SIM ktg

Società Italiana Marketing

MARKETING & RETAIL
NEI MERCATI
CHE CAMBIANO

XIII^ SIM Conference
Cassino, 20-21 ottobre 2016

PROCEEDINGS

ORE 11.00 Facebook and Twitter, social networks for culture. A first investigation on museums.
Piergiorgio Re, Bernardo Bertoldi, Chiara Giachino, Margherita Stupino

ORE 11.20 Marketing to families in the museum context.
Lucia Cicero, Maria Chiarvesio, Francesco Crisci

ORE 11.40 Living forever inked? Tattoo consumption and materialism. Evidence from italian tattoo conventions.
Michela C. Mason, Andrea Moretti, Francesco Raggiotto

ORE 12.00 Between sacred and profane.
A Systematic Literature Review on Religious Tourism in Marketing Research.
Michela C. Mason, Andrea Moretti, Francesco Raggiotto

ORE 12.20 Experiencing places. A comparison between user-generated and DMO's photos.
Chiara Mauri, Enrico Amato

SESSIONE INTERNET & DIGITAL MARKETING
PROF.SSA MARIA VERNUCCIO – PROF. RAFFAELE DONVITO
AULA 1.03

ORE 9.00 QRCode: what contents? A focus on wine industry.
Diletta Acuti, Valentina Mazzoli, Raffaele Donvito, Gaetano Aiello

ORE 9.30 Le azioni di marketing digitale per la promozione del gioco responsabile: un'analisi nel mercato italiano dei giochi on line.
Paolo Calvosa

ORE 10.00 L'utilizzo dell'e-WOM come strumento di management del comparto alberghiero: indagine nel mercato italiano.
Carmen Bernè Manero, Andreea Vicuta Ciobannu, Roberto Bruni, Andrea Moretta Tartaglione, Giuseppe Granata

ORE 10.30 How online recommendation agents affect consumers' search and post-purchase evaluation of professional services: evidences from the notary sector.
Giuseppe Pedeliento, Daniela Andreini, Mara Bergamaschi, Jane Klobas

ORE 11.00 Integrating linguistic tools and statistical models to measure brand association alignment in virtual environments.
Silvia Ranfagni, Rossella Berni, Nedka D. Nikiforova

ORE 11.30 A framework for the assessment of online fashion retailers: the fashion shopper web empowerment index.
Enrico Valdani, Elena Bellio, Luca Buccoliero, Elisa Solinas

ORE 12.00 Can companies generate engagement through their social media activity? A field experiment.
Sara Valentini, Elisa Montaguti, Federica Vecchioni, Alessandra Zammit

ORE 12.30 Rivoluzione digitale versus evoluzione del branding.
Maria Vernuccio

SESSIONE B2B MARKETING
PROF.SSA ROBERTA BOCCONCELLI – CHIARA CANTÙ

SESSIONE. MARKETING RESEARCH & EDUCATION
PROF. SEBASTIANO GRANDI
AULA 1.10

ORE 9.00 Antecedenti e moderatori della relazione fra entrepreneurial marketing orientation e customer retention.
Giancarlo Ferrero, Andrea Buratti

ORE 9.30 La partecipazione delle PMI a progetti complessi di R&S: una prospettiva business network.
Fabrizio Ciarmatori, Roberta Bocconcelli, Alessandro Pagano

ORE 10.00 Social media marketing nel B2B: primi risultati di una rassegna della letteratura internazionale.
Tonino Pencrelli, Maria Gabriella Mele

ORE 10.30 La convivialità quale mediatore tra relazioni sociali e relazioni business nelle comunità imprenditoriali. Risultati emergenti da un'analisi esplorativa.
Simone Guercini, Silvia Ranfagni, Claudio Becagli

ORE 11.00 Dal business dream al busienss plan:
la nascita di una start up nella prospettiva relazionale.
Chiara Cantù, Giorgia Sepe, Alessandra Tzannis

ORE 11.30 Business model innovation and marketing: a literature review.
Daniela Andreini

ORE 12.00 L'evoluzione degli studi di marketing in Italia: un'analisi longitudinale sulle riviste accademiche
Federica Ceccotti, Alberto Mattiacci, Costanza Nosi

ORE 12.30 Customer behaviour: implicazioni diencefaliche e mesencefaliche nelle dinamiche di acquisto.
Lino Barbasso, Giuseppe Tardivo, Milena Viassone

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PROGRAMMA DELLE SESSIONI PARALLELE

SESSIONE INTERNATIONAL MARKETING
PROF. GIUSEPPE BERTOLI – PROF.SSA MICHELA MATARAZZO
AULA 0.04

ORE 9.00 Acquisizioni internazionali e presidio dei mercati esteri: un'analisi delle medie imprese italiane acquisite.
Michela Matarazzo, Federica De Vanna, Giulia Lanzilli, Riccardo Resciniti

ORE 9.30 Backshoring in a marketing perspective: the role of manufacturing and Made in Italy for district firms.
Marco Bettiol, Maria Chiarvesio, Eleonora Di Maria

ORE 10.00 Consumer ethnocentrism e halal trust nelle intenzioni di acquisto di prodotti provenienti da Paesi non musulmani in Marocco.
Giada Mainolfi, Riccardo Resciniti

ORE 10.30 Distretti industriali e approvvigionamenti internazionali.
Fabio Musso, Barbara Francioni

ORE 11.00 The impact of cross-border innovative linkages on international sales growth of SMEs.
Bernardo Balboni, Guido Bortoluzzi, Gouya Harirchi

ORE 11.30 Italian lovers o Italian skeptics? La country image italiana come variabile di segmentazione nei mercati emergenti.
Alessandro De Nisco, Antonello D'Avino, Maria Rosaria Napolitano

ORE 12.00 Strategie distributive delle imprese italiane nei mercati internazionali. L'esperienza di Fiasconaro.
Tindara Abbate, Augusto D'Amico, Tiziana La Rocca

SESSIONE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
PROF.SSA STEFANIA BORGHINI – PROF. DANIELE SCARPI
1/2 AULA 0.05

ORE 9.00 The Triathlon sport consumer. A segmentation proposal.
Francesco Raggiotto, Michela C. Mason, Andrea Moretti, Stefano Ciani

ORE 9.30 Distanza culturale, trasferimento di reputazione e acquisizioni internazionali: la prospettiva del consumatore.
Michela Matarazzo, Federica De Vanna, Giulia Lanzilli

ORE 10.00 Construal-level theory in action: time-dependent facts and artifacts in marketing research and practice.
Gian Luca Marzocchi, Marco Visentin, Gabriele Pizzi

ORE 10.30 A field study in bookshops: how the strong power of weak anchors. Affects consumer behavior.
Marco Visentin, Chiara Orsingher

ORE 11.00 The bright and the dark side of referral reward programs.
Chiara Orsingher, Jochen Wirtz

ORE 11.30 Positive versus negative WOM: the role of audience expertise.
Matteo De Angelis, Jonah Berger, Chezy Ofir

ORE 12.00 Eyes don't lie: the influence of testimonial gaze direction and message wording on brand perception and purchase intention.
Marco Pichierri, Gabriele Pizzi, Daniele Scarpi

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ORE 12.30 Effetti della personalità sul consumo compulsivo dei nail biters.
Cristian Rizzo, Gianluigi Guido, Giovanni Pino, Aurora Marras

SESSIONE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
PROF.SSA STEFANIA BORGHINI – PROF. DANIELE SCARPI
2/2 AULA 0.06

ORE 9.00 The role of consumer-entrepreneurs in the context of tribes.
Silvia Biraghi, Rossella Gambetti, Stefano Pace

ORE 9.30 Customization and satisfaction: the role of self expression.
Alessandra Zammit, Elisa Montaguti, Sara Valentini

ORE 10.00 Consumer ambivalence in luxury shopping experience.
Stefano Prestini, Roberta Sebastiani

ORE 10.30 Boundary objects, "translation" and institutional work: "consuming. History" and "a history of the world in 100 objects".
Francesco Crisci

ORE 11.00 Nationalism and autarky in the contemporary (liberal) marketplace: the emergence and rise of futurist mixology.
Giuseppe Pedeliento

ORE 11.30 La confusione del consumatore di fronte ai copy cats: un esperimento nel food and beverage.
Chiara Mauri, Silvia Rossi

ORE 12.00 Social media e propensione all'acquisto on-line: il ruolo di moderazione della conoscenza.
Tommaso Pucci, Elena Casprini, Costanza Nosi, Lorenzo Zanni

SESSIONI MARKETING COMMUNICATION & BRANDING
PROF.SSA ROSSELLA GAMBETTI – FEDERICA CECCOTTI
AULA 1.01

ORE 9.00 The impact of social mediascape on brand communication: CSR risks in tweetjacking.
Agostino Vollero, Maria Palazzo, John Balmer, Alfonso Siano

ORE 9.30 L'effetto dell'incongruenza fra reputazione e evento critico sull'efficacia delle strategie di risposta alla crisi.
Giacomo Gistri, Matteo Corciolani, Stefano Pace

ORE 10.00 Brand equity and the alignment to new social and competitive paradigms in the modern context.
Nicolaia Iaffaldano

ORE 10.30 Heritage Marketing: una possibilità davvero sfruttata dalle imprese storiche italiane?
Angelo Riviezzo, Antonella Garofano, Maria Rosaria Napolitano

ORE 11.00 Communicating CSR: a selective "empirical review" of theories and methods. Work in progress.
Annamaria Tuan, Daniele Dalli, Matteo Corciolani, Alessandro Gandolfo

ORE 11.30 Come comunicare il reshoring? La risposta del consumatore alle motivazioni comunicate dall'impresa e il ruolo dello scetticismo.
Silvia Grappi, Simona Romani

ORE 12.00 Co-marketing: state of the art and existing approaches. Insights from a literature review.
Cecilia Grieco, Gennaro Iasevoli, Laura Michelini

ORE 12.30 Brand & Country of origin: una ricerca sulle preferenze del consumatore di olio extra-vergine d'oliva.
Patrizia de Luca, Giovanna Pegan, Stefania Troiano, Gianluigi Gallenti, Francesco Marangon, Marta Cosmina

SESSIONE SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING
PROF. CARLO ALBERTO PRATESI – PROF.SSA LAURA MICHELINI

SESSIONE TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION MARKETING
PROF.SSA NICOLETTA BURATTI – PROF. MICHELE SIMONI
AULA 1.02

ORE 9.00 CSR e green strategies nella gestione delle Autorità Portuali.
Marcello Risitano, Francesco Parola, Alessandra Turi, Marco Ferretti

ORE 9.30 Eco-awareness, eco-responsibility and eco-behaviour: a cross-country analysis.
Michelle Bonera, Elisabetta Corvi, Anna Codini, Ruijing Ma

ORE 10.00 The stock market reaction to CSR voluntary disclosure: firm and institutional determinants.
Stefano Mengoli, Marco Visentin

ORE 10.30 Assessing consumers' subjective well-being: a conceptual model for value creation and co-creation in service recovery from the service logic perspective.
Jenny Patricia Amaya-Vega, Mónica Gómez-Suárez, Mercedes Rozano

ORE 11.00 B Corps and their social impact communication strategy: does the talk match the walk?
Laura Michelini, Giorgia Nigri, Gennaro Iasevoli, Cecilia Grieco

ORE 11.30 Market orientation, performance and innovation in research based spin offs.
Nicoletta Buratti, Luca Persico, Giorgia Profumo

ORE 12.00 L'innovazione tecnologica per valorizzare il capitale relazionale.
Maria Fedele, Emanuela Antonucci

ORE 12.30 Gli intermediari della conoscenza per lo sviluppo dell'innovazione.
Giuseppe Cappiello, Raffaele Corrado, Manuela Presutti

SESSIONE SERVICE, RETAILING & CHANNEL MANAGEMENT
PROF. FRANCESCO IZZO – EDOARDO FORNARI
1/2 AULA 0.01

ORE 9.00 La visibilità online nel comparto retail.
Tonino Pencarelli, Marco Cioppi, Ilaria Curina, Fabio Forlani

ORE 9.30 Il "format diffuso": analisi dell'impatto della circolarità sulla brand retail experience.
Lucrezia Maria de Cosmo, Luca Petruzzellis, Pierluigi Passaro

ORE 10.00 L'impatto dei canali digitali in un contesto omni-canale.
Vincenzo Formisano, Michele Modina

ORE 10.30 "Le smart vending machine: da canali di vendita a fornitori di esperienze".
Monia Melia

ORE 11.00 Fenomenologia del consumo HoReCa: una ricerca induttiva per un nuova metodologia di analisi.
Febo Leondini, Matteo De Angelis

ORE 11.30 Sulle orme del consumatore: affinity analysis e knowledge visualization per il processo decisionale nella distribuzione commerciale.
Letizia Lo Presti, Vittoria Marino, Paolo Di Betta

ORE 12.00 Parafarmaci a marca commerciale? Sì, sono value conscious.
Elisa Martinelli, Francesca De Canio

ORE 12.30 Exploring share of wallet determinants in fmcg retailing. A qualitative study.
Vincenzo Basile

SESSIONE SERVICE, RETAILING & CHANNEL MANAGEMENT
PROF. FRANCESCO IZZO – EDOARDO FORNARI
2/2 AULA 0.02

ORE 9.00 Alcune applicazioni dell'illusione di Müller-Lyer alla gestione dello spazio espositivo a scaffale.
Daniele Porcheddu, Francesco Massara, Antonio Usai

ORE 9.30 Le capacità dinamiche nelle strategie di marketing dei retailer: definizione di un modello di analisi.
Marcello Sansone, Roberto Bruni, Annarita Colamatteo

ORE 10.00 L'influenza della store atmosphere nella relazione tra store satisfaction e store loyalty. Primi risultati di un'analisi panel.
Elisabetta Savelli, Barbara Francioni, Marco Cioppi

ORE 10.30 Extent and recoverability of retail food waste. Why supermarkets are not the "great wasters" of the food chain.
Clara Cicatiello

ORE 11.00 The influence of new technologies on shopping values: an exploratory research at a retail level.
Gaetano Aiello, Raffaele Donvito, Virginia Vannucci

ORE 11.30 How brand cue consistency across retail environments affects the customer experience: an empirical investigation.
Manuela Valta, Donata Vianelli, Barbara Stöttinger

ORE 12.00 Customer-oriented category management.
Gabriele Pizzi, Gian Luca Marzocchi

ORE 12.30 How to design and execute an omni-channel strategy: a literature review.
Valeria Colucci, Antonella Zucchella, Antonio Fossati

SESSIONE TOURISM, CULTURE & ARTS MARKETING
PROF. TONINO PENCARELLI – ANDREA MORETTI
AULA 1.06

ORE 9.00 La definizione del concetto dell'autenticità nelle destinazioni turistiche: un approccio fondato sul laddering.
Marcello Atzeni, Giuseppe Melis, Giacomo Del Chiappa

ORE 9.20 Moral versus material values in shaping tourist's happiness.
Mariella Pinna, Giacomo Del Chiappa, Antònia Correia

ORE 9.40 Inter-sectorial collaboration in networks: a boundary object approach to wine routes.
Giacomo Del Chiappa, Aise Kim, Ilenia Bregoli

ORE 10.00 Wine architecture e destination marketing: Chianti e Napa Valley a confronto.
Filomena Izzo, Pasquale Sasso

ORE 10.20 Le strategie di social media marketing adottate da alcuni festival culturali italiani: un'analisi comparata.
Maddalena Tammaro

ORE 10.40 The re-sacralization process of contemporary pilgrimage. A phenomenological study of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.
Costanza Nosi, Fabiola Sfodera, Alberto Mattiacci, Federica Ceccotti

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Positive Versus Negative WOM: The Role of Audience Expertise

Matteo De Angelis[1], Jonah Berger[2], Chezy Ofir[3]

We focus on how audience expertise shapes WOM valence, showing that individuals are more likely to share negative WOM with expert audiences but positive WOM with less expert audiences. We find that the interaction between audience expertise and WOM valence is explained by consumer's desire to appear competent.

1. Introduction

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is one of the most common activities individuals engage in both online and offline, as manifested in the fact that about 3.3 billion conversations about brands occur every day (Keller and Libai 2009). While traditional research has focused on the link between WOM and some antecedents, such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, commitment and trust (see DeMatos and Rossi 2008 for a review), as well as consequences, such as product judgments, sales and market shares (e.g., Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006), more recent research has focused on the content of WOM conversations, trying to shed light on what consumers talk about and why (see Berger 2014 for a review of these motives).

One important element that can affect the type of information shared is the audience one talks to. In our everyday life we face different audiences that vary along a number of dimensions. For instance, we might talk to close others (e.g., friends or family members) or distant others (e.g., strangers or people we barely know); still, we might talk to larger or smaller audiences, to people who have higher or lower status. While it is quite well understood that individuals frequently tailor the content of their conversations to the audience they talk to, the issue of how audience shapes WOM communications has been quite underexplored.

One relevant dimension on which audiences of our daily conversations commonly vary is their expertise on the topics at hand. We constantly talk about topics that present a higher degree of variation on how expert people can be. If we talk about cars, movies, wine, opera and topics like these, we might happen to talk to people who are highly expert or to people who are definitely not expert. Extant research, however, has not investigated the role of this factor in shaping WOM communications. We address this gap by studying how talking to more or less expert others affects the valence of WOM shared. We argue that consumers are more likely to engage in WOM after a negative rather than a positive experience when talking to

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expert others, whereas they are more likely to engage in WOM after a positive rather than a negative experience when talking to non-expert others. Across two experiments, we offer empirical evidence as well as propose that one single mechanism, i.e., individuals' desire to appear competent, explains both why consumers share more negative than positive WOM with more expert people and why they share more positive than negative WOM with less expert people.

2. Psychological Drivers of Positive and Negative WOM

Past research in marketing and consumer behavior has shown that individuals use either positive or negative WOM to project a positive image of themselves in the marketplace. Specifically, on the one hand consumers might share positive WOM to signal their expertise to others (Packard and Wooten 2013), to self-enhance by sharing their own personal experiences (De Angelis et al. 2012) or to be seen as sharers of positive rather than negative things (Berger and Milkman 2012). On the other hand, consumers might share negative WOM to self-enhance by sharing other people's experiences (De Angelis et al. 2012) or to show competence and knowledge, since sharing negative product evaluations can make the sharer seem knowledgeable (Amabile 1983; Schlosser 2005).

There is, however, a dearth of studies that have investigated when positive versus negative WOM is more likely to be shared to improve one's image in social contexts. One exception is represented by the work of De Angelis et al. (2012) that has shown that consumers can self-enhance by sharing either positive or negative WOM. These scholars have shown that consumers' likelihood to share more positive versus negative WOM depends on whether they share experiences occurred to themselves (in this case they are more likely to share positive WOM) or experiences they heard occurred to other people (in this case they are more likely to share negative WOM). In this research we propose that by shaping the valence of information shared, audience expertise helps increase our understanding of when positive versus negative WOM tends to be shared.

3. How Audience Expertise Shapes WOM: A Focus on WOM Valence

While reality shows that consumers often craft their WOM messages to the audience they talk to, WOM literature has not given adequate attention to the issue of how audience shapes WOM. Only recently some scholars have investigated two main dimensions of WOM audience. The first dimension is the closeness with the communicator, whereby consumers sometimes talk to people they feel close to (e.g., friends) while some other times they talk to people they feel distant from (e.g., acquaintances). Chen and Berger (2013) have found that individuals are less likely to talk about controversial topics with distant others rather than with close others. The second dimension is the size of the audience, whereby people tend to share self-presentational content when talking to large audiences and useful content when talking to small audiences (Barasch and Berger 2014).

In many situations, however, consumers adapt the messages they share to the audience they face depending on how expert the audience is or is perceived to be.

Some scholars have actually investigated the role of expertise in WOM, but have focused on the effect of the expertise of the communicator on WOM behavior (Packard and Wooten 2013) Missing from the literature is an investigation of how the level of expertise of the audience affects the type of WOM one shares. We predict that consumers are more likely to engage in WOM after a negative rather than a positive experience when talking to expert others, whereas they are more likely to engage in WOM after a positive rather than a negative experience when talking to less expert others. We hypothesize this effect is explained by sharers' desire to appear competent. In other words, we expect that the valence of WOM shared moderates the effects of audience expertise on likelihood to engage in WOM by moderating the effect of audience expertise on desire to appear competent.

4. Experiment 1

Experiment 1 tested the hypothesis that WOM valence moderates the effect of audience expertise on likelihood to engage in WOM. In particular, we expected a higher WOM likelihood following a negative versus a positive experience when the sharers talked to expert others, and a higher WOM likelihood following a positive versus a negative experience when talking to less expert others. Two hundred three respondents, recruited online, were randomly assigned to a 2 (WOM valence: positive vs. negative) x 3 (audience expertise: expert, non expert, control) between subjects design. Participants read a scenario about a car purchase situation. Information valence was manipulated by asking respondents in positive (negative) condition to imagine they have bought a car and the more drive it the more they are happy (unhappy) about it, as the car seems (doesn't seem) fast enough, seems (doesn't seem) to have a reliable engine, a good (poor) pickup, and seems (doesn't seem) quite fuel efficient. Next, we manipulated audience expertise by having respondents imagine they were at a party celebrating their friend's birthday and imagine talking to another person known to be expert on cars (expert condition), to a person who doesn't know much about cars (non-expert condition), or to a person they know (control condition). Our dependent variable was a 7-point measure of how likely they would be to share their car experience with their audience (1 = very unlikely, 7 = very likely).

Data analyzed though a two-way ANOVA using likelihood to engage in WOM as dependent variable and WOM valence and audience expertise as factors revealed a significant main effect of audience expertise (F (1, 197), = 10.79, $p < .001$) and a significant WOM valence x audience expertise interaction effect (F (1, 197), = 6.85, $p < .001$), while the main effect of WOM valence was not significant (F (1, 197), =.89, ns). Planned contrasts showed that when talking to expert others participants were more likely to engage in WOM after a negative rather than a positive experience (M_{neg} = 5.97, SD = 1.03 vs. M_{pos} = 5.14, SD = 1.11, t (197) = 2.25, $p < .03$), while no difference was observed when talking to non-expert others (M_{neg} = 4.42, SD = 1.99 vs. M_{pos} = 4.40, SD = 1.70, t (197) = .05, ns). In contrast to what shown for expert others, when audience expertise was unknown (i.e., in the control condition), participants were more likely to engage in WOM after a positive rather than a

negative experience (M_{pos} = 5.81, SD = 1.22 vs. M_{neg} = 4.76, SD = 1.63, t (197) = 2.97, p < .001). Thus, these results seem to comfirm our prediction.

5. Experiment 2

Experiment 2 aimed to show convergence on the effect and to offer evidence that the interaction between valence of information and audience expertise might be explained by respondents' desire to appear competent. One hundred seventy seven respondents, recruited online, were randomly assigned to a 2 (WOM valence: positive vs. negative) x 3 (audience expertise: expert, non-expert, control) between subjects design.

WOM valence was manipulated in a similar was as in Experiment 1 but the product described in the scenario was a novel. Also audience expertise was manipulated in similar way as in Experiment 1.We used the same dependent variable as in Experiment 1, but here we also measured how respondents would feel if they happen to share their experience with the novel with the kind of people described in the scenario using two 7-point measures (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree): (1) "I would be very much willing to appear knowledgeable," and (2) "I would be very much willing to show I have high standards in my evaluations."

Data analyzed with a two-way ANOVA with likelihood to engage in WOM as dependent variable and WOM valence and audience expertise as factors revealed a significant valence x expertise interaction (F (1, 171), = 7.44, p < .001), while the main effects of valence (F (1, 171), =1.82, ns) and expertise (F (1, 171), =1.58, ns) were both not significant. As in Experiment 1, when talking to experts participants were more likely to engage in WOM after a negative rather than a positive experience (M_{neg} = 5.07, SD = 1.48 vs. M_{pos} = 4.15, SD = 1.49, t (176) = 2.08, p < .04), while no difference in WOM sharing was observed when talking to non expert others (M_{neg} = 3.89, SD = 2.11 vs. M_{pos} = 4.36, SD = 1.88, t (197) = 1.10, ns). When audience expertise was unknown (i.e., in the control condition), however, participants were more likely to engage in WOM after a positive rather than a negative experience (M_{pos} = 5.32, SD = 1.22 vs. M_{neg} = 3.86, SD = 1.67, t (171) = 3.37, p < .001). Next, we tested the hypothesis that individuals' desire to appear competent drives the effects shown, by creating an index of individuals' desire to appear competent averaging the scores of the two measures above (α = .84). We split the variable describing the three levels of audience expertise into two dummy variables. One variable, labeled "expert," took value 1when the respondents read the scenario in which they talked to experts and 0 otherwise; the other variable, labeled "non expert," took value 1 when the respondents read the scenario in which they had to talk to non expert others and 0 otherwise. To test our hypothesis we ran a mediated moderation analysis.

We first regressed the mediator on "expert" (dichotomous variable), WOM valence, and their interaction, while controlling for the other dichotomous variable, i.e., "non-expert." Results showed a significant main effect of expert that was negative (b = -.46, t(172) = -1.89, p = .06), and a significant interaction effect between expert and valence (b = -.37, t(172) = -.1.78, p = .08), suggesting that the possibility that talking to experts increases the desire to appear competent is higher when sharing negative rather than positive WOM. We repeated the analysis using

"non-expert" as independent variable and "expert" as covariate, but none of those effect resulted to be significant (ps > .1). Second, we regressed WOM likelihood on audience expertise, WOM valence, their interaction, and the mediator. We ran the analysis using "expert" as independent variable and "non-expert" as covariate. The results showed that the effect of the mediator on WOM likelihood was positive and significant ($b = .45$, $t(171) = 4.87$, $p = .001$). More importantly, the analysis revealed an indirect effect of "expert" x valence that was negative and significant ($b = -.34$, 95% confidence interval = .87 and -.06). This finding demonstrates that the desire to appear competent accounts for the differential impact of audience expertise and WOM valence on WOM likelihood.

6. Discussion

In two experiments, we have shown that the expertise of the audience shapes WOM valence. In particular, we consistently found that while talking to expert audiences prompts the sharing of WOM after negative versus positive experiences, talking to less expert audiences prompts the sharing of WOM after positive versus negative experiences. In Experiment 2 we offer evidence that this effect is explained by communicator's desire to show competence. These research offers three main contributions. First, it sheds light on how a relevant but underexplored dimension of the audience, i.e., its expertise, shapes WOM. Second, it contributes to the knowledge about the role of expertise in WOM by studying how the expertise of the audience influences WOM. Third, it contributes to the knowledge into when positive versus negative WOM is more likely to occur.

References

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