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What influences people´s willingness to share their customer experiences (word of mouth) via social media?

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This Master's Thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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Preface

This master thesis is a mandatory part of the Business Administration program at the University of Agder. It represents the end of the program and counts for 30 credits. The main purpose of the thesis is to apply scientific methods to analyze a given problem.

My choice of research area is based on my interest for social media marketing. I find the theory of consumer-to-consumer communication very interesting. The process of creating the thesis has been educational, where I have developed an in-debt understanding for the theory of social media marketing. I am sure that I will benefit from this knowledge in my future career.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Rotem Shneor for his guidance, help and feedback during the process of writing the thesis. I would also like to thank all the respondents to my survey, and everyone who shared it with their friends during the data collection period, a result would not have been possible to derive without your help.

Abstract

Electronic word of mouth is a growing phenomenon within social media marketing. There is no lack of research on the topic, and the literature review presented in the thesis gives an overview of the most relevant studies. Six hypotheses related to eWOM intentions were created based on these studies. A survey was conducted among 179 users of Facebook and a multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the result from the survey. Three out of six independent variables was identified to have an impact on the willingness to share customer experiences; sense of belonging, reciprocity and gender. None of the previous studies had been conducted in Norway, so this thesis gives us a better understanding of eWOM intentions in the Norwegian context. The result from the thesis could provide marketing divisions with information about the sharing patterns of their existing and potential customers, which they can utilize in their best interest.

Key words: WOM, eWOM, social media, consumer behavior, marketing, altruism, sense of belonging, reciprocity, entertainment value, reputation, eWOM intentions, and online customer reviews.

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Introduction

This chapter introduces a brief description of the phenomenon social media and electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Previous studies similar to this research will be introduces and the research question will be presented as well as how the study will be conducted. Lastly, an overview of the thesis will be presented along with a short description of each chapter.

Social media

Internet usage has expanded greatly in the last 20 years. Few people had access to internet before, while today it plays an essential role in people's everyday life. Social media is a widely used description for applications that are used daily; such applications involve social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram), creativity work-sharing sites (e.g. YouTube and Flickr), and microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter).

Social media is defined by Oxford Dictionaries as:

> *"Websites and applications that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking."*

Kaplan and Haenlein give the most known and used definition:

> *"Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content"* (2009, p. 61).

Web 2.0 is used to describe the second generation of the World Wide Web. The term was first used in 2004 to describe the way people now edit and publish content in a collaborative fashion. The content published is no longer created by expert individuals, but by multiple people with broad knowledge. It is clearly shown in the use of blogs and encyclopedia sites such as Wikipedia (Kapland & Haenlein, 2009). Encyclopedia is a type of reference work often put together by a

number of people. Individuals can publish reviews and experiences and other customers can discuss and comment on this. These reviews are published on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but also on websites developed for the purpose of sharing experiences.

Facebook was developed by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 as a private site for Harvard Students. By September of 2006 Facebook was available for everyone above 13 years that had a valid email address. As of October 2013, almost 10 years later, Facebook had 1.26 billion registered users worldwide (Smith, 2014). The development of Facebook gives an idea of the rapid growth the market is experiencing today when it comes to the use of social networking sites. As many as 93 % of marketers use social media to interact with existing and potential customers, and around 46 % of web users look at social media sites before making a purchase (Costill, 2013). Clearly the internet is the key for companies to have success in the future. The way companies manage marketing has changed today. It is important for every company to establish a two-way communication with their customers as opposed to the one-way communication that was often used earlier. The power has shifted from those involved in marketing and PR to the consumer of the product or service.

In 2008 United Airline received a customer complaint regarding their handling of luggage. They disregarded the complaint which gave a great example of how social media can contribute to sharing experiences within hours. Dave Carroll was the musician who filed a complaint against United Airline`s customer service when the airline broke his guitar and refused to pay him back for the damages. After going back-and-fourth for nine months, Dave created a music video about his experience and posted it on YouTube. The video profiled United Airlines in a bad light and it generated almost 9.5 million views. This was probably not the first guitar they had broken but it was the first time the owner of the guitar made a video about his experience. The video led to a marketing and public relations crisis for United Airlines and they claimed having solved the issue with the owner after the video went viral. This is only one example of how social media can spread content over the internet within a few hours (Snyder, 2009).

Electronic Word of Mouth

The growth of different technologies and increased internet access has extended traditional word of mouth (WOM) to electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Traditional WOM is defined by Richins (1984) as a form of interpersonal communication among customers concerning their personal experiences with a firm or a product. It has been shown that traditional WOM has an influence on peoples buying behavior (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). WOM plays a big part of consumer behavior as it results from the consumer's direct experience with a company. To increase their knowledge about a product customers tend to search the internet for reviews. This leads the customer to both marketer-generated information and customer-generated information. With the increased use of internet and social media sites the term WOM has expanded to include electronic communication. The most commonly used definition of eWOM is by Hennig-Thurau et al (2004):

> *"Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (2004, p. 39).*

Traditional WOM was concentrated between friends and family while eWOM is considered to work on a one-to-many basis where shared experiences can reach anyone (Kavanaugh et al, 2005). Compared to traditional WOM eWOM has a tendency to spread even faster because of the characteristics of social media sites. There are a number of social media platforms that are design solely for this type of communication, such as; yelp.com, eopinions.com and consumerreview.com. When one customer has a good or not-so-good experience, the first place the customer will take the praise or complaint is most likely Facebook, Twitter or a blog. This way of communicating is highly valued by customers and is often considered one of the most reliable sources of information. The information coming from WOM or eWOM often have greater credibility than marketer-generated information (i.e. advertisement generated by a company) as the reviews are based on personal experiences (Bickart & Schindler, 2001).

Research question

With the growing use of social media sites customers are more frequently seen writing personal reviews about a product or service. As the flow of eWOM increases it is becoming more important for managers to understand the behavior of customers that are willing to share their experiences online. Therefore, the research question is:

What influences people´s willingness to share their customer experiences with others (word of mouth) via social media?

The dependent variable is the willingness to share experiences online. The independent variables will be defined after a literature review of existing previous studies. "Customer experiences" is in this thesis defined as the private experience a customer has with a company and its product or service. Sharing experiences online is also known as eWOM. The study will focus on both negative and positive customer experiences.

How will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted through an internet survey developed and based on a literature review containing relevant studies. Existing studies will be used to develop the independent variables. The research model includes a dependent variable and multiple independent variables and shows the predicted relationship between all variables. Data will be gathered by using a survey created in SurveyXact. Based on this survey the relationships will be tested to reveal important motivational factors for eWOM intentions. The analytic software SPSS will be used to analyze the results from the data collection. The result will be compared to previous studies and any disagreeing result will be discussed and analyzed. Based on this the research will try to identify the most significant variables that influence people`s willingness to share their experiences with others via social media. The result will be reviewed and discussed towards the end of the thesis. The implications and limitations to the study will also be discussed towards the end of the thesis.

What kind of studies has been done earlier?

The topic of eWOM and online sharing is a relatively new phenomenon. Regardless of this a number of studies related to the research question existed. Dichter (1966) was one of the first researchers who conducted a study of motives for sharing experience through WOM. There have been several studies done on motives for sharing experiences both through WOM and eWOM. The different variables used in this research will be discussed in chapter 2. The most relevant study was conducted by Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) and Cheung & Lee (2012). Both studies found motivational factors for engaging in eWOM. The difficulty with studies about this topic is not only the vast amount of information being created but also how quickly the information is being changed and updated. Based on this it is important to regularly search for new information and updates by conducting new studies on the topic. The literature review is presented in the next chapter.

Structure of thesis

The master thesis consists of six chapters.

Figure 1: Structure of thesis

The introduction to the thesis outlined the research question as well as gave a brief introduction to the phenomenon of social media and eWOM. It also presented an overview of how the study will be conducted and what kind of studies that have been done earlier.

The literature review consists of a review based on studies done on related subjects earlier. It aims to give the reader a brief overview of results found in earlier studies. The chapter includes a summary of the main issues, such as the most frequent dependent variable and most common effects. The research model and hypotheses` will be developed based on literary reviews.

The third chapter describes the methodology and data collection and will contain information regarding the data collection method used in this study.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data collected in chapter 3. SPSS will be used to analyze the results. Based on this analysis the hypotheses` developed in chapter 2 will either be rejected or accepted.

The findings from the previous chapter will be discussed in chapter 5, and will be compared with findings from previous studies and in a Norwegian context.

The thesis` conclusion will include a summary, brief overview of the results, contributions, limitations to the study, and implications.

Literature review

The goal of this research is to contribute to theory development, capturing factors affecting willingness to share customer experiences online.

This chapter consists of a literature review of 31 articles. The articles were found through extensive research. 27 of them contained a *quantitative* analysis; three of them used a *qualitative* analysis and one was a *conceptual* paper. The articles tested the relationship between different independent and dependent variables such as; product recommendation behavior (Yang, 2013), customers' eWOM intention (Cheung & Lee, 2012), motivations for sharing opinions (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004), and review generating factors (Cantallops & Salvi, 2013).

Emerald, Ebsco, Scopus, and Google Scholar are databases that were used to find literature for this research. Keywords that generated the most relevant articles were "electronic word of mouth", "motivations for sharing opinions", and "traditional word of mouth". A search using the keyword WOM generated a result of over 7,500 articles, while using the keyword "electronic word of mouth" reduced this number to around 950 articles. This was still a substantial amount of articles, so studies that were not related to the research question were not considered.

A table was used to collect information about each article to further simplify the review process later on. Most of the studies were gathered through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, but also traveling sites like TripAdvisor. Studies were in addition collected from multiple universities in the US, where both undergrad and graduate students were asked questions related to the topic. Some of the previous studies reviewed for this paper were conducted in the US, while some were conducted in Taiwan, Korea, Spain, Germany, Hong Kong and China. None of the studies were conducted in Norway.

Relevant studies

The oldest study found in the literature review was conducted by Ernest Dichter in 1966. He surveyed people in the New York metropolitan area to find their motives for sharing traditional WOM. He was one of the first authors to address the problem of motivational factors and he developed research questions related to the phenomenon, such as what motivates people to talk about their experiences and how does this word of mouth affect advertising. By doing this study he could develop recommendations as to how the practice of word of mouth could be used for marketing and advertising purposes (Dichter, 1966). The article was written before the phenomenon of internet and social media became what it is today, so it is a particularly early study. How does this study relate to this thesis about the willingness to share eWOM? Dichter`s study was often cited in articles related to the more up-to-date topic of electronic word of mouth. His research revealed that a person will spread WOM if he receives self-satisfaction from talking about the product or service. There are similarities to traditional WOM and eWOM and the study still has a few relevant motivational factors.

Sundaram et al (1998) suggest that the motives for engaging in word of mouth might differ between positive and negative word of mouth. It is one of the most comprehensive WOM studies. By doing a qualitative analysis they identified eight motives for sharing WOM, a few of them identical to those defined by Dichter (1966). Their study was conducted by 39 undergrad students who each interviewed 10 people intercepted in a variety of business establishments in the US. After conducting the study they identified 8 different motives; four related to negative WOM and four related to positive WOM. Compared to Dichter (1966) they discovered a few additional motives, for instance, the desire to help the company by sharing their experiences. This is related to customers who are very pleased with the company and are willing to share this with family and friends in order to give something back. With their study they also found that people often talk negatively about a product or company with motives of altruism, vengeance, anxiety reduction and seeking advice. Altruism is defined as the desire to help others while vengeance is defined as the desire for revenge.

A newer and more relevant study is one conducted by Hennig-Thurau et al (2004), granted that it is 10 years old already. When reading through other studies this one is by far the most cited one. It was one of the first one to address the motivational factors related to sharing eWOM. Using a literature review consisting of Dichter`s study, as well as other relevant papers they developed a research model containing 8 independent variables. This study is an integration of traditional WOM motives (Dichter, 1966; Sundaram et al, 1998) and motives derived by looking at features from eWOM communication (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004). They created a survey and sent it to 2000 German customers who actively participated in Web-based opinion platforms. After the publication of their study there have been changes in the technology, moving from web 1.0 to 2.0, and also increasing use of social networking sites. Based on these changes the paper may be a bit outdated since this development could lead to effects that the paper does not capture.

Cheung & Lee (2012) did a similar study on a consumer opinion platform in Hong Kong. They had a sample of 203 members of the platform and found reputation, sense of belonging and enjoyment of helping others (altruism) to have a significant positive impact on the intentions to share eWOM. This is a newer study that have accounted for the changes in technology and internet access in the last years. It is however important to remember that this study is conducted in Hong Kong, which may make it a bit difficult to generalize to fit the context of this thesis. They used a relatively small sample compared to Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) and most of their respondents were students. They suggest that future studies should use a larger and more diverse sample to reduce this limitation of their study.

Cantallops & Salvi (2013) wrote a conceptual paper reviewing and analyzing articles published in the last five years (2007-2011). They looked at articles related to eWOM in the hospitality industry. Their research question was related to factors that contribute to generating and publishing online reviews. They identified nine different review-generating factors (See table 1: Literature

review). This is a paper related to the hospitality industry and might be a bit difficult to generalize to other industries. In their study they mentioned that very few of the articles they reviewed referred specifically to eWOM and hotels and they did include independent variables similar to studies that did not focus on a specific industry.

Summary of all relevant studies

Following is a table containing all the articles read through when preparing the research model. The table lists the 31 most relevant articles. It lists the dependent variables of the different studies. There is one column explaining the context of each study, such as where the study was conducted and how big the population was. The last column includes additional information that is relevant to get a better understanding of each study. This is left blank if there was no additional information.

Author	Dep. variable	Ind. variable	Findings	Control variables	Methodology	Context of study	Add. info.
Alexandrov *et al* (2012)	Drivers of WOM	Social comparison Need to belong Gossip Social learning Altruism (intention to help others) Self-enhancement Self-affirmation (defense mechanism)	Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	Data collected students in a Midwestern U.S. university. 394 usable responses on an online survey.	Using to scenarios for positive and negative WOM, did two groups with different dependent variable – positive and negative WOM.
Bigné *et al* (2012)	Individual and social drivers on eC2C and eWOM.	Helping others Expressing joy Belonging to a community Meet expert people Social enhancement	Positive Positive Positive Positive Negative		Quantitative analysis	507 Spanish e-shoppers	
Bronner & Hoog (2011)	Motivations for posting a review online	Self-directed Helping other customers Social benefits	Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	Subsample from the sample of the Dutch "Continu Vakantie	

		Consumer empowerment Helping companies	Positive Positive			Onderzoek". The panel consists of respondents who report on their vacation behavior.	
Canhoto & Clark (2013)	What support do users of social media perceive to derive from eWOM	Emotional – able to express oneself, focus on relationship Effective – ability to avoid future problems, access support Social – engagement with the org, other users and the community.	Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	51 users of twitter (35), Facebook (1) and LinkedIn (8), 44 valid responses	Semi structured interview approach
Cantallops & Salvi (2013)	Review-generating factors	Service quality Customer satisfaction Customer dissatisfaction Sense of community belonging Social identity Repurchase	Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive		Conceptual paper	Reviewed articles published in the last five years (2007-2011). Travel industry.	Researchers also found that people contribution to review sites were often younger than 55, from the high and

		expectations Helping other customers Helping companies Failure and recovery	Positive Positive Positive				lower-middle income group and couples without children.
Casaló *et al* (2010)	Intention to participate in eWOM	Attitude Subjective norms Perceived behavioral control Perceived usefulness	Positive Negative Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	456 valid questionnaires collected from members of several travel communities. Related to the travel industry.	
Cheung & Lee (2012)	Consumers eWOM intention	Reputation Reciprocity Sense of belonging Enjoyment of helping Moral obligation Knowledge self-efficacy	Positive Negative Positive Positive Negative Negative		Quantitative analysis	203 users of OpenRice.com (consumer review community)	High education level among respondents
Dichter (1966)	What motivates a person to talk about a product or service (WOM)	Involvement in the product or message Fulfilling a need to share or to fulfill psychological	Positive Positive		Qualitative analysis	In-debt interview with 255 consumers in 24 localities in the US, focusing on the New York	Early study on motivational factors in sharing traditional

		needs such as gaining attention Displaying connoisseurship Feeling like a pioneer or an insider Achieving status Confirming personal judgments	Positive Positive Positive Positive			metropolitan area.	word of mouth.
Eisingerish *et al* (2013)	Customer participation in WOM	Customer satisfaction	Positive	Customer expertise	Quantitative analysis	327 randomly selected customers.	
Hansen & Lee (2012)	Opinion passing on eWOM (Social Network Games)	Social ties Enjoyment Economic incentive	Negative Negative Positive		Quantitative analysis	158 participants who play games on Facebook	Gaming aspect on Facebook
Heinonen (2011)	Motivation for engaging in social media	Information Social connection Entertainment	Positive Positive Positive		Qualitative analysis	Exploratory study design – diary method.	
Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004)	Customer´s motivation for sharing opinions	Platform assistance Venting negative feelings Concern for other consumers Positive self-	Negative Negative Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	2000 consumers who actively participate in Web-based opinion platforms. Study conducted in	63 % males, only 37 % females

		enhancement				Germany.	
		Social benefits	Positive				
		Economic incentives	Positive				
		Helping the company	Negative				
		Advice seeking	Positive				
Hew & Hara (2007)	Motivators for knowledge sharing	Collectivism	Positive		Qualitative analysis	Online observation and interviews with 54 participants	All these independent variables were mentioned during the interview – with reciprocity being mentioned the most.
		Reciprocity	Positive				
		Personal gain	Positive				
		Respect	Positive				
		Altruism	Positive				
		Technology	Positive				
		Seekers interest	Positive				
Ho & Dempsey (2008)	Motivation to pass along online content	The need to be a part of a group	Negative		Quantitative analysis	582 undergrad students enrolled in marketing courses at a university located in a major metropolitan area.	
		The need to be individualistic	Positive				
		The need to be altruistic	Positive				
		The need for personal growth	Positive				

Hsu & Lin (2007)	Participation in a blog	Altruism Expected reciprocal benefit Reputation Trust Expected relationship	Positive Negative Positive Negative Negative		Quantitative analysis	Online field survey giving 212 usable responses. Mainly from the population of Taiwan.	More towards the blog environment which is about sharing information and experiences.
Liao *et al* (2013)	Positive influence of online WOM	Brand image (value, personality, organization) Brand trust (brand reliability and brand intentions)	Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	Survey developed for the Korean online market space, gave 257 usable responses	
Liu (2012)	Intention to provide an online review	Reputation as a top reviewer Reputation as a helpful reviewer Experience Satisfaction with purchase	Negative Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	238 university students, Xidian University in China	
Munzel & Kunz (2013)	Motives for providing eWOM	Positive experience (altruism) Negative	Positive Positive		Two steps, qualitative analysis first to identify the	Empirical study analyzing eWOM senders who posted hotel	Two most important motives are those related

		experience (altruism)			motives, then quantitative analysis	reviews on TripAdvisor.com, total of 693 site users participated	to altruism.
		Social bonding	Positive				
		Individual benefit	Positive				
Oh (2011)	Motivations to Contribute in Online Environments	Self-enjoyment	Positive		Quantitative analysis	257 online surveys – from health answerers using Yahoo! Answers.	
		Self-efficacy	Positive				
		Learning	Positive				
		Personal gain	Positive				
		Altruism	Positive				
		Empathy	Positive				
		Community interest	Positive				
		Social engagement	Positive				
		Reputation	Positive				
		Reciprocity	Positive				
Ross et al (2009)	Motivation associated with using Facebook	Extraversion (sociable)	Positive		Quantitative analysis	97 students at a university in Southwestern Ontario	84,5 % women. Students were compensated for participation
		Seek online social support	Positive				
		Engage in caring and meaningful offline relationships	Positive				
		Curious and exploring new activities	Positive				
Saenger (2013)	Motivation to spread eWOM	Self-expression	Positive		Quantitative analysis	30 undergrad marketing	70 % female

							students	
Sundaram *et al* (1998)	Motives to engage in **POSITIVE** WOM	Altruism Product involvement Self-enhancement	Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	731 usable responses, where 363 were positive WOM.	Related to WOM not eWOM
Sundaram *et al* (1998)	Motives to engage in **NEGATIVE** WOM	Altruism Anxiety reduction Vengeance Advise-seeking	Positive Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	731 usable responses, where 368 were positive WOM.	Related to WOM not eWOM – divided into two since it was related to both positive and negative WOM.
Taylor *et al* (2013)	Likelihood to share	Self-brand congruity – i.e. brand loyalty Entertainment value of the message Product category involvement	Negative Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	615 undergrad students at a large public university in the Southwestern US.	
Tong *et al* (2013)	Motivation to contribute to product reviews	Perceived cognitive cost Helping other consumer Influencing the	Negative Positive Positive	Opinion leadership and internet experience	Quantitative analysis	168 university students	Based on students, not everyone having experience

		product merchant Enhancing self-image	Positive				with product reviews.
		Economic incentives	Positive				
Tsao & Hsieh (2012)	Sharing positive eWOM	Customer satisfaction Customer trust Customer commitment	Negative Negative Positive	Customer commitment has a mediating effect between customer satisfaction and sharing positive eWOM and customer trust and sharing positive eWOM	Quantitative analysis	324 questionnaires were given out (face-to-face) to users of the internet. Survey collected in China.	
Walsh et al (2004)	Motives for passing on information	Obligation to share information Pleasure in sharing information Desire to help others	Positive Positive Positive		Quantitative analysis	Survey of 326 consumers from a moderate size city located in the southeastern US.	Survey administered by telephone, the result was stronger with high levels of mavenism

								(individuals who have information about many kinds of products etc.)
Wang & Fesenmaier (2003)	Incentives to contribute to online travel community	Seeking/providing emotional support	Positive			Quantitative analysis	322 members of a virtual travel community.	Focus on the travel industry – might give different results
		Finding friends	Positive					
		Relationship building	Positive					
		Group commitment	Positive					
		Expressing identity	Positive					
		Increasing self esteem	Positive					
		Satisfying other members 'needs	Positive					
		Being helpful to others	Positive					
		Providing advice	Positive					
		Sharing advice	Positive					
		Sharing enjoyment	Positive					
		Controlling product/service quality	Negative					

		Enforcing service excellence	Negative				
		Product suggestions	Negative				
		Gaining prestige	Negative				
		Attaining status in the community	Negative				
		Seeking future exchange from anybody	Negative				
Wolny & Mueller (2013)	Motivation to engage in eWOM.	High involvement	Positive		Quantitative analysis	210 users of internet and social media.	
		High brand commitment	Positive				
		High product commitment	Positive				
		Motivated by self-involvement	Positive				
		Motivated by others involvement	Positive				
		Advice seeking	Positive				
		Need for social interaction	Positive				
Yang (2013)	Product recommendation behavior	Pleasure in passing on information	Positive		Quantitative analysis	Paper survey of 835 Chinese college students.	93,2 % of the students between age 16-25.
		Helping the company	Positive				
Yoo *et al*	eWOM	Intrinsic motives	Positive		Quantitative	Survey	

| (2013) | participation | (concern for others, self-enhancement and social benefits) | | | analysis | developed for the Korean online market space, gave 257 usable responses | |
| | | Extrinsic motives (economic incentives) | Positive | | | | |

Frequently studied independent variables

The papers that are summarized in the table test the relationship between a number of independent variables and the motivation for sharing eWOM. The independent variables altruism (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Tong et al, 2013; Bronner & Hoog, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2013; Bigné et al, 2012; Cantallops & Salvi, 2013; Oh, 2011; Ho & Dempsey, 2008; Alexandrov et al, 2012; Hsu & Lin, 2007; Hew & Hara, 2007; Sundaram et al, 1998; Yoo et al, 2013; Munzel & Kunz, 2013; Walsh et al, 2004), sense of belonging (Dichter, 1966; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Wolny & Mueller, 2013; Canhoto & Clark, 2013; Cheung & Lee, 2012; Heinonen, 2011; Bronner & Hoog, 2011; Bigné et al, 2012; Cantallops & Salvi, 2013; Hansen & Lee, 2012; Oh, 2011; Ho & Dempsey, 2008; Alexandrov et al, 2012; Munzel & Kunz, 2013), and reputation (Dichter, 1966; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Tong et al, 2004; Oh, 2011; Cheung & Lee, 2012; Alexandrov et al, 2012; Sundaram et al, 1998; Yoo et al, 2013; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003; Hsu & Lin, 2007; Liu, 2012) seems to be the most commonly tested independent variables. Also variables such as helping the company (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Yang, 2013; Cheung & Lee, 2012; Bronner & Hoog, 2011; Cantallops & Salvi, 2013), economic incentives (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Tong et al, 2013; Hansen & Lee, 2012; Yoo et al, 2013), self-expression (Saenger, 2013; Canhoto & Clark, 2013; Bigné et al, 2012; Cantallops & Salvi, 2013; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012; Eisingerish et al, 2013; Liu, 2012), high involvement with product, service or company (Wolny & Mueller, 2013; Taylor et al, 2013; Sundaram et al, 1998), advice seeking (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Wolny & Mueller, 2013; Sundaram et al, 1998), and reciprocity (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Oh, 2011; Hew & Hara, 2007) have appeared in several papers.

In addition to the independent variables mentioned above, there were some variables only mentioned a few times such as; venting negative feelings (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004), entertainment (Heinonen, 2011), curious and exploring new activities (Ross et al, 2009), perceived usefulness (Casaló et al, 2010), and brand loyalty (Taylor et al, 2013). The authors found significant positive relationships between eWOM intentions and motivations like entertainment, curiousness and

exploration of new activities, and perceived usefulness (Heinonen, 2011; Ross et al, 2009; Casaló et al, 2010). There was however not found significant relationships between eWOM intentions and venting negative feelings or the feeling of brand loyalty (Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Taylor et al, 2013)

Out of the three independent variables most frequently tested, altruism and reputation was proved, by all papers, to have a positive relationship with the intention to share eWOM. All papers except for Hansen & Lee (2012) and Ho & Dempsey (2008) reported a positive relationship between the sense of belonging and the willingness to share eWOM. Hansen & Lee (2012) investigated factors that lead customers to share marketer-generated information. They gathered survey data from 158 participants in a Facebook game. As mentioned they tested the relationship between the sense of belonging and the willingness to share marketer-generated information, while the other papers look at customer-generated information, this might be one of the reasons why the test gave a different result. Ho & Dempsey (2008) tested the need to be a part of a group by developing a survey which they passed along to 582 undergrad students enrolled in marketing courses at a university located in a major metropolitan area in the US. They did not find support for their hypothesis about the sense of belonging affecting the intention to share eWOM. A reason for this might be that they tested the relationship between the need to belong and motivations to pass along online content. Customers that have a need to belong might not fulfill this need by only passing along online content, but also being a part of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Out of the independent variables that were tested the least amount of times, economic incentives, high involvement, advice seeking, and entertainment were by all studies found to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) did however identify a negative relationship between the willingness to share eWOM and wanting to help the company. The study was conducted in Germany, which can make it difficult to generalize to other countries. This was a surprising result granted that this paper is cited in almost all of the other papers. Tsao & Hsieh (2012) tested a negative relationship

between sharing positive eWOM and customer self-expression. They did not support the relationship between customer self-expression and eWOM sharing, but they did find that customer commitment has a mediating effect between customer self-expression and positive eWOM sharing (Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). So the higher the commitment is the more likely the customer is to engage in eWOM. This study was conducted among users of Chinese networking sites; because of this it might be difficult to generalize the result. The study also only focused on sharing positive eWOM, and excluded negative eWOM. This might also affect the result.

The relationship between being reciprocal and the intention to share customer experiences online were tested by three of the papers in the literature review. Being reciprocal can be described as exchanging information with others for mutual benefit. The motivation of being reciprocal is interesting in the context of eWOM intentions, and the relationship was supported by Oh (2011) and Hew & Hara (2007). Cheung & Lee (2012) did not support this relationship. They tested a hypothesis stating that there is a positive relationship between the opportunity for reciprocity and the intentions to share eWOM. Their study was conducted among 203 users of OpenRice.com, a website designed for restaurant reviews of restaurants located in Hong Kong and Macau. Most respondents had higher education i.e. high school, college, university etc. Providing reviews on OpenRice.com is voluntary and since reciprocity is described as being an egocentric motivation this might have an effect on their result. The person writing a review would then expect something in return in the future. Since this is on a voluntary basis it can yield a different result. Oh`s (2011) study is based on answers from a health forum in a social Q&A site on Yahoo!. This might not be directly related to customer experiences, but more towards motivations to contribute in different online environments such as health sites. Health related questions and answers will most likely be considered more important. Hew & Hara (2007) interviewed 54 people in their qualitative analysis. Based on this study they developed seven variables related to online sharing. Reciprocity was in their interview round mentioned the most.

Independent variables	Number of times tested	Positive/ negative	Articles
Altruism	15	Positive	Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Tong *et al* (2013), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Wang & Fesenmaier (2013), Bigné et al (2012), Cantallops & Salvi (2013), Oh (2011), Ho & Dempsey (2008), Alexandrov *et al* (2012), Hsu & Lin (2007), Hew & Hara (2007), Sundaram *et al* (1998), Yoo *et al* (2013), Munzel & Kunz (2013), Walsh *et al* (2004).
Sense of belonging	14	Positive	Dichter (1966), Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Wolny & Mueller (2013), Canhoto & Clark (2013), Cheung & Lee (2012), Heinonen (2011), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Bigné et al (2012), Cantallops & Salvi (2013), Hansen & Lee (2012), Oh (2011), Ho & Dempsey (2008), Alexandrov *et al* (2012), Munzel & Kunz (2013).
Reputation/self-enhancement	11	Positive	Dichter (1966), Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Tong *et al* (2004), Wang & Fesenmaier (2003); Oh (2011); Alexandrov *et al* (2012), Sundaram *et al* (1998), Yoo *et al* (2013), Cheung & Lee (2012), Liu (2012), Hsu & Lin (2007).
Helping the company	5	Positive	Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Yang (2013), Cheung & Lee (2012), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Cantallops & Salvi (2013).
Economic incentives	4	Positive	Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Tong *et al* (2013), Hansen & Lee (2012), Yoo *et al* (2013).
Self-expression, customer satisfaction	5	Positive	Saenger (2013), Canhoto & Clark (2013), Bigné et al (2012), Cantallops & Salvi (2013), Tsao & Hsieh (2012), Eisingerish *et al* (2013), Liu (2012).
High involvement	3	Positive	Wolny & Mueller (2013), Taylor *et al* (2013), Sundaram *et al* (1998).
Advice seeking	3	Positive	Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Wolny & Mueller (2013), Sundaram *et al* (1998).
Reciprocity	3	Positive	Cheung & Lee (2012), Hew & Hara (2007) Oh (2011).

Table 2: Variable overview

Research model

The research model consists of key variables adopted from earlier studies related to the intentions to share eWOM. The study will test to see if the variables explain the dependent variable, and inconsistencies in findings will be reviewed in the data analysis chapter. The hypotheses are developed based on the expected relationship between the five independent variables and the willingness to share customer experiences online (eWOM).
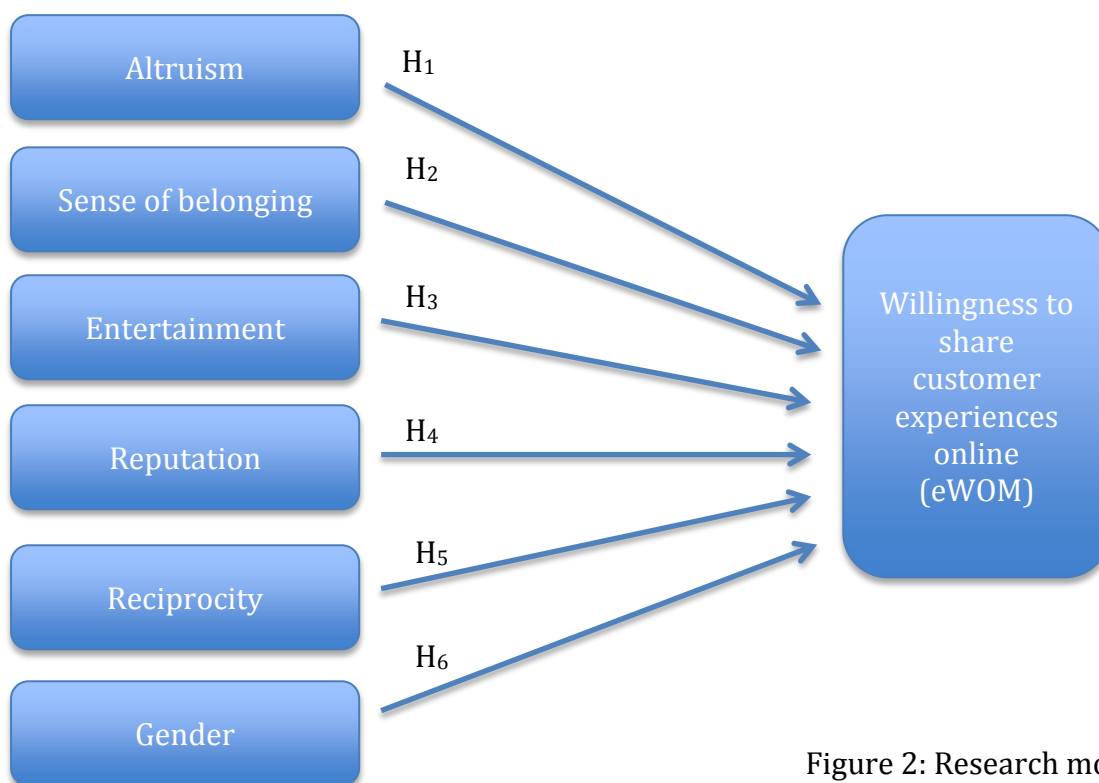

Figure 2: Research model

The dependent variable can be explained as motives that lead customers to write positive and negative experiences online. Shaw & Ivens (2002) have defined customer experiences as:

> *"A company`s physical performance and emotions evoked, intuitively measured against customer expectations across all moments of contact"* (2002, p. 6).

It is important to point out that customer experiences are developed based on a blend of both performance and emotions. It is measured intuitively by each customer up against their already created expectations about the company, product or service. Customer experiences are subjective, meaning that the opinion belongs to the person experiencing it. Other customers might get the same service but because of subjective decision the other person can have a different perception of it (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

Altruism

Ozinga (1999) explained altruism as doing something for someone else, at a low costs for oneself. A perceived personal cost might be the time and effort it takes one to write and share a customer experience online. The concept is often explained as the opposite of being selfish. Earlier studies used concern for other customers and enjoyment of helping as altruistic factors (Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Tong et al, 2013; Bronner & Hoog, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003; Bigné et al, 2012; Cantallops & Salvi, 2013; Walsh et al, 2004).

Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) explained it as a desire to help a friend with his or her purchase. Bronner & Hoog (2011) categorized the variable as a social concern and only studied the positive reviews, for instance; "I want to help others with my positive experience". Sundaram et al (1998) was one of the few who actually separated WOM between positive WOM and negative WOM. They did two studies, and included altruism in both categories.

An example of being altruistic can be that customers share experiences just because other customers have a need for it. The goal of being altruistic is to increase the welfare of someone else. Another example might be that an altruistic reviewer wants to warn other customers about a bad product, or recommend a good product. Meaning that one want to prevent or encourage other customers in buying the same product. These are all examples of sharing customer experiences without expecting something in return.

Based on the argumentation above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: The more altruistic the reviewer, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

Sense of belonging

This variable is based on the sense and need for belonging in a community (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Oh, 2011). This might be the emotional involvement with an online community, such as Facebook. Bignè et al (2012) found that the feeling of belonging has a positive influence on participation and loyalty to a community. The sense of belonging and identification is a theory that also includes the feelings of acceptance, inclusion and the sense of belonging to a community (McMillan & George, 1986).

Customers might share their experiences to acquire new friendships. Sharing experiences in certain communities will bring together customers with the same interests. The perceived social benefits might be the only motivation one has to write an online review. The feeling of belonging to a community can be retrieved by sharing experiences on social networking sites. The feeling of belonging and inclusion is subjective and dependent on the consumer's personality traits.

Several studies have shown that the sense of belonging has a direct positive relationship with the willingness to share eWOM, while only two out of the 13 reviewed studies did not find a significant relationship (Hansen & Lee, 2012; Ho & Dempsey, 2008).

From this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: The greater the perceived social benefits a reviewer associates with sharing customer reviews, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

Entertainment

Entertainment is defined as "the action of providing or being provided with amusement or enjoyment" (Oxford Dictionaries). A study done by market research firms THR and Penn Schoen Berland revealed that as many as 88 % of the respondents considered engaging in company related discussions as entertainment. They also found evidence supporting that a change in the entertainment experience is generated by the increased use of social media. (Godley, 2012).

Kristina Heinonen (2011) developed this variable when doing a qualitative analysis. She explained it as being a way to escape the real word for a moment, and that it often was used as private entertainment value. Customers found entertainment in following and contributing to online product discussions (Heinonen, 2011). This is supported by the study done by Taylor et al (2013), who stated that the entertainment value of a message would have an influence of the likelihood to share that message online. The entertainment value of sharing experiences is subjective and is related to each customers own personality. One might find it entertaining to write negative reviews and follow the discussion it generates, while other reviewers have a different subjective opinion about the entertainment value of a written review. An example of perceived entertainment value can be that one consumer writes a review with the sole purpose of developing a discussion thread about the company or the product.

Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_3: The greater the entertainment value a reviewer associates with sharing customer reviews, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

Reputation

Reputation can be considered as an egoistic motivation for sharing eWOM. An egoistic motivation refers to being motivated by increasing one`s own welfare.

People often share and contribute their own knowledge to get the feeling of a better reputation and to be recognized as an expert (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Hennig-Thurau and his colleagues (2004) describe this motivation as being driven by a person's desire for positive recognition and respect, such as "I feel recognized when sharing my experiences" or "Sharing my experiences within my community makes me a respected reviewer". This is supported by Alexandrov et al (2012), who see the key characteristic of a customer's reputation as the need to seek positive evaluations and recognition from others. They also stated if a customer wants to gain a positive reputation in an online community, he or she are more willing to share their customer experiences (Sundaram et al, 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Cheung & Lee, 2012).

In the study conducted by Sundaram et al (1998) they found that the respondents had a need to share their experiences via WOM to enhance their image among other customers. About 20 % of the respondents to their survey said that expressing their experiences allowed them to seek appreciation and enhance their status among their peers. Sharing customer experiences online could increase ones reputation among other reviewers, it could also lead to increased respect compared to those customers who don`t contribute with their reviews (Tong et al, 2013).

Previous studies have found a significant positive relationship between the need for a positive reputation and WOM (Sundaram et al, 1998) and eWOM (Hennig-Thurau *et al*, 2004; Tong *et al*, 2004; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003; Oh, 2011; Alexandrov *et al*, 2012; Yoo *et al*, 2013; Cheung & Lee, 2012).

Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: The greater a reviewer's desire to gain a reputation in an online community, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

Reciprocity

Kunz and Woolcott (1976) was one of the first to study the theory of reciprocity. They discussed the rule of reciprocity as a positive thing, and as an obligation to return a favor. A definition given by Oxford Dictionaries was presented earlier in the thesis and was then defined as the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit, or mutual exchange. The same dictionary defined reciprocity as something that was done in return. Cheung & Lee (2012) explained reciprocity as yet another egoistic motivation. They described it as an individual benefit for engaging in eWOM, that the person writing a review will be expecting returns in the future. This description is also supported by Oh (2011). Examples of being reciprocal can be that "I expect to get something back when sharing my customer experiences" or "I believe that I will get an experience for sharing an experience".

Studies have shown to have found disagreeing results about the relationship between reciprocity and eWOM intentions. Two studies in the literature review tested the variable to have a positive effect on the willingness to share experiences (Oh, 2011 and Hew & Hara, 2007), while Cheung & Lee (2012) did not find a significant relationship.

Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_5: The greater the reviewer's need to reciprocate the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

Gender

In consumer behavior and marketing theory there is an assumption regarding differences in how men and women reacts and response to marketing. The differences in how men and women behave have been thoroughly studied, both in the field of psychology and consumer behavior (Fisher & Arnold, 1994). Kempf & Palan (2006) stated that men and women reacts and process information differently. They found that women are more likely to read eWOM. It has also

been found that women often use online community to give and receive social support, while men use it to increase their social standing (Fan & Miao, 2012). This is supported by Muscanell & Guadagno (2011). Fan & Miao (2012) also uncovered that women are more concerned with their privacy while contributing to online discussion. Studies have also found major gender differences in reasons for using networking sites. Men are more likely to use social networking sites to find friendships and as a network for future career, while women reported more frequently posting public messages (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2011). Bakan (1966) discovered that women are more focused on contributing to the community while men have a higher self-focus. This is also supported by Yoo & Gretzel (2008).

Based on this; the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: Female reviewers are more willing to share their customer experiences online than male reviewers.

Methodology and data collection

The research model was proposed in the previous chapter. It is important to clarify the methodology and research design used in this study before moving on to the data analysis. The main purpose of this next chapter is to present a detailed outline of the methodology as well as present a data collection guide. Selected research methods will also be justified.

Research design

The research design is described by Zikmund et al (2010) as a master plan that defines the selected methods and procedures for the data collection and data analysis. This design provides a framework for the research and data collection.

Business research is used to search for the truth about a phenomenon. The purpose is often to provide knowledge regarding an organization, the market or economy or another area that is uncertain. The main purpose of this study is to identify different motives customers have to engage in eWOM. The study relies on secondary data, such as existing literature. A survey is used to gather data and the data will be analyzed with the help of SPSS. This is known as explanatory research based on quantitative analysis on survey data. This type of research is used to clarify situations or to discover potential business opportunities and is often used as a first step to gather information about a subject; additional research is often needed in the future (Zikmund et al, 2010).

Quantitative research method

Quantitative research design is by Zikmund et al (2010) defined as:

"*Business research that addresses research objectives through empirical assessments that involve numerical measurement and analysis approaches*" (2010, p. 134).

Quantitative research measures a concept using a scale, numbers and hypotheses. The method involves comparing numbers to reject or accept developed hypotheses. The advantage with using a quantitative method is that the result is easy to measure and compare. It is also recognized by using close-ended questions in a survey that is distributed to many people. The research question should be central in the decision of research method, and in this case the research question will be measured using a quantitative method. The phenomenon is known and the study will test already existing theory.

Context of study

Norway is a highly developed country when it comes to internet usage. Statistics Norway (SSB) has provided statistics about the Norwegian society since 1876. SSB found that 95 % of Norwegian households have access to internet at home (2012), which is an increase of 3 percentage points from 2011. They also found that 80 % of Norwegians between 9-79 years use internet every day. This is a percentage increase of 196.29 % from 2000. 79 % of us have access to a smart phone, while 52 % has access to a tablet.

As of 2012 there are 2,7 million Norwegians on Facebook. TNS Gallup did a research where they found that 67 % of Norwegians use Facebook at least once every day, and that women used social networking sites more frequently than men (Sørum, 2012). Brandtzæg and Heim (2009) did a study of the motivational factors of using online social networking sites (SNS). The study was conducted in Norway and found that out of a sample group of over 5,000 31 % used social networking sites to seek new relations, 21 % reported that they used SNS to stay in touch with friends and family and 14 % used SNS as part of their socializing. Only 3 % used SNS mainly to share and consume content.

Data collection

A survey was distributed among Norwegian Facebook users, using SurveyXact. The survey link was posted on Facebook groups such as the University of Agder (UiA) and the Norwegian Consumer Council (Forbrukerrådet) and it was also sent via email to employees at Nordea Bank Kristiansand and to students signed

up to write their master thesis this year. Three reminders were posted during the three weeks of data collection. A snowball sampling procedure was used when initial respondents shared the survey link with their Facebook friends (Zikmund et al, 2010). The survey was presented in Norwegian and translated by two independent people to ensure that the original meaning was not lost in translation (Dillman, 2007). It contained closed-ended questions, except for age which was measured using an open ended question were the respondents simply were to type in their age (Dillman, 2007). Two control variables were used and 26 statements about six different variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale adapted from earlier studies (Cheung & Lee, 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Oh, 2011; Heinonen, 2011). The first and last page was used to introduce the survey and its purpose and to thank the respondents for their participation (Appendix). The survey was completely anonymous.

Sampling size

The population is any complete group that shares a common set of characteristics, which in this case is Norwegian customers using Facebook (Zikmund et al, 2010). It is important that the sampling size is a good representative of the population to reduce the number of sampling errors. The sampling size depends on several factors such as time, money, sampling methods used, number of categories, number of variables, and number of statements in the survey. A larger sampling size will reduce the number of sampling errors, but it is also more expensive and time demanding. The reliability of the factor analysis done later in the thesis is dependent upon the sample size. One rule of thumb is to have at least 10-15 participants per variable. This study includes 6 variables, which means that the sample size would be 6*10=60 or 6*15=90 (Field, 2013). Field also argue that this rule of thumb oversimplify the issue about choosing the right sample size. Another frequently used rule of thumb is to have 5 participants per statement/factor. In this case that would mean 27*5 = 135. But it is important to remember that the bigger the sample size is the better and more accurate the result will be.

The survey had 194 respondents. Unfinished answers were deleted before going on with the analysis, so n=179. Based on the rule of thumb this number should be sufficient for our study.

Measurement of variables

This part of the thesis will present each variable with a definition, how it was measured and from what source it was adapted. Both dependent and independent variables will be presented. Variables are described by Hair et al as:

"Variables are the observable and measureable characteristics in a conceptual model. Values are assigned to each variable to enable us to measure them" (2003, p. 144).

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the variable that is being studied (Hair et al, 2003). This paper has one dependent variable, which is the willingness to share customer experiences online.

eWOM intentions

eWOM intentions refer to customers` willingness to share customer experiences on Facebook. The concept was measured by three items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items and scale used were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and they were slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Independent variables

An independent variable is characteristics possible to measure and that influences or explains the dependent variable (Hair et al, 2003).

Altruism

Being altruistic refers to the state of being concerned for other customers. This independent variable was measured by seven items on a 7-point Likert scale that

ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items were adapted from Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) and Cheung & Lee (2012). The statements and scale were slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Sense of belonging

The sense of belonging refers to the perceived feeling of acceptance, inclusion and belonging to a community, where the community in this case is Facebook. The sense of belonging was measured by five items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items and scale were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and were slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Reputation

Reputation refers to the general estimation on how a person is viewed by the public. It is the sense of status and approval by the community. This variable was measured by three items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items and scale were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and Oh (2011). The statements were slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Entertainment

Entertainment refers to the perceived entertainment value of sharing customer experiences on Facebook. It was measured by two items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The statements and scale are adapted from Heinonen (2011), and were slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity refers to the expectation of getting something in return when sharing customer experiences on Facebook. This variable was measured by six items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly

agree. The statements and scale are adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and Oh (2011). The text was slightly altered to fit a more general context.

Gender

This variable is included for comparison between men and women. Gender is measured by a closed ended question of being a male or female. Men were assigned the value of 1 and women the value of 2 in the regression analysis.

Control variables

Two control variables were used in the survey, age and education level. Age was measured by an open-ended question, while education level was measured by a closed-ended question with four alternatives.

Factor analysis

Andy Field (2013) explained factor analysis as a:

"multivariate technique for identifying whether the correlations between a set of observed variables stem from their relationship to one or more latent variables in the data" (2013, p. 666).

Latent variables can also be explained as factors, and represents the variables that correlate highly with each other. The factor analysis will be done using SPSS Statistics and will help reduce the number of variables if this is necessary. The respondents of the survey were asked a number of questions about a few different variables. A factor analysis will see if each question actually measured the variable it was supposed to measure. The question is removed if it does not measure the correct factor. Questions that do not capture the right variable will distort the result if not removed. The next step in the process is testing the hypotheses by doing a multiple regression analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy

The KMO test can be calculated for individual and multiple variables and is used to measure the sampling adequacy. It measures whether or not the sample will yield distinct and reliable factors.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.924
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4212.022
	Df	325
	Sig.	.000

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett`s test

The KMO statistics varies between 0-1, where a value of 0 indicates factor analysis to be inappropriate and a value of 1 indicates that a factor analysis should give us reliable factors. In this case the KMO is 0.924. Values below 0.5 is barely acceptable while values above 0,90 falls into the required category and is suitable for doing a factor analysis (Field, 2013). The table above also presents the Bertlett`s measure. This test should be significant because a non-significant test would indicate a problem.

Normality test

The normality of each statement should be checked before doing the factor analysis. The Kolmogorow-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test compare the scores in the sample to a normally distributed set of scores with the same mean and standard deviation (Field, 2013). If p<0.05 the distribution of the sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution. If p>0.05 then the distribution of the sample is significantly different from a normal distribution. The table includes a statistics column, a degrees of freedom column, and a sig. column. In this case the K-S test is highly significant, this indicates that the distributions is not normal. Because the variables are not significantly different

from a normal distribution the extraction method called principal axis factoring
is used.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
eWOM intentions	.207	174	.000	.911	174	.000
eWOM intentions	.173	174	.000	.925	174	.000
eWOM intentions	.191	174	.000	.916	174	.000
Altruism	.206	174	.000	.898	174	.000
Altruism	.183	174	.000	.892	174	.000
Altruism	.174	174	.000	.896	174	.000
Altruism	.185	174	.000	.906	174	.000
Altruism	.225	174	.000	.928	174	.000
Altruism	.235	174	.000	.920	174	.000
Altruism	.241	174	.000	.914	174	.000
Sense of belonging	.193	174	.000	.903	174	.000
Sense of belonging	.219	174	.000	.919	174	.000
Sense of belonging	.198	174	.000	.920	174	.000
Sense of belonging	.203	174	.000	.891	174	.000
Sense of belonging	.237	174	.000	.902	174	.000
Reputation	.207	174	.000	.887	174	.000
Reputation	.212	174	.000	.870	174	.000
Reputation	.259	174	.000	.790	174	.000
Entertainment value	.175	174	.000	.912	174	.000
Entertainment value	.198	174	.000	.903	174	.000
Reciprocity	.215	174	.000	.884	174	.000
Reciprocity	.204	174	.000	.904	174	.000
Reciprocity	.164	174	.000	.914	174	.000
Reciprocity	.201	174	.000	.917	174	.000
Reciprocity	.201	174	.000	.911	174	.000
Reciprocity	.255	174	.000	.888	174	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4: Test of Normality

Factor analysis

The extraction method used for the analysis was principal axis factoring and rotation method was varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotated Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
eWOM intentions	.698			
eWOM intentions	.604			
eWOM intentions	.626			
Altruism	.762			
Altruism	.767			
Altruism	.739			
Altruism	.647			
Altruism	.457		.684	
Altruism		.434	.686	
Altruism	.408	.416	.667	
Sense of belonging			.633	
Sense of belonging			.614	
Sense of belonging			.588	
Sense of belonging			.629	
Sense of belonging			.594	
Reputation				.592
Reputation				.659
Reputation				.639
Entertainment value	.444			.432
Entertainment value	.490			.539
Reciprocity		.652		
Reciprocity		.801		
Reciprocity		.789		
Reciprocity		.665		
Reciprocity		.593		
Reciprocity		.726		

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Table 5: Rotated Factor Analysis (1)

The table above was the result when doing the factor analysis for the first time, as you see some of the items load on more than one factor. These were deleted before running the test again.

Rotated Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
eWOM intentions	.690			
eWOM intentions	.632			
eWOM intentions	.686			
Altruism	.778			
Altruism	.780			
Altruism	.740			
Altruism	.661			
Sense of belonging			.686	
Sense of belonging			.674	
Sense of belonging			.674	
Sense of belonging			.716	
Sense of belonging			.600	
Reputation				.693
Reputation				.807
Reputation				.605
Reciprocity		.706		
Reciprocity		.797		
Reciprocity		.788		
Reciprocity		.693		
Reciprocity		.614		
Reciprocity		.732		

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 6: Rotated Factor Analysis (2)

Entertainment value was deleted as a variable, since it loaded on more than one factor. Altruism item 5, 6, and 7 also loaded on more than one factor, and were also deleted. As you can see, eWOM intentions and altruism (item 1,2,3, and 4) is loading on the same factor. The statements used in the survey are adapted from

earlier studies (Cheung and Lee, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004) but might in different contexts yield different results. In the context of this study the statements measuring altruism are capturing eWOM intentions and, hence, *are* eWOM intentions.

The 7 items measuring the dependent variable were; "I intend to share my customer experiences with other members on Facebook frequently in the future", "I will always share my customer experiences at the request of other members on Facebook", "I will try to share my customer experiences with other members on Facebook in a more effective way", "I share my customer experiences on Facebook because I want to warn others of bad products", "I share my customer experiences on Facebook because I want to save others from having the same negative experience as me", "I share my customer experiences on Facebook because I want to help others with my own positive experiences", and "I share my customer experiences on Facebook because I want to give others the opportunity to buy the right product". Looking at the survey attached in the appendix a few of the statements regarding altruism was deleted after the factor analysis.

All statements measuring entertainment value were deleted before going on with the analysis, because they loaded on two or more factors. All the statements measuring the sense of belonging (5 items), reciprocity (6 items), and reputation (3 items) were kept for further analysis.

Reliability and Cronbach`s alpha (α)
Reliability means that a survey should consistently measure what it is developed to measure (Field, 2013). Cronbach (1951) developed a measure to computing the correlation coefficient for each split possible. The measure is called Cronbach`s alpha and is the most commonly used measure of scale reliability. Simpler put the Cronbach´s alpha measure the internal consistency between the items that was used to measure a variable.

eWOM intentions

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.926	7

Table 7: Cronbach´s Alpha (eWOM intentions)

Sense of belonging

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.872	5

Table 8: Cronbach´s Alpha (Sense of belonging)

Reputation

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	3

Table 9: Cronbach´s Alpha (Reputation)

Reciprocity

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.931	6

Table 10: Cronbach´s Alpha (Reciprocity)

Cronbach`s alpha is measured between 0 and 1, where the higher it is the more reliable is the study. Kline (1999) presented a measuring scale of 0.8 being

appropriate for cognitive tests and 0.7 appropriate for ability tests. The Cronbach for this study are all above 0.8, and indicates reliable measures.

Descriptive statistics

There was in total 179 respondents to the survey; out of these 49.7 % were men and 50.3 % were women, which is a good ratio between men and women. The average age of the respondents were 33.6 years, where the youngest respondent was 14 and the oldest were 79 years giving a wide spread. 77 % of the respondents had a higher education level such as college or university. 40 % of the respondents were in the age group between 22-26 years; this could indicate a high level of students taking the survey, which explains the high education level among the respondents. The survey was also distributed via email to employees at Nordea Bank ASA, which also explains the high education level and the high age average. The table for descriptive statistics is presented in the next chapter.

Regression analysis

Since Cronbach´s alpha indicated reliable measured factors, in order to create a single score for each factor an average score of all factor items was calculated for each factor. So for eWOM intentions now including 7 items, each of the scores were added together, and then divided by 7. This was done for each factor, and the regression analysis was done based on these averages. SPSS Statistics was used to do the analysis. A regression analysis is used to measure the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Field, 2013). Two control variables (age and education level) were included in the regression analysis in addition to the other variables. In this case a multiple regression analysis was done because more than one variable is analyzed. A regression model looks like this: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + ... \beta_x X_x + \varepsilon$. Y is the dependent variable, while X represents the independent variables. β represents unknown parameters that will be calculated in the model, these will explain the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. ε measures the error associated with the variables (Field, 2013).

The regression model in this thesis will look like this:

eWOM intentions = β_0 + β_1 Sense of belonging + β_2 Reputation + β_3 Reciprocity + β_4 Gender

When doing the regression analysis in SPSS Statistics the software produces a model summary output. This table provides the value of R, R^2, and Adj. R^2. The R^2 value is a "measure of how much of the variability in the outcome is accounted for by the predictors" (Field, 2013). The Adj. R^2 gives an idea of how well the model generalizes. The ideal situation is when Adj. R^2 is equal or close to R^2. An ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to test if the model was better than using the mean (Field, 2013). It is a technique used to test the hypotheses to determine whether statistically significant differences in means occur between groups (Zikmund et al, 2010).

The data analysis and findings chapter contains all the tables present the analysis, and an explanation to each table and what they indicate will follow.

Multicollinearity

When doing a multiple regression analysis multicollinearity should be avoided. Multicollinearity exists if there is a high correlation between one or more predictors in the model. When doing a regression analysis SPSS Statistics also produces a correlation matrix. This output can be used to see if any of the variables correlated highly, above 0.8 (Field, 2013). The variables should be independent of each other. Collinearity can be avoided by looking at the variance inflation factor (VIF). It is presented in the Coefficients output in the data analysis chapter. VIF should be well below 10, while the Tolerance column should be above 0.2. The average VIF can be calculated once the numbers are known, if this average is close to 1 it is safe to assume that collinearity is not a problem in this model.

$$VIF = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} VIF}{k}$$

Data analysis and findings

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
eWOM intentions	4.1620	1.37795	179
Sense of belonging	3.1799	1.19889	179
Reputation	2.6052	1.30707	179
Recriprocity	3.7840	1.37206	179
Gender	1.49	.501	179
Age	33.66	13.139	179
Education level - College/University	.77	.425	179

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics

Correlations

		EWOMINT	SOB	REP	RECIP	Kjønn?	Alder?	Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå ? - Høgskole/Univ ersitet
Pearson Correlation	EWOMINT	1.000	.599	.464	.658	.153	-.041	-.059
	SOB	.599	1.000	.558	.514	.115	-.097	-.025
	REP	.464	.558	1.000	.607	-.068	.092	-.117
	RECIP	.658	.514	.607	1.000	-.023	-.053	-.004
	Kjønn?	.153	.115	-.068	-.023	1.000	-.325	.116
	Alder?	-.041	-.097	.092	-.053	-.325	1.000	-.269
	Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet	-.059	-.025	-.117	-.004	.116	-.269	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	EWOMINT	.	.000	.000	.000	.021	.294	.215
	SOB	.000	.	.000	.000	.062	.098	.371
	REP	.000	.000	.	.000	.181	.110	.059
	RECIP	.000	.000	.000	.	.378	.238	.479
	Kjønn?	.021	.062	.181	.378	.	.000	.060
	Alder?	.294	.098	.110	.238	.000	.	.000
	Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet	.215	.371	.059	.479	.060	.000	.
N	EWOMINT	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	SOB	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	REP	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	RECIP	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	Kjønn?	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	Alder?	179	179	179	179	179	179	179
	Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet	179	179	179	179	179	179	179

Table 12: Correlations

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.741ª	.549	.533	.94174	.549	34.847	6	172	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet, RECIP, Kjønn?, Alder?, SOB, REP

Table 13: Model summary

ANOVAᵇ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	185.431	6	30.905	34.847	.000ª
	Residual	152.544	172	.887		
	Total	337.975	178			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet, RECIP, Kjønn?, Alder?, SOB, REP
b. Dependent Variable: EWOMINT

Table 14: Anova

Coefficientsª

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Correlations Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Correlations Part	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1 (Constant)	.402	.453		.888	.376					
SOB	.399	.075	.348	5.307	.000	.599	.375	.272	.612	1.634
REP	-.045	.075	-.042	-.595	.553	.464	-.045	-.030	.520	1.924
RECIP	.514	.068	.511	7.593	.000	.658	.501	.389	.578	1.729
Kjønn?	.403	.151	.147	2.672	.008	.153	.200	.137	.872	1.147
Alder?	.006	.006	.057	1.005	.316	-.041	.076	.051	.818	1.223
Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå? - Høgskole/Universitet	-.180	.174	-.056	-1.037	.301	-.059	-.079	-.053	.916	1.092

a. Dependent Variable: EWOMINT

Table 15: Coefficients

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Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics for the regression analysis. This output presents the mean and standard deviation of each variable in the study. It is a useful summary of the data collected, but does not help with the further analysis.

Table 12 is a correlation matrix output. It displays the value of the correlation coefficient between every pair of variables. Reciprocity is highly correlated with eWOM intentions (r=0.658). The one-tailed significance of each correlation is shown in the same output. Reciprocity is seen to be significant, $p<0.001$. The sample (n=179) is also presented in the table. Notice how the correlation of each variable with itself is 1, these forms a diagonal "line" in the matrix output. This table gives a quick overlook of the analysis. It can also give an idea about multicollinearity. In this case there is no multicollinearity, i.e. $r<0.8$.

Table 13 presents a summary of the entire model. In this case R^2 and Adj. R^2 both are above 0.50. The value of R^2 is 0.549 which means that variables account for 54.9 % of the variance in eWOM intentions. The adjusted R^2 has a value of 0.533, which is close to R^2. As explained in the methodology chapter the adjusted R^2 gives us an idea of how well the model generalizes. The difference between the two is 0.549-0.533=0.016=1.6 %. If the data were gathered from the population instead of a sample it would account for about 1.6 % less variance.

Table 14 is the ANOVA table; the table includes a column named F and a significance value. The F-model is highly significant ($p<0.001$) the independent variables explain a significant portion of the variation in eWOM intentions.

Table 15 presents the coefficients of the regression model. This output will help us conclude our regression model, and fill in the unknown parameters. The sense of belonging, reciprocity, and gender has a significant impact on eWOM intentions. Sense of belonging and reciprocity is significant at a 0.001 level, while gender is significant at a 0.01 level. Reputation had no significant impact on eWOM intentions. Both the control variables included in the study (age and education level) had no impact on intentions to share customer experiences.

Multicollinearity can also be assessed from the VIF column in table 15. All the variables have a VIF value well below 10, and collinearity tolerance values of above 2; collinearity is not a problem for this model (Field, 2013).

Discussion

Six hypotheses were presented in the literature review chapter. With the help of the regression analysis above and relevant studies these will now be either supported or rejected. The analysis shows that there are three variables affecting eWOM intentions; sense of belonging, reciprocity and gender.

Altruism

Altruism is the act of doing something for someone else at a low cost to oneself. This cost might be the time and effort it takes to do the gesture.

H_1: The more altruistic the reviewer, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

The items measuring altruism were through the factor analysis found to load on the same factor as eWOM intentions. Three of the items regarding altruism were deleted, while four of them were included in measuring the dependent variable. This hypothesis was therefore removed based on the result from the factor analysis.

The items were adapted from Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) and Cheung & Lee (2012) who both studied consumer`s reasons for engaging in eWOM communication. Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) found altruism to be significant at a 0.001 level, while Cheung & Lee (2012) found it to be significant at a 0.01 level. Possible explanations for these contradicting results could be that Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) conducted their study in Germany, while Cheung & Lee (2012) conducted their study on a consumer-opinion platform in Hong Kong. Their results might be difficult to generalize to fit the Norwegian context. There might also be cultural reasons for the different results. Geert Hofstede (2001) published his first work on national cultures in 1980 where he derived four dimensions of national cultures (the last dimension were added in 1991). The masculinity/femininity dimension is relevant to explain the cultural

differences between Norway, Germany and Hong Kong. Hofstede defines culture as

"…the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category to people from another" (2001, p. 9).

Countries with a masculine culture, i.e. concerned with power, status, achievement, materialism etc., can be separated from countries with feminine cultures, i.e. concerned with welfare, quality of life, inclusiveness, and friendships etc. Hofstede developed an index measuring the masculinity values for 50 countries and 3 regions, so a total of 53 different cultures. Norway is ranked as number 52 while Germany is ranked number 9 and Hong Kong number 18 (Hofstede, 1998). Germany and Hong Kong are much more masculine societies than Norway. Results from studies about eWOM intentions will therefore be difficult to generalize to fit Norway's feminine culture. Customers in feminine societies are more likely to share experiences and advice with each other based on the features of the culture.

Sense of belonging

H_2: The greater the perceived social benefits a reviewer associates with sharing customer reviews, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

The regression analysis showed that this variable had a significant positive impact on the intentions to share customer experiences on Facebook. With this, the hypothesis is supported. This supports previous studies by Cheung & Lee (2012), Hennig-Thurau *et al* (2004), Wolny & Mueller (2013), Canhoto & Clark (2013), Cheung & Lee (2012), Heinonen (2011), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Bigné et al (2012), Cantallops & Salvi (2013), Hansen & Lee (2012), Oh (2011), Ho & Dempsey (2008), Alexandrov *et al* (2012), Munzel & Kunz (2013).

The items used in the study were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012), and all of them were included in the regression analysis. They found the sense of belonging to have a significant positive relationship with eWOM intentions ($p<0.01$). This suggests that the feeling of belonging to an online community such as Facebook will increase the willingness to share experiences online. The customer are more willing to share experiences (contribute to eWOM) if he/she is rewarded in terms of social benefits. The sample used in this study views this as an important factor for sharing eWOM.

Entertainment value

H_3: The greater the entertainment value a reviewer associates with sharing customer reviews, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

This hypothesis was removed before doing the regression analysis, based on the factor analysis that showed that all the items used to measure entertainment value loaded on more than one factor. The items were adapted from an earlier study conducted by Heinonen (2011). Heinonen used the diary method to capture the thoughts of the customers. She found entertainment activities such as relaxation and escape by following and contribution to inline discussions. Her study was conducted in Finland. One explanation for the differences in the results from the studies might be that the items were adapted from a qualitative study. The quantitative study used in this thesis might not have captured the factors captured in the earlier study.

Another possible explanation for our contradicting results regarding the entertainment value of eWOM sharing might be that the qualitative study was case specific and that it may not apply to the population in general.

Reputation

H_4: The greater a reviewer's desire to gain a reputation in an online community, the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

A significant positive relationship was not found between reputation and eWOM intentions. Thus, this hypothesis is rejected. The items were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and Oh (2011). This contradicts the findings of both studies. Cheung & Lee found a significant positive relationship at a 0.10 level. Oh (2011) found that reputation had less impact on more experienced reviewers. Oh (2011) identified 38 different nationalities in her sample, and her study were concentrated around customers answering health questions on Yahoo! Answers.

One possible explanation for the contradicting results might be that reputation is more important in health related communities. People tend to not take health advices from unprofessional people with a negative reputation. Oh (2011) found that less experienced reviewers were more concerned with their reputation than more experienced reviewers. In the general context of Facebook customers might not be as concerned with their reputation.

Cheung & Lee (2012) conducted their study in Hong Kong. Hoftsede´s (2001) cultural dimensions can again be used to describe the contradicting results. Customers in Norway are less likely to focus on increasing their reputation because Norway is described as having a feminine society.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is earlier in the thesis described as the act of doing something for others and expecting something in return, a mutual benefit.

H_5: The greater the reviewer's need to reciprocate the more willing he or she will be to share their customer experiences online.

The regression analysis identified a significant positive relationship ($p < 0.001$) between the need to reciprocate and the willingness to share customer experiences on Facebook. Thus, this hypothesis is supported.

The items used in the study were adapted from Cheung & Lee (2012) and Oh (2011). They all loaded on the right factor, and were all included in the regression analysis. Our findings are supported by Oh (2011) while it contradicts the findings of Cheung & Lee (2012). Cheung & Lee (2012) conducted their survey among reviewers on a consumer-based platform in Hong Kong. One possible explanation of these contradicting results might be the fact that the members of this platform provide experiences on a voluntary basis and don't necessarily feel a commitment or obligation to keep posting experiences. Studies conducted through Facebook might generate different results because the reviews are shared with friends and the reviewers may feel more of an obligation towards them.

Geert Hofstede also talks about another cultural dimension; individualism versus collectivism. Traits of individualistic cultures are that people are more independent, they are encourage to do things on their own, being dependent on someone is seen as shameful and there is less drive to help other people in the community. People from collectivistic cultures are more dependent on each other. Norway is ranked number 13 in the world, while Hong Kong is ranked number 37. Hong Kong is a more collectivistic society. This difference in culture might help explain why this study got different results than the one done by Cheung & Lee (2012). Since Norway is a more individualistic society customers are more likely to want something in return when sharing, some sort of reward for sharing their experiences with others.

Gender

H_6: Female reviewers are more willing to share their customer experiences online than male reviewers.

A significant positive relationship was found between gender and the intentions to share customer experiences. Female reviewers are more willing to share their experiences than male reviewers. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

The literature review showed men and women had different reasons for participating online. Women were more concerned about their privacy while men had a higher self-focus. Women were according to theory more likely to post messages online and contribute to communities, while men were more interested in establishing relationships and finding future career connections. Our result supports the findings of Muscanell & Guadagno (2011), Bakan (1966) and Gretzel (2008). These studies are not directly related to eWOM intentions, but related to the pattern of internet usage of men and women.

Control variables

Control variables such as age and education level (college/university) were included in the analysis. There were respondents with a wide age spread, and mostly higher educated participants. Neither one of the control variables had a significant impact on eWOM intentions.

The average age of the participants was 33.6 years. A few possible explanations for why age does not have an impact on eWOM intentions might be that there is a definite change in the generation using Facebook. TNS Gallup did a quarterly study of the usage of internet in Q3 2013. They found that the average age of Facebook members hadn`t changed a lot during the last few years, but they could see that more people from the older generation (60 +) used Facebook on a daily basis. They saw that the younger generation stayed on Facebook while also trying out new platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. The figure below presents the daily internet use based on age (not including traffic via phones or tablets).
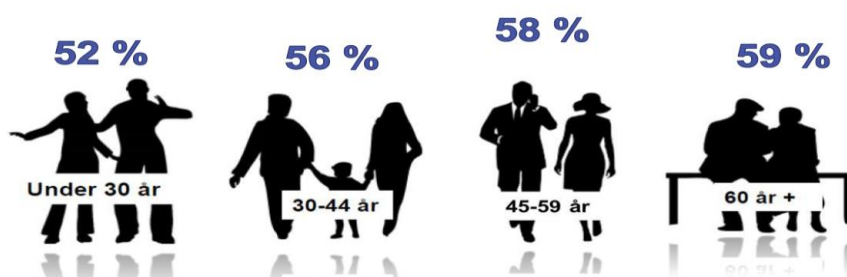
Source: Norsk InternettPanel 2013 – TNS Gallup:
http://www.tns-gallup.no/arch/_img/9110512.pdf

Figure 3: daily internet use based on age

The survey had respondents between 14-79 years old. There is no correlation between age and the likeliness to share experiences online. Another reason for this is that with the technology changing at the paste it is today you have to be a part of that change no matter what age group you belong to. Most companies use data and internet applications every day, and the older generation is forced to learn this at some point. To be able to take advantage of the opportunities created by new technology you have to be able to follow the development. This is believed to be one of the reasons why there are no differences between the younger generation and the older generation in intentions to share customer experiences online.
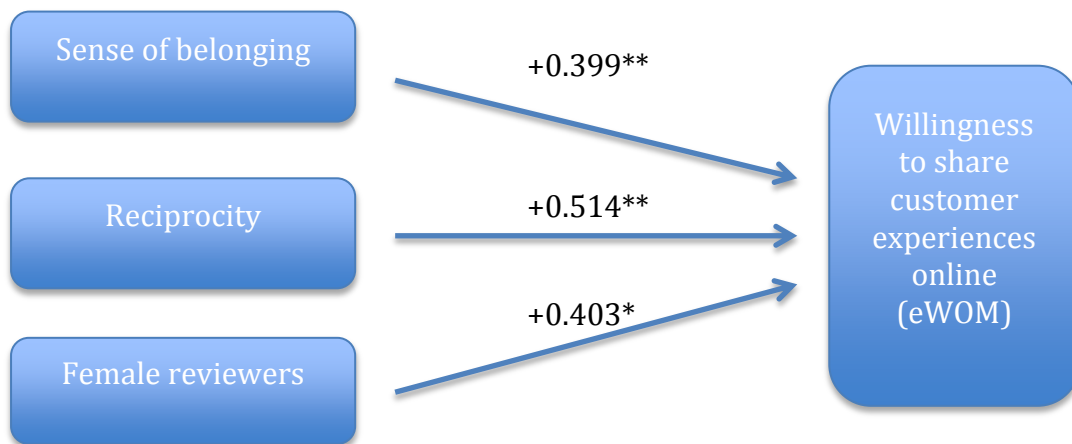
Note: **p<0.001, *p<0.01

Figure 4: Adjusted research model

From the above discussion three of the hypotheses were supported, two rejected and one removed before doing regression analysis due to multiple factor loadings. Figure three presents' the three hypotheses that have a significant impact on eWOM intentions. None of the control variables are included in the figure because they were not found to have a positive relationship with eWOM intentions. Some of the result is supported by earlier studies, while some of it was contradicting. The contradicting results might be based on the fact that not

all of the items used in measuring the variables were possible to generalize into the Norwegian context.

The model was overall very reliable and the variables not supported in the analysis were removed.

Conclusions

The overall goal of this research was to study and identify factors that influence electronic word of mouth (eWOM) intentions among customers. The study was based on the theory of social media marketing and eWOM.

Existing literature related to the field of study was reviewed before doing the data collection. 31 relevant articles ranging from year 1966 to 2013 were reviewed. The articles studied eWOM intentions among customers in the US, Germany, Hong Kong, Finland etc. None of the studies were conducted in Norway.

The research contained a sample of 179 Norwegian Facebook users. The statistical analysis software SPSS Statistics was used to perform a multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses.

The research question presented in the beginning of this thesis was:

What influences people´s willingness to share their customer experiences with others (word of mouth) via social media?

A research model containing six hypotheses was developed based on the already existing studies, in addition was the respondents age and education level included as control variables. The independent variables included in the study were: altruism, sense of belonging, entertainment, reputation, reciprocity and gender. The hypotheses' regarding altruism and entertainment value was removed during the factor analysis because they loaded on more than one factor. Based on the regression analysis the hypotheses regarding the sense of belonging, reciprocity and gender were supported and the hypothesis regarding reputation were rejected. The control variables were found to have no impact on eWOM intentions.

Based on this, customers are more willing to share their customer experiences if they have a greater perceived feeling of belonging to a community, when the

customer has a need to reciprocate (get something in return in the future), and that female customers are more willing to share than male customers.

The result is supported by some of the previous studies, while others have disagreeing results. This can be due to the extent to which results can be generalized across differing national and cultural contexts, in particular in differences between masculine/feminine and individualistic/collectivistic societies. This can also imply that Norwegian Facebook members are more open to the use of social media sites to share experiences.

Contributions

Most of the reviewed studies have been conducted in countries such as the US, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. none of them in Norway, thus, there is a different cultural view. This study is expanding our knowledge about eWOM intentions to include a new cultural setting.

When comparing this study with previous research, some variables and effects hold in different contexts while some does not. Norway has a highly feminine society where customers are more tender than tough. In a feminine society both men and women are modest, tender, and aware of the quality of life. Masculine societies are more interested in reputation, career, and material success (Hofstede, 1998).

The positive relationship between reciprocity and eWOM intentions was supported in the regression analysis. This result is contradicting to the findings of Cheung & Lee (2012). This might be due to the cultural differences between Hong Kong and Norway. Gender was also included as a variable and females were found to be more likely to share eWOM on Facebook

This study also included entertainment value of posting messages online. The statements were removed because they did not measure what they intended to measure. Our contradicting results might be because the statements were

adapted from a qualitative analysis. This variable was only included in one previous study and contributed to our understanding of eWOM intentions and how it differ among cultures.

Limitations

This research has several limitations. The study included 179 Facebook users, which is a relatively small sample due to time and money restrictions. A larger sample would increase the reliability of the study. Norway is a relatively small country and the result from the study might be difficult to generalize outside of Norway. The time constraint also impacted the number of included variables.

The survey was posted on Facebook and the respondents were friends and family of the author which could yield a biased result. The study was also concentrated around sharing experiences on Facebook. The result might have been different if the study included a broader variety of social networking sites.

Implications for research

Future studies should increase the number of variables and include cultural setting as a control variable in the research model. This would increase the possibility for similar results in different cultural settings. It would also increase the credibility to repeat the study including a different, but similar sample (another cross-sectional study). Future studies should also include different social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram and other consumer-sharing sites. This would include a broader group of people and would yield a more reliable result.

Technology changes and trends would be possible to measure by testing the same sample over a longer period of time (repeating the study over longer periods of time). Future studies with more time and money should also consider increasing the sample size. The topic of the thesis has one of the fastest changing dynamics due to its use of technology. Information is being changed and updated

at a rapid paste and future authors should have this in mind during the development of similar studies.

Implications for practice

The value of eWOM is created by the impact it has on existing and potential customers. Comments from satisfied customers can increase sales, while comments from unsatisfied customers could decrease sales. Managers often perceive eWOM to be one of the most powerful marketing channels because it is developed and shared by already existing customers. It is important that managers know how to communicate with their customers. Managers can use the results from this study to their advantage by changing their focus to social media sites. The company can use Facebook as a statistical tool, where you can see and measure the customers who share marketer-generated content. With this information the managers could segment the market so that customers that are more likely to share will receive benefits of some sort, e.g. discounts, coupon etc.

Other social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram can also be used. Twitter and Instagram are easy channels for managers to follow consumer-generated content, where their customers link their comments to the company (a so-called hash-tag). Hash tags make it possible for companies to search for their name and get all messages related to their name ever posted. This can be used for their advantage in following discussions and thread about their service and use the content to improve their customer service.

Managers can create customer specific content and develop marketing strategies based on the findings in this study. Customers would be more likely to share if they get a feeling of belonging to a community, so managers could create an online community where customers could "meet" and discuss products. Investing in online consumer activities would increase the possibility of positive eWOM. Customers could also be included in the development process of new products.

Reciprocity was found to have an impact on eWOM intentions. Customers who are reciprocal are more likely to share if they get something in return. Managers could develop a system where they reward customers who contribute to positive eWOM with discounts etc. This finding could also be used to develop sites where customers who share content frequently are welcome to share experiences with each other.

Female customers are more likely to share experiences than male customers, which could be exploited by developing advertisements with focus on female customers. In addition, the company can offer rewards appealing to females as an expression of gratitude.

Appendix

Survey

What is your gender?

(1) ❑ Female

(2) ❑ Male

Please enter your age.

_____

Were you born in Norway?

(1) ❑ Yes

(2) ❑ No

What is your education level?

(1) ❑ Elementary school

(2) ❑ High school

(3) ❑ College/university

(4) ❑ Other

On a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree with the following statements regarding your intentions to share customer experiences on Facebook.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"I intend to share my customer experiences with other members on Facebook frequently in the future"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"I will always share my customer experiences at the request of other members on Facebook"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"I will try to share my customer experiences with other members on Facebook in a more effective way"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

On a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree to the following statements regarding your concern for other customers.

"I share my customer experiences because..."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"…I want to warn others of bad products"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"…I want to save others from	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
having the same negative experience as me"							
"…I want to help others with my own positive experiences"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"…I want to give others the opportunity to buy the right product"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"…I like to help other members on Facebook"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"…it feels good to help other members on Facebook"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"…I enjoy helping other members on Facebook"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

On a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree to the statements regarding the sense of belonging.

"I share my customer experiences because..."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"…I am very attached to the Facebook community"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"…other Facebook members and I share the same objectives"	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐	(7) ☐
"…the friendships I have with other Facebook members mean a lot to me"	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐	(7) ☐
"…if Facebook members planned something, I would think of as something "we" would do rather than something "they" would do"	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐	(7) ☐
"…I see myself as part of Facebook"	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐	(7) ☐

On the 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree to the statements regarding your reputation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"I feel that sharing my customer experiences on Facebook improves my status in the profession"	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐	(7) ☐

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"I share my customer experiences on Facebook to improve my reputation in the profession"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"I share my customer experiences on Facebook because I want to be a top reviewer"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

On a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree to the statements about entertainment value of posting an experience on Facebook.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"I find it entertaining to follow and participate in discussions about products and companies"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"I feel relaxed and amused when sharing my experiences online"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

On a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree to the statements regarding reciprocity.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
"When I share my customer experience through Facebook, I believe that I will get an experience for sharing an experience"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"When I share my customer experiences through Facebook, I expect somebody to respond when I´m in need"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"When I share my experiences on Facebook, I expect to get back knowledge when I need it."	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"I know that other members of Facebook will help me, so it is only fair to help other members with my experiences"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
"Other members of Facebook have helped me in the past, I want to return the favor by	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

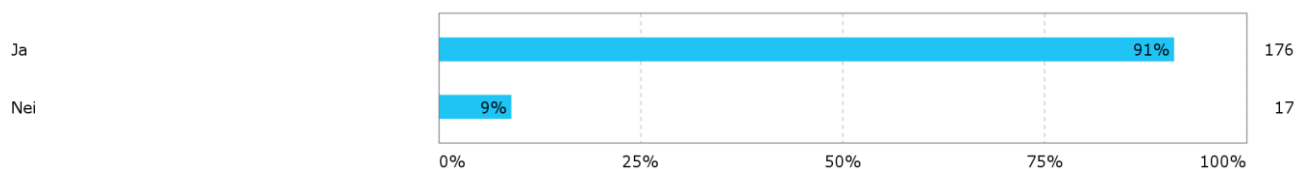|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
posting my customer experiences"							
"I want to encourage other members of Facebook to "pay it forward" as they share their experiences"	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
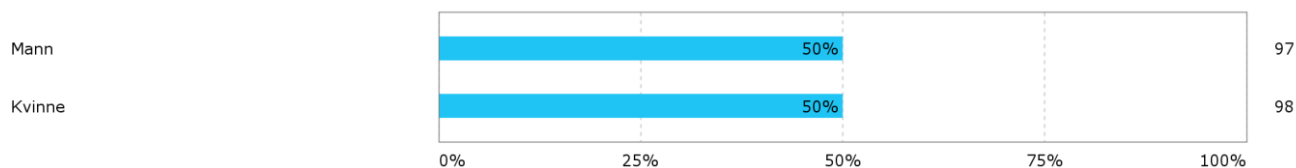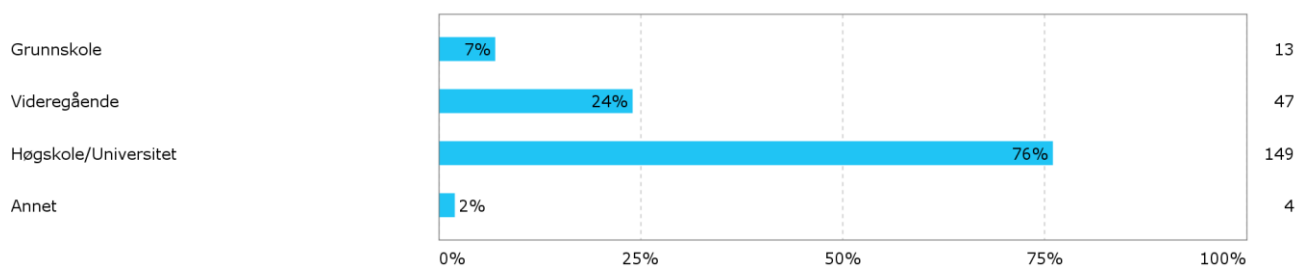
Kjønn?

Mann	50%	97
Kvinne	50%	98

Er du født i Norge?

Ja	91%	176
Nei	9%	17

Hva er ditt utdanningsnivå?

Grunnskole	7%	13
Videregående	24%	47
Høgskole/Universitet	76%	149
Annet	2%	4

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til dine intensjoner om å dele kundeerfaringer på Facebook.

"Jeg kommer ofte til å dele mine kundeerfaringer med andre medlemmer av Facebook i fremtiden"

Svært uenig	18%	35
Uenig	26%	51
Noe uenig	12%	24
Nøytral	18%	34
Noe enig	15%	29
Enig	8%	15
Svært enig	3%	6

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

"Jeg kommer alltid til å dele mine kundeerfaringer på forespørsel fra andre medlemmer av Facebook"

Svært uenig	16%	30
Uenig	21%	40
Noe uenig	11%	21
Nøytral	19%	36
Noe enig	17%	33
Enig	12%	23
Svært enig	4%	8

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

"Jeg kommer til å prøve å dele mine kundeerfaringer med andre medlemmer av Facebook på en mer effektiv måte"

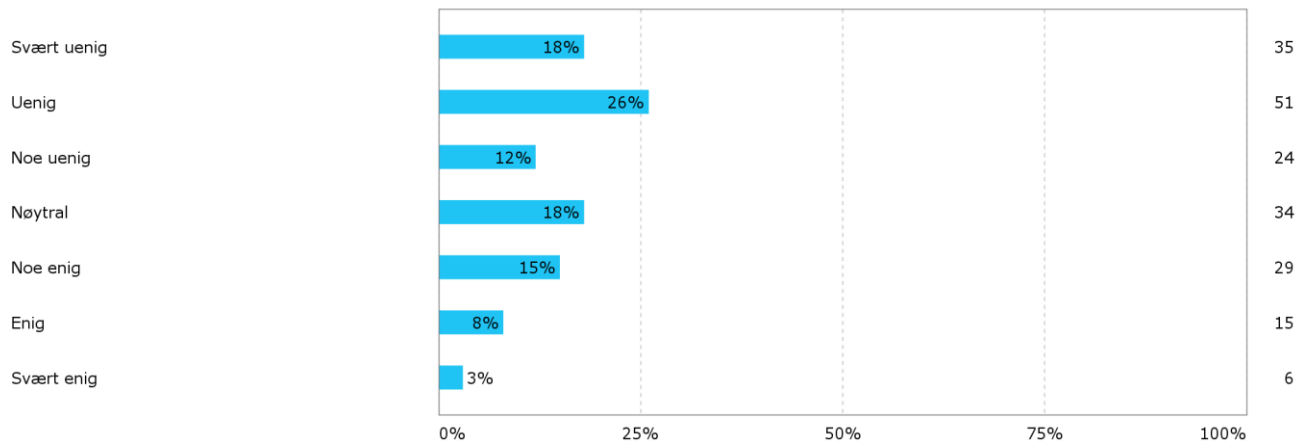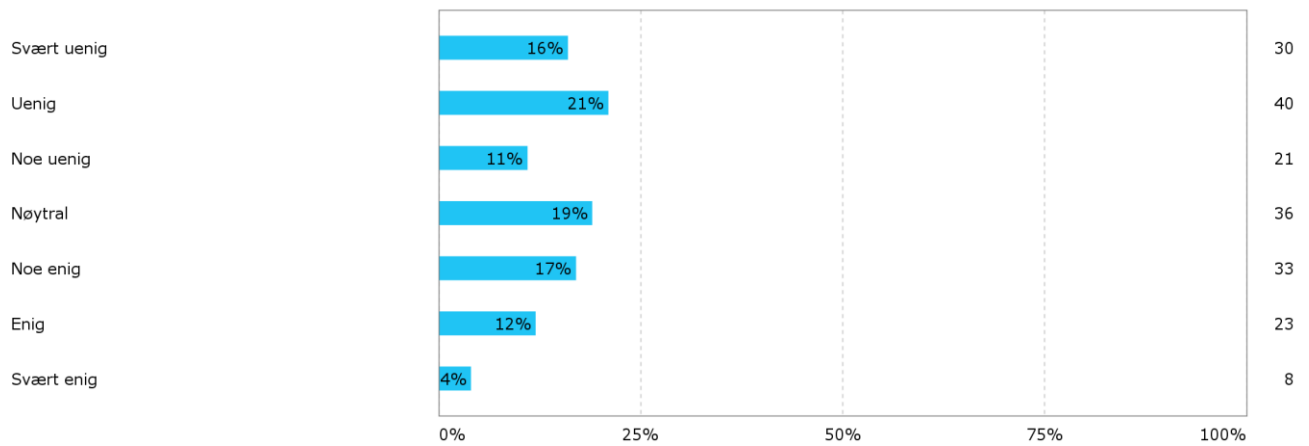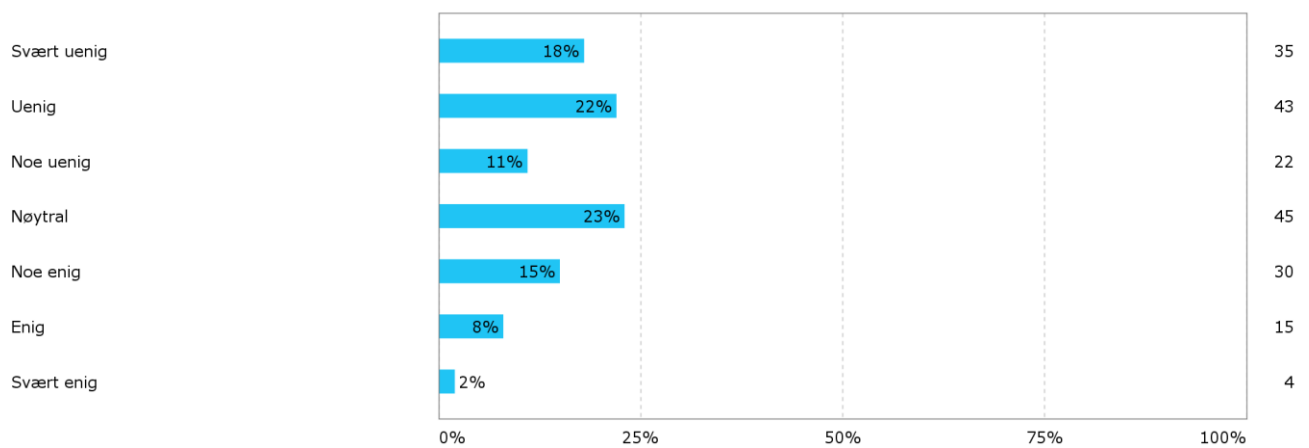|		
Svært uenig	18%	35
Uenig	22%	43
Noe uenig	11%	22
Nøytral	23%	45
Noe enig	15%	30
Enig	8%	15
Svært enig	2%	4

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til din bekymring for andre kunder.
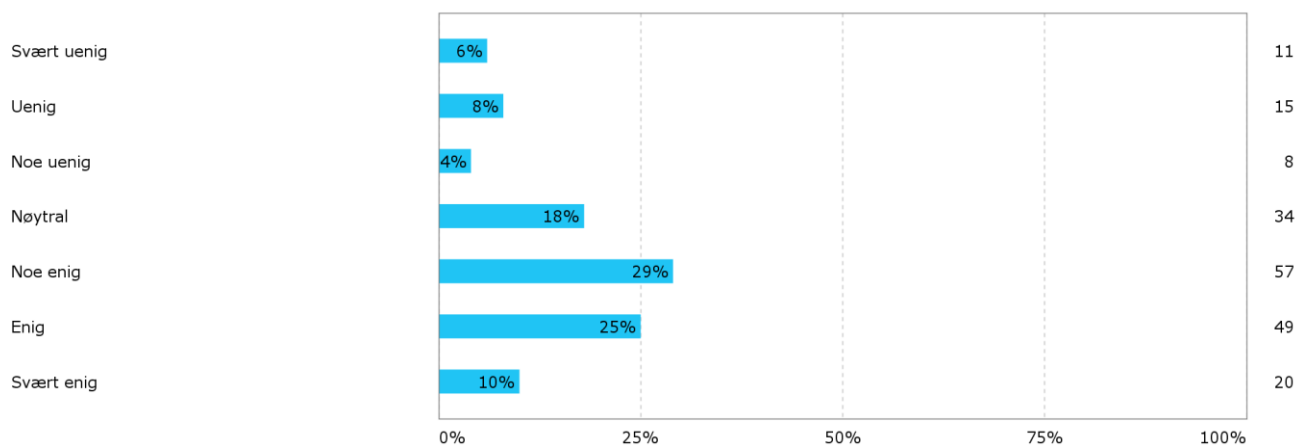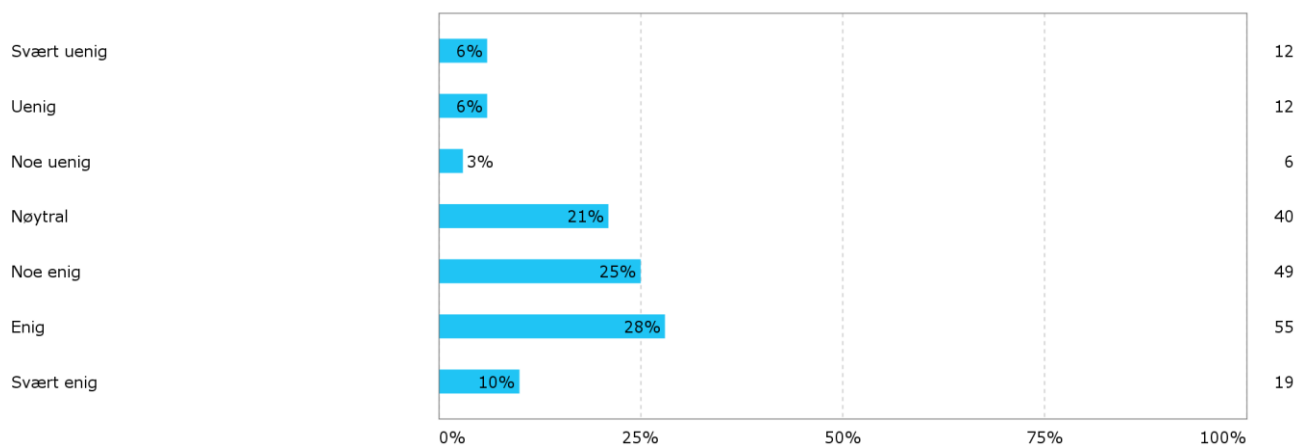
"Jeg deler mine kundeerfaringer på Facebook fordi…"

"…jeg vil advare andre kunder om dårlige produkter"

Svært uenig	6%	11
Uenig	8%	15
Noe uenig	4%	8
Nøytral	18%	34
Noe enig	29%	57
Enig	25%	49
Svært enig	10%	20

"…jeg ønsker å redde andre fra å ha samme dårlige erfaringer som meg"

Svært uenig	6%	12
Uenig	6%	12
Noe uenig	3%	6
Nøytral	21%	40
Noe enig	25%	49
Enig	28%	55
Svært enig	10%	19

"…jeg ønsker å hjelpe andre med mine egne positive erfaringer"

79

Svært uenig	6%	12
Uenig	6%	12
Noe uenig	2%	4
Nøytral	22%	43
Noe enig	22%	42
Enig	29%	56
Svært enig	12%	24
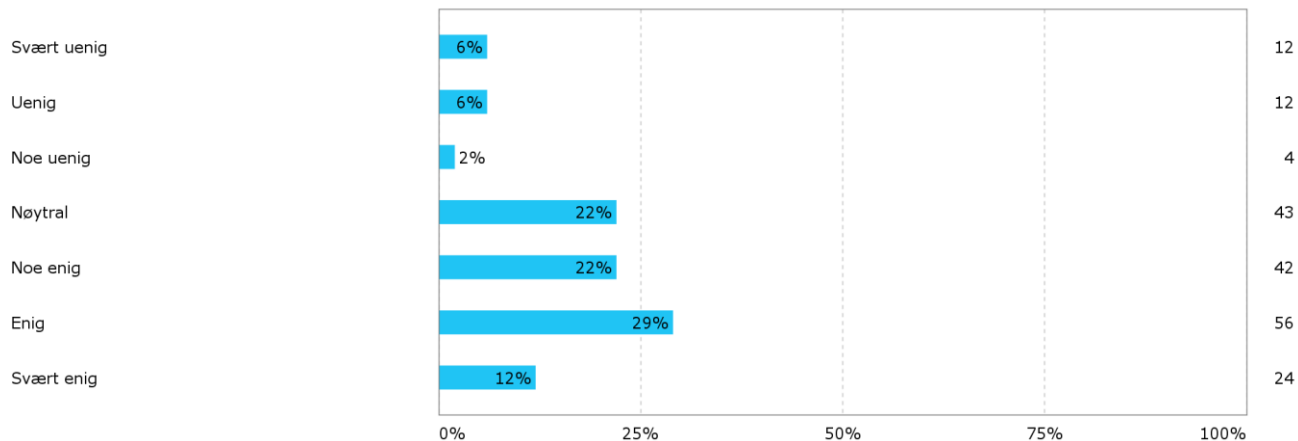
"…jeg ønsker å gi andre muligheten til å kjøpe riktige produkter"

Svært uenig	7%	13
Uenig	7%	14
Noe uenig	2%	4
Nøytral	27%	52
Noe enig	21%	41
Enig	26%	50
Svært enig	9%	17

"…jeg ønsker å hjelpe andre medlemmer av Facebook"

Svært uenig	10%	19
Uenig	10%	19
Noe uenig	10%	19
Nøytral	38%	72
Noe enig	18%	34
Enig	10%	20
Svært enig	5%	9
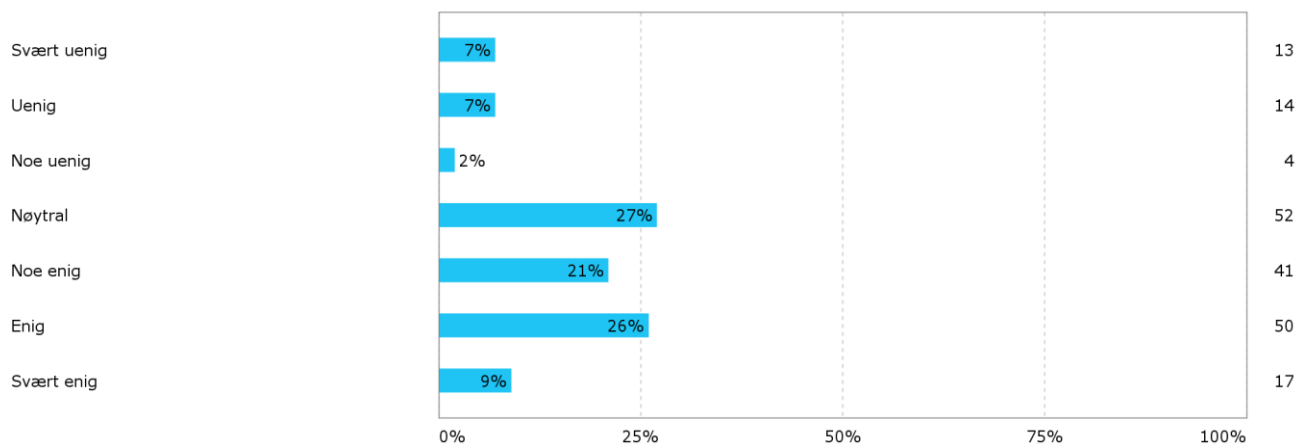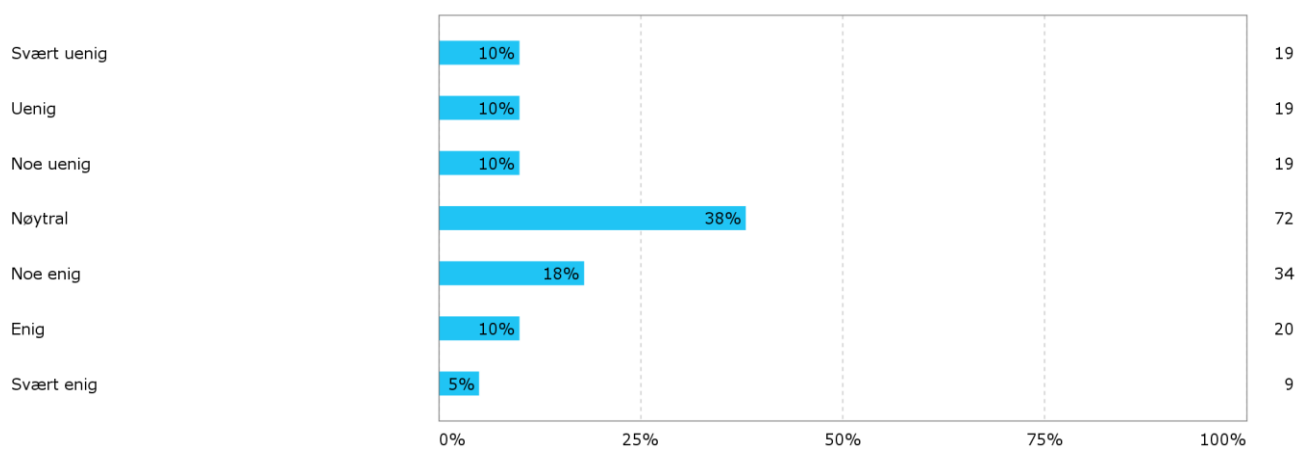
"…det føles godt å hjelpe andre medlemmer av Facebook"
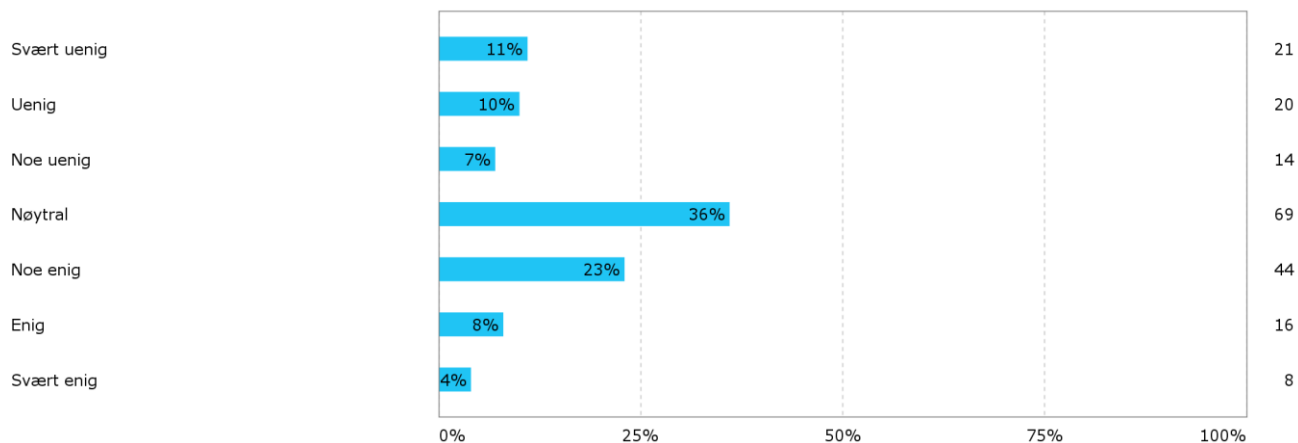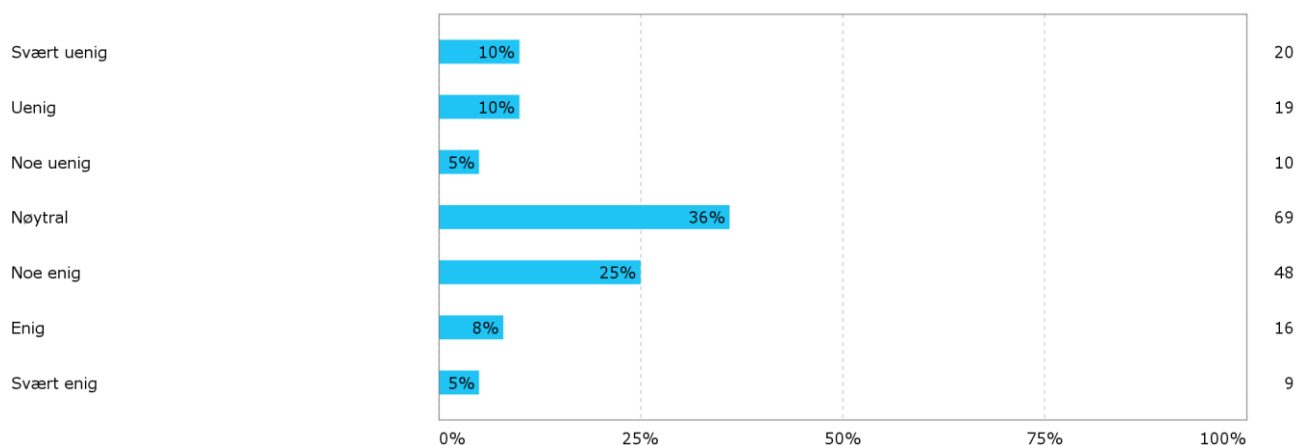
	%	Antall
Svært uenig	11%	21
Uenig	10%	20
Noe uenig	7%	14
Nøytral	36%	69
Noe enig	23%	44
Enig	8%	16
Svært enig	4%	8

- "…jeg liker å helpe andre medlemmer av Facebook"

	%	Antall
Svært uenig	10%	20
Uenig	10%	19
Noe uenig	5%	10
Nøytral	36%	69
Noe enig	25%	48
Enig	8%	16
Svært enig	5%	9

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til din følelse av tilhørighet.
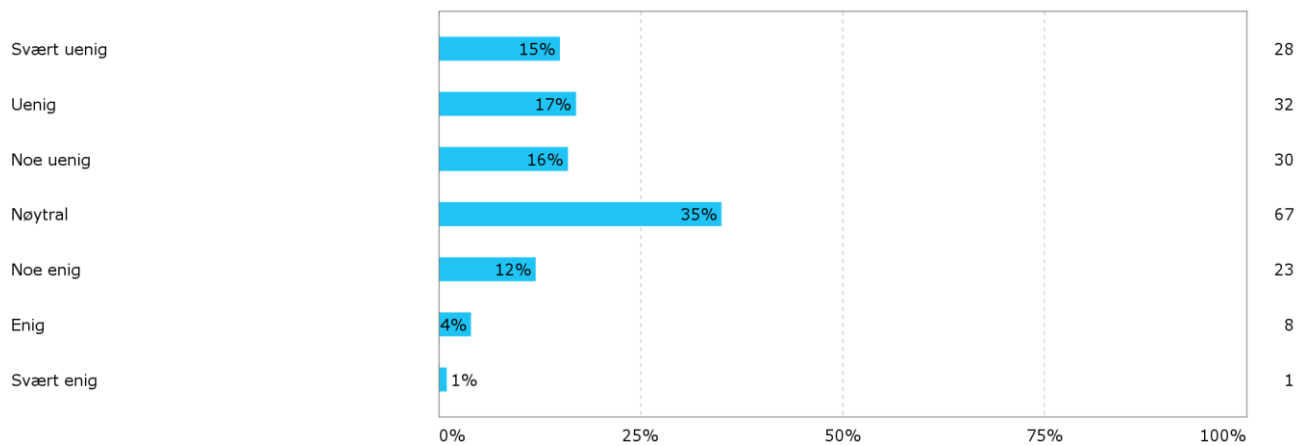
"Jeg deler mine kundeerfaringer på Facebook fordi…"

"…jeg er veldig knyttet til fellesskapet på Facebook"

81

Svært uenig	23%	44
Uenig	21%	40
Noe uenig	11%	21
Nøytral	28%	54
Noe enig	12%	23
Enig	4%	7
Svært enig	1%	1

0%　25%　50%　75%　100%
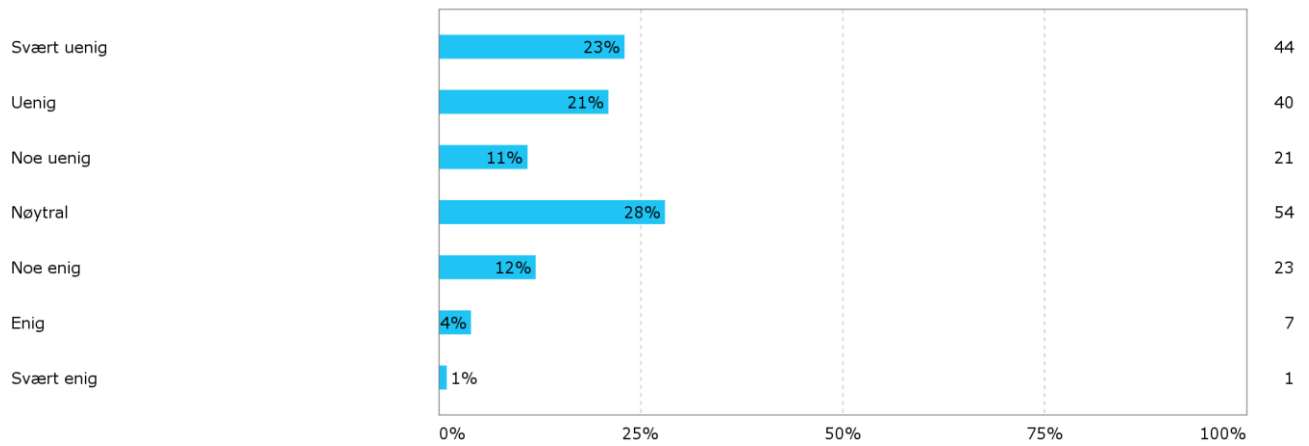
"...andre Facebook medlemmer og jeg deler de samme meningene"

Svært uenig	15%	28
Uenig	17%	32
Noe uenig	16%	30
Nøytral	35%	67
Noe enig	12%	23
Enig	4%	8
Svært enig	1%	1

0%　25%　50%　75%　100%

"...vennskapene jeg har med andre Facebook medlemmer betyr mye for meg"

Svært uenig	15%	28
Uenig	17%	33
Noe uenig	15%	28
Nøytral	29%	55
Noe enig	17%	32
Enig	7%	13
Svært enig	0%	0

0%　25%　50%　75%　100%
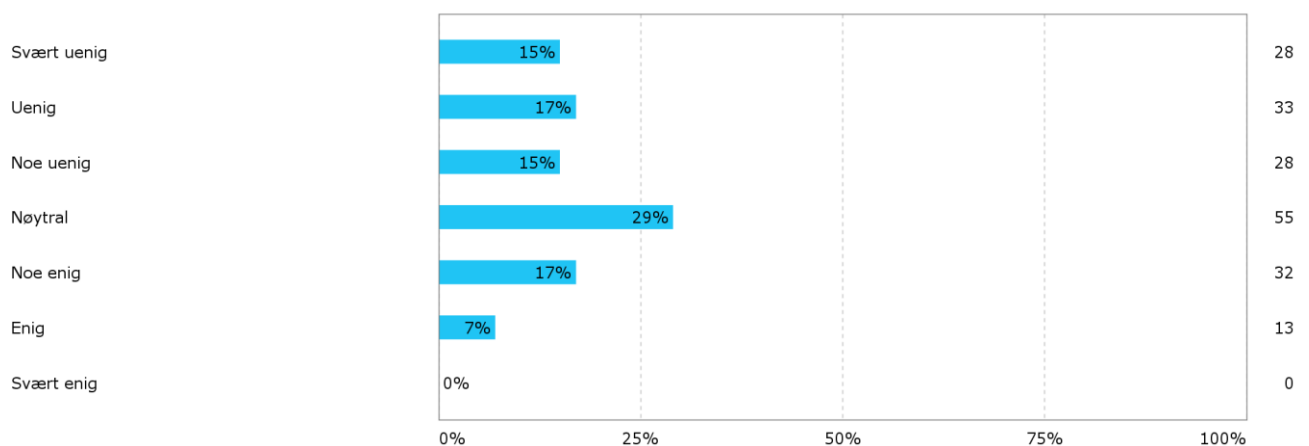
"…hvis medlemmer av Facebook planlegger noe, ser jeg på det som noe "vi" som et fellesskap gjør, i motsetning til noe "de" gjør"

	%	Antall
Svært uenig	24%	45
Uenig	23%	42
Noe uenig	11%	20
Nøytral	30%	56
Noe enig	9%	17
Enig	3%	6
Svært enig	0%	0
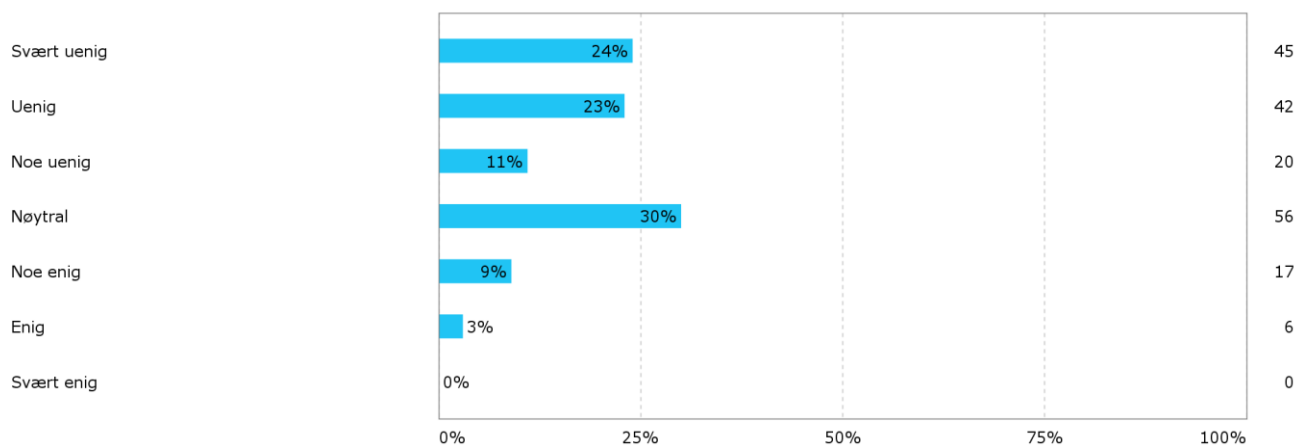
"…jeg føler at jeg er en del av Facebook"
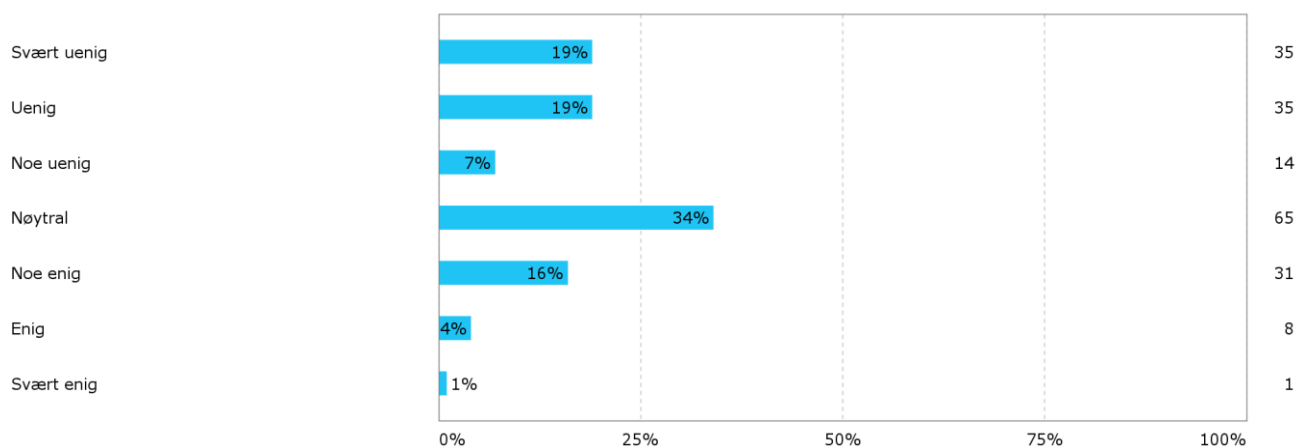
	%	Antall
Svært uenig	19%	35
Uenig	19%	35
Noe uenig	7%	14
Nøytral	34%	65
Noe enig	16%	31
Enig	4%	8
Svært enig	1%	1

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til ditt personlige rykte.
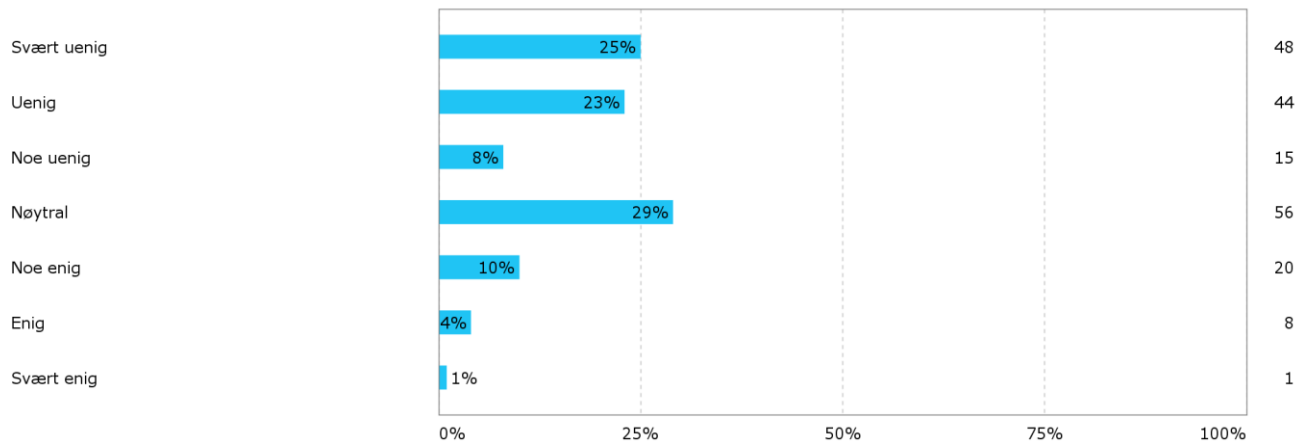
"Jeg mener at å dele mine kundeerfaringer bidrar til forbedret status i mitt yrke"

Svært uenig	25%	48
Uenig	23%	44
Noe uenig	8%	15
Nøytral	29%	56
Noe enig	10%	20
Enig	4%	8
Svært enig	1%	1

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

"Jeg deler mine kundeerfaringer på Facebook fordi det forbedrer mitt rykte i mitt yrke"

Svært uenig	30%	58
Uenig	23%	44
Noe uenig	9%	17
Nøytral	28%	54
Noe enig	7%	14
Enig	2%	3
Svært enig	1%	1

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

"Jeg deler mine kundeerfaringer på Facebook fordi jeg ønsker å bli en topp-anmelder"

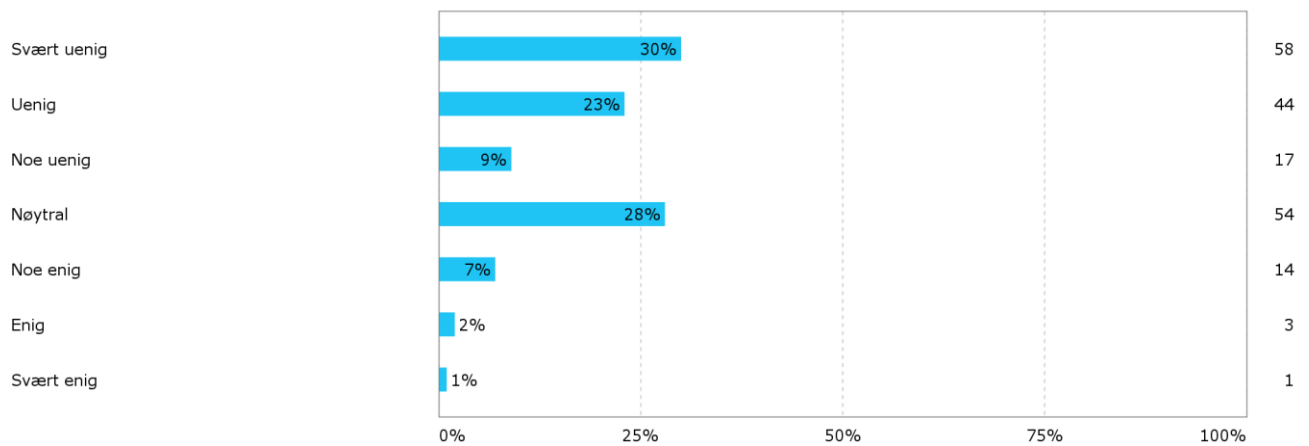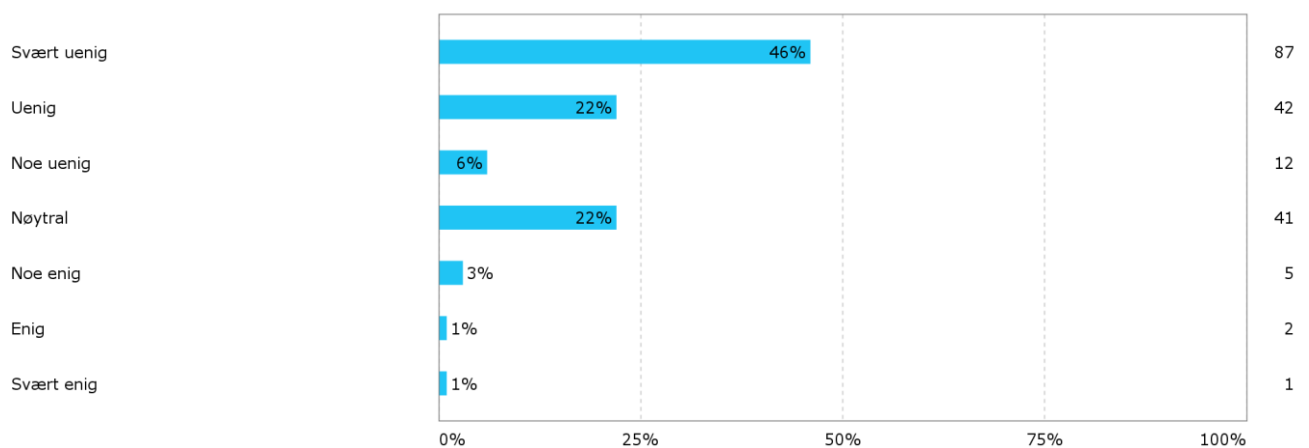|		
Svært uenig	46%	87
Uenig	22%	42
Noe uenig	6%	12
Nøytral	22%	41
Noe enig	3%	5
Enig	1%	2
Svært enig	1%	1

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til underholdningsverdien av å publisere en kundeerfaring på Facebook.

"Jeg syntes det er underholdende å følge og delta i diskusjoner relatert til produkter og tjenester"

Svært uenig	15%	29
Uenig	16%	30
Noe uenig	11%	20
Nøytral	21%	39
Noe enig	28%	53
Enig	8%	15
Svært enig	2%	3

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%
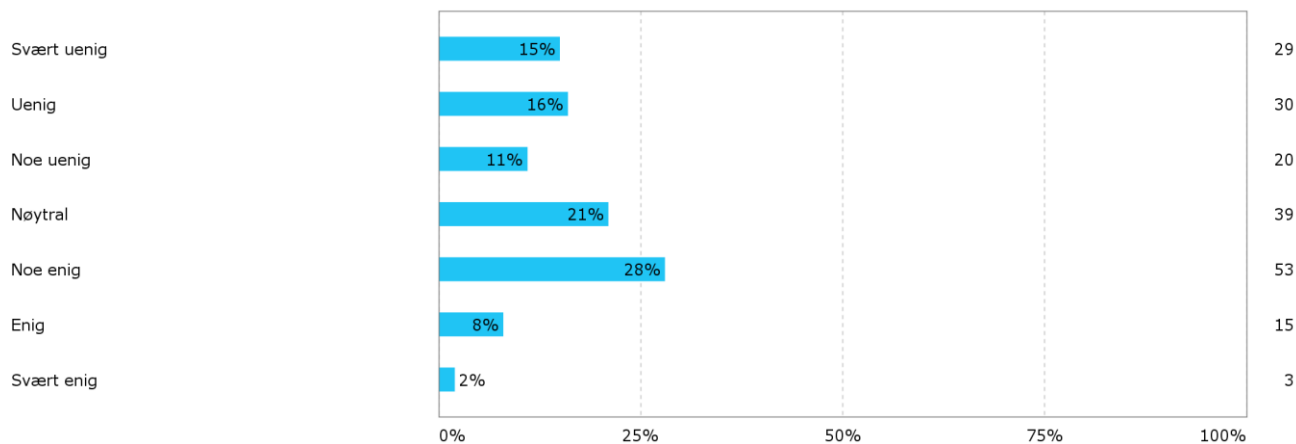
"Jeg føler meg avslappet og underholdt når jeg deler mine kundeerfaringer på Facebook"

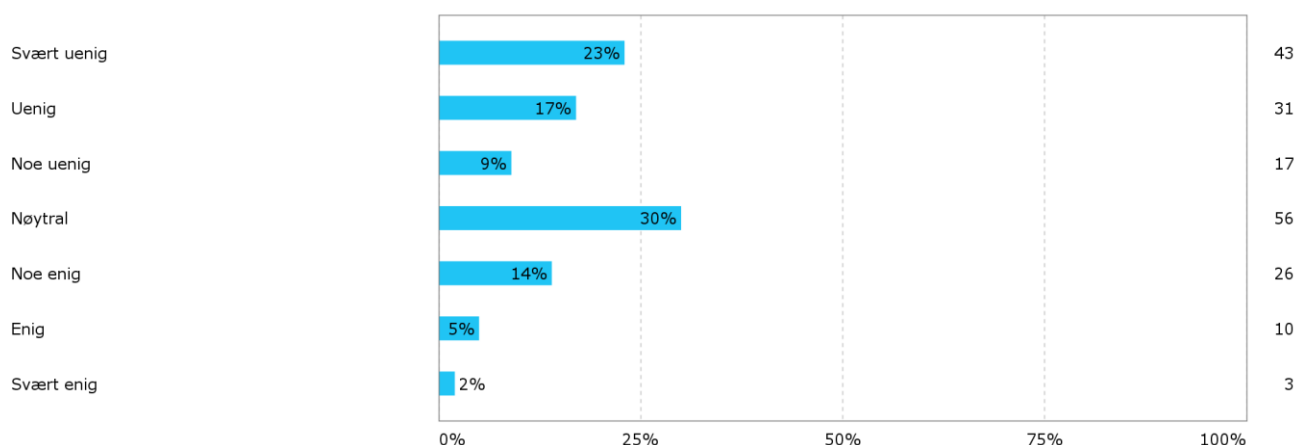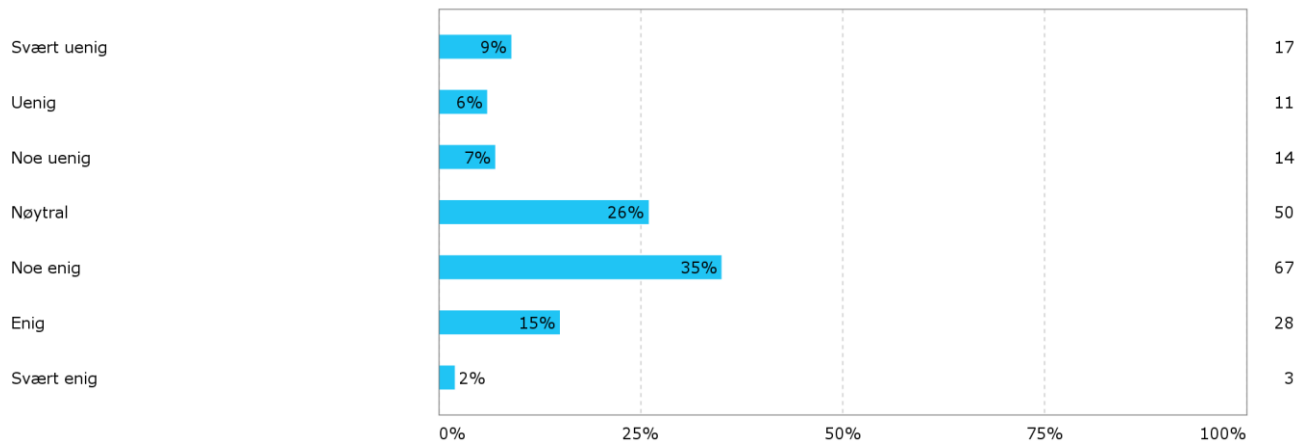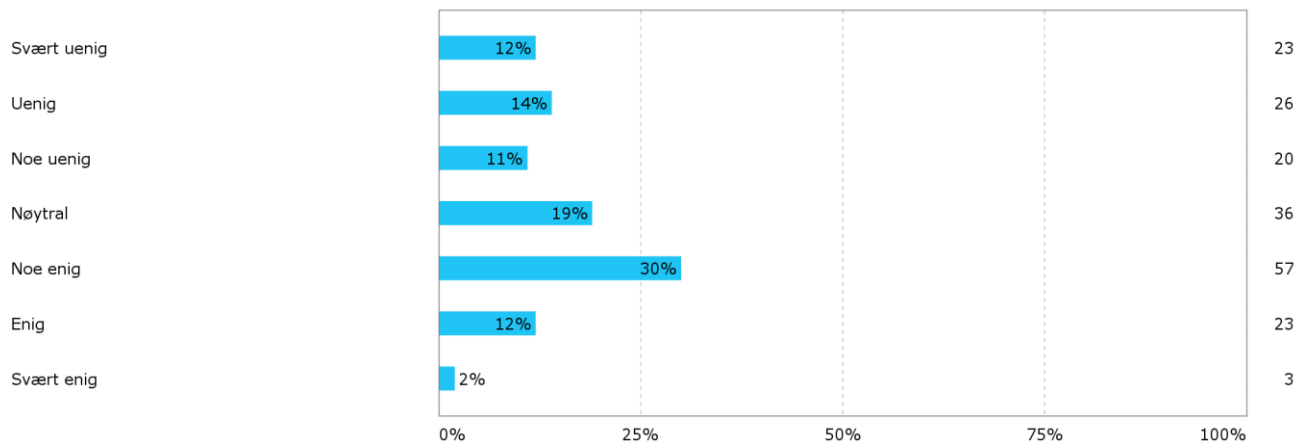|		
Svært uenig	23%	43
Uenig	17%	31
Noe uenig	9%	17
Nøytral	30%	56
Noe enig	14%	26
Enig	5%	10
Svært enig	2%	3

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

På en skala fra 1-7 hvor 1 er svært uenig og 7 er svært enig, vennligst angi i hvilken grad du er uenig eller enig med fremlagte påstander relatert til resiprositet.
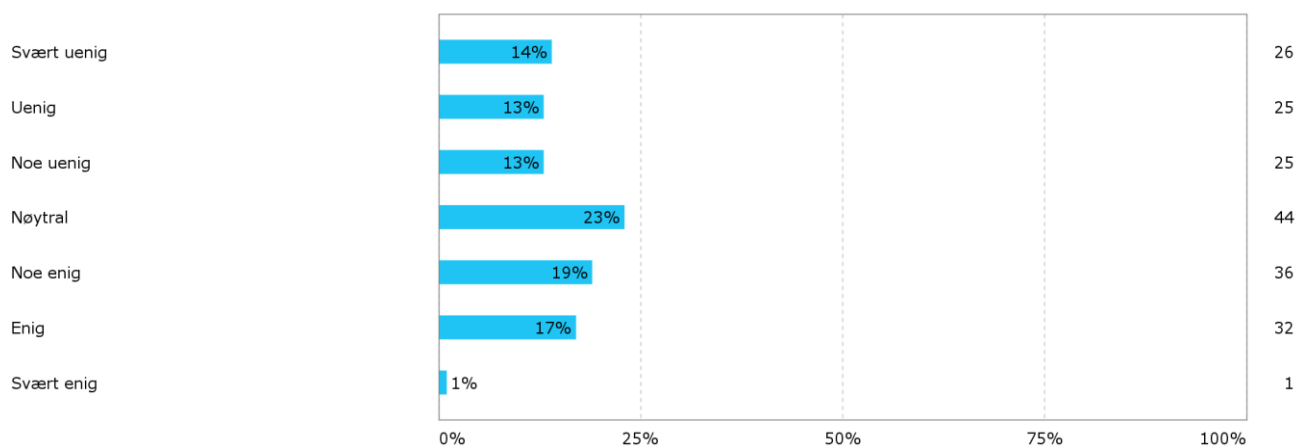
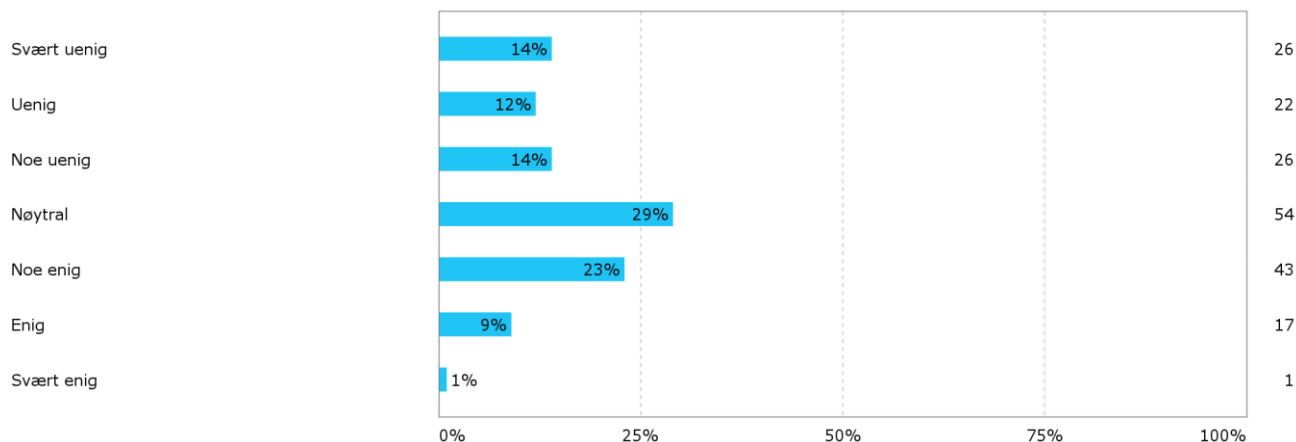"Jeg tror andre vil dele sine erfaringer når jeg deler mine"

85

Svært uenig	9%	17
Uenig	6%	11
Noe uenig	7%	14
Nøytral	26%	50
Noe enig	35%	67
Enig	15%	28
Svært enig	2%	3

0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%

"Når jeg deler mine erfaringer forventer jeg at andre vil respondere når jeg trenger det"

Svært uenig	12%	23
Uenig	14%	26
Noe uenig	11%	20
Nøytral	19%	36
Noe enig	30%	57
Enig	12%	23
Svært enig	2%	3

0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%

"Når jeg deler mine erfaringer forventer jeg å få kunnskap i retur når jeg trenger det"

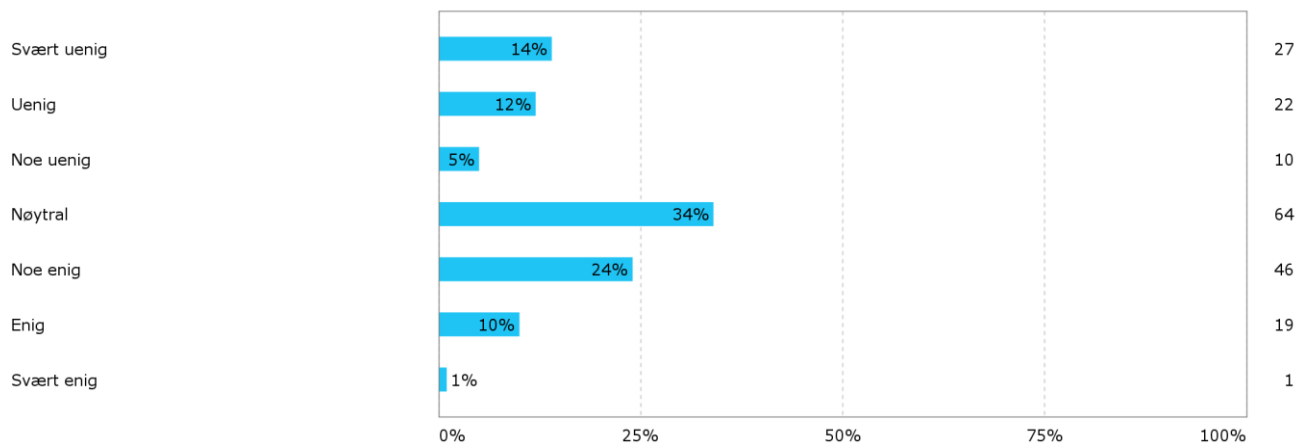|		
Svært uenig	14%	26
Uenig	13%	25
Noe uenig	13%	25
Nøytral	23%	44
Noe enig	19%	36
Enig	17%	32
Svært enig	1%	1

0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%

"Jeg vet at andre medlemmer av Facebook vil hjelpe meg, så det er bare rettferdig at jeg hjelper andre med mine erfaringer"

Svært uenig	14%	26
Uenig	12%	22
Noe uenig	14%	26
Nøytral	29%	54
Noe enig	23%	43
Enig	9%	17
Svært enig	1%	1

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

"Andre medlemmer har hjulpet meg tidligere, og jeg ønsker å returnere tjenesten ved å dele mine erfaringer"

Svært uenig	15%	29
Uenig	16%	30
Noe uenig	7%	13
Nøytral	27%	51
Noe enig	24%	45
Enig	10%	18
Svært enig	2%	3

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%
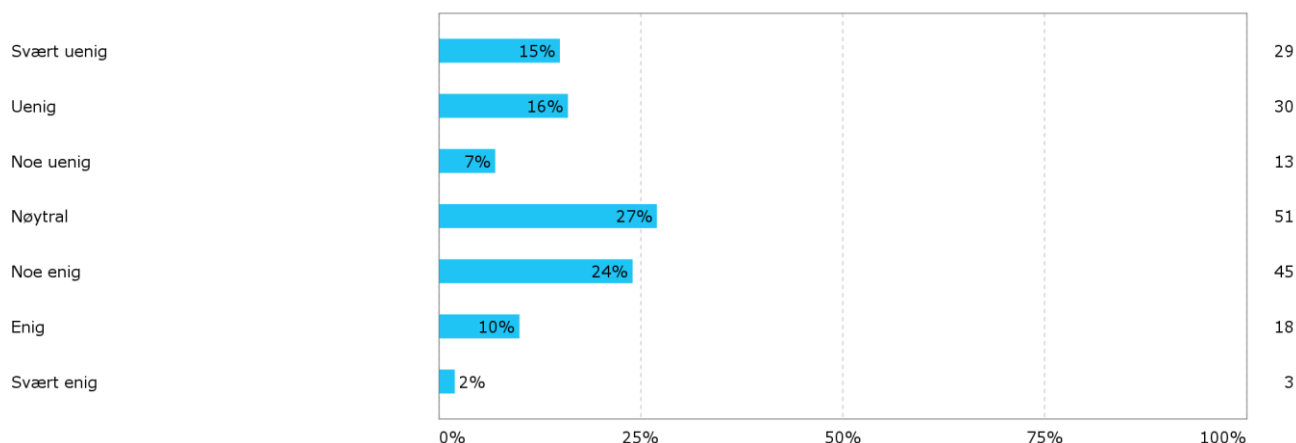
"Jeg ønsker å motivere andre medlemmer til hjelpe andre når de deler sine erfaringer"

Svært uenig	14%	27
Uenig	12%	22
Noe uenig	5%	10
Nøytral	34%	64
Noe enig	24%	46
Enig	10%	19
Svært enig	1%	1

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

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