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MODERN TECHNOLOGY FOR OLD-FASHIONED USERS: THE POWER OF E-WOM (ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH) ON MOBILE PHONES PURCHASE AMONG OLDER GENERATIONS

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A B S T R A C T

The intention to purchase a mobile phone can be influenced either internally or externally. This study investigates the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) particularly the source's expertise, the source's trustworthiness, the richness of message content, strength of advocacy, and tie strength towards such intention among consumers from the older generation. Compared to the younger generation, the possibility of older consumers having higher purchasing power is likely and without many people being aware of it. Some of them are interested in new technologies that will not want to be left behind. They are willing to learn and know more. Empirical data analysis involving 180 respondents aged more than 50 years old showed that the hypothesized relationships were all supported. Findings suggested that older consumers were more prone to act on their purchasing intent with credible eWOM recommended by others whom they trust. They are also attracted by strong emotional appeal from highly informative messages delivered through eWOM.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays cell phones are more than a curiosity but a requirement to be up-to-date with the latest developments. As a result, market demand for mobile phones continues to grow and potential buyers are being faced with a wide variety of product choices that they can choose from to cope with this demand. Epstein (2016) describes the propensity of mobile phone firms to use new marketing approaches as an attempt to achieve a competitive advantage in their crowded market. Nonetheless, the proliferation of different product choices could become overwhelming for some (Bughin et al., 2010), as customers are exposed to numerous marketing tactics used by cell phone companies. It is even more so since researchers such as Chung et al. (2018), Fung and Carstensen (2003), Wolfe (2005), and Tongren (1988) concluded that younger generation and older generation customers have different marketing preferences.

In this study, the focus is on the older generation customers as their number especially those aged 60 years and above is growing whereby by the year 2050, it could reach 2 trillion (UN, 2015). They thus would probably possess higher purchasing power in the years to come. Such probability is statistically reinforced

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through a survey conducted in the United States by Pew Research Center that found approximately 77% of senior citizens bought cell phones in 2014 compared to 69% in 2012 (Smith, 2014). Wong (2011) considered the Asian region to have the most aging population due to statistics showing longer life expectancies and low birth rates. Malaysia is projected to be similarly populated at least 12% in the year 2030 (Wong, 2011). Cell phones here are more commonly called mobile phones for their mobility. Locals especially those having reached the age of 60 years old, use their mobile phones to communicate with loved ones or for emergencies. Such usage aid in sustaining older generation's social relationships as well as provide them with an added sense of security and safety (Hassan & Nasir, 2008). Complex features of mobile phones nevertheless might become a hindrance to older users as they are known to be less fond of innovative addition compared to their younger counterparts (Malik & Azuddin, 2013). Yet, Malik and Azuddin (2013) discovered that some older users of mobile phones are open to innovation if the outcome gained will outweigh the complexity and cost of the device. It is thus unwise to not tap into this potentially lucrative market segment since the older generation will keep on growing and the trend of mobile ubiquitous technologies will keep on being in our daily life actions.

As older consumers' purchase intention is focused on, the theoretical framework in this study is supported by Aristotle's rhetorical theory of reasoned action as well as Selective Optimization with Compensation (SOC). Kennedy (1991) explained that rational action theory concerns the resultant effect of subjective standards towards the buying intent. Concerning eWOM, older consumers' intention to buy can be affected but the degree of such impact (resultant effect) is dependent on how well the opinion of others is valued by the customer (subjective standard). Similarly, Johnson and Mutchler (2013) explained that SOC concerns life choices made by strategizing to pick possible outcomes in their chronological age and thereby maximizing personal satisfaction while at the same time compensating for the conditions resulting from old age. Concerning eWOM, older consumers tend to deliberate their purchasing intent (strategizing) based on available options that best suit them under current circumstances (maximizing and compensating).

Older generation's intention to purchase

Intention to buy is the propensity of personal behavior against a specific brand (Spears & Singh, 2004; Chang & Wildt, 1994). Such a propensity can be intentionally or unconsciously influenced by others, particularly when those important to consumers are involved (Tsai et al., 2010). This echoes previous studies (e.g. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Tsai et al., 2010) that support the importance of social influence in consumer behavior. Tsai et al. (2010) however emphasized that intention would always affect individual action in a positive light. Studies by Carrington et al. (2010), Chang and Wildt (1994), and Middleton and Smith (2011) also noted similar findings that significantly associate purchase intention with brand consumption. This study deemed the driving force behind a purchasing action to be purchase intention. In a survey involving American consumers, Kitterman (2018) found those aging up to 40 years old tend to trust others that are around their parents' age and older. The trust will prevail until they reach the age of 60 years old which they then would also start to trust others that are similar in age to their children. Akhter (2003) reasoned consumers become more discerning with age as they tend to be more vigilant in decision making when they grow older. Such behavior is apparent when the current older generation of consumers frequently act upon their buying intent if the purchase results in a beneficial outcome (Szimigin & Carrigan, 2001). However, their deteriorating cognitive abilities make it harder for them to fully appreciate items that are technologically advanced than the standard. Older consumers compared to younger ones who take advantage of the development of today's technology daily thus favor technological innovation that eases the daily routine (i.e. electronic fund transaction). Older people often act upon their buying intent until their ulterior motives, cognitive ability, and financial benefits are aligned for the purchase. In terms of commercial appeal, Williams and Drolet (2005) projected that the risk of drawing older audiences to the emotional appeal of adverts rather than reasonable ones is greater. This is because they are more inspired by emotionally stimulating, advertising messages. Henceforth, purchase intention in this study looks at the actual behavior of older consumers towards purchasing mobile phones as their intent can be influenced by the source's characteristics (i.e. expertise and trustworthiness) and message characteristics of eWOM (i.e. richness of message content and strength of advocacy).

The electronic word of mouth

Cooke and Buckley (2008) noticed the popularization of adverts through social media means whilst Friebe and Campbell (2010) crowned Facebook and Twitter as the most used social media platforms for marketing purposes in the hospitality industry. Such literature suggests that online advertising is the future direction of marketing. Moreover, it is favored by companies with a limited budget for advertising as it is deemed more cost-efficient to communicate their product online. Küster and Vila (2011) adds that the chances of achieving global recognition are also rather high than the previous offline advertisement. As a result, businesses can expand their product advertising outside of the regional market and attained prospective consumers worldwide. Further understanding of consumer behavior is thus necessary to stay competitive on the global scale (Teo & Yeonh, 2003) as business expansion necessitates changes in complementing 'global' consumers. Consumers nevertheless remain vigilant in deliberating any purchasing related decision. At times, consumers

deliberate their purchase intention by considering what was mentioned online on social media as well as search engines (Ghose & Han, 2011; Geissler et al., 2006). Dellarocas (2003) views consumers nowadays as tech-savvy hence they can know what others are mentioning and even express themselves online by using the internet. Consumers might even find this sort of eWOM to be useful in aiding their purchasing deliberation. It is evident as consumers actively read various reviews and opinions posted online (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008) that are a representation of actual consumers' views in writing (Bhatnagar & Ghose, 2004). The same can be said in regards to Malaysian consumers. In the past years, reliance on online comments and reviews about certain products or services has become more prominent among conscious-minded locals. Some even considered it to be a wise choice in searching for such electronic postings as they could save on valuable time plus avoid any further hassle. Nonetheless, consumers, particularly from the older generation, may opt to not make such a choice as they might be limited by their physical and non-physical changes that come with age (Malik & Azuddin, 2013). Wong (2011) reassured that older users require more time to fully adopt the available mobile technologies hence those opting otherwise would surely rise in numbers. Reasons for triggering their intent to purchase mobile phones includes staying in touch with acquaintances, fostering closer familial relationship through sharing emotions, aiding tool for health deterioration and personal guide for directions or places (Wong, 2011). Some of the reasons can be done remotely via social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram as well as through communication apps such as WhatsApp and Twitter.

The purchasing intention of older users though is susceptible to likely being influenced by eWOM. This is because online eWOM might provide a more detailed and durable source of information for consumers (Banarjee & Chai, 2019). Some have even treated eWOM as a countermeasure for quality assurance (Blal & Sturman, 2014; Vermeulan & Seegers, 2009). Consumers for instance would often rely on online reviews of hotels when they intend to book for their next holiday accommodation. Such reliance affects consumers' perception and in turn their consideration when booking. A study by ComScore and the Kelsey Group (2007) gives support whereby they concluded that consumers are willing to spend more for a service that is rated higher online in exchange for higher quality service.

2. HYPOTHESES

Consumers think eWOM message material is more trustworthy if it comes from an expert. Determining if someone possessed the expertise is a subjective matter yet, anyone who can make valid statements (Yoon et al., 1998) based on their own experience and abilities (Gotlieb & Sarel, 1991; Sweeney et al., 2014) can be called an expert. So experts are considered to have a stronger understanding of the commodity. Schiffman et al. (2013) added that the personal perception of an expert could be affected by his or her related work position, social training, or experience. Therefore, consumers often counseled someone who possessed perceived higher expertise as the probability that they have more product insights is likely. Information received from experts has more persuasive power as their opinions are higher in value (Gilly et al., 1998; Jun et al., 2011). Ohanian (1990b), Pornpitakpan (2004), and Sternthal et al. (1978) collectively indicated that there is a positive relationship between source expertise and persuasiveness. As a result, it plays a substantial role in the consumer's purchasing deliberation (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998). Lim and Chung (2014) relate an individual's information acceptance with the source's degree of expertise, credibility, and risk. A higher degree of expertise, credibility, and lower risk increases the likelihood of affecting consumer's intentions particularly the older generation without further pondering (Bohner, Ruder, & Erb, 2002; Jun et al., 2011; Strutton & Tanner, 1994). How well older consumers perceived the information source either positively or negatively, therefore, would affect their information-seeking behavior. Strutton and Tanner (1994) discovered that such perception could result in a lower or higher affinity towards relying on a particular source. Consumers should also trust their eWOM more as the intention to buy entails unknown risks (Lim & Chung, 2014). The interest entrusted to the message content represents the faith of the receiver in the sender otherwise known as trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990a). Chu and Kamal (2008), Priester and Petty (2003), and Ohanian (1990b) collectively described confidentiality as the degree of customer trust that knowledge derived from the content of the message is truthful, genuine, reasonable, and honorable. The following are the hypothesized relationships between eWOM source reputation and older customer buying intent:

H1a: The expertise of eWOM sources is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention towards the mobile phone.

H1b: The trustworthiness of the eWOM source is positively related to the older consumers' purchase intention towards the mobile phone.

Collectively, Chu and Kamal (2008), Priester and Petty (2003), and Ohanian (1990b) defined confidentiality as the degree of customer confidence that information derived from the message content is authentic, real, fair, and honorable. The following are the hypothesized relationships between the credibility of eWOM sources and the buying intent of older customers. The quality of message content is measured by how much the recipient values the information obtained while the strength of the advocacy is determined by how well the message delivery result is perceived (Sweeney et al., 2012). In terms of advertisement, marketing information

transmitted by a narrative message is considered by Phillips and McQuarrie (2010), Adaval and Wyerjr (1998), and Padgett and Allen (1997) to be the best choice as such eWOM is more convincing because of its factual basis and not produced by the sender. In turn, both the sender and the receiver interpret the eWOM message which is transmitted with intensity and excitement more significantly. This is more evident among older generation users, as their declining cognitive capacities and perceived restricted time forced them to prioritize emotional social goals fulfillment. The following are the hypothesized relationship between eWOM message and purchase intention of older consumers:

H2a: The richness of eWOM message content is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention toward the mobile phone.

H2b: The strength of advocacy of eWOM is positively related to older consumers' purchase intention on the mobile phone.

This research contains a moderating variable, i.e. the tie intensity between eWOM sender and recipient to further shed light on customer behavior in such a relationship (Baker et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2012). Money et al. (1998) defined tie strength as a "multidimensional construct that in the context of social networks represents the strength of dyadic interpersonal relationship" (p.79). Those who received eWOM are most likely to react if the message delivered is from strong ties. It is deemed more trustworthy thus reliable compared to weak ties (Baker et al., 2016 and Wen et al., 2009). Koo (2016) reasoned that individuals involved in a strong tie often have a greater understanding of each other and in turn, they can offer suitable information that aids the other's information-seeking process. A strong tie nonetheless could bring either a positive or negative eWOM effect on branding. This is evident as a positive eWOM about a brand entices consumer's intent to buy far better than a negative eWOM would despite both having strong ties (Baker et al., 2016; Chu & Kim, 2011; East et al., 2008). Jun et al. (2011) and Wangenheim and Bayon (2004) considered tie strength as a significant moderator of interpersonal influence. It is so as older consumers have a profound appreciation towards their social relations with others. Moschis (2003) clarified that personal relationships are valued once they come into a realization of the other's affectionate feelings for them. As consequence, older consumers tend to act based on suggestions made by those who have demonstrated their affection. Fall and Knutson (2001) exemplified that the tendency often originates from friends and family. They also would probably make changes in terms of values, beliefs, and decisions to avoid being excluded from their circle of friends. Trocchia and Janda (2000) attribute the change possibility to the older generation's desire of staying connected with cherished individuals. In this analysis, the strength of the relationship between the message sender and the receiver of the information is calculated according to the classification of strong links and weak links by Baker et al. (2016). Strong links indicate a significant relationship involving regular contact with those close to the receiver of the message while weak connections indicate a non-significant relationship involving casual contact with acquaintances or strangers. Baker et al. (2016) found close links to be reflective of a greater degree of confidence in the relationship as the message originates from a reliable source. This is therefore more effective towards recipient actions which include their intention to purchase. On the other hand, weak links suggest that even though it is distributed infrequently and originates from an untrusted source, the message has potential novel content. The hypothesized relationships between tie strength and buying intention are as follows:

H3a: Tie strength positively moderate the relationship between the expertise of eWOM source and older consumers' purchase intention.

H3b: Tie strength positively moderate the relationship between the trustworthiness of eWOM source and older consumers' purchase intention.

H3c: Tie strength positively moderate the relationship between richness of message content of eWOM and older consumers' purchase intention.

H3d: Tie strength positively moderate the relationship between the strength of advocacy of eWOM and older consumers' purchase intention.

3. METHOD

3.1 Respondents

This study gathers empirical data from older consumers. Yoon et al. (2005) grouped the older generation as those aged 50 years and above. In general, older people are expected to experience deteriorating physical, motor, cognitive and memory abilities. Despite that, they possessed invaluable life experiences, accumulated knowledge, and practical skills compared to the younger generation in their respective field (Wong, 2011). They were chosen due to the increasing size of the market for older consumers. The market increase is considered a tempting business venture to marketers as it is a rapidly growing population that possesses higher disposable income and purchasing power (Eastman & Iyer, 2004). Specifically, in this study, the targeted respondents are older customers with their age varying from 50 years of age who buy cell phones or plan to do so. Wong (2011) discovered that local historical instability contributed towards Malaysians born earlier than 1953 to have undergone less formal education. The diversity of culture and ethnicity nevertheless enable locals to have a good command of different languages though most can master the country's mother tongue. Today's older generation is said to have experienced changes in their behavior as current older people achieve higher education and income leading to different lifestyles from their predecessors (Ong et al., 2008). Also said to

be more insightful about what they perceive and more innovative than the previous generation (Szmigin & Carrigan, 2001).

Hence, the perceived technophobia among older people may not be relevant anymore in modern times. Wagner, Hassanein, and Head (2010) shed light on the increasing number of older consumers using online services such as surfing the internet and emailing which contradicts the belief that older consumers are not too keen on new technology. Therefore, it is considered appropriate for this study to target older people to investigate the influence of eWOM on the purchase intention among older consumers towards mobile phones. A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed to selected representative respondents, which included 91 women and 89 males. They were chosen based on simple random sampling that allows the sample to be taken from the target population in a manner that mitigates any bias and prejudice (Kumar et al., 2013).

3.2 Data collection

A survey approach is applied in this study to gather equal and detailed data from respondents. Kumar et al. (2013) explained that a survey includes gathering data from a selection of respondents by using a predesigned questionnaire. The selected respondents, therefore, are considered as representative of consumers from the older generation. This research also collected offline data, as it was proposed by Gunter et al. (2002) that better respondent control and higher response levels could be feasible if data collection were carried out offline. The overall data collection covers Klang Valley, where about 7.2 million reside in one of the rapidly growing metropolitan cities in Malaysia (Sumarjan et al., 2013). It is thus an ideal scope of the area to investigate the influence of eWOM on older consumers' purchase intention towards mobile phones. Data collected were measured against a Likert scale of 7 points and all of the variables used in the questionnaire were built based on previous studies. However, each of the variables has been changed to fit this study's context. A total of 25 questions were posed in six parts; purchase intention, source expertise, source trustworthiness, the richness of message, the strength of advocacy, and tie strength. The completed questionnaire as per the Appendix was pilot tested beforehand to ensure the reliability and validity of data collection. Bryman and Bell (2015) asserted the importance of piloting especially when the questionnaire is self-administered as the presence of an interviewer to clarify any uncertainty would be absent. It also gives assurance that the intended survey purpose would be addressed. The test was conducted among a small group of 30 people with criteria similar to those in the sample population. Muijs (2011) recommends doing so would determine the need for further amendment to ensure that the posed questions are wholly understood by respondents.

3.3 Statistical procedure

Babbie (2010) emphasized that an analysis of the association between an independent variable and a dependent variable will determine the hypothesized relationship. Such an experiment is carried out in this study using the program IBM Statistical System for Social Science (SPSS). The software provides results through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, bivariate correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and moderation tests based on data collected from the survey. Data collected from respondents were filtered based on their demographic differences such as age, race, gender, and level of education. The data filtering was done through descriptive analysis. O'leary (2004) explained that descriptive statistics facilitate a better understanding of the respondent's criteria through its measurement of dispersion, central tendency, and distribution shape. Such statistics permit better control of respondent selection hence allowing exclusion of data from respondents that did not meet the required criteria before further analysis is made.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Reliability analysis

Golafshani (2003) describes reliability as the consistency shown through performance over time. Therefore, it is considered accurate if the findings of this analysis are compatible with the findings of other related research (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Reliability analysis was performed to evaluate the reliability of the data collected for this study. The results as shown in Table 1 indicated that all of the variables in this study (i.e. purchase intention, source's expertise, source trustworthiness, the richness of message content, strength of message delivery, and tie strength) can be accepted as the range of each variable for Cronbach's Alpha is between 0.841 and 0.929. These were in agreement with Meyers et al. (2013) who suggested that a robust Cronbach's Alpha should be more than 0.7.

Table 1. Results for reliability analysis.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Purchase intention	0.929	5
Source's expertise	0.841	4
Source's trustworthiness	0.891	5
The richness of message content	0.923	3
Strength of message delivery	0.911	3
Tie Strength	0.915	5

Bivariate correlation analysis

The bivariate correlation analysis tests the relationship between variables (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2012)

through the Pearson correlation. Taylor (1990) considered the correlation efficiency of r; when it is 0.35 to be weak or low, 0.36 to 0.67 to be moderate or medium, and 0.68 to 1.0 to be either high or heavy. Findings based on such analysis as can be seen in Table 2 suggested that the relationship between the competence of the message source and the intention to buy, the trustworthiness and buying intention of the source message as well as the wealth of message content and buying intention are moderately positive while the relationship between message delivery intensity and buying intention is weak but positive. Also, the results indicated a value of 0.000 for all variables hence statistical relationships among variables in this study are less than 0.01 in p-value.

Table 2. Results for bivariate correlation analysis.

	Source's expertise	**Source's trustworthiness**	**The richness of message content**	**Strength of message delivery**
Pearson Correlation	.639	.643	.582	.314
Purchase Intention Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	180	180	180	180

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

a. Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis in this research links multiple independent variables to a given dependent variable. Such analysis is used to investigate the relationships hypothesized, and the results are summarized in Table 3. Beta's (β) importance for knowledge, trustworthiness, message material richness, and advocacy power suggest that the experience of the message source has the most effect on the buying intention of the older people. Meanwhile, the t-statistics showed that a confidence interval of t > 1.960 (2-tailed) supports the relationship between variables. These implied that the expertise of eWOM source is positively related to consumers' purchase intention ($H1_a$), the trustworthiness of eWOM source is positively related to consumers' purchase intention ($H1_b$), the richness of eWOM message content is positively related to consumers' purchase intention ($H2_a$) and the strength of advocacy of eWOM message is positively related to consumers' purchase intention ($H2_b$), are supported. The results replicate similar findings of a positive relationship between source's expertise and persuasiveness (Ohanian, 1990b; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Sternthal et al., 1978) that subsequently influence consumer's purchase decisions (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998).

Table 3. Results for multilinear regression.

Model	**Unstandardized coefficients**		**Standardized coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.226	.401		-.563	.574
Expertise	.483	.121	.368	3.996	.000
Trustworthiness	.308	.156	.236	1.975	.050
Richness of message content	.307	.137	.249	2.240	.026
Strength of advocacy	-.195	.084	-.173	-2.313	.022

***b.* Moderation test**

This research performed a moderation test to investigate whether the hypothesized relationships of the dependent variable (purchase intention) and independent variables (expertise and trustworthiness of the message source, the richness of message material, and advocacy power) shift with specific moderating variable, i.e. tie intensity (Cohen et al., 2003). Results from the test can be seen in Table 4a, Table 4b, Table 4c and are collectively for H3a. Findings in Table 4a showed that a large pattern exists between variables with 41.33% of the variables being described. In Table 4b, the tie strength as the moderating factor between the competence of the message source and the purpose of the purchase was found to be moderate. However, its p-value was not statistically significant in terms of tie strength at a significant 5% level and the relationship between tie strength and message source expertise at a significant 5% level, whereas it was statistically significant in terms of the expertise of the message source at a significant 1% level. In Table 4c, the p-value of the expertise of the tie strength and message source was not statistically significant as p > 0.05, thus implying that bond strength positively moderates the relationship between the expertise of the eWOM source and the purchase intention of older consumers is not supported.

Table 4a. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_a$).

R	**R-sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
.6429	.4133	1.1701	41.3321	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 4b. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_a$).

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.6371	.7333	.8688	.3861
Tie Strength	-.2156	.2173	-.9924	.3224
Expertise	.8128	.1724	4.7147	.0000
int_1	.0273	.0420	.6512	.5158

Table 4c. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_a$).

	R2-change	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0014	.4240	1.0000	176.0000	.5158

Results from the test can also be seen in Table 5a, Table 5b, Table 5c and are collectively for H3b. Findings in Table 5a showed that there is a substantial trend between variables with 42.29% of the variables being described. In Table 5b, the tie strength as the moderating factor between the trustworthiness of the message source and the purpose of the purchase was found to be moderate. Nevertheless, its p-value was not statistically significant for the tie strength at a significant 5% level and the relationship between the tie strength and the reliability of the message source at a significant 5% level, whereas it was statistically relevant for the reliability of the message source at a relevant 1% level. In Table 5c, the p-value of the connection intensity and the trustworthiness of the message source is not statistically relevant as $p > 0.05$. This indicates that binding intensity positively influences the relationship between the trustworthiness of the eWOM source and the purchasing intention of older consumers is not endorsed.

Table 5a. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_b$).

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6503	.4229	1.1511	42.9857	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 5b. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_b$).

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.2236	.7178	.3115	.7558
Tie Strength	-.1079	.2218	-.4867	.6271
Expertise	.9830	.1691	5.8115	.0000
int_1	-.0078	.0419	-.1870	.8519

Table 5c. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_b$).

	R2-change	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0001	.0350	1.0000	176.0000	.8519

Additionally, results from the test can be seen in Table 6a, Table 6b, Table 6c and are collectively for H3b. Findings in Table 6a showed that there is a large model between variables with 34.81% of the variables being described. In Table 6b, the results based on the intensity of the tie as the moderating factor between message material richness and purchase intention found a moderate relationship between the variables.

Nevertheless, its p-value was not statistically significant in terms of tie strength at a significant 5% level and the relationship between tie strength and message content richness at a significant 5% level, whereas it was statistically significant in terms of message content richness at a significant 1% level. In Table 6c, the p-value of the binding intensity and richness of message content is not statistically important as $p > 0.05$, thus suggesting that binding intensity positively affects the relationship between the richness of eWOM message content and the buying intention of older consumers.

Table 6a. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_c$).

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5900	.3481	1.3002	31.3281	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 6b. Results for moderation analysis (H_{3c}).

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	.0819	.7618	.1075	.9145
Tie Strength	.1941	.2117	.9169	.3604
Expertise	1.0130	.2009	5.0431	.0000
int_1	-.0624	.0446	-1.3984	.1637

Table 6c. Results for moderation analysis (H_{3c}).

	R2-change	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0072	1.9557	1.0000	176.0000	.1637

Results from the test which are collectively for H3d can be seen in Table 7a, Table 7b, and Table 7c. Findings in Table 7a showed that there is a considerable trend between variables with 19.16% of the variables being described. In Table 7b, the results based on the tie strength as the moderating factor between advocacy strength and purchasing intention found a moderate relationship between the variables. The p-value was statistically important in terms of tie strength and the relationship between tie strength and advocacy strength was at a modest 1% level. In Table 7c, the p-value of bind strength and advocacy strength is statistically significant as $p > 0.05$, thus suggesting that bond strength positively influences the relationship between eWOM advocacy strength and purchasing intention of older consumers is not supported.

Table 7a. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_d$).

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4378	.1916	1.6122	13.9086	3.0000	176.0000	.0000

Table 7b. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_d$).

Model	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	-.0038	.8230	-.0046	.9963
Tie Strength	.9040	.2074	4.3583	.0000
Expertise	.8307	.2429	3.4197	.0008
int_1	-.1596	.0496	-3.2168	.0015

Table 7c. Results for moderation analysis ($H3_d$).

	R2-change	F	df1	df2	p
int_1	.0475	10.3480	1.0000	176.0000	.0015

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to understand the power of eWOM, in particular the knowledge of the source, the trustworthiness of the source, the richness of the quality of the message, the strength of the advocacy, the strength of the bond, and the intention of the older consumer to buy the mobile phone among the older consumers. In order to do so, Aristotle's rhetoric theory of reasoned action and Selective Optimization with Compensation (SOC) theory were integrated into the theoretical framework in this study. The integration of both theories provided necessary perspectives to better grasp the relational antecedents of eWOM influence on consumers' buying behavior. The theory of reasoned action sheds light on how the influence of eWOM from people around the consumers can impact their purchasing intent. Meanwhile, the SOC theory sheds light on the norming process adapted by aging consumers when they have the intention to buy. The process though is liable to external influences such as eWOM that bring possible impact towards the buying intent. Such impact is henceforth examined as a moderator between variables using the hypothesized relationship and tie power. Results from data analysis give support to all of the variables used in this study. A bivariate correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between the message source's competency and trustworthiness, the richness of message content, and the strength of message delivery with purchase intention respectively. It also suggested that the experience of the message source has the most impact on purchase intention among older consumers. Tie strength tested showed that binding intensity only has a positive impact on the relationship between the richness of eWOM message content and the purchasing intent of older consumers.

In summary, a review of empirical evidence gathered supported all of the hypotheses in this study suggesting that the source and content of eWOM messages also affect the buying intent of older people. Findings indicated that trustworthy advice from those they trust and considered experts encourages older consumers to act upon their intention to buy. That is because they are more likely to embrace information delivered in eWOM messages instead of challenging it. Nevertheless, the trust they place in others allows them to be exposed to the risk of being vulnerable to others' actions. When the suggestions obtained are insightful and have a clear emotional appeal, older consumers are often encouraged. This form of commercial appeal is more successful because ads that are filled with high emotions due to their perceived limited time and diminishing cognitive capacities appear to convince them.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The population of older consumers is growing in numbers which subsequently gives stakeholders promising business opportunities. Efforts to sell cell phones to older generation customers are missing though. These efforts are advantageous not only to advertisers but also to customers if pursued. This study henceforth helps to undertake such efforts by providing a basis for a better understanding of how eWOM could influence the purchase intention of consumers towards mobile phones, particularly among older people. This research also complements previous consumer behavior studies particularly those that are tech-savvy (e.g., Ye et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2019). Findings will help strengthen the existing practice of advertisement for mobile phones while strategizing further advancement based on the newly learned insight from this report. It also helps marketers understand better on older consumers. This study's limitation stems from the fact that it focuses solely on older consumers within a certain area only, hence further studies should involve different age groups of consumers and wider study scope.

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