Research Summary on the Influence of Internet Word-of-Mouse on Consumers Purchase Behavior

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Abstract

The reason why word-of-mouth attracts much attention among scholars, executives and consumers is that word-of-mouth is not only a marketing method of the company, but also one of the driving forces for consumers to generate purchasing behavior. Nowadays, in the era of developed online shopping and popular comments from netizens, online word-of-mouth is booming, which has become an important factor in determining consumers' purchasing behavior. By combing the literature at home and abroad, this paper first summarizes the connotation and related theoretical models of online word-of-mouth, then summarizes the influence of the four components of online word-of-mouth, including quality, quantity, potency and dispersion, on consumers' purchasing behavior, and finally puts forward some suggestions on the future research direction of online word-of-mouth.

Keywords

Internet Word-of-Mouse; Consumers; Purchase Behavior.

1. Introduction

Word of mouth communication can have an impact on consumers' purchase behavior, which has long been confirmed by a large number of scholars.In today's big data era, the transmission speed and scope of all kinds of information are faster and wider than before. This convenience undoubtedly provides a new communication channel for the connection between entrepreneurs and consumers. Online word-of-mouth came into being and has rapidly developed into a key reference basis for consumers to buy products or enjoy services.

For consumers, the use of online word-of-mouth information is a timely and convenient means of purchase.Various positive or negative evaluations of products are presented to the public one by one through the Internet, which adds a reference basis for consumers to think about whether to make purchase behavior."Popular products", "popular products" and "popular products" can be used by consumers for reference, or "popular products can be used by consumers to compare their own values", etc.With the characteristics of convenience, timeliness and rich types of information, online word-of-mouth has gradually become an important reference for consumers to purchase. Tiktok Kwai, the master of the Internet, the development of the Internet, the involvement of third kinds of platforms (such as app, jitter, little red book), the arrival of goods and the growth of the opinion leaders, have brought more possibilities to the marketing methods of enterprises with the rapid development of the data age.For example, Hua Xi Zi, Mei Kang and other cosmetics companies in China are launching new products, and actively take advantage of B station beauty makeup bloggers, small red books, micro-blog, and micro-blog to promote tiktok, so as to form a full network promotion so as to achieve the goal of increasing sales volume.Another example is that some time ago, after hongxingerke's silent donation was learned by netizens, it aroused consumers' favor for hongxingerke brand. For a while, hongxingerke stores were crowded and sales increased sharply. Although this is not the result of active marketing, we can still see the

important role of online reputation in it.Online word-of-mouth provides a wider channel for enterprise marketing. At present, it has become one of the important marketing means for enterprises to improve sales.

The latest statistical report on China's Internet Development released by CNNIC points out that by the end of 2021, China has 1.032 billion internet users, an increase of 42.96 million over 2020, reaching 73% Internet penetration.In this environment where the number of people using the Internet increases year by year, the propagation speed and scope of online word-of-mouth will gradually expand, and consumers will have a certain dependence on whether the evaluation conveyed by reference to online word-of-mouth is positive or not before purchasing products.In the past, the Internet has not been popularized. In reality, advertising, marketing and promotion activities have a great impact on consumers' purchase decisions for products, but now its importance has been gradually replaced by virtual online word-of-mouth.Therefore, it is very important to study how online word-of-mouth affects consumers' purchase decisions, correctly guide consumers to use online word-of-mouth to produce purchase behavior, and control enterprises not to develop online word-of-mouth into a means of over marketing.

2. Definition of Online Word of Mouth

Online word-of-mouth is formed by introducing the Internet on the basis of traditional word-of-mouth.Therefore, before defining online word-of-mouth, we can first understand the origin of traditional word-of-mouth.Compared with online word-of-mouth, traditional word-of-mouth has a long history of information dissemination. It is a way for the company to use the information exchange between customers to promote product or service information or brand image when creating a brand.In the common marketing methods, word of mouth always plays an important role, especially in the era of slow information flow and underdeveloped Internet, many consumers will collect or share information through face-to-face word-of-mouth communication.

The research on word-of-mouth started earlier in foreign countries than in China. First, Arndt & Johan (1967) defined word-of-mouth. He believed that word-of-mouth originated in the process of message interaction between the information publisher and the receiver. The generation method is face-to-face communication or telephone communication. It is a subjective evaluation of products or services and has a non-commercial nature.At the same time, he confirmed that word-of-mouth has a significant impact on consumers' final purchase decision.After that, Westbrook (1987) also gave his understanding of word-of-mouth, which is defined as the informal evaluation given by consumers according to the use of products, experience of purchasing products or service quality after consumers buy products or enjoy services, and communicate and share the evaluation with other consumers.His common view with Arndt is that word-of-mouth communication is an informal and non-profit information exchange initiated by consumers.

With the advent of the 1990s, the Internet has ushered in a new period of development, and the subsequent network reputation has gradually appeared in everyone's life and has been understood and recognized by the public.Gelb et al. (1995) were a group of researchers who defined the concept of online word-of-mouth. They explained that online word-of-mouth is also a way for consumers to evaluate products or services, especially in that consumers use the Internet for communication.Five years later, bussiere (2000) defined online word-of-mouth as the behavior of consumers sharing a company's products and company news, whether positive or not, to other consumers through online forums, chat groups and other channels, and he created a new term for this behavior - electronic word-of-mouth, or online word-of-mouth.Although they give different definitions to online word-of-mouth, one thing they have in

common is that online word-of-mouth is that consumers evaluate products or services in a virtual environment, which is also the biggest difference between online word-of-mouth and traditional word-of-mouth.

After entering the 21st century, foreign research on online word-of-mouth began to mature, while domestic research on online word-of-mouth began to increase, which greatly enriched the connotation of online word-of-mouth and made its definition more and more detailed and specific.Hennig thurau (2010) explained that online word-of-mouth is the positive and negative evaluation of products or enterprises shared by previous, existing or potential customers on the Internet for reference by other consumers and businesses.Liu Yan pointed out that the two-way communication between domestic media such as the Internet and the Internet is aimed at the two-way communication between domestic consumers.Subsequently, Shen Suxia (2017) expressed her views on online word-of-mouth, mainly starting from the importance of the network in the e-commerce environment, and believed that the network is an indispensable link for the growth and development of the company. This link can eliminate the problem of information asymmetry between the company and consumers, and play a vital role in the formulation of development strategy and marketing plan of the company.Later, Hou Haiqing and Gong Yajing (2019) added the definition of online word of mouth: consumers express their subjective emotions and feelings about the company, goods or services by publishing relevant information about the company, goods or services on the Internet, and provide other consumers with information they can refer to when making purchase decisions.

By combing the above literature on the definition of online word-of-mouth, the connotation of online word-of-mouth is summarized here, The disseminators of online word-of-mouth are mainly consumers who have purchased products or enjoyed services; The recipients of online word-of-mouth are mainly other consumers who have purchase plans or may make purchase decisions in the future, as well as enterprises providing goods or services and peer competitors;The media of online word-of-mouth communication is the Internet, which mainly uses third-party platforms, opinion leaders or wild endorsements and other communication methods;The characteristics of online word-of-mouth are non-commercial, two-way interactive, informal and mixed with positive and negative evaluation.This overview: consumers take the Internet as the media, release and share relevant information about companies, products and services with subjective emotions, and provide reference for other consumers at the same time, which is online word-of-mouth.

3. Common Models and Theories in the Research of Online Word of Mouth

Up to now, the research on online word-of-mouth has developed relatively mature at home and abroad. Scholars have also used many models and theories in their research. This paper summarizes the common model theories in the research of online word-of-mouth, which are S-O-R theory model, attribution theory and rational behavior theory model.

3.1. S-O-R Theoretical Model

Mehrabian and Russell put forward the "S-O-R theoretical model" as early as 1974. The external environment is the antecedent variable, the emotional state and emotional response are the intermediary variables, and the output results of tightening or avoidance are the response behavior. The three constitute the stimulus organism response model, which explains and analyzes how the environment affects human behavior to a certain extent,In other words, individual psychological changes may be induced by changes in the external environment, so as to make corresponding behaviors to adapt to psychological changes.

Since the theoretical model was put forward in the 1970s, scholars have gradually applied it to the study of consumer behavior. The first to use the S-O-R model is the theoretical system of

environmental psychology, which is mainly used to study the impact on consumers' purchase intention in the environment of shops or shopping malls. Until the early 1980s, e-commerce appeared in the public eye and developed rapidly. The model began to attract the attention of researchers in this field,It is gradually widely used to study the changes of consumers' purchase intention and purchase decision under the network environment.

Firstly, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) built an economic model of retail environment emotional response purposeful consumption behavior based on S-O-R theoretical model for empirical research, and finally concluded that the consumption environment has a direct impact on consumers' emotions. The consumption environment is the key factor for consumers to generate purchase behavior. When the consumption environment meets consumers' shopping expectations, consumers are willing to spend more time choosing products,Then increase the purchase intention ranging from 12-50%.Later, with the maturity of domestic e-commerce, domestic scholars also began to invest in this research. Guan Rongwei (2013) studied the impact of online retailers' reputation, promotion and after-sales on customers' perceived value and their response to customers' identity on the basis of "S-O-R model".Guo Jinghua (2016) used this model to study the consumer emotion and purchase behavior of retail stores offline under customer environmental management, and concluded that the consumption environment composed of many factors significantly affects consumers' consumption emotion and behavior.

3.2. Attribution Theory

Heider (1958) first put forward the attribution theory, believing that individuals are more willing to speculate and explain the causes of the events they face. Different explanations and understandings will lead to different judgments on specific information or cognitive events.Finch (2007) pointed out that the attribution analysis of specific events by individuals based on their knowledge or daily cognition is mainly carried out in two directions, the internal causes related to subjective factors and the external causes related to external stimuli or objective environment.

In the study of the determinants of consumers' perceived information credibility and other related attribution formation, scholars often use attribution theory.Sen et al. (2007) pointed out in the paper that online word-of-mouth is one of the important factors to promote consumers to make purchase decisions. The citation of attribution theory can help consumers analyze and summarize the publishing motivation of existing comments and whether to learn from online word-of-mouth under different attribution choices.Bond et al. (2015) used attribution theory to study the dispersion of online word-of-mouth and concluded that when online word-of-mouth is low, consumers are willing to attribute the dispersion of word-of-mouth to external reasons related to products, and when online word-of-mouth is high, consumers are willing to attribute it to internal reasons of commentators who have published comments.

3.3. Rational Behavior Theory

Rational behavior theory (TRA) first belongs to the category of social psychology. It is a theory used by psychologists to explain how attitudes affect human behavior. Later, Fishbein and Ajzen introduced and improved the field of marketing in 1975 and widely used in the prediction of various human behaviors.This theory holds that an individual's willingness to take behavior will determine his specific behavior. Willingness is a function of the subjective norms of behavior attitude and individual cognition, that is, a person's attitude towards something and the subjective norms of the code of conduct that should be followed by something act on behavior intention, and then behavior intention affects the final behavior. The principle is shown in the figure below.
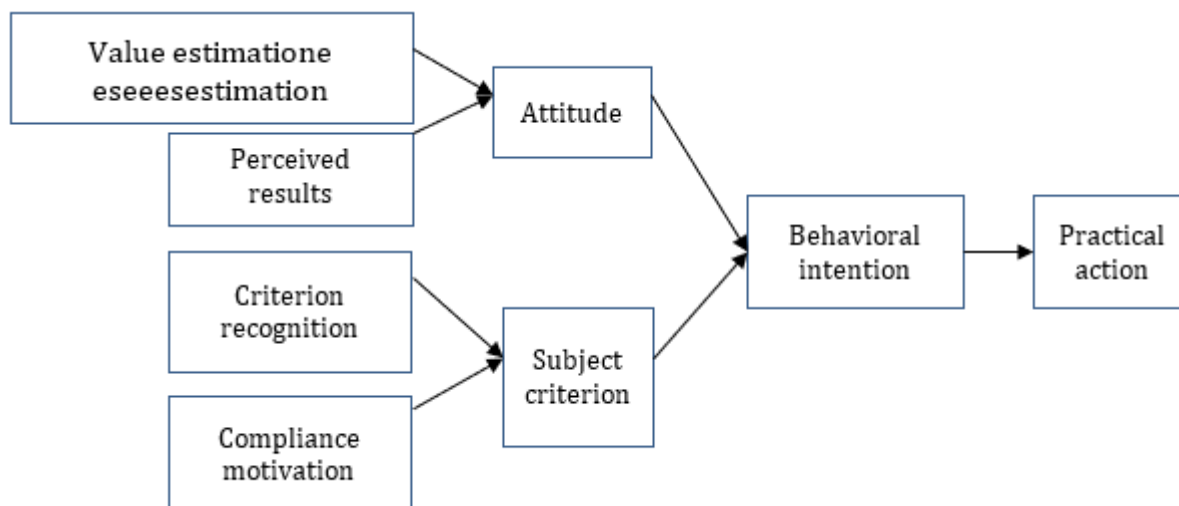
Figure 1. The model of Theory Reasoned Action

Of course, in addition to the above theories, there are also scholars based on many other theoretical models, such as metacognitive theory, lens model, dual system theory and so on.

4. Impact of Online Word-of-Mouth Quality on Consumers

The impact of online word-of-mouth on consumers has been complicated and intertwined with various factors. Scholars at home and abroad have been studying the important factors since the emergence of online word-of-mouth. With the deepening of research, the impact of online word-of-mouth quality on consumer behavior has gradually emerged. The research on it is mainly carried out from the aspects of credibility, relevance and objectivity of word-of-mouth information.

Domestic scholars song Xiaobing (2011) and others established theoretical models for empirical research. The results show that when the argument information quality of online word-of-mouth is higher, consumers' attitude towards products will be better and their purchase desire will be higher.The high quality of argument information is mainly reflected in that the information can reflect the real attributes of the product, and the published evaluation arguments are logically close and can be accepted by consumers.For example, when evaluating the quality of a commodity, attaching a real picture of the commodity is easier for consumers to believe than describing the commodity in language alone, or the evaluation from all aspects of product appearance, price and use feeling can attract consumers' attention more than template praise.

In addition, Chevalier (2006) and others proposed that consumers are more willing to look for evidence to support their prejudice against products.Subsequently, Cui g (2012) and others also put forward the negative bias view: consumers who maintain neutrality towards a product are more likely to accept the negative comments of the product than positive comments.

Lee et al. (2014) explored the impact of the quality of online word-of-mouth on consumers. They found that when a consumer selects a commodity and tries to read a complete positive word-of-mouth, he will give a positive evaluation of the commodity, which will increase the possibility of purchase intention. Therefore, it can be seen that high-quality online word-of-mouth has a greater influence on consumers.After that, Jun Wang (2017) and others conducted a questionnaire survey on the behavior of college students in buying mobile phones. The results show that in the case of buying mobile phones, consumers' purchase intention and purchase behavior are mainly affected by the quality of online word-of-mouth, which is the main dimension.

By combing the literature related to online word-of-mouth quality, we can conclude that online word-of-mouth quality has a great impact on consumers' purchase behavior, and the higher the quality of word-of-mouth information, the greater consumers' interest in products. At the same time, when both positive and negative evaluations exist in online word-of-mouth information, for consumers with neutral attitude, negative evaluation is easier to convince them than positive evaluation.Especially now, in order to improve the sales volume of goods, many businesses hire people to brush the bill and create the illusion of high praise for the goods, which leads consumers to rely on negative word-of-mouth to judge whether the products are good or not. In the face of this situation, how to effectively stop the phenomenon of brushing the bill and improve consumers' trust in positive word-of-mouth is a focus that enterprises and scholars should pay attention to.

5. Impact of Online Word of Mouth on Consumers

The number of online word-of-mouth refers to the total number of subjective comments on the product or service made by consumers who have bought the product or enjoyed the service on the Internet.The number of online word-of-mouth can reflect the popularity and popularity of a tangible or intangible product to some extent. Therefore, the number of online word-of-mouth is generally an indispensable variable in the research of online word-of-mouth communication. Godes (2004) and others analyzed the number of relevant comments on TV programs in 1999 and 2000, and found that the more viewers participating in comments on the website every day, the more relevant topics spread to groups, and the higher the score and ranking of TV programs.Liu (2006) studied the role of online word-of-mouth in film box office and found that the more online word-of-mouth, the higher the film box office revenue, the higher the popularity and the more the sales volume.Zuo Wenming (2014) and others used social capital theory to build the model of online word-of-mouth and consumers' purchase intention from the perspective of social capital, concluded that the number of online word-of-mouth has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention, and proposed that the impact of the number of online word-of-mouth on consumers' purchase intention is greater than that of the quality of online word-of-mouth.Chen fajie, Cui Dengfeng et al. (2015) constructed a theoretical model in a social environment and finally reached the same conclusion.Later, with the deepening of research, some scholars began to hold the opposite attitude. Zeng Wenye (2017) pointed out in his paper that the number of online word-of-mouth of products will not significantly affect consumers' purchase intention, nor will it affect consumers' views on the usefulness of products.

By combing the above literature, most scholars believe that the number of online word-of-mouth significantly affects consumers' purchase intention and purchase behavior, and some scholars hold different views on this point of view, mainly because of different research perspectives.Therefore, whether there is a relationship between the number of online word-of-mouth and consumers' purchase behavior needs to be discussed in the actual situation, which can not be generalized.This also shows that in the future, the research on the number of word-of-mouth should be more detailed and specific, which will have more reference value for different consumers and entrepreneurs.

6. Impact of Online Word-of-Mouth Titer on Consumers

Online word-of-mouth titer can reflect consumers' satisfaction after purchasing products. It can be used as an indicator to measure consumers' recognition of products. Summarizing the literature at home and abroad, it is found that word-of-mouth titer includes positive titer (positive titer), neutral titer (neutral titer) and negative titer (negative titer).

Charlett (1955) and others pointed out in their paper that both positive and negative word-of-mouth information will have an impact on consumers, and then affect product sales.However, when there are too many positive word-of-mouth in online word-of-mouth, consumers will more believe in the authenticity of negative word-of-mouth. Therefore, researchers have gradually increased their research on negative word-of-mouth in recent years.Domestic scholars Zhang Guangling and Gao Anyu (2008) conducted an empirical study on the impact of negative word-of-mouth on consumers' purchase decisions by taking mobile phone sales as an example. The results show that the more negative comments on mobile phone brands, the better the relationship between comment publishers and comment recipients, or the more professional the comment publishers are, the more significant the impact of negative word-of-mouth information on other consumers' purchase behavior.Liu Beibei (2018) and others used Wuhan consumer survey data to conduct experimental analysis on the impact of negative word-of-mouth in the sales of agricultural products. The experimental results show that from the perspective of food safety time, rational negative word-of-mouth can reduce consumers' willingness to buy agricultural products by causing consumers' high contradictory attitude.

By combing various literature, we can find that consumers are more intense about negative word-of-mouth than positive word-of-mouth.Studies have shown that consumers who are satisfied with the product will share the praise with three people, while those who are dissatisfied with the product will share the attitude with at least ten people, and then the recipients of these negative news may also share the negative evaluation with others. Especially now that the false phenomenon of "brush praise" by businesses is frequent, consumers only pay more attention to negative word-of-mouth. Therefore, in the later research on online word-of-mouth, we should pay more attention to negative word-of-mouth. Its formation reasons, communication mechanism and influence range from different perspectives are worthy of in-depth research.

7. Impact of Online Word of Mouth Dispersion on Consumers

The dispersion of online word-of-mouth refers to the degree of dissemination of product related comments among different groups.Its discreteness mainly depends on the types of products and services that consumers pay attention to on the network and the diversity of product or service communication platforms.Different groups have different concerns about goods or services, and their communication purposes are also different.When the word-of-mouth of a product spreads among many groups and the word-of-mouth information has the behavior of diffusion, it shows that the word-of-mouth of the brand has great influence and high dispersion.

Godes (2004) and others found that the dispersion of online word-of-mouth has a significant impact on the future ratings of TV programs when studying the impact of online word-of-mouth on the ratings of TV programs.Through three experiments, domestic scholars such as Jiang Yushi (2019) concluded that under the regulation of endowment effect, consumers in the state of strong endowment are more likely to accept the high dispersion option of word-of-mouth, and for specific products, consumers' own dependence on emotion will attribute the dispersion of word-of-mouth to other reasons rather than the product itself, thus reducing the negative impact of dispersion on purchase intention.Chen Meihong and Wang Shufen (2021) used the S-O-R model to build a theoretical model of the impact of online word-of-mouth dispersion on consumers' purchase intention for empirical research. The results show that the high dispersion of online word-of-mouth leads to the reduction of consumers' perceived trust, which weakens consumers' purchase intention, and pointed out that this negative impact is more significant in practical products than in hedonic products.

Different from the research conclusions basically consistent with the other three constituent elements of online word-of-mouth, scholars have different views on the impact of online word-of-mouth dispersion on consumers' purchase decision-making, some hold positive impact views, some hold negative impact views, and even some scholars believe that there is no correlation between the two.Because of the controversy, the research on the dispersion of online word-of-mouth at this stage is more and more valuable than the other three factors.After that, online word-of-mouth research can focus on dispersion, such as in-depth exploration of consumers' attention to the perception level of word-of-mouth dispersion, and the impact of processing dispersion of different presentation methods of online word-of-mouth on product sales.

8. Summary and Prospect

At present, domestic and foreign scholars' research on the impact of online word-of-mouth on consumers' purchase behavior has been very mature, but some data show that among the influencing factors of consumers' purchase intention and behavior, online word-of-mouth has reached 77.5%, which is the most critical factor. Therefore, it can be seen that this research is bound to continue.The following are some prospects for the future research direction of the relationship between online word-of-mouth and consumers.

First, focus on the research of online word-of-mouth in terms of internal factors of consumers.Because of the anonymity of the Internet, consumers will be more free to post comments.Consumers will certainly have personal color when publishing evaluations. The more obvious the personal style is, the more attractive the online word-of-mouth is to consumers, which will affect consumers' purchase decisions.Among the factors affecting consumers' purchase decision, consumers' internal factors are obviously very important, but there is little research on this aspect, which can be further studied in this direction in the future.

Second, refine the research on online word-of-mouth in different industry situations.The sales characteristics of each industry are very different, and consumers in different industries pay different attention to online word-of-mouth. For example, the film box office will fluctuate up and down with the quality of online word-of-mouth, but the sale of luxury goods is basically not affected by online word-of-mouth, or there is little online word-of-mouth about luxury goods.Therefore, it is very important to refine different industries and pay attention to the impact of online word-of-mouth on consumers' purchase behavior in specific industries.

Third, focus on the impact of online word-of-mouth released by specific groups on consumers' purchase decisions.Obviously, the tiktok released by the big platforms (micro-blog, jowl, Xiao Hong, B station) and the master V users, which are released by the Internet, are more concerned than the average consumers. However, the degree of the impact of Internet word of mouth on consumers' purchase intention and behavior is still not a major factor.Future research is imperative.

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