EFFECTS OF THE ATTRACTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES OF TAIWAN TOYS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION

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Effects of the Attraction of Social Networking Sites of Taiwan Toys on Consumers' Purchase Intention

Huang-Cheng CHEN[1], Ming-Hung LIN[2]

Abstract

The change in the original business model of social networking sites connects people in the world together and transfer social activity in real life onto networks that people could precede social activity without going out. It is the social model mostly expected by modern people. Nonetheless, such a behavior model slowly changes the marketing pattern of electronic commerce. The high standardization of model toys facilitates the use and assembly. Unlike clothing which needs to try on or food which could easily rot, e.g. agricultural products, toys are suitable for being sold on the Internet. Aiming at social networking site members of Taiwan toys, random sampling is used for distributing 420 copies of questionnaire in this study. Total 327 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 78%. The research results conclude positive and significant effects of 1.word-of-mouth on attraction of social networking sites and 2.attraction of social networking sites on purchase intention, as well as positive effects of 3.word-of-mouth on purchase intention. According to the results to propose suggestions, it is expected to help toy industry in Taiwan attract users participating in social networking sites with the characteristics of social networking sites to achieve the marketing objective.

Keywords: toy industry, attraction of social networking site, consumer behavior, purchase intention, social model, evaluation, participation.

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Introduction

The prevalence of Facebook changes the original business model of social networking sites as well as users' purpose to visit websites. It connects people in the world together and transfers social activity in real life onto the Internet so that people could precede social activity without going out. It is exactly the social model which modern people expect. However, such a behavior model slowly changes the marketing pattern of electronic commerce. Any marketing researchers, who would like to perceive contemporary social trend, have to understand the rich monthly information provided by social networking sites with billions of registered members. Social networking sites with increasing users have gradually become the marketing tactic for enterprises making high profits. A lot of enterprises also slowly emphasize the power of social networking sites, which could change the original rules of electronic commerce in a day. A lot of institutions and enterprises also start to utilize social networking sites as the platforms to connect with customers and use the specific fan page to achieve the objectives of promotion and communication with customers. Using social networking site fans as the marketing tool would not need to pay extra advertising expenses that a lot of shopping networks in the world invest in the development of fans for marketing, shortening the distance with customers, and understanding customers' product preference and evaluation.

Many enterprises do not simply release the latest message on the social networking site walls, but would post offers; by clicking on the link and making orders, people could purchase the products with preferential prices. Many enterprises also utilize the check-in function to increase the exposure of the social networking sites. Such enterprises provide offers for those visiting and checking in the stores in front of the shop assistants so that customers are willing to check in the enterprises. In this case, more check-in would have more people see the information of the enterprises. Such a promotion strategy would be a win-win. For large enterprises, it could accumulate popularity and achieve the promotion effect. On the other hand, medium and small enterprises and personal brands would enhance the long-term effectiveness, without being restricted to locations and time. It would save lots of marketing costs for such enterprises. Model toys show high standardization and easy use and assembly. Unlike clothing which needs try-on or food which can easily rot, such as agricultural products, toys are extremely suitable for being sold on the Internet. For this reason, the effect of the attraction of social networking sites of Taiwan toys on consumers' purchase intention are discussed in this study, expecting to help toy industry in Taiwan utilize the characteristics of social networking sites and attract users to participate in social networking sites to achieve the marketing objective.

Literature review

Chang *et al*. (2017) explained that word-of-mouth was the process of message delivery among people and developed major function on customers' purchase decision. Someone reporting the descriptions and functions of certain articles would catch the attention of people who were interested in the articles. Pang (2018) indicated that consumption related online social networking basically stood for word-of-mouth network; such people were interested in certain products to generate interactive information, such as purchase inquiries, contact with like-minded people, or participate in complaints or compliments. In other words, consumers being interested in certain articles would search the articles on online social networking sites, refer to the article related message posted by others, and exchange opinions with those posted message on the Internet to exclude doubts and acquire the article related information. Brell *et al*. (2016) stated that the function of word-of-mouth message was based on social networking sites and trust; people relied on family, friends, and others in social networking sites. Previous research revealed that people seemed to believe in the selfless-like opinions posted by those not directly related to the social networking sites, e.g. online comments. The comments posted by strange netizens seemed to appear better influence, as netizens believed that the third-party speech presented better creditability. Dhir & Tsai (2017) indicated that traditional communication theory regarded strong effect of word-of-mouth on behavior, particularly on consumers' message search, evaluation, and successive decision-making. Such an influential trait allowed network word-of-mouth attracting network users that it became the favorite source opinions for consumers. Chan (2018) mentioned that a network word-of-mouth with high credibility would strengthen users' desire to adopt network suggestions and eventually attract users repeatedly visiting other consumers' suggestions. Besides, the enhancement of communication attraction would strengthen the change of positive attitudes. Apparently, the propagation through word-of-mouth could develop strong influence on social networking site users' successive behaviors. The hypothesis is therefore proposed in this study.

H1: Word-of-mouth presents positive and significant effects on the attraction of social networking sites.

With the factors in communities, Jeong & Kim (2017) argued that network could benefit information dissemination channels to fulfill individual and social goals. In other words, users, with purposes, would achieve the goals through information dissemination. As a result, enterprises, when attempted to market the products, would disseminate information through network platforms. Fans were currently the platform selected by major enterprises. Previous research revealed that users expected to fulfill various information and useful demands, such as searching and sharing information, through participation in online communities, to

complete specific tasks, like solving problems, generating ideas, affecting others' opinions, or/and to confirm decisions through community interaction. A lot of users with demands would therefore complete the goals through the power of social networking and would be attracted by users or communities with the same taste and continuously participate in the communities. Lin *et al*. (2017) stated that successful network marketing should attract and retain consumers by providing individualized and attractive contents as well as the relevant social awareness. Kim & Stavrositu (2018) explained that social networking sites, in order to attract users, should be related to the issues users concerned. Once the issue content attracted users, they might continuously use and become the members. In this case, it is assumed that users would join in communities due to the interests in the issues. Crabtree & Pillow (2018) pointed out the correlations between overall website effectiveness and attraction. In the first contact with a website, attraction would be the key in the users' attention and successive search. When being attracted, they might continuously participate in the activity related to the website and appear purchase intention on the products. Hall *et al*. (2018) mentioned that such purchase desire was agreed with the community, and the community agreement would have the person keep positive self-defined relationship with other virtual community members. They therefore would positive engage in such behaviors, i.e. being more positive and active to announce comments or respond to others' comments in order to receive others' agreement. Chen *et al*. (2019) indicated that community media provided several channels for users participating in organizations. It satisfied many users' desire to participate in the organizations and purchase intention of products. It is therefore considered that users are attracted by social networking site content to be willing to participate in the community and deeply participate in the community in order to receive the agreement of other users on the social networking sites to further appear purchase intention of the products. As a result, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H2: Attraction of social networking sites shows positive and remarkable effects on purchase intention.

Zhan *et al*. (2016) mentioned that word-of-mouth was the process to deliver message among people and would largely affect customers' purchase decisions. Someone's reports on the descriptions and functions of certain articles would attract the attention of people who were interested in the articles. Burke & Kraut (2016) mentioned that a lot of consumer behaviors were achieved through the Internet which was also regarded as the media to communicate with others. Word-of-mouth was an important factor in consumers' purchase decisions. Along with the development of network media, word-of-mouth did not simply exist among people, but spread customers' opinions, experience, and comments through forums, chatrooms, and message boards to form the new-style word-of-mouth, i.e. "network word-of-mouth". For this reason, users' online comment and word-of-mouth became the important information sources for network consumers understanding

the quality of products. Bi *et al*. (2017) indicated that the appearance of the Intern*et al*lowed customers collecting other consumers' product information and topic discussion through website visit and sharing personal experience, opinions, and relevant knowledge of specific topics to form the so-called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Reimer & Benkenstein (2016) mentioned that, network word-of-mouth, similar to traditional word-of-mouth, would affect people's decisions on the Internet. A lot of research revealed that people would refer to others' opinions when making decisions on the Internet. Accordingly, network word-of-mouth was worth emphasis. Araujo *et al*. (2017) considered it as electronic word-of-mouth that customers actively and positively shared the experience, opinions, and relevant knowledge about specific topics on electronic media of website message boards or chatrooms, without commercial objectives, or collected other consumers' product information and topic discussions, as well as induce emotional cognition in the process interacting with enterprises. Erkan & Evans (2016) called it as online word-of-mouth or network word-of-mouth. Dore *et al*. (2019) proposed that such comments and word-of-mouth could reduce consumers' product or service purchase risks and uncertainties to further affect the purchase intention and decisions. Nevertheless, people's psychological functions on websites were different. Since the physical products were not viewed, the consumer behavior would be influenced by network information. Consequently, the content and structure of network word-of-mouth information would affect consumers' purchase decisions. Shapoval *et al*. (2018) divided word-of-mouth information into positive word-of-mouth and negative word-of-mouth. The former referred to consumers, after the consumption, sharing the positive evaluation of products or service or the satisfaction with the quality. The latter referred to informing negative evaluation to others about dissatisfied purchase and use experience after the consumption and even suggesting not to consume such products. Leiner *et al*. (2018) stated that consumers would leave the product feeling and experience on network message boards or forums. Such a type of network word-of-mouth might affect consumers' brand image, brand attitude, and purchase intention of products. As a consequence, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H3: Word-of-mouth reveals positive effects on purchase intention.

Methodology

Research sample and object

Aiming at social networking site members of Taiwan toys, random sampling is used for distributing 420 copies of questionnaire in this study. Total 327 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 78%.

Reliability and validity test

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is an important part in SEM that two-stage model modification in the structural model evaluation should first test the measurement model. When the measurement model fit is acceptable, the second-step SEM evaluation is preceded. In the analysis of dimensions in CFA, the factor loadings of the dimensions appear in.70~.9, the composite reliability appear in .80~.90, and the average variance extracted appears in .60~.70, conforming to the standards of 1.factor loadings being higher than .5, 2.composite reliability being higher than .6, and 3.average variance extracted being higher than .5. The dimensions therefore present convergent validity.

Results

Structural model analysis

Structural model analysis contains model fit analysis and the explanatory power of overall research model. By referring to experts' opinions, seven numerical indices are used for testing the overall model fit, including chi-square ($\chi2$) test, $\chi2$-degree of freedom ratio, goodness-of-fit index, adjusted goodness-of-fit index, root mean square error, comparative fit index, comparative hypothesis model, and chi-square difference of independent model. The overall result analyses are organized in Table 1.

In sum, $\chi2$-degree of freedom ratio, used for testing the model fit, is better smaller; the $\chi2$-degree of freedom ratio of this research model shows < 3 (1.63). GFI and AGFI are better close to 1 and have no absolute standard to judge the model fit; GFI >.9 and AGFI >.8 are acceptable. GFI and AGFI of this research model reveals .95 and .83, respectively. RMSEA within .05-.08 stands for good model and reasonable fit; RMSEA of this research model appears .06. The allowable range of CFI is >.9; CFI of this research model is .91. NFI should at least be higher than .9; NFI of this research model shows .90. Overall speaking, goodness-of-fit indices conform to the standards, revealing the acceptable model of the research results. The research sample data therefore could be used for explaining the actual observation data.

The previous overall model fit shows favorable fit between the structured model and the observation data, showing that the theoretical model could fully explain the observation data. In this case, the correlation coefficient and coefficient estimate of word-of-mouth to attraction of social networking sites and purchase intention could be understood.

Table 1: Research model fit analysis

Fit Indices	Allowable range	This research model	Model fit judgment
χ2 (Chi-square)	The smaller the better	18.75	
χ2-degree of freedom ratio	<3	1.63	match
GFI	>.9	0.95	match
AGFI	>.8	0.83	match
RMSEA	<.08	0.06	match
CFI	>.9	0.91	match
NFI	>.9	0.90	match

The research data are organized in *Table 2*. The complete model analysis results show positive and significant correlations between word-of-mouth and attraction of social networking sites (0.86, p <0.01), attraction of social networking sites and purchase intention (0.83, p <0.01), and word-of-mouth and purchase intention (0.88, p <0.01) that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 2: Overall linear structural model analysis result

Evaluation item	Parameter/evaluation standard	Result
Internal fit	word-of-mouth→attraction of social networking sites	0.86**
	attraction of social networking sites→purchase intention	0.83**
	word-of-mouth→purchase intention	0.88**

Note: * stands for p<0.05, ** for p<0.01, and *** for p<0.001.

Overall hypothesis test with LISREL model

Figure 1 shows the relation path graph of this study, where the relation estimate among dimensions and variables appear significance.
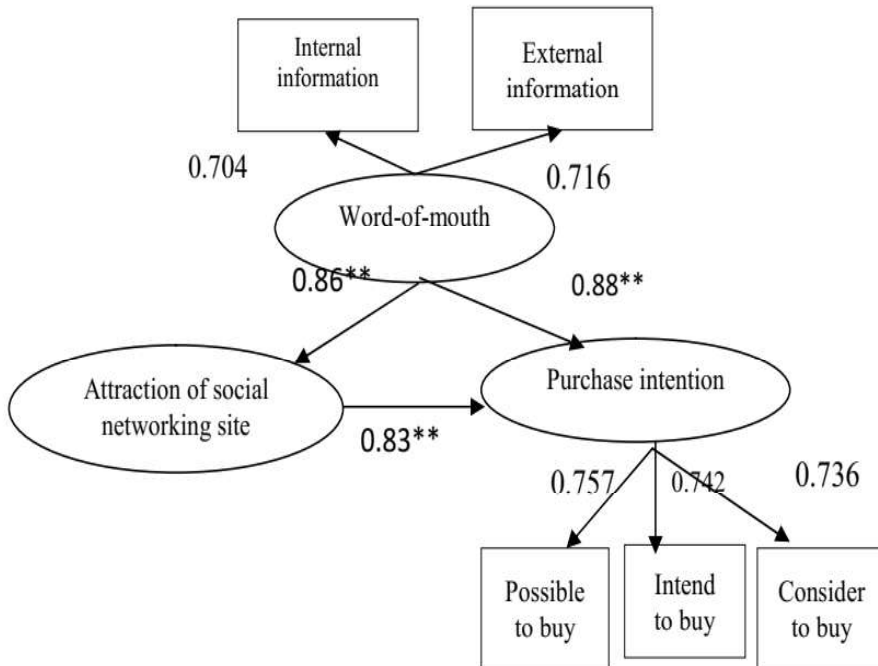
Figure 1: Relation path graph

Conclusion

The research results reveal that word-of-mouth on social networking sites of Taiwan toys could positively affect users' senses of social networking sites to further enhance the attraction to the social networking sites. Taiwan toy businesses could successfully market the brands, indirectly influence users' final participation intention, and enhance the purchase intention of toy products. Social networking sites present strong power in Taiwan; however, the real application in Taiwan is less than two years. Many social networking sites of toys add fans, but do not really understand the potential economic benefits, nor find out the proper use regulations. The development of social networking sites of Taiwan toys is not as mature as the auction or shops on various major web portals, but the endless possibilities are waited for being dug out. In this case, social networking sites of Taiwan toys have to hold the advantage and search for correct time points to develop a different business marketing channel.

In the era with fast information network, the practicability of websites not conforming to user demands would reduce the attraction of social networking sites to users. Consequently, when social networking sites of toys could provide correct and fast information, the users would present higher intention of word-of-mouth promotion and would be willing to continuously use the social networking sites of toys. In addition to users' attraction of social networking sites to join in the social networking sites, the provision of latest information of relevant issues, the reliability of information sources and contents, and the prompt responses to users would affect users' attraction of social networking sites and the behavior reaction after the use.

Suggestions

From the important research results and findings, the following practical suggestions are proposed in this study.

1) Toy businesses are suggested to cooperate with network businesses to reduce consumers' perceived risks. The practicable measures contain the establishment of security mechanisms, e.g. encryption of consumers' transaction data and personal data, the provision of correct, real-time, and rich toy related information, and the establishment of credit evaluation mechanisms for consumers scoring the shopping websites; the higher scores stand for the better credit. Moreover, returns and refund should be guaranteed, and the cooperation with the same toy trade, such as delivery locations, could have the consumers rapidly receive products.

2) Consumer needs would reveal the purchase intention on the network search, e.g. consumers' collection needs. Toy businesses are therefore suggested to provide consumers on the social networking sites with information, including keywords of such needs, to enhance the chance of the product information being searched by consumers. Toy businesses should connect the social networking sites with relevant network communities to enhance the product exposure. Besides, they should ensure the smooth of the information search channels so as not to lose the business opportunities.

3) When consumers purchase model toys for entertainment, the network purchase behavior would become direct, not take long consumption decision, and show less network search. Toys for entertainment, such as Gundam models, with cute styles or cool equipment to more easily induce entertainment effects would conform to such types of consumption needs. The market management of social networking sites of toy businesses could make aggressive promotion to have the product information directly appear on consumers' network activity and shorten consumers' consumption decisions.

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