Chapter 17
The Role of Motivational Factors for Determining Attitude Towards eWOM in Social Media Context

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ABSTRACT

Social media channels provide a critical opportunity for sharing electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication. eWOM has been considered a prominent factor in shaping consumer behavior. The purpose of this is to examine the effect of website quality, social support, emotional experience, and subjective norms on the attitude of eWOM. Furthermore, the personal interactivity role as moderator is examined. An online survey was conducted from 756 consumers in China. Structure equation modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis by using AMOS 23. The results indicate that above-mentioned determinants positively influence on attitude and eWOM. Personal interactivity significantly moderates the relationship between attitude toward eWOM and eWOM. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) has a positive direct effect on eWOM. This study provides useful and valuable insights regarding potential determinants of eWOM in Chinese perspective. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has been emerging as the most influential media to a piece of exchange information between consumers and marketers around the globe (Chu and Kim 2018). It enables users to provide their opinions, evaluations, and consumption experiences without time-based limitations (Tien, 2018). The social media has provided an opportunity wherein consumers can share their reviews related to products and services, namely known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Hayes, Shan, and King 2018).

eWOM can be defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Social media have become the most usual channels of eWOM communication because of their interactivity, ubiquity, and mobility. Nowadays, communication is witnessed on different social media channels like social networking sites (SNSs), online review sites, online discussion forums, and blogs (Sohaib et al., 2019). Consumers and merchants could initiate eWOM communication. The interactive communication among them in social media usually revolves around products and services. The benefits of social media usage have been significantly improving the eWOM motivations, but the interpersonal connection remains unclear.

Related studies have explored key drivers of eWOM and their effects on decision making, and attitude toward website and brand (Wang et al., 2016; Hu and Kim, 2018). However, numerous studies have been conducted related to the primary motivation elements that drive attitude toward eWOM in social media (Sohaib et al., 2018). The current study closes the research gap by using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and to investigate the potential effects of social media characteristics on eWOM. TPB signifies three motivational factors of a behavior: behavioral beliefs are the prospective outcomes of a behavior, normative beliefs are expected actions of important referents, and control beliefs are likely consequences that may facilitate the performance of a behavior. Therefor TPB provides the reason to measure the association of social support, emotional experience, and website quality with the attitude towards eWOM.

Last but not least, personal characteristics and individual cultural values have been understudied. However, few studies have examined the moderating role of personal interactivity (Lee and An, 2018). Interactivity can develop an interactive relationship and persuade communication among consumers. Thus, personal interactivity moderates the association among attitude toward eWOM and intentions toward eWOM.

According to the above research situations, this study postulates the following research questions:

RQ1: What significant factors are associated with the attitude towards eWOM?
RQ2: Does personal interactivity play a moderating role in this research?

The rest of the study is organized as follows: the second section provides the literature review related to relevant constructs, propose hypotheses, and empirical model. After that, we describe the research methodology, analysis, and outcomes. Finally, this study key finding discussed in detail and provides an outlook on future research.

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