Chapter 35

Purchase Intention of Males and Females Through Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Social media use pervades daily life, leading to a dramatic transformation in communication styles. Three factors affecting purchase intentions through SM modified from technology acceptance model include experience (experience on purchasing through social media, perceived usefulness on purchasing through social media, perceived ease of use on purchasing through social media), company (corporate credibility, product/service information), and social (social influence on purchasing through social media, electronic word of mouth on purchasing through social media). Three hundred and thirty-two respondents (male: 171, female: 161) from Taiwan were surveyed using a structure questionnaire. Analysis results indicate that significantly influence shopping intention with respect to social media. Additionally, males and females differ in purchasing intention. Social influence affects purchase intention for females, but not for males. Product/service information affects social influence for females, but not for males.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has emerged in the 21st century (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). From a business perspective, social media refers to various sources of online information that are created, initiated and used by consumers who are intent on influencing each other with respect to the purchase of products and services (Blackshaw, 1989; Pookulangara and Koessler, 2011). For marketing purposes, merchandisers must segment a market into different niches, allowing a company to promote goods to a target niche. Of these niches, genders are always targeted, owing to their different purchase intentions (Aspara and Van Den Bergh, 2014; Avery, 2012; Brangule-Vlagsma et al., 2002).

Social media use is intended mainly for personal communication. Social influence plays an important role in social media use. If information on social media is useful (commonly referred to as perceived usefulness) and helpful in customer decisions (commonly referred to as perceived ease of use), customers do not have to visit company websites to acquire information on a specific product or service. Instead,
users can log onto social media and find valuable comments and product information from companies and friends. Electronic word of mouth thus plays a pivotal role in customers selecting products and services. With social media, marketing communication becomes a two-way communication, rather than one-way communication used in traditional marketing (Eley and Tilley, 2009). Social media allows companies to share information and interact with customers via the Internet. As online shopping companies must provide customers with easy access and useful functions (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013; Hennig-Thrau et al., 2011; Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011), social media represents the most important marketing platform for companies to promote their products and services. The company must provide sufficient social media-related information to help customer purchases (Liang and Huang, 1998), making it easier for them to understand customer needs. Business companies have created Twitter accounts, set up Facebook fan pages, or posted YouTube videos to deliver product/service information (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011), which represents the major promotion method that companies offer through social media. Obviously, company creditability is widely used in product/service information, too (Davis, 1989; Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). In sum, social media has provided organizations with innovative ways of satisfying customer demand and influencing consumer behavior, including purchasing behavior (Hsieh and Chu, 2009; Swaminathan et al., 1999).

Despite the aspirations of companies to promote products on social media, to our knowledge, exactly how the above factors affect the purchase intention of customers with different genders on social media has not been addressed (Bashar et al., 2012; Das, 2014; Ehrlichman and Eichenstein, 1992; Lee et al., 2013; Okazaki, 2007). The purchase intention of males and females on social media must also be understood to elucidate the human behaviors of both gender groups.

This study attempts to identify the purchase intention of males and females on social media by administering a questionnaire survey on their purchasing experiences. A pretest verified the questionnaire reliability and validity. Purchasing experiences of respondents through social media were also surveyed based on an author-verified questionnaire. The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant literature. Section 3 then details the research methodology and the proposed questionnaire. Next, Section 4 summarizes the analytical results. Section 5 illustrates individual marketing strategies for males and females. Conclusions are finally drawn in Section 5, along with recommendations for future research.

2. RELATED WORKS

2.1. Social Media Experience

As is well known, individuals have a more positive attitude towards a particular stimulus when they are more familiar with it (Carpenter et al., 2011; Zajonc, 1968). Restated, greater familiarity that consumers have with an online medium owing to their frequent use implies a higher receptiveness towards that medium (Belanche et al., 2012). Restated, a more positive social media experience implies greater perceived ease of use on social media. We thus posit the following:

**H1:** Social media experience improves perceived ease of use on social media.

Based on the above Inference, increasing Internet usage increases the likelihood of online purchases (Aldridge et al., 1997; Liang and Huang, 1998). According to Camilla study (2010) users who under-