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 BORGINI - 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 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 Pedelenio

ORE 11.30 La confusione del consumatore di fronte ai copy cats: un esperimento nel food and beverage. Giacomo Gistri, Matteo Corciolani, Stefano Pace

SESSIONE SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING
PROF. CARLO ALBERTO PRATESI - PROF.SSA LAURA MICHELINI
AULA 1.02

ORE 9.00 CSR and green strategies in the governance of the Auto- rity 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 Melchini, Giorgia Nigri, Gennaro Iasevoli, Cecilia Grieco

ORE 11.30 Market orientation, performance and innovation in research based spin off. 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 Cioppo, Ilaria Ciruna, Fabio Forlani

ORE 9.30 il “format diffuso”: analisi dell’impatto della circolarietà sulle brand retail experience. Lucrezia Maria de Cosmo, Luca Petruzelli, Pierluigi Passaro

ORE 10.00 L’impatto dei canali digitali in un contesto omnicanale. 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 Leonardi, Matteo De Angelis

ORE 11.30 Sulle orme del consumatore: affinity analysis and knowledge visualization for the process decisionale in the distribution commercial. Letizia Lo Presti, Vittoria Marino, Paolo Di Betta

ORE 12.00 Parafarmaci a manca 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 scala multinazionale. Valeria Colucci, Antonella Zucchella, Antonio Fossati

ORE 9.30 The influence of new technologies on shopping values: an exploratory research at a retail level. Gaetano Aiello, Raffaele Dorvito, Virginia Vannucci

ORE 10.00 How brand cue consistency across retail environments affects the customer experience: an empirical investigation. Manuela Valti, Donata Vaneili, Barbara Stöttinger

ORE 10.30 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. TORINO PENCARELLI - ANDREA MORETTI
AULA 1.06

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

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

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

ORE 10.00 Wine architecture and destination marketing: Chianti and 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 di Santiago de Compostela. Costanza Nosì, Fabiola Sfodera, Alberto Mattiacci, Federica Cecchot

Cassino 20-21 ottobre
Positive Versus Negative WOM: The Role of Audience Expertise

Matteo De Angelis¹, Jonah Berger², Chezy Ofir³

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.

Keywords: positive word-of-mouth, negative word-of-mouth audience, expertise

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 ($M_{\text{pos}} = 5.81, SD = 1.22$ vs. $M_{\text{neg}} = 4.76, SD = 1.63, t(197) = 2.97, p < .001$). Thus, these results seem to confirm 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 ($F(1, 171), p < .001$), 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 ($M_{\text{neg}} = 5.07, SD = 1.48$ vs. $M_{\text{pos}} = 4.15, SD = 1.49, t(176) = 2.08, p < .04$), while no difference in WOM sharing was observed when talking to non expert others ($M_{\text{neg}} = 3.89, SD = 2.11$ vs. $M_{\text{pos}} = 4.36, SD = 1.88, t(197) = 1.10, ns$). 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 ($M_{\text{pos}} = 5.32, SD = 1.22$ vs. $M_{\text{neg}} = 3.86, SD = 1.67, t(171) = 3.37, p < .001$). 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 ($\alpha = .84$). We split the variable describing the three levels of audience expertise into two dummy variables. One variable, labeled “expert,” took value 1 when 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 ($p > .1$). 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