THE EFFECT OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTOR FOR USING SNSs ON TOURIST ATTITUDE

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Abstract
Purpose – This research examines the relationship between motivational factor in regards to writing comments and tourist attitude. Specifically, the study (a) explains the relationships between motivational factors and tourist recommendation intentions on SNSs, and (b) evaluates the factors influencing recommendation intentions on SNSs.
Design – To develop a useful marketing strategy in the Social Networking Site (SNS) environment in Korea tourism, it is important to identify the relationship between the motivational factors regarding the reasons for writing comments and tourist attitude to suggest effective tourism marketing on SNSs due to the growing interest in Korea tourism among Chinese students and tourists.
Methodology – The measurement items were adapted for an SNS setting from published studies related to the hospitality and tourism field. All of the measurement items were based on a 7-point Likert-type scale.
Finding – The results offer valuable suggestions to SNS firms and marketers with important insights into the quality of SNS contents for developing marketing strategies.
Originality – For further utilization as an effective bridging tool between SNS users, more detailed understanding of the developed approach for using SNSs is provided.
Keywords Motivational Factor, E-WOM (Electronic Word-Of-Mouth), SNS (Social Networking Site)

1. INTRODUCTION

The convenience of modern society has allowed information to be provided to consumers both unilaterally and bilaterally, enabling them to obtain the desired information on their own terms. This enables the exchange of information on social networking sites (SNSs) (Hong, 2004). According to the China Internet Network Information Center (2012), the users of the major Chinese SNS site, Weibo surpassed 250 million in June 2011, and the rate of growth increased 29.6% over 2010. Because Weibo features open information, popularization, dissemination, participation, and communicability, it is recognized as one of the best SNSs in China. Another SNS, RenRen users include students from 32,000 universities and 56,000 high schools in China and employees from 85,000 companies. RenRen offers various functions such as making new friends, finding people, and viewing requests from friends. RenRen users write about their daily lives and post their pictures on message boards. In addition, they share various resources on the site, including music and videos, and create platforms on which any information can be exchanged based on the availability of highly efficient features. As a communication tool,

QQ is widely disseminated in China and its message features the largest number of connections. Around 500 million users visit the site each day. Weixin also allows for the sharing of the latest information and offers easy information searches, which provides users with more information. Eventually, because SNSs in China have taken advantage of their own popularity, they have quickly influenced Chinese users' social lives. In this regards, the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) had made substantial efforts to cultivate its tourism support from Chinese students. Accordingly, reporters for KTO used "Korea Tourism Weibo" and "Sina Weibo" Chinese versions of Twitter and the largest channels of communication. This site allowed for the exchange of any information and comments related to Korea's tourism resources and to important tourism destinations after visiting without restrictions. This is expected to have both direct and indirect effects on tourism marketing. Based on their new experience and knowledge of living in Korea, Chinese students are serving as an important bridge between China's tourists and Korea's tourism industry.

Despite the increased SNS users in China, little research has investigated the relationship between motivational factor regarding the reasons for writing comments and tourist attitude in the hospitality and tourism settings. To develop a useful marketing strategy, it is important to examine the relationship between the motivational factor regarding the reasons for writing comments and tourist attitude to suggest effective tourism marketing on SNSs due to the growing interest in Korea tourism among Chinese students and tourist. This research therefore examines the relationship between motivational factor in regards to writing comments and tourist attitude. Specifically, the study (a) explains the relationships between motivational factors and tourist recommendation intentions on SNSs, and (b) evaluates the factors influencing recommendation intentions on SNSs. The results offer valuable suggestions to SNS firms and marketers with important insights into the quality of SNS contents for developing marketing strategies. For further utilization as an effective bridging tool between users on SNS, more detailed understanding of the developed approach for using SNSs is provided.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Motivational Factors

Information provided in the online space may create a positive image, maintain ongoing relationships with consumers, and be one of the most powerful motives underlying consumers' decision-making process (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). It is possible for users to obtain desired information through SNSs and to share other users' reviews easily and navigate through required information (Oh, 2010).

Because emotions influence purchase decision-making processes and behavior intentions for a firm's services, it can be defined as consumers' subjective beliefs (Park & Lee, 2006). Chatterjee and Datta (2011) targeted college students to create a virtual online shopping mall to examine the impact of online reviews and found that negative reviews had a significant impact on online trust and purchase intentions. On the other hand, Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) examined the motivation to express positive emotions and found that positive word-of-mouth (WOM) communication and other

information concerning the reliability of businesses shared by trusted people play a crucial role in consumers' decision-making process. Nadri et al., (2004) also considered emotion expressions, life history, opinion expressions, speculations, and group discussions as reasons for using blogs or personal homepages.

Lilia (2003) showed the existence of a variety of motivating factors in blogging. The study included a desire to maintain a record of one's daily life and personal information and manage one's information on a day-to-day basis. In addition, they described how people desire to share thoughts and feelings because of their curiosity and desire to interact with others. Kim (2008) compared the motivation and behavior of college students who blogged in Korea and China, and found that Chinese students used blogs mainly to record their daily lives, share expert knowledge, provide information, share daily habits, engage in daily conversations, foster community, and engage in self-reflection.

Self-expression is "communicated behavior as their own language to others regarding own information" or "others recognized as expose in terms of own to others" (Ahmann, 2007). As part of expressing oneself, people create their own chat rooms to share their thoughts, feelings, and information with others and enjoy their interaction with community members in the online environment (Gong, 2013).

Interactions involve the sharing of any information with friends by using online WOM tools. This raises the question of what interactions are. Interactions involve a communication process in which users have the equal status in the online space. Under an equal footing (status), users exchange messages and share information through mediated means with one another to create some meaning and repetitive cycles (Goh, 2012).

Group power refers to the exertion of the maximum ability in the shortest period (Kim, 2001) and is the ability to grab the mind of a person, not mandatory compensation, to achieve certain goals. Because group power is the ability to induce a goal-oriented behavior, it refers to tools or methods used to achieve any given objective (Lee, 2009). Group power is called authority (power) in social sciences and is the result of human interactions and the ability to influence group activities (Park, 2009). Eventually, people's motivations for engaging in communication has to do with the possibility of economic benefits, relationships with other consumers, and positive psychological effects (Brown et al., 2007)

2.2. e-WOM (Recommendation Intention)

Electronic WOM (e-WOM) communication involves consumers commenting on relevant information based on their personal experiences and knowledge related to consumption (Lee, 2004). This forms an effective source of information offering a wide range of information. It is also highly reliable and professional and facilitates easy dissemination (Kim & Hwang, 2007; Lee & Park, 2005). Thus, e-WOM influences the decision-making process and people's information searches and diffusion (Bayus, 1985; Assael, 1984). The motivations behind WOM activities on the Internet have been shown

to be distinct based on the quest for psychological stability, positive WOM, favorable relationships, and utilitarian information-seeking behaviors (Baik, 2005).

According to Kim et al. (2006), consumers spontaneously engage in e-WOM communication to share their experiences and knowledge through the Internet. Online users can obtain e-WOM information from unrelated others or strangers on the Internet. Therefore, if any recipients of e-WOM information have interesting information to acquire, e-WOM can serve as a source of a wide range of information and play an important role (Kim, 2008).

The effectiveness of e-WOM varies according to the characteristics of the sender providing the specific information. This means the sender may have some popularity, relationship, friendship, attraction, and expertise when the recipient obtains information from the sender (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1995). Therefore, when the sender has characteristics associated with his or her popularity, relationship, friendship, attraction, and expertise, e-WOM affects his or her decision-making process. In particular, any information based on reliability from a relationship on the Internet strengthens the effectiveness of e-WOM. E-WOM affects mainly acceptance and confidence (Kim et al., 2011; Lee & Park, 2005; Lim & Lee, 2007).

Vivid community interactions and control of users have considerable influence on the effectiveness of e-WOM (Lee & Lee, 2005). Because consumers recognize that negative and objective postscripts are more useful forms of information than typical online WOM communication, these have positive effects on purchase intentions, e-WOM intentions, personal decision-making processes for product attitudes (Lee & Park, 2005; Baik, 2005; Sohn & Rhee, 2007; Shim, 2007), and recommendation intentions (Suh et al., 2009; Sung et al., 2012).

3. METHODOLOGY

The measurement items were adapted for an SNS setting from published studies related to the hospitality and tourism field (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2004; Schau & Gilly, 2003; Schlosser, 2003; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004) to examine Chinese students attending universities in Korea after visiting major tourist attractions in Korea. All of the measurement items were based on a 7-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

The study investigates the relationships between motives for postscripts and recommendation intentions on SNSs to evaluate the factors influencing these intentions in the SNS context. The targeted students, who were attending eight universities in Korea's southern region (Kyungbook National University, Yeungnam University, and Daegu University) and capital area (Ewha Woman's University, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Konkok University, and Kyunghee University). Finally, 315 subjects were used to examine for the study analysis.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of a comparison of the respondents' behaviors. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (63.5%) had used SNSs for more than five years, and about a fourth (23.8%) for between one and three years. Nearly a third (34.9%) used SNSs between three and six hours a day, and about a fifth (21.0%), between six and nine hours. The number of friends on SNSs ranged from 101 to 300: 101-200 (27.9%) and 201-300 (20.3%). Less than a fifth (17.5%) had more than 500 friends. A majority of the respondents used smartphones (38.6%) and laptops (32.2%), and about half used QQ (50.1%), followed by Weibo (30.1%), Weixin (18.7%), and RenRen (0.9%).

Table 1: **SNS use behaviors of the respondents (n = 315)**

Variable	Frequency	%
Period of SNS use		
Less than 6 months	3	1.0
Between 6 to 12 months	3	1.0
Between 1 to 3 years	34	10.8
Between 3 to 5 years	75	23.8
5 years and more	200	63.5
Duration of SNS use (per day)		
Less than 3 hours	52	16.5
Between 3 to 6 hours	110	34.9
Between 6 to 9 hours	66	21.0
Between 9 to 12 hours	58	18.4
Between 12 to 15 hours	12	3.8
15 hours and more	17	5.4
Number of SNS friends		
Under 100	53	16.8
101 - 200	88	27.9
201 - 300	64	20.3
301 – 400	27	8.6
401 – 500	28	8.9
500 and above	55	17.5
SNS tools (multiple responses)		
Desktop computer	110	17.7
Laptop computer	200	32.2
Smartphone	240	38.6
Tablet	72	11.6
Frequently used SNSs		
QQ	158	50.1
Weibo	95	30.1
Weixin	59	18.7
RenRen	3	0.9

As shown in Table 2, more than a third (37.8%) selected Seoul City, and about a fifth (22.2%), Gyeongju and Gyeongbuk. Only a tenth (11.1%) indicated that their choice of tourist attractions was an informed one, followed by Jeju Island (8.9%), Daegu (7.0%), Gangwon (5.1%), and Incheon and Gyeonggi (4.8%). This suggests that Seoul City and Gyeongju may be well-known tourist attractions for Chinese tourist.

Table2: **Comments (Review) for tourist attractions on SNSs (n = 315)**

Variable	Frequency	%
Region		
Seoul	119	37.8
Busan	35	11.1
Daegu	22	7.0
Incheon / Gyeonggi	15	4.8
Jeju Island	28	8.9
Gangwon	16	5.1
Gyeongju / Gyeongbuk	70	22.2
Other	10	3.2

Regression analysis was conducted with the seven factors in terms of motivational factors for postscripts as predictor variables and recommendation intentions as the outcome variable. The results show that five factors were significantly correlated with these intentions (excluding "the alleviation of negative emotion," and "self-expression"): "information offerings," "record storage," "social interactivity," "the expression of positive emotions," and "group power." The coefficient of determination (R^2) of .347 indicates that 34.7% of the total variance in recommendation intentions was explained by the seven factors. The t-values of all independent variables were less than .001, verifying that the regression model was significant. The positive regression coefficients (β) illustrate that the seven factors had positive effects on recommendation intentions.

Table 3: **Regression analysis of motivational factors and recommendations**

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.478	.402		8.661	.000
Information offering	.087	.063	.245	3.287	.000
Expression of positive emotions	.103	.062	.110	1.663	.002
Mitigation of negative emotions	-.034	.043	-.090	-1.298	.195
Record storage	.011	.075	.163	2.411	.017
Self-expression	.143	.059	.010	.148	.882
Social interactivity	.238	.072	.088	1.384	.000
Group power	.086	.067	.147	1.790	.000

Notes: (1) F = 7.565, R^2 = .347, Adjusted R^2 = .328, p=.000

5. CONCLUSIONS

The students were found to be motivated by seven factors: information offering, expression of positive emotions, mitigation of negative emotions, record storage, self-expression, social interactivity, and group power.

The motivation for writing postscripts on SNSs after visiting a tourist attraction had a significant effect on recommendation intentions. The results provide support for all factors, except for the motivation to self-express and express negative emotions, indicating that all motivational factors except for these two had significant effects on recommendation intentions. The motivation to offer information had a significant effect on recommendation intentions. The results indicate significant correlations between various factors and recommendation intentions. In addition, the results highlight the significant effects of the motivation to write postscripts and reviews on recommendation intentions.

The data were collected from only a few regions in South Korea. The limited sample size and geographical scope make generalizability difficult. A larger sample size and a variety of regions and countries may provide better generalization. Therefore, more specific and expanded targeting data will be required in future study to ensure that the results can be generalized. Further studies also should examine external variables, such as demographics and a moderator variable. More studies should be conducted to further develop the motivational factors in the hospitality and tourism industry.

6. DISCUSSIONS

These results are demanded to provide as principle information for developing more effective strategies.

The motivation to offer information had a significant effect mainly on recommendation intentions. In addition, the motivation to store records had a significant effect on recommendation intentions.

If student tourists receive high-quality services from accommodation and service providers at tourist attractions, they are likely to leave postscripts for those attractions on SNSs because of their satisfaction to recommend these attractions to others , reflecting social interactivity and group power. In this regard, price discounts and special events may enhance the effectiveness of e-WOM communication in a consistent manner.

Because preferences as the motivation for self-expression vary across age groups in terms of both traditional and new cultural experiences, such as the Korean wave, traditional products should be developed continuously to encourage positive postscripts for each age group. In addition, the Chinese language should be offered at tourist destinations to help Chinese tourists better understand the local culture and motivate potential Chinese tourists to Korea. The results revealed several issues that are important for tourism administration in Korea and SNS companies eager to explore the effectiveness of SNSs as a strategic marketing tool for developing tourism nowadays

because SNSs are considered important social and business communication methods for individuals and companies.

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