

Association for Information Systems

AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ICEB 2014 Proceedings

International Conference on Electronic Business
(ICEB)

Winter 12-8-2014

Taking Shopping Advice from Virtual Communities

Chien-Hsiang Chou

Tzung-I Tang

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/iceb2014>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Electronic Business (ICEB) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ICEB 2014 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

TAKING SHOPPING ADVICE FROM VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

Chien-Hsiang Chou, National Chengchi University, Taiwan, ksoarc@gmail.com

Tzung-I Tang, National Chengchi University, Taiwan, mtang@nccu.edu.tw

ABSTRACT

As the proliferation of Internet, people getting used to search information online, consumers who need decision support for purchase also looking for advice through Internet, or ask for advice within virtual communities. In order to understanding the advice taking behavior provided by community members, this study tries to identify the antecedents of advice taking by normative social influence that is suitable in the context of virtual communities. The mediation layer, the informational influence utilizes to predict the consumers' advice taking intention. Based on these two kinds of social influence, the investigation would be conducted by testing two factors in each kind of social influence: advice rating and consistency conceive as normative factors whereas advice quality and advisor credibility represent the informational influence. According to the results the factors of social influence both exert significant effects on the informational factors. In addition, the informational factors also have salient impacts on the advice taking.

Keywords: Advice taking, informational and normative influence, virtual community.

INTRODUCTUION

In the generation of Web2.0, user generated content and virtual community (VC) raise great impact on our daily life. People getting used to search information online, consumers who need decision support for purchase also looking for advice through Internet, or ask for advice within virtual communities. In online contexts, some members who join a community seek information they need or ask for advice and help; some members who post article or information like share their knowledge, Virtual community is a place aggregated members that share common interest [1] and contain wide variety which ranges from those focused on economics and marketing to social networking and education, virtual communities influence universally on human behavior [2].

It is a trend that consumers would search for product related information online before purchase. After the popular of VC, consumers are tends to look for others' shared experience about the target product or asking shopping advice from VC's members before or even in shopping. Therefore, understanding how these advice provided by others would be taken becomes an important topic in VC and marketing area. This study aims to understand the consumers' advice taking behavior in virtual communities. Based on these two kinds of social influence, informational and normative influence, this study tries to identify the antecedents of advice taking. The investigation would be conducted by testing two factors in each kind of social influence: advice rating and consistency conceive as normative factors whereas advice quality and advisor credibility represent the informational influence.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

Research model

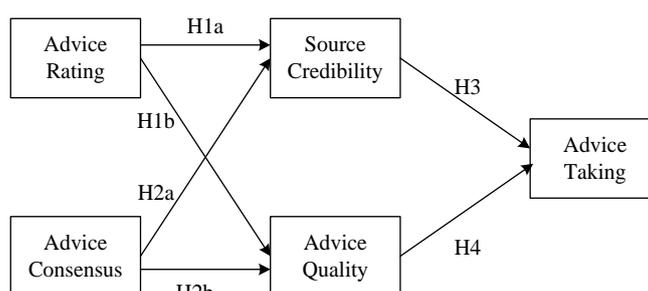


Figure 18. Research model

Normative and Informational Social Influence

Social influence occurs after individuals' interaction with others, and changes in their minds, emotions, opinions or behaviors [3]. Deutsch and Gerard [4] distinguished social influence into normative and informational influence. Informational influence is the extent that people "accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality" and may be derived from the power of the presenter if he/she is considered more authoritative and erudite on the topic in question [4]. In contrast, normative influence is defined as the influence on the individual to conform to the perceived expectations of one's self, or of another person or group [4]. As past research suggested, this two influences would exert influence simultaneously or may dominated by one of them. In this study, normative influence posits as primary effect because of the VC context. When consumers asking

advice from VC, and then they may be encounter the normative influence from other members such as rating of the posting, the feedback from other member or many other posting related to the target product. These may induce normative influence and further change consumers' mind to think these advisors are credible and their advices are believable and helpful.

Thus, this study proposes following hypothesis:

H1a. Advice rating has positive effect on source credibility.

H1b. Advice rating has positive effect on argument quality.

H2a. Advice consensus has positive effect on source credibility.

H2b. Advice consensus has positive effect on argument quality.

H3. Source credibility has positive effect on advice taking.

H4. Argument quality has positive effect on advice taking.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

To assure the validity of the instrument, items were adopted from the prior research and modified to fit VC context. Partial least squares (PLS) method was used to test the research model and SmartPLS software was used for the PLS analysis. A web-based survey was conducted by recruiting volunteer from Internet users on online discussion boards of Taiwan. In this study, participants need to have experience of advice search in virtual communities they joined. A total of 124 useable responses were collected. Basic characteristic statistics of the respondents are shown in Table 1. There were 49 female respondents (39.5%) and 75 male (60.5%). Age distribution was primarily 21-30 years old (69.4.0%), followed by 31-40 years old (20.2%) and 15-20 years old (8.8%). In terms of education, most respondents had attained at least a bachelor's degree (74.2%), followed by master or PhD degree (23.4%). Finally, most respondents were students (42.7%).

Results

Table 1: Respondent characteristics.

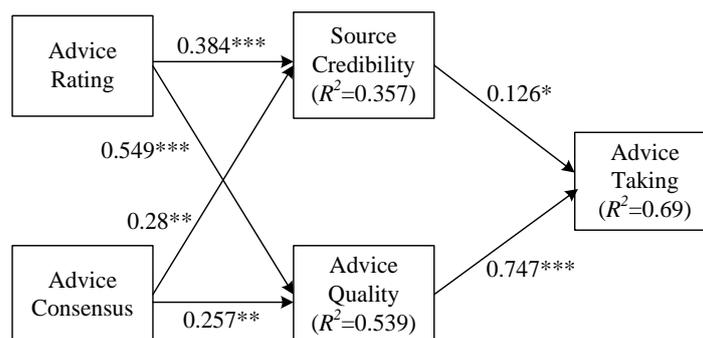
Characteristic	Number	Percentage	
Gender	Female	49	39.5
	Male	75	60.5
Age	15-20	11	8.8
	21-30	86	69.4
	31-40	25	20.2
	41-50	1	0.8
	>51	1	0.8
Education	Junior high school	1	0.8
	High school	2	1.6
	Bachelor's degree	92	74.2
	Master's degree or PhD	29	23.4
Industry	Manufacturing	10	8.1
	Service	21	16.9
	Science and technology	14	11.3
	Education and research	9	7.3
	Financial institution	3	2.4
	Retail business	1	0.8
	Government	8	6.5
	Student	53	42.7
	Construction	1	0.8
	Other	4	3.2

Reliability and convergent validity of the factors were estimated by composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) (see Table 2). The interpretation of the composite reliability is similar to Cronbach's alpha, except that it also takes into account the actual factor loadings rather than assuming that each item is equally weighted in the composite load determination. Composite reliability for all the factors in our measurement model was above 0.88. The AVE values were all above the recommended 0.50 level [5]. In order to examine discriminant validity, this study compared the shared variances between factors with the AVE of the individual factors based on Fornell and Larcker [6]. As shown in Table 2, the AVE of the individual factors was larger than each of the shared variances between constructs and the discriminant validity was supported.

Table 2: Reliability, average variance extracted and discriminant validity.

Construct	CR	AQ	AR	AT	AC	SC
AQ	0.904	0.838				
AR	0.913	0.705	0.882			
AT	0.887	0.725	0.629	0.814		
AC	0.910	0.591	0.608	0.541	0.877	
SC	0.892	0.612	0.554	0.586	0.513	0.822

Notes: 1. CR: composite reliability.
 2. AQ: advice quality; AR: advice rating; AT: advice taking; AC: advice consensus; SC: source credibility.
 3. Diagonal elements show the average variance extracted; off-diagonal elements show the shared variance.



Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; — Significant

Figure 2: Structural model results

CONCLUSION

This study investigates informational and normative influence on consumers' intention to take advice from VC. The results indicate the factors of normative influence (advice rating and consensus) exert significant influence on informational factors (advice quality and source credibility). As expected, normative influence has been induced in VC and further impacts on consumers' attitude toward the provide advices and advisors' credibility. This indicates the normative power has dominated the social influence within VC context. Perceived higher informational influence would directly affect consumers' decision, this result inconsistent with prior research. Based on informational and normative influence, this study empirically evaluates the antecedents and the mediators and has salient positive influence. This may offer practical suggestion for those pay attention to community marketing.

REFERENCES

[1] Armstrong, A., & Hagel, J. (1996). 'The real value of online communicates', *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 134-141.

[2] Teo, H.H., Chan, H.C., Wei, K.K., Zhang, Z. (2003) 'Evaluating information accessibility and community adaptivity features for sustaining virtual learning communities', *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*. Vol. 59, No.5, pp. 671-697.

[3] Rashotte, L. (2007), *Social influence*, The blackwell encyclopedia of social psychology, Vol. 9, pp. 562-563.

[4] Deutsch, M., and Gerrard, H.B. (1955) 'A study of normative and informational social influence upon individual judgment', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 629-636.

[5] Hair, J.F, Anderson, R.E. Tatham, R.L., & Black, W.C. (1992) Chapter 3, "Multiple Discriminant Analysis" in *Multivariate Data Analysis with Readings*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. pp 87-152.

[6] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981) 'Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement errors', *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 39-50.

