



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***INFLUENCE OF NEGATIVE ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH ON
CONSUMER'S INTENTION TO SWITCH MOBILE SERVICE PROVIDER IN
MALAYSIA***

GEETHA NADARAJAN

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**INFLUENCE OF NEGATIVE ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH ON
CONSUMER'S INTENTION TO SWITCH MOBILE SERVICE PROVIDER
IN MALAYSIA**

By

GEETHA NADARAJAN

**Thesis Submitted to the Putra Business School in Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2018

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DEDICATION

In the darkest moment is where you have to keep your best behaviour...

I dedicate this completed mammoth of work to those close to my heart, my kids,
Amirthaa Valli and Karthi Chethil.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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January 2018

Chairman : Associate Professor Jamil Bojei, PhD
Faculty : Putra Business School

Consumer decisions are increasingly influenced by word-of-mouth of friends, family and other consumers. With the advent of Web 2.0, much of the word-of-mouth is online and 65% consumers learn about products or services of interest online and a whopping 50% use social media to air their grouses or complaints on service providers particularly mobile service provider (Nielsen, 2014). However, given the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), there is lack of studies on how eWOM from online communities influence mobile switching.

This study explored the influence of negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on mobile consumer switching. Negative eWOM is online consumer's expression of an unfavourable product or service experience and recommendation not to buy (Luo, 2009). Using convergent design mixed methods, qualitative phase involved the netnography technique where the negative eWOM and its related discussion thread of 537 eWOM in an online community on mobile consumer switching was collected and analyzed. Thematic analysis revealed that there were six (6) main elements in the negative eWOM including consumer environment, mobile experience/knowledge, tangible mobile benefits and costs, affects and agree or disagree behaviors to the negative eWOM. Quantitative phase analysed the influence of the same negative eWOM on consumer's switching where 585 valid responses were collected via an electronic survey instrument distributed to public. Regression and multiple comparison test results indicate given varying consumer affects, consumer behaviour towards the negative eWOM has significant influence on consumer switching intentions.

In summary, the analysis of negative eWOM showed that in a token based mobile consumption setting like Malaysian telecommunications industry, consumer awareness of selective treatment by service providers through negative word-of-mouth aligns sentiments which increases the likelihood to switch service providers. The findings of this research provide important implications for the understanding of mobile consumer switching which could not be explained based on price, network and service alone.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGARUH EWOM NEGATIF TERHADAP NIAT PENGGUNA
PERKHIDMATAN MUDAH ALIH UNTUK MENUKAR
PENYEDIA PERKHIDMATAN DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Januari 2018

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Maklumat mulut ke mulut adalah satu medium pengguna berkuasa yang mampu mempengaruhi tingkah laku pengguna walaupun dalam keadaan di luar talian (offline). Keputusan dan tingkah laku pengguna semakin dipengaruhi oleh pendapat, cita rasa dan pilihan rangkaian sosial besar rakan-rakan, keluarga dan hubungan social di mana secara purata 70% daripada pengguna mendengar pendapat orang lain mengenai jenama manakala 65% melayari internet untuk mengetahui lebih lanjut mengenai produk atau perkhidmatan yang menarik dan sebanyak 50% menggunakan media sosial untuk menyuarakan rungutan atau aduan mereka terhadap penyedia perkhidmatan mereka khususnya penyedia perkhidmatan mudah alih (Nielsen, 2014).

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimanakah maklumat elektronik mulut ke mulut yang negatif mempengaruhi niat pengguna perkhidmatan mudah alih untuk menukar produk atau perkhidmatan. Memandangkan populariti komuniti internet sebagai sumber yang dipercayai yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku pengguna, satu kes yang boleh dikaitkan adalah, baru-baru ini pengguna Maxis telah meluahkan kekecewaannya dalam satu forum komuniti bertarikh 9 haribulan Mac 2016 (Lowyat.net, 2016). Terdapat 563,136 pandangan dan 4,865 perkongsian ulasan ini dengan beratus-ratus pengguna memberi komen bersetuju dengan pengalaman itu dan mengancam untuk menukar penyedia perkhidmatan. Apabila Maxis membalas ulasan pengguna dalam laman Facebook, 3,000 pembacanya kecewa dengan respons Maxis dan memaparkan emotikon marah, manakala ramai menyatakan niat kuat untuk menukar penyedia perkhidmatan. Sehingga November 2016, Maxis telah kehilangan kira-kira 600,000 pelanggan kepada pesaing melalui nombor mudah alih.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan campuran untuk mengukuhkan keputusan ke arah menyokong objektif kajian. Dengan reka bentuk tumpu, pengumpulan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif, analisis dan tafsiran akan dilakukan dengan objektif untuk mengkaji pengaruh eWOM ke atas tindak balas pengguna dalam situasi pengguna yang diberikan. Fasa kualitatif akan melibatkan kajian eWOM negatif mengenai isu Maxis di atas untuk mengenal pasti situasi pengguna yang baru muncul, tema afektif dan hubungannya dengan niat pertukaran. Manakala, fasa kuantitatif digunakan untuk memberi gambaran umum kesan eWOM negatif dengan menggunakan instrumen kajian untuk mengumpul dan menganalisis pilihan responden terhadap situasi pengguna dan bagaimana ia mempengaruhi respons afektif (PAD) mereka ke arah eWOM negatif yang seterusnya memberi kesan terhadap tindakan – pengelakan mereka dan akhirnya, niat pertukaran.

Hasil kajian kualitatif ini bergema dengan *Behavioral Perspective Model* (BPM) di mana jika situasi pengguna yang baru muncul dari eWOM komuniti internet adalah pencapaian, hedonisme, pengumpulan dan penyelenggaraan menjadi situasi pengguna yang biasa. Dalam analisis yang lebih mendalam, tema afektif baru muncul adalah keseronokan, rangsangan dan penguasaan yang mengesahkan model Mehrabian-Russell (M-R). Jika rasa tidak puas hati tinggi terhadap eWOM negatif, ramai menunjukkan niat pertukaran. Manakala, hasil kajian kuantitatif menunjukkan yang semua eWOM negatif memberikan impak yang tinggi atas niat pengguna mudah alih untuk tukar penyedia perkhidmatan melalui respons PAD afektif. Respons afektif ini membawa kepada situasi pengguna mengelak daripada penyedia perkhidmatan mudah alih dan / atau produk-produk dan perkhidmatan-perkhidmatan mudah alih yang seterusnya membawa kepada niat pertukaran lebih tinggi.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 18 January 2018 to conduct the final examination of Geetha Nadarajan on her thesis entitled " Influence of Negative Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Consumer's Intention to Switch Mobile Service Provider in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15th March 1998. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	vi
DECLARATION	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Preamble	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Problem Statement	4
1.4 Research Significance	5
1.5 Scope of the Study	6
1.6 Research Objectives	6
1.6.1 General Objective	6
1.6.2 Specific Objectives	7
1.7 Research Questions	7
1.8 Operational Definitions of Concepts	8
1.9 Organization of the Thesis	9
1.10 Summary	9
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)	10
2.3 EWOM and Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	13
2.4 eWOM from Online Community	14
2.5 Negative eWOM	15
2.5.1 Negative eWOM in Telecommunications Industry	17
2.6 Consumer Switching	17
2.6.1 Consumer Switching Intentions	19
2.7 Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)	21
2.7.1 Applications of Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)	26
2.8 Mehrabian-Russell (M-R) Theory	27
2.8.1 Mehrabian and Russell (M-R) Approach	28
2.8.2 Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD)	31
2.8.3 Approach- Avoidance Behaviour	33
2.8.4 Applications of Mehrabian and Russell (M-R)	34
2.8.5 Limitation of the Mehrabian and Russell Scaling	34

2.9	Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) and Mehrabian and Russell (M-R)	34
2.10	Conclusion	37
3	RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	38
3.1	Introduction	38
3.2	Theoretical Framework	38
3.3	Justification of Selecting Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)	41
3.4	Theoretical Framework Diagram	42
3.5	Research Hypothesis Development	43
3.5.1	Consumer Affect across Consumer Situations	43
3.5.2	Consumer Affect and Behaviour to the Negative eWOM across Consumer Situations	44
3.5.3	Consumer Affect and Switching Intentions	44
3.5.4	Consumer Behaviour towards the Negative eWOM and Switching Intention	45
3.5.5	Consumer Behaviour towards the Negative eWOM has a Mediating Effect on the Relationship between Affect and Switching Intention	45
3.6	Definition of Study Constructs	46
3.6.1	Behaviour Setting	46
3.6.2	Learning History	46
3.6.3	Consumer Situation	47
3.6.4	Approach-Avoidance	47
3.6.5	Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD)	48
3.6.6	Switching Intentions	48
3.7	Conclusion	49
4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	50
4.1	Introduction	50
4.2	Philosophical Perspective	50
4.3	Research Design	52
4.4	Approach to Design	52
4.4.1	Justification of Using Mixed Method Designs	53
4.4.2	Mixed Method Design	54
4.4.3	Convergent Mixed Method Design	54
4.5	Qualitative Strand	56
4.5.1	Purpose of Study	56
4.5.2	Study Setting	57
4.5.3	Types of Investigation	57
4.5.4	The Extent of Researcher's Involvement	58
4.5.5	Time Horizon	58
4.5.6	Unit of Analysis	58
4.5.7	Netnography	59
4.5.7.1	Entrée'	60
4.5.7.2	Data Collection	61
4.5.7.3	Data Analysis	64
4.5.7.4	Coding Scheme	66

	4.5.7.5	Trustworthiness of the Study	70	
4.6		Quantitative Strand	72	
	4.6.1	Purpose of Study	72	
	4.6.2	Study Setting	73	
	4.6.3	Types of Investigation	73	
	4.6.4	The Extent of Researcher's Involvement	74	
	4.6.5	Time Horizon	74	
	4.6.6	Unit of Analysis	74	
	4.6.7	Sampling Design	75	
		4.6.7.1 Sampling Frame	75	
		4.6.7.2 Sample Size	76	
	4.6.8	Operationalization of the Study Constructs	76	
	4.6.9	Measurement Item	79	
		4.6.9.1 Independent variables	79	
		4.6.9.2 Dependent Variables	80	
	4.6.10	Questionnaire Design	84	
	4.6.11	Pre-Testing Questionnaire	85	
		4.6.11.1 Profile of Respondents in Pre-Test	86	
		4.6.11.2 Questionnaire Items	86	
		4.6.11.3 Scale reliability in Pre-Test	91	
	4.6.12	Structure and Wordings	91	
	4.6.13	Sequencing of Questions	92	
	4.6.14	Questionnaire Instructions	93	
	4.6.15	Data Collection Method	93	
	4.6.16	Sampling Method	93	
	4.6.17	Data Analysis Plan	95	
	4.6.18	Statistical Technique	96	
	4.6.19	Internal Consistency Reliability	96	
	4.6.20	Assessment of Validity	97	
4.7		Triangulation Strategy	99	
4.8		Conclusion	100	
5		ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	101	
	5.1	Brief	101	
	5.2	Qualitative Analysis and Findings	101	
		5.2.1 The source of data	101	
		5.2.2 Introduction	102	
		5.2.3 Theme 1: Consumer Environment	117	
		5.2.4 Theme 2: Consumer Mobile Experience/Knowledge	120	
		5.2.5 Theme 3: Mobile Consumption Benefits and Costs	123	
			5.2.5.1 Theme 3.1: Tangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	125
			5.2.5.2 Theme 3.2: Intangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	127
			5.2.5.3 Theme 3.3: Tangible Mobile Consumption Costs	130
			5.2.5.4 Theme 3.4: Intangible Mobile Consumption Costs	132

5.2.5.5	Linkages between Tangible and Intangible Mobile Consumption Benefits and Cost	134
5.2.6	Theme 4: Consumer Situation	135
5.2.7	Theme 5: Agree-Disagree	140
5.2.8	Theme 6: Affects	142
5.2.8.1	Theme 6.1: Pleasure	143
5.2.8.2	Theme 6.2: Arousal	150
5.2.8.3	Theme 6.3: Dominance	153
5.2.9	Theme 7: Switching Intention	157
5.2.10	Trustworthiness of the Study	161
5.2.10.1	Preparation Phase	161
5.2.10.2	Organization Phase	162
5.2.10.3	Reporting Phase	162
5.2.11	Qualitative Analysis Conclusion	164
5.3	Quantitative Analysis and Findings	164
5.3.1	Descriptive Analysis	164
5.3.1.1	Preparation of the Data	164
5.3.1.2	Missing Data	165
5.3.1.3	Outliers	165
5.3.1.4	Normality Check	166
5.3.1.5	Summary of Survey Response	166
5.3.1.6	Respondents' Demographic Profile	167
5.3.2	Internal Consistency of Affective and Behavioural Constructs	171
5.3.3	Relationship Between Affective and Behavioural Constructs	174
5.3.4	Multicollinearity of the Affective Constructs	175
5.3.5	Regression Analysis	176
5.3.6	Differences Between Affective and Behavioural Constructs by Consumer Situation	177
5.3.7	Results of Hypotheses Testing	186
5.3.8	Quantitative Analysis Conclusion	188
5.4	Method Triangulation	188
5.5	Conclusion	195
6	DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	196
6.1	Introduction	196
6.2	Summary of Findings	196
6.3	Discussion	197
6.3.1	Research Objective 1: To Identify Key Indicators in the Negative EWOM Related to Mobile Consumer Switching Intentions	198
6.3.2	Research Objective 2: To Determine Correlations of Key Indicators Such as Consumer Affects and Behaviour, Resulting from the Negative EWOM, Across Customer Situations	202

6.3.3	Research Objective 3: To determine the Mediating Effect of Behaviour in the Relationship between Affect and Switching Intention	203
6.4	Contributions and Implications	203
6.4.1	Academic Contribution	204
6.4.1.1	Theoretical Contribution	204
6.4.1.2	Methodological Contribution	206
6.4.2	Implications for Practitioners	206
6.4.3	Policy Contribution	207
6.5	Limitation of the Research	208
6.6	Recommendation for Future Research	209
6.7	Conclusion	209
	REFERENCES	210
	LIST OF APPENDICES	243
	APPENDICES	244
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	272
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	273

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 Research Objectives, Research Questions and Hypotheses	7
2.1 Differences between WOM and eWOM	14
2.2 Four classes of consumer behavior	23
2.3 Four classes of consumer behaviour in a continuum of behaviour setting	24
2.4 Pattern of reinforcement and operant classes of consumer behavior	24
2.5 BPM Contingency Matrix	25
2.6 BPM Emotion-Contingency Matrix	26
2.7 The semantic differential measures of emotional states	32
2.8 The four dimensions of Approach-Avoidance behavior	33
2.9 BPM Contingency Matrix	36
3.1 Four classes of consumer behaviour in a continuum of behaviour setting	39
3.2 Consumer situations	47
3.3 The four dimensions of Approach-Avoidance behaviour	48
4.1 Qualitative research questions	56
4.2 Data collection and management process	62
4.3 Data analysis steps	65
4.4 Consumer behaviour setting coding scheme	67
4.5 Antecedent coding scheme	68
4.6 Reinforcement and punishment coding scheme	68
4.7 Consumer situation coding scheme	68
4.8 Consumer affective coding scheme	69
4.9 Approach-Avoidance coding scheme	70
4.10 Consumer switching intentions coding scheme	70

4.11	Measure of trustworthiness	71
4.12	Research questions and hypotheses	73
4.13	Construct definitions, working definitions and questionnaire item	77
4.14	Questionnaire item development	81
4.15	Respondent's profile for the Pre-Test	86
4.16	Initial and final list of questionnaires items	87
4.17	Reliability analysis	91
4.18	Mobile phone penetration rate per 100 inhabitants by state	95
4.19	Summary of quantitative research objectives, research questions, proposed constructs and proposed statistical analysis	98
4.20	Validation of meta inference	100
5.1	Mobile Service Provider Code	102
5.2	Basic Statistics of the discussion thread involving the negative eWOM	105
5.3	Definition of members	106
5.4	Details of members	107
5.5	Number of posts in the discussion thread	108
5.6	Inter-Rater reliability	113
5.7	Count of occurrences for Consumer Environment	120
5.8	Count of occurrences for Consumer Mobile Experience/Knowledge	122
5.9	Count of occurrences for Mobile Consumption Benefits and Costs	124
5.10	Count of occurrences for Tangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	127
5.11	Count of occurrences for Intangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	129
5.12	Count of occurrences for Tangible Mobile Consumption Cost	132
5.13	Count of occurrences for Intangible Mobile Consumption Cost	134
5.14	Analysis of Consumer Situation	136
5.15	Count of occurrences for Consumer Situation	140

5.16	Count of occurrences of Agree/Disagree to the Negative eWOM	142
5.17	Coding and analysis of Pleasure	144
5.18	Count of occurrences for Pleasure	150
5.19	Coding and analysis of Arousal	151
5.20	Count of occurrences for Arousal	153
5.21	Coding and analysis of Dominance	154
5.22	Count of occurrences for Dominance	157
5.23	Count of occurrences for Switching Intention	160
5.24	Audit Trail	163
5.25	Study sample	166
5.26	Summary of demographic profile of respondents	168
5.27	Gender composition	169
5.28	Race composition	169
5.29	Age distribution	170
5.30	State of residence distribution	170
5.31	Education level	171
5.32	Reliability of affective and behavioural constructs	171
5.33	Factor analysis of affective constructs	172
5.34	Factor loadings of individual items of affective constructs	172
5.35	Factor analyses of the behavioural constructs (Approach-Avoidance)	173
5.36	Factor loading (Approach-Avoidance)	174
5.37	Factor analysis for switching intentions	174
5.38	Factor loadings for switching intentions	174
5.39	Means and correlation coefficients for affective and behavioural constructs	175
5.40	Multiple regression analysis	176
5.41	Consumer situations in mobile service purchase and consumption	178

5.42	ANOVA results for consumer situations	180
5.43	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for affect-pleasure	181
5.44	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for affect-arousal	182
5.45	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for affect-dominance	183
5.46	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for approach	184
5.47	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for avoidance	185
5.48	Multiple comparison analysis (post hoc) for switching intentions	186
5.49	Summary of hypothesis testing	187
5.50	Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings	189

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.1	Average Weekly Reach of Social Media Platforms	2
2.1	Directed Graph of the Online Community	14
2.2	Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)	22
2.3	Multidimensional Scaling of Emotion-Related Words	30
2.4	Mehrabian and Russell's Approach to Environmental Psychology	31
3.1	Mehrabian and Russell's Approach to Environmental Psychology	40
3.2	Theoretical Framework Diagram	43
3.3	Pattern of Reinforcement and Operant Classes of Consumer Behaviour	46
4.1	Convergent Mixed Method Design	54
4.2	Process Steps in Convergent Mixed Design	55
4.3	Negative eWom Discussion Thread in The Online Community	59
4.4	CAQDAS Software	66
4.5	Types of Sampling Methods	94
4.6	Triangulation Strategy	99
5.1	Maxis Giving Unfair Treatment to Customers, Bye Maxis	104
5.2	Breakdown of the Negative eWOM Thread	105
5.3	eWOM Datafile in NVivo	109
5.4	Top 100 Most Frequently Occurring Words	110
5.5	Creating Nodes in NVivo11	111
5.6	Creating Sub-Nodes for Behaviour Setting	111
5.7	Creating Sub-Nodes for Avoidance	112
5.8	Thematic Map for Consumer Environment	120
5.9	Thematic Map for Consumer Mobile Experience/Knowledge	122
5.10	Thematic Map for Tangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	126

5.11	Thematic Map for Intangible Mobile Consumption Benefits	129
5.12	Thematic Map for Tangible Mobile Consumption Cost	131
5.13	Thematic Map for Intangible Mobile Consumption Cost	133
5.14	Relationship Diagram for Mobile Benefit and Costs	134
5.15	Thematic Map for Switching Intention	160
5.16	Scree Plot of Affective Constructs	173



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MCMC	Malaysian Communications and Media Corporation
eWOM	Electronic Word-of-Mouth
BPM	Behavioural Perspective Model
PAD	Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance
M-R	Mehrabian and Russell
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Preamble

This chapter presents an overview of this research. It includes the background, problem statement and research objectives. This chapter also introduces the reader to the research questions, the scope and importance of the research and subsequently, organization of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

Social media has evolved significantly in the last 10 years with its purposeful ways of engaging with people, events and brands that matter to them. It continues to have a tremendous impact on how people behave online; how they search for information, play games, converse, form communities, build and keep relationships; and how they create, tag, modify and share content across any number of sites and devices (Kietzmann et al., 2012). In its Q3 2016 Report, Facebook reported monthly active users (MAUs) were 1.79 billion as of September 30, 2016, an increase of 16% year-over-year while Twitter reported 317 MAUs as of September 30, 2016 which is an increase of 3% year-over-year. With the phenomenal user growth of these social media applications among others, it was published (Nielsen, 2016) that consumer decisions and behaviours are increasingly influenced by the opinions, tastes and preferences of a larger social networks of friends, family and connections where an average of 70% of consumers hear other peoples' opinions on the brand while 65% get online to learn more about the products or services of interest and a whopping 50% use social media to air their grouses or complaints on their service providers. This trend is revolutionary and grows in significance against the background of traditional, in store-advertising, personal selling, and retail environment (Bridgen, 2011).

As consumer-brand engagement increases in online social media applications, the business community has been grappled with uncertainty on how this engagement could benefit or harm their brand consciousness (Dix, 2012) as consumers have access to social information virtually anywhere in the form of personal reviews, shared recommendations and conversations with other consumers before, during and after purchase (Court et al., 2012). Highest reach of social media is through mobile phone across all age demographics compared to tablet or pc (Nielsen, 2016).

AVERAGE WEEKLY REACH OF SOCIAL MEDIA OVER PLATFORMS

Q3 2016

BY AGE DEMOGRAPHIC								
	ADULTS 18+	ADULTS 18+ REACH %	18-34 YEARS OLD	18-34 YEARS OLD REACH %	35-49 YEARS OLD	35-49 YEARS OLD REACH %	50+ YEARS OLD	50+ YEARS OLD REACH %
Smartphone	176.9 M	73%	59.6 M	82%	51.2 M	85%	65.5 M	60%
Tablet	74 M	30%	21.4 M	29%	27.5 M	45%	25.1 M	23%
PC	70.2 M	29%	17 M	23%	20.1 M	33%	33.1 M	30%

Figure 1.1 : Average Weekly Reach of Social Media Platforms
(Source : Nielsen, 2016, pg4)

Given the large percentage of mobile consumers on social media to read or share their opinions on products and services as pointed out (Nielsen, 2016), mobile service providers create and manage their own consumer-brand engagement in the social media with Facebook sites, Twitter accounts and online consumer forums for their consumers to engage with the brand. One of the most successful telecommunications service providers with an active social media presence is Verizon Wireless in the United States. Verizon Wireless is one of the biggest telecommunications service providers in the US with a subscriber base of more than 100 million. It has 7.2 million followers on Facebook, 1.46 million followers in Twitter, 33,000 viewing its' You Tube posts (Gupta & Das, 2012).

Key motivations to engage in a social media platform include loyalty, innovation, operational and commercial (Culnan et al., 2010; Di Gangi et al., 2010). Companies are identifying loyal customers who follow, like or comment on posted messages, videos and photos as key influencers and rewarding them generously in the context of brand ambassadors. As social media allows for two-way communication, companies are able to receive real time feedbacks or inputs on consumer's preferences and rapidly innovating their products and services to suit their consumers. As consumers provide their negative or positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), companies use these opportunities to serve or grow the relationships by attending to the needs or grievances of their consumers or taking the opportunity to offer relevant and personalized products or services.

EWOM is any informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of specific goods and services or their providers (Litvin et al., 2008). EWOM contains a wealth of textual, video, photo, data and contextual relationships which contain insights for businesses to leverage upon. Telecommunication companies scour eWOM data to identify and discover new patterns of usage, identify and utilize consumer's social networks for viral marketing efforts, understand what competitors are doing, how consumer compares and perceives value and worth which helps towards planning marketing

strategies to grow revenue and consumer base (Dey et al., 2011). Consumers perceive eWOM to be as trustworthy as brand web sites. Theories of communication view eWOM as having a powerful influence on behaviour, especially on consumers' information search, evaluation and subsequent decision making (Silverman, 2002; Fu et al., 2015; Lee & Youn, 2009). eWOM exchanges provide access to consumption-related information which has higher value and impact on consumers' decision-making process than the formal advertising messages.

Given the importance of eWOM in consumer decision making, it is, however, not systematically collected and analysed as a source of reliable consumer data for marketing intelligence. In spite of having the capability to gather, store and attend to eWOM from a customer service perspective, telecommunication companies are not familiar with the process of mining and analyzing eWOM data systematically to support their marketing intelligence (Dai et al., 2011).

In Malaysian telecommunications industry, market competitiveness is stiff due to high market saturation where mobile penetration is more than 100% and the exit barrier being low with the implementation of Mobile Number Portability (MNP, 2018). MNP allows mobile consumers to switch service providers while retaining their existing mobile number. This market and regulatory situation is highly conducive for consumer to switch their mobile service operator rapidly with a low switching cost. Analysing eWOM provides a competitive edge to consumer understanding towards proactive retention of their subscriber base. From a practitioner perspective, this research contributes to literature on mobile consumer switching phenomenon with contextualization of negative eWOM as a source of current and rapid consumer data for marketing intelligence. Rapid marketing intelligence allows telecommunication companies to quickly react to consumer voice by analysing consumer sentiments and behaviours from eWOM and react to possibilities of switching proactively.

Consumer switching denote consumer's behaviour to terminate their current relationship with their service provider and move on to a new service provider (Keaveney, 1995; Bansal et al. 2005; Pae & Hyun 2006). Voluntary consumer switching is synonymous to consumer switching to another mobile service provider either by cancellation of service through termination or mobile number portability (MNP). Previous studies state voluntary consumer switching behaviour is highly dependent on critical service encounters, price, economic, technological factors and switching costs, relevant products or better competitor products or services (Ahmed et al., 2015). However, there is limited consideration of the influence of negative eWOM on switching in the literature. Most studies on switching deliberate on the switching costs, price, network as key factors of switching (Quoquab et al., 2016; Calvo et al., 2015) but, many consumer switching is not only due to these reasons. There are many consumers who still switched despite satisfying experience of price, network, service and high switching cost. This research makes a contribution to eWOM literature by examining the contents of negative eWOM within the context of consumer behavioural framework towards a specific consumer phenomenon i.e. switching.

1.3 Problem Statement

As countries worldwide reach mobile market saturation, the key drivers for switching worldwide are price, network and service. Switching has a high financial impact on telecom companies as the cost to acquire a subscriber is more than 5 times to retain an existing subscriber (Lu, 2002). However, many switching studies focus on the intrinsic factors of switching where only the key characteristics and features of the individual subscriber are analysed to identify subscriber's switching probability. This includes subscriber demographics, contractual data, subscriber service logs, call details, complaint data, bill and payment information (Hadden et al., 2006; John et al., 2007; Luo et al., 2007). Recent studies have identified this as a gap because high percentage of switching are not accounted by price, network and service and argues to replace or extend the intrinsic approaches with extrinsic outlook which includes unstructured information such as eWOM (Nanavati et al., 2006; Kawale et al., 2009; Dasgupta et al., 2011).

Despite long discussions on the growing volume and influence of eWOM in consumer behaviour, there is insufficient effort to validate eWOM as an important and structured source of consumer data to study switching behaviour. Studies have identified there is minimal attention on how eWOM grows within an online social structure (Bansal & Voyer, 2000) and structurally influence consumer's behaviour even though the elements of the linkage between communicators are independent of specific contents and is crucial to appreciate the process of eWOM. This study addresses this problem by exploring eWOM related to mobile consumer switching within the context of Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM).

The fundamentals of the BPM framework reside in a contextual stance where consumer behaviour is located at the intersection between consumer's learning history and the behavioural setting, along with the recognition of reinforcement as utilitarian or informational and behaviour setting scope. Mehrabian and Russell model (1974) was identified as a suitable scaling theory to approach the BPM framework (Laroche, 2010). In this theory, the Mehrabian and Russell's scale examines the interaction of people with their environments and investigates the effect of environmental learning and in this study, measures the impact of eWOM on consumers' emotional reactions and approach-avoidance behaviours in the context of switching.

To enable the constructs of the study, switching behaviour has been explored from the basis of switching intentions. As switching behaviour or actual switching by a consumer could not be gathered from mobile service providers, the study will focus on consumer switching intentions on the basis that the stronger the consumer's intention to switch, the more likely the consumer will engage in switching behaviour (Chuang et al., 2016).

Thus, the main research problem of this study is in spite of the lengthy discussion on the importance of eWOM in consumer behaviour, there are limited studies to validate eWOM as a significant factor in consumer switching intentions. From the problems discussed, the significance of the research is identified next.

1.4 Research Significance

Studies have identified common antecedents to mobile consumer switching as price, network and service (Ganesh et al., 2000; Keaveney & Parthasarathy, 2001; Ranganathan et al., 2006). These elements are still relevant from the perspective of mobile service provider but, with limited focus on consumer-related attributes. Recent studies show consumer-related factors namely dissatisfaction and mobile products/service knowledge are showing a significant role in switching (Lee et al., 2001; Ranganathan et al., 2006). With the advent of social media, these consumer-related factors seem distorted with extrinsic consumer environmental elements such as word-of-mouth and competitor products or services. These elements provide voluminous, emerging and unstructured consumer data in relation to specific consumer phenomenon and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is one such consumer data. The major contribution of this research was it showed negative eWOM significantly impacts switching. This is important because many eWOM studies have indicated eWOM play an important role in consumer decision making process but, has not proven a cause-effect relationship in relation to specific consumer behaviour (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014; Ruiz et al., 2016). This research proved that negative eWOM intensifies switching.

Theoretically, utilizing the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) and Mehrabian-Russell (M-R) model, this research contributed to switching literature by exploring and examining the influence of negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on switching. Most studies on switching are based on consumer self-assessed reasons and intentions to switch and primarily highlight network, price, service, costs as key reasons. In contrast, this research examines consumer's actual negative word-of-mouth and how it's emotive and behavioural elements influence switching.

Practically, the research contributes to consumer marketing intelligence by improving the critical understanding and management of new, emerging indicators in consumer switching in a highly saturated telecommunications industry in Malaysia. Recent developments in online social media have transformed consumer-brand engagement to consumer-first culture and divested many of the existing factors of switching, requiring telecommunications companies to urgently explore and test new consumer insights to fuel more effective and current switching management strategies. Understanding and managing of new indicators in consumer switching enables marketing managers to know their subscribers well and rapidly respond to consumer needs by managing consumer's mobile purchase and consumption experience as well as develop relevant products and services to reduce consumer switching.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The main focus of this research was to explore contents of a negative eWOM and its related discussion thread on mobile product and service from a local, popular community forum, Lowyat.net on mobile service provider and how it is related to Malaysian mobile consumer switching. This Telco forum has been selected because of the importance placed by major three (3) telecommunication operators in Malaysia by following closely and replying to consumer feedbacks, making announcement of their community events here and moving their Customer Forum from their own digital space to Telco Talk in Lowyat.net.

The contents of negative eWOM were examined using a consumer behavioural model BPM-MR to identify the presence of behavioural elements in eWOM significantly related to switching. To achieve the above purpose, convergent mixed method design was applied where both qualitative and quantitative study were performed concurrently. The sample for the qualitative phase of the study was taken from Lowyat.net (<https://forum.lowyat.net>) where a negative viral eWOM was identified in the online community forum and only comments within the negative eWOM thread were included as sample for qualitative analysis between the period of 10th March 2016 to 31st March 2016. The quantitative phase involved the distribution of self-administered electronic questionnaire to mobile consumers through postgraduate and alumni groups in Malaya University and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) as well as posting of the survey in the online community where the negative eWOM originated from i.e. Telco Talk in Lowyat.net forum. A total of 585 valid samples were collected. As this research employed online survey as its instrument, errors were primarily attributed to the coverage error where only consumers who have access to the Internet were included in the sampling frame.

1.6 Research Objectives

The objective of the research was to investigate the influence of eWOM on consumer switching intentions.

1.6.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research was to determine the influence of negative eWOM on mobile consumer switching intentions in the Malaysian telecommunications industry.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

In order to achieve the main objective above, it was necessary to ensure if there exist key indicators in the negative eWOM correlated to switching intention as well as if those indicators lead to switching. Accordingly, the following are the specific objectives:

- 1) To identify key indicators in the negative eWOM related to mobile consumer switching intentions
- 2) To determine correlations of key indicators from the negative eWOM such as consumer affects and behaviour in mobile consumer switching intentions
- 3) To determine the mediating effect of behaviour towards negative eWOM in the relationship between affect and mobile consumer switching intentions

1.7 Research Questions

Further to the research objectives above, this research seeks to address the research questions that are formulated within the context of theoretical fundamentals of the research i.e. Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) and Mehrabian-Russell. Table 1.1 below provides the objectives matched to respective research questions.

Table 1.1 : Research Objectives, Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis
1	What are the key indicators in negative eWOM related to mobile consumer switching intention?	Nil
2	What is the correlation between key indicators of consumer affect and behaviour to the negative eWOM in mobile consumer switching intention?	H1: Consumer affect is significantly different across consumer situations in the negative eWOM related to mobile switching intention. H2: Consumer affect is significantly correlated to consumer behaviour towards the negative eWOM in relation to mobile switching intention
3	a) What is the relationship between the key indicators of consumer affect and behaviour towards the negative eWOM to mobile consumer switching intention?	H3: Consumer affect is significantly related to mobile switching intention H4: Consumer behaviour to the negative eWOM is significantly related to mobile switching intention
	b) Does consumer behaviour towards the negative eWOM impact the relationship between consumer affect and mobile consumer switching intention?	H5: Consumer behaviour towards the negative eWOM has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between affect and mobile switching intention

1.8 Operational Definitions of Concepts

In order to accomplish the research objectives

- Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM): “All informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of specific goods and services or their providers” (Litvin et al., 2008)
- Negative eWOM: “Negative eWOM is specifically consumer’s expression of an unfavourable product or service experience and recommendation not to buy in the Internet” (Luo, 2009)
- Switching: “Switching is a marketing-related term characterizing a consumer who is moving his/her purchase and consumption of a product or service from one brand to another” (Lu, 2002; Jahromi, 2009)
- Behaviour setting: “The social and physical environment in which the consumer is exposed to where a choice has to be made” (Foxall et al., 2011)
- Learning history: “The accumulated memory or effect of a rewarding or punishing outcome of a past behaviour which has led to consumer’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction” (Foxall & Greenley, 2012)
- Affects: “An emotional response to stimuli or environment which influences consumer behaviour” (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974)
- Consumer situation: “A combination of consumer physical and social environment with consumer past experiences and learnings in regards to purchases and consumption” (Foxall, 2013)
- Approach: “A positive consumer response to a stimuli or environment by exploring, spending time and feeling friendly” (Foxall & Yani, 2011)
- Avoidance: “A negative consumer response to a stimuli or environment by not exploring, avoiding other consumers and trying to leave” (Foxall & Yani, 2011)
- Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM): “An operant framework that describes consumer behaviour as a function of consequences” (Foxall et al., 2006)
- Mehrabian-Russell (M-R): “A theoretical model which proposes three (3) basic emotional states which influence consumer behaviour” (Robert & John, 1982)

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

In order to accomplish the research objectives outlined in sections 1.6, this thesis was organized into six chapters as shown below:

- Chapter one provides an introduction to the subject matter and includes research problem, significance of the research, research objectives, research questions and operational definitions of concepts.
- Chapter two contains a review of switching in telecommunications industry as well as critical review of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).
- Chapter three provides the details on the convergent mixed method research design of this research including the qualitative and quantitative phases. Netnography is the qualitative instrument while survey as the quantitative instrument. The validity and reliability analysis of the scales is also provided for the quantitative phase, along with the sampling design, data collection and data analysis methods.
- Chapter four discusses the qualitative and quantitative results findings with respect to the research objectives from Chapter 1. This chapter includes the data analysis procedures as well as triangulation of both the qualitative and quantitative findings.
- Chapter five presents the summary of the key research findings and discussion on the implications, contributions, limitations of the study and ends with suggestions on potential areas for research and improvement.

1.10 Summary

In highly saturated Malaysian telecommunications industry where Mobile Number Portability is present, consumer switching phenomenon is a real and urgent problem for telecommunications industry. Due to low switching barrier, retaining consumers is a challenge and companies have to explore new and rapid sources of consumer data. This research identifies elements in negative eWOM that influences mobile switching and contributes to the literature by demonstrating how negative eWOM may function as a core capability.

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