

“Divergence, Similarity, or both”: An Empirical Study on the Influence of eWOM on College Students’ Purchasing Intention

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abstract

This article analyzes the unique buying habits and psychology of the college student group, then explores the mechanism of influence of electronic Word-of-Mouth on college students’ purchase intention, with a view to discovering the differences and the same in the treatment of electronic Word-of-Mouth among college students compared with other consumer groups. Through the analysis of structural equation model, this paper draws several conclusions that college students are different from other consumers.

Introduction

As a key part of the purchase process, purchase intention has a strong subjectivity, so different consumer groups will have certain differences, and there will be greater similarities within the same group. College students have increasingly become an important consumer group. Based on group differences, this article focuses on the mechanism of the influence of eWOM on the purchase intention of college students. With the increasing role of word-of-mouth marketing, it is inevitable to carry out word-of-mouth marketing for different target customer groups. What’s more, finding out the differences in the attitudes of different consumer groups towards eWOM is of greater practical significance for businesses to carry out word-of-mouth marketing.

Hypothesis

1. The professionalism and popularity of eWOM publishers positively affect the purchase intention of college students.
2. The accuracy and authenticity of eWOM positively affect the purchase intention of college students.
3. The richness of eWOM positively affects college students’ purchase intentions.
4. The timeliness of eWOM positively affects college students’ purchase intention.
5. The difference in eWOM negatively affects college students’ purchase intentions.
6. The number of eWOM positively affects the purchase intention of college students.
7. Compared with people with low sensitivity, eWOM has a greater impact on the purchase intention of college students with high sensitivity.
8. The regularity and reliability of the media of eWOM communication are positively affecting the purchase intention of college students.

Materials and Methods

The survey was conducted on a sample of 5 universities a total of 258 college students were surveyed, and 245 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective rate of 94.96%.

This article uses AMOS to establish two structural equation models for empirical analysis. Model 1 is a first-order 8-factor model, including 8 latent variables and 1 dependent variable. Model 2 is a second-order 4-factor model. The latent variables are the content of eWOM, the publisher of eWOM, the recipient of eWOM, and the communication medium of eWOM. The content of eWOM include the authenticity, accuracy, number, difference and timeliness of eWOM.

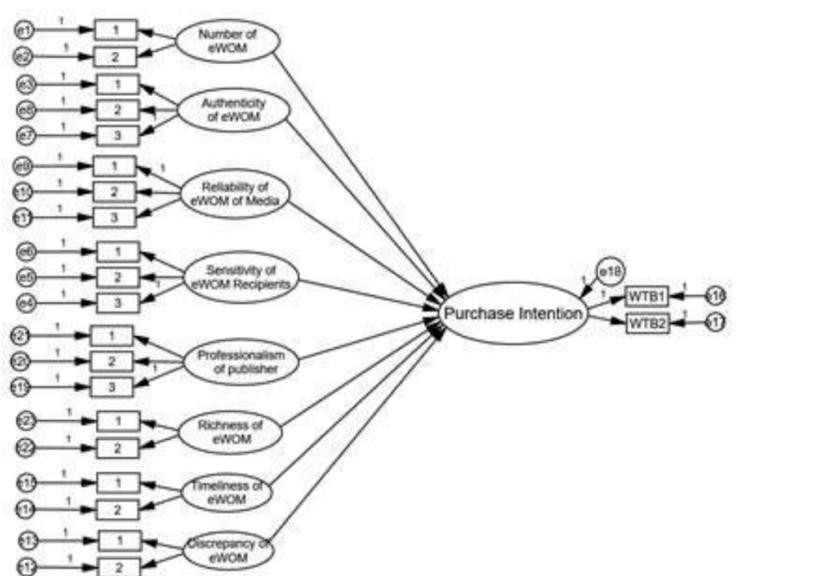


Figure 1 Order 8-factor model

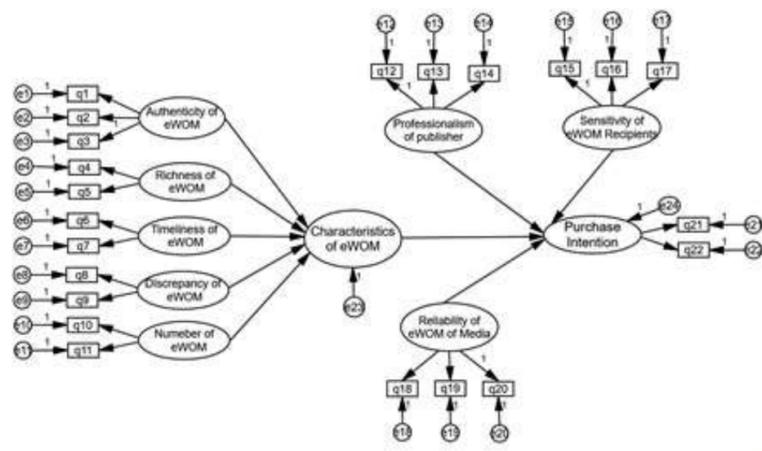


Figure 2 Order 4-factor model

Model competition

This article selects 5 indicators to compare the models, including χ^2/df , NFI, GFI, PNFI and RMSEA. After the calculation of AMOS24.0, the fitting degree of model 2 is better than that of model 1, so model 2 is finally used for subsequent analysis in this paper.

Table 1 Goodness of fit

	χ^2/df	NFI	GFI	PNFI	RMSEA	Optimal model
Ideal range	<3.0	>0.9	>0.8	>0.5	<0.08	Model 2
model 1	4.391	0.702	0.726	0.501	0.081	
model 2	2.892	0.925	0.790	0.539	0.078	

Path analysis and hypothesis testing

Through analysis, it is found that Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 are not statistically significant, so the hypothesis does not hold. The remaining hypotheses are significant in statistical testing. To sum up, in the eight hypotheses established in this paper, six hypotheses are established and two hypotheses are not established.

Table 2 Path coefficient evaluation

Hypothesis	N-standardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	C.R	P	Hypothesis is holds ?
H1	.40	.832	5.883	***	yes
H2	.18	.19	3.229	.001	yes
H3	.15	.18	3.016	.003	yes
H4	-.03	.04	.588	.557	no
H5	-.10	.10	1.711	.087	no
H6	.15	.16	2.751	.006	yes
H7	.628	.766	6.489	***	yes
H8	.30	.370	3.188	.001	yes

Conclusion

- The popularity and professionalism of eWOM publisher significantly positively affect college students’ purchase intention, and have the greatest influence.
- The timeliness and difference of eWOM don’t have a significant impact on college students’ purchase intention.
- College students with high sensitivity traits are more susceptible to the opinions of others when making decisions, and they are more affected by negative comments.

Forthcoming research

On the similarities and differences of college students with different professional backgrounds affected by eWOM.

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