

TEMPORAL DECAY IN ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH

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Abstract

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is of significant influence on consumer decisions in terms of its perceived trustworthiness and heuristic basis. Most research and platform practices, however, assume that eWOM maintains its informational value indefinitely, overlooking how time may erode its relevance. This examination explores eWOM not as a static phenomenon, but a time-sensitive communication signal. Drawing on communication and cognitive processing theories as well as integrating time into eWOM theory, this examination questions assumptions about cumulative informational value, and presents implications for marketing and communication strategies.

Keywords: eWOM, Temporal Decay, Credibility, Diagnosticity, Relevance, Marketing & Communication Strategies

JEL Classification: M31, D91, D83

1. INTRODUCTION

EWOM plays a significant role in consumer decision making, by assisting individuals in acquiring information, assessing reputations, and reducing uncertainty, prior to purchases (Zohora et al., 2017). The rapid growth of online review platforms, as well as other social media outlets, has resulted in a shifting away from corporate controlled messaging, towards user generated content. Consumers often perceive eWOM as more trustworthy and experience based, than corporate messaging (Filiari et al., 2015). Research also shows that consumers rely on eWOM at levels comparable to, or exceeding, traditional in-person word of mouth (Eisingerich et al., 2015). Consequently, eWOM has become a core mechanism of marketing and business communications in this new digital world, where markets are often characterized by information asymmetry.

Existing eWOM research streams primarily focus on identifying deterministic eWOM credibility and effectiveness (e.g., Furner et al., 2022). Such works focus on the importance of review quantity, polarity, logic etc. When these cues are favourable, eWOM operates as a powerful, non-commercial communication centre; one that is capable of influencing attitudes, reducing perceived risk, and shaping purchase intentions. However, much of the existing eWOM literature simply assumes that reviews retain information value over extended periods of time (Delre and Luffarelli, 2023). As such, reviews are typically seen as persistently relevant, so long as they remain visible on a platform, regardless of when they were written. In practice, platforms do not necessarily archive reviews; as such, they are seen as just as consistently relevant as newer reviews (Filiari et al., 2018). This allows content generated under past

conditions to coexist with newer evaluations. Such practices create illusions of informal continuity that may not reflect changes in products and services.

Such assumptions (i.e., older reviews do not suffer from temporal decay) regarding online reviews remain significant. This represents a meaningful gap in the eWOM literature. Indeed, products evolve, service processes change and firms modify policies. Nevertheless, older reviews often continue to influence customer perceptions, despite potentially providing outdated information. Although prior research recognizes that consumers focus on cues such as credibility and argument quality (e.g., Zinko et al., 2020) researchers rarely concern themselves with how the passage of time may alter the validity of those reviews. Indeed, as simple temporal distance increases, the link between past experience and future outcomes weakens. As such, noise is introduced into the reviews. This raises an important question for marketing and business communication research: does the credibility and usefulness of eWOM decay over time, even when content quality and source characteristics remain unchanged? Without this knowledge, organizations may overestimate the value of accumulative reviews and underestimate communication risks associated with such outdated information. Indeed, outdated reviews may continue to shape brand perceptions, while no longer accurately representing the products and services being offered.

This manuscript adopts a theory building conceptual approach, which is supported by an integrative review of the eWOM literature. Instead of conducting a systematic review, the purpose is to synthesize prior research streams related to eWOM credibility, diagnosticity and temporal dynamics. This is done to develop a novel

theoretical framework. Relevant literature was identified through targeted searches of leading marketing and information system journals. An emphasis was placed on addressing review credibility recency effect and information processing and digital environments. The selected studies were analysed and integrated to identify inconsistencies, undeveloped areas and opportunities for theoretical extension. This approach allows for the development of propositions that extend existing eWOM theory by explicitly incorporating time as a central construct.

1.1. Problem statement and managerial relevance

The questionable relevance of a review's age is caused by the widespread reliance of organizations and platforms on accumulated eWOM being viewed as a durable reputational asset. Firms routinely view historical reviews as persistent signs of quality. Furthermore, they assume that visibility equates to continuous informational value. However, when products and services evolve, dated reviews may no longer reflect the current performance conditions of an organization---creating a nontrivial communication risk in which outdated reviews continue to be seen as credible. This can potentially distort an audience's evaluation of both a brand, as well as purchase expectations. As such, review age is not merely a temporal descriptor, but a managerial concern that affects reputation management, platform governments and communication accuracy.

1.2. Research gap

Existing eWOM research has shown that credibility, diagnosticity, both review quantity and quality can shape information adoption and affect an audience's decision making across digital contexts (e.g., Jiang et al., 2021, Kaur and Singh, 2020). These research streams show that consumers use eWOM to reduce uncertainty, form trust judgments, and infer product performance when direct experience is unavailable (Purnawirawan et al., 2012). Review attributes are treated as stable informational properties that persist as long as the content remains accessible on a platform. Additionally, it's assumed that as information is accumulated over time, eWOM perceptions of credibility will be reinforced (Yan et al., 2018). Although some research acknowledges that contextual relevance or currency may influence perceived diagnosticity (e.g., Fileri et al., 2018), the temporal dimension of eWOM, and its relationship to the validity of the reviews, has not been systematically theorized within the broader literature. Indeed, existing studies typically examine reviews cross-sectionally or experimentally at a single decision point (e.g., Zinko et al., 2017). This does not address how the passage of time alters the inferential strength of otherwise credible information. This gap is significant because eWOM effectiveness depends not only on the message, but also on alignment between the informational context to review and the current decision environment. Without explicit temporal frameworks to

examine eWOM, existing theory cannot fully account for the effect of aging reviews.

1.3. Conceptual contributions

This examination advances existing eWOM research by viewing temporal decay as a distinct mechanism through which eWOM credibility and diagnosticity diminishes as context alignment weakens over time. In contrast to dominant perspectives that view eWOM as a cumulative information archive, the present examination positions eWOM as a time sensitive communication signal---one in which validity depends on temporal congruence between past experiences and current offerings of an organization. The analysis further integrates cognitive processing and platform design perspectives in order to explain how aging reviews alter information usage. By introducing time as an aspect of eWOM effectiveness, this examination extends existing theory beyond static content and source attributes, moving toward a dynamic view of online communication validity.

1.4. Paper roadmap

The remainder of the document is structured as follows: first, the background section, which examines established eWOM theory, focusing on credibility diagnosticity and information adoption mechanisms. Next, the analysis as to how temporality has been overlooked in prior research. The main section develops the conceptualization of temporal decay outlining its mechanism cognitive effects and contextual moderators. Finally, the paper finishes with implications for marketing and platform design followed by the conclusion.

2. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF EWOM

2.1. Defining eWOM

EWOM is typically described as a consumer generated communication about services and products, that is disseminated through internet based platforms (e.g., Cheung et al., 2012, Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). This differs from corporate control marketing messages, as eWOM is seen as non-commercial and experience based (Erkan and Evans, 2016). Existing research consistently views eWOM as informal input, rather than direct persuasive appeal to an audience. It theorizes that eWOM's function is primarily to reduce uncertainty when consumers evaluate products or services that cannot be easily examined in person (Litvin and Hoffman, 2012). For example, if an individual is going to buy a car, they're able to show up at the dealership and test drive it. Alternatively, if they're going to book a hotel room across the country, they do not have an opportunity to go and examine the room. As such, audiences typically rely upon eWOM. This uncertainty reduction role that eWOM one plays is particularly relevant in online context where consumers lack specific, direct sensory experience (King et al., 2014). As such, beyond these foundational definitions, eWOM has been conceptualized as a decentralized consumer driven information environment

in which individuals share experience regarding valuations, insights and product judgments (i.e., to broad audiences).

Unlike firm generated communication, which is strategically designed to persuade, eWOM is result of peer experiences and therefore interpreted as independent and less commercially biased (Park et al., 2005). This perceived independence results in consumers contributing higher diagnostic value, particularly in situations characterized by information asymmetry between firms and consumers. Essentially, eWOM works as a proxy within the broader word of mouth tradition, extending interpersonal recommendation processes persistent, searchable and scalable digital environments (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Indeed, traditional word of mouth is episodic and socially bound. Alternatively, eWOM is archived, publicly accessible and aggregated across many contributors. This persistence transforms individual changes into a collective informational signal that can easily be accessed by a variety of different audiences. As a result, eWOM's function is not merely as a communication channel but a distributed reputation system in which multiple reviews jointly signal aspects such as quality satisfaction and trustworthiness (Lee et al., 2009).

The role that eWOM plays in informational dissemination is particularly salient for experience and credence goods, where a product of attributes cannot fully be evaluated prior to or even after consumption (Zhao et al., 2020). In such context, audiences rely on reviews to interpret performance reliability service quality and the overall confidence of the service provider. As such, eWOM operates as an experiential reporting mechanism that allows audiences to mentally stimulate consumption outcomes, based on prior users experiences. This function distinguishes eWOM from advertising, which presents claims rather than audience perceived product evaluations (Verma and Yadav, 2021). It also explains why consumers more often perceived reviews as more trustworthy and relevant for decision making.

Despite broad agreement regarding the experiential nature that is eWOM, this mechanism encompasses multiple communication forms at varying structure and informational richness. These include textual reviews, ratings, images, videos and discussion posts from across platforms. These interactions can occur on retail sites, travel portals, social media, etc. Yet all share the similar property of consumer generated revenue valuation content directed towards other audiences, rather than towards firms (e.g., Roy et al., 2025).

Therefore, eWOM is understood as an informal peer based informational signal that supports consumer inference under uncertainty. Its influence arises from perceived experiential authenticity, independent from firm controls, and aggregation across multiple contributors (Doh and Hwang, 2009). These characteristics position as a central mechanism through which consumer evaluation of products and services and

digital markets occurs. As such, definitions of eWOM consistently emphasize three defining features: consumer authorship, experiential grounding and audience (i.e., rather than persuasion).

2.2. Core mechanisms

Ngo et al. (2024) define eWOM credibility as the extent to which online reviews are seen as believable, factual, and trustworthy. Their findings suggest that customers are willing to see eWOM as comparable to traditional word of mouth when credibility cues are seen as high. As such, credibility operates as a gateway condition: without it, information presented by eWOM is unlikely to be accepted or processed by audiences. Similar to credibility, diagnosticity is the perceived usefulness of information informing judgments (Gurney et al., 2019). Reviews that are well presented and seen as logically articulated in a helpful manner are perceived as more diagnostic. Together, these cues determine how effectively eWOM can replace direct experience.

Existing research treats credibility and diagnosticity as stable attributes of review content (e.g., Filieri et al., 2018). A review's assessment of a product is assumed to retain its information of value as long as the content remains accessible. Additionally, quantity effects are similarly seen as cumulative. This implies that additional reviews consistently enhance the perceived reliability of a product or service. This sees eWOM as a largely static information archive, rather than a time sensitive communication process.

Although this approach reflects the cross-sectional design of the majority of eWOM research, it doesn't fully express the nature of the online marketplace. Indeed, products, services and organizations evolve over time in response to competitive, technological and managerial changes. As these shifts occur, the relevance between past eWOM reviews and current organizational offerings to customers becomes uncertain. Nevertheless, existing newer models provide limited theoretical tools for addressing this temporal misalignment.

3. EWOM AND TIME

Although prior research has begun to examine temporal aspects of eWOM including recency effects (e.g., Delre & Luffarelli, 2023) and the evolving impact of reviews over time (e.g., Filieri et al., 2018), these and such remain fragmented and largely empirical in focus. Existing studies primarily treat time as a moderating or control variable rather than as a central theoretical construct. As such, the literature provides limited conceptual integration regarding how temporal distance systematically alters both credibility and also diagnosticity of eWOM.

The majority of eWOM research focuses on content base and source base determinates of such aspects as credibility and effectiveness. Time is treated as neutral or irrelevant. Reviews are analysed as informational units, which are assumed to persist as long as they remain actively visible to consumers. This assumption stands in

stark contrast to the dynamic environment in which eWOM is generated and consumed by audiences. It can be argued that the reason that time has been overlooked is the structural design of online platforms. Reviews are typically archived and displayed alongside more recent content. This is often done without signalling potential, age-related relevance. From the consumer's perspective, the mere presence of reviews suggests continued usefulness (Hong et al., 2017). This results in researchers studying eWOM for such characteristics as operationalized credibility quantity and polarity. Temporal distance between review creation and current product offerings is dismissed. As such, this creates the difference between visibility and validity. Visibility considers whether a review can be accessed. Validity refers to the accuracy of the information as it relates to current products or services. Existing research emphasizes how visibility is a driver of influence, particularly through quantity effects and cumulative eWOM assessments (e.g., Albayrak and Ceylan, 2021). Alternatively, validity is implicitly assumed and not tested. As reviews age, the likelihood that they reflect outdated policies or features is not considered.

An additional reason for lack of theory in this area is methodological shortcomings. Cross-sectional survey design and scenario-based experiments are the norm in eWOM research (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Such academic designs rarely evaluate how it reviews age affects trusted usefulness. Temporal effects are often either left unexplained or treated as noise. Communication research clearly shows that context changes over time, and messages that were once accurate and relevant may lose those qualities as temporal states increase. When considering eWOM, this means that credibility is not only a function of source and message characteristics but also temporal alignment between the review and the current product being offered.

3.1. Temporal Decay in eWOM

Temporal decay in eWOM can be defined as a gradual decrease in the review's ability to function as credible and diagnostic information, as time progresses (Delre and Luffarelli, 2023). Differing from abrupt credibility loss caused by deception or poor content quality, temporal decay is incremental. Indeed, reviews do not suddenly become untrustworthy; instead, their inferential strength decreases as the contextual link between past experience and present decisions increases. This process occurs even when the quality remains unchanged.

At the centre of temporal decay is the concept of declining diagnosticity. Diagnosticity reflects the extent to which information allows customers to confidently gather information about the future performance of a product (Fileri et al., 2018). Although logic, articulation and quality enhance diagnostic value by making reviews appear informative and reliable, these characteristics only diminish as time progresses. As temporal distance between review creation and consumption increases, uncertainty grows regarding whether these conditions will still apply (Delre and Luffarelli, 2023).

Proposition 1. Temporal distance between review creation and consumer decision context is positively associated with temporal decay in eWOM.

Credibility is not solely a function of message quality or source expertise, but rather it is contingent on relevance. When consumers encounter eWOM reviews they should question whether the experience reflects current standards of the organization. Not to say that they should not trust the review, but rather, credibility becomes conditional (i.e., as opposed to absolute).

Proposition 2: Temporal decay is negatively associated with perceived credibility of eWOM reviews, with credibility becoming conditional on perceived temporal relevance.

It is important to note that temporal decay operates independently of review valence. Indeed, regardless of whether the review is positive or negative, they are both subject to erosion. Favourable reviews written years earlier may no longer signal such high quality as consumers believe that organizational performance has changed. Likewise, older negative reviews may lose impact if individuals believe that organizations have corrected the issues reported. As such, time moderates the influence of polarity rather than amplifying its uniformity.

The construct of temporal decay can also be examined through uncertainty. The purpose of eWOM is to allow readers to infer future outcomes, based on the past experiences of others. As time progresses, this inference gap widens. As such, consumers must assume continuity between conditions of the past and the current ongoing of the organization in order to rely on all the reviews. When such continuity is uncertain cognitive effort will increase. This will lead consumers to discount the reviews or seek additional information (Furner et al., 2016).

Proposition 3. The negative effects of temporal decay on diagnosticity and credibility reduce eWOM influence on consumer judgments and decision intentions.

Finally, temporal decay differs from information overload or quantity effects. When considering overload, excessive information is thrust upon of reader at a single point in time. Temporal decay, on the other hand, results from misalignment across time. Indeed, large volumes of older reviews may signal popularity while also offering limited insight into the current workings of the organization. In some, temporal decay represents a structural vulnerability one considering the effectiveness of eWOM. Reviews are designed to persist, but their value is based upon a time dependent context.

3.2. Cognitive Processing of Aging Reviews

As eWOM ages, consumer processing of review information shifts in systematic ways. Prior research

shows that consumers typically evaluate eWOM through systematic processing, attending to credibility, logic, articulation, and source characteristics before incorporating reviews into decision making (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Temporal decay alters the conditions under which such processing occurs by introducing uncertainty that traditional credibility cues cannot fully resolve (Xu, 2014). When consumers encounter older reviews, readers must assess not only what is being communicated, but whether the information remains applicable to current conditions. This additional evaluative burden increases cognitive load and raises the cost of systematic processing. As a result, consumers may reduce processing depth, rather than intensifying it; particularly when the perceived payoff of careful evaluation is uncertain.

This shift often leads to greater reliance on heuristic cues such as star ratings, aggregate scores, or review volume. Although quantity is typically interpreted as a credibility signal, temporal decay weakens its interpretive clarity. A large number of reviews may indicate historical popularity without signalling current performance. Nevertheless, consumers may default to such heuristics when relevance is ambiguous.

Temporal decay also reduces confidence in inference making. eWOM enables consumers to extrapolate from others' experiences to anticipated outcomes, but older reviews widen the inferential gap between past and present. This reduced confidence often manifests as hesitation rather than outright scepticism, with consumers partially discounting reviews without fully rejecting them. Trust formation is particularly sensitive to these dynamics. Trust in eWOM is graduated rather than binary, reflecting degrees of willingness to rely on information (Chih et al., 2020). As reviews age, trust becomes conditional and increasingly dependent on corroboration from recent sources. While source credibility and articulation enhance trust, these effects presume temporal alignment. When alignment is uncertain, trust becomes provisional.

The effects of temporal decay vary across product and service contexts.

Proposition 4: The rate of temporal decay is positively moderated by product or service change frequency.

Prior research emphasizes that eWOM is most influential under high uncertainty, particularly for experience and credence goods (Zinko et al., 2021). Experience goods, such as hospitality and professional services, are highly sensitive to operational change, making older reviews less representative over time. Research in service and accommodation settings shows that trust and purchase intention depend strongly on perceived relevance of reviewer experiences (Alam et al., 2024).

Credence goods are similarly vulnerable because consumers lack the expertise to evaluate performance even after consumption and therefore rely heavily on

eWOM cues. In these contexts, outdated reviews may introduce false confidence or unwarranted concern, increasing uncertainty rather than reducing it. Search goods and relatively stable products exhibit slower decay, but even here innovation cycles can erode relevance over time. Research on information quality and overload suggests that diagnosticity declines as the fit between review content and decision context weakens (Hong et al., 2017). Overall, temporal decay shifts eWOM from a stable source of guidance to an ambiguous signal whose value depends on contextual interpretation. By increasing reliance on heuristics, reducing inference confidence, and rendering trust conditional, temporal decay fundamentally alters how consumers process and use online reviews.

4. PLATFORM DESIGN AND TEMPORAL DISTORTION

The effects of temporal decay when examining eWOM are increased by features of online review platforms. Although prior research has emphasized that platform structures can influence visibility and credibility cues (Hong et al., 2017), less attention has been given to how these same structures can obscure temporal relevance. Platform designs function as a mediating tool between reviewer content and consumer interpretation. Many online review platforms prioritize persistence and aggregation (Dellarocas et al., 2010). Reviews can remain in perpetuity alongside newer content. These reviews are often sorted by such characteristics as relevance, popularity or healthfulness; rather than by redundancy. This design choice increases quantity effects identified in prior research wherein a large number of eWOM reviews increased perceived credibility and popularity (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Such aggregation can mask the age distribution of the reviews. This can create the impression of contemporary agreement even when a large portion of the content is based upon past reflections. As a result, consumers may infer consensus without realizing that the reviews are temporally dispersed.

The algorithmic sorting functions that are applied on these platforms further contribute to temporal distortion. Reviews deemed as helpful or influential, regardless of their age, may remain prominently displayed, in perpetuity (Hong et al., 2017). Although such reviews may be well articulated and well structured, their continued visibility does not guarantee any level of accuracy. Platform algorithms often reinforce cues without accounting for temporal misalignment. Essentially, these platforms increase surface credibility while suppressing signals of obsolescence.

Platform designs can also interact with cognitive processing limitations. Studies examining information overload show the readers are sensitive to the effort required to evaluate eWOM content (Filiberti et al., 2015). When platforms do not clearly signal the age of the review, consumers must expend additional cognitive effort to determine this information. Faced with such

difficulties, readers may default to heuristic cues such as star ratings or aggregated scores. This would further weaken the diagnostic role of eWOM. As such, temporal decay is compounded by design reduce heuristic reliance. An additional source of such temporal distortion can arise from asymmetric updating. New reviews are added incrementally, but older ones are rarely removed. This creates an imbalance in which outdated information can present as more relevant than current perspectives.

Proposition 5: Platform temporal cues moderate temporal decay such that clearer signalling of review age reduces misinterpretation but increases discounting of older reviews.

It is important to note that platform induced temporal distortion will not necessarily end in instant distrust. Instead, it can produce latent ambiguity. Indeed, readers may sense that information may be outdated, without precisely being able to identify certain reviews as problematic. Such ambiguity can affect confidence and also contribute to the conditional trust patterns that were described earlier. As such platforms did not simply host eWOM, they actively shape and affect how readers interpret the reviews.

5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND PROPOSITIONS / RESEARCH AGENDA

Developed upon the preceding conceptualization, temporal decay is positioned as a time dependent process through which the credibility and diagnosticity of eWOM weakens as temporal distance between the original experience and the consumer decision context increases. The model opposes the temporal distance introduces contextual misalignment. It reduces perceived relevance and increased uncertainty regarding whether prior review experience is reflective of current product or service conditions. As temporal misalignment increases, consumers have increased difficulty in confidently inferring future outcomes from past evaluations. This results in conditional trusts and reduced informational value in regard to aging reviews.

Temporal decay occurs through cognitive and imperative mechanisms rather than simply through changes in message content and source characteristics. Indeed, reviews remain visible and structurally credible, yet their inferential strength declines because consumers question the validity of the contextual continuity. This process is further affected by platform environments that preserve and aggregate historical reviews, potentially obscuring age-related relevant cues. As such, the importance of temporal decay depends not only upon elapsed time but also on contextual moderators that affect how available age-related cues to consumers.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The acknowledgement of temporal decay in eWOM carries with it significant implications for marketing and

business communication theory. A large portion of the existing literature treats online reviews as durable information assets in which value accumulates over time through increased volume and visibility. A temporal perspective challenges this assumption by proposing that information value is not permanent. Indeed, reviews that once functioned as credible may be seen as losing their relevance as contextual alignment deteriorates.

For marketers, temporal decay adds a layer of noise regarding the use of eWOM as a low-cost communication channel. Indeed, firms that rely on accumulating positive reviews to espouse quality and reliability may find such efforts spurious. This can occur because when reviews age, their continued prominence determined by the platform may misrepresent current performance or create uncertainties. This can be especially detrimental for service organizations operating in environments characteristic of those that experienced frequent changes. Without ongoing renewal of eWOM reviews, firms risk being seen with outdated expectations.

Temporal decay can also affect reputation management practices. Indeed, marketing strategies frequently focus on generating positive reviews and responding to negative feedback. Such tactics never consider the life cycle of eWOM influence. Negative reviews that are not addressed may lose relevance, but this may not necessarily be the case. From a communication standpoint, organizations must understand that a lack of response does not necessarily neutralize the prominence of a review. Instead, it allows outdated signals to remain without clarification.

Temporal decay also challenges the assumption that transparency is achieved simply through information availability. Although eWOM content may appear transparent, without temporal context, this can be misleading. Effective communication requires both openness and also the ability of an audience to properly interpret the information.

7. CONCLUSION

This examination promotes eWOM research by focusing on time as a meaningful dimension of online communication. Unlike dominant beliefs that online reviews retain their credibility due to visibility, this paper argues that eWOM is essentially time sensitive. The informational alignment between past experiences and present consumer decision weakens, as products, services, and their organizational practices change. As a result, the connection between past experiences and present consumer decision contexts weakens. This temporal gap, therefore, generates gradual decay in credibility as well as usefulness of eWOM.

This examination positions eWOM as a dynamic communication mechanism rather than a static informational archive. The analysis also demonstrates how aging reviews introduce uncertainty and render trust increasingly conditional. In broad terms, this examination

proposes that transparency in digital markets requires not only information availability but also temporal clarity. The findings, therefore, underscore the limits of relying on accumulated reviews and highlight the importance of continuous renewal and proactive communication. Broadly, this research suggests that transparency in digital markets requires not only information availability but also temporal clarity.

Finally, testable propositions are offered. The conceptual framework presented provides several avenues for empirical testing other proposed relationships. Indeed, future research is able to examine temporal decay with the use of longitudinal designs that track changes and review influence over time period this would allow for

direct observation as to how temporal distance effects perceived credibility and diagnosticity. An experimental approach could manipulate review age while holding constant the content being offered. This would isolate the causal effect of temporal distance on consumer judgments, transformation and decision intentions. Additionally, archival eWOM data could be leveraged to model the relationship between review age, product evolution, and consumer response patterns with the use of panel or time series analysis. Finally multi-level modelling could be employed to assess how contextual moderators such as product changing frequency or platform design features would influence the rate of temporal decay across settings.

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