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The Antecedents and Consequences of Social and Economic User Satisfaction in Online Social Shopping Community: The User Experience Perspective

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

Online social shopping communities are gradually becoming prevalent with the dissemination of e-commerce and social media. Community users or consumers can generate their own contents or engage in social activities while shopping without switching between platforms. The level of engagement and actual purchase, however, are unsatisfactory. Although, prior scholars have examined possible factors (e.g. satisfaction, experience) that can improve participation or purchase in community, they have failed to explore their internal relationships. In this research, we unpack the concept of user satisfaction and adopt the four-dimension user experience principle to improve participation and purchase intention more efficiently. We assume that different components of user experience may have distinct influences on economic and social user satisfaction. Moreover, the impacts of economic and social satisfaction on participation and purchase may differ. An empirical survey of users in online social shopping communities in China will be conducted to test the assumptions. Potential implications for theory and practice will also be discussed.

Keywords: economic and social satisfaction, four-dimension user experience, online social shopping community, participation and purchase intention

Introduction

Consumers are keen on interesting and compelling experiences on social media and e-commerce platforms. Nowadays, businesses are interested to combine social media and e-commerce efficiently in order to reap competitive advantages. The online social shopping community is a form of on-site social commerce, in which buyers are not only able to achieve their shopping needs but also to generate related contents and build a pleasant relationship through their social interaction with other buyers without jumping between different websites (Grange and Benbasat 2010; Olbrich and Holsing 2011). Kohler et al. (2011), however, found that online shopping communities fail to attract a satisfying level of engagement and actual purchase. Moreover, recent reports^[1] also show that a few

^[1] <http://it.sohu.com/20161002/n469548869.shtml>

social shopping communities have died out because they only focused on low price or discount incentives without creating unique experiences to build up satisfactory long-term relationships.

Researchers have undertaken many studies on the effect of holistic satisfaction on behavioral intentions in marketing (Kumar et al. 2013; Straus et al. 2016) and the IS realm (Fang et al. 2014; Hsu et al. 2015). However, few studies have examined social and economic satisfaction together in online social shopping community wherein buyers can be characterized in both economic and social terms. Geyskens and Steenkamp (2000) found economic and social satisfaction have different antecedents and outcomes. In a recent study (Huang et al. 2015), the distinct impacts of a buyer's social and economic satisfaction on loyalty were verified empirically. In order to help practitioners learn how to increase consumers' actual purchase behavior efficiently, the first research question we expect to solve is: *How and to what extent do social and economic satisfaction impact the participation and purchase intentions of consumers in an online social shopping community?*

Gartner has found in 2016, 89% of companies believed that customer experience will be a core competence for them to win over competitors, versus 36% 4 years ago (Plummer et al. 2014). Additionally, researchers have found that compelling experiences can generate high levels of satisfaction, thereby impacting users' behavioral intentions (Chen and Chen 2010; Deng et al. 2010; Rose et al. 2012). A framework of a user's experience-satisfaction-behavioral intention in online shopping environments has been attested by literatures in retailing (Eroglu et al. 2005; Rose et al. 2012; Rose et al. 2011). In these research, however, user experience is mostly examined as a monolithic or dual-dimension concept (e.g. affective & cognitive (Rose et al. 2012) or hedonic & utilitarian (Overby and Lee 2006)), and user satisfaction is considered as holistic as well, which is unlike the comprehension and exploration of the mechanism between user experience and satisfaction. Furthermore, they failed to provide effective guidance for platform managers and designers with respect to which dimension of user satisfaction should be paid more attention, and which component of user experience needs to be addressed, in order to stimulate users' participation and actual purchase behavior. To fill this gap, we apply Nambisan and Watt's (2011) four-dimension principle of user experience in online community, and adopt the framework of the user's experience-satisfaction-behavioral intention to address our second research question: *How and to what extent do different user experiences effect their social and economic satisfaction in an online social shopping community?*

Literature Review

Online Social Shopping Community

An online social shopping community refers to a complete and professional online shopping community wherein all the interactions and purchases take place in the community (Grange and Benbasat 2010; Olbrich and Holsing 2011). Members of the community are able to: 1. Generate contents on product reviews, experiences, create listings and their own profiles; 2. Search for products, product reviews, product listings; 3. Purchase products directly in the community platform; 4. Build relationships with other community members, communicating and interacting with each other (Olbrich and Holsing 2011; Stanoevska-Slabeva 2002). In China, popular online social communities include xiaohongshu.com and mogujie.com; In Western countries, similar online social communities include pinterest.com, etsy.com and polyvore.com.

Economic and Social User Satisfaction

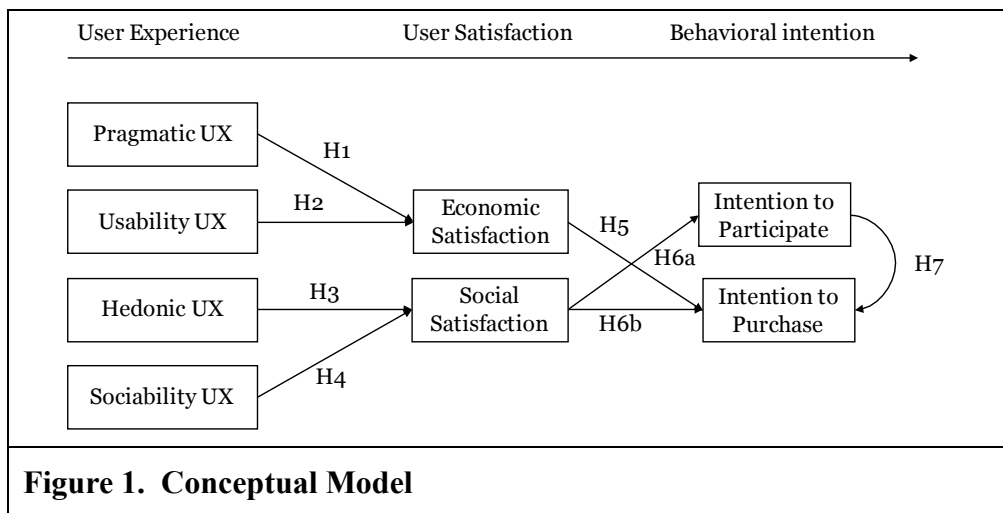
User satisfaction reflects the overall satisfaction with the usage processing experience in the online social shopping community (Deng et al. 2010). In order to improve users' participation and actual purchase behavior, we adopt Huang et al. (2015) dual-dimension measure of economic and social satisfaction. There are two reasons why we separate the concept of satisfaction in our context: 1. Online social shopping community comprises innate economic and social attributes; 2. There are different antecedents and outcomes of economic and social satisfaction. Economic satisfaction refers to the extent to which the users are satisfied with the cost of time and effort, economic value derived from related information or privileges provided by the online social shopping community (Dabholkar et al. 2009; Geyskens and Steenkamp 2000). Social satisfaction implies that a user is satisfied with the psychosocial aspects of his or her experience of the community (Geyskens and Steenkamp 2000; Huang et al. 2015). Specifically, a socially satisfied user thinks that the social space provided by the community is open, and the relationship between community members is friendly and pleasing (Dabholkar et al. 2009).

The creation of a superior experience for users on the shopping community system is pivotal to ensure user satisfaction with the community. Ha and Perks (2005) have found that consumers' experience has a significant influence on long-term successful business building on the web. A framework of user's or customer's experience-satisfaction-behavioral intention in the online shopping environment has been attested by literatures in retailing (Eroglu et al. 2005; Rose et al. 2012; Rose et al. 2011) and research in tourist management (Chen and Chen 2010).

The Four-Dimensional Principle of User Experience

{Kohler, 2011 #2023} have stated that customer experience has four components: pragmatic experience, sociability experience, usability experience and hedonic experience in virtual environment, especially in social or community IT-driven context. Since, online social shopping community is a place where users can acquire product-related knowledge and interact with other members, we suggest that it is necessary to adopt Nambisan and Nambisan (2008) four-dimension principle of customer experience to guide our dissection of the potential impacts of the distinct experience components on user satisfaction.

User experience in a social shopping community refers to the subjective, personal and holistic perception of the interactions users encounter. The pragmatic component refers to goal achievement in the community, such as: gaining reviews on specific products they are interested in; receiving advice and recommendations on products; and purchasing products they want (Kohler et al. 2011; Nambisan and Watt 2011). The usability dimension is defined as “the extent to which a system, product or service can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use”(ISO CD 9241-11, definition). The hedonic component reflects the intrinsic or affective value the users derive from the interactions in the online social shopping community, for instance enjoyment and excitement (Nambisan and Watt 2011). Finally, sociability user experience in the computer-mediated context refers to the perceived support an online system can provide, or experience from social interaction and membership in the online community (Kreijns et al. 2004). According to the principle of user experience, and the verified relationship between experience and satisfaction and behavioral intention, we build up our conceptual model (see Figure 1) . Note: UX represents User Experience.



Hypothesis Development

User Experience and User Satisfaction

The prior literature indicates that the compelling experiences users have in the shopping community are critical to create and improve their satisfaction (Chen and Chen 2010; Deng et al. 2010; Eroglu et al. 2005; Ha and Perks 2005). Pragmatic experience reflects “the pragmatic or utilitarian value a user experiences from the interactions in the community” (Nambisan and Watt 2011). Users with a high quality pragmatic experience usually perceive their experience in the social community as worthwhile, useful, and/or valuable (Mathwick et al. 2001). Thus, they tend to feel satisfied with the increase of economic outcomes or reduction of cost on time and effort. Hence, we hypothesise:

H1: Users who have high levels of pragmatic experience will develop more economic satisfaction in the community.

The ease of use, effectiveness, and efficiency of the technological features of the social shopping community are conducive to cost savings of time and effort while shopping. Users with high-level usability experience often think that they spend less time or effort on accomplishing a purchase or surfing in the community. Hence they would be more likely to feel satisfactory with the economic performance of the community. Thus, we hypothesise:

H2: Users who have high levels of usability experience will develop more economic satisfaction in the community.

The hedonic dimension reflects the enjoyment and excitement users are able to gain from their interactions or processing (Nambisan and Watt 2011). An excited or pleased user will be inclined to feel satisfied with their interactions in the community and relationships with the community members. On the contrary, frustrating, boring, or unappealing perceptions will cause dissatisfaction (Honeycutt 2005; Mummalaneni 2005). Hence, we hypothesise that:

H3: Users who have a high level of hedonic experience will acquire more social satisfaction in the community.

Members of an online social community who achieve positive social experience will have positive evaluations on the social interactions or social atmosphere in the community (Nambisan and Watt 2011; Preece 2000). Positive sociability experience implies that a user obtains the perceived support provided by the community, or experience with social interaction and membership in the online community (Kreijns et al. 2004). Thus, the user will be more likely to consider that the social space provided by the community is open and the relationship between community members is friendly and pleasing. Therefore, we hypothesise:

H4: Users who have a high level of sociability experience will develop more social satisfaction in the community.

User Satisfaction and Participation & Purchase Intentions

If a user is content with the economic value from product reviews, relevant experience stories, and rich forms of recommendations on products in the community (Kozinets 1999; Stephen and Toubia 2010; Ulrike Lechner 2002), he or she would be more likely to purchase in the community. Additionally, satisfaction with the time and effort savings also contribute to the purchase intention. Moreover, financial privileges provided by the social shopping community will immediately bring about purchase appetite. Hence, we hypothesise.

H5: Users who gain more economic satisfaction within the community will have a stronger intention to purchase products in the community.

A social satisfied user considers that the social space provided by the community is open and the relationship between community members is friendly and pleasing, thus he or she will show more trust and enthusiasm to participate in the community in depth. Particularly, he or she might post more contents or interact with others more actively. Hence, we hypothesise that.

H6a: Users who gain more social satisfaction within the community will have a stronger intention to participate in the community.

When a user is satisfied with the relationship between members and social atmosphere created in the community, he or she will be more willing to purchase products from familiar members who own a store in the community. If his/her friends with good relationship recommend some products, he or she will be more likely to purchase the products. Thus we hypothesise:

H6b: Users who gain more social satisfaction within the community will be more likely to form the intention to purchase products in the community.

Kilger and Romer (2007) have explored the evidence that consumers' participation has a positive relationship with their purchase likelihood in diverse media channels. A user who participates more in the community may be heavily involved in the community. Thereby, the generated trust and dependence in the community will contribute to his/her willingness to purchase products in the community. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H7: Users who participate more in the community will be more likely to form the intention to purchase products in the community.

Methodology

We intend to collect the data through an empirical survey of users in online social shopping communities in China. The items of four dimensions of UX (User Experience) are adapted from (Nambisan and Watt 2011), using a 7-point semantic differential scale with a question “*How do you feel about your overall experience during the recent usage of XX²?*”. Social and economic user satisfaction are assessed with a 7-point Likert scale adapted from Dabholkar et al. (2009), Sethi and King (1999) and Huang et al. (2015). A sample item for social user satisfaction is “*I am pleased with my communications with other members in XX².*”, while the item for economic user satisfaction is “*I am satisfied with the relevant information of high quality provided by XX².*” (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). The scale of user participation intention is adapted from Dabholkar et al. (2009), Zoogah (2010) and (Chen et al. 2014). Purchase intention is measured with the items adapted from Sia et al. (2009) and Dabholkar et al. (2009). We measure all the constructs at the level of the individual, and focus on their recent experience in their preferred online social shopping community.

Conclusions and Potential Implications

We attempt to shed light on the antecedents and consequences of users’ social and economic satisfaction in online social shopping communities from the perspective of user experience via an empirical survey. On the theoretical side, we combine Nambisan and Nambisan’s (2008) principle of user experience with the existing framework of user experience and satisfaction and behavioral intention. On the one hand, the findings could explain the internal mechanism of user experience and user satisfaction. On the other hand, the findings may enrich our knowledge of dual-dimension user satisfaction and their corresponding contributions to different levels of user involvement. In practice, the research findings may also provide suggestions for community designers on enhancing functional artifacts that manipulate the corresponding components of user experience to improve their economic and social satisfaction respectively. Moreover, the results may also guide community managers to improve users’ participation and purchase intentions efficiently through social and economic satisfaction enhancement.

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² XX is a social shopping community website/app you most often visit in your daily life.

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