

A Theoretical Model of Impulsive Buying Behaviour in Tourism Social Commerce

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Abstract

Lately, tourism increasingly investigates for travellers' deals in social commerce. When consumers make purchasing decisions in social commerce, they often act impulsively because social commerce is a deal-of-the-day website. However, the prior researches on the social commerce only is concerned about consumer behaviour on rational buying rather than impulse buying. Travellers' impulse buying put a different aspect on consumer behaviour when it compares with rationally planned shopping behaviour. It is affect much by emotion. Hence, this study proposes new conceptual model for psychologically emotional aspect for travellers' decision making in tourism social commerce. A theoretical model of impulsive buying behaviour in social commerce is discussed. Theoretical and practical implications are suggested.

Keywords: Tourism Social Commerce; Urge to Buy impulsively; Impulsive Buy Behaviour; Scarcity Message; Conceptual Model

1 Introduction

Social commerce has been a crucial and recurrent theme in e-commerce and after the appearance of Groupon in 2008. Prior studies in this theme have concerned mainly about consumer behaviour on rational thinking (Hajli, 2013). Despite those of research, the social commerce still remain scant. One theoretical insight that we are looking for is comprehension of unreasonable behaviour caused by the impulsive buying decision. When consumers make purchasing decisions in social commerce, they often act impulsively because social commerce is a deal-of-the-day website that features discounted gift certificates (Lee & Kim, 2012). Since impulsive buying can be irrational purchasing behaviour, it would be perceived with negative image to many potential consumers. On the other hand, impulsive buying can be seen positively in a sense that it offers emotional fulfilment such as joy while planned and rational buying process can rather be seen as a duty (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Unlike the customers in the past, consumers nowadays tends to pursue hedonic style of shopping through impulsive buying experience which can be easily seen in social commerce purchasing behaviour. It has been proven that many of the consumers who has impulsive buying style purchase a product not because they need this product but to have the pleasure that comes from the action of buying. Planned buying and impulsive buying differs since later is affected by emotion from rather than

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reasonable thinking. Therefore, existing studies that are based on rational thinking purchasing process is not suitable to explain the impulsive buying behaviours. To understand impulsive buying behaviour, studies based on both psychological and emotional patterns on impulsive buyers are necessary to be investigated. Hence, we will focus on the emotional aspect of the consumers (i.e., travellers).

We will study on product in the context of tourism. At social commerce variety of tourism products exists, such as restaurants, hotels, performances, and travel. Tourism products are more appropriate subject on study of scarcity message in social commerce, since they are usually timely sensitive and small units in every deal and under a limitation of time, purchaser of tourism products in social commerce seems to be more pressured. Thus, objectives of this study are following. First, we will investigate the elements including scarcity message that affect the tourism product buyers' emotion in social commerce environment. Second, then, we will develop a conceptual model, which provides to visualize the effects that social commerce environment in tourism has on impulsive buying behaviour. This research provides not only theoretical understanding on tourism product buyers' behaviour but also discuss practical insights to the marketing managers.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Impulsive Buying Behaviour

Reasonable buying and impulsive buying differs in a point that reasonable buying normally requires complex process when impulsive buying is rather a simple decision made from being exposed to emotional stimulation. Therefore, in impulsive buying, one does not consider other alternative options or information search phase (Rook & Hoch, 1985). Early studies on impulsive buying cognize unplanned purchase as an equivalent concept. An example can be a study of impulsive studying done by Stern (1962) which regarded impulsive buying concept equal to unplanned purchase.

Nonetheless, later studies does not recognize unplanned buying as a same concept to impulsive buying. Weinberg & Gottwald (1982) mentioned that impulsive buying is in fact an unplanned behaviour but that does not mean unplanned buying is always impulsive. Further they asserted that impulsive buying is an action that is decided by consumers' emotional side, cognitive side, and instinctive side. Impulsive buy behaviour goes through urge to buy process and impulsive buy behaviour process. Impulse behaviour take place after experiencing an urge and when thoughts on the purchase is not thoroughly done. To clarify, impulse purchase behaviour happens after buyers experience urge to buy impulsively (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998).

Urge to buy impulsively is a type of spontaneous emotion. This means, when buying a product one will not think thoroughly about the need of the product. Rather, it will result in immediate purchase to satisfy the buying duty which naturally leads to impulse purchase behaviour (Verhagen & Van Dolen, 2011). These spontaneous emotions will hinder the customers to plan constructively on alternatives and attract people to impulse purchasing behaviour (Lee et al, 2009). First of all, looking at the previous studies on shopping environment it is said that there are factors that accelerate the purchasing behaviour in Internet. For example, they are easy to access,

variety of products, and promotion (Koski, 2004). As online sites are easy to use, provide various products, and offers lower price there is higher possibility for impulsive buying. Nonetheless, according to Weinberg & Gottwald (1982), consumers' emotion plays a vital role in impulsive buying behaviour. Verhagen & Van Dolen (2011) investigated how convenience and representational delight go through urge to buy impulsively eventually leads to impulsive buy. In addition, Parboteeah et al. (2009) studied on how website characteristics influence consumers' urge to buy impulsively

2.2 Social Commerce and Scarcity Message

Social commerce is an online business system based on social networking service. Ever since the appearance of Groupon in 2008 at the U. S, market has been expanding globally. There are a few social commerce elements mentioned in wikipedia to keep in mind while utilizing persuasive social commerce effectively. There are some studies on other elements except scarcity message, especially social features (Stephen & Toubia, 2010). But, study that is done on scarcity message is hard to be found.

Scarcity message is a method to accelerate the buying process by alarming consumers that there are limited possibility of buying a specific product (Lynn, 1989). This notice will increase psychological pressure of the buyer which can promote the purchase. Analysing previous studies that are done on scarcity message, it can largely be distinguished into limited quantity and limited time. Limited quantity is to limit the number of the products that can be bought, and limited time is to limit the time products can be bought. So, Scarcity message is a method of expressing messages to customers by limiting the products quantity and time which will increase the value and attractiveness of certain product or service (Cialdini, 1985).

Unlike other product in social commerce, tourism items are limited in production. That is because a space where service of tourism items can be provided is limited (i.e., hotel room). Therefore, there are limited varieties of products in small quantity. When products are provided in small quantity, sensitivity on limited quantity is inevitable. Since tourism products are provided in small quantity to start with, consumers easily recognize the scarcity of the quantity which leads to impulsive buying behaviour. In addition, tourism products cannot be opaque. Therefore it has to be sold by the designated time or before. Due to its perishability, consumers (i.e., travellers) feel pressure to buy for the limited product due to feel scarcity. This study will give us an understanding how the scarcity by limiting the quantity and time can affect customers' impulsive buying behaviour. Therefore, recognized scarcity message was measured as impulsive buying behaviour's external cognition elements.

3 Conceptual Model of Impulsive Buying Behaviour

Attitude of consumer toward buying is formed generally as following steps: 'cognition → emotions (affect) → behaviour'. Therefore, this study suggests a conceptual model on how cognition affects emotion and how emotion affects the behaviour. Based on study of Hong and Tam (2006), this study separates cognition into two types of perception. One is general perception that consists of technology acceptance model (TAM)'s variables. Second, there is a specific perception that can

be shown distinctively in social commerce environment. From Davis et al. (1992), this study borrows two variables, perceived ease of use and perceived enjoyment. First of all, perceived ease of use at social commerce's site has great importance to users. Since, ease of use creates positive emotion to the customers (Verhagen & Van Dolen, 2011). Positive assessment is made on perceived ease of use it will lead an affirmative effect on positive emotion like urge to buy. Perceived enjoyment can also be seen as an important factors to the users. Many people actually utilize online shopping to feel pleasure. In addition, under specific perception that social commerce provides, there are perceived discounted price (Gupta & Kim, 2009). Business operator for online shopping sites uses the discounted price as a strategy to accelerate purchase (Lepkowska, 2004). Therefore, due to the sensitivity that consumers have, discounted price can bring huge positive effect.

This study newly adds scarcity message to the specific perception. Scarcity is when consumers recognize the scarcity value of a product or service due to its limitation it carries (Lynn, 1989). Prior studies have shown that purchase limitations are used as informational cues by consumer (Aggarwal et al., 2011). Two types of scarcity messages are generally used by practice: limited time (e.g., "Sales ends today") and limited quantity (e.g., "Only 50 units available at this price"). This cause the rise in impulsive emotion toward certain product or service accelerating the purchasing decision (Aggarwal et al., 2011). Many social commerce sites such as Groupon is already using scarcity message to increase impulsive buying behaviour. When consumers are using social commerce, they do not have sufficient time to search for alternatives due to the pressure they receive from time and quantity limitation. As a result, consumers easily feel urges to buy impulsively which enables impulsive behaviour to occur. Therefore, this study suggest conceptual model such as Figure. 1.

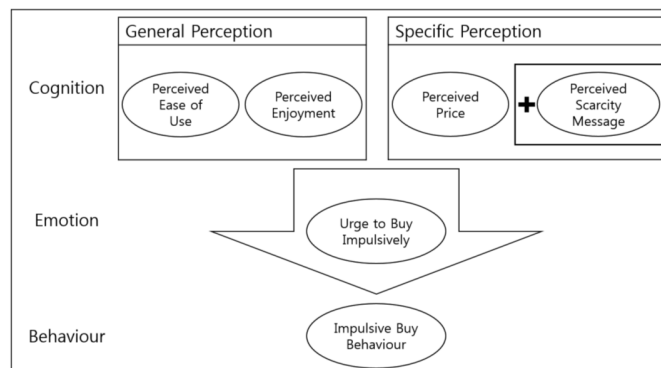


Figure. 1 Tourism Social Commerce Conceptual Model

4 Concluding remark

Recently, social commerce in mobile market is rapidly expanding to diverse industries. Due the expansion the mobile market, sales in social commerce are paid attention to. Considering on tourism products such as restaurant, travel items, and lodging coupons at social commerce, tourism research about social commerce are rare and research should be conducted for tourism social commerce. This study elaborates

the theoretical understanding of the tourism social commerce within the context of impulsive buying. Also, for tourism practitioners, this research shows how scarcity message would be effective and crucial.

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