The Impact of Social Network-Based Recommendation on Social Commerce Participation Intention

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1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Social commerce is an e-commerce model with social media as the vehicle, which has both social and e-commerce attributes[1]. Due to the virtual nature of social commerce, consumers can't have direct access to sellers and products. Consumers' decisions may be affected by uncertain factors, such as mismatch of products and description, information overload and cognitive pressure[2]. Thus, recommendation matters. Previous studies have confirmed that recommendations can offer valuable information that mostly fits users' need in order to decrease information overload[3]. In social commerce, users' social network has been embedded in[4], which allows consumers to obtain information and advice about products and services from other users and share their own shopping experiences and recommend within their social network. Although many studies have explored how recommendations influence consumers' purchasing intention on the view of recommendation information quality, research on the impact of social network-based recommendations on users' social commerce participating intention from a perspective of relationship is very limited.

Therefore, our research questions are proposed as follows: (1) What motivates consumers' intention to re-share the recommendation information they received, and what is the underlying mechanism involved? (2) How social network-based recommendation affects consumers' social commerce participating intention? What is the mechanism involved?

2. THEORY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on social support theory and S-O-R framework, this paper develops a model to explore how informational support and emotional support mediate the impact of social-network recommendation on consumers' participating intention in social commerce context (Figure 1).
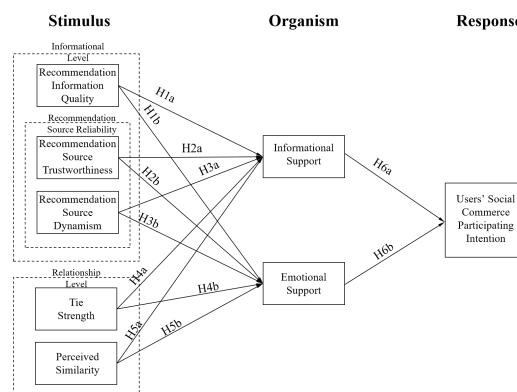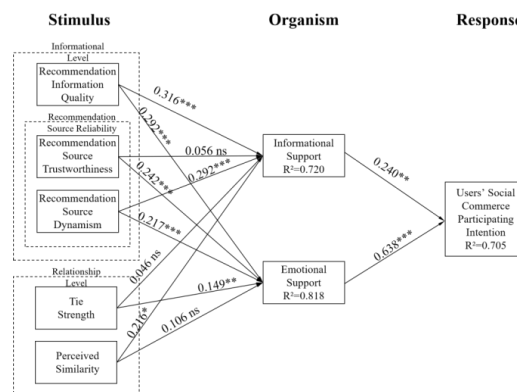

Figure 1. Research model

In this paper, we use questionnaire survey method to collect sample data. We collected 393 valid questionnaires were obtained. And we test our hypotheses by SPSS and AMOS.

3. RESULTS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

This study observed some valuable and interesting findings: (1) At the information level, recommendation information

quality and recommendation source dynamism have positive effects on informational support and emotional support. Recommendation source trustworthiness has a positive effect on emotional support, but has no significant effect on informational support. (2) Tie strength has no significant effect on informational support, but has a significant positive effect on emotional support. Perceived similarity has a significant positive effect on information support, but has no significant effect on emotional support. (3) Both informational and emotional support have significant positive effects on users' social commerce participating intention. (4) Informational support and emotional support significantly mediate the effect of tie strength, perceived similarity, recommendation information quality, recommendation source trustworthiness and recommendation source dynamism on social commerce participating intention, respectively.

Note(s): ns stands for not significant; ***p＜0.001，**p＜0.01，*p＜0.05

Figure 2. Results of research model

4. CONTRIBUTIONS

For research, first, this research integrated social support theory with S-O-R framework and apply the model to the context of social network-based recommendation, which broadens the research scope of social support theory. Social support, as organism, significantly mediate the effects of constructs of information and relationship level on users' social commerce participating intention. Second, this study takes the social attribute in the context of social commerce as the starting point and explore how factors of information and relationship level influence users' intention to participate in social commerce from the perspective of social network. Third, this paper fully takes users' different types of relationship on social commerce platforms into consideration, and investigates the impact of tie strength and perceived similarity on users' perceived social support. In practice, this study can offer suggestions to social e-commerce platform enterprises to stimulate users' participating intention and provide new ideas for social commerce users to evaluate the information and re-share it.

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