

**The effect of social media comment on Chinese consumers' attitude toward the brand**

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	1
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
Electronic word-of mouth (eWOM) and social media advertising .....	7
Message framing postulate of prospect theory .....	9
Brand familiarity and prospect theory .....	12
Attitude toward the brand .....	13
Hypotheses .....	13
CHAPTER 3 METHOD .....	15
Participants .....	15
Procedure .....	15
Variables and Measures .....	16
Stimulus .....	18
Manipulation Check .....	18
Data Analysis .....	19
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS .....	20
Sample Characteristics .....	20
Descriptive Statistics .....	21
Manipulation Check .....	24
Hypotheses Test .....	24
Summary of Findings .....	30

	Page
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION .....	32
Implication of the Findings to Theory .....	33
Implication of the Findings to Professional Practice .....	34
Limitation of the Study .....	36
Suggestions for Future Study .....	37
REFERENCES .....	40
APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL LETTER .....	44
APPENDIX B. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- NO- FRAMED MESSAGE GROUP (IN ENGLISH) .....	45
APPENDIX C. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- POSITIVE MESSAGE GROUP (IN ENGLISH) .....	50
APPENDIX D. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- NEGATIVE MESSAGE GROUP (IN ENGLISH) .....	55
APPENDIX E. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- NO- FRAMED MESSAGE GROUP (IN CHINESE) .....	60
APPENDIX F. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- POSITIVE MESSAGE GROUP (IN CHINESE) .....	64
APPENDIX G. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE- NEGATIVE MESSAGE GROUP (IN CHINESE) .....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 A hypothetical value function.....	10

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample .....	20
Table 2 Descriptive Statistics .....	22
Table 3 Descriptive Statistics Among Different Groups .....	23
Table 4 Descriptive Statistics Among Different Groups by Familiarity .....	24
Table 5 Independent Sample t- tests for Attitude Toward the Brand by Different Groups Comparison.....	25
Table 6 One-way ANOVA Among the Three Groups .....	26
Table 7 Pairwise t-test for Differences in Group Means .....	27
Table 8 One-way ANOVA Test Among the Three Groups.....	28
Table 9 Pairwise t-test for Means Difference Among Groups for Participants Unfamiliar with the Brand.....	29
Table 10 Independent t-test Between Groups for Participants Familiar with the Brand.....	30

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated how the valence of framed messages and consumers' familiarity with the brand impacts consumer attitudes toward the brand. An online study was conducted with a sample of 126 Chinese students who were randomly assigned to one of three groups.

Based on the prospect theory, five hypotheses were explored. This study found that: (1) positive comments in social media advertising have a positive effect on consumers' attitudes toward the brand; (2) negative comments in social media advertising have a negative effect on consumers' attitudes toward the brand; (3) negative comments have more effect than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand; (4) among consumers who are unfamiliar with the brand, negative comments have more effect than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand; (5) among consumers who are familiar with the brand, positive comments in social media advertising have no significant effect on consumers' attitudes toward the brand, but for brand familiar consumers, negative comments in social media advertising also have an effect on their attitudes toward the brand. The contribution of this study is to help Chinese companies and international companies have a better knowledge of Chinese consumers and helping them for their digital marketing campaigns.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social media play a very important role in people's lives. People tend to contact friends via social media, gather information through online social media, and search for products in social media. Advertisers use social media as platforms to advertise their brands and products. Facebook and Twitter, as globally well-known social media, have had hundreds of millions of users all over the world (Yu & Huberman, 2011). Microblogging is a "form of blogging that lets you write brief text updates about your life on the go and send them to friends and interested observers" via the website, this kind of social media platform provide users' a faster communication way, and lower time spending on create contents (Java et al., 2007). According to Fosdick (2012), microblogging was reported globally by 15% of respondents in 2009; but in 2011, the amount of microblogging had increased to 34% of global interactive users (Fosdick, 2012).

As social media advertising has become more attractive for marketers and advertisers, maximizing the effectiveness of their advertisements has been recognized as a problem. According to a report of Nielsen.com (2013), "there is a gap between how marketers would like to use the medium and the current reality." Thus, investigation of how to make social media advertising more effective is essential, and gaining knowledge of consumers will also benefit them.

## Social Media and Advertising

Social media, as an online platform, allows people to create visual or non-visual content, comment on what others post, and share it. Because social media are very easy to use, and reach the audience rapidly, it is widely used in areas related to the environment, politics, technology and the entertainment industry (Yu & Huberman, 2011).

According to Nielsen's report on social media advertising (2013), about 80 percent of Internet users have social networks pages, and one-seventh of the people in the world have a Facebook page. These data indicate that social media use today is so popular, and social media platforms offer huge business opportunities that marketers and advertisers could use for their brand and product promotions. Because social media platforms as online platform, it would be much easier to reach consumers. Because so many people use social media, reaching them as consumers through social media platforms should be relatively easy.

Social media, as an important factor in people's daily lives have gradually become an essential platform for consumers to meet their shopping needs. A study showed that 21% of consumers use social media to get information about a potential purchase; almost 30% of consumers are introduced to new products and have their minds changed about a brand by using social media; and 22% of consumers considered social media very important in their final purchase decision (Powers et al., 2012). According to neilsen.com (2013), only 6% of advertisers and agencies do not use social media at all, but about 80% of advertisers and agencies would either use free tools or purchase media or sponsor content in social media. About 64% of advertisers indicated they expect to increase their paid social media advertising budget; 34% of advertisers would like to keep the same budget in social media advertising; and only 2% indicated they want to decrease their paid social media advertising

budget (Nielsen.com, 2013). The report of Nielsen.com (2013) also pointed out that marketers were willing to increase viewing and using social media advertising as an integrated platform, and “social media is no longer being viewed as its own discrete medium but instead used alongside other tactics to achieve an overall, usually branding-related, objective.”

### Chinese Social Media

In China, online social media have become a major platform for Chinese youth to use to contact friends and gather information. Over two-thirds of users of Chinese social media are between the ages of 18 and 30, and nearly 90% of Chinese social media users are below the age of 35. (Jin, 2008). According to a report of an analysis of Sina Weibo users in 2012, it pointed out that about 83% of users use Weibo for reading and about 61% use Weibo for online shopping. Therefore, online advertising in Chinese social media is very important in attracting Weibo users to increase their purchase intention.

As the most popular microblogging network in China, Sina Weibo has over millions of users. According to the website [tech.sina.com.cn](http://tech.sina.com.cn), by 2013, users of Sina Weibo numbered more than 50 million. The website gave the information that in 2009, Sina Weibo had one million users. Obviously, in four years, Sina Weibo had increased tremendously. The website also showed that the average number of posts by Weibo users is more than ten million per day, and the average online time per user is about one hour per day. Therefore, the importance of Weibo in Chinese daily life is obvious.

According to the report of mapping digital media-China (2012), reported that China has become one of the fastest growing advertising markets in the world, with advertising

sales jumping from RMB120 million in 1981 to RMB234 billion in 2010. According to this report, the advertising industry grew at a rate 30% higher than the recorded growth in Chinese GDP over 29 years. The report predicts that in the next ten years, the Chinese advertising industry will grow at an average annual rate of 15%. Based on these findings, investigation of Chinese social media advertising would appear to be essential.

In this study, the Chinese social media Sina Weibo was used as the platform for exploring how the valence of messages-comments in a Weibo post and level of familiarity in social media advertising influence consumers' attitude toward a brand.

#### Framing Postulate of Prospect Theory as a Mechanism to Understand Consumer Response to Advertising in Social Media

Prospect theory is a descriptive theory of decision making under risk that describes how people put more emphasis on losses than on gains resulting from their decision making (kahneman & Tversky,1979).

In an effort to understand the effect of prospect theory, several studies have explored consumers' behavior in the online environment based on prospect theory (Shankar et al, 2002; Jiang & Rosenbbloom, 2003). Marshall, Huan, Xu & Nam (2011) studied cross-cultural consumers' behavior based on prospect theory and concluded that individuals in different cultures would perceive different levels of risk aversion over both a gain and a loss frame when making a personal financial decision. Zhang & Buda (1999) explored the need for cognition on responses to positively versus negatively framed advertising messages, based on prospect theory; they found that individuals were influenced more by negatively framed advertising messages than by positively framed messages (Zhang &Buda, 1999).

Several studies have investigated the effect of online comments on consumers' attitudes toward the brand and their purchase intention. For example, Chatterjee (2001) concluded that online comments were useful for consumers when choosing an online retailer. Mudambi & Schuff (2010) found that, on Amazon.com, five star rating and comment depth were helpful to a consumer in the process of making a purchase decision.

Based on these studies, few articles have used prospect theory to understand the effects of online comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand.

### Description of This Study

With a theoretical base in prospect theory, this study used an experimental design to investigate the effects of valence of messages (positive/ negative comments) and the level of familiarity (high/ low) in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand. The Chinese social medium Sina Weibo was used as the social media platform. The results were expected to assist Chinese companies in improving their marketing promotion in Chinese social media to enhance positive outcomes. Examining Chinese consumers' attitudes toward the brand in Chinese social media would be most useful for businesses trying to expand their reach beyond the country's borders. Because China is one of the world's largest consumer markets, determining the most effective way of promoting products to Chinese consumers also would be most beneficial to other international brands. Knowing the most effective approach to persuade Chinese consumers is a step in this direction. In particular, the results provide suggestions for marketers and advertisers as to what kind of strategy they should use in digital marketing promotion. The contribution of this study is to help Chinese

companies and international companies have a better knowledge of Chinese consumers and helping them for their digital marketing campaigns.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this study will be composed from electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and social media advertising, message framing postulate of prospect theory, brand familiarity and prospect theory and attitude toward the brand.

#### Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and Social Media Advertising

Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury (2009) stated that Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is “ the process of conveying information from person to person and plays a major role in consumer buying decision”; in the commercial field, “ WOM involves consumers sharing attitudes, opinions, or reactions about business, products, or services with other people.” When consumers choose products or judge products, WOM commonly has a strong effect on them (Herr et al., 1991).

Online word-of-mouth is not identical to the real world word-of-mouth. Consumers use social networking to find disinterested online reviews or comments from people outside their social networking, a form of word of mouth known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Jansen et al., 2009), defined as a “statement made by potential, actual, or former consumers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). eWOM appears on emails, blogs, consumer review websites and social media sites (Chu & Kim, 2011). According to a study of Chu & Kim (2001), more than 70% of social media users are between 18 and 29 years old, and social media advertising induced consumers to engage in social activities, including

commenting, liking or sharing product information. eWOM has great influence in consumers' decision making for purchasing products (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). It offers more messages in quantity than traditional WOM, and it includes both positive and negative messages from multiple sources, in contrast to traditional WOM, which has only a single message that is either positive or negative (Chatterjee, 2001). Consumers willingly participate in eWOM communication with other members of their social networks (Lee et al., 2009).

Lee, Rodgers & Kim (2009) studied the valence of message of eWOM on attitude toward the brand and attitude toward the website. They found that a moderately negative message had a greater effect than an extremely positive message, even though extremely a positive message increased the favorability of attitude toward the brand.

Chu & Kim (2011) investigated the effect of eWOM on social networking sites and found that consumers' engagement in eWOM behaviors in social networking sites influenced users' strength, trust, normative and informational influence.

According to a study of the effect of negative eWOM on retailer evaluation and consumers' decision making, the effect of negative eWOM that consumers perceived was determined by familiarity with the retailer (Chatterjee, 2001).

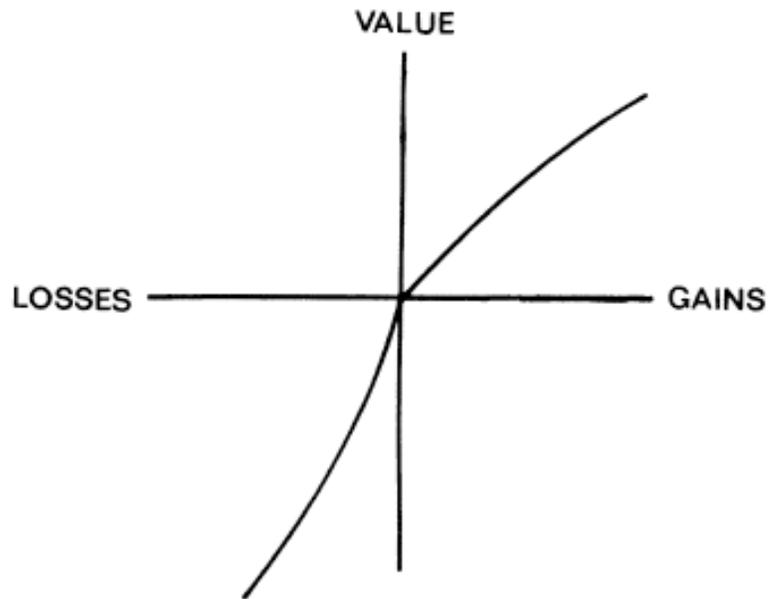
In this paper, eWOM stands for the "verbal exchange of both positive and negative information about a company's product" as consumers post their comments on social media advertising (Zhang, 2011). As it mentioned above, eWOM has an important impact on consumer behavior, and a study of eWOM found out that in online reviews, negative reviews have a greater impact than positive reviews (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2003). Therefore,

investigation of the valence of messages in social media advertising will benefit a company to allow it to improve its communication strategies.

### Message Framing Postulate of Prospect Theory

Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1984) is a model of choice that explains the predicted decision making under risk. It suggests that a loss-framed message would be perceived to have a greater effect than a gain-framed message. Loss-framed messages are defined as “communications that point out a brand’s disadvantages or the potential losses to consumers in a situation.” and in contrast, gain-framed messages are defined as “communications that emphasize a brand’s advantages or the potential gains to consumers in a situation” (Grewal et al., 1994). Kahneman & Tversky (1979) also assumed an S-shaped function (Figure 1) that predicted how the reference point would change when different types of framed messages are perceived. The reference point here actually accords with the current asset position, or it can be defined as the past or present context of experience, and the framed messages are perceived relative to this reference point. In addition, the S-shaped function suggests that “the value function is concave for gains and convex for losses”, and for the loss term, it will be steeper than for gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Therefore, this function suggests that individuals more likely tend to loss aversion than with gains, so loss-framed messages may increase the individual’s perceived risk. Consumer studies have broadened the scope of this theory to the effect of framing advertising messages (Smith & Petty, 1996). Negative and positive framed messages would have different effects on individuals’ choices, preferences, attitudes and behaviors (Tversky & Kahneman, 1984). When individuals process framed messages,

positive framed messages would be encoded as gains from an original reference point. Also, individuals perceive negative framed messages as losses term (Tversky & Kahneman, 1984). In this study, positive comments and negative comments in social media advertising will be exposed to subjects as gain-framed messages and loss-framed messages, respectively.



*Figure 1.* Prospect theory: an analysis of decision under risk. A hypothetical value function.

Several studies of the framing postulate of prospect theory have focused on the effect of message framing on attitude, intention and behavior in the health care field. Meyerowitz & Chaiken (1987) used prospect theory to investigate the effect of message framing on breast self-examination attitude, intention and behavior. It was found that negative-framed messages about breast self-examination in a pamphlet were more persuasive than positive-framed messages; in addition, the negative-framed messages had more effect on fear arousal, had better memory of pamphlet content, and greater intention than positive messages.

Another study in the health care field that applied the framing postulate of prospect theory compared the effectiveness of negative framed messages and positive framed messages to persuade women to have a mammography screening (Banks et al, 1995). The findings suggested that negative framed messages for mammography would have an advantage in promoting this detection behavior.

Block & Keller (1995) examined the effect of perceived efficacy and message framing based on the prospect theory. The study demonstrated that for people in the low efficacy condition, negative framed messages would be more persuasive than positive framed messages; in contrast for people in the high efficacy condition, positive framed messages and negative framed messages did not have differ significantly in persuasiveness.

Chang (2007) focused on studying the effect of message framing on purchase of health care products advertised in print advertisements. It was found that advertisements with both negative and positive-framed messages increased the effectiveness of the message among consumers who had previous experience with the product.

In this study, the original reference point would be consumers' attitude toward the brand before they saw the comments in social media advertising; while, the influence of comments in social media advertising represents the value function for changes as a particular asset position. In this study, the valence of messages would be shown as two types of comments to participants: positive comments, and negative comments in social media advertising. Thus, the influence of each of the two types of comments in social media advertising has a particular asset position of the value.

### Brand Familiarity and Prospect Theory

Wirtz & Kimes (2007) stated, “Familiarity may be a boundary condition for prospect theory.” Familiarity is defined as “the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by consumer”, and product related experiences are defined at “most inclusive level, including advertising exposures, information search, interaction with salesperson, choice and decision making, purchasing, and product usage in various situations”(Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Brand familiarity is defined as “the accumulated related experiences that consumers have had with a brand” (Tam, 2008). Consumers would have prior attitudes and beliefs about a brand that they are familiar with (Petty & Cacioppo,1986). Brand familiarity “captures consumers’ brand knowledge structures”; consumers would have more ability to process brand information based on previous experience for consumers who familiar with the brand, and less ability if they are unfamiliar with the brand (Campbell & Keller, 2003). Ahluwalia (2002) indicated that positive and negative framed messages about a brand would have different effects, based on different levels of participants’ familiarity with the brand. Negative messages had a greater effect than positive messages when the brand was unfamiliar, but when the brand was familiar, the effects of positive and negative messages did not have differ significantly.

Wirtz &Kimes (2007) studied the relationship of familiarity to perceived fairness of revenue management pricing. Their findings supported what Ahluwalia (2002) reported; the effect of different framed messages did not differ significantly for participants with high familiarity with revenue management practices.

### Attitude Toward the Brand

Mitchell & Olson (1981) defined attitude toward the brand as “an individual’s internal evaluation of the brand.” Spears & Singh (2004) defined as “a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior.” Giner-Sorolla (1999) considered attitude toward the brand as “implicit in beliefs, feelings, behaviors and other components and expressions of attitudes.” As these definitions imply, attitude toward a brand is a kind of approach to measuring how consumers evaluate the brand. In other words, attitude toward the brand can be viewed as how consumers favor the brand.

Shimp (1981) found that structuring advertising influenced consumers’ beliefs and evaluations and thus would influence consumers’ attitude toward the brand. That is, measuring attitude toward a brand is a way to examine which kind of advertising, marketing promotion or other factors related to the brand would have the most positive influence on consumers’ attitude toward the brand. Thus, a company would know how to improve their advertising, marketing promotion or other factors related to the brand in the most effective way.

### Hypotheses and Research Question

Based on the findings of these previous studies, the following five hypotheses and research question can be posed:

H1a: positive comments in social media advertising will lead to positive effects on consumers’ attitudes toward the brand.

H1b: negative comments in social media advertising will lead to negative effects on consumers’ attitudes toward the brand.

H1c: negative comments will be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

H2: Among consumers who are unfamiliar with the brand, negative comments will be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

RQ1: Whether positive comments or negative comments have effect in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand among consumers who are familiar with the brand?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

#### Participants

Participants were recruited from the 1800 Chinese students enrolled in Iowa State University in 2014. A total of 1500 students were randomly selected from the list of email addresses of all Chinese students enrolled in ISU, obtained from registrar's office of ISU. According to Chu & Kim (2011), "males and female are equally likely to use social media," and young people are the main population of social media users, so the population of this study was Chinese college students enrolled in the U.S., age 18 to 29, who used Sina Weibo. A total of 126 Chinese students participated in this study. These students were randomly assigned to three groups: participants who were exposed to Weibo advertising with positive comments, participants who were exposed to the same Weibo advertising with negative comments, and a third group that served as a control group, not exposed to any Weibo posts or comments. All participants were sent an invitation email with a link to the study website on a Thursday evening. The website contained Weibo post, comments on Weibo advertising, and the questionnaire. Qualtrics was used as the online survey system.

#### Procedure

Before beginning the questionnaire, participants were asked if they agreed to participate in this study, if they are Chinese, and if they use Sina Weibo. If their answer to any question was "no," they were directed to the end of the questionnaire; if not, then the three groups of participants were given different questionnaires. The participants in the group with no frame

message were shown a brand logo; then the questionnaire asked them to rate their familiarity on a seven scale. After that, this group of participants was asked to rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) their attitude toward this brand. The other two groups of participants, after being asked to rate their familiarity with the brand, they were shown a Weibo post of this brand's product from this brand's official page in Sina Weibo, as well as either positive or negative comments. These comments were manipulated, and a question about the manipulation check in the questionnaire asked participants to rate the valence of these comments. After reading all the stimuli, these two groups of participants were asked to rate their attitude toward this brand on a seven- point scale. For all three groups of participants, the same items were used to measure their attitude toward the brand. Finally, all participants were asked questions on their demographics, including their gender, their age, and whether they were enrolled in a U.S. university or college now.

### Variables and Measures

The independent variable in this study was the valence of message (positive, negative); level of familiarity (high, low). The positive and negative comments were manipulated. Positive comments and negative comments were divided by different themes: positive themes include trust/ admiration, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity; negative themes include mistrust/ fright, shame, guilt, anger/ inferiority, identity problems, isolation, stagnation and despair/ regret (Maercker et al., 1998). Jansen, Zhang & Chowdury (2009) defined the action codes in their research on investigating microblogging as a platform for consumer share opinion about the brand:

positive comments were coded as complimenting and praising; negative comments were coded as critiquing and complaining.

Consumer familiarity was a self-reported measure (Tam, 2006). Level of familiarity measured by a seven-point Likert scale referred to the degree to which participants were familiar with a brand, how often they had heard of it, and how often they had experienced it. Three items were used for familiarity (Lin, 2013; Wirtz & Kimes, 2007). For these participants who rated less than 4 on the seven-point scale were considered the low familiarity group; all others were the high familiarity group (Dawar & Lei, 2009).

The dependent variable, attitude toward the brand, was measured by how participants think and feel about the brand shown in the Weibo advertising. Based on studies of attitude toward the brand, it was measured as good/bad, favorable/unfavorable, desirable/undesirable, useful/not useful, interesting/ not interesting, good value for the money/ not good value for the money, attractive/ not attractive (Spear & Singh, 2004; Herr et al, 1991). Most of the articles that measure feelings and evaluations of advertisements use likert scales. For example, in an article by Madden, Allen & Twible (1988), it was used a Likert scale from “very much so” to “not at all” to answer the question of how people felt about the commercials. In this study, participants were asked to respond to the questions through use of a 7-point scale. The two groups of participants exposed to the social media advertising content as well as comments were then asked to rate their agreement with the advertising recommendation, and the degree of their attitude toward the brand.

### Stimulus

Mizerski (1982) identified two criteria for choosing a stimulus product in an experiment:

1. The product should be one that participants would use and purchase.
2. The product should be one that participants would be interested in seeking other consumers' opinions about.

In addition to the study of investigating the postings, the types of expressions and sentiment in microblogging, SONY was chosen as the major brand in the consumer electronics industry (Jansen et al., 2009).

Based on the above studies, the product used in the experiment was the QX10 by SONY. A Weibo post was chosen from Sina Weibo by SONY official account. Sony official account in Sina Weibo has about 400 thousand followers, and the posts about product QX10 have nearly a hundred comments. Thus, this product was appropriate to be chosen as a product in the experiment. , The stimulus in the experiment was a photograph and a Weibo post and comments of the SONY QX10 camera lens system.

### Manipulation Check

To ensure that the valences of comments are successfully manipulated, participants were asked to rate the valence of comments, using Likert scales (Lee et al, 2009). After a Weibo post and either positive or negative comments were shown to participants, participants were asked to rate the valence of comments shown in the Weibo post, using seven-point Likert scale.

## Data Analysis

To test these hypotheses, independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were conducted. For H1a and H1b, an independent sample t-test was conducted between the no-framed message group and positive/ negative framed message groups. For H1c, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for differences among the three groups and a pairwise t-test was conducted to compare the mean difference between the no-frame message group and the positive/ negative framed message groups. For H2, a one-way ANOVA was conducted for participants unfamiliar with the exposed brand among the three groups, and a pairwise t-test was conducted to compare the mean difference between the no-framed message group and positive/ negative framed message groups for participants unfamiliar with the brand. To test RQ1, an independent sample t-test was conducted for participants familiar with the brand between the no-framed message group and the positive/ negative framed message groups.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

## Sample Characteristics

In this study, 1500 ISU email addresses of Chinese students were randomly selected from 1800 email addresses of Chinese students, and 126 participants of the 1500 students who received the invitation email submitted the questionnaire, which means the rate of response was 8.40 percent. Of these participants who participated in this study, 5 of participants did not complete the questionnaire, and 14 of participants did not use Sina Weibo. Therefore, a total of 107 questionnaires were valid (Table 1): 37 representing participants randomly assigned to the control group, 34 of participants assigned to the group with a positive message, and 36 in the groups exposed to a negative message. A total of 26 (24%) males and 81 (76%) females participated in this study. There were 106 participants age 18-29, and only one aged older than 29.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 107)

	Frequency	Percentage
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Male	26	24%
Female	71	76%
<b><i>Age</i></b>		
18-29	106	99%
> 29	1	1%

### Descriptive Statistics

Participants were asked about their familiarity with the brand to which they were exposed and their attitude toward the brand. The results are shown in the Table 2, which presented the means and standard deviations of these two variables. The variable of familiarity was obtained as the average value of three items: the degree of your familiarity about the brand (M= 5.22, SD= 1.53), how often have you heard about this brand (M= 4.68, SD= 1.40), and how often have had experience with this brand (M = 3.79, SD = 1.55). The mean of familiarity was 4.60 (SD = 1.40), which was above the mid-point of the seven-point Likert scale. The computed indices represent the high reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93).

Another variable attitude toward the brand, it was calculated by the average of the values of seven items that mentioned before, which were anchored on the bipolar adjectives: bad/good (M= 4.40, SD=1.25), favorable/unfavorable (M= 4.11, SD=1.26), desirable/undesirable (M= 4.12, SD= 1.29), interesting/ not interesting (M=4.07, SD=1.28), useful/not useful (M= 3.63, SD=1.10), good value for money/not good value for money (M=3.54, SD= 1.19), and attractive/not attractive (M= 3.82, SD=1.09). These seven items were measured by Likert scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The mean of attitude toward the brand was 4.00 (SD=1.09), which were slightly above mid-point on the seven-point Likert scale. These items measured attitude toward the brand were found to be highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.96).

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics (N = 107)

Variables	Mean	SD
<b><i>Familiarity</i></b>	4.60	1.40
The degree of your familiarity about this brand. <sup>a</sup>	5.22	1.53
How often you have heard about this brand. <sup>b</sup>	4.68	1.40
How often you have experienced this brand. <sup>b</sup>	3.79	1.55
<b><i>Attitude toward the brand</i></b>	4.00	1.09
I feel good about this brand. <sup>c</sup>	4.40	1.25
I think the products of this brand are always favorable. <sup>c</sup>	4.11	1.26
I think the products of this brand are always desirable. <sup>c</sup>	4.12	1.29
I think the products of this brand are interesting. <sup>c</sup>	4.07	1.28
I think the products of this brand are very useful. <sup>c</sup>	3.63	1.10
I think the products of this brand are value for money. <sup>c</sup>	3.54	1.19
I think the products of this brand are attractive. <sup>c</sup>	3.82	1.09

a. Responses were coded as 1= Not familiar at all to 7= Very familiar

b. Responses were coded as 1= Never to 7= Always

c. Responses were coded as 1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree

Table 3 indicated the mean and standard deviation of attitude toward the brand in different groups. For participants in the negative group who received negative comments via Weibo post, the mean of attitude toward the brand in this group was 2.99 (SD= 0.99, n= 36); the

mean of attitude toward the brand of participants exposed to positive comments was 4.73 (SD = 0.64, N = 34), and for the no-framed message group M = 4.19, (SD = 0.83, N = 37).

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics Among Different Groups (N = 107)

	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No-framed message</i>
Attitude	2.99 <sup>a</sup>	4.73	4.19
	(.99) <sup>b</sup>	(.64)	(.83)
n	36	34	37

<sup>a</sup> Treatment means

<sup>b</sup> Standard deviation

Table 4 showed the means and standard deviations for the different groups on the basis of familiarity. Since familiarity is a self-measured variable, those participants with familiarity rated less than 4 constitute an unfamiliar group (N=34), and participants with familiarity equal to or greater than 4 constitute a familiar group (N=83). Thus 32% of participants were not familiar with the exposed brand, and 68% of participants were familiar with the exposed brand. Among participants familiar with the brand, 24 participants were exposed to a negative framed message (M=3.53, SD=0.68), 25 were exposed positive framed message (M= 4.47, SD= 0.51), and 24 participants were not exposed to any framed message (M= 4.37, SD= 0.79). Among participants unfamiliar with the brand, 12 participants were exposed to a negative framed message (M=1.92, SD= 0.51), 12 participants received a positive framed message (M=5.33, SD= 0.50) and 10 participants did not receive any framed message (M= 3.82, SD= 0.81).

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics Among Different Groups by Familiarity (N = 107)

	<i>Familiar</i>			<i>Unfamiliar</i>		
	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No-framed message</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No-framed message</i>
Attitude	3.53 <sup>a</sup>	4.47	4.37	1.92	5.33	3.82
	(.68) <sup>b</sup>	(.51)	(.79)	(.51)	(.50)	(.81)
n	24	25	24	12	12	10

<sup>a</sup> Treatment means

<sup>b</sup> Standard deviation

#### Manipulation Check

To ensure that the valences of comments were successfully manipulated, participants were asked to rate how positive or negative the comments about the exposed brand were on a seven-point Likert scale. An independent sample t- test revealed a significant difference in the perceived valence of the comments ( $t= 16.68$ ,  $df= 67$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). As expected, participants who received a negative framed message ( $M= 2.27$ ,  $SD= 0.77$ ) rated the valences of comments more negatively than participants who received a positive framed message ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ); similarly, the positive framed message group participants rated valence of messages more positively than negative framed message group participants. Thus, the manipulation of comments in the Weibo post was judged successful.

#### Hypotheses Test

Hypothesis 1a stated that positive comments in social media advertising would have a positive effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

The results showed as Table 5, an independent samples t-test was conducted to test this hypothesis, assuming equal variances between the groups (the results of test for equality of variances was not significant). The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the positive framed message group and the no-framed message group ( $t = -3.01$ ,  $df = 69$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) in terms of participants' attitude toward the brand. That is, the attitude toward the brand was affected positively by positive comments in social media advertising ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ), compared with the effect of no comments in social media advertising ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). Thus, H1a was supported.

**Table 5.** Independent Sample t-tests for Attitude Toward the Brand by Different Groups

Comparison

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Attitude (Positive framed message vs. no-framed message)	-3.01	69	0.003
Attitude (Negative framed message vs. no-framed message)	5.62	71	<0.001

Hypothesis 1b stated that negative comments in social media advertising would have a negative effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand. An independent sample t-test was conducted to test this hypothesis for the negative framed message group and the no-framed message group hypothesis assuming equal variances between the groups (the results of test for equality of variances was not significant). The results in Table 5 indicated a significant difference between these two groups ( $t = 5.62$ ,  $df = 71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, with regard to

the attitude toward the brand, negative comments in social media advertising ( $M = 2.99$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ) led to a more negative effect than no comments in social media advertising ( $M=4.19$ ,  $SD=0.82$ ). Thus, H1b was supported.

Hypothesis 1c stated that negative comments would be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising in terms of consumers' attitude toward the brand. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test this hypothesis, assuming unequal variances between the groups (the results of test for equality of variances was significant). The results shown in table 6, indicated that the attitudes toward the brand among these three groups were significantly different,  $F(2,104) = 39.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Thus, participants who received negative comments in social media advertising, positive comments in social media advertising, or did not receive any framed message would have different attitudes toward the brand.

**Table 6.** One-way ANOVA Among the Three Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	55.573	2	27.786	39.84	<0.001
Within groups	72.544	104	0.697		
Total	128.117	106			

To determine whether negative comments were more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising with regard to attitude toward the brand, a pairwise t- test was conducted (Table 7). The results showed that the mean difference between the no-framed

message group and the positive framed message group was 0.53, and the mean difference between the no-framed message group and the negative framed message group was 1.20. Thus, the mean difference between negative message group and no-framed message group was greater than that of the positive framed message group and the no-framed message group. This indicated that the negative framed message had a greater effect than the positive framed message in social media advertising. Therefore, H1c was supported.

**Table 7.** Pairwise t-test for Differences in Group Means

Group comparison	Difference between means	t	sig.
<i>Positive framed message group vs. no-framed message group</i>	0.53	-0.31	0.003
<i>Negative framed message group vs. no-framed message group</i>	1.20	5.62	<0.001

H2 stated that among consumers who are unfamiliar with the brand, negative comments would be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising in terms of consumers' attitude toward the brand.

Using participants' self-measured familiarity, as a basis, for those participants who were not familiar with the exposed brand ( $M < 4.0$ ), a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test this hypothesis, assuming equal variances between the groups (the results of test for equality of variances was not significant). As results showed in table 8, there was a significant difference in attitude toward the brand for those participants unfamiliar with the brand to which the three groups were exposed,  $F(2,31) = 81.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . This indicated that for participants

who were unfamiliar with the brand to which they were exposed, those who received negative comments in social media advertising, positive comments in social media advertising, or no-framed message differ in attitude toward the brand.

**Table 8.** One-way ANOVA Test Among the Three Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	66.538	2	32.269	81.33	<0.001
Within groups	12.300	31	0.396		
Total	76.838	33			

To test whether negative comments would be more persuasive than positive comments among participants who were unfamiliar with the brand in social media advertising of attitude toward the brand, a pairwise t-test was conducted (Table 9). The results showed that for these participants who unfamiliar with the brand which they were exposed, the means difference between the positive framed message group and the no-framed message group was 1.50, and the means difference between the negative framed message group and the no-framed message group was 1.90. This suggested that, for the participants unfamiliar with the brand, a negative framed message would have greater effect than a positive framed message in social media advertising. Thus, H2 was supported.

**Table 9.** Pairwise t-test for Means Difference Among Groups for Participants Unfamiliar With the Brand

Group comparison	Difference between means	t	sig.
<i>Positive framed message group vs. no-framed message group</i>	1.50	-5.12	<0.001
<i>Negative framed message group vs. no-framed message group</i>	1.90	6.91	<0.001

RQ1 mentioned whether positive comments or negative comments have effect in social media advertising on consumers' attitudes toward the brand among consumers who are familiar with the brand.

Based on the results of self- measurements of familiarity, for those participants who were familiar with the exposed brand ( $M \geq 4.0$ ), a t-test was conducted to test this research question assuming equal variances between the groups (the test for equality of variances was not significant). First, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the positive framed message group and the no-framed message group of participants who were familiar with the brand. The results, shown in Table 10 suggested that there was no significant difference between the positive framed message group and the no-framed message group for participants familiar with the brand, in terms of participants' attitude toward the brand ( $t = -0.54$ ,  $df = 41$ ,  $p = 0.590$ ). So that indicated that for participants who familiar with the brand, positive comments in social media advertising had no significant effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

A second t-test was conducted to compare the negative framed message group and the no-framed message group among participants who were familiar with the brand, assuming equal variances (the results of test for equality of variances was not significant), and the results shown in Table 10 suggested that there was a significant difference between the negative framed message group and the no-framed message group for these participants who were familiar with the brand on participants' attitude toward the brand ( $t = 3.96$ ,  $df = 47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicated that for participants who were familiar with the brand, negative comments had significant effect in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand. Thus, the result for this research question suggested for consumers who are familiar with the brand, positive comments had no effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand, whereas negative comments had effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

**Table 10.** Independent t-test Between Groups for Participants Familiar with the Brand

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Attitude ( <i>familiar</i> ) ( <i>Positive framed message vs. no-framed message</i> )	-0.54	47	0.593
Attitude ( <i>familiar</i> ) ( <i>Negative framed message vs. no-framed message</i> )	5.60	46	<0.001

#### Summary of Findings

Most of the Chinese students studying in the U.S. use Sina Weibo as one of the social media platforms. In this study, participants used self-reported measurement of their

familiarity with the brand to which they were exposed. For the target brand in this study, more than half of the participants were familiar with the brand.

The independent sample t-test results showed that positive comments in social media advertising had a positive effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand. In addition, negative comments in social media advertising led to a negative effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

Based on the one-way ANOVA test, the results revealed that negative comments in social media advertising were more persuasive than positive comments on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

Based on participants' self-measured familiarity, results of a one-way ANOVA suggested that among consumers who were unfamiliar with the brand, negative comments were more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising in terms of consumers' attitude toward the brand.

However, the results of the independent sample t-test indicated that for consumers who were familiar with the brand, positive comments had no significant effect in social media advertising in terms of consumers' attitude toward the brand. In contrast, for consumers who were familiar with the brand, negative comments still had a significant effect in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This study examined how different valences of comments in Chinese social media advertising influenced consumers' attitude toward the brand. It also examined, for consumers with different levels of familiarity with the brand, how the different valences of comments in Chinese social media advertising influenced consumers' attitude toward the brand. Among the five hypotheses proposed in this study, four of these hypotheses were supported, and one hypothesis was rejected. It supported that in social media advertising, positive comments would have positive effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand, negative comments would have negative effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand. Besides, in social media advertising, negative comments would have greater effect than positive comments on consumers' attitude toward the brand. For unfamiliar brand consumers, negative comments would have greater effect than positive comments. This study not supported that for familiar brand consumers, positive and negative comments had no effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

This study provided support for the application of prospect theory in Chinese social media advertising, which compared the different effect of valence of messages in social media advertising. For consumers with different levels of familiarity with a brand, valence of messages also had an effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand, except in the case of the effect of positive comments in social media advertising among consumers familiar with the brand.

### Implication of the Findings to Theory

Many studies have examined the influence of framed messages in advertising or in the social media advertising field, but few studies have applied prospect theory to examine the influence of framed messages in social media advertising. Moreover, social media advertising has become an important platform to allow people to communicate, search for information, and gain information about brands and products. This study attempted to find a way to improve promotion for marketers and advertisers.

Comments in social media advertising as a kind of eWOM could influence consumers' attitude toward the brand. H1a and H1b postulated that both positive and negative comments in social media advertising could have an effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand. Positive comments in social media advertising had a positive effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand, whereas negative comments had a negative effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) suggested that individuals are more likely to experience loss aversion than to gains, so negative framed messages may increase an individual's perceived risk. Thus, negative framed messages would have a greater effect than positive framed messages. Hypothesis 1c, which stated that negative comments would be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising in terms of consumers' attitude toward the brand, was a hypothesis to which prospect theory was applied. The results also supported the idea that negative comments in social media advertising had a greater effect than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand. Thus, this study supported the suggestion of prospect theory.

The hypotheses stated that with different levels of familiarity with the brand, consumers would be affected differently by different valences of comments in social media advertising. The H2, which stated that among consumers unfamiliar with the brand, negative comments would be more persuasive than positive comments in social media advertising on consumers' attitude toward the brand was supported. Differently from the previous study, the results supported the idea that when the brand was familiar, positive comments had no effect on consumers' attitude toward the brand, although for consumers familiar with the brand, negative comments still had an effect on their attitude toward the brand.

From the overall results, we could find that positive comments in social media advertising had an effect on attitude toward the brand only among consumers who were not familiar with the brand. Whether consumers were familiar or not familiar with the brand, negative comments in social media advertising would have an influence on consumers' attitude toward the brand. So even though the consumers were divided into familiar and unfamiliar groups, prospect theory could also be applied in this situation. This also holds for the power of prospect theory in studying the valences of framed messages in social media advertising. These findings were consistent with the prospect theory. It supported that people would more like to involve into negative framed message than positive framed message so that they can avoid losses; people seem like more worried to loss than to gain.

#### Implication of the Findings to Professional Practice

The results of this study could give marketers and advertisers very specific suggestions for digital marketing promotion in social media advertising. Nowadays, as more and more consumers use social media for shopping and to gain product and brand information, getting

more of consumers' attention through social media advertising is a problem that should concern a marketer or an advertiser. Even though the population of this study focused on Chinese consumers, the results could help Chinese marketers and advertisers with their digital marketing campaigns. Moreover, this study also can help international companies understand Chinese consumers better when these companies plan digital marketing campaigns.

In particular, what could a company do if it had a budget for a digital marketing campaign? Based on the results of this study, one could argue that using the budget to avoid negative reviews or comments to which consumers would be exposed would be more beneficial than using the funds to present more positive reviews or comments to consumers. Because positive reviews or comments may have little effect on consumers, and consumers who see these positive reviews or comments do not stand for they would have a more positive attitude toward the brand. This response can also be based on their familiarity with this brand. However, if consumers see negative reviews or comments in social media advertising about a particular brand, their attitude toward this brand is likely to be influenced negatively, whether or not they are familiar with this brand. Moreover, the effect of negative comments appears to be more persuasive than the effect of positive comments. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that, improve consumers' attitude toward a brand, marketers and advertisers should first try their best to avoid causing consumers to develop a negative attitude toward the brand.

In addition, marketers and advertisers could consider appropriate contents and comments control in social media advertising for a particular brand. If the brand is well known, the digital marketing promotion could focus primarily on consumers familiar with the brand, and

on what kind of digital marketing promotion would have the greatest effect for these consumers. For a brand that is not well known, digital marketing promotion could aim at consumers not familiar with the brand, and could plan particular types of promotion that could be the best way to catch consumers' attention.

Moreover, because the results of this study show that, positive comments in social media advertising have a positive effect on consumers' attitude toward a brand, another suggestion for marketers and advertisers is that in addition to avoiding exposing consumers to negative comments, a large number of positive comments should be made available to consumers, so as to maximize the positive effect and minimize the negative effect.

#### Limitation of the Study

This study has taken a step toward explaining the effect of valences of messages in social media advertising to consumers' attitude toward the brand, but there still are some limitations.

First, the sample is Chinese students who were studying in the U.S. Even though the participants were Chinese, they were students studied in the U.S.. The culture of the U.S. might have influenced them, so there may be a little bit difference with people living in China. In addition, students are a special group of people; they have relatively little money, and their opinions sometimes will differ from opinions of people who have jobs. Especially, in this study, the target brand was Sony, which produces relatively expensive electronic products, and the prices might be a very important factor for students in choosing product.

Second, this study chose Chinese Sina Weibo as a target social media platform, this means that this study was limited to a Chinese social media platform, and other platforms all over the world (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) might not fit the result of this study.

Third, the sample size of this study may have been too small. A larger sample size of Sina Weibo users could get more generalizable results. In this study, female participants were much more than male, so if the proportion of female and male were equal, that would be better.

Fourth, the variables of both familiarity and attitude toward the brand were through self-reported measurement. This measurement would be easily prone to bias, so that would lead to the data distortions.

Addition, since the stimulus in this study was one of the products by SONY, participants might be confounded between attitude toward the product and attitude toward the brand.

Last, the target brand in this study is Sony, which is a well-known brand. As the results showed in this study, only 32% of participants were unfamiliar with this brand.

#### Suggestions for Future Study

Future studies may select samples from Chinese Sina Weibo users living in China, so that the culture differences will not be a limitation during the studies. Besides, if the participants could include both students and people who are employed, then the results would be more persuasive than the results obtained with just students or just people who are employed. The online questionnaire could be given through active links in Sina Weibo so

that all the participants would be Sina Weibo users and the data would be easier to gather, and the sample size could be larger than the one used in this study.

To generalize the study, the future studies could apply prospect theory to examine the effect of valences of message in social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter. Since the users of Facebook and Twitter are from all over the world, the result of studies about Facebook and Twitter will be more generalizable than this study about Sina Weibo. And also, the comparison of these studies about Facebook, Twitter and Sina Weibo could have a conclusion about the differences in Social media using of people in different cultures so that international companies could have specific planning for different cultures digital marketing promotions.

Since this study used self-reported measurements of participants' familiarity, for the future studies, familiarity could be a manipulated variable. For example, before administration of the questionnaire, the materials could have two brands of products social media advertising. One brand could be a well-known brand, and the other a lesser-known brand. After exposure of participants to the social media advertising about the two brands, then the manipulation check could ask participants about their familiarity with the brand. This might be a better way to measure familiarity.

For the experimental design, it could have a pretest to determine participants' pre-attitude toward the brand. Then, after a few weeks, a post-test questionnaire and stimulus could be sent to the same sample of participants so that it will have a better comparison between the pre-attitude toward the brand and post-attitude toward the brand after the stimulus was presented to the participants.

Beyond measuring consumers' attitude the brand, there are other variables could be measured, such as purchasing intention, consumers' behavior, consumers' attitude toward the advertisement and consumers' recall of comments in social media advertising. These could benefit companies seeking to improve their digital marketing campaign.

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## APPENDIX A

## IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
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515 294-4566  
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**Date:** 3/6/2014

**To:** Huiying Yu  
205 S 5th Street Unit 903  
Ames, IA 50010

**CC:** Dr. Jay Newell  
122 Hamilton

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** The Effect of Online Advertising in Chinese Social Media for the Attitude Toward the Brand of Chinese Consumer

**IRB ID:** 14-096

**Study Review Date:** 3/5/2014

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

**Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form.** A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption**, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that**

APPENDIX B. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN ENGLISH)  
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The Effect Of Online Advertising In Social Media On Chinese Consumers' Attitude Toward  
The Brand

**Consent statement:**

You are being invited to participate in an online questionnaire study that aims to investigate the effect of online advertising in social media on Chinese consumers' attitude toward the brand. This questionnaire contains some materials that are manipulated. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take this questionnaire, to stop doing it at any time, or you may skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable responding. All the participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

**Benefits**

If you decide to participate in this study, there is no direct benefit to you. The findings of this study are expected to assist Chinese companies in improving their marketing promotion in Chinese social media to enhance positive outcomes.

**Risks**

There are no potential risks from participating in this study.

**Cost and compensation**

You will need no cost from participating in this study.

**Participants' rights**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your refusal of participation or an uncompleted questionnaire will have no penalty or negative consequences.

**Confidentiality**

Your answers will be kept confidential. In order to keep data confidentially, the following measures will be taken: once the data is collected, it will be stored in a secure server. If the results are published, your identity will be kept confidentially.

**Contact Information**

If you need more information about this study, please contact Huiying Yu, graduate student, Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University, Tel: 515-708-5428; E-mail: [huiying@iastate.edu](mailto:huiying@iastate.edu). Jay Newell, research supervisor, Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University, Tel: 515-294-3445; E-mail: [neweljj@iastate.edu](mailto:neweljj@iastate.edu). If you have any concerns or questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Administrator, 515-294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu).

Clicking on the “agree” button below to indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study
- You are 18 years or older

If you do not wish to participate in this study, or you are not meet any of the criteria above, please click on the “disagree” button.

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (NO-FRAMED MESSAGE GROUP)**

1. Are you Chinese?
  - A. yes
  - B. no

2. Do you use Sina Weibo?

A. yes

B. no

Below is a brand logo:



Next, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

3. The degree of your familiarity about this brand

\_\_\_\_\_

Not familiar at all

very familiar

4. How often you have heard about this brand.

\_\_\_\_\_

Never

always

5. How often you have experienced of this brand.

\_\_\_\_\_

Never

always

Now, think about the brand. On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 means “strongly agree,” please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

6. I feel good about this brand.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

7. I think the products of this brand are always favorable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

8. I think the products of this brand are always desirable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

9. I think the products of this brand are interesting.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

10. I think the products of this brand are very useful.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

11. I think the products of this brand are value for money.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

12. I think the products of this brand are attractive.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

You are almost done! We just have a few questions about you:

13. What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female

14. How old are you?

- A. Under 18
- B. 18-29
- C. older than 29

15. Are you enrolled in the college or university now?

- A. Yes
- B. No

APPENDIX C. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN ENGLISH)  
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (POSITIVE MESSAGE GROUP)

1. Are you Chinese?
  - A. yes
  - B. no
  
2. Do you use Sina Weibo?
  - A. yes
  - B. no

Below is a brand logo:



Next, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

3. The degree of your familiarity about this brand  
\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
Not familiar at all very familiar
  
4. How often you have heard about this brand?  
\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
Never always

5. How often you have experienced of this brand?

\_\_\_\_\_

Never always

Next, you will be shown a Weibo post about this product from this brand's official Weibo page, as well as several comments under this post from consumers:

Beauty in scope, shot without distance, your best friend for shooting! Sony DSC-QX10 scope camera, equipped with G scope and Exmor R CMOS image sensor, emerge profession and elegance together, through near field communication technology and WIFI hot keys that can be connected with smartphone quickly. QX10 makes you experience the possibility of comprehensive creativity and shooting creativity, and get everything in control!



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全部 | 热门 | 认证用户 | 关注的人 共 条

[@user](#): Delicate, pretty, and handy 回复

[@user](#): The pictures it takes could be directly transmitted into cellphone, so that friends could share the picture easier. 回复

[@user](#): Wifi in this product makes it more universal. 回复

[@user](#): The product has functions including 10-times optical zoom and extending picturing, such an extension makes it convenient for people who like taking pictures or shooting videos by phone. 回复

[@user](#): the view finder on qx10 is separate from cell phone when taking pictures, which allows you to take pictures from any angle possible, even self-shooting. 回复

6. Rate the valence of comments exposed.

\_\_\_\_\_

extremely negative extremely positive

After explored a social media advertising as well as comments, now, think about the brand.

On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 means “strongly agree,” please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

7. I feel good about this brand.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

8. I think the product of this brand always favorable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

9. I think the products of this brand always desirable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

10. I think the products of this brand are interesting.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

11. I think the products of this brand are very useful.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

12. I think the products of this brand are value for money.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

13. I think the products of this brand are attractive.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

You are almost done! We just have a few questions about you:

14. What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female

15. How old are you?

- A. Under 18
- B. 18-29
- C. older than 29

16. Are you enrolled in the college or university now?

- A. Yes
- B. No

APPENDIX D. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN ENGLISH)  
 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (NEGATIVE MESSAGE GROUP)

1. Are you Chinese?
  - C. yes
  - D. no
2. Do you use Sina Weibo?
  - C. yes
  - D. no

Below is a brand logo:



Next, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

3. The degree of your familiarity about this brand
 

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all very familiar
4. How often you have heard about this brand?
 

\_\_\_\_\_

Never always
5. How often you have experienced of this brand?
 

\_\_\_\_\_

Never

always

Next, you will be shown a Weibo post about this product from this brand's official Weibo page, as well as several comments under this post from consumers:

Beauty in scope, shot without distance, your best friend for shooting! Sony DSC-QX10 scope camera, equipped with G scope and Exmor RCMOS image sensor, emerge profession and elegance together, through near field communication technology and WIFI hot keys that can be connected with smart-phone quickly. QX10 makes you experience the possibility of comprehensive creativity and shooting creativity, and get everything in control!



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同时转发到我的微博

评论

全部 | 热门 | 认证用户 | 关注的人

共 条

- 评论** : It slows down your cell phone's imaging speed.

| 回复
- 评论** : The processing speed of this thing is very slow, plus it is hard to use as sometimes it takes a long time to connect the wifi.

| 回复
- 评论** Super power consuming, approximately 100 pictures per charge, also the smart phone itself is a big electricity consumer, so the power pressure just pile up.

| 回复
- 评论** : The price can buy a digital camera, so it is really not valuable to use the same money to purchase a lens, and the utility of this product is low.

| 回复
- 评论** : The shooting effects is just so so, some of smartphones also can achieve that effect.

| 回复

6. Rate the valence of comments exposed.

\_\_\_\_\_

extremely negative extremely positive

After explored a social media advertising as well as comments, now, think about the brand.

On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 means “strongly agree,” please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

7. I feel good about this brand.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

8. I think the product of this brand always favorable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

9. I think the products of this brand always desirable.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

10. I think the products of this brand are interesting.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

11. I think the products of this brand are very useful.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

12. I think the products of this brand are value for money.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

13. I think the products of this brand are attractive.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

You are almost done! We just have a few questions about you:

14. What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female

15. How old are you?

- A. Under 18
- B. 18-29
- C. older than 29

16. Are you enrolled in the college or university now?

- A. Yes
- B. No

## APPENDIX E. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN CHINESE)

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

## 通知同意书

## 社交媒体广告对消费者对品牌态度的影响

您被邀请参加这次关于社交媒体广告对消费者对品牌态度的影响的在线问卷调查。本次问卷包含一些被篡改的材料信息。您的参与是自愿的。您可以选择不参与此次问卷调查，或者您不愿意回答其中的某些问题或项目，您可以随时省略或者跳过。所有的参与者必须年满 18 岁。

**好处**

如果您决定参与此次研究，有可能对您没有直接的好处。但是研究结果可望帮助中国公司提高他们在中国社交媒体网络上市场营销策略。

**危害**

参加此次调查没有任何可预见性的危害。

**费用及补偿**

您不用承担参与本次研究的任何费用。

**参与者权利**

您在此次研究项目的参与完全是自愿的。您可以随时拒绝参与或离开本次调查，不会受到任何处罚或不良后果。

**保密原则**

您的答案会被保密。为确保保密，将采取以下措施：一旦数据被收集，这些材料将在一个安全的服务器储存。如果结果公布，您的身份将严格保密。

**联系信息**

如果您需要更多相关研究的资料，请与美国爱荷华州立大学格林利新闻传播学院研究生于慧颖联系，电话：515-708-5428；电子邮箱：[huiying@iastate.edu](mailto:huiying@iastate.edu)。杰牛尔，美国爱荷华州立大学格林利新闻传播学院研究生导师，电话：515-294-3445；电子邮箱：[neweljj@iastate.edu](mailto:neweljj@iastate.edu)。如果您对研究对象的权利或对研究有关的伤害有任何疑问，请联系爱荷华州立大学的机构审查委员会管理员，电话：515-294-4566，电子邮箱：[irb@iastate.edu](mailto:irb@iastate.edu)。

诚挚感谢您的协助！

点击下面的“同意”表明：

- 您已经阅读以上信息
- 您自愿参与此次调查问卷

- 您已满 18 岁

如果您不想参与此次研究，或者您没有达到以上标准，请点击“不同意”。

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (NO-FRAMED MESSAGE GROUP)

1. 您是中国人吗？
  - A. 是
  - B. 不是
2. 您使用新浪微博吗？
  - A. 使用
  - B. 不使用

下面是一个产品商标：



下面，请您在 7 个数值范围内，指出在下面的陈述中最符合您的同意程度：

3. 您对图中商标的品牌的熟悉程度
 

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
一点也不熟悉						非常熟悉
4. 您平时听到此品牌的频率
 

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
从没听到过						总是听到
5. 您使用此品牌的频率
 

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
从没使用过						总是使用

下面的问题有关于此品牌。在 1-7 的数值范围中，1 代表“非常不同意”，7 代表“非常同意”，请指出在下面的陈述中你最同意的程度：

6. 我觉得这个牌子很好。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

7. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很讨人喜欢。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

8. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是令人满意的。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

9. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是能引起我的兴趣。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

10. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是非常有用。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

11. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是物有所值。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

12. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很吸引人。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

下面，还有几个关于您个人的问题：

13. 请问您的性别是？

- A. 男性
- B. 女性

14. 请问你的年龄是？

- A. 18 岁以下
- B. 18-29 岁
- C. 29 岁以上

15. 请问您现在是在校大学生吗？

- A. 是
- B. 不是

## APPENDIX F. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN CHINESE)

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (POSITIVE MESSAGE GROUP)

1. 您是中国人吗？
  - C. 是
  - D. 不是
  
2. 您使用新浪微博吗？
  - C. 使用
  - D. 不使用

下面是一个品牌的图标：



下面，请您在 7 个数值范围内，指出在下面的陈述中最符合您的同意程度：

3. 您对图中商标的品牌的熟悉程度

\_\_\_\_\_

一点也不熟悉 非常熟悉

4. 您平时听到此品牌的频率

\_\_\_\_\_

从没听到过 总是听到

5. 您使用此品牌的频率

\_\_\_\_\_

从没使用过 总是使用

下面，您将看到一条某品牌在新浪微博上的微博和用户们的评论：

#新品推荐#镜所及·美无距，酷玩新拍档！索尼DSC-QX10镜头式相机，配备索尼G镜头与Exmor R CMOS影像传感器，通过NFC近场通讯技术或WIFI与手机快捷连接，将专业与轻巧融于一身，体验“拍摄创意x混搭创意”的可能，用QX10镜头式相机Hold住全场！<http://t.cn/z8xodSn>



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评论输入框

同时转发到我的微博 评论

全部 | 热门 | 认证用户 | 关注的人 共 条

: 它很小巧，非常漂亮，即使是随身携带也不会有任何负担。 | 回复

: 用它拍照后可以直接把照片导入手机，省时省力，更方便于与朋友之间分享照片。 | 回复

: 这个产品使用wifi连接，适用广泛的手机产品。 | 回复

: qx10这个产品有10倍光学变焦，拓展手机照相摄像能力之利器，这样就像给手机附加了个专业相机功能，方便了那些喜欢使用手机照相摄像的朋友。 | 回复

: 有了qx10，照相时候取景器和机身脱离，这样无论拍什么角度的照片，包括自拍都轻松实现啦 | 回复

下面的这个问题，请您评价一下关于这些微博评论：

6. 您认为这些微博评论属于消极评论还是积极评论？

\_\_\_\_\_

非常消极 非常积极

在您看了微博以及其评论后，下面，请您回答以下关于此品牌的问题。在 1-7 的数值范围中，1 代表“非常不同意”，7 代表“非常同意”，请指出在下面的陈述中你最同意的程度：

7. 我觉得这个牌子很好。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

8. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很讨人喜欢。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

9. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是令人满意的。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

10. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是能引起我的兴趣。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

11. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是非常有用。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

12. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是物有所值。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

13. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很吸引人。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意

非常同意

下面，还有几个关于您个人的问题：

14. 请问您的性别是？

C. 男性

D. 女性

15. 请问你的年龄是？

D. 18 岁以下

E. 18-29 岁

F. 29 岁以上

16. 请问您现在是在校大学生吗？

A. 是

B. 不是

## APPENDIX G. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (IN CHINESE)

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (NEGATIVE MESSAGE GROUP)

1. 您是中国人吗？
  - E. 是
  - F. 不是
  
2. 您使用新浪微博吗？
  - E. 使用
  - F. 不使用

下面是一个品牌的图标：



下面，请您在 7 个数值范围内，指出在下面的陈述中最符合您的同意程度：

3. 您对图中商标的品牌的熟悉程度
 

一点也不熟悉							非常熟悉
  
4. 您平时听到此品牌的频率
 

从没听到过							总是听到
  
5. 您体验此品牌的频率
 

从没体验过							总是体验

下面，您将看到一条某品牌在新浪微博上的微博和用户们的评论：

#新品推荐#镜所及·美无距。畅玩新拍档！索尼DSC-QX10镜头式相机，配备索尼G镜头与Exmor R CMOS影像传感器，通过NFC近场通讯技术或WIFI与手机快捷连接，将专业与轻巧融于一身，体验“拍摄创意x混搭创意”的可能。用QX10镜头式相机Hold住全场！<http://t.cn/z8XodSn>



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Input field for comments.

同时转发到我的微博 评论

全部 | 热门 | 认证用户 | 关注的人 共 条

心影微拍：手机连上这个镜头之后，成像速度变慢了。 | 回复

WIFI连接时有时候会很慢才能连上，而且连接上这个相机也不好使，处理速度跟不上。 | 回复

拍摄效果不怎么样，有的手机直接可以达到qx10的拍照效果。 | 回复

非常耗电，基本上一块电池也就可以拍100张照片，况且连接的智能手机本来就耗电，连上这个镜头给手机更大压力。 | 回复

这个价格可以买一个数码相机了，用同样的钱买这么一个相机镜头实在不值，实用性不强。 | 回复

下面的这个问题，请您评价一下关于这些微博评论：

6. 您认为这些微博评论属于消极评论还是积极评论？

\_\_\_\_\_

非常消极 非常积极

在您看了微博以及其评论后，下面，请您回答以下关于此品牌的问题。在 1-7 的数值范围中，1 代表“非常不同意”，7 代表“非常同意”，请指出在下面的陈述中你最同意的程度：

7. 我觉得这个牌子很好。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

8. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很讨人喜欢。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

9. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是令人满意的。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

10. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是能引起我的兴趣。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

11. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是非常有用。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

12. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是物有所值。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意 非常同意

13. 我认为这个品牌的产品总是很吸引人。

\_\_\_\_\_

非常不同意

非常同意

下面，还有几个关于您个人的问题：

14. 请问您的性别是？

E. 男性

F. 女性

15. 请问你的年龄是？

G. 18 岁以下

H. 18-29 岁

I. 29 岁以上

16. 请问您现在是在校大学生吗？

A. 是

B. 不是