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THE EFFECT OF CONTENT MARKETING ON REPURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY OF ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to empirically investigate how content marketing on social media affects repurchase intention in the tourism industry. Content marketing is a strategy that is used to attract a specific audience by curating, distributing, creating, and amplifying interesting and relevant content. Despite its widespread use, it remains a relatively new concept in the social science domain. Little is known regarding how content marketing on social media influences repurchase intention in the tourism industry. However, to the best of our knowledge, few studies provide a comprehensive theoretical understanding of content marketing. Based on the empirical results of this study, the significant factors were evaluated, and reliable results were provided for each factor. The result of this study indicates that the customer engagement has a significant effect on repurchase intention.

Keywords: Content marketing, customer engagement, brand trust, loyalty, tourism, repurchase intention, purchase frequency

Introduction

In the background of the emergence of social media and the Internet's convenience, A number of firms have used content marketing as a marketing strategy to attract consumers attention. This study focuses on the powerful generational cohorts of young consumers (also known as Millennials and Gen Z) in Taiwan. The Millennials, also called "Gen Y, they were defined as those who born between 1980s and 1990s (Berkup, 2014). Generation Y is well investigated, informed, loyal, and their peers are strongly influenced.

Generation Y wants to connect with the brands which they purchased, so that the firms need to create real, unique, inspire joy and make customer recognition the brand (Bravo et al., 2019). Generation Z is defined as those who born between 199os and 2000s (Kitchen & Proctor, 2015). Moreover, Duffett (2017) indicated that young people are the heavy social media users, and in the modern era social media has become an essential part of life, especially among Gen Z. In the future, as millennial and Gen Z customers will represent a growing proportion of travellers and tourists, it is important to

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managers of tourism to understand them well and build strategies to engage them (Ek Styvén & Foster, 2018). To address this gap, this study will explore both these two generational cohorts to understand the extent to which content marketing influences repurchase intention.

According to International Communications Union, ITU, (2020), Virtually all young people use the Internet in developing countries, while Asia and the Pacific have the highest youth-to-overall ratio. Mamaghaini (2009) indicated that consumers increasingly rely on the usage of Internet to collect travel-related information. Customers could be engaged in new ways by the brand and the media, particularly through social media platforms (Delbaere et al., 2020). That is to say, social media is also a strong instrument for customer engagement (Kotler et al., 2017, p.89). Furthermore, social media helps the firms of tourism industry to connect with prospective customers online and increase the reach of brands online (Asperen et al., 2017). "Over the decades, tourism has undergone constant growth and deepening diversification to become one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors". (UNWTO, 2020). In recent years online travel services, particularly online travel agencies (OTAs), have attracted the attention of scholars, and various relevant studies have been carried out around the globe (Talwar et al., 2020).

Research Questions

Little literature has been done on digital content marketing (DCM) in travel and tourism domain (Mathew & Soliman, 2020). "Despite the customer engagement is commonly measured in the marketing research, there has been limited academic attention to it as a stand-alone construct" (Van Doorn et al., 2010, p.254). In the field of tourism, purchase intention is an important aspect of consumer behavior. In the past, many studies were focused on purchase intention (Lien et al., 2015; Talwar et al., 2020). Furthermore, the frequency of repeat purchase is one of the critical factors for describing transactions (Yu & Chen, 2018). Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that brand loyalty and consumer engagement also influence consumers' purchase decisions (Ansari et al., 2019). However, "little is known about the role of consumer engagement in the concept of brand loyalty and how it interacts with established determiners of loyalty" (So et al., 2014, p.65).

To sum up, this study was conducted using customer engagement as a variable to measure content marketing, and to explore how customer engagement affects brand trust, brand loyalty and repurchase intention among generation Z in the tourism industry. This study can provide appropriate input to other service industries on the role of customer engagement.

Literature Review

Content Marketing

Content marketing is seen as a marketing campaign strategy that involving the distribution and creation of media content by its brand (Bouchra & Hasnaa, 2020). In addition, it is also relevant to social media marketing due to the created content needs to be propagated, syndicated and shared on different social platforms to increase

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the visibility to the target audience (Vinerean, 2017). In 2004, the concept of digital content marketing was mentioned, digital content and products are thought of as a bit-based objects that are shared through electronic channels (Koiso- Kanttila, 2004). As explained above, the content of digital is delivered via an electronic channel, most commonly the internet. To deliver products to customers, there are two interconnected dimensions: supply chain and consumer experience of the supply chain (Rowley, 2008). Thus, digital content marketing is recognized as a crucial marketing relationship tool, it is also described as the managed process in charge of detecting, predicting, satisfying and profiting from consumer needs through relevant digital content (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). The content does not limit to text and images. Different type of contents can attract diverse types of people and serve varying purposes (Odden, 2012). Content marketing strategies are widely used by B2C businesses in social media networks, website posts, blogs, and vlogs (Ansari et al., 2019).

Customer Engagement

Refer to Oxford Dictionary (1996), there has several different meanings to the verb of ''engage''. However, there is no clarity about how to define engagement (Rather et al., 2019). Although marketing has been interested in the concept of engagement for several years, it is only recently that it has appeared in the literature (Bouchra & Hasnaa, 2020).

Customer engagement, referring to the customer's interactive brand experience, is rapidly becoming more important in the tourism literature (Rather et al., 2019). It has become a significant marketing concept, with a strong behavioral influence (So et al., 2014). Furthermore, customer engagement is regarded as a set of behavioral responses combined with an emotional context. Several authors argued that that customer engagement has many dimensions construct (Vivek et al., 2012; Chahal & Rani, 2017). "The cognitive dimension of consumer interaction with an object in the social media sense relates to the customer's overall mental activity against this object, while the affective (emotional) dimension includes excitement and pleasure, and the behavioral dimension includes the customer's active appearances, such as sharing and other behaviors" (Touni et al., 2019, p.281).

Content Marketing and Customer Engagement

Lei et al. (2020) indicated that type of media and content affect customer engagement level on social network sites. Similarly, the previous studies have shown that content analysis or surveys advocate the positive role of social media- based content marketing in consumer engagement (Lou & Xie, 2020, p.2). Although marketers have multiple different options in implementing digital content marketing, the marketers often turn to social media influences to build brand engagement (Torres et al., 2019; Delbaere et al., 2020). However, "The concept of engagement during the digital content marketing experience embodies few specific factors that can lead to customer brand engagement. As a result, a deeper knowledge of the possible antecedents of this brand engagement caused by digital content

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marketing is needed" (Taiminen & Ranaweera, 2017, p.1762).

Brand Trust

Brand trust is defined that the intention to rely on the brand (Luk & Yip, 2008). The goal of trust is to reduce confusion and knowledge asymmetry, as well as to make consumers feel at ease with a company's brand (Laroche et al., 2012). Similarly, brand trust is illustrated as consumer confidence in the reliability and integrity of a brand (Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015). That is to say, "the trust that consumers place in a brand is based on their positive beliefs about the organization's behavior and the expectations of the performance of the product that the brand represents." (Ashley & Leonard, 2009, p213).

However, brand trust plays a significant role in reducing uncertainty when customers are in an uncertain environment, and they are skeptical about services online (Ha, 2016). Hong and Cha (2013) indicated that trust has a major impact in helping consumers overcome the perceptions of risk and insecurity.

Customer engagement and Brand Trust

Recent research reports that brand engagement is critical to building brand confidence, and that trust is a result of engagement (Khan et al., 2019). Compare to low engaged consumers, Consumers who are highly engaged develop positive attitudes and trusting beliefs about the brand more immediately. Which means that highly engaged consumers are more likely to trust brands than less engaged consum-

ers (Liu et al., 2018). In summary, higher engagement is expected to lead to increased relationship confidence. (So et al., 2014). Thus, we proposed that:

H1a: Cognitive Engagement has a positive impact on Brand Trust.

H1b: Emotional Engagement has a positive impact on Brand Trust.

H1c: Behavioral Engagement has a positive impact on Brand Trust.

Brand Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as a behavioral expression including attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Harris & Goode, 2004). Brand loyalty symbolizes the deep commitment of customers to keep repurchasing the preferred brand (Oliver 1999). Although brand loyalty is not a new concept in the tourism industry, in recent years, it has attracted the attention of many researchers again (Ha, 2016). According to Cetin (2020), creating customer loyalty has become the main source of competitive advantage. Loyalty is often conceptualized as the intention to purchase a branded product and to encourage others to purchase that brand (Pongpaew et al., 2017).

Effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

Recent studies have found that brand trust represents one of the most critical priors of customer loyalty and repurchase intention (Anaya-Sánchez et al., 2020). Customers who trust a product provider are more likely to remain loyal to the product provider (Chinomona & Sandada, 2013). The following hypotheses is thus proposed:

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H2: brand trust is positive on brand loyalty.

Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention, is the intention to purchase a product twice or more. Likewise, the intention of consumer to repurchase a product in the form of goods or services for which they have already experienced the benefits and quality is known as repurchase intention (Chinomona & Sandada, 2013). Therefore, Liu et al., (2016) proposed that repurchasing can be seen as a continuance behavior. Moreover, Lin and Lekhawipat (2014) found that online satisfactory shopping experience can increase repurchase intention.

Effect of Brand loyalty on repurchase intention

"The definition of brand loyalty is a preference for a purchased brand psychologically, including positive emotions and a lasting emotional association with the purchased brand" (Liu al., 2016, p1089). Oliver (1999) indicated that the definition of brand loyalty is a repeatedly purchasing frequency or continuing purchasing of the same brand. That is, customers who are extremely loyal to a brand are those who purchase it on a regular basis (Ercis¸ et al., 2012). According to Chinomona and Sandada (2013), the repurchase intention depends on the evaluation of customer of the previous purchase transaction. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: brand loyalty is positively associated with repurchase intention.

Methodology

This study is adapted for a quantitative research and the data were collected through survey methods. This study surveyed 284 young consumers in Taiwan. The questionnaire was designed to measure the constructs in the model using accepted scales. The following three steps were involved in the development of measures: literature review, the preliminary questionnaire and pilot study were translated from English to Chinese. To perform statistical analysis, SPSS 26 and AMOS 24 were used. The analysis was done by EFA, CFA, reliability and correlation technique and SEM analysis applied to measure the impact of content marketing in social media on customers repurchase intention.

The reliability and validity of scales was calculated in quantitative scale evaluation. To do this a pilot a pilot study must be conducted in order to collect a sufficient enough sample of responses to use in measuring internal accuracy reliability or discriminant validity (Hair Jr et al., 2015). The pilot test was used a quantitative online survey to conduct with 20 university students to assess whether the items were easily understood, clearly worded, and unambiguous. The result indicated that the content of the questionnaire was comprehensible and easy to understand. The items in this study were based on prior research. A five-point Likert scale was used for the measurement items. In line with literature analysis, customer engagement is divided into three facets: cognitive (CECOG), emotional (EMO) and behavioral (BEV). Cognitive engagement: Cognitive engagement were used to measure CE and adapted from Vivek et al. (2012). Emotional was measured with four items reported in Khan et al. (2019).

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Behavioral engagement: Behavioral was measured with three items reported in Khan et al. (2019). Brand Trust was measured with four items reported in Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). The scale for brand loyalty was adopted from Casaló et al. (2008) and Liu et al. (2016), which was includes five items asking about brand loyalty. The scale for repurchase intention was adopted from Liu et al. (2016).

Data Analysis and Results

The sample size of this study is 284 participants. To accomplish the process of data collection, the survey was conducted from Mar 07th to Mar 31st, 2021. Of the 284 respondents, 42.3% (284) were male, 57.7% (284) were female. The respondents" age groups were age less than 20 years old (0.7%, 2), 21-25 years old (57.4%, 163), 26-30 years old (28.8%, 81), 31-35 years old (11.6%, 33), 36- 40 years old (1.4%, 4), and more than 41 years old (0.4%, 1). Their job titles: (For education, the results showed that 1.8% (5) were high school graduates, 66.2% (188) had a bachelor's degree, and 32% (91) had a master's degree in master. For the average time on social media use, of the 284 respondents, 5.3% (15) were under an hour, an hour - 2 hours 20.4% (58), 2 hours - 3 hours 20.1% (57), 3 hours - 4 hours 14.8% (42), 4 hours - 5 hours 15.1% (43), and more than 5 hours were 24.3% (69).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The presence of common method (CMV), the Harman's single-factor test was used to investigate the severity (Hair, 1998). The first factor of the total variance was shown to explain only 26.537% of the total variance (less than 50%). Thus, the majority of co-variance was not accounted by any single factor. This indicates that the CMV did not significantly affect the findings. The data are first subjected to the sampling adequacy index of the Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin measurement scale, which was 0.828, the results was over acceptable limit of 0.8 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). The approximate chi-squared value of Bartlett's Test of Sphercity is 3086.309 with a degree of freedom of 276 (p=0.000). That is, these statistics are adapted for factor analysis. Convergent validity is a subtype of construct validity that means a particular construct is actually measuring that construct. The results of the factor loadings via EFA confirm convergent validity as the sample size in the survey is 284, and the range of factor loading was from 0.413 to 0.95. The six factors extracted from the EFA were named as: Cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, Behavioral engagement, brand trust, brand loyalty, repurchase intention. A total of 65.088% of the variance was explained by these factors. The scale items loaded onto separate factors as indicated by the original sub-scales. The loadings onto each factor ranged as follows: cognitive engagement (0.537-0.785), emotional engagement (0.516-0.767), behavioral engagement (0.562-0.915), brand trust (0.428- 0.807), brand loyalty (0.413- 0.730), and repurchase intention (0.547- 0.994).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Principal components with varimax rotation were used in CFA, with eigenvalues greater than 1 as the criterion for factor extraction. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of the MSA was 0.812, which exceeds the

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satisfactory limit of 0.8 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). The Barlett''s Test of Sphericity reported an estimated Chi-Square value of 2869.831 with 231 degrees of freedom (p=0.000). From the Rotated Matrix Component Table produced, the results of the CFA were as expected with a loading of the measurement scales with 6 dimensions.

The loadings onto each factor ranged as follows: cognitive engagement (0.746- 0.784), emotional engagement (0.759- 0.823), behavioral engagement (0.747- 0.88), brand trust (0.729- 0.817), brand loyalty (0.729- 0.795), and repurchase intention (0.767- 0.808). Each variable load significantly only on one factor and showing good discriminant and convergent validities, the factor loadings were between the range of 0.729 to 0.887. The six factors extracted were labelled as: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, behavioral engagement, brand trust, brand loyalty, repurchase intention. The six factors explained a total of 70.982 percent of the variance.

Reliability and validity

In this study, the values of Cronbach's α for each of factors were in the range of 0.738 to 0.845. All of the value of Cronbach's α were greater than 0.7 (Hair Jr. et al., 2016). The result shows that the reliability and validity of final measurement items for each scale, which reports that the AVE value for all constructs exceeds 0.5 (Hair Jr. et al., 2016) while the Composite reliabilities (CR) value were all above 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the convergent validities of the measures have been confirmed. These six factors identified are: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, be-

havioral engagement, brand trust, brand loyalty, repurchase intention.

Correlations

After the verification of the measuring construct validity, the average of items connecting to factors extracted are used to form the variables for the remaining statistical analysis. The six identified factors are concept of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, behavioral engagement, brand trust, brand loyalty, repurchase intention (RP). The results indicate that cognitive engagement and behavioral engagement were significantly correlated with brand trust (r = .357, p < 0.01; r = .355, p < 0.01, separately). Brand trust was significantly correlated with brand loyalty (r =.526, p < 0.01). Then, brand loyalty was also significantly correlated with repurchase intention (r= .366, p < 0.01, respectively). Most of the hypotheses in the testing model are supported by correlation findings.

Model Fit

The results presented the model of the hypotheses was established an acceptable fit. The chi-square/degree of freedom ratio was 2.061 which is within the recommended level of 2.00 to 3.00, indicating for a reasonable fit (Holmes- Smith 2001). The chi-square goodness of fit is considered to be noteworthy ($\chi 2$ = 333.867, df = 162, p = 0.000), goodness-of-fit index indicates the model did fit the data very well: the (GFI) = 0.896, (AGFI) = 0.866, (RMR) = 0.026, (CFI) = 0.896, (NFI) = 0.875, (IFI) = 0.932, and the (RMSEA) = 0.061. Overall, the fitting statistics show that the model of this study fits the data well. The result of

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parameter estimates of the final SEM model for the measurement indicated that all 6 hypotheses proposed in this study in general seem were supported by the findings.

Conclusions

This study offers an empirical implication for the management in the travel industry. This study provides supplementary support for the validity of the causal relationship posited in the hypotheses in the tourism industry. From the results of the data review in previous chapter, the effect of content marketing on brand trust was measured by customer engagement. The dimensions of customer engagement are divided into three dimensions: the first is cognitive, then, emotional and behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement and behavioral engagement are both associated with brand trust. However, emotional engagement is only marginally related to brand trust. Therefore, the result of this study does not support the effect of the emotional engagement on brand trust. This is not in complete agreement with (Khan et al., 2019). To sum up, Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1c are valid, but there was no support for H1b.

For future studies, this study focuses on the association between the customer engagement and social media content marketing, which only explored online marketing activities. Furthermore, this study suggests that future studies can explore the part of content marketing that includes offline marketing activities for a more comprehensive study. Therefore, future researchers can conduct with other variables as the measure of content marketing and explore offline marketing ac-

tivities for a more comprehensive study.

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