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UNDERSTANDING WHAT DRIVES CONSUMERS' ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH BEHAVIOR IN A MULTICHANNEL, MULTIMEDIA AND MULTISCREEN ENVIRONMENT

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Resumo

O objectivo da presente dissertação consiste em investigar a intenção dos consumidores em escolher canais electrónicos quando decidem partilhar informação (*boca-a-boca*) com outras pessoas, num ambiente de múltiplos canais e dispositivos. O estudo explora as motivações dos consumidores aquando pretendem transmitir informação, com o objctivo de perceber o que os leva a (1) envolver-se neste tipo de comunicação, especificamente na indústria das companhias aéreas, e (2) associar essas motivações à intençao de uso de vários canais electrónicos para a partilha da informação.

Foi realizado um questionário online, determinando uma amostra de 103 adultos portugueses, de forma a analisar quantitativamente as hipóteses propostas, através de análises estatísticas para factores e associações lineares entre as variáveis. Os resultados sugerem que as motivações dos consumidores para a partilha de informação influenciam positivamente a escolha de múltiplos canais electrónicos para a sua transmissão, sendo que a preocupação pelos outros, ajudar a empresa, e expressar maus sentimentos consistem nas principais motivações. Foi ainda verificado que o conhecimento prévio sobre um canal influencia positivamente a sua posterior utilização.

A dissertação ainda oferece sugestões para as empresas desenvolverem estratégias sobre a utilização de canais electrónicos no contexto da intenção dos consumidores em partilhar informação sobre a empresa. Desta forma, o estudo prevê um avanço no conhecimento na área de gestão de múltiplos canais electrónicos, através da investigação das motivações que levam os consumidores a escolher certos canais na transmissão de informação.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do consumidor; Escolha de canais; Multimídia, multiplos canais e dispositivos electrónicos; Transmissão de informação (*boca-a-boca*) *online*

Classificação JEL: M31, M39

Abstract

The purpose of the current dissertation is to investigate the intention of consumers to channel usage when engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communications, in a context of multichannel, multimedia and multiscreen environment. The study explores consumer's motivations for eWOM in order to understand what takes consumers (1) to engage in this type of communication, specifically in the airline services industry, and (2) associate these motivations to channel usage intention and consequent multichannel behavior.

A questionnaire was conducted, with a sample of 103 Portuguese adults, in order to perform a quantitative statistical analysis with factor analysis and linear regression between the variables. Findings suggest that eWOM motivations influences multichannel behavior, being concern for others, helping the company, and venting negative feelings the principal motivations for a multichannel behavior.

Additionally, obtained findings suggest that perceived channel knowledge has a positive important in explaining consumer's choice of online channels. The research offers suggestions to develop multichannel strategies in a context of eWOM intentions as this study advances knowledge in the multichannel management field by investigating why and how consumers choose channels for transmitting eWOM.

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Glossary

eWOM: Electronic (Online) word-of-mouth.

Facebook: Social network site (facebook.com), launched in 2004, where users can create a user profile, access other user profiles, exchange messages, status updates and other types of media.

MCM: Multichannel customer management.

Motivation: Occurs through the arousing of a need and refers to the processes that grounds people to behave as they do.

PCA: Principal components analysis.

Smart TV: A television set with internet connection capabilities.

Twitter: Microblogging social network site (twitter.com), launched in 2006 that allows users to share and post text-based "tweets" up to 140 characters in length.

Web 2.0: Describes World Wide Web sites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, and dynamic Web applications.

WOM: Word-of-mouth, usually referred as it traditional form.

Acknowledgments

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Focus

Consumer behavior consists in the "*study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires; and the impact that these processes have on the consumer society*" (Solomon *et al.*, 2006: 33).

Information seeking and buying habits can derive from psychological and social drivers. However, these factors are difficult to define since it varies according to each consumer's experience and future expectations. Although it is possible to predict future trends, by bringing profitable products and services into the market (Rose *et al.*, 2012), the importance of consumer behavior consists in an ongoing process that happens through all the consumption decision making process (Solomon *et al.*, 2006).

Data about consumers help marketers to define the market and to identify threats and opportunities in their own that will affect how consumers receive the product, constructing a successful strategic marketing plan (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). However, as technology develops and proliferates, consumers start to have a variety of channels and interfaces at their disposal to browse, purchase and interact with companies or other consumers. It is possible to, not only choose between different channels, but also to synchronize several media, to satisfy information seeking and shopping experience stages of the consumer decision process (Noble, Griffith, and Weinberger, 2005).

Consumers' transactions that occur through multiple channels are becoming more frequent and the communication flows through both offline and online media (Kumar, 2010). This changing of media and channel's choice in consumers' decision making process has created a need for a new marketing strategy approach, one that integrates multichannel and multimedia options (Neslin, *et al*., 2006). In order to reach this goal, understanding consumer behavior within multichannel and multimedia environment is essential since this environment requires consumer-centric strategies. It is important to increase retention and brand awareness by given the right message at the right time in the right channel (Triano, 2013a).

The relevance of the study about consumer behavior in a multichannel, multimedia and multiscreen environment relays in the understanding of how consumers choose channels, and which impact that choice has on their decision process *(Neslin, et al.*, 2006). This recent paradigm shift is yet an under-researched domain since consumers have only recently begun to fully experience this environment (Dholakia, *et al.*, 2010) and, with the proliferation of social media, new behaviors and channels have emerged (Kumar, 2010). Consumers are now empowered to require information delivered on their terms, take control of the information exchange and choose which content delivers higher value (Triano, 2013a). New online channels are creating an opportunity to reinvent the world in a consumer behavior perspective as socially aware people can create change in a worldwide space, and individuals can organize large-scale events with virtually no cost, to create awareness and engage others (Marketing Science Institute, 2014). There is no limit to available information, and the globalization led consumers to interact and collaborate with others in a consumer-to-consumer communication (Sun *et al.*, 2006).

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The dissertation pretends to synthesize existing insights and develop new visions that help explain consumer's channel choice in a multichannel, multimedia and multiscreen environment. The study aims to enhance prior understanding of how this environment affects consumer behavior, expecting to provide an insightful contribution to an understanding of new forms of consumer behavior that appeared within channel usage and selection. Most of academic researches focus on consumers that seek information (information receivers) and its impact on their purchase decision process. There is a lack of knowledge from the perspective of eWOM senders (Chan and Ngai, 2011), thus the importance of the present dissertation on exploring their motivations and channel choice intention for transmitting information.

Dholakia *et al.* (2010) argues that, in order to conduct an adequate research that explains the complexity of consumer behavior in a multichannel environment, it is important to be aware of what consumers bring to this environment, what they encounter, and what they do during and after the course of the usage of the channels. The same premises are suggested by Pozza (2014) since it is important to investigate *why* and *how* consumers choose channels, when multiple information channels are available. Further,

to understand consumer behavior in a multichannel environment, it is important to understand how consumer motivations at various stages of the decision process are in accordance with the characteristics of various channels.

The specific contribution of the present research is to analyze the relation between eWOM with consumer's channel usage intention from the perspective of the senders (those that write and share information as opposed to eWOM receivers) and their motivations. Previous literature focus mainly on eWOM motivations on specific opinion consumer platforms, leaving on the side new channels that appear to have significant presence of eWOM communications. As multichannel literature tend to focus on the consumer's decision process and buying behavior, rather than the use of channels for providing word-of-mouth, the rather different focus of the present study tends to construct a link between word-of-mouth as a vital source of consumer information and multiple channel and screen usage.

As there is a gap on the literature about eWOM motivations and its relationship within channel usage intention, and also little literature focus on the eWOM senders in a multichannel behavior, the following research questions appear within this study:

1. Which channel attributes affect and influence consumers' channel usage intention?
2. Which are the consumers' motivations and antecedents for choosing certain channels and engage in a eWOM behavior?
3. Is there a connection between eWOM motivations and consumer's channel usage intention? It influences a multichannel behavior and consequent use of several screens?

1.3. Structure

The dissertation structure aims to identify, in a primary phase, the key challenges and further relevant investigations provided in the conducted multichannel, multimedia and multiscreen main academic literature studies. Then, by following the research directions based on the literature analysis, it is proposed a set of research hypotheses and a conceptual framework model. In order to test these hypotheses, an empirical study was conducted, following by statistical analysis for the airline industry. Finally the dissertation ends by discussing the results, followed by stating the conclusions, and discussing its business implications, limitations and possibilities for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Multichannel, Multimedia and Multiscreen Environment

2.1.1. Channel Usage Intention

A channel consists in a user's contact point, or a medium through which a person interacts with other consumers or with a company/brand (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006). According to most of the academic literature, it typically includes the physical store, websites, wireless devices, catalogue, brick-and-mortar store, sales force, third party agency, call center, or social media (Neslin and Shankar, 2009).

The development of communication and information technologies, assembled with the increasing penetration of the Internet into households across the world, allowed the existence of a shift on consumers' channel choice and usage (Foster, Francescucci, and West, 2010). Consumers start to have a variety of channels and interfaces at their disposal to browse, purchase and interact with companies and other consumers. These changes in media, and the simultaneous use of various channels, have created a need for a new marketing strategy approach: one that integrates multichannel options (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006; Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008; Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005).

Through this integration of channels, consumers start to experiencing higher empowerment over brands and companies: due to an extent of channels on their disposal, they start to have a certain power of decision on how and when they deal with a certain brand (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005).   The field of multichannel customer management has emerged as a result of these changes in the business environment due to the increasing importance for marketers to build an effective multichannel strategy in order to satisfy different consumers (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006).

The use of a variety of channels simultaneously to satisfy information seeking and shopping experience results in a multichannel practice. Nevertheless, multimedia practice is associated with either online and offline media that consumers use to communicate between themselves and with companies (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005). Literature review usually conveys media with channels, since media relies on whether the channel is online and offline, so the study will follow the same premise.

Multichannel behavior consists in the consumers' propensity to use a set of channels in order to satisfy their needs of either information seeking/sharing or shopping decisions. Consumers can use a set of alternative channels and change channels whenever they want (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005). *"The conceptual difference from the classical marketing of multiple channels is in the freedom of channel selection and the lack of obligation to use channels previously designed to reach a determined segment"* (Albesa, 2007: 491).

Also, for companies, multichannel customer management (MCM) consists in the *"design, deployment, coordination, and evaluation of channels through which firms and consumers interact, with the goal of enhancing customer value through effective customer acquisition, retention, and development"* (Neslin, *et al*., 2006). To be capable to deal with the new environment requirements, the strategy needs to be a consumer-centric marketing function, unlike traditional focus on the product, organization and distributors (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005).

Worthy MCM strategies should focus on developing content that satisfies both the informational and emotional needs of the customers keeping in mind the content in which those needs arise. Companies need to design the experience in which the content is delivered to be the one that streamlines work allows customer to choose a path. Websites, social media and customer relationship marketing (CRM) programs should be extensions of each other living as one brand entity online, and tied together in order to create a single brand experience. The content should increase the value exchange by adapting the consumer's journey across screens by using the information derived about their context to tailor the experience to that moment (Triano, 2013a).

These behavioral changes have impacted allocation of marketing resources (Venkatesan and Kumar, 2004), consumer channel migration (Thomas and Sullivan, 2005; Venkatesan, Kumar, and Ravishanker, 2007; Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008), brand equity (Keller, 2010), distribution strategy (Pitt, Berthon, and Berthon, 1999), marketing communications (Kumar, 2010), and management of multichannel consumers (Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal, 2003).

Understanding the way consumers use several media and channels available to them, and their attitudes and conflicts towards it, can help marketers develop strategies to

reach and engage consumers with powerful experiences that strengthen brands and produce business results (Dholakia *et al*., 2010).

Marketers need to guide consumers effectively through channels, since consumers may choose different channels according to the type of transaction and move through the various stages of their decision and purchase process (e.g. search for information online and purchase in offline physical channels) (Rangaswamy and Bruggen, 2005).

Wallace, Giese and Johnson (2004) stresses an important issue regarding multichannel strategies as they enhance customer satisfaction and subsequent loyalty. As customers can choose the channel where they can interact with the company, there is a high positive relation between consumers intention to interact with a company. Also, the emerging of new channels provides a best service, leading to some degree of consumer loyalty (Neslin, *et al*., 2006).

Kumar and Venkatesan (2005) found that multichannel consumers are more loyal and more profitable than single channel ones, because they are aware of all options available and choose the most convenient channel. Other studies also argue that multichannel consumers are more profitable than single channel consumers, since they generate more purchase volume, and spend on average more resources (i.e. Thomas and Sullivan, 2005; Kumar, 2010). Consumers that have deeper relationships with a company, easily migrate to new channels strategically proposed by the company. On the other way, customer loyalty can also grind down in a multichannel environment since extensive search may lead to purchase in different companies, and some channels (e.g. ATM) can entail little human contact. Other authors address this negative association between Internet usage and loyalty, since consumers can search for information and find the best option, even on the competition (Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008).

2.1.2. Multichannel Consumer Segmentation and Profiling Studies

Dholakia *et al.* (2010) propose the study of consumer behavior in a multichannel and multimedia environment by focusing in two sets of general issues such as (1) segmenting and profiling costumers based upon their multichannel experiences, and (2) examining processes of channel selection and migration. Following these issues, and according to the framework, the first thing to analyze and understand is consumer

segmentation. The first adressed question consists on wether a company should incorporate the multichannel environment into is segmention scheme (Neslin and Shankar, 2009). Multichannel consumer segmentation studies agree that there are clearly defined channel segments, since individual differences influence channel choice (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006).

Profiling studies of multichannel consumers are essential since, given a segmentation of the market, effective communication strategies can be develop (Thomas and Sullivan, 2005). It is indispensable for the segments to be measurable, accessible, differentially responsive, actionable, and substantial. In order to be relevant on the study on how to segment de market, it is important to (1) identify demographic and psychographic covariates for characterizing the segments, (2) acknowledge that consumers use channels for multiple phases of their decision process, and (3) incorporate the possibility that multichannel consumer segmentation differs according to product category (Konuş, Verhoef, and Neslin, 2008).

Konuş *et al.* (2008) provide a segmentation based on consumer attitudes toward various channels for search and purchase phases. On this premises, the authors identify three segments of consumers: multichannel enthusiasts (consumers who have positive attitudes toward all channels), uninvolved shoppers (characterized by less preference for any channel or shopping phases in general), and store-focused consumers (orients toward brick-and-mortar stores instead of other channels).

Influenced by consumer attitudes and subjective norm, Keen *et al.* (2004) proposes that consumer behavior is determined by an individual's intention to perform the behavior. In this essence, the authors propose four segments: generalists (who care about all issues), formatters (who have particular channel preferences), price sensitives (who care primarily about price and select channels accordingly), and experiencers (who inertially tend to use the same channel they used the previous time).

Pozza (2014) found that users of different social media channels represent distinct consumer segments to be adressed differentily, since users of each social media have different orientation and goals for their multichannel behavior. The author explores that Facebook users tend to rely on others for help and feel the need to socially share their problems. Having multiple channels available is a way to reassuring them and turn to Facebook when other channels fail to deliver value. On the other side, Twitter users are

more independent in their choices and seek channels that are fast and efficient, in order to save money and time. They feel more free to explore channels and have more conciousness about which channels are more efficient for a certain situation.

2.1.3. Channel Selection and Migration Research

Channel migration affects companies' profit through its influence on cost and revenue (Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008). In order to achieve the goal of having an efficient multichannel strategy, it is important to understand consumer selection between available channels (Nicholson, Clarke, and Blakemore, 2002). Neslin *et al.* (2006) summarizes some factors that determine consumer channel choice: marketing efforts, channel attributes, channel integration, social influence, situational variables, and individual differences. Table 1 summarizes those variables and respective studies and research conclusions on the subject.

In a multichannel environment, consumers use several channels in combination, leading to a channel choice pattern and its characterizing length that represents "*the number of channels consumers interact with when trying to find a solution or answer to their questions in the specific situation under investigation*" (Pozza, 2014: 1289). There are common patterns followed by consumers such search information about a product online and then acquire the product in the physical store (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen, 2007), or conduct information search offline and then making the purchase online (Noble, Griffith, and Weinberger, 2005). Other channel usage patterns are also possible since there is a positive relationship between channel information search and channel purchase frequency across channels (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen, 2007).

Consumer multichannel behavior can be moderated by customer's goals (the value customers seek from their interactions through different channels) (Chitturi *et al.*, 2008). Balasubramanian, *et al.* (2005) focus on five goals for which consumer choose a channel while shopping: (a) pure economic goals (pursuit of efficiency and utility), (b) self-affirmation (opportunity to share their subjectively expertise), (c) the quest for symbolic meaning (satisfaction from the effort and attention they expend in shopping), (d) the quest for socialization and experimental impact, (e) the use of shopping related schemas and scripts (the goal of maintaining regularity and familiarity).

Table 1 – Determinants of channel selection

Determinant	Variable	References	Main Conclusions
Marketing Efforts	E-mail	Ansari *et al.* (2008)	E-mails are more cost efficient, increase sales in the short term but also switch demand to the Internet. Represents limited loyalty due to lower channel switching costs and deficient interaction with organizations personal service.
	Catalogue	Ansari *et al.* (2008)	Consumers who purchase high quantities from the catalogue are more likely to use the catalogue in the following month, suggesting that it solidifies consumers as catalogue users.
	Website In-Store Information	Kumar *et al.* (2005); Kumar (2010)	Websites and in-store information is listed as one of the most preferred source of influence on consumers when they are making shopping decisions, although it always depends on the type of product/service.
	Incentives and Promotions	Burke (2002); Myers *et al.* (2004); Ansari *et al.* (2008); Zhang *et al.* (2010)	Promotions or improved service can encourage consumers' channel use or switch to other. E.g. airline companies that invest on check-in machines that offer short wait lines as opposite of large sepending time on counters, in order to reduce costs on personel.
	Social Media	Chu *et al.* (2011); Pozza (2014)	Social media allows companies to connect with consumers either by advertising, promotions or talk directly with consumers. It allows companies to create a better customer experience and satisfaction by solving their problem and give information.
Channel Determinants	Ease of use	Burke (2002); Nicholson *et al.* (2002); Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003); Keen *et al.* (2004); Pozza (2014); Frasquet *et al.* (2015)	One of the principal characteristics consumers value in a channel is its rapidity and ease of use. Online channels allow more convinient and ease of navigation, although new technologies may be perceived as confusing and need time to be learned, leading some consumers to avoid this channels due to the factor of ease of use.
	Price	Burke (2002); Ancarani *et al.* (2004); Keen *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007); Zhang *et al.* (2010); Yu *et al.* (2011)	For a lower cost/risk item, retail format may outweigh price because of the convenience factor in the purchase. Alternatively, with a high cost purchase, consumers assume that it's worth to have a price comparison shopping and then wait for the product.

Determinant	Variable	References	Main Conclusions
	After-sales and Return Policy	Kumar *et al.* (2005); Verhoef *et al.* (2007); Zhang *et al.* (2010)	Consumers value the expected quality of the service that is provided after the purchase (delivery, assistance, installation). A favourable return policy enhances trust and convenience and leads to a higher likelihood of repeat purchases through multiple channels.
	Convenience	Kumar *et al.* (2005); Albesa (2007); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	New technologies and self-service systems provide some utilities of space and time which are valued by the consumers (e.g. the lack of a need to wait in line can influence consumer decision when selecting a channel).
	Search effort	Burke (2002); Gupta *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	Online channels can dramatically reduce search effort for information, which motivates consumers to find online shopping more attractive than offline shopping.
	Information quality	Yu *et al.* (2011); Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003)	When the online channel is perceived to offer high service quality, consumers will use the online channel more frequently and the overall satisfaction with the service provider will be higher.
	Aesthetic appeal	Schoenbachler *et al.* (2002); Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003); Hausman *et al.* (2009)	Website design affects significantly online channel use and overall channel satisfaction since the ease of use and facility on getting information on the disposal is a key motivator for Website usage. Aesthetic characteristics such eye appeal, ease of use, ease of purchase process, and product layout can affect wheter consumers choose online channels.
	Information comparability	Gupta *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	Online channels are the best way for consumers to compare several amounts of information, being an important factor when choosing a channel for their search process.
	Service	Burke (2002); Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	When shopping on in-store for durable goods, consumers want knowledgeable sales assistants who could look up product information. In Web-based channels they intend find more product specifications, comparison of prices and reviews/ratings of the products.
	Risk, Security, and Privacy	Burke (2002); Schoenbachler *et al.* (2002); Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003); Gupta *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007); Frasquet *et al.* (2015)	Online channels replace pshysical marketplace and salesperson which increase the concerns of security and risk. Firms minimize these barriers by sharing information content (testimonials and policies about security and privacy practices) in order to reduce the perceived risk and uncertainty associated with online channels and increase the likelihood of use.
	Purchase effort	Keen *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	There is a perceived difficulty and time costs consumers experience when purchasing a product using a specific channel.Consumers prefer the most time and cost saving channel.

Determinant	Variable	References	Main Conclusions
	Negotiability	Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	The ability to negotiate on price and other aspects of the products in a channel influence its usage.
	Speed of purchase and delivery	Burke (2002); Gupta *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	Efficiency of delivery has impact on consumer satisfaction, since time-sensitive consumers may favour a traditional channel because it saves delivery time.
	Evaluation effort	Gupta *et al.* (2004)	Consumer's ability of touching and feeling influence the choise of channels since online channels can impede evaluation of product options in terms of non-price attributes.
	Assortment	Burke (2002); Inman *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007); Zhang *et al.* (2010)	Consumer's channel choice is likely to depend on the breadth and depth of assortment available in each channel. Consumers who seek a higher degree of variety may have to use multiple channels fulfill their requirements.
	Enjoyment	Nicholson *et al.* (2002); Verhoef (2007); Frasquet *et al.* (2015)	It reflects the shopping experiences that reflect the hedonic value of shopping in a channel. Also, younger people value the fun of shopping while older consumers.
	Channel category associations	Schoenbachler *et al.* (2002); Inman *et al.* (2004)	Each product category can be associated with a certain channel. E.g. automobiles are, most often, purchased via specialized automobile stands.
Channel integration	Ease moving from channel A to B	Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003)	If the Internet promotes the store by providing store location information, it prompts consumers to use the store. If the firm allows products ordered on the Internet to be picked up at the store, it encourages Internet users to use the store as well.
Social Influence	Subjective Norm	Nicholson *et al.* (2002); Keen *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007)	Consumer's selection of channels is influenced by the belief that people similar to them use the channel.
Situational factors	Physical setting (weather, crowding)	Nicholson *et al.* (2002)	Situational factors are "variables particular to time and place of observation which do not follow from a personal knowledge (intra-individual) and stimulus (choice alternative of attributes)" (Belk, 1975, p. 158). These variables play a significant role in the channel
	Social setting	Nicholson *et al.* (2002)	selection, influencing all stages of the consumer shopping process since consumers favour

Determinant	Variable	References	Main Conclusions
	(shopping with friends)		different modes of shopping in different situations and may select particular modes of shopping in specific situations.
	Temporal issues (time of day, urgency of the purchase)	Nicholson *et al.* (2002)	
	Antecedent state (mood)	Nicholson *et al.* (2002)	
	Task definition (type of product)	Nicholson *et al.* (2002); Burke (2002); Mathwick (2002); Inman *et al.* (2004); Gupta *et al.* (2004)	Consumers express a preference for using multiple channels when shopping less frequently goods. For regular and frequently purchased goods (groceries, health and beauty care products), consumers require less search for information and comparison between products.
Individual differences	Demographics	Burke (2002); Inman *et al.* (2004); Gupta *et al.* (2004); Verhoef *et al.* (2007); Ansari *et al.* (2008)	Younger people value the fun of shopping while older consumers are less likely to use online channels and have more interest in product specifications, usage instructions or warranty information. Men express a greater interest in using various types of technology in the shopping process while the majority of women are consistently more focused on price, promotions and coupons. High educated consumers are more comfortable using non-store channels and less receptive to forms of intrusive communications.
	Previous experience	Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003); Keen *et al.* (2004); Pozza (2014); Inman *et al.* (2004)	Previous channel selection and experience affect future channel interactions since greater knowledge with a certain channel may create a greater sense of comfort and reduce the perceived uncertainty or risk associated with it.
	Stage in consumer's lifecycle	Valentini *et al.* (2011)	The channel decision process evolves over the lifetime of the customer. Mature customers are less responsive to marketing efforts aimed at getting them to try new channels, while newly acquired customers are more receptive.

Pozza (2014) explains that there are four factors that can determine channel choice pattern and its length: channel knowledge, product or service knowledge, the perceived channel utility, and social motivation. In addition, consumers often turn to information channels in order to connect with other consumers and solve their problems. The first factor addresses that it is important to the consumer's ability to use a particular channel when they are familiarized and comfortable with the technology employed, (e.g. Internet experience will lead to frequent online channels usage) (Albesa, 2007). Consumers who have knowledge of and experience with different channels are more likely to select the most efficient channel to address their issue, thereby reducing the number of channels needed to reach a solution (Pozza, Wood, and Burkhalter, 2015).

Another important factor relies on the fact that product or service knowledge can influence channel usage. Consumers can more easily solve their problems as more knowledge they have about a product and service, requiring less assistance, thus reducing the channel pattern length (Pozza, 2014). Perceived channel utility is also a strong predictor of online buying behavior as it leads consumers to have positive attitudes given their perception about the cost and benefits of a given channel (Li, Kuo, & Rusell, 1999). Yu, Niehm and Russel (2011), by studying several effects of channels attributes on channel choice, suggest that perceived channel value is the best predictor of channel usage behavior, being also an important influence on multichannel behavior.

Social motivation is associated as the consumers' need to socialize, maintain social interactions and to connect with other consumers for help and to gain visibility (Albesa, 2007). As social media proliferate, social network sites start to have an important impact on the exchange of eWOM through social motivations. Pozza (2014), through conducted interviews, found that consumers turn to Facebook and Twitter in order to connect with other consumers, share their experiences or to give visibility to their problem. It is also important to note that consumers are more influenced by strong ties friends than those with weak ties due to higher credibility. Regarding Facebook, information shared by strong ties generate more positive product attitudes, higher intentions to purchase, and higher intentions for users to click in the post (Wu, Wang, & Hsu, 2014).

2.1.4. Multiscreen Behavior

The evolution of data consumption has changed faster than predicted not only because of new forms of media and channels, but the insurgence of several devices where consumers can access media. As people choose to access information, they expect that content flows seamlessly between their devices. In 2011, mobile devices outsold personal computers, and it is predicted that is already the Internet-connected device more used globally (Triano, 2013b). Studies agree that users choose the perceived best screen available, defined by its technological characteristics (signal availability, battery life, picture quality), and by individual preferences that vary by location, context, and time (Phalen and Ducey, 2012).

According to a study conducted by Google (2012), and cited by Rooksby *et al.* (2015), the majority of consumers daily media interactions were screen based (90% of all media interactions) versus 10% of non-screen based, which includes radio, newspaper and magazine. Smartphones, personal computers, tablets or television allows these screen-based interactions, and on average people spend 4.4 hours of leisure time spent in front of screens each day according to the same study from 2012.

The chosen device to use at a particular time is often driven by a certain context that can range from the amount of time people have or need, the intended accomplishment of a goal, location or attitude and state of mind. The following Table 2 embodies major motivations related to the use of certain screen devices (Google Inc., 2012).

Table 2 – Motivations and context for screen device usage

Screen Device	Daily Interaction	Major Motivations	Context	Home usage
Personal Computers (PC)	24%	Finding Information, Productivity	- Office or home use - Productive, task-oriented - Requires lots of time and focus - Serious, research intensive attitude	69%
Smartphone	38%	Connection, Communication	- On-the-go as well as at home - Communicate and connect - Short bursts of time - Need info quickly and immediately	60%
Tablet	9%	Entertainment	- Primarily used at home - Entertainment and browsing - Unbounded sense of time - Relaxed and leisurely approach	79%

Source: Google Inc. (2012)

New devices are not replacing existing ones but complementing leading to an emerging of multi-device usage referred to as multiscreen consumption. Consumers start to own multiple devices and move seamlessly between them throughout the day. The average consumer spends about 60 hours a week consuming content across multiple devices, according to a Nielson report about (Nielson, 2014).

The multiscreen usage allows consumers to access to certain content through various multimedia terminals, tablets, smartphones and personal computers. Consumers move among screens in two distinct ways: sequential and simultaneous. Sequential describes the moving from one device to another at different times to accomplish a task. It is more common for completing tasks within one day. According to the same study, 90% of people participate in sequential multiscreen usage to accomplish a task over time.

The following Figure 1 illustrates the top activities performed when sequentially screening between devices, smartphones are the most common starting place for online activities compared with other devices. While personal computers are most often at starting point for more complex activities, tablets are most often a starting point for shopping online and trip planning. It is also possible to analyse that the most common sequential usage consists by starting on smartphone and continues with the personal computer, while the second most used combination is starting on PC and continue on a smartphone. That has some implications for companies, since website design has to be adaptable for small screens, and easy to switch for other devices.

The same study indicates that is more usual to search again on the second device while transitioning from one device to another, following with directly navigating to the destination site or by sending the link via e-mail or other application. One important factor that starts to prevail in everyone daily lives is the use of social media, more concretely social network sites: 64% of overall social media users say they use social media sites at least once a day via computer, and 47% of smartphone owners visit social networking sites every day. With the rapid adoption of mobile devices, social media has a symbiotic relationship with the mobile consumer. And social has played a pivotal role, empowering consumers by providing a direct point of contact with the brands they use and the content they access.

Figure 1 - Top activities performed when sequentially screening between devices

Top Activities Performed When Sequentially Screening Between Devices
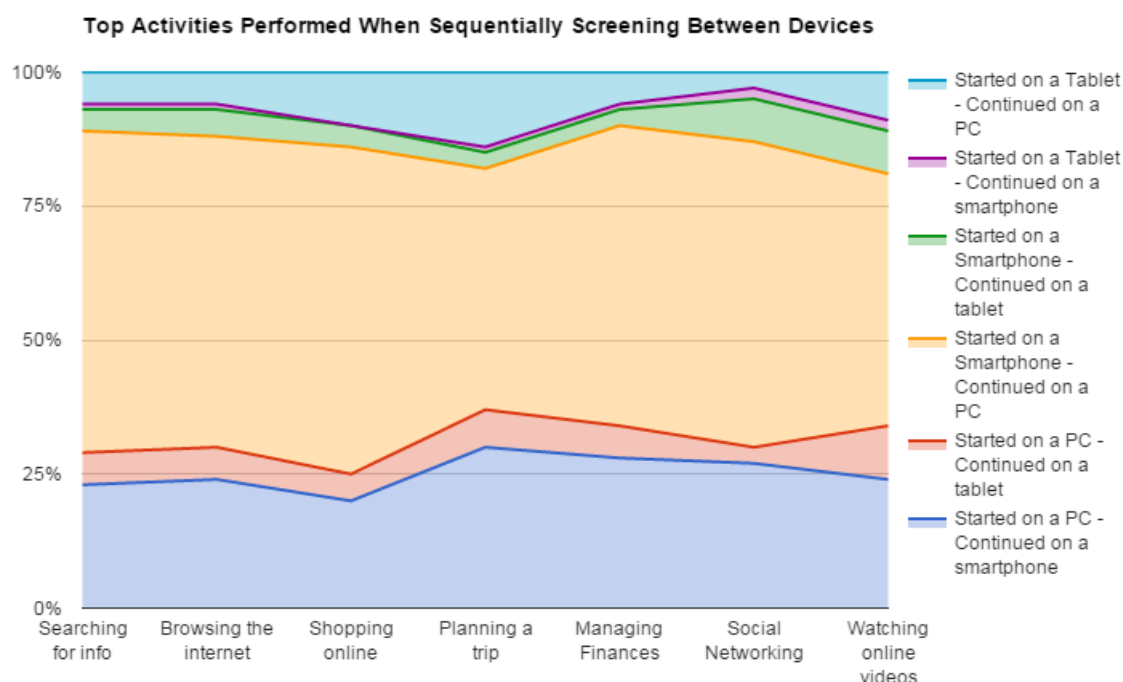
Source: Adapted with data from Google Inc. (2012)

Simultaneous screen usage relates to the use of more than one device at the same time for either a related or an unrelated activity or task. Google (2012) shows that smartphones are the most frequent companion devices during simultaneous usage. This trend can be explained since consumers tend to use the screen that is closest to them, when looking for information. A growing portion of this time is spent engaging in social media and consuming content that supports what they are viewing, being the combination of Smartphone and PC, the most engaged screen pattern choice.

Another finding show that most consumers are multi-tasking, doing different activities at the same time (78% of the inquiries) and the other 22% conduct complementary activities across screens, being the use of TV and tablet, the most used combination. According to a Nielson report about the digital consumer (Nielson, 2014), 84% of smartphone and tablet U.S.A. owners use their devices as second-screens while watching TV at the same time. Understanding the user's screen usage motivation and the context in which they use screens allows companies to deliver more valuable, relevant content at the right time, at right place, and essentially on the right device, staying relevant in the market (Triano, 2013b).

## 2.2.	Consumer Behavior

### 2.2.1.	Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Channels are extremely important on providing information to and from consumers. Information channels not only provide communications and product-related information but also can educate consumers, give ongoing assistance service, and increasingly, can connect consumers with others in a cheap, credible and effective way (Dholakia *et al.,* 2009). The importance of information channels is stressed by Yu *et al.*, (2011): as channel usage intention for information search increases, multichannel shopping tend to increase since there is a positive relationship between channel information search and channel purchase frequency. Information channels can take many specific forms, being social media one of the most recent information channels where social interactions occur (de Valck, van Bruggen, and Wierenga, 2009).

Consumers' rights such the right to safety, to be informed, to choose and to be heard, affects how consumers view themselves in the marketplace and how companies relate to them. Online, consumers are empowered with greater information: they can easily access more accurate, up-to-date information about products, companies and legal regulations from a vast variety of sources (Kucuk and Krishnamurthy, 2007), taking the concept of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) into consumer behavior studies (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). Its concept describes "*any positive or negative statement made by a potential, actual, or former consumer about a product or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet*" (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004: 39). First studies in the phenomenon of word-of-mouth, as a consumer peer-to-peer communication, agrees that it affects the majority of all purchase decisions (Brooks Jr., 1957) since consumers can share their opinions and experiences with products, services and brands with several other consumers.

Consumers now have access to new impersonal sources of influence that can provide personalized product information and recommendations which may direct consumers towards or away from products, brands and companies. Senecal and Nantel (2004) demonstrates this phenomenon of online interpersonal influence as online product recommendations influences consumers' online product choices and evaluations.

Findings show that the voice of the consumer is getting stronger than before, enhanced by online channels, and are on the rise as an important potential power source to protect consumer rights (Kucuk and Krishnamurthy, 2007). Consumers evaluate companies' actions and form ethical judgements that explain consumer's voice complaints, third party complaint intentions, and boycott intentions (Swimberghe, Flurry, and Parker, 2011). When the company does not satisfy consumers, and deliver the required knowledge, consumers turn to others for help. It reflects that consumers, when in an encounter with a weaker channel and knowledge, build relational social value through the information exchange with other consumers for better decision-making (Pozza, 2014). Some characteristics define and differentiate traditional WOM from eWOM (King, Racherla, and Bush, 2014):

C1. Enhanced volume – eWOM has a high reach and volume (leading to great awareness) since online communication is able to reach a vast number of people in a short period of time, in an asynchronous way.

C2. Dispersion – the extent to which product-related conversations are taking place across a broad range of communities and platforms is superior for eWOM.

C3. Persistence and observability – the information is available on-demand to other consumers who are seeking opinions about products and services. Consumers can acquire the information at their own pace and observe a greater amount of information in more detail than it would be possible through spoken word (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Also, eWOM communications are more measurable and observable than traditional WOM (Cheung and Thadani, 2012).

C4. Anonymity and deception – Anonymity allows consumers to share their opinion without revealing their identities in a more comfortable way. In the other hand, self-interest behavior may reduce both credibility and quality of eWOM since, with anonymity, comes the possibility of deception with the purpose of harming competitors, or simply for fun. There is a greater possibility for misinformation or inaccurate information to be passed on to consumers (Lee and Youn, 2009).

C5. Salience of valence – eWOM enables weak ties between the communicators and the receivers to prevail due to no prior relationship between both. (Lee and Youn, 2009).

C6. Community engagement – eWOM platforms support collections of people in forming specialized, non-geographically bound consumer communities in order to discuss products/services, share complaints and frustrations, and to learn from other consumers how to better use products/services. According to Lee, Kim and Kim (2012), consumers' community engagement has a significant influence in their eWOM behavior intentions, when in social network platform.

Consumers believe that other user's opinions have better and safer information since they also experience the products in a consumer view (Huang and Chen, 2006). The quality of these opinions (logical and persuasive) has a positive effect on consumers' purchasing intention as these intentions increase as the number of reviews also rise, indicating the popularity of the product (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007).

Low involved consumers are affected by the quantity rather than the quality of the reviews, while high level of involvement with a product in a consumer, is affect by both quality and quantity (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007). Also, Senecal and Nantel (2004) argue that consumers rely more on product recommendations for experience products than for search products, as experience products are perceived to have higher risks for the consumer. The choice for consumer-generated websites is also higher for experience products, rather marketer-generated websites (Bronner and de Hoog, 2010).

Consumers tend to weight negative information more than positive during evaluation, trusting the negative information more than the positive (Sen and Lerman, 2007). Another finding from Gauri *et al*. (2008) found that positive consumer reviews have the greatest impact on repurchase intention, being the percentage of positive reviews more influencing than the total number of reviews.

As authors focus on motivational factors such as involvement and relevance, Park and Kim (2008) study the ability-related factor that is the level of expertise of the consumers through the processing of different reviews and messages. The authors found that consumers with different levels of expertise preffer different types of messages, and that the number of reviews is a more important factor for novices than for experts, since it can show the level of popularity and educate consumers that do not have a high experience with the product.

2.2.2. Motivations for Engaging in Word-of-Mouth Communication

Research literature in the area tend to distinguish two parties in eWOM: senders (opinion leaders that may exert great influence on others' attitudes and behaviors), and receivers (as opinion seekers, tend to search for information and advice from others when making a purchase decision); as each one can have different communications characteristics (Chu and Kim, 2011). In traditional WOM, the connections between the sender and receiver would have to be pre-existing to have any meaning, but the venting of online channels enabled that even weak ties can still have a major impact on others (King, Racherla, and Bush, 2014).

Also, it what's important to note that consumers are more influenced by strong ties friends than those with weak ties due to higher credibility. Regarding Facebook, information shared by strong ties generate more positive product attitudes, higher intentions to purchase, and higher intentions for users to click in the post (Wu, Wang, and Hsu, 2014). Consumers are more likely to transmit messages to strong ties than to weak ties. Interestingly, consumers are also more likely to pass on only negative messages to weak ties, whereas they share both positive and negative messages with strong ties (King, Racherla, and Bush, 2014).

Nevertheless, with the venting of online communications, most opinion leaders tend to be opinion seekers because they feel the need to seek information to acquire more knowledge about a product and to update information (Sun *et al*., 2006). Persistence and observability (C3), and community engagement (C6) are the principal characteristics that can determine how and why people generate and transmit eWOM.

King, Racherla and Bush (2014) organises key issues surrounding eWOM in two parties (Figure 2): the sender and the receiver, analysing each party according to their antecedents (factors that motivate) and consequences (effects of eWOM). The same Figure 2, analyses the principal characteristics, previous discussed by the same authors, that are inherit into each area.

Figure 2 – Key issues regarding the research of eWOM

Q1: Antecedents of eWOM Senders	Q2: Consequences to the Senders
Self-Enhancement, Consumer Psychographics, Product/Retailer Performance, Altruism/Concern for Others, Social factors (norms, need for interaction, and relational benefits) Relevant Characteristics: C1. Enhanced volume, C3. Persistence and observability, C6. Community engagement	Enhanced Product Learning, Impression Management, Social Capital and Reputation Relevant Characteristics: C3. Persistence and observability, C4. Anonymity and deception, C6. Community engagement
Q3: Antecedents of the Receiver	**Q4: Consequences to the Receiver**
Reduce Search/Evaluation Efforts, Risk Reduction, Maximize consumption benefits, Social Assurance, Leisure Activity Relevant Characteristics: C1. Enhanced volume, C2. Dispersion, C3. Persistence and observability, C4. Anonimity and deception	Product sales (sale volume, revenues, stock prices), Price premiums/product spending, Purchase intention, Product knowledge, Trust and Loyalty Relevant Characteristics: C1. Enhanced volume, C2. Dispersion, C3. Persistence and obervability, C5. Salience of valence

Source: King, Racherla and Bush (2014)

Consumer's motivation for engaging in WOM, which have been identified in the literature as relevant for traditional WOM, also can be expected to be relevant for eWOM, due to its given conceptual closeness (Hennig-Thurau *et al*., 2004). Prior findings from Dichter (1966) and Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster (1998) still have a relevant importance in recent academic studies about WOM communication on online channels (i.e. Hennig-Thurau, *et al.* (2004)). Some authors have suggested that the motives for engaging in positive WOM communication may differ from the motives that drive negative WOM communication (Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster, 1998). The following Table 3 addresses the studies that have explicitly addressed the specific motives underlying WOM communication.

Table 3 – Motives for word-of-mouth communication behavior identified in the literature

Author	Motive	Description
Dichter (1966) Consumer's motivations for WOM and insights on how it works	Product-involvement	A customer feels so strongly about the product that a pressure builds up in wanting to do something about it; recommending the product to others reduces the tension caused by the consumption experience.
	Self-involvement	The product serves as a means through which the speaker can gratify certain emotional needs.
	Other-involvement	Word-of-mouth activity addresses the need to give something to the receiver.
	Message-involvement	Refers to discussion which is stimulated by advertisements, commercials, or public relations.
Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster (1998) Motivations for WOM	Helping the company	Desire to help the company.
	Product involvement	Personal interest in the product, excitement resulting from product ownership and product use.
	Self-enhancement	The self-enhancement motivation is driven by one's desire for positive recognition from others Enhancing images among other consumers by projecting themselves as intelligent shoppers.
	Altruism (positive WOM)	Consumers do something for others without anticipating any reward in return.
	Altruism (negative WOM)	To prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered.
	Anxiety reduction	Sharing dissatisfying consumption experiences can serve to diminish the frustration and reduce the anxiety associated with the event.
	Vengeance	Consumers retaliate against the company associated with a negative consumption experience.
	Advice seeking	Consumers obtaining advice on how to resolve problems.
Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) Consumer motivations for online articulation on online consumer-opinion platforms.	Concern for other consumers (focus-related utility)	Consumers feel the need to add value to others by helping other consumers with their buying decisions or to save them from negative experiences.
	Helping the company (focus-related utility)	As consumers consider the company a social institution worthy of support, they feel the need to exchange with other consumers their positive experience in order to support the company.
	Social Benefits (focus-related utility)	Refers to a sense of emotional involvement with a certain group Consumers engage in eWOM communication to participate and belong to online communities, feeling the desire for social interaction.
	Exerting Power (focus-related utility)	EWOM communication can cause the shift of power from companies to consumers, particularly in cases where consumer's individual criticism can contribute to the exertion of collective power over companies.

Author	Motive	Description
	Self-enhancement (approval utility)	Consumers feel the need to self-express and fulfil their self-esteem through social status and recognition. Consumers that intent to obtain high reputation in online channels have higher tendency to spread eWOM.
	Economic Incentives (approval utility)	Some platforms incentive consumers to express their comments and recommendations in exchange of incentives that can have a form of discounts or monetary rewards.
	Advice seeking (consumption utility)	Consumers obtain value by accessing product reviews and comments from other consumers, which can also motivate consumers to write their own comments in order to obtain feedback.
	Venting negative-feelings (homeostase utility)	Sharing a negative consumption experience through the publication of online comments can help consumers to reduce the discontent associated with their negative emotions.
	Expressing positive emotions (homeostase utility)	Consumers' positive consumption experiences contribute to a psychological tension inside them because of a strong desire to want to share the joy of the experience with someone.
	Platform assistance (moderator-related utility)	When eWOM communication is forwarded to companies by platform operators, such communication gives consumers the ability to express dissatisfaction with low financial and psychological risk.
	Convenience (moderator-related utility)	Some eWOM platforms can be a more convenient way for consumers to seek redress when the consumer has been unable to reach the appropriate individual.
Cheung and Lee (2012) Motivations that drive consumers to spread positive eWOM on online consumer-opinion platforms.	Reputation (egoism)	Consumers share and contribute their knowledge because they want to gain an informal recognition and establish themselves as experts.
	Reciprocity (egoism)	Consumers tend to also seek future benefits when engaging in social exchange.
	Sense of belonging (collectivism)	Refers to a sense of emotional involvement with the group. , individuals with a collective motive contribute their knowledge for the benefit of the whole group and align their goals with those of the community.
	Enjoyment of helping/altruism	Consumers are willing to volunteer themselves to contribute their knowledge and reviews without expecting direct rewards in return.
	Moral obligation/Principalism	Consumers view their knowledge as a public good and they are motivated to have knowledge exchange with others because of moral obligation and community interest.
	Knowledge Self-Efficacy	Self-efficacy is a personal judgment of one's capability to execute actions required for designated types of performances.

As Dichter (1966) identifies four main motivational categories for positive WOM (altruism, product involvement, self-enhancement, and helping the company), Sundaram *et al.* (1998) later incorporates negative WOM (altruism, anxiety reduction, vengeance, and advice seeking) into eight motives for WOM communication. With the insurgence of online channels, other studies appear in order to analyze eWOM communication motives on consumer opinion platforms (i.e., Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) and Cheung and Lee (2012)).

Based on the study conducted by Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001) on the economic leverage and social activity within the virtual community, Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) distinguishes three types of social interaction utility: focus-related utility, consumption utility, and approval utility. Also, they include and adapt other two motives for engaging in eWOM communication on Web-based consumer opinion platforms in order to focus on the unique aspects of such platforms: homeostase utility, and moderator-related utility.

According to focus-related utility, consumers receive utility through their contribution when they add value to other consumers, such as providing reviews and commentary on products and services to others. Another important utility explains that consumers obtain value by accessing product reviews and comments from others, which can also motivate consumers to write their own comments in order to obtain feedback (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001).

As eWOM enables extended social connections and community engagement (King, Racherla, and Bush, 2014), approval utility appears when a consumer's satisfaction comes from the approval and acknowledge from others (Balasubramanian and Mahajan, 2001). Channels can provide such feedback when another user praises and communicates the usefulness of the information provided. Some channels even provide a mechanism which allows product reviews to be evaluated by other users on the basis of helpfulness (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).

Moderator-related utility is derived when a third party makes the complaint act easier for the community member and it can happen when the platform staff interact with a company on behalf of the customer. This utility category stems from the existence of a moderator in the consumer-to-consumer interaction process. The mere existence of the platform can make the complaining process easier to perform for the complainant. This is especially true when the consumer has been unable to reach the appropriate individual at the company involved in the dissatisfying exchange.

On the other hand, homeostase utility "*is based on the notion that people have a basic desire for balance in their lives, suggesting that the source of unbalance comes from either a strong positive or negative consumption experience. As balance can be restored by writing a comment on an opinion platform*" (Hennig-Thurau, *et al.*, 2004: 44).

The main conclusion from the study of Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) is that concern for other consumers, positive self-enhancement, social benefits, economic incentives, and advice seeking serve as motives for eWOM behavior and channel visits. Cheung and Lee (2012) also found that consumers' eWOM intention is significantly related to reputation (intention to alter a company reputation), sense of belonging, and enjoyment of helping. Sense of belonging was the most significant antecedent in the study, demonstrating that consumers are serious committed to a community engagement (Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo, 2004).

Other findings suggest that consumers are not a homogeneous group in terms of their eWOM motivations (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Instead, they can be divided into four distinct motive segments: (a) self-interest helpers, which appear to be strongly driven by economic incentives; (b) multiple-motive consumers, motivated by a large number of factors and not only a specific one (found to be the ones that more engage in eWOM communication and visit several platforms); (c) consumer advocate, motivated to provide eWOM comments primarily by the concern for other consumers (the study found that this segment is more prevalent between graduated consumers); and (d) true altruists, motivated by helping other consumers as well as helping companies.

Although the antecedents and motivations are an important factor for eWOM, consumer's post-behavior is important to analyse in order to find the impact of eWOM in their behavior (Lee and Youn, 2009). For the receivers, trust plays a significant role in the willingness to purchase online (more for women than for men) and in order to study this trust it is important to analyse the principal determinants of WOM quality (Awad and Ragowsky, 2008).

Also, the effect of the eWOM platform on consumer willingness to recommend the product to friends was found when the review was positive, while, when the review was negative, it had disadvantageous effects regardless of the eWOM platform (consumers are not willinf to recommend the product) (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).

2.2.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth Channels

The main factor that distinguishes eWOM from traditional WOM consists on the platform in which people exchange information (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). While traditional WOM can be made by face-to-face contact, eWOM communication take place in several online platforms such as Web-based opinion platforms, online discussion forums, review sites, personal blogs, brand or shopping Websites, personal or community news groups or social networking sites (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).

There are different patterns in the way consumers exchange their opinion through eWOM (Lerrthaitrakul and Panjakajornsak, 2014), as several studies have focused their investigations on the impact of eWOM on consumer-opinion platforms (Hennig-Thurau, *et al.*, 2004; Cheung and Lee, 2012), and social network sites (Chu and Kim, 2011). These platforms consist on examples of eWOM channels, consisting on platforms where eWOM is exchanged.

Studies on whether consumer's opinion can influence others, more than marketer-generated content, are indecisive on their results. According Lee and Youn (2009), whether the website is marketer-generated or non-marketer generated (e.g. an independent product review website or a personal blog), it does not seem to play a significant role in influencing consumers' product judgement. Senecal and Nantel (2004) explains this by suggesting that the type of website on which recommendation sources are used, do not affect their perceived trustworthiness and do not influence consumer's propensity to follow the product recommendation.

On the other hand, other authors defend that consumer online discussions are more influential on consumer's opinion formation and product choices than marketer-generated exposure, due to greater credibility, relevance and ability to evoke empathy (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). As example, Bickart and Schindler (2001) found that Internet forums generate more product category interest than does exposure to marketer-generated sources of information available on the internet. Brooner and Hoog (2010) addresses this question by concluding that the roles of both consumer-generated and marketer-generated websites are complementary in the consumer decision process.

Lee and Youn (2009) tried to study the impact and effect of eWOM platforms on consumer willingness to recommend the product to others. Interestingly, only when the review

was positive, there was an impact from the platform. When the review was negative, there was no impact from the platform.

Lee and Youn (2009) found that consumers are more willing to express their opinions about a product's performance in independent product review websites or personal blogs. On the other hand, consumers turn to a brand's website towards a particular circumstance. Riegner (2007) addresses this issue by segmenting online channel users as social clickers (maintain relationships with friends and others and prefer instant message platforms), online insiders (vocalizing their preferences in being experts and knowledgeable influencers), content kings (addicted to entertainment seeking ways to have fun online), everyday pros (interest in money management and commerce), and fast trackers (tend to meet online their immediate needs such as checking the news, and are more focused in search information rather than creating).

Kozinets *et al.* (2010) summarizes eWOM channels according to its scope of communications: one-to-one channel (messages that are sent from a person to another), one-to-many channel (messages that are sent from one person to other people e), and many-to-many channel (messages that are sent from many people to other people). In its most organic form, eWOM occurs between one consumer and another through the motivation to advise others, without direct influence of marketers (Figure 3). It occurs naturally among consumers when marketers are in the marketplace and perform product advertising and promotions (Kozinets *et al.*, 2010). The information is usually changed in private conversations or dialogs (a characteristic from traditional eWOM) and, therefore, difficult to pass along the information to other individuals (Hung and Li, 2007) (e.g. When one person sends an e-mail to another).

Figure 3 – The evolution of WOM theory (Organic Interconsumer Influence Model)

A: The Organic Interconsumer Influence Model
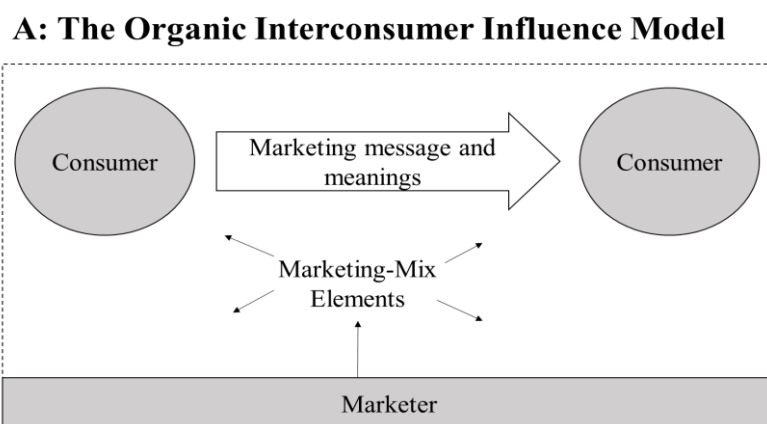
Source: Kozinets, *et al.* (2010)

In a first primary form of the Internet, consumers were empowered to influence others, allowing the existence of opinion leaders that represent an active user who interprets the meaning of media message content for others (e.g. opinion seekers) (Livtin, Goldsmith, and Pan, 2008). Opinion leaders are targeted by marketers in an attempt to influence WOM and monitoring these activities (Figure 4). The concept of WOM in this model, "*represent a new form of social communication content (stimuli) involving both information-seeking consumers (receivers) and information sharing consumers*" (Cheung and Thadani, 2012: 463). One-to-many channel occurs when one person makes a comment on an online chat room.

Figure 4 – The evolution of WOM theory (Linear Marketer Influence Model)
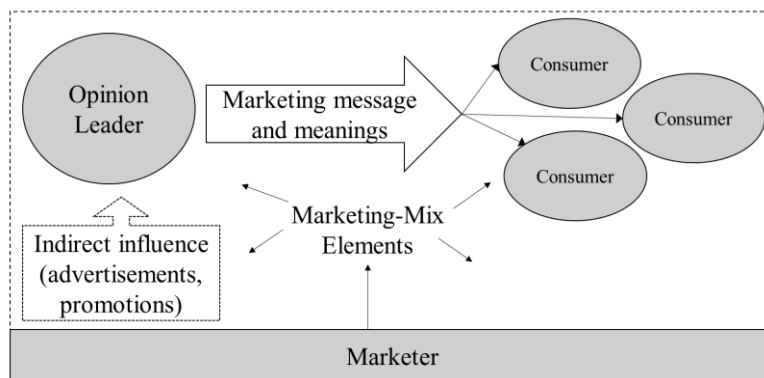
Source: Kozinets, *et al.* (2010)

With the evolution of online channels, social network sites emerged as a convenient platform to the development of word-of-mouth behavior since the information shared is not only transmitted to some persons that know the consumer, but is passed to a wider circle of people. Online channels started to be the basis of freely available user-created content, collaborative tools, and networked communities create this dynamic and participatory online culture. It has changed the way people exchange information and essentially, engage in eWOM (Riegner, 2007; Lee, Kim, and Kim, 2012).

Regarding this new scenario, and subsequent popularization of social media, the concept of opinion leader transactions is tranformed into relationships amid groups or communities (Figure 5). Consumers exchange messages and create ties with others, allowing creating an information network (Dwyer, 2007). Marketers can also participate as opinion starters, having a direct influence on WOM (Kozinets *et al*., 2010).

Online channels, due to its interactive nature, allowed that most opinion seekers can also be opinions leaders and be more participative at sharing information (Sun *et al*., 2006).

When a consumer express an opinion, other consumers interact between themselves, coproducing value and meaning to the same opinion, creating a network of consumers (Chu and Kim, 2011). Another form of eWOM appears due to sharing characteristics of online channels, being opinion-passing behavior a new form of interaction where consumers facilitate the flow of information by sharing others' opinions (Sun *et al*., 2006). Many-to-many channel refers when many people post their messages on online communities or newsgroups.

Figure 5 – The evolution of WOM theory (Network Coproduction Model)

C: The Network Coproduction Model
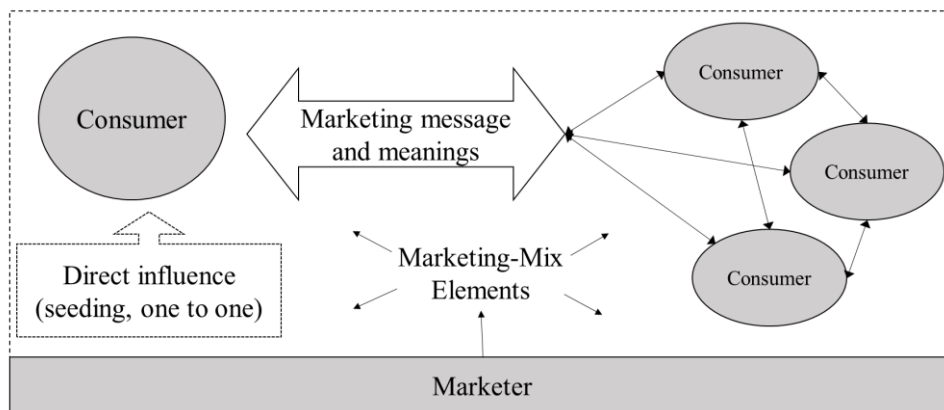
Source: Kozinets, *et al.* (2010)

Livtin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008), relying in these distinction of channels, tries to segregate online channels into Kozinets *et al.* (2010) scope of communication, and also comparing with the level of interactivity of the channels, based on the characteristic of asynchronous mode (Hennig-Thurau *et al*., 2004; Hung and Li, 2007). The following Figure 6 differentiates several eWOM channels according to each of these variables.

Figure 6 – Typology of electronic word-of-mouth channels

Communication Scope	Asynchronous		Synchronous
Many-to-Many	Blogs Forums Online Fan Pages (Facebook Pages)	Online Group Discussion Platforms	Instant Group Messaging
One-to-Many	Webpages Review Websites (Trip Advisor) Video Sharing Platforms (Youtube)	Microblogs (Twitter) Social Network Sites (Facebook Posts) Photo Sharing Platforms (Instagram)	Live Video Streaming (Periscope)
One-to-One	E-Mails	Text-Based Messages (WhatsApp)	Videoconference (Skype) Instant Messaging (Facebook Messanger)

Level of Interactivity

Source: adapted from Livtin, Goldsmith, & Pan (2008)

Within online communication, channels have different characteristics and differ from each other in their level of interactivity. E-mails have an asynchronous nature, and it is related to a one-to-one communication as privacy is a primary concern on this medium. Another advantage of the medium consists on the possibility of which it is possible to send the same information to several e-mail addresses at the same time and preserve privacy. Riegner (2007) in her study about word-of-mouth on consumer adoption of online channels stresses that e-mail was the dominant form of online conversation as data from 2007, but found that younger age groups are adding new forms of online media to their communications, such instant messaging, blogs, chat and discussion forums.

Related with asynchronous and one-to-many medium, websites usually are one of the principal mediums which information can stimulate eWOM among visualizers. On the other hand, product review websites consist in one of the most influential mediums when opinion seeker consumers search for specific opinions about products, influencing its buying decision process. Consumer review websites are written by consumers that usually are opinion leaders, influencing other consumers on either positive or negative evaluations of a product or service (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007). For this reason, consumers tend to prefer this medium when

comparing products and services, seeking other consumers opinions (Lerrthaitrakul and Panjakajornsak, 2014). Blogs and online communities allow several consumers to interact and continuously exchange information with each other, allowing a network to be formed.

Social media has largely become a source of information and recommendations, providing a new way of expressions and opinions toward products or companies (Wu, Wang, and Hsu, 2014). It enables the existence of a platform of freely user-generated content, collaborative tools, and networked communities with a low level of involvement (Riegner, 2007). They can vary from text-based communication to the sharing of pictures, videos, and other forms of media, appearing in the form of collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs (e.g. WordPress), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game (e.g. World of Warcraft) and social worlds (e.g. Second Life).

Social networking sites have increased on its several forms, allowing users' participation to become the most dominant force in social media as a global movement (Hutton and Fosdick, 2011). These media also provide easy-to-use tools for current users to invite others to join a global community of consumers (Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels, 2009).

These platforms have the core aspect of facilitating real time interactions and communications between users, leading to greater proximity between brands and people. It changed the way of proliferating and exchanging information by making easy to create, share and digest information on the internet relying on the premises of user-generated content (Akrimi and Khemakhem, 2012), in an extremely low cost way, independent of geographic distance and time (Pitt *et al*., 2002).

Recently, it has becoming an important channel for spreading WOM, relying on the advantages of either eWOM (information is spread faster and cheaper) and traditional WOM (consumers trust sources as, in many cases, they know the other person) (Akrimi and Khemakhem, 2012). As each social network site has characteristics that differentiates from one or another, it can allow any type of communication type. It can evolve from one-to-one communication (instant messaging and video-conference), one-to-many (post in personal profiles), and many-to-many communication as social network sites allow users to build and maintain a network of friends for social or professional interaction, but also shape other forms of relationship formation such as online communities (Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels, 2009).

3.   Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

Changes and advances of technology significantly impact consumer behavior and their decision process. Consumers have now a variety of channels and interfaces at their disposal to browse, purchase and interact with companies and other consumers. The relevance of the study on consumer behavior in a multichannel, multimedia and multiscreen environment consists in an understanding of how consumers choose channels and what impact that choice has on their decision process (Neslin, *et al.*, 2006).

Concerning consumers' information sharing, online channels are the preeminent channels when consumers intend to share information and find several sources in the same place, dramatically reducing search efforts (Verhoef, Neslin, and Vroomen, 2007). According to Pozza (2014) it is important to investigate *why* (channel choice determinants) and *how* (multichannel consumer behavior) consumers choose channels, when multiple information channels are available. The following Table 4 illustrates the four main studies that support the proposed conceptual model and are on the basis of the research directions.

In a first stage, Pozza (2014) found that there are four factors that determine channel choice: channel knowledge, product or service knowledge, the perceived channel utility, and social motivation. These factors tend to have an impact on channel's choice and are the basis for determine multichannel behavior. Adapted from this perspective, the variables of perceived channel knowledge, service knowledge, and perceived channel utility will be tested in order to determine which variables influence multichannel behavior according to the context of the current study.

Perceived channel knowledge consists on the user's ability to use a particular channel when they are familiarized and comfortable with the technology employed, (e.g. Internet experience will lead to frequent online channels usage) (Albesa, 2007). Thus it influences consumers' perceptions about channel utility and channel choice as past channel usage has a positive impact on future channel choice, as consumers tend to choose the same channels they are familiar with. Studies show that previous use of a channel increases future likelihood of using the same channel, as consumers already perceive how the channel works and if it satisfies their needs (Gensler, Verhoef, and Böhm, 2012). Also, perceived service knowledge indicates that as more knowledgeable consumers are, more easily and rapidly they solve their problems, thus reducing channel pattern length (Pozza, 2014).

Table 4 - Main studies that support the proposed conceptual model

Author	Construct	Statistical Techniques	Sample	Conclusions
Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) Consumer motivations for online articulation.	Platforms assistance, venting negative feelings, concern for other consumers, extraversion/positive self-enhancement, social benefits, economic incentives, helping the company, advice seeking.	- Factor analysis and basic correlations between factors. - Multiple regression analysis with the PCA factor scores from eWOM motive factors as independent variables and dependent variables: (1) platform visit frequency, (2) comment writing. - Hierarchical cluster analysis using the PCA factors to investigate differences among groups of consumers.	Quantitative analysis: online questionnaire responses from 2000 German web-based opinion platform users.	- 1) $R^2 = 0.242$ (social benefits, self-enhancement, concern for other consumers). - 2) $R^2 = 0.197$ (social benefits, economic incentives, concern for other consumers, self-enhancement). - Consumers can be grouped based on what motivates their behavior.
Gensler *et al.* (2012) Consumers' multichannel choices according to channel characteristics.	Channel choice intention, channel attributes, channel experience, channel utility.	Multiple regression analysis for consumer channel choice through all decision buying processes.	Quantitative analysis: 500 German banking customers from a consumer panel.	- Channel attributes differ across the stages of the buying process. - Perceived channel quality ($R^2 = 0.083$), and channel knowledge affect consumer channel choice in the search stage.
Yu *et al.* (2011) Channel choice and usage in multichannel shopping environments.	Channel usage intention, multichannel behavior, channel value, channel attributes	Factor analysis, basic correlations between factors, and multiple regression analysis.	Quantitative analysis: questionnaire to 182 students from Midwestern university.	$R^2 = 0.67$ (perceived channel value was the best predictor of channel usage intention)

Perceived channel utility is also a strong predictor of online buying behavior as it leads consumers to have positive attitudes given their perception about the cost and benefits of a given channel (Li, Kuo, and Rusell, 1999). Yu, Niehm and Russel (2011), by studying several effects of channels attributes on channel choice, suggest that perceived channel value is the best predictor of channel usage behaviour, being also an important influence on multichannel behaviour. Li, Kuo, and Rusell (1999) addresses the importance of channel utility for consumers, as channels need to meet their information needs for decision making.

In a multichannel environment consumers use several channels in combination, which gives rise to the need for the company to understand the entire path customers follow for a given situation (Albesa, 2007). When different channels are available, different paths can be freely chosen by consumers, giving rise to different levels of consumer satisfaction and affecting consumer attitudes and behaviours towards the company (Pozza, 2014), thus it is expected channel usage to have a positive impact on multichannel behavior.

Yu *et al.* (2011) is the principal author to group in their study the relation between channel choice criteria and channel usage intention, although adapted to multichannel shopping and information search as channel usage intention characteristics. In its study perceived channel value, perceived channel quality, and perceived channel price are on the basis for channel choice criteria, consisting in the present study as the variable of perceived channel utility. Gensler *et al.* (2012) add other variables to the channel choice criteria: channel experience and product channel associations, indicating a positive impact of channel and service knowledge on the study. Analyzing these variables with the proposed study direction from Pozza (2014), channel knowledge, service knowledge, and channel utility are on the basis of channel usage intention.

Based on the framework from Yu *et al.* (2011), the structure basis of the conceptual model relay on the determinants that relate channel choice criteria (perceived channel knowledge, perceived service knowledge and perceived channel utility) with channel usage intention, with channel usage as intermediary for a consequent multichannel behavior. The following scheme (Figure 7) illustrates these positive relations.

Figure 7 – Expected correlations between independent variables, channel usage and the dependent variable

| Channel Choice Criteria | Channel Usage Intention |
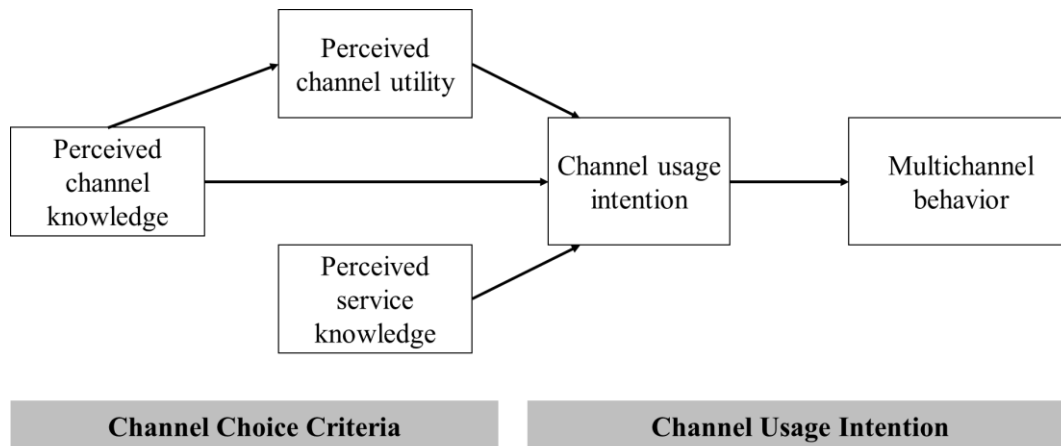
According to the characteristics and intentions that the dissertation wants to test, the variable social motivation was swapped with eWOM motivations, in order to analyze if it has an important impact for consumers that choose a channel in order to engage in eWOM communications. When engaging in eWOM, consumers have access to several channels where they can write suggestions and opinions, or seek other user-generated content. These channels differ from each other in terms of their diffusion mode, communication network, message storage, and information sources (Wu, Wang, and Hsu, 2014). This relation between eWOM motivations with channel usage is analyzed in previous literature by Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) and Cheung and Lee (2012), although these studies emphasis on consumer-opinion platforms, focusing only on the motivations for using these platforms. The present study goes beyond, and incorporates eWOM motivations for channel usage intention with channel choice criteria, focusing in most of eWOM channels, in the context of multichannel behavior.

Livtin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008) addresses this issue when distinguishing online eWOM channels between its scope of communication and its level of interactivity (asynchronous level). For example, instant messaging is synchronous in its nature and link one consumer to another (one-to-one) as opposed to blogs that rely on a many-to-many communication and the information can be accessed any time. The following figure 8 illustrates the relationship between the independent variable of eWOM motivations as having a positive impact on eWOM intention and the dependent variable of multichannel behavior. All the relations are positive.

Figure 8 – Expected correlations between eWOM motivations and multichannel behavior
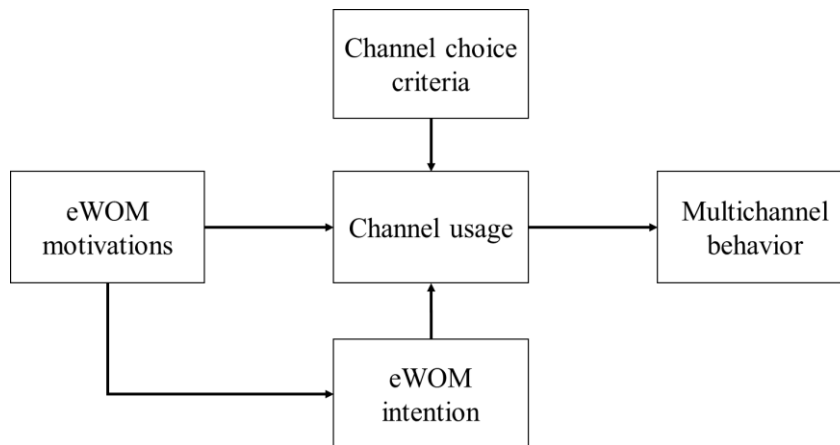
The emergence of several screens allowed online channels to proliferate, as the majority of consumers' daily media interactions is now screen based. The chosen device to use at a particular time is often driven by a certain context that can range from the amount of time people have or need, the intended accomplishment of a goal, location or attitude and state of mind (Triano, 2013b). In addition, multichannel is expected to have a positive impact on multiscreen behavior, as the use of several channels may led to the use of more than one screen to access them. The following Figure 9 illustrates the proposed conceptual model for multichannel behavior in the context of WOM articulation. The model is driven from the need to study why and how consumers engage in a multichannel environment when they intend to share information. All the hypothesized relationship between the variables are positive.

Figure 9 – Proposed Conceptual Model
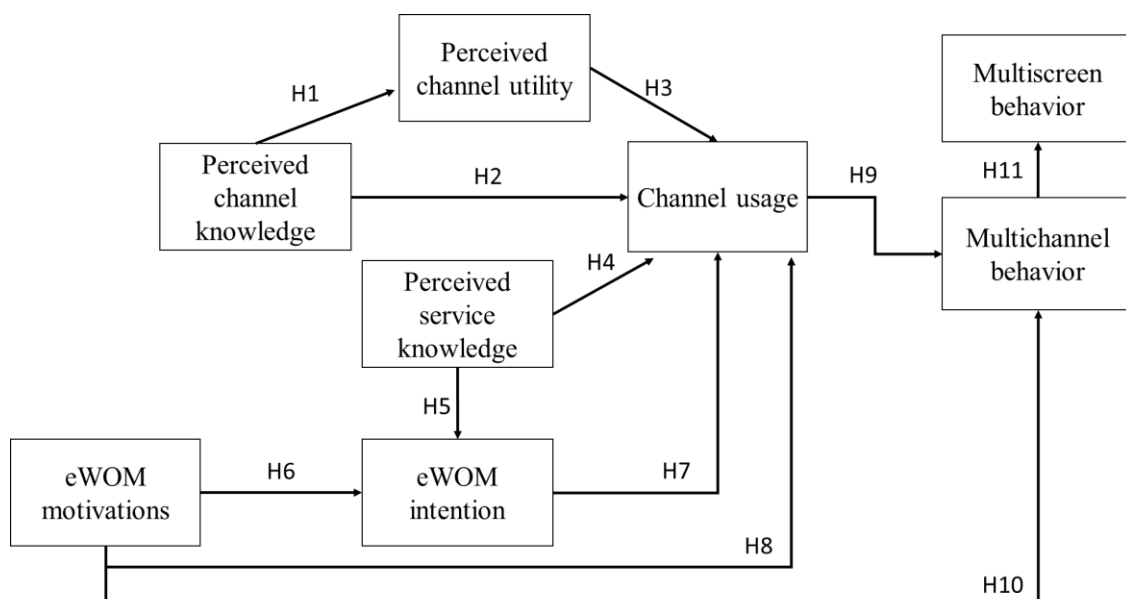
Regarding the model, there are two analyses to be made. The first analysis tries to predict which independent variables influence consumer's channel usage intention. When different channels are available, different paths can be freely chosen by consumers, giving rise to different levels of consumer channel usage (Albesa, 2007). In this essence, the centrality of the study will rely on the literature that, in order to understand consumer multichannel behavior, it is important to predict which variables affect channel choice.

The second analysis affects the central study of consumers' multichannel behavior where the variables of channel usage intention and eWOM motivations lay as the principal assumptions of the dissertation, in order to understand what drives consumers to engage in eWOM. Also, the variable multiscreen behavior is added to the study as it is important to predict if the propensity to use several channels also leads to the use of more than one screen to complete the task.

H1: Perceived channel knowledge has a positive impact on user's perceived channel utility.

As previous literature show, a consumer with more knowledge about a certain channel may have a positive perception of channel utilities (Li, Kuo, & Rusell, 1999). For this reason, it is expected that perceived channel knowledge will have a positive impact on the user's perceived channel utility.

H2: Perceived channel knowledge has a positive impact on user's channel usage intention.

Consumers' knowledge can influence their ability and understanding on how to best choose certain channels. When consumers are familiarized and comfortable with the technology employed, channel choice is strengthened by the consumer's channel knowledge and experience (Albesa, 2007). Other study conducted by Frambach, Roest, and Krishnan (2007) found that consumer's channel experience affects channel usage intentions and preferences, when studying the buying stages of a complex service. The same study found that consumers with Internet experience demonstrate a significant higher usage intention for the online channel than do the consumers without Internet experience. Therefore, it is expected that consumer's perceived channel knowledge will positively influence channel usage choice.

H3: Perceived channel utility has a positive impact on channel usage intention.

Yu, Niehm and Russel (2011), by studying several effects of channels attributes on channel choice, suggest that perceived channel utility is the best predictor of channel usage behavior, also translating to the willingness to have a multichannel behavior. A previous study from Li, Kuo, and Rusell (1999) addresses that perceived channel utility leads consumers to have positive attitudes towards their perception about the cost and benefits of a given channel. For this reason, it is expected that perceived channel utility has a positive impact on consumers channel usage, and consequent multichannel behavior.

H4: Perceived service knowledge has a positive impact on channel usage intention.

Other important factor relies on the fact that product or service knowledge can influence channel usage. Consumers can more easily solve their problems as more knowledge they have about a product and service, allowing them to know what they intend to do on the channel and which one to choose when sharing information about a company (Pozza, 2014).

H5: Perceived service knowledge will positively influence consumer's eWOM intentions.

Park and Kim (2008) agree that consumers' level of expertise about a product/service affect the processing of reviews and messages. Consumers with different levels of expertise preffer different types of messages, thus suggesting a positive relation between service knowledge and eWOM intention.

H6: Consumer's eWOM motivations will positively influence eWOM behavior intentions.

Consumer motives to engage and articulate on online platforms (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004) measures the extent to which consumers' eWOM communication intentions, acknowledging the impact of motivations on consumers' eWOM intentions.

H7: The adoption of electronic word-of-mouth will positively influence consumer's channel usage intention.

Consumer motives to engage and articulate on online platforms (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004) measures the extent to which consumers' eWOM communication intentions, believing to have a more positive (or less negative) impact on the environment.

H8: Consumer's eWOM motivations will positively influence channel usage intention.

Balasubramanian, Raghunathan and Mahajan (2005) addresses the importance to understand, why consumers choose specific channels according to their eWOM motivations. Some authors such Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) and later, Cheung and Lee (2012), develop researches in order to identify consumer motives for engaging in eWOM communication on online channels.

H9: Channel usage intention will positively influence consumers' multichannel behavior.

It is expected that consumers that choose to engage in several channels in combination follow a certain pattern of choice of the channel, thus engaging in a multichannel behavior (Pozza, 2014). So, it is expected a high relation between the two variables.

H10: Consumer's electronic word-of-mouth motivations will positively affect the adoption of a multichannel behavior.

On the consumer' side, the effects of consumer determinants on multichannel behavior are moderated by consumer's motivations for their multichannel intentions. Authors like Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004), and later Cheung and Lee (2012), stress the importance of several consumer motivation factors for online channel usage, thus suggesting a positive impact between both variables.

H11: Multichannel behavior will positively influence multiscreen behavior.

Screen devices are routinely used to access media and channels that is "*unconnected and unrelated to media, for example for sending and receiving messages, browsing social media, and browsing websites*" (Rooksby *et al.* 2015: 243). So it is suspected that consumers that engage in a multichannel behavior also tend to use several screens to complete their task.

4.   Research Methodology

4.1.   Questionnaire Design

To test the proposed model, the research was conducted through an online questionnaire via a research software (Qualtrics Insight Platform) shared on questionnaire sharing oriented Facebook groups, in order to understand motives and behaviors associated with a multichannel, multimedia, and multiscreen usage in order to articulate and communicate online. A definition of these variables was explained to respondents in order to clarify some appearing doubts. An example of the questionnaire is in the Annexes section of the current dissertation.

For a more detailed and specific study, the research analysis as a focus on Airline Companies. Representing a mature market in developed countries, airlines try to explore all channels and communication in order to examine their service quality and find solutions in order to stay competitive. The airline industry is pioneer in exploring platforms for communicating with customers that includes all multiple channel choices that exist for consumers (Mau, 2012; Lerrthaitrakul & Panjakajornsak, 2014). Most airlines, in order to offer high consumer satisfaction, implement multichannel integration to connect with their customer base (website, call centres, physical counters, e-mails and social media), being one of the main industries that explore customer service via social media channels.

The questionnaire structures four main sections: consumer characteristics, eWOM intention and motivations, channel usage intention and multichannel behavior, and multiscreen behavior. In order to test the proposed conceptual model, the questionnaire was built from existing literature scales, adapted for each variable to study.

4.1.1.   Independent Variables

Perceived channel knowledge

Channel knowledge was measured by asking the respondents to rate to what extent they have online channel knowledge and experience. The response categories were shows in a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) and 5 (Strongly agree). Channel

knowledge was measured using multi-item scales (Table 5) that showed high reliability (Cronbach alpha (α) = 0.93) adapted from Frambach, Roest, and Krishnan (2007).

Table 5 – Perceived channel knowledge scale

1. I have a great deal of experience with online channels.
2. I have used or been exposed to online channels in the past.
3. I am familiar with the different possibilities to use online channels.
4. I frequently inform myself on the possibilities of using online channels.
5. I am very confident in using online channels.

Perceived service knowledge

Service knowledge was measured according to service involvement characteristics. The four items (Table 6) were adapted from the apparel/electronic product analysis from Frasquet, Mollá, and Ruiz (2015), which prove high reliability with Cronbach α for the items of 0.904. The response categories were shows in a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Far below average) and 5 (Far above average).

Table 6 – Perceived service knowledge scale

1. How much time do you devote to airline travel services, relative to other people?
2. How much are you involved with airline travel services?
3. How much do you feel like you are an airline travel expert?
4. How intensively are you interested in airline travel services, relative to other people?

Perceived channel utility

As for perceived channel utility, Wang, *et al.* (2014) provide a list of variables that translate the analysis of channel utility by analysing both consumers' perceived channel benefits and costs (Table 7). The items were analysed according to 1 (Not at all important) and 5 (Extremely important).

Table 7 – Perceived channel utility scale

Indicator: When I share information, the channel I choose must…:

Item	Source
1. Good source of information.	Hausman *et al.* (2009)
2. Supply relevant information.	(Information quality)
3. Informative about the industry services.	

4.	Provide a high level of overall service through its channel.	Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003)
5.	Provide reliable service through its channel.	(Information service quality)
6.	Provide helpful assistance through its channel.	
7.	Easy to find what I am looking for on the channel.	Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003)
8.	Easy to move around on the channel.	(Accessibility/Easy-to-use)
9.	Offer a logical layout that is easy to follow.	
10.	It is one that I would enjoy.	Sweeney *et al.* (2001)
11.	It is one that I would feel relaxed about using.	(Enjoyment)
12.	It would make me feel good.	
13.	It helps me to feel acceptable.	Sweeney *et al.* (2001)
14.	It helps me improve the way I am perceived.	(Social Value)
15.	It helps me make a good impression on other people.	
16.	It would give me social approval.	
17.	It does not cost a lot of time.	Verhoef *et al.* (2007)
18.	It does not cost a lot of effort.	(Time/effort risks)
19.	Easy to share information with others.	
20.	It is secure.	Montoya-Weiss *et al.* (2003)
21.	It gives me privacy.	(Privacy/security risks)

Consumers' eWOM intention

Sreenivasan *et al.* (2012), while studying airline product and services consumers and their travel-related information exchange among users in microblogging sites, analysed 9 types of consumer communication (Table 8). The inter-rater reliability for the coders, according to Krippendorf's α value of 0.81, indicate acceptable levels of agreement. Through these types of consumer communication, it was identified 9 items presented in a 5-point scale Likert-format from 1 (Does not describe me) and 5 (Describes me extremely well).

Table 8 – Consumers' eWOM intention scale

Indicator: I share information with other people in online channels in order to…

1.	Appreciate airline's product and services. [Compliments]
2.	Share companies' promotions, recent news and events. [Marketing]
3.	Share my status messages and personal updates. [Personal updates]
4.	Share my airline experience. [Information sharing]
5.	Seek help and support from users about airline questions. [Community support]
6.	Expect a clarification about a certain airline. [Information seeking]
7.	Express negative feelings about an airline. [Grievances]

8. Interact with other users about an airline company. [Socializing]
9. Share spam/irrelevant information. [Spam]

EWOM Consumer Motivations

Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) provides a framework scale that expresses a eWOM motivation scale for consumer's intention to engage in online channels. The eWOM motives construct was measured using a 25-item scale proposed by the authors (Table 9), which was originated by an analysis of 11 distinct motives based on the total utility framework adapted from Balasubramanian *et al.* (2005). Previous, Henning-Thurau *et al.* (2004) instigated a 49-item scale, that after being subject to user judgements, was reduced for the following 25-item. The 11 factors were reduced to 8 factors according to its reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.785$). The following individual items are presented in a five-point rating scale, as participants were asked to ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) due to its Likert scale format.

Table 9 – Consumer motivations for eWOM communication behavior scale

Indicator: I write comments in online channels because…

1. I believe the platform operator knows the person in charge within the company and will convey my message.
2. The platform operator will stand up for me when speaking to the company.
3. It is more convenient than writing to or calling the company.
4. One has more power together with others than writing a single letter of complaint.
5. The company harmed me, and now I will harm the company.
6. I want to take vengeance upon the company.
7. My contributions help me to shake off frustration about bad buys.
8. I like to get anger off my chest.
9. I want to warn others of bad products.
10. I want to save others for from having the same negative experiences as me.
11. I want to help others with my own positive experiences.
12. I want to give other the opportunity to buy the right product.
13. This way I can express my joy about a good buy.
14. I feel good when I can tell others about my buying successes.
15. I can tell others about a great experience.
16. My contributions show others that I am a cleaver customer.
17. I believe a chat among like-minded people is a nice thing.
18. It is fun to communicate this way with other people in the community.
19. I meet nice people this way.

20. I receive incentives (e.g. Web Miles).

21. I receive a reward for the writing.

22. I am so satisfied with a company and its product that I want to help the company to be successful.

23. In my own opinion, good companies should be supported.

24. I expect to receive tips or support from other users.

25. I hope to receive advice from others that helps me solve my problems.

4.1.2. Dependent Variables

Channel Usage Intention

Adapted from Yu, Niehm, and Russel (2011) channel usage intention items, the following table 10 represents all items modified according to each category of channels from Kozinets *et al.* (2010) for the current study, with the objective to study wich channels consumers normaly use in order to share information about an airline company services with others. Also, in order to identify the choosen channel for each type of eWOM communication, another question was conducted to perceive that behavior. It was identified 9 items presented in a 5-point scale Likert-format according to 1 (Extremely unlikely) and 5 (Extremely likely) according to the respondent's willingness to share information through certain channel.

Table 10 – Channel usage behavior scale

Indicator: I am willing to share information about airline service companies through…:

1. Blogs, forums, online fan pages (Facebook pages).

2. Online group discussion platforms (Facebook groups).

3. Instant group messaging (group messenger).

4. Webpages, review websites (TripAdvisor), video sharing platforms (YouTube).

5. Chatrooms, microblogs (Twitter), social network sites (Facebook posts) or photo sharing platforms (Instagram).

6. Live video streaming (Periscope, Facebook Live).

7. E-mails.

8. Text-based messages (WhatsApp).

9. Videoconference (Skype), Instant Messaging (Messenger).

Multichannel Behavior

Given few articles studying multichannel behavior in the context of the sender of eWOM communication, the first two items were adapted from Yu, Niehm, and Russel

(2011) study about multichannel shopping. The other three items were created for the current dissertation in order to analyse consumers' eWOM sender communications in a multichannel context (Table 11). Respondents were asked to select which statements best describe their behavior in a 5-point scale Likert-format, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree".

Table 11 – Multichannel behavior scale

1. I usually share the same information through different online channels (e.g. Twitter + Messenger).
2. I go back and forth between several different online channels before choosing where I share certain information.
3. I usually share information in the same set of channels that I am used to it.
4. I usually use a set of channels according to which ones suit best giving the information characteristics.
5. I usually share information in the channel that allows me to obtain social recognition.

Multiscreen Behavior

Similarly, the multiscreen scale was created for the current study based on the literature analysis made for the study (Table 12). Respondents were asked which statements best describe their behavior, according to 1 (Strongly disagree) and 5 (Strongly agree).

Table 12 – Multiscreen behavior scale

1. I usually use more than one screen at the same time when I use more than one channel (e.g. smartphone + computer).
2. I usually use more than one screen when I share information online with others.
3. Most of the time I start an activity in one screen and then continue in another.

4.2. Sample Characterization

The questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 130 portuguese adult consumers that had previous acquired airline services, in the first week of October, in order to obtain their valuable insight in the topic. Using a structured questionnaire, a total of 27 started the questionnaire but did not finish it, presenting a response rate of 79.23% of usable questionnaires, giving a valid sample of 103 responses.

The age of the respondents vary between 18 and 51 years old with an average age of 25 years old, but there is a large number of respondents with less than 24 years old. The following Table 13 lists the characteristics from the sample according to their gender, education level, professional situation and income. Also, it was asked to respondents their frequency of internet use, being that a large number (87%) access the Internet everyday. This can be explained since most of the respondents have or attend a superior education (85.4%).

Table 13 – Sample characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency of Sample	Percentage of Sample
Gender:		
Male	43	41.7%
Female	59	57.3%
Other	1	1%
Education Level:		
Elementary School	0	0.0%
Middle School	3	2.9%
High School	12	11.7%
Bachelor's Degree	57	55.3%
Master's Degree	30	29.1%
Doctoral	1	1.0%
Professional Situation:		
Working (paid employee)	46	44.7%
Working (self-employed)	5	4.9%
Not working	13	12.6%
Retired / Unable to work	0	0.0%
Student	38	36.9%
Other	1	1.0%
Income:		
Until 500 €	3	2.9%
From 501 € to 1 000 €	33	32%
From 1 001 € to 1 500 €	23	22.3%
From 1 501 € to 2 000 €	20	19.4%
From 2 001 € to 2 500 €	10	9.7%
More than 2 500 €	9	8.7%
Not respond / Missing	5	4.9%
Internet Use:		
Every day	87	84.5%
5 or 6 days per week	12	11.7%
Between 2 and 4 days per week	3	2.9%
Once a week or less	1	1.0%

Also, it was asked how many times respondents take an airline travel, on average, considering the last 3 years. The respondents said they take on average 3 or 4 trips a year,

being that most of them take less than 3 trips per year. The minimum response considers 0 trips, meaning that the respondent did not travel by airplane in the last 3 years. Also the maximum responses was 6, excluding outliers. It is also possible to observe that self-employed consumers are the ones that take on average more airline trips per year, probably due to its professional necessity or more disposable income. This last statement can be verified as, according to the sample, those who have higher monthly aggregated family income, are also the ones that travel more per year.

4.3.   Statistical Analysis Techniques

The elaboration of the questionnaire and the selection of the constructs were based on the literature review mentioned in the first chapter. The statistical packages used for the present dissertation were Microsoft Excel, IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In a first stage, all the variable items were entered into a principal components analysis (PCA) in order to examine the dimensionality of the entire set of items. This procedure is preferred for this study than the application of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) since the PCA is more adequate in order to take into consideration the exploratory state of the typology of eWOM communication motives. After analysing the variables according to their variation and also structure some cluster analysis, it was safe to proceed to linear correlation models with the intention to test the proposed hypothesis.

5.   Analysis and Results

5.1.   Scale Validation

In order to analyse if the variables were correlated with each other, a factor analysis was conducted to each variable, in order to understand whether the items in the questionnaire are reliable and measure the same latent variable if the variables are representative of what is being tested.

For the eWOM motivations scale, the factor analysis identified 7 factors, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure the sample adequacy of 0.751. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy indicates that the sample under analysis is appropriate to perform a principal component analysis (PCA). As the measure ranges between 0 and 1, values above 0.6 are considered acceptable to perform PCA (as in this case with the value of 0.751). Also, according to the Bartlett's test, where a hypothesis test is analysed if the initial variables are not correlated (correlation matrix is an identity matrix), the results show the data analyst has to reject the null hypothesis, thus concluding there are pairs of variables significantly correlated (as Sig. = 0.000), allowing to perform a PCA.

Based on Kaiser's eigenvalue criterion, seven factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted by applying a Varimax rotation. They were labelled according to extraversion/self-enhancement (Factor 1), venting negative feelings (Factor 2), concern for other consumers (Factor 3), helping the company/advice seeking (Factor 4), economic incentives (Factor 5), platform assistance (Factor 6), and social benefits (Factor 7). All these variables are in conformity regarding the original study from Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004), although the original study has 8 factors. Here, the original factors of advice seeking and helping the company merged into the same factor. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.892 was obtained for the measurement of the reliability of the variables, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the scale with the specific sample. The following table contains the factor loadings for the rotated PCA solution and Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the factors.

Table 14 – Results of Principal Components Analysis for eWOM Motivations Scale

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
Factor 1 – Extraversion / Self enhancement (Cronbach's alpha = 0.897)							
15. I can tell others about a great experience.	0.886						
14. I feel good when I can tell others about my buying successes.	0.849						
16. My contributions show others that I am a cleaver customer.	0.790						
13. This way I can express my joy about a good buy.	0.728						
19. I meet nice people this way.	0.481				0.455		
Factor 2 – Venting negative feelings (Cronbach's alpha = 0.896)							
6. I want to take vengeance upon the company.		0.885					
5. The company harmed me, and now I will harm the company.		0.876					
8. I like to get anger off my chest.		0.848					
7. My contributions help me to shake off frustration about bad buys.		0.810					
Factor 3 – Concern for other consumers (Cronbach's alpha = 0.849)							
10. I want to save others for from having the same negative experiences as me.			0.915				
11. I want to help others with my own positive experiences.			0.820				
12. I want to give other the opportunity to buy the right product.			0.763				
9. I want to warn others of bad products.			0.701				
Factor 4 – Helping the company / Advice seeking (Cronbach's alpha = 0.822)							
25. I hope to receive advice from others that helps me solve my problems.				0.787			
24. I expect to receive tips or support from other users.				0.767			
23. In my own opinion, good companies should be supported.				0.729			
22. I am so satisfied with a company and its product that I want to help the company to be successful.				0.689			

Factor 5 – Economic incentives (Cronbach's alpha = 0.934)			
21. I receive a reward for the writing.		**0.909**	
20. I receive incentives (e.g. Web Miles).		**0.908**	
Factor 6 – Platform assistance (Cronbach's alpha = 0.786)			
2. The platform operator will stand up for me when speaking to the company.			**0.841**
1. I believe the platform operator knows the person in charge within the company and will convey my message.			**0.841**
3. It is more convenient than writing to or calling the company.			**0.583** 0.556
Factor 7 – Social benefits (Cronbach's alpha = 0.714)			
17. I believe a chat among like-minded people is a nice thing.	0.502		**0.669**
4. One has more power together with others than writing a single letter of complaint.			**0.639**
18. It is fun to communicate this way with other people in the community.	0.585		**0.636**

For the eWOM intention scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of the sample adequacy of 0.859 and the Bartlett's test (as Sig. = 0.000) conclude there are pairs of variables significantly correlated, allowing the conduction of the PCA. After applying a Varimax rotation (all the variables with eigenvalue higher than one), the factor analysis indicated that the original 9 factors are reduced to two factors, that explained 65% of the variance of the initial variables. Factor 1 relied on compliments, personal updates and information sharing representing a group where consumers focus more on sharing their experience and information. Factor 2 relied on items related with information seeking, community support and socializing, thus representing consumers that intend to seek for information and socializing. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.886, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the scale with the specific sample. The following table contains the factor loadings for the rotated PCA solution and Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the factors.

Table 15 – Results of Principal Components Analysis for eWOM Intention Scale

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 1 – Information sharing (Cronbach's alpha = 0.888)		
4. Share my airline experience.	0.855	
2. Share companies' promotions, recent news and events.	0.839	
3. Share my status messages and personal updates.	0.820	
1. Appreciate airline's product and services.	0.775	
Factor 2 – Information seeking (Cronbach's alpha = 0.799)		
5. Seek help and support from users about airline questions.		0.818
6. Expect a clarification about a certain airline.		0.766
7. Express negative feelings about an airline.		0.725
8. Interact with other users about an airline company.		0.627
9. Share spam/irrelevant information.		0.490

A PCA analysis was also conducted for the perceived channel utility scale (KMO = 0.763; Bartlett's Sig. = 0.000) and, after applying a Varimax rotation, the factor analysis reduced the original 21 variables into 4 factors that explained 74% of the variance of the initial variables. The original items indicated the presence of seven factors, although previous literature was conducted for consumers that only seek for information. For this study the variables were grouped through enjoyment and social value (Factor 1 – the perceived sharing experiences that reflect the hedonic value of shopping in a channel), information quality (Factor 2 - the perceived quality, quantity, accessibility of

information for consumers), channel risks (Factor 3 - consumer confidence in online security and privacy), and accessibility (Factor 4 - the perceived ease and speed at which consumers can share information on products in the specific channel).

A Cronbach's alpha of 0.902 was obtained for the measurement of the reliability of the variables, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the scale with the specific sample. The following table contains the factor loadings for the rotated PCA solution and Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the factors.

Table 16 – Results of Principal Component Analysis for Perceived Channel Utility Scale

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1 – Enjoyment / Social Value (Cronbach's alpha = 0.917)				
14. It helps me improve the way I am perceived.	0.876			
13. It helps me feel acceptable.	0.848			
15. It helps me make good impression on other people.	0.830			
12. It would make me feel good.	0.798			
16. It would give me social approval.	0.756			
10. One I would enjoy.	0.749			
11. One that I would feel relaxed about using.	0.728			
Factor 2 – Information Quality (Cronbach's alpha = 0.939)				
1. Good source of information.		0.920		
2. Supply relevant information.		0.902		
6. Provide helpful assistance through the channel.		0.865		
5. Provide reliable service through the channel.		0.861		
3. Informative about the industry services.		0.828		
4. Provide a high level of overall service through the channel.		0.813		
Factor 3 – Channel Risks (Cronbach's alpha = 0.878)				
21. It gives me privacy.			0.866	
17. It does not cost a lot of time.			0.849	
20. It is secure.			0.810	
18. It does not cost a lot of effort.			0.749	
19. Easy to share information with others.			0.640	
Factor 4 – Accessibility / Easy-to-use (Cronbach's alpha = 0.809)				
8. Easy to move around the channel.				0.836
9. Offer a logical layout that is easy to follow.				0.836
7. Easy to find what I am looking for on the channel.				0.600

After checking the PCA procedures (KMO = 0.704) for the channel usage intention, the factor analysis identified three factors extracted from the 9 variables that explained 76% of the variance of the initial variables. The factors were structured according to Kozinets *et al.* (2010) communication scope: one-to-one (Factor 1), many-to-many (Factor 2), and one-to-many (Factor 3). Although both item 6 and item 9 are misplaced according to the original separation, they were grouped according to which variables had more representation. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.773 indicates internal consistency of the scale with the specific sample.

Table 17 – Results of Principal Components for Channel Usage Intention Scale

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1 – One-to-one (Cronbach's alpha = 0.673)			
8. Text-based messages (WhatsApp).	0.821		
7. E-mails.	0.746		
6. Live video streaming (Periscope, Facebook Live).	0.667		
Factor 2 – Many-to-many channels (Cronbach's alpha = 0.784)			
2. Online group discussion platforms (Facebook groups).		0.892	
1. Blogs, forums, online fan pages (Facebook pages).		0.856	
3. Instant group messaging (group messenger).		0.555	
Factor 3 – One-to-many (Cronbach's alpha = 0.697)			
9. Videoconference (Skype), Instant Messaging (Messenger).			0.790
4. Webpages, review websites (TripAdvisor), video sharing platforms (YouTube).			0.789
5. Chatrooms, microblogs (Twitter), social network sites (Facebook posts) or photo sharing platforms (Instagram).			0.733

As for the perceived channel knowledge and perceived service knowledge scale, the KMO measure of the sample adequacy is 0.891 and 0.881 accordingly, with both having a Bartlett's test (Sig. = 0.000) was rejected and the factor analysis identified only one factor. The factor resulting from channel knowledge explained 81% of the variance of the initial variable. Similarly, the factor resulting from service knowledge explained 81% of the variance of the initial variable. There was also a high level of internal consistency of each scale with the respectively specific sample.

For the multichannel scale, the KMO measure is 0.790 and the null hypothesis for the Bartlett's test (Sig. = 0.000) was rejected, leading to a factor analysis that identified only one factor that explained 56% of the variance of the initial variable. Also, for the

multiscreen behavior scale, with KMO = 0.704 and Bartlett's Sig. = 0.000, only one factor was identified, explaining 76% of the variance of the initial variable.

Table 18 – Factor analysis for perceived channel knowledge, service knowledge, multichannel behavior, and multiscreen behavior scales

	Factor 1
Perceived channel knowledge factor (Cronbach's alpha = 0.939)	
5. I am very confident in using online channels.	0.954
1. I have a great deal of experience with online channels.	0.926
3. I am familiar with the different possibilities to use online channels.	0.922
2. I have used or been exposed to online channels in the past.	0.851
4. I frequently inform myself on the possibilities of using online channels.	0.835
Perceived service knowledge factor (Cronbach's alpha = 0.931)	
2. How much are you involved with airline travel services?	0.937
3. How much do you feel like you are an airline travel expert?	0.910
4. How intensively are you interested in airline travel services, relative to other people?	0.907
1. How much time do you devote to airline travel services, relative to other people?	0.891
Multichannel behavior factor (Cronbach's alpha = 0.796)	
1. I usually share the same information through different online channels (e.g. Twitter + Messenger).	0.839
4. I usually use a set of channels according to which ones suit best giving the information characteristics.	0.826
5. I usually share information in the channel that allows me to obtain social recognition.	0.730
3. I usually share information in the same set of channels that I am used to it.	0.681
2. I go back and forth between several different online channels before choosing where I share certain information.	0.637
Multiscreen behavior factor (Cronbach's alpha = 0.841)	
1. I usually use more than one screen at the same time when I use more than one channel (e.g. smartphone + computer).	0.905
3. Most of the time I start an activity in one screen and then continue in another.	0.873
2. I usually use more than one screen when I share information online with others.	0.835

5.2. Analysis of bivariate (Pearson) correlation

Before testing the proposed conceptual model hypothesis, it is relevant to conduct a preliminary exploratory analysis to investigate if there is a relationship between variables, in order to contextualize and reinforce the proposed hypothesis. All correlations

between the 7 variables are positively significant (at the 0.01 or 0.05 levels), meaning that when one variable increases in value, the second variable also increases in value.

It was expected that perceived channel knowledge and perceived service knowledge influence perceived channel utility. According to the bivariate correlation analysis, only perceived channel knowledge was confirmed to have a moderate positive linear association with perceived channel utility, since there is a statistical significance at the 0.01 level. As for perceived service knowledge, the correlation with perceived channel utility is assumed to be small, thus not statistically significant.

Moreover, it was found that channel usage intention has a moderate positive correlation with multichannel behavior, as previous suspected. This means that changes in one variable are moderately correlated with changes in the second variable. Also it is noticeable that the all the variables in the study have a positive relevant correlation with the independent variable of multichannel behavior, at the 0.01 level.

Also, it is important to notice that there is a moderate positive correlation between either eWOM intention and eWOM motivations with channel usage intention and multichannel behavior, indicating an important relation between the principal analysis of the conceptual model: eWOM and multichannel behavior.

Table 19 – Correlation matrix between variables

	Multichannel Behavior	Multiscreen Behavior	Channel Usage Intention	Perceived Channel Utility	eWOM Intention	eWOM Motivations	Perceived Channel Knowledge
Multiscreen Behavior	0.418**						
Channel Usage Intention	0.654**	0.382**					
Perceived Channel Utility	0.284**	0.219*	0.207*				
eWOM Intention	0.457**	0.447**	0.380**	0.259**			
eWOM Motivations	0.535**	0.270**	0.404*	0.345**	0.461**		
Perceived Channel Knowledge	0.333**	0.399**	0.396**	0.358**	0.375**	0.274**	
Perceived Service Knowledge	0.389**	0.383**	0.357	0.124	0.566**	0.250*	0.376**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

5.3.   Cluster Analysis

To access the proposed hypothesis, it was necessary to create distinct groups for eWOM intentions: information sharing and information seeking consumers. To generate these groups a cluster analysis by Ward's method was conducted concluding the existence of 2 groups. Running a non-parametrical K-Means cluster analysis to verify the same 2 groups it was determined that the first group, considered by information seeking consumers had a sample of 71 respondents. The other group 2 was mainly considered from information sharing consumers, with a size sample of 30 respondents. By conducting an independent samples t test, it was possible to conclude that by Levene's test the two samples come prom populations with equal variance of the variable eWOM intention. The model indicated that there is significant mean differences for the mean differences between the two groups as the level of intention to eWOM is not the same for sharing and seeking intentions. As both the lower and the upper limits of the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference in the eWOM intention are negative, consumers that intend to share information have a higher propensity for eWOM intention than those that seek information.

In the same premises, to create groups of consumers that are homogenous regarding eWOM motivations, it is necessary to perform a cluster analysis for the 7 dimensions previously obtained from the PCA. After an initial analysis, it was conducted a non-hierarchical K-Means cluster analysis in order to validate the solution in the 6 groups suggested by the Ward's method. By crosstabulating the solution it was possible to conclude that the proportion of individuals equal grouped in the two procedures equals $(10+5+37+7+26+11)/103=0.93$. The solution was compared with the Complete Linkage method but the best validating analysis is the one with 6 factors. As the samples do not have a normal distribution, it was selected an appropriate non-parametric alternative to the one-way independent-samples ANOVA: Kruskal-Wallis test. The analysis was used to verify if there were significant mean differences between the defined groups and concluded that expressing negative feelings and helping the company had the higher mean rank for eWOM motivations (Table 20).

Table 20 - Mean differences regarding eWOM motivations

Cluster Tag	N	Mean Rank (motivations)
1 – Platform assistance	10	18.00
2 – Extraversion / Self-enhancement	5	39.10
3 – Concern for others	37	46.47
4 – Economic incentives	7	38.00
5 – Negative feelings + Helping the company	26	74.25
6 – Social Value	11	33.14
Total	96	

After submitting the PCA of channel usage intention variable into a cluster analysis Ward's method, it conclude the existence of 3 groups. Running a non-parametrical K-Means cluster analysis to verify the same 3 groups it was concluded that the first group, considered by consumers that are more inclined to choose many-to-many channels had a sample of 28 respondents. Group 2 was considered for one-to-many channel preference, with a size sample of 48 respondents, and group 3 for one-to-one channels, a sample of 24. Also, it was showed that, although "one-to-many" consumers represented the highest sample, it was the least likely channels for consumers to choose for sharing information. The other two groups had a mean rank similar according to the Kruskall-Wallis test.

The last important variable to perform a cluster analysis with its PCA's factors is perceived channel utility. According to Ward's method it was decided the existing of 4 groups: costs (Factor 1), enjoyment (Factor 2), information (Factor 3), and accessibility (Factor 4) with 6 + 54 + 22 + 16 sample size accordingly. Also, by conducting a Kruskall-Wallis analysis, after the parametrical analysis ANOVA was rejected, it was showed that the factor that consumers interpret as the most important in a channel is the disposal amount of information, being the costs of the channel surprisingly the last of the perceived utility factors in a channel, preceded by enjoyment (2º) and accessibility (3º).

5.4. Hypotheses Testing

After the preliminary exploratory analysis to understand if there is a correlation between the variables, it is necessary to estimate the linear regression model in order to predict the value of a variable based on the value of another variable.

H1: Perceived channel knowledge has a positive impact on consumers' perceived channel utility.

The first hypothesis estimates that consumers with more knowledge about a certain channel may have a positive perception of the channel utilities. Thus, it was expected that perceived channel knowledge will have a positive impact on the user's perceived channel utility. Correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.358.

After estimating both variables with a simple linear regression model it was possible to conclude that 12.8% ($R^2 = 0.128$) of the variation of the variable perceived channel utility is explained by the level of perceived channel knowledge. There is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that the model is valid (Sig 0.000 < 0.05), thus the explanatory variable perceived channel knowledge explains the dependent variable of perceived channel utility (accept H1).

H2: Perceived channel knowledge has a positive impact on channel usage intention.

The other hypothesis relies on the belief that channel knowledge can influence channel usage as consumers can more easily understand the premises of a channel as more knowledge they have about a certain channel, thus reducing the channel pattern length (Pozza, 2014). The correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.396.

After estimating the two variables with a simple linear regression model it was possible to conclude that 21.3% ($R^2 = 0.213$) of the variation of the variable channel usage intention is explained by the level of perceived channel knowledge. There is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables, with a valid ANOVA analysis (Sig 0.000 < 0.05), concluding that the independent variable of channel knowledge explains channel usage intention (accept H2).

H3: Perceived service knowledge has a positive impact on channel usage intention.

The correlation between both variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.357. Before continuing with the linear correlation, it is important to highlight the fact that consumers that flight more on average per year are

the ones that have higher perceived knowledge about airline service companies, as the variable explains 34.5% of service expertize, according to a conducted linear regression model.

Regarding the hypothesis testing, it was possible to conclude that 12.7% ($R^2 = 0.127$) of the variation of the variable channel usage intention is explained by the level of perceived service knowledge. There is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig 0.000 < 0.05). There is statistical evidence that the level of perceived service expertize significantly explains channel usage intention, as all the assumptions of the model was checked, and the residuals form a normal distribution (accept H3).

H4: Perceived channel utility has a positive impact on channel usage intention.

After estimating the linear regression between the two variables it was possible to conclude that only 4.3% ($R^2 = 0.043$) of the variation of the variable channel usage intention is explained by the level of perceived channel utility. Although, there is a positive linear correlation between the two variables and their correlation is significant at 0.05 level, given a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.207. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig 0.037 < 0.05), thus the explanatory variable perceived channel utility explains the dependent variable of channel usage intention, although the impact of perceived channel utility is weak on the channel usage intention.

It is also important for the analysis to compare the means from the cluster analysis groups formed with the PCA factors from perceived channel utility. It is possible to conclude that the assumption of equality of variances is fulfilled (Levene's test: Sig. 0.204 > 0.05), proceeding with the ANOVA analysis that determines that the mean propensity of channel usage is the same for all the groups defined by perceived channel utility.

In order to make the assumption of H4 valid, as there is a weak correlations, a multiple linear regression model was conducted for the dependent variable of channel usage. In a first analysis the variable channel utility was excluded from the model as the test indicated that the variable is no important in explaining channel usage intention (Sig. 0.423 > 0.05). For this reason, the hypothesis H4 was rejected. If the variable was not rejected it would be also possible to analyze if the choice of channels by individuals who

perceive certain channel utility is strengthened by channel knowledge, making channel utility as a moderator variable of that relation. By the same model it is also possible to observe that either channel knowledge or service knowledge are important in explaining channel choice, strengthening the assumption to accept H2 and H3.

H5: Perceived service knowledge will positively influence consumer's eWOM intentions.

As correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.566, it is possible to conclude that 32% ($R^2 = 0.320$) of the variation of the variable eWOM intention is explained by the level of perceived service knowledge, according to the linear regression model. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig $0.000 < 0.05$), thus the explanatory variable perceived service knowledge explains the variable of eWOM intention (accept H5).

It is also important to analyze the different eWOM intention groups of consumers (eWOM sharing and eWOM seeking) according to their perceived service knowledge, by conducting an independent-samples t-test with the cluster dimension variables. It is possible to know that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable channel usage intention and both come from populations with normal distribution. There is evidence that service knowledge is higher for those that intend share information than seeking, allowing to conclude that those who have a perceived service knowledge are more willing to share information.

H6: Consumer's eWOM motivations will positively influence eWOM behavior intentions.

The correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, giving a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.461. Also it was confirmed through a simple linear regression model that there is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables, as the independent variable of consumer eWOM motivations explains the variable of eWOM intention. Also, 21.3% ($R^2 = 0.213$) of the variation of consumers' eWOM intentions is explained by eWOM motivations. The decision is to accept the hypothesis.

To determine the ability of the different motives to predict eWOM behavior, it was conducted a multiple regression analyses with two measures of consumers' actual eWOM behavior as dependent variables and the six eWOM motive factors as independent variables. It was operationalized according to eWOM behavior in two ways: (a) information sharing, and (b) information seeking.

It was found that the motivations that have a significant impact on consumers' information sharing intention were (factor 4) helping the company and (factor 3) concern for other consumers, as they significantly explains the variable of information sharing (Sig. < 0.05). All the other factors had a low impact on the dependent variable. Also, the fact that two factors had a negative regression coefficient number, indicates that venting negative feelings and economic incentives motives are the ones that lead consumers to engage less in eWOM behavior when sharing information (although these factors do not have a strong impact on the linear regression). On the other hand, for information seeking, the motivations of (factor 1) extraversion/self-enhancement, (factor 2) venting negative feelings and also (factor 4) helping the company/advice seeking were the ones with a strong impact on consumers' information seeking intention. The fact that the variable helping the company/advice seeking has a positive impact with the two eWOM behaviors has to do with the fact that the variable has both advice seeking (related with information seeking) and helping the company (related with information sharing). Table 21 lists the regression coefficients for all motive factors.

Table 21 – Factor-score regression results

Model	Regression Coefficients (Standardized)	
	Information sharing	Information seeking
Factor 1: Extraversion/ Self-enhancement	0.003	**0.231**
Factor 2: Venting negative feelings	-0.007	**0.218**
Factor 3: Concern for other consumers	**0.269**	0.181
Factor 4: Helping the company/ Advice seeking	**0.301**	**0.273**
Factor 5: Economic incentives	-0.039	-0.067
Factor 6: Platform assistance	0.139	0.151
Factor 7: Social benefits	0.048	0.076
R^2	0.185	0.232

H7: Consumers' adoption of electronic word-of-mouth will positively influence channel usage intention.

The correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.380. There is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables. After estimating the two variables with a simple linear regression model it was possible to conclude that only 14.4% ($R^2 = 0.144$) of the variation of the variable channel usage intention is explained by the level of eWOM intention. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig 0.000 < 0.05), thus the explanatory variable perceived channel utility explains the dependent variable of channel usage intention (accept H7).

Analyzing the different eWOM behavior groups of consumers (eWOM sharing and eWOM seeking) according to their channel usage intention, performing a T-test with the cluster analysis, it was possible to know that the two samples do not come from populations with equal variance (Sig. 0.011<0.05) of the variable channel usage intention and both come from populations with normal distribution. Also, the mean of the variable channel usage intention is not the same for the consumers that intend to seek or share information. Both the lower and the upper limits of the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference of channel usage are negative, suggesting that consumers that intend to share information are more willing to use online channels than those that seek for information.

H8: Consumers' eWOM motivations will positively influence channel usage intention.

There is a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables as Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.404, at 0.01 level. After estimating the two variables it was possible to conclude that only 16.3% ($R^2 = 0.163$) of the variation of the variable channel usage intention is explained by eWOM motivations. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig 0.000 < 0.05), thus the independent variable explains the channel usage intention (accept H8).

It is also important to analyze the different consumers' eWOM motivations according to their channel usage intention. According to Kruskall-Wallis non-parametric test, as it was not possible to proceed for the ANOVA equality of variances, the

distribution of the variable multichannel behavior is different for at least one of the six populations defined by consumers' eWOM motivations. Analyzing the sample mean ranks, it is possible to conclude that there is evidence from the sample that consumers that have altruism (concern for other consumers and helping the company), and social value motivations, are the ones that intend to use online channels for eWOM communications. On the other hand, economic incentives is not an important motivation when choosing an online channel.

Table 22 – Mean differences regarding eWOM motivations and channel usage intentions

Cluster Tag	N	Mean Rank
1 – Platform assistance	10	28.60
2 – Extraversion / Self-enhancement	5	46.50
3 – Concern for other consumers	36	54.76
4 – Economic incentives	7	17.00
5 – Negative feelings + Helping the company	26	51.10
6 – Social Value	11	56.59
Total	95	

a. Test variable: channel usage intention

In order to better perceive which explanatory variables have a statistical significant impact on channel usage intention, all explanatory variables that have a positive correlation with the dependent variable were aggregated into a multiple linear regression model. Although the hypothesis of channel utility was rejected, it also had a positive correlation with channel usage, so it was also added to the model. After estimating the model it was possible to conclude that 28.7% ($R^2 = 0,287$) of the variation of the dependent variable is explained by the explanatory variables in the model, which it is a quit low percentage. With the ANOVA analysis it is possible to conclude that the multiple linear regression model under analysis is valid since at least some of the explanatory variables used are important in explaining the dependent variable.

Investigating which variables are important on explaining channel usage intentions, only perceived channel knowledge and eWOM motivations positively impact the adoption of a channel for information sharing as (Sig. < 0.05). This can also been seen when testing the variance of the variables on channel usage, where channel knowledge and eWOM motivations where the ones that had higher R^2. So, it is imperative to calculate the same model without the explanatory variables rejected from the first analysis. After analysing the model, the explanatory variables explain 25.1% ($R^2 = 0,251$) of the

dependent variable. This model is valid with the variable eWOM motivations has a larger magnitude than perceived channel knowledge, indicating that motivations is the most important variable that explains channel usage.

Table 23 – Coefficient analysis with explanatory variables of channel usage intention

Model	R^2	Understandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)		0.455	0.609		0.746	0.458
Perceived service knowledge	0.127	0.149	0.100	0.160	1.490	0.140
Perceived channel utility	0.043	-0.018	0.153	-0.011	-0.117	0.907
Perceived channel knowledge	0.213	0.187	0.079	0.237	2.368	0.020
eWOM intentions	0.144	0.78	0.112	0.080	0.695	0.488
eWOM motivations	0.163	0.385	0.145	0.268	2.657	0.009
2 (Constant)		0.543	0.445		1.221	0.225
Perceived channel knowledge	0.213	0.244	0.071	0.309	3.419	0.001
eWOM motivations	0.163	0.459	0.130	0.319	3.532	0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Channel usage intention

H9: Channel usage intention will positively influence consumers' multichannel behavior.

The correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting the highest coefficient (0.654) of the Pearson correlation analysis, indicating that there is a positive linear correlation between channel usage intention and multichannel behavior. It is also possible to conclude that 42.7% ($R^2 = 0.427$) of the variation of the variable multichannel behavior is explained by the level of channel usage intention. There is statistical evidence that the level of channel usage intention significantly explains multichannel behavior. As this hypothesis is intuitive, it represents that having several online channels on disposal, the more intention of use of several, conducts to a higher level of multichannel behavior.

It is also essential to compare the means of the variable multichannel behavior according to the three groups detected from the hierarchical cluster analysis on channel usage, in order to see if there is any statistically significant differences among them. Running a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), according to the Levene's test the assumption of equality of variances is fulfilled (Sig. 0.245 > 0.05) and at least one mean

is different from the others. Those that use more one-to-many channels are the ones that have the lowest intention to contemplate multichannel behavior for the same information sharing than those who intend to use more other channels.

H10: Consumer's electronic word-of-mouth motivations will positively affect the adoption of a multichannel behavior.

The correlation between the two variables is significant at 0.01 level, presenting a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.535. After estimating the two variables with a simple linear regression model it was possible to conclude that only 28.6% ($R^2 = 0.286$) of the variation of the variable multichannel behavior is explained by the level of eWOM motivations. As for the ANOVA analysis of the linear regression model, it concludes that it is valid (Sig $0.000 < 0.05$), thus the explanatory variable consumers' eWOM motivations explains the dependent variable of multichannel behavior (accept H11).

It is also important to analyze the different eWOM motivations groups of consumers, using the cluster analysis results, according to their multichannel behavior. The two samples come from populations with different variance of the variable (Levene's test Sig. $0.015 < 0.05$): proceed with Kurskall-Wallis. The distribution of the variable multichannel behavior is different for at least one of the six populations defined by consumers' eWOM motivations. Analyzing the sample mean ranks, it is possible to conclude that there is evidence from the sample that multichannel behavior is higher for those that intend to warn others (concern for other consumers) and also the variables helping the company and venting negative feelings, indicating a certain altruism from consumers that influence the use of multiple channels when sharing one information about an airline company. On the other hand, those that seek platform assistance are the ones with less propensity to engage in a multichannel behavior.

Table 24 – Mean differences regarding consumers' eWOM motivations and multichannel behavior

Cluster Tag	N	Mean Rank
1 – Platform assistance	10	28.30
2 – Extraversion / Self-enhancement	5	41.00
3 – Concern for others	36	55.33
4 – Economic incentives	7	32.64
5 – Negative feelings + Helping the company	26	53.87
6 – Social Value	11	41.00
Total	95	

a. Test variable: multichannel behavior

The most important question of the study lies on whether eWOM motivations have a significant impact on consumers' multichannel behavior. As this hypothesis is accepted in previous H9 estimation, it is important to see if, when the other variable that have a positive correlation with the variable of multichannel (channel usage intention) is added to the model, eWOM motivations are still useful on explaining the dependent variable. After estimating the multiple linear regression model it was possible to conclude that 51.5% (R^2 = 0,515) of the variation of the dependent variable is explained by the explanatory variables in the model. With the ANOVA analysis it is possible to conclude that the multiple linear regression model under analysis is valid since at least one of the explanatory variables used are important in explaining the dependent variable. Both explanatory variables were accepted, concluding that both channel usage intention and eWOM motivations are statistically explanatory for multichannel behavior. By analysing the standardized coefficients' Beta it is also possible to conclude that channel usage intention is the most important variable to explain multichannel behavior. In order to investigate if the other variables of the model have a direct explanatory impact on multichannel behavior, another multiple linear regression model was conducted with all explanatory variables, but none of them are useful for the model.

Table 25 - Coefficient analysis between channel usage intention, eWOM motivations and multichannel behavior

Model	R^2	Understandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		-0.648	0.419		-1.548	0.125
Channel usage intention	0.427	0.626	0.092	0.523	6.838	0.000
eWOM motivations	0.286	0.556	0.132	0.323	4.224	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Multichannel Behavior

H11: Consumer's multichannel behavior has a positive impact on multiscreen behavior.

Conducting a simple regression model it was possible to conclude that the variation of multiscreen behavior is explained by multichannel behavior (17.5%), as the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.418, at 0.01 level. The model was valid (Sig 0.000 < 0.05), confirming the acceptance of H11. This analysis was important, as multichannel behavior has a strong impact in a multiscreen environment.

6. Discussion and Recommendations

6.1. Main Conclusions

The current dissertation, build on prior literature regarding channel choice and eWOM motivations, develops a model that explains consumers' channel usage according to their electronic word-of-mouth intentions. Previous literature show that it is important to estimate channel choice according to channel attributes (Gensler, Verhoef, and Böhm, 2012): perceived channel knowledge, perceived service knowledge, and perceived channel utility. Through the conducted study, it was found that these three variables had a positive impact on channel choice. Between these three perceived attributes, the variable that most influenced channel usage intention was the perceived channel knowledge as it is the variable that most explain the dependent variable, by comparing their standardized coefficients. It is clear that improving this perception is the best way to obtain wider channel utilization (Albesa, 2007). Literature emphasizes this strong relation between channel knowledge and channel usage, since technological channels may present more difficulties for those with low expertize, and users' tend to choose channels where they are more comfortable with the technology employed (Albesa, 2007).

It was possible to note that, as more travel consumers make, savvier are about the industry, thus also more willing to engage on eWOM behavior. It was found that 32% of the variable perceived service knowledge explains eWOM behavior, meaning that consumers who know more about the industry, are also the ones that are more willing to share information on online channels. But another important finding indicates that perceived service knowledge has a low influence on explaining the variable of channel usage, proved by the multiple regression model, where this variable is not relevant when the other variables of the model are also estimated.

Also, although having a positive correlation, perceived channel utility does not have a significant impact on the dependent variable, since there is a weak influence of channel utility on consumers' channel usage (only 4.3% of the explained variance). When constructing a model that estimates which variables have an impact on channel usage, perceived channel utility is excluded from the model as it is not useful as an explanatory variable for channel choice. This result contrasts with literature review, as most studies

show that channel usage intentions are directly influenced by consumer perceptions of channel value (Yu, Niehm, and Russel, 2011).

As channel usage intention appears in the model as the primary dependent variable, resulting from the estimation of channel attributes and eWOM intentions, results show that not only channel knowledge is the most important variable for channel choice, also eWOM motivations play a significant role on the dependent variable, supporting the premises of the study. This analysis of the variables that influence channel usage make a contribution in the literature by finding that either channel knowledge and eWOM motivations are the variables that positively influence channel usage.

Analysing which motivations have a strong impact in consumers' intention for eWOM communications, either social value, concern for other consumers, and helping the company are the primary factors leading to channel usage behavior. These results only differ from the study from Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004), as in their findings, economic incentives play a significant role when consumers' share information on consumer-opinion platforms. Another relevant factor influencing channel usage is social value motivations, recalling the importance that consumers give to social capital and reputation (King, *et al.* 2014). Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) also found that consumers' desire for social interaction is the primary factor leading to eWOM behavior on consumer opinion platforms. Consumers may consider eWOM communication as an opportunity to socialize and maintain social interactions.

It was also found that consumers' eWOM motivations also have a positive correlation within multichannel behavior. Findings show that there is evidence that multichannel behavior adoption is higher for those that showed high motivation to help other consumers about certain service (concern for other consumers), indicating a high level of altruism or prosocial behavior (King, Racherla, and Bush, 2014). Also, the motivation of helping the company, as consumers feel satisfied with a service or a company and exchange with other consumers their positive experience, is related to the general altruism motive and the consumer considers the company a social institution worthy of support. Consumers have the intention to help others to make a satisfying purchase choice decision, consistent with the literature proposition that consumers are likely to engage in eWOM communication because of altruism motivations (Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster, 1998; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). This finding supports literature

findings that suggests that altruism directly influence overall motivation to eWOM communications within findings from the airline services industry (Bigné *et al.,* 2015).

It is interesting to note, however, according to eWOM intention, that the factor analysis for the variable of eWOM intentions parted the factors according to information sharing and information seeking intentions. Nevertheless, this is explained as most opinion leaders tend to be opinion seekers as they feel the need to seek information to acquire more knowledge about a service and to update information (Sun *et al*., 2006). King *et al.* (2014) also agrees that one of the consequences (what consumers acquire when engaging in eWOM) for senders is enhanced service knowledge, meaning that this is an important characteristic on the context of online channels.

As a conclusion, it is possible to accomplish that, when consumers perceive high channel knowledge, there is more probability for them to use online channels for the purpose of eWOM sharing. EWOM motivations also play a significant role on channel choice, as consumers that experience altruistic motivations, are the ones more willing to engage in a multichannel behavior.

Another important analysis, derived from the importance that, when studying multichannel behavior, the use of several screens are also an important factor to be considered since they are routinely used to access media (Rooksby *et al*., 2015) . Thus findings from the present dissertation proves that 17,5% of the variation of multiscreen behavior is explained by multichannel behavior, suggesting a low, but also positive relation that consumers who use several channels also tend to access them on more than one screen to complete the task of eWOM communication.

6.2.   Research and Managerial Contributions

The growth of internet usage and the variety of disposable channels start to have an important role on consumer behavior. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has been changing people's behavior and decisions as consumers tend to make decisions based on other consumers' opinions and information. As interaction channels, consumers engage in an ongoing conversation about companies and products. EWOM may accelerate and help a company's marketing efforts but it may also destroy its reputation and brand image

when consumers intend that the company failed to deliver according to consumers' expectations.

Companies are no longer controlling consumers' perceptions and habits, so they must get involved with these emergent forces among the consumers in order to stay aware of its guiding influences (Luedicke, 2006). In a world of constant consumer-to-consumer communication exchange, it is important for companies to understand what consumers are telling about the company and which online channels they choose for this information sharing. Understand what value customers derive from each channel is relevant in order to determine effective channel strategies (Noble, Griffith, and Weinberger, 2005). Understanding consumers' channel usage pattern and motivations allow companies to adjust their brand's presence in create greater value and relevance for the consumer.

While past literature is more focused on eWOM in one single channel, this dissertation highlights the need to focus on the entire set of online channels, as consumers start to adopt a multichannel behavior. In this context, and according to the finding results, companies need to (e.g. have a strong presence in a social network site in order to interact with the consumer, when he/she expresses a disappointment about an acquired service, to try to compensate and emend the error in order to maintain consumer satisfaction).

Not only focusing on companies, but for platform operators, the results of the study identifies consumers' motives for eWOM intention enabling platform operators to design their service and channel characteristics to facilitate and manage users messages. As indicated in the study, concern for others consumers and helping the company are the primary reasons consumers publish their experiences on opinion platforms. Also, it is important to structure the channel according to what consumers perceive as the most important characteristics in a channel, such allowing enjoyment. For example, because of the especially large impact that enjoyment has on channel usage, a platform provider might offer to consumers a channel experience that enhances joy to the consumer.

As channel experience proved significant as predicted, a better knowledge of the internet will provoke greater use of the channel with the purpose of eWOM communication. From this perspective, there is a need for companies and platform operators to promote internet use, facilitating the accessibilities of the channel.

6.3. Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

The study shows some research limitations that could be addressed in future research. First of all, only one industry was analysed, the industry of airline travel services. Even though, the conceptual model represent a transversal analysis for other industries, although the results cannot be generalised because it can vary according to the industry, especially the impact of perceived service knowledge on eWOM intentions and channel usage. However, it is worth noting through the literature that perceived channel knowledge is an important factor that justifies channel usage intentions, and this result is transversal through other industries as it is a variable that does not depend on the industry, but on the knowledge and experience in the channels that are incorporated in the analysis, as in this case, online channels.

Another important future research may relay on the fact that different consumer demographic characteristics may influence the use of multichannel behavior and eWOM intention. According to Konuş *et al*. (2008) covariates of multichannel behavior, the authors propose that demographic consumer characteristics induce different perceptions of the benefits of channel usage strategies. Either age, education level, income, or area of occupation can have an impact on consumers' multichannel behavior.

Also, the current study addresses the most used online channels, leaving aside other channel and screen innovations such handheld and wireless devices, touchscreen kiosks, electronic signage and shelf labels, virtual reality displays, body scanning, smart cards, and even robotics. On the other hand, the study does not address why consumers switch channels, since it is one of the major challenges for companies when defining a multichannel strategy in order to build synergies and minimize associated difficulties (Ansari, Mela, and Neslin, 2008). For this reason it is important to study migration between channels when consumers intend to engage in eWOM communications and also another important topic about channel cannibalization (Yu, Niehm, and Russel, 2011).

Future research may also explore consumer brand and anti-brand communities as a strong force for eWOM since consumers seek social connectivity and social enhancement. The community is built around common interests and form online because consumers are able to come together, regardless of geographical proximity, and identify with a common need, goal, or identity.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this research is to determine consumer's attitudes towards the use of channels, media, and screens when engaging in word-of-mouth. If you are or already have been a consumer of travel airlines, you are invited to participate in this study as your response will provide valuable insight to this topic.

Your participation in this study will be completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes of your time. Your responses will not be associated with your name or personal information. This survey is confidential. Only the researcher and the supervising faculty will have access to the information provided during the survey.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Ana Lucília Oliveira Rocha
Master Science in Marketing Student
ISCTE-IUL Business School

Section 1/4

Please check or fill with the appropriate information.

1. **Age:**

2. **Gender:**

Male	
Female	
Other	

3. **Education Level:**

Elementary School	
Middle School	
High School	
Bachelor's Degree	
Master's Degree	
Doctoral	

4. **Current employment status:**

Working (paid employee)	
Working (self-employed)	
Not working	
Retired / Unable to work	
Student	
Other	

5. **Monthly Aggregated Family Income** (after taxes)

Until 500 €	
From 501 € to 1 000 €	
From 1 001 € to 1 500 €	
From 1 501 € to 2 000 €	
From 2 001 € to 2 500 €	
More than 2 500 €	

6. **Frequency of Internet access:**

Every day	
5 or 6 days per week	
Between 2 and 4 days per week	
Once a week or less	

7. **How many airplane trips do you make on average (each year)?** [   ]

8. **Please indicate what you think best describes your behavior and experience with the airline services industry.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Far below average" and 5 - "Far above average".

	Far below average		Average		Far above average
How much time do you devote to airline travel services, relative to other people?	1	2	3	4	5
How much are you involved with airline travel services?	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you feel like you are an airline travel expert?	1	2	3	4	5
How intensively are you interested in airline travel services, relative to other people?	1	2	3	4	5

9. **Please indicate what best describes your behavior when sharing information online with others about your experience with the airline services industry.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Does not describe me" and 5 - "Describes me extremely well".

	Does not describe me		Describes me moderately well		Describes me extremely well
Appreciate an airline product/service with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
Share airline promotions, recent news and events.	1	2	3	4	5
Update personal status.	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing a travel experience.	1	2	3	4	5
Seek help from users.	1	2	3	4	5
Expect a clarification.	1	2	3	4	5
Express negative feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
Interact with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
Share spam/irrelevant information.	1	2	3	4	5

10. **Please, identify what best describes your motivations when sharing information online with others, about your air travel experiences.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Strongly disagree" and 5 - "Strongly agree".

	Strongly disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree
I believe the platform operator knows the person in charge within the company and will convey my message.	1	2	3	4	5
The platform operator will stand up for me when speaking to the company.	1	2	3	4	5
It is more convenient than writing to or calling the company.	1	2	3	4	5
One has more power together with others than writing a single letter of complaint.	1	2	3	4	5
The company harmed me, and now I will harm the company.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to take advantage of the company.	1	2	3	4	5
My contributions help me shake off frustrations about bad buys.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to get anger off my chest.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to warn others of bad products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to save others from having the same negative experiences as me.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to help others with my own positive experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to give others the opportunity to acquire the right product/service.	1	2	3	4	5
This way I can express my joy about a good buy.	1	2	3	4	5

I feel good when I can tell others about my buying successes.	1	2	3	4	5
I can tell others about a great experience.	1	2	3	4	5
My contributions show others that I am a clever consumer.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe a chat among like-minded people is a nice thing.	1	2	3	4	5
It is fun to communicate this way with other people in a community.	1	2	3	4	5
I meet nice people this way.	1	2	3	4	5
I receive incentives (e.g. Web miles).	1	2	3	4	5
I receive a reward for the writing.	1	2	3	4	5
I am so satisfied with the product/service that I want to help the company to be successful.	1	2	3	4	5
In my own opinion, good companies should be supported.	1	2	3	4	5
I expect to receive tips or support from other users.	1	2	3	4	5
I hope to receive advice from others that helps me solve my problems.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3/4 – Channel usage

Consider a channel as an online contact point, or a medium, through which a person interact with other users.

11. **To what extent do you intend to use the following online channels for the purpose of sharing information with others?** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Extremely unlikely" and 5 - "Extremely likely".

	Extremely unlikely		Neither likely nor unlikely		Extremely likely
Blogs, forums, online fan pages (Facebook pages).	1	2	3	4	5
Online group discussion platforms (Facebook groups).	1	2	3	4	5
Instant group messaging (Group Messenger).	1	2	3	4	5
Webpages, review websites (Trip Advisor), video sharing platforms (YouTube).	1	2	3	4	5
Chatrooms, microblogs (Twitter), social network sites (Facebook posts) or photo sharing platforms (Instagram).	1	2	3	4	5
Live video streaming (Periscope, Facebook Live).	1	2	3	4	5
E-mails.	1	2	3	4	5
Text-based messages (WhatsApp).	1	2	3	4	5
Videoconference (Skype), Instant Messaging (Messenger).	1	2	3	4	5

12. **Please consider all the channels from the previous question and choose what best describes your knowledge and experience with them in general.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Strongly disagree" and 5 - "Strongly agree".

	Strongly disagree		Neither agree or disagree		Strongly agree
I have a great deal of experience with online channels.	1	2	3	4	5
I have used or been exposed to online channels in the past.	1	2	3	4	5
I am familiar with the different possibilities to use online channels.	1	2	3	4	5
I frequently inform myself on the possibilities of using online channels.	1	2	3	4	5
I am very confident in using online channels.	1	2	3	4	5

13. **Which of these channel characteristics do you find important when you share information with other people.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Not at all important" and 5 - "Extremely important".

	Not at all important		Moderately important		Extremely important
Good source of information.	1	2	3	4	5
Supply relevant information.	1	2	3	4	5
Informative about the industry services.	1	2	3	4	5
Provide a high level of overall service through its channel.	1	2	3	4	5
Provide reliable service through its channel.	1	2	3	4	5
Provide helpful assistance through its channel.	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to find what I am looking for on the channel.	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to move around on the channel.	1	2	3	4	5
Offer a logical layout that is easy to follow.	1	2	3	4	5
It is one that I would enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5
It is one that I would feel relaxed about using.	1	2	3	4	5
It would make me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5
It helps me to feel acceptable.	1	2	3	4	5
It helps me improve the way I am perceived.	1	2	3	4	5
It helps me make a good impression on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
It would give me social approval.	1	2	3	4	5
It does not costs a lot of time.	1	2	3	4	5
It does not costs a lot of effort.	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to share information with others.	1	2	3	4	5
It is secure.	1	2	3	4	5
It gives me privacy.	1	2	3	4	5

Consider a screen as a device where you can access online channels.

14. **Please choose what best describes your behavior.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Strongly disagree" and 5 - "Strongly agree".

	Strongly disagree	Neither agree or disagree			Strongly agree
I usually share the same information through different online channels (e.g. Twitter + Messenger).	1	2	3	4	5
I go back and forth between several different online channels before choosing where I share certain information.	1	2	3	4	5
I usually share information in the same set of channels that I am used to it.	1	2	3	4	5
I use a set of channels according to which ones suit best giving the information characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
I usually share information in a set of channels that allows me to obtain social recognition.	1	2	3	4	5

15. **Please choose what best describes your behavior.** Please circle ONE number on each line being 1 - "Strongly disagree" and 5 - "Strongly agree".

	Strongly disagree	Neither agree or disagree			Strongly agree
I usually use more than one screen at the same time when I use more than one channel (e.g. smartphone + computer).	1	2	3	4	5
I usually use more than one screen when I share information online with others.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of the times I start an activity on one screen and then continue on another.	1	2	3	4	5