

RESEARCH

<http://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2018.45.129-148>

Recibido: 14/11/2017 --- Aceptado: 10/01/2018 --- Publicado: 15/03/2018

## ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA. ANALYSIS OF ITS BACKGROUND

### LA COMUNICACIÓN DE BOCA EN BOCA ELECTRÓNICA EN LOS MEDIOS SOCIALES. ANÁLISIS DE SUS ANTECEDENTES

**José Ramón Sarmiento Guede<sup>1</sup>:** International University of La Rioja and ESERP Business School. Spain

[Joseamon.sarmiento@unir.net](mailto:Joseamon.sarmiento@unir.net)

**José Rodríguez Terceño:** Complutense University of Madrid and ESERP Business School (Madrid). Spain

[joserodriguez@eserp.com](mailto:joserodriguez@eserp.com)

#### ABSTRACT

In recent years, electronic Word of Mouth Communication has developed exponentially, due to social media and the advances made in electronic commerce. A situation that has arrived with a greater perception of the phenomenons associated to it, such as false info, unprecise facts, un-checked news, manipulation and spontaneous generation of movements around said information. What has come to be known as "post-truth. In this context, the main Objective of this paper is to identify the dimensions that are related to and directly influence the development of electronic Word of Mouth Communication. To this end, the Methodology of the in-depth interview technique and the technique of the online survey have been used in the methodology; this survey was applied to social media users throughout Spain. To analyze the results, the linear regression model was used. As a conclusion we can affirm that the dimensions of quality perception, value perception and satisfaction that users develop in social media has a direct influence on electronic Word of Mouth Communication.

**KEY WORDS:** Electronic word of mouth communication - Perception of quality - Perception of value - Satisfaction - Social media.

#### RESUMEN

En los últimos años, la comunicación de boca en boca electrónica ha desarrollado un crecimiento exponencial debido a los medios sociales y a los avances producidos en el comercio electrónico. Un incremento que ha venido acompañado por una mayor percepción de los fenómenos asociados a ella, como la profusión de informaciones falsas, la falta de comprobación de las informaciones, imprecisión, manipulación y generación espontánea de movimientos digitales o incluso ciudadanos, todo lo cual

<sup>1</sup> **José Ramón Sarmiento Guede:** Associate Professor of Marketing at the International University of La Rioja (UNIR) and ESERP Business School.

[Joseamon.sarmiento@unir.net](mailto:Joseamon.sarmiento@unir.net) y [Prof.jrsarmiento@eserp.com](mailto:Prof.jrsarmiento@eserp.com)

se ha quedado globalmente incluido bajo el nombre genérico de "Post-verdad". Ante este contexto, el presente trabajo se ha marcado como objetivo principal identificar las dimensiones que tienen relación e influyen de una manera directa en el desarrollo de la comunicación de boca en boca electrónica. Para ello, se ha utilizado en la metodología la técnica de la entrevista en profundidad y la técnica de la encuesta *online*, dicha encuesta se aplicó a usuarios de los medios sociales en toda España. Para analizar los resultados, se recurrió al modelo de regresión lineal. Como conclusión, podemos afirmar que las dimensiones de la percepción de calidad, la percepción de valor y la satisfacción que los usuarios desarrollan en los medios sociales tiene una influencia directa en la comunicación de boca en boca electrónica.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Comunicación de boca en boca electrónica - Percepción de calidad - Percepción de valor – Satisfacción - Medios sociales.

### **A COMUNICAÇÃO DE BOCA EM BOCA ELETRÔNICA NOS MEIOS SOCIAIS. ANÁLISES DE SEUS ANTECEDENTES**

#### **RESUME**

Nos últimos anos, a comunicação de boca em boca eletrônica desenvolveu um crescimento exponencial devido às redes sociais e aos avanços produzidos no comércio eletrônico. Ante este contexto, o presente trabalho marcou como objetivo principal identificar as dimensões que têm relação e influem de maneira direta no desenvolvimento da comunicação de boca em boca eletrônica. Para isso, foi utilizado na metodologia a técnica da entrevista em profundidade e a técnica das encostas online aplicando-as aos usuários dos meios sociais em toda Espanha.

Para analisar os resultados, recorreu ao modelo de regressão lineal. Como conclusão, podemos afirmar que as dimensões da percepção de qualidade, a percepção de valor e a satisfação que os usuários desenvolvem nas redes sociais tem uma influência direta na comunicação de boca em boca eletrônica.

**PALAVRAS CHAVE:** Comunicação de boca em boca eletrônica – Percepção de qualidade – Percepção de valor – Satisfação – Meios Sociais.

#### **How to cite the article**

Sarmiento Guede, J. R. y Rodríguez Terceño, J. (2018). Electronic word of mouth communication in the social media. Analysis of its background [La comunicación de boca en boca electrónica en los medios sociales. Análisis de sus antecedentes]. Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI, 45, 129-148. doi: <a href="http://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2018.45.129-148">http://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2018.45.129-148</a> . Recuperado de <a href="http://www.seeci.net/revista/index.php/seeci/article/view/503">http://www.seeci.net/revista/index.php/seeci/article/view/503</a>
--

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, social media has transformed the way of thinking, buying or relating to of all consumers. This transformation has allowed 77% of the population to have access to the Internet and 47% to have a profile in a social environment. Spaniards spend an average of 4 hours connected to the Internet and 2 hours from

mobile phones; specifically, we spend 1 hour and 36 minutes watching social media and 2 hours and 17 minutes watching television (Sarmiento, 2017). These data reflect that the importance of the Internet as a marketing and communication channel cannot be underestimated. The majority of social media users participate in one or two online communities, either directly or indirectly (Albors *et al.*, 2008). As such, the Internet and social media have brought a new way of communicating, electronic word-of-mouth communication <sup>2</sup> (Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003, Sarmiento, 2014).

The Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), in general, not only provide new opportunities for users to share their opinions positively or negatively on different brands (Chen and Xie, 2008), they are also new key channels for the commercialization of products and services (Chan and Ngai, 2010).

Electronic word-of-mouth communication has developed an exponential growth of its use in recent years, mainly due to social media (Brown *et al.*, 2007) and thanks to the advances made in electronic commerce (Sarmiento, 2015). These two reasons soon caught the attention of researchers and marketing professionals whose results are available to everyone (Bickart and Schindler, 2001, Brown *et al.*, 2007, Dwyer, 2007, Xia and Bechwati, 2008).

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Research on electronic word-of-mouth communication can be divided into two branches: 1) a main one, which studies in Internet channels the influence of electronic word-of-mouth communication on the behavior of consumers (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Xia and Bechwati, 2008); and 2) another, focused on consumers who use electronic word-of-mouth communication to search for information (Smith *et al.*, 2005). Given this context and after reviewing the existing literature on electronic word-of-mouth communication, we have identified a gap that leads us to ask ourselves the following research question:

---

<sup>2</sup> There is a lot of confusion in the current Marketing and Communication literature about which expression is more correct with respect to "word-of-mouth" communication. And, as the English term WOM (Word-of-Mouth) is the most commonly accepted to refer to the comments of consumers, in the literature available in Spanish several translations are used without the least conceptual and terminological rigor, such as "mouth "heard", "mouth to ear", "mouth-to-ear", "mouth to mouth" or "mouth in mouth". If we turn to the Dictionary of Current Spanish by Manuel Seco *et al.* (1999, p. 681), it can be stated that under the entry for *mouth*, in sense 14, the word "mouth to mouth" is recorded, defined as "direct oral relationship or transmission". In the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (2014) the term "word of mouth" is already included as an adverbial phrase and defined as "saying about spreading news, rumor, praise, etc. "From one person to another." Consequently, we consider that the most correct thing to do is to use the expression "word of mouth" in our research work, since it refers to a communication technique consisting in passing oral information from one person to another person. And it coincides with what Kotler and Armstrong (2013, p. 133), from the perspective of Marketing, use. In fact, the term "word of mouth" is defined as "the impact on the purchasing behavior of the words and personal recommendations of friends, associates and other consumers who one trusts ". Likewise, from the perspective of consumer behavior, Solomon (2013, p. 421) uses the term word of mouth communication and defines it as "the information about products that is transmitted from one individual to another".

Q1 What dimensions lead to the development of electronic word-of-mouth communication through social media?

And, to respond to it, we propose two objectives:

- O<sub>1</sub> Identify the dimensions that develop electronic word-of-mouth communication.
- O<sub>2</sub> Analyze the relationship and influence of these dimensions on electronic word-of-mouth communication.

And, two specific objectives:

- O<sub>3</sub> Identify and offer a clear definition of what is meant by social media.
- O<sub>4</sub> Identify the different types of social media through which electronic word-of-mouth communication develops.

In order to achieve these two objectives, we structured this paper in the following way: first, we will offer a review of the available literature on electronic word-of-mouth communication and its antecedents, as well as the statement of hypotheses; second, and based on this review, we will develop a methodology using a linear regression analysis to verify the hypotheses; thirdly, we will discuss the results achieved to end with a section of conclusions of future recommendations.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Electronic word-of-mouth communication refers to "any positive or negative statement made by potential customers, either current or former, about a product or company that is made available to a large number of people and institutions through the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004, p.39). It can also be considered as the extension of traditional interpersonal communication brought to cyberspace.

In the research work of Lee and Youn (2009), it is stated that electronic word-of-mouth communication has a series of unique characteristics that, due to their relevance, are detailed below: (1) Electronic word-of-mouth communication is not an oral activity anymore (Pollach 2008). In the digital context, the different websites and their web 2.0 applications are those that facilitate electronic word-of-mouth communication. As we have already mentioned earlier, word-of-mouth communication takes place in a face-to-face situation in which information about the product, service or brand is shared (Bickart and Schindler 2001). On the contrary, electronic word-of-mouth communication is transmitted through the different technological devices that capture the information (computer, tablet, mobile, etc.). The face-to-face context disappears, so the physical features to evaluate the other person are absent (Gelb and Sundaram 2002; Kiecker and Cowles 2001). Although the spoken word may have a great impact due to its immediacy (Herr *et al.*, 1991), the written word has the advantage of permanence over time (Bickart and Schindler 2001); (2) Electronic word-of-mouth communication removes time and place restrictions. The advantage of asynchronous discussions is that they can be saved for a while to allow other users to participate or read their messages at their own pace

(Hoffman and Novak, 1997). Therefore, users can read, reread and compare archived opinions about products, services or brands that interest them. This ease of access makes electronic word-of-mouth communication very attractive to Internet users and, as a result, it has become the user's preferred source of information (Sarmiento, 2017); (3) The Internet is defined as a set of network of networks that allows electronic word-of-mouth communication to have a wider scope of dissemination, since it also has a greater number of taxpayers. The Internet allows the development of a "many to many" communication, which makes it, in comparison with word-of-mouth communication, more interactive (Gelb and Sundaram 2002, Kiecker and Cowles 2001). According to Hung and Liyan (2007), social media provides a dynamic, interactive, multimedia and social platform for the development of electronic word-of-mouth communication; (4) On many occasions, electronic word-of-mouth communication occurs between people who do not initially have any kind of relationship (Dellarocas 2003, Goldsmith and Horowitz 2006, Sen and Lerman 2007), but who, thanks to this type of anonymity that can occur in electronic communication, such users tend to lose their fear and share much more information, which increases the volume of electronic word-of-mouth communication (Sarmiento, 2015). As a result, the chances of finding other users with experiences about the service, product or brand of interest increase (Duhan *et al.*, 1997).

The rise of social media in recent years has allowed the development of electronic word-of-mouth communication through the different web 2.0 platforms. The terms social media and web 2.0 often appear as interchangeable in the specific literature used; However, some researchers associate the term web 2.0 (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011, Berthon *et al.*, 2012, Sarmiento, 2015), mainly with the online applications of a website; other researchers associate social media with the aspects that can be developed with web 2.0 applications: participation, conversation, interactivity, community, sharing, generating, etc. (Constantinides and Fountain, 2007). One of the definitions that best reflects the concept of social media is the one provided by Aichner and Jacob (2015) in which they define social media as: (1) web 2.0 applications based on the Internet; (2) Content Generated by the User (CGU); (3) user profiles that are developed from a structure of social organization among users; (4) means of communication that facilitate the development of social networks by connecting the profile of a user with others.

The popularity of web 2.0 tools and their growth have allowed us to talk about different types of electronic word-of-mouth communication according to the platform used by the user to upload their content (for example, blogs, collaboration projects, business social network). , forums, microblogs, websites to share photos, websites to share opinions about products and services, social bookmarking, websites to share videos, social games, social networks and virtual worlds). After reviewing the literature on electronic word-of-mouth communication, we can state that most research papers have been applied to e-commerce websites or discussion forums (Cheung and Thadani, 2012).

### **3.1. Background of electronic word-of-mouth communication**

Oliver defined satisfaction as "the positive response of the consumer. It is an emotional state produced in response to the evaluation of the characteristics of the

product or service, or the product or service itself "(Oliver, 1997, p, 17). The term satisfaction has been widely discussed in the literature (Mason and Bearden, 1979, Oliver, 1981, Anderson *et al.*, 1994, Terblanche and Bosho FT, 2001, Ofir and Simonson, 2007), but a consensus about its definition or its nature has never been reached (Bigné, Andreu and Gnoth, 2005).

The most obvious difference between electronic services and services is the substitution of user-computer interaction for human-human interaction and, therefore, this change may require new approaches to measure satisfaction (Sarmiento, 2015), since the consumer in an electronic environment is both a virtual buyer and a real user of the computer (Koufaris 2002). Consumers who use social media cannot use all five senses to make purchasing decisions online, but they face limited representations, such as photographs, videos and text descriptions. Therefore, online decisions are also sensitive to the designs of the websites and the content generated by the user (Finn *et al.*, 2009).

Szymanski and Hise (2000) understood electronic satisfaction to be a global construct reflecting the accumulated effect of a series of discreet experiences with the service supplier for a period of time. And, as such, the degree in which a client is satisfied and dissatisfied with online experiences is measured. Anderson and Srinivassan also define electronic satisfaction as "client's satisfaction regarding their previous purchasing experience with a certain company of entropic commerce" (2003, p 125). In this context, Sarmiento affirms that electronic satisfaction is "the judgment the client currently forms about past experiences in relation to the perception of an online company" (2014, p 174).

Research papers like those by Naik *et al.* (2010) came to the conclusion that the dimensions such as customer's satisfaction are antecedents and mediators of behavioral intentions, and since 1980 there is evidence that higher levels of satisfaction have a greater intention to recommend, ie, to develop electronic word-of-mouth communication. Other authors such as Lee and Youn (2009) demonstrated that satisfied customers in online shopping develop positive electronic word-of-mouth communication, while unsatisfied customers develop negative electronic word-of-mouth communication through social media.

Consequently, electronic satisfaction should be directly related to electronic word-of-mouth communication, which is why we propose the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub> The satisfaction that is developed through social media has a positive effect on electronic word-of-mouth communication.

Electronic services differ from traditional services in several important aspects. Let us see. According to Boyer (2001, p. 47), electronic services can be defined as "all the interactive services that are developed on the Internet through telecommunications, information and multimedia technologies". Hence, Santos (2003, p. 235) defined electronic quality as "the evaluations and considerations of consumers about the excellence and quality of the offer of electronic services in the market space". And, based on these two definitions of services and electronic quality, Parasuraman *et al.* (2005, p. 217) developed their own definition of quality of service: "the extent to which a website efficiently and effectively facilitates the purchase process, purchase itself and the delivery of products and services".

Cristobal *et al.* (2007) and Matos and Rossi (2008) focused their interest on the fact that clients' perceptions of the quality of service have an important relationship with their behavioral responses, especially loyalty and electronic word-of-mouth communication. They found that, when the evaluations of the quality of the service are high, the intentions of the client's behavior in terms of recommendations are favorable, thus strengthening the relationship between clients and the company (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). On the other hand, they discovered that, when clients perceive the performance of the service as inferior, they are likely to manifest a complaining behavior that involves negative electronic word-of-mouth communications (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996).

Another research work carried out on the relationship between the perception of quality of service and the development of electronic word-of-mouth communication was carried out by Sarmiento (2014). This author proved that, when the quality of service in the tourist social media is high, it directly influences the development of positive word-of-mouth communication and that, consequently, the perception of the quality of electronic service must be directly related to electronic word-of-mouth communication, and that is the reason why the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>2</sub> The perception of quality of service that is developed through social media has a positive effect on electronic word-of-mouth communication.

In the discipline of Marketing, the notion of value has been studied from two perspectives: (1) the value of the client; and (2) the value for the client. When we mention the value of the client, we refer to the value that a customer represents for the organization, that is, how much margin or how much profit a certain client can contribute to the organization. On the contrary, the value for the client is focused on the value the client receives or perceives. In this piece of research, we will focus on the term of value for the client, since we consider that only clients can determine the value of the product or services (Lewitt, 1983).

Zeithaml (1988, p. 14) defines "the value perceived as the global evaluation the consumer makes of the usefulness of a product, based on the perception of what is perceived and what is delivered". Therefore, value is a compromise between what the client wants from that product and what the client gives until obtaining that product. We could say that what the client wants is highly subjective, as well as the perceptions of what is given. The perception of what the client will lose to acquire this value could be the monetary and non-monetary costs in which the dimensions of time and effort can be included (Sarmiento, 2015).

Woodruff (1997, p. 42) defines the value for the client as "a preference and perceived evaluation of the attributes of the product, of the attributes of the results and of the consequences derived from use that facilitate reaching the objectives and purposes of the client when using them." Woodruff (1997) adds that there is quite unanimity among international researchers when it comes to understanding the value for the client as inherent to the use of the product or service.

Based on the above, Hartline and Jones (1996) proposed that the perceived value is related to and influences the behavior of clients, especially in word-of-mouth communication. McKee *et al.* (2006) already argued and proved that clients who

perceive greater value tend to be more committed to the organization and recommend other reference groups to become loyal to the organization.

Consistent with the previous justification, the perceived value understood as an antecedent of word-of-mouth communication and electronic word-of-mouth communication has constituted the hypothesis of several studies (Durvasula *et al.*, 2004, Keiningham *et al.*, 2007, McKee *et al.*, 2006; Matos and Rossi, 2008; Kamtarin, 2012) mostly inserted in the context of services. It is also the reason why our research focuses on the context of the social media service and in an electronic environment. And, in this context, we propose the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub> The perception of the value that is developed through social media has a positive effect on electronic word-of-mouth communication.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology that has been used in this piece of research to achieve the objectives and to verify the hypothesis has been structured in two phases: a first one in which qualitative techniques were used to identify the study dimensions (Malhotra, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2010), in our study, we have used them to identify the antecedents of electronic word-of-mouth communication. In a second phase, quantitative research is developed to analyze the relationship between the study dimensions, in our case, we analyze how satisfaction, perception of quality of service, perception of value are related to and influence the development of the electronic word-of-mouth communication.

In the first phase, we held a group meeting (*focus group*). Malhotra (2008) and Hair *et al.* (2010) state that the participants of a *focus group* must have enough notion about the topic to be studied. Therefore, in our research, we have chosen experts in communication in *online* environments that could provide subjective and valid information for conducting research. Thus, the selected experts (from Esteban Curiel, 2007; Antonovica, 2012; Vallespín and Pinwheel, 2014; Sarmiento, 2016) were as follows: (1) academics whose research line is related to communication through the social media and who were identified by their contribution to the bibliography; and (2) professionals in the field of technology companies such as *bloggers, instagrammers or youtubers*, as well as directors of social networks, virtual games or communities of content exchange.

According to Malhotra (2008) and Hair *et al.* (2010), in order to correctly develop a *focus group*, a sample of 8 to 12 participants is necessary; In our research, the sample consists of 12 people (8 men and 4 women) aged 35 to 61 years. For the group, the interview tool was used in an unstructured and natural way in which a moderator (in this case, the researcher) guided the discussion to obtain information by listening to the groups of people in the target market and to reach the main objective of this first phase. Also, according to Malhotra (2008) and Hair *et al.* (2010), in this type of research, at least two sessions have to be carried out and they must be continued until the interviewed groups no longer offer ideas or opinions. In our research, three sessions lasting two hours were used; in the first, the subject was presented to the participants; in the second, it was discussed about it, and in the third and last, all the most important aspects are summarized.



In the quantitative section, users from Spain who used social media regularly were chosen with the main objective of being able to analyze the relationship among satisfaction, perception of service quality, perception of value and electronic word-of-mouth communication. In total, the population under study was 638 people, with a response rate of 65.76% (419 valid questionnaires) and an error of 6.7% for a confidence level of 95%. Previously, the adequacy of the questionnaire was checked through a pre-test based on a small number of respondents (45 people). It was carried out in the months of March and April 2017.

For the collection of information, the *online* survey technique and the questionnaire were used as a tool. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions. It consisted of three sections: the first consisted of two filter questions to give greater validity to our research work and three questions related to the use of social media; the second had twenty questions related to the dimensions of satisfaction, the perception of quality of service, the perception of value and electronic word-of-mouth communication; and the last one revolved around three socio-demographic questions. For our questionnaire, multiple structured, dichotomous and scale questions were used. For the measurement of scale questions, the Likert scale of 5 points was used, where 1 indicated that the respondent highly disagreed and 5, that he strongly agreed. For the analysis and interpretation of the results, SPSS was used (frequency distribution, averages, dispersion measurements).

## **5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

In this section, we analyze and discuss the results obtained from the 419 surveys carried out on social media users (blogs, collaboration projects, business social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing websites, websites for share opinions about products and services, social merchants, websites to share videos, social games, social networks and virtual worlds). The percentages presented below are calculated based on the sample size of 419 surveys. As Sarmiento (2016) affirms, this method has made it possible to obtain a sample that, both in size and in form, is representative of the society under study.

For the analysis of the demographics of the surveyed users, a descriptive analysis of frequencies was used. In question number one, they were asked about sex; 61.09% of respondents were male and 38.90% were female. Regarding the ages of the users, 51.31% of respondents were 18-30 years old; 31.50% were 30-50 years old; 15.27% of respondents were 50-60 years old; and, finally, 1.9% of respondents were over 65 years old. Regarding the level of studies, the majority of respondents, 63.23%, were graduates; 20.52% were high school graduates; 12.41% had a master's degree; and 3.85% had a PhD.

In group interviews, we used a content analysis that consists of the systematic analysis in which answers are taken and grouped into thematic categories or guidelines (Malhotra, 2008, Hair *et al.*, 2010). In our research, in order to identify the most suitable dimensions as background of electronic word-of-mouth communication, we resorted to asking the selected experts about said dimensions. The results obtained from the group interview allowed us to identify satisfaction, quality of service and the perception of value as dimensions that influence electronic word-of-mouth communication. The majority of experts (84.5%) agreed that these

dimensions are general assessments of the *online* service that is being consumed and that has a direct relationship with the behavior of users.

Next, the results obtained from the two filter questions that were asked to respondents are shown. In question one, the respondent is questioned to see if he has ever used social media. The results show that 92.23% (386 out of the 419 surveys) of users use social media, this data being the most significant. On the contrary, 7.77% (33 out of the 419 surveys) of users have never used them. In question two, the respondent is questioned about the frequency of use of social media. The results prove that 78.3% (328 out of the 419 users) of respondents use social media daily; 14% use them weekly (58 out of the 419 users); 4.3% use them monthly (18 out of the 419 users); and the least significant, 3.4% (15 out of the 419 users) use them annually. These data from the filter questions reflect that the use of social media by the Spanish population is high and that the sample selected for our study is valid.

Questions three, four and five correspond to the use of social media by the interviewed users. In question three, the respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which he used social media. The results showed that the most used social media are social networks (91.2%); the second, social media to share videos (87.4%); the third was social media to share photographs (84.1%); the fourth social media of microblogging (77.4%); the fifth blogs (75.90%); the sixth social business networks (68.90%); the seventh the collaboration project (64.67%); the ninth virtual games (43.50%); the tenth virtual worlds (23.50%); and the last, the social markers (15.30%). In question four, the respondent is asked to indicate the main reason for using the social media. The results confirm that the main reason why users use social media is to maintain contact with other users (87.23%); the second reason is to find fun or entertaining content generated by other users (78.4%); the third reason is to share opinions on a specific topic, product, service or brand (64.59%); the fourth reason is to share photography and videos with the other users (59.45%); and the last of the reasons analyzed is to generate a contact network (34.5%). In question five, the respondent was asked if, by viewing the content on social media, it had provoked a reaction such as the development of electronic word-of-mouth communication. The majority of respondents (87.9%) answered affirmatively, which clearly reflects that social media influences user behavior (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In this section, we collect the conclusions in the same order of the questions. In fact, the most important empirical contributions to academic praxis have been the following:

On the first general objective that consisted in identifying the dimensions that develop the electronic word-of-mouth communication, we can affirm that, after having made a review of the existing literature and after having made a *focus group* with experts, the dimensions that directly influence are the perception of value, the perception of the quality of service and satisfaction.

In the second objective, it was about demonstrating the relationship among the dimensions of the perception of value, the perception of quality of service,

satisfaction and electronic word-of-mouth communication. We can affirm that the dimension that most influences electronic word-of-mouth communication and, as demonstrated in the results, is the perception of value. This is mainly due to the fact that the perception of value is highly subjective, we have to understand value as the global evaluation of what the client wants from that service and what the client gives to obtain that service. This result coincides with the research work of Matos and Rossi (2008), who affirm that the perception of value was the dimension that most directly influences electronic word-of-mouth communication. The second dimension that most influences electronic word-of-mouth communication is the perception of quality. The quality of service in social media must be understood as global assessments of the excellence of the different attributes that make up the electronic service (design, ease of use, interactivity, quality of information, purchase process, security, etc.). This relationship coincides with the research work of Cristobal *et al.* (2007) in which they affirm that the clients' perceptions about the quality of the service have an important relationship with their behavioral responses, especially with electronic word-of-mouth communication. The third dimension and, therefore, the one that less influences is satisfaction. The main reason for this result is that satisfaction with the service of a determined social environment is an effective response to a specific fact. The three proposed hypotheses were verified by using a linear regression analysis model in which the hypothesis could be accepted.

Regarding the specific objectives, we can conclude that, after carrying out a review of the existing literature, we understand social media to be all websites that are interactive and that facilitate the exchange of content through a network of user profiles. Regarding the second specific objective, we can state that we have identified up to thirteen types (blogs, collaborative projects, business social networks, forums, microblogs, websites to share photos, websites to share opinions on products and services, social bookmarking, websites to share videos, social games, social networks, virtual worlds, instant messaging).

The model proposed in this piece of research has been limited to social media users on travel websites, excluding other contexts of interest. For future research, we consider it convenient to incorporate into this model the dimensions of fidelity and commitment as a background of electronic word-of-mouth communication.

## REFERENCES

- Aichner, T., y Jacob, F. (2015). Measuring the degree of corporate social media use. *International Journal of Market Research*, 57(2), 257-275.
- Albors, J., Ramos, J. C., y Hervás, J. L. (2008). New learning network paradigms: Communities of objectives, crowdsourcing, wikis and open source. *International Journal of Information Management*, 28(3), 194-202.
- Anderson, E. W., Fornell, C., y Lehmann, D. R. (1994). Customer satisfaction, market share, and profitability: Findings from Sweden. *The Journal of marketing*, 53-66.
- Anderson, R. E., y Srinivasan, S. S. (2003). E-satisfaction and e-loyalty: A contingency framework. *Psychology & marketing*, 20(2), 123-138.

- Antonovica, A. (2012). *Comunicación e imagen de los países bálticos en España a través de la técnica del discurso periodístico* (Vol. 156). Madrid: Dykinson.
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., y Guinaliú, M. (2012). Website usability, consumer satisfaction and the intention to use a website: the moderating effect of perceived risk. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 19(1), 124-132.
- Berthon, P. R., Pitt, L. F., Plangger, K., y Shapiro, D. (2012). Marketing meets Web 2.0, social media, and creative consumers: Implications for international marketing strategy. *Business horizons*, 55(3), 261-271.
- Bickart, B., y Schindler, R. M. (2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 15(3), 31-40.
- Bigné, J. E., Andreu, L., y Gnoth, J. (2005). The theme park experience: An analysis of pleasure, arousal and satisfaction. *Tourism management*, 26(6), 833-844.
- Boyer, K., (2001). E-operations: a guide to streamlining with the Internet" *Business Horizons*, 44 (1), 47-54.
- Brown, J., Broderick, A. J., y Lee, N. (2007). Word of mouth communication within online communities: Conceptualizing the online social network. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 21(3), 2-20.
- Chan, Y. Y., y Ngai, E. W. (2011). Conceptualising electronic word of mouth activity: An input-process-output perspective. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(5), 488-516.
- Chen, Y., y Xie, J. (2008). Online consumer review: Word-of-mouth as a new element of marketing communication mix. *Management science*, 54(3), 477-491.
- Cheung, C. M., y Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision support systems*, 54(1), 461-470.
- Chung, K. H., y Shin, J. I. (2010). The antecedents and consequents of relationship quality in internet shopping. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(4), 473-491.
- Constantinides, E., y Fountain, S. J. (2008). Web 2.0: Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of direct, data and digital marketing practice*, 9(3), 231-244.
- Cristobal, E., Flavián, C., y Guinaliú, M. (2007). Perceived e-service quality (PeSQ) Measurement validation and effects on consumer satisfaction and web site loyalty. *Managing service quality: An international journal*, 17(3), 317-340.
- de Esteban Curiel, J. (2007). *La demanda del turismo cultural y su vinculación con el medio ambiente urbano los casos de Madrid y Valencia* (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid).
- Dellarocas, C. (2003). The digitization of word of mouth: Promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms. *Management science*, 49(10), 1407-1424.

- Duhan, D. F., Johnson, S. D., Wilcox, J. B., y Harrell, G. D. (1997). Influences on consumer use of word-of-mouth recommendation sources. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(4), 283.
- Durvasula, S., Lysonski, S., Mehta, S. C., y Tang, B. P. (2004). Forging relationships with services: the antecedents that have an impact on behavioural outcomes in the life insurance industry. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, 8(4), 314-326.
- Dwyer, L. (2007). *International handbook on the economics of tourism*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Finn, A., Wang, L., y Frank, T. (2009). Attribute perceptions, customer satisfaction and intention to recommend e-services. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23(3), 209-220.
- Gelb, B. D., y Sundaram, S. (2002). Adapting to "word of mouse". *Business Horizons*, 45(4), 21-25.
- Giese, J. L., y Cote, J. A. (2000). Defining consumer satisfaction. *Academy of marketing science review*, 2000, 1.
- Goldsmith, R. E., y Horowitz, D. (2006). Measuring motivations for online opinion seeking. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 6(2), 2-14.
- Hair, J. F., Bush, R. P., y Ortinau, D. J. (2010). *Investigación de mercados*. McGraw-Hill.
- Hartline, M. D., y Jones, K. C. (1996). Employee performance cues in a hotel service environment: Influence on perceived service quality, value, and word-of-mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 35(3), 207-215.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., y Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet?. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 18(1), 38-52.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Walsh, G., y Walsh, G. (2003). Electronic word-of-mouth: Motives for and consequences of reading customer articulations on the Internet. *International journal of electronic commerce*, 8(2), 51-74.
- Herr, P. M., Kardes, F. R., y Kim, J. (1991). Effects of word-of-mouth and product-attribute information on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnostics perspective. *Journal of consumer research*, 17(4), 454-462.
- Novak, T. P., y Hoffman, D. L. (1997). Measuring the flow experience among web users. *Interval Research Corporation*, 31, 1-36.
- Huang, P., Lurie, N. H., y Mitra, S. (2009). Searching for experience on the web: an empirical examination of consumer behavior for search and experience goods. *Journal of marketing*, 73(2), 55-69.
- Kamtarin, M. (2012). The effect of electronic word of mouth, trust and perceived value on behavioral intention from the perspective of consumers. *International journal of academic research in economics and management sciences*, 1(4), 56.

- Keiningham, T. L., Cooil, B., Aksoy, L., Andreassen, T. W., y Weiner, J. (2007). The value of different customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics in predicting customer retention, recommendation, and share-of-wallet. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 17(4), 361-384.
- Kiecker, P., y Cowles, D. (2002). Interpersonal communication and personal influence on the Internet: A framework for examining online word-of-mouth. *Journal of Euromarketing*, 11(2), 71-88.
- Kotler, P. (1991). *Principles of Marketing*, [by] Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong: *Instructor's Resource Manual*. Prentice Hall.
- Palmer, A. (2010). Customer experience management: a critical review of an emerging idea. *Journal of Services marketing*, 24(3), 196-208.
- Koufaris, M. (2002). Applying the technology acceptance model and flow theory to online consumer behavior. *Information systems research*, 13(2), 205-223.
- Lee, M., y Youn, S. (2009). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) How eWOM platforms influence consumer product judgement. *International Journal of Advertising*, 28(3), 473-499.
- Levitt, T. (1986). *Marketing Imagination: New*. Simon and Schuster.
- Litvin, S. W., Blose, J. E., y Laird, S. T. (2005). Tourists' use of restaurant webpages: Is the internet a critical marketing tool?. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 11(2), 155-161.
- Lovelock, C. H., (1996). Developing global strategies for service businesses. *California management review*, 38(2), 64-86.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2008). *Marketing research: An applied orientation*, 5/e. Pearson Education India.
- Mason, J. B., & Bearden, W. O. (1979). Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with food shopping among elderly consumers. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 13(2), 359-369.
- De Matos, C. A., y Rossi, C. A. V. (2008). Word-of-mouth communications in marketing: a meta-analytic review of the antecedents and moderators. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(4), 578-596.
- McKee, D., Simmers, C. S., y Licata, J. (2006). Customer self-efficacy and response to service. *Journal of Service Research*, 8(3), 207-220.
- Naik, C. K., Gantasala, S. B., y Prabhakar, G. V. (2010). Service quality (SERVQUAL) and its effect on customer satisfaction in retailing. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 16(2), 231-243.
- Ofir, C., y Simonson, I. (2007). The effect of stating expectations on customer satisfaction and shopping experience. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(1), 164-174.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty?. *the Journal of Marketing*, 33-44.
- Oliver, R. L. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction processes in retail settings. *Journal of retailing*.

- Oliver, C. (1997). Sustainable competitive advantage: Combining institutional and resource-based views. *Strategic management journal*, 697-713.
- Palmatier, R. W. (2008). Interfirm relational drivers of customer value. *Journal of Marketing*, 72(4), 76-89.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., y Malhotra, A. (2005). ES-QUAL: A multiple-item scale for assessing electronic service quality. *Journal of service research*, 7(3), 213-233.
- Pollach, I. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth: a genre approach to consumer communities. *International journal of web based communities*, 4(3), 284-301.
- Santos, J. (2003). E-service quality: a model of virtual service quality dimensions. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 13(3), 233-246.
- Sarmiento Guede, J. R. (2014). *Marketing de relaciones en los medios sociales: Estudio empírico de los antecedentes y consecuentes de la calidad de la relación en los sitios web de viajes* (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos).
- Sarmiento Guede, J. R. (2015). La comunicación de 'boca en boca' vs. la de 'boca en boca electrónica': Análisis de sus principales diferencias. *Ámbitos*, (30).
- Sarmiento Guede, J. R. (2017). La experiencia de la calidad de servicio online como antecedente de la satisfacción online: estudio empírico en los sitios web de viajes. *Investigaciones Turísticas*, (13), 30-53.
- Sarmiento Guede, J. R., de Esteban Curiel, J., & Antonovica, A. (2017). Viral communication through social media: analysis of its antecedents. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, (72), 69.
- Sarmiento Guede, J. R. (2017). Los medios sociales a través de la experiencia web: un análisis de su percepción desde un enfoque relacional. *Aposta*, 73.
- Hung, K. H., y Liyan, S. Y. (2007). The influence of eWOM on virtual consumer communities: Social capital, consumer learning, and behavioral outcomes. *Journal of advertising research*, 47(4), 485-495.
- Sen, S., y Lerman, D. (2007). Why are you telling me this? An examination into negative consumer reviews on the web. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 21(4), 76-94.
- Smith, R. (2005). Medical journals are an extension of the marketing arm of pharmaceutical companies. *PLoS Medicine*, 2(5), 138.
- Stauss, B. (2000). Using new media for customer interaction: a challenge for relationship marketing. In *Relationship marketing* (pp. 233-253). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Storbacka, K., Strandvik, T., y Grönroos, C. (1994). Managing customer relationships for profit: the dynamics of relationship quality. *International journal of service industry management*, 5(5), 21-38.
- Szymanski, D. M., y Hise, R. T. (2000). E-satisfaction: an initial examination. *Journal of retailing*, 76(3), 309-322.

- Terblanche, N. S., y Boshoff, C. (2001). Measuring customer satisfaction with some of the controllable elements of the total retail experience: an exploratory study. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 32(2), 35-42.
- Vallespín Arán, M. V., y Molinillo, S. (2014). El futuro de la intermediación en el sector turístico. *Revista de análisis turístico*, (17), 13-25.
- Weinberg, B. D., y Pehlivan, E. (2011). Social spending: Managing the social media mix. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 275-282.
- Woodruff, R. B. (1997). Customer value: the next source for competitive advantage. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 25(2), pp. 139-153.
- Xia, L., y Bechwati, N. N. (2008). Word of mouse: the role of cognitive personalization in online consumer reviews. *Journal of interactive Advertising*, 9(1), 3-13.
- Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *The Journal of marketing*, 2-22.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., y Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *the Journal of Marketing*, 31-46.

## **AUTHORS**

### **José Ramón Sarmiento Guede**

Currently, he works as a teacher in centers such as ESERP Business School, the International University of La Rioja, Rey Juan Carlos University, among others.

He has worked for a year in the marketing agency Patronage Management in which he developed communication campaigns for Central Lechera Asturiana. He has also worked in the External Relations and Marketing Department of IFEMA for five years.

He has done his training focused on three areas: on tourism industries where he obtained the Degree in Tourism from the URJC; on Marketing in which he studied the Master's degrees in Marketing Management from ESIC and Commercial Management from the URJC; and on Economics in which he obtained the title of Doctor of Business Economics (Marketing and Tourism specialty). In 2014 he began his research work in the areas of Relationship Marketing (focusing on virtual relationships in the market), Digital Marketing, Social Media, Tourism Marketing and Online Communication. In addition to different research articles in scientific journals, in 2015 he published his first book entitled Relationship Marketing: Approaching Virtual Relations.

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0342-0348>

<https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=0P8I548AAAAJ&hl=es>

### **José Rodríguez Terceño**

He holds a degree in Audiovisual Communication from the Complutense University of Madrid and a doctorate in the film branch of the same institution. Member of the Validated Research Group Complutense Concilium, he has participated in several collective publications focused on the seventh art, journalism and public relations.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2859-4181>.