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Master of Business Administration

**The Influence of eWOM over Myanmar Consumers' Purchase
Intention of Korea Cosmetic Products in Facebook
– the Moderating Role of Social Tie Strength**

**The Graduate School
of the University of Ulsan**

Department of Business Administration

Zarni Htun

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Supervisor: Professor Ju-Sik Park

A Dissertation

Submitted to
the Graduate School of University of Ulsan
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Master of Business Administration

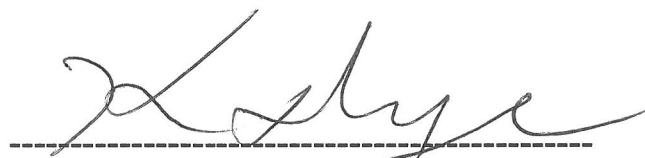
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Ms. Zarni Htun

Abstract

This study will look at the impact of eWOM over consumers' purchase intention of Korea cosmetic products at Facebook in the context of Myanmar. Cosmetic buying behavior will highlight the specific consumer behavior of Myanmar people. The purpose of this paper is to explore the characteristics of consumers' reviews information (electronic word-of-mouth, credibility, quality and quantity) as antecedents of customers' purchase intention. In an online, 202 respondents of Myanmar consumer started from age of 18 were presented with online survey in a Facebook context. Descriptive analysis, factor and reliability analysis were conducted using SPSS version 22.0. The results display that in terms of Myanmar consumers' perception, source credibility, quality of eWOM information and quantity of eWOM information for Korean cosmetic products show a substantial impact on purchase intention. The moderating impacts of social tie strength was also investigated by regression analysis. This study suggests that quality and quantity of eWOM information have the significant effect on purchase intention of Myanmar consumers to buy Korean cosmetic products. In addition, this research shows that social tie strength does not have any effect on the relationship between eWOM information and purchase intention of Myanmar consumer toward Korean cosmetic product at Facebook. This research also helps Korean cosmetic retailers and manufacturer companies understand more about Myanmar consumers' market. The results of this research will allow the Korea cosmetic firms to better understand Myanmar consumers' behaviors and will help them to implement effective ways to enter and approach Myanmar market. This paper will also help companies to reflect their marketing strategies and compete effectively in Myanmar market. The findings of this paper will serve as a guide to such companies who have limited knowledge of Myanmar consumers. The findings also contribute useful information to any company to determine Myanmar consumer behavior for indicating the appropriate strategy of marketing. In the final part of the paper, theoretical with practical implications alongside limitations and further suggestions for research are presented.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

In our modern age with new technologies like internet, more and more people before purchasing any product, at first try to go online and find some information about goods, services, or brands in the view of user comments, ratings, reviews, video reviews, or other contents made by other usual consumers; nowadays, this phenomenon is spread in almost every country and a business world should pay more attention to it (Evgeniy, 2019). At these days, consumers have more power and unlike in traditional marketing, people tend to trust people and not advertisements or marketers (Morris, 2009). Nielsen (2015) has reported that offline and online word of mouth (WOM) take first and third places in the list of the most trusted types of advertising around the globe, leaving behind all other forms of advertising. More and more customers listen and trust in recommendations of their family or friends (WOM). Also, consumer opinions posted online are considered to be trustful (Neilson, 2015). Consequently, electronic word of mouth is regarded as a digital format of traditional word-of-mouth, resulting in an expanded research field (He Jie, 2018). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined eWOM as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet.” Senecal and Nantel (2004) examined how eWOM influences product choice using an experimental study of consumers’ use of online recommendation sources. As consumers are increasingly performing activities previously controlled by companies, the entire marketing landscape is changing. (Heinonen,2011). Therefore, companies need to better understand the changing behavior of consumers, in order to create mutual benefits from the use of internet.

Researchers are interested in investigating the motives for seeking eWOM (e.g. Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006) and for sharing or articulating the eWOM (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2006), providing implications for marketers to better understand online consumer behavior. A recent survey found that most consumers perceive online opinions to be as trustworthy as brand web sites (ACNielsen, 2007). Stauss (1997, 2000) discussed the threats and opportunities for businesses brought about by the rise in online customer articulations. Rowley (2001) also proposed that commercial enterprises should try to organize online communities rather than to simply advertise on the Internet. These studies indicate how great of a potential impact eWOM can have on the consumer decision process. Gilly, Graham,

Wolfinbarger, and Yale (1998) indicated that the lack of effective information to distinguish products raises the risk of purchase. At this moment, a WOM message will be a very important reference for consumers to establish their purchasing decision-making process. Moreover, Purchase intention is a decision plan to buy a particular product or brand created through a choice/decision process (American Marketing Association, 2016). Therefore, consumer behavior to purchase intention is an important factor in decision making process.

Some related studies have also indicated that eWOM messages are an important means whereby consumers can obtain information about product or service quality (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). The efficacy of online reviews as a good proxy for overall WOM is well-established, and they are shown to influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Zhu and Zhang, 2010; Lee et al., 2008; Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Duan et al., 2008), customer satisfaction and their revisit intentions (Berezina et al., 2012) and sales (Liu, 2006; Zhang et al., 2011; Zhu and Zhang, 2010). Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) examined effects of online product reviews on relative sales of two online book shops based on publicly available data from two leading online booksellers. Moreover, both active and passive consumers use this information medium (eWOM). Individuals who share their opinions with others online are active consumers; those who simply search for information in the comments or opinions posted by other customers are passive consumers (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004). The results of their study show that such online communications significantly affect other consumers' purchase behavior. In addition, researchers have already demonstrated useful applicability of theory to a variety of other marketing contexts, which studies about influence of eWOM on consumers' purchase intention from different perspectives.

The major contribution of the study is that it focuses on consumer behavior in a cultural context. It is evident that research has been conducted on the same issue in many countries, but there is no evidence of similar type of study in the Myanmar. Research conducted earlier on the Myanmar market focused primarily on outdoor consumer behavior. There is no evidence about the link between the antecedents of eWOM and purchase intention at Facebook. There are many determinants of purchase intention, like consumer attitude, word of mouth (WOM), trust, experience, brand image and brand familiarity. Among them, in Myanmar, word of mouth is the most trusted channel of information for the consumer because of the culture context where personal relationships are essential for doing business. Consumer, most of the time, know about the products from friends, colleagues and relatives through word of mouth which

has a significant role in influencing the purchasing decision. Moreover, according to the current trend, Myanmar consumers become relying on the suggestions and recommendations from social influencers, celebrities, and bloggers who they admire, respect and trust more than ever before. In spite of the rich literature on the effects of eWOM on purchase intention, there are little literatures have been conducted in order to investigate whether social tie strength has moderating effect between eWOM and purchase intention. Recent years, some studies have noticed to the power and difference of social ties in eWOM research, addressing the issues of comparing the influence of social ties on consumer decision making (Steffes and Burgee, 2009; Zhao and Xie, 2011) and examining the effect of social ties on consumer eWOM sharing (Choi et al., 2017). There is little literature in existing researches about the moderating effect of social tie strength on purchase decisions. This study develops a moderated model that explain the effects of eWOM social ties (strong-tie and weak-tie eWOM) on purchase intentions. Under the moderating effect of social tie strength, whether eWOM related variables have the indirect effect on consumers' purchase decisions also becomes a research focus.

The paper is structured as follows: primarily, the review of existing literature has been presented to justify the variables selected for the study, followed by the development of the conceptual model. Secondly, the paper explains the research methodology followed, including the questionnaire design and data collection. Lastly, the paper presents data analysis, managerial implications, conclusions and directions for further research.

1.2 Research Objectives

According to Nielsen research, Myanmar consumers also tend to believe the recommendations from family, friends, and acquaintances. At this trend, the modern era of technologies is changing the way of how Myanmar customers acquire information too. One interesting field of Myanmar consumers, according to cultural perception, Myanmar people are more likely to perceive word of mouth (WOM) than traditional advertising ways of receiving information compared with other nationalities, because of their traditional perceptions. Before buying something, most of Myanmar people search information about product at Facebook, which is the most famous social media platform in Myanmar, and evaluate the product which they intend to buy and make decisions.

Therefore, this study contributes to research and practice in consumer behavior especially in online community by describing different factors associated with user generated

contents. Furthermore, although various researchers have developed the models that define and explain culture and marketing strategy, not many of these models focus on moderating effect of social tie strength in specific industries in different cultural environments. This research explores the eWOM influences on purchase intention and how social tie strength can moderate the relationship of those variables.

Based on those above-mentioned facts, I decided to focus on the concept of purchase decision and by analyzing literature in this area, I identified three different factors of eWOM related with eWOM source and related with eWOM information. And this relationship might be proven by several studies, however how social tie strength affects the relationship might be the difference point of this study compared with existing research. These factors have been chosen in this study as the factors affect Myanmar customer purchase intention mostly during these days. The results of this research will allow the Korea cosmetic firms to better understand Myanmar consumers' market and will help them to implement effective ways to enter and approach Myanmar market. This paper will also help companies to reflect their marketing strategies and compete effectively in Myanmar markets. The findings of this paper will serve as a guide to such companies who have limited knowledge of Myanmar consumers. The findings also provide useful information to any company to determine Myanmar consumer behavior for indicating the appropriate strategy of marketing.

1.3 The Most Famous Social Media Platform in Myanmar

Of the three social media platforms identified as commonly used by companies to support marketing and branding (i.e. Twitter, YouTube and Facebook), Facebook is considered by some to be the “holy grail of marketers” because of its focus on the integration of advertising into participants social content. In the Facebook format, advertisers present their information about specific brands and products, Facebook users provide comments or "Like" content (showing approval of specific content), and this then drives additional similar content (Nelson-Field, Riebe, & Sharp, 2012; Shen & Bissell, 2013). The more consumers engage in behaviors around product advertising or comment on Facebook about specific products, the more content they will be provided that has similar products or brands (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Social media, then, has a significant impact on how marketers design their strategic approach, how they deliver brand information, and how they scale advertising to enhance consumer engagement.

Social networking sites like Facebook have provided a new way of introducing brand-related content and creating exchanges with consumers by generating consumer interactions (Shen & Bissell, 2013). The value of this approach is based on the shift in the way in which the Internet is being used, and social venues are progressing. Just a decade ago, the number one online activity was pornography, but just a decade later, this has shifted to social networking (Shen & Bissell, 2013). As a result, about 93% of businesses use some form of social networking for marketing and branding (Shen & Bissell, 2013). In their 2013 study, Shen and Bissell maintained that in any given year, there are more than 200 million active online users in the United States who spend more than 29 hours spent on online browsing, product assessment and networking. Of this large amount of social networking use, Facebook is the leader, with the most time spent on this social network leader (over 7 hours per person per week) (Shen & Bissell, 2013).

According to Thaw Zin Min, 2018, the population of 53.61 million Myanmar people, about 18 million people can access the internet and all of them are on social media. The increasing numbers of accessibility to internet and social media open more opportunity to not only users but also the retailers and marketers to reach more consumer. The social media platforms and commercial sites, highlighting an excellent opportunity to reach their targeted consumers directly and promote their products. Social media platform allows people to collect data and sent different types of messages to their specific targets based on their interest. Marketers can segment the same group of people who have seen the first awareness-raising message then target their location then learn about their consuming behavior. After that, marketers can also target a secondary group to learn about their influencers or loved ones and test the traffic. With all those good qualities of social media, it is still not enough to influence the targeted the consumer's thought because of the consumer's cultural perception.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Reviews

2.1 Purchase Intention

The process of consumer purchase decision is a complicated one, and tend to be tied with customer's individual behavior, attitudes and perceptions. The concept of buying intentions reflects consumers' foreseeable behavior in short term future buying decisions. Purchase intentions are frequently used to forecast sales of existing products and services. Market research firms often use purchase intentions to forecast new products' sales potential. Moreover, purchase intention measures have been used frequently to identify products buying probability within the defined time periods. According to Asshidin, 2015, an individual's behavioral intention depends on his or her attitude towards the behavior and the subjective norms associated with the behavior. Among the many different questions pertinent to consumer behavior, one of the most difficult to explain is why a consumer makes a particular purchase, since such answers are seldom simple or clear. However, the question is crucial since a firm needs to know what really triggers a consumer to purchase a product (Ghazali et al., 2008). According to Ghosh (1990), the buying process can be effectively predicted by purchase intention. In addition, purchase intention indicates that after estimating a product or service and considering that it is worth buying or not, the customer is going to buy the product or service. Previous studies have shown that intention is one of the predictive of sales. Besides, the measurements of purchase intentions have been pervasive in modern marketing. Shamdassani, Stanaland and Tan (2001) argued that purchase intention is the extent to which customers are willing to recommend the service or product. Purchase intentions have been recognized as a part of consumer behaviors. Purchase intention refers to the extent of consumer buying a certain product regularly and refusing to switch to another product (Yoo et al., 2000).

Another definition declares that purchase intention is the individual's awareness to make an attempt to buy a brand (Shabbir et al. 2009). They have also concluded that intention is different from attitude. While attitude means evaluation of products, intention is the person's motivation in the sense of his or her will to perform behavior. Purchase intention can also be defined as the decision to act or physiological action that shows an individual's behavior according to the product (Wang & Yang, 2008). The higher the intention, the more likely the purchase is to be made (Schiffman & Leslie, 2000). Purchase intention means that a consumer prefers to buy a product or service because they find that they need a particular product or

service, or even attitude towards a product and perception of the product. Purchase intention is the probability of consumers being willing to buy a certain product. The purchase intention is also a certain transaction behavior driven by consumers' assessments on products and is an emotional response which urges consumers to take action on the targets (Shjun, 1987). Particular features of products, perception of consumers, country of origin and perception of country of origin, all have an influence on customer purchase intention (Wang et al., 2012).

2.2 Word of Mouth

According to Mohamed E. Abd-Elaziz, Wael M. Aziz, Gamal S. A. Khalifa & Magdy Abdel Aleem Ma'youf, 2015, word of mouth has been recognized as one of the most influential resources of information transmission since the beginning of human society (Yaylı and Bayram, 2012). It is also often mentioned to be the most important information source when consumer is making a purchase decision and one of the oldest forms of marketing (Sırma et al., 2009). Literature about WOM dates to the 1960s (Arndt, 1967; Dichter, 1966), although even in fifties Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) published "personal influence" in order to understand how consumers can influence each other.

2.2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth

According to Mohamed E. Abd-Elaziz, Wael M. Aziz, Gamal S. A. Khalifa & Magdy Abdel Aleem Ma'youf, 2015, the advances of information technology and the emergence of online network sites have profoundly changed the way information is exchanged and have transcended the traditional limitations of WOM (Shin, 2007; Heyne, 2009; Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Magalhaes and Musallam, 2014). Nowadays consumer can share their product-related experiences on the internet through email, bulletin boards, chat rooms, forums, fan clubs, brand and user groups (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006; Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Wu, 2013). Internet has led word of mouth to be simultaneously ubiquitous and removed necessity of physically present anywhere (Heyne, 2009; Torlak et al., 2014). This new trend is named electronic word of mouth, the studies demonstrated that EWOM has a critical role on consumer preferences and behavioral intentions (Pedersen et al., 2014; Severi et al., 2014; Torlak et al., 2014). Lin et al. (2013) shows that EWOM may have higher credibility, empathy, and relevance than marketer-created sources of information.

Today's new form of online WOM communication is known as electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM (Yang, 2017). This form of communication has taken on special importance

with the emergence of online platforms, which have made it one of the most influential information sources on the Web (Abubakar and Ilkan, 2016). As a result of technological advances, these new means of communication have led to changes in consumer behavior (Cantallops and Salvi, 2014; Gomez-Suarez et al., 2017), because of the influence they enable consumers to exert on each other (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012) by allowing them to obtain or share information about companies, products, or brands (Gomez-Suarez et al., 2017). One of the most comprehensive conceptions of eWOM was proposed by Litvin et al. (2008), who described it as all informal communication via the Internet addressed to consumers and related to the use or characteristics of goods or services or the sellers thereof. The advantage of this tool is that it is available to all consumers, who can use online platforms to share their opinions and reviews with other users. Where once consumers trusted WOM from friends and family, today they look to online comments (eWOM) for information about a product or service (Nieto et al., 2014).

As a result of ICT, today consumers from all over the world can leave comments that other users can use to easily obtain information about goods and services. Both active and passive consumers use this information medium (eWOM). Individuals who share their opinions with others online are active consumers; those who simply search for information in the comments or opinions posted by other customers are passive consumers (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004).

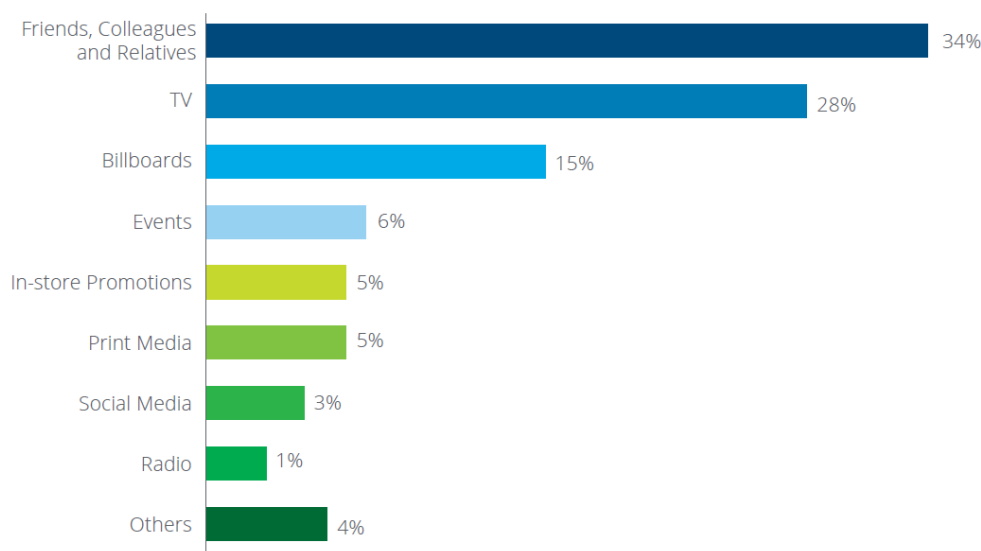
According to Emilie Lehmann-Jacobsen, 2018, one of the most surprising findings from the audience study was the role and impact of Facebook. Although official figures state that only about one out of three in Myanmar are active Facebook users, most people that participated in the audience study knew of Facebook and had gotten information from Facebook in one way or another. Facebook has clearly become a big factor in Myanmar's news and information flows and the reach of the social networking site is far bigger than the official figure of 34 percent. The sharing culture of Myanmar has ensured that information from the social networking platform is spread outside of the online realm and reaches people by word of mouth in traditional ways.

2.2.2 The Influence of Word of Mouth over Myanmar's General Consumer Culture

According to Thaw Zin Min, 2018, culturally elders and people with high social status (for example, teacher, doctors, monks and etc.) have the power to influence younger members

to listen and follow them. The same concept goes to marketing, Myanmar consumers tend to listen from authoritative figures, experts, public figures and other experienced consumers. For an instance, an advertisement with doctor recommendations most likely to get trust from more consumers. Even though Myanmar culture is more oriented toward feminism, men are still house head and decision makers. The gentle touch on caring and quality of life in marketing is the common way to touch Myanmar consumers' heart. One of the undeniable channels of reach consumers' ears is word of mouth. Myanmar word of mouth is the most trusted channel of information for the consumer because of the culture context where personal relationships are essential for doing business. Consumer, most of the time, know about the products from friends, colleagues and relatives through word of mouth which has a significant role in influencing the purchasing decision. Moreover, the good review from public figures would boost the product awareness among the consumers better.

In a cultural context where personal relationships are essential for doing business, word of mouth is the most trusted source of information in Myanmar. Friends, Colleagues, and Relatives can play a significant role in influencing the purchasing decision as many consumers are not very- well informed (see figure 1) (Eugene Ho and Pua Wee Meng, 2016).



Source: Deloitte's Myanmar Consumer Survey

Figure 1: Myanmar Consumer Influence of Advertising according to different sources

2.3 Sources of eWOM

Research on WOM has been focusing on the analysis of characteristics of the communicators and sources of information, effects of these characteristics on WOM and the reasons why certain sources of information are more likely to exert influence than others (Veranika Varabyova, 2014). Bearden and Etzel (1991) discuss the influence of the reference group on the product and brand judgments. A reference group is defined as any person or group of people that significantly influences an individual's behavior, aspirations and evaluations (Park and Lessig, 1977; Bearden & Etzel, 1991).

2.3.1 eWOM Information Source Credibility

Source credibility refers to consumers' overall perception regarding the credibility of an eWOM source rather than the content of the message. Source credibility is considered a basic factor, which helps individuals to judge eWOM communications (Akyuz 2013). Source credibility describes how the recipient perceives the competences of the origins or source of the received information. It refers to the expected ability of the information source to generate accurate, valid and believable information (Cheung et al., 2009; Dou, Walden, Lee, & Lee, 2012).

According to Awad and Ragowsky (2008), definition of perceived credibility, the last one plays the main role in a customer's decision-making process, and also claimed that it decreases uncertainty in business intercommunications, as well as social. Credibility of the information source has been associated with different terms, such as "trustworthiness," "believability," and "expertise." Some researchers offer a loose definition of credibility. Tseng and Fogg (1999) determined eWOM credibility as the degree to which people perceive that someone's recommendation is factual, true or believable. Ohanian (1990) defines credibility as "a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (p. 41). Other researchers distinguish between factors that form credibility.

McCroskey and Teven (1999) conducted an overview of previous research on credibility and boiled it down to two factors that define credibility: trustworthiness and competence. Here, trustworthiness is defined with such terms as "safety" and "honesty," which correspond to the unbiased attitude. Competence is associated with "qualifications," "intelligence" and "expertness," which correspond to the notion of source expertise in the previous definition. The authors also introduced a third factor – "goodwill." This term stands

for the perceived communicator's caring and empathic attitudes towards a receiver. On the grounds of these definitions, I can conclude that if the customers feel that products or services' comments or reviews are coming from credible sources, purchase decision is likely to be made taking into account these comments or reviews. On the other side, if customers perceive that comments or reviews are not so credible, these comments or reviews will apparently be overlooked, people tend to ignore less credible sources (Sussman and Siegal, 2003).

Previous researches have confirmed the significant effect of source credibility with the receiver's acceptance of the message in both offline and online context (Cheung et al., 2009). In face to face communication, empirical findings have illustrated a positive correlation between the perceived attributes of communicators and their perceived persuasiveness of their message (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Chaiken, 1980). According to Ba and Pavlou (2002, cited in Cheung et al., 2009), the similar effect could also be found in online communication between the virtual source credential and the credibility perception of eWOM messages, despite the anonymity effect. This was supported by Li and Zhan (2011) who conclude from their experimental study about the persuasiveness of eWOM that the credibility of the source influences how convincing the online message is to the receivers. Similarly, Cheung and colleagues (2009; 2012), mention that information originated from an online source with high credibility is more trust worthy and acceptable than one given by a low credible online source.

Existing literatures commonly identify two main constructs of source credibility including (1) source expertise and (2) source trustworthiness (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990; Dou et. al, 2012). These two components are highly interrelated and jointly shape the receiver's perception of the message source credibility (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; 1953).

2.3.2 Source Expertise

Source expertise is considered as a main mechanism in reducing uncertainty of using eWOM communications in the decision-making process (Casalo et al. 2008). Source expertise refers to the perceived knowledge, skills or experiences of a sender which signal the capability to provide accurate information (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise refers to the extent to which a source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information (Bristor 1990, p. 73). Regarding the source, expertise here relates to the understanding of the reviewed product or service is obtained by formal education and training, professional experiences, or actual

product usage (Li & Zhan, 2011). The degree of expertise is connected to the experience or training of the information source (Racherla and Friske 2012). Source expertise can be assessed by the context of the review, the duration of a reviewer's membership of the platform, and the number of reviews posted (Racherla and Friske 2012; Weiss et al. 2008). In eWOM communication, by checking reviewer's profile information, the quantity and quality of reviewer's past recommendations, and his or her product usage experience, receivers approximate the virtual credentials (Mackiewicz, 2008). People tend to value high expertise sources since they believe to receive high quality information. According to Wathen and Burkell (2002), the perception of high expertise minimizes the recipient's doubt toward the accuracy and validity of the given information; hence a knowledgeable communicator is considered more credible. Previous researches have shown that information from high expertise sources has considerable influence on the audience (Cheung et al., 2009; 2012). Moreover, the research of Li and Zhan (2011) suggests that due to their substantial knowledge and experiences, experts are more likely to provide stronger and more convincing arguments.

2.3.3 Source Trustworthiness

Beside source expertise, source trustworthiness is also an important determinant for overall credibility of the information source. The perception of a sender's objectivity and sincerity here is closely linked with the concept of trust (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). A receiver of information doubts its credibility if they perceive that the source of this information is untrustworthy (Sparkman Jr and Locander 1980). Source trustworthiness, on the other hand, regards the receiver's confidences about the objectivity and honesty of the provided message (Hovland et al., 1953). The source is considered trustworthy if the statement is considered as valid, honest and up to the point (Hovland and Weiss 1951). Source trustworthiness is considered an important predictor of the persuasiveness of eWOM communications (Cheung et al. 2009; Hu et al. 2008).

According to published literature, the trustworthiness of the source has positive influence on the way audiences judge the credibility of the message. If receivers perceive the message sender as trustworthy, they are more likely to value the recommendation validity and credibility (Cheung et al., 2009).

2.3.4 eWOM from Personal Source

Social network sites represent an ideal tool for e-WOM, as consumers freely create and disseminate product-related information in their established social networks composed of friends, classmates and other acquaintances (Vollmer and Precourt, 2008). The consumers may perceive their contacts in social network sites as more trustworthy and credible source than unknown people, so this makes social network sites an important source of product information for consumers and facilitates e-WOM (Chu and Kim, 2011).

This influence can be magnified by the effect of word-of-mouth allowed by Social Media platforms and tools that give the possibility to consumers to share their good, but also bad, experiences with 'just the click of a mouse' (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2010, p408). McKinsey & Company (2010, p2) argued that in today's business world consumers are overwhelmed by product choices, and presented word-of-mouth as the right vector that 'cuts through the noise in a quick and effective way'. The word-of-mouth on Social Media plays a major role in influencing consumers. Indeed, consumers tend to believe information heard from people they have a relationship with, due to the fact that people have similarity (share the same values and preferences) and feel as members of the same communities (Hoyer, MacInnis, 2010, p389). McKinsey & Company (2010, p 2) described the level of trust as being higher with people that the consumer knows and the word-of-mouth as the 'primary factor behind 20 to 50 percent of all purchasing decisions. This demonstrate the power of influence of Social Media that by welcoming communities and allowing people to share contents together can influence consumers' purchasing decision making process.

As consumers on communities tend to trust their peers because they feel like they are similar, the trust level that plays a major role in the buying process is magnified and influenced on Social Media. The increasing frequentation of reviews and opinions in specific groups of Facebook illustrates the fact that consumers are seeking for their peers' opinions because they estimate them as being trustful. According to Antony Pecotich, Clifford J. Shultz, Myanmar consumers tend to follow their neighbor's purchase decisions, making word-of-mouth advertising crucial. Furthermore, word-of-mouth recommendation plays an important role in determining the success of a product, especially from family members, friends or neighbor.

2.3.5 eWOM from Non-personal Source

Before engaging with consumers, marketers also need to identify the influencers on Social Media. According to Brown and Hayes (2008, p172), marketers need to identify specific Social Media sites that are ‘hosts for clusters of influencers. Social Media has given more possibilities to influencers to spread messages to consumers. Once influencers and consumers are identified, marketers need to be present where customers are and engage them in a two ways dialogue (Reed, 2011). This can be done by with creating content that consumers will value and pass on to peers (Reed, 2011, p17). Moreover, Sweeney and Craig (2011, p10) pointed out that consumers interacting within the Social Media broadcast their participation to their contacts and spread thus marketers’ message to a wider audience. By engaging with consumers, marketers can thus have feedbacks about the products or the brand and will be able to answer consumers (Jaffe, 2010, p154). This demonstrate that marketers can use Social Media to show to their consumers that they are actually listening and taking into consideration what they say.

2.3.6 Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Buying Behavior

A Taiwanese study shows that consumers show greater recall of products that have been endorsed by celebrities – regardless of whether they are actual fans or not. The human brain recognizes celebrities similarly to how it recognizes people we actually know. The effect is that, if consumers happen to be fans, they place a higher value on products that celebrities are endorsing – it is as if they are receiving advice from a valued friend.

With celebrities vouching for or promoting their products, brands can increase awareness, trust and familiarity, which are important variables in the purchase decision-making process. Consumers feel more sympathetic towards a brand, if their products are promoted by a celebrity they admire or relate to. It is a simple psychological effect: Subconsciously people believe that purchasing a product that’s promoted by a celebrity they admire, will allow them to emulate the celebrity’s desired traits or attract similar people into their lives. They will associate the celebrities’ success, beauty, athletic skill etc. with a particular product.

A recent study by the University of Arkansas in collaboration with the Manchester Business School in London found that consumers (ages 18-24) take on an active role in developing their identities and appearance based upon celebrities. They are more susceptible to celebrity brand endorsements than other age groups. Research by Nielson conducted in 2015

broke down the level of trust in advertising formats by different generations. It found that celebrity endorsements resonate more strongly with Generation Z (ages 15-20) and Millennial (ages 21-34) audiences.

Celebrity endorsement is generally seen as a viable option for brands to increase awareness, build credibility and promote products. Around 14-19% of advertisements aired in the US featured celebrities that endorsed products and brands. A number that is even higher in other markets. Nike alone is said to spend \$475 million annually on getting athletes to endorse their brand. Market watch reports that a simple announcement from a brand signing a celebrity or athlete can cause stock prices to rise slightly and increase sales by 4% on average. After Chanel signed Nicole Kidman in 2003, it was reported that global sales of the promoted Chanel's perfume increased by 30%. And when Nike and Tiger Woods inked an endorsement deal in 2000, Nike's market share went from 0.9% to 4% in 6 months. However, after Nike decided to keep Woods despite his highly publicized scandal, the company suffered a loss of \$1.7 million in sales and 105,000 customers.

Brands are taking advantage of that by increasingly utilizing the social media communities of celebrities. Social media is a way for consumers, in particular those of younger demographics, to engage and build intimate connections with the celebrities they follow, making it THE place for these celebrities to plug a company or a product on their personal Social media accounts. Social media celebrities, such as Kim Kardashian or Justin Bieber, can be paid \$20,000 for a single, 140-character tweet. While celebrity endorsements certainly help to attract consumers, its direct influence on the consumers' purchasing decisions are inconclusive. In the book *Contemporary Ideas and Research in Marketing*, researchers found that 85% of people surveyed said that celebrity endorsements enhanced their confidence in and preference for a product, but only 15% said that celebrities had an impact on their purchase decisions.

2.4 Quality of eWOM

Bhattacharje and Sanford (2006) argued that information quality can be defined as convincing force of the message and if customers perceive that information about product or service is clear and satisfactory they are likely going to purchase the product or service more willingly (Cheung, Lee and Rabjohn, 2008; Sussman and Siegal, 2003). Doll and Torkzadeh (1988) figured out that information's content, accuracy, format, and timeliness, was the

standard to evaluate the quality of information in the early year. Currently, with the proliferation of Internet, the content of information quality was expanded. People usually have their own certain criteria that match their needs based on which they decide whether to buy a product or not; for example, the degree to which the given information is understandable, clear and helpful (Cheung, Lee and Rabjohn, 2008). Taking McKinney et al. (2002)'s research for reference, understandability, reliability, and usefulness of information are the three key dimensions related to information quality. So, if the content of information has these key dimensions, we can consider that information has high quality. From other research, the definition of a high-quality review is the one more comprehensive and logical based on the facts about a product. Therefore, while assessing the probable purchase intention, the perception of information quality that consumers hold can be an important element.

2.5 Quantity of eWOM

When customers make purchase decisions, in order to reduce the feeling that their choices were not right or on the contrary to boost the confidence that they bought the right product or service among many others, the quantity of information steps up and plays a huge role in decision making process. (Yu Evgeniy, 2019). If customers can see a lot of reviews or comments about any particular product or service, it could mean that this products or service is in demand and popular. According to Davis and Khazanchi (2008), the changes in certain product sales can be influenced by the three aspects, such as product category, volume and product reviews. In particular, the product views about certain product category is statistically meaningful in explanation the sales change. The amount of eWOM makes reviews more apparent, when a customer search for these online reviews (Cheung and Thadani, 2010). Based on study by Lee, Park and Han (2008), consumers' decision whether to get a product or service could be influenced by the quantity of the information that people can get about this product or service. Since it is reasonable to suppose that the number of reviews is equal to the number of consumers who have already bought the product in some extension, the quantity of on-line reviews of product can be considered as the index of the product's popularity (Park et al, 2001). Nowadays, along with the commonly known major source of information - organizations' official websites, other sources like online blogs, online forums, web boards, product review websites and online social networking sites are growing rapidly giving people the chance to read more information before purchasing a product or service (Yu Evgeniy, 2019).

2.6 Social Tie Strength

Brown, Broderick and Lee (2007) suggest that “all WOM communication takes place within a social relationship that may be categorized according to the closeness of the relationship between information seeker and the source, represented by the construct tie strength” (page 4). The closeness of relationships with a source of information shapes attitudes toward an incoming message from this source. Attribution theory explains why WOM coming from a trustworthy sender has high impact on the receiver. According to Hilton et al. (1995), attribution theory provides the receiver of WOM with an understanding of the sender’s motives for communicating the specific WOM information. Hilton et al. (1995) assume that the receiver’s perception of the sender influences the receiver’s subsequent interpretation of the message. Thus, according to attribution theory, it is the receiver’s perception of the sender’s trustworthiness that establishes acceptance. If the sender truly believes in what she/he is communicating, the sender is more likely to be perceived as a reliable and trustworthy person, and the receiver will accept the information as being independent and objective (Laczniak et al., 2001).

Receivers of WOM who are searching for recommendations will have different motives for using strong-tie sources and weak-tie sources (Anne Martensen, and Lars Grønholdt, 2015). Mark Granovetter pointed out the concept of tie strength “The Strength of Weak Ties” in his landmark paper launched in 1973. While Granovetter did not give the detail explanation of tie strength, he divided social ties into two types which were strong tie and weak tie. Strong ties are the people you think they are very trustworthy, people whose life have the intersection with you. Often, they are the people similar with you in many aspects, such as hobby, values, education background etc. In the contrast, weak ties are the people you know, regarding as acquaintances. The utility of information collected from the weak ties is less than the information came from the strong ties. In line with the research, Walker, Wasserman and Wellman (1994) considered strong ties is a kind of intimate and special relationship which people devote voluntary in the relationship and desire for caring and helping the partner, it also be considered as a mutual relationship which the partner’s needs understood and supported. Compared to those in a weak tie relationship, in the strong tie relationship, peoples incline to interact with each other and exchange information more frequently (Brown and Reingen, 1987). Social networking sites offer individuals the opportunity to interact with both “weak ties” and “strong ties” and support the development of both.

CHAPTER 3

Hypothesis Development

3.1 Relationship between Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

Source credibility describes how the recipient perceives the competences of the origins or source of the received information. It refers to the expected ability of the information source to generate accurate, valid and believable information (Cheung et al., 2009; Dou, Walden, Lee, & Lee, 2012). Previous researches have confirmed the significant effect of source credibility with the receiver's acceptance of the message in both offline and online context (Cheung et al., 2009). Significant number of studies consider that online WOM is an essential affecting factor on consumer purchase intentions (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Chan and Ngai, 2011; Naz, 2014; Park, Lee, and Han, 2007). Purchase action can immediately be happened when people take into account eWOM messages. Credibility of information determines how much the receiver of this information learns from and adopts the received information: if the received information is perceived as credible, the receiver will have more confidence to use it for the purchase decision (Sussman and Siegal 2003). Nowadays, more and more people prior making a decision to purchase the particular service or product try to read recommendations shared by customers who already have the experience in buying that type of product or service (Yu Evgeniy, 2019). Taking into consideration that online information exchanges occur between people who may have no prior relationship, it is essential to consider how perceived credibility of information influences consumer behaviour (Elvira, Emma, Nripendra & Yogesh, 2019). Some studies have examined the relationship between eWOM credibility and purchase intention (Koo 2016; Teng et al. 2017; Wang et al. 2015b; Xie et al. 2011). Forman et al. (2008) argued that there is a direct impact of eWOM on a firm's sales. Several studies have explored the relationship between source credibility and purchase intention (Akyuz 2013; Nekmat and Gower 2012; Yang et al. 2015; Zhang et al. 2014b). For example, by conducting surveys with 378 respondents from China, Yang et al. (2015) found that information coming from a source perceived as credible positively affects intention to buy. Koo (2016) surveyed 302 students from South Korea and found eWOM credibility to have a significant positive effect on purchase intention of airline tickets, meal at a family restaurant and a skin care service. Previous studies have investigated the influence of source expertise on intention to buy (Dou et al. 2012; Park and Kim 2008; Saleem and Ellahi 2017; Zainal et al. 2017). For example, using an online survey of 280 respondents from Malaysia, Zainal et al. (2017) found that source expertise

significantly affects intention to book a hotel room. The expertness of an individual is an important factor for making eWOM communications more persuasive and it increases intention to buy. Using theories of planned behavior and reasoned action, Lis (2013) suggests that trust in the source leads to purchase intention (Saleem and Ellahi 2017). Cheung et al. (2009) found that source trustworthiness positively influences behavioral intention by conducting laboratory experiments with 40 participants. Another study by Saleem and Ellahi (2017) found that trustworthiness of the message provider affects the buying intention on social media websites in the context of fashion products. Therefore, on the basis of aforementioned literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. eWOM Information Source Credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention.

3.2 Relationship between Source Quality, Quantity and Purchase intention

Quality of eWOM is another important element that is tend to be discussed with eWOM cogency (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007). Moreover, although various numerical feature of electronic word of mouth have been explored extensively, it is only recently that researchers started to explore the effect of the quality of electronic word of mouth. Review's quality refers to the arguments' persuasiveness hidden behind the information (Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006).

Chatterjee (2001) claimed that quantity of eWOM which is reading multiple reviews or comments by other consumers could lead to less anxiety when making a purchase decision because you get to realize that there a lot of others who also purchased this certain product or service. Extensive researches have approved that with the increasing quantity, the influence of electronic word of mouth will be aggrandized (He Jie, 2018). Lin et al. (2005) found from a study of 10 Internet book reviews, in the eyes of consumers, if the review is more than 9, then means the book worth discussion. 7 means the book just so, if the review is 5 or even fewer, this book may not arouse peoples' interests. So, the amount of information may not only affect consumer's attention about the information but also their interest in the product. In this study, we assume eWOM information as positive. Based on abovementioned facts, hypotheses presented below are:

H2. eWOM Information Quality has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H3. eWOM Information Quantity has a positive effect on purchase intention.

3.3 Moderating Effect of Social Tie Strength

Tie strength is a contrast that is identified by “closeness, intimacy, support, and association” between people (Brown et al, 2007, p. 4). Stronger ties mean more frequent interactions with more exchanged information. The perceived strength of ties also affects the influence that the information from a particular source has on the receiver. Phua and Jin (2011) notice that the Internet facilitates production and accumulation of social capital, as it makes it easier for people to connect and stay connected with a wide audience of people. The Internet, and SNSs in particular, help to maintain the relationships with close friends and family (strong ties) as well as maintain and create relationships with old and new acquaintances weak ties, (Penard & Poussing, 2010). Researchers tend to classify family and friends into the category of strong ties (e.g., Penard & Poussing, 2010) and loose social connections into the weak-ties category of social 15 connections (Jin & Phua, 2014).

Receivers of WOM who are searching for recommendations will have different motives for using strong-tie sources and weak-tie sources. Brown and Reingen (1987) find that receivers often turn to weak-tie experts for active information search; they initiate a conversation with experts to obtain information. On the other hand, information and recommendations through strong ties will often have a greater impact and influence on the receivers’ decision-making process. Findings by Brown and Reingen (1987) thus indicate that receivers evaluate strong ties as crucial and more important to the flow of influence than those perceived as weak ties. This is supported by Bone (1995), Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993) and Reingen and Kernan (1986). Brown and Reingen (1987) conclude that WOM through strong ties have greater impact on the receiver’s behavior than WOM through weak ties. Duhan et al. (1997) also supports the proposition by Brown and Reingen (1987) that receivers choose different sources for different purposes, and that these sources seem to have a different impact on the receiver. Since the frequent interaction and perceived significance of social relationship among certain group members, comparing with weak ties, strong ties will affect more on the receiver’s behavior (Bansal and Voyer, 2000).

Based on above literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between source credibility and purchase intention.

H5. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.

H6. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.

The research proposes a research model, as shown in Figure 2, to examine the relationships between the constructs of this research, namely, factors of eWOM, social tie strength and purchase intention.

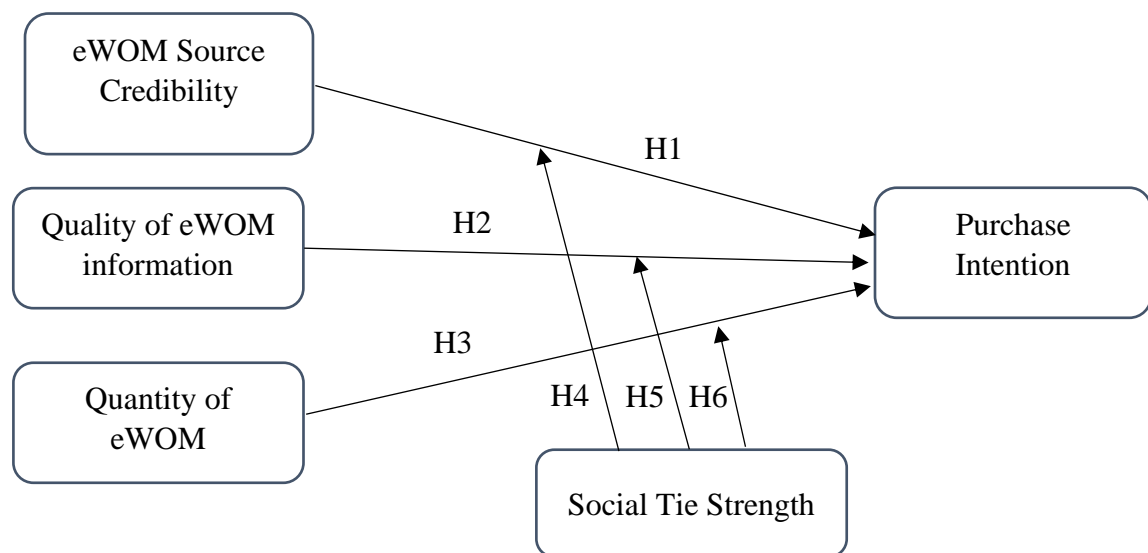


Figure 2: Research Model

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Method

The computer software program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22) was used for all statistical data analysis. There are two separated part analysis to analyze the data. In measurement scales test, data were initially evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Besides, the moderation effect analysis was carried out using SPSS hierarchical multiple regression following (Coakes, Steed, & Price, 2008). The hierarchical multiple regressions have been advocated as more appropriate method for determining whether a quantitative variable has a moderating effect on the relationship between two other quantitative variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cramer & ebrary, 2003). In this method, the orders in which independent variables are entered into the regression equation were known, and were based on logical or theoretical considerations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009).

4.2 Research Measurement

In this study, a five-point Likert scale was used to measure the components of the research model (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree). The questionnaire included measurement items of source credibility, quality of eWOM, quantity of eWOM, social tie strength and purchase intention. Source credibility was evaluated using 5 items, was modified from the studies of Sussman & Siegal (2003), Cheung et al. (2008) and Cheung et al. (2008), Mackiewicz (2008), Lis (2013). Quality of eWOM was evaluated using 5 items from the studies of Park, Lee and Han (2007), Park and Kim (2008) and Citrin (2001) Wixom and Todd (2005). Quantity of eWOM was evaluated using 4 items from the studies of Park, Lee and Han (2007), Park and Kim (2008) and Bi (2010). Purchase intention was evaluated using 4 items, was modified from the studies of Baker and Churchill (1977). Social tie strength was evaluated using 4 items from the studies of Almeida et al (2014).

4.2.1 Measures

Scales to measure each of the constructs in the model were adopted mainly based on previous literature. The details are as below:

Table 1: Measurement Items with Original Resources

Variable	Item No.	Scale	Original Resource
Source Credibility	A-1	Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is reputable.	
	A-2	Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is highly rated by other site participants.	
	A-3	Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is trustworthy.	
	A-4	The reviewer shares his/her sincere opinion(s) about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook.	Sussman & Siegal (2003), Cheung et al. (2008)
	A-5	The reviewer has actual usage experience(s) with Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook.	Cheung et al. (2008), Mackiewicz (2008), Lis (2013)
Quality of eWOM	B-1	I think comments and discussion about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook have sufficient reasons supporting the opinions.	Park, Lee and Han (2007), Park and Kim (2008)
	B-2	The information about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is understandable and clear.	
	B-3	The comments about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook are appropriate.	

	B-4	The contents of the messages about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook are of high quality.	Citrin (2001) Wixom and Todd (2005)
	B-5	The comments about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook sufficiently complete my need.	
Quantity of eWOM	C-1	There are many reviews or recommendations about Korean bands' cosmetic in Facebook.	Park, Lee and Han (2007), Park and Kim (2008)
	C-2	Many people communicate about Korean brands' cosmetic products in Facebook.	
	C-3	There are lot of information about Korean brands' cosmetic products in Facebook.	Bi (2010)
	C-4	The amount of information about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is enough for helping me make the purchase decisions.	
Purchase Intention	D-1	I desire to buy the Korean brand cosmetic products in Facebook.	Baker and Churchill (1977)
	D-2	I will consider buying the Korean brand cosmetic products in Facebook.	
	D-3	I intend to try the Korean brand's cosmetic products in Facebook.	
	D-4	In the future, I intend to buy the Korean brand's cosmetic products in Facebook.	
Social Tie Strength	E-1	The information provider has the good intimacy and relationship with me. (intimacy)	

	E-2	The information providers have the similarities with me in several aspects.	Almeida et al (2014)
	E-3	I consider the information providers are much similar considering their interests and hobbies.	
	E-4	The information providers and I have the same value in many aspects. (value)	

4.3 Data Collection

The main purpose of this study is to investigate three factors such as source credibility, quality of eWOM, quantity of eWOM that affect consumers purchase intentions and moderating role of social tie strength. The research model developed on the basis of the hypothesis needs to be validated empirically using a quantitative research method. To do this, a questionnaire was used to collect data from the Myanmar respondents who knew about Korean cosmetic products and have bought it. The participants have to fill out the questionnaires according to their purchase intention toward cosmetic products. The questionnaire was developed to measure the research variables, as well as to collect demographic information. Questionnaires, which were designed by Google form tool, consist of 29 questions in various types including multiple choice, checkboxes (Yes/No question), and linear scale. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section 2 contained questions pertaining the information and knowledge of research subjects about cosmetic product. Section 3 consisted of 5-point Likert scale measurement questions ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to measure source credibility, quality of eWOM, quantity of eWOM, social tie strength and purchase intention. Section 1 contained questions pertaining to demographic details such as gender and age. The surveys containing 29 questions were distributed via-online through social media such as Facebook. Data were collected from author's acquaintances by the author, and others were distributed and collected by author's acquaintances. A total of 264 questionnaires were collected and valid questionnaires were 202.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

After collecting activities, all the available data were entered into software program. Prior to analyzing data, it was sure that there was no mistake occurring in accessing data. Besides, the reliability of data from the sample was also checked to satisfy the requirement of measurement scale. After the scanning step, totally 202 of appropriate questionnaires were used in analyzing process including two separated parts. In measurement scales test, data was initially evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis. In research model test, multiple regression analysis was employed to analyze the relationships between predictors and dependent variables.

5.1 Description of the Sample

The age of the respondents is started from 18 years and over 38 years old. Most of the respondents are between 18-29 years old with 82.6%. Almost 87.5% of respondents were females. And 86.4% of respondents have experience to use and buy cosmetic products and 13.6% of do not have experiences to use cosmetic products. Respondents know about Korean cosmetic product primarily through Internet, social network with 91.2%, friends and acquaintances 58.8% and advertisement on TV with 25%. About Korean cosmetic brand Nature Republic and Innisfree were the most famous brand with 96.1% and 83.8% of respondents know about its brand, followed by The Face Shop, Etude House, Laneige and Missha. About the spend amount for cosmetic products per month, under 50,000 kyats per month was the largest group 55.7% followed by between 50,000 kyats and 100,000 kyats is second largest with 39 % between 100,000 kyats and 200,000 kyats group and over 200,000 kyats group are smallest with 3.9 % and 1.3%. About information searched at Facebook, the descriptive statistic of respondents can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic of Respondents

	%
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	12.5
Female	87.5
<u>Age</u>	
Between 18 - 29	82.6
Between 29 - 38	11.4
Over 38	6.1
<u>Use and buy cosmetic products</u>	
Yes	86.4
No	13.6
<u>Korea Cosmetic Brand</u>	
The Face Shop	75.9
Nature Republic	96.1
Innisfree	83.8
Laneige	66.7
Sulwhasoo	18.9
Missha	38.2
Etude House	71.5
<u>How do you know about Korean product</u>	

Advertisements on TV	25
Friends Acquaintances	58.8
Internet /Social network	91.2
<u>Spend amount on cosmetic products per month</u>	
Under 50,000 kyats	55.7
Between 50,000 kyats and 100,000 kyats	39
Between 100,000 kyats and 200,000 kyats	3.9
Over 200,000 kyats	1.3
<u>Search information about cosmetic products at Facebook</u>	
Yes	88.6
No	11.4

5.2 Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

To explore Myanmar consumer's purchase intention of cosmetic products at Facebook, structured questionnaires are used to collect the primary data. Firstly, reliability test and correlations are calculated and described as shown in the following tables. The overall reliability of scale is assessed by Cronbach's Alpha, the most commonly used mean of estimating reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha values are between 0.7 and 0.8 is acceptable level, between 0.8 to 0.9 is good level and equal to above 0.9 is excellent level (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis Results						
	Purchase Intention	eWOM Quality	Social Tie Strength	eWOM Quantity	Source Credibility	Cronbach's α
PI1	.861	.196	.081	.127	.023	0.911
PI3	.844	.113	.243	.164	.077	
PI2	.826	.190	.121	.184	.206	
PI4	.781	.183	.283	.187	-.042	
QL2	.074	.724	-.123	.199	.171	0.752
QL4	.165	.663	.242	-.013	.288	
QL3	.307	.640	.148	.161	.076	
QL5	.209	.601	.216	.086	.166	
QL1	.056	.599	.284	.322	-.203	
STS2	.091	.118	.764	.157	.113	0.771
STS1	.231	.201	.721	.126	.062	
STS3	.200	.001	.601	.383	.224	
STS4	.426	.258	.591	.051	.108	
QN1	.086	.165	.142	.771	.166	0.771
QN3	.183	.174	.193	.756	.163	
QN2	.271	.159	.128	.730	-.009	
SC1	.115	.203	.031	.181	.802	0.679

SC2	.039	.156	.307	.097	.780	
Eigen Value	6.697	1.709	1.324	1.234	1.063	
Explained variance (%)	37.205	9.494	7.356	6.855	5.908	
Cumulative explained variance (%)	37.205	46.700	54.056	60.911	66.819	

In conducted research, coefficient alpha was used to examine the reliability of questionnaire. According to the Zikmund, WG., Babin, BJ., Carr. JC and Griffio (2010), when alpha values are from 0.89 and 0.95, it is considered very good reliability, when the alpha value is from 0.70 and 0.89 is considered as good reliability. When the alpha value is below 0.60 will be considered as poor reliability. Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha should be equal and bigger than 0.60 because it is often said that the higher the Cronbach's Alpha, the more reliability scale has.

Table 3 shows that the Alpha value of each selected variable. Alpha value of purchase intention is 0.911 which is considered as good reliability. Beside the result show quality of eWOM with 0.752, quantity of eWOM with 0.771 and social tie strength with 0.771 which are considered as good reliability. The Alpha value of source credibility is 0.679 which is poor but still can be considered as reliable. Therefore, the result of the questionnaires is suitable for further analysis. These three variables (source credibility, quality of eWOM and quantity of eWOM) are regarded as the independent variables, purchase intention as dependent variable and social tie strength is the moderating variable.

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis of eWOM and Purchase Intention

Multicollinearity results from two independent variables that are highly correlated (Pallant, 2005). When multicollinearity is present. After reliability test, the independent variables source credibility, quality of eWOM and quantity of eWOM) were tested to show their correlation with dependent variable (purchase intention).

Table 4: Tolerance Value and the VIF of variables

Tolerance Value and the VIF of variables		
Variables	Collinearity statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
SC	.804	1.244
QL	.703	1.422
QN	.746	1.341

The result show in Table 4 indicates that multicollinearity problem does not exist among all independent variables because the Tolerance values are more than .10 and VIF values are less than 10. The result suggests that the current study does not have any problem with multicollinearity and this allows for standard interpretation of the regression coefficients.

Below, table 5 is shown with Pearson Correlations between the different independent variables. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (1996), one should hesitate to include two independent variables with a correlation of 0.7 or more. As all the intercorrelations are well below 0.7, all the independent variables can be retained.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis (r)

Pearson Correlation Analysis (r)					
	Source Credibility	eWOM Quality	eWOM Quantity	Purchase Intention	Social Tie Strength
SC					
QL	.410**				
QN	.344**	.478**			
PI	.267**	.481**	.445**		
STS	.404**	.499**	.490**	.547**	

As the main analysis of the study was applied regression analysis to test the objectives of purchase intention on eWOM (source credibility, quality of eWOM and quantity of eWOM) of Myanmar consumers. Regression analysis is asset of statistical process for estimation the

relationship among variables. It helps one to understand how the typical value of the dependent variable change when any one of the independent variables is varied, which the other independent variables are held fixed.

The regression analysis results provided that source credibility was positively related to purchase intention ($\beta=0.305$, $t=0.527$, $p>0.05$), quality of eWOM also had a positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta=0.337$, $t=4.725$, $p<0.01$) and quantity of eWOM also had a positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta=0.272$, $t=3.930$, $p<0.01$). The results were shown in following Table 6.

The proposed Model is

$$Y = \beta + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon_0$$

Thus, the estimate model,

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3$$

Where, $\hat{y} = Y = \text{Purchase Intention}$

$a = \text{Constant (intersection)}$

$b = \text{Coefficient (the slope of the regression)}$

$X_1 = \text{Source Credibility}$

$X_2 = \text{Quality of eWOM}$

$X_3 = \text{Quantity of eWOM}$

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Source Credibility, eWOM Quality and eWOM Quantity on Purchase Intention

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Source Credibility, eWOM Quality and eWOM Quantity on Purchase Intention							
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	p	Multicollinearity	
	B	Standard Error	β			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.439	.373		1.179	.240		
SC	.044	.084	.035	.527	.599	.804	1.244

QL	.472	.100	.337	4.725	.000	.703	1.422
QN	.339	.086	.272	3.930	.000	.746	1.341
* Dependent variable: Purchase Intention * Method: Enter * R-squared: .92 * Adjusted R-squared: .282 * F: 27.283 * Sig.: .000							

The proposed Model is

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon_0$$

Where, Y = Purchase Intention

β_0 = constant in regression equation

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = regression coefficient

ε_0 = the random errors

The estimate model,

$$\hat{y} = \beta + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$$

Where, $\hat{y} = Y$ = Purchase Intention

a = Constant (intersection)

b = Coefficient (the slope of the regression)

X_1 = Source Credibility

X_2 = Quality of eWOM

X_3 = Quantity of eWOM

Thus, the regression equation is

$$\text{Purchase intention} = 0.439 + 0.035 \text{ Source Credibility} + 0.337 \text{ Quality of eWOM} \\ + 0.272 \text{ Quantity of eWOM}$$

According to Table 6, H1 was not supported. Since “p” value of “source credibility” was greater than 0.05. Besides, the rest variables have the positive direct effect on purchase

attention. According to Table 6 and table 7, since P-value was smaller than 0.01, all in valid. The next step was to test the moderating effect of social tie strength on quality of eWOM and quantity of eWOM. The conclusion of hypothesis testing result can be as Table 7 showing below.

Table 7: Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Standard Error	β	t value	P value	Result
H1: Source Credibility → Purchase Intention	0.84	0.035	0.527	0.599	Rejected
H2: Quality of eWOM → Purchase Intention	0.100	0.337	4.725	0.000	Supported
H3: Quantity of eWOM → Purchase Intention	0.086	0.272	3.930	0.000	Supported

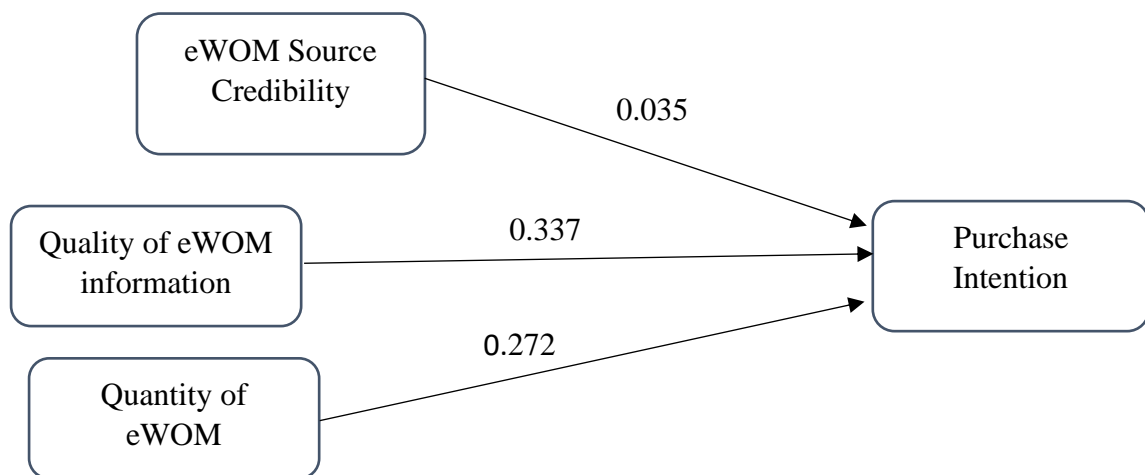


Figure 3: Research Model of Multiple Regression Result

5.4 The Moderating Effect

To assess the moderating effects, as recommended by (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003), a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed to examine the moderating effect of each moderating variable on the relationship between each independent and dependent variable. In the first step, the main effects represented by independent and moderator variables were entered. In the second step, the moderation effects (Baron & Kenny,

1986), also known as interaction variables were computed as products of independent and moderator variables were entered in the equation.

. Then, the results are interpreted by representing the regression equations graphically in order to explain the way of moderating effect is established.

Table 8: Result of Regression Analysis of Moderating Social Tie Strength on Relationship between eWOM Quality, eWOM Quantity and Purchase Intention

Result of Regression Analysis of Moderating Social Tie Strength on Relationship between eWOM Quality, eWOM Quantity and Purchase Intention						
	STEP 1		STEP 2		STEP 3	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
SC	.035	.599	-.033	.606	-.038	.565
QL	.337	.000	.234	.001	.239	.001
QN	.272	.000	.167	.015	.154	.038
STS			.362	.000	.172	.703
SC*STS					-.171	.705
QL*STS					.723	.169
QN*STS					-.355	.473
R^2	0.292		0.376		0.383	
ΔR^2			0.084		0.006	
$F(p)$	27.283(0.000)		26.515(0.000)		0.642(0.589)	

The proposed Model is

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 (X_2 X_4) + \varepsilon_0$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_5 (X_3 X_4) + \varepsilon_0$$

Where, Y= Purchase Intention

β_0 = constant in regression equation

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = regression coefficient

β_4 = Moderating coefficient

β_5 = Moderating coefficient

X_1 = Source Credibility

X_2 = Quality of eWOM

X_3 = Quantity of eWOM

X_4 = Social Tie Strength

Thus, the regression equation is

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Purchase Intention} = & 0.439 + (-0.038 \text{ Source Credibility}) + 0.239 \text{ Quality of eWOM} \\ & + 0.154 \text{ Quantity of eWOM} + (-0.171 [\text{eWOM Source Credibility} \times \text{Social} \\ & \text{Tie Strength}] + 0.723 [\text{Quality of eWOM} \times \text{Social Tie Strength}] + [-0.355 \\ & (\text{Quantity of eWOM} \times \text{Social Tie Strength})] \end{aligned}$$

Table 9: Hypothesis

Hypothesis	β	P value	Result
H4. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between source credibility and purchase intention.	-0.171	0.705	Rejected
H5. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention.	0.723	0.169	Rejected
H6. Social Tie Strength has moderating effect on relationship between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention.	-0.355	0.473	Rejected

The correlation between ‘quality of eWOM’ and ‘Purchase Intention’ is 0.0169 and similarly, the correlation between ‘quantity of eWOM’ and ‘Purchase Intention’ is 0.473 which suggest that the personal characteristics have no any moderation effect on the relationship between these two variables. To verify the above indication, a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed among these variables that confirmed it as there is no significant increment of R^2 (ΔR^2) after adding the interaction terms of any moderating variable to the regression models. Based on the moderation analysis the research model can be revised as shown in figure 4.

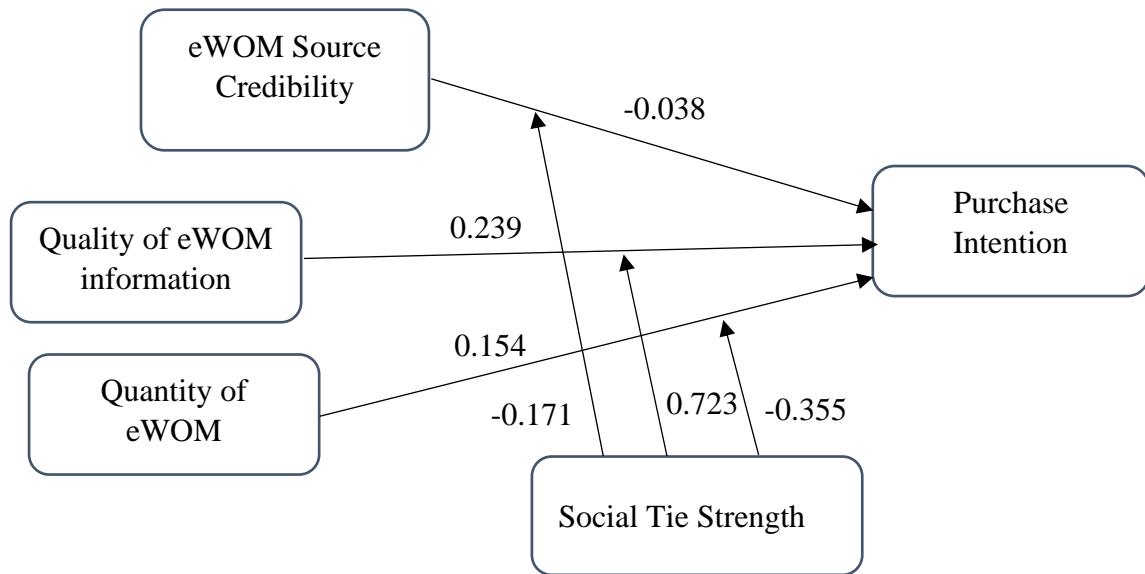


Figure 4: Research Model of Regression Analysis of Moderating Effect

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussions, Implications and Limitations

In this chapter, the main findings with regard to the research questions are summarized and general conclusions based on the findings of the studies presented in this thesis are described. Furthermore, the limitations of this thesis are considered and suggestions for further research into trustworthiness of online information sources are presented. This chapter concludes with managerial implications for industry professionals.

This study contributes to research and practice in consumer behavior especially in online community by describing different factors associated with user generated contents. First, regardless of the increasing popularity and importance of eWOM information, our understandings of the eWOM characteristics remain somewhat limited. The missing on more integrated knowledge about the principals, mechanism, characteristic and phenomenon of eWOM constrains the ability of both researchers and business practitioners to utilize the influential power of eWOM. This research would clarify on how consumers use the information given in a review during the evaluation process. As the result, this study confirms the findings of prior studies and supports the significant influence of informational factors, including quality of eWOM and quantity of eWOM over purchase intention. On the other hand, these research findings do not find any significant effects of normative cues on the source credibility over purchase intention. Furthermore, although various researchers have developed the models that define and explain culture and marketing strategy, not many of these models focus on moderating effect of social tie strength in specific industries in different cultural environments. This research explores the eWOM influences on purchase intention and how social tie strength can moderate the relationship of those variables. This study contributes to the future research by empirically testing different dimensions of eWOM studies arguments (Wang et al. 2013), which suggests the evaluation of characteristics of eWOM information and consumers' behavior towards eWOM information. This study also provides a greater understanding of eWOM on SNS by highlighting the determinants of eWOM information on SNS, influences consumers purchase intentions in different cultural context.

Cosmetic buying behavior will remain interesting as long as people wish to beautify themselves. This being the case, it is essential to examine the factors in which influence consumer intention to purchase cosmetic products at Facebook. This study examined the potential influences of consumer behavior over Korean cosmetic products in the context of Myanmar. Numerous of prior studies have investigated the influence of word of mouth on customer's purchase intention. However, there are few literatures on the moderating role of social tie strength towards purchase intention and eWOM information. In this study, we tried to identify the determinants of intention to purchase Korean brand cosmetics in the context of electronic word of mouth among Myanmar consumers, and the degree of the impact of factors such as source credibility, quality and quantity of eWOM as well as moderating roles of social tie strength was investigated.

After an empirical analysis of 202 respondents' data collected primarily online in Myanmar, descriptive analysis, reliability and factor analysis, multiple regression analysis was conducted to measure the relationship between all variables of the proposed model on purchase intention for Korean cosmetics products in Myanmar. The results of the analysis indicate that all the hypotheses except source credibility from our proposed model were supported: quality and quantity of eWOM were positively affect purchase intention. From the analysis of the moderating effect, β value was 0.723 and p value is 0.169. So, it can be assumed that social tie strength moderates the relationship between quality of eWOM and purchase intention but not significant. However, social tie strength did not moderate the relationships between quantity of eWOM and purchase intention. Later, these results of the study may help Korea cosmetic company and agents in organizing marketing strategies focusing on Myanmar customers. The implication of the study is that it is first to explore the degree of impact of eWOM over Myanmar consumer's behavior in our modern age with new technologies like internet and social media.

This research provides valuable insights for Korean cosmetic companies that had joined Myanmar market or have the intent to invest in Myanmar cosmetic market by indicating the word of mouth is the most important determinant of purchase intention. The findings of this study suggest that Myanmar customer has positive attitude toward Korean cosmetic product. As the result, this study suggests that quality and quantity of eWOM information have the significant effect on purchase intention of Myanmar consumers to buy Korean cosmetic products. In addition, this research show that social tie strength does not have any effect to the

relationship between eWOM information and purchase intention of Myanmar consumer toward Korean cosmetic product at Facebook. This research also helps Korean cosmetic retailers and manufacturers understand more about. The results of this research will allow the Korea cosmetic firms to better understand Myanmar consumers' market and will help them to implement effective ways to enter and approach Myanmar market. This paper will also help companies to reflect their marketing strategies and compete effectively in Myanmar markets. The findings of this paper will serve as a guide to such companies who have limited knowledge of Myanmar consumers. The findings also contribute useful information to any company to determine Myanmar consumer behavior for indicating the appropriate strategy of marketing.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

As this study was conducted in a quite short period of time with small scale, there several imitations related to our research to be considered for the generalization of the results. First, although this study had 202 respondents in the survey which may not make the results accurate enough in representing all Myanmar customers and the respondents were mostly dominated by female respondents and most of them are from 18-29 years old. In a future study, it is essential to consider more respondents, especially in a country with huge population. Moreover, the survey was conducted mostly via online such as Facebook. The study could be further carried out in more geographical areas or other social media and use a method to collect the data as paper questionnaires. Second, this study examines the influence of eWOM over the purchase intention of Korean cosmetics. However, there are many popular cultures which might promote the consumption of more products or even services related to it. So, future research can explore other Korean products besides cosmetics, such as, Korean food, Korean fashion items etc. Next, the three determinants of eWOM (quality, quantity and source credibility) are not comprehensive and additional independent variable can be added to this model as well as some other mediating and moderating constructs besides social tie strength. And there are number of factors affecting purchase intention of customer that were not researched in this paper such as customer's attitude, brand credibility, price, brand image, perceived value, perceived quality and trust. For future research, researchers can include additional variables to test the effects of those factors on purchase intention. Further research should be undertaken to study the difference between actual buying behavior and preference of products. Lastly, this research just focused on Korean cosmetic product, in the further researches may study about Japanese, United State, EU and Thailand cosmetic product. And

Myanmar consumer behavior can be explored more than just on cosmetics, to clothes, food or mobile phone and other kinds too.

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Questionnaire (English)

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on the topic titled: “The Influence of eWOM over Myanmar Consumers’ Purchase Intention of Korea Cosmetic Products in Facebook – the Moderating Role of Social Tie Strength”. The contents of the questionnaire are only processed statistically and we promise that the data obtained from the survey results will not be used for any purpose other than this study. In addition, there is no correct answer for every question, so please be frank about what you think. Thank you for your valuable time for this study.

Respondent Information

1. Gender

- ① Male ② Female

2. Age

- ① Between 18 – 29 ② Between 29 – 38 ③ Over 38

3. Do you know Korean cosmetic products? And did you buy Korean cosmetic products?

- ① No, I don’t know. (End of question. Thank you)
- ② Yes, I know, I bought it and I am also intended to buy them. (Go to the next question. Thank you)

4. Do you know any Korean Cosmetic brand? Please check all the brands you know.

- ① The Face Shop

② Nature Republic

③ Innisfree

④ Laneige

⑤ Sulwhasoo

⑥ Missha

⑦ Etude house

5. How did you know about Korean cosmetic products?

① Advertisements on TV

② Friends, Acquaintances

③ Internet, Social network

④ Other sources

6. Do you buy Korea cosmetic products? How much do you spend for cosmetic each month?

① Under 50,000 kyats

② Between 50,000 and 100,000 kyats

③ Between 100,000 kyats and 200,000 kyats

④ Over 200,000 kyats

7. Have you ever seen and searched information about Korean brand cosmetics in Facebook?

① Yes. (Go to the next question. Thank you)

② No. (End of question. Thank you)

8. Below are questions for the information about Korean brand cosmetic which you have seen in Facebook.

When you search Korean cosmetics in Facebook, to what extent do you agree with the following statements. Please rate from 1 to 5.

(Information provider can be your family, close friends, acquaintances, social influencers or bloggers.)

(1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

Variables	Questionnaires					
Source Credibility	8. Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is reputable.	1	2	3	4	5
	9. Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is highly rated by other site participants.	1	2	3	4	5
	10. Information provider about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5
	11. The reviewer shares his/her sincere opinion(s) about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	12. The reviewer has actual usage experience(s) with Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of eWOM Information	13. I think comments and discussion about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook have sufficient reasons supporting the opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
	14. The information about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is understandable and clear.	1	2	3	4	5
	15. The comments about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook are appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5

	16. The contents of the messages about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook are of high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
	17. The comments about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook sufficiently complete my need.	1	2	3	4	5
Quantity of eWOM Information	18. There are many reviews or recommendations about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	19. Many people communicate about Korean brands' cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	20. There are lot of information about Korean brands' cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	21. The amount of information about Korean brands' cosmetic in Facebook is enough for helping me make the purchase decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
Purchase Intention	22. I desire to buy the Korean brand cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	23. I will consider buying the Korean brand cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	24. I intend to try the Korean brand's cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
	25. In the future, I intend to buy the Korean brand's cosmetic products in Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Tie Strength (closeness, intimacy,	26. The information provider has the good intimacy and relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
	27. The information providers have the similarities with main several aspects.	1	2	3	4	5

support, and association)	28. I consider the information providers are much similar considering their interests and hobbies.	1	2	3	4	5
	29. The information providers and I have the same value in many aspects.	1	2	3	4	5