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Entitled

*PERCEIVED SOURCE CHARACTERISTICS OF EWOM SENDERS EFFECTS ON PURCHASE  
INTENTIONS AND BEHAVIORS: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN THE UAE*

by

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Date & Venue

12:00

Thursday, 15 April 2021

Abstract

**Purpose:** The popularity and power of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has raised the attention of academia and businesses in the past decade. A plethora of relevant literature investigated the motives of the sender to engage in eWOM, besides the actual content of the message, leaving unanswerable questions concerning the receiver's perception of the message and the interpersonal similarities with the sender. This study dedicated to fill this gap through assessing experimentally the impact of eWOM cues on the receiver using i) Social comparison theory, and ii) Social judgement theory.

**Methodology:** Two experiments were designed and conducted in a mixed method research addressing gender and cultural similarities between the sender and receiver within the concept of eateries in the UAE.

**Results:** The sender credibility of eWOM is influenced by the relationship between the sender and the receiver.

**Research Implications:** Theoretically, this research adds to the knowledge of eWOM influences from a receiver perspective. Professionally, it could enhance managerial knowledge of cross-cultural effects on consumer choices and purchase intentions to direct future marketing strategies. This research also adds to the welfare of both senders and receivers of eWOM regarding understanding motives for sending and receiving eWOM.

**Keywords:** WOM, eWOM, egocentric, theory of social comparison, theory of social judgement, restaurant, consumer behaviour.