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# SUSTAINABILITY, FOOD TOPICS AND WEBLOGS: DO THEY REALLY FIT? TARGETING AND VALUING FOOD-RELATED EWOM GENERATORS

## ABSTRACT

Without any doubt, the advent of the Internet has substantially transformed the way and rhythm of our lives. This circumstance reflects directly on our daily behaviours, which are today quite different from what they used to be only a few years ago. In this sense, the current patterns of search for information and consumption are frequently paced by the eWOM communication. In addition, environmental concerns have driven consumers to increasingly demand the so-called environmentally friendly products. Considering both issues together, literature reveals that the study of the interaction between eWOM and sustainable consumption is still scarce and needs more attention. For this reason, the present research is devoted to the identification and evaluation of a sustainable food-related eWOM. In this regard, an online survey of authors of food-related weblogs/videoblogs was conducted containing different questions about their food consumption styles. Even though the existence of a distinct group of green authors was confirmed, the following examination of centrality levels showed that the influence exerted by this group on the Web 2.0 is exactly the same as that of the other groups. Jointly, these findings provide information of great importance that has implications for businesses and professionals in marketing.

**Keywords:** Sustainable eWOM, food topics, weblogs/video-blogs, cluster analysis, centrality analysis

## 1. Introduction

The advent of the Internet has substantially transformed the way of life by supplying us with a wide range of possibilities which are simply unimaginable through traditional offline channels. This circumstance reflects directly on our consumption

patterns, which are today quite different from what they used to be only a few years ago.

In this regard, the purchasing behaviour represents a fair example as the online channel is becoming, for lots of consumers, the most common way of acquiring many product categories. According to

data retrieved from Statista (2018a<sup>1</sup>; 2018b<sup>2</sup>), in 2017, 60.2% of global Internet users purchased products online, a figure which is expected to grow to 63.0% in 2019. These percentages amount, in terms of sales, to 2.30 trillion U.S. dollars in 2017 and a projection of 2.84 trillion U.S. dollars in 2018 and 3.45 trillion in 2019, which confirms the growing trend.

Moreover, the Internet has also altered the traditional manner of interaction between individuals (King et al., 2014). According to a recent study (GWI, 2019<sup>3</sup>), a typical Internet user spent around 2:23 hours per day on online social networking in 2018, while it was 1:36 hours back in 2012 (GWI, 2016<sup>4</sup>). Indeed, users worldwide have rapidly integrated online social networking into their daily communication routines, their decision-making processes (Zhu, Zhang, 2010) and, thus, their habits when searching for information (Litvin et al., 2008). In this sense, the reviews that consumers post on the Internet are known to play a noticeable role in effecting and shaping consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions (Park, Lee, 2009), constituting one of the most effective methods of communication (also termed as electronic word-of-mouth communication, eWOM hereafter).

Besides that, but definitely not less important, today's world has also caused consumers to become increasingly concerned about the environment. Such concerns have begun to be displayed in their decisions and consumption patterns, with individuals increasingly interested in buying environmentally friendly products, a tendency which has motivated the emergence of a "new marketing philosophy", known as the "green marketing" (Belz, Peattie, 2009; Kumar, 2016), whose aim is to achieve a balance between the objectives of sales and profits of companies and a concern for society and the environment (Kärnä et al., 2002; Papadas et al., 2017).

In this sense, companies, seeking to remain competitive in the market and to meet consumer demands, have begun to incorporate these newly emerging concerns in their management and marketing decisions by paying special attention to market segmentation and market orientation (do Paço et al., 2008; Lu et al., 2013; González et al., 2015).

Considering both issues together, it has been observed that research on eWOM and sustainable consumption is in its initial phases and needs more

attention in order to attract the power of eWOM communications since, according to some authors, focusing on dissemination of efficient eWOM results in influence and impact on consumer behaviour (Fan, Miao, 2012; Reichelt et al., 2014). Likewise, as Chang and Chang (2017) point out, few studies have evaluated the interaction between eWOM and sustainable consumption of food products. Thus, the present study aims at determining the tone in the content of the food-related eWOM, and, if sustainable food-related eWOM is identified, shaping its relevance on the Internet.

The paper is structured as follows. The next two sections review the essential literature related to eWOM, food aspects, and sustainability. After this contextualisation, the main methodological aspects related to the investigation are presented in the fourth section. Subsequently, the results are presented in the fifth section. Finally, the last section sets out some valuable conclusions.

## 2. eWOM on the Web 2.0

Online weblogs/videoblogs, microblogs, discussion forums, opinion websites, social network platforms themselves, collaborative projects, virtual worlds,... are all social websites (Aichner, Jacob, 2015) that consumers frequently visit to read reviews from other consumers (in such a case, they are opinion seekers) and/or to generate reviews for other consumers –opinion givers (Gruen et al., 2006; López, Sicilia, 2013; Luo et al., 2013; Serra, Salvi, 2014). These are tools that conform to the term Web 2.0, that is, the participative and interactive web that emerged in about 2000 and created by and for users from collective intelligence (Boyd, Ellison, 2008; O'Reilly, 2005<sup>5</sup>).

For example, in the Spanish market (AIMC, 2018<sup>6</sup>), it is worth stressing that 77.0% of online customers stated they read comments and reviews coming from other customers before making a final decision, with 50.9% of them trusting largely those reviews. In addition, 58.8% of Spanish Internet users stated to have posted any kind of review about a product or service during 2017 (AIMC, 2018).

Marketing researchers have termed this phenomenon with the broad appellation of online Word-of-Mouth communication, Word-of-Mouse communication, or electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM). Continuing the line adopted by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004: 39), eWOM can be defined as "any posi-

*tive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet*".

The significance of eWOM communication research lies in its considerable commercial impact due to its capacity to influence and to determine attitudes and behaviour of consumers toward a product, service, brand or organization (Brown, Reingen, 1987; Christiansen, Tax, 2000; Nadeem et al., 2011; Van Noort, Willemsen, 2012), even more so than the traditional mass media such as radio, press, and television.

This influence on consumer attitudes and behaviour does not reflect uniquely, then, on the purchase decision, but rather on four different stages of the decision-making process (Smith et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2008; Chan, Ngai, 2011; Pan, Zhang, 2011; Jalilvand, Samiei, 2012). eWOM has an impact, firstly, on a cognitive level, facilitating and raising awareness about a product/brand/company hitherto unknown; secondly, on an affective or emotional level, where a feeling, sense, or meaning is attached to it; thirdly, on a conative and behavioural level, motivating response, either acceptance/purchase, inaction or rejection; and finally, on a post-behavioural or feedback level, stimulating an outcome about experiences as a result of consumption/non-consumption.

Apart from that, it should be noted that issues such as credibility, accuracy, or quality of eWOM communication are, undoubtedly, of high interest in the great majority of publications (Smith et al., 2005; Park et al., 2007; Cheung et al., 2008; Park, Lee, 2009; Steffes, Burgee, 2009; Gupta, Harris, 2010; Elliot et al., 2013; Kim, Park, 2013; Moran, Muzellec, 2017).

Moreover, eWOM transcends local boundaries and the small, intimate, and private groups in which traditional WOM usually occurs (from one person to another); consumers are connected with other consumers beyond their personal circle (comprising relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc.) and outside their geographical and sociocultural borders. Supported by the worldwide scope of the Internet, opinions and experiences are transmitted globally through eWOM from a single person to the entire world (Dellarocas, 2003; Cheung, Thadani, 2012; Mauri, Minazzi, 2013; Serra, Salvi, 2014).

Furthermore, eWOM is usually produced in an asynchronous way, passing from informants to re-

cipients of information who are separated in terms of time and space (Hung, Li, 2007; Steffes, Burgee, 2009). This also implies that the information uploaded onto the Internet remains available worldwide, anywhere, and at any time, causing information to flow exponentially (Hussain et al., 2017).

### 3. Food products and sustainability

Debating on sustainability and food consumption, it is worth mentioning that there is an old relation between food and sustainability dating back to the 1980s (Rana et al., 2008). In this context, the food sector has long been facing a number of challenges in terms of sustainability (Hartmann, 2011). Primarily, the food sector is directly influenced by environmental, human and physical resources. Moreover, the food sector is diverse and complex and this reality provides different perspectives of approaching CSR, which further implies conflicting perspectives in this respect. Costanigro et al. (2016) gathered a series of nine activities geared to that accomplishment of sustainability, initially developed for the dairy industry but adaptable to different food sectors. These activities were the pursuit of animal welfare, control of energy consumption, control of water consumption, control of air pollution, community involvement, promoting employee opportunities, stimulation of local operations, waste management, and commitment to sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, to these actions one could add the communication of sustainable information as a sustainable activity itself, understood as an exercise in transparency and reliability (Pérez et al., 2019).

In line with the previous statements, the influence of sustainability over the consumer decision-making process in the food sector is more relevant and appropriate in a context when domestic food chains are challenged by tightening price competition which furthermore forces food enterprises to permanently look for sustainable sources or competitive advantage (Forsman-Hugg et al., 2007; Heikkurinen et al., 2011).

In this context, many experts have analysed the main obstacles that may prevent consumers from choosing sustainable products. For instance, Grunert (2011) identified six barriers related to awareness, perceptions or credibility. One of those obstacles may consist in the idea that exposure does not lead to perception, which means that custom-

ers may notice the existence of a certain sustainable brand but without purchasing it. Moreover, perception leads only to peripheral processing if we take into account that customers, although noticing a new brand, do not make the necessary effort to understand it. However, if we presume that customers succeed to see the label, they might still not understand its meaning or message due to wrong reasoning. Furthermore, we should not forget that eco-information is traded off against other criteria. Thus, potential consumers might be afraid that the price is higher and maybe the taste is not so good. For example, when asked about the main barriers to purchase and use of sustainable products, perceived high price is among the top answers (Röös, Tjärnemo, 2011). The fifth possible obstacle that a potential consumer might face in his behaviour is the lack of awareness or credibility: customers sometimes hesitate while choosing sustainable products because they find it difficult to carry such choices out in practice. That is because consumers can say that they seek for green food but without necessarily buying it (Ward, 2012<sup>8</sup>). Ultimately, any kind of association between products and motivations can be perceived as a way of enduring personal values (de Boer et al., 2006). Finally, the last obstacle or barrier, according to this classification, consists in the lack of motivation at time of choice. This barrier is characterized by consumers disregarding their positive attitudes related to sustainability while making food choices (Grunert, 2011; Grunert et al., 2014).

Aside from those above mentioned sustainability barriers usually faced by the food sector, there are four relevant rules that could also be considered as impediments to sustainable consumption (Dzene, Yorulmaz, 2011). The first of those assertions supports the idea that the lack of an unsatisfied sustainable need excludes from the start the possibility to purchase new products created on sustainable principles. The second statement pleads for the idea that a negative attitude towards sustainability will not lead to a sustainable consumer behaviour. Continuing the list of thoughts that can represent sustainability barriers, the third one states that the lack of clear information about sustainable food products might have a negative impact on the decision making process. Finally, according to the last statement, there is a straight relation between the availability of sustainable products and consumer's

ability to purchase because the first one clearly determines the second one.

As evidenced in this latter, as both the array of food-related sustainability practices and barriers are wide and dispersed, the research on sustainable consumer behaviour has also been inevitably reflected in wide-ranging studies about customer loyalty, brand image, reputation and credibility (Pivato et al., 2008; Obermiller et al., 2009; Cha et al., 2016; Pino et al., 2016), product awareness and product evaluation (Lotz et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2014; Costanigro et al., 2016), or purchase intention and willingness to pay (WTP) (Mohr, Webb, 2005; Yoon, George, 2012; Chen et al., 2016; Pino et al., 2016).

In consideration of the above review, the growing impact of eWOM on consumers' behaviour has been illustrated, as well as the importance and complexity of implementing diverse sustainability criteria in food products. In this line, if both approaches were bound, there would be a great opportunity that companies could exploit by focusing their communication efforts on those individuals who perform eWOM. Anyway, literature reveals that little is known whether green or sustainable food-related eWOM actually exists, and if so, what its relevance is in terms of capacity of influence. These are the main reasons why an eWOM segmentation is strongly needed. Thus, the present study presents an approach diving into Web 2.0 and eWOM with reference to food issues, considered these within their wider spectrum: gastronomy, restaurants, cooking, products, etc. For that purpose, two main objectives are established:

- 1) Firstly, to perform a segmentation of authors of food-related eWOM based on their food-related lifestyle and determine whether there is, among them, a distinct group displaying consistent sustainability features,
- 2) and secondly, if this condition is fulfilled, to verify whether the capacity of this particular group to influence the behaviour of opinion seekers is higher compared to the other groups.

#### 4. Methodology

In order to address the purpose previously pointed, a survey was conducted with a total sample of 150 authors of food-related weblogs/videoblogs in Spanish. Initial respondents were randomly select-

ed from general online population of weblogs and videoblogs through searches performed on “Google” search engine (www.google.es) during March 2013, and authors were contacted via e-mail (usual keywords were recipes blog/vlog<sup>9</sup>, kitchen tools blog/vlog, gastronomy blog/vlog, nutrition blog/vlog, restaurants blog/vlog,...). This initial group of participants constituted a directory of 2,951 contacted authors, from which 428 responses were received. Later, 278 of them had to be discarded since no relational structure was established, that is, they were isolated individuals in the population of food-related weblogs/videoblogs.

**Table 1** Technical data

Population	Authors of personal food-related weblogs/video-blogs
Sample size	150 individuals
Surveying technique	CAWI (computer aided web interview)
Sampling method	Simple random sampling
Sampling error (e)	±8.16%
Level of significance ( $\alpha$ )	95.5% ( $p = q = .50$ )
Date	March 2013

Source: Authors.

All respondents answered voluntarily to a questionnaire composed of three main sections. The first section gathered information about the most basic demographic variables, such as gender and age.

In the second section, in order to determine and classify the food-related lifestyle depicted by respondents, and hence, also in the content they generate and share through their weblogs, the Food-related Lifestyle instrument - FRL was included (Brunso et al., 2004; Wycherley et al., 2008). The FRL model has been widely and successfully applied to various European and non-European food cultures since its creation and its validity and reliability are beyond any doubt. This instrument attempts to explain behaviour toward food purchase through examining the food-related lifestyle of individuals by looking at the importance of five interrelated aspects: ways of shopping, quality aspects for evaluating food products, meal preparation methods, consumption situations, and purchase motivations. For our survey, the FRL adaptation consisted of 28 statements and the response modality took the form of a Yes/No type question.

Finally, the third section was devoted to the measurement of centrality. Centrality is a sociometric measure, meaning that it requires the calculation

The questionnaire was auto-administered online by respondents themselves but under control of SphinxOnline 3.1.2., software specialized in digital surveys. Based on these criteria, the total sample comprised 139 females (92.7%) and 11 males (7.3%), aged 20 to 59 years old. By age group, 18.0% were 20 to 29 years old, 48.7% were 30 to 39, 26.0% were 40 to 49, and 7.3% were 50 to 59 years old. These data highlight that the population of authors of food-related weblogs/videoblogs is mainly comprised of women aged between 30 and 49. For more detailed information about methodological aspects, see Table 1.

of network data, in this instance relationships between individuals. Centrality (Wasserman, Faust, 2009) refers to the “strategic position of an actor within a network” (p. 169), which makes him or her “particularly visible to the other network actors” (p. 171). To this end, the most common procedure is to ask each respondent about the people they turn to or would turn to for information, affection, advice, help or financing, etc., as the case may be (Requena-Santos, 1996; Rogers, 2003). The standard practice in this is to state a specific number of contacts to be cited by each participant. Thus, with the aim of establishing links between participants, and consequently a database with a grid structure, the individuals contacted were asked to answer the question: “Please name up to five weblogs/video-blogs to which you most frequently turn or would turn to obtain information and/or to ask for advice about food-related topics, such as recipes, nutrition, restaurants, kitchen tools, etc.”

Once data were processed, two main techniques of analysis were performed to respond to the listed objectives: firstly, by using the software SPSS version 24.0.0.1, a k-means Cluster Analysis was conducted in order to segment respondents, and secondly,

with the intent of facilitating the visualization of central individuals, a sociogram was generated using the software Netdraw 2.159 (Borgatti, 2002).

The specific centrality measure selected for the study was the in-degree centrality (Freeman, 1979). In its simplest form, in-degree centrality helps to locate those actors involved to a greater extent in relationships with other actors. In-degree centrality provides an easy means to examine the relevance of network actors, designating as central the actor with multiple ties. Specifically, an actor is central according to in-degree centrality if he or she exhibits more direct links with adjacent actors in comparison with other network actors by adding together the number of received mentions.

In the next section, the main results are presented under two sections: first of all, the analysis of different food-related lifestyle segments/contents, and after that, the study of the relation between levels of centrality and clusters.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Clustering of weblog/videoblog authors

With the aim of accomplishing a meaningful segmentation of authors of food-related eWOM, a k-means Cluster Analysis was conducted in order to divide weblog and videoblog authors who were selected. After several preliminary trials, this statistical procedure distinguished three groups of individuals which come together through similarities in various FRL aspects. At the same time, some variables of the FRL instrument were not statistically significant (see Appendix I), which means that these variables are not strong enough to establish differences between respondents, being aspects equally shared by all of them.

Taking into account these variables (Appendix I), it can be stated that authors of food-related weblogs are, generally speaking, highly impressionable by advertising and comments of other people about food topics. Furthermore, they all like everything relating to the act of cooking itself (they love cooking, trying new products and recipes, and avoid purchasing ready-to-eat foods). Moreover, our respondents tend to have and enjoy meals at home with a strong social component. The authors of food-related weblogs attach, thus, great value to food.

Aside from this, there are particularities that justify a further distinction among them. On this point,

as it was mentioned above, three differentiated groups were highlighted (Table 2). After interpreting and comparing characteristics and patterns of each cluster, jointly with scorings obtained from the cluster analysis (Table 3), different segments were labelled *conservative savers*, *gourmets*, and *greens*.

Table 2 Clusters' size

Clusters	Cases	Percentage
<i>Conservative savers</i>	56	37.33%
<i>Gourmets</i>	42	28.00%
<i>Greens</i>	52	34.67%
Total sample	150	100%

Source: Authors.

*Conservative savers*, 37.33% of the sample (Table 2), are very price conscious and hence also the most interested in the price/quality relation. *Conservative savers* pay attention to shopping lists and planning for menus. Moreover, for this segment cooking does not have to be time-consuming and complex nor involve the whole family. They value social relationship aspects of having lunch/dinner the most, and they adhere to mealtimes (Table 3).

*Gourmets* represent 28.00% of the sample (Table 2). People in this group enjoy shopping for food the most and use specialty shops more than others. On the other hand, this group is not as much concerned about prices. *Gourmets*, sybarite and hedonistic food consumers, consider taste as the most relevant indicator of quality. They also differ from other segments in their foresight, since they tend to be more impulsive and spontaneous when going shopping and planning menus. Eating between meals is not particularly common and social interaction at mealtimes is also important for this group (Table 3).

Finally, *greens*, 34.67% of respondents (Table 2), are characterized by a strong interest in product information and quality aspects such as healthfulness, freshness, and organically grown food. In contrast, they attach the least value to taste of all segments. Eating between meals is not particularly common for this group. Moreover, *greens* are more price conscious and farsighted than *gourmets* but less so compared to *conservative savers*. *Greens* also tend to involve the whole family in cooking tasks while the social side of eating is perhaps not as important for them as it is for the other segments (Table 3).

Table 3 Significant FLR statements' scoring in clusters

Statement	Scoring*	
<i>Conservative savers</i>		
I always check prices.	.8	High
I like buying food products in specialty food shops.	.1	Low
Before I go shopping for food, I make a list of everything I need.	.7	High
I always try to get the best quality for the best price.	.9	High
I prefer fresh products to canned or frozen products.	.4	Low
I try to involve the whole family in meal chores.	.2	Low
I always plan what we are going to eat a couple of days in advance.	.5	High
I attempt to adhere to mealtimes.	.9	High
The most important thing when having dinner with friends is that we are together.	.8	High
<i>Gourmets</i>		
I just love shopping for food.	.9	High
I like buying food products in specialty food shops.	.6	High
I always check prices.	.1	Low
I always try to get the best quality for the best price.	.4	Low
I find the taste of food products important.	.9	High
I always plan what we are going to eat a couple of days in advance.	.3	Low
I attempt to adhere to mealtimes.	.7	High
The most important thing when having dinner with friends is that we are together.	.7	High
<i>Greens</i>		
I read information labels and compare products.	.8	High
Before I go shopping for food, I make a list of everything I need.	.7	High
I prefer to buy organic products, i.e. products without preservatives.	.9	High
I always buy organically grown food products.	.8	High
I find the taste of food products important.	.1	Low
I try to involve the whole family in meal chores.	.5	High
Going to restaurants is a regular part of my eating habits.	.3	Low
I attempt to adhere to mealtimes.	.9	High

\* Significance level of 95%

Source: Authors

At this point, once the data derived from cluster analysis has been interpreted, it can be reliably confirmed that the respondents in the sample retrieved from the Internet have three differentiated and consistent food-related lifestyles (*conservative savers*, *gourmets*, and *greens*), which will guide the eWOM communication through their personal weblogs.

### 5.2 Group comparison by centrality

Figure 1 shows the sociogram resulting from the relational data previously gathered and reproduces the links between participants. Isolated nodes have

been deleted, and the identity of nodes is not shown to respect their anonymity. As can be seen, there are considerable differences between the relational structures of actors at an individual level.

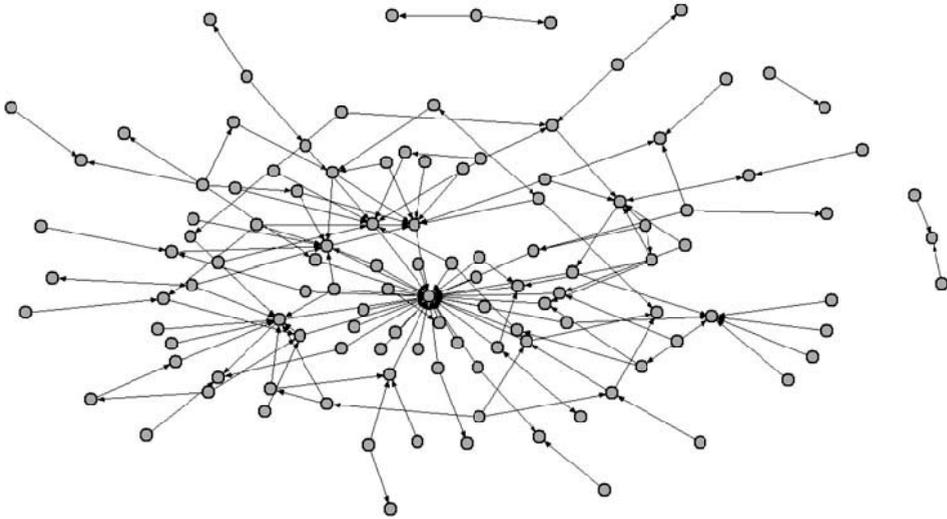
Actors with a high in-degree centrality, such as participants 1, 65, 68, 83, 129, 134, and 135 in Figure 2, are considered prestigious and relevant actors, since the others try to establish links with them – hence their importance.

This exploratory analysis was followed by the identification of the cluster to which those central actors

belonged, that is, *conservative savers*, *gourmets*, or *greens*, in order to check the possibility of existence of different levels of influence depending on the group of membership, which would imply that all these three groups are not equally prominent or relevant on the food-related Web 2.0.

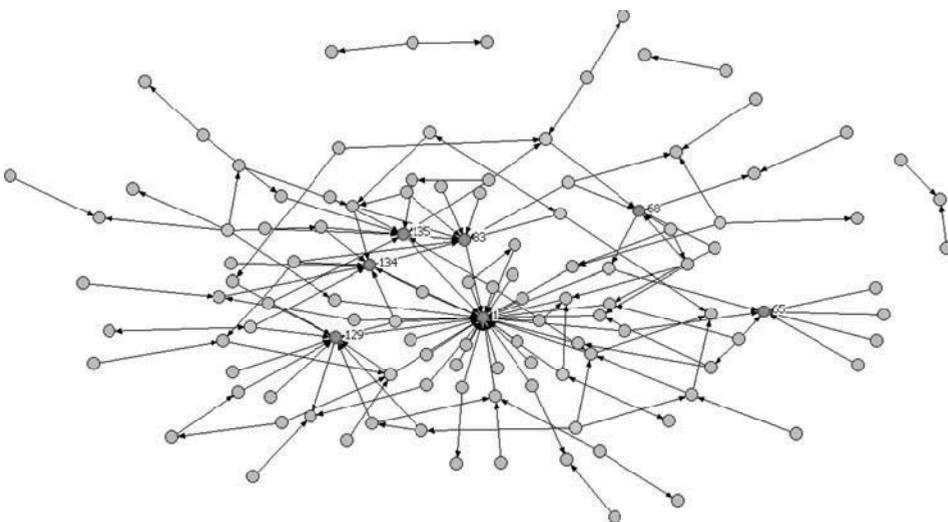
In this sense, a certain balance was found between cluster memberships among the different central individuals (Table 4). Presumably, this indicates that *greens*, just as much as *conservative savers* and *gourmets*, show the same power of influence when boosting the flow of information on the Internet about food-related issues by means of their weblog content.

**Figure 1** Relational structure between participants



Source: Sahelices-Pinto, Rodríguez-Santos (2013).

**Figure 2** Participants with highest levels of in-degree centrality



Source: Sahelices-Pinto, Rodríguez-Santos (2013).

**Table 4** Group membership of central actors

Node	Cluster
1	<i>Conservative savers</i>
65	<i>Gourmets</i>
68	<i>Conservative savers</i>
83	<i>Greens</i>
129	<i>Conservative savers</i>
134	<i>Gourmets</i>
135	<i>Greens</i>

Source: Authors

## 6. Discussion

The results of this study represent information of great importance that could be reflected in implications for businesses and professionals in marketing, to be considered at the time of making strategic and/or managerial decisions. In this regard, it should be noted that, to date, while sustainable food consumption is a noticeable topic in mass media channels such as newspapers and TV, there are still few existing studies focusing on the intersection between this topic and eWOM. For all that, originality and convenience of this paper denote a value which is far from negligible.

Apart from that, it is worth of mention that the methodological approach used in the present paper, even though it is not a widespread technique in the professional practice, exemplifies a suitable means to examine eWOM generators' food consumption style in a rather simple and efficient way, especially as regards the aspects related to the social network analysis and centrality measurement. By identifying these central network members, advertising practitioners can encourage positive eWOM and prevent spreading of negative consumer reviews. In addition, social network sites allow marketing professionals to have access to a large number of consumers with worldwide scope at low cost.

In reference to food-related eWOM, whose authors have been analysed above, there is reason to believe that those aspects which are in tune with preferences and opinions of these opinion leaders will most likely be supported and penalized, in contrast to those which are not. Anyway, eWOM must be viewed and treated as opportunity rather than a threat, since it allows a more efficient communication, capable of reaching a greater number of consumers and higher levels of trust and customer loyalty, in the same line as pointed out by Farzin and Fattahi (2018).

In particular, related to the two explicit objectives to which the present study is devoted, its findings indicate that approximately a third of authors of food-related weblogs are guided by green principles when making their decisions about food consumption, and, presumably, also share eWOM in the same sustainable tone when communicating through their weblogs/videoblogs.

Nevertheless, considering clustering solutions together with the in-degree centrality measures, it is proven that *green* consumers do not take more prominent places than *conservative savers* or *gourmets* in online social networks, and therefore, they exert the same influence as the other groups.

This circumstance, alluding to the core aim of this research, does not indicate that *conservative savers* or *gourmets* are less committed to sustainable production or not prone to sustainable behaviour. It should not be forgotten that behavioural patterns are not univocally consistent with attitudes; in other words, positive attitudes towards organic food might not necessarily be translated into actual purchases of green products. Therefore, *conservative savers* and *gourmets* are not willing to give up certain product attributes such as convenience, availability, price, quality, or taste to purchase a product only for its environmentally friendly attributes. This discrepancy is widely known as the 'attitude-behaviour gap' (Chatzidakis et al., 2006; Chekima et al., 2017; Wiederhold, Martinez, 2018).

In this vein, as organic food consumption is highly susceptible to eWOM effects (Chang, Chang 2017; Allen, Spialek, 2018), it is of critical importance to increase the audience's exposure to credible information about the environment and sustainable consumption through maintaining higher levels of self-disclosure and social presence of companies on social networks (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010). The ultimate intention would be to assure the internalisation of this green knowledge advocated by marketers, and eventually to stimulate consumers to purchase green.

Finally, despite the contribution of this study, the scope of the findings is limited by several aspects. The first aspect to consider is the issue of longevity of results in these kinds of study. Social networks, in this case personal weblogs, are comprised of transient and changeable populations that grow and decrease constantly as individuals emerge and vanish from them. As a consequence, relationships

between actors can reflect different information in the short term. In addition, the limited sample size renders it difficult to generalize the final results across such a huge population. These issues point to the need to increase the sample size to achieve a higher scientific strength. Working with a larger group would produce more representative and stable results in terms of population and time. Moreo-

ver, it should be noted that the research context is only focused on one particular geographic region (Spain). This limitation, however, represents a new opportunity for an enhanced future research, since this approach, if replicated and expanded (i.e. to international contexts), would result in new studies with greater validity, generalizability and comparability of results.

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## Appendix I

- Information from advertising helps me to make buying decisions
- I just love cooking
- I like to try out new recipes
- We use a lot of ready-to-eat foods in our household
- I consider the kitchen to be the woman's domain
- I used to nibble between meals
- We often get together with friends/relatives to have dinner in a restaurant
- I like to be praised for my cooking skills
- Eating is to me a very exciting sensation
- I only buy and eat foods which are familiar to me

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Statista (2018a), "Digital buyer penetration worldwide from 2016 to 2021", available at: <https://bit.ly/2ruCMpV> (Accessed on: May 25, 2018)
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- 8 Ward, J. I. (2012), "Can companies market greener food choices to consumers?", available at: <https://bit.ly/2SDDOLK> (Accessed on: December 10, 2018)
- 9 In colloquial language, blog and vlog are synonyms with weblog and videoblog, respectively.

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## **ODRŽIVOST, HRANA I WEBLOGOVI: KAKO PRONAĆI I ISKORISTITI AUTORE ELEKTRONIČKE USMENE PREDAJE**

### **SAŽETAK**

Razvoj interneta nesumnjivo je promijenio način i ritam života, što se odražava na naše svakodnevno ponašanje koje se na više načina razlikuje od onoga prije samo nekoliko godina. U tom smislu, na današnje načine traženja informacija i potrošnje često utječe elektronička komunikacija, odnosno usmena predaja na društvenim mrežama (eWOM). Nadalje, zabrinutost za okoliš potiče potrošače na povećanu potražnju za ekološki prihvatljivijim proizvodima. U literaturi zasad nema dovoljno istraživanja interakcije tih dvaju područja, održive potrošnje i usmene predaje elektroničkim putem. U ovom će se radu provesti istraživanje i evaluacija elektroničke komunikacije i usmene predaje povezane s održivošću u prehrani. U tu je svrhu provedena internetska anketa autora *weblogova* i *video-blogova* u kojoj su odgovarali na pitanja o svojem pristupu hrani i potrošnji hrane. Iako je potvrđeno da postoji definirana skupina „zelenih“ autora, izračun centralnosti pokazuje da je utjecaj te skupine na Web 2.0 jednak utjecaju ostalih skupina. Ti rezultati daju informacije koje mogu biti korisne ekonomskim subjektima i osobama koje rade u marketingu.

**Ključne riječi:** održivi eWOM, elektronička preporuka, hrana, weblogovi/video-blogovi, klasterska analiza, analiza centralnosti