



# Understanding the influence of C2C communication on purchase decision in online communities from a perspective of information adoption model



Dong Hong Zhu <sup>a,1</sup>, Ya Ping Chang <sup>a,\*,2</sup>, Jian Jun Luo <sup>b,3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Management, Huazhong University of Science & Technology, PR China

<sup>b</sup> School of Management, Wuhan Textile University, PR China

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 4 February 2015

Received in revised form 4 June 2015

Accepted 5 June 2015

Available online 6 June 2015

### Keywords:

C2C communication

Purchase decision

Online community

Relationship type

Information adoption model

## ABSTRACT

Information derived from consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication in online communities plays an important role in consumers' purchase decision making. Based on the information adoption model, the present study develops a research model to investigate the influence of C2C communication on consumers' purchase decision in online communities. Based on 324 effective data, the Partial Least Squares technique is used to test the proposed model. The results show that argument quality, source credibility, and tie strength positively influence purchase decision through product usefulness evaluation. In addition, tie strength exhibits difference effect on product usefulness evaluation between the context of consumers communicating with real and virtual relationships. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Consumers once mainly relied on acquaintances at hand to help them make purchase decisions when they want to hear thoughts from others before purchase. Recent advances in information technology have resulted in profound changes in consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communications. Today's consumers can freely communicate with acquaintances in the distance and like-minded strangers having common interests in online communities (Zhu and Chang, 2014). Particularly, with the rise of Mobile Internet, consumers can freely communicate with others at any time any where through mobile devices. Consumers increasingly use online community as a vehicle for pre-purchase information gathering (Adjei et al., 2010). Information derived from C2C communication in online communities plays an important role in consumers' purchase decision making and thus marketing strategies (Adjei et al., 2010; Parmelee and Perkins, 2012; Wang et al., 2012). Hence, understanding how C2C communications in online communities affect consumers' purchase decisions is particularly important in today's digital environment (Libai et al., 2010).

C2C communication produces an influence on consumer decision through persuasive information. The information adoption model developed by Sussman and Siegal (2003) has been widely used to understand how individuals process persuasive

\* Corresponding author at: School of Management, Huazhong University of Science & Technology, 1037 Luoyu Road, Wuhan, PR China.

E-mail addresses: [zhudonghong1982@126.com](mailto:zhudonghong1982@126.com) (D.H. Zhu), [changyphust@126.com](mailto:changyphust@126.com) (Y.P. Chang), [jason819@aliyun.com](mailto:jason819@aliyun.com) (J.J. Luo).

<sup>1</sup> Her research interests include customer behavior and network marketing.

<sup>2</sup> His research interests include customer behavior and electronic commerce.

<sup>3</sup> His research interests include information management and electronic commerce.

information (Cheung et al., 2008; Jin et al., 2009; Li, 2013; Watts and Wyner, 2011; Zhang et al., 2014). However, few studies have been done on how consumers with a shopping demand process C2C communication information in online communities from the perspective of information adoption model.

In addition, in the online C2C communication context, consumers can choose to mainly communicate with real or virtual relationship by participating in different communities (Dholakia et al., 2004; Zhu and Chang, 2014). For example, consumers can choose to mainly communicate with acquaintances on the Facebook or strangers in virtual brand communities. People have different attitude and behavior in different social environments (Myers, 2005). However, knowledge about the influence of C2C communication on consumer behavior in different interpersonal relationship environments is scarce.

Based on the information adoption model, the present study develops a research model to investigate the influence of C2C communication on consumers' purchase decision and compares the differences of real and virtual relationship environments to better understand consumers' purchase decision in online communities. Our findings can provide companies with a deep understanding of the role of C2C communication in online communities for consumer behavior research and marketing.

## 2. Research model and hypotheses

### 2.1. C2C communication and information adoption model

C2C communication refers to “the transfer of information from one customer (or a group of customers) to another customer (or group of customers) in a way that has the potential to change their preferences, actual purchase behavior, or the way they further interact with others” (Libai et al., 2010, pp. 269).

In the online context, Gruen et al. (2006) examined the antecedents and consequences of C2C online know-how exchange. Wu and Fang (2010) examined the influence of the extent of C2C interaction on idea generation in virtual brand communities. Adjei et al. (2010) examined the influence of online C2C communication quality (timeliness, relevance, frequency, and duration) on consumer purchase behavior. Chan and Li (2010) examined the influence of C2C interactivity routes on online co-shopping in virtual communities. Wang et al. (2012) examined the antecedents (tie strength with peers and identification with the peer group) and consequences (product attitude and purchase intention) of peer communication. Though these studies provide some valuable insights, little research empirically investigates the influence of online C2C communication on consumers' purchase decision from the information adoption model perspective and compares the differences between real and virtual relationship environments.

In addition, some studies have investigated the influence of online review on the behavioral intention of consumers based on the information adoption model. For example, Zhang et al. (2014) examined the influence of source credibility, argument quality, and perceived quantity of online reviews on consumers' behavioral intention. Chang and Wu (2014) examined the influence of source credibility and information credibility on negative electronic word-of-mouth adoption. Cheung et al. (2008) examined the influence of source credibility and argument quality on the adoption of electronic word-of-mouth through information usefulness in online customer communities. However, little research has empirically investigated the purchase decision process of consumers after online C2C communications and the moderating effect of relationship type.

### 2.2. Research model

The information adoption model developed by Sussman and Siegal (2003) has been widely applied in the field of information system and marketing to explain how people process persuasive information (Cheung et al., 2008; Jin et al., 2009; Li, 2013; Watts and Wyner, 2011; Zhang et al., 2014). It is developed based on the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and dual-process models of informational influence (Chaiken and Eagly, 1976; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). According to information adoption model, central and peripheral cues of persuasive information influence recipients' information adoption through information usefulness. C2C communication produces an influence on consumer decision through persuasive information. Therefore, the present study draws on the information adoption model to understand how consumers process information from online C2C communications.

Central cue refers to issue-related arguments for an individual critically cognitive consideration a target behavior (Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Sussman and Siegal, 2003). According to information adoption model, the quality of argument contained within a communication is an important central cue in the persuasive information process. Argument quality has been proved to be an effective central cue (Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006; Lee, 2012; Li, 2013). In online C2C communication contexts, such argument refers to task-related product information and shopping advices from other consumers, which is an important content cue for consumers making purchase decision. Hence, in line with the information adoption model, the present study employs argument quality to describe informational influence from C2C communications.

Peripheral cue refers to simple cues or inference for an individual evaluating a target behavior (Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Sussman and Siegal, 2003). According to information adoption model, source credibility is an important peripheral cue in the persuasive information process. Source credibility has been proved to be an effective peripheral cue (Bhattacharjee and Sanford, 2006; Lee, 2012; Li, 2013). In online C2C communication contexts, such source refers to other consumers with whom a consumer with a shopping demand communicates in online communities. Given

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/465302>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/465302>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)