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Master's Thesis

探討女性部落客讀者對美妝部落格中電子口碑
及口碑行銷的態度

A Study on Female Blog Readers' Attitudes toward
eWOM and Buzz Marketing in Beauty Blogs

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中華民國九十九年七月

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ABSTRACT

Ever since “blog” was selected by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as the word of year 2004, the development of blogs has been prospering. More and more bloggers are viewed by blog readers as new opinion leaders on their impact of information-sharing and purchasing decision-making. This study will pay closer attention to one certain category of blog readers—the beauty blog readers and their attitudes toward the emerging phenomenon among bloggers— from simply sharing information to spreading the buzz (online word-of-mouth, or eWOM), and eventually leading to rewarded blog post with incentives. Such business behavior is conceptualized as buzz marketing, which has been arousing dilemma about blogger honesty and credibility.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied in this study. In first stage, in-depth interviews with well-known beauty bloggers were conducted to first provide with preliminary yet detailed understanding of how word of mouth operates and the existing buzz marketing among beauty blogs. Quantitative surveys will be designed based on the findings from first stage, and then be distributed among beauty blog readers to further examine that consumers' attitudes toward bloggers' credibility associate with their purchasing behavior. Likewise, consumers' satisfaction toward blog content may influence their attention paid to WOM in blogs, willingness to conduct Word-of-mouth referrals, and actual purchasing behavior.

Keywords: Blog, eWOM, attitudes, incentives, buzz marketing, credibility

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CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

According to a Nielsen global survey (2007) on word of mouth (WOM) of 26,486 internet users in 47 markets, recommendations from consumers remain “the most trusted sources of information when consumers decide which products and services to buy”. Among top ten markets that rely heavily on “recommendation from consumers,” Taiwan was ranked the second (91%) in the world. From the same survey, in the finding of “trusting web-based opinion such as blogs,” Taiwan (76%) also ranked second. The power of WOM has never been underestimated, and with the rapid development of the internet, more online platforms, are easily-accessible for consumers to search as well as share online WOM, also known as eWOM.

The concept of Web2.0 was first coined by Tim O'Reilly in the Web2.0 conference in 2004, with the core idea suggesting web as platform to operate participation through interactivity. In recent year, blogging has become one of the most popular applications of Web2.0. It is not hard to find that blogs have not only been viewed as personal expressive channels, but also been utilized as effective marketing tool (BusinessNext, 2005).

“Blog” was chosen by Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary the word of the year 2004; the year denoted a defining point for blogs to be “one of the most sought-after media formats” (Wibbels, 2006). A 2006 Pew Internet and American Life Project survey discovered the number of blog creators has increased to about 12 million American adults while blog readers have boosted to 57 million. In 2005, if one searched the word “blog” on Google, there would appear more than 130 million results (Shih, 2005). Today, the number has multiplied to more than 2.5 billion. In Taiwan, a survey done by Market Intelligence & Consulting

Institute (MIC) in 2009 showed 89.6% of the internet users have their own blogs, and female internet users appeared to be more active in browsing popular blogs as well as looking for information from blog (cited from BusinessNext, 2009).

In Taiwan, beauty bloggers are one of the mostly recruited groups to generate word of mouth (WOM) by posting testimonials or sharing experiences after using certain products or services. Many beauty bloggers nowadays write about the samples they receive or subtly introduce product placement in their blogs. When blogging becomes a tool of marketing, the line between posting personal experiences and advertising has become ambiguous, and beauty blogging is no exception. From 2008 up to now, there have been more and more articles discussing about the marketing truth behind a beauty blogger's recommendation. Some condemned the credibility and moral issues(Chang, 2008; Chang, 2008), others (mostly bloggers) brought up defensive counterarguments (Xi, 2008; Xin, 2008), and still the others provided some neutral insights for consumers' references(Tino, 2008).

1.2 Research Rationale and Significance of the Study

Many scholars in the communications realm have studied Word of Mouth for decades; from their studies, it is noticed that WOM has been evolving with time under different communication environment (Word of Mouth Marketing Association, 2004). Buttle (1998) pointed out that scholars' contemplation of WOM can be traced back to the fourth century B.C., yet it was not until 50s that modern marketing research on the effectiveness of WOM has started (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Arndt (1967) was one of the earliest to learn about WOM and consumer behavior. According to Breazeale's overview of WOM studies (2009), many researchers have proven that WOM actually worked better in effecting consumer decision-making than traditional marketing (Day, 1971; Sheth, 1971; Murray, 1991; Buttle, 1998); it is further elaborated that consumers are more prone to be influenced by WOM

because it is credible, reliable and interpersonal (Engel, Blackwell, & Kegerreis, 1969; Day, 1971; Richins, 1983).

Recent research concerning WOM has altered to concentrate more on operating WOM to reach new customers (Kumar & Krishnan 2002; Brown *et al.* 2005), to maintain existing customers (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003; Jones & Reynolds 2006; Gremler & Gwinner 2008), and to elevate the value or reputation of the company (Luo & Homburg 2007; Villanueva, Yoo, & Hanssens, 2008; Hong & Yang, 2009). Wojnicki and Jia (2007) pointed out the other main stream of WOM study weighs on the motivations and factors linked with behavior, such as expertise (Jacoby and Hoyer 1981), altruism (Price et al. 1995), and self-enhancement (Wojnicki and Godes 2006). Such motivations and behavior may portray opinion leaders (King and Summers, 1976), early adopters (Rogers, 1983), innovative communicators (Baumgarten, 1975), and market mavens (Feick and Price, 1987).

Current studies on buzz marketing in blogs concentrate more on the impact over consumers and their attitudes of subsequent purchasing behavior. Others of which depict the bloggers as opinion leaders or early adopters. Still others observe their specific motivation as well as their behavior in information-seeking and information-sharing. However, there is lacking of study on how blog readers react to different type of blog posts and what their attitudes and tendency towards buzz marketing are.

Most bloggers are recognized as ordinary people blogging for smaller audience (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz, 2004), showing a "long-tail" (Anderson, 2006) pattern in that the majority of blogs attract little attention. As Anderson (2006) stated, blogs as filters could be considered as a powerful long-tail factor that links demand and supply. Being filters, blogs lower the search costs for consumers, and further alter consumers' demands under the influence of WOM. From the perspective of long tail theory, 20% of eWOM generated by

blogs can easily turn into 80% of WOM in real life among consumers (Anderson, 2006).

Furthermore, as more and more people become bloggers, understanding the very nature of blogging activities is crucial for marketers to utilize their ever-growing blogosphere.

1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is mainly to observe blog readers' responses to different type of blog posts as well as their attitudes and tendency towards buzz marketing. In first stage, qualitative in-depth interviews are conducted to provide with understandings of current phenomenon on beauty blogging and buzz marketing. In the second stage, the use of quantitative survey is to further examine the attitudes and tendencies of beauty blog readers toward different blog posts and purchasing behavior. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Arousing consumers' interest is always the first step in marketing communications. The first objective is to discuss the relationships between blog readers, as potential consumers, their satisfaction toward blog content and interest-arousing in products, services or brands.
2. Consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction that are generated from how they expect and perceive the product would influence the subsequent output WOM from the experiencing consumers, or become the input WOM source for other consumers who seek information on helping them make purchasing decision (Buttle, 1998). The second objective in this study is to understand the relationships between blog readers' satisfaction toward blog content and their actual purchasing behavior.
3. As mentioned, satisfaction or dissatisfaction would also be an antecedent of the output WOM. WOM referral is viewed very valuable because WOM has been

considered more credible than traditional media, especially in Taiwan, where consumers rely heavily on peoples' recommendations.

4. In order to examine whether incentives do affect blog readers' attitude towards positive or negative eWOM generated from beauty bloggers, the level of credibility of different types of blog posts will be observed and compared.
5. The study will discuss the relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward buzz marketing embedded in beauty blogs and purchasing behavior.

1.4 Research Questions

- First Stage:

RQ1. What is the current phenomenon of beauty blogging with and without the involvement of buzz marketing?

- Second Stage:

RQ1. Does readers' level of content satisfaction influence their attention towards products, services, or brands?

RQ2. Does readers' level of content satisfaction influence their purchasing behavior?

RQ3. Does readers' level of content satisfaction influence their conduction of WOM referral?

RQ4. Do different types of blog posts have different WOM credibility?

RQ5. Does WOM credibility moderate the relationships between blog readers' attitudes toward buzz marketing and purchasing behavior?

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

For decades, researchers have studied how WOM works on consumer behavior, how WOM has been strategically operated in marketing, how WOM has been evolving in the Web2.0 era, as well as how new media tools, such as blogs, being incorporated into buzz marketing. The following sections review the past literature on WOM, buzz marketing, placement of buzz marketing in blogs, and beauty bloggers' credibility dilemma.

2.1 Word of Mouth (WOM)

More and more companies accentuate on the immense power of word of mouth (WOM). The power of persuasion and influence of WOM has far exceeded its mass media counterparts (Price & Feick, 1984). Levinson (2003) pointed out two facts concerning word of mouth; one is that people would credit WOM referrals rather than acknowledging the impact of marketing. Nevertheless, on the other hand, most people “do check with friends before patronizing a business” (2003, p.50). Dichter (1966) indicated WOM is related to 80% of the buying behavior. As Hall (2006) cited from Intelliseek and Forrester, “consumers are 50% more likely to heed peer recommendations than they are to follow advertisers' leads” (p.72).

The valence of word of mouth may be positive or negative. While positive WOM can significantly enhance the impact on consumer behavior and loyalty (Engel *et al.*, 1969; Richins, 1983; Herr *et al.* 1991), the negative WOM disseminated by the dissatisfied customers may cause serious consequences, such as change in purchasing decision/behavior, loss of consumer loyalty, even harm to the reputation of the company (Tybout *et al.*, 1981; Richins, 1983; Singh & Pandya, 1991; Soloman, 1999; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

Arndt (1967) defined WOM as “oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service.” In Buttle’s(1998) review of WOM literature, the author found previous study of WOM inadequate due to market change and innovation of technology. Three reasons suggested by Buttle (1994) are as follows:

1. WOM not only involve a product/brand/service, it can conclude an organization (Buttle, 1994). It is more frequently seen in later studies that the interrelations between WOM and company’s reputation and values have been examined (Luo & Homburg 2007; Villanueva *et al.* 2008; Hong & Yang, 2009).
2. WOM can be electronically mediated via cell phone, chatrooms, e-mail, hyperlinks, and etc. In this study, this form of online WOM is re-positioned as eWOM, which will be discussed in the following literature. Moreover, noted in Buttle’s (1994) examples of electronically mediated WOM, blogs and other online social networks, such as discussion forums or microblogs were not documented yet due to the contemporary time frame.
3. In contrast to Bone’s(1992) definition of WOM as “an exchange of comments, thought, and ideas among two or more individuals in which none of the individuals represent a marketing source” (p.579), there has been an increasing inclination of companies offering incentives or rewards for consumers to disseminate positive WOM or make referrals (Buttle, 1994; Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). This concept of company-created WOM-spreading behavior based on the benefit exchange (e.g. free product, discount, or direct payment) between consumers and companies has challenged its noncommercial nature, which can be found in Harrison-Walker’s definition, that WOM is “informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived noncommercial communicator and a receiver regarding the target object,

such as brand, product, an organization, or a service” (2001). For the purpose of distinguishing spontaneous WOM and planned WOM, the latter will be redefined as buzz marketing in the following content.

2.1.1 WOM Model

Recognizing word of mouth, as referring to the previous literature, is the communication between individuals, it is important to look at Schramm's interpersonal communication model—the two-way circular communication between the sender and receiver. The process of encoding and decoding took place simultaneously, and the messages were two-way interchangeable (see Figure 2-1). Schramm's model provides equilibrium between two parties, that both are equal communicator and messages circulate two-way.

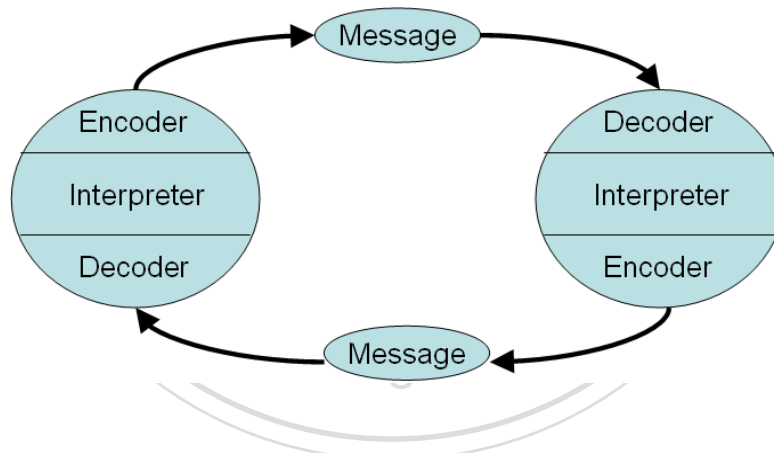


Figure 2-1. Schramm's Interactive Model, 1954

The earliest WOM theory can be traced back to the two-step flow of Communication (Figure 2-2) proposed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet in 1948, and was elaborated by Katz and Lazarsfeld in 1955. By indicating messages, instead of being distributed directly by mass media to the audience, were intentionally sent to opinion leaders/early adopters, who then spread out the WOM to influence their peers/receivers/followers.

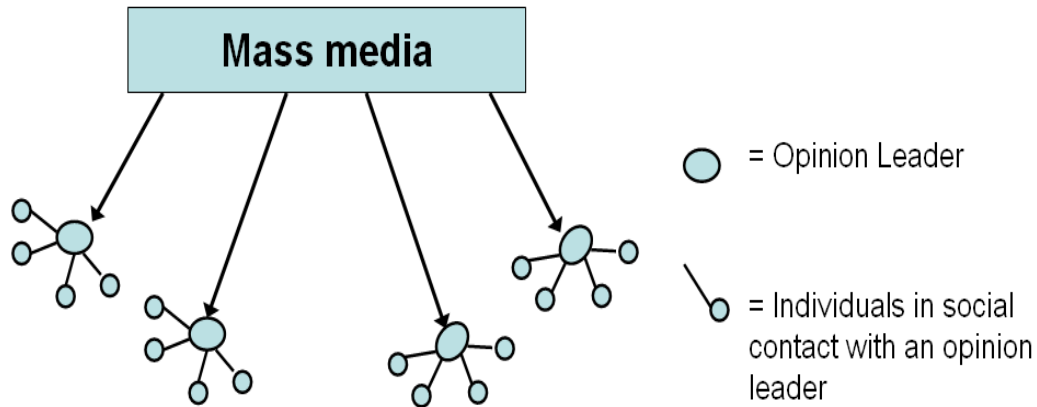


Figure 2-2. Two Step Flow of Communication Model, 1955

From the view of consumer behavior and WOM, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of persuasion introduced by Petty and Cacioppo (1982) suggest that the route of persuasion depends on the level of the consumers' motivation as well as their ability to think about the received information (Figure 2-3). They claimed that the consumer's attitude changes through diligent consideration of information when ELM is high, and called that central route of persuasion. The input WOM (positive and negative) serves as an important source of information here. Peripheral route, on the other hand, is more likely when ELM is low, and the consumer's attitude changes without engaging extensive issue-relevant thinking, through associating with either positive or negative cues. ELM has been applied to examine the engagement of WOM and its outcome as attitudinal change.

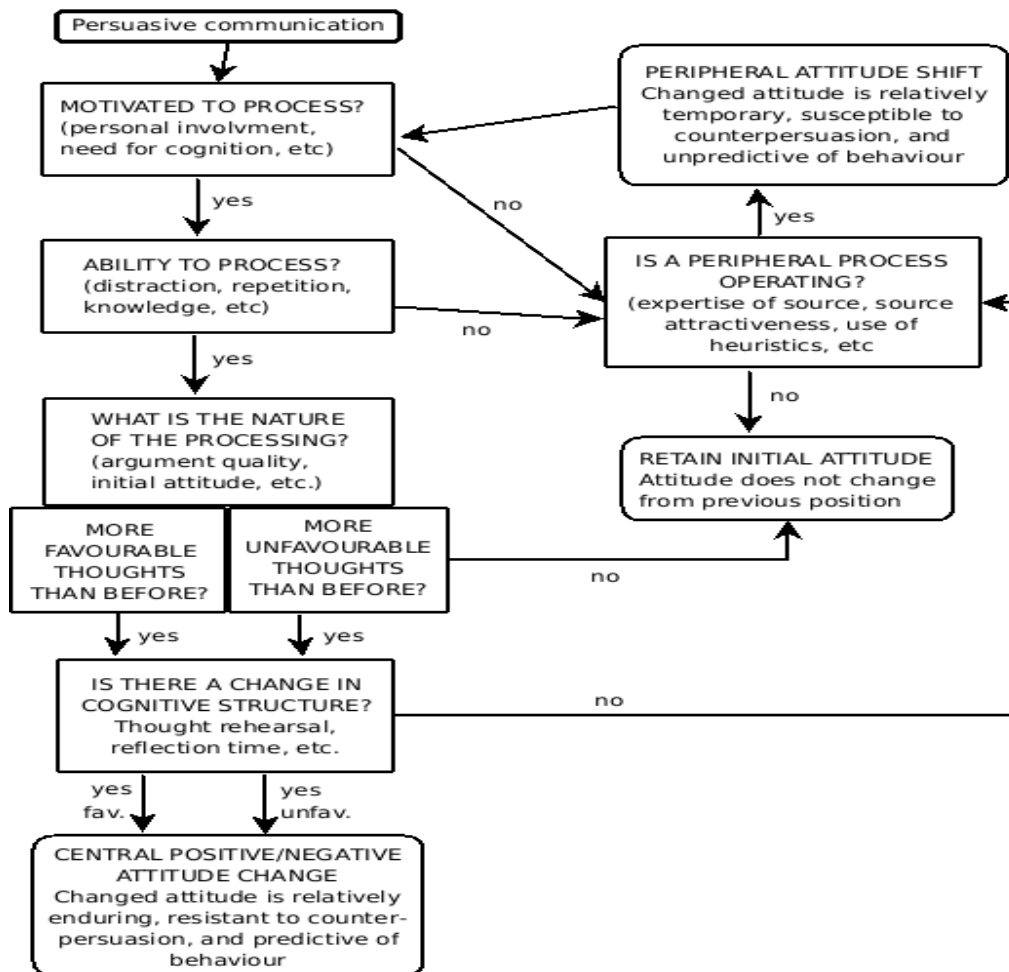


Figure 2-3. Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo 1982)

Later in 1998, Buttle presented the inclusive model of WOM, containing two sets of variables — the intrapersonal variables and the extrapersonal variables (Figure 2-4). Notice both input WOM (pre-purchase information) and output WOM (post-purchase information) are two-way information exchange by both giving and seeking. In the intrapersonal environment, the interrelationship between expectation and perception would decide consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which would lead to subsequent output WOM from the experiencing consumers, or become the input WOM source for other consumers who seek information. In the extrapersonal environment, “incentives” plays one of the four main factors that may influence the construct of WOM.

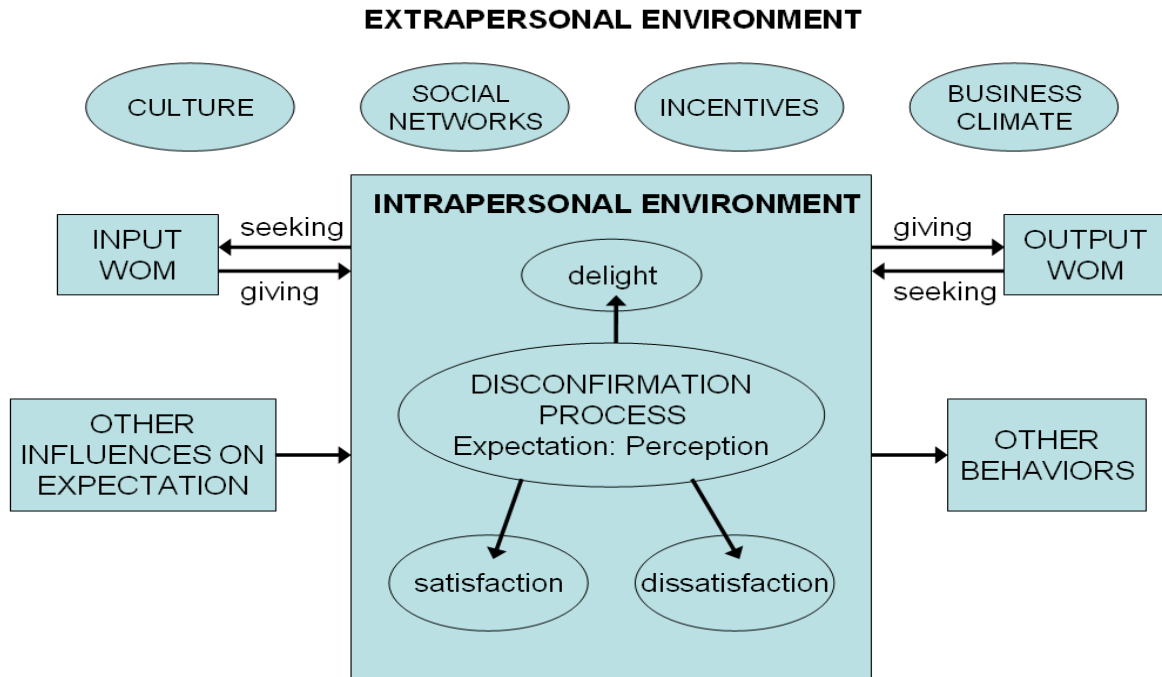


Figure 2-4. Inclusive WOM Model (Buttle, 1998)

Ever since the Internet prospered and developed from Web1.0 to Web2.0, from one-way information sharing to two-way communicating, WOM as well, evolved to its online version—internet users can freely participate and exchange information, opinions, and suggestions. In 2004, Japan Dentsu Group launched the AISAS online consumer behavior model (Attention → Interest → Search → Action → Share), which is the modification of the traditional AIDMA theory (Attention → Interest → Desire → Memory → Action) proposed by Ronald Hall in 1920s (Wang, 2009). AISAS model (as shown in Figure 2-5) was developed to “define the new purchasing process that has resulted from the proliferation of internet” (Dentsu, 2006), and has been used to observe the information-searching and information-sharing behavior of online WOM (eWOM) (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2008; Okada & Yamamoto, 2009; Wang, 2009).

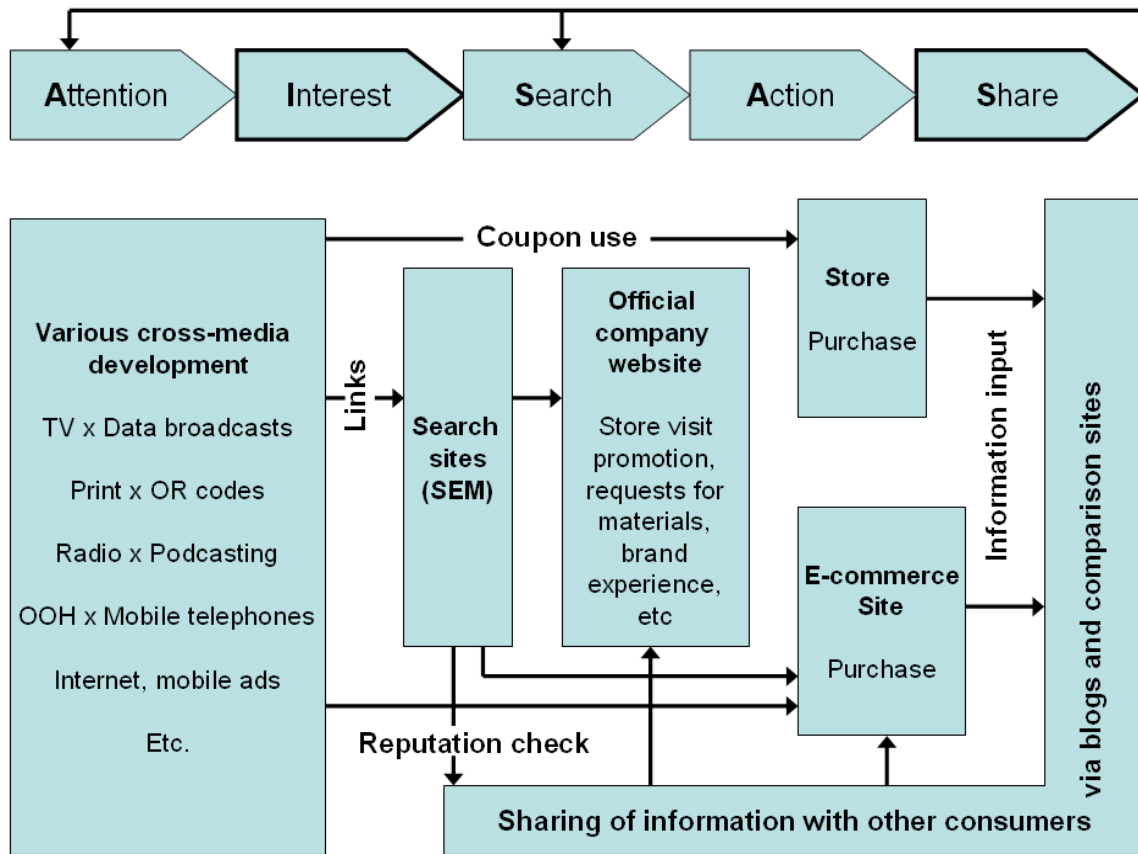


Figure 2-5. AISAS Consumer Behavior Model (Dentsu Group, 2006)

Nonetheless, the AISAS model did not put emphasis on eWOM under the CGM (Consumer-Generated-Media) environment. In combination of the AISAS model and the AIDEES model (Attention → Interest → Desire → Experience → Enthusiasm → Share) proposed by Tokuriki (cited from Buzz Lab, 2007), Buzz Lab clearly illustrated the complementary relationships between the two models and how the AIDEE model represents the six stages of consumers being influenced by eWOM in the CGM environment, such as blogs (2007).

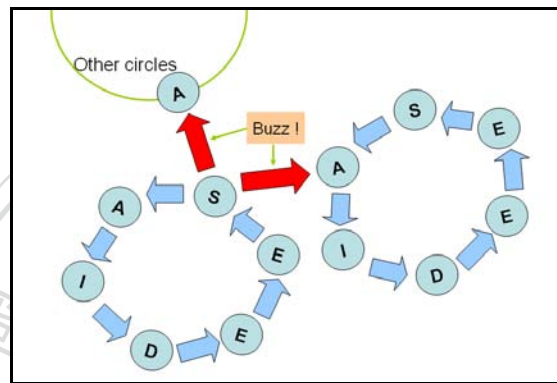
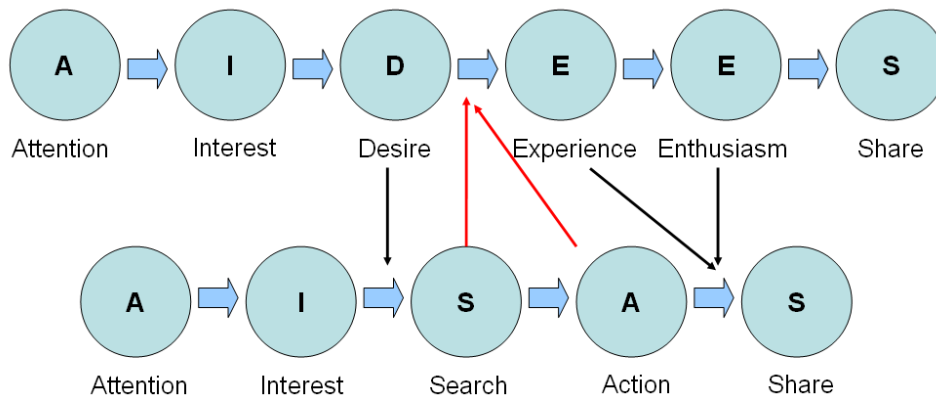


Figure 2-6. AIDEES Model (2007)

2.1.2 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

With the rapid development of the internet, the definition of WOM should be adjusted. The internet brought forth a “word-of-mouth Revolution” (Dellarocas, 2003) with millions of internet users “engage in a mass-mediated exchange of personal information and opinions every day” (Thorson and Rodgers, 2008). Hung and Li (2007), in their study of eWOM influence on virtual consumer communities, also observed “product knowledge communicated via eWOM opens up a great quantity and diversity of information that commercial messages rarely can provide.”

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM), also known as word of mouse (Gelb and Sundaram, 2002), is the online form of WOM, which emerges as the internet took part in people’s daily

lives. Hennig-Thuau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004) conceptualized eWOM as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.” The omnipresence of eWOM on the internet has played an irreplaceable role in marketing communication. Nevertheless, it was only until last decade has the research on eWOM and its impact been studied and observed in academic journals (Breazeale, 2009).

Although similar to the traditional oral/face-to-face WOM, eWOM has several distinctive characteristics—

1. eWOM is dependent on written form (Christiansen & Tax, 2000). Whether reviews in online forum, opinions in chatrooms, recommendations on websites, experience-sharing in blogs, or testimonials in social networks, it is the “online” written WOM that generates “offline” behaviors.
2. Different from traditional WOM’s ephemeral nature, as Stern (1994, p.7) mentioned “WOM communication vanishes as soon as it is uttered, for it occurs in a spontaneous manner and then disappears” (cited from Buttle, 1998) eWOM effect can be contagious and long-lasting. Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009) found out eWOM “induced both a larger short-term response and a substantially longer carryover effect. “
3. Early studies on WOM and social ties showed strong ties were distinguished to trigger more referrals and thus make greater influence than weak ties, which was perceived as bridging the information flow (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Nevertheless, eWOM often takes place between people with weak ties and can be anonymous (Dellarocas, 2003;Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006); this makes consumers more comfortable and willing to share their opinions or experiences (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006).

4. In the pre-internet era, WOM is distributed by consumers who were passively exposed under mass media channels, such as TV, radio or newspaper. Today, by buzzing on the new media tools such as blogs or social networks, consumers can be active participants on generating media content and drive eWOM that travels far in the world of Web2.0.

In Taiwan, a survey conducted by InsightXplorer in 2009 discovered that 80 % of the internet users view online word of mouth (eWOM) as very important and very influential. Besides searching for pre-purchase information, 60% of the internet users would also post their own experience or comments.

2.1.3 Women Consumer vs. WOM

It is recognized that women consumers are very influential (Yaccato & Yaeger, 2003; Marletta, 2003.) In “The 80% minority: reaching the real world of women consumers”, Yaccato and Yaeger point out that women construct and effect around 80% of the purchasing decision; in North America, women are in responsible of 80% of total expense (2003, p.2 & p.4). A research conducted in 2005 by Leo Burnett, an ad agency, indicates that as women in Asia become more financially independent, they also become more self-indulgent and are willing to spend more on themselves. Michelle Kristula-Green, the president of the Leo Burnett Asia-Pacific, noted, “as more women come to terms with their sexuality, their desire to improve and enhance their looks is also rising, creating an unprecedented beauty boom with more women across Asia investing in their looks” (White, 2005, p. 8).

According to Yaccato and Yaeger(2003), there are six characteristics of women consumers' behavior. First, they weighed on human interactions, both online and offline. Second, they tend to refer or pass along information. Statistically, women build more referrals and greater word of mouth than men. Third, they draw attention to or provide

testimonials on personal experiences, either positive or negative ones. In the process of comparing experiences, women continuously build networking and forge interrelationships. Fourth, women are more likely to share knowledge about a product or service. Fifth, women allow self-discovery. Last, they don't like to waste time (p.141-142 & p.172-173). Blogs provide the exact platform to satisfy all above.

More and more women do online research before purchasing. Instead of merely accepting given marketing messages, women nowadays with the help of the internet, would "trust filters of information to help them weed through the volume of information available" (2003, p.142).

Many have concluded that women's referral network work better and thus might eventually generate more profit (Barletta, 2003). As a matter of fact, initial buzz would equally attract both men and women, yet the following word of mouth is mostly passed and spread by women. In *Marketing to Women*, author Martha Barletta puts much emphasis on women consumers' referral behavior that makes them worthier customers. Barletta assertively interprets, "because women customers return more loyalty and referrals to the companies they patronize, every woman convert represents more business in the long run than her male counterpart" (2003). Being the author of all-time best-selling financial book *The Wealthy Barber*, David Chilton claims that "there is nothing you can do in marketing that can achieve the same level of success as garnering word of mouth from women consumers". The target group of the present study, therefore, is women, who are the new emerging, powerful consumers.

2.2 Buzz Marketing

As the founder of BzzAgent, Balter stated that the impact of buzz marketing is greater than any other traditional media (2006). As mentioned in the earlier literature, buzz marketing is not randomness, for it engages structural and methodical approach to get people talking and media writing (Hugh, 2005). Before unveiling the charm of buzz marketing, the concept of “buzz” needs to be clarified.

2.2.1 Buzz

“Buzz” in brief explanation, is the “contagious word-of-mouth commentary about products, services, brands, and ideas” (Walker, 2004). Jim Matorin, business catalyst with Smartketing, further described that true buzz is like a virus that changes to meet the challenge of a new environment. There are three distinct stages of the evolution of buzz: inoculation, or the introduction of a product; incubation, or the use of the product by a few innovative trendsetters; and infection, or widespread use of the product among the mainstream. He then pointed out that a good buzz marketing campaign should start by establishing infection. Rosen (2000) in his book *The anatomy of Buzz*, identified that “buzz is all about the word of mouth about a brand. It’s the aggregate of all person-to-person communication about a particular product, service, or company at any point in time” (p.7). He also explained the combination of local and nonlocal communication enables buzz to travel faster on the internet (p.22).

Thomas (2004) classified buzz into four, which are shown in the table 2-1:

Table 2-1. Four Types of Buzz (Thomas, 2004)

	Definition	Tools	Facts
Uncodified Buzz	The information passed on by innovators to their social network	Online media in the form of e-mail, blogs, list serves, personal websites, chat groups	More than 90% of consumers indicated they told at least one other person about a website when the original recommendation came

	when encounter new products.		from a friend (Jupiter Media Metric, 2004)
Codified Buzz	Codified buzz is that which is incubated, fostered and underwritten by the firm	Testimonials, endorsements, trial versions, observable usage, gift registries, guarantees, customer communities, embedded customers, hosted chat rooms, pass-alongs affiliate programmes, referral programmes, experiential marketing, bounce backs, gift certificates, advocacy marketing, customer ratings, demonstrations, preferred customer programmes, seminars, parties and conferences	<p>A January 2001 survey by Brand Marketing, the Promotion Marketing Association, Greenfield and Experian found among its respondents that (see McConnell and Huba, 2004):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 84% would consider switching products if they liked the free sample they tried — 73% became aware of new or improved products through samples — 92% decided to buy a grocery, household or health and beauty care product after trying a sample (Greenfield Online, 2001).
Pseudo Buzz	Schemed WOM generated by the promotional agencies that have been hired	Promotional Agencies	The problem with this marketing technique is that generally people do not like to be duped, and sending out posers is a dupe tactic.
Ultimate Buzz	The ultimate buzz is delivering exceptional value, what is known as the relative advantage of the offer	<p>—Customers need to be integrated into the process of new product development</p> <p>—Having a unique value proposition is not good enough, one has to deliver relevant innovative value propositions (choose a primary value proposition, a secondary, even a tertiary, but understand this requires leadership in the competitive context)</p>	Surprising customers with added or unanticipated value and customising value or information about the customer will result in the highest levels of customer satisfaction, higher retention rates (customer loyalty) and higher buzz levels.

2.2.2 Definition of Buzz Marketing

Thomas (2004) defined buzz marketing as “the amplification of initial marketing efforts by third parties through their passive or active influence.” As defined by Hughes (2005), “buzzmarketing captures the attention of consumers and the media to the point where talking about your brand or company becomes entertaining, fascinating, and newsworthy.” Walter (2006) pointed out the difference between WOM communication and buzz marketing, that the latter apply explicit organizational efforts to stimulate "buzz" by either paying people or seeking volunteers to try new products/services and then have agents "talk them up" among their social networks. Three examples of this phenomenon are (a) paying people to talk up a product/service/brand either in online or offline form, (b) recruiting volunteers to participate in a campaign, oftentimes in exchange of rewards (e.g. free samples, discounts, points-to-redeem) or the satisfaction that comes along with being the first ones to know/try, and (c) creating a platform/network for selected individuals to buzz about certain products/services/brands (Carl, 2006). Buzz marketing, therefore, is more about an organized marketing strategy rather than mere spontaneous behaviors.

Nevertheless, from the classification of buzz (Walter, 2004), it is suggested that pseudo buzz done by posers would only bring negative effect. Therefore, a successful buzz marketing, even though planned out under structural and methodical approach, should remain truthful and transparent to the consumers.

2.3 Blog

“The power of blogs lies in their capability to challenge the role media conglomerates play in how information is delivered, phrased, reported, or otherwise distributed” (Wallace, 2008, p.5). According to Forrester, 11.2% of online adults in the U.S. publish a blog at least

once a month. Of the same group, 24.8% read a blog and 13.7% comment on a blog at least once a month. The numbers are higher for youths. Of online youths, 20.8% publish a blog, 36.6% read a blog, and 26.4% comment on a blog at least once a month. (Baker & Green, 2008)

2.3.1 Historical Background of Blog

Back in the early 90s, the concept of “blog” was nothing more than a small population of the Internet users posting online journals to express their opinions as well as sharing links by manually programming. Being the founder of *rec.humor.funny*, Brad Templton stated his *rec.humor.funny* as the world’s oldest blog, and while some referred to Mosaic’s “What’s New” page in 1993 the first blog (Pack, 2004).

The word “blog” was originally the contraction of “web log (logging the web)”, which was first proclaimed by John Barger in 1997 (Park, 2004). Peter Merholz announced in early 1999 that he would pronounce weblog as “wee blog” and henceforth got shortened to “blog” as well as “blogger” referred to the weblog editor (Blood, 2000). In July 1999, Pitas launched as the first free blog-publishing tool. Later in August, Blogger was released by Prya Labs (Blood, 2000) with the innovative technology to automate the process of updating posts, reducing the barrier of publishing and making it open for anyone without any computer-programming knowledge (Wibbles, 2006, Wallace, 2008). Henceforth, blogs have altered the way people communicate online and have continued to expand its domain. 2004, the turning point in blog history, blogs were first introduced to politics and celebrities. As indicated by Sirfy (2006), the numbers of existing blogs has augmented 100 times from mid-2003 to mid-2006. In early 2008, the search company Technorati indexes 112 million blogs, with 120,000 new ones popping up each day (Baker & Green, 2008).

2.3.2 Blog Definition

Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang defined blogs as “personal journals on the internet arranged in reverse chronological sequence that facilitate interactive computer mediated communication through text, images, and audio/video objects” (2007). “A blog is an easily, instantly, and frequently updated Web site, focused around a topic, industry, or personality” (Wibbels, 2006). Thorson and Rodgers (2008) consider interactive blog a form of eWOM.

Researchers have categorized blogs under diverse criteria. Blood (2002) distinguishes three types of blogs by their functions. Krishnamurthy (2002) proposes to classify blogs into four types by two dimensions of a blog's orientation: personal versus topical and community versus individual. Herring, Scheidt, Wright, and Bonus (2005) modify Krishnamurthy's categorization and ascribe blogs into five categories. Dearstyne (2005) suggests five types of blogs by their uses.

There are seven characteristics that distinguish blogs from other media:

1. Interactive

Of all communication tools, blogs are the most interactive (Claxton & Woo, 2008.). Its engaging nature allows bloggers and readers to have two-way conversations via comments, trackbacks, or message boards.

2. Accessible

Blogs can be accessed from anywhere in the world, as long as the internet works. There are all kinds of blogs (e.g. v-log: video blog, k-log, knowledge blog) in blogosphere, and they are open to the public, unless locked from the bloggers.

3. Personality-driven

There is no set rule of how a blog post should be written; instead, the beauty of free speech makes blogging a “creative outlet” (Wallace, 2008, p.8). Many personal blogs are self-expressive and do not represent any party except the blogger himself/herself. The tone of a personal blog is usually informal and identical with the bloggers' own personality.

4. Cost-Efficient

Unlike its mass media counterparts, to communicate on a blog is inexpensive (Brown, 2007, p.21). Using an existing blogging software or platform, such as Blogger, Wordpress, or Wretch (Taiwan), is usually free. Once a blog is set up, one can promote his/her business, product, service, or cause for no cost.

5. Easy-to-manage

To start a blog does not require computing skills (Brown, 2007, p.21), nor much technology knowledge. There are existing blogging software/platforms for people to create their own accounts and blog whenever, and wherever. It is easy to manage a blog, even if one decides to stop his/her blog, there will not be any managerial cost or loss involved.

6. Insightful

A blogger can be any person, from middle school student to the president. In fact, there are many bloggers with rich knowledge on specific topics; they offer in-depth analysis or useful information via links (Wibbels, 2006, p.27) and oftentimes, give advises or recommendations. This theme-based blogs that concentrate on certain fields of knowledge is referred to as knowledge blogs, also known as k-logs (Herring et al, 2005).

7. Up-to-date

Blogs offer fresh content on a frequent and regular basis (Wibbels, 2006, p.27); they provide a “new breed of ‘citizen journalists’ to supply real time eyewitness accounts of events around the world that the mainstream media does not, or cannot, cover and instantly communicate reports” (Wallace, 2008, p.10). A blog post is put online instantly (Brown, 2007, p.22), unlike a news report needs to be edited or a TV commercial requires long production time.

8. Credible

Traditional mass media are bought to promote a product/service/organization, yet blogs are consumer-generated-media that reveal real-consumer experiences or opinions. Thus, word of mouth generated via blogs, as the AIDEES model shows, has undergone the stages of bloggers' own experience, and being enthusiastically shared in the blogosphere that can generate great buzz. Readers trust recommendations from bloggers more highly than from traditional advertising (Wibbels, 2006, p.22). The credibility of blogs and bloggers will be further discussed in following literature.

Blogs have been viewed as one of the most influential and effective means in current integrated marketing communications (IMC). What blogging can achieve is the more specific and direct targeting (Claxton & Woo, 2008). Professor Kotler and Keller (2004) have named 14 shifts in marketing in their reputed book *Marketing Management*; within which they mentioned the market has changed from organized by products unit to organized by customer segments as well as the market used to sell to everyone, but now the market serves the well-defined target market. The major purpose of targeting is to reach precise consumer group, further building strong customer relationship. The distinctive outcomes of targeting are its preciseness, customization, directness, reinforced customer relationship, and effectiveness.

New Identities, a marketing agency located in New Jersey, names “the process of putting products in front of potential customers at the exact moment” the pinpoint marketing, which is in contrast to the more expensive and wasteful interruptive marketing, such as television or radio ads.

Consumers are not homogeneous; each consumer has his/her own preference, cultural background...etc. Mass marketing communications in many cases, such as advertising, result in ineffectiveness for both the company and customers – company would waste money and lose profit as well as customers would waste energy and make wrong buying decision, which may deteriorate the building of customer loyalty. The best for a value of certain product/service to be delivered thus is suggested as “the right product to the right consumers in the right way” (Kotler, 2004). The readers of blogs are of selected groups with specific interest on certain topics. It is now the targeting or customer segmentation that plays an important role in marketing and integrated marketing communications, either in macroenvironment or microenvironment.

2.3.3 Blogging Motivations

In the existing literature, studies mostly focus more on the blogs rather than bloggers (Huang, Shen, Ling, & Chang, 2007). Although several surveys touch the base of bloggers' motivations (e.g. Blood, 2002; Blumenthal, 2005; Herring, Scheidi, Wright, and Bonus, 2005; Lenhart and Fox, 2006). Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz (2004) are the first to investigate the issue in depth, they concluded that there are five blogging motivations— "to document their life experiences, to provide commentary and opinions, to express deeply felt emotions, to articulate ideas through writing, and to form and maintain community forums." They also suggest that for a blogger, these motivations may not be mutually exclusive and may play out simultaneously. Huang, Shen, Lin, and Chang (2007) combined “to express

deeply felt emotions” and “to articulate ideas through writing” into “self-expression” in addition to adding “Information seeking.”

2.3.4 Blog/Blogger Credibility

Blogs can be viewed as a form of eWOM, and “word of mouth is one of the best sources of credibility....The road to profitability is paved with credibility” (Levinson, 2003, p.41). Levinson, a famous marketing expert as well as many best-sellers author, highlighted the causal relationship between word of mouth and profitability in business by stating the importance of source credibility. More and more people would cite blogs as a source of information. Blogs create a greater sense of trust and reputation than traditional media (Wibbels, 2006, p.22). Researchers found that almost all blog readers thought blogs were “moderately to very credible” (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). Blogs are also rated as more credible than other online source, and even traditional media source (Banning & Sweetser, 2007). Although there does exist credibility concern about blogs (anyone can create one, no ethics, or anonymity), researchers claim that the peer-view process would compensate the credibility issue (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). Moreover, oftentimes influential bloggers have their own blog readers who consume the content on a regular base; these audiences are looking for valuable and reliable information. A blogger’s reputation lies in the blog’s credibility, because readers are smart enough to compare and tell from an irresponsible post. Hewitt indicated “the credibility of blogs depends on their timeliness and accuracy, but invariably, the qualification of the bloggers matter as well” (2005, p.108).

2.3.5 Blog Glossary

Blogosphere—Blogosphere is the internet blogging community with the collective content of all blogs worldwide.

Blogroll— “Users might mention other blogs in their postings, and express their suggested contacts in blogrolls (a sidebar within a particular blog listing the other blogs the blogger frequents)” (Furukawa et al., 2007). Besides RSS, blog viewers sometimes put the links of their interested blogs in their blogrolls, and people who visit their blogs can also click on the linkages to visit the blogs on the list. This is a transformed way of Word of Mouth in the blogosphere.

Trackback—“A TrackBack links to another blog that is referencing that particular post” (Wibbels, 2006). It is “a mechanism that automatically finds other comments about a blog post on a weblog, and provides excerpts and links to the comments alongside the post” (Bowman & Willis, 2003, p.20).

2.3.6 Blogs vs. Discussion Forums

As cited by Wibbels (2006), the differences between blogs and online discussion forums are explained by a technology forum TechSoup, that “blogs are diaries that can be read by the public, while bulletin boards are town hall meetings in which the public can all discuss issues equally. The town hall quality of message boards can play off of the informational/journal quality of blogs.” In another word, blogs are more specific and personal while a forum is more content-free and collective.

2.4 eWOM, Blogger, and Buzz Marketing

Bloggers are “a cohort of internet users who produce as well as consume content on the internet.” Bloggers’ role can be versatile; more than seeking and sharing information, they can also be “communicator, producer, explorer, collector, and player in terms of their consumption of information.” (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). Certain bloggers with great popularity become valuable for their ability to spread the WOM and influence people’s

attitude, even behavior. The follow up section will discuss about past review on the influential individuals from the respect of communicativeness, innovativeness, marketing, consumer behavior, or social networks. The potential of these influential bloggers on spreading eWOM in the blogosphere has recently been targeted by marketers and henceforward been recruited to facilitate buzz marketing.

2.4.1 Role of Influential Blogger

The ideas of certain people who are more influential over others and how these people shape others' thinking or decisions have drawn much attention from both researchers and practitioners. Their contributing role in depicting adoption of innovations has been widely-documented. These people have been categorized and labeled with various names, such as opinion leaders (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), early adopters (Rogers, 1962), innovative communicators (Baumgarten, 1975), market mavens (Freick & Price, 1987), influentials (Weimann, 1994), and talkers (Sernovitz, 2009).

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) originally defined *opinion leaders* as “the individuals who were likely to influence other persons in their immediate environment,” and this concept of opinion leadership has been thoroughly studied by researchers since then. Rogers (1983) conceptualized opinion leadership as “the degree to which an individual is able to informally to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior in a desired way with relative frequency” (p. 271). Early adopters, as mentioned in the previous literature of the diffusion of innovations theory, are categorized as the second fastest of individuals who adopt an innovation. According to Rogers (1983), these individuals have the highest degree of opinion leadership among the other adopter categories. From the view of socioeconomic profiles and educational background, early adopters share similar characteristics with opinion leaders (Baumgarten, 1975; Venkatraman, 1989). It is identified by Baumgarten that the overlapping

between fashion opinion leaders and fashion early adopter, of which the former implies the degree of communicativeness and the latter of innovativeness, could be fused together to allow measurement on influence—referring to as an innovative communicator (1975).

Market mavens are “individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of markets, and initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests from consumers for market information” (Feick & Price, 1987, p. 85). To differentiate market mavens from opinion leaders, three considerations based on Feick and Price’s study are—they are more sensitive in market change, they have more general market knowledge, and they are self-motivated by the obligation and pleasure to share as well as to help others (Price, Feick, & Guskey, 1995; Walsh, Gwinner, & Swanson, 2004; cited from Ruvio & Shoham). The perception of the influentials was suggested by Weimann (1994) that there is a minority of individuals who influence an exceptional number of their peers. However, in recent study conducted by Watts and Dodds (2007), it is found that “large cascades of influence are driven not by influentials but by a critical mass of easily influenced individuals.”

In his widely-recommended book *Word of mouth marketing: how smart companies get people talking*, Sernovitz (2006/2009) established Five T’s elements for building WOM—Talkers (find people who will talk about you), Topics (give people a reason to talk), Tools (help the message spread faster and farther), Talking (join the conversation), and Tracking (measure and understand what people are saying). Talkers are “any group of people who have the enthusiasm and connections to reply your message” (Sernovitz, 2006/2009, p.17). Unlike the traditional conception of opinion leader, who comparably has higher social status or education background, talkers can be any regular person, your customers, friends, and even

online strangers. What motivates talkers to talk is because they enjoy sharing ideas and helping people.

From the review of the literature above about bloggers as well as influential individuals, influential bloggers are defined as “bloggers who enjoy sharing abundant information about certain topics and influence or are influenced by producing as well as consuming content on the internet.”

2.4.2 Beauty Blogs

Beauty-related products, such as cosmetics or fashion apparels, are products of feeling decision and high involvement (Vaughn, 1980) of which information, feedback and testimonials from trusted sources play an important role in buying decisions (Montague-Jones, 2009). By labeling high-involvement products as “conversation products,” Rosen (2000) pointed out that these products provoke high involvement and create buzz among customers (p.26). In the era of Web 2.0, consumers are not only doing more and more cosmetics shopping online but they are also scouring social networking sites (e.g. blogs) for information and tips on beauty matters.

Rogers in his book *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962 & 1983), pointed out that diffusion is “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system,” and that innovation is “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (p.11). Diffusion of an innovation happens through five stages—knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Within this conceptual framework, expertly summarized by Rogers, empirical marketing research has largely focused upon developing a greater understanding of the characteristics of two key consumer “change agents”: (1) the *innovator*,

or *early adopter* in the life cycle of a new concept or product, who gives the new concept initial physical visibility and functional application; and (2) the *opinion leader* who presents a "peer group legitimate" evaluation of the new concept and transmits product information and usage experience to the peer group culture. Beauty-related industry (e.g. fashion, cosmetics), due to its high frequency on introducing new products, has been acknowledged that interpersonal communications plays a crucial role in the diffusion of innovative information (Baumgarten, 1975). As more women turn to blogs for advice on beauty, beauty bloggers have become influential "change agents" on pre-purchase information collecting as well as post-purchase experience sharing.

Beauty bloggers, through expressing their personal experiences on using certain cosmetics or beauty-related products/services, they not only provide functional benefits (i.e. smoother skin, increased length of eyelashes, shinier hair, more-evened skin tone, and etc.) but also emotional benefits (i.e. strengthened confidence, increased attractiveness, regained self-esteem, and etc.). However, different from advertising that speaks to mass without precise targeting, the nature of blogs' personal, interactivity, specificity, real-time as well as real-people experience-sharing, blog readers may find the information more accountable, truthful, and convincing. Once this mindset is established, such consumer-to-consumer relationships may generate more buzz in the blogosphere, further building positive WOM, which further lead to purchasing behavior.

It is not uncommon that well-known beauty bloggers posting articles about their evaluations of different product samples, which, are directly sent to them due to their high influence on generating effective "buzz" among other bloggers and numerous blog readers. Moreover, there are even "professional bloggers" that are paid to write, to advertise, or even

to endorse products in their blogs. The buzz generated by these bloggers, due to their high popularity and credibility, may further motivate the readers' purchasing behavior.

On the first page of many popular beauty blogs which attract millions of visitors/readers, bloggers' personal email addresses are given for "cooperation request from firms (廠商合作事宜)". Most likely, a category for writing about free samples or corporation invitations would be listed in the categorization section. Two examples of beauty blogs are demonstrated in Figure 2-7 and 2-8 —



Figure 2-7. Example 1. Beauty Blogger 花猴 (<http://www.wretch.cc/blog/benshee>)



Figure 2-8. Example 2. Beauty Blogger Katy Beauty

(<http://www.wretch.cc/blog/katykissbo>)

2.4.3 Blogs and Buzz Marketing

Online businesses are usually categorized into three models: business to business (B2B), business to consumer (B2C), and consumer to consumer (C2C). However, the recently-emerged buzz marketing via blogs is that marketers exploit the nature of blogs as C2C platforms (Zhao, Fang, & Whinston, 2006) to achieve B2C2C communication. Blogs are useful tools for expanding and accelerating word of mouth by making message portable through interconnecting, creating new topics with frequent updates, providing a platform for the conversation to happen, and building credibility among bloggers (Sernovitz, 2009, p.140-141).

Blogs can build a buzz: getting influential bloggers to review the latest product or service is a great way to generate attention (see example Figure 2-9). Companies such as BzzAgent and Marqui have used bloggers as prime movers in their clients' marketing

campaigns (Wibbels, 2006, p.29). According to a survey done by Ad:Tech and MarketingSherpa, blogs were perceived by companies as the most prevailing marketing communication tool in 2007; 42% of the surveyed companies have allocated budget in blog marketing. To sum, it is suggested that blogs do have impacts in social and political aspect; its value in business is yet to be verified.



50 Beauty Bloggers親證
ESTÉE LAUDER
CyberWhite EX 高效淡斑亮白成果

全新 CyberWhite EX 突破亮白高效精華
觀看Beauty Bloggers分享，親身體驗神奇淡斑力量

ESTÉE LAUDER以領先亞洲去斑科技，研發出能杜絕色斑死灰復燃的嶄新技術，令肌膚回復剔透亮白。50位Beauty Bloggers亦率先試用了CyberWhite EX突破亮白系列中的重點產品—突破亮白高效精華，並親身體驗到其神奇速效淡斑力量，而她們更就其個人體驗分享了試用文章。

Figure 2-9. ESTÉE LAUDER: Beauty Bloggers Buzz Marketing Example

(<http://www.getjetso.com/forum/viewthread.php?tid=356142&extra=page%3D1%26amp;filter%3Dtype%26amp;typeid%3D156>)

Nevertheless, some successful cases of which bloggers were recruited in buzz marketing campaign revealed bloggers' potential in spreading positive WOM, resulting in

growth of profit. As reported by BusinessNext (2010), a buzz marketing campaign held by Cheetos Taiwan incorporating famous bloggers to buzz about a new snack (campaign website shown as Figure 2-10) has achieved huge success. Trackbacks of this campaign among blogs have produced huge buzz effects; as a result, there are estimated 1.4 million people engaging in this campaign, and the sale growth has multiplied by seven times.



Figure 2-10. Cheetos Campaign Webpage (<http://www.cheetos.com.tw/blogger/01.asp>)

2.4.4 Blogging vs. Incentive

Claxton and Woo, in their co-authored book *How to say it: marketing with new media: a guide to promoting your small business using websites, e-zines, blogs, and podcasts*, they position that "...of all the new media components, blogs have had the biggest effect on the way business communicate with customers" (2008, p.109). "Think of the implications for businesses of getting an up-to-the-minute read on what the world is thinking" (Baker & Green, 2008)

Silver and Yanik (2008) has listed blogging as one of five methods that are proven to help bring in extra money online. It is the huge traffic and potential eWOM generated of a blog that allow bloggers to have extra income, directly through advertising (e.g. BlogAds) and sponsorship (e.g. Affiliate Program) or indirectly via making use of bloggers' specific knowledge/expertise (e.g. online writing gigs, speaking opportunities) (271-282).

2.4.5 Dilemma

The dilemma under this framework is the credibility of the blogger and content posted. Although incentives do motivate bloggers to update more frequently, the commercialization of blog content that turns into product placement may cause readers' questioning on credibility and righteousness (何英煒, 2007). Godes and Mayzlin (2004) raised the questions on (1) the righteousness of online personal recommendation being taken advantage of by companies and (2) offering recommendations which seem to be credible yet are advertising. The effectiveness of blog persuasion only occurs under one prerequisite—both bloggers and the content need to be credible (Laermer and Simmons, 2007), and credibility is the key element of successful buzz marketing because satisfied readers will help spread the buzz.

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association applauds the Federal Trade Commission's response to the complaint filed by Commercial Alert in October 2005 urging that government regulate companies engaged in buzz marketing practices. WOMMA further proposed the Honesty ROI, which can also be a guideline for beauty bloggers to consider when engaging in buzz marketing—

- Honesty of Relationship: You say who you're speaking for.
- Honesty of Opinion: You say what you believe.

- Honesty of Identity: You never obscure your identity.

In 2009, the Federal Trade Commission announced its final guides concerning the use of endorsements and testimonials that will affect bloggers being recruited into buzz marketing. Any “material connections” between advertisers or marketers and endorsers must be disclosed to the consumers. It is stated that “Under the revised Guides, advertisements that feature a consumer and convey his or her experience with a product or service as typical when that is not the case will be required to clearly disclose the results that consumers can generally expect” (FTC, 2009).

In Taiwan, there were not any clear regulations that governed bloggers performing product placement or any other material connections with the companies/advertisers. Yet on July 1st, 2010, National Communications Committee (NCC) announced they would be regulating bloggers' endorsement or paid/rewarded testimonials for the purpose of giving back consumers a more transparent online environment where commercialized advertisements and truthful testimonials are clearly differentiated. It is also reported by NCC that among the ten famous bloggers they examined, most of the blog posts that wrote about free samples or product placement did not notify their readers that the posts were actually advertisement. Starting from August, anyone can report any suspicious blog contents to NCC, and for those reported bloggers, if they are found violating the regulations, punishment will be imposed (2010, China Times).

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methods used are described in details. Research framework and procedure are explained, with hypotheses as well as variables presented. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were conducted in this study. The results from qualitative in-depth interviews on beauty bloggers as well as previous literature review are applied to conduct the survey for quantitative study.

3.1 Research Framework

Currently, there is yet sufficient literature for this field of study on WOM credibility in different types of blog posts and how the WOM credibility may moderate the relationships between readers' attitudes and their actual purchasing behavior. Hence, in this study, hypotheses concerning WOM credibility in three types of blog posts were conducted based on limited literature review and the qualitative in-depth interviews.

The first hypothesis presumes readers/consumers' level of satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively associated with their interest generated in products/ services/ brands. The second hypothesis proposes that readers/ consumers' level of satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to purchasing behavior. The third hypothesis assumes there is a positive correlation between readers/consumers' level of satisfaction toward beauty blog content and WOM referral.

This study also aims to examine the WOM credibility in three different types of blog posts—Pure Sharing Blog Post, Sample Trial Blog Post, and Product Placement Blog Post. The fourth hypothesis assumes the correlation between Pure Sharing Blog Post and purchasing behavior will be higher than the other two types of blog post. The fifth hypothesis

assumes WOM credibility moderates the relationship between readers' attitude toward certain types of blog posts and purchasing behavior. Research framework is illustrated as Figure 3-1.

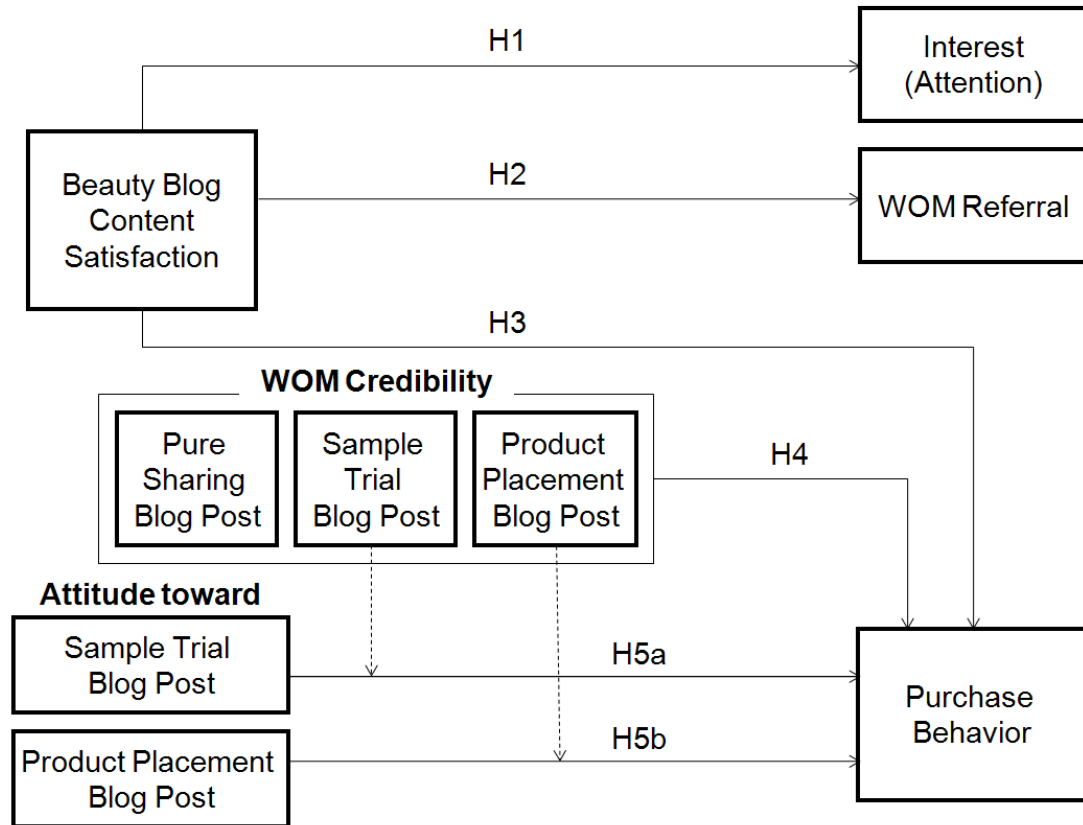


Figure 3-1. Research Framework

3.1.1 Hypotheses

Based on the previous literature review and research questions, five hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H1. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to interest-arousing in products, services or brands.

H2. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to purchasing behavior.

H3. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to the conduction of WOM Referral.

H4. The correlation between WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post and purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs will be higher than other two types of blog posts.

H5a. The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting sample trial articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of STBP WOM credibility.

H5b. The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting product placement articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of PPBP WOM credibility.

3.2 Research Procedure

The research procedure will be composed of two stages—first stage is the preliminary study that provide with understanding of current phenomenon of beauty blogs and influential bloggers via qualitative in-depth interviews; second stage will be the main study on observing beauty blog readers' attitudes toward buzz marketing via quantitative survey.

3.2.1 First Stage — Preliminary Study

In-depth interviews were conducted with selected beauty bloggers during April and May, 2010. Two well-known beauty bloggers were interviewed in person, and the interviews were recorded during the whole process. Discovery from the interviews would be compared and

further provided with directions and knowledge for quantitative research design in the second stage of this study.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) stated that “interview talk is the participants’ rhetorical construction” (p173), along with eight purposes of qualitative interviews: (1) understanding the social actor’s experience and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations; (2) understanding native conceptualization of communication; (3) Eliciting the language forms used by social actors in natural settings; (4) Gathering information about things or processes that cannot be observed effectively by other means; (5) inquiring about occurrences in the past; (6) verifying, validating, or commenting on information obtained from sources; (7) testing hypotheses developed in the field; (8) achieving efficiency in data collection (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The researcher of this study conducted the interview outline that would serve the purposes. The outline was composed of 19 nondirective questions which are listed as follows:

1. How do beauty bloggers share with readers? (On content presentation/tone and manner)
2. What do beauty bloggers position themselves as?
3. Why are beauty blogs so popular?
4. Could you please describe beauty bloggers and credibility?
5. Do beauty bloggers use other consumer-generated-content platforms?
6. What motivates beauty bloggers to write beauty blog post?
7. Could you please describe the current phenomenon of firms/agencies cooperating with beauty blogs?
8. What are the different types of incentives? (Free Samples / Money Payment / Free Trial / Event Participation)

9. If it is money payment, is there a set price?
10. Could you please describe Sample Trial Blog Post vs. Product Placement Blog Post?
11. What are readers' attitudes toward these two types of blog posts?
12. Compared to the products that you buy yourself, do you find writing blog post differently from products provided (or paid to write) by companies or agencies?
13. Do incentives influence bloggers' attitude when writing blog posts? (content, presentation, referral)
14. Do incentives become one of the motivations for beauty bloggers to post articles?
15. What are the common requirements from companies/agencies? (Content/tone & manner/ product name/ effectiveness/ ingredient/ brand exposure)
16. What if the requirements are not met?
17. Could you please describe in detail positive WOM in beauty blogs? (Compliment/ encouragement, direct/ indirect)
18. Could you please describe in detail negative WOM in beauty blogs? (Criticism/ discouragement, direct/ indirect)
19. What are your opinion as well as attitude toward blog buzz marketing?

3.2.1.1 Sampling

Due to bloggers' requirements on not revealing their identity as well as to ensure truthfulness and completeness of the interview content, two interviewed beauty bloggers were presented anonymously.

Miss T is recognized as one of the most widely-known beauty blogger. During her stay in Japan, she would post personal experiences, or share information related to Japanese products on a CGM platform—PTT Cosmetics Board. Eventually, readers would ask for

demonstration on products, and PTT Cosmetics Board did not allow image or video files. In order to share with people, she then started her first blog. Since 2005, she has been constantly writing, even after her return to Taiwan from Japan. Today, the clicks on her blog have reached more than 50 million and still growing. Miss T insists her own principle of not accepting any free samples or incentives to write about any products or services. All her blog posts are guaranteed non-commercialized; thus many of her readers have built loyalty in reading for years. She has openly discussed about the dilemma of the blogging truth behind buzz marketing, in response of a controversial article posted by a reporter condemning beauty bloggers driven by buzz marketing and losing credibility by posting irresponsible contents.

Miss H, on the hand, represents those who do accept incentives or even get paid to write about products. She opened her blog since 2007, and has reached more than five million clicks since. Since 2008, Miss H started to receive invitation or free samples, asking her to write about the products and share testimonials with the exposure of product names and brands. Her principle is to openly notifying her readers that those articles are sample trial provided by other parties. She insists not to post product placement in her blog because she believes credibility is very important for bloggers that give much effort on sharing useful information with readers. Besides writing about products, she also got invited to events, both inside and outside Taiwan.

3.2.1.2 In-depth Interview Results

Interview with Miss T was conducted on April 25th and with Miss H on May 24th, 2010. Both bloggers claimed their initial purpose of writing beauty blogs was to share with people. And in order to sustainably manage a good blog, blogger credibility is very crucial and valuable. They both also indicated blog buzz marketing was not as easy as it seemed; it

actually could be very complicated considering the content of blog post being controlled, and often times the agencies/companies would require revision on what has been written.

On discussing whether incentives influenced bloggers in writing, Miss T indicated more or less bloggers would be influenced and tend to enlarge the advantages and minimize the disadvantages. However, Miss H held different opinion; she believed writing truthfully, and if a company or agency asked her to deceive or needs can not be satisfied for both parties, she would not write about the product. Table 3-1 listed five definitions that were clarified after the interview, and would be applied in the conduction of quantitative research.

Table 3-1 Definition Clarification for Questionnaire Design

	Definitions
Pure Sharing Blog Post	Non- commercialized blog posts that are blogger's pure sharing on products or services as well as honestly recording personal experiences or information. The content may contain both positive and negative evaluation.
Sample Trial Blog Post	Commercialized blog posts that explicitly notify that bloggers write because they either receive free samples, free trials, PR events invitation, or direct payment. Content may be more or less under control from companies or agencies.
Product Placement Blog Post	Commercialized blog posts that implicitly contain advertising content. Bloggers also either receive free samples, free trials, PR

	events invitation, or direct payment. Content may be more or less under control from companies or agencies.
PTT Cosmetics Board	Non-commercialized CGM platform where PTT users search or share knowledge, experiences, and testimonials on cosmetics-related products. It is strictly against any commercial content.
FashionGuide Sample Trial Report	Commercialized CGM content produced by a sample trial team that receive free samples from companies / agencies and write evaluation or testimonials about the products.

3.2.2 Second Stage — Main Study

In this stage, quantitative research questionnaire will be generated based on the literature review and findings from the first stage. Questionnaires will be mainly composed of 5-point Likert scaled questions.

Items are designed to measure the attitudes of beauty blog readers toward beauty blogs and buzz marketing by asking their satisfaction of beauty blog content, perspectives on three different types of blog post as well as two different CGM platforms, WOM referral tendency and purchasing behavior. The online survey was conducted from May 27, 2010 to June 9, 2010, and posted on My3Q website. 639 samples were collected, and 604 of which are valid, with 28 male consumers and seven system missing being excluded from the study.

3.2.2.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling was applied with the inclusion criterion of female blog readers of beauty blogs. In order to reach the blog readers of beauty blogs, the researcher observed the comment function in popular beauty blogs, those readers were left messages on their own blogs to invite them to fill-out the questionnaire. Snowball sampling was also applied to allow questionnaire participants to make referrals. Moreover, questionnaire was posted on related online forum in PTT in order to target beauty blog readers.

3.2.2.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was composed of ten sections. In the first section, demographic information was required to help researcher draw a general blog reader profile. The second section asked about participants' behavior on searching beauty-related information. In the third section, participants' general level of satisfaction toward beauty blog content was observed. The fourth, fifth and six section asked participants' attitude and their perceptions toward three different types of blog posts (Pure Sharing Blog Post, Sample Trial Blog Post, Product Placement Blog Post). In section 7 and 8, participants were asked to evaluate the two CGM platforms –PTT Cosmetics Board and FashionGuide Sample Trial Report. The ninth section was composed of information-sharing as well as purchasing behavior questions.

3.3 Research Variables

Demographic Variables

Age was measured as a continuous variable with “below 18” (coded ‘1’), “18 to 24” (coded ‘2’), “25 to 29” (coded ‘3’), “30 to 34” (coded ‘4’), “35 to 39” (coded 5), “40 to 44” (coded ‘6’), “45 to 49” (coded ‘7’), and “50 and above” (coded ‘8’). *Level of education* was an ordinal variable measured using seven categories, ranging from “elementary school” (coded ‘1’) to “Ph. D” (coded ‘6’) and “Others” (coded ‘7’). *Monthly income* was measured

with the use of six categories, ranging from “under 10,000 NTD” (coded ‘1’) to “more than 90,000 NTD” (coded ‘6’).

Independent Variables

Level of Content Satisfaction refers to readers' general level of satisfaction toward the content of beauty blogs and was measured with 10 items using 5-point Likert scale with “Strongly disagree” coded as 1, “Disagree” coded as 2, “Neutral” as 3, “Agree” as 4, and “Strongly agree” as 5.

Attitude toward Sample Trial Blog Post was measured with a single item that asked participants what their attitudes toward beauty bloggers explicitly notifying readers about the blog posts with material connection are. 5-point Likert scale with “Strongly disagree” coded as 1, “Disagree” coded as 2, “Neutral” as 3, “Agree” as 4, and “Strongly agree” as 5 was applied.

Attitude toward Product Placement Blog Post was measured with a single item that asked what their attitudes toward beauty bloggers writing product placement articles without openly notifying the readers are. 5-point Likert scale with “Strongly disagree” coded as 1, “Disagree” coded as 2, “Neutral” as 3, “Agree” as 4, and “Strongly agree” as 5 was applied.

WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post was measured with Eight items that asked participants how much they agree with eight statements on whether positive as well as negative WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is (1) credible, (2) true, (3) can be valuable reference, and (4) objective. An additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM credibility in PSBP ($M=3.56$, $SD=0.50$).

Frequency of Beauty Blog Reading was measured with a single item that asked participants the average time spent on reading beauty blogs each day.

Beauty-related Information Collecting involves blog readers pre-purchasing information gathering behavior. The Information collecting is the new index from the mean of following seven items using 5-point Likert scale, with Strongly disagree coded as “1”, Disagree as “2”, Neutral as “3”, Agree as “4”, and strongly agree as “5”: (1) When I need information about beauty-related products/services, I search online; (2) Compared to other information-collecting channels, reading beauty blogs is the most convenient; (3) I can quickly find the information I need in beauty blogs; (4) Reading beauty blogs has become my everyday habit; (5) If I have any questions while reading the blog posts, I can find answers in the blog posts or relevant responses/comments; (6) I think the content of beauty blogs is detailed; (7) I think beauty bloggers' personal experience and recommendation can help me make right purchasing decision. (*Cronbach's alpha=0.82*)

Dependent Variables

Interest-arousing in Products/ Services/ brands was measured with a single item using 5-point Likert scale, from “Strongly agree” coded as 5, “Agree” as 4, “Neutral” as 3, “Disagree” coded as 2, and “Strongly disagree” as 1. ($M=4.04$, $SD=.67$) The statement is “I have been influenced by beauty blogs and further grown interests in products, services, or brands.” is treated as dependent variable indicating consumer purchasing behavior.

WOM Referral was measured using two 5-point Likert scale with “Strongly agree” coded as 5, “Agree” as 4, “Neutral” as 3, “Disagree” coded as 2, and “Strongly disagree” coded as 1.

Correlation analysis was conducted on “I recommend beauty blogs to friends” and “Generally speaking, I will recommend my friends to use the products or services that I have good

evaluation.” Significance was found between this two items; thus this two items are put together to generate new index for WOM Referral ($M=.80$, $SD.68$).

Consumer Purchasing Behavior was measured with a single item that asked participants how much they agree on the statement “I have been influenced by beauty blogs and further purchase products/services. 5-point Likert scale, from “Strongly agree” coded as 5, “Agree” as 4, “Neutral” as 3, “Disagree” coded as 2, and “Strongly disagree” coded as 1. ($M=3.92$, $SD=.80$) is treated as dependent variable indicating consumer purchasing behavior.

Moderator Variable

WOM Credibility of Sample Trial Blog Post was measured with Eight items that asked participants how much they agree with eight statements on whether positive as well as negative WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is (1) credible, (2) true, (3) can be valuable reference, and (4) objective. An additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM credibility in STBP ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.87$).

WOM Credibility of Product Placement Blog Post was measured with Eight items that asked participants how much they agree with eight statements on whether positive as well as negative WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is (1) credible, (2) true, (3) can be valuable reference, (4) objective. An additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM credibility in PPBP ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.87$).

CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS

The purposes of this study is to examine whether readers/consumers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content would influence their interest, purchase behavior, and WOM referral. Moreover, the WOM credibility of three different types of blog post was examined to provide with more understanding on readers/consumers' attitudes as well as tendencies toward buzz marketing among beauty blogs.

The data collected was run and analyzed using SPSS 16.0. The online survey was conducted from May 27, 2010 to June 9, 2010, and posted on My3Q website. 639 samples were collected, and 604 of which are valid, with 28 male consumers and seven system missing being excluded from the study.

4.1 Sample Structure

For the first section of the questionnaire, preliminary descriptive analysis was conducted to provide with a general demographic profile of participants on age, education, marital status, occupation, monthly income, and residency (Table 4-1). To further understand the internet-using frequency and blog-using habit, descriptive analysis was performed on average hours spent online per week, blog owning, average time spent on editing blogs, average time spent on reading beauty blogs, and beauty blog reading motivations (Table 4-2).

Age

Among 603 valid samples, the accumulation of two age groups account for the majority (83.5%); respectively age group 18 to 24 years old (46.7%) and 25 to 29 years old (36.8). Following up by age group 30 to 34 years old that accounts for 10.3% of the total samples.

Level of Education

With the accumulated percentage of 94.4% that receive education up to college/university or above out of 602 samples, it is shown that the majority of participants are fairly educated. 398 participants hold college/university degree (65.9%), 166 master degree (27.5%) and 6 doctor degree (1%).

Marital Status

552 (91.4%) participants are single, accounting for the great majority of all 600 valid samples. While 46 are married (7.6%), two participants fall under the group of separated/divorced/widowed (0.3%).

Occupation

Among 598 participants that answered, 289 are students, accounting for 47.8%. Second largest group falls in education, with 57 participants that account for 9.4%. Participants who are unemployed (32 persons), in service industry (32 persons), in electronics or information industry (31 persons), in medial or environment industry (26 persons), and in communications industry (24 persons) share close percentages that rang from 4% to 5.3%. The rest 107 participants accounting for 17.7% distributed in other 21 industries.

Monthly Income

More than 90% of the participants make less than 50,000 NTD per month, among which the largest group falls in making less than 10,000 NTD per month (278 participants, 46%), following by those who make 30,001 to 50,000 NTD (145 participants, 24%) and those who make between 10,001 to 30,000 NTD (132 participants, 21.9%). People who make more than 50,001 NTD account for a total of 43 persons, 7.1%. This distribution is in

accordance with the previous question on age and occupation, in which younger group as well as students take up for majority of all participants.

Residency

Among 601 valid samples, 403 indicate their residency in northern Taiwan (66.7%), 71 in central Taiwan (11.8%), 86 in southern Taiwan (14.2%), 8 in eastern Taiwan (1.3%), and 10 in foreign countries (1.7%), including Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, France, and Guatemala.

Table 4-1. Descriptive Analysis: Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Under 18	13	2.2
18 to 24	282	46.7
25 to 29	222	36.8
30 to 34	62	10.3
35 to 39	16	2.6
40 to 44	7	1.2
45 to 49	1	0.2
Missing	1	0.2
Total Number	603	100
Level of Education		
Junior High School	2	0.3
Senior / Vocational High School	29	4.8
University/ College	398	65.9
Master	166	27.5
Ph. D	6	1.0
Other	1	0.2
Missing	2	0.3
Total Number	602	100%
Marital Status		

Single	552	91.4
Married	46	7.6
Separated / Divorced / Widowed	2	0.3
Missing	4	0.7
Total Number	600	100%
Occupation		
Electronics / Information	31	5.1
Manufacturing	17	2.8
Wholesales / Retails	13	2.2
Finance / Insurance	13	2.2
Education	57	9.4
Service Industry	32	5.3
Politics / Social Welfare	5	0.8
Communications	24	4.0
Logistics / Warehouse	5	0.8
Agriculture / Forestry / Fishery / Farming	1	0.2
Tourism / Leisure	4	0.7
Construction	7	1.2
Legal / Accounting	4	0.7
Medical / Environment	26	4.3
Hospitality	2	0.3
Student	289	47.8
Military / Police	2	0.3
Housekeeping	10	1.7
Unemployed	32	5.3
Self-employed	3	0.5
Others	19	3.8
Missing	6	1.0
Total Number	598	100%
Monthly Income		
Under 10,000 NTD	278	46.0
NTD 10,001-30,000	132	21.9
NTD 30,001-50,000	145	24.0
NTD 50,001-70,000	26	4.3

NTD 70,001-90,000	9	1.5
NTD 90,001 and above	8	1.3
Missing	6	1.0
Total Number	598	100%
Residency		
Northern Taiwan	403	66.7
Central Taiwan	71	11.8
Southern Taiwan	86	14.2
Eastern Taiwan	8	1.3
Foreign Countries	10	1.7
Missing	3	0.5
Total Number	601	100%

Average Hours Spent Online per Week

The largest group is composed of 278 participants out of 602, accounting for 46%, indicate their average time spent online is more than 20 hours per week, implying nearly half of the participants are heavy users of the internet. The second largest group is those who spend 5 to 8 hours per week, with 120 participants accounting for 19.9%. 78 (12.9%) have indicated their average time spent online per week is 9 to 12 hours, 49 (8.1%) indicated 13 to 16 hours, 42 (7%) indicated less than 5 hours, and 35 (5.8%) indicated 17 to 20 hours.

Blog Owning

There are 597 valid samples, among which 431 participants (71.4%) indicate blog owning, while 166 participants (27.5%) do not own any blogs.

Daily Average Time Spent on Editing Blog(s)

Among the 431 participants that suggest blog-owning, 423 has answered this question. The majority, 383 participants that account for 88.9%, averagely spend less than 2 hours on

editing blog(s). 34 participants (7.9%) spend 2 to 4 hours, two spend 8 to 10 hours (0.7%), and only one spends more than 10 hours (0.4%) per day.

Average Time Spent on Reading Beauty Blogs

Up to 93.4% of the participants spend averagely less than 2 hours reading beauty blog(s) each day; among which those who spend less than 30 minutes per day account for the majority (290 participants, 48%). With the percentage of 29.8%, 180 participants spend 30 minutes to less than an hour to read beauty blogs. 93 participants accounting for 15.4% spend 1 to 2 hours. Participants that spend more than 2 hours each day account for 6.2%.

Beauty Blog Reading Motivations

Blog readers may have more than one motivation to read beauty blogs, therefore multiple choices are offered for better describing reading motivations. Among 603 participants, “to exchange information” was chosen by 363 participants (60.1%), “to learn knowledge” was chosen by 358 participants (59.3%), “to kill time” was chosen by 299 participants (49.5%), “to relax” was chosen by 243 participants (40.2%), “to seek suggestion” was chosen by 197 participants (32.6%), “to exchange opinion” was chosen by 52 participants (8.6%).

From the descriptive result, it is clear that beauty blogs are considered more functional for readers as information-exchanging and knowledge-learning are the top two purposes of reading. Nonetheless, beauty blogs are also viewed as good tools for time-killing and relaxation. In other words, beauty blogs serve multiple functions; readers can not only look for helpful information or practical knowledge, but also can relax as well as get rid of boredom. Moreover, readers can even seek for suggestions on decision-making.

Table 4-2. Descriptive Analysis: Internet-using Frequency and Blog-using Habit

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Average Online Hours Per Week		
Less than 5 hours	42	7.0
5 to 8 hours	120	19.9
9 to 12 hours	78	12.9
13 to 16 hours	49	8.1
17 to 20 hours	35	5.8
More than 20 hours	278	46.0
Missing	2	0.3
Total Number	602	100%
Blog Owning		
Yes	431	71.4
No	166	27.5
Missing	7	1.2
Total Number	597	100%
Average Time Spent on Editing Blog(s)		
Less than 2 hours	383	88.9
2 to 4 hours	34	7.9
4 to 6 hours	3	0.7
8 to 10 hours	2	0.4
More than 10 hours	1	0.2
Missing	8	1.9
Total Number	423	100%
Average Time Spent on Reading Beauty Blog(s)		
Less than 30 minutes	290	48.0
30 minutes to less than 1 hour	180	29.8
1 to 2 hours	93	15.4
2 to 3 hours	30	5.0
More than 3 hours	7	1.2
Missing	4	0.7
Total Number	600	100%
Beauty Blog Reading Motivation(s) Multiple Answers		
To relax	243	40.2

To kill time	299	49.5
To exchange information	363	60.1
To exchange opinion	52	8.6
To learn knowledge	358	59.3
To seek suggestion	197	32.6
Others	5	0.8
Missing	1	0.2
Total Number	603	

4.2 Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

In the second section, questions 13 to 23 are asked about consumer's behavior on searching beauty-related information. From the descriptive analysis, it is observed that the mean of question 20 is 3.13 ($SD=1.07$), indicating the overall attitude toward "The impression/number of clicks of beauty blogs will influence my willingness to read" is quite neutral. Therefore, question 20 was excluded. The rest of data was subjected to Factor analysis that applied Principle Axis Factoring extraction method and Promax Rotation method. A two-factor solution for 10 items was deemed appropriate.

Factor 1 ($Eigenvalue = 4.22$) was labeled "*Beauty-related Information Collecting*" and accounted for 42.20% of the total variance. Factor 2 ($Eigenvalue = 1.77$) was labeled "*Willingness to Read*" and accounted for 17.71% of the total variance. Table 4-3 shown below contains the 10 items and their corresponding factor loadings. The reliability (*Cronbach's alpha*) of two factors are respectively .82, and .88.

Table 4-3. Factor Analysis: Consumer Behavior on Searching Beauty-related Information

	# of items	Reliability (<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>)	Items	Factor Loadings
Factor 1	7	.82	Q13	.52
Beauty-related			Q14	.74
Information Collecting			Q15	.77

			Q16	.50
			Q17	.65
			Q18	.69
			Q19	.62
Eigenvalue = 4.22				
% of variance = 42.20 %				
Factor 2	3	.88	Q21	.84
Willingness to Read			Q22	.96
			Q23	.76
Eigenvalue = 1.77				
% of variance = 17.71 %				

Extraction Method: Principle Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Loadings are greater than .50, Eigenvalues > 1

Level of Content Satisfaction

In Section 3, 10 questions were asked to observe readers' general level of satisfaction toward the content of beauty blogs. 575 samples are valid among the total of 604 samples.

The content satisfaction refers to readers' general level of satisfaction toward the content of beauty blogs by measuring 10 items using 5-point Likert scale. With Strongly disagree coded as "1", Disagree as "2", Neutral as "3", Agree as "4", and strongly Agree as "5", 10 items are as follows: (1) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is interesting; (2) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is frequently updated; (3) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is abundant; (4) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is correct; (5) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is credible; (6) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is interactive; (7) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is true; (8) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is immediate; (9) Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is close to my life; (10) Generally speaking,

the content of beauty blogs is influential. An additive index “Level of Content Satisfaction” from these 10 items was created with *Cronbach's alpha*=0.85 ($M=3.65$, $SD=.49$).

Section 4, 5 and 6 paid closer attentions to readers' attitudes toward three different types of blog post—(1) Pure Sharing Blog Post (PSBP), which is the non-commercial content that is not operation of buzz marketing; (2) Sample Trial Blog Post (STBP), which involves commercial content and is operationalized as explicit buzz marketing; (3) Product Placement Blog Post (PPBP), which involves commercial content and is operationalized as implicit buzz marketing. First, descriptive analysis was conducted on all items from these three sections. The mean scores of corresponding items were compared to provide with a general profile on readers' attitudes on specific aspects, shown as Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. Mean Scores of Readers' Attitudes toward PSBP, STBP, and PPBP.

	Pure Sharing Blog Post	Sample Trial Blog Post	Product Placement Blog Post
Interested in positive WOM	4.04	3.42	2.78
Positive WOM is credible	3.50	3.07	2.60
Positive WOM is true	3.40	3.02	2.65
Positive WOM can be reference	3.75	3.37	2.73
Positive WOM is objective	3.12	2.83	2.58
Positive WOM is commercial	3.42	3.85	3.59
Positive WOM increase purchase intention	3.80	3.34	2.88
Interested in negative WOM	3.84	3.75	3.31
Negative WOM is credible	3.73	3.63	3.21
Negative WOM is true	3.66	3.61	3.20
Negative WOM can be reference	3.93	3.80	3.33

Negative WOM is objective	3.38	3.45	3.05
Negative WOM is commercial	2.91	3.16	3.18
Negative WOM decrease purchase intention	4.00	3.86	3.55

For a clearer comparison, mean scores are put into a horizontal bar graph (Figure 4-1).

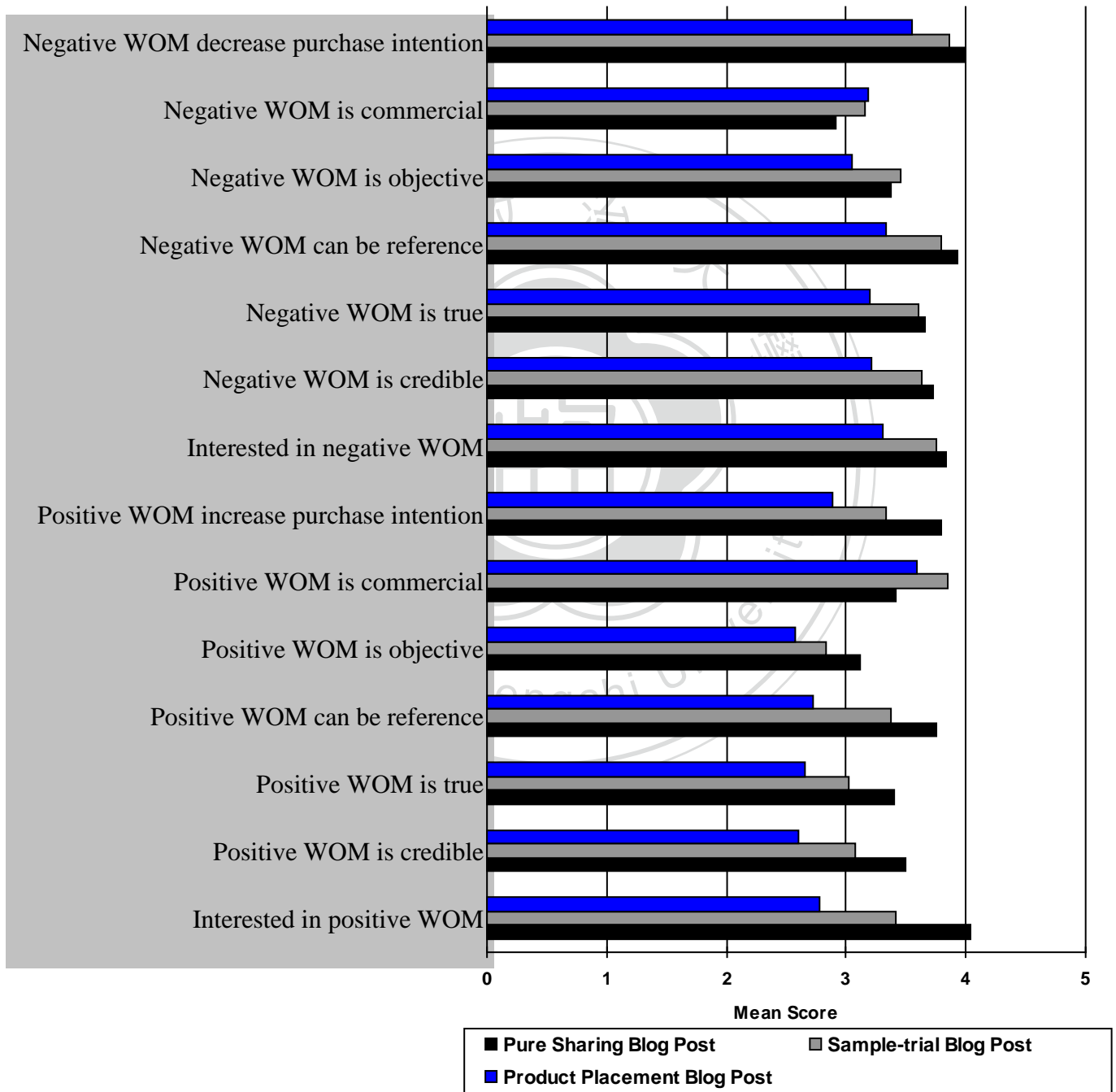


Figure 4-1. Horizontal Bar Graph on Readers' Attitudes toward PSBP, STBP, and PPBP.

With regard to positive WOM, readers show much agreement on the statement that WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post arouse their interest, rather than the other two types of blog posts. In general, readers agree the most on Pure Sharing Blog Post being more credible, true, worthwhile to be reference, objective, as well as increasing purchase intention while readers also appear tendency to agree on the above statements in Sample Trial Blog Post. As to Product Placement Blog Post, readers show more disagreement on its credibility and recognize those posts to be the most commercial. It was also indicated that positive WOM in Product Placement Blog Post has the lowest influence on consumers' purchase intention.

However, it is evident that generally, despite different types of blog post, readers consider negative WOM relatively more credible, truer, more worthy as a reference, more objective, less commercial than its positive counterpart. Readers also agree more on the statement that negative WOM may decrease their purchase intention than positive WOM may increase their purchase intention. This is consistent with previous literature on negative WOM may have more influence than positive WOM on consumers' decision making and purchasing behavior.

In addition, for the purpose of observing readers' attitudes toward two kinds of buzz marketing, explicit and implicit, participants were asked on their level of agreement on Sample Trial Blog Post (explicit buzz marketing) and Product Placement Blog Post (implicit buzz marketing). It is found that on being notified, readers will have relatively higher acceptance on buzz marketing (Sample Trial Blog Post, $M=3.48$) while the implicit buzz marketing will cause lower agreement (Product Placement Blog Post, $M=2.37$).

WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post was measured with eight items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as "1", Disagree as "2", Neutral as "3", Agree as "4", and strongly Agree as "5": (1) I think the positive WOM in Pure Sharing Blog

Post is credible, (2) I think the positive WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is true, (3) I think the positive WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post can be valuable reference, (4) I think the positive WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is objective. (5) I think the negative WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is credible, (6) I think the negative WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is true, (7) I think the negative WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post can be valuable reference, (8) I think the negative WOM in Pure Sharing Blog Post is objective. 586 out of a total of 604 samples are valid; with *Cronbach's alpha* = .85, an additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM Credibility in PSBP ($M=3.56$, $SD=.50$).

WOM Credibility of Sample Trial Blog Post was measured with eight items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as "1", Disagree as "2", Neutral as "3", Agree as "4", and strongly Agree as "5": (1) I think the positive WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is credible, (2) I think the positive WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is true, (3) I think the positive WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post can be valuable reference, (4) I think the positive WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is objective. (5) I think the negative WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is credible, (6) I think the negative WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is true, (7) I think the negative WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post can be valuable reference, (8) I think the negative WOM in Sample Trial Blog Post is objective. 580 out of a total of 604 samples are valid; with *Cronbach's alpha* = .82, an additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM Credibility of STBP ($M=3.42$, $SD=.51$).

WOM Credibility of Product Placement Blog Post was measured with eight items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as "1", Disagree as "2", Neutral as "3", Agree as "4", and strongly Agree as "5": (1) I think the positive WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is credible, (2) I think the positive WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is true, (3) I think the positive WOM in Product Placement Blog Post can be valuable reference, (4) I

think the positive WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is objective. (5) I think the negative WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is credible, (6) I think the negative WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is true, (7) I think the negative WOM in Product Placement Blog Post can be valuable reference, (8) I think the negative WOM in Product Placement Blog Post is objective. 564 out of a total of 604 samples are valid; with *Cronbach's alpha*= .88, an additive index from these eight items are created and treated as the index of WOM Credibility of PPBP ($M=2.92$, $SD=.64$).

In section 7 and 8, two different platforms for consumer-generated content— PTT Cosmetics Board and FashionGuide Sample Trial Report—were proposed to serve two purposes: to observe readers/consumers' attitudes toward WOM on different platforms, as well as to test the hypothesis that assumes the level of WOM Credibility will appear consistent between commercial platform (FashionGuide Sample-trial Report) and blog posts that are operated under buzz marketing (Sample Trial Blog Post and Product Placement Blog Post). PTT Cosmetic Board as noncommercial platform share similar traits with Pure Sharing Blog Post. On the other hand, FashionGuide as a more commercial platform will perform like Sample Trial Blog Post and Product Placement Blog Post under the operation of buzz marketing. The level of WOM Credibility will appear consistent between commercial platform (FashionGuide Sample-trial Report) and blog posts that are operated under buzz marketing (Sample Trial Blog Post and Product Placement Blog Post).

WOM Credibility of FashionGuide(FG) Sample-trial Report was measured with four items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as “1”, Disagree as “2”, Neutral as “3”, Agree as “4”, and strongly Agree as “5”: (1) I think the WOM in FashionGuide Sample-trial Report is credible, (2) I think the WOM in FashionGuide Sample-trial Report is true, (3) I think the WOM in FashionGuide Sample-trial Report can be valuable reference, (4)

I think the WOM in FashionGuide Sample-trial Report is objective. Among 604 participants, 214 have read the FashionGuide Sample-trial Report. With Cronbach's $\alpha=.76$, an additive index from these four items are created and treated as the index of WOM credibility in FG ($M=3.48, SD=.52$).

WOM Credibility of PTT Cosmetics Board was measured with four items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as "1", Disagree as "2", Neutral as "3", Agree as "4", and strongly Agree as "5": (1) I think the WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is credible, (2) I think the WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is true, (3) I think the WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board can be valuable reference, (4) I think the WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is objective. Among 604 participants, 413 have read the Cosmetics Board on PTT. Compared with FG Sample Trial Report, of which only 1/3 of participants have read it, PTT Cosmetics Board reaches 2/3 of readership among all participants. It is evident that PTT Cosmetics Board has more popularity among most blog readers. With *Cronbach's alpha* = .88, an additive index from these four items were created and treated as the index of WOM credibility in PTT Cosmetics Board ($M=4.00, SD=.60$).

Section 9 was composed of questions concerning consumer decision-making and information-sharing behavior. From the result of descriptive analysis, it is found that 79.8% of participants would read beauty blogs upon friends' recommendation, while 58.5% would recommend to friends (with 24.7% rating neutral and 15.4% shows disagreement). On comment-leaving, 80.3% indicated they never or seldom leave comments on beauty blogs while 16.7% indicates they sometimes do. Only 2.9% indicated they always or quite often leave comments on other beauty blogs. On viewing comments on beauty blogs, the most rated falls in "sometimes," accounting for 39.1%. 40% of the participants indicate they never or seldom do. One fifth of the participants indicated that they always or quite often view

people's comments on beauty blogs (20.2%). Only 24.6% of the participants would post testimonials or post-purchase evaluation on their own blogs. 85% of the participants would make recommendation to others if the product or service they use is good.

On asked if they have ever trackbacked or forwarded beauty blog posts to their own blog, 88.2% answered "no". On asked if they have ever tracked or forwarded beauty blog posts to other platforms, 79.8% answered "no". The percentages shown indicate most participants do not trackback nor forward beauty blog posts to any other platforms. Among those who have trackbacked or forwarded to other platforms, specification of the platforms were required and multiple choices were allowed. The most commonly selected platforms include social network such as Facebook, online discussion forum such as Fashionguide and UrCosme, BBS such as PTT, and microblogging platform Plurk; few indicated other platforms such as PTT2, 104beaty, youtube, Pixnet, and iswii.

As to the examination of whether readers would link to other blogs through blogrolls as well as to other websites/webpages through blog Ads, 80.5% indicated they have linked to other blogs through blogrolls, and 52.8% indicated they never clicked on the Ads that link to other websites/webpages. This implies blogrolls do help bridging different blogs, reinforcing the blog networking and transportation of information in blogosphere. Moreover, blog Ads may attract half of the blog users' attention.

The influence of beauty blogs on generating interest in products, services or brands among readers was highly recognized by 87% of the participants. Yet the percentage lowers slightly when it comes to influencing real purchasing behavior—78.9% agreed that they have made purchase due to the influence of WOM in beauty blogs. The means of WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post, WOM Credibility of Sample Trial Blog Post, WOM Credibility of Product Placement Blog Post, WOM Credibility of FashionGuide Sample-trial

Report from, WOM Credibility of PTT Cosmetics Board are compared to verify researcher's assumptions—that the level of WOM Credibility will appear consistent between non-commercial platform (PTT Cosmetics Board) and Pure Sharing Blog Post.

WOM Referral was measured with two items on 5 point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree coded as “1”, Disagree as “2”, Neutral as “3”, Agree as “4”, and strongly Agree as “5”. Correlation analysis was conducted on “I recommend beauty blogs to friends” and “Generally speaking, I will recommend my friends to use the products or services that I have good evaluation” (Table 4-5). Significance was found between this two items; thus this two items are put together to generate new index for WOM Referral ($r=.40, p<.001$).

Table 4-5. Correlation Analysis of Q94 and Q98

		Generally speaking, I will recommend my friends to use the products or services that I have good evaluation.
I recommend beauty blogs to friends.	Pearson Correlation	.400**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	582

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p <.05$; ** $p <.01$, *** $P <.001$

In Table 4-6, all Cronbach's alphas in this study are listed to examine the reliability. Except WOM Credibility of FashionGuide Sample Trial Report, all the other seven indexes reached higher than .80.

Table 4-6. Cronbach's Alpha Scores in this Study

Index	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Beauty-related Information Collecting</i>	.82
<i>Willingness to Read</i>	.88
<i>Level of Content Satisfaction</i>	.85
<i>WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post</i>	.85
<i>WOM Credibility of Sample Trial Blog Post</i>	.82
<i>WOM Credibility of Product Placement Blog Post</i>	.88
<i>WOM Credibility of FashionGuide(FG) Sample Trial Report</i>	.76
<i>WOM Credibility of PTT Cosmetics Board</i>	.88

Note: Cronbach's alpha scores are greater than .70

4.3 Analytical Approach

Hypothesis 1: Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to interest-arousing in products, services or brands.

Correlation analysis is first conducted between readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content and interest-arousing in products, services or brands. For H1, researcher as well applied Hierarchical Regression to examine the effect of independent variable (blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content) and control variables on dependent variable—interest-arousing in products, services or brands. Demographics such as age, level of education and monthly income are input in block 1. The first control variable—frequency of beauty blog reading—is put in block 2. Information collecting as the second control variable is put into the third block. In the fourth block, content satisfaction is input in the last block.

Hypothesis 2: Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to purchasing behavior.

Besides correlation analysis, hierarchical regression is applied on H2 to further study the effect of independent variable (blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content) and control variables on dependent variable—purchasing behavior of beauty blog readers. In the 1st block, demographics such as age, level of education and monthly income are included, following up in the 2nd block is the first control variable—frequency of beauty blog reading. Information collecting as the second control variable is put into the third block. In the fourth block, content satisfaction is input in the last block.

Hypothesis 3: Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to the conduction of WOM Referral.

A correlation analysis is carried out to examine the relationship between readers' satisfaction toward beauty blogs content and readers' conduction of WOM Referral. Furthermore, hierarchical regression is applied to study the effect of both independent (blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content) and control variables on dependent variable—the WOM Referral behavior of beauty blog readers. In the 1st block, demographics such as age, level of education and monthly income are included, following up in the 2nd block is the first control variable—frequency of beauty blog reading. The second control variable, information collecting, is put into the third block and along with the independent variable—content satisfaction— in the last block.

Hypothesis 4: The correlation between WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post and purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs will be higher than other two types of blog posts.

A correlation analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs and three types of blog posts. From observing and comparing the Pearson Correlation score, the hypothesis can be verified or rejected.

Hypothesis 5a: The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting sample trial articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of STBP WOM credibility.

Hypothesis 5b: The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting product placement articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of PPBP WOM credibility.

In order to study if WOM credibility in both STBP and PPBP moderates the effect of blog readers' attitude on purchasing behavior, regression analysis was applied to examine whether there was interaction effect. To test H5a, "attitude toward STBP" as independent variable and "STBP WOM credibility" as moderator variable are standardized and multiplied to get an interaction term. For H5b, "attitude toward PPBP" as independent variable and "PPBP WOM credibility" as moderator variable are standardized and multiplied to get an interaction term. For both H4a and H4b, Moderated Multiple Regression with two main effects (Independent and Moderator variables) entered into the 1st block and the interaction term entered as the 2nd block.

4.4 Test of Hypotheses

As shown In Table 4-7, the correlation analysis suggests significant relationship between blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content and interest-arousing in products, services, or brands.

Table 4-7. Correlation Analysis on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and Interest-arousing in Products, Services, or Brands

		Interest-arousing in products, services or brands
Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content	Pearson Correlation	.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	578

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

Observing the result from hierarchical regression analysis (see Table 4-8), it is found age ($\beta = -.11, p < .05$) and level of education ($\beta = .11, p < .05$) showed significant influence on interest-arousing while only demographics were input. After frequency of beauty blog reading was added and showed great significance ($\beta = .26, p < .001$), only level of education remains its significance ($\beta = .14, p < .05$). This indicates a positive relationship that the more time one spent on reading beauty blogs, the more likely one would be interested in products, services, or brands. Furthermore, in model three, information collecting also shows strong significance ($\beta = .39, p < .001$), while frequency of beauty blog reading still remains great significance ($\beta = .16, p < .001$), and age ($\beta = -.09, p < .05$) as well as education ($\beta = .10, p < .01$) show significance. Participants with either younger age or higher education will spend more time on reading beauty blogs, and hence involve more in information collecting. Finally, content satisfaction also performs great significance ($\beta = .19, p < .001$) on readers' interest-arousing in products, services, or brands., reflecting higher level of satisfaction along with more information collecting and higher frequency in blog reading will lead to more interest. Notice the significance of education has increased as more variables were entered, suggesting positive relationships with frequency of blog reading, information collecting, content satisfaction, and readers' interest-arousing in products, services, or brands.

Table 4-8. Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and Interest-arousing in Products, Services, or Brands (Standardized regression coefficients)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<u>Block 1: Demographics</u>				
Age	-.11*	-.10	-.09*	-.09
Education	.11*	.14*	.10**	.11**
Monthly Income	-.06	-.03	-.00	.01
Incremental R ² (%)	7.31			
<u>Block 2:</u>				
Frequency of beauty blog reading		.26***	.16***	.16***
Incremental R ² (%)		24.12		
<u>Block 3:</u>				
Beauty-related Information				
Collecting			.39***	.27***
Incremental R ² (%)			60.15	
<u>Block 4:</u>				
Content Satisfaction				.19***
Incremental R ² (%)				64.93

Note: $N=578$. Entries for all models are final standardized regression coefficients β

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

From the results shown in Table 4-7 and 4-8, hypothesis 1 “Blog readers’ satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to interest-arousing in products, services or brands” is accepted.

The result of correlation analysis (Table 4-9) shows that blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty bog content is significantly correlated with purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blog WOM.

Table 4-9. Correlation Analysis on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and Purchasing Behavior

		Purchasing Behavior
Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content	Pearson Correlation	.428**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	578

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

The result of hierarchical regression is shown as Table 4-10, in which demographics did not show much significance, except monthly income that show higher significance in model 1 ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$) yet diminished after other variables were inserted. Frequency of beauty blog reading performed great significance on purchasing behavior ($\beta = .27, p < .001$); its significance remained after more variables were input. For beauty-related information collecting, it is also significantly associated with purchasing behavior ($\beta = .42, p < .001$). Content satisfaction also showed significance ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) on purchasing behavior, indicating higher level of content satisfaction along with more information collecting as well as higher frequency in blog reading will be more positively associated with purchasing behavior.

Table 4-10. Hierarchical Regression on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and Purchasing Behavior (Standardized regression coefficients)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<u>Block 1: Demographics</u>				
Age	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.14
Education	.06	.09*	.05	.06
Monthly Income	-.14**	-.10*	-.09	-.07
Incremental R ² (%)	10.42			
<u>Block 2:</u>				
Frequency of beauty blog reading		.27***	.15***	.16***
Incremental R ² (%)		35.63		
<u>Block 3:</u>				
Beauty-related Information				
Collecting			.42***	.29***
Incremental R ² (%)			93.87	
<u>Block 4:</u>				
Content Satisfaction				.19*
Incremental R ² (%)				101.15

Note: $N=578$. Entries for all models are final standardized regression coefficients β

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

From the results shown in Table 4-9 and 4-10, hypothesis 2 “Blog readers’ satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to purchasing behavior” is accepted.

As shown in Table 4-11, blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is significantly correlated with WOM Referral.

Table 4-11. Correlation Analysis on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and WOM Referral

		WOM Referral
Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content	Pearson Correlation	.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	584

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

In Table 4-12 (as shown below), demographics have no significant influence on the WOM Referral. Nevertheless, the frequency of beauty blog reading shows great significance ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) on WOM Referral, with its significance remained after more variables being input. This indicates a positive relationship that the more time one spent on reading beauty blogs, the more likely one would make WOM referrals to others. Furthermore, information collecting also shows strong significance ($\beta = .38, p < .01$), which shows higher involvement in information collecting will cause more WOM Referral. Finally, content satisfaction also performs significance ($\beta = .13, p < .05$), reflecting higher level of satisfaction along with more information collecting and higher frequency in blog reading will lead to more WOM Referral.

Table 4-12. Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Blog Readers' Satisfaction toward Beauty Blog Content and WOM Referral (Standardized regression coefficients)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<u>Block 1: Demographics</u>				
Age	-.019	.003	.004	.005

Education	-.034	.004	-.031	-.024
Monthly Income	-.070	-.033	-.011	-.002
Incremental R ² (%)	2.38			
<u>Block 2:</u>				
Frequency of beauty blog reading		.309***	.205***	.206***
Incremental R ² (%)		26.94		
<u>Block 3:</u>				
Beauty-related Information				
Collecting			.381***	.296***
Incremental R ² (%)			63.01	
<u>Block 4:</u>				
Content Satisfaction				.127*
Incremental R ² (%)				65.35

Note: $N=573$. Entries for all models are final standardized regression coefficients β

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

From the results shown in Table 4-11 and 4-12, hypothesis 3 “Blog readers’ satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to the conduction of WOM Referral” is accepted.

As shown in Table 4-13, it is evident that WOM Credibility in both Pure Sharing Blog Post and Sample Trial Blog Post is significantly correlated with purchasing behavior, while WOM Credibility in Product Placement showed no significance. With the correlation coefficient higher than WOM Credibility in STBP, WOM Credibility in PSBP reflected higher correlation with the dependent variable—purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs. Therefore, hypothesis 4 “The correlation between WOM Credibility of Pure

Sharing Blog Post and purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs will be higher than other two types of blog posts” is accepted.

Table 4-13. Correlation analysis on WOM Credibility and Purchasing Behavior.

		WOM Credibility (PSBP)	WOM Credibility (STBP)	WOM Credibility (PPBP)
I have been influenced by beauty blogs and performed purchasing behavior.	Pearson Correlation	.364**	.276**	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.162
	N	578	576	568

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

From the regression analysis on interaction effect of attitudes toward Sample Trial Blog Post and purchasing behavior (Table 4-14), the main effects were examined significant in both model 1 (Attitudes toward SPBP: $\beta = .14$, $P < 0.01$, WOM credibility in STBP: $\beta = .22$, $P < 0.001$) and model 2 (Attitudes toward SPBP: $\beta = .15$, $P < 0.01$, WOM credibility in STBP: $\beta = .23$, $P < 0.001$). The positive coefficients suggest positive relationships with the dependent variable; in other words, if one agrees more on STBP, one will be more likely to have purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs. As well, if one feels WOM in STBP more credible, one will tend to perform purchasing behavior.

Yet, no interaction effect was found, which indicates the level of WOM credibility in Sample Trial Blog Post does not moderate the effect of readers' attitudes on their purchasing behavior. Hence, hypothesis 5a “The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward

beauty bloggers posting sample trial articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of STBP WOM credibility” is rejected.

Table 4-14. Regression Analysis on Interaction Effect of Attitudes toward STBP and Purchasing Behavior (Standardized regression coefficients)

	Model 1	Model 2
<u>Block 1:</u>		
Attitudes toward Sample Trial Blog Post	.14**	.15**
WOM credibility in Sample Trial Blog Post	.22***	.23***
Incremental R ² (%)	33.09	
<u>Block 2: Interaction</u>		
Interaction term (Attitudes toward Sample Trial Blog Post x WOM credibility in Sample Trial Blog Post)		.07
Incremental R ² (%)		34.80

N=591. Entries for all models are final standardized regression coefficients β

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

As to Product Placement Blog Post, the result of regression analysis on interaction effect of attitudes toward PPBP and purchasing behavior H5b is shown in Table 4-15, in which the Interaction effect is observed. Before adding the interaction term, both attitudes toward Product Placement Blog Post ($\beta = -.13, P < 0.01$) and WOM credibility in Product Placement Blog Post ($\beta = .13, P < 0.01$) have significance. However, by adding interaction terms, not only the significance of attitudes toward Product Placement Blog Post ($\beta = -.19, P < 0.001$) has enhanced but also the WOM credibility in Product Placement Blog Post ($\beta = .19, P < 0.001$) on purchasing behavior shows higher significance. Meanwhile, interaction effect shows strong significance with $\beta = .19, P < 0.001$, implying the level of WOM credibility in

Product Placement Blog Post significantly moderate the influence of readers' attitudes on purchasing behavior. As the level of credibility in Product Placement Blog Post increases, the impact of readers' attitudes towards beauty bloggers posting Product Placement Blog Post on purchasing behavior decreases.

Table 4-15. Regression Analysis on Interaction Effect of Attitudes toward PPBP and Purchasing Behavior (Standardized regression coefficients)

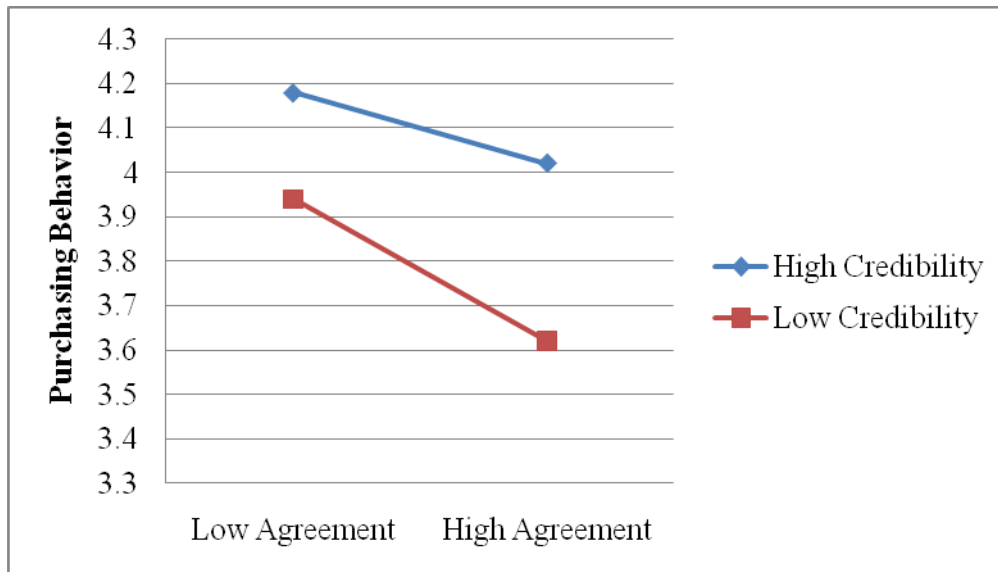
	Model 1	Model 2
<u>Block 1:</u>		
Attitudes toward Product Placement Blog Post	-.13**	-.19***
WOM credibility in Product Placement Blog Post	.13**	.19***
Incremental R ² (%)	5.67	
<u>Block 2: Interaction</u>		
Interaction term (Attitudes toward Product Placement Blog Post x WOM credibility in Product Placement Blog Post)		.19***
Incremental R ² (%)		17.47

N=582. Entries for all models are final standardized regression coefficients β

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $P < .001$

From the interaction plot shown as Figure 4-1, it is indicated that readers holding lower perception of credibility in Product Placement Blog Post will be more influenced by attitude toward the bloggers' posting product placement articles when purchasing.

Figure 4-2. Plotting Interaction Effect (Scale ranges only partially displayed on Y-axis)



Concluding from the results of regression analysis on interaction effect shown in Table 4-15 and the interaction plotting shown in Figure 4-1, there do show interaction effect, indicating the level of PPBP WOM does moderating the relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting product placement articles and purchasing behavior. Nevertheless, instead of positively influencing the relationship, a negative result is observed. In conclusion, hypothesis 5b "The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting product placement articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of PPBP WOM credibility" is as well rejected.

4.5 Summary

Each hypothesis is examined, and listed below in Table 4-16. In this study, all hypotheses were tested with data collected from the survey, with first four hypotheses accepted as well as the last H5a and H5b being rejected.

Table 4-16. Summaries of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	
H1. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to interest-arousing in products, services or brands.	Hypothesis Accepted
H2. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to purchasing behavior.	Hypothesis Accepted
H3. Blog readers' satisfaction toward beauty blog content is positively related to the conduction of WOM Referral.	Hypothesis Accepted
H4. The correlation between WOM Credibility of Pure Sharing Blog Post and purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs will be higher than other two types of blog posts.	Hypothesis Accepted
H5a. The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting sample trial articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of STBP WOM credibility.	Hypothesis Rejected
H5b. The relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting product placement articles and purchasing behavior will be positively associated with the level of PPBP WOM credibility.	Hypothesis Rejected

As previously mentioned, due to lacking of existing literature, hypothesis 5a and hypothesis 5b regarding WOM credibility in different types of blog posts were rejected may be the misevaluation from limited literature review and in-depth interview results. Hypothesis 5a is rejected due to no discovery on interaction effect; hence the level of STBP WOM has no

influence on the relationship between blog readers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers posting sample trial articles and purchasing behavior. Hypothesis 5b is rejected because of the data analysis results show a negative association instead of a positive one that was presumed in the hypothesis.



CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS

The development of blogs has been ever-prospering. More and more bloggers are viewed by blog readers as new opinion leaders on their impact of information-sharing and purchasing decision-making. This study observes blog readers attitude and follow-up purchasing behavior under the influence of WOM generated from beauty blogs.

5.1 Discussion and Other Finding

It is evident that the frequency of beauty blog reading, along with information collecting and the level of satisfaction toward blog content will have significant effect on readers/consumers' interest (in products, services or brands), purchasing behavior, and tendency on referring WOM. In other words, if one spends more time reading beauty blogs, it is more likely for her to collect information from beauty blogs; thus cultivating her satisfaction toward beauty blogs, eventually (1) developing interest in products, service; (2) performing purchasing behavior; and (3) passing on the WOM to friends or families.

WOM credibility in both Pure Sharing Blog Post and Sample Trial Blog Post are positively correlated with purchasing behavior under the influence of beauty blogs. This is to say, higher credibility may be associated with more purchasing behavior. However, there is no correlation between WOM credibility in Product Placement Blog Post and purchasing behavior.

Moderating effect exists only in Product Placement Blog Post, as the level of credibility in Product Placement Blog Post increases, the impact of readers' attitudes towards beauty bloggers posting Product Placement Blog Post on purchasing behavior decreases. In addition, from the findings, those who agree less with the bloggers' writing Product Placement Blog Post tend to be more influenced by beauty blogs when performing

purchasing behavior. This might be due to their reliance on consuming credible information from beauty blogs to help make purchasing decision that they are more aware of advertising-like contents; as the result, their tolerance towards buzz marketing in the form of product placement relatively lowers.

There is one finding in this study that is worth elaborating. As to WOM credibility in different platforms, it was presumed that the WOM credibility of noncommercial platform and noncommercial blog post will perform similarly, whereas commercial platform and commercial blog posts will share close traits. Nonetheless, it is found in study, that contents with similar traits, will perceive different credibility in different platforms.

By examining the mean scores of WOM Credibility of three different types of blog posts as well as WOM Credibility of two different CGM (Consumer-generated Content) platforms, it is found that PTT Cosmetics Board ($M=4.00$) received fairly high agreement on its WOM credibility, yet Pure Sharing Blog Post ($M=3.56$) shared close score with FashionGuide Sample Trial Report ($M=3.48$) and Sample Trial Blog Post ($M=3.42$). This may due to readers' acceptance toward open and transparent sample trail testimonials. In other words, if readers are notified beforehand, their agreement toward explicit sample trail testimonials will be of little difference from noncommercial blog posts. Nevertheless, readers held low agreement toward the implicit Product Placement Blog Post ($M=2.92$), suggesting consumers' opposition against deceiving buzz marketing messages, or pseudo buzz.

To sum, even contents with similar traits, will have different credibility in different platforms. Readers/ consumers' perception towards Pure Sharing Blog Post, Sample Trial Blog Post and FashionGuide Sample Trial Report share close credibility, indicating openly informing readers about bloggers receiving incentives to write does not necessarily decrease the credibility of the contents.

5.2 Recommendations

The suggestion for beauty bloggers is to secure their credibility, which is recognized as the most valuable asset of a blogger. From this study, it is observed that readers' acceptance toward Sample Trial Blog Post is fairly high, and the WOM credibility is only a little lower than Pure Sharing Blog Post. This is to say, it is not unacceptable for beauty bloggers to receive incentives or be recruited to operate buzz marketing to recommend, or even advertise a product. The most crucial key is to keep open and transparent about it as well as to keep integrity and be honest about what to say.

Likewise, for marketing or advertising professionals, it is also suggested to keep buzz marketing through blogs as transparent as possible. As mentioned, readers/consumers perception of Product Placement Blog Post is relatively low. Keeping readers or potential consumers informed about commercialized content will be more accepted and appreciated by blog readers. Moreover, since readers/consumers agree more on the negative WOM and tend to be more influenced by negative WOM when purchasing, to maintain quality control and always try to offer consumers best products/services that allow no room for criticism is suggested.

5.3 Contribution of the Study

Word-of-mouth has always been one of the most significant discussion topics in both marketing and communication fields. The new form of WOM, eWOM, has broken old boundaries and has been prospering on the internet, generating great influence that attracts researchers to study its diversified application and effectiveness. Recruiting bloggers has become more common and prominent in buzz marketing.

This paper covers the emerging market dynamics of buzz marketing among beauty blogs and consumer research on attitudes and purchasing behaviors. The findings of this paper may help marketing practitioners to discover consumers' attitudes, purchasing behavior, and follow-up WOM referrals. Through understanding consumers' insights on buzz marketing in blogs, marketers or practitioners may find information that is useful for enhancing their planning efforts for interactive marketing strategies.

Many have predicted that the trend of recruiting beauty bloggers to spread positive WOM and generate actual profit will be less feverish, that blog buzz marketing is already at its peak. With readers/consumers become smarter and more sensitive about the content they consume, they may just filter out the unwanted commercialized messages. However, as mentioned previously, the Taiwanese new law regulating bloggers' endorsement or product placement should be open and notifying. In the future, bloggers will be like bloggers in North America or Europe that write about products under the regulation. All contents concerning any commercialization will be transparent. Eventually, rewarded/paid blog post will become another form of paid advertising on a 24/7 channel. Yet the viewing right is in readers' own hands; readers can choose what they want to read and evaluate what to believe.

Hence, this trend of blog buzz marketing might not fade, but develop more under the supply-demand paradigm, just as TV commercials are still viewed as one of the most effective media as well as marketing tools. How to properly employ beauty blogs as effective buzz marketing tool will be an important issue.

5.4 Future Research

Due to time and other constraint, the scope of work of this study only focuses on domestic blog readers. However, the phenomenon of bloggers being recruited to do buzz

marketing is very common in other North American and European countries. In Taiwan, dilemma such as the controversy on explicitness of marketing messages as well as undefined code of ethics, have been discussed vigorously. Yet in some other countries, buzz marketing through bloggers and advertising on blogs have grown transparent and been well-regulated by the government. Hence, for future researchers, it is suggested to apply cross-cultural studies as well as bigger scope of work, in order to further compare this phenomenon among different countries and readers/consumers' purchasing behavior.

Furthermore, in this study, attitudes toward blog buzz marketing are evaluated subjectively by the participants, in other words, consumers themselves. Nevertheless, it is still insufficient to test actual reactions from consumers toward pseudo buzz, as well as consumers/readers' ability to tell whether a blog post has product placement or any other form of advertising content. In this case, experimental research is suggested for further study to test consumers' awareness of the implicit marketing messages in blog posts as well as their attitudes and purchasing intention.

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Appendix 1.

In-depth Interview Outline (Chinese Version)

中文深度訪談大綱

1. 請問美妝部落客如何和讀者分享 (內容呈現方式/語氣)
2. 請問美妝部落客的自我角色定位為?
3. 請問美妝部落格為什麼會這麼紅?
4. 請談談美妝部落客及信用?
5. 美妝部落客會使用別的消費者產生媒體平台嗎?
6. 美妝部落客寫美妝文的動機
7. 形容一下廠商與部落客合作的美妝部落格生態
8. 請問有什麼不同的合作方式 (免費試用品/現金/免費體驗/出席活動)
9. 如果是現金的話，有所謂的行情價嗎?
10. 請談談公開試用文 vs 隱性置入性行銷文
11. 請談談網友對於這兩種類型文的態度
12. 和自己購買的產品相比，分享心得有否不同?
13. 有酬是否會影響美妝部落客撰寫心得時的態度 (口碑/內容呈現/轉載)?
14. 有酬是否為促使美妝部落客發文的動力之一?
15. 請談談廣告商/廠商的要求為何? (內容/語氣/出現名稱/產品功效/成分/品牌露出)
16. 若寫出來的文達不到廣告商或廠商的要求呢?
17. 請詳細討論美妝部落客的正面口碑 (稱讚/鼓勵 直接/間接)
18. 請詳細討論美妝部落客的負面口碑 (批評/勸阻 直接/間接)
19. 請問您對網羅部落客來達到口碑行銷的行為有何看法? 態度為何?

Appendix 2.

Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

探討女性部落客讀者對美妝部落格中電子口碑及口碑行銷的態度

親愛的受訪者，您好：

感謝您撥冗填寫本問卷。本問卷為探討女性讀者對美妝產品／服務的態度或購買慾是否會受到部落格口碑的影響，更進一步探討讀者對試用文或產品置入文對讀者的態度，您的每一個回答對此研究都相當重要，本問卷調查不記名，您的任何資料將不會引用於研究以外的用途。所有題目皆無正確答案，請放心誠實填答。本問卷費時約 10 分鐘。您提供的意見將幫助我們更進一步了解台灣的美妝部落格口碑行銷效應。再次感謝您撥冗完成此份問卷，謝謝。

國立政治大學
指導老師：賴建都
研究生：賈德欣

第一部分：基本資料

1 請問您的年齡是

- 未滿 18 歲 18~24 歲 25~29 歲 30~34 歲
 35~39 歲 40~44 歲 45-49 歲 50 歲以上

2 請問您的性別是

- 男性 女性

3 請問您教育程度為

- 國小及國小以下 國中
 高中/職 大專/大學
 碩士 博士
 其它請註明:

4 請為您的婚姻狀況為

- 未婚
 已婚
 分居/離婚/鰥寡(喪妻、夫)

5 請問您的職業為

- 電子資訊 傳統製造 批發零售 金融保險 教育服務 一般服務
 政治社福 政治社福 大眾傳播 物流倉儲 農林漁牧 旅遊
休閒 營建土木 礦石開採 法律會計 醫療環保 住宿餐飲 學生
 軍警 家管 待業中 自僱 退休 其它
若你選了"其它",請註明:

6 請問您的月收入為

- NTD 10,000 以下 NTD 10,001-30,000
 NTD 30,001-50,000 NTD 50,001-70,000
 NTD 70,001-90,000 NTD 90,001 以上

7 請問您目前的居住地為

- 北部 中部 南部
 東部 台灣離島地區

國外請註明:

8 請問您平均每週上網時數為

- 不到 5 小時 5~8 小時 9~12 小時 13~16 小時
 17~20 小時 20 小時以上

9 請問您是否有自己的部落格

- 是 否

如果你回答'否',請跳到 **11**.

10 請問您平均每天花多少時間編輯您的部落格

- 不到 2 小時 2~4 小時 4~6 小時 6~8 小時
 8~10 小時 10 小時以上

11 請問您平均每天花多少時間閱讀美妝部落格

- 不到 30 分鐘 30 分鐘~少於 1 小時
 1~2 小時 2~3 小時
 3 小時以上

12 請問您瀏覽美妝部落格的動機為 (可複選)

- 放鬆心情 打發時間 資訊交流 意見交流
 學習知識 尋求建議

其它請註明:

第二部分：消費者美妝資訊收集行爲

- | | 非常
同意 | 同意 | 普通 | 不同
意 | 非常不
同意 |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----|----|---------|-----------|
| 13 當我需要美妝的相關資訊時，我會上網搜尋 | | | | | |
| 14 和其他資料收集方式相比，我覺得閱讀美妝部
落格式最方便的 | | | | | |
| 15 我可以很快地在美妝部落格中獲得我需要的美
妝資訊 | | | | | |
| 16 每天閱讀美妝部落格已成為我生活的習慣 | | | | | |
| 17 當我在美妝部落格遇到問題時，我可以在文章
或相關回應中找到答案 | | | | | |
| 18 我覺得美妝部落格的介紹跟評論是詳細的 | | | | | |
| 19 我覺得美妝部落客的經驗及介紹，能夠幫助我
做出正確的購買決定 | | | | | |
| 20 美妝部落格的瀏覽人次，會影響我閱讀的意願 | | | | | |
| 21 美妝部落格的版面排列，會影響我閱讀的意願 | | | | | |
| 22 美妝部落格的內容呈現方式，會影響我閱讀的
意願 | | | | | |
| 23 美妝部落格的語氣風格，會影響我閱讀的意願 | | | | | |

第三部分：消費者對於美妝部落格態度

- | | 非常同
意 | 同意 | 普通 | 不同意 | 非常不
同意 |
|--------------------------|----------|----|----|-----|-----------|
| 24 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是有趣的 | | | | | |
| 25 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容資訊是經常更新的 | | | | | |

- 26 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是豐富的
- 27 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是正確的
- 28 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是可信的
- 29 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是互動的
- 30 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是真實的
- 31 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是即時的
- 32 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是貼近我的生活的
- 33 大體而言，美妝部落格的內容是有影響力的

第四部份：消費者對於美妝部落格分享文的態度

分享文定義：文章內容為純粹分享個人心得，內容褒貶均有，忠實紀錄部落客本身的經歷或使用感想，又稱"感想文"、"心得文"。

非常
同意 普通 不同 非常不
同意 同意 意 同意

34 我對分享文中的正面評價感到有興趣 (好用/CP 值高/
推薦/生火/勸敗)

35 我覺得分享文中的正面評價是可信的

36 我覺得分享文中的正面評價是真實的

37 我覺得分享文中的正面評價是值得參考的

38 我覺得分享文中的正面評價是客觀的

39 我覺得分享文中的正面評價是商業的

40 我覺得分享文中的正面評價會讓我有購買慾

41 我對分享文中的負面評價感到有興趣 (難用/CP 值低/
雷/滅火/雞肋)

42 我覺得分享文中的負面評價是可信的

43 我覺得分享文中的負面評價是真實的

- 44 我覺得分享文中的負面評價是值得參考的
- 45 我覺得分享文中的負面評價是客觀的
- 46 我覺得分享文中的負面評價是商業的
- 47 我覺得分享文中的負面評價會降低我的購買慾

第五部份：消費者對於部落格口碑行銷的態度—試用文

試用文定義：公開標示試用、體驗、工商時間、廠商合作、邀約等，部落客因為收到試用品、免費體驗、公關活動邀約、或撰文費用而發文，又稱體驗文、廠商邀約文等。

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

- 48 請問您對公開表明和廠商合作撰寫試用文的態度為
- 49 我對試用文中的正面評價感到有興趣
- 50 我覺得試用文中的正面評價是可信的
- 51 我覺得試用文中的正面評價是真實的
- 52 我覺得試用文中的正面評價是值得參考的
- 53 我覺得試用文中的正面評價是商業的
- 54 我覺得試用文中的正面評價會讓我有購買慾
- 55 我對試用文中的負面評價感到有興趣
- 56 我覺得試用文中的負面評價是可信的
- 57 我覺得試用文中的負面評價是真實的
- 58 我覺得試用文中的負面評價是值得參考的的
- 59 我覺得試用文中的負面評價是客觀的
- 60 我覺得試用文中的負面評價是商業的
- 61 我覺得試用文中的負面評價會降低我的購買慾

第六部份：消費者對於部落格口碑行銷的態度—置入文

置入文定義：標題或內文均無公開表明為試用文或付費文等，但文章內容有廣告或產品置入，本質上一樣是有價介紹特定產品或廠商，又稱廣告文、置入行銷文。

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

- 62 請問您對無公開表示撰寫試用文，但有文中有廣告置入行為的態度為
- 63 我對置入文中的正面評價感到有興趣
- 64 我覺得置入文中的正面評價是可信的
- 65 我覺得置入文中的正面評價是真實的
- 66 我覺得置入文中的正面評價是值得參考的
- 67 我覺得置入文中的正面評價是客觀的
- 68 我覺得置入文中的正面評價是商業的
- 69 我覺得置入文中的正面評價會讓我有購買慾
- 70 我對置入文中的負面評價感到有興趣
- 71 我覺得置入文中的負面評價是可信的
- 72 我覺得置入文中的負面評價是真實的
- 73 我覺得置入文中的負面評價是值得參考的
- 74 我覺得置入文中的負面評價是客觀的
- 75 我覺得置入文中的負面評價是商業的
- 76 我覺得置入文中的負面評價會降低我的購買慾

第七部份：消費者對於 FashionGuide 試用大隊口碑的態度

- 77 請問您有在看 FashionGuide 嗎?
(若無,請跳至問題 85)

有 無

非常同 同 普 不同 非常不同
意 意 通 意 意

- 78 我對 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價感到有興趣
- 79 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價是可信的
- 80 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價是真實的
- 81 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價是值得參考的
- 82 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價是客觀的
- 83 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價是商業的
- 84 我覺得 FashionGuide 試用大隊的消費者評價會影響我的購買決定

第八部份：消費者對於 PTT 美妝板口碑的態度

- 85 請問您有在看 PTT 美妝板嗎?
(若無,請跳至問題 93)

非常同 同 普 不同 非常不同
意 意 通 意 意

- 86 我對 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價感到有興趣
- 87 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價是可信的
- 88 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價是真實的
- 89 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價是值得參考的
- 90 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價是客觀的
- 91 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價是商業的

92 我覺得 PTT 美妝板的消費者評價會影響我的購買決定

第九部分：消費者決策分析及分享行為

93 我會因朋友推薦而閱讀美妝部落格

- 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意
 非常不同意

94 我會推薦美妝部落格給朋友看

- 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意
 非常不同意

95 我會在美妝部落格上給予回應

- 總是 經常 偶爾 很少 從未

96 我會瀏覽美妝部落格的回應

- 總是 經常 偶爾 很少 從未

97 我會在自己的部落格上發表使用後評價(若無部落格，可跳過此題)

- 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意
 非常不同意

98 一般而言，如果我用到好的產品或服務，我會推薦給別人

- 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意

非常不同意

99 我曾將美妝文引用或轉載到自己的部落格(若無部落格，可跳過)

是 否

100 我曾將美妝文引用或轉載到其他平台(若答否，請跳至 102 題)

是 否

101 若有，請問為哪些平台?(可複選)

例: 請註明

Fashionguide UrCosme Plurk 撲浪
 Facebook 臉書 PTT
 其他 請註明:

102 我曾瀏覽美妝部落格，並從頁面旁邊的連結連到別的部落格文章

是 否

103 我曾瀏覽美妝部落格，並從頁面旁邊的廣告連結連到別的網站頁面

是 否

104 我曾受到美妝部落格的影響而對產品/服務/品牌產生興趣

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意

非常不同意

105 我曾受到美妝部落格的影響而購買產品/服務

- 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意
 非常不同意

第十部分：填答者聯絡資訊

106 請留下您的電子郵件帳號，方便日後抽出 15 位填答者贈送精美美妝小禮

全卷完



Appendix 3.

Questionnaire (English Version)

A STUDY ON FEMALE BLOG READERS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD eWOM AND BUZZ MARKETING IN BEAUTY BLOGS

Dear participants,

Thank you for filling this questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed on the purpose of discussing whether female blog readers' purchasing behavior toward beauty-related products/services will be influenced by blog buzz marketing. Moreover, blog readers' attitudes toward different types of blog posts will be discussed as well. Every of your answer is very valuable for this study. This is an anonymous study; your information will solely be for academic use. There is no correct answer to each question, please fill in based on your personal opinions. It will take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation will help the researcher further understand the effect of blog buzz marketing. Thank you.

National Chengchi University
Advisor: Prof. Chien-tu Lai
Student: De-hsin Chia

Section I. Demographics

1 Age

- Under 18 18~24
25~29 30~34
35~39 40~44
45~49 50 and above

2 Gender

- Male Female

3 Level of educational

- Elementary school and below Junior high school High school
College/University
Master's degree Doctoral degree Others, please indicate

4 Marital Status

- Single Married Separated / divorced / widowed

5 Occupation

- Electronics / Information Manufacturing Wholesales / Retails
 Finance / Insurance Education Service Industry
 Politics / Social Welfare Communications Logistics / Warehouse Agriculture /
Forestry / Fishery / Farming Tourism / Leisure Construction Mining Legal /
Accounting
 Medical / Environment Hospitality
 Student Military/Police Housekeeping Unemployed Self-employment Retired
 Others, please indicate

6 Monthly Income

- under NTD 10,000 NTD 10,001-30,000 NTD 30,001-50,000
 NTD 50,001-70,000 NTD 70,001-90,000 NTD 90,001 and above

7 Residency

- Northern Taiwan Central Taiwan Southern Taiwan
 Eastern Taiwan Offshore Islands Foreign Countries, please indicate _____

8 Average hours spent online per week

- Less than 5 hours 5 to 8 hours 9 to 12 hours
 13 to 16 hours 17 to 20 hours More than 20 hours

9 Do you have your own blog?

- Yes No

10 Average time spent on editing blog(s)

- Less than 2 hours 2 to 4 hours 4 to 6 hours
 6 to 8 hours 8 to 10 hours More than 10 hours

11 Average time spent on reading beauty blogs

- Less than 30 minutes 30 minutes to 1 hour
 1 to 2 hours 2 to 3 hours More than 3 hours

12 Beauty blogs reading motivations (Multiple Choices)

- To relax To kill time To exchange information
 To exchange opinion To learn knowledge
 To seek suggestion Others, please indicate

Section II. Beauty-related Information Collecting Behavior

13 When I need beauty-related information, I search online.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

14 Comparing with other information-collecting channels, reading beauty blogs is the most convenient

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15 I can quickly find the information I need in beauty blogs.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16 Reading beauty blogs has become my everyday habit.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

17 If I have any questions when reading beauty blogs, I can find answers in the blog posts or relevant responses/comments.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18 I think the content of beauty blogs is detailed.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19 I think beauty bloggers' personal experiences and recommendations can help me make right purchasing decision.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20 The number of clicks in beauty blogs will influence my willingness to read

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|

-
21. The page layout of beauty blogs will influence my willingness to read.
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
22. The content presentation of beauty blogs will influence my willingness to read.
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
23. The tone and style of beauty blogs will influence my willingness to read.
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-

Section III. Readers' General Attitudes toward Beauty Blogs

24. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is interesting
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
25. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is frequently updated
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
26. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is abundant
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
27. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is correct
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
28. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is credible
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
29. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is interactive
- Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
-
30. Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is true

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 31 Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is immediate
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 33 Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is close to my life
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 33 Generally speaking, the content of beauty blogs is influential
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section IV. Readers' Attitudes toward Pure Sharing Blog Post (PSBP)

Definition: Non-commercialized blog posts that are blogger's pure sharing on products or services as well as honestly recording personal experiences or information. The content may contain both positive and negative evaluation.

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 34 I am interested in positive WOM in PSBP.
- 35 I think positive WOM in PSBP is credible.
- 36 I think positive WOM in PSBP is true.
- 37 I think positive WOM in PSBP can be reference.
- 38 I think positive WOM in PSBP is objective.
- 39 I think positive WOM in PSBP is commercial.
- 40 I think positive WOM in PSBP increases purchase intention.
- 41 I am interested in negative WOM in PSBP.
- 42 I think negative WOM in PSBP is credible.
- 43 I think negative WOM in PSBP is true.
- 44 I think negative WOM in PSBP can be reference.
- 45 I think negative WOM in PSBP is objective.
- 46 I think negative WOM in PSBP is commercial.

47 I think negative WOM in PSBP decreases purchase intention.

Section V. Readers' Attitudes toward Sample Trial Blog Post (STBP)

Definition: Commercialized blog posts that explicitly notify that bloggers write because they either receive free samples, free trials, PR events invitation, or direct payment. Content may be more or less under control from companies or agencies.

- | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 48 What do you think of blog posts that openly notify blog readers about cooperating with companies/agencies to write sample trail articles? | | | | | |
| 49 I am interested in positive WOM in STBP. | | | | | |
| 50 I think positive WOM in STBP is credible. | | | | | |
| 51 I think positive WOM in STBP is true. | | | | | |
| 52 I think positive WOM in STBP can be reference. | | | | | |
| 53 I think positive WOM in STBP is commercial. | | | | | |
| 54 I think positive WOM in STBP increases purchase intention. | | | | | |
| 55 I am interested in negative WOM in STBP. | | | | | |
| 56 I think negative WOM in STBP is credible. | | | | | |
| 57 I think negative WOM in STBP is true. | | | | | |
| 58 I think negative WOM in STBP can be reference. | | | | | |
| 59 I think negative WOM in STBP is objective. | | | | | |
| 60 I think negative WOM in STBP is commercial. | | | | | |
| 61 I think negative WOM in STBP decreases purchase intention. | | | | | |

Section VI. Readers' Attitudes toward Product Placement Blog Post (PPBP)

Definition: Commercialized blog posts that implicitly contain advertising content. Bloggers also either receive free samples, free trials, PR events invitation, or direct payment. Content may be more or less under control from companies or agencies.

Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly

Agree

Disagree

- 62 What do you think of blog posts that introduce product placement/advertising without openly notifying readers?
- 63 I am interested in positive WOM in STBP
- 64 I think positive WOM in STBP is credible.
- 65 I think positive WOM in STBP is true.
- 66 I think positive WOM in STBP can be reference.
- 67 I think positive WOM in STBP is objective.
- 68 I think positive WOM in STBP is commercial.
- 69 I think positive WOM in STBP increases purchase intention.
- 70 I am interested in negative WOM in STBP.
- 71 I think negative WOM in STBP is credible.
- 72 I think negative WOM in STBP is true.
- 73 I think negative WOM in STBP can be reference.
- 74 I think negative WOM in STBP is objective.
- 75 I think negative WOM in STBP is commercial.
- 76 I think negative WOM in STBP decreases purchase intention

Section VII. Readers' Attitudes toward FashionGuide Sample Trial Report

77 Do you read FashionGuide Sample Trial Report?

Yes No

(If you choose No, please go to Q 85.)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- 78 I am interested in WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report
- 79 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report is credible.
- 80 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report is true.
- 81 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report can be reference.
- 82 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report is objective.
- 83 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report is commercial.
- 84 I think WOM in FashionGuide Sample Trial Report influences purchase intention.

Section VIII. Readers' Attitudes toward PTT Cosmetics Board

85 Do you read PTT Cosmetics Board?

Yes No

(If you choose No, please go to Q 93.)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

86 I am interested in WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board

87 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is credible.

88 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is true.

89 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board can be reference.

90 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is objective.

91 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board is commercial.

92 I think WOM in PTT Cosmetics Board influences purchase intention.

Section IX. Readers' Decision-making and Information-sharing Behavior

93 I will read beauty blogs because my friends recommend me to read.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

94 I will recommend beauty blogs to my friends.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

95 I will leave responses/comments on beauty blogs.

Always	Quite Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

96 I will read others' response/comments on beauty blogs.

Always	Quite Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

97 I post my testimonials on my blog. (If you do not own a blog, please skip this question)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

-
- 98 Generally speaking, I will recommend good products/services to others.
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
- 99 I have trackbacked or forwarded beauty blog posts to my own blog. (If you do not own a blog, please skip this question)
 Yes No
- 100 I have trackbacked or forwarded beauty blog posts to other platforms (If you answer "No", please go to Q102)
 Yes No
- 101 If yes, what are those platforms? (Multiple choices)
 FashionGude UrsCosme Plurk Facebook PTT
 Others, please indicate _____
- 102 I have read beauty blogs, and clicked on the blogroll to other bloggers' posts.
 Yes No
- 103 I have read beauty blogs, and connected to other webpages from the blog Ads .
 Yes No
- 104 I have become interested in products/services/brands because of the influence of beauty blogs.
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
- 105 I have purchased products/services because of the influence of beauty blogs.
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Section X. Participant Contact Information

- 106 Please leave your email for future contact if you are chosen for the gifts.
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The End