THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Intention to Use Social Media as a Source of Information for Consumers of Y and Z Generations

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Abstract:
This research addresses the intention to use social media as a source of information for consumers of Y and Z generations. A questionnaire was administered face-to-face to consumers of both generations. A total of 496 consumers participated in the investigation. The results demonstrated that, for these consumers, perceived usefulness is the only determinant of intention to use social media as a source of information. On the other hand, perceived usefulness, trust and electronic word-of-mouth play a significant role in developing an attitude towards these social media. Several managerial implications have emerged from this research.

Keywords: Social media, perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, trust, electronic word-of-mouth, Generation Y, Generation Z.

1. Introduction

Social media are the latest form of web-based applications. They represent a revolution in the world of communication (Postman, 2008). Social media are defined as "a set of Internet-based applications that are established on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0; they enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, P.61). The two main reasons for consumers' use of social media are the need for information and the search for social links (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Foster et al., 2010). Several studies have indicated that social media have become an important source of information for consumers as they allow them to access more information online.

The search for information online is a behavior that manifests itself in the generation of the Internet. This generation is represented by consumers of generations Y and Z. Generation Y is also known as the *Net Generation* (Tyler, 2008). This denomination refers to consumers who were born between 1981 and 1995 (Klaffke, 2014). These are the first generation of people who grew up in the digital era and have always expressed themselves using technologies (Anandarajan et al., 2010). Generation Y consumers tend to use the Internet primarily in information retrieval (Alch, 2000; Sheahan, 2005; Chan and Fang, 2007; Nusair et al., 2013; Bilgihan et al., 2014). However, Generation Z represents those consumers who were born after 1995 (Klaffke, 2014). They are also known as *Generation Next* and *Generation I* (Igel and Urquhart, 2012). Consumers of Generation Z were born during the Internet age (Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). These young people use the Internet and their mobile phones to do their homework, socialize, communicate and for entertainment as well (San Martín et al., 2015). However, their main use of the Internet is to search for information (Maldifassi and Canessa, 2009).

The use of the Internet and social media in an online search for information has considerably grown in recent years. Nowadays, the Internet allows obtaining the desired information and helps in decision-making (Schecpers, 2001; Geotzinger et al., 2007). The information disseminated online influences the decision-making process (Hudson and Thal, 2013; Hutter et al., 2013). On the other hand, much attention has been paid to the study ofthe impact of generational changes in consumer behavior (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Gursoy et al., 2008; Reisenwitz, 2009; Moore, 2012; Parment, 2013). Recent research has reported that the behavior of each generation is distinct and unique (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010). Using social media as a source of information requires highlighting the main determinants that motivate such action in order to allow marketers to deepen their knowledge and choose the appropriate communication strategies best suited for each generation. The present study tends to determine the main factors that influence the intention of generations Y and Z consumers to use social media to search for information. This article is presented as follows. In the first section, previous studies are introduced; the model and hypotheses of research are also disclosed. The statistical method used in this study is presented in the second section. The results and discussion of the results are then exposed in separate sections.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The information search process begins when the consumer feels that only the acquisition of that information can satisfy his needs (Lioutas, 2014). The choice of the information source depends on the researcher's familiarity with the research topic (Lioutas, 2014).

Consumers tend to use multiple sources of information to reduce uncertainty and confirm the validity of the information they get (Savolainen, 2008; Lioutas, 2014). However, a new trend has emerged recently; it is the search for information online. This kind of behavior allows consumers to have access to specific information that is available in virtual communities (Ridings et al., 2006, Leal et al., 2014). It also reduces the research expenses (Narwal and Sachdeva, 2013).

Recent studies have attempted to highlight the determinants of online information search. The latter can be motivated either by a search for general information, such as searching for information relating to the health field, or by a search for information relating to the purchase of a product or a service. The present research focuses on finding information online to purchase a product or service. The main determinants that motivate such a search for information are *Perceived Usefulness* (Bei et al., 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martinez et al., 2007; Castaneda et al., 2009; Lin and Chan, 2009; Park and Lee, 2009; Lin, 2010; Ku, 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Huang et al., 2013; Cheung, 2014), *Ease-of-use* (Bei et al., 2003; Bei el al., 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martinez et al., 2007; Berger and Messerschmidt, 2009; Castaneda et al., 2009; Lin and Chan, 2009; Lin, 2010; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a), *Attitude* (Seock and Norton, 2007; Munoz-Meiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Ayeh et al., 2013.b), *Perceived Pleasure* (Ku, 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Kim et al., 2013.b), *Trust* (Pan and Chiou, 2011; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Ayeh et al., 2013.b; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013), and *Electronic Word-of-Mouth* (Di Pietro et al., 2012; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Pöyry et al., 2012; Albarq, 2014).

Perceived Usefulness and *Ease-of-Use* are the two main factors that motivate an online search for information. On this basis, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1986) is used as it provides an essential theoretical basisfor someone who seeks to identify the track record of an online information search before realizing a purchase.

2.1. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was originally formulated by Davis in 1986. Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the Technology Acceptance Model is considered asone of the most fundamental and influential theories in human behavior. According to Davis (1989, P. 252), The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) "...*is specifically meant to explain computer usage behavior*...". This model was developed to test the effect of information system characteristics on their acceptance by end-users. The study was conducted with IBM employees.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a reasonable representation of the consumers' intention to use technology (Legris et al., 2003). According to this model, the behavioral intention of an individual to use a new technology is determined by his attitude towards the use of that technology, which is itself influenced by two beliefs, namely *Perceived Usefulness* and *Ease-of-Use*.

The model has been widely used by researchers to test the consumers' intention to conduct online information searches (Chuan-Chuan and Lu, 2000; Chung and Tan, 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martinez et al., 2007; Castaneda et al., 2009; Lin and Chan, 2009; Lin, 2010; Yun and Park, 2010; Lim et al., 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2013; Chang and Im, 2014). To do this, our research was based on TAM, while adding other variables, such as *Trust* and *Electronic Word-of- Mouth*, in order to adapt the theoretical model to the context of our study. *Perceived Usefulness* refers to the extent to which the consumer believes that the use of a particular system will improve his performance (Davis et al., 1989, p. 320). When applied in the context of our study, *Perceived Usefulness* refers to the fact that using social media to search for information helps consumers to make better purchasing decisions. Therefore, one can assume that *Perceived Usefulness* has an influence on consumers' attitude and on their intention to use social media as a source of information when making a purchase decision. The relationship between *Usefulness* and *Attitude* is supported by a number of studies in several contexts (Davis, 1986; Davis et al., 1989; Chung and Tan, 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martinez et al., 2007; Celik, 2008; Castaneda et al., 2009; Yun et Park, 2010; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Akturan and Tezcan, 2013; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Hsu et al., 2013). Thus, it seems legitimate to suggest the following hypothesis:

> ➤ H 1-1: The Perceived Usefulness of social media positively influences the attitude towards the use of social media as a source of information in a *purchase decision-making* process.

Furthermore, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) shows a direct relationship between *Perceived Usefulness*and *Behavioral Intention*. This relationship has been confirmed by a number of studies (Davis, 1986; Davis et al., 1989; Chuan-Chuan and Lu, 2000; Liaw and Huang, 2003; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martinez et al., 2007; Celik, 2008; Lin and Chan, 2009; Kim and Song, 2010; Lin, 2010;Yun and Park, 2010; Erawan et al., 2011; Ku, 2011; Lim et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Kesharwani and Bisht, 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Sim et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Akturan et Tezcan, 2013; Huang et al., 2013; Yi et Hwang, 2013; Chang and Im, 2014 ; Cheung, 2014; Park et al., 2014). Based on these results, the following hypothesis may be proposed:

> ➤ H 1-2: Perceived Usefulness of social media positively influences the Behavioral Intention to use social media as a source of information in a *purchase decision-making*process.

Perceived Ease-of-Use is the second determinant of attitude in the model of Davis (1986). *Perceived Ease-of-Use*, as defined by Davis et al. (1989, p. 320), is the degree to which a consumer believes that no effort, whether mental or physical, is required to use the system, and also how easy it is to learn how to use the system. Therefore, the perceived ease-of-use refers to the fact that using social media makes the search for information easy. In its initial version, the perceived ease-of-use has a double impact. The first oneis seen through its influence on perceived usefulness and the second one is its impact on attitude. These two effects have been validated in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) through various research works.

The first impact has been validated by various studies (Teo et al., 1999; Chuan-Chuan and Lu, 2000; Liaw and Huang, 2003; Chung and Tan, 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martiniez et al., 2007; Alda's-Manzano et al., 2009; Castaneda et al., 2009; Lin and

Chan, 2009; Lin, 2010;Lim et al., 2011;Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011;Kesharwani and Bisht, 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Akturan and Tezcan, 2013; Chang and Im, 2014).Moreover, the impact of perceived ease-of-use on attitude has been validated through a number of studies (Chuan-Chuan and Lu, 2000; Chung and Tan, 2004; Castaneda et al., 2007; Luque-Martiniez et al., 2007; Celik, 2008 ; Berger and Messerschmidt, 2009; Castaneda et al., 2009; Yun and Park, 2010; Cudmore et al., 2011; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a). The results from these studies allow suggesting the following hypotheses:

- ➢ H 2-1: The perceived ease-of-use of social media positively influences the attitude towards their use as a source of information in a purchase decision-making process.
- ➢ H 2-2: The perceived ease-of-use of social media positively influences the perceived usefulness of this information source for making purchasing decisions.

Another kind of impact has been demonstrated by other research studies. It is the direct impact the perceived ease-of-use has on behavioral intention, which means that the decision-making behavior aims at minimizing effort. This impact has been demonstrated by several authors (Yi and Huang, 2003; Castaneda et al., 2007; Celik, 2008; Lin and Chan, 2009; Kim and Song, 2010; Lin, 2010; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Sim et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Chang and Im, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis may be formulated:

- ➢ H 2-3: The perceived ease-of-use of social media positively influences the behavioral intention to use these media as a source of information for making purchasing decisions.

According to the authors of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the attitude is an individual feeling, positive or negative, towards the execution of the target behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, P.216). In the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Davis (1993, p. 476) defines the attitude towards usinga system as the degree of evaluation that an individual associate with the use of the target system in his work. In this study, the construct of attitude refers to the use of social media as a source of information when making a purchase decision.

The relationships between attitude and behavior, on one hand, and between attitude and behavioral intent, on the other, have been confirmed in the literature through various research studies, especially those related to the intention of using the Internet or social media in searching for information online(Seock and Norton, 2007; Yoo and Robins, 2008; Chang et al., 2009; Yun and Park, 2010; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Shim et al., 2011; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Ayeh et al., 2013.b), purchasing online (Bianchi and Andrews, 2012), getting technology services (Monsuwé et al., 2004 ; Akturan and Tezcan, 2013; Celik, 2008), or in the intention of traveling (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Albarq, 2014).The following hypothesis can then be proposed:

- ➢ H 3: Attitude towards the use of social media positively influences the behavioral intention to use them as a source of information for making purchasing decisions.

2.2. Trust

Trust is considered as an aspect of a specific culture (Hofstede et al., 1990). It is a feeling that puts people at ease. Trust is one of the most relevant antecedents of stable and collaborative relationships Menidjel C., Benhabib A., Bilgihan (2017). According to Ibrahim et al. (2009), the individual willingness to trust depends on the personal characteristics of people. These determine the willingness of the individual to trust, based on his or her past experiences and some other social factors. However, in the virtual world, trust depends on security, skills, etc. (Kini and Choobineh, 1998, Schneider, 1999).

This study focused on how much one can trust the information published online. Several researchers have been interested in this area of research (Lee et al., 2011; Lemire et al., 2011; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Ayeh et al., 2013.b; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013; Cheung, 2014; Xiao, 2014). It has been demonstrated that, nowadays, consumers search for information on the Internet, either for a general purpose or to make a decision. For this reason, they tend to choose the websites they trust (Hoffman et al., 1999). On the other hand, consumers express their desire to trust other people who are in the same situation (Ibrahim et al., 2009); this is called *situational decision-making* (Mcknight and Chervany, 1996).

If consumers have to make a purchasing decision, they carry out research on social media, and this would lead them to trust unknown people who, under certain circumstances, are in the same situation. Various studies have shown that a relationship exists between attitude and confidence (Suh and Han, 2002; Wu and Chen, 2005; Lim et al., 2006; Hsiao et al., 2010; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al, 2013.a; Ayeh et al., 2013.b). Thus, it was decided to test whether trust has a positive influence on attitude towards the use of social media for the search for information in a purchase decision-making.

- ➢ H 4-1: Trusting social media influences in a positive way the attitude towards their use as a source of information for purchasing decision-making.

By building trust on social media, individuals tend to view these new sources of information as useful. This pushes them to develop an intention to use them. In other words, the emergence of trust in social media increasesthe perceived usefulness and the intention to use them for information search. The relationship between trust and perceived usefulness has been confirmed earlier by several studies (Kim and Song, 2010, Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011, Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012, Ayeh et al., 2013.a; Hsu et al., 2013). The second relationship between trust and behavioral intention has also been proven by previous studies (Kim and Song, 2010; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013.b; Hsu et al., 2013).

It is assumed that trust in social media positively influences the perceived usefulness and behavioral intention.

- ➢ H 4-2: Trust in social media positively influences the perceived usefulness of social media as a source of information in making purchasing decisions.

> ➢ H 4-3: Trust in social media positively influences the intention to use social media as a source of information in making purchasing decisions.

2.3. Electronic word-of-mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth is an extension of word-of-mouth in the virtual world. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM) is defined as messages written by individuals who are not employees of the company. These messages are broadcast usingtools not belonging to the company, such as social networks for example (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012, p. 592). Moreover, electronic word-of-mouth refers also to online knowledge exchange between consumers (Wu and Wang, 2011). Several factors motivate word-of-mouth communication. This is mainly about searching for social benefits, economic rewards, concern for others, and self-realization (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004).

These various opinions and recommendations, which are disseminated on the Web, represent information sources for some consumers. According to Chatterjee (2001), the information spread in the form of electronic word-of-mouth reduces the risks of uncertainty related to the product purchase, purchase intention and purchase decision. Similarly, the recommendations of bloggers influence the different stages of the purchasing process (Hsu et al., 2012). It has even been proven that these bloggers have more influence on decision-making than discussions among friends (Steffes and Burgee, 2009). On the other hand, Cox et al. (2009) consider that UGCs are mainly used during the information retrieval step.

In the context of our study, it is considered that when consumers want to make a purchase, they look for recommendations, opinions and experiences shared by other people online. Studies conducted by several researchers suggest that the electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM) has an influence on attitude as well as on behavioral intention. The relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and attitude has been demonstrated in several research studies (Di Pietro et al., 2012, Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Albarq, 2014). In addition, the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and behavioral intention has been confirmed by many researchers (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Albarq, 2014).

The present work aims at testing the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM) on attitude as well as on behavioral intention.

> ➢ H 6-1: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences the attitude towards the use of social networks as a source of information for making a purchasing decision.
> ➢ H 6-2: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences the intention to use social media as a source of information for making a purchasing decision.

The model selected for the present study considers that the intention to use social media to search for information, before making a purchase, is influenced by perceived ease-of-use, perceived usefulness, perceived trust, and electronic word-to-mouth (eWoM). This is done as follows.
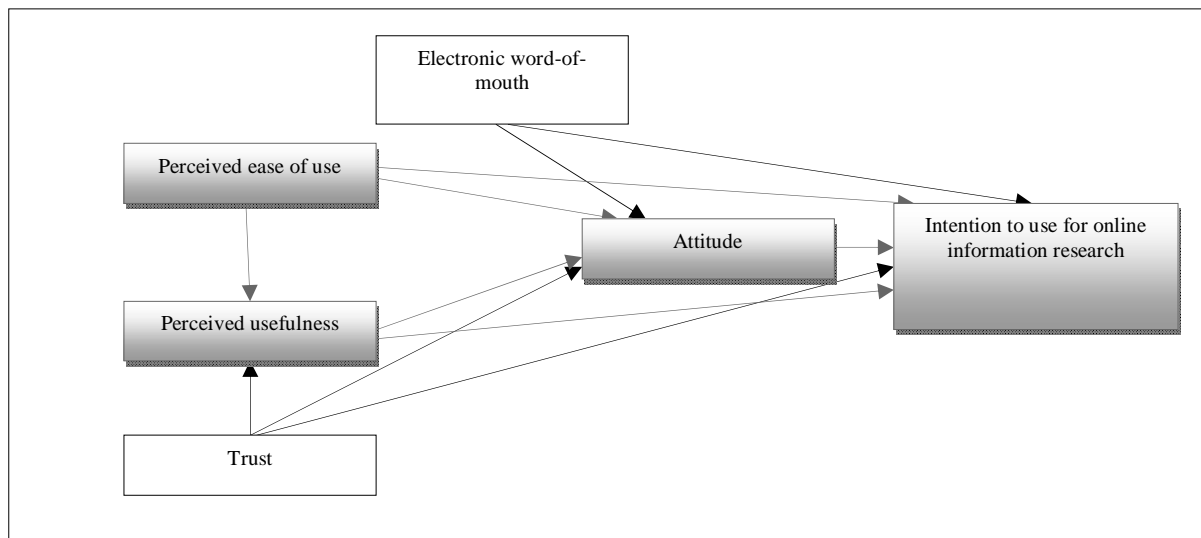

Figure 1
Source: Adapted from Davis (1986)

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Model Measurements

To test our hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed on the basis of a literature review. It was decided to use some measurement scales that had previously been used in a study context similar to ours. The original Davis scales (1989) were chosen to measure the constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use. Behavioral intention was assessed using the scales of Venkatesch and Davis (2000). For the construct of electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM), the scale developed by Bamauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011) was selected. Items were measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from *'strongly disagree'* to *'strongly agree'*. Attitude and trust were evaluated by means of bipolar scales. The Ayeh scale (2013, a, 2013, b) was chosen to evaluate the attitude; the trust construct was measured with the Ohanina scale (1990, 1991).

3.2. Data Collection

Our sample consisted of consumers from Generation Y and Generation Z. In addition to belonging to one of the two generations, the consumer interviewed must already have done a search for information online before buying a product or a service. The quota sampling method was chosen in order to have a representative sample in terms of age and sex categories. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face during the period from November 2015 to March 2016. It was possible to collect 496 responses. A preliminary analysis allowed eliminating six questionnaires as the respondents were born before 1981. Other questionnaires (70) were rejected for other reasons (e.g. incomplete answers, etc.). The remaining questionnaires (420 questionnaires) were considered reliable.

3.3. Data Analysis

The Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test our research hypotheses. This method was applied using the Smart-PLS software. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)was originally tested with multiple regressions but nowadays it is commonly tested with the method of structural equation modeling (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). The use of this approach has become almost standard in marketing research (Babin et al., 2008; Bagozzi, 1994; Hulland, 1999). Its advantage is that it allows testing complex models that involve several dependent and independent variables (Heene et al., 2011; MacCallum and Austin, 2000). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was carried out in two stages. The first one consisted in carrying out an evaluation of the measurements of the model which represents a series of p observed variables such as the multiple indicators of a small series of latent variables. However, the second step tried to evaluate the structural model that describes the relationships between latent variables (McDonald and Ringo, 2002). This study attempts to explain the intention of consumers of generations Y and Z to use social media as a source of information. The PLS approach seems to be the most appropriate. This method is preferred for prediction-oriented research that requires the explanation of endogenous constructs (Henseler et al., 2009).

4. Results

4.1. Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1 shows the profileof our sample. It consists of 50% of Generation Y consumers and 50% of Generation Z consumers. Generation Y is represented by 54.76% of women and 45.23% of men, while Generation Z involves 67.14% of women and 32.85% of men. More than half of Generation Y respondents, about 64.28%, use the Internet several times a day. The same observation was made for Generation Z respondents, with a percentage of 58.09%. More than 70% of those who participated to the study, namely Generation Y participants, search online information primarily for electronic products, multimedia products, luxury goods, fashion products, vehicles, and sport, in descending order. In contrast, 70% of Generation Z respondents use the Internet to search for information primarily on electronic products, multimedia products, fashion products, luxury goods, vehicles, sports and travel, in descending order.

Profile category		Frequency		Percentage	
		Generation Y	Generation Z	Generation Y	Generation Z
Gender	Female	115	141	54.76%	67.14%
	Male	95	69	45.23%	32.85%
Frequency of Internet use	A few times a month or less	13	6	6.19%	2.85%
	A few times a week	31	33	14.76%	15.71%
	About once a day	31	49	14.76%	23.33%
	Several times each day	135	122	64.28%	58.09%
Products for which consumers search online	Electronic product	201	198	95.71%	94.28%
	Household product	136	120	64.76%	57.14%
	Vehicles	175	165	83.33%	78.57%
	Fashion products	176	185	83.80%	88.09%
	Luxury goods	184	176	87.61%	83.80%
	Cosmetic products	81	67	38.57%	31.90%
	Traveling	144	149	68.57%	70.95%
	Books	111	105	52.85%	50%
	Softwares	129	122	61.42%	58.09%
	Real estate	104	89	49.52%	42.38%
	Interior decoration	132	117	62.85%	55.71%
	Multimedia	191	192	90.95%	91.42%
	Health	123	129	58.57%	61.42%
	TV programs	87	93	41.42%	44.28%
	Recruitment offers	104	23	49.52%	10.95%
	Location	36	21	17.14%	10%
	Sport	154	157	73.33%	74.76%

Table 1 : Profile of respondents; Source : SPSS V21

4.2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The measurement model used in the PLS procedure was evaluated by calculating the reliability of each item, the reliability of the construct, the average variance extracted and the discriminant validity of the indicators that measure the latent variables (Barclay et al., 1995). Reliability is evaluated through the calculationof the reliability indicator and composed reliability (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2012). The first results gave values below 0.7 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) for the factorial contributions (loading). Hair et al. (2011) recommend removing items with factor contributions between 0.4 and 0.7 if the composed reliability value of the construct increases above the recommended threshold. Thus, the item with the lowest value (UTL1) was eliminated because the value of the average variance extracted (AVE) for the utility construct is less than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2005). These findings for the factorial contributions varied between 0.62 and 0.89. The composed reliability values ranged from 0.84 to 0.88, implying compliance with the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Kline, 2005). Instead of calculating the composed reliability, some researchers recommend calculating Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), or both, namely the composed reliability and Cronbach's alpha (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). The results indicate that the values obtained vary between 0.73 and 0.81. The condition of the minimum threshold of 0.7, as recommended by some researchers (Fornell and Larcker, 1981, Barclay et al., 1995, Compeau et al., 1999, Agarwal and Karahanna, 2000), is well respected.

Construct	Items	Loading	Cronbachs' alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Attitude	ATT 1	0.725	0.781	0.851	0.533
	ATT 2	0.718			
	ATT 3	0.748			
	ATT 4	0.744			
	ATT 5	0.715			
Electronic word-of-mouth	BAO-E 1	0.668	0.813	0.876	0.640
	BAO-E 2	0.843			
	BAO-E 3	0.860			
	BAO-E 4	0.814			
Trust	COF 1	0.723	0.771	0.843	0.518
	COF 2	0.721			
	COF 3	0.756			
	COF 4	0.681			
	COF 5	0.715			
Ease of use	FCT 1	0.648	0.803	0.859	0.504
	FCT 2	0.757			
	FCT3	0.723			
	FCT 4	0.701			
	FCT 5	0.714			
	FCT 6	0.711			
Intention	INT 1	0.885	0.730	0.881	0.787
	INT 2	0.889			
Usefulness	UTL 2	0.706	0.778	0.850	0.533
	UTL 3	0.625			
	UTL 4	0.725			
	UTL 5	0.789			
	UTL 6	0.791			

Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity test
Source : Smart PLS (V.3.2.1)

To evaluate the validity, it is necessary to assess the convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity is ensured when the measurements of the same construct are sufficiently correlated (Carricano et al., 2010). This validity is determined by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). The value of the AVE must be greater than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2005; Hair et al., 2011). The results obtained give values between 0.50 and 0.78, which is good in agreement with the recommended minimum threshold. Discriminant validity aims to ensure that the measurement indicators of a construct are weakly correlated with the measurement indicators of the other constructs (Carricano et al., 2010). The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct must be greater than the correlations shared with the other constructs. According to Table 3, the discriminating validity is guaranteed.

	ATT	BAO	COF	FCT	INT	UTL
ATT	(0.730)					
BAO	0.207	(0.800)				
COF	0.338	0.132	(0.719)			
FCT	0.152	0.232	0.164	(0.709)		
INT	0.202	0.102	0.195	0.241	(0.887)	
UTL	0.232	0.213	0.217	0.471	0.294	(0.730)

Table 3: Discriminant validity test
Source : Smart PLS (V.3.2.1)

4.3. Evaluation of the Structural Model

The second step in the Structural Equation Modeling Using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) procedure is to evaluate the model by examining how the causal relationships conform to the available data (Real et al., 2006). According to this procedure, the main criterion in evaluating the model is the variance explained R^2 (Hair et al., 2011). Falk and Miller (1992) suggest that a "good model", obtained by PLS regression, should have coefficients of determination greater than 0.1. According to Table 4, the model accounts for 15.9% of variance for attitude, 12.5% of variance for intention, and 24.2% of variance for usefulness.

Endogenes construct	Explained variance R^2	Prediction relevance Q^2
Attitude	0.159	0.080
Intention	0.125	0.080
Utilité	0.242	0.122

Table 4: Explained variance and the prediction relevance test
Source : Smart-PLS (V.3.2.1)

The second criterion in evaluating the model is to verify its prediction ability. To do this, the Stone and Geisser (Q2) test was used (1974). This test was developed to evaluate the predictive capacity of exogenous latent variables (Ayeh et al., 2013.a). Chin (1988) considers that the Q^2 values must be greater than zero for the model to have a predictive relevance. Table 4 shows that some Q^2 values are greater than zero, which means that the exogenous constructs have a predictive force.

To test our hypotheses, it was decided to follow the Bootstrapping procedure, with 420 observations and 5000 subsamples. The results obtained show that seven hypotheses are confirmed. The hypothesis (H-1), which considers a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude ($\beta=0.135$, $t=2.676$, $\rho<0.01$), is confirmed. In addition, perceived usefulness has a positive effect on behavioral intention ($\beta=0.192$, $t=3.247$, $\rho<0.01$). The perceived ease-of-use has a positive and significant effect on perceived usefulness ($\beta=0.447$, t $=9.086$, $\rho<0.001$). However, the hypotheses that state a positive effect of perceived   ease-of-use on attitude ($\beta=0.009$, $t=0.152$, $\rho>0.05$) and behavioral intention ($\beta=0.119$, $t=1.845$, $\rho>0.05$) are not confirmed. Trust has a positive impact on attitude ($\beta=0.289$, $t=5.080$, $\rho<0.001$) and on perceived usefulness ($\beta=0.144$, $t=2.971$, $\rho<0.01$), but it has no effect on behavioral intention ($\beta=0.098$, $t=1.833$, $\rho>0.05$). The positive relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and attitude ($\beta=0.138$, $t=2.823$, $\rho<0.01$) is confirmed. On the other hand, the electronic word-of-mouth has no impact on behavioral intention ($\beta = -0.002$, $t = 0.028$, $\rho> 0.05$). The results indicate that attitude has a positive effect on behavioral intention ($\beta=0.106$, $t=1.968$, $\rho<0.05$).
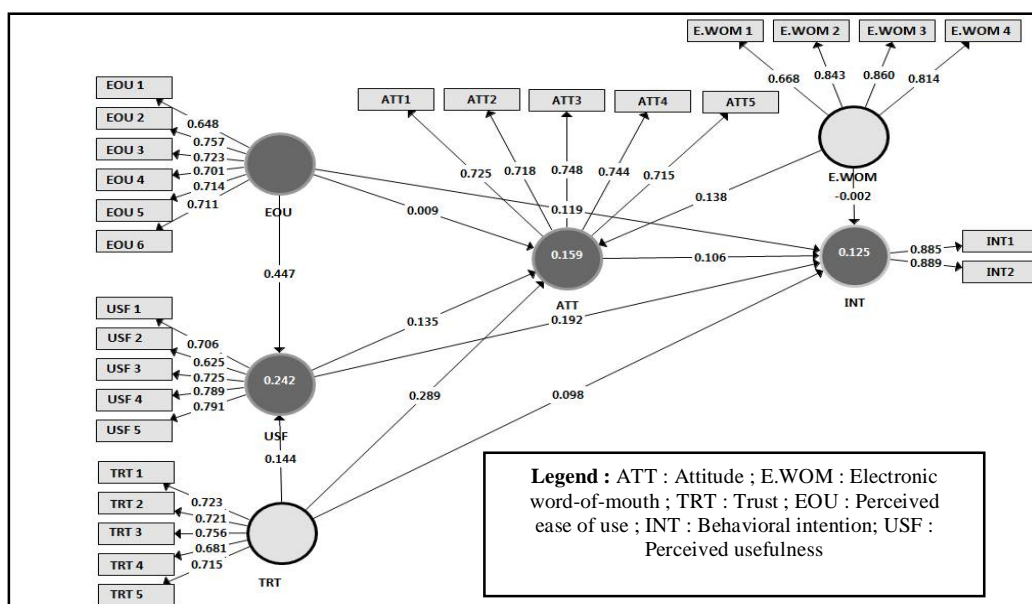

Figure 2 : Structural Model

To examine the indirect effects of perceived ease-of-use, trust and electronic word-of-mouth on behavioral intention, on one hand, and the indirect effect of perceived ease-of-use on attitude, it was decided to perform the Sobel test (1982), following the procedure available on the following link: *www.danielsoper.com/statcalc3*. The results obtained indicate that the mediating effect of perceived usefulness in the relationship between perceived ease-of-use and attitude is confirmed.

Mediating effect	Relation	Sobel test statistic	Two tailed probability	Confirmed
Attitude	FCT ➞ INT	**0.160**	0.872	No
	COF ➞ INT	1.830	0.067	No
	BOE ➞ INT	1.610	0.107	No
Perceived usefulness	FCT ➞ ATT	2.542	0.011	Yes

Table 5 : Test of médiation effects

To check whether there are differences between Generation Y and Generation Z consumers, the Henseler test (2007), which represents an approach to multi-group analysis, was performed.

Relation	Path-coefficient (generation Y)	Path-coefficient (generation Z)	Path-coefficient différence (generationY vs generation Z)	P-values (generationY vs generation Z)
ATT -------- INT	0.167	0.034	0.133	0.113
E.WOM --- ATT	0.146	0.145	0.001	0.509
E.WOM --- INT	-0.082	0.064	0.145	0.884
TRT------- ATT	0.308	0.244	0.065	0.303
TRT ------- INT	0.116	0.077	0.039	0.371
TRT ------- UTL	0.158	0.109	0.049	0.316
EOU ------ ATT	-0.012	0.052	0.064	0.706
EOU ------ INT	0.211	0.045	0.166	0.105
EOU ------ UTL	0.471	0.435	0.036	0.352
USF ------- ATT	0.184	0.074	0.110	0.152
USF ------- INT	0.144	0.234	0.090	0.780

Table 6: Comparaison between the two generations
Source: Smart-PLS (V. 3.2.1). Differences was significatifs atρ<0.05.

According to Table 5, none of the values of ρis smaller than 0.05, which means that there are no significant differences between the two groups at the 5% threshold.

5. Discussion

5.1. Main Results
The main reason for using social media is the desire to communicate with others (Hutter et al., 2013), but the need for information is also a motivator (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Foster et al., 2010). The objective of this study is to investigate the intention of Y and Z generation consumers to use social media to search for information. In our opinion, this study presents more interesting results than those reported in other research works.
The influence of perceived usefulness on the attitude and intention to use social media in a search for information has been confirmed. Generation Y and Generation Z consumers will use social media as a source of information if they consider it as useful for their research. In other words, the use of social media by consumers of these two generations makes it possible to collect the maximum information by connecting to different pages of social networks, forums, blogs, User Generated Contents (UGCs), etc. Thus, consumers will have the opportunity to strengthen their final choice. In the literature, it is widely accepted that the main determinant in using information technology (IT) is perceived usefulness (Chuan-Chuan et Lu, 2000; Castaneda et al., 2007; Lemire et al., 2008; Castaneda et al., 2009; Lim et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2013).
Our results show that perceived usefulness is the only determinant in the intention to use social media as a source of information. This implies that perceived usefulness is the only factor that has a direct impact on the intention to use social media in the search for information.
The results of the structural model were found to be different from those reported in the literature. Perceived ease-to-use is seen as the main factor influencing the search for informationin online communities (Choraria, 2012). Although the perceived ease-of-use has a lower impact than perceived usefulness in the original model of the TAM (Davis et al., 1989; Davis, 1993; Venkatesh, 2000), our study yielded different results. Perceived ease-of-use has no direct impact on attitude or behavioral intention to use social media to search for information. Its only influence is on perceived usefulness. In addition, Davis (1989) indicated that the strongest impact ofease-of-use on the user's behavior is seen through its strong impact on perceived usefulness. In other words, consumers of the two generations Y and Zwill consider social media as increasingly useful during their search for information if they feel that their

navigation on these social media is easy. The perceived ease-of-use plays an important role in developing a positive attitude towards social media among Generation Y and Generation Z consumers. This role is reflected in the fact that the ease of navigation influences the utility value of social media in a search for information.

The results revealed the direct influence of trust on attitude and perceived usefulness. Thus, Generation Y and Generation Z consumers are more inclined to use social media when searching for information if they trust the information published online. Consumers trust social media that are characterized by low levels of social ties when searching for information (Munar and Jacobsen, 2013). On the other hand, trusting the information published on social media increases the usefulness of these sources of information. This has already been reported in other research studies (Cheung, 2014). Trust is regarded as an important determinant in using the Internet to search for information related to health (Lemire et al., 2008). However, when searching for information before purchasing a product or service, the results obtained show that trust has no direct influence on the behavioral intention of using social media as a source of information. This result was found to be in good agreement with those of previous studies that focused on the use of UGCs for travel planning (Ayeh et al., 2013.a).

For the consumers of both generations, the gathering of information from the different social media platforms, by consulting the opinions and comments written on the desired product or service, develop a favorable attitude towards the use of these media. This result is consistent with findings of previous studies which indicated that electronic word-of-mouth is a source of information that influences the decision to travel (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Albarq, 2014). On the other hand, the results of the study did not confirm the direct influence of electronic word-of-mouth on the intention to use social media as a source of information. This may be explained by the fact that consumers cannot judge the credibility of the information published on certain platforms by unknown Internet users. Pan and Chiou (2011) showed in their study that social ties are important for judging the credibility of online information.

The structural model test helped to reveal that attitude has a direct impact on the intention to use social media when searching for information among consumers of the Y and Z generations. This implies that the use of social media, by consumers of these two generations, to conduct a search for information, results from a freely made decision. This result is consistent with the findings reported in previous studies which indicated that attitude plays a decisive role in choosing the preferred source of information (Seck and Norton, 2007; Ayeh et al., 2013.a).

The Henseler's approach (2007) allowed us to note that there are no significant differences between the two generations at the 5% threshold; the results were found to be very close. This implies that it is difficult to differentiate between Generation Y and Generation Z consumers. The reasons are different from those found in other countries. Generation Z consumers were born in some countries, such as the United States and Great Britain, with the presence of the Internet, mobile phones, MP3s, video games and all kinds of digital media (Posnick - Goodwin, 2010; Biometric Technology Today, 2015). These consumers have not known a world without technology, like the Internet or social media. They therefore have a broad knowledge of these media. Young consumers use these different technologies to perform tasks such as doing homework, socializing and communicating with others, and entertaining (San-Martin et al., 2015). Another difference concerns the online purchase or via mobiles, the *m-shopping*. Generation Z consumers in Algeria have little experience with these types of purchases, even going so far as to say that they have no experience at all. In addition to this, these consumers in other countries, such asSpain and France, in addition to using information technology to conduct information searches (Maldifassi and Canessa, 2009; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010), they also realize some of their purchases via mobiles (Agrebi and Jallais, 2015; San-Martin et al., 2015).

5.2. Managerial Implications

The present study aimed at identifying the history of a search for information using social media prior to making a purchase, in a particular segment of consumers, by introducing two additional variables, namely trust and electronic word-of-mouth, to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This study made it possible to compare consumers of generations Y and Z. As previously mentioned, this study corroborated the dominant role of perceived usefulness in developing an intention to use social media as a source of information before achieving a purchase. Thus, perceived usefulness plays an essential role when consumers of Y and Z generations use social media as a source of information before making a purchase.

The results show that three factors have a positive and direct effect on the attitude toward the intention to use social media when searching for information. However, the test of the mediating effect of attitude revealed that perceived ease-of-use, trust and electronic word-of-mouth do not have any indirect influence on the intention to use social media as a source of information. This research work also indicated that there are no significant differences between Generation Y and Generation Z consumers.

Several management contributions have emerged from these results. It has been noted that consumers use social media as a source of information. This implies that companies should implement the so-called community management function. Its role is to animate the presence of the company on the social networks, as this will allow the company's managers to know what is said on them, and hence answer the questions of the consumers and deal with their complaints. On the other hand, this research work allowed notingthat social media are widely used by consumers of generations Y and Z as a source of information before making a purchase. Thus, it is necessary for marketers to improve the utility value of their online communication channels in order to attract and retain consumers. Perceived ease-of-use plays a fundamental role in the development of utility value, hence the need for system developers to make navigation on these media easier. Moreover, this study indicated that there are no significant differences between Generation Y and Generation Z consumers. However, it is important to differentiate between the two generations Y and Z in order to target a specific audience. According to the obtained results, marketers can establish homogeneous communications between these two generations that best fit their characteristics.

5.3. Study Limitations and Future Research

This research has faced some limitations. Despite our efforts to collect the largest number of questionnaires using the face-to-face method, some people either refused to be interviewed or did not take our study seriously.

This research work focused only on the cognitive factors that can influence the intention to search for information on social media in a pre-purchase situation among consumers of Y and Z generations. However, the behavior of searching for information online can also be found in other generations. Therefore, it is necessary to make a comparison between the consumers of various generations, and also between the determinants that motivate a search for information in men and women. It would also be interesting to distinguish between the factors that motivate a search for information according to the various forms of social media used. This study allowed testing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)in the Algerian context, with consumers of generations Y and Z. However, other variables may appear as strong precedents in an online search for information in another study context. Attention should be given to the studyof the factors that motivate a pure search for information such as, for example, searching for information online in the field of health.

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