A Comparison of Consumer Characteristics and their Influence on the Use of Electronic Word-of-Mouth

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impact of word-of-mouth concept in social media on consumers' decision-making for purchasing a product. One hundred and fifty-four responses from Eastern Mediterranean University, Turkish Cypriot and Turkish customers were used in the questionnaire. T-test and ANOVA analysis were conducted to examine the relationship between word-of-mouth and its determinants. The results of independent T-test show that both male and female have a significant difference in their consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages for commercial activities. Results also show that Females rely more on word-of-mouth than males for commercial purposes. The results of ANOVA test explain that younger respondents were more eager to use online networks for commercial purposes than their older counterparts. There was no significant difference between people's job status in their use of social media for commercial purposes, online and offline word-of-mouth reliance.

Keywords: Word-of-Mouth, Social Media, Customer Satisfaction, T-test, ANOVA test, North Cyprus.

ÖZ

Bu tez, tüketicilerin bir ürün satın alımında karar verme konusundaki sosyal medyadaki ağız dan ağıza (dilden dile) kavramının etkisini inceler. 154 katılımcının kullanıldığı ankette, Doğuakdeniz üniversitesi öğrencileri, yerel kıbrıs Türk halkı ve Türk vatandaşı müşterileri yeralmaktadır. Çalışmada ağızdan ağıza kavramı ile kendisinin belirleyicileri arasındaki ilişkiyi bağımsız t-testi, tek yönlü anova analizi ve faktör analizi kullanılarak tespit edilmiştir. Faktör analizinin sonuçları, üç ana bileşenin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır; İlk insanlar çevrimiçi platformun araçlarına güveniyorlar, İkincisi, çevrimiçi araçlardan haberdar olduklarını ve sonuncusu ticari faaliyetler için sosyal ağ kullanıyor olmaları. Bağımsız T testi sonuçları, hem erkek hem de kadınların çevrimdışı WOM mesajlarının ticari faaliyetler için dikkate alınmasında anlamlı bir farklılığa sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Elde edilen sonuçlar ayrıca, Kadınların ticari amaçlar için erkeklerden daha fazla WOM'a güveniyor olduğunu göstermektedir. ANOVA testinin sonuçları, genç katılımcıların çevrimiçi ağları ticari amaçlı olarak eski meslektaşlarından daha istekli olduklarını açıklıyor. Ticari amaçla, çevrimiçi ve çevrimdışı WOM güvenirliği için sosyal medya kullanımında, insanların iş durumları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ağızdan ağıza, Sosyal Medya, Müşteri memnuniyeti, Faktör Analizi, Bağımsız T-testi, Tek yönlü Anava analizi, Kuzey Kıbrıs.

To my parents

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I want to appreciate my supervisor Prof. Dr. Semi Fethi, my instructors at the school,

my dear family and friends, profoundly.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Arndt (1967) suggested a definition for word-of-mouth communication that became very useful and has been used in literature widely. "Spoken individual-to-individual communication between a receiver and a communicator which the receiver perceives the process as non-commercial about a product, brand or service."

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study uses T-test and ANOVA to investigate the differences between impersonal and personal sources of word-of-mouth communication and find the potential differences among different groups of customers.

1.3 Findings of the Study

The results of the independent T-test show that male group and the female group have a significant difference in their consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages for commercial activities with each other. Results also show that Females rely more on word-of-mouth than males for commercial purposes. The results of ANOVA test explain that younger respondents were more eager to use online networks for commercial purposes than their older counterparts. There was no significant difference between people's job status in their use of social media for commercial purposes, online and offline word-of-mouth reliance.

1.4 Structure of Study

Chapter one introduces the word-of-mouth concept. The second chapter gives a review of previous studies, which is the literature review. The third chapter will give more details about the research methodology. Chapter four discusses the empirical results. Finally, chapter Five gives a summary of the findings, policy implications and limitations for further research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Without doubt, the emergence of the Internet and later social media has changed people's lives to a great extent and power. The influence of the platform which they offer is undisputable and unrebuttable. Word-of-mouth as one of the oldest marketing practices has always had a huge impact on consumer behaviors. Studies determine that word-of-mouth has an effect on consumer outcomes; they offer numerous influential roles of it in the marketplace. For example, word-of-mouth influences product adoption likelihood (Arndt, 1967), product judgments (Bone, 1995), brand attitudes (Herr et al., 1991), purchase intentions (Sundaram et al., 1999), service quality perceptions (Wang, 2011), and product involvement based on its category (Giese et al., 1996). East et al. (2005) found that word-of-mouth makes thirty-one percent of the consumers' brand choices, which is over twice the amount that advertising is responsible for (14%). In this thesis, the impact of off-line word-of-mouth and especially online word-of-mouth related to social media on consumers has been examined.

2.2 The History of Word-of-Mouth Concept and Its Definition

Word-of-mouth is probably the most tenacious tools of swapping ideas and opinions on goods and services available in the market. Once upon a time, word-of-mouth was the only possible advertising practice between neighbors and families in every region in a fashion that they could be able to provide their needs at the next door local stores

(Whyte, 1954). More than fifty years ago, when researchers began to work on word-of-mouth, they immediately established it as a powerful marketing force with an enormous impact on the likelihood of consumers getting interested to adopt a product (Arndt, 1967), brand choice (East et al., 2005), product judgments (Bone, 1995), and purchase intentions (Sundaram and Webster, 1999) brand attitudes (Herr et al., 1991). People also give others word-of-mouth to take advice and support from them in return (Sundaram et al., 1998) or to get social advantages (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) like social belonging and social comparison (Alexandrov et al., 2013).

Today, word-of-mouth is also an Internet phenomenon, which has made it more quick and ubiquitous, and, therefore, even more powerful (Yeh and Choi, 2011). Recent studies suggest that word-of-mouth has become more effective than traditional marketing tools like advertising or public relation (Stephen and Galak, 2012; Trusov et al., 2009). In early 1955, Katz and Lazarsfeld estimated that word-of-mouth was seven times more effective than newspaper ads, four times more than direct sales, and two times than radio advertising. Day (1971) believed that word-of-mouth was nine times more effective than advertising in consumers purchasing decision-making. Morin (1983) determined that "other people's recommendations" were three times more effective in provoking people to buy a commodity. Reicheld (1996), reflects that this persuasive nature turns into customer loyalty and profitability. Researchers are still holding the same idea that word-of-mouth is superior to everything for attracting and keeping customers on the producers' side (Duhan, Johnson, Wilcox, and Harrell, 1997).

Word-of-mouth has a close relationship with peoples' level of trust (Bergeron, Ricard, and Perrien, 2003), service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988), satisfaction (Anderson, 1998), perceived value (Hartline and Jones, 1996), the quality of relationship (Boles, Barksdale, and Johnson, 1997), and with their intention for buying commodities and services (Crocker, 1986). Nowadays, among the virtual era, the influence of word-of-mouth is increasing more and more day to day. The increasing attention to and the growing interest in word-of-mouth between marketers over the past decade has raised questions about word-of-mouth's functions and its utilization for marketing purposes properly. Consumer contemplations such as value, satisfaction, perceived quality, trustfulness, and respect have been studied thoroughly as predecessors of word-of-mouth (de Matos and Rossi, 2008). East et al. (2005) found that word-of-mouth recommendations shape and make thirty-one percent of consumers' brand choices, which is more than twice the amount that the advertising is responsible for which is fourteen. Based on some researches interesting things like latest Apple iPhone has the chance to be talked about more than bores such as a painkiller tablet. Bakshy (2011) argues that more interesting URLs on the internet were tweeted more. Nevertheless, more intriguing materials doesn't make more discussion frequently than those which consumers found as bores (Berger and Schwartz, 2011).

2.3 Modern Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is an informal and noncommercial conversation, also a behavior which happens after purchasing or service delivery. It must be free and independent and company or service provider must not have a direct influence on the communication (Silverman, 2001). Nowadays we are facing a modern type of word-of-mouth (Godin, 2001), which claims that the old phenomenon (word-of-mouth) has

an internal relationship with the online context. Thus, expert started to create a multidimensional word-of-mouth measurement scale for electrical service. A useful scale for measuring great benefits of favorable word-of-mouth (traditional and online) would mitigate manager's effort to figure out their strategies for shepherding customers to share good stuff about their products and services. Also, this scale could be helpful for providers to forecast consumer's intention for buying a specific commodity. (Arndt, 1968; Brown and Reingen, 1987; Maxham III, 2001; Ying and Chung, 2007). People share their opinions, news, and different kind of information with each other (Berger, 2014; King et al., 2014). They talk about their travels, a food they have tried, or complain about a restaurant or café or services they have experienced. They talk about the subject that which mobile phone is better.

Word-of-mouth has an informal and interpersonal nature (Westbrook, 1987). They also communicate with others about their purchases and experiences (e.g., I think the new Apple iPhone has an exceptional camera), direct recommendations (e.g., I really recommend this Gym), and likewise. Word-of-mouth happens through the face-to-face chats as well as written discussions in different online channels and platforms. It happens in one-on-one interactions too as well as bigger groups of people.

People have face to face discussions, talk to each other on the phone, and send text. The advent of Internet and further social media let a larger community of human beings to be connected through Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, weblogs, and other online platforms.

Researchers who used electronical word-of-mouth (e-WOM) information (Berger and Milkman, 2012) revealed that consumers talk about intriguing subjects more (Bakshy et al., 2011), but researchers who used face-to-face word-of-mouth data failed to find same effects as above. Perhaps these different results could be considered under the question which how communication channels put consumers under influence to what they need to talk about and to share. Researchers suggest that, despite spoken communication, written communication (e.g., writing a text, writing a message or even post materials on the net) let consumers to discuss more intriguing brands that they have interest in them, services or commodities and products, because communicating in writing style without doubt can be considered more asynchronous than oral form of communication (i.e., you have got a period of time which is more than enough for contemplating, correcting or even re-correcting what you want to say). People naturally have an approach to self-enhancement, but constructing a refined concept to tell to receivers needs time(Berger and Iyengar, 2013). Most of the buyers would consider Adidas products as more interesting materials to talk about than Colgate toothpastes (Berger and Milkman, 2012).

2.4 Word of Mouth Concept's Features

Word-of-mouth would perform face to face, by phone or Smartphone, email, mail, or other styles of communicating (Silverman, 2001). Receivers must not be conveyed by any marketing intention behind the recommendations, directly or subliminally. Otherwise, those would not be considered as word-of-mouth. A word-of-mouth communication can be personal or impersonal, but both giver and receiver should not be related to the producer. Experts have asserted the word-of-mouth concept with, personal recommendations (Arndt, 1967), interpersonal communications (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004), interpersonal relationships (Arndt, 1967), informal communications

(Silverman, 2001), personal and interpersonal influence (Arndt, 1967; Brown and Reingen, 1987), informal advertising (Arndt, 1967).

2.5 Electrical Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Viral Marketing

 Since the advent of the Internet, word-of-mouth has had several names: Viral marketing, email marketing, Internet word-of-mouth, word-of-mouth marketing, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Viral marketing is related to word-of-mouth through electronic and social media. The Internet makes a distinction between general word-of-mouth and viral. Godin (2001) claims that the term 'viral', refers to an idea which acts like a virus: "A huge idea that goes amid the target receivers, a popular idea that propagates among a selected crowds and teaches and changes and influences everyone it touches".

 The consumer him/herself plays an important role in the advertising process by becoming a brand or company's supporter and, occasionally, advertising concept developer (Stanbouli, 2003) or solicitor (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, and Raman, 2004). Godin suggested that helping consumers to communicate with each other and setting some incentives would help them to reach their goals, but there are some arguments that in this fashion the independence of the communication is not clear and strict enough. The source of word-of-mouth is personal or impersonal. Bakshy et al. (2011) realized that online contents are more interesting subjects to share among people on Twitter. Researchers studied to what extent online materials get viral through users (Berger and Milkman, 2012). Berger and Schwartz (2011) worked on face-to-face word-of-mouth among the products and brands and they realized that however, products which consumers have more interest in them do not always get more word-of-mouth in overall. Companies are putting too much effort to harness

word-of-mouth's power and to take control of its influence. On the other hand, by intervening in costumers communicating process by setting incentives to them for persuading them in order to recommend their acquaintances, friends, and families. Network marketing relies mostly on the personal and mutual usage of connections to increase sales. One might truly remark, that, the independence of communication is not complete. But some scholars maintain that they have considerable effects on word-of-mouth (Bayus, 1985; Payne et al., 1995). Findings say that 'opinion leaders' apparently have more influence than either innovation on word-of-mouth (Sheth, 1971). Zeithaml (1992) asserts that the level of difficulty for a consumer who buys a product for reckoning it or a service has a direct influence on the amount of word-of-mouth swapped.

Communication modality is the key difference between the interest concept and word-of-mouth. Through communication with a synchronous nature, communicators don't have more than normal and enough time to contemplate about what they want to share orally and perhaps they are going to talk about things that the atmosphere shepherd them into. (Berger and Iyengar, 2013)

2.6 Word-of-Mouth and Different Kind of Products

We have three types of products:

1. Products with high search qualities (for instance, price, fit, color, etc.) these could be assessed easily. Their quality could be contemplated before purchasing.

2. Products with high experience qualities (like taste, freshness, etc.). These could only be evaluated after purchasing.

3. Products which are highly intangible and hard to be assessed even after purchasing (like health treatment, legal counseling, …)

The more difficult a product can be assessed, the more willing the customers are to search for a reliable word-of-mouth source which they can trust in to reduce the risks which they have before purchasing (Herr et al, 1991).

Taking care of word-of-mouth specifically negative word-of-mouth through consumer's contemplations and especially their complaints could affect not only the existing customer loyalty but also customer acquisition too (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1988). Thus, this might manipulates service providers and business owners to focus only on promoting their products and services by word-of-mouth through customer's recommendations rather than usual marketing practices (Stokes et al, 1997).

2.7 Word-of-Mouth's Disadvantages

For word-of-mouth we can consider some perceived disadvantages. It might limits improvement and expansion and also it is not under control. We can find arguments in literature (e.g. *Barclays Review*, 1997) claiming that relying on word-of-mouth comes from an inability to apply marketing methods properly, or it is caused by improper marketing practices. Consumer behavior study suggests that the nature of word-of-mouth and its extent of activities are based on its context. For instance, the intangibility and high experienced qualities of a service increase the probability of consumers to search and look for word-of-mouth recommendations (Zeithaml, 1992).

The level of interaction between producers and consumers among the process of delivering a service has an influences on the level and amount of word-of-mouth

occurred (Haywood, 1989). Management intervention for affecting word-of-mouth process depends mainly on trying to seduce 'unpaid advocates' (Buttle, 1998) to make recommendations. Relying on the word-of-mouth has its disadvantages too, as an example, it might limit growth. The informal nature of these communications can put the companies and producers into a networking channel cage. We perceive it as an uncontrollable phenomenon. Some business owners have fewer opportunities to intervene and harness recommendations and their influences, even while they are providing the best service at their level.

2.8 Word-of-Mouth Motives

Satisfaction, perceived quality, perceived value, trust, and commitment have been studied largely as antecedents of word-of-mouth (de Matos and Rossi, 2008). This evaluation shows that consumers' information about a commodity or service and experiences which he/she had with it lead them towards further purchasing or communicating (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Satisfaction is an assessment idea that includes both cognitive and affective aspects (Oliver, 1993). The domineering discourse in the marketing literature is approximately a cognitive view on the subject which believes the concept of satisfaction is a function of expectation-disconfirmation (Szymanski and Henard, 2001). Scholars recently are working on the affective and emotional aspect of satisfaction concept thoroughly (Martin et al., 2008). Consumers' involvement in production process, occasionally involvement, and marketplace involvement (Wangenheim and Bayón, 2007), setting an incentive in return for giving word-of-mouth (Wirtz and Chew, 2002), and other consumers' ideas about a commodity or service (Ryu and Han, 2009) are elements which have effects on satisfaction concept. Emotion also affects word-of-mouth (Berger and Milkma, 2012), because by emotion consumers would be able to determine their achievement,

seek for confirmation from others, and receive calmness and relaxed feelings (Cheung et al., 2007). Public visibility (Berger and Schwartz, 2011) and motivation like self-enhancement also shepherds consumers onto word-of-mouth process (Sundaram et al., 1998).

Perceived quality is defined as consumers' assessment of the physical features of the product (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). The attributes would be considered as the quality judgment of a product or service, for instance elements in food industry could be elements like the taste, the look, and the texture (Aikman and Crites, 2007; Olsen, 2002). The evaluation of quality also like satisfaction concept which is mentioned above is a cognitive form of people assessment (Parasuraman et al., 1988), but it is in contrary with satisfaction concept because satisfaction was a more effective concept than cognitive one (Giese and Cote, 2002). Many scholars consider the satisfaction concept and perceived quality as predecessors of word-of-mouth and they highly depend on it (Brown et al., 2005; Cronin Jr et al., 2000; Fullerton and Taylor, 2002; Harrison-Walker, 2001a; Hartline and Jones, 1996; Ladhari, 2007; de Matos and Rossi, 2008; Wangenheim and Bayón, 2007). On the contrary consumers don't share positive things with others about their satisfied experiences whenever they got delivered one (de Matos and Rossi, 2008).

Motivation is a drive that leads people towards their desired wills and goals. Marketers never stop searching for new ways to motivate their audience more or try to figure out how and why they get motivated by products and services (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997; MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). Marketers are willing to use motivational forces because they are important in spreading of word-of-mouth, they

also like people to use word-of-mouth for altruistic purposes because consumers have self-likeness as well as self-enhancement (Sundaram et al., 1998). They use word-of-mouth for identity signaling (Chung and Darke, 2006), and for filling conversational gaps (Berger, 2014), also non-selfish motives, such as being worried for others who are going to buy or use a product (Sundaram et al., 1998) and they might want to support the business or company which delivers service or sells products to them (Cheung et al., 2007).

Emotional regulation is another motive for word-of-mouth (Berger, 2014), which covers motives like cognitive dissonance (Engel et al., 1969), venting (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), psychological arousal (Berger and Milkman, 2012), and revenge (Sundaram et al., 1998).

Perceived risk is a motive which includes multi-dimensions and can be defined in terms of instability and consequences. This motive develops a degree of uncertainty and increases the possibility of negative consequences which could end into perceived hazards (Oglethorpe and Monroe, 1987). Perceived risk can be in any six different forms of hazard including performance, financial, physical, convenience, social, and psychological (Murray, 1991). Gatignon and Robertson (1986) maintain that the perceived risk is a cost-centric factor. In a research conducted by Pew research center, it was realized that, American people with higher income level than 75000 dollars per year are using social media 10 percent more than those who earn less than 30000 dollars per year. Mazzarol et al. (2007) says that consumers might be unwilling to swap word-of-mouth in a risky occasion, especially for expensive products. However, there are studies which argue a contrary effect; that perceived risk would increase

peoples' willingness to communicate in word-of-mouth form. Wangenheim (2005) in his studies determines that perceived risk increases negative word-of-mouth about a failed service delivery and he relates this to cognitive dissonance. Lin and Fang (2006) found that another two dimensions of perceived risk, social and psychological risk, have a positive effect on word-of-mouth communication sharing. Positive effects of perceived risk may happen because hazards give people a chance to improve and refine their image.

 Satisfaction has a positive effect on word-of-mouth (Ladhari, 2007; de Matos and Rossi, 2008), dissatisfaction also leads to word-of-mouth as well (Nyer and Gopinath, 2005; Richins, 1983). Some experts make this question that which one is overbearing, satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Anderson, 1998; East et al., 2007). A study offers that dissatisfied customers are willing to tell double times as many people as satisfied customers (Technical Assistance Research Programs, 1986). On the opposite, a more recent study shows that most of the word-of-mouth communications are positive rather than negative (East et al., 2007), he claims that satisfaction dominates over dissatisfaction related to being a reason of sharing word-of-mouth. By sharing positive information through communications with other customers, they can require a positive self-concept and refine their self-image (Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster, 1998).

 Personality traits are defined as "temporally and situationally invariant personal characteristics that distinguish between different individuals shepherd them to stability in behavior in different occasions through the time" (Baumgartner, 2002). Studies suggest that word-of-mouth has a relationship with consumers' self-

confidence (Chelminski and Coulter, 2007), the process that an individual needs for being considered as a unique person (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010), innovativeness (Sun et al., 2006), and need for vivid information (Mowen et al., 2007).

Individualism is related to cultural differences (Hofstede, 1980), as opposed to collectivism (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). Individualism as a trait identifies an individual person who characterizes himself as being separated from others (Triandis, 1995). Individualistic characters seek for values like being unique, they want to be seen as a people who relies on themselves for being easily noticed, and they care to communicate with other human beings in a direct way (Singelis, 1994). Studies show that this trait increases the level of word-of-mouth communication because consumers with individualistic characters have a higher self-confidence level to consume products or to receive services, thus they are more confident to share word-of-mouth with other consumers (Barnes and Pressey, 2012; Chelminski and Coulter, 2007).

Extraversion is another personality trait in which people are more willing to be involved in social interactions (e.g., Costa and McCrae, 1992). The extraversion is positively related to word-of-mouth (Mooradian, 1996; Gnambs and Batanic, 2012). It also has a positive impact on a consumer to be more confident in his/her social involvement (Cheng and Furnham, 2002).

2.9 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM) and Social Media

Internet and virtual platforms for communicating have changed consumers, societies, and companies by accelerating their access to an ocean of information and enhanced social connectivity (Kucuk and Krishnamurthy, 2007). More than 2 billion people or

almost twenty-nine percent of the world's population are using social networking sites (Kemp, 2015). Facebook, Google+ and Twitter have respectively 936m, 300m and 302m active users (Ahmad, 2015). More than half of these population have reviewed or rated products which they have experienced on social networking sites (Roggio, 2011). Seventy-seven percent of people who shop online rely on reviews made by other users and those making their purchasing decisions (Petersen, 2013). Baldacci (2015) realized that more than one million consumers read product or service reviews every week on a social networking platforms or channels such as Twitter or Facebook, and more than eighty percent of these reviews are reproached, negative ones, complaints or critics. The commercial impact of social commerce will soon influence more than half of all retail transactions and is expected to reach $2 trillion in the U.S. alone by 2016, according to a report by For-rester Research (Mulpuru, Sehgal, Evans, Poltermann, and Roberge, 2012).

The intriguing aspects of social media and its extraordinary popularity have made a revolution in marketing literature and practices such as advertising and products promotion (Hanna, Rohn and Crittenden, 2011). Social media also has an influence on consumer behavior from the very beginning stage like gathering information about a product or service till the after purchasing stage as well as behaviors such as dissatisfied expressions or specific manners towards a product or a company (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Social networks are websites or web-based platforms which link billions of internet users from all around the globe with the same interests, opinions, and aims. Blogs, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook are examples of social media that are ubiquitous these days between all kinds of consumers. (Sin, et al., 2012).

Consumers surf on the social networks in their life routines for different reasons. Most of the users want to be connected with their relatives, friends or acquaintances. This is a way to conduct an interpersonal social support, friendship (Utpal et al., 2004). These facilitate connectivity especially through peer groups (Ahuja and Galvin, 2003). Now by using Social media channels and platforms consumers are able to find their own individualistic voice and also accessibility to more information which shape their purchasing decisions (Kozinets et al., 2010). All these happen in an efficient time at a low cost (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), it has an enormous influence on people's behaviors and their perceptions (Williams and Cottrell, 2000).

Recently online networking environment has opened a new commercial horizon in front of consumers' eyes. The communication style between consumers and marketers has changed after the advent of social media phenomenon (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Electronic word-of-mouth has many differences with traditional one because of its asynchronous nature, while the traditional one was synchronous (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). Many companies have an option on their website in form of a forum which let consumers discuss the product and services but what happen in these forums could be considered as word-of-mouth if people who comment and share ideas there feel that the communications are independent and informal and also company doesn't fund or subsidize them, also the advertisement in there are not sponsored by the producers. Consumers join these expert systems and discussion forums and get impersonal recommendations and go under their influence of them and choose a product online based on a recommendation they had read online (Sénécal and Nantel, 2004). There

are two main sources of recommendations, friends, family, and acquaintances are considered as personal sources (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Duhan, et al., 1997) also they are pigeonholed as word-of-mouth vehicles. Columns, articles, and commentary which is broadcasted in newspapers, magazines, expert publications, online discussion forums, and expert systems are impersonal sources of word-of-mouth.

People who pay attention to motivation like self-enhancement as self-concept (Sirgy, 1982) or those who have individualistic characters (Kitayama et al., 1997) are more confidently willing to share interesting word-of-mouth in an online platform than offline one (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). A research on electronic word-of-mouth found that information about a product which is collected from online word-of-mouth communications has a stronger effect on people's interest into that product than those information which gathered from a corporation's web page (Bickart and Schindler, 2001).

Modality is considered as a primary factor for distinguishing between channels in which communications occur (like written or spoken; look at Chafe and Tannen, [1987]). Eye-to-eye contacts or chatting on the phone is recognized as oral communications. Texting on the phone, tweeting a text, and most conversations performing online involve writing style of communication. Modality concept also is not the same for all channels in its synchronicity level (Clark and Brennan, 1991). Spoken communications' tendency is to make the process synchronous at some level: consumers while interchanging in real time, they know that there could not be an abnormal delay between one side of conversations' speech and another side's reply. Written conversations are more asynchronous. One person writes and sends the e-

mail and the other side responds later, for example, four hours later or even one day later. Even in texting in an online chat, people are allowed to interchange in closer time to real conversation time, it is somehow asynchronous, and with letting writers take a break between replying to the latest received text hours later. Asynchrony offers extra time to construct and correct communication, rather than, just telling anything someone wants to tell because they can take more time to contemplate on what they want to say or re-correct their materials up to the time which is refined properly (Chafe and Danielewicz, 1987). As a result, this asynchrony quality gives consumers more opportunities to get involved in selected by choice communications for presenting him/herself (Walther, 2011). Communication modality affects which products and brands get discussed (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). Therefore, by self-enhancement which is offered by asynchrony, consumers are able to talk more about interesting goods.

By acquiring social media, people are able to influence other consumers by reviews they write or utter about services they have been delivered. People are also under influence of other psychological and social characteristics such as income, the motivation for shopping, company presentation, company or brand's presence on social media, demographic variables (age, sex, disposable income, etc.), shop's payment style, type of stores (online or physical), etc. Social media websites procure the possibility for businesses to get involved and interact with consumers, become intimate to them and construct all-important relationships with potential consumers (Mersey, et al., 2010). Being present on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and others is a must for companies and brands nowadays if they want to be successful in online platforms and channels (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). A research done in

2009 determines that among the top hundred companies according to Internet Retailer seventy-nine percent of them have a public page on Facebook, sixty-nine percent have Twitter and fifty-nine percent have both (What's in a Retail email, 2009). A research of Deloitte Touche´ USA reports that sixty-two percent of American consumers read online reviews which provided by other consumers and ninety-eight percent of them rely on these reviews; eighty percent of these population said that reflecting on these reviews had an effect on their purchasing decision-making (Pookulangaran, et al., 2011).

There is a report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project which published in 2010 that claims more than seventy percent of people who use online platforms are between 18 and 29 of age and use social networking sites, they state that Facebook (73%) has the highest level of popularity between them, after that Myspace (48%) is the most popular and then LinkedIn (14%) has the third level (Yin Chu and Yoojung, 2011).

2.10 Negative Word-of-Mouth (NWOM)

After an unsatisfying experience with a brand or service, consumers might warn other people, and through this process compensate their self-image that got hurt. A negative word-of-mouth communication is described as a customer's effort to spread negative or unfavorable reflections as feedback with personal and impersonal groups such as family and friends. NWOM apparently have a greater volume than positive word-of-mouth. In a research done for the Coca-Cola, Tarp (1989) revealed that people who had negative experiences with the products shared those with a mean of nine people, on the other hand, consumers with positive experiences told a mean of four to five consumers. The repetitiveness of complaints which is reported to a

company might underestimate the true level of peoples' dissatisfaction and as a result the possibility of NWOM (Richins, 1983). The owners can try to manage NWOM by considering useful complaints to influence not only their existing audience loyalty but customer acquisition for future as well and guarantee their loyalty (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1988). When dissatisfied consumers apply complaining behavior then NWOM communications would immediately degrade the efforts to take care of positive word-of-mouth (Richins, 1983). Consumers receiving NWOM show lower possibilities and willingness to purchase the criticized product (Arndt, 1967; Herr et al., 1991). Researchers report that NWOM receivers might take the company into "defense" mode, for example, when they relate the NWOM to the communicator rather than the producer (Laczniak et al., 2001), or when they are firmly tied to the brand (Ahluwalia et al., 2000). Results assert that online defenses do exist. Previous researches argue that consumers generally react to NWOM by demising their approach toward the company or brand which is being reproached (Arndt, 1967; Bone, 1995). Another article reveals that consumers might hire a stronger defensive attribute towards NWOM by implying different kinds of speech or writing style tactics to build a shield against the NWOM (Hauge Wien, 2015). A study suggests that the motivations beneath the behavior of defending a brand might also include cognitive dissonance (Engel et al., 1969), self-enhancement (Konow, 2003), and sense of justice (Sundaram et al., 1998). The prior motivation to share positive word-of-mouth is the need for self-enhancement. Consumers by sharing NWOM satisfy their need for self-affirmation. The social comparison is another need which influences both self-enhancement and self-affirmation, the social bonding have an impression on positive word-of-mouth only, and altruistic purposes by spreading social knowledge have an impression only on NWOM. Schlosser (2005) added to the

literature that sometimes the small volume of NWOM and negative information for instance, by posting few negative materials on social media can make drastically harmful impacts on peoples' purchasing attitudes (Eisingerich, Chun, Liu, 2015).

Although social media word-of-mouth is similar to face-to-face word-of-mouth and electronical word-of-mouth, its main difference with them is the anonymity, social risk, and its level of freedom. Through a face-to-face word-of-mouth connection, consumers are in close touch with others and using non-verbal communication, voice intonation and countenance (Verhagen, Nauta, Feldberg, 2013). But word-of-mouth communication on social media is not always simultaneous conversations (Balaji, Khong, Chong, 2015). The advent of social media platforms has greatly and suddenly changed the nature of customer communications. These new channels and platforms let customers connect to each other directly and immediately be in touch with other customers. For instance, a famous basketball player named Mike Brown posted a negative experience with Wild Café services on his Facebook wall. Four thousands of people shared the post and he got more than one thousand comments under his post. As the result, the owners of café sent him an apology (Ramsey, 2013).

2.11 Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, below are the following assumptions:

- H1: There is a difference among the age groups in contemplating of offline WOM communications to use for commercial activities.

- H2: There is a difference between younger respondents and their older counterparts using online networks to pursue their commercial purposes.

- H3: there is a difference among part-time, full-time and unemployed individuals in their use of social media for commercial purposes.

- H4: There is a difference among monthly income groups in their level of confidence in using social networking for commercial activities.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter procures delineated information about the research method applied in this study. Information on the population used for the research is gathered with detailed explanation of developing a questionnaire.

Keyton (2006) considers quantitative studies as a way of measuring and representing data in figures. The methods applied in the study are descriptive analysis, T-test, and the analysis of variance (ANOVA). In this study, a descriptive analysis will be carried out through distributing questionnaires. The choices range from one to five, in which one represents strongly disagree, two means disagree, three represents neutral, four also for agree, and five for strongly agree (Steiner, 2003).

Gravetter and Wallnau (2016) argues that ANOVA test presents the differences between two or more means which is carried out through a statistical procedure. ANOVA represents the degree of differences between variables. It also maintains which mean differs from another statistically. Thus, ANOVA, as well as T-test, enable you to state the significant difference between means. The assumptions used in the analysis process of the research are based on the following hypotheses: The first hypothesis (There is a difference among the age groups in contemplating offline word-of-mouth communications to use for commercial activities), the second hypothesis

(There is a difference between younger respondents and their older counterparts using online networks to pursue their commercial purposes), the third hypothesis (there is a difference among part-time, full-time and unemployed individuals in their use of social media for commercial purposes) and the fourth hypothesis (There is a difference among monthly income groups in their level of confidence in using social networking for commercial activities).

3.2 Research Design

The study uses questionnaire. Yin (2003) suggests case study because it is convenient for studies that concentrate on examining the happening of something in a context. He also thinks multiple case studies are helpful tools for accurate research results and responses cannot be manipulated.

3.3 Sample and Data Collection

The study was carried out in Famagusta, North Cyprus (Turkish Part). The questionnaires were administered to students of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), local people and travelers. The students of EMU were selected as part of the sample for the study because they are supposed to spend more time on social media on the assumption that their knowledge using technology makes them suitable respondents. Turkish Cypriots and other respondents were also included for the sake of having a variety of respondents.

Primary data were gathered through distributing the questionnaires among the participants. The questionnaire is designed based on the Likert Scale, 180 respondents were selected according to suitability and being close to the researcher in terms of distance or time. Participants were assured that through the process they will remain anonymous (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008).

The total number of the questionnaires filled is a hundred fifty-four (154) out of one hundred and eighty (180) questionnaires distributed. The survey contains thirty-seven (37) questions in two (2) sections; the first section collects demographic information and the second section contains the main information. The questions use the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

3.4 Questionnaire Development

The demographic information includes gender, age, and job status, monthly income level (TL), education level, nationality, and occupation.

In section 2, the first two questions are asked to figure out if they search for information offline or online and whether or not they use online sources, such as social media or searching engines. Questions 3 to 9 can show which network setting they surf on and search in more. Questions 10 and 19 are asked to find out to what extent people are sensitive and care about offers and incentives because one of the most important factors in word-of-mouth communication is whether it is connected to the marketing and producing sources or it is totally independent. Another group of questions is 11 to 17 which try to determine the respondents' confidence in using social and virtual information and their reliance on others' recommendations and experiences. The other questions are related to the convenience level of online shopping. We conduct our survey based on three studies which had been made by Anja Gfrerer and Judyta Pokrywka (2012); Barbara Gligorijevic (2013); T.D. Pham (2016). For question adoptions based on previous studies just mentioned above, we prepared a table at the end of our questionnaire in Appendix A.

3.5 Data Analysis

To make comparisons among several consumers' characteristics, such as their gender, age, their monthly income and job status, to figure out their different behavior on acquiring offline and online word-of-mouth, SPSS software was used to carry out the analysis statistically. One-way ANOVA test and T-tests were used on SPSS to examine the hypotheses. ANOVA, a tool for the analysis of variance, is used to compare the means of two or more independent samples and to test whether the difference between means are statistically significant or not. T-test compares differences between only two separate groups to test the equality of means.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

A thorough insight and meaning from our data was obtained by the use of IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). We perform set of analyses which are reported below.

4.1 Demographic Profile

A frequency analysis was performed to clarify our sample demographic specification as disclosed on table 1. From the final sample (n = 154), male respondents outweighed female respondents by 55.2% (n = 85); nearly half were aged 16 to 27 years (n = 76, 49.4%), followed by those aged 28 to 37 years (n = 38, 24.7%) and the remaining groups (38-47 and 48+) respectively 12.3% and 13.6%. Most of the respondents were either full-time employed (n = 66, 42.9%) or jobless (n = 61, 39.6%), and the remaining consisted of part-time job holders.

The respondents' monthly income (in Turkish Lira) levels ranked orderly from 1,001-1,999 with 43.2%, to 1,000 TL or less with 7.1%. Also, the educational level of our sample was proportionated as follow: 47.4% were undertaking a university degree program or had successfully completed a Bachelor degree, 25.3% were post-graduate students or held a post-graduate degree, and then 22.7% had a Secondary/High school level while the remaining 4.5% had at most a primary school level of education.

Table 1. Respondent demographic profile

Variables	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	85	55.2
Female	69	44.8
Age		
16-27	76	49.4
28-37	38	24.7
38-47	19	12.3
48 and above	21	13.6
Job status		
Full Time	66	42.9
Part Time	27	17.5
Unemployed	61	39.6
Income (TL)		
1000	11	7.1
1001-1999	65	43.2
2000-2999	46	29.9
3000 and above	32	20.8
Education level		
Primary school	7	4.5
Secondary/ High School	35	22.7
University	73	47.4
Post graduate	39	25.3
Ethnic origin		
Turkish Cypriot	36	23.4
Turkish	25	16.2
Iranian	36	23.4
African	20	13.0
People from Middle East	21	13.6
People from Former USSR	9	5.8
European	7	4.5
Occupation		
Student	84	54.5
Civil servant	16	10.4
Self-employed	24	15.6
Private Sector	30	19.5
N	154	

Most of the respondents were either Iranians or Turkish Cypriots (n = 36, 23.4%) respectively, followed by Turkish citizens (n = 25, 16.2%), Middle-Easterners (n = 21, 13.6%) and Africans (n = 20, 13%). Finally, an overwhelming majority of respondents were students (n = 84, 54.5%), meanwhile private sector employees, self-employed people and civil servants were respectively 19.5%, 15.6%, and 10.4%.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

In addition to the above frequency analysis undertaken, we also carried out a descriptive analysis of the study variables as shown on Tables 2 and 3. Respondents were asked to provide a score for each of the 25 items, ranging from 1 to 5, respectively expressing the least and the most agreement level with the statements expressed by the items. The five highest items' mean scores as follow, show that the respondents nearly fully agree with the relevant statements:

- Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .71$),

- I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…) ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .64$) ,

- I search for information online (on the Internet)   ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.05$),

- I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities ($M = 4.23$, $SD = .77$),

- I consider offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities ($M = 4.23$, $SD = .74$).

On the other hand, our respondents seemed to be less agreeing with or confirming some of the statements regarding the use of social media for their commercial activities, as reported specifically by the 3 lowest items mean scores:

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Table 2. Descriptive statistics summary

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I search for information online (on the Internet)	154	1.00	5.00	4.28	1.05
I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	154	2.00	5.00	4.44	.64
I used Facebook for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.36
I used Twitter for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	2.36	1.52
I used YouTube for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	3.77	1.26
I used Viber for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	2.38	1.38
I used Tango for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	2.12	1.37
I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	2.66	1.35
I used Google for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	4.09	1.12
I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	4.23	.77
I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	3.90	1.08
I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	154	1.00	5.00	3.71	1.13
I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	154	1.00	5.00	3.98	.99
I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	154	1.00	5.00	4.09	.99
I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.12
I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	154	2.00	5.00	4.23	.74
I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	154	1.00	5.00	3.89	.96
I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	154	1.00	5.00	4.09	.74
Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	154	2.00	5.00	4.45	.71
Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	154	1.00	5.00	3.82	.93

Table 3. Descriptive statistics summary *(cont'd)*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	*SD*
I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	154	1.00	5.00	3.73	.94
There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	154	2.00	5.00	4.17	.71
Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	154	2.00	5.00	4.01	.71
Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	154	1.00	5.00	3.21	.97
Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	154	1.00	5.00	4.06	.77

- I used Tango for commercial activities ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.37$),

- I used Twitter for commercial activities ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.52$)

- I used Viber for commercial activities ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.38$)

4.3 Independent Sample T-test

We ran an independent sample T-test to investigate for a potential difference between male and female customers in their use of social media, and information seeking their commercial activities. In table 5, we present the results of all the 25 items which consist of our research aim. There were only 3 statistically significant mean differences found. Specifically, there was a statistically significant difference in the use of Facebook for commercial activities between male and female respondents on average, such that females used Facebook ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.42$) more than males ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.41$) for commercial purposes: $t(151.103) = -2.125$, $p < .05$.

In addition, both genders also had a statistically significant difference in their average consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages for commercial activities use. Female re-

Table 4. T-test table

No.	Items	Gender	N	Mean	T	Sig.
1	I search for information online (on the Internet)	Male	85	4.28	-.044	.965
		Female	69	4.29		
2	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	Male	85	4.40	-.899	.370
		Female	69	4.49		
3	I used Facebook for commercial activities	Male	85	3.53	-2.125	**.035**
		Female	69	3.98		
4	I used Twitter for commercial activities	Male	85	2.26	.888	.376
		Female	69	2.48		
5	I used YouTube for commercial activities	Male	85	3.78	.041	.968
		Female	69	3.77		
6	I used Viber for commercial activities	Male	85	2.28	-1.007	.315
		Female	69	2.51		
7	I used Tango for commercial activities	Male	85	1.96	-1.540	.126
		Female	69	2.30		
8	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	Male	85	2.59	-.756	.451
		Female	69	2.75		
9	I used Google for commercial activities	Male	85	4.09	.039	.969
		Female	69	4.09		
10	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	Male	85	4.14	-1.658	.099
		Female	69	4.35		
11	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	Male	85	3.86	-.558	.577
		Female	69	3.96		
12	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	Male	85	3.61	-1.170	.244
		Female	69	3.82		
13	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	Male	85	3.95	-.379	.705
		Female	69	4.01		
14	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	Male	85	4.09	.044	.965
		Female	69	4.09		

15	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	Male Female	85 69	3.55 3.77	-1.184	.238
16	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	Male Female	85 69	4.09 4.39	-2.533	**.012**
17	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	Male Female	85 69	3.81 4.00	-1.215	.226
18	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	Male Female	85 69	4.02 4.19	-1.342	.182
19	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	Male Female	85 69	4.42 4.49	-.604	.547
20	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	Male Female	85 69	3.75 3.81	-.964	.337
21	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	Male Female	85 69	3.73 3.72	.030	976
22	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	Male Female	85 69	4.13 4.23	-.880	.381
23	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	Male Female	85 69	3.96 4.07	-.912	.364
24	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	Male Female	85 69	3.41 2.96	2.895	**.004**
25	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	Male Female	85 69	4.01 4.12	-.801	.425

p significant at *.05* level, N=154

spondents had a higher level of reliance ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .69$) to conventional word-of-mouth for their commercial activities than their males counterparts ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .75$): : $t(152) = -2.533$, $p < .05$. Finally, we found a third statistically significant

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difference between males and females regarding the plethora and/or contradicting online information's influence on their purchasing decision. Precisely, men on average tend to be more resilient to the influence of online information mixture and/or contradiction on their buying decisions ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .82$) than women are ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.07$): $t(124.784) = 2.895$, $p < .01$.

4.4 Analyses of Variance

Series of Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were also undertaken to investigate the potential differences between our respondent subset groups, precisely age, job status, income level, education level, and occupation.

4.4.1 ANOVA for Age Group

The first round of ANOVA test we ran were aimed at looking for significant differences between our age groups regarding the survey items. Preliminary results provide evidence for statistically significant difference between groups as shown by the significance level in tables 7-8-9, regarding the study items. A notable exception however concerns items 10, 16, and 24. There was no significant difference between the age groups in the attention paid to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities, consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities, and the resilience to change the purchase decision for commercial product despite mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web.

Other than these exceptions, all other items were subject to a significant difference between the groups ($p < .05$). A post hoc analysis confirm that the differences laid mostly between seniors (48 and above) and younger age groups. In other words, there was a difference between respondents aged 48 or above and those aged respectively 16-27, 28-37, 38-47. A closer look to the groups' mean confirms that younger

respondents were more eager to use online networks to pursue their commercial purposes than their older counterparts.

Table 5. ANOVA table for age

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
1	I search for information online (on the Internet)	16-27	76	4.67	12.823	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.53		
		38-47	19	3.95		
		48+	21	2.76		
2	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	16-27	76	4.55	2.826	**.041**
		28-37	38	4.47		
		38-47	19	4.21		
		48+	21	4.19		
3	I used Facebook for commercial activities	16-27	76	4.00	26.155	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.24		
		38-47	19	3.84		
		48+	21	1.76		
4	I used Twitter for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.66	19.754	**.000**
		28-37	38	2.50		
		38-47	19	2.16		
		48+	21	1.19		
5	I used YouTube for commercial activities	16-27	76	4.30	21.848	**.000**
		28-37	38	3.76		
		38-47	19	3.37		
		48+	21	2.24		
6	I used Viber for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.55	11.599	**.000**
		28-37	38	2.32		
		38-47	19	2.89		
		48+	21	1.43		
7	I used Tango for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.30	13.715	**.000**
		28-37	38	2.16		
		38-47	19	2.32		
		48+	21	1.19		
8	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.95	6.308	**.000**
		28-37	38	2.68		
		38-47	19	2.68		
		48+	21	1.57		
9	I used Google for commercial activities	16-27	76	4.49	17.612	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.34		
		38-47	19	3.89		
		48+	21	2.38		

10	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.95	.791	.501
		28-37	38	2.68		
		38-47	19	2.68		
		48+	21	1.57		
11	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	16-27	76	4.33	21.507	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.05		
		38-47	19	3.79		
		48+	21	2.19		
12	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	16-27	76	4.05	15.466	**.000**
		28-37	38	3.89		
		38-47	19	3.74		
		48+	21	2.09		
13	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	16-27	76	4.30	12.425	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.21		
		38-47	19	3.84		
		48+	21	2.52		
14	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	16-27	76	4.38	10.819	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.37		
		38-47	19	3.95		
		48+	21	2.67		
15	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	16-27	76	3.97	8.743	**.000**
		28-37	38	3.74		
		38-47	19	3.74		
		48+	21	2.24		
16	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	16-27	76	2.95	.282	.839
		28-37	38	2.68		
		38-47	19	2.68		
		48+	21	1.57		
17	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	16-27	76	4.29	14.983	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.26		
		38-47	19	4.21		
		48+	21	4.00		
18	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	16-27	76	4.24	4.401	**.005**
		28-37	38	4.29		
		38-47	19	4.11		
		48+	21	4.19		
19	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	16-27	76	4.14	3.685	**.013**
		28-37	38	4.03		
		38-47	19	3.89		
		48+	21	2.76		

20	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	16-27	76	3.97	9.460	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.03		
		38-47	19	4.11		
		48+	21	2.62		
21	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	16-27	76	3.8816	4.074	**.012**
		28-37	38	3.8421		
		38-47	19	3.6316		
		48+	21	3.0476		
22	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	16-27	76	4.3421	5.524	**.002**
		28-37	38	4.2105		
		38-47	19	4.1579		
		48+	21	3.5238		
23	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	16-27	76	4.2237	7.388	**.000**
		28-37	38	3.9737		
		38-47	19	3.8421		
		48+	21	3.4762		
24	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	16-27	76	3.2237	1.615	.188
		28-37	38	3.1053		
		38-47	19	2.9474		
		48+	21	3.5714		
25	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	16-27	76	4.2632	10.874	**.000**
		28-37	38	4.1316		
		38-47	19	3.9474		
		48+	21	3.2857		

p significant at *.05* level, N=154

4.4.2 ANOVA for Job Status

Next on, an ANOVA for job status was undertaken. There were 3 groups, specifically full-time, part-time, and unemployed. As the results from table 6 disclose, there was no significant difference between part-time, full-time and unemployed individuals in their use of social media or virtual networking for commercial purposes, their online and offline word-of-mouth reliance, or recommendation to friend or relatives through networking regarding purchasing or commercial intentions. The job position of our respondents seemed not to affect any of their attitudes or behaviors regarding our study

items. Since this category failed to have significant differences, we will find out for

monthly income level in the next section.

Table 6. ANOVA table for job status

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
1	I search for information online (on the Internet)	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.1364 4.2593 4.4590	1.529	.220
2	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.3485 4.5185 4.5082	1.241	.292
3	I used Facebook for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.6364 3.7778 3.8197	.303	.739
4	I used Twitter for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	2.0455 2.7778 2.5082	2.771	.066
5	I used YouTube for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.6364 3.5556 4.0164	1.951	.146
6	I used Viber for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	2.2879 2.2593 2.5410	.664	.516
7	I used Tango for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	1.8333 2.1852 2.3934	2.764	.066
8	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	2.4697 2.6667 2.8689	1.395	.251
9	I used Google for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.0000 3.8519 4.2951	1.879	.156
10	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.3333 3.9630 4.2459	2.244	.110
11	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.7273 3.8519 4.1148	2.118	.124
12	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.5909 3.5926 3.8852	1.246	.290
13	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.8939 3.7407 4.1803	2.280	.106

Table 7. ANOVA table for job status (cont'd)

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
14	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.9697 3.9630 4.2787	1.803	.168
15	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.4697 3.5185 3.9016	2.620	.076
16	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.1515 4.1852 4.3279	.961	.385
17	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.8333 3.8148 4.0000	.595	.553
18	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.1212 3.9630 4.1311	.541	.583
19	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.4091 4.4815 4.4918	.239	.788
20	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.7424 3.7037 3.9508	1.040	.356
21	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.8333 3.5926 3.6721	.804	.449
22	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.1667 4.1111 4.2131	.202	.817
23	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.9848 3.9259 4.0820	.534	.588
24	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	3.3182 3.4444 2.9836	2.945	.056
25	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	Full Time Part Time Unemployed	66 27 61	4.0152 3.9630 4.1475	.720	.489

p significant at *.05* level, N=154

4.4.3 ANOVA for Monthly Income

The ANOVA analysis disclosed significant differences between the monthly income level groups in 7 out of 25 items. Specifically, the preliminary results and the concurrent Tukey HSD post hoc test output were as follow:

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of searching for information online [$F(3,150) = 4.26$, $p < .01$]. Precisely, the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score was significantly lower (M = 3.78, SD = 1.43) than those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL (M = 4.49, SD = .90) and those earning up to 1,000TL mean score (M = 4.73, SD = .47).

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of using Facebook for commercial activities [$F(3,150) = 4.61$, $p < .01$]. Precisely, the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score was significantly lower (M = 2.97, SD = 1.59) than those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL (M = 3.95, SD = 1.15) and those earning 2,000 and 2,999 TL mean score (M = 3.89, SD = 1.25).

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of using YouTube for commercial activities [$F(3,150) = 4.29$, $p < .01$]. Specifically, those earning up to 1,000TL mean score (M = 4.73, SD = .47) was significantly higher than the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score (M = 3.28, SD = 1.39).

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of using Google for commercial activities [$F(3,150) = 3.52$, $p = .017$]. Explicitly, those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL mean score (M =

4.21, SD = 1.07) was significantly higher than the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score (M = 3.56, SD = 1.46).

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of confidence in using social networking for commercial activities [F(3,150) = 5.69, p < .01]. Precisely, the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score was significantly lower (M = 3.31, SD = 1.42) than those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL (M = 3.98, SD = .97) those earning 2,000 and 2,999 TL mean score (M = 4.02, SD = .85), and those earning up to 1,000TL mean score (M = 4.63, SD = .50).

- There was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of reading large amount of information for commercial activities via social networks [F(3,150) = 3.59, p = .015]. Explicitly, those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL mean score (M = 3.86, SD = .99) was significantly higher than the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score (M = 3.15, SD = 1.48).

- Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference between monthly income groups in their level of relatives recommendations' consideration to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others [F(3,150) = 2.84, p = .04]. Specifically, those earning between 1,001 and 1,999 TL mean score (M = 4.23, SD = .86) was significantly higher than the highest pay range group's (3,000 TL) mean score (M = 3.65, SD = 1.33).

Table 8. ANOVA for Monthly income level

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
1	I search for information online (on the Internet)	1000	11	4.7273	4.266	**.006**
		1001-1999	65	4.4923		
		2000-2999	46	4.2391		
		3000+	32	3.7813		
2	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	1000	11	4.7273	1.044	.375
		1001-1999	65	4.4615		
		2000-2999	46	4.4130		
		3000+	32	4.3438		
3	I used Facebook for commercial activities	1000	11	4.0000	4.607	**.004**
		1001-1999	65	3.9538		
		2000-2999	46	3.8913		
		3000+	32	2.9688		
4	I used Twitter for commercial activities	1000	11	2.0909	2.203	.090
		1001-1999	65	2.6769		
		2000-2999	46	2.3043		
		3000+	32	1.8750		
5	I used YouTube for commercial activities	1000	11	4.7273	4.291	**.006**
		1001-1999	65	3.9077		
		2000-2999	46	3.6957		
		3000+	32	3.2813		
6	I used Viber for commercial activities	1000	11	2.6364	.657	.580
		1001-1999	65	2.4462		
		2000-2999	46	2.4348		
		3000+	32	2.0938		
7	I used Tango for commercial activities	1000	11	2.2727	1.606	.190
		1001-1999	65	2.3692		
		2000-2999	46	1.9348		
		3000+	32	1.8125		
8	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	1000	11	3.0000	.391	.760
		1001-1999	65	2.6923		
		2000-2999	46	2.6522		
		3000+	32	2.5000		
9	I used Google for commercial activities	1000	11	4.5455	3.516	**.017**
		1001-1999	65	4.2154		
		2000-2999	46	4.1739		
		3000+	32	3.5625		
10	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	1000	11	4.1818	.320	.811
		1001-1999	65	4.2308		
		2000-2999	46	4.1739		
		3000+	32	4.3438		
11	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	1000	11	4.6364	5.696	**.001**
		1001-1999	65	3.9846		
		2000-2999	46	4.0217		
		3000+	32	3.3125		

Table 9. ANOVA for Monthly income level (Cont'd)

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
12	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.0909 3.8615 3.7826 3.1563	3.597	**.015**
13	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.2727 4.0462 4.1087 3.5625	2.602	.054
14	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.3636 4.2308 4.1304 3.6563	2.839	**.040**
15	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	3.9091 3.7846 3.6304 3.3125	1.488	.220
16	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.1818 4.2462 4.1739 4.2813	.163	.921
17	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.1818 3.9385 4.0000 3.5625	1.875	.136
18	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.2727 4.1077 4.0652 4.0625	.260	.854
19	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.4545 4.5231 4.3913 4.4063	.373	.773
20	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	3.9091 3.8769 3.8913 3.5625	1.018	.386
21	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	3.8182 3.7538 3.6522 3.7500	.154	.927
22	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	1000 1001-1999 2000-2999 3000+	11 65 46 32	4.4545 4.2000 4.1304 4.0938	.801	.495

Table 10. ANOVA for Monthly income level (Cont'd)

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
23	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	1000	11	4.2727	1.978	.120
		1001-1999	65	4.1231		
		2000-2999	46	3.8478		
		3000+	32	3.9375		
24	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	1000	11	2.9091	.914	.436
		1001-1999	65	3.3231		
		2000-2999	46	3.0870		
		3000+	32	3.2500		
25	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	1000	11	4.3636	2.320	.078
		1001-1999	65	4.1846		
		2000-2999	46	3.9565		
		3000+	32	3.8438		

p significant at *.05* level, N=154

4.4.4 ANOVA for Occupation

The occupational categories comprised students, self-employed, private and public-sector individuals. We sought to know if differences existed between these four groups. Preliminary analyses showed that from the 25 study items, 7 did not reveal any statistically significant difference as displayed on table 8. Any of the groups did not differ from the other when it came to use Viber for commercial activities [$F_{(3,150)}$ = .809, p = .491], to pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities [$F_{(3,150)}$ = .427, p = .734], to consider offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities [$F_{(3,150)}$ = .449, p = .518], to acknowledge the influences of the newly-released technologies for buying commercial products on the Internet [$F_{(3,150)}$ = 2.14, p = .098], to think that significant discount should be applied for the customers using social networks for commercial products [$F_{(3,150)}$ = 2.203, p = .09], just to report a few. Furthermore, the post hoc analysis for the significant differences showed that students' mean scores were higher than other groups of occupation and thus, were significantly different.

Table 11. ANOVA for occupation

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
1	I search for information online (on the Internet)	Student	84	4.6548	12.131	.000
		Civil servant	16	3.8750		
		Self-employed	24	3.4167		
		Private Sector	30	4.1667		
2	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	Student	84	4.5714	3.010	.032
		Civil servant	16	4.3750		
		Self-employed	24	4.3333		
		Private Sector	30	4.2000		
3	I used Facebook for commercial activities	Student	84	4.0357	4.337	.006
		Civil servant	16	3.1250		
		Self-employed	24	3.1250		
		Private Sector	30	3.7000		
4	I used Twitter for commercial activities	Student	84	2.7024	5.121	.002
		Civil servant	16	1.6250		
		Self-employed	24	1.5833		
		Private Sector	30	2.4000		
5	I used YouTube for commercial activities	Student	84	4.2024	8.824	.000
		Civil servant	16	3.0625		
		Self-employed	24	3.1250		
		Private Sector	30	3.4667		
6	I used Viber for commercial activities	Student	84	2.5119	.809	.491
		Civil servant	16	2.1250		
		Self-employed	24	2.0833		
		Private Sector	30	2.4000		
7	I used Tango for commercial activities	Student	84	2.3452	3.191	.025
		Civil servant	16	1.7500		
		Self-employed	24	1.4583		
		Private Sector	30	2.2000		
8	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	Student	84	2.9286	3.205	.025
		Civil servant	16	2.0625		
		Self-employed	24	2.2083		
		Private Sector	30	2.6000		
9	I used Google for commercial activities	Student	84	4.4286	7.983	.000
		Civil servant	16	3.4375		
		Self-employed	24	3.4583		
		Private Sector	30	4.0000		
10	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	Student	84	4.2619	.427	.734
		Civil servant	16	4.0625		
		Self-employed	24	4.1667		
		Private Sector	30	4.3000		
11	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	Student	84	4.2857	9.665	.000
		Civil servant	16	3.4375		
		Self-employed	24	3.2500		
		Private Sector	30	3.6000		

Table 12. ANOVA for occupation (Cont'd)

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
12	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	Student	84	4.0357	6.273	.000
		Civil servant	16	3.2500		
		Self-employed	24	3.1250		
		Private Sector	30	3.5000		
13	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	Student	84	4.2619	5.896	.001
		Civil servant	16	3.4375		
		Self-employed	24	3.5833		
		Private Sector	30	3.8000		
14	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	Student	84	4.3571	5.358	.002
		Civil servant	16	3.5000		
		Self-employed	24	3.7917		
		Private Sector	30	3.9000		
15	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	Student	84	3.9762	6.053	.001
		Civil servant	16	3.1875		
		Self-employed	24	3.1250		
		Private Sector	30	3.4000		
16	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	Student	84	4.2738	.449	.718
		Civil servant	16	4.0625		
		Self-employed	24	4.2500		
		Private Sector	30	4.1667		
17	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	Student	84	4.1190	3.998	.009
		Civil servant	16	3.4375		
		Self-employed	24	3.5833		
		Private Sector	30	3.7667		
18	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	Student	84	4.2143	2.140	.098
		Civil servant	16	3.7500		
		Self-employed	24	4.0000		
		Private Sector	30	4.0333		
19	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	Student	84	4.5833	2.203	.090
		Civil servant	16	4.3750		
		Self-employed	24	4.2500		
		Private Sector	30	4.3000		
20	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	Student	84	3.9524	2.042	.110
		Civil servant	16	3.3750		
		Self-employed	24	3.6667		
		Private Sector	30	3.8000		
21	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	Student	84	3.8571	3.557	.016
		Civil servant	16	3.2500		
		Self-employed	24	3.3750		
		Private Sector	30	3.9000		
22	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	Student	84	4.2976	3.560	.016
		Civil servant	16	3.9375		
		Self-employed	24	3.8333		
		Private Sector	30	4.2333		

Table 13. ANOVA for occupation (Cont'd)

No.	Items	Groups	N	Mean	F	Sig.
23	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	Student	84	4.1905	4.147	.007
		Civil servant	16	3.8750		
		Self-employed	24	3.7500		
		Private Sector	30	3.8000		
24	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	Student	84	3.2024	.170	.916
		Civil servant	16	3.0625		
		Self-employed	24	3.2500		
		Private Sector	30	3.2667		
25	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	Student	84	4.2262	3.242	.024
		Civil servant	16	3.8125		
		Self-employed	24	3.7917		
		Private Sector	30	3.9333		

p significant at .05 level, N=154

Based on our research our hypothesis acceptance is as follow:

	ACCEPTED	DENIED
H1:		*
H2:	*	
H3:		*
H4:	*	

Yin Chu and Yoojung (2011) claim that most of the social media users are young people among 18 to 26 of age and Facebook has the highest level of popularity among them. In our research, it has been found that same age groups use social media more and they contemplate the online word-of-mouth more in contrast with offline word-of-mouth for which we found there are no significant differences between young respondents with their elder counterparts. Based on a survey conducted by Pew Research Center, it is found that there is a difference between income level and social

media usage. We also found a difference between income level and usage of online platforms and also the consumers' trust in electronic word-of-mouth based on their higher income level. But we found that there are no significant differences among individual's job status in their use of social media for commercial purposes.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In order to find out the determinants of word-of-mouth communication on social media, it was important to examine active and potential consumer's attitudes towards online shopping, online advertising practices and their reliance on technology and their level of trust in personal and impersonal information sources of word-of-mouth.

Based on the research, these conclusions are drawn. Respondents fully agreed on these items, significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied, they search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…), they search for information online (on the Internet), they pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities, they consider offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities. They seemed to be less agreeing with some of the statements regarding the use of social media for their commercial activities while the source of information is impersonal rather than personal and the communicator is anonymous.

There was a statistically significant difference in the use of Facebook for commercial activities between male and female respondents on average. Females used Facebook

more than males for commercial purposes, both genders also had a statistically significant difference in their average consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages for commercial activities. Men on average tend to be more resilient to the influence of online information mixture and/or contradiction on their buying decisions than women are. Running ANOVA test indicated that there was no significant difference between the age groups in their attention paid to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities, consideration of offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities, and the resilience for changing their purchasing decision for commercial products despite the mixed or opposite ideas about them on the web. Younger respondents were more eager to use online networks to pursue their commercial purposes than their older counterparts. By another round of ANOVA, we found there was no significant difference between part-time, full-time and unemployed individuals in their use of social media or virtual networking for commercial purposes, their online and offline word-of-mouth reliance, or recommendation to friends or relatives through networking regarding purchasing or commercial intentions. The job position of our respondents seemed not to affect any of their attitude or behavior regarding our study items.

Preliminary analyses showed that from the 25 study items, several did not reveal any statistically significant difference as displayed on table 8. Any of the groups did not differ from the other when it came to pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities, to consider offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities, to acknowledge the influences of the new released technologies for buying commercial products on internet, to thinking about significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied.

5.2 Managerial Implications and Recommendations

 A feeling of participation and getting involved with a business could also encourage the customers to be more loyal and increase their recommendations. Stokes (1997) realized that there is a relationship between parental involvement in their children's schools, and representing that school to others. Most business owners rely on their personal experiences and their intuitions to require the best decisions for applying marketing practices (Carson et al., 1995). Informal business methods of collecting market information are not much effective in figuring out about the sloppy and non-commercial processes of word-of-mouth recommendations.

 The importance of 'offensive' marketing strategies for acquisition of new customers must be complemented by setting 'defensive' strategies to keep current customers loyal (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1988). Word-of-mouth marketing must be the same. Giant companies like Coca-Cola hired a defensive word-of-mouth strategy and it has been revealed as a beneficial and good investment for the company (Tarp, 1981), but there is a little evidence that owners consider this as an important issue. By revealing that some consumers who encounter NWOM take the criticized company or brand's side and engage in defensive mode against the negative word-of-mouth communication which is spreading. This expands the concept of word-of-mouth to go further than just complaining (Harrison-Walker, 2001b) or praising (Harrison-Walker, 2001a). Companies looking for obtaining positive word-of-mouth should put harder effort for higher rates of perceived quality and satisfaction assessment (de Matos and Rossi, 2008). This research also suggests that these two assessments must be used carefully as indicators of word-of-mouth communications. When companies gather feedback from consumers based on specific product experiences, only the

quality evaluation would be a reliable predictor of positive word-of-mouth intentions. It can be asserted that, when a brand or company solicits more gradually increasing product assessments from its consumers, satisfaction would be a better indicator of positive word-of-mouth than perceived quality. So companies must be aware and careful about these varying effects of assessment contexts because they can improve more thorough measurement tools, which will enable them to forecast more accurately when positive word-of-mouth would happen.

Many consumers spread word-of-mouth when they see it as an occasion for self-enhancement and improve or refine their self-image. In this fashion, companies can satisfy these consumers' need for self-enhancement, for instance through advertising messages, the likelihood of word-of-mouth happening is going to increase. Companies could apply this insight, for instance, when they strive to improve online content they hope their material goes "viral" through social media platforms (Golan and Zaidner, 2008). They could also benefit from this insight of producing word-of-mouth related to the boosting of the new products, for example by positioning the products based on self-enhancement needs such as "This product tells that you are a buff." Marketing campaigns could involve identifying particular consumer groups also that would act like a catalyzer for spreading marketing messages (Liu-Thompkins, 2012), but the criteria for recognizing these consumers are often limited to the category of different types of "influential" people (Watts and Dodds, 2007), such as opinion leaders, copywriters, and innovators.

Companies nowadays allocate resources to monitor online communications for being able to reply to reproaches that may occur. However, other consumers send their

feedback to these complaints before their support for the criticized company occurs. This defensive act by consumers is rarely enough to stop the spread of NWOM and mitigate it. Therefore, companies need not act too much against the word-of-mouth when negative word-of-mouth arguments arise in online channels, and they should keep themselves away from entering these arguments very quickly (Balaji, Wei Khong, 2015).

Other motives related to individualism, such as consumers' appeal for being unique (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994), should be taken into account as alternative explanations. The appeal for being unique has been found to demise some consumers' willingness to spread word-of-mouth because it could adversely affect their uniqueness (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010). It is better to promote different products on different channels and platforms to generate word of mouth. Also, marketing practitioner might prefer to focus more on different aspects based on the spectacular platform which marketers are feeling hopeful that they can make discussion on. If the aim is to generate more online word-of-mouth, managers can frame the product in an intriguing and eerie fashion which can facilitate the process of adverting or electronic contents to make their audience surprised, by arousing their interest to products which are more likely going to be shared (Stewart and Pavlou, 2002). As consumers are increasingly involving in activities and processes that previously were harnessed by companies, the entire marketing landscape has been changing. Therefore, companies need to realize the changing behavior of consumers better, in order to construct mutual benefits from social media usage for both sides. Being careful and thoroughly consider the hazards related to negative comments and reviews on a firm's sales and reputation, a vivid understanding of the elements which

provoke NWOM communication on Social Network platforms is crucial for managers to procure appropriate and accurate responses. Many people are on social media platforms to share their negative or positive service experiences (Clark, 2013), so study on their feedbacks will aid managers to have a widen horizon on the customer's decision-making process.

5.3 Limitation of the Study

Most articles on this subject rely only on one channel's data (e.g., online reviews: Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), makes it hard to maintain enough about how the channel would have an impact on word of mouth communication per se. For example, in our research, we found females use Facebook more than men for commercial purposes but we don't know to what extent Facebook itself affects the process and word-of-mouth communication and what is the difference, for instance, between word-of-mouth on Facebook and Twitter. Another important point is that we cannot be assured the word-of-mouth communication on social media and other practices are completely independent or whether or not people really care about them. In this research, most of the respondents care about special offers and incentives by the producers, which can manipulate their genuine intentions to spread word-of-mouth.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

You are asked to partake in the study investigate the phenomenon of online Word-of-Mouth on commercial activities. Your honest opinions are required, all the information that you provide will be confidential and in no way will you be identified when the results of the study are reported.

Thank you for your participation

Prof. Dr. Sami Fethi and Sina Beheshti

Which type of commercial product are you buying for yourself?

Online Word-of-Mouth is regarded as opinions, experiences, recommendations or other feedback about commercial activities on Social Media platforms (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, Tango, Viber, Google or other social networking sites and applications).

Part A: Demographic Information

Gender:
Male ( )   Female ( )

Age:
16- 27 ( )   28-37 ( )   38-47 ( )   48 and above ( )

Job Status:

Full time ( )   Part time ( )   Unemployed ( )

Monthly Income Level (TL):
1000 ( )   1001-1999 ( )   2000-2999 ( )   3000 and above ( )

Education Level:
Primary school ( )   Secondary/High School ( )   University ( )   Post graduate ( )

Nationality
a. Turkish Cypriot   b. Turkish   c. Iranian   d. African
e. People from Middle East   f. People from Former USSR   g. European

Occupation
a. Student   b. Civil servant at Government   c. Self-employed   d. Private Sector

Part B:

Instructions: For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by placing a tick in the appropriate box. The response scale is as follows:

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neutral   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

ID	Measuring the phenomenon of online Word-of-Mouth on commercial activities	LIKERT`S SCALE				
1.	I search for information online (on the Internet)	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I used Facebook for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I used Twitter for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I used YouTube for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I used Viber for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I used Tango for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I used Google for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	1	2	3	4	5

17.	I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	1 2 3 4 5
19.	Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	1 2 3 4 5
20.	Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	1 2 3 4 5
22.	There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	1 2 3 4 5
23.	Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	1 2 3 4 5
24.	Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	1 2 3 4 5
25.	Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	1 2 3 4 5

Sources: Anja Gfrerer and Judyta Pokrywka (2012); Barbara Gligorijevic (2013); T.D. Pham (2016).

On the below chart there is a link to prior studies which we adopted our questions from.

Questions:	Gfrerer and Pokrywka (2012)	Pham (2016)	Gligorijevic (2013)
1	1		
2	2		
3	6		
4	6		
5	6		
6	6		
7	6		
8	6		
9	6		
10		1	
11		1	
12		1	2
13	16		
14	14		
15	16		

16	16		
17			2
18			2
19			1
20	22		
21			4
22			3
23			2
24			2
25			2

Appendix B: PCA Communalities Table

	Initial	Extraction
I search for information online (on the Internet)	1.000	.852
I search for information offline (on TV, in the magazine, on billboard ads…)	1.000	.681
I used Facebook for commercial activities	1.000	.723
I used Twitter for commercial activities	1.000	.712
I used YouTube for commercial activities	1.000	.701
I used Viber for commercial activities	1.000	.828
I used Tango for commercial activities	1.000	.826
I used WhatsApp for commercial activities	1.000	.638
I used Google for commercial activities	1.000	.795
I pay attention to special offers and advertisements for commercial activities	1.000	.573
I have confidence to use social networking for commercial activities	1.000	.866
I can read lots of information for commercial activities via social networks	1.000	.845
I consider recommendations of friends to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than strangers or advertisements	1.000	.861
I consider recommendations of relatives to use social networks for commercial activities more carefully than friends or others	1.000	.855
I consider online word-of-mouth (WOM) messages through people's interaction on the net for commercial activities	1.000	.809
I consider Offline word-of-mouth messages to use for commercial activities	1.000	.821
I am willing to listen to online word-of-mouth regarding to commercial activities	1.000	.793
I acknowledge the influences of the new release technologies for buying commercial products on internet	1.000	.765
Significant discount for the customers using social networks for commercial products should be applied	1.000	.663
Persuasive information I receive online can have an influence on my purchase decision for commercial products	1.000	.813
I observe the information of volume of sales for the relevant commercial products	1.000	.695
There is a tight competition to promote the products on internet	1.000	.683
Buying products online makes it easier to purchase things from any point of the World	1.000	.644
Even mixed or opposite ideas about a product on the web do not change my purchase decision for commercial products	1.000	.887
Social networking has improved the purchasing ability and decision making on buying products by let people to consider their options and needs clearly	1.000	.763

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix C: Total Variance Explained Table PCA

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.837	51.348	51.348	12.837	51.348	51.348
2	2.417	9.669	61.016	2.417	9.669	61.016
3	1.600	6.399	67.415	1.600	6.399	67.415
4	1.134	4.534	71.950	1.134	4.534	71.950
5	1.106	4.424	76.373	1.106	4.424	76.373
6	.682	2.729	79.102			
7	.564	2.257	81.359			
8	.533	2.133	83.493			
9	.473	1.894	85.387			
10	.470	1.879	87.265			
11	.440	1.761	89.027			
12	.364	1.456	90.483			
13	.341	1.363	91.846			
14	.301	1.203	93.049			
15	.265	1.060	94.109			
16	.243	.971	95.080			
17	.200	.801	95.882			
18	.191	.765	96.647			
19	.172	.690	97.336			
20	.159	.634	97.970			
21	.139	.557	98.527			
22	.115	.462	98.989			
23	.106	.425	99.414			
24	.093	.371	99.785			
25	.054	.215	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix D: Screeplot PCA