

Impact of “Viewers Affective Reaction” Towards Word of Mouth intention on Social Networking Sites

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Abstract

Social networking sites (SNSs) gaining popularity and have become a prevailing communication technology among the contemporary internet users. Marketers are attempting to harness the influence of WOM (Word Of Mouth) in SNSs. The paper examines how one's WOM intention is shaped by Viewers Affective Reaction, by adopting the VRP (Viewers Response Profile) scale; keeping in view the moderating effects of demographics. The impact of 'Viewers Affective Reaction' on consumer's propensity to share the advertisement and product experience was studied using simple linear regression. 285 valid responses were considered for the research. The responses were collected in a batch size of 30. The results indicate that WhatsApp as a social networking site tool, influences Generation C viewers WOM intention. Further analysis revealed that demographic variables viz. Gender, Time spent on WhatsApp moderates the effects of the viewers' effective responses on their WOM intention will affect the manner consumers gauged the advertisement. Present study examines and confirms that WhatsApp ad was confusing and doesn't probably convey much about the product knowledge.

Keywords: Word of mouth (WOM); Social Networking Sites (SNS); Viewers Response Profile Scale (VRP); WhatsApp; Viewers Affective Reaction

Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) in the recent years, are gaining popularity and have become a prevailing communication technology in the digital era for the contemporary internet users (Chu, et al., 2011; Kaur & Dangi, 2021). Marketers are attempting to harness the influence of WOM (word of mouth) in SNSs and hence rigorous examination of the factors leading to customer engagement in WOM through social networking sites is becoming critical (Chu, et al., 2011; Algumzi, 2022). The popularity and use of social networking sites (SNSs) like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is rapidly increasing with these sites becoming one of the communication mediums of preference among young consumers (Pelling et al., 2009). WhatsApp messenger is one of the popular social networking tools among the students, professionals, and household in India (Bajpai, 2016; Stone & Logan, 2018). These social networking platforms examine opportunities for branded communication messages to be re-distributed extensively by online web users in their social communities (Lobstein et al., 2017).

In the recent past, WhatsApp tool has become popular, gaining approx. 350m users and has been rated as the most downloadable SNS at 55% across 127 countries (Sha, et.al. 2019).

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WhatsApp is known for its functionalities of interactive engagements through text messages, audio files, attached images, or links to internet addresses and has also been an application to harness and mine product knowledge by way of promoting their product launches by sharing video files (Rupavathy et. al 2018). Consumers reliance on social media for brand and product related messages has allowed firms to directly interact with consumers at SNSs (Kim et al., 2016). The attention of this research is on the behaviour of consumers who have actually grown up with this digital media, or what has been called as “Generation C”. This generation C segment are termed as psychographic group born from 1982 to late 90’s (Forbes, 2018). This Generation C constitute of the most connected group of users, and have been significant part of the membership of consumer review websites (Hardey, 2011). Thus, it becomes imperative to realize the responses of Generation C consumers amidst various marketing campaigns shared through SNS’s (WhatsApp in the current paper) and understand its relevance in influencing product and brand experiences. Drawing on from Harolds Lasswell’s “5W” model of communication the paper attempts to capture the viewers reaction to commercial messages on SNS (Whatsapp) and its impact on their intention of spreading such messages among many users in their network. However, literature demonstrates that the measure of ad likability, which is frequently used as a reliable copy-test measure in commercial marketing situations, is not a valid measure of ad effectiveness in the context of social advertising (Noble et al. 2014). Hence, we adopted Viewer’s Response Profile (VRP) proposed by Schlinger in 1979 for the present study.

The study confirmed that WhatsApp ad was confusing and doesn’t probably convey much about the product knowledge which is in sync with ‘brand reinforcement’ being the weakest predictor of Viewers Affective Reaction. ie. the viewers are unable to relate to the brand as the ad is confusing and hence has lowest brand relevance. The differences in the viewer’s affective reaction and demographic variables ‘Gender’, ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ revealed that the behavior towards finding the WhatsApp ad ‘relevant’ and empathetic’ differs based on gender of the viewer. Additionally, ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ exhibited significant difference w.r.t Viewers Affective Reaction across the dimension ‘confusion’ and ‘Alienation’. The present study also confirms WhatsApp as a social networking site tool, which influences Generation C viewers WOM intention.

The flow of the paper is as follows: literature review and hypothesis development, proposed framework, Research Methodology, Empirical results, Findings and discussions, conclusions and implications, limitations and avenues for future research.

Literature Review and hypothesis development

Viewers Affective Reaction and Word of Mouth intention

Harold Lasswell a communication theorist, in 1948, had conceptualized model of communication (Muth et al.1990), which is considered as one of the most influential communication models (Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasorsa, 2004). Harolds Lasswell’s “5W” model of communication commonly referred as “Lasswell’s “5W” Model” focuses on "Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) Which Channel (with) What Effect". Here the entire communication process is divided into five parts; communicator, information, media, audience and effect. The literature has considered this model to be very appropriate to study the new media communication (Wenxiu, 2015). These five elements are having their own features like, communicator can be an individual or organization; information can be in the



form of audio, video, text etc; media can be more interactive; and lastly audience is more participative and connected. Thus, under any new media, such communication processes have greater opportunities and broader prospects. Thus, drawing from this 5W model of communication, present study attempts to link 5W's in the context of SNS (Whatsapp in our study). The first W - "Who" are the consumers (Generation C in our study), second W - "What" is the advertisement, third W - "Whom", are other consumers in their network, fourth W - "Which Channel", here it is SNS(Whatsapp), and lastly "What Effect" is the impact of such advertisements. That is what could be the reaction of consumers towards these advertisements on SNS. Thus, to measure the viewers reaction towards these advertisements Viewer's Response Profile (VRP) proposed by Schlinger in 1979 was adopted for the present study. Viewer's Response Profile (VRP) proposed by Schlinger in 1979 has emerged as a widely applicable tool to measure consumer's reactions to television commercials/advertising in Advertising research (Zinkhan et al., 1989). VRP instrument measures responses and categorizes viewers' responses in seven dimensions namely, entertainment, familiarity, relevance, alienating, confusion, empathy, and brand reinforcement (Strasheim et al, 2007). Also, the literature suggests that 'Likeability' of a commercial is the extent of creating an ad with an objective of being entertaining, empathetic and providing relevant-news without confusion, alienation and familiarity (Strasheim et al.2007). But there are studies that have demonstrated that the measure of ad likability, which is frequently used as a reliable copy-test measure in commercial marketing situations, is not a valid measure of ad effectiveness in the context of social advertising (Noble et al. 2014). Rao, 2010 had analyzed viewer's affective responses to four different types of television commercials by adopting the Schlinger scale. The study revealed that Viewers Affective Reaction was capable to convey variances between viewers from different categories. A shorter version of the Schlinger scale was also tested for the adaptability in financial services advertisements. The study indicated that the scale was appropriated to be adopted in that environment also (Steyn, P et al 2011). Later, Akram, et al .2012) had examined the impact of viewer response profile on skepticism toward advertising. The Findings of the study had confirmed that viewer response profile had positive and noteworthy influence on skepticism toward advertising. A recent study by Srivastava & Naik, 2018 had explored the viewers' affective reactions to government campaign commercials by adopting Schlinger's scale. The study conveyed that viewers' affective reactions were not dependent on respondents' demographics. However, the study confirmed that there existed significant difference for two dimensions of VRP scale, Confusion and Government Brand Recognition amongst urban and rural consumer. Hence the tool was considered appropriate to measure the viewers reaction to advertisement on new digital media (SNS).

However, it was observed that in new digital media (SNS) consumers have shown keen interest in gaining more control over their advertising experience (Belanche,2019). Consumers have demanded for having interactions with peers or chatting through social media (Rodgers &Thorson 2017). And in response to such demand's, organizations have started giving control to the users for their online experiences. Many platforms have introduced features of share, like comment etc on their SNS (Acar & Puntoni 2016). The same is possible for SNS, Whatsapp, where the users have full control of sharing the commercial messages to thousands of users (Schivinski & Dabrowski,2016). Thus, Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication has been well-defined as unceremonious, individual to individual communication (King & Summers, 1970), between a sender and receiver, which could be related to a product, service, firm or a brand (Anderson, 1998). Earlier, in the year 1983, Richins, had defined the same

concept as an act of sharing the personal experiences of being satisfied or dissatisfied with any product or services, with at least someone, which could be an associate or a friend. This definition was further extended by Dabholkar in 1995 by discussing the concept of WOM as customer's willingness to indorse the product and services. WOM has found its significance in high contact and high in credence attributes services, which have more of perceived risks. Thus, transferring of information from one person to another, regarding experience, quality of product and services either through individual or via any other communication channel is Word of mouth (Brown et al. 2005). This theory of WOM and behavioral intention gave rise to another new conception of “WOM intention”.

The association between WOM intention and customer satisfaction have been supported by various studies (Brown et al. 2005). The consumer's intention to spread positive WOM messages is dependent on the functional or emotional value received during the encounter. This would predict the outcomes as customer satisfaction and intention of positive WOM (Babin et al 2005). A similar kind of study with reference to service recovery, for three service industries confirmed, that consumers who had positive or satisfactory, service recovery experience, demonstrated higher inclination towards sharing positive evidence about their experiences, that is positive WOM intention was predominant. The shorter time of service recovery also had shown higher propensity of positive WOM (Swanson et al. 2001). However, literature also supports negative WOM intention behavior, which is impacted by attitude, and subjective norms (Cheng, et al 2006).

A study was investigated by Brown, Barry & Dacin, 2005 on the antecedents of consumers WOM behaviors and intensions where-in ‘commitment’ was tested for mediation effect and ‘satisfaction towards positive WOM’ was studied as a moderation effect of WOM identification. The study analyzed data collected from retailers and supported the hypothesis indicating relationship with WOM behaviors and WOM intentions which was the dependent variable. Hong and Byung-Sook, 2011 investigated internet shopping malls and their attributes on repurchase intention, WOM intention, purchase satisfaction among consumers preferring fashion products. The results depicted that all the dimensions of internet shopping malls affected the purchase satisfaction, WOM intention and repurchase intention of fashion products. Additionally, among the 3 types of internet shopping malls viz. comprehensive malls, online-market places (open-markets) and fashion specialty malls, there were significant differences in their perceived attributes. Although, no significant relationship existed on repurchase intension, consumer satisfaction and WOM intention when analyzed on the types of e-tailers. Integration of guerilla marketing characteristics into the advertising model was administered by Dinh & Mai (2015) through which perceived effects of guerilla marketing was studied to examine its effects on WOM across Gen Y consumers using message credibility as the mediator. The study confirmed that creativity is an amalgamation of relevance and novelty which has an indirect and direct effect on WOM intention. Literature has also indicated that WOM intention has been conducted in hospitality sector. J Wang et al., 2018 researched on SOR (Stimulus organism response) framework where-in the association between green image and WOM intention of Chinese users in the green hotel industry was examined using green trust and green satisfaction as the mediating variables. The study concluded that the green image among the green hotels strongly impacted consumers green trust and green satisfaction while green satisfaction of consumers had a significant impact on consumer green trust. Both consumer green trust and green satisfaction were positively related to the intention of WOM towards promoting and recommending green hotels.



In both academic and corporate much emphasis has been given to Word of mouth intention (Royo-Vela and Casamassima, 2011). There are studies to support that if customers are actively involved and engaged it may positively impact the overall brand loyalty and intention of recommendation in various online platforms (Okazaki et al., 2014). Among the online brand communities, research scholars have investigated the manner 'customer experience' elevates 'customer engagement' and subsequently 'WOM intention' (Zhang, Hu, Guo & Liu, 2017). Furthermore, the relationship between 'customer experience' and 'WOM intention' was mediated by 'community engagement' construct. Studies have conceptualized that WOM impacted social networking sites (SNS) with reference to 'customer engagement' and confirmed that trust, tie strength, normative and informational influence positively impacted the behavior of e-WOM among the users. This study depicted that product specific eWOM phenomenon in SNSs has social implications (Chu & Kim, 2011). Certain studies have conceptualized that self-construal is a social cognitive indicator of self-observation which users engage towards developing and maintaining social unions with others. From the perspective of social cognition, this paper inspected the manner self-construal affects the behavior of consumer eWOM on SNSs through the cognitive factors viz. expectations of social outcome and online community engagement self-efficacy. The results depicted that the relational view of the consumers became important when consumers self-construal was interdependent rather than independent. Also, the outcome demonstrated that the interdependent self-construal influenced consumers eWOM behavioral intentions positively through their social outcome expectations and community engagement self-efficacy (Lee, D et al., 2012). Wang, Yeh, Chen & Tsydypov, 2016 identified the drivers for WOM intention on SNSs. The study indicated that tie strength and innovativeness influences eWOM directly in virtual social networking sites; and shared language, trust and voluntary self-disclosure didn't depict significant influence. Research has indicated that social messages have impacted consumers' WOM intentions and behaviors based on the affective and cognitive attitude of viewers towards social media messages (Kim et al., 2016).

Gender and Time spent on SNS

Social role theory postulates that gender differences in social behaviors have originated from expectations of the society about what is supposed to be an appropriate behavior to be followed by men and women (Karakowsky & Elangovan, 2001). The theory says that, men often believe they should attain agentic traits of being aggressive and self-assertive, whereas women often believe they should establish communal traits of being caring, unselfish, and expressive. Such gender specific behaviors and stereotypes are often known to influence the communication style of men and women. (Wood & Eagly, 2012). Gender has been identified as predictive variable with reference to attitude and actual behavior of consumers in various other contexts like product placement, online privacy concerns, mobile phone usage (Maity, 2014). Some studies have also renowned that men and women have diverse attitudes toward online messages and shopping (Chen et al., 2015). And a recent study by Bartosik-Purgat, (2018) had also confirmed that gender is one of the differentiating factors that impacts the consumer behavior towards e WOM. This study was conducted across China, United States of America, Poland and Turkey. Similarly in the context of luxury market it was confirmed by Park, J., Hyun, H., & Thavisay, T. (2021), in order to develop one on one marketing strategies to promote luxury brands on SNS, demographic characteristics like age, gender, income, play a significant role.

According to the social capital theory, most of the internet users are known to share some relevant information and knowledge because they seek to intensify their social bondings and gain relational social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). There are many empirical studies that have validated this theory in varies contexts (Chu and Choi, 2010). This infers that more time users spend on SNS, the more likely they would have inclination towards WOM.

Hence, the present research paper adds to the existing body of literature by advancing the knowledge of how viewers respond to product and brand communication messages shared through SNS's would impact WOM intention. Also, the moderating effect of gender and time spent on SNS like WhatsApp on relationship between Viewer's Affective reactions and WOM Intention was not explored in the literature.

Hence, based on the literature review the proposed hypothesis for the study are as follows:

H_{1a}: Viewer's Affective Reactions differs based on 'Gender'

H_{1b}: Viewer's Affective Reactions differs based on 'Time spent on WhatsApp'

H₂: Affective reactions of the consumers impacts their WOM Intention

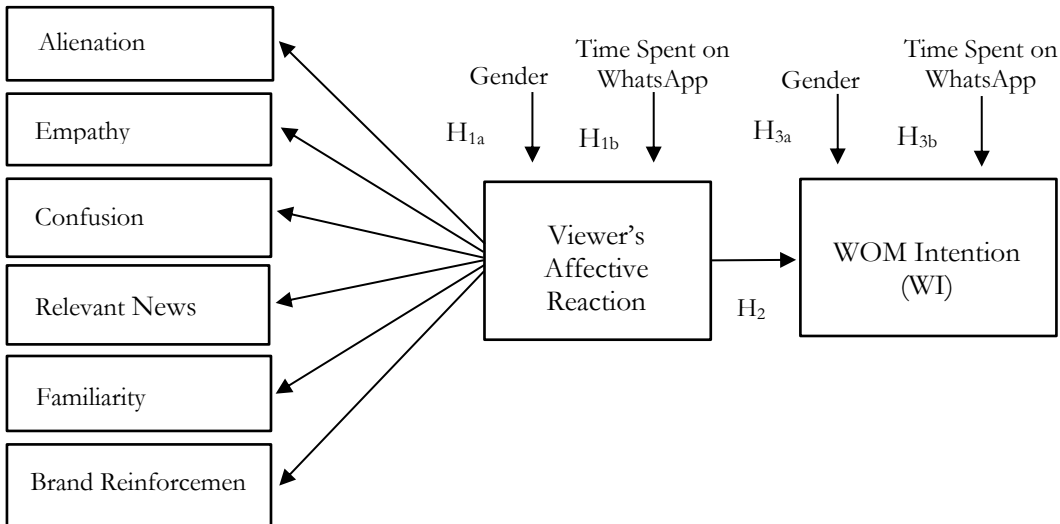
H_{3a}: 'Gender' moderates the relationship between Viewer's Affective reactions and WOM Intention

H_{3b}: 'Time Spent on WhatsApp' moderates the relationship between Viewer's Affective reactions and WOM Intention

Conceptual Framework

The framework proposed for the study has been diagrammatically represented in fig 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



Research Methodology

The data for the present study was collected through both primary and secondary study. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were administered for the primary study. A



qualitative study was administered to finalize the commercial for the study. Since in India use of WhatsApp as an advertising tool is in a very nascent state but authors could identify few commercials by companies like LIC, Nescafe, Swiggy, Zomato. In order to identify the commercials, authors did a small study with the experts in this domain. The experts were exposed to all these commercials and were asked to rank the commercials on the bases of its relevance for the generation C and its ability to hold interest of the audience. The commercial identified for the study was by “Nescafe”.

Data was collected through structured questionnaire in the form of a survey. The survey was directed on the suggested sample of Generation C. Around 350 respondents were approached for the study of which 300 agreed to contribute in the study. The study was administered in a batch size of 30. The study was conducted in Bangalore city. Convenience sampling was used in the study. The complete field study was extended across six months' period. The researchers had forwarded the commercial on WhatsApp application for all the respondents. After watching the commercial, respondents were asked to share their responses through a structured questionnaire. To measure the affective reactions to WhatsApp campaigns/commercials authors have used well defined scale VRP (Viewers Response Profile) developed by Schlenger (1979). The questionnaire included questions from VRP scale, and demographics like native city, gender, age, monthly family income, how much time does the respondents spend on WhatsApp. The VRP instrument measures responses and categorizes viewers' responses in seven dimensions namely, entertainment, familiarity, relevance, alienating, confusion, empathy, and brand reinforcement. VRP scale has emerged as popular and widely applicable tool to test viewers' reactions to television commercials in Advertising research (Strasheim, Pitt & Caruana, 2007). The study captured the intention of the participants to disseminate the information (positive/negative) through WOM and the intention to forward or delete the advertisement received through Whatsapp. WOM has been proved to be an effective tool to measure advertising decisions and is believed to influence and shape the advertising decisions which inturn is shaped by the VRP instrument (Chu & Kim, 2018). To measure WOM intention of the respondents, the scale was adopted from Word-of-mouth intention scale developed by Kim et al. 2001 and Chiu et al. 2013. The respondents were exposed to the commercial in controlled environment. The responses will be collected on a 7-point Likert scale where 7 indicate strongly agree and 1 indicate strongly disagree.

Empirical results

After the exhaustive field study for six months overall 300 sample responses were collected, of which 285 responses were considered as valid for the final study. Table 1 shows demographic profiling of the respondents, which include age, gender, monthly household income, and time spent on WhatsApp.

Exploratory factor analysis of the 29 items revealed a seven-factor structure with eigen values of 5.523 and 1.221. The seven factors with 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3 and 2 items accounted for 19.044, 18.333, 7.423, 6.688, 5.512, 4.669 and 4.210 percent variance respectively. The exploratory factor analysis yielded a factor solution and explained 65.878 % of the total variance. From the principle component analysis and varimax rotation, the factor loadings on each factor were described as shown in the Table 2. The instrument reliability was established using the method Cronbach's alpha which was found to be 0.828 (Nunnally 1978).

Table 1. Demographic profiling of the samples

Sample Characteristics	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	144	50.5
	Female	141	49.5
Age	21 yrs to 25 yrs	127	44.56
	26yrs to 30 yrs	106	37.19
	31- to 39 yrs	52	18.24
	Less than 50K	72	25.3
Monthly household income	50k to 1 lac	72	25.3
	Above 1 lac	141	49.5
	Less than 2 hours	48	16.8
Time spent on WhatsApp	2-4 hrs	99	34.7
	More than 4 hrs	138	48.4

Table 2. Factor Extraction results

Factor loadings							
	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confusion1				.742			
Confusion2				.819			
Confusion3				.768			
Confusion4				.802			
Relevant_News_1			.835				
Relevant_News_2			.567				
Relevant_News_3			.704				
Relevant_News_4			.871				
Relevant_News_5			.509				
Brand_RF_1							.836
Brand_RF_2							.782
Empathy_1		.770					
Empathy_2		.744					
Empathy_3		.758					
Empathy_4		.785					
Empathy_5		.701					
Familiarity_1						.859	
Familiarity_2						.669	
Familiarity_3						.809	
Alienation_1	.658						
Alienation_2	.692						
Alienation_3	.805						
Alienation_4	.813						
Alienation_5	.842						
Alienation_6	.763						
W11					.802		
W12					.777		
W13					.731		
W14					.667		



Extraction Method using PCA Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method using Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged into 6 iterations.

To analyze the viewer's affective reaction on WhatsApp, mean scores of the six dimensions of VRP scale were considered viz. Alienation, Empathy, Confusion, Relevant News, Familiarity and Brand Reinforcement. The results demonstrated that the mean score of the dimension 'Confusion' to be the highest with mean score of 5.25, followed by 'Alienation' with mean score 4.83, 'Familiarity' having mean value of 4.12, 'Relevant News' with mean score 3.57, 'Empathy' with mean value of 3.45 and the least mean score was for 'Brand reinforcement' having value of 2.51.

The study was also designed to analyze the differences in the 'Viewers Affective Reaction' with respect to 'Gender' and 'Time spent on WhatsApp'. The same has been depicted in Table 3 and Table 4 resp.

Table 3. ANOVA results of 'Gender' and Viewers Affective Reaction

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
confusion_mean	Between Groups	.526	1	.526	.257	.613
	Within Groups	579.160	283	2.047		
	Total	579.686	284			
RN_mean	Between Groups	11.431	1	11.431	7.294	.007
	Within Groups	443.477	283	1.567		
	Total	454.908	284			
BR_mean	Between Groups	1.195	1	1.195	.694	.406
	Within Groups	487.484	283	1.723		
	Total	488.679	284			
Empathy_mean	Between Groups	9.655	1	9.655	5.228	.023
	Within Groups	522.676	283	1.847		
	Total	532.332	284			
familiarity_mean	Between Groups	.530	1	.530	.272	.602
	Within Groups	551.089	283	1.947		
	Total	551.619	284			
alienation_mean	Between Groups	.106	1	.106	.054	.817
	Within Groups	558.144	283	1.972		
	Total	558.250	284			

The impact of 'Viewers Affective Reaction' on consumer's propensity to share the advertisement and product experience is depicted in Fig 2 and was studied using regression using AMOS which is an extension of the multiple regression relationship where-in the analysis revealed significant relationship between 'Viewers Affective Reaction' and 'WOM intention' (p value=0.001, estimate: 0.410, CR: 3.465, SE: 0.118). As seen in Fig 3, the unstandardized regression coefficients, indicate the change in the dependent variable per unit change in the predictor variable. This suggests that for every single unit of increase in the viewers affective reaction, WOM intention is increased by .41 units in the population of study. Additionally, the residual variance associated while measuring Viewers Affective Reaction is

not directly measured and hence represented as a latent variable in AMOS diagram. This estimate of the error variance in the current relationship is 2.13.

Table 4a. Post Hoc ANOVA results of ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ and Viewers Affective Reaction

Multiple Comparisons							
Tukey HSD							
Dependent Variable	(I) Hrs_perday	(J) Hrs_perday	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
confusion_mean	1.00	2.00	-.13076	.18657	.763	-.5704	.3088
		3.00	.51223	.23737	.080	-.0471	1.0715
	2.00	1.00	.13076	.18657	.763	-.3088	.5704
		3.00	.64299*	.24915	.028	.0560	1.2300
	3.00	1.00	-.51223	.23737	.080	-1.0715	.0471
		2.00	-.64299*	.24915	.028	-1.2300	-.0560
RN_mean	1.00	2.00	.03070	.16693	.982	-.3626	.4240
		3.00	.22880	.21238	.529	-.2716	.7292
	2.00	1.00	-.03070	.16693	.982	-.4240	.3626
		3.00	.19811	.22292	.648	-.3271	.7233
	3.00	1.00	-.22880	.21238	.529	-.7292	.2716
		2.00	-.19811	.22292	.648	-.7233	.3271
BR_mean	1.00	2.00	-.15613	.17307	.639	-.5639	.2517
		3.00	-.15897	.22019	.751	-.6778	.3598
	2.00	1.00	.15613	.17307	.639	-.2517	.5639
		3.00	-.00284	.23111	1.000	-.5474	.5417
	3.00	1.00	.15897	.22019	.751	-.3598	.6778
		2.00	.00284	.23111	1.000	-.5417	.5474
Empathy_mean	1.00	2.00	-.37418	.17957	.095	-.7973	.0489
		3.00	-.11812	.22847	.863	-.6564	.4202
	2.00	1.00	.37418	.17957	.095	-.0489	.7973
		3.00	.25606	.23980	.535	-.3089	.8211
	3.00	1.00	.11812	.22847	.863	-.4202	.6564
		2.00	-.25606	.23980	.535	-.8211	.3089
familiarity_mean	1.00	2.00	.06954	.18406	.924	-.3641	.5032
		3.00	.15308	.23417	.790	-.3987	.7048
	2.00	1.00	-.06954	.18406	.924	-.5032	.3641
		3.00	.08354	.24579	.938	-.4956	.6627
	3.00	1.00	-.15308	.23417	.790	-.7048	.3987
		2.00	-.08354	.24579	.938	-.6627	.4956
alienation_mean	1.00	2.00	.09256	.18183	.867	-.3359	.5210
		3.00	.75196*	.23133	.004	.2069	1.2970
	2.00	1.00	-.09256	.18183	.867	-.5210	.3359
		3.00	.65941*	.24281	.019	.0873	1.2315
	3.00	1.00	-.75196*	.23133	.004	-1.2970	-.2069
		2.00	-.65941*	.24281	.019	-1.2315	-.0873

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



Table 4b. one-way ANOVA results of ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ and Viewers Affective Reaction

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
confusion_mean	Between Groups	13.811	2	6.906	3.441	.033
	Within Groups	565.874	282	2.007		
	Total	579.686	284			
RN_mean	Between Groups	1.916	2	.958	.596	.551
	Within Groups	452.992	282	1.606		
	Total	454.908	284			
BR_mean	Between Groups	1.756	2	.878	.508	.602
	Within Groups	486.923	282	1.727		
	Total	488.679	284			
Empathy_mean	Between Groups	8.129	2	4.065	2.187	.114
	Within Groups	524.203	282	1.859		
	Total	532.332	284			
familiarity_mean	Between Groups	.893	2	.446	.229	.796
	Within Groups	550.727	282	1.953		
	Total	551.619	284			
alienation_mean	Between Groups	20.803	2	10.401	5.458	.005
	Within Groups	537.447	282	1.906		
	Total	558.250	284			

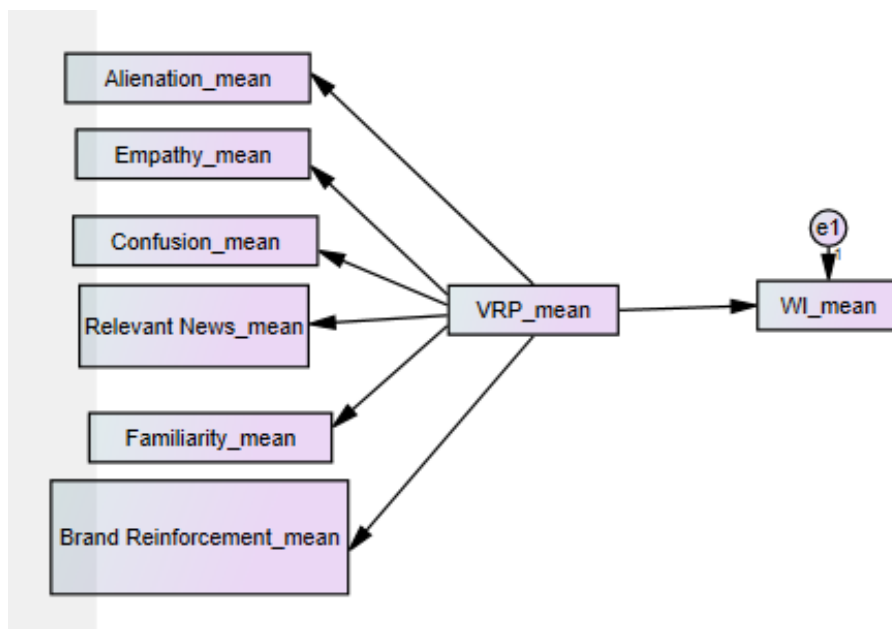
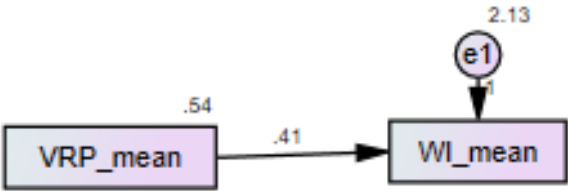
Figure 2. The Proposed Conceptual Model:

Figure 3. The path diagram with standardized regression coefficients:



Subsequently the authors administered multiple regression to examine the relationship between demographic variables (‘Gender’ and ‘Time spent on WhatsApp’) and ‘WOM Intention’. Evidence of this analysis confirmed that there is impact of ‘Gender’ (p value = 0.038) on ‘WOM Intention’ as well as ‘Time spent on WhatsApp’ with p value = 0.013. A closer examination of ‘Gender’ and ‘Time spent on WhatsApp’ suggests that they moderate the relationship between ‘Viewers Affective Reaction’ and ‘WOM Intention’ (as depicted in Table 5).

Table 5. Moderation effect of demographic variables (Gender, Time spent on WhatsApp) and ‘WOM Intention’

Demographic variable (moderator)	Predictor variable	Model 1 without interaction/ Model 2 with interaction	F value	Significance	R ² value
Gender	WOM Intention	Model 1	7.448	0.001	0.050
		Model 2	789.292	0.000	0.894
Time Spent on WhatsApp	WOM Intention	Model 1	8.672	0.000	0.058
		Model 2	527.989	0.000	0.849

Findings and Discussion of the Study

Viewer Response Profile Scale

Viewer Response Profile scale consisting of items Confusion (having 4 items), Relevant News (having 5 items), Brand Reinforcement (with 2 items), Empathy (with 5 items), Familiarity (having 3 items) and Alienation (with 6 items) is a scale usually adopted in commercial and academic advertising research. VRP scale allows the researcher to measure viewers’ subjective feelings towards advertisement across the 6 dimensions. The respondents in this study are aged between 21 years to approx. 39 years. The 6 dimensions of the Schlinger VRP scale resonate meaningfully with responses from viewers of fast food commercial shared via WhatsApp SNS. The first part of the study tries to test the viewers responses towards the commercial. The results indicated that viewers felt WhatsApp ad to be confusing and doesn’t probably convey much about the product knowledge which is in sync with the results of ‘brand reinforcement’ - being the weakest predictor of Viewers Affective Reaction. i.e. the viewer is unable to relate to the brand as the ad is confusing and hence has lowest brand relevance. Viewers watching the whatsapp commercials for 2 hours a day versus 3 hours a day significantly differed w.r.t the variable ‘confusion’. Additionally, viewers felt alienated when they watched whatsapp ads and differed significantly when they viewed the commercial for 1 hour versus 3 hours; 2 hours versus 3 hours. This implies, more the number of hours spent



on whatsapp ads, viewers claim the ad to be causing irritation, exaggerating, unrealistic and not demonstrating the claims as claimed. The differences in the viewer's affective reaction and demographic variables 'Gender', 'time spent on WhatsApp' was analyzed using ANOVA. This analysis revealed that the behavior towards finding the WhatsApp ad 'relevant' and empathetic' differs based on gender of the viewer (Caruana, A., & Vella, J. 2004). Additionally, 'time spent on WhatsApp' exhibited significant difference w.r.t Viewers Affective Reaction across the dimension 'confusion' and 'Alienation'. Thus, we accept hypothesis H_{1a} and H_{1b}. Subsequently, the current research established the relationship between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM intention (WI) which results in supporting hypothesis H₂.

Attitude towards the advertised product

The empirical results indicate that viewers find the ads shared through whatsapp as 'Confusing'. This imply that the ads might lack video/audio congruence may be because of distracting elements in the ad or poorly integrated elements which takes the focus away from the main story of the campaign. Additionally, viewers felt Whatsapp ads to be 'Alienating'. This could probably be because of unconvincing or inconsequential or exaggerated claims which seem difficult to accept as people's attitude might be different in comparison to the product's attitude itself. However, viewer's scored whatsapp ad towards 'Familiarity' to be high indicating that there is something special and interesting about the commercial or campaign which marketers should leverage on in their creative plan (Rao, 2010).

Theory suggests that 'Likeability' of a commercial is the extent of creating an ad with an objective of being entertaining, empathetic and providing relevant-news without confusion, alienation and familiarity (Strasheim, Pitt & Caruana, 2007). However, our study depicts that whatsapp ads doesn't create likeability as viewers scored the ad high on confusion, alienation or being not so familiar. Thus, studies have posited that ads which are 'Likeable' are supposed to be more encouraging for viewers to watch and remember the ads which results in enhancing the salience of a brand thereby associating the brand with the advertisement (Kennedy, Byron & Campbell, 1999). This is in consistent with the study by (Noble et al.2014) who had demonstrated that the measure of ad likability, which is frequently used as a reliable copy-test measure in commercial marketing situations, is not a valid measure of ad effectiveness in the context of social advertising.

Viewer Response Profile and Demographic Variables

Studies have indicated that gender impacts emotional responses of individuals across the evaluation of commercials (Hall, 1979). The findings presented here revealed that the behavior towards finding the WhatsApp advertisement to be providing 'Relevant News' which differs based on gender of the viewer. These results posit that viewers considered the commercials giving them an inclination of trying the product, making them feel connected to the product, providing them with advantages and usefulness of using the product.

The findings presented here also revealed that a WhatsApp advertisement provides 'Empathy' and this variable differs based on gender of the viewer. The manner in which commercials are portrayed, be it personal and intimate, realistic, the way brands in the ad talk and connect with audiences indicate behavioral traits of the viewer and this was significantly associated with Gender as a demographic variable where being a male and female impacts viewers affective reaction (Duda & Brown, 1984).

It was hypothesized that ‘Gender’ (Caruana & Vella, 2004) moderates the relationship between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM Intention which has been accepted in the present study. This analysis suggests that the two variables directly impact viewer’s affective reaction and WOM intention of the viewers; and hence supports the relationship. In model 2, with the interaction effect, R square change accounts for significant variance with $p = 0.000$ indicating there is potentially significant moderation between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM intention on demographic variables (Elite Research, 2013) thus accepting hypothesis H_{3a} and H_{3b} . Viewers Affective Reaction by gender thus indicated that demographic variables did have effect on the six dimensions which is consistent with the findings of Caruana, & Vella, 2004.

Studies have suggested that ‘time spent on social networking sites’ has increased tremendously towards online advertising industry indicating that they find more value in marketing programs that utilize social media viz. whatsapp (Dickey & Lewis, 2010). The findings presented here revealed that a WhatsApp commercial creates ‘Confusion’ which differs significantly on account of time spent on whatsapp. Viewers felt that the commercial viewed on whatsapp was complex and required a lot of effort in understanding. Results also showed that the more they spent their time on whatsapp, the commercials they viewed and their communication messages gave them a feeling of ‘alienation’. The commercials made the consumers feel irritating and irrelevant and they feel rejected by the execution of the message (Amorasin, 2006).

It was hypothesized that and ‘Time spent on WhatsApp’ moderates the relationship between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM Intention which has been accepted in the present study. This analysis suggests that the two variables directly impact viewer’s affective reaction and WOM intention of the viewers; and hence supports the relationship. In model 2, with the interaction effect, R square change accounts for significant more variance with $p = 0.000$ indicating there is potentially significant moderation between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM intention on demographic variables (Elite Research, 2013) thus accepting hypothesis H_{3a} and H_{3b} . Viewers Affective Reaction by ‘time spent on whatsapp’ indicated that demographic variables did have an effect on the six dimensions of Viewers Affective Reaction. Empirical studies have proved that since consumers spend a lot of time on social media, marketers have been shifting their marketing dollars away from traditional media and venturing into mobile marketing, search engine, social media marketing etc. (Arora, Agarwal, Kumar, 2018).

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

To analyze the viewer’s affective reaction on WhatsApp, mean scores of the six dimensions of VRP scale were considered viz. Alienation, Empathy, Confusion, Relevant News, Familiarity and Brand Reinforcement, which here resonate meaningfully with responses from viewers of fast food commercial shared via WhatsApp SNS. The study confirmed that WhatsApp ad was confusing and doesn’t probably convey much about the product knowledge which is in sync with ‘brand reinforcement’ being the weakest predictor of Viewers Affective Reaction. ie. the viewers are unable to relate to the brand as the ad is confusing and hence has lowest brand relevance. The differences in the viewer’s affective reaction and demographic variables ‘Gender’, ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ revealed that the behavior towards finding the WhatsApp ad ‘relevant’ and empathetic’ differs based on gender of the viewer. Additionally, ‘time spent on WhatsApp’ exhibited significant difference w.r.t Viewers Affective Reaction



across the dimension 'confusion' and 'Alienation'. The present study also confirms WhatsApp as a social networking site tool, which influences Generation C viewers WOM intention. Hence the current paper offers in-depth knowledge on the relationships between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM intention involving demographic variables as moderating variables which provides newer theoretical context under the literature of computer-mediated communication through the linkage of social ties and WOM in a single study.

Viewer's responses to the VRP scale delved into understanding their conditioned responses to the brand that was presented in the WhatsApp SNS. The paper tries to examine how one's WOM intention is shaped by the VRP scale by keeping in view the moderating effects of demographic variables. The empirical results indicate that WhatsApp as a social networking site tool, influences Generation C viewers WOM intention. However, across the discourse of the ads shown to viewers, a surprising finding has been that WhatsApp ads are not very prominent discussion amidst viewer conversations. The analysis revealed that demographic variables viz. Gender, Time_spent_on_WhatsApp moderates the effects of the viewers' effective responses on their WOM intention and have affected the manner consumers gauged the advertisement. Understanding WOM intention from consumers is a dual edged sword for most firms as they have positive reviews as well as negative reviews about the product information but this transmission of product and brand information depended on whom they talked and interacted with. Brand managers must consider the possibility that brands in the commercial must provide positive dimensions relating to VRP viz. Empathy, Familiarity, Brand reinforcement, providing relevant news rather than the ad being confusing or being alienated from the ad which will lead to positive discussions amongst viewers conversations. Firm gets involved in encouragement and actions pertaining to the ad through WOM by way of being commentators, bloggers and direct communicators with the consumers. These communication towards must be ideally targeted towards the weaker social ties who are less loyal consumers (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004).

Limitations and avenues for future research

Although the current research brings forth the relationship between viewers' response profile and WOM intention which presents some of the first research, few limitations are identified. Future scholars may study the 'seed discussion' on the conversation viewers have on the ads aired on social media or WhatsApp as a medium. This can be achieved by analyzing the commercial before launching it and later providing feedback to viewers on the ad. Future studies may examine the relationship between Viewers Affective Reaction and WOM intention among varied generations. As the study focuses on social relationships of SNSs, other determinants like motivational factors and individual differences may also influence WOM intentions. Future research may examine these factors in an elaborate manner which will enforce internet marketers to develop appropriate social networking marketing and advertising strategies. It would be worthwhile, if future research scholars posit how the SNS's interacts with a viewers' motivation levels which may differentially influence the consumers' behavior towards the ad campaign shared through WhatsApp as a tool. Every culture has specific media usages and communication platforms that may influence online consumer behavior. Cross-cultural research would produce distinct patterns which future research scholars may explore. The sample frame was restricted to one city, Bangalore, India, may not be the representative sample alone and may not realistically reflect the consumer behavior of the entire population w.r.t social networking sites. This group have been actively being

engaged into social media and are very contented with usage of advanced online entertainment on SNSs. Therefore, their engagement and behavior on information exchange may be different from the adult segment.

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