

National Chengchi University: Master of Science in International Business

國立政治大學：國際經營與貿易學系

Master's Thesis

碩士論文

**HOW SEVERITY OF NEGATIVE EVENT, SOURCE CREDIBILITY,  
AND LEVEL OF BRAND ATTACHMENT AFFECT CONSUMERS'  
ATTITUDE AND PRODUCT EVALUATION CHANGES**

事件嚴重性、來源可靠性、品牌依賴程度對

消費者態度和產品評估改變的影響

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June, 2011

中華民國一百年六月

## ABSTRACT

Negative events are known to draw more attention than positive events, but how consumers' brand attachment would interact with negative events is rarely discussed in the literature. As a result, this research would like to investigate how severity level and source credibility of a negative event, and consumers' brand attachment would affect consumers' negative brand attitude change, negative product evaluation change and perceived risk change through studying of young adults who use brand cell phone.

In this research, it is found that when a brand is attacked by a negative event, consumer's brand attachment and the severity level of a negative event would both affect consumer's negative product evaluation and negative product evaluation changes, though only brand attachment would affect consumers' brand attitude. Furthermore, brand attachment cannot resolve negative impacts of a negative event to the consumers; instead, the severity level and the source of a negative event would affect consumers' negative brand attitude, negative product evaluation and perceived risk changes. Specifically, it is worth the brand managers the most attention when a negative event involves high severity level and comes from a more credible source, as this combination bring more negative changes to consumers, and the least attention when a negative event involves low severity level and comes from a less credible source, as this combination would bring least negative changes to consumers.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

2 years of Master study in International Business in National Chengchi University fly away in a blink of eye. I was once a freshman in the campus and a newcomer to Taipei; all of sudden, I was wearing my graduation gown and ready to leave the school. If I must conclude my master study with a memorable event, there is nothing comparable to my master thesis research that occupied me for nearly a year.

The person who should get the most credit is for sure my thesis advisor, professor Jyh-Shen Chiou (邱志聖). He is the one who provided me guidance and timely feedbacks (yes, even in the Chinese New Year) whenever I hit a wall in the middle of research. I am also thankful for valuable assistance and suggestions from senior Szu-Yu Chou (周思好). Of course I did not forget supports from pals who spent good time eating out, hanging around and exchanging information with me (the name list is way too long, please tag yourself).

The end of the master study is indeed not an end, but a beginning for everyone. I am grateful to whom I have met and what I have learnt. Wish everyone all the best in the future.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

People love good news events; unfortunately, we all hear about both good and bad news events every day from all kinds of media sources. In fact, negative news events tend to attract more attention than positive ones (Fiske, 1980), such that negative event impress people four times more than positive ones (Kroloff, 1988). People are more impressed by negative events which provide more judgment and event value about other people or product than positive events (Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991; Klein, 1996; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989). Furthermore, people not only respond to the negative publicity in a homogeneous manner (Marconi, 1997; Thompson, 1995), but consider negative event more diagnostic or informative than positive event (Maheswaran, 1990; Skowronski, 1987).

Increasing media sources from traditional magazine to modern email enhance the transferability of tremendous amount of event we receive, but could be troublesome sometimes, especially when it is of unwelcomed negative nature. How should people decide the truthfulness of the negative events and their impacts on them, when there are



more and more news events coming from a variety of resources? It is probably not an easy task. Toffler (1970) even describes the situation of inhabitation of rational judgment to individuals resulting from a fast and irregularly changing situation as “event overload”.

Perhaps the most well-known example in the recent years is the Toyota crisis (MacKenzie & Evans, 2010) that happened in the United States. Sudden acceleration and brake faults in Toyota’s cars caused several injuries and deaths, which jeopardized the brand’s reputation and is reflected by the declined sales. When consumers receive the negative event about Toyota that has record of high car safety standards, how would their attitude and evaluation to Toyota cars change, as high brand attached consumers or low brand attached consumers?

Previous studies (Milberg, Park, & McCarthy, 1997; Romeo, 1991) that investigated the negative brand effect in the context of negative feedback and consumers’ product evaluation suggest corporate to handle crisis accordingly (Johar, Birk, & Einwiller, 2010). However, there are rarely studies discussing the effects of consumers’ brand attachment and a negative event to consumers’ attitude and product evaluation changes. How would brand consumers, who establish relationship with the brand, called brand attachment that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand (Chaplin & John, 2005; Escalas, 2004) react to a negative event that attacks the relationship?

A negative event about a brand has to be spread from a media source. When it is from a media source of high credibility, how would the presence of brand attachment

affect consumers' attitude and product evaluation? What if it is from a low credible media source? Previous studies (Abdulla, Garrison, Salwen, Driscoll, & Casey, 2002; Greer, 2003) discuss the credibility of different sources and persuasion effects. Abdulla et al. (2002) studied how credibility of newspapers, television and online news on different dimensions, and Greer (2003) discuss how consumers evaluate the credibility of online news. However, there seems to be limited discussion about the relationship between source credibility and brand attachment.

A negative event can further be classified to high and low severity level in nature, which triggers consumers' fear levels. In the literature, fear has been found to be related to persuasiveness and attitude changes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hovland, 1953; Keller, 1996; Rogers, 1983). There seems to be limited discussions on how persuasiveness of a negative event be changed in the presence of consumers' brand attachment.

In sum, since there are not many researches discussing negative brand effects from the perspective of consumer's brand attachment and the nature of a negative event, it is important for this study to fill in the gap by connecting the theories and experimental studies to investigate how consumers' attitude and product evaluation would be changed by their brand attachment, severity level and source credibility of a negative event.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The investigation of the relationship between consumers' brand attachment and a negative event to consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation is broke down to the following research questions:

1. How does consumers' brand attachment affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation in the case of a negative event?
2. How does severity of a negative event affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation?
3. How does the source credibility of a negative event affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation?
4. How do the interactive effects between severity and source credibility of a negative event affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation?
5. How do the interactive effects between a consumer's brand attachment and the severity of a negative event affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation?
6. How do the interactive effects between a consumer's brand attachment and the source credibility of a negative event affect changes in consumers' brand attitude and product evaluation?

### 1.3 Research Process

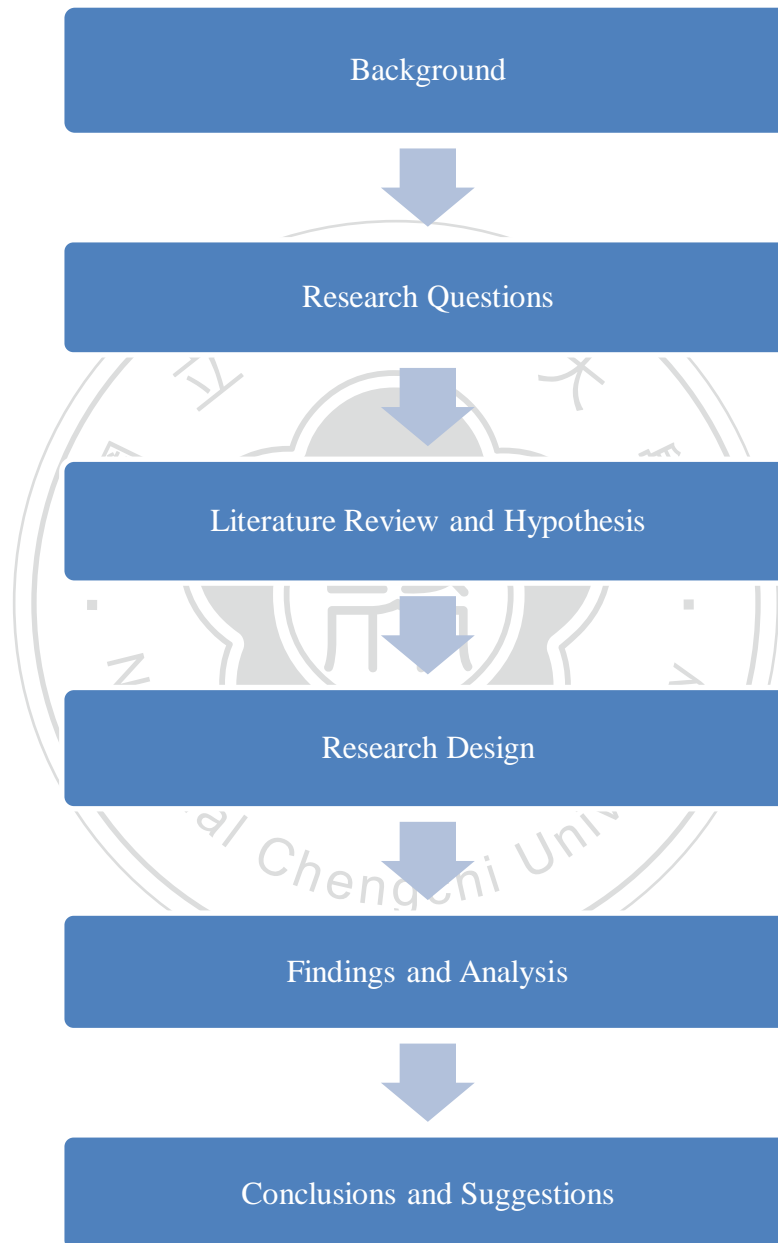


Figure 1: Research Process. Developed by this research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

#### **2.1 Brand Attachment**

Brand attachment is defined as cognitive and emotional connection between the brand and self (Chaplin & John, 2005; Escalas, 2004), and is the strength of the bond connecting the brand with self involving thoughts and feelings about the brand, as well as the brand's relationship to the self. Brand attachment can be measured by two factors: brand-self connection and brand prominence.

Brand-self connection refers to a consumer who develops a sense of oneness with the brand by categorizing the brand as part of the self, establishing cognitive links, and connecting to the brands that represent who self is or toward meaningful to them in light of goals, personal concerns, or life projects (Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Lacobucci, 2010). Brand prominence refers to the notion that brand-self connections develop over time and through experience, which suggests that brand-related thoughts and feelings become part of one's memory (Park, et al., 2010). Positive memories about the attachment object are more prominent for people who are highly attached to an attachment object than for people who show weak attachment (Collins, 1996; Mikulincer, 1998).

As a result, when discussing brand attachment, it is necessary to take into the account of brand-self connection and prominence, and it is possible that consumers

possessing high brand-self connection but low prominence are less likely to engage in relationship-sustaining behaviors than those who possess high brand-self connection and high prominence. Thus, high attachment consumers may show more behavioral commitment in the form of brand loyalty and other behaviors in terms of high brand-self connection and high prominence (Park, et al., 2010).

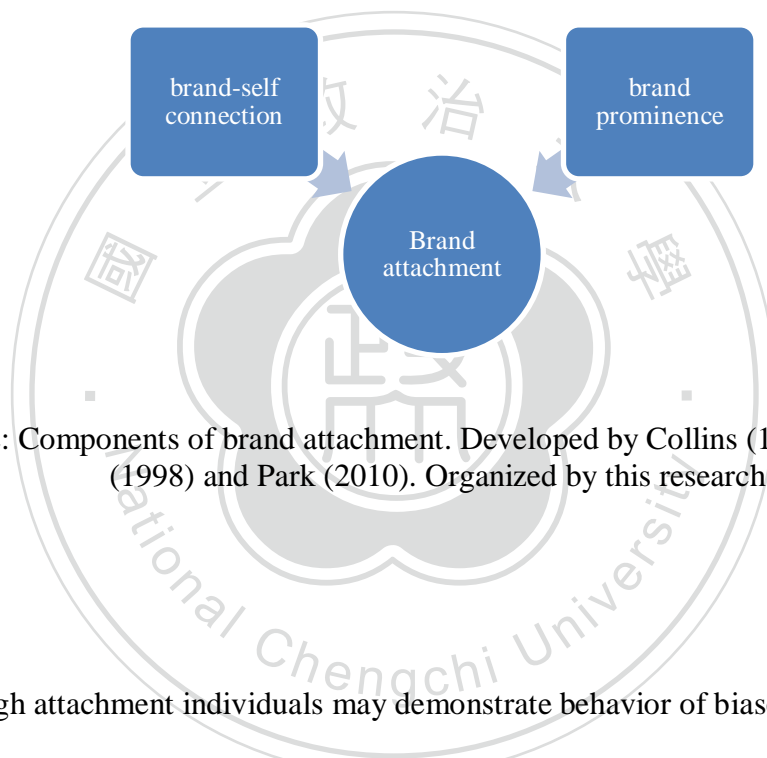


Figure 2: Components of brand attachment. Developed by Collins (1996), Mikulincer (1998) and Park (2010). Organized by this research.

High attachment individuals may demonstrate behavior of biased assimilation, which refers to tendency of viewing events similar to his/her point of view more reliable than non-similar events when asked about certain topics and pushed to express self opinion (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979), thereby proves that personal's previous attitude is indeed an important convincing factor. Furthermore, when receiving a events that is against what an personal's previous altitude, such point of view in the events may be threaten personal concepts to a events receiver who reacts by protection act or closed minded; in the contrary, if the point of the view in the events is similar to the personal

previous attitude, events receiver tend to be open minded (Zanna, 1993). Thus, it is inferred that consumers who are familiar and in love with certain objects tend to pay attention to events similar to their attitude (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Extending from the high brand attachment concept, consumers tend to pay more attention to positive events related to their attached brand, which serves to strength their positive attitudes, at the same time seem to be more reliable than negative events (Feldman & Lynch, 1988), whereas negative events will less likely to affect the high attachment consumers (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the contrary, when low brand identification consumers receive negative events, they tend to show negative attitude changes, whereas when high brand identification receive positive events, their attitudes changes are more likely to be in line with their previous attitude (Lord, et al., 1979; Zanna, 1993).

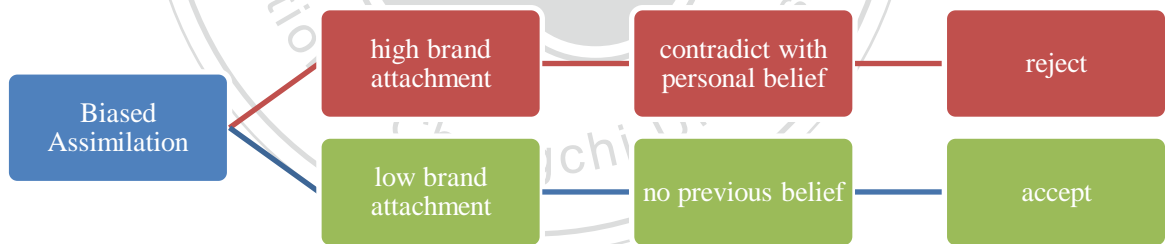


Figure 3: Biased assimilation and brand attachment. Theories developed by Park (2010), Petty (1986), and Feldman (1988), organized by this research.

### *Theoretical Inference*

From the previous research, it can be inferred that consumers' level of brand attachment will affect their attitudes when exposed to negative events about the brand. High attachment customers who share values with the brand and feel emotionally attached to it tend to deny negative events by showing less negative attitude changes, since the negative content in the events does not align with their previous belief about the brand; whereas customers who do not identify with the brand will examine negative events less carefully and tend to believe the accusation in the negative events, thus show more negative attitude changes.

*Hypothesis 1: When exposed to a negative event, consumers with higher brand attachment will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment*

### **2.2 Source Credibility**

When an individual evaluates an event, source credibility is one of the factors they take into account and may influence their attitudes. Source credibility refers to a event source's perceived ability or motivation to provide accurate and truthful event (Kelman & Hovland, 1953), and the source of a persuasive events is rated more credible by expertise (Rhine & Severance, 1970) or trustworthiness (Mills & Jellison, 1967).

Source credibility is widely studied in the past by persuasion researchers, who



find high credibility sources elicit more persuasion power and is perceived more trustworthy than low credibility sources (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Rhine, 1970), depending on situational or individual difference factors (Tormala & Petty, 2004). In general, the public is less likely to credit reputable sources with persuasive intent (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981).

Persuasion can be further evaluated in low and high elaboration conditions, which works differently. Under low elaboration conditions, expertise appears to invoke an “experts are correct” heuristic (Petty, et al., 1981). On the other hand, under high elaboration conditions, source credibility influences persuasion by biasing individuals’ nature of thoughts (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994), which affect the confidence individuals have in their thoughts or cognitive responses (Briñol, Petty, & Tormala, 2004), or thoughts to be evaluated as a piece of evidence relevant to the central merits of the issue under consideration (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999). Only when elaboration is not constrained to be high or low, source credibility can influence the amount of processing that occurs (DeBono & Harnish, 1988; Heesacker, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1983). As a result, central route processing (high-effort scrutiny) occurs when an individual is highly involved in the issue or events, whereas source credibility influences peripheral route (less effortful shortcut) when an individual is less involved (Petty, et al., 1981).

Furthermore, researchers found that people’s attitudes can actually change when they resist events from different sources (Tormala & Petty, 2004). The effects occurred when people try to resist attack events from an expert source, but not from an inexperienced source (Tormala & Petty, 2004). People will become more certain of their attitudes after resisting persuasion from a high credibility source, but not after resisting persuasion from

a low credibility source (Tormala & Petty, 2004). Consistent with this reasoning, events from high credibility sources have been shown to be perceived as more valid and persuasive than events from low credibility sources, even when the event in the events is objectively the same (Kaufman, Stasson, & Hart, 1999).

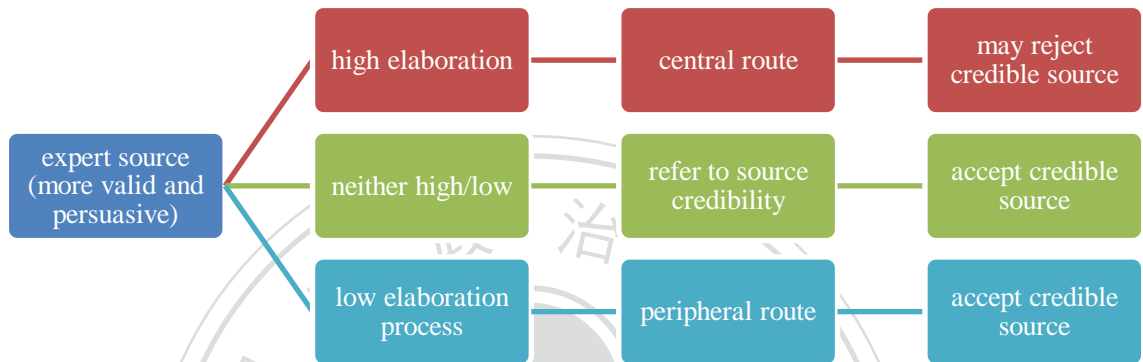


Figure 4: Attitude changes by elaboration type in expert source. Theories developed by (Petty, et al., 1981) & (Tormala & Petty, 2004) and organized by this research.

### *Theoretical Inference*

In sum, negative events from credible sources should be regarded more reliable and more trustworthy as they represent certain level of expertise, comparing to the same content from less credible sources, with the assumption that people's level of elaboration did not take into account. However, if the negative events try to attack what people believe, such as brand believes, even from credible sources, people will resist to be persuaded, and become more certain about their attitude, thus may show stronger resistance comparing to less credible sources.

*Hypothesis 2: When exposed to a negative event from a more credible source, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source*

### **2.3 Event Severity**

If negative events attract more attention than positive events, then the question next is: what kind of contents would increase an event's persuasiveness and change its recipients' attitude? Take the "Do not drive after drinking" ad as an example, deadly accident demonstration in the forms of pictures or descriptions is usually used as fear appeals to persuade viewers not to drive after drinking alcohols.

In the literature, fear arousal has been found to affect persuasiveness, consequently attitude changes (Keller, 1996), which could be done by presenting event about the harmful consequences of a behavior, or offering a solution comprised of recommended actions that one might take to avoid the negative consequences (Hovland, 1953; Keller, 1996). The defensive acts may include avoiding the events, minimizing the severity of the threat, selectively attending the events, discounting the threat, and denying its personal relevance (Eagly, 1993; Rogers, 1983).

Furthermore, negative event may trigger individuals' problem elaboration process, and is depended on low or high level of fear appeal and may affect individuals' attitudinal changes (Keller, 1996). For high fear arousal, increasing the level of problem elaboration increases the extent to which the recipient will engage in defensive tendencies such as events avoidance and thus reduce events elaboration; in contrast, low fear arousal

interferes with persuasion because of insufficient motivation to elaborate on the events, which come to a conclusion that the level of fear arousal may be positively related to the propensity to elaborate (Keller, 1996).

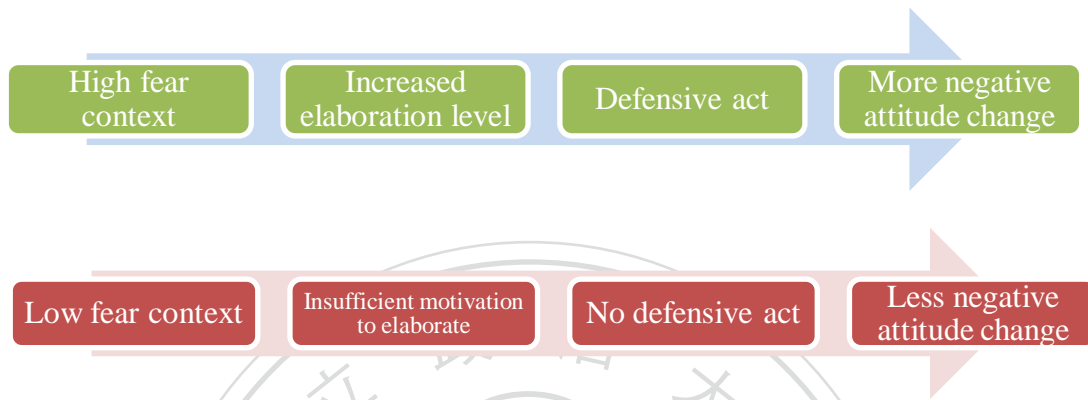


Figure 5: Fear context and events persuasiveness. Theory developed by Keller (1996). Organized by this research

### *Theoretical Inference*

Negativity effect that consider negative event more useful or diagnostic in making decisions than positive event, is found in both personal perceptions as well as product evaluation, in terms of events persuasiveness. Consistent with this reasoning, fear arousal could be a part of negative events that make individuals process negative contents more carefully and systematically. Incorporate with fear appeal literature, it can be inferred that recipients who receive high fear appeal negative events will increase elaboration level, and take corresponding defensive act, thus demonstrate more negative attitude changes; while recipients who receive low fear context negative events tend to lack insufficient motivation to elaborate the negative content, thus will not take defensive act and show less negative attitude changes.

*Hypothesis 3: When exposed to a negative event with higher level of severity, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to with lower level of severity*

### *Theoretical Inference*

Although few studies has mentioned how different levels of fear appeal in negative events might interact with source credibility and affect consumers' attitude, this study proposes that source credibility should dominate fear context regardless of the level of negativity in the events by providing valuable reference to recipients of the negative events. The inference is that when consumers are threatened by negative events, they are forced to elaborate the events carefully, the higher the severity level of the negative event, the more consumers need to elaborate. Credible source that represent expert knowledge in this case will help consumers elaborating negative events. The more credible the source, the more consumers will take it into account in the elaboration process. As a result, in the high fear negative events situation, consumers will have more negative attitude changes when the events are from a credible source comparing to a less credible source. On the contrary, in the low fear negative events situation, since consumers are not motivated to elaborate, it does not matter which source the negative event is from, thus consumers will show no difference in negative attitude changes.

*Hypothesis 4: There are interactive effects between the level of severity and the source credibility of a negative event.*

*4 (a): When consumers receive a negative event with higher level of severity from a more credible source, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source*

*4 (a): When consumers receive a negative event with lower level of severity from a more credible source, they will make no difference in negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source*

#### *Theoretical Inference*

Brand assimilation theory suggests that high brand attached consumers tend to reject opinions against their believes to the brand; while low brand attached consumers will not. However, no previous literature has investigated how brand attachment interacts with negative events of different fear levels and sources. This research proposes that, when exposing to negative events, brand assimilation will work as a wall between consumers' believes to the brand and negative events, and affect consumers' attitude changes, such that higher brand attached consumers will show less negative attitude changes when receiving negative events. The logic is that, although negative events from a credible source provide persuasive information, in the existence of brand attachment, in order to for the high brand attached consumers to protect the relationship between self and the brand, they will tend to deny the negative content by demonstrating less negative attitude changes. Similarly, although negative events with higher severity level will

increase consumers' elaboration level, in order to protect the relationship between the self and brand, high attached consumers will tend to deny the negative content by demonstrating less negative attitude changes.

On the other hand, since low brand attached consumers do not have to take the risk of sacrificing the relationship with the brand, they will demonstrate more negative attitude changes if the negative events are from credible source or with higher severity level, as low brand attached consumers will be easily persuaded by expertise and trustworthiness provided by a credible source. Similarly, low brand attached consumers will show more negative attitude changes by taking defensive acts if they receive negative events with high severity level.

*Hypothesis 5: There are interactive effects between the brand attachment level and the source credibility of a negative event.*

*5 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source*

*5 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, there will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source*

*Hypothesis 6: There are interactive effects between the brand attachment level and the level of severity of a negative event.*

*6 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment.*

*6 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment.*





## 2.4 Hypothesis Model

A hypothesis model is developed to include all hypotheses, so that readers could clearly observe relationship of main effect and interactive effect between independent variable (variables) and dependent variables.

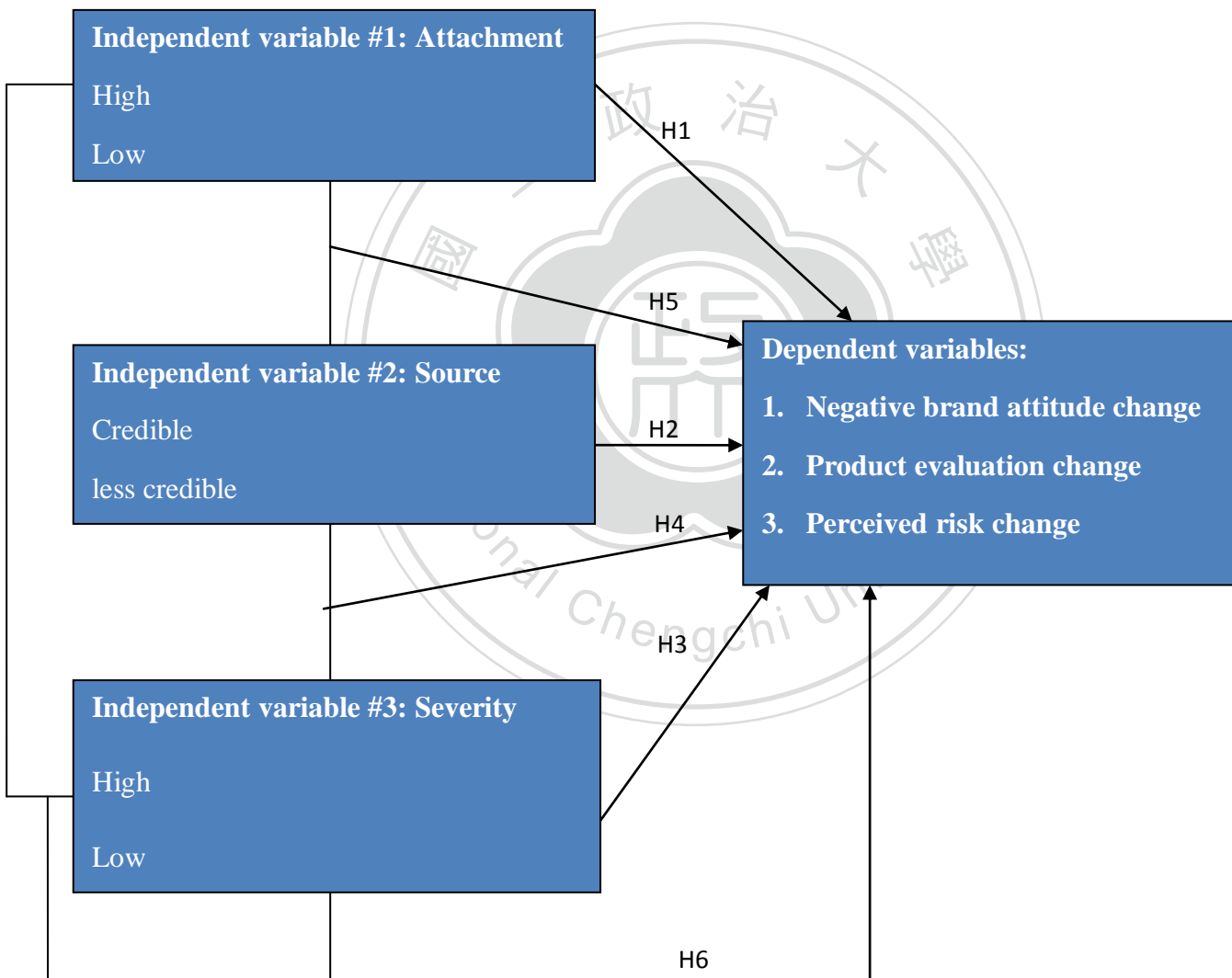


Figure 6: Hypothesis model developed by this research

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1 Research Design**

##### *Product choice*

Since this research would like to focus on brand users to discover a potential general rule, a product widely used rather than a single brand is required. As a result, the ideal product choice is the product that people use or carry with them often. The research chooses cell phones that people carry with them as portable devices for communication and entertainment as the focal product.

##### *Brand choices*

This research considers all available cell phone brands, and selected 19 brands, including best-selling brands, well-known brands, and the least known brands in the forms of both traditional feature phones and smart phones. The brand names are listed in alphabetical order in table 5.

Table 1: Brand choices available to the respondents

Acer	Alcatel	Apple	ASUS	BenQ
Blackberry	Docomo	GPlus	HTC	LG
Moto	Nokia	OKAWAP	Panasonic	Philip
Samsung	Sony Ericsson	Sharp	UTEC	

### *Target Respondents*

Since most of the young people are observed to carry at least one cell phone, some even have two, and are frequent cell phone users, they are chosen as target respondents for this research. Young generation, including university students and young workers are the main target respondents.

### *Research Method*

This research is conducted in experimental study, not only because it can reach the widest target respondents, but also because there is available survey websites that provide desired functions to fit the requirement of this research purpose. The survey was advertised on the media channels used most widely by the target audience, including BBS (electronic billboard) and Facebook (the social network), which link respondents to a pre-set up survey website. Pre-test has been carried out before the actual distribution of the research to ensure quality of the control variables.

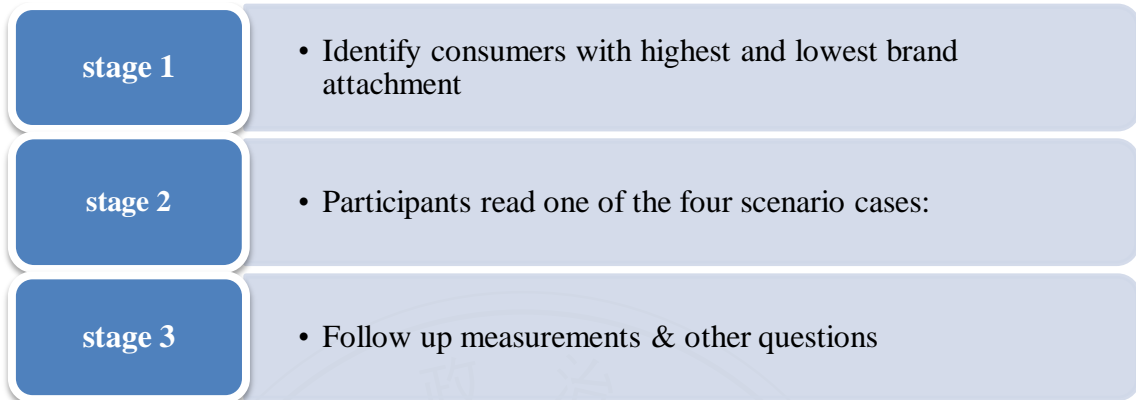


Figure 7: Survey design. Developed by this research.

Stage 1: Identify consumers with high and low brand attachment

A respondent is guided from BBS or Facebook to enter a survey website designed particularly for this research. In the introduction page, the respondent is first told that this research aims to understand how sever events will affect cell phone consumers' brand attitude and purchasing intention. Then respondents will start stage 1. The respondent is randomly assigned to answer either “what is you most attached cell phone brand” or “what is your least attached cell phone”, in which they need to self identify a cell phone brand within 19 brands. Specifically, 19 brands are shown in different random order for each participant to avoid blind selection.

Stage 2: Respondents read one of the four scenario cases containing source and severity

Following by self identified brand with highest or lowest attachment, respondents is randomly given one of the four scenario cases: (1) less credible source and high severity, (2) less credible source and low severity, (3) credible source and high severity, as well as (4) credible source and low severity. Credible source refers to magazine, less credible source refers to forwarded email; while high severity refers to battery explosion event, and low severity refers to slow events texting speed.

The brand that the respondent chooses in stage 1 is embedded in each scenario case at stage 2. In other words, each scenario is customized to make the survey as realistic as possible for respondents; also, to prevent the respondent from noticing the control variables, the scenario cases are designed to incorporate with other irrelevant event.

The introduction in the scenario cases first ask the respondent to pretend as someone who pay attention to 3C news and trend, and happens to walk into the bookstore to read a magazine or receive forwarded email from friends who does not have relevant IT background, then continues to read the article content. The article content of magazine source is presented in the way similar to magazine layout with journalist's name, title, and written style. On the other hand, forwarded email is composed using the same title and same content as magazine, but in e-mail format and deliberately poorer written style.

### Stage 3: Follow up measurement

Measurement regarding consumers' attitude changes (attitude, evaluation and severity), brand attachment, and consumer commitment are described in the previous part of this research.

Other questions include in stage 3 are article reliability of the scenario cases, independent variables check, and individual background, and are explained in the following parts.

### **3.2 Variables Manipulation and Measurement**

This section will discuss manipulation (measurement) of independent variables — brand attachment, event severity and source credibility, and measurements of dependent variables—negative brand attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes.

#### *Independent Variables*

#### Brand attachment: manipulation and measurement

Brand attachment is self identified by respondents in stage 1, through randomly assigning to select one of respondents' highest/lowest attached brand from 19 available brands, then measured with a set of questions in stage 3 adopted from the survey

developed by Park et al. (2010). Refer to table 2. Respondents are asked to rate in 5-point-scale, in which the 1 represent least agree with the negative description about the brand, and 5 represent most agree with the description about the brand.

Table 2: Questionnaire items of brand attachment. Developed by Park et al. (2010) and adopted by this research.

Brand Attachment
1. I think this brand is part of me, or can represent me.
2. I have strong personal connection with this brand.
3. I have strong emotional connection with this brand.
4. I think this brand is who I am.
5. I think this brand can tell other people the kind of person I am.
6. I can tell my thoughts and feelings about this brand without even thinking about it.
7. Speaking of this brand's past, present and future, I can recall many positive thoughts without thinking about it.
8. I have many thoughts about this brand.

#### Source credibility and event severity: manipulation pretest

Since source credibility and event severity will both be manipulated in scenario cases, it is important to conduct a pretest in order to make sure quality of independent variables. A group of 40 respondents are asked to rate 9 descriptions about sources credibility and 8 events with various severity levels by using 7-point Likert scale, in which 1 represents least credible/least severe, and 7 represents very credible/ very severity. The descriptions of source credibility and event severity in the pre-tests are

developed by this research and distributed to respondents in Chinese, then translated to English as in table 3 and table 4.

Table 3: Questions to pre-test source credibility. Developed by this research

Questions to pre-test source credibility		Expected result	Mean (actual result)
1	Headlines of paid newspaper	High	4.90
2	Headlines of high technology focused magazine	High	5.58
3	Low click rate non-professional, and self-recorded video news (i.e. I'm TV, YouTube)	Low	2.90
4	Television news headlines	Medium	4.48
5	BBS "PTT"—Gossip board	Low	3.58
6	Online technology news not founded and operated as an extension of a media group (i.e. AOL founded websites)	Medium-high	4.33
7	Low click rate and non-professional individual e-newspaper	Low	2.10
8	E-mails with no identified source nor author forwarded from friends without professional background	Low	1.95
9	Famous online discussion board (i.e. mobile 01)	Low-medium	4.13



Table 4: Questions to pre-test event severity. Developed by this research

Questions to pre-test event severity		Expected result	Mean (actual result)
1	Potential battery explosion due to unclear reasons	Major	6.23
2	Overly slow events texting speed on the screen	Minor	4.05
3	Bad battery usage duration	Minor	4.80
4	Five burnt pixels on the screen that are in yellowish color	Major	5.20
5	Signal problems which cause slow wireless connection	Minor	4.60
6	Slightly loose on the back cover of cell phones	Minor	4.18
7	Software problems which cause cell phone to auto turn off	Major	5.93
8	Brand new cell phone with tiny scratches	Minor	4.68

After collecting the pre-test results, it is observed that in terms of source credibility, “Headlines of high technology focused magazine” is rated the most credible with a mean of 5.58 out of 7-point-scale, while “E-mails with no identified source nor author forwarded from friends without professional background” is rated the least credible with a mean of 1.95. In addition, in terms of event severity, “Potential battery explosion due to unclear reasons” is rated the most severe with a mean of 6.23, while “Overly slow events texting speed on the screen” is rated the least severe with a mean of 4.05.

To make sure the results' credibility and severity measurement are truly different, paired sample T-test has been conducted using 5% significance. It is observed that the two items in both source credibility and event severity are significantly different.

Table 5: T-test results for manipulation pretest of source credibility and event severity

Measurement	Paired-up items	Mean	Standard deviation	Paired t-value	Paired Significance (double-tail)
<b>Source credibility</b>	Magazine	5.58	1.06	19.98	0.00
	forwarded-email	1.95	0.93		
<b>Event severity</b>	Battery explosion	6.23	1.29	7.85	0.00
	Slow texted msg speed	4.05	1.41		

Source credibility and event severity: manipulation check

To ensure successful manipulation of source credibility and event severity, the survey respondents are asked to rate how credible the magazine and forwarded-email source are, as well as how high is the severity of potential battery explosion and events texting speed in 5-point-scale. Using 5% significance, it is observed that independent control variables are significantly different from the paired T-test blow indicated in table 6. Both results for source and event severity are pretty close to the pre-test results. Magazine is a more credible source, whereas forwarded email is a less credible source.

Potential battery explosion is a high severity event, whereas slow events texting speed is a moderate severity event.

Table 6: T-test results for manipulation check of source credibility and event severity

Measurement	Paired-up items	Mean	Standard deviation	Paired t-value	Paired Significance (double-tail)
<b>Source credibility</b>	Magazine	3.51	0.81	18.12	0.00
	Forwarded-email	2.07	0.87		
<b>Event severity</b>	Battery explosion	4.33	1.03	10.31	0.00
	Events texting speed	3.67	0.94		

#### *Dependent Variables Measurement*

Respondents need to answer, after reading the scenario cases with their selected brands, how their attitude have changed by reading extremely negative description and give response from least agree to most agree.

#### 1. Attitude Change

Respondents are asked to read 6 negative statements relating to attitude toward the product, and rate their agreed level from 1-5, in which 1 represents least agree and 5 represents most agree. The statements are listed in table 7.

## 2. Product Evaluation Change

Respondents are asked to read 3 negative statements relating to evaluation toward the product, and rate their agreed level from 1-5, in which 1 represents least agree and 5 represents most agree. The statements are listed in table 7.

## 3. Perceived Risk Change

Respondents are asked to read 3 negative statements relating to perceived risk changes toward the product, and rate their agreed level from 1-5, in which 1 represents least agree and 5 represents most agree. The statements are listed in table 7.

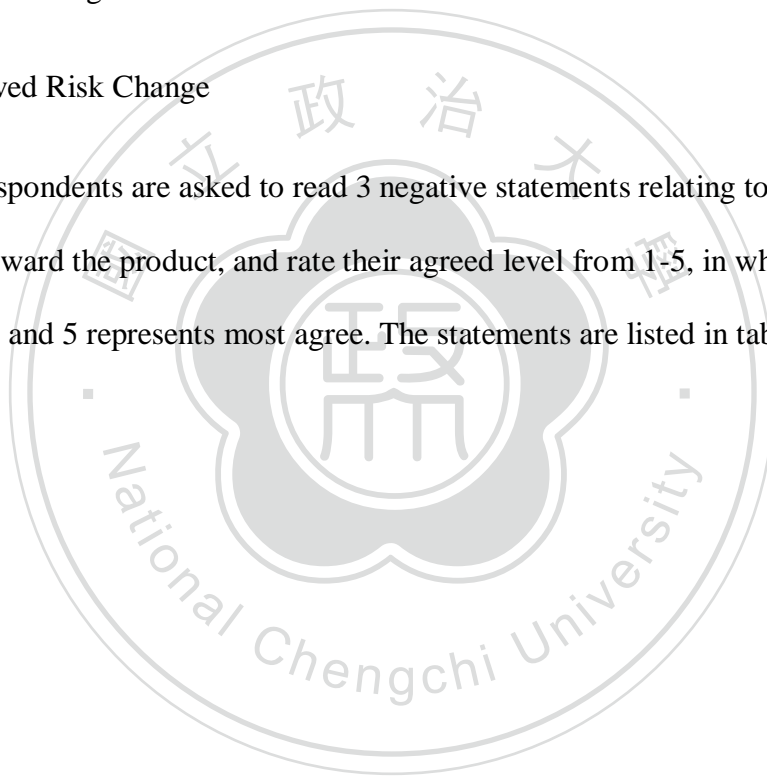


Table 7: Questionnaire items of dependent variables. Developed by this research

Set	Questions
Attitude change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In general, I think that products of this cell phone brand have become very unuseful.</li> <li>2. In general, my overall perception about this cell phone brand has become very bad.</li> <li>3. In general, I think choosing this cell phone brand is very stupid.</li> <li>4. This cell phone brand has become very unattractive to me.</li> <li>5. This cell phone brand has become very disgusting to me.</li> <li>6. My feeling toward this cell phone brand has become very awful.</li> </ol>
Product evaluation change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This cell phone brand has become very unattractive to me.</li> <li>2. This cell phone brand has become very disgusting to me.</li> <li>3. My feeling toward this cell phone brand has become very awful.</li> </ol>
Perceived risk change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think it has become very dangerous to use this cell phone brand.</li> <li>2. I think using this cell phone brand has incurred very high severity.</li> <li>3. I have become very doubtful for trustworthiness of this cell phone brand.</li> </ol>

Table 8: Reliability of each dependent variable

Dependent variable	Number of items	Cronbach $\alpha$	Reliability ( $\alpha > 0.7$ )
Attitude	6	0.959	valid
Evaluation	3	0.947	valid
Severity	3	0.922	valid

### *Individual Background Information*

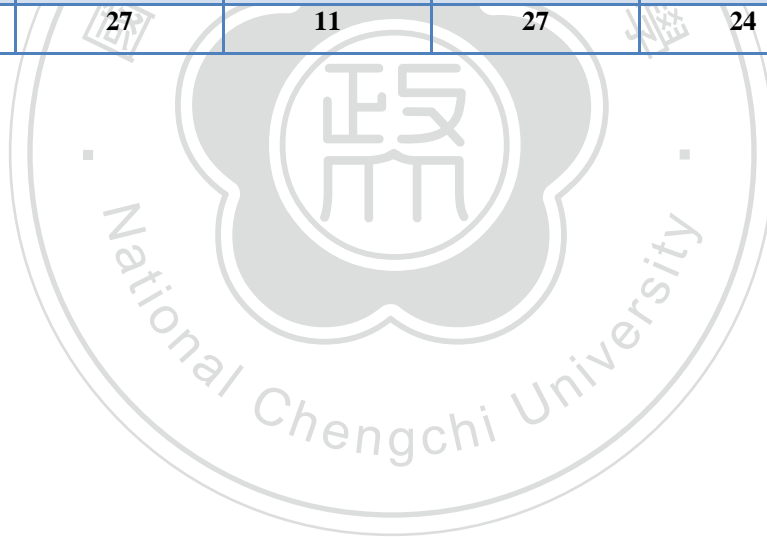
Background information of each respondent is asked in the final section of the survey, including gender, age, education level, cell phone usage frequency, cell phone brands ever used, expenditure on cell phone, and source of event are asked in the last part of the survey.

### **3.3 Sample Screening**

It is found that some respondents did not have highest/lowest brand attachment when asked to identify a highest/lowest attached brand. Perhaps they are not as high/low attached as they think they are to the brand they choose. As a result, data screening is applied to screen the unqualified responses. The criteria is that if a respondent is asked to self identify a high attached brand in stage one, then he/she must have an average score equal or great than 3 in the measurement of brand attachment in stage 3; whereas low brand attached respondents must have an average score less than 3. If respondents' answers did not meet the qualification, their responses will be excluded from the sample. In total, 349 complete surveys have been collected, in which 189 valid sample surveys that meet the purpose of this research, which accounts for 54% of the total collected surveys.

Table 9: Total number of survey responses by scenario case

<b>Scenario case</b>	high attachment × fw-mail × high severity	high attachment × fw-mail × moderate severity	high attachment × magazine × high severity	high attachment × magazine × moderate severity	Total high attachment cases
Total #	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Scenario case</b>	low attachment × fw-mail × high severity	low attachment × fw-mail × moderate severity	low attachment × magazine × high severity	low attachment × magazine × moderate severity	Total low attachment cases
Total #	<b>27</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>89</b>



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Data Summary

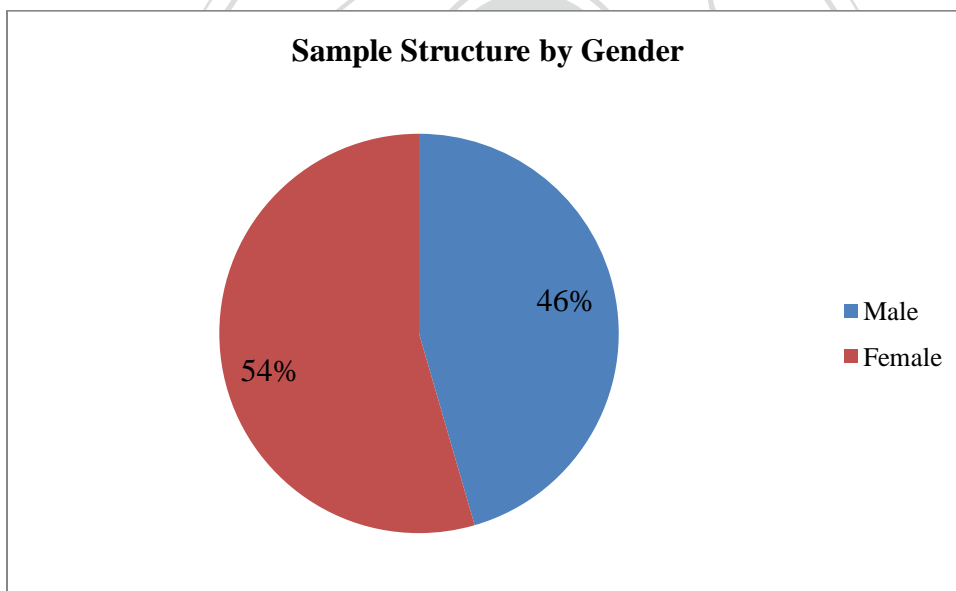


Figure 8: Sample structure by gender



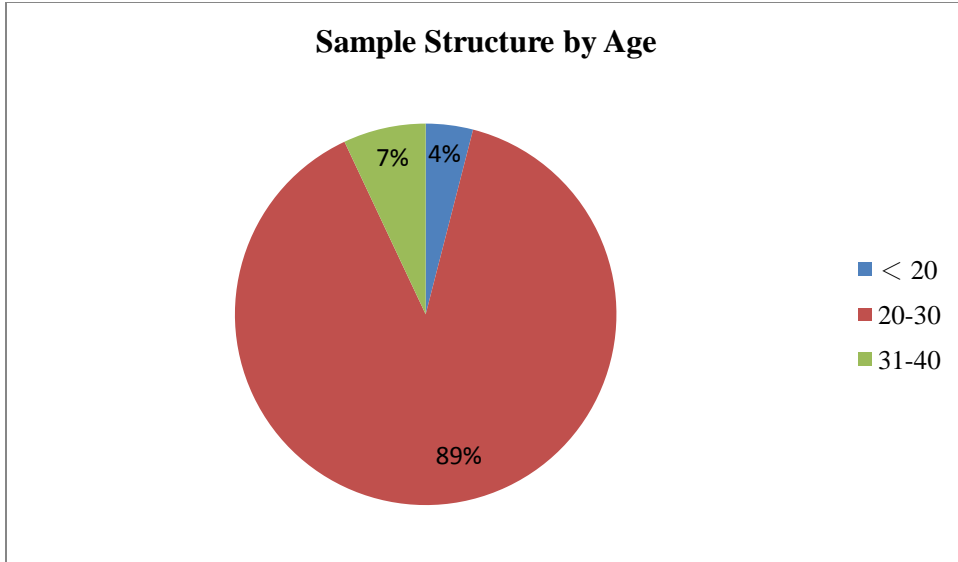


Figure 9: Sample structure by age

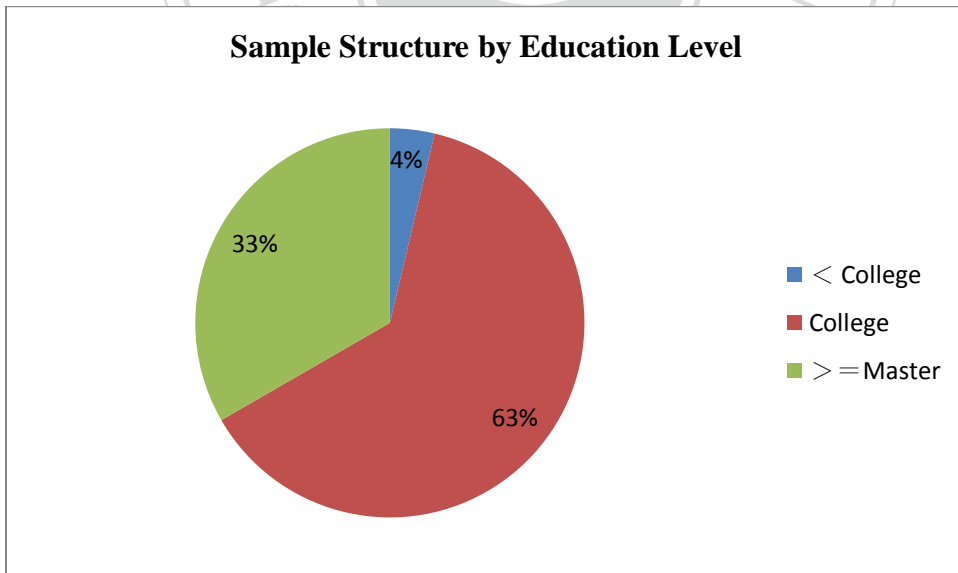


Figure 10: Sample structure by education level

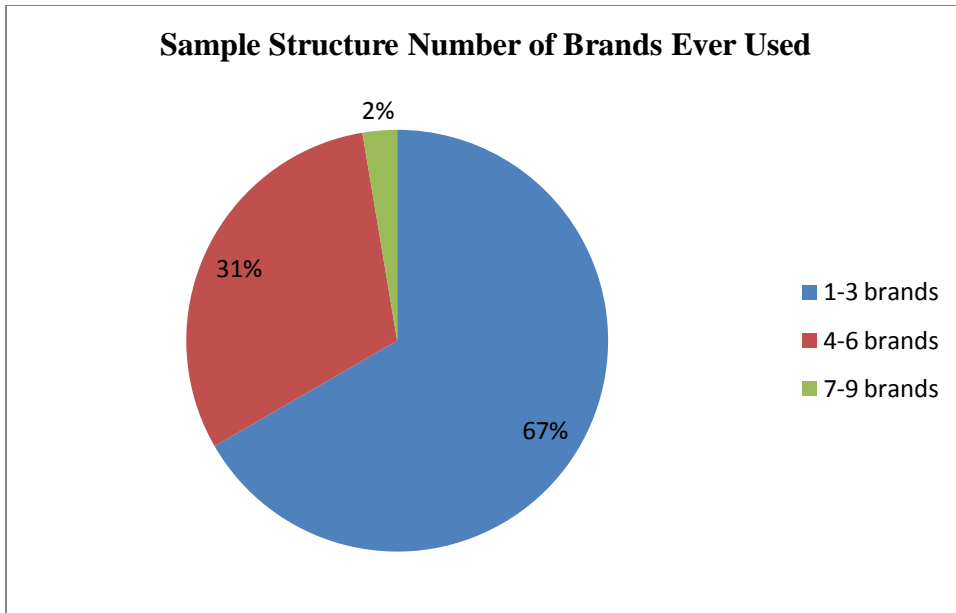


Figure 11: Sample structure by cell phone brands ever used

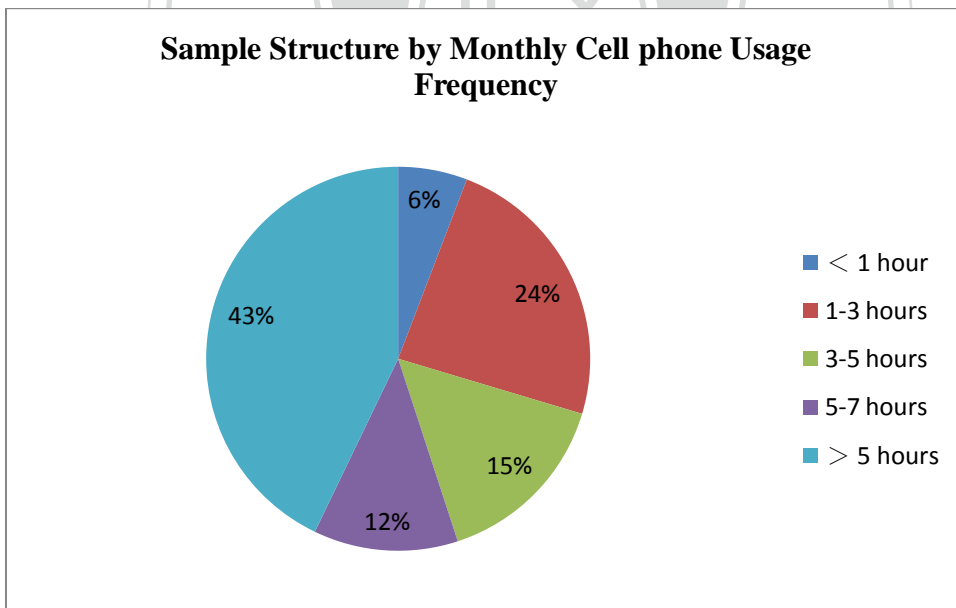


Figure 12: Sample structure by monthly cell phone usage frequency

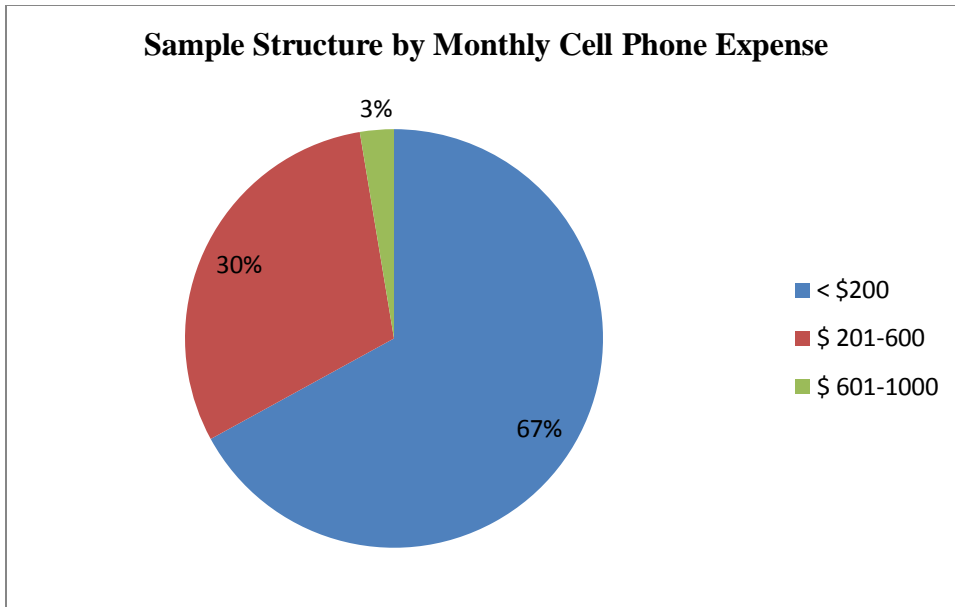


Figure 13: Sample structure by monthly cell phone expense

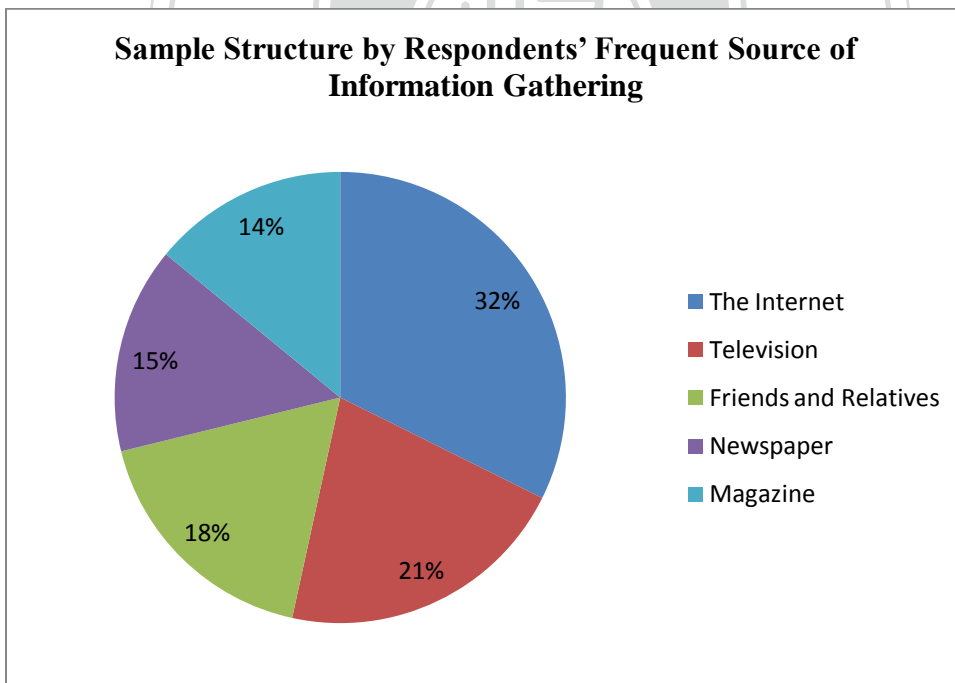


Figure 14: Sample structure by source of event gathering  
(More than one answer from a participant may be possible)

## *Data Description*

### Demographic Structure

From the demographic structure, it is found that almost equal percentage of female and male sample respondents answered this survey, while almost 90% of the respondents are aged 20-30, which fit the target audience in this study. Over 90% of the respondents have college or above degree.

### Cell phone Usage Experience

From the cell phone usage experience figure, it is found that about 70% of respondents have used 1-3 cell phone brands, while about 40% of respondents use the cell phone for over 5 hours per month, but about 70% spent only \$200 per month.

### Source of Event

From respondents' frequent source of event gathering the event gather source, it is found that the most frequent source used by respondents is the internet, followed by television, friends and relatives, newspaper, and magazine. It is not clear that why magazine as the least frequent source used is rated the most reliable source in comparison with other sources when doing pretest and posttest for this study.

## 4.2 Data Analysis and Discussion

This part will present tables of tests of between-subjects effects by individual dependent variable, then analyze results and discuss why or why not each hypothesis is supported and not supported hypothesis along with appropriate supporting graphs of estimated marginal means. Highlighted rows in tables of tests of between-subjects effects are those with significance over 0.1 and worth to be discussed.

Table 10: Tests of between-subjects effects by attitude change

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	90.215 <sup>a</sup>	7	12.888	17.346	.000
Intercept	1469.317	1	1469.317	1977.517	.000
Attachment	75.456	1	75.456	101.554	.000
Source	.694	1	.694	.934	.335
Severity	.733	1	.733	.987	.322
Attachment * Source	.041	1	.041	.055	.815
Attachment * Severity	.989	1	.989	1.331	.250
Source * Severity	2.639	1	2.639	3.552	.061
Attachment * Source * Severity	.343	1	.343	.462	.497
Error	134.485	181	.743		
Total	1789.636	189			
Corrected Total	224.700	188			

Table 11: tests of between-subjects effects by product evaluation change

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	105.248 <sup>a</sup>	7	15.035	17.061	.000
Intercept	1541.549	1	1541.549	1749.257	.000
Attachment	81.019	1	81.019	91.936	.000
Source	.074	1	.074	.083	.773
Severity	3.383	1	3.383	3.839	.052
Attachment * Source	.032	1	.032	.037	.849
Attachment * Severity	.000	1	.000	.000	.989
Source * Severity	5.450	1	5.450	6.184	.014
Attachment * Source * Severity	.025	1	.025	.028	.868
Error	159.508	181	.881		
Total	1896.456	189			
Corrected Total	264.756	188			



Table 12: Tests of between-subjects effects by perceived risk change

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	95.344 <sup>a</sup>	7	13.621	14.804	.000
Intercept	1496.590	1	1496.590	1626.641	.000
Attachment	54.488	1	54.488	59.223	.000
Source	1.302	1	1.302	1.416	.236
Severity	15.347	1	15.347	16.680	.000
Attachment * Source	.114	1	.114	.124	.725
Attachment * Severity	.745	1	.745	.809	.370
Source * Severity	3.165	1	3.165	3.440	.065
Attachment * Source * Severity	.003	1	.003	.004	.952
Error	166.529	181	.920		
Total	1887.468	189			
Corrected Total	261.873	188			



*Hypotheses results*

Hypothesis 1: Main effect of brand attachment to all dependent variables

- Statement: When exposed to a negative event, consumers with higher brand attachment will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment
- Result: supported
- Discussion:

Table 13: Average dependent variable score by level of attachment

	High attachment	Low attachment
Average negative attitude change	2.24	3.59
Average negative product evaluation change	2.26	3.69
Average negative perceived risk change	2.34	3.59
Average brand attachment	3.53	2.07

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that the brand attachment as an independent variable has significant effect to consumers' attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes. Furthermore, in table 13, it is found that high brand attached consumers tend to show less negative changes in attitude, product evaluation and lower perceived risk comparing to low brand attached consumers.



Consistent with the literature findings, that consumers tend to pay more attention to positive events related to their attached brand (Feldman & Lynch, 1988) to maintain altitude change in line with their previous perception about the brand (Lord, et al., 1979; Zanna, 1993), this research finds out that high brand attachment customers tend to show less negative attitude, product evaluation and severity changes when exposed to a negative event, comparing to low brand attached group. In other words, brand attachment has a negative relationship with customers' overall attitude changes when consumers are exposed to negative events.

Hypothesis 2: Main effect of event source to all dependent variables

- Statement: When exposed to a negative event from a more credible source, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source
- Result: not supported
- Discussion:

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that the event source as an independent variable has no significant effect to consumers' attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes.

According to the literature, source credibility will affect the level of an event's persuasiveness, such that high credibility sources elicit more persuasion than low credibility sources. As a result, magazine source considered as a credible source with

experts' knowledge by the respondents should have better persuasion power than forwarded email source as a less credible source. However, credibility did not affect consumers' attitude after analyzing the survey data.

Possible reasons might be that source credibility should be considered with consumers' elaboration process in order to make the persuasion of the credible source take effect. Heesacker et al. (1983) and DeBono et al. (1988) indicate that, source credibility works as a reference to consumers whose elaboration is neither high nor low, or is low. Since in hypothesis 2, consumers' responses are analyzed purely from the perspective of source but not take into account of their elaboration levels, source is therefore not initiated by consumers as a credible reference. As a result, one cannot tell whether the source credibility would affect consumers' negative attitude change, negative product evaluation and perceived risk change.

### Hypothesis 3: Main effect of event severity to all dependent variables

- Statement: When exposed to a negative event with higher level of severity, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to with lower level of severity
- Result: mainly supported

- Discussion:

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that the severity level as an independent variable has significant effect to consumers' product evaluation and perceived risk changes, but not attitude change. Furthermore, in table 14, it is found that consumers who are exposed to high severity negative events tend to show higher average negative product evaluation change and higher average negative perceived risk change.

In the literature, fear contained in the negative event can bring up individual's level of problem elaboration, depending on the level of fear appeal. A low-fear appeal event reduces individual's level of problem elaboration and high-fear appeal increases individual's level of problem elaboration (Keller & Block, 1996). The findings in the research support the literature, and imply that increasing problem elaboration process would affect consumers' product evaluation and perceived risk, but not brand attitude. Perhaps the fear level is more related and determined by severity level, whereas brand attitude is more affected by consumers' perception about the brand and cannot be simply shaken by a single negative event.

Table 14: Average dependent variable score by level of severity

	High severity	Low severity
Average negative attitude change	3.07	2.67
Average negative product evaluation change	3.2	2.66
Average negative perceived risk change	3.31	2.53

#### Hypothesis 4: Interactive effect between event severity and event source

- Statement:

4 (a): When consumers receive a negative event with higher level of severity from a more credible source, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source

4 (a): When consumers receive a negative event with lower level of severity from a more credible source, they will make no difference in negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source

- Result: supported

- Discussion:

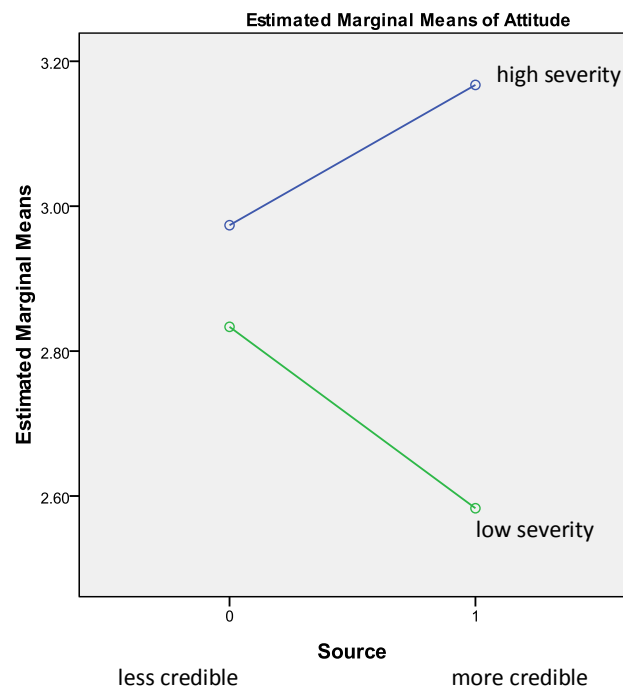


Figure 15: Estimated marginal mean of attitude by severity and source

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that interactive effect between event severity and event source does exist. Graphs of estimated marginal mean of each dependent variable are provided to enable more analysis.

Figure 15 that provide interactive effect between event's severity and source to attitude change show that the p-value of the two points along the vertical axis of less credible source is more than 0.25, and imply that regardless of high or low severity, consumers would behave similarly when the piece of event is from a less credible source. Furthermore, figure 15 show that when respondents receive a negative event from a more credible source, high severity involved event would trigger more attitude change to customers comparing to low severity event.

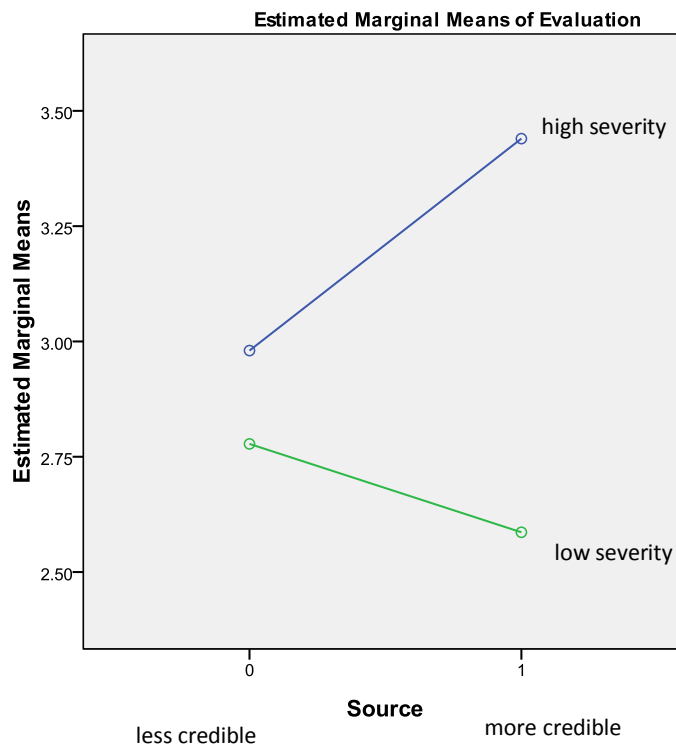


Figure 16: Estimated marginal mean of evaluation by severity and source

Figure 16 that provide interactive effect between severity and source to attitude product evaluation change, show the p-value of the two points along the vertical axis of less credible source is between 0.2-0.25, and imply that regardless of high or low severity level, consumers would behave similarly when the piece of event is from a less credible source. Furthermore, figure 16 show that when respondents receive a negative event from a more credible source, high severity involved event would trigger more product evaluation change to customers comparing to a low severity event.

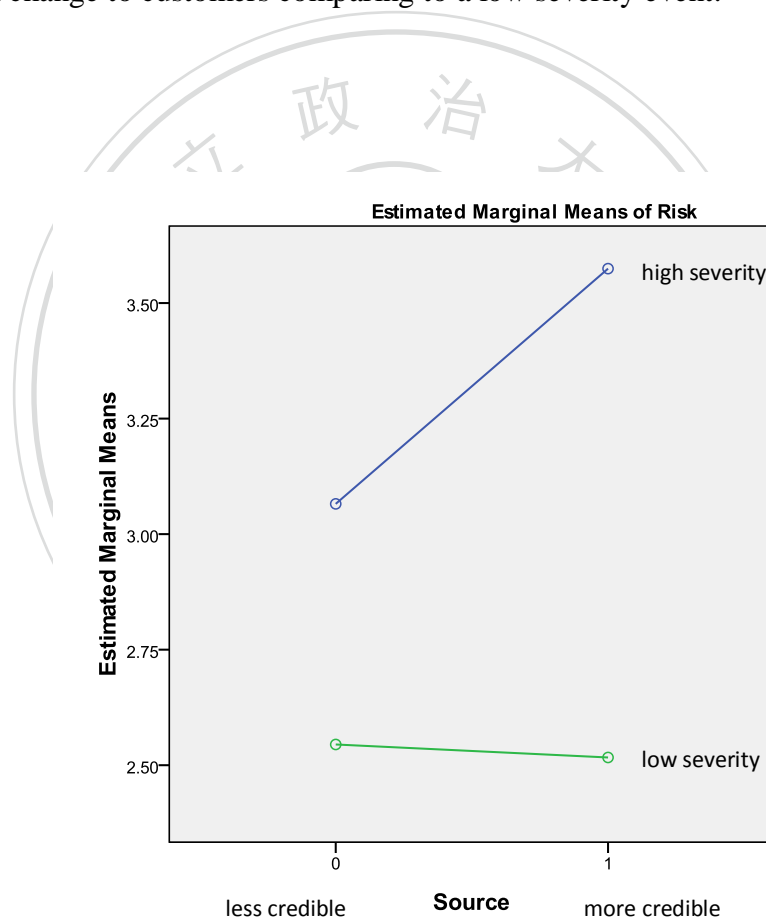


Figure 17: Estimated marginal mean of severity by severity and source

Figure 17 provide interactive effect between severity and source to perceived risk change show the p-value of the two points along the low severity involved line on less

credible source and more credible source is found to be greater than 0.25, which imply that consumers behave similarly when receiving low severity involved event.

Furthermore, figure 17 show that when respondents receive a high severity involved event, a more credible source would trigger more perceived risk change comparing to a less credible source.

In sum, it can be inferred from figure 15, 16, and 17, when consumers receive a high severity involved negative event, they tend give more negative rating in favorability, attitude, evaluation and severity dimensions, and such negative rating becomes stronger as the source of the events moves from a less credible source to a more credible source. On the other hand, consumers who receive a lower severity involved events tend to demonstrate less negative favorability, attitude. Also, they tend to behave similarly regardless of the source credibility.

#### Hypothesis 5: Interactive effect between brand attachment and event source

- Statement:

5 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source

5 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, there will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source

- Result: not supported
- Discussion:

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that the brand attachment has no interactive effect with event source to consumers' attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes. As a result, hypothesis 5 is not supported.

According to biased assimilation theory, brands consumers' commitment will affect how they perceive negative event about their brands, so it is originally assumed that high committed consumers tend to reject an event that threatens one's belief to a higher degree, whereas low committed consumers tend to accept negative events.

However, biased assimilation only works when singly speaking about consumers brand attachments' effects to consumers' brand attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes, but not when it interacts with events source. Perhaps, consumers did not consider attachment to the brand with the sources of negative events, and vice versa holds true too.



Hypothesis 6: Interactive effect between brand attachment and event severity

▪ Statement:

6 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment.

6 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment.

▪ Result: not supported

▪ Discussion:

From the table 10, 11 and 12, it is found that the brand attachment has no interactive effect with event source to consumers' attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes.

Similar to hypothesis 5, brand attachment is found to play a role when singly speaking to consumers' brand attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk changes, but not when brand attachment interacts with event source.

Perhaps consumers regard brand attachment separately with negative event severity, thus brand assimilation did not seem to work as a protection wall between consumers and the negative event.

### 4.3 Hypothesis Result

#	Hypothesis	Result
1	When exposed to a negative event, consumers with higher brand attachment will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment	Support
2	When exposed to a negative event from a more credible source, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source	Not support
3	When exposed to a negative event with higher level of severity, consumers will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to with lower level of severity	Mainly support
4	4 (a): When consumers receive a negative event with higher level of severity from a more credible source, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source 4 (b): When consumers receive a negative event with lower level of severity from a more credible source, they will make no difference in negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source	Support
5	5 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source 5 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event from a more credible source, there will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to from a less credible source	Not support
6	6 (a): When consumers with higher brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show less negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment. 6 (b): When consumers with lower brand attachment receive a negative event with higher level of severity, they will show more negative attitude, product evaluation, and perceived risk changes comparing to consumers with lower brand attachment.	Not support

Table 15: Hypothesis results

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This research follows footsteps of the previous research and provides some new insights. Consistent with the Lord (1979) and Zanna (1993)'s findings, this research proves that brand attachment represents a kind of relationship established between the consumers and brands, will affect consumers' brand attitude, product evaluation and perceived risk in the case of negative events.

Also, following Keller's (1996) findings, the research finds out that a higher fear level involved negative event will increase consumers' elaboration motivation and will affect consumers' brand attitude, whereas a lower fear level involved negative event will not make such impacts.

In addition, previous research has not put together events source with the severity level involved in a negative event, and this gap has been fulfilled by this research. This research reveals that source serves as a key reference for consumers to elaborate the negative content of a negative event. Although a more credible source is proven be perceived to be more valid and persuasive than a less credible source as described in Kaufman's (1999) findings, this research discovers that credible source will only be referred as expert knowledge in the case of high severe negative event, but not low severe

negative event. Furthermore, the interactive effect of the severity level and source credibility of a negative event will only affect consumers' attitude to the brand and product evaluation, but not perceived risk. Perceived risk has more to do with fear levels that trigger consumers' elaboration motivation.

Lastly, previous research has not mentioned how consumers' brand attachment will interact with negative events about brands, this research discovers that brand attachment does not interact with negative event from either the perspective of event source or event severity, which suggests that brand assimilation resulting from brand attachment does not replace knowledge provided by events source nor the fear level contained in a negative event. In other words, consumers tend to consider brand attachment and the negative event separately.

## **5.2 Managerial implications**

Since products today are made globally and sold globally, brand power is considered important to the companies to retain loyal consumers and create more sales. At the same time, it is increasingly harder to prevent hurting negative events to the brands, especially with the convenient technology that creates or transmits negative events in timely manner. This research helps brand managers devise possible strategies in response to negative events with different severity levels and sources.

When a brand is attacked by negative events, brand managers should take necessary responses based on the negative events' severity level and transmission sources,

but not to rely on customers' brand loyalty because consumers' brand attachment is not enough to help them deal with crisis.

If negative events involve low severity and come from a less credible source, or low severity from a more credible source, brand managers can simply ignore the attack since consumers know that the accusation in the negative events is not true. If negative events involve high severity and come from a less credible source, managers should try to lower the severity level in the events, such as explaining the situation and take corresponding responses. If negative events involve high severity and come from a more credible source, managers should not only explain the situation in public, but actively response to the crisis to sustain consumers' trust.

### **5.3 Limitation and Future Research**

Every research has its own limitation; this study is not an exception. One of the limitations is the control of brand attachment in this survey design. Since this research adopts online surveys in order to include a huge number of cell phone brands with random assignment of brand attachment levels and scenario cases, it is hard to measure respondents' actual brand attachment levels and to drive out unqualified responses that resulted with fewer survey responses. Future research can work on making a better control on the brand attachment measurement, by either set up interactive website or pre-selection process to ensure quality response in terms of brand attachment levels.

Also, future research can try to provide cross-product comparison, by replicating this research using other products that may provide different functions and benefits to consumers, and see if there is any difference.

In addition, since brand attachment is not so well controlled in this research, brand commitment is not used for analysis in this research. Future research that has good control on brand attachment may further analyze consumers' brand commitment types and study consumers' behaviors accordingly.



## APPENDICES

### Original Survey in Chinese

#### 正式問卷

親愛的受訪者您好：

這是一份學術性的研究問卷，研究的主要目的在於了解「手機品牌事件及其嚴重性對消費者的品牌態度及購買意願的影響」。為了使研究資料更具代表性，本研究將針對品牌手機使用者(不限品牌)做情境式的訪問，您的協助與賜答是本研究成功的最大關鍵，懇請您撥出寶貴的幾分鐘協助填答。

此項調查採匿名方式，您所填寫的所有資料僅作為學術研究之用，絕不對外公開，敬請安心填答。為了感謝您的抽空填答，研究單位將從填答完整的「有效問卷」中抽出 30 位左右的受測者，贈送 7-11 \$200 商品卡作為獎品。因此，請務必留下您的真實姓名與聯絡方式。視最後問卷量而定，中獎率一定維持在 10% 上下，希望各位踴躍參加。後續抽獎事宜，會採公開、公正的方式進行抽獎，並有公正的第三者監督，敬請放心填答。

敬祝各位

萬事如意

國立政治大學國際貿易研究所

指導教授： 邱志聖 博士

研究生： 許綺芬 敬上

### 第一部份：品牌依賴程度

1. 請從以下手機品牌名單中，選出你最依賴或連結程度最高(低)的一個品牌

- |                                      |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acer(宏碁)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcatel(阿爾卡特)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Apple(蘋果)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASUS(華碩)    | <input type="checkbox"/> BenQ(明碁)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberry(黑莓機) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Docomo      | <input type="checkbox"/> GPlus                | <input type="checkbox"/> HTC(宏達電)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LG(樂金)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Moto(摩托羅拉)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Nokia(諾基亞)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OKAWAP(英華達) | <input type="checkbox"/> Panasonic(松下)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Philip(飛利浦)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samsung(三星) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sony Ericsson(索尼愛立信) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharp(夏普)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UTEC(全虹通信)  |   |  |





## 第二部份：情境內容

### 1. 第一組

假設你是個很關心 3C 新聞和趨勢的人，這天你到連鎖書局去，走到雜誌區，隨手拿起一本銷售前 10 名的當期的**科技類雜誌**，看到該雜誌的**封面標題**，是關於手機的報導。

這篇報導全文如下：

#### **注意！你的手機安全嗎？**

記者：採訪·撰文／王潔如

手機已成為現代人不可或缺的產品，但它也可能成為不定時炸彈，輕則受傷，重責死亡，消費者人人自危。中國已傳出有一個因為手機電池爆炸而死亡的案例，台灣也有人因為手機爆炸而受傷。

本雜誌抽樣調查市面上二十個品牌的手機之原廠電池，送到專業的實驗室研究後發現，在正常使用情形之下，僅 oo 牌的某個型號電池有過熱現象，可能導致不明原因的爆炸，造成人員傷亡。專家表示，電池過熱有數種可能，也許是電池內部缺陷，例如充電孔的設計不良，使得電池本身在不充電及不放電的情況下爆炸，也可能是使用劣質的電芯，導致鋰電池在特殊溫度、濕度及接觸不良等情況或環境下可能瞬間放電產生大量電流，引發自燃或爆炸。

詳細導致該品牌電池過熱的原因還需要進一步研究，截至目前為止，記者聯絡該品牌的公關部門，也無法得到確切的說明。

## 2. 第二組

假設你是個很關心 3C 新聞和趨勢的人，這天你到連鎖書局去，走到雜誌區，隨手拿起一本銷售前 10 名的當期的科技類雜誌，看到該雜誌的封面標題，是關於手機的報導。

這篇報導全文如下：

### 買手機，你看清楚了嗎？

記者：採訪·撰文／王潔如

手機已成為現代人不可或缺的產品，推陳出新的速度也愈來愈快，功能也越來越多。由於推出新產品的速度太快，難免會有沒有注意到的細節，導致產品瑕疵的產生。

根據本雜誌發放的 1000 份問卷顯示，最被消費者詬病的就是簡訊輸入顯示速度過慢，特別是 oo 牌手機的某個型號，不滿意的比例遠高於其他品牌。這群集中於 20-30 歲的消費族群，不約而同地表示，經常字都打了好幾個，螢幕還顯示不出來。

由於很多人都習慣透過收發簡訊聯絡朋友，該品牌手機的瑕疵造成他們溝通上的不順暢。建議消費者在購買前多加比較，以免買到自己不喜歡的產品。

### 3. 第三組

假設你是個很關心 3C 新聞和趨勢的人，這天你收到一位沒有專業 3C 背景的朋友轉寄來的信件，是關於手機的報導，趕緊點閱。

這篇報導全文如下：

**FW: 注意！你的手機安全嗎？**

*From: delimma@hotmail.com*

*To: azhai@hotmail.com*

傳給更多人吧，大家要注意手機的使用情形阿！

阿宅

這是發生在我身上的真實經歷，希望分享給大家避免類似情形的發生。

我用的是 **OO 牌手機的某個型號**，機身和電池都是原廠的。話說中午時，我用手機講個電話，也沒多久，之後手機摸起來有過熱的感覺。剛好我同事曾經在通訊行工作過，我問他手機過熱的問題，他告訴我，手機過熱十之八九是電池有問題的警訊，**可能會造成不明原因的爆炸**，造成傷亡，還叫我不再用了。在正常使用情形之下，但是造成手機過熱的原因很多，可能是電池內部缺陷或電芯品質差，還需要再進一步檢查。

這牌的手機也太恐怖了，好個暗藏爆炸殺機的電池。如果大家有這品牌，建議不要再用了。萬一在講手機時真的炸開來，頭可能會破一個洞吧@@

#### 4. 第四組：

假設你是個很關心 3C 新聞和趨勢的人，這天你收到一位沒有專業 3C 背景的朋友轉寄來的信件，是關於手機的報導，趕緊點閱。

這篇報導全文如下：

**FW: 買手機，你看清楚了嗎？**

*From: delimma@hotmail.com*

*To: azhai@hotmail.com*

傳給更多人吧，大家要注意手機的使用情形阿！

阿宅

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我不久前才買了一台 **OO 牌手機的某個型號**，就是看中他出新款的速度很快，功能也很多，可是這樣的瑕疵真的也太誇張了，大家一定要多注意。

我最不喜歡就是他 **簡訊輸入顯示速度過慢**，我身邊好幾個也用這個品牌的朋友也有類似的情形，經常字都打了好幾個，螢幕還顯示不出來。

由於我平時都習慣透過收發簡訊聯絡事情，大家在購買前多加比較，以免買到自己不喜歡的產品。

### 第三部份：品牌態度及購買意願

請根據您剛剛閱讀的文章裡描述的手機品牌事件及其嚴重程度，以個人主觀感覺，回答您對每一項陳述的認同程度；越左邊代表越不認同，越右邊代表越認同。

	非常 不認 同	有 些 不 認 同	普 通	有 些 認 同	非 常 認 同
1. 整體而言，我認為此手機該品牌產品變得非常不受用。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 整體而言，我對該此手機品牌的整體觀感變得非常差。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 整體而言，我認為選擇此手機品牌的決定是非常愚昧的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 我覺得此手機品牌變得非常不吸引我。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 我覺得此手機品牌變得非常令人厭惡。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. 我對此手機品牌的感覺變得非常差。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. 我對此手機品牌的產品功能評價變得非常差。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 我對此手機品牌的形象評價變得非常差。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 我對此手機品牌的產品品質評價變得非常差。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. 我認為使用此手機品牌變得非常危險。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. 我認為使用此手機品牌手機風險變得非常高。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. 我認為此手機品牌的信任度變得非常值得懷疑。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**第四部份：**

請以您個人主觀感覺，回答 oo 手機品牌與您的心理關係；越左邊代表越不認同，越右邊代表越認同。

	非常 不認 同	有 些 不 認 同	普 通	有 些 認 同	非 常 認 同
1. 我認為此手機品牌是我的一部分，或是能代表我這個人。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 我與此手機品牌有強烈的個人連結。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 我與此手機品牌有情緒上的強烈聯繫。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 我覺得此手機品牌就是我的一部分。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 我覺得此手機品牌能夠向大眾說明我是什麼樣的人。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. 我能夠不假思索的說出對此手機品牌的想法和感受。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. 一提到此手機品牌的過去、現在、未來，我可以不假思索的喚起很多正面想法。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 我對於此手機品牌的有很多想法。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 即使我可以，我也不想離開此手機品牌。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. 此手機品牌應該得到我對它的忠誠。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. 如果離開此手機品牌，我會有罪惡感。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. 我不會離開此手機品牌，因為我對它有責任感。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. 即使我願意，離開此手機品牌是非常困難的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. 如果我決定離開此手機品牌，我的生活會大大受影響。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. 如果離開此手機品牌，我有的品牌選擇其實很少。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. 我覺得我被此手機品牌的情感影響。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. 我覺得我屬於此手機品牌的「家族成員之一」。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. 我感到對此手機品牌的強烈歸屬感。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**第五部份：**

請以個人主觀感覺，回答您對每一項陳述的認同程度；越左邊代表越不認同，越右邊代表越認同。

	非常不認同	有些不認同	普通	有些認同	非常認同
1. 我認為文章內容非常真實。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 我認為文章內容非常值得相信。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 我認為文章內容的可信度很高。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**第六部份：**

請以個人主觀感覺，評估以下訊息來源的可靠性；越左邊代表越不可靠，越右邊代表越不可靠。

	非常不可靠	有些不可靠	普通	有些可靠	非常可靠
科技類雜誌封面報導	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
無專業背景之朋友轉寄之作者及出處不明的電子信件	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**第七部份：**

請以個人主觀感覺，評估以下事件的嚴重性；越左邊代表越不嚴重，越右邊代表越嚴重。

	非常不嚴重	有些不嚴重	普通	有些嚴重	非常嚴重
簡訊輸入顯示速度過慢	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
手機電池因不明原因有爆炸可能	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 第八部份：個人資料

請填答您的個人資料，您所寫的任何資料僅供本研究分析之用，絕對不對外公開，敬請放心填答。

1. 請問您的性別為

男           女

2. 請問您的年齡為

20歲以下           20-25歲           25-30歲           30-35歲

35-40歲           40-45歲           45-50歲           50歲以上

3. 請問您的教育程度為

大學以下           大學           碩士           博士

4. 請問您使用手機的頻率為

每個月低於1小時           每個月介於1-3小時           每個月介於3-5小時

每個月介於5-7小時           每個月高於7小時

5. 請問您曾使用過的手機品牌數目

1-3個品牌           4-6個品牌           7-9個品牌           10個品牌以上

6. 請問您平均每個月在手機的通訊花費為

200元以下           201-600元           601-1000元           1001-1500元

1501-2000元           2001-3000元           3001-4000元           4001以上

7. 請問您平常取得資訊來源(可複選)

報紙           雜誌           電視           網路           親朋  
好友

8. 抽獎的聯絡姓名 \_\_\_\_\_

9. 抽獎的聯絡電話或手機 \_\_\_\_\_

10. 抽獎的聯絡 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_



## Translated English Scenario Case

\* Please notice that since the questions in the survey have been provided in the content of the research, the appendix will provide only translation of the four English scenario cases used in the survey.

### Scenario case 1

Please imagine yourself as someone who pays attention to technology news and trend. On one day, you go to a chain bookstore and visit the magazine section. You pick up one of the 10 best sold technology magazines, and are attracted to the title on the cover page about cell phones. Then you go to the appropriate page to read more about the story.

The whole story of the cover story is as the following:

#### ***Is your cell phone safe enough?***

*Written by Jei-Ru Wang*

*Cell phone has become a must product for almost everyone nowadays, but it could become an unstable bomb threatening your life and causing injuries or death. Consumers have increased awareness of the safety issue from a series of recent cell phone battery explosion events causing one person reported death in China, and several injuries in Taiwan.*

*Our magazine has randomly selected about 20 cell phone brands in the market, and sent them to the professional laboratory. Under normal usage following the cell phones' instruction guides, **battery overheated problem is founded in oo brand, which may cause explosion of unknown reasons, and consequence of injury or death.** According to the experts, there are several possible reasons causing the battery overheated. For example, circuit design flaw in the charging hole may cause the battery to explode under non-charging and discharging conditions. Also, poor quality of battery cells may cause lithium battery to release non-normal electric current under certain temperature, humidity or undesired contact, and make batteries to self-burn or self-exploded.*

*The real cause of the battery of this **oo brand** still needs further in depth investigation. We were unable to get any response or explanation before the release of the magazine.*

## Scenario case 2

Please imagine yourself as someone who pays attention to technology news and trend. On one day, you go to a chain bookstore and visit the magazine section. You pick up one of the 10 best sold technology magazines, and are attracted to the title on the cover page about cell phones. Then you go to the appropriate page to read more about the story.

The whole story of the cover story is as the following:

### ***Have you made a right choice selecting a cell phone brand?***

*Written by Jei-Ru Wang*

*Cell phone has become a must product for almost everyone nowadays. The demand of consumers has caused brands to release new cell phones with better styles or functions in shorter and shorter time. However, faster releasing speed or more models may be sacrificing at the price of product defects.*

*According to 1000 surveys conducted by our magazine, consumers dislike **slow text messaging speed the most, especially to certain model of oo brand.** The respondents of the surveys are mostly in the 20-30 age range, and they express that slow text messaging speed annoys them the most, such that word appearance on the screen does not catch up with word typing speed.*

*Since many people like to communicate with friends via text events, text messaging defect will definitely affect communication efficiency. We suggest consumers to compare functions among different brands before making their purchasing decision so that they will not regret in the future.*

### Scenario case 3

Please imagine yourself as someone who pays attention to technology news and trend. On one day, you got a forwarded email from a friend who has no expert knowledge about the technology. The content in the forwarded email is about cell phones. You scroll down the page to see the whole story.

The whole story is as the following:

*FW: **Have you made a right choice on selecting a cell phone brand?***

*From: delimma@hotmail.com*

*To: azhai@hotmail.com*

*Please pass this on to more friends and remind them when using cell phones.*

*aZhai.*

---

*This is what really happened to me, and I would like to share the story with you and help you avoid similar incidences.*

*I use **a certain model of oo brand**, in which the cell phone and battery are both from original brand. This afternoon, I was making a phone call with my cell, and felt it overheated after hanged up the call for a while. I felt weird about the situation. Fortunately, I happen to have a colleague who worked in a telecom before, so I asked him about the overheated problem of my cell. He told me that eight out of ten cases, overheated cell phone is a sign of the problematic battery, which may **cause explosion for unknown reasons, resulting of injuries or death**. He asked me not to use this cell anymore, because there are so many reasons causing poor battery quality, such as circuit design flaw, and we just don't know what will happen even under proper usage.*

*It's definitely not a good idea using a cell phone that threatens your precious life. If you have a cell phone of this brand, I would strongly recommend you stop using it! Who knows when you'll bomb your head a hole while on the phone? @@*

#### Scenario case 4

Please imagine yourself as someone who pays attention to technology news and trend. On one day, you got a forwarded email from a friend who has no expert knowledge about the technology. The content in the forwarded email is about cell phones. You scroll down the page to see the whole story.

The whole story is as the following:

**FW: *Is your cell phone safe enough?***

*From: delimma@hotmail.com*

*To: azhai@hotmail.com*

*Please pass this on to more friends and remind them when using cell phones.*

*aZhai.*

---

*I just bought **a certain model of oo brand**, cause I love about its incredible new model releasing speed that provide interesting new features. But I was really unhappy about a defect in the model I purchased, and I would like to share the experience with your so that you can avoid similar incidence.*

*What I pissed off the most is **the hell slow text messaging speed**. Several friends of mine have the same problem; nothing would show up on the screen after typing in several words.*

*I care about the text messaging speed so much cause I use this function a lot to communicate with friends. I would definitely recommend you to do more homework comparing features of different cell phone brands before purchase, to avoid ending up getting a product that you don't like.*

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