

A Study on Offline Factors that Affect Customer Participation Behavior on Mobile Social Platform: Based on WeChat

Jia-li Zhu^{1,a}, Hong Jin^{2,b} and Ying-qing Chi^{3,c}

¹Business school, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, China

²Business school, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, China

³Business school, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, China

^a942177188@qq.com, ^b342944219@qq.com, ^c2660878498@qq.com

Keywords: offline factors, customer participation behavior, mobile social platform

Abstract. The users of WeChat has a great number and with a rapid growth. Enterprises use WeChat as a mobile social platform to do promotion. And WeChat marketing ranks the first over all these methods used on Internet. This study is based on WeChat marketing in order to do research on offline factors that will have influence on customer participation behavior under the background of the Internet. Some factors and the function mechanism of the model construction of these offline factors are proposed in this study. The finding of this study can offer suggestions on maintaining more customers on mobile social network platform to enterprises.

Introduction

In 2015, the China Internet network information center (CNNIC) issues 《The 35th China Internet network development state statistic report》 pointing out that at the end of December 2014, the number of Internet users is about 649 million and the Internet penetration is 47.9 percent. The report also points out that the number of mobile Internet users is maintained a rapid growth. All of that provides a good chance to mobile social platform.

Besides, WeChat payment ranks third accounting for 21.5% in network payment market at the end of December 2014 according to that report. And the scale of enterprises using instant messaging tools to do promotion is 62.7% and ranks the first during the various network marketing methods.

In China, WeChat is the most representative social networking application in mobile device and in mobile instant messaging software. Therefore, in the mobile social platform, based on the WeChat marketing, the degree of customer participation will have a great influence on marketing strategy of enterprises. This study divides the factors affecting customer participation into online factors and offline factors and focuses on the offline factors affecting customer participation researching.

Literature review

Mobile social platform. At present academia for mobile social networking is not a clear and precise definition. Based on previous academic knowledge of mobile Social Network, this article will mobile Social Network (Social Network) is defined as the Social Network structure formed through mobile client device.

In foreign studies, Mobile social platform focuses on several application platform, such as Facebook, Kik in Canada, LINE in Japan, Kakao Talk in Korea and so on, as the center. These studies do exploratory research on how to use the several application to do better marketing activities.

In domestic studies, having not found similar empirical study about the customer participation in WeChat marketing activities based on the consumer perspective through literature retrieval. Although, there having found a few studies on WeChat, most of the studies focus on the perspective of explain ,qualitative and technical theory, and having not found the consistent research conclusions.

Customer participation behavior. Customer participation has been a hot topic that scholars are concern about in recent years. But the academia has not reached a unified understanding about the definition and dimensions of customer participation.

Research on customer participation behavior mainly focuses on manufacturing and service industries, and mostly from a single perspective. Currently, more and more enterprises take consumer participation development and innovation into consideration, research on customer participation behavior has expanded to more aspect of the business. This study argues that the factors affecting customer participation behavior can be divided into two parts, online factors and offline factors. This study will do exploratory research on the offline factors affecting customer participation behavior, and provide references to enterprises on offline marketing strategy, but also in order to do better combination with online marketing strategy in mobile social platform.

Model construction

When enterprises do WeChat marketing activities, the controlling of offline factors affecting customer participation is relatively unstable. For enterprises, customer positive participation behavior will bring positive brand equity based on customers, and will bring a premium for enterprise brand.

Through online interaction and offline support, using the advantage of offline to promote online activities, all of that will do good to make use of collaboration of the two channels, online and offline, and has a very important significance on promoting the participation of consumers. This research takes reference groups, quality of customers, customers' perception, brand knowledge, situational factors as offline factors.

Model construction in this study consults technology acceptance model that put forward by Davis and the theory of planned behavior to construct the preliminary and reasonable model, as shown in figure 1.

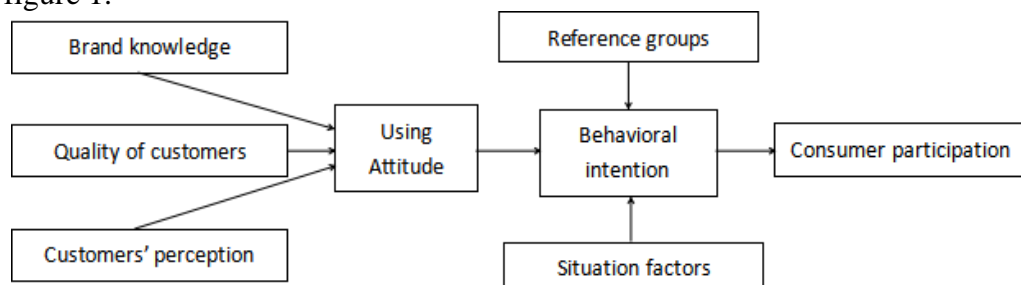


Fig.1 Model construction

Zhuang Guijun scholars argue that situation factors will affect buying decision made by consumers. Enterprises can change some adverse situational factors that affect consumers' buying decision through marketing activities[1]. This study thinks that only consumers involved in the marketing activities of enterprises, can they take purchase behavior. The reference groups will have a influence on whether customer participation behavior occurring indirectly. Based on that, this study takes situational factors, brand knowledge as two offline factors affecting customers' behavioral intention.

When enterprises take integrated marketing strategy, combination of product, price, place, promotion will be involved. Through the marketing combination strategy, this study argues that the consumers' perception, brand knowledge and quality of customers as the three factors affecting customer using attitude to the marketing method on social platform during the model construction. Quality of customer and consumers' perception will directly affect the quality of customer participation behavior occurring. Besides, brand knowledge is the key to create a strong brand and play an important role on mind of customers.

Research implications

WeChat marketing as a new marketing mode, based on the diverse function of itself, becomes

the first method that enterprise marketing strategy will use. However, for both business and academia, research on WeChat is still in its infancy, especially WeChat puts stress on customer participation for its particularity in spreading. Overall, the influencing factors of customer participation behavior WeChat marketing can be roughly divided into online and offline factors. This article focuses on the attention to the offline factors affecting customer participation behavior research.

The topic of this study is a current important problem and need to be solved urgently in theory and practice level.

In theory, this study tries to explore WeChat offline factors affecting customer participation behavior in marketing and their dimensions, build offline factors and its mechanism of action of theoretical framework, provide theoretical guidance for enterprises, combination with online marketing strategy, and help enterprises to motivate customers to participate in the activities of WeChat marketing better.

In practice, this study takes WeChat as the research objective, focuses on the consumer offline behavior and the offline factors that have influence on consumers participating in the enterprise marketing activities. And the research will help enterprises with improving the customer participation from offline operation, and help enterprises to improve final performance of the marketing strategy. Besides, this study also covers the demand of technical innovation and the development of the Internet .Through in-depth exploration, using WeChat marketing as the new marketing mode to enhance the strength of enterprises, especially the ability in marketing of small micro enterprises under the environment of Internet.

Acknowledgments

Funded Project: The 12th Five years Planning(2014) research project of Jiangxi Social Science(14GL27); Jiangxi Universities Humanities and Social Sciences Research on Young Fund(GL1412). Corresponding Author: Hong Jin.

References

- [1] Zhuanggui Jun, Zhou Nan, Li Fuan, Situational Factors affecting customer purchasing decisions(a preliminary study), *Mathematical statistics and management*, 2004, 04:7-13.
- [2] Algesheimer R, Dholakia U M, Herrmann A., The Social Influence of Brand Community: Evidence from German Car Clubs, *Journal of Marketing*, 2005, 64(7): 19- 34.
- [3] Anderson-Butcher, D., Ball ,A., Brzozowski, M., Lasseigne,A., Lehnert, M., Mc Cormick B.L., Adolescent weblog use: Risky or protective? *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 2010, 27: 63-77.
- [4] Bergman, S. M, Fearington, M. E., Davenport, S. W., Bergman, J. Z., Millennials, narcissism, and social networking: What narcissists do on social networking sites and why, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2011, 50: 706 -711.
- [5] Choi, Eunjeong, KakaoTalk, a mobile social platform pioneer, *SERI Quarterly*, 2013, 6(1): 63-69.
- [6] Chan K., Yim C., Lam S., Is Customer Participation in Value Creation a Double-edged Sword? Evidence from Professional Financial Services Across Cultures, *Journal of Marketing*, 2010, 74(3): 48-88.
- [7] CNNIC China Internet network information center, 《The 35th China Internet network development state statistic report 》, <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/>