0.039	17.929	0.000
usefulness -> dissemination intention	-0.030	-0.030	0.051	0.575	0.566
usefulness -> purchase intention	0.174	0.174	0.066	2.633	0.009

According to this Table 5-5a, there are 4 relationships which have no significance: the relationship between disposition trust and usefulness, the relationship between involvement and trust, the relationship between involvement and usefulness and the relationship between usefulness and dissemination intention.

Table 5-5b. Significant results of Chinese

Chinese sample's P value	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
trust -> dissemination intention	0.229	0.228	0.097	2.360	0.018
trust -> purchase intention	0.548	0.552	0.061	9.024	0.000
WOM quantity -> trust	0.293	0.287	0.071	4.136	0.000
WOM quantity -> usefulness	0.422	0.415	0.067	6.316	0.000
disposition trust -> trust	0.152	0.159	0.064	2.367	0.018
disposition trust -> usefulness	0.038	0.048	0.072	0.519	0.604
involvement -> trust	0.087	0.093	0.056	1.564	0.118
involvement -> usefulness	-0.029	-0.024	0.063	0.463	0.643
media expression -> trust	0.342	0.342	0.064	5.386	0.000
media expression -> usefulness	0.313	0.315	0.056	5.566	0.000
purchase intention -> dissemination intention	0.268	0.263	0.091	2.950	0.003
usefulness -> dissemination intention	0.334	0.344	0.075	4.466	0.000
usefulness -> purchase intention	0.256	0.252	0.066	3.856	0.000

According to this Table 5-5b, there are 3 relationships which have no significance: the relationship between disposition trust and usefulness, the relationship between involvement and trust and the relationship between involvement and usefulness.

Table 5-6. The result of H15

Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
Equation 1	(Constant)	.371	.245		1.510	.132
	Ztrust	1.181	.139	.980	8.478	.000
	Zage_A	.010	.074	.008	.133	.895
	Zincome	-.063	.059	-.070	-1.059	.290
	sex_A	-.089	.139	-.044	-.637	.525

Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
Equation 1	(Constant)	-.299	.198		-1.509	.133
	Zage_A	-.009	.064	-.009	-.143	.886
	Zincome	.054	.051	.074	1.062	.289
	sex_A	.070	.118	.042	.594	.553
	Zusefulness	.872	.111	1.050	7.875	.000

There are two significant variables in two regression equations in Table 5-6: trust and usefulness. When trust is independent variable, the usefulness is significant. It is the same on the contrary. All of age, income and sex are not significant.

Model: capurchase = f(caintrust, caabtrust, caquanti)

Rows: 8
☐ Rows: 3 37.5%
☐ Rows: 5 62.5%
☐ Rows: 0 0.0%

Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
 True: 1

--- COMPLEX SOLUTION ---
 frequency cutoff: 2.000000
 consistency cutoff: 0.904844

	raw coverage	unique coverage	consistency
caabtrust	0.827515	0.126295	0.876658
caintrust*caquanti	0.760677	0.059457	0.931553
solution coverage:	0.886972		
solution consistency:	0.873642		

Figure 5-3. The result of H16

This Figure 5-3 illustrates that there is no one solution with three variables together, even we put three variables into software. The target is reach purchase intention. There two combinations can get this result. One is improving ability trust. Another is improving ability trust and WOM quantity together.

From above calculation, all hypotheses results can be summarized as below: Firstly, Three hypotheses of involvement are rejected in both counties (H4, H5, H6) and H3: The relationship between disposition to trust and usefulness is rejected too. For H15, it is supported partially, because of the can influence each other, which relationship doesn't adjusted by gender, income and age. H16 is rejected fully. H17 is supported partially for 3 of 6 relationships appeared differences between two countries.

Owing to difference of purchase and disseminate intention between japan and china, H18 is supported. All of other hypotheses are confirmed by data test. All results of hypotheses test are summarized by Table 5-7.

Table 5-7. All results of hypotheses test

H1	Disposition to trust can impact on ability trust significantly.	Supported
H2	Disposition to trust can impact on integrity trust significantly.	Supported
H3	Disposition to trust can impact on perceived usefulness significantly	Rejected
H4	Involvement can impact on ability trust significantly.	Rejected
H5	Involvement can impact on integrity trust significantly.	Rejected
H6	Involvement can impact on perceived usefulness significantly	Rejected
H7	Quantity of WOM can impact on ability trust significantly.	Supported
H8	Quantity of WOM can impact on integrity trust significantly.	Supported
H9	Quantity of WOM can impact on perceived usefulness significantly	Supported
H10	Multimedia expression can impact on ability trust significantly.	Supported
H11	Multimedia expression can impact on integrity trust significantly.	Supported
H12	Multimedia expression can impact on perceived usefulness significantly	Supported
H13	Usefulness can influence purchase intention significantly.	Supported
H14	Purchase intention can influence dissemination intention significantly	Supported
H15	Perceived usefulness and trust influence each other and this relationship is moderated by gender, income and age.	Partial supported
H16	The combination of ability trust, integrity trust and WOM quantity is the best solution of the three variables for the cultivation of purchase intention.	Rejected
H17	All relationships about trust in China and Japan have great differences.	Partial supported

H18	The Relationship between purchase intention and dissemination intention in China and Japan has great difference.	Supported
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Chapter 6. Results and discussion

All significant relationships are summarized in Figure 6-1. From the results, five hypotheses are rejected and two are partially proven by the significance test. These results are discussed as follows.

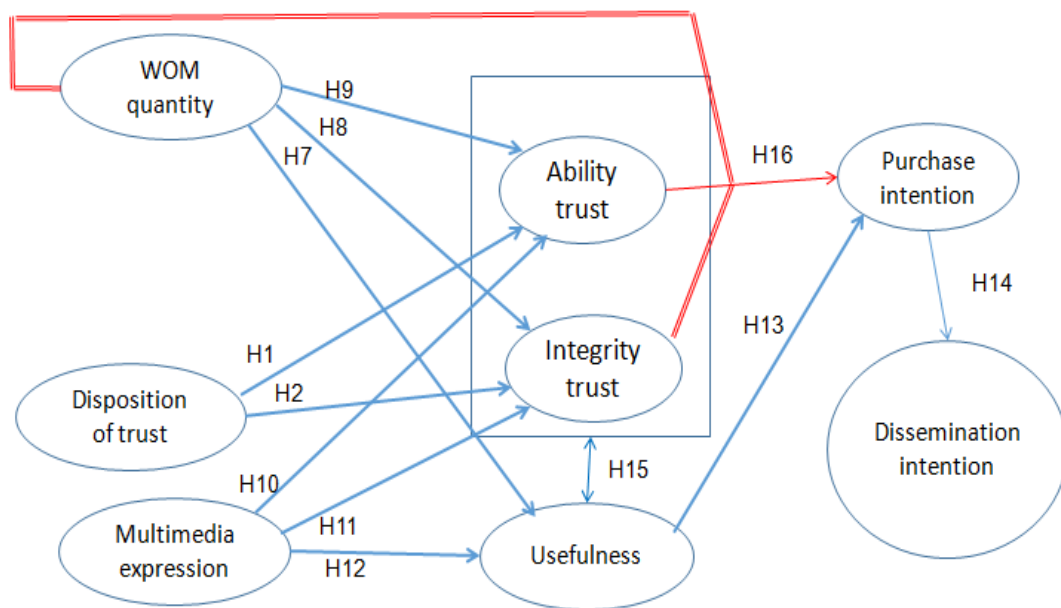


Figure 6-1. All the significant results of Hypotheses

6.1 Significant and partial significant discussion

The empirical analysis result shows that the influence of consumer involvement on trust (H4 and H5) and usefulness (H6) did not pass the significance test and the result is universal. Neither the Chinese nor the Japanese data passed the significance test.

Here are some reasons for such a result. First, is the irrelevance of consumer and trust to WOM information and sensing of usefulness. This explanation is opposite to that of a majority of prior surveys. Celsi and Olson (1988) think that the effect of involvement should consider situational sources (situation involvement) relevant to each individual and inner origin (lasting involvement) combining these two sources.

This study ensures the importance of involvement. Bi (2010) also found that website involvement had a substantial influence on consumer risk perception. Therefore, we believe that the relevance between WOM trust and involvement should not be overlooked.

Second, consumers may not understand the questionnaire, resulting in deviation. However, this possibility is very low as the questionnaire is one designed by Zaichkowsky (1985) and widely used by many scholars. The applications from different countries all verified the reliability of this questionnaire.

The third explanation is the more reliable one: consumer involvement in the products studied is generally low. Therefore, the questionnaire measuring involvement is invalid. Involvement can be explained as the relevance between products, advertising, and purchasing environment, based on their value concept and interest. Involvement is a subjective perception that is relevant to the consumer's self-perception and the information resource. Former scholars defined the degree of consumer involvement differently by various methods based on different research contents. Meanwhile, what is sure is that the degree of consumer involvement will have a short or long-term influence on their behavior. The theory and practice of marketing must ensure the type of involvement, their respective levels, and different influences on consumer psychology and behavior. However, improvement in output and technological development drastically reduces the lifetime of some technology-based products. Rapid upgrading leads to swift fall in the degree of consumer involvement in electronics and technology products. On one hand, the faster technology upgrades, the more frequently are electronics and technology products eliminated. On the other hand, decreasing prices of electronics and technology products enables consumers to easily access these products. What more important is electronics and technology products, especially tablet computer belongs to searching products but not experiencing products. The differences between such types of products are minute, and most of them provide the same functions. In addition, tablet computers in recent years have not undergone substantial innovation making it difficult to attract consumers.

The influence of trust disposition on usefulness failed to pass the significant test in both (H3). As the coefficients for both countries are small, we believe that this relation must be examined further. However, we will not arbitrarily conclude that this relation does not exist. This result can be explained tentatively as follows. Although consumers' personal trust disposition can influence their information process, perhaps it cannot influence usefulness perception.

Usefulness and trust can enhance each other (H15). Usefulness and trust are different perspectives of information consideration. Useful information cannot be fully trusted in certain situations. Further, some information will be saved first as useful information. However, whether it can be trusted or not needs further analysis. In addition, trusted information does not mean it is useful. Some trusted information might be known and confirmed beforehand and is redundant for consumers. Although trust and usefulness have differences, it seems quite reasonable that they enhance each other. One suspicious message could lead to loss of trust in consumers, even for useful information. This analysis and results conform with the research results of Suh (2002) and Horst (2006).

From the research, we can be certain that individual trust disposition has obvious influence on trust (H1 and H2). The influence of trust disposition in China and Japan has passed the test of significance with very little difference. As individual trust disposition is an important antecedent of trust, people with high trust propensity trust others more easily. Further, we find a strong relation between trust disposition and trust, especially under the circumstance that the both sides are not familiar with each other. (Mayer et al., 1995; Coppola et al., 2004). The conclusion of this research proved the above opinion. In China, this factor is 0.152; while it is 0.135 in Japan. As the difference is so minor it does not merit further investigation.

6.2 Discussion on coefficients

6.2. 1 Positive WOM quantity

The study revealed that WOM quantity could exert a positive effect on both consumer trust and perception of usefulness and pass the significance test, which is in accordance with the previous conclusions of the studies (H7, H8, and H9). In fact, the WOM quantity is the popularity of certain products among consumers and a high WOM quantity indicates more consumers and a popular product.

Overall, the influence of WOM quantity on consumer trust is primarily reflected in the dimension of integrity trust. In China, the impact factor of consumer perception on integrity trust is 0.825, while it is 0.145 in Japan. The impact factor of the WOM quantity on competence trust is 0.053, while it is 0.249 in China. The combination of the competence trust and integrity trust shows that the impact factor of WOM quantity on trust in China and Japan are 0.293 and 0.116, respectively. The impact factor of WOM quantity on the usefulness is 0.422 in China and 0.264 in Japan.

Many researches have demonstrated a significant correlation between WOM quantity, consumer behavior, and market achievements (Anderson and Salisbury, 2003; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Liu, 2006), which indicates that the “effect of awareness” of WOM is rather obvious. This study confirms the significant effect of WOM quantity on consumer trust. Liu (2006) thought that the WOM quantity mainly plays an informational role improving consumer cognition, which could explain that WOM quantity influences the perception of usefulness. Further, an increase in consumer cognition will strengthen consumers’ purchasing psychology and behavior. Through data analysis of consumer purchases and reviews on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com, Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) found the following. First, reviews had absolutely positive effect on the two websites, but Amazon had both longer and greater number of reviews; second, more WOM would improve the sale of books; third, compared with the positive effect of PWOM on the sale, the NWOM might cause a larger negative impact on the sale of books. Finally, consumers would

not only focus on “WOM quantity” and “WOM score” when they scan the WOM, but also read its contents (i.e., the length of WOM content). Therefore, with the growth in WOM, product sales will increase accordingly. Although former scholars have referred to the study of WOM quantity, the various dimensional effects on trust have been not so clear yet. Therefore, the combination of the above theoretical model constructed by the two trust variables will have a certain reference value for the research of EWOM.

The research also revealed some differences in the effects of EWOM in China and Japan, which we will discuss further later.

6.2.2 Multimedia expression

The study confirms that multimedia expression has great influence on trust and usefulness (H10, H11, and H12). In China, the overall influence of multimedia expression of trust is 0.342. However, this ratio is 0.512 in Japan, as Japanese consumers thought that multimedia expression substantially influenced integrity trust (0.511). In China, the relevance of multimedia expression and integrity trust is only 0.278. The influence ratios of multimedia expression on usefulness are similar in both countries, which are 0.251 and 0.313, respectively.

Lurie and Mason (2007) highlighted the relationship between visual cues and WOM studies. They note that a picture is worth a thousand words and emphasize that visual information has suggestibility to consumer’s decision making. For an analysis of visual cues, Lurie and Mason (2007) put forward the visual perspective (level of interaction and detailed product view) and background information (vivid, evaluation and information framework) characteristics. The e-commerce website mentioned in their study enables consumers to examine products in their own home, and provides other forms of EWOM to consumers who are satisfied or dissatisfied with enterprise products. Visual cues conveyed to consumers by such EWOM can help shape product expectations.

The study shows that not only pictures but also other expressions can cause similar effects, such as videos and emoticons. The other explanation is that pictures, videos, or emoticons play an important role in consumer moods and feelings of arousal. The influence of mood and feeling has two aspects: (1) the conformity or conflict between one comment and others. Korfiatis and others think that the conformity of on-line comments is important for consumers to sense usefulness, and if one comment cannot reflect the consensus of another for the same product, it will be considered useless (Korfiatis, 2012). The conclusion of this study is the same as this idea. Kim and Gupta (2012) referred to the conformity among comments as convergence. The study shows that online comments expressing emotion affect products evaluation by consumers. There are no interpersonal links and proximity of physical space between the comment sender and receiver. The emotional expression of online comments will not arouse an emotional reaction in the comment receivers. Comment receivers will apply a cognitive process to the comment sender's emotions. When there is only one comment, the expression of negative feelings will be considered as irrational, and the influence ration of comment on product's evaluation will decrease. Instead, when there is more than one comment and the emotional expression remains convergent, ignoring the preferences expressed by the comments, comment receivers will contribute the emotion to products but not the comment senders, and the influence ration of comments on product's evaluation will increase.

Finally, pictures and video contain a large quantity of background information. The effect of background information itself is limited, but it offers verifiable background information for consumers to assess the purchasing environment and situation of others. Furthermore, they can assess the self-identification levels of other consumers. The theory of symbolic interaction emphasizes that relationships have a great influence on the formation of self-conception. We live in a society of symbols, almost every situation or object has a symbolic meaning. Decoding these symbolic meanings shapes a consumer's self-cognition. The decoding might have three results as follows. First, consumers may think they share common attributes with the product while others may think the product is suitable to their status. Second, most consumers

have high social status and better finances and thus may generate trust and sense of usefulness. Third, most consumers are of lower social status and poor finances or have different self-cognition with themselves and avoid purchasing this product. However, we can be sure that multimedia WOM can provide decision making information to consumers. The influence of multimedia expression on trust in both countries will be discussed further.

6.2. 3 Sub-dimensions of trust and usefulness on purchase intention

From two dimensions of the trust aspect, Chinese consumers concentrate more on integrity trust because, in China, integrity trust impacts purchase and dissemination intention on levels of 0.300 and 0.225, respectively. This is higher than Japanese data (0.143 and 0.093). There is almost no difference in ability trust between the two countries. After combining the two dimensions, trust influences purchase and dissemination intention on levels of 0.548 and 0.229, respectively. In Japan, this is 0.394 and 0.167. This illustrates that trust has a greater impact in China when compared to Japan.

In China, the influence of usefulness on purchase and dissemination intention is 0.256 and 0.334 (H13). Among them, the relationship between usefulness and dissemination (-0.030) does not pass the significance test. Perhaps Japanese consumers generate more WOMs than Chinese consumers. They might believe WOM as only a touching method with other people. The relationship between usefulness and purchase intention has been proved repeatedly in prior research (Bi, 2010). This study proved it again.

6.2.4 Differences between Chinese and Japanese

Table 6-1. Differences between Chinese and Japanese

Relationship	Coefficient	Differences
--------------	-------------	-------------

Purchase intention → Dissemination intention	0.268 (China)	0.423
	0.691(Japan)	
Quantity of WOM → Trust	0.293(China)	0.177
	0.116(Japan)	
WOM quantity → Usefulness	0.422(China)	0.158
	0.264(Japan)	
Multimedia expression → Trust	0.342(China)	0.170
	0.512(Japan)	
Usefulness→ Dissemination (unexpected discovery)	0.334(China)	0.334
	No significance	
Trust → Purchase intention	0.548(China)	0.154
	0.394(Japan)	

First, the quantity of WOM can impact trust more (H17), especially ability trust in China in comparison to Japan. From a cultural aspect, the Chinese individualism score is 20 and the Japanese score is 46 (Hofstede, 1993). Therefore, it is reasonable to think that peer influence has more power in China. However, the uncertainty avoidance score of the Japanese is much higher than the Chinese. Why are the Japanese insensitive to peer influence? Social policy should be considered here. Japan, as a high trust country (Fukuyama), 1995, can ensure quality and financial safety of products. Thus, the Japanese do not care about WOM quantity. However, Chinese consumer protection laws are insufficient.

Second, the trust influence purchase intention is different in China and Japan (0.548 and 0.394, respectively) (H 14 and H17). As noted earlier, a high trust country provides insurance for consumers and they do not need to increase trust anymore. However, trust is highly correlated with risk. More income results in more brave purchases, when price is fixed. Probably, this difference occurs just because of income. In addition, the philosophy of collectivism requires individuals to consider others before themselves.

Third, multimedia expression is a greater influence on trust in Japan (0.342 in China and 0.521 in Japan) (H17). Some scholars point out that 10.3% of WOMs are manipulated (Hu. N et al., 2012). Since Chinese laws insufficient, this percentage is surely greater than 10.3%. Chinese consumers are alert and never take expressions on face value; however, Japanese consumers lack this alertness.

Fourth, from Table 6-1, Japanese consumers are more willing to spread WOM information when they intend to purchase (H18). The coefficient of regression from purchase to dissemination is 0.268 in China; however, it is 0.691 in Japan. Why do the Japanese talk so much? Although, the common opinion is that the Japanese are quieter than the Chinese. This result reveals two possible reasons. First, the Japanese population is rapidly aging and the sample's distribution shows the large number of senior citizens. Lonely old folk need a way to communicate and discussing products is one way to achieve this. Second, some scholars have already proven that motivations behind WOM include altruism (Dellarocas and Narayan, 2006) and perhaps different levels of altruism trigger this situation. This study is only based on self-reporting and the real impact of altruism should be explored further. The need for self-enhancement should be considered too (Angelis et al., 2012).

Last, usefulness influences dissemination intention significantly only in China. This is an unexpected discovery, which cannot be properly explained based on previous theories. For one, the Japanese generated more WOMs than the Chinese; however, they think those WOMs are useless. This phenomenon should be tested and discussed further in the future.

6.3 Other discussion: combination of two dimensions of trust and purchase intention

This study tested the best combination of ability trust, integrity trust, and quantity of WOM for cultivation of purchase intention (H16). The result shows that improving integrity and ability trust together is not so effective. Most prior research concentrated on factor analysis; however, Woodside (2013) states that maybe the recipe is more important than the ingredients. Prior studies declared the usefulness of integrity is very limited for improving purchase intention, for which ability trust is the key (Xie, 2012). This study attempts to argue that integrity can also trigger purchase intention significantly, as long as it appears together with WOM quantity.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

7.1 Summary of findings and contribution

This study discovered several important findings. Firstly, the influence mechanism of WOM is summarized and confirmed through empirical data analysis. From this mechanism, WOM quantity, media expression, and disposition trust can influence ability trust, integrity trust, and usefulness. However, the influence involvement is highly related to product type. This study did not observe this influence. Second, trust and usefulness can influence purchase intention and dissemination intention and this relationship is very significant, according to our research. It proves that when consumers receive WOMs, they first judge this information. If they think it can be trusted, they decide to purchase products or disseminate the information. Trust is only one aspect in consideration, as consumers will consider their utility at the same time. Third, purchase intention can influence dissemination intention. Consumers always try to disseminate information after they purchase a product. Fourth, trust and usefulness can influence each other. Perceived trust improves usefulness. Consumers think trusted information is useful. Usefulness also improved trust. Consumers perceive that some unconfirmed information contains valuable information. Last, ability trust can influence purchase intention individually. For integrity trust, it has to work with a quantity of WOM. In other words, the accumulation of WOM proves the sender's integrity and consumers cannot accept integrity without it.

These aspects reveal the contribution and originality of this research.

First, this research proves that multimedia expression can significantly improve trust and usefulness. As King (2014) declared that visual WOM should be researched urgently, this study is one of a few that test the function and influence of media expression. Yap et al. (2013) argued that product reviews could be classified as per two characteristics; namely, cognitive features and emotional features. This study did

not explore the expression method for emotion reason. Hamby, Daniloski, and Brinberg (2015) found that narrative reviews are more persuasive than argumentative reviews. This study only refers to language styles. The multimedia expression result completed the mechanism theory of WOM. Multimedia expression is an important factor of influence mechanism and contributes to purchase intention, proving that except for information itself, expression is vital for consumer acceptance. Companies and websites can use it to increase purchase rate.

Second, this study also contributes to research methodology. A new calculation method was developed to reduce data dimensions and reasonably distribute the five scale results. Normally, the five-scale questionnaire is too narrow for further analysis in various data process. Peiling Wu (2014) explained how to calibrate 5% and 95% problem in 5-point Likert scale as “1=0.5; 2=0.25; 3=0.5; 4=0.75; 5=0.95. However, if respondents ignore an extreme score such as 1 or 5, the calibration scores would have been adjusted accordingly: 1=0.00; 2=0.05.” There are only 5 scores in 5-point Likert scale. If researchers adopt 2 for 5%, it may include 15% or more. Our new formula solves this problem and can precisely target 5% calibration.

Next, both ability and integrity trust are demonstrated as influencing purchase intention and dissemination intention. Several scholars (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Kanawattanachai & Yoo, 2002; Eisingerich, 2014; Sussman & Siegal, 2003) proved the function of trust but did not explore further. This study goes deeper into WOM research.

Moreover, our research demonstrates the interactive relationship between trust and usefulness. The argument about the relationship between those two concepts is a long-standing one, primarily concerning which is dependent or independent among them. This study answered this question. There is an interactive relationship between the two, discovered through one-way linear exploration, and is a new perspective on WOM research.

In addition, this study used fsQCA to investigate ability trust, integrity trust, and quantity of WOM. This is rarely used for WOM through the Boolean logic symbol test. This study attempted to discuss the combination of factors, which are the raw

materials for purchase. Most importantly, it is how they work together and our research revealed this different function of trust dimensions.

Last, this study noted differences between China and Japan. Prior studies focus only on one country. Relevant studies have no strict comparative significance because they use various methods and operations. This study reveals those comparative points precisely, comparing through meta-analysis. Finally, samples are collected when the same questionnaire was used.

7.2 Implications

For managers, this study answered how Internet WOM influences purchase intention and dissemination intention. We find that trust and usefulness are the two keys for purchase and dissemination intention. When companies try to attract more customers by WOM, they should first attempt to improve trust and usefulness levels. Companies can manage WOM in four aspects: quantity of WOM, multimedia expression, involvement and disposition to trust. Lots of WOM signals that the product is popular among consumers. Multimedia expression attracts consumers and they believe the reviews. For involvement, its effect is in conjunction with the product and some experience products should notice involvement function.

The easiest way to improve trust levels is by improving ability trust. Ability trust can impact purchase intention directly. Of course, improving integrity also affects this, when companies spend more time and money to accumulate quantity WOM. This method is slow and expensive; however, it can generate a long-term relationship between consumers and companies.

If a company targets the Japanese market, they should encourage Japanese consumers to generate multimedia WOMs. If they target the Chinese market, quantity of WOM is important. Finally, companies need not worry about WOM quantity in Japan, even they may not type it on internet. However, these WOMs cannot overtly influence the purchase decision of the self-centered Japanese consumer.

Academically, this research only discussed multimedia expression. Future

research should discuss the combination of different media. Other factors may also influence WOM acceptance and future research can further explore this aspect.

To improve trust levels for marketing as a whole, this study implies that enhancing government management cannot significantly redress societal situations. Restriction of management in society will impose centralization of state power, which will trigger further government corruption. Finally, individuals will band together in small groups to ensure their legal rights and this will enhance collectivism worsening social trust. Hofstede (2003) proved that it is harder to build social trust in collectivist countries than individualist ones. Therefore, the government should lead individualist thought among the country's citizens.

7.3 Limitations

First, this study is based on a self-reporting questionnaire. Self-reporting is not actual behavior and it is important to research the difference between actual behavior and self-reporting. In fact, self-reporting is about the ideal self. Solomon (2008) points out that many consumers try to fill the gap between their ideal and actual selves through fantasy. Second, the sample size is relatively small and two countries require a large sample size in future. Although those samples come from different areas of the two countries, their representativeness should be further discussed. Third, this research only investigated tablet PCs and the inherent influence of product type and brands should be noticed. Tablet PCs are a typical product searched for by consumers who do not care much about its experience. Experienced products should be examined further. Last, this study attempts to compare differences in WOM acceptance and dissemination between China and Japan. Nevertheless, there are many dimensions among the two countries that hardly explain these WOM differences. We suggest that economics, policy, culture, and customs should be considered together.

Appendix A. Questionnaire and questions' references

English Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for customers who want purchase computer and components or brand clothes through online shop or website, please try to recall your recent website browse experience (if you didn't remember, please open your computer browse history and don't close it):

Part 1

1. The product your purchased most recently is ()
A. foods C. clothes D. tablet
2. The product brand is _____
3. Your gender is ()
A male B female
4. How old are you?
A <18 B 18-24 C 25-34 D 35-44 E 45-54 F. over 55
5. Your nationality is ?
A China B Japan C USA D.others
6. What is your job?
A. student B. company business man C. school D. hospital E. government F. other organizations G. housewife
7. Your income per month?
(Different in each language edition)

References	code	Questions	Sub-concept
Ability Trust			
Ridings 2002	TA1	The other participants on that website/online shop have much knowledge or experience about the computer and components or clothes	Professional knowledge
	TA2	The other participants on that web/online shop seem to be successful in the activities they undertake.	Action ability
	TA3	The other participants on this web/online shop are well qualified in the computer and component or clothes understanding	Experience
Integrity Trust			
Ridings 2002	TI1	The other participants on that web/online shop are concerned about what is important to other consumers	Care
	TI2	The other participants on that web/online shop will do everything within their capacity to help others	kindness
	TI3	The other participants on that web/online shop try hard to be fair in dealing with one another	Share
Disposition to trust			
GeFen 2000, Lee and Turban 2001, Ridings et al 2002	DT1	I usually trust others	frequency
	DT2	I tend to trust others	Tendency
	DT3	I think humanity can be trusted	Social attitude
	DT4	I often trust others except they give me an unreliable reason.	Pre-Suppose
Involvement			
Zaichkowsky (1985,1994)	In 1	The product which discussed by Word of mouth is important for me	Important
	In 2	For me, the product which discussed by Word of mouth is interesting	Interesting
	In 5	For me, the product which discussed by Word of mouth is means a lot to me	Significant

Perceived usefulness			
(Venkatesh&davis, 2000); (Wang et al. ,2005); (Taylor &Todd,1995)	Pu1	Those Word of mouth can increase my personal efficiency?	Decision easy
	Pu2	I find that it is quite useful to read Word of mouth.	Help Decision
	Pu3	Those comments are informative	Information value
Purchase intention			
Gilly et al. 1998, Bansal and Voyer Choi, et al., 2003; Davis, 1989, Gefen, et al., 2003	Pi1	I would like to recommend the computer and components or clothes online shop to my friends	recommendation
	Pi2	There is a strong likelihood that I will buy that one	Intention level
	Pi3	I will purchase that computer and components or clothes	Intention level
	Pi4	Given a choice, my friends will choose that one.	Hypothesis
Disseminated intention			
Brown et al 2005	DI1	If my friends consider to purchase this product, I will tell them those Word of mouth	Information recommendation
	DI2	I am willing to paste those Word of mouth to other websites or online shops	Positive action
	DI3	When I chat with friends about this product, I will mention those Word of mouth	Passive action
	DI4	I will tell my friends about those Word of mouth to enquire their advice.	Exchange benefit
	DI5	After purchase, I will write comments / I have written comments	Activity

Positive WOM quantity			
New items by authors	Q1	I can see same positive comments in other websites and online shops about this product	Website view
	Q2	I can find many positive comments about this product through search engine	Search engine view
	Q3	There are lots of consumers who agree with those positive products	Comments are followed
	Q4	Positive comments of other customers are very similar about this product	Converge
Multimedia expression			
New items by authors	M1	Those online comments about this product use various multimedia types such as words, photos, and video.	Various
	M2	This online shop looks vivid because of various multimedia types.	Vivid
	M3	The multimedia expression types are plenty.	Plenty
	M4	I am satisfied with the multimedia expression types which is enough	Adequate
All questions are measured by Likert 5 scales Questionnaire			

中文问卷

在线口碑（网络商品评价）调查问卷

尊敬的顾客您好：

感谢您的关注，这份问卷仅仅花您几分钟时间。如果您最近准备在网上购买或已经购买平板电脑产品，请填写该问卷。请您回忆最近一次浏览过的商品，然后再填写问卷，如果您不记得，请打开您的浏览器历史记录，找出该商品的网页，并且不要关闭。

该问卷是匿名问卷，不会泄露您的个人隐私。问卷用途仅限于学术研究。

第一部分：

请选择符合您的选项。

1. 您最近准备在网上购买了哪一类商品或者已经购买了哪一类商品？
A. 衣服（包括鞋和帽子） B. 平板电脑 C. 衣服和电子产品都买 D. 其它商品
2. 该产品的品牌是_____？
3. 您的性别是（ ）
A 男性 B 女性
4. 您的年龄是（ ）
A 18岁以下 B 18-24岁 C 25-34岁 D. 35-44岁 E. 45-54岁 F. 55以上
5. 您的国籍是（ ）
A 中国人 B 美国人 C 日本人 D 其它
6. 您的职业是（ ）
A. 学生
B. 公司职员
C. 家庭主妇
D. 学校 医院 或公益性机构职员
E. 政府职员
7. 您每月的收入（税后）是
A. 无收入 B. 1000-4000RMB C. 4000-8000RMB D. 8000RMB-12000RMB E.超过12000RMB

第二部分

请给下列陈述评分， 1 分表示完全不赞同 5 分表示完全赞同，请选择您认为符合您想法的分数。

问题	评分
DT1. 我通常会信任其他人	1 2 3 4 5
DT2. 我总是尝试去相信其他人	1 2 3 4 5
DT3. 我认为人性是善良的，可以被信任。	1 2 3 4 5
DT4. 我经常信任别人，除非他给我一个理由他不能被信任。	1 2 3 4 5
In1 我打算网络购买的平板电脑 对我来说很重要	1 2 3 4 5
In2 我打算网络购买的平板电脑对我来说很有趣	1 2 3 4 5
In3 我打算网络购买的平板电脑和我生活关联较大	1 2 3 4 5
Q1 我发现了很多关于这件商品积极的网络评论	1 2 3 4 5
Q2 利用搜索引擎，我能找到很多关于这件商品的正面评论	1 2 3 4 5
Q3 关于这件商品的正面评论都很相似	1 2 3 4 5
Q4 该商品的正面评论有很多支持者	1 2 3 4 5
M1 该商品的评价信息应用了很多不同类型的表达方式	1 2 3 4 5
M2 该商品评论的信息表现形式很丰富	1 2 3 4 5
M3 该商品评论的信息表现形式很充足	1 2 3 4 5
M4 该商品评论的信息表现形式很生动	1 2 3 4 5
AT1 网上评论这件商品的人很有经验，商品知识充足	1 2 3 4 5
AT2 网上评论这件商品的人完成评价很容易	1 2 3 4 5
AT3 网上评论这件商品的人很了解该商品，有资格去评论该商品	1 2 3 4 5
IT1 网上评论这件商品的人关心其他的消费者和评价阅读者	1 2 3 4 5
IT2 网上评论这件商品的人是在尽力帮助别人	1 2 3 4 5
IT3 网上评论这件商品的人能够公平评论商品，公平对待他人	1 2 3 4 5
PU1 关于该商品的评论提高了我的个人决策效率	1 2 3 4 5
PU2 关于该商品的评论对我来说很有用	1 2 3 4 5
PU3 关于该商品的评论信息很丰富	1 2 3 4 5
PI1 我会推荐这件商品给我朋友	1 2 3 4 5
PI2 有很大可能性我会购买该商品	1 2 3 4 5
PI3 我会购买该商品	1 2 3 4 5
PI4 如果有机会，我想我朋友也会买这件商品	1 2 3 4 5
DI1 如果我朋友也想买这件商品，我会告诉他这件商品的网上评价	1 2 3 4 5
DI2 我会复制这些评价，然后粘贴到其他网站上	1 2 3 4 5
DI3 购买后，我会写针对这件商品的网络评价/我已经写了该商品的网络评价	1 2 3 4 5
DI4 我和朋友聊天时候会提到该商品的网络评价	1 2 3 4 5
DI5 我会告诉我朋友这件商品的网络评价，然后征求他们的意见	1 2 3 4 5

ネットショッピングに関する アンケート調査についてのお願い

私は立命館大学大学院テクノロジー・マネジメント研究科の博士後期課程に在学しており、ネットショッピング利用者の購入した商品に対する評価について研究しております。そこで、皆様のネットショッピングでの評価に関する現状を調査したいと思いますので、下記のアンケートにお答えください。

なお、今回のアンケートは匿名での実施であるため、お答え頂いた情報については学術的な目的のみに使用させて頂き、個人の情報が漏れることは決してありません。

アンケートにご協力、ご回答をお願い致します。

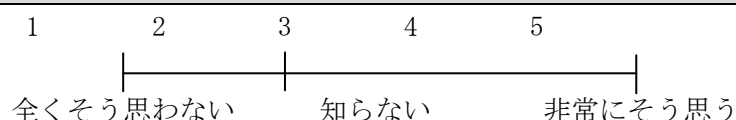
記

I. 該当する選択肢をお選びください。

1. 性別： A. 男性 B. 女性
2. 年齢： A. 18 歳未満 B. 18-24 歳 C. 25-34 歳 D. 35-44 歳 E. 45-54 歳 F. 55 歳以上
3. 国籍： A. 日本 B. アメリカ C. 中国 D. その他
4. 職業： A. 学生 B. 会社員 C. 専業主婦 D. 自営業
E. 公務員 F. その他
5. 月収： A. 0-9 万円 B. 10-15 万円 C. 16-25 万円 D. 26-35 万円 E. 35 万円以上
6. 最近、ネットショッピングでどのようなものを購入しましたか？
 - A. 衣料品（帽子、靴などを含む）
 - B. 家電（パソコン、パソコン周辺デバイス、デジカメ、携帯電話など含む）
 - C. 日用品、食料品
 - D. その他
 - E. 購入していない

、

Ⅱ. ご自分の考え方に当てはまる程度や頻度を、1～5の尺度に○をつけてお答えください。



質問項目	尺度				
DT1. いつも他人を信頼する。	1	2	3	4	5
DT2. いつも他人を信じる傾向があります。	1	2	3	4	5
DT3. 人は基本的に善い人で、信じられる存在だと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
DT4. 特に理由がなければ、いつも他人を信頼する。	1	2	3	4	5
In1 ネットショッピングで何かを購入する場合、その商品は私にとって大事なものだ。	1	2	3	4	5
In2 ネットショッピングで何かを購入する場合、その商品はおもしろいと思ったものだ。	1	2	3	4	5
In3 ネットショッピングで何かを購入する場合、その商品は生活に大きく関わるものだ。	1	2	3	4	5
Q1 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品について、ネットやマスコミ等でよい評価があると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
Q2 Google などの検索エンジンを通じて、今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品について、良い評価を見つけたことがある。	1	2	3	4	5
Q3 良い評価を得ている商品について、同意している人が多いと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
Q4 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品について、良い評価は同じような内容が多いと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
IT1 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品について、写真、映像などの多くの情報を用いてネット上で評価されていると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
IT2 ネットショッピングサイトは、さまざまな情報で活性化されていると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
M3 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品についてのレビューが多く、の形(写真、映像)で表現されている。	1	2	3	4	5
M4 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品についてのレビューが十分な形で表現されている。	1	2	3	4	5
TA1 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、ネットショッピングの経験が豊富で、商品に対する知識がたくさんあると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
TA2 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、評価を簡単に決めていると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
TA3 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、その商品をよく知っていて、評価する資格があると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
TI1 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、他の販売者やレビュー閲覧者に関心を持っていると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
TI2 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、他の購入者	1	2	3	4	5

の手助けになっていると思う。					
TI3 ネット上で商品をレビューしている人は、公平に商品 を評価していると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
PU1 レビューを確認することは、効率よく買い物すること の手助けになると思う。	1	2	3	4	5
PU2 レビューは、役に立つと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
PU3 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品について レビュー情報はとても多いと思う。					
PI1 私は、今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品に ついて、友達に勧めたいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
PI2 私は、今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品に ついて、再びネットで買う可能性が高いです。	1	2	3	4	5
PI3 私は、今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品に ついて、絶対にネットで買います。	1	2	3	4	5
Pi4 今までに購入した商品や今後購入したい商品を、自分 の友人に購入してほしいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
DI1 私が買った商品を友人が買いたいなら、その評価を友 人に教えたいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
DI2 私が買った商品について、ネット上でレビューして、 広めたいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5
DI3 私が買った商品について、レビューを書いたことがあ る。	1	2	3	4	5
DI4 私が買った商品のレビューについて、友人に話したい と思う。	1	2	3	4	5
DI5 私が買った商品のレビューについて、友人に感想を聞 きたいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5

アンケートは以上です。
ご協力、誠にありがとうございました。

全くそう思わない
そう思わない
知らない
そう思う
非常にそう思う

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