A Study on Influence of Trust, Social identity, Perceived Risk and EWOM on Consumer Decision-Making Process in the context of Social Network Sites

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Abstract

With the advent of Web 2.0 applications, social network sites enable customers to actively participate as market players and reach out to the mass population within a short span of time. The tremendous impact of the rise of social network sites not just shifted the way businesses work, it also changed the manner consumers behave.

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the influence of social identity, EWOM (Electronic word-of-mouth), perceived risks, trust and purchase intentions affecting consumer decision-making process in social networks sites. A conceptual model is developed, using Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Technology Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) as theoretical bases, to explain the interactions of these salient factors that affect purchase intention and eventually leading to purchase behaviour. With the use of structured questionnaire on 225 respondents via emails, this thesis examine these social networks sites namely, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Youtube and blogs. The findings show that 1) purchase intention directly affects actual purchase behaviour, 2) EWOM is positively related to trust in social networks sites 3) perceived risk negatively relates to trust and 4) trust positively relates to purchase intention. Further, the analysis results do not support the hypotheses that social identity relates to trust, perceived risk relates to purchase intentions. Inferences are drawn from previous researches to explain for the phenomenon.

Interestingly, the empirical findings reveal that social identity in social networks sites is not the same with other virtual communities and high perceived risk does not affect purchase intentions. Finally, this thesis concludes with how the findings can contribute in understanding consumer decision-making process in social networks sites.
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I would like to thank my supervisor, Marie Hemming, for her valuable guidance throughout the course of the thesis.

And sincerely appreciate the participation of the respondents and the opponents in making this thesis possible.
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background and context

With the exponential usage of social network sites globally, they have increasingly become an integral part of consumers’ daily lives. For marketers, the business opportunities are largely dependent on consumers’ receptiveness of social networks sites as reliable retailers. In light of this, a conceptual model is proposed to describe the factors that drive consumers to participate in these social networks sites and to accept on-line purchases, thus to better aid marketers in understanding consumer online behaviour that is emerging from these social networks sites. Using Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Technology Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) as theoretical basis for this thesis, the author has additionally incorporated trust, perceived risk, social identity and WOM literatures which are deemed salient influences in understanding consumer behaviour and hence affecting their decision making process. In online environment, Kim et al. (2008) pointed out that trust comes into play as a solution for specific problems of risk, while social identity strongly influences participation in online communities (Kozinet et al., 2009 and Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002), WOM (word-of-mouth) strongly influences the perception of information in social networks sites (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010), and thus it is reasonable to employ these factors. More importantly, this thesis seeks to investigate the relationships of these factors and how they affect consumers’ intention and decision to purchase in social networks sites.

With growing predominance of social networks sites, businesses would be interested how social networks sites can be part of the strategy to reach out to potential customers. In the area of consumer behaviour, the influences of social networks sites should be of great importance to marketers, especially in the manner consumers search and evaluate information, the way purchase intentions are found and finally leading to actual purchase. To make use of the opportunities (and also avoid dangers) provided by these social networks sites, we need to understand why consumers are attracted to them and how they influence their buying behaviour. In Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Technology Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999), they provide the rational sequence of events...
and sources of influences exert on consumers during the decision making process. They are used as fundamental basis in the construction of the conceptual model.

Social network sites are built upon Web 2.0 applications that allow the creation and exchanges of user-generated content, enabling individuals to interact. They are considered second generation internet technology that has given the general public tools to citizen journalists, to report news and to record and publish information (Jones, 2010). Hence, the internet has developed into an avenue where anyone with internet access can interact with a whole new online audience via Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Wikis and etc. In a recent Forrester Research finding\(^1\), there are 500 billion opinions about products and services are shared by consumers in social networks sites, with Facebook accounting for 60% of the figure. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) pointed out that these new media empowered consumers to promote and distribute their own offers – consumers serve as retailers on eBay, media producers on YouTube, authors on Wikipedia and critical reviewers on Amazon; and they do all this or more on Facebook and MySpace.

Through social networks sites like Facebook, Twitter or Youtube, consumers can show their enthusiasm in their favourite brands. Product reviews and product-related questions and answers generated by consumers are easily available to anyone, anywhere with the use of social network sites. This type of consumer articulation is known as electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM). Hennig-Thurau et. al (2010) pointed out that EWOM are mainly driven by social environment, identity, norms and utilitarian motive. In other words, people talked about products because they feel that they are doing others a favour by highlighting the pros and cons. More importantly, many previous researches pointed out that consumer pay attention to word-of-mouth communications because of “trust” (Evans and Bretton 2010; Arndt, 1967 and Brown et al., 2010) and consumers readily trust these EWOM even though they do not know the authors. Individual’s perceptions of WOM trustworthiness will depend on the belief that the sender’s opinions and comments are unbiased. In online environment, trust is expected to be an important factor in consuming EWOM. It is of great interest to understand why individuals trust the vast amount of EWOM that are floating in

these social networks sites and how they affect consumer decision making in this online environment.

Social networks sites such as blogs, Twitters and Facebook are viewed as virtual communities where individuals use the internet to interact and communicate. As these social networks sites are essentially online communities, the element of social identity as defined by Dholakia et al. (2004) is crucial for consumer membership and participation. As individuals identify themselves with online communities, they form relationships and these repetitive activities in turn create trusting relationships and strong bonds. In marketers’ point of view, social networks can be an excellent source of marketing tool to reach out to a greater mass of consumers that traditional marketing channel lacks the capability to do so. In understanding how social networks platforms enhance the power of virtual communities, Kane et al. (2009) pointed out four important attributes: they promote deep relationships, allow fast organisations, improve the creation and synthesis of knowledge and permit better filtering of information. Recent studies found that these online social networks not just have the ability to influence members’ decisions, rapidly disseminate information and perceptions about new products; it also serves as forums for active customer relationship building (Dholakia et al., 2004). Although these previous researches highlighted the growing dominance of social networks sites, they do not shed light into how social networks sites can affect decision-making process during online transactions. This thesis aims to fill the gap here to provide deeper knowledge in this area.

Teo and Yeong (2003) pointed out that as consumers moved their decision making online, the cognitive and social context of the decision-making will change in ways that are as yet partially understood. With social network sites growing predominance in our daily lives, consumers can retrieve relevant information about products or services easily, hence reducing information search cost and the level of perceived risk. Many previous researches found strong evidence of WOM influence over purchase decisions (Harrison-Walker, 2010; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2004; Goyette et al., 2010). In addition, many of the previous researches focussed on niche area in addressing consumer behaviour in these online communities, such as social influence (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2004; Zeng et al., 2009) and perceived risk and trust (Kim et al., 2008) but do not
consider these factors in totality. Specifically, what motivates the sharing of consumption experience and participative behaviour in these online social communities and how these variables affect the consumer decision making process during purchase fuelled the interest in this thesis.

This thesis seeks to contribute in the following areas. Firstly, this thesis develops a conceptual model, using Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Technology Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) as theoretical basis, to describe the decision-making process that a consumer experiences when she uses an online retailer and to uncover the salient factors; trust, perceived risks, social identity and WOM in social networks sites. Hypotheses are drawn to address the research question with regards to these salient factors. Secondly, this thesis examines consumer experiences that results in both ‘non-purchase’ as well as ‘completed purchases’ in social networks sites. This is to ensure that this thesis covers the reasons for ‘non-purchase’, hence providing a wholesome picture of the consumer decision making process. Thirdly, hypotheses are tested using regression in Microsoft Excel and results are reported. Finally, the findings of this thesis provide several insights which should aid marketers in formulating their strategies using social networks sites.

### 1.2 Problem Discussion

The motivation for this thesis is mainly to extend our understanding in consumer decision making process and behaviour that is unique to social network sites. The degree of influence in modern social networks sites far exceeds the older-generations of virtual communities. Consumers’ intention to use social networks sites may varies widely, from just simple sharing photos or videos to perhaps buying grocery from online retailer. However, the marketing perspective of social networks sites as a viable marketplace is as yet not fully explored. Previous researches found that successful businesses should incorporate social network sites for marketing purpose, such as communicating with customers and reaching out to a greater pool of prospective patrons and understanding purchase-related behaviour (Armstrong and Hagel, 1997; Kozinets et al., 2010 and Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Despite these developments, the salient factors affecting consumers’ participation and purchasing
behaviour remains unclear. This thesis seeks to uncover some of these factors and investigate how they influence consumer decision-making process.

Firstly, in order to uncover factors that influence decision-making process in social networks sites, we need to understand how attitudes of a brand or product are formed. Trust, which is an important attitude, is developed during consumer decision making process and it sets the foundation for consumer confidence in the company products and services. In this thesis, trust is viewed as a central concept and is essential in developing not just the types of interactions but also the depth of relationships among users and businesses. Trust results in loyalty to companies and repeated purchases. Consumers recommend products and brands that they trust. Hence, WOM forms a significant source of influence in the formation of trust as consumer search for information during the process.

During the decision making process, consumer generally cannot process all the information available to them. They will employ simple guides to help them and thus WOM communication eased the amount of information that is needed to process and to make better buying decisions (Duhan et al., 1997; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2004). Previous research considered WOM as having powerful influence over behaviour, especially on consumer information search, evaluation and subsequent decision making (Brown and Reingen, 1987). WOM is significantly more important to the decision process when purchasing services than goods (Buttle, 1998). Consumers who are buying a service will seek information from family, friends and peers rather than sponsored promotional sources because services are dependent on its credibility which is difficult to determine prior consumption (Buttle, 1998). Therefore, it is of great interest to examine the level of trust consumers have on the WOM communications that manifest on social networks sites.

Since social network sites are like communities of friends who will share similar interests and preferences, social influence plays a crucial part in building trust. Ashmore and Lee (1997) defined social identity (or community influence) as socially-constructed and socially meaningful categories that are accepted by individuals as descriptive of themselves or their group. Human needs positive and distinctive group identities, where individual self-esteem and a sense of personal value can be derived. It is this need that motivates intergroup
behaviour. This happens when one identify with others lead to a perceived similarity of interests and goals; concurrently conformity takes place because one adopts the stereotypical traits, attitudes, and behavioural norms of the group (Ashmore and Lee, 1997). For example, being a member of Harley Davidson fan page on Facebook.com, does the social identity influence your level of participation and trust with the company, hence leading to intention of buying products from the company?

In the marketing literature, perceived risk is an essential concept and various types of risk have been identified (Kim et al., 2008; Pavlou, 2003; Jacoby and Kaplan, 1972). A consumers’ perceived risk is an important barrier for online consumers who are considering making online purchases. The distant and impersonal nature of on-line environment and the implicit uncertainty of using the open global infrastructure for transactions have rendered risk an inevitable of e-commerce (Pavlou, 2003). During consumer decision making process, high level of perceived risk can deter intentions to purchase and dilute the desired outcomes of trust-building efforts by marketers. Perceived risks can possibly be a source of avoidance for consumers to engage social networks sites as a viable marketplace. This thesis wants to extend the concept of perceived risk in social networks sites to address possible reservations leading to ‘non-purchase’.

In determining consumer perceptions and responses to advertising in online environment, Zeng et al (2009) established that two important factors: social identity and group norms as key variables, which is in line with Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) reasoning. Although in essence, social networks sites are virtual communities, they are organised around ‘individual’ interests, and not ‘group’ interests (Boyd and Ellison (2008). Hence, in my opinion, the degree of which group norms influence consumer participation in social networks sites is relatively insignificant as group interests are diminished. Therefore, this thesis addresses the role of social identity (and not group norms) as it is deemed more relevant in affecting consumer decision-making process in social networks sites.

Brown et al. (2007) showed strong evidence that individuals behave as if websites are primary “actors” in online social networks and that online communities can act
as a social proxy for individual identification. It provides a significant understanding in the area of online interaction and information evaluation process as websites are being considered as an actor. Similarly, in the context of blogging, social factors like community identification and attitude towards blogging significantly influence a blog participant to continue to use blog (Hsu and Lin, 2008). In these studies, in order for interactions to take place, it is largely assumed that there is the value of trust between individuals and these social networks sites. Dwyer et al. (2007) argued that trust and usage goals may affect what people are willing to share- Facebook users express greater trust in Facebook than MySpace, and thus more willing to share information on site. Many of these researches focussed on the social environment that consumers participate but do not adopt a marketing perspective to analyse how the social environment can affect the purchasing behaviour. In order to address this matter, this thesis also investigates how social identity comes into play in consumer purchasing behaviour.

1.3 Problem formulation and Purpose

As social network sites are relatively new phenomenon, there are still limited researches of it on consumer behaviour (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). To examine consumer decision-making process in social network sites, it is necessary to establish the predominant factors that influence purchase behaviour. In online environment, Kim et. al (2008) argued that trust serves as solutions for specific problems of risk, while social identity strongly influences participation in online communities (Kozinet et al., 2009 and Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002), and WOM strongly influences the perception of information in social networks sites (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). In this thesis, it is investigated how these factors affect consumer decision-making process. Quantitative research was conducted with the use of structured questionnaire, with 225 respondents by emails. The relationships of these factors affecting consumer decision-making process are examined through social network sites networks such as:

1) Facebook,
2) Twitter,
3) Myspace,
4) Youtube and
5) Blogs.

The underlying assumption here is that consumer attitudes towards a brand or product based on off-line knowledge and experience will be carried over to their online behavioural intentions towards the retailer. Supported by the theory of social cognition (Bandura, 2001), most people have a strong desire to be consistent in their cognitive attitudes and behaviours, and between off-line attitudes and online behavioural intention. For example, a motorcycle owner of Harley Davidson who is also a great fan will exhibit positive attitudes online. During consumer decision making process, many factors can affect the purchase behaviour, such as previous-purchase experience, education level, gender, demographics etc. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the focus is on social identity, EWOM, trust and perceived risk that are deemed imperative to social network sites.

In consumer behaviour literature, many focussed on the aspects of trust (Jones and Kim, 2010; Kim et al., 2008; Pavlou, 2003) and perceived risk (Pavlou, 2003) in online environment. The formation of trust between individuals, despite relative anonymity in online environment, is an important determinant in e-commerce transactions. Trust is considered a central concept in determining participation in social network sites (Dwyer et al., 2007 and Kim et al., 2008). In another study, Agustin and Singh (2005) pointed out that trust plays a direct role in shaping consumers’ value evaluation. Trust in the online retailer brings about trust-related internet behaviours includes purchasing, cooperate and information sharing (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). In other words, a high level of trust in the retailer in social networks sites will reduce the level of perceived risks associated with online shopping and ultimately allow the consumer to make online purchases comfortably (Jones and Kim, 2010).

This thesis examines the importance of trust in influencing consumer decision-making process in social networks sites. In order for meaningful relationships to develop, trust forms a prerequisite between the various stakeholders in social networks sites. The dimensions of trust includes consumers-to-consumers, consumers-to-social networks sites and consumers-retailers operating in these social networks sites. Trust is defined here as a consumer subjective belief that the online retailer or the website will fulfil its transactional...
obligations as the consumer understands them. During consumer decision-making process, trust is expected to be essential in the stage where consumers search and evaluate information. For consumers to develop the intention to purchase, foremost prerequisite is the degree of trust with the online retailers. These intentions to purchase are important determinants of the successfulness of these businesses to penetrate new business arena in social networks sites.

Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) identified there are seven types of risk associated to online transactions in consumers’ perspective: financial, performance, physical, psychological, social, time and opportunity cost risk. Risk aversion generally leads to negative responses to advertisement, marketing campaigns and events. Kim et al. (2008) highlighted that risks associated with on-line transactions are monetary loss due to reliance on electronic information or incomplete information by online retailers; risk of loss of security and privacy; and product risk. Similarly, in this thesis, perceived risks are narrowed down into three types of risks: financial, privacy and product, which are specific to online transacting environment.

Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2004) identified that people read online reviews or articulations because of self-involvement motivation; where one seeks risk reduction with regards to buying decisions and reduction of search time. Similarly, this thesis takes the view that consumers consume EWOM to seek risk reduction and reduce search time during consumer decision process. Perceived risks are presumed to be reduced from the amount of positive EWOM generated or consumed. The underlying assumption here is that consumers are rational and hence adopted steps to make sure that they purchase the best available option. However, this assumption does not include cases of impulse or irrational purchases where it usually happens in reality.

Social identity is the psychological state of which one recognizes himself as ‘belonging to a group”, distinct from being unique individual and is categorized into three different types: Cognitive, Affective and Evaluative (Dholakia et al., 2004). In cognitive part, individuals form self-awareness in the virtual community group, which include
recognising similarities with members and difference with non-member. In affective part, social identity involves emotional involvement within the group which will foster loyalty and citizenship behaviour. In evaluative part, social identity means the evaluation of self-worth on the basis of belonging to a group. Social identity serves as a social-cognitive schema (norms, values and beliefs) for group related behaviours where people develop group intentions to act or behave in a specific way towards an issue related to the group (Zeng et al, 2009). Kozinet et al. (2009) found that communal norms are important in understanding the groups’ resistance or acceptance of commercial values introduced in the communication forum. In another study, Ridings et al. (2002) found group adherence to norms where a member receives responsiveness from others indicates a willingness to help other community members and also increases the reciprocity nature of the community. However, limited researches are done to suggest social identity influences purchasing behaviour in social networks sites as it is a rather new phenomenon. This thesis hopes to provide some insights in this area.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model depicting the relationships of constructs in this thesis and how the constructs are expected to be related. However, this does not represent the complete list of factors that will affect consumer decision-making process in reality. Neither does this thesis seeks to test the robustness of this conceptual model. The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the factors that are expected to be significantly more prominent in online environment, specifically in social networks sites. In the context of consumer decision-making process, it is reasonable to expect purchase intentions will lead to actual purchase behaviour. In the conceptual model, trust is viewed as the behavioural belief that is central in guiding consumers during purchasing decision. Social identity and EWOM are exogenous variables affecting trusts. As the nature of social network sites is to provide a platform for individuals to interact, the social and community purpose form an important part of its utility, where the concept of social identity fits in. Perceived risks are viewed as behavioural control affecting trusts and also directly affecting purchase intention. This is an important feature of this conceptual model as it considers the role of behavioural controls that is directly hindering purchase intentions, which is adapted from Theory of Planned Behaviour. If there is excessive perceived risk, it is expected to deter the intention of purchase directly.
Figure 1: Conceptual model depicting the relationships of construct

Therefore, the objective of this thesis is to investigate the influence of social identity, EWOM, perceived risks, trust and purchase intentions affecting consumer decision-making process in social networks sites. The hypotheses are presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): A consumer’s intention to purchase through social network sites positively affects the decision to purchase

Hypothesis 2 (H2): EWOM is positively related to trust in social network sites

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Social identity is positively related to trust

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Perceived risk negatively relates trust

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Perceived risk negatively relates intention to purchase

Hypothesis 6 (H6): A consumer’s trust is positively affects the intention to purchase.
Chapter Two: Theoretical Background

2.1 Social Networks Sites

The spotlight of this thesis is on general social networks sites, which is defined here as social network sites that have a primary objective of social interactions and communications. Many previous researches in social networks sites focussed on the types of activities that affect interactions among users (Keenan and Shiri, 2009; Pace, 2008 and Shen and Chiou, 2009) but they do not provide a business perspective. As social networks sites are increasingly become a part of our daily lives, businesses will be interested in how they can make use of the opportunities available. This thesis aims to provide some insights to marketers how the various factors investigated affects consumer decision-making process in social networks sites.

These social networks sites usually includes multiple communications medium, such as blogs or postings/ comments/ testimonials of the homepages that are accessible to the owner and friends (sometimes called a “wall”) and a text messaging board or email service (Thelwall, 2008). Many also allow pictures or videos to be posted and commented on. In addition, music sharing is possible through embedding music in their homepages or external links. In essence, these social networks sites support the communications between friends and provide an avenue for making new friends in addition to pleasurable activities that lend themselves to sharing, such as music listening and posting pictures and video. For marketers, it appears that social media offers a relatively cheap and efficient way to advertise its products and reach out to a great mass of online audience.

There are many terms commonly used by public and academics to describe social networks sites. Some examples are online social media, Web 2.0, virtual communities, e-communities, online communities, social networking software, collaborative software, and social networking services (Van Zyl, 2009). When these new technologies and applications are used in the business domain, they are often referred as enterprise 2.0, enterprise web 2.0 or enterprise social software (Van Zyl, 2009). Examples of social networks applications are
Google (reference, social networking), Wikipedia (reference), MySpace (social networking), Facebook (social networking), Youtube (social networking, video sharing), Flickr (photo sharing) and Second Life (virtual reality) (Evans and Bretton, 2010). The most popular social networks are Facebook, Twitter, Wikis and Youtube (McAfee, 2009). According to Dholakia and Durham (2010), there are more than 350 million accounts in Facebook by late 2009.

Fundamental elements of social network sites:

1. Social networks involve a number of different social channels and especially online social channels.
2. Social networks change over time. For example, the Wikipedia entry will continue to evolve as our collective understanding and acceptance of its meaning evolves.
3. Social networks are participative. The “audience” is assumed to be part of the creative process or force that generates content.

(Adapted from Evans and Bretton, 2010)

Table 1 illustrates the various capability of Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Youtube and blogs. When an individual joins a social networks site, he or she is prompted to identify others who they have relationships with. Some popular terms are “Friends”, “Contacts” or “Fans”. Most social networks sites require bi-lateral confirmation of relationships. Interestingly, the public display of connections is an important feature of social networks sites. The friends list contains links to each friend’s profile, enabling viewers to navigate through the friend’s list. Many of these researches here focussed on the sociability of these social networks sites but the business aspects of social networks sites are seldom discussed.

In analysing the types of content that dominates social networks sites, Thelwall (2008) found that subjects related to festival attract the most comments while news related subjects attracts little attention. However, there are limited researches to investigate how receptive are consumers to marketing events and purchasing in social networks sites. This thesis seeks to provide a business perspective in investigating the nature of interactions of social networks sites.
Jang et al (2008) found that online community participation or commitment increase the brand value perceived by community and helps to maintain a positive attitude towards the brand and increases brand loyalty. In addition, many researches focused on the social influence that is exerted by the community on its member (Dholakia et al., 2004; Postmes, Spears and Lea, 2000). However, most of these studies narrowly viewed virtual communities as commercially sponsored bulletin-boards or chat-rooms on company websites (Dholakia et al., 2004). As these virtual communities are unable to perform the same capabilities and functions, we therefore cannot assume the same phenomenon in social network sites. This further justifies the motivation to venture into this area that may shed some useful marketing insights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>MySpace</th>
<th>Youtube</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using legal name</td>
<td>Tweets, short and quick updates about &quot;What you are doing&quot;</td>
<td>Customable profiles to allow media-rich profile page</td>
<td>Broadcasting through video clips</td>
<td>Web site owner creates entries of commentaries, descriptions of events, diary or other media like photos and videos. Restriction to profile is possible Readers can post comments and also discussion with other bloggers about topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted profile access</td>
<td>Public access to profile</td>
<td>Public access to profile</td>
<td>Public access to profile and videos</td>
<td>Public access to profile and videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desktop environment</td>
<td>Micro-blogging</td>
<td>Blogging</td>
<td>Text comments are available for users to discuss about the video</td>
<td>Readers can post comments and also discussion with other bloggers about topics</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Summary of Social Networks Sites Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main types of activities</th>
<th>Simple Media Interface</th>
<th>Integration with mobile networks and handheld devices. Tweets are limited to 140 characters which can be sent via SMSs to mobile phones (which are capped at 140 characters too)</th>
<th>Embedded social media where users can post videos, audio and photos in the profile pages using flash content.</th>
<th>Users can upload, view and rate videos of size up to 1GB and 10 minute duration.</th>
<th>Photos and videos sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on sociability</td>
<td>Viewing photos and videos</td>
<td>Tweets</td>
<td>Entries with multimedia display</td>
<td>Videos sharing Entries, photos and videos</td>
<td>Interactions with other bloggers usually based on similar interests, topics, hobbies etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Consumer Behaviour Theories

Consumer decision-making process involves a very wide variety of personal and situational variables (Teo and Yeong, 2003). In the consumer behaviour literature, there are numerous models on consumer decision making process. These models illustrate the different stages that go through the mind of the consumer from the initial ignorance of a particular brand or product or service to the actual purchasing behaviour (Hansen, 2005). In this thesis, three theories, namely Theory of Planned Behaviour, Consumer Decision Making Process Model and Theory of Acceptance Model, are examined to provide a fundamental understanding in consumer behaviour. These theories helped to shape the formation of the conceptual model of this thesis and are thus presented here.
2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005), the intentions (and behaviours) are a function of three basic determinants: personal attribute, social influence and perceived behavioural control. It is based on the assumption that humans behave in a sensible manner; that they take into account information available, implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions. This is an extension of the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), which is concerned with the casual antecedents of intentions to perform behaviours over which people have sufficient control. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) incorporated perceived behavioural control to address the possibility of incomplete volitional control. In other words, behavioural control can directly affects behaviour in situations where one intends to perform behaviour but is prevented to do so. As the name suggests, this theory does not explain situations where unplanned or impulse purchases are made. Hence, it limits the applicability of this theory in many real-life situations where consumers do make impulse purchases.

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the conceptual model for this thesis draws from the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Technology Acceptance Model, which have been extensively validated on consumer intentions. The major building blocks of these two models are salient beliefs, which are used to ascertain attitudes, consequently determining intentions and behaviour. Drawing upon trust as the central concept, and incorporating perceived risk, WOM and social identity literatures, the conceptual model integrated this set of salient beliefs which are jointly proposed to influence online transactions intentions and behaviour.
In the conceptual model, it includes perceived risk as a behavioural control construct, which is a feature adopted from Theory of Planned Behaviour. Behavioural control is an important feature as it encompasses reasons why consumers did not purchase even though there is an intention to do so. This thesis seeks to analyse how significant this behavioural control, i.e. perceived risk, in deterring purchases to occur in social networks sites.

2.2.2 Consumer Decision Process Model

In this model, consumer decision making is viewed as a problem-solving task. It is known as EKB (Engel, Kollat and Blackwell) model when first introduced in 1968 and subsequently developed into EBM (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard) model (Teo and Yeong, 2003). The advantage of EBM model is its generality and applicability in a wide variety of situations. It specifically introduces memory, information processing and positive or negative purchase outcomes. The process begins with the stimulation of need where the consumer is experiencing imbalances between desired and actual states of need, resulting in stimulation for a search. After identifying the needs, the consumer searches for information and eventually produces a set of preferred alternatives. Using information stored in memory and also from outside sources, the consumer formed the criteria for evaluating and comparing alternatives and buy the chosen alternative. Good experience and satisfaction with the product or brand will lead customer to that product in the future. Bad experience will lead to post-purchase dissonance.

There are several major criticisms of this model that is limiting its applicability. Firstly, it largely assumes that consumers will search and evaluate every option available before purchase. In real life, due to time constraints and conveniences, consumers seldom follow the model. Secondly, it assumes rational purchases in all situations but in reality, consumers always experiences impulse or irrational purchases that make this model invalid.
In addition, this theory has no consideration of external influences. As described in the earlier chapter, we see how social identity influences affects one's participation and behaviour but it is not addressed in this theory. In addition, there is no behavioural control to account for reasons why consumers do not buy even though they may have the intention to do so. Hence, this consumer decision process model is rather simplistic in nature.

Nonetheless, consumer decision making process model is very relevant and useful to explain WOM communications that manifest in social networks sites. During online purchasing process, consumers search for product reviews or critics for a particular product in mind and formed a perception at the end of the search. This perception will eventually lead to purchase or non-purchase. If they are unhappy with their purchases, they will write a bad review to warn others about the problems that may arise. On the other hand, if they are happy with their purchases, they can also write an excellent recommendation. In the context of social networks sites, this theory is particularly relevant to show how WOM are used during information processing for evaluation and why WOM are generated.

2.2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model is a specific adaption of Theory of Reasoned Action for IT usage (Dishaw and Strong, 1999). Similar to Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour, behaviour is determined by the intention to perform the behaviour. In this thesis, the conceptual model depicts that intention to purchase leads to actual purchase. Applying Technology Acceptance Model in the conceptual model, WOM is considered the source where Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness are formed. In
other words, WOM communications translate in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness which affects the attitude towards the online social network. In addition, intention itself is determined by attitude towards the behaviour.

As trust forms a significant attitude towards the perception of social networks and subsequently leading to volitional participation, and trusting relationships among the members, it is recognised as a central attitude that is investigated in the conceptual model. The underlying assumption of Technology Acceptance Model assumes that the behaviour is volitional. However, Technology Acceptance Model does not include behavioural control construct, which means that behaviour is directly at the discretion of oneself. In other words, this model does not explain cases where consumers are not able to perform transactions even though there is an intention to do so. For example, consumers do not have sufficient money or credit card for purchases.

Having discussed the various models above, we have a better understanding of our study in consumer decision-making process.
2.3 Purchase Intentions

Drawing from Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Theory of Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) in the preceding chapter, consumer intentions to engage in online transactions are significant predictor of consumer actual participation in e-commerce transaction (Kim et al., 2008). The relationship between intention and actual behaviour is driven by the assumption that human beings attempts to make rational decisions from the available information to them. Therefore, a person’s intention to perform (or not to) a behaviour is a direct determinant of the persons’ actual behaviour. Based on this intention-behaviour relationship, this thesis predicts that a consumer’s intention to purchase from the social network sites is a predictor of the consumer’s actual purchase behaviour. The assumption here is that consumers make planned purchases.

2.4 Word of Mouth Communication (WOM)

One of the earliest research on WOM, Arndt (1967) characterized WOM as oral, person-to-person communications regarding a brand, product or service between a receiver and a communicator who is perceived as independent of any commercial influences. Kozinets et al. (2009) defined WOM marketing as the intentional influences of consumer-to-consumer by professional marketing technique. Many studies have shown that WOM has significant impact on consumer choice and post-purchase perceptions (Bone, 1992; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2004).

Early Stage of WOM:
In *Figure 5*, it illustrates the evolution of WOM theory. Early forms of WOM (without the advent of internet technology), are motivated by the desire to help others, to warn others about poor services and/or to communicate status (Kozinet et al., 2009). At this stage, WOM was commonly assumed to occur naturally among customers when marketers perform their jobs of developing market innovation, product promotions and advertising (Kozinet et al., 2009). The second stage of WOM theoretical development formed as marketing scholarship and practiced advances, theories of WOM emphasized on the importance of particularly influential consumers (known as opinion leaders) in the process of WOM as explained by Kozinet et al. (2009). These opinion leaders are targeted and influenced by marketers, which in turn will recommend their friends about the particular product. The third stage as defined by Kozinet et al. (2009) is the direct managing of WOM activity through targeted one-to-one seeding and communication program. With the internet allowing unprecedented new levels of management, measurement of these campaigns, efficient development and diffusion of WOM marketing communications are ensued. In the
context of social network sites, WOM marketing is particularly prominent due to the nature of its communications capability in terms of reach and depth. However, with the vast amount of WOM generated in social networks sites, it is questionable how much trust consumers have on them.

Gatignon and Robertson (1986) cited the main motivators for WOM communications are decision support, decision justification, social status and power. Past research has shown that WOM communication generated is generally higher in group with strong ties relations than within groups with weaker relations (Bone, 1992). Within a consumer social network, social ties strength, the level of intensity of social relationship between consumers or the degree of overlap of two individuals’ friendship varies greatly across (Steffes and Burgee, 2008). Strong primary ties come from close family and friends, weak ties from acquaintances and non-existent ties with complete strangers. In addition, information obtained from strong tie relation is more influential than from weak tie relation (Brown and Reingen, 1987). However, Steffes and Burgee (2010) highlighted that weak ties are often critical in the dissemination of information between tightly woven strong tie clusters as evidenced when weak tie acquaintances share restaurant opinions gathered from consumption experiences with their family, their strong tie network.

In Acar and Polonsky (2008), its findings showed that 46% of the Facebook users displayed one or more brand among their interests and user groups which indicates the willingness to share brand experiences in social network sites, which is a form of WOM communications. This type of WOM is termed EWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth). Despite fundamental similarities in purposes, there are several key differences between EWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) and traditional WOM (Steffes and Burgee, 2008). Firstly, WOM involves face-to-face conversation while EWOM occurs over the internet where sender and receiver are separated by time and space. Next, EWOM harness the unlimited reach of internet to share opinion and experiences to the whole world while traditional WOM cannot do. Lastly, traditional WOM emanates from a known sender where the receiver is aware of his/her credibility. The nature of EWOM in most applications does not allow the receiver to judge the credibility and the message contents. It was found that consuming EWOM is strongly driven by utilitarian motives such as getting purchase or consumption-
related advice while posting EWOM is largely attributed by social-psychological factors, identity and utilitarian motives (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

The important element that is driving up word-of-mouth communications is “trust” (Evans and Bretton, 2010). Consumers pay attention to WOM because it is perceived as credible, customised and generated by people having no self-interest in pushing a product (Arndt, 1967; Brown et al., 2010). Individual’s perceptions of WOM trustworthiness will depend on the belief that the sender’s opinions and comments are unbiased. As such, trust between friends and colleagues or, the social relations between them help to determine trustworthiness of WOM communications during purchase decisions process. Therefore, in online environment like social networks sites, trust is expected to be a significant factor in consuming EWOM.

2.5 Social Identity

Identification with a social group is a psychological state very different from merely being designated as falling into one social category or another and has important self-evaluative consequences (Hoggs and Abrams, 1990). In this thesis, social network sites are viewed as platforms to provide for social identification process. For example, a mother who loves baking may seek to identity herself with online baking group (via Facebook or Twitter) to share experiences, recipes and creations. In addition, social influence can manipulate consumer decision-making, Stafford’s (1966) experiment showed that group cohesiveness has strong impact on the probability of members choosing the same brand as the group leader and Witt (1969) found that group influence, cohesiveness and group knowledge of member choice are significantly related to similarity of brand choice within group. However, the influence of social identity affecting purchases in social networks sites has yet been extensively explored. This thesis hopes to provide some empirical findings to suggest the influence of social identity in consumer decision-making process social networks sites.

In traditional community settings, the group is usually organised around interests, and group influence dominates decisions made (Dholakia et al. (2004). On the other hand,
Boyd and Ellison (2008) pointed out that these social networks sites are organised around “people”, not interests. Hence, social network sites are structured as “personal” (or egocentric) networks, with individuals at the centre of their community which leads to a shift in the organization of online communities. Similarly, Lampel and Bhalla (2007) showed that status-seeking is an important motivation in the provision of free advice and information in virtual consumer communities. It is argued that within these online communities, individuals are able to project identities that are closer to their ideal self, thus elicits powerful emotions that motivate volitional participation. This observation provides an important starting point for this thesis to investigate the nature of motivation to engage in these social networks sites and how they affect consumer decision-making.

Many of the previous researches focussed on the concept that websites can form relationships with consumers. In relational view of user-website interactions, it emphasizes the building and continuous maintenance of a relationship between the user and the website through social and personalized exchanges (Li et al., 2006). In these studies, individuals perceived these websites as primary “actors” during user-website interactions (Brown et al., 2007 and Li et al., 2006). More interesting, social processes such as attachment, involvement, understanding and social identity have been found in many human-computer interactions (Li et al., 2006). Similarly, this thesis also takes the view that social networks sites are perceived as individuals and relationships do develop between them and consumers.

To explain why consumers participate actively in online communities, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) found that social identity motivates the participation in online interaction by enhancing ‘we-intentions’, i.e. individual’s commitment to participate in a joint action, and involve explicit or implicit agreement between the participants to engage in the joint action. They added that the membership, frequency and extent of participation are driven by volitional choices. In addition, Wasko and Faraj (2000) found that people participate in online community primarily out of community interest, generalized reciprocity and pro-social behaviour. According to Shen et al. (2009), the main driving force of social identity is affective social presence, which is referred as the extent to which a user’s emotional connection is aroused by the virtual social interaction with others. Lin (2010) study on online gaming communities found that affective commitment and social norms are significant influences to community loyalty behaviour. Extending from these various
researches, this thesis would like to investigate if the influence of social identity also exists and how they differs in social networks sites.

Henning-Thurau and Walsh (2004) found that virtual opinion platforms serves as “social positioners”, the infrastructure of the virtual community that offers social and information utility by helping consumers to compare and process their product experience. Consumers searching for social orientation through information on on-line platform can be expected to change their buying behaviour in a way compatible to the values and behaviour of the virtual reference group.

The fundamental purpose of social network sites is to provide a platform for individuals to interact, the social and community purpose become a major part of its utility; hence the concept of social identity fits in. Through the participatory interactions with the group members, they formed strong relationship bondage and trust among them is developed. Trust is considered essential in exchange relations because it is a key element of social capital (Kim et al., 2008). The level of engagement a community member has with the others in the social networks sites will impact upon the types of bonds and relationships that are built among the members (Quinton and Harridge-March, 2010). Online relationships can be just as strong and deep as off-line relationships. This is very much dependent on the level of trust they have. In the era of e-commerce, issues surrounding privacy and security made online audience sceptical of marketing or advertising. Moreover, virtual communities and social network sites which lack face-to-face contact, makes the element of trust seems more significant in online communications and interactions. Lin (2008) pointed out that trust is crucial in circumstances where absence of workable rules requires others to behave in a socially acceptable manner. In other words, mistrust creates barriers in forming sustainable relationships and social function of these online communities. Thus, this thesis postulates that social identity forms a considerable component of building the element of trust during the consumer decision process.

2.6 Perceived Risk
A consumers’ perceived risk is an important barrier for online consumers who are considering making online purchases. The distant and impersonal nature of on-line environment and the implicit uncertainty of using the open global infrastructure for transactions have rendered risk an inevitable of e-commerce (Pavlou, 2003). In the marketing literature, perceived risk is an essential concept and various types of risk have been identified (Kim et al., 2008; Pavlou, 2003; Jacoby and Kaplan, 1972). For example, Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) identified there are seven types of risk: financial, performance, physical, psychological, social, time and opportunity cost risk. Risk aversion generally leads to negative responses to advertisement, marketing campaigns and events.

The types of risk associated with on-line transactions are:

1. Risk of monetary loss; consumers have to rely on electronic information and vulnerable to incomplete or distorted information by online retailers or other parties (Pavlou, 2003). For example, the online transaction may be duplicated because of technical errors or unintended double-clicked the purchase button.
2. Risk of loss of security and privacy; consumers who provide personal information to online retailers.
3. Product Risk is associated to the product; the product turns out to be either defective or not up to the perceived quality when purchased (Kim et al., 2008).

Precisely due to the inherent nature of online shopping, consumer always experience some forms of risk. The perceived risk can be so overwhelming compared to traditional mode of shopping, hence inducing reluctance to purchase. During internet transaction, consumer has to provide personal information, address, phone number and credit card information. After providing the necessary information, the consumer has to wait for days for goods to be delivered and then, transaction is completed. Thus, it is not surprising that consumers are attentive to risk in online transaction and such risk may directly influence their intention to purchase from the online retailer.

In these uncertain situations, where consumers have to act, trust comes into play as a solution for specific problems of risks (Kim et al., 2008). Kim et al. (2008) argued that trust can alleviate the effect of risk on online purchases in situations where one must enter into risks but have no complete control over the outcome. It was found that the effect of trust is mediated by risk on the consumers’ intention to purchase. For example, a consumer may
take risks to purchase clothing from unheard online retailers because he or she is attracted to the largely discounted price. In this case, the consumer is willing to take chances in undertaking the purchase in believing that the online retailer is trustworthy to deliver the product.

Taking these findings into consideration, this thesis endeavours to unveil the relationship between perceived risk and trust in social networks sites. In addition, perceived risk can also directly have a significant effect on intention to purchase. In other words, if the consumer deems that the associated risks of the online purchase outweigh the level of trust he or she has with the online retailer, she may reject patronage. The fear of associated risks such as monetary, privacy and product risks can be so overwhelming that consumers rather choose not to buy at all.

### 2.7 Trust

Trust is essential in exchange relations because it is the key element of social capital and it affects firm performance, satisfaction, competitive advantage and other economic outcomes like transaction costs and search cost reductions. In e-commerce context, most studies on trust focussed on technological issues relating to privacy, security (Dwyer et al., 2007) and other key aspects of trust (Kim et al., 2008; Pavlou 2003; Smith et al., 2005).

Since there are already many researches done on trust, many definitions of trust have evolved. In Ha and Perks (2005), it defined brand trust as an average consumer to rely on the ability of brand to perform its stated function. Lin (2008) defined trust as the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of others. Plank et al. (1999) recognised that consumer trust could have multiple referents: salesperson, product and the company and accordingly defined trust as a global belief on the part of the buyer that the salesperson, product and the company will deliver its obligations as understood by the buyer. In this study, we focus trust on the internet retailers in social network sites. Logically, it should include trust in the website (e.g. Dessert Gallery on facebook.com), website brand (e.g. Dessert Gallery) and the company itself. Accordingly, in this thesis, an online consumer
trust is defined as a consumer subjective belief that the selling party or the entity will fulfil its transactional obligations as the consumer understands them.

As discussed earlier, trust is important during consumer decision making process. Trust is essential in order for meaningful interactions and information exchanges to occur, to undertake the risk of providing personal information and believing that the online retailers will deliver goods as promised. In order for consumers to develop the intention to purchase, first and foremost, consumers are expected to trust the online retailers in believing that they will deliver the promised action. In line with the arguments of Theory of Planned Behaviour, this thesis views trust as an important behavioural attitude towards the intention to purchase in social networks sites. In the marketing perspectives, knowing the level of trust the consumers have is an important pre-requisite for intentions to purchase to form. These intentions to purchase are important determinants of the successfullness of these businesses to penetrate new business arena in social networks sites. Therefore, this thesis explores if there is a direct relationship between trust and purchase intentions.
3.1 Quantitative Research

After researching on the various research methods, quantitative study is found to be commonly used in the area of consumer behaviour. Quantitative method emphasize on testing and verification, logical and critical approach, particularistic and analytical with results orientation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Hence, for the purpose of this thesis, it will be a quantitative study and the data and information for this thesis will be solely based on survey. As mentioned in Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), survey is an effective tool to get opinions, attitudes and descriptions as well as for getting cause-and-effect relationships. Particularly, descriptive surveys are commonly used to obtain consumer attitudes towards a certain product and to ascertain views and opinions. Thus, a descriptive survey form was drawn up and distributed to a total of 250 respondents.

Surveys were sent out via emails to friends within the author’s Facebook community and they were in turn asked to send the surveys to their friends. In the email, the criteria for the desirable participants are stated; he or she is required to be at least a member of one of the social network sites, logged in at least once a week and spent at least 1 hour a week in these social network sites. These qualifying criteria are included in the survey to ensure greater percentage of relevant respondents.

At the end of the data collection, there were 231 surveys forms returned. Among the survey forms returned, 6 of them were discarded. There are 2 respondents with no membership in any of the social network sites, 3 respondents spending less than 1 hour per week in social network sites and are discarded as they do not fit the criteria stated above. There is 1 survey form discarded due to incomplete response. In the end, a total of 225 valid responses are recorded and it accounts for 90% response rate. This high response rate is considered successful data collection outcome.
A preliminary study was conducted during 1st November 2010 to 5th November 2010. The preliminary study aided in the development of the questionnaire as constructive feedback was considered to make the survey form easier to comprehend. Three respondents from my target group were selected for the preliminary study. Keeping in mind of a virtual community, interest groups or friends group in social networks sites that they are most familiar with, they are asked to fill up the survey form. Amendments were made accordingly to their feedback and recommendations.

Subsequently, the actual data collection took place from 5th November to 5th December. Surveys were electronically distributed through emails. Emails were sent to friends and also asked my friends to pass on the surveys. I have employed non-probability sampling -convenience sampling and referral sampling in this data collection. The advantages of convenience sampling and referral sampling are low cost of administration and it minimized apprehension on the part of the respondents. However, disadvantages may include untimely responses, incomplete surveys and refusal to response. During the course of data collection, some surveys are returned later than stipulated and there are numerous non-responses. Reminders are sent to ensure adequate responses are collected. The surveys were requested to fill up by the respondents on their own and send back via email. Similar to the preliminary study, respondents’ answer are based on their experiences about their interactions with other members in social networks sites and purchasing experiences (or perceptions) from social networks sites.

The data collected were analysed using Microsoft Excel. Hypotheses testing are and correlation analysis is conducted. The results are presented in the next chapter.

3.2 Measurement Development

The survey questions are divided into 3 sections, based on their nature and analysis required. The first second consists of general questions which are used to gather information regarding demographics and social network sites usage patterns. Importantly,
they serve as qualifying criteria in getting valid responses for the purpose of this thesis. In addition, these questions reveal the usage patterns of the social network sites that are imperative to the aim of this thesis. The second part consists of questions concerning respondents experience in participating in social networks sites. The constructs are used to measure the respondents’ attitudes towards social networks sites which include social identity and perceived risk. The third section consists of questions concerning respondents experience in purchasing in social network sites. The constructs in this section are used to measure how factors like trust, WOM and intention to purchase affects purchase experience among the respondents.

All the constructs are measured using multiple items gathered from the survey, using a five-point Likert-type scale (from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree). The scale is used to measure the intensity of the respondents view on the statements. Appendix I lists all the survey items used to measure each construct. The constructs are:

- EWOM; measures adapt from Goyette et al. (2010) where WOM is divided into four dimensions: WOM intensity, positive valence WOM, negative valence WOM and WOM content. These four dimensions are considered to be critical in categorizing WOM. In the structured questionnaire, Question 25 is used to measure WOM intensity; Question 26 and Question 27 are used to measure positive valence WOM; Question 28 is used to measure negative valence; Question 29 to Question 33 are used to measure WOM content.

- Social Identity; adapted from Dholakia et al. (2003) where social identity is broken down into three scales: cognitive, affective (sense of belongingness) and evaluative. These scales allow us to establish the degree of commitment and loyalty consumers have with social networks sites. In the structured questionnaire, Question 10 to Question 13 measures the variable ‘Belonging to Virtual Community’, question 14-16 measures ‘Cognitive Social Identity’ and question 17-18 measures ‘Evaluative Social Identity’.
• Perceived Risk; adapted from Kim et al. (2008) where perceived risk is broken down into financial risk, privacy risk and product risk. These three risks are deemed to be relevant in online environment like social networks sites. In the structured questionnaire, Question 19 and 20 measures the Perceived Risk among the respondents.

• Trust; measures are adapted from Kim et al. (2008) including trustworthiness of the website, the website retailer gives the impression that it keeps promises and commitments and I believe the website retailer has my best interests in mind. I have included the trustworthiness of the community to measure trust among its members. These are presented in Question 21 to 24 of the structured questionnaire.

• Intention to purchase; measures are adapted from Jarvenpaa et al. (1999) and Jones and Kim (2010) which include “I am likely to purchase products from this site” and “The likelihood to search for goods in this site is high”. They are presented in the structured questionnaire in Question 34 and 35 respectively.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypotheses postulated in Chapter 2, normal curve means tests are conducted to support the hypotheses. It is also commonly known as hypothesis tests to test the null hypothesis that the observed sample mean does not differ significantly from zero (Garson, 2008). In the survey questionnaire, likert scale questions are used to determine the extent a respondent agree or disagree with a statement. Points are assigned from 1 to 5 where 1 point corresponds to “Strongly Agree”, and 5 point corresponds to “Strongly Disagree”. The mean for each Likert scale questions are calculated as follows:

\[
\text{Mean (\bar{x})} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n}
\]

Where \( n \) is the number of cases

\( x_i \) is the value of the \( i \)th response in the sample
The function AVERAGE in Microsoft Excel is used to calculate the arithmetic mean. And standard deviation is used to calculate the standard error in the sample. The function STDEV in Microsoft Excel is used.

\[
\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \overline{x})^2}{n-1}}
\]

Standard Deviation, \(\sigma\) = \(\frac{\sum (x - \overline{x})^2}{n-1}\)

Standard Error is used to calculate the how spread out the sample mean will be around the true population mean. The formula of Standard Error is as below:

\[
\text{Standard Error, } SE = \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}
\]

3.4 Limitations of Research Methodology

Due to time and resources constraint, the relatively small sampling size employed limits the extent to which we can apply the results as a general theory. The major drawback of convenience sampling used in the data collection is that such non-probability samples give no basis for evaluating the size of the sampling variation and the error of estimation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Random sampling instead of convenience sampling may help in generating a more valid data analysis and improve the accuracy of the aim of this study.

Non-response error was expected to happen during the course of data collection. As such, I tried to keep non-responses error to the minimum by sending reminders to my targeted respondents to return survey forms. In addition, non-response error also includes cases of incomplete survey forms returned. To counter this problem, returned survey forms with more than 20% erroneous replies are discarded.

In quantitative research, the assessment of the conceptual model usually includes the estimation of the internal consistency for reliability and tests of convergent and discriminant validity for construct validity. Reliability can be examined with Cronbach Alpha, which implicitly assume each construct carries the same weight; and Composite Reliability, which relies on the actual loadings to construct the factor score. For internal consistency, Composite Reliability is a better measure and a score of greater than 0.70 is
necessary. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicates the amount of variance of the measurement items can be accounted for by the construct. Validity is examined through convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is considered acceptable when all item loadings are greater than 0.50 and the items in each construct loads onto only one factor with an eigenvalue of more than 1.0. Discriminant validity can be checked by calculating if the correlations between the variables are lower than the square root of the average variance extracted.

In the analysis of the data, reliability and validity tests cannot be included in the results due to lack of executable programmes. This implies that the reliability or robustness of the conceptual model cannot be tested statistically. However, Microsoft Excel does not support reliability tests and acquisition of other statistical software like SPSS demands more time in understanding its functionalities which may well exceeds the deadline to submit this thesis. Therefore, only regression and correlations analysis are examined from the data collected. Nevertheless, they are deemed adequate in explaining the relationships among the constructs and therefore, sufficient for the scope of the thesis.
Chapter Four: Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 Empirical Findings

The demographics profiles of the respondents were shown in Table 2. In Appendix II, Figure 9, 10 and 11 present the results of general questionnaire in chart format. Out of the 225 respondents, 68% are female and 32% are male. Majority of the respondents fall in the age groups of between 26-30 (accounts for 47%) and between 31-35 (accounts for 36%). They account for 83% of the respondents in this study. The remaining 17% percentage of the respondents fall in the age groups of between 21-25 (accounts for 12%) and between 36-40 (accounts for 5%).

In understanding the usage patterns of these social network sites, Table 2 shows the breakdown of days per week and hours logged in per visit. A majority of the respondents logged on everyday (accounts for 38%), followed by 3-4 days a week (accounts for 29%), then 1-2 days a week (accounts for 21%) and lastly 5-6 days a week (accounts for 12%). As stated earlier, respondents with frequency of logged on to social networks sites less than once a week are removed from the respondent list as they are deemed not suitable for this study. In terms of time period spent per visit to each social networks sites, a majority of the respondents indicated that they spent between 1-2 hours (accounts for 72%), followed by 3-4 hours (accounts for 20%), less than 1 hours (accounts for 6%) and lastly only 2% of the respondents logged on more than 5 hours.

It was found that 63% of the respondents joined various types of community or interest groups ranging from companies, fan pages, friends’ group, campaigns etc. This findings shows that majority of the respondents are opened to the interacting with and building relationships with others. Among the reasons for joining social networks sites, having fun by interacting with others is the most cited reason. From these results, I have gathered that businesses can foster ties with their customers through marketing programmes that are fun, entertaining and interactive.
Among the social network sites investigated, Facebook accounts for 92% of the respondents’ membership. The high percentage of Facebook membership can be attributed to the growing popularity of its applications. Of the respondents, 17% of them are Twitter members, 43% of them are Youtube members, 9% have their own blogs and 6% are members of MySpace. In addition, 58% of the respondents (130 out of 225 respondents) have memberships in more than 1 membership in these social network sites but none has more than 3 memberships. Figure 7 shows the graphical representation of the membership in Social Networks Sites among the respondents.

![Figure 6: Membership in Social Networks Sites](image)

In understanding the reasons for joining Social Networks Sites, Table 3 shows the summary of reasons indicated by the respondents. Respondents are allowed to tick more than one reason. “Having fun by interacting with others” accounts for 68% of the respondents, which indicates the importance of the social interaction value to them. “Fulfilling interests/ hobbies” accounts for 44% of the respondents, which shows the entertainment value in the daily lives. “Forming relationships with other members” accounts for 25% of the responses, indicating the social identity value of Social Networks Sites. Lastly, “Performing transactions” accounts for only 23% of the responses, indicating the fact that many respondents are not willing to purchase products via Social Networks Sites.
In understanding the types of community or interest groups the respondents joined in Social Networks Sites, Table 4 shows a summary of the responses. Among the respondents, 63% or 142 respondents indicate that they do join community or interest groups while 37% or 83 respondents indicate they do not join. Respondents are allowed to tick more than one type of community or interest groups they joined. Among the total 225 respondents, “Companies” accounts for the majority of 39% of the responses, followed by “Friends Group” which accounts for 30%, then “Fan pages” which accounts for 28%, then “Hobbies” accounts for 18%, then “Organisations” accounts for 14% and lastly campaigns accounts for 4%.

To ascertain the proportion of the respondents who are purchasing products from Social Network Sites, Question 9 asks if the respondents have bought any products from Social Networks Sites. 38% of the respondents indicated they have bought products from Social Networks Sites and 62% of the respondents indicated that they did not buy any products before at all. Among the total 225 respondents, 22% or 49 respondents indicated that they buy “once in many months”, followed by 8% or 18 respondents indicated that they buy “once a month” and lastly, 8% or 19 respondents indicated that they buy “more than once a month”. The results show a majority of the respondents did not do online shopping before and only 8% of the respondents represent frequent online buyers.

To understand how readily consumers accept marketing programmes and involvement in social network sites, Figure 8 shows the results of the responses. 24% of the respondents cited that they never follow marketing campaigns, 64% cited they sometimes follow marketing campaigns and 12% cited that they always follow marketing campaigns.

The results of all the general questions are presented in the section above. Next, hypothesis testing and analysis will be done in the following section.
4.2 Results of Main Questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire are shown in Appendix III (Tables 5 to Table 8). In these tables, the column SD represents standard deviation and the column SE represents standard error. In Table 5, it shows the results for the constructs for Social Identity.

For a 95% confidence interval, the z-value corresponds to a value of 1.96 in the distribution table. The negative sign for the z-value represents positive relationship while a positive sign represents a negative relationship. Respondents generally agree that they enjoy interacting with others and being a member in social networks sites. However, neither the respondents feel that committed to the online community nor they believe that the community has high morale. In terms of cognitive social identity, they do not feel that they obtain respect from others, or their self-image is improved from joining the social networks sites. This empirical finding contradicts Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) findings where they assert that cognitive, affective and sense of belonging influence the participation in online interaction. The difference can be inferred from the fact that they do not include social networks sites in their investigation. In terms of evaluative social identity, it is generally believed that social networks sites give them an opportunity to recommend ideas to other members. The empirical findings reinforced the existing literature review, in particular on the ‘ego-centric’ organisation of social networks sites where community interests are weak (Boyd and Ellison, 2008).

The results for the construct ‘Perceived Risk’ are shown in Table 6. Generally, the respondents disagree that online transactions involves significant risk and does not believe that purchasing from online retailers will involve more product risk. As the majority of respondents use social networks frequently, they are considered relatively IT-savvy and hence more open to online shopping. Moreover, majority of the respondents are between 21 years old to 35 years old, where it represents the working adults in the population, hence they are considered relatively financial independent and confident to view that online shopping do not lead to significant risks.
The results for the construct ‘Trust’ are shown in Table 7. Respondents are asked to relate website retailer to the one which they frequently patronise. If the respondent has never bought anything from social networks sites before, they are asked to relate an online retailer that they are familiar of. On the whole, the respondents feel that the website retailer gives the impression that it keeps its promises and the community is trustworthy. Interestingly, the statistical results do not show that the respondents feel that the website retailer is trustworthy or it has the consumers’ best interests in mind.

The results for Questions 25 to 33, which measures the WOM in social networks sites are shown in Table 8. The results show that the respondents do not agree that they often talk about the retailer, or they will recommend the online retailer and to tell others that they are a customer. In terms of negative valence, the results show that the respondents strongly disagree that they often speak negative things about the online retailer. In terms of WOM content, the respondents do discuss about the user-friendliness of the website, the prices, quality, variety of products and delivery speed.

To sum up this section, we have discussed about the results of the questionnaire. In the following section, hypotheses testing and analysis of results will be conducted.

4.3 Hypothesis 1 Testing

Table 9 below shows the summary of results. One-tail hypothesis test is conducted as follows:

Null hypothesis $H_{01} > 3$

Alternative hypothesis, $H_{1} \leq 3$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qn</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>-7.8576**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.903</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>-1.6981*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where ** denotes $p < 0.05$ and * denotes $p < 0.1$

Table 9: Summary of Results for Hypothesis 1
For a 95% confidence interval, the z-value corresponds to a value of 1.96 in the distribution table. Typically, the null hypothesis will be rejected if the calculated z-value is greater than 1.96. In Table 9, the results support the hypothesis 1 regarding the positive impact of purchase intentions to actual purchase behaviour in social networks sites. The z-values for Question 34 and Question 35 are -7.8576 (where p < 0.05) and -1.6981 (where p < 0.1) respectively. The negative sign for the z-values reflects the positive relationship between purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour. Thus, a consumer’s intention to purchase through the social network sites positively affects the decision to purchase.

4.4 Hypotheses 2-6 testing

As stated in Chapter 4, the constructs: Social Identity, Perceived Risk, Trust and WOM are divided into variables in the questionnaire. Pearson correlation is used to explain the relationships among the constructs. Table 10 shows Pearson correlation coefficients results among the main factors: social identity, perceived risk, trust, EWOM and intention to purchase. A coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship, -1 indicates a perfect negative linear relationship and 0 indicates no relationship (Garson, 2008). Table 11 shows a detailed comparison of the Pearson correlation among the individual variables. In Table 11, the results show high correlation coefficient of 0.5166 between intention to purchase and positive valence WOM, and 0.4582 between intention to purchase and WOM content.

In Table 10, the Pearson correlation shows the results of the hypotheses tested. Hypotheses tests 2, 4 and 6 are supported. EWOM and Trust shows a relatively strong but positive correlation of 0.353. Perceived Risk and Trust shows a relatively strong negative correlation of -0.305. Trust and Intention to Purchase show positive correlation of 0.380. Therefore, it is evident that EWOM is positively related to trust in social network sites, perceived risk negatively affects trust and a consumer’s trust is positively affects the intention to purchase.
### PEARSON CORRELATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EWOM</th>
<th>SOCIAL IDENTITY</th>
<th>PERCEIVED RISK</th>
<th>TRUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL IDENTITY</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEIVED RISK</td>
<td>-0.146</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>0.353</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.305</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTENTION TO PURCHASE</td>
<td>0.663</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Pearson correlation of constructs

Hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 5 do not yield significant results and thus they are not support. Correlation coefficient between Social Identity and Trust shows positive but weak coefficient of 0.019. Perceived Risk and Intention to purchase shows negative and small coefficient of -0.081. Therefore, the results do not validate the postulated claims that social identity is positively related to trust and perceived risk negatively affects intention to purchase.

To sum up the results, *Table 12* shows the final results of the hypotheses tested.
4.5 Results Analysis

Hypothesis 1 supports the postulated notion that purchase intention is positively related to actual purchase. The results are similar to Kim et al. (2008) where the underlying assumption postulates that a consumer’s intention to perform (or not) a behaviour is an important determinant of the subsequent actual behaviour. More importantly, the results follow Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Theory of Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) that intention is a predictor of behaviour itself. This implies that the respondents perform rational purchases over social networks sites and intentions are developed before they do the purchases. However, taking into account that more than 60% of the respondents indicate they have never bought anything before, this empirical finding may likely implies that no intention to purchase positively relates to non-purchase.

Hypothesis 2 supports the claim that EWOM is positive related to trust in social networks sites. In other words, the results show that people generally trust EWOM
communications in social networks sites. This empirical finding concurs with previous researches from Duhan et al. (1997) and Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2004). The evidence suggests that people seek risk reduction by consuming EWOM communications. In addition, consumers respond to post-purchase dissonance by generating negative EWOM. Similarly, they share their joy from consuming a product by posting comments, videos or photos about it via social networks sites. This empirical finding suggests that marketers should actively manage EWOM communications in order to benefit the most from social networks sites. In order to do so, marketers can perhaps launch advertisements that stimulate consumers to talk about and generate positive WOM, where it usually involves hidden messages that are funny, controversial, or poignant. Engaging consumers to generate WOM can also through, for example, competitions on home-made videos loaded in Youtube with the highest online votes or sending discount vouchers to friends by email. Besides, negative WOM has to be address immediately by, for instance, sending public apologies or notices, to contain unconstructive publicity.

The results do not support hypothesis 3 where it is postulated that social identity is positively related to trust. To explain for such results, there could be a possibility that the survey questions are addressed to incorrect respondents. As the empirical findings show that 62% of the respondents did not buy any products before, this may indicate significant level of mistrust which are already exist, hence leading to such discrepancy. Another possible explanation for this finding can be attributed to the fundamental structure of the social networks sites in general. As mentioned by Boyd and Ellison (2008), social networks sites are organised around individuals and not community interests. The definition of “friends” in these sites is not the same as the normal everyday meaning and the reasons why people connect differs widely. Therefore, the empirical evidence does not show strong enough social identity to produce significant trust among the members of these social networks sites. Marketers who are concentrating their efforts on the social or communal influence of the members in these social networks sites should be cautious of the implications here. Bearing in mind that consumers from various backgrounds join social networks sites for a wide variety reasons, this can be a source of divide among them. As such, even if they join a particular interest group in social networks sites, it is not necessary that they have similar objectives in doing so. Therefore, marketers can perhaps divide its target consumers on these
social networks sites into different categories like age, gender or income-levels and launch marketing programmes that best fits different segments’ needs.

Hypothesis 4 is supported, which states that perceived risk negatively affects trust. In other words, it is statistically significant that consumers’ level of trust negatively related to the level of perceived risk. This finding is in line with past researches (Kim et al., 2008 and Pavlou 2003), which has significant implications for marketers. Essentially, businesses should build trust through the various interactions with customers. Trust develops loyalty and healthy relationships with customers which in turn translate into more sales. Therefore, for online retailers, they should continually deliver their marketing efforts in building trust and loyalty with their customers. This can be through enhancing transaction security, timely delivery of products and services, constant updates of events and offers etc.

For hypothesis 5, the results do not support the postulated notion that perceived risk negatively affects intention to purchase. The empirical findings do not validate the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) where attitude towards behaviour (i.e. perceived risk) affects intention. Although it is expected that high level of perceived risk in online shopping lowers the intention to purchase, the results prove otherwise. Intuitively, it may suggest that the questions in the survey are structured wrongly, hence leading to such results. However, respondents were being asked if they understood the questions correctly before they submitted the questionnaire. Therefore, the possibility of wrongly structured questions is eliminated.

To illustrate cases where consumers want to purchase products online even though perceived risk is high, a good example is buying super-discounted computers from unknown online retailer. The apparent benefits seem to outweigh the risks undertaken, hence inducing the intention to purchase. However, this is rather extreme scenario to support the results. Another attempt to seek explanation in this phenomenon, inference can be drawn from Kim and Jones (2010). They pointed out that degree of consumer’s product involvement affects the level of perceived risk in online shopping. In other words, the more involved a consumer is towards a product, the more willing the consumer is to shop online, hence reducing the level of perceived risk of online shopping. High-involved consumers’ willingness to shop online may result from their sense of self-confidence, in turn reducing
perceived risk of online transactions. This thesis does not measure consumers’ product involvement but it would be of significant future research area to explore.

In support of hypothesis 6, trust is found to be significantly influencing intention to purchase. This finding is in line with past studies (Jones and Kim, 2010; Ha and Perks, 2005). The results shows that the respondents do generally believe that the online retailers and community are trustworthy, which reiterates the importance of trust to entice consumers to patronise. For marketers, trust building has to be of utmost consideration in managing relationships and communications with consumers. As discussed earlier, marketers need to recognise the importance for managing WOM communications to ensure the essential level of trust between consumers and businesses exists.

Despite the exploratory nature of this thesis, attempts are made to formulate and test research hypothesis in order to provide some evidence for statistical significance. However, due to the fact that this thesis does not use randomly sampled data, significance tests are not appropriate for inferential analysis. As pointed out by Garson (2009), statistical significance is reported as an arbitrary criterion in deference to its widespread use in social science for exploratory analysis of non-random data. Therefore, results should be interpreted with caution.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COGNITIVE SI</th>
<th>EVALUATIVE SI</th>
<th>PERCEIVED RISK</th>
<th>TRUST</th>
<th>WOM INTENSITY</th>
<th>POSITIVE VALENCE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE VALENCE</th>
<th>WOM CONTENT</th>
<th>INENTION TO PURCHASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BELONGING SI</td>
<td>0.5176</td>
<td>0.2233</td>
<td>0.0984</td>
<td>-0.1062</td>
<td>0.0584</td>
<td>0.0346</td>
<td>-0.5591</td>
<td>-0.0663</td>
<td>-0.0831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGNITIVE SI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATIVE SI</td>
<td>0.3111</td>
<td>-0.0112</td>
<td>-0.3052</td>
<td>0.1128</td>
<td>-0.2450</td>
<td>-0.1154</td>
<td>-0.1653</td>
<td>-0.0815</td>
<td>0.1077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEIVED RISK</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
<td>-0.0112</td>
<td>-0.3052</td>
<td>-0.2363</td>
<td>0.4432</td>
<td>-0.0416</td>
<td>-0.4853</td>
<td>-0.4051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>0.0964</td>
<td>0.0873</td>
<td>-0.3052</td>
<td>-0.2363</td>
<td>0.4432</td>
<td>0.2240</td>
<td>0.2668</td>
<td>0.3796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOM INTENSITY</td>
<td>-0.1993</td>
<td>-0.1522</td>
<td>0.1128</td>
<td>-0.2363</td>
<td>-0.6785</td>
<td>-0.0416</td>
<td>-0.4853</td>
<td>-0.4051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE VALENCE WOM</td>
<td>0.2994</td>
<td>0.3140</td>
<td>-0.2450</td>
<td>0.4432</td>
<td>-0.6785</td>
<td>-0.0013</td>
<td>0.6589</td>
<td>0.5166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE VALENCE WOM</td>
<td>-0.2415</td>
<td>-0.1557</td>
<td>-0.1154</td>
<td>0.2240</td>
<td>-0.0416</td>
<td>-0.0013</td>
<td>0.1021</td>
<td>0.0410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INENTION TO PURCHASE</td>
<td>0.1806</td>
<td>0.1077</td>
<td>-0.0815</td>
<td>0.3796</td>
<td>-0.4051</td>
<td>0.5166</td>
<td>0.0410</td>
<td>0.4582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Pearson correlation coefficients results between constructs variables
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Summary and Findings

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the salient factors that affect consumer decision-making in social networks sites. The factors include EWOM, social identity and perceived risks and trusts and how they affect purchase intentions and how purchase intentions affect actual purchase. A total of 225 respondents participated in the structured questionnaire through emails. The findings show that 1) purchase intention directly affects actual purchase behaviour, 2) EWOM is positively related to trust in social networks sites 3) perceived risk negatively relates to trust and 4) trust positively relates to purchase intention. Further, the analysis results do not support the hypotheses that social identity relates to trust, perceived risk relates to purchase intentions.

The empirical findings revealed that a majority of the respondents are aware of the marketing campaigns of companies and more than 60% mentioned that they follow these campaigns occasionally, though only 8% of the respondents are frequent buyers in social network sites. For businesses, we can construe that these social networks sites represent a rather untapped market to exploit the full marketing opportunities that are presented there. However, reservations in purchasing through social networks are apparent as more than 60% of the respondents indicated they have never purchase from social networks sites before. Further, the empirical findings found that perceived risk is significant and supports the notion that perceived risk negatively relates to trust. To overcome such reservations in purchasing, marketers will have to invent new ways to lower their potential patrons’ level of perceived risk.
The research findings reveal that social identity do not yield similar results as with the findings in Dholakia et al., (2003) and the results do not show that affective social presence is the most significant factor in social identity, as opposed to the findings of Shen et al. (2009). These findings support the purported view that “social identity” in social networks sites is not the same as other real life or virtual communities. More importantly, it is the ‘ego-centric’ structure of these social networks sites that dilutes the community spirits and communal interests among them. Although many of the respondents do cite that they join various community or interest groups, it can be inferred that is purely for entertainment value. For businesses, this research finding is of great significance in terms how businesses should market themselves. Besides launching marketing programmes that are fun, entertaining and interactive to attract attention and promote WOM, marketing efforts should focus on the fact that individuals are unique and different from the other users.

The findings of this thesis showed strong evidence to support purchase intentions positively relates to purchase, which is in-line with Kim et al. (2008). Trust is found to be positively related to EWOM, which supports the arguments of Evans and Bretton (2010). In addition, the findings support the hypothesis that trust is positively related to intention to purchase, which further supports Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and Theory of Acceptance Model (Dishaw and Strong, 1999) where attitude (i.e. trust) towards the behaviour (i.e. purchase) is a predictor to intention. Reinforcing the findings of Kim et al. (2008), perceived risk also found to show significant negative relation with trust. For marketers, loyalty programmes to build trust and confidence with the online retailer are essential to reduce perceived risk that is deterring purchases.

Perceived risk does not show evidence to affect intention to purchase. In search for explanation for such findings, Kim and Jones (2010) pointed out that degree of consumer’s product involvement affects the level of perceived risk in online shopping, which mediates the effect of perceived risk in intention to purchase. A highly product-involved consumer will be more willing to shop online, hence the level of perceived risk is reduced in this scenario. High-involved consumers’ willingness to shop online may result from their sense of self-confidence, in turn reducing perceived risk of online transactions. The empirical finding also seems to agree with Kim and Jones (2010) as only 8% of the
respondents represent frequent buyers and thus, they can be inferred as highly-involved consumers.

5.2 Further Research and Recommendations

This thesis has been done with constraints in time and resources. A relatively small sampling size limits the validity of the results. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the investigated findings have provided important implications for marketers as illustrated earlier. It would be recommended for future researches in social networks sites to employ random sampling with larger responses base. In addition, future researches can divide the study between the genders and various demographics or ethnics groups to assess any significant differences in attitudes and behaviours towards social networks sites.

From above, the empirical findings have shed some light into consumer behaviour in social networks sites. Previous researches found that social identity or influences are important factors in affecting member’s participation in virtual communities (Dholakia et al., 2003 and Kozinets et al., 2010). On the contrary, this thesis does not establish any significant social identity to influence the respondents in terms of interactions with other members and also the level of trust with the online retailers or the social networks sites. A possible explanation lies in the ‘ego-centric’ structure of these social networks sites and that ‘social identity’ in social networks sites is not the same as real life or other virtual communities. Lampel and Bhalla (2007) pointed out that participation can be driven by the status seeking motive where individuals attempt to project identities that are closer to their ideal self within online environment. It would be of great research area for future studies to focus on how the status seeking motives affects the level of participation in social networks sites.

In conclusion, this thesis believes that social networks sites possess an excellent dimension for businesses to market their products. Jones (2010) recognises the importance of managing brand reputation in social networks sites, lies not just with the business owners
itself alone. Especially for small businesses, they no longer have to rely solely on traditional advertising or print media to managing their branding and marketing processes. Social networks sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and many more can be used to engage in these activities. To harness its potential powers and reap maximum benefits from it, businesses need to understand the nature of the interactions among its members and how these salient factors investigated can affect consumer purchasing behaviour within these social networks sites.
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Appendix I: Questionnaire
This is a survey of consumer behaviour on social network sites (SNS). Please kindly answer all the questions. Thank you for your participation!

1. Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female


3. Are you a member of any social network sites (for more than 3 months)?
   [ ] Facebook [ ] Twitter [ ] Myspace [ ] Youtube [ ] Own Blog [ ] Others; pls name _________

4. How much time do you spend on these social network sites in a week?
   [ ] Everyday [ ] 5-6 days [ ] 3-4 days [ ] 1-2 days [ ] Less than once a week

5. What is the duration of each session?
   [ ] More than 5 hours [ ] 3-4 hours [ ] 1-2 hours [ ] Less than 1 hour

6. Do you join/form any community or interest groups on these social network sites?
   [ ] Yes [ ] No

   If Yes, what are the types of community or interest groups?
   [ ] Companies (examples: Starbucks, ZARA, Rolex, Harley Davidson, BMW) [ ]
   [ ] Friends Group
   [ ] Fan pages (examples: Idols fan clubs)
   [ ] Organisations (examples: United Nations, WWF)
   [ ] Hobbies (example: Fishing, Marathon, Pets)
   [ ] Campaigns (example: Breast Cancer Campaigns, Human Rights Campaigns)

7. What are the reasons for joining/using social networks sites?
   [ ] Fulfilling interests/hobbies
   [ ] Having fun by interacting with others
   [ ] Performing transactions
   [ ] Forming relationships with other group members
8. Do you follow news updates of product launches, marketing campaigns from online retailers in social network sites?
   - Always
   - Sometimes
   - Never

9. Have you bought anything from any social network sites (From blogs, facebook, twitter etc)?
   - Yes
   - No

   If Yes, how often do you buy?
   - Once in many months
   - Once in a month
   - More than once in a month

The following questions relate to your experience in participating in the online community/interest groups in Social Network Sites (SNS), please state if you agree or disagree and to the extent of the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging to Virtual Community</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. I enjoy interacting with other members/ my friends in the SNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I enjoy being a member of the community in SNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am committed to the community in SNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The community has a high morale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Social Identity</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Joining the community/group in SNS helps me obtain respect from other members/ my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Joining the community/group in SNS improves how I am perceived by other members/ my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The identity of community/group in SNS is a reflection of my self-image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Social Identity</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Using SNS gives me an opportunity to recommend ideas to other members/ my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Using SNS helps me form warm relationships with other members/friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Risk</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Generally, the decision to transact in SNS involves significant risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Purchasing from retailers on SNS will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
involve more product risk (i.e. not working, defective product)

The following questions relate to your purchase experience from the online retailer in SNS. Please state if you agree or disagree to the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. The website retailer gives the impression that it keeps promises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I believe the website retailer has my best interests in mind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The community is trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The website retailer is trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I often talk about this online retailer to my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I will recommend this online retailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I am proud to tell others I am a customer of this online retailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I often talk about negative things of this online retailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I discuss about the user-friendliness of the online retailer page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I discuss about the prices that were offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I discuss about the quality of products offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I discuss about the variety of products offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I speak of rapid delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. The likelihood to search for goods from this online retailer is high</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I am likely to purchase products from this online retailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>No. of counts</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and below</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 21-25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 26-30</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 31-35</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 36-40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 and above</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of social network sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Blog</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of days logged on</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 days</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 days</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 days</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a week</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time period per visit</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hours</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Characteristics (N=225)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for joining Social Networks Sites</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling interests/hobbies</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having fun by interacting with others</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing transactions</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming relationships with other members</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of responses for joining Social Networks Sites
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of community or interest groups joined in Social Network Sites</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companies</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Group</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan pages</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Summary of responses in types of community or interest groups joined in Social Network Sites
Appendix III: General Questions Results from Questionnaire

How often do respondents follow news updates of product launches, marketing campaigns from online retailers in social network sites

- Always: 64%
- Sometimes: 24%
- Never: 12%

Figure 7: How often do respondents follow news update of product launches, marketing campaigns from online social network sites

Age groups of respondents

- Between 21-25: 12%
- Between 26-30: 36%
- Between 31-35: 5%
- Between 36-40: 47%

Figure 8: Age groups of respondents
Reasons for joining Social Networks Sites

- Fulfilling interests/hobbies: 68%
- Having fun by interacting with others: 44%
- Performing transactions: 25%
- Forming relationships with other members: 23%

Figure 9: Reasons for joining Social Networks Sites

Types of community or interest groups joined in Social Network Sites

- Companies: 39%
- Friends Group: 30%
- Fan pages: 18%
- Organisations: 14%
- Hobbies: 4%
- Campaigns: 28%

Figure 10: Types of community or interest groups joined in Social Network Sites
## Appendix IV: Summary of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging to Virtual Community</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. I enjoy interacting with other members/ my friends in the SNS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.769</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>-3.846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I enjoy being a member of the community in SNS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.849</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>-2.692</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am committed to the community in SNS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.253</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>4.381</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The community has a high morale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.311</td>
<td>0.830</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>5.624</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Social Identity</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Joining the community/group in SNS helps me obtain respect from other members/ my friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.347</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Joining the community/group in SNS improves how I am perceived by other members/ my friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.209</td>
<td>0.748</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>4.191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The identity of community/group in SNS is a reflection of my self-image</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.893</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>-1.788</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative Social Identity</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Using SNS gives me an opportunity to recommend ideas to other members/ my friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.649</td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>-9.757</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Using SNS helps me form warm relationships with other members/friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.138</td>
<td>0.636</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>3.247</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Summary of results for Question 10-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Risk</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Generally, the decision to transact in SNS involves significant risk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.169</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>3.357</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Purchasing from retailers on SNS will involve more product risk (i.e. not working, defective product)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.209</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>4.573</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Table 6: Summary of results for Question 19-20
### Table 7: Summary of results for Question 21-24

<table>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The website retailer gives the impression that it keeps promises</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.680</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-9.690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I believe the website retailer has my best interests in mind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.964</td>
<td>0.376</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>-1.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The community is trustworthy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.742</td>
<td>0.794</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>-4.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The website retailer is trustworthy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.933</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>-1.614</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 8: Summary of Results from Question 25-33

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word of Mouth in social network sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I often talk about this online retailer to my friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.947</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>-0.986</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Positive valence WOM</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I will recommend this online retailer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.929</td>
<td>0.815</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>-1.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I am proud to tell others I am a customer of this online retailer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.951</td>
<td>0.830</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>-0.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative valence WOM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I often talk about negative things of this online retailer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.707</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>22.747</td>
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<td><strong>WOM content</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I discuss about the user-friendliness of the online retailer page</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-10.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I discuss about the prices that were offered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.089</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>-36.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I discuss about the quality of products offered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.102</td>
<td>0.382</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>-35.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I discuss about the variety of products offered</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.053</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>-34.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I speak of rapid delivery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.698</td>
<td>0.962</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>-7.858</td>
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</table>