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eWOM and Docility: The Restaurant Decision-making Process

Daniele Grechi

Ph.D. Student, Department of Economics, Insubria University, Italy
Contract Professor, Department of Financial Mathematics & Department of Mathematical Sciences,
Mathematical Finance and Econometrics, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

Paola Ossola

Lecturer, Department of International Tourism Management, Hospitality Marketing and Service
Operations Management, César Ritz Colleges, Montreux, Switzerland

Thorsten Merkle

Director, Department of Studies (BSc Tourism),
Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft HTW Chur, Switzerland

Abstract:

The paper aimed to explore the role of EWOM in consumers eating out decision-making process. The purpose is the one of showing how information shared through EWOM were much more effective than commercial information and they made consumers change their mind in their eating out decisions. To test hypothesis an experiment simulating the eating out behaviour of consumers was used.

434 Italian students took part to it. Different scenarios characterized by high and low customers satisfaction were presented to respondents; half of the students were presented both commercial information and Trip advisor reviews, half acted as a control group. Z-scores were used to test for docility. SEM was used to identify variables affecting.

EWOM in the form of Tripadvisor reviews had such a strong power to make people docile up to the point of changing their mind although before, after reading commercial information, they would have shown a different behaviour. EWOM was more useful than commercial information in influencing consumers' decisions, in every scenario, however EWOM was more trustworthy than commercial information when they have the same valence and more informative when their information quality is low. Among factors influencing docility usefulness was the variable mediating the impact of trustworthiness on docility; trustworthiness does not have a direct impact on docility.

The paper contributes to improving the understanding of EWOM role in the decision-making process, and in particular it explores how powerful EWOM is in making people change their mind in their eating out decisions, i.e. showing strong docility.

Keywords: restaurant, decision-making process, eWOM, docility

Article Classification: JEL: L83 L66

1. Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

The Internet is a vast source of information where people find information on which more and more individuals rely on in order to improve their decision-making (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002; Brown et al., 2007; Granitz and Ward 1996; Sen and Lerman 2007). Information on the Internet is usually provided to consumers through official company channels, as well as through peers' channels, such as communities of consumers that through electronic word of mouth (eWOM) (Godes, and Mayzlin; 2004; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Mauri and Minazzi, 2013), strongly influence decision-making processes of other individuals. eWOM is a signal to help a consumer to improve his/her purchase decision (Pan and Chiou, 2011). It in comparison with commercial information, allows "to shift power from companies to consumers" (Hennig-Thurau et. al., 2004: p. 42) influencing behavioural intentions of consumers that might change their behavioural intentions developed on the basis of commercial information after reading reviews, showing docility.

1.2. Interpersonal Influence and Docility

eWOM, as well as WOM concepts embed their roots in the literature about interpersonal influence, a concept that refers to the flow of information and influence between people in a social environment as empathized by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955). Interpersonal influence in decision making and advice giving and taking has been largely studied, and findings underline the importance of external

resources in increasing the ability of individuals to make decisions and to evaluate the alternatives available (Sniezek and Buckley, 1995; Sniezek and Van Swol, 2001; Van Swol and Sniezek, 2005). This implies that individuals are usually influenced by others' opinion and advice (Bonaccio and Dalal, 2006) on which they base their decisions. This means that individuals, as human beings, are boundedly rational (Simon, 1947; Simon 1972, Kahneman, and Tversky, 1979) and since they suffer information asymmetries, they need to rely on external sources' advice, suggestions, comments and information to form their behavioural intention. This behaviour makes individuals and their social environment 'docile' (Simon, 1993; Bardone and Secchi, 2009), due to the docility effect. Docility is a twofold concept: individuals depend on suggestions, perceptions, comments and information provided by other individuals (Simon, 1993), and at the same time they are willing to provide others with suggestions, perceptions, comments and information (Bardone and Secchi, 2009). Docile individuals in order to increase their cognitive ability rely on external resources due to their bounded rationality. This implies that they will look for commercial information and reviews selecting source of information from which to learn (Secchi, 2007) making them consider one source of information rather than others on the basis of informativeness, trustworthiness and usefulness.

1.3. The impact of Trustworthiness, Informativeness and Usefulness on eDocility

Trust is among those factors that might increase docility, and make opportunism and other non-docile behaviours costly (Barney and Hansen, 1994; Mayer et. al., 1995; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Zaheer et. al., 1998). In advice-taking literature, a positive relation between trust and docility has been already emphasized (e.g. Sniezek and Van Swol, 2001). Trust makes individuals more willing to be docile (McAllister, 1995; Barney and Hansen, 1994): the lack of trust is deleterious to information exchange. The higher the level of trust in others, the higher the individual is influenced by other advice (Sniezek and Van Swol, 2001). According to Mauri (2002), eWOM is based on the following elements: credibility, importance, intensity, persistency, speed, and valence, also common in a more general discussion about trust and docility (e.g., ability/expertise (Mayer, et al. 1995; Harvey and Fischer, 1997; Sniezek et. al., 2004), confidence (Yaniv, 2000; Sniezek and Buckley, 1995; Sniezek and Van Swol, 2001, Van Swol and Sniezek, 2005; Price and Stone, 2004; etc.), intentions (Barnett and White 2005; Bonaccio and Dalal, 2010); benevolence (Mayer, et al. 1995), credibility, reliability, and importance). In this situation individuals develop higher level of docility due to trust: "Without a significant level of trust this "docile" process is not possible at all" (Secchi, 2007, p. 8): trust has a positive influence on docility (Ossola, 2013). The aim of this paper is to explore the role of trustworthiness in influencing docility when information is available online, emphasizing how eWOM from peers in virtual online communities (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006) is likely to make customers change their behavioural intention (i.e., customers beliefs about what they would do in a certain situation, as a surrogate of their actual behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, Ajzen, 2005). In particular, this paper presents a theoretical model based on the assumption that trustworthiness of the source of information (commercial information vs. reviews) influences positively docility (as the difference between two different behavioural intentions) in social channels (i.e., online community, that is docile due to the docility effect), when the customer is asked to decide whether to go and eat in a restaurant where neither the consumer nor his/her acquaintance have been before. In this scenario consumers can only rely on company information and eWOM. eWOM is considered as a helpful source of information for consumers, and their purchasing intentions are influenced by consumers reviews (Mauri and Minazzi, 2013), and the absence of face-to-face human contact acts as facilitator of eWOM (Sun et. al., 2006) showing that in this context customers are docile even if according to the docility theory it is "very unlikely that people are docile in a community of strangers" (Secchi, 2011, p. 120). According to these principles behavioural intentions of respondents' changes after having read reviews, showing docility. If the behavioural intentions of respondent changes after reading reviews even if before on the basis of commercial information they would have acted different, means that they are docile, showing clearly that reviews not only influence behavioural intentions, but they make them change their intention, and this difference in their behavioural intention is statistically significant.

- Hypothesis 1: In online communities, even if their members are strangers, consumers show docile behaviours. As a matter of fact, they change their intention to visit the restaurant after having read online reviews, even if they would have acted differently if they had only commercial information.

Trustworthiness is considered as a factor that influences docility in a community of strangers: people tend to trust social channels as a major basis for making decisions (Sousa et.al, 2012), and the level of trust they have in reviews, even if they are developed by strangers is higher than the one they have in commercial information (Mangold and Faulds 2009, with reference to reliability one of the determinates of trust). In addition to this it is also important to test the information that is released by reviewers is more informative than commercial ones (Dickinger, 2010), and much more useful (information quality influence positively perceived usefulness) (Kim et.al, 2008). This analysis enabled us to confirm that reviews are considered more trustworthy, more informative and useful than commercial information in the decision-making process of customers, and it is an essential element to test in order to further develop our cause-effect analysis. The following three hypotheses have been tested.

- Hypothesis 2: Customers have a higher level of trustworthiness in reviews read in a community of strangers than in commercial information.
- Hypothesis 3: Customers consider reviews as more informative than commercial sources
- Hypothesis 4: Customers consider reviews as more useful in influencing their intention than commercial sources.

After testing for docility, trustworthy, informativeness and usefulness, cause-effect analysis was hypothesised. The following Full SEM Model was tested.

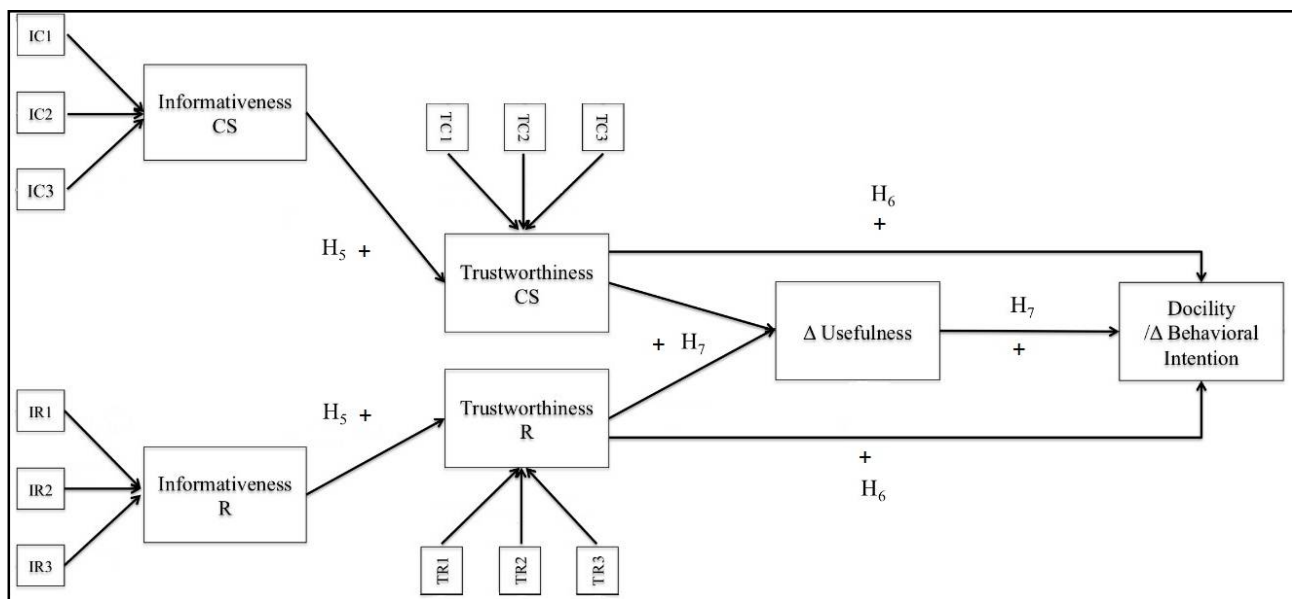


Figure 1: SEM Model, Source: Personal Elaboration

The following hypothesis were tested on the basis of the SEM:

- Hypothesis 5: CS and R Trustworthiness are positively influenced by CS and R Informativeness
- Hypothesis 6: Docility is positively influenced by CS and R trustworthiness
- Hypothesis 7: The relationship between CS and R trustworthiness and docility is positively mediated by Δ usefulness

Δ usefulness and docility are the differences in the behaviour before and after having read the reviews.

2. Methods

2.1. Instrument Development

In order to test our hypothesis an experimental study was conducted using a survey. Four experimental scenarios as well as four control scenarios were developed. Information available was commercial information from restaurant websites, and reviews. In experimental scenarios respondents were provided with an entire set of information (commercial information and reviews), in control scenarios they were instead provided only with commercial information. Restaurants that were included in each scenario were chosen on the basis of the level of the quality of their commercial information (informativeness). Two scenarios included restaurants that showed a high commercial informativeness (Scenario 1 and 4), the other two showed a low level of informativeness (Scenario 2 and 3). Reviews were selected by information posted during Summer 2014. Reviews provided to respondents were the score (% of visitors that consider the restaurant excellent and very good in % and % of visitors that consider the restaurant excellent, very good, average, poor, and terrible), the ranking (position of the restaurant in the restaurant ranking of the city where it is located) and comments published on TripAdvisor. Three different comments were randomly selected assuring that different levels of satisfaction were included (average, poor and terrible). Two scenarios included restaurants that were highly recommended, the other two included restaurants that were not highly recommended.

To avoid bias due to brand recognition, information about restaurants included in each scenario were unbranded (Chatterjee, 2001; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009), and restaurants located in geographical areas far away from Insubria University, where respondents live and study, were selected. Price information was also excluded.

Respondents were randomly allocated to different scenarios, and they were required to express their opinion on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely disagree) to 7 (extremely agree). Constructs used to measure these variables were borrowed and adapted from existing literature. The measurement of these variables enabled us to measure the following variables: docility, trustworthiness, informativeness and usefulness. Further information collected aimed to measure different constructs as well as to have a clear picture of respondents' characteristics (i.e., gender, age, education, and income, eating out frequency and average expenses for eating out). A pilot test (20 participants) was used to check for the adequacy of the instrument, and to refine it before collecting data.

2.2. Method used to Analyse the Data

In order to test the hypothesis different analysis were carried out. Z-test was used to access the importance of reviews in comparison with commercial information. In particular, to measure docility, as the change in the intention to eat at a proposed restaurant or not measured as the difference between the intention they show before reading the reviews (only based on commercial information, i.e. company websites), and after, and the difference in trustworthiness, informativeness and usefulness between commercial information and reviews. SEM was instead used to test the model previously introduced: The relationship between trustworthiness and informativeness has been hypothesized: informativeness influences strongly the level of trustworthiness that people have in commercial and reviews: the level of informativeness influences the level of trustworthiness. This in turn influences directly docility, and the

relationship between trustworthiness and docility is mediated by usefulness. Briefly Hypothesis 1 to 4 were tested through Z-test, and Hypothesis 5 and 7 were tested through SEM. The software used to run the analysis was R (version 3.1.2 “Pumpkin Helmet”).

3. Data Collection and Analysis

10,000 students from Insubria University were surveyed in the period September-November 2014. 450 people took part in the experiment: valid cases used in the analysis were 434. 16 cases were deleted due to excessive missing values. Mean imputation, which “allows researchers to use the mean value of a variable in place of missing data values for that same variable” (Roth, 1994), was used when less than 5% of the data were missing, in fact this method is “appropriate if only a small number of cases are missing values” (Saunders et al., 2006).

3.1. Respondents' Profile

In the following table, the respondents' profile is shown. Notice that 64% of the respondents were female, and the average age of respondents was 23, without a job (56%). 93% of the respondents eat out from 1 to 5 times a month spending on average 21€ each time.

Variables	Sample for the Experiment		Sample for SEM	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender				
Female	277	63,82%	145	67,44%
Male	157	36,18%	70	32,56%
	434	100,00%	215	100,00%
Age				
Mean	23,26		23,76	
SD	5,51		5,99	
Education				
Highschool	346	79,72%	162	75,35%
Bachelor	51	11,75%	28	13,02%
Master	27	6,22%	15	6,98%
PhD	4	0,92%	3	1,40%
Other	6	1,38%	7	3,26%
	434	100,00%	215	100,00%
Average Monthly Salary				
Tra 1 e 250 €	74	17,05%	34	15,81%
Tra 251 e 500 €	23	5,30%	16	7,44%
Oltre 1000 €	61	14,06%	33	15,35%
tra 501 e 1000 €	35	8,06%	15	6,98%
NA	241	55,53%	117	54,42%
	434	100,00%	215	
Eating Out Monthly Frequency				
0 - 5	402	92,63%	201	93,49%
5-10	24	5,53%	11	5,12%
>10	8	1,84%	3	1,40%
	434	100,00%	215	100,00%
Monthly Eating Out Check				
Mean	20,68		20,80	
SD	11,93		14,49	

Table 1: Sample Descriptive Statistics

3.2. Measurement Model

In the following table, the measurement model is presented. As we can see the level of internal consistency, reliability and unidimensionality, of each construct in every scenario was acceptable with a Cronbach's Alpha bigger than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). In the following table items used to measure each construct are also provided.

Company's Commercial (Website) Information
Behavioural intention after analysing Website Information (Namkung and Jang, 2007) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.89 (Scenario 2) - α max.= 0.94 (Scenario 5)
I would like to eat in this restaurant in the future I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others I would say positive things about this restaurant to others
Website Informativeness (Hausman, and Siekpe, 2009) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.85 (Scenario 6) - α max.= 0.94 (Scenario 1)
The website is a good source of restaurant information This website supplies relevant restaurant information This website is informative about the restaurant
Usefulness of Website Information (Hausman, and Siekpe, 2009) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.88 (Scenario 4) - α max. = 0.96 (Scenario 2,5,6)
Using this website can improve my performance in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant Using this website can increase my productivity in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant Using this website can increase my effectiveness in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant I find using this website useful in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant
Website Information Trustworthiness (Qiu, Pang, and Lim, 2012) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.83 (Scenario 4) - α max. = 0.94 (Scenario 1,6,7,8)
In general, I think the Website Information I just read is very trustworthy In general, I think the Website Information I just read is very reliable In general, I think the Website Information I just read is very credible
Peers' Review
Behavioural Intention after analysing Peers' Review (Namkung and Jang, 2007) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.89 (Scenario 4) - α max. = 0.95 (Scenario 1,3)
I would like to eat in this restaurant in the future I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others I would say positive things about this restaurant to others
Peers' Review Informativeness (Hausman, and Siekpe, 2009) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.90 (Scenario 4) - α max.= 0.96 (Scenario 1)
Peers' Review is a good source of restaurant information Peers' Review supplies relevant restaurant information Peers' Review is informative about the restaurant
Usefulness of Peers' Review (Hausman, and Siekpe, 2009) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.87 (Scenario 2) - α max.= 0.92 (Scenario 2)
Using Peers' Review can improve my performance in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant Using Peers' Review can increase my productivity in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant Using Peers' Review can increase my effectiveness in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant I find using Peers' Review useful in deciding whether or not to eat in the restaurant
Peers' Review Trustworthiness (Qiu, Pang, and Lim, 2012) Cronbach's Alpha α min.= 0.91 (Scenario 4) - α max. = 0.97 (Scenario 3)
In general, I think the Peers' Review I just read is very trustworthy In general, I think the Peers' Review I just read is very reliable In general, I think the Peers' Review I just read is very credible

Table 2: Measurement Model

All the constructs used had an acceptable level of internal consistency. estimates ranging from .89 to .95

3.3. Differences between Groups

Experimental group and the control groups did not differ in their characteristics: per *Z-tests* (Anderson, 1984) μ in the different groups do not statistically differ on the different dimensions (docility, informativeness, trustworthiness, and usefulness). All the *Z-tests* (Lawley, 1938) accept the H_0 ($\mu_{exp} = \mu_{contr}$), where the μ in the different groups do not statistically differ on the different dimensions (docility, informativeness, trustworthiness, and usefulness). All the tests had a *Z-test* score less than 1.96 ($\alpha = 0.05$), only one of the sixteen tests had a z-test score between 1.96 ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 2.326 ($\alpha = 0.10$).

Experimental vs Control	Variable Tested	z-test	St Sign
Experimental Scenario 1 vs Control Scenario 5	Docility	1,12	$\alpha = 0.05$
1-5	Informativeness	0,54	$\alpha = 0.05$
1-5	Trustworthiness	-0,02	$\alpha = 0.05$
1-5	Usulfuness	-0,13	$\alpha = 0.05$
1-5	Age	1,30	$\alpha = 0.05$
Experimental Scenario 2 vs Control Scenario 6	Docility	-1,79	$\alpha = 0.05$
2-6	Informativeness	-0,61	$\alpha = 0.05$
2-6	Trustworthiness	-0,46	$\alpha = 0.05$
2-6	Usulfuness	-0,39	$\alpha = 0.05$
2-6	Age	1,04	$\alpha = 0.05$
Experimental Scenario 3 vs Control Scenario 7	Docility	2,06	$\alpha = 0.10$
3-7	Informativeness	-0,23	$\alpha = 0.05$
3-7	Trustworthiness	1,04	$\alpha = 0.05$
3-7	Usulfuness	1,80	$\alpha = 0.05$
3-7	Age	1,33	$\alpha = 0.05$
Experimental Scenario 4 vs Control Scenario 8	Docility	-1,41	$\alpha = 0.05$
4-8	Informativeness	0,09	$\alpha = 0.05$
4-8	Trustworthiness	-0,61	$\alpha = 0.05$
4-8	Usulfuness	-1,71	$\alpha = 0.05$
4-8	Age	-0,56	$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3: Scenarios

This implies to conclude that there are no differences between the characteristics between the two groups, as expected, allowing us to carry out the analysis with confidence in the fact that the sample in the two groups had similar features.

3.4. Analysis

As previously stated, to test hypothesis different approaches were used. *z-test* in our experiment was used to test Hypothesis 1–4 (docility, taking into consideration changes in respondents' behavioural intentions, changes in trustworthiness, informativeness and usefulness in case of commercial information and peers' review). SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) with a maximum likelihood method was used to test Hypothesis 5–7 on the basis of the model developed.

3.5. Hypothesis 1 to 4

The following table summarizes the result of the *z-test* used to test Hypothesis 1 to 4. *Z-test* scores allowed to analyse the differences between mean in the two groups expecting to reach a statistical significance difference between the groups in the different scenarios.

Z-Test - Hypothesis 1 to 4 –			
Scenario	Z-test Value	St Sign	Result
1	4,642903471	Yes	Hypothesis 1 - Accepted
2	6,797158602	Yes	
3	3,715665944	Yes	
4	6,736500407	Yes	
1	-2,859495481	Yes	Hypothesis 2 - Partially Accepted
2	-4,116491422	Yes	
3	-1,038485701	No	
4	-1,591465526	No	
1	-0,222483542	No	Hypothesis 3 - Partially Accepted
2	-3,986350504	Yes	
3	-4,071203623	Yes	
4	0,128967843	No	
1	-2,045145546	Yes	Hypothesis 4 – Accepted
2	-5,930693137	Yes	
3	-2,671750166	Yes	
4	-3,205215328	Yes	

Table 4

3.6. Hypothesis 5 to 7

The following model shows the result of the SEM used to test the cause and effect model hypothesized. In order to get further understanding about the relationship between different variables, and test the hypothesis 5 and 7 the model in Figure 2 was run allowing to get to the results shown in the figure.

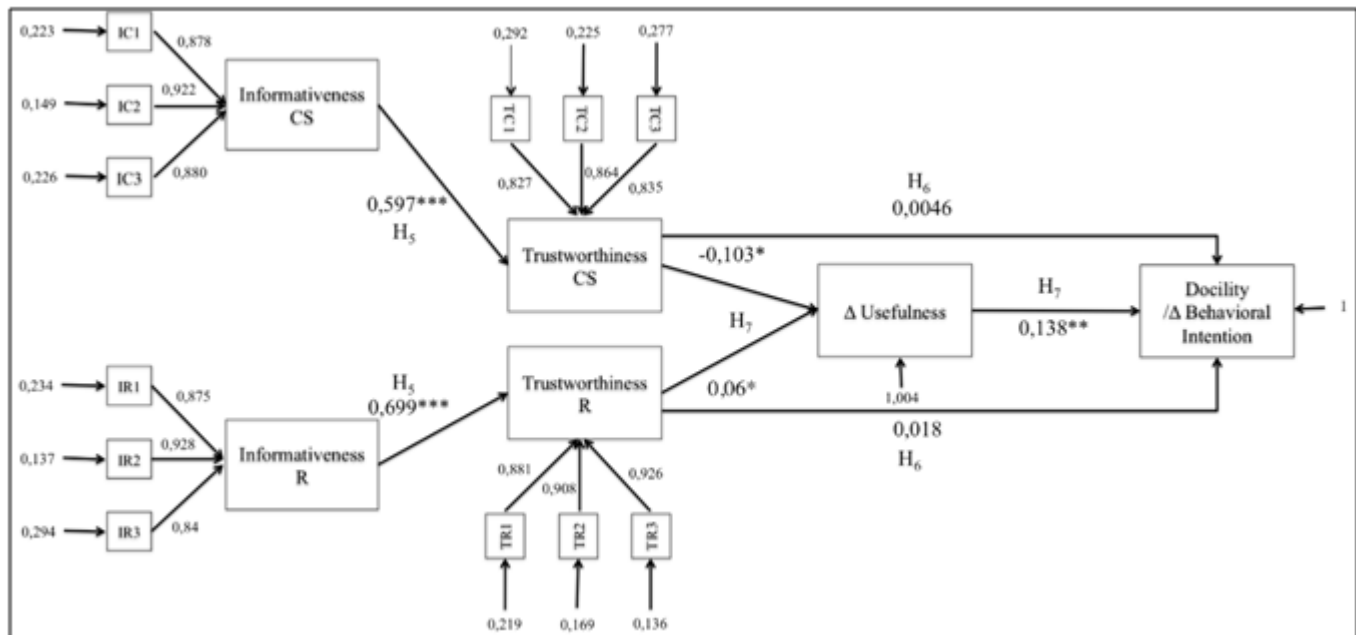


Figure 2: SEM Model with coefficients, Source: Personal Elaboration

The goodness-of-fit statistics of the structural model showed that the model reasonably fits the data, $\chi^2_{(75)} = 16.47$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 0.2196$, Goodness of fit = 0.90, NFI = 0.921, TLI = 0.945, CFI = 0.954, Incremental Fit Index (IFI; Bentler & Bonnet, 1980) = 0.955, RMSEA = 0.078 (90% CI: 0.062, 0.094).

4. Results

The result allows us to accept Hypothesis 1, since H_0 (the null hypothesis that we would like to reject) is rejected. This means that respondents always (Scenario 1 to 4) change their behavioural intention, after having read reviews, even if they would have acted differently if they had only commercial information. Individuals are more likely to change their when they are provided with reviews that have negative valence: this in fact causes a deterioration of their intention to visit the restaurant. This is shown by the fact that the Z -test results in Scenario 2 and 4 where the reviews given to respondents were more negative, are higher than in Scenario 1 and 3 where the reviews given to responders were positive. Hypothesis 4 is also accepted, since H_0 is rejected in all the scenarios. This means that respondents considered reviews as more useful than commercial information in shaping their behavioural intention. In particular individuals are more likely to consider more useful negative reviews. Instead Hypothesis 2 and 3 are partially accepted. Hypothesis 2 is partially accepted, since the H_0 is rejected only in the first and second scenarios. This means that respondents consider reviews more trustworthy than commercial information only when commercial information have the same valence. However, in third and fourth scenario where valence of commercial information and reviews is different, this difference is not statistically significant even if the review trustworthiness is higher. Hypothesis 3 is partially accepted, since the H_0 is rejected only in the second and third scenarios. This means that respondents consider reviews more informative than commercial information only when the quality of commercial information is low. However, in the first and in the fourth scenarios where valence of commercial information and reviews is different, this difference is not statistically significant, even if in the first scenario the review informativeness is higher than the one of commercial information. In the fourth scenario, the level of commercial informativeness is so high that it does not enable reviews to have a strong power in influencing behavioural intention. The SEM Model presents the standardized path coefficients. It allows us to conclude that Hypothesis 5 is accepted, the standardized path coefficient is significant at $p < 0.001$ (H_5). The hypothesized relationship between trustworthiness and informativeness (Hypothesis 5) was supported by the corresponding estimate of 0.597 ($z = 11.57$, $p < .001$) (Trustworthiness of commercial information and informativeness of commercial information) and 0.699 (Trustworthiness of reviews and informativeness of reviews) ($z = 17.10$, $p < .001$). Considering the relative impacts of informativeness of commercial information and informativeness of reviews on trustworthiness, the first exhibited a stronger direct impact (0.699) than the second (0.597), suggesting the more importance of informativeness of commercial information. Hypothesis 6 is instead rejected, showing that there is not a direct effect between trustworthiness (whatever source) and Docility/ Δ Behavioural Intention, as instead was expected. The standardized path coefficient in this case was 0.0046 (Trustworthiness commercial information and docility) ($t = 0.75$, $p > 0.1$), and 0.018 (Trustworthiness of reviews and docility) ($t = 0.34$, $p > 0.1$) indicating that trustworthiness is not a significant predictor of docility. According to the results H_7 is fully accepted, there is potentially full mediation, potentially usefulness fully mediates the path between trustworthiness and docility both in the case of reviews and in the case of commercial

sources. In the model, the standardized estimates path for direct and indirect effect are visible and allow us to conclude that both estimated path for the indirect effect are statistically significant while the estimated path of the direct effect from trustworthiness to docility was not significant (close to zero). Mediation was tested with SEM, that offers a more fitting inference framework for mediation analyses (Hoyle and Smith, 1994; Cheung and Lau, 2007), than Baron and Kenny (1986) Four step's test that is ill-suited for modeling relationships with a *priori* assignment (Gunzler et al., 2013). Moreover, as sustained by MacKinnon (2008) the regression model by Baron and Kenny has low power in many situations.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings obtained in the analysis, it is possible to conclude that the role of the source of information in influencing behavioural intentions is crucial, and that people after having read commercial information change their behavioural intentions if they have the chance to read reviews, and this difference in their behavioural intentions is statistically significant. Customers consider also reviews more trustworthy, more informative and useful than commercial information, and the difference in trustworthiness, informativeness and usefulness between commercial information and reviews is significant. This means that customers are docile in community of strangers and that reviews make customers change their behavioural intention even if they had chosen before on the basis of the commercial information to go and eat in the restaurant. This empathizes the importance for customers to take advice from people that belong to the same community, even if in the community these people do not know each other face-to-face. Although they might not know each other face-to-face, people in the community trust the information provided there more than commercial information, showing higher level of docility. Trust increases the level of usefulness of the information in making a more accurate decision and this in turn influences docility. The higher the trustworthiness in the source of information, the higher its usefulness. In general reviews show a higher level of trustworthiness than commercial information (even if there might be cases, as shown in the test of the hypothesis where this is not always statistically significant) and this influences positively consumers' docility and the relationship between these two variables that are positively and fully mediated by usefulness. Customers form their opinion about the trustworthiness of the source of information on the basis of the quality of the information provided: i.e. informativeness of the source of information influences positively trustworthiness. In general, informativeness of reviews is higher than the one of commercial information (even if there might be cases, as shown in the test of the hypothesis where this is not always statistically significant), and this influences positively trustworthiness. These findings are significant and they confirm the importance that the source of information has in shaping the intention of customers, up to the point of making them change their intention. This means that companies should be much more involved in eWOM management, and pay attention to service variables that create a satisfactory experience for them. As a matter of fact, customers satisfaction, where satisfaction is based on the expectancy–disconfirmation theory (Lewin, 1938) (a comparison between expectations held a priori and the perception of the service (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Cardozo, 1965) is the element on the basis of which customers develop their willingness to return to the property and share with peers their experiences. This implies that companies need to pay attention to food quality and service quality (atmosphere, delivery and employees service) as determinants of customers satisfaction (Raajpoot, 2002; Peri, 2006, Sulek and Hensley, 2004, Susskind and Chan, 2000, Namkung, and Jang, 2007; Liu and Jang, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Ladhari et al., 2008; Kotler, 1973; Ryu and Jang, 2008; Bojanic and Rosen, 1994) that in turn influences their willingness to share the experience with other WOMs (de Matos and Rossi, 2008; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Sundaram et al., 1998; Westbrook, 1987; Dichter, 1966) and eWOMs (Boo and Kim, 2013; Tsao and Hsieh, 2012; Jeong, and Jang, 2011; Liu and Jang, 2009); and that in turn allows consumers to get through information asymmetries (Rezabakhsh, et al., 2006) that characterize traditional relation in consumer markets, and to get additional information that are very important for decision accuracy (Park and Kim, 2009) about their potential restaurant experience. Although this paper allows us to understand better that EWOM influence docility and what are the factors that can be the drivers for docility it is essential to a knowledge the need of further analysis that takes into consideration results coming from the market rather than those of an experiment that as involved students, limiting the understanding of the behaviour of other consumers. Another limit of the paper is represented on the focus of the Italian consumers, it would be necessary to take into consideration different cultural backgrounds, given the important role that cultural lays in shaping the decision-making process buyers. This will enable to understand better how culture influences the level of docility in EWOM. An interesting path of future analysis will include analysis of actual behaviour of customers in order to see whether docility remains in intention or it has also practical consequences and whether customers are satisfied by the choice of following suggestion in reviews.

6. References

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