MASTER THESIS EXPOSÉ

The effects of social and self-motives on e-WOM
on Instagram and TikTok

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: The effects of social and self-motives on e-WOM on Instagram and TikTok

KEYWORDS: Electronic word-of-mouth; Social-needs; Self-needs; Social comparison; Social bonding; Helping behavior; Self-affirmation; Self-enhancement; Entertainment; Social networking sites; Social ties.

BACKGROUND: The emergence of new social network sites (SNSs) and their alternative approaches of content sharing and communication have greatly influenced electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). In this new context, the study of the antecedents of electronic word of mouth becomes topical again, especially the motivational factors that guide social interaction. Social interaction is the main feature of social networks sites and the process through which e-WOM meets the social and self-needs of senders.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to analyze the contextual drivers of e-WOM in an SNS context, by measuring the relationship between social and self-motives with e-WOM on SNSs and by discovering how the motivational process differ between strong and weak ties.

METHODOLOGY: As a quantitative approach will be followed, a self-administered online questionnaire will be distributed to respondents via social networks and email.

VALUE: This work contributes to electronic word of mouth literature and it opens a broader perspective for understanding e-WOM and what purpose does e-WOM serve. The study discovers the contextual factors that drive people to disseminate brand-content online on Instagram and TikTok, and by doing so it connects e-WOM literature with SNS literature. This understanding enables marketers to effectively develop out-of-the- box managerial strategies by focusing on the benefits customers accrue through social interactions.

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1. Introduction

The technological progress and rapidly changing consumer tastes are the driving forces behind the emergence of new social networks (SNSs), such as photo-sharing sites (e.g. Instagram and Pinterest), video sharing sites (e.g. TikTok and YouTube), and multimedia messaging applications (e.g. Snapchat). With the proliferation of new SNS platforms, new ways of communication, e.g. photos, videos, ephemeral content, etc. (Berger, 2014; Schweidel & Moe, 2014; Smith et al., 2012) and new methods of content sharing about products, brands and companies (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) have emerged and have greatly influenced electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) - "the dynamic and continuous process of information exchange between potential, current or past consumers about a product, a service, a brand or a company, which is available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Ismagilova et al., 2017, p. 18). Today SNS represents an important channel for e-WOM, and these technological changes have further amplified it, as it is largely recognized that social media disseminate information among consumers and marketers worldwide (Chu and Kim, 2018; Sung et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2015) and advance communication between companies and clients (Aladwani & Dwivedi, 2018; Gallaugher & Ransbotham, 2010; Kamboj et al., 2018; Shareef et al., 2018; Shiau et al., 2018, 2017). According to recent statistical reports, more than 4.5 billion people worldwide use the Internet (We Are Social, 2020) and the current number of active people using social networking sites reached 3.6 billion people, a number projected to increase to almost 4.41 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2020). In this new context, more than 60 years after the introduction of the WOM concept in the literature (Brooks, 1957), despite the vast e-WOM research in the past two decades (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016), themes that have been investigated several times, such as the study of the antecedents of word of mouth, become urgent and topical again (King et al., 2014; De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). For these reasons and in order to answer to the explicit call from Berger (2014) to consider how technological changes shape WOM, this research will focus on studying the contextual drivers of e-WOM in two emerging types of social media platforms, Instagram and TikTok.

In the study of WOM, most of the research has approached it according to the experiences of the brand. Although brand-related factors such as satisfaction, loyalty, quality, commitment, trust, and perceived value (de Matos & Rossi, 2008) are well-established drivers of WOM in the literature, this view does not account for motives outside brand experiences. In particular individual and social motives such as: involvement with the self and others (Dichter, 1966; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003), emotion (Berger and Milkman, 2012; Heath et al., 2001) - used to express achievement, seek confirmation, deepen social connections, reduce dissonance and achieve a therapeutic feeling (Festinger et al., 1956; Peters & Kashima, 2007; Rime et al., 1991; Cheung et al., 2007) - public

visibility and interest (Berger & Schwartz, 2011) and motives such as altruism and self-enhancement (Sundaram et al., 1998; Berger & Iyengar, 2013; Reimer & Benkenstein, 2018). Aside from brand experiences, these contextual factors have been discussed in the literature too, but to a lesser degree and they have yet to be explored within an integrative framework, except for Alexandrov et al. (2013), from whose model this thesis takes its cue. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to investigate the contextual drivers of e-WOM in an SNS context, based on social exchange theory. This more comprehensive objective can be split into two sub-objectives. First, to measure the relationship of social and self-motives with e-WOM on SNSs. Second, to discover how the motivational process differ between strong and weak ties.

The importance of this study stems from the use of the individual characteristics view of Alexandrov et al. (2013) to understand the antecedents of e-WOM in SNSs, converging the literature on WOM with the social network sites (SNSs) literature. In fact the self-interest and social motives behind WOM, are in some respects – self-presentation (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Ong et al., 2011), self-promotion (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Ryan & Xenos, 2011), social connection (Ellison et al., 2007), altruism to other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) - linked to the psychological incentives behind SNS media use.

Several contributions of this research to the previous literature can be emphasized. By identifying e-WOM's antecedents within social networks, this work contributes to online word of mouth literature, and by focusing on the two most emerging social network platforms (Instagram and TikTok) the study expands the existing literature, that focuses mainly on Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms (Spackman & Larsen, 2017; Yang & Kankanhalli, 2014). Moreover, since much of the extant literature has focused on the impact of WOM on the receivers (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Brown & Reingen, 1987; East et al., 2008; Söderlund & Rosengren, 2007; Wang, 2011), neglecting the viewpoint of the senders, this study aims to reinforce the meagre list of studies investigating the senders' perspectives of e-WOM usage in SNS platforms (Chawdhary & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2015; Choi et al., 2017). The topic is relevant not only from an academical point of view, but also from a practical point of view: For several product categories, most of the word of mouth now takes place online, therefore, there is a clear need for companies to know the mechanisms and motivations that drive users to transmit and trust online content to derive valuable insights, for example on the advertising strategies to follow in social networks.

Generally speaking, this paper aims to answer to the call for papers regarding the implications of these expansive and rapid changes driven by latest digital technologies and modern marketplace on consumers' e-WOM behaviours and marketers' e-WOM practices and strategies. In conclusion, by

considering e-WOM as a social process, the study will answer to the call for more attention to social aspects of consumer behaviour (Bagozzi, 2000; Wright, 2002) together with self-concept aspects.

In the next section, there follows an exploration of the literature on e-WOM and its role in social networks sites, the presentation of the theories underlying the study and the analysis of hypotheses and the self and social motives considered in the model. The exposé ends with a presentation of the methodology used, the overview of the chapters, the plan of work and the references.

2. Literature review

2.1 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

The definition used to identify electronic Word of Mouth is the one of Hennig-Thurau et al., (2004), more recently revisited by Ismagilova et al., (2017):

"e-WOM is the dynamic and ongoing information exchange process between potential, actual, or former consumers regarding a product, service, brand, or company, which is available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet".

The e-WOM is the Internet version of the WOM, the fundamentals of word of mouth have remained almost unchanged, but the new means through which it is transmitted have imposed a revision of its definition. E-WOM represents the consumers' information exchange behaviour online, in fact, consumers are the protagonists of the conversation. Unlike the classic definitions of WOM - among the most famous being those of Dichter (1966), Arndt (1967), Brown & Reingen (1987), Anderson (1998), Word of Mouth Marketing Association (2006) - the definition of e-WOM does not specify whether it is personal or impersonal, since the Internet has changed the way information is transmitted, increasing the importance of impersonal means. Moreover, the commercial purpose of conversations is also excluded, as it is assumed that a consumer does not obligatorily have a commercial purpose in talking about a given product, but can interact as a mere expression of his thought and in the different forms of user-generated contents, online product reviews, and social media posts (Chu & Kim, 2018). A large number of studies have largely examined the effects of e-WOM in both consumer behaviour and firm-level outcomes, for example on consumer attention (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014), on purchase intention (Prendergast et al., 2010; King et al., 2014; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), and sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Doh & Hwang, 2009; Davis & Khazanchi, 2008; Prendergast et al., 2010).

With the increase of consumer interaction facilitated by the World Wide Web, the first substantial difference between WOM and e-WOM lies in the size of the network involved in word of mouth, empowering each individual to share their opinions and experiences with anyone who has access to the network (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004), so that they can influence the decisions of many other individuals. At the same time, the speed of diffusion and the persistence of the message change; instantaneousness and eternity merge, in fact, the content put on the net can remain available for an infinitely long period of time than the volatility of word of mouth. Moreover, the transition from WOM to e-WOM opens a new dematerialised reality, in which the human relationship and individual identity are mediated by the medium of communication, like chat rooms, social networking sites, e-mails, instant messages, discussion forums, online communities and product review sites (Chu and

Kim, 2011); the medium chosen influences e-WOM's credibility. While in traditional communication, WOM could essentially only pass through oral communication, in e-WOM the communication is written and asynchronous and the message is multimedia, using images, videos, GIFs etc. (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006).

2.2 E-WOM and SNSs

SNSs - "online communities where people socialize or exchange information and opinions" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p.172) - represent an ideal tool for e-WOM, in fact in recent years SNSs have become a significant component of companies' communication programs, as they allow them to establish strong and personal relationships with their consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Consumers use them to search, create and freely share brand information with their friends, acquaintances or members of the same community (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Social media differ from other sites used for e-WOM for their extreme availability and ease of use, and above all, because they adopt a policy that encourages users to remove anonymity and thus show their identity. For this reason, what generally happens with e-WOM, i.e. the "activation of weak ties", does not apply in the case of social networks, which on the contrary have been shown to activate strong ties (Sun et al., 2006). In fact, social media users have the possibility to show whether they prefer a brand or a particular product through the use of a profile, i.e. an account with name and image. The expression of opinions generates e-WOM communication. This preference can be expressed, for example, by becoming "friends" or "fans". In this specific case, Instagram and TikTok allow users to mainly make unidirectional connections by acquiring "fans" or "followers", and not only bidirectional as in the case of Facebook.

In simple terms, Facebook is an example of bidirectional connections, indeed by sending a friend request tapping the person-shaped icon "Add friend" below the person's profile picture, if he/she accepts it, he/she will be added to the friends list. While Instagram and TikTok are examples of platforms where connections can more easily be unidirectional, indeed there could be three different cases:

- People that follow a person and that person does not follow them back
- People that do not follow the person, but that person does follow them
- People that follow a person and that person does follow them back

So, while Facebook users can have a "limited" number of friends, the number of possible fans for Instagram and TikTok is essentially unlimited, allowing companies or brands to enroll thousands of fans.

As of January 2020, there are 4.5 billion people using the internet and more than 3.8 billion social media users, an increase of more than 9% by 2019. TikTok and Instagram are the top and emerging social media platforms, characterized by short, fun, trendy, creative and highly interactive contents. TikTok has risen to sixth place in the global ranking of mobile apps for monthly active users by 2019. TikTok is still behind WhatsApp, Facebook, WeChat and Instagram, but it grows at a higher speed. Despite the use of the oldest social media it slows down Instagram's growth momentum remains strong. Moreover, according to a recent consumer study from McKinsey, with COVID-19 the average time spent by individuals on social media platforms increased in 2020; consumers are expected to spend more time consuming digital and video content, news and social media even after COVID-19.

Since to date, most social media studies have focused on Facebook and Twitter, since TikTok was founded in 2018 and little research has been done on it, and due to the fact that every online media is unique and independent, this study decided to focus on Instagram and TikTok.

3. Theoretical Framing

3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a sociological and psychological theory that considers social change and social behavior as processes of interactive exchanges between people, to maximize the benefits at the minimum cost. According to the theory there is a simple principle that drives individuals' behaviour: the exchange process. The exchange process in turn is based on the reciprocal principle.

Based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1986; Emerson, 1976), this study considers WOM as a type of social exchange (Gatignon & Robertson, 1986), a currency of exchange that allow individuals to gain self and social benefits. The classic cost and reward comparisons is regarded here as the driver of the consumers' WOM's behaviour and participation toward social media, and for this reason the present research explores the self and social benefits that encourage people to do e-WOM in SNS. In addition, of interest for the present study is the fact that according to some authors including Sahlins (1972) social exchange is influenced by the degree of social distance (i.e. by the social tie stenght).

Finally, SET, as well as other theories related to social behaviour (social identity theory, U&G theory, social capital theory etc.), has been applied also in prior studies for understanding consumers' participation in online communities, therefore is considered appropriate for the study of e-WOM in a social network context.

3.2 Contextual factors driving e-WOM

The present work, following previous studies on the subject (Alexandrov et al., 2013; Chen, 2017; Sundaram et al., 1998), identifies two categories of benefits as motives of e-WOM: self needs and social needs.

Social needs derive mainly from the social interaction between consumers, which, in the case of e-WOM in SNS is maximized by the extreme availability and ease of use of social networks. Specifically, social interaction, in particular through the intention to help others (Arndt 1967; Sundaram et al., 1998; Henning- Thurau et al., 2004; Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Piliavin & Charng, 1990; Batson et al., 1991) and the intention to entertain (Muntinga et al., 2011; Courtois et al., 2009; Shao, 2009; Lee & Ma, 2012), enables individuals to satisfy the need for social comparison (Festinger, 1954) and social belonging (Chen, 2017; Chu & Kim, 2011; Baumeister & Leary 1995). As for the personal needs, they represent the final gain achieved by social interaction and satisfaction of social needs, and consist of the self-enhancement need (Jones, 1973; Sundaram et al., 1998; Henning-

Thurau et al., 2004; Berger & Iyengar, 2013) and self-affirmation need (Steele, 1988; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

3.2.1 Need to belong

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), the need to belong is the need to bond with others and maintain relationships, and it is considered a universal human social motivation. Humans have a central impulse for interpersonal attachment and social support (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and it has been recognized to influence individuals' behaviour (Ainsworth, 1989). Moreover, humans who succeed in satisfying this need present higher self-worth and self-esteem (Denissen et al., 2008; Srivastava & Beer, 2005). Both the social media literature and the WOM literature consider the sense of belonging as a crucial psychological antecedent, that drives social media use (Muntinga et al., 2011; Chai & Kim, 2012; Lin et al., 2014) and WOM message content (Alves et al., 2016; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

3.2.2 Altruism

The concept of altruism has been investigated in different disciplines and different ways. Although there is no unambiguous definition of altruism, there are some common elements that make an action "altruistic", such as the benefit for another person, the voluntariness and intentionality of the act and altruism as the ultimate goal itself. The desire to help others and to increase their welfare (Piliavin & Charng 1990; Batson, 1991) has been considered by many authors of the WOM literature as an antecedent of the sharing behaviour of people (Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1993; Sundaram et al., 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Sundaram et al. (1998), distinguishes this variable in two forms: altruism for a positive e-WOM, understood as the act of doing something for others without expecting a form of reward in return; altruism for a negative e-WOM, understood as providing help so that others avoid a negative shopping experience. In the context of social media, concern for others has been found to have a great influence on their buying (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). It is not clear, however, the distance between altruism and egoism and weather the desire to help others explains sharing over and above the more self-serving motives such as self-enhancement and reciprocity.

3.2.3 Entertainment

Entertainment has been studied on social media context as an important motivation for social media use; in particular, it motivates users' participation (Ashley & Tuten, Sangwan, 2005; 2015; Kaye,

2007; Liu & Arnett, 2000; Park *et al.,* 2009; Manthiou et al., 2013) and user-generated content consumption (Shao, 2009). Entertainment occurs when social media platforms are used to create exciting, amusing and funny experiences and contents, such as posts, games, photos, video sharing and contests (Cheung et al., 2019). As a consequence, the entertainment motivation serves several users' needs such as escapism, emotional release, enjoyment, relaxation, anxiety relief, passing time and sexual arousal with regard to the use of social media in general, while it has been estimated to cover only the motivations enjoyment, relaxation and pastime for brand related content activities (Muntinga et al., 2015). Since entertainment helps build consumer-brand relationship, brand knowledge and purchase intention (Seo & Park, 2018), it is used by marketers to attract consumers' attention, engagement and loyalty.

3.3 Social ties and e-WOM

Social ties are a "combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services that characterize the tie" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361) and are typically classified into two categories according to the tie strength: strong ties and weak ties. The degree of social distance among communicators affects exchange (Granovetter, 1983) and information transmission (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993) and it can determine e-WOM processes and effects on message receivers (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Thus, e-WOM receivers perceive strong-tie sources as being more credible than weak-tie sources (Chow & Chan, 2008), hence having higher WOM retransmission intention as well. Further, as social tie strength increases, so does the likelihood of tailored, relevant, persuasive, and personalized WOM communications. This is known as the "strength of strong ties" (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Also, strong ties individuals are more likely to exchange useful and understandable knowledge to receivers (Levin & Cross, 2004; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998; Hansen, 1999). Conversely, even though weak ties interact infrequently and tend to be untrusted, they are essential to spreading new information throughout a social network, and this is the so-called "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter, 1983). Although the literature states that e-WOM, compared to WOM, activates weak ties due to the anonymity feature of online communication (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), however, with the recent growth of social networking sites, which encourages users to use a profile corresponding to the real one (Chu, S. C. & Kim, Y 2011), the role of anonymous interaction is less evident, and social ties are central again. Compared to the traditional predominance of weak ties, strong ties re-emerge with social networks sites, and this increases the ability to attribute an e-WOM message (Sun et al., 2006). Furthermore, the study by Chu and Kim (2011) on social ties in social networks sites showed that e-WOM behaviour is positively correlated with the strength of strong ties, trust and interpersonal influence.

In conclusion, SNS platforms present different interpersonal communication devices allowing users to share text messages, videos, and photos, consequently fostering interpersonal relationships (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), with the general public or with strong ties only.

3.4 Social comparison theory

Social comparison theory states that people have an inherent drive to benchmark their opinions, abilities and accomplishments with those of others (Festinger, 1954). Festinger (1954) posited that the reason why individuals tend to engage in social comparison is to gain a precise self-evaluation and to seek self-improvement. There are two forms of social comparison, upward comparison and downward comparison. Upward comparisons refer to the comparisons with who are superior or better than oneself, to improve and learn from them but with the related risks to be threatened and demoralized (Brickman & Bullman, 1977; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Wood & Taylor, 1991). Indeed, individuals more often are motivated to seek downward social comparisons to protect and affirm their self-integrity (Hakmiller, 1966; Taylor & Lobel, 1989; Gibbons & Gerrard, 1991; Wood, 1989; Wills, 1981). In general, the tendency to compare oneself with others increases if the counterpart is seen as similar to oneself, because, according to Festinger (1954), individuals implicitly assume that similar people have similar needs and preferences. The fact that friends in SNS tend to be similar in socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, race and age, as well as in beliefs and attitudes (Festinger, 1957; Gilly et al., 1998) and that the information exchange occurs more frequently between similar individuals (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970; Rogers, 1995), make social networks a key channel for e-WOM.

3.5 Self-enhancement theory

According to the self-enhancement theory people "want to increase, confirm, and maintain personal satisfaction, worth, and effectiveness" (Jones, 1973 p. 186). In other words, self-enhancement is the fundamental human need (Baumeister, 1998; Sedikides, 1993; Fiske, 2001) to bolster the self-concept, achieve a favourable self-image and enhance self-esteem (Brown et al., 1988; Sedikides, 1993; Shrauger, 1975; Smith, 1968; Angelis et al., 2012; Eisingerich et al., 2015). In addition to be considered by Fiske (2001) one of the main human social motivations (besides belonging, understanding, controlling and trusting), self-enhancement has also been established by several researchers as a principal motivation of WOM (Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1969; Feick & Price, 1987; Gatignon & Robertson, 1986) and e-WOM (Eisingerich et al., 2015; Presi et al., 2014). Specifically, to create good impressions and receive positive recognition in social interactions (Berger & Schwartz, 2011), consumers tend to share things that make them look good among other customers

(Chung & Darke, 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Sundaram et al., 1998), that prove their achievements and expertise (Wojnicki & Godes, 2011; Packard et al., 2016), and that signal their status (Engel et al., 1993) and their knowledge (Wojnicki & Godes, 2008).

3.6 Self-affirmation theory

Self-affirmation theory (Aronson et al., 1999; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Steele, 1988) is a psychological theory that states that people need to maintain the integrity of the self. According to the theory, integrity is the culturally embedded concept of oneself as a good and appropriate person who behave by social and cultural norms. Thus, such standards of integrity are not univocal since they vary according to cultures, groups and contexts, and they are uniquely characterised by the different roles, values, and belief systems of the self. As a consequence, the threats against self-integrity take many forms as well. When people experience a threat to their self-integrity, they try to minimize it and restore the integrity of the self through different defensive responses such as accepting the threat, rejecting it or by self-affirming in domains unrelated to the provoking threat. In conclusion, following the reasoning of Alexandrov et al. (2013), we can state that, although the concept has been connected to WOM only conceptually by Asugman (1998), self-affirmation can be used as a self-defence mechanism (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele & Liu, 1983; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Koole et al., 1999). An example could be a negative experience with a brand that threaten the self, where it is possible to assert the self-integrity by sharing information about other brands, showing knowledge and expertise.

4. Research Hypotheses

The following research model derives from Alexandrov et al. (2013), and the following hypotheses are an integration of the above theories. The model shown in Fig. 1 is a modification of the model of Alexandrov et al. (2013) in order to answer two new research questions:

R.Q1 Which social- and self-motives are drivers of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Instagram and TikTok?

R.Q.2 How does the motivational process behind e-WOM on Instagram and TikTok varies between strong and weak ties?
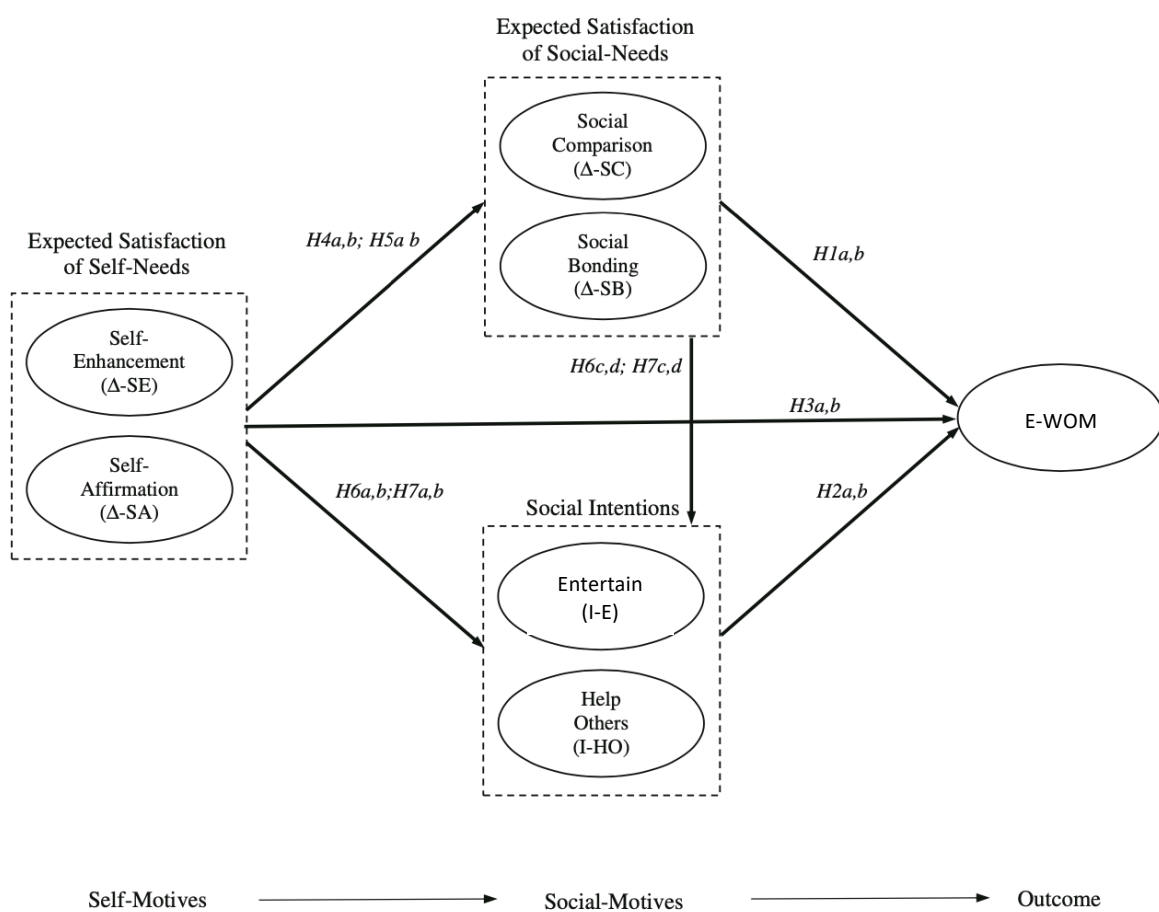
Fig. 1 *Research model.*
(The hypotheses H8, H9, H10 and H11 are not depicted)

Drawing inspiration from the approach of Alexandrov et al. (2013), the first set of research hypotheses sees in sequence the analysis of social needs and their effect on e-WOM on SNS, followed by the analysis of the self, basic human needs.

The first social need under analysis is the need for social comparison, as the individuals' internal drive to benchmark their opinions and abilities with those of other people (Festinger, 1954). With the theory of social comparison, Festinger (1954) shows that similarity is a source of influence and persuasion, consequently the tendency to compare oneself with other people increases if the counterpart is seen as similar to oneself. It is possible to assume that this mechanism works particularly well in SNS, indeed, previous studies have found that friends in SNS tend to be similar in socio-demographic attributes such as sex, ethnicity and age, as well as in perceptual characteristics such as beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyle (Festinger, 1957; Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970; Gilly et al., 1998). In general, the mere presence (physical or virtual) of other individuals arouses the need for comparison, making the act of WOM an opportunity to satisfy this need, and this is even more accentuated in the SNS context.

Besides the need for social comparison, the need for social belonging is the need to bond with others and maintain relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social bonding is one of the most important reasons for individuals to adopt the information produced through e-WOM into online communities. In fact, through social interaction and interpersonal communication like word of mouth, social support is produced. Also, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) discovered that consumers post comments or write posts to receive social benefits, such as identification and social integration to be part of a virtual community, and Cheung e Lee (2012) found that the sense of belonging is the factor with the greatest impact on the intention to produce e-WOM. Therefore, it can be assumed that consumers are increasingly engaged in e-WOM communication because they are driven by a sense of belonging to virtual communities (McWilliam, 2000; Oliver, 1999). This is encouraged above all by the emergence of social networks sites that facilitate access and participation among consumers.

Based on the above, the measurement of this construct was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H1: The needs for (a) social comparison and (b) social bonding positively affect e-WOM.

According to the model, the two intentions that impact e-WOM are the intention to entertain and the intention to help others. The need for entertainment has never been studied as a motivational factor of WOM, but it is not new in the SNS and media use literature. Specifically, previous studies examining motivations behind social media use have identified entertainment to be a key motivational factor that promotes social interaction and group discussion (Dunne et. al., 2010; Lee & Ma, 2012;

Park et al., 2009; Gallego et al., 2016). In like manner, the entertainment motivation has been studied in many U&G researchers. For example, Shao (2009) found it a significant incentive in consuming user-generated content, and Sangwan (2005) and Park et al. (2009) revealed that the participation in a social networking site is also in part driven by entertainment. Moreover, according to McQuail (2005) and Lee & Ma (2012), the value of media entertainment is attributed to the users' purposes for escapism, enjoyment, emotional release, relaxation and stress/anxiety relief. In particular, Nov et al. (2010) proposed enjoyment as an intrinsic motivation to encourage users to share photos within an online community. Conversely, research on content contribution on mobile applications also suggest that contributing content on such platforms provide a good source of entertainment (Chua et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010). Finally, research has shown that there is likely to be a positive relationship between high entertainment value and frequent social media use (Luo, 2002). For the above, the social and psychological needs for entertainment can be assumed to be satisfied through the engagement in e-WOM in SNS.

The desire to help others is the second intention behind e-WOM. Altruism has already been explored several times as a psychological factor both in the WOM literature and in the SNS literature (Arndt 1967; Sundaram et al., 1998; Henning-Thurau et al., 2004).

The measurement of this construct was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H2: The intentions to (a) entertain and (b) help others positively affect e-WOM.

The initial drivers of e-WOM in the model are self-needs, the need for self- enhancement, and self-affirmation. Self-enhancement theory asserts that individuals are driven by the motivation to boost their self-worth and to seek opportunities for positive recognition from others (Jones, 1973). The need for self-enhancement is a primary personality trait to project a good image to others and it has already been established as a central factor of WOM (Sundaram et al., 1998; Engel et al., 1993; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Wojnicki & Godes, 2008). Since several studies have identified this need as a determining factor for e-WOM too (Angelis et al., 2012; Eisingerich et al., 2015; Tan et al., 2017; Yap et al., 2013; Presi et al., 2014), and since more recently, Shu-Chuan Chua et al. (2019) showed that the need for self-enhancement plays an important role in the engagement with a social media platform like WeChat, then this study assumes that the need for self-enhancement can be satisfied through e-WOM on SNSs.

Similarly connected to people's egos, self-affirmation theory is a social psychological theory that asserts that individuals need to protect their self-integrity and image (Steele, 1988). Following the study of Alexandrov et al. (2013), it is assumed that when people feel threatened, this need can be

accomplished by sharing information about brands, considering e-WOM as a self-defense mechanism to restore a positive self-view.

Based on the above, the measurement of this construct was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H3: The needs for (a) self-enhancement and (b) self- affirmation positively affect e-WOM.

The logical reasoning behind the model suggests that social-needs are activated by self-needs, but in order to satisfy them people need to socially interact and engage in e-WOM. This causal mechanism implies that social interaction, and thus e-WOM's behavior, is the way in which individuals manage to meet their basic needs. Since it is evident that social interaction has been widely expanded with the advent of social media (Brown et al., 2007), it is easy to argue that even in SNS social needs are activated by self-needs. Moreover, it is interesting to understand whether social bonding and social comparison help to make SNS a venue to enhance consumers' ego. For example, if an individual who wishes to strengthen his or her self-concept used SNS circles to share product information, this would mean that the need for self-enhancement promotes social bonding and thus encourages e-WOM behavior.

Based on the above, the measurement of these constructs was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H4: The need for social comparison in SNSs is positively affected by the needs for (a) self-enhancement and (b) self-affirmation.

H5: The need for social bonding in SNSs is positively affected by the needs for (a) self-enhancement and (b) self- affirmation.

In this study both the social needs and social intentions depicted in Fig. 1, are included under the heading "social motives" and they are seen as the result of the social interaction process. Since, as already mentioned, the social motives are activated by self-motives, then it is possible to state that social intentions (i.e., helping others and entertain) also would be driven by self-motives. This is reflected in the fact that social intentions are part of the social exchange process described in the study, where social intentions represent the opportunities to satisfy social and self-needs. Many examples can be given of social and self-motives underlying social intentions, such us altruism that according to prior theories of human motivation is activated by self-serving motives (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Miller, 1999), and sharing entertaining content which is driven by different sub motivations like escapism, enjoyment, emotional release, anxiety relief and achievement (Katz et al., 1973; McQuail, 1983; Vorderer et al., 2004) and that motivates its transmitter to compare his/her opinions with those of others - consistent with the concept of consuming as play of Holt (1995).

The measurement of these constructs was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H6: The intention to entertain in SNS is positively affected by (a) the need for self-enhancement, (b) the need for self-affirmation, (c) the need for social comparison, and (d) the need for social bonding.

H7: The intention to help others in SNS is positively affected by (a) the need for self-enhancement, (b) the need for self-affirmation, (c) the need for social comparison, and (d) the need for social bonding.

The second set of research hypothesis explores how the cognitive mechanisms of e-WOM on SNSs differ according to social tie strength.

Based on the fact that the degree of social distance between people influences the exchange (Granovetter, 1983) and the transmission of information (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993), and given that weak ties rarely interact and tend to be unreliable despite the fact that they are fundamental to spreading new information across social media (Granovetter, 1983), it becomes interesting to explore how the effects of social and self-motives differs in the intention to do e-WOM to weak and strong ties on SNSs.

Several studies on WOM seem to agree on the idea that individuals have distinct goals and share different things when interacting with strangers and friends (Clark & Lemay Jr., 2010). To different goals (self-enhance vs. connect) are associated different forms of WOM: when the goal is to impress, they share self-enhancing WOM with strangers, whereas when the objective is to maintain existing relationships, they engage in emotionally connecting WOM to friends. Obviously, this mechanism has direct effects on the valence of WOM (Dubois et al., 2016), with positive WOM (De Angelis et al., 2012; Wojnicki & Godes, 2013) considered more instrumental when the motive is to self-enhance (Folkes & Sears, 1977; Berger, 2014; Chen & Lurie, 2013; Wojnicki & Godes, 2013), and negative information if the motive is to connect and protect friends. Furthermore, similar studies suggest that interaction with strong or weak ties activate different psychological motives (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), respectively the self-enhancement motive for the former case and the motive to protect others for the latter case. In other words, as interpersonal closeness increases, the psychological motive to self-enhance decreases. However, more recent studies on e-WOM and on SNSs confirm that social tie strength affect self-enhancement for both senders and receivers (Chawdhary & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2015; Wilcox & Stephen, 2013), but in the opposite way. In particular, these findings suggest that people interacting with strong ties seem to appear more sensitive to their self-image (Bargh et al., 2002; Brown & Reingen, 1987). In order to better understand the effects of self-enhancement and self-affirmation on strong and weak ties on

SNSs, and to reconcile the results of the above-mentioned studies, the present research assumes that self-enhancement has a stronger effect on weak ties, while self-affirmation is the psychological motive that explains why individuals are more sensitive to a negative self-image e-WOM to strong-tie friends.

The measurement of these constructs was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H8a: Self-enhancement has a stronger total effect on weak ties than it has on strong ties.

H8b: Self-affirmation has a stronger total effect on strong ties than it has on weak ties.

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), individuals have a fundamental need to develop social interactions with close others and to maintain them. This need manifests itself relatively early in each individual's life, as evident in the case of infants and caretakers (Bowlby, 1969). An example of the importance of the relationship for close ties is that when talking to friends, controversial or offensive topics are less likely to affect social acceptance, in fact it has been shown that the relationship closeness moderates discomfort (Chen & Berger, 2014). Moreover, consumers who enjoy more intimate relationships are more likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging (Clark et al., 2001) and have a greater tendency to compare themselves with them. This is in line with the theory of social comparison of Festinger (1954), which attempts to explain how similarity is a source of influence and persuasion. The tendency to compare oneself with other people increases if the counterpart is seen as similar to oneself, as it happens with friends in social media (Festinger 1957; Gilly et al., 1998).

Based on the above, the measurement of these constructs was adapted by Alexandrov et al. (2013).

H9: The (a) need for social bonding and the (b) need for social comparison will have a stronger effect on strong ties than on weak ties.

According to Dubois et al. (2016) people altruistically share WOM to protect friends, while emotional connection explains WOM with strangers. In addition, benevolence, that is a similar and interconnected concept to altruism, is the preservation and enhancement for the close others' welfare (Schwartz, 1992). For this reason, it is possible to assume that:

H10: The intention to help others will have a stronger effect on strong ties than on weak ties.

The last hypothesis is based on the fact that the recipients of e-WOM may be different from those of WOM, because the communities people interact with on the Internet are different from those in real life. In particular, the particular characteristic of the two social media under examination to allow their users to create above all unidirectional connections by acquiring "fans" or "followers", allows a user to reach an unlimited number of possible fans. This characteristic clearly distinguishes itself

from the reality of private life, where the number of connections outside the online reality is limited. The above leads one to assume that in the specific case of the two social media under consideration the intention to entertain has a stronger effect on weak ties. In fact, virtual communities are groups of people who share common interests, in most cases distant apart from each other and who therefore do not necessarily know each other and that interact only virtually. To support this hypothesis there is the fact that sharing entertaining information is also self-enhancing because it makes people look smart and helpful (Berger, 2014), and as already mentioned, self-enhancement is supposed to have a stronger total effect on weak ties than it has on strong ties.

H11: The intention to entertain will have a stronger effect on weak ties than on strong ties.

4.1 Literature review

Title	Author(s) Year	SJR	Contribution
The effects of social- and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. 2013	5.31	They examine social- and self-motives as drivers of Word of Mouth (WOM). The findings suggest that discussing brands can be a mechanism for acquiring personal and social benefits, and consequently, promotional campaigns should highlight the gains customers accrue through WOM.
What makes users share content on facebook? Compatibility among psychological incentive, social capital focus, and content type	Fu, P. W., Wu, C. C., & Cho, Y. J. 2017	2.17	This study focused on Facebook users' psychological incentives for content sharing. Both self-interest and communal incentive could drive Facebook users' content-sharing intention, but their effects depended on the content types. Further, the effects of self-interest in- centives were found only among the users who focus on their close friends (bonding-focus), but not among those who focus on the distant friends (bridging-focus).
Social Acceptance and Word of Mouth: How the Motive to Belong Leads to Divergent WOM with Strangers and Friends	Chen, Z. 2017	7.6	This study explores how and why WOM differs based on whether people are talking to strangers or friends. The article theorizes that one important motivation for WOM is social acceptance. To fulfill this motivation, people form and maintain existing relationships with others. When communicating with strangers, people attempt to self-enhance to attract strangers into forming relationships with the self; when sharing with friends, on the other hand, people attempt to connect emotionally in order to maintain existing ties.
Word-of-mouth communications in marketing: a meta-analytic review of the antecedents and moderators	De Matos, C. A., & Rossi, C. A. V. 2008	5.31	Primarily, it is the first meta-analytic effort to assess WOM as a focal construct and to investigate its antecedents and moderators. Additionally, it identifies the different methodological approaches and the main

			antecedents of WOM in empirical studies. It evaluates the moderating effects of studies' characteristics and different WOM approaches such as WOM valence and WOM incidence.
Introducing COBRAs Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use"	Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. 2015	2.1	The present study provides a first comprehensive understanding of consumers' motivations for engaging in consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs).
Antecedents of WOM: SNS-user segmentation	Arenas-Gaitán, J., Rondan-Cataluña, F. J., & Ramírez-Correa, P. E. 2018	0.76	The aim of this study is to analyze the antecedents of word-of-mouth (WOM) in a social networking sites (SNS) context, based on social identification theory and uses and gratification theory. This general objective can be divided into two sub-objectives. First, to measure the relationship between social identity, altruism and perceived encouragement as antecedents of WOM in SNS. Second, to study the existence of SNS-user segments which have differentiated behaviors according to the proposed model.
ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH VIA CONSUMER-OPINION PLATFORMS: WHAT MOTIVATES CONSUMERS TO ARTICULATE THEMSELVES ON THE INTERNET?	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. 2004	3.29	The study develops a typology for motives of consumer online articulation. Consumers' desire for social interaction, desire for economic incentives, their concern for other consumers, and the potential to enhance their own self-worth are the primary factors leading to e-WOM behavior.
What drives immediate and ongoing word of Mouth?	Berger, J., & Schwartz, E. M. 2011	7.3	This article examines psychological drivers of immediate and ongoing WOM.
Sender outcomes of online word-of-mouth transmission	Chen, C., & Gao, T. T. 2019	0.75	This paper aims to investigate the sender outcomes of online WOM participation. "The findings show that sender outcomes from online WOM transmission differ by the types of drivers stimulating the online sharing activity and the level of exaggeration in the senders' self-generated contents. Specifically, online WOM triggered by emotions leads to catharsis and emotional homeostasis among

			the senders, while that stimulated by motivational drivers such as altruism, reciprocity, self-enhancement and belongingness leads to sender happiness. Exaggeration in self-generated WOM contents by the senders, in turn, leads to delayed outcomes of sender regret and reduced sender trust in general online WOM contents.
E-WOM messaging on social media: social ties, temporal distance, and message concreteness	Choi, Y. K., Seo, Y., & Yoon, S. 2017	1.61	This study explores intentions to share e-WOM messages on social media websites depending on tie-strength, perceptions of temporal distance, and the concreteness of promotional messages. Findings indicate that consumers are more likely to share promotional messages with their strong rather than weak ties. If they perceive that purchases will occur soon, concrete promotional messages will more strongly motivate them to share the message with their friends. However, if they perceive that purchases will occur in the distant future, abstract messages are more motivating. The difference occurs because construal level theory is more effective among strong e-WOM ties.
Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on WeChat: examining the influence of sense of belonging, need for self-enhancement, and consumer engagement on Chinese travellers' eWOM	Shu-Chuan Chua, Che-Hui Lienb and Yang Caoc 2018	2.1	Drawing from the social identity theory, literature on consumer engagement and eWOM, this study presents the first research that examines the influence of two personality traits, sense of belonging and need for self-enhancement, on consumer engagement and in turn leads to eWOM intention. The results suggest that the need for self-enhancement positively influences Chinese travellers' engagement with WeChat.
Investigating How Word of Mouth Conversations About Brands Influence Purchase and Retransmission Intentions	Baker, A. M., Donthu, N., & Kumar, V. 2015	7.33	This study investigates how valence, channel, and strength of the social tie of a word-of-mouth (WOM) conversation about a brand impact the purchase intentions and WOM retransmission intentions of WOM recipients. The strength of the social tie relationship does

			tend to influence a WOM receiver's intentions to purchase a brand; however, social tie strength had a much less significant impact on a consumer's WOM retransmission intentions
Intrinsic vs. Image-Related Utility in Social Media: Why Do People Contribute Content to Twitter?	Toubia, O., & Stephen, A. T. 2013	7.17	They empirically study the motivations of users to contribute content to social media in the context of the popular microblogging site Twitter.
On Braggarts and Gossips: A Self- Enhancement Account of Word-of-Mouth Generation and Transmission	De Angelis, Matteo, Andrea Bonezzi, Alessandro M. Peluso, Derek D. Rucker, and Michele Costabile 2012	7.33	The study found that a basic human motive to self- enhance leads consumers to generate positive WOM (i.e., share information about their own positive consumption experiences) but transmit negative WOM (i.e., pass on information they heard about others' negative consumption experiences).
Generation Y's positive and negative eWOM: use of social media and mobile technology	Zhang, T. C., Omran, B. A., & Cobanoglu, C. 2017	2.2	This paper aims to explore the factors that influence Generation Y's positive or negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) behavior via social media and mobile technology in the foodservice sector.
The future of social media in marketing	Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. 2020	5.31	The authors focus on where they believe the future of social media lies when considering marketing-related topics and issues.
How does brand-related user-generated content differ across social media? Evidence reloaded	Roma, P., & Aloini, D. 2019	1.87	This paper extends the theo- retical framework of user-generated content (UGC) dimensions and updates evidence on how brand-related UGC characteristics vary across social media. It ompares how different social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) shape twelve important UGC dimensions.

*Table 1*Literaure review

5. Methodology

The following chapter depicts a description of the chosen research methodology for the purpose of this work. A quantitative approach will be followed.

In the paragraphs below, information about the selection of the sample and how data will be collected and thereafter analyzed will be given as well.

5.1 Research Design

As stated above, in order to test the hypothesis, a quantitative research method will be applied, and a survey will be distributed to collect data. The method of choice was questionnaire over other research instruments for several reasons, which are the possibility of getting information from the sample in a time effective way, the ease with which quantitative analysis can be conducted and comparisons been made, and the potentiality to generalise the results over the whole population.

Since the purpose of the study is identifying factors that influence an outcome (the effects of social- and self-motives on the intentions to do WOM to social ties), and the goal is explanatory, understanding the best predictors in generating WOM, then a quantitative approach is more adequate. It is considered also the best approach to test the existing model of Alexandrov et al. (2013), in the new study context of SNS.

5.2 Participants

The study will be conducted thanks to the participation of people who are at least 16 years old, of both genders and users of Instagram and TikTok. The age restriction is motivated by statistical reports that show that the average age of the active population on Instagram and TikTok, although with different percentages, is between 10 and 30 years (Statista, 2020). In detail, in the case of TikTok, the age group with the largest number of users is 10-19, accounting for 32.5%, followed by the age group 20-29 with 29.5%, while for Instagram 33.8% of users aged between 25 and 34 years, followed by the age group 18-24 with 29,3% (Statista, 2020).

For ethical reasons the minimum age of the study is set at 16 years. The sample will have no territorial restrictions; however, the distribution is more likely to reach predominantly European citizens.

The questionnaire will be distributed through direct contact with my network and the publication of the survey in a post on Facebook and LinkedIn and the sharing through Instagram Stories. The snowballing sampling is the technique that will be used to reach a sufficient number of respondents,

by asking my contacts after they have filled the questionnaire, to collaborate in the dissemination of it. In order to determine whether an interviewee is eligible for the survey, the variable to consider will be the frequency of use of one of the two social media platforms, that should be at least twice per weak.

Setting the eligibility criteria at an early stage of the survey will permit the researcher to neglect data from respondents that are neither using Instagram nor TikTok, whereas the examinee will not go through the whole questionnaire unnecessarily.

5.3 Data collection

The instrument of choice to collect data will be an online, self-administered questionnaire that will be created by using SphinxDeclic Software. The survey will be accessible from computers, smartphones and tablets. As the sample will be made of people coming from different countries, two translations of the same questionnaire will be performed, English and an Italian.

In order to engage respondents, attention will be paid to graphic elements: colors, images, icons and backgrounds will be included to boost one's motivation to fill the survey. An attractive introduction will be given at the beginning of the questionnaire, with selection of a rights free picture, presenting the contact person, the general objective of the survey, the issuing institution, the duration and a precise description of how the data will be used. By doing so, the respondent will have the chance to understand what the upcoming questions will be about.

To keep the attention of the interviewee the researcher will use filter questions to create a scenario, simple, short and specific questions, negative questions will be avoided and the survey will not last more than 7-8. The questionnaire will start with easier questions and will end with the more complex ones.

To overcome the challenges of online data collection (Granello & Wheaton, 2004), different techniques will be applied. First, in order to avoid respondents that rushed through the survey, all respondents who completed the survey in less than four minutes will be deleted. Second, in the examination of the data all the responses with social desirability bias, agreement bias, anchoring bias and satisficing behaviors will be discarded.

Tie Strength	Adapted by Chu, S. C., & Kim, Y. (2011). Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *International Journal of Advertising*, *30*(1), 47-75. 1. Approximately how frequently do you communicate with the close friends on your "friends" list on these social networking sites? (1= "never" and 7= "very frequently") 2. Overall, how important do you feel about the close friends on your "friends" list on these social networking sites? (1= "not at all important" and 7= "very important") 3. Overall, how close do you feel to the close friends on your "friends" list on these social networking sites? (1= "not at all close" and 7= "very close")
Expected Satisfaction of the Need for Self-Enhancement (Δ-SE)	Adapted by Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. (2013). The effects of social-and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 531-546. If I share my opinion about this brand in a conversation with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok… (1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree") SE1 It will create the impression that I am a "good" person SE2 I will receive positive feedback from others about my gesture SE3 I will create a positive impression on others
Expected Satisfaction of the Need for Self-Affirmation (Δ-SA)	Adapted by Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. (2013). The effects of social-and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 531-546. If I share my opinion about this brand in a conversation with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok …(1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree") SA1 It will reveal who I am SA2 It will reveal what I stand for SA3 It will make the other person aware of what I value about myself SA4 It will make the other person understand what is important to me SA5 It will make me think about positive aspects of myself
Expected Satisfaction of the Need for Social Comparison (Δ-SC)	Adapted by Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. (2013). The effects of social-and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 531-546. If I share my opinion about this brand with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok, it will allow me to compare... (*1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree"*) SC1 My opinion about the brand to others' opinions SC2 My feelings of the brand to the feelings of other people

	SC3 My experience with this brand to the experiences of others
Expected Satisfaction of the Need for Social Bonding (Δ-SB)	Adapted by Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. (2013). The effects of social-and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 531-546.
	If I share my opinion about this brand in a conversation with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok... (1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree")
	SB1 It will provide a topic for further discussion with this person
	SB2 It will benefit the relationship with this person
	SB3 It will help me learn more about the person I'm talking with
Intention to Entertain (I-E)	Adapted by Courtois, C., Mechant, P., De Marez, L., & Verleye, G. (2009). Gratifications and seeding behavior of online adolescents. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *15*(1), 109-137.
	When sharing my opinion about this brand with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok... (1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree")
	IE1 I amuse myself
	IE2 I have a good time
	IE3 I relax
Intention to Help Others (I-HO)	Adapted by Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E. (2013). The effects of social-and self-motives on the intentions to share positive and negative word of mouth. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 531-546.
	When sharing my opinion about this brand with my close friends on Instagram or TikTok, I want... (1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7= "Strongly Agree")
	IHO1 To help them be a better customer
	IHO2 To help them get the information they want/need
	IHO3 To help them form an opinion about the brand or related issues

5.4 Data Analisys

The software to be used to conduct the analysis will be SmartPLS.

6. Expected Contributions

The purpose of the present study is to analyze the contextual drivers of e-WOM in an SNS context, based on social exchange theory and on the individual characteristics view of Alexandrov et al. (2013). First, it measures the relationship of social and self-motives with e-WOM on SNSs. Second, it discovers how the motivational process differ between strong and weak ties.

Several contributions of this research to the previous literature can be emphasized. The study discovers the contextual factors that drive people to disseminate brand-content online on Instagram and TikTok, thus, it contributes to making up for the lack of exploration of the contextual factors of e-WOM within an integrative framework (Alexandrov et al., 2013) and it answers to the call from Berger (2014) to consider how technological changes shape WOM. By identifying e-WOM's antecedents within social networks, this work links e-WOM literature with SNS literature, and by focusing on the two most emerging social network platforms (Instagram and TikTok) the study expands the existing literature, that focuses mainly on Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms (Spackman & Larsen, 2017; Yang & Kankanhalli, 2014). Moreover, since the literature has focused mainly on the receivers of WOM this study aims to reinforce the meagre list of studies investigating the senders' perspectives of e-WOM usage in SNS platforms (Chawdhary & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2015; Choi et al., 2017). Furthermore, especially related to this model are the examation of how the model from Alexandrov et al. (2013) performs when predicting to engage in e-WOM to strong and weak ties, and of the role of the intention to entertain as a driver of e-WOM.

The topic is relevant not only from an academical point of view, but also from a practical point of view. For several product categories, most of the word of mouth today takes place online, therefore, there is a clear need for companies to know the mechanisms and motivations that drive users to transmit and trust online content in order to help marketers to develop promotional campaigns by focusing on the benefits customers accrue through social interactions

Generally speaking, this paper aims to answer to the call for papers regarding the implications of these expansive and rapid changes driven by latest digital technologies and modern marketplace on consumers' e-WOM behaviors and by considering e-WOM as a social process, the study will answer to the call for more attention on social aspects of consumer behavior (Bagozzi, 2000; Wright, 2002).

7. Overview of chapters

8. Plan of work

DATE	ACTIVITY	STAGE OF COMPLETION
01.09 – 30.09.20	Literature review and exposé writing	Completed
1.10 – 10.10.20	Questionnaire design and pretest	To follow
11.10 – 21.11.20	Questionnaire distribution and data gathering	To follow
22.11 – 20.12.20	Data analysis and conclusion drawing	To follow
21.12 – 01.01.21	Buffer	To follow
02.01 – 12.01.21	Finalization and review	To follow
13.01.21	Thesis submission	To follow

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