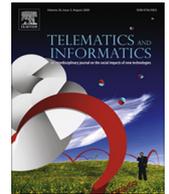




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Telematics and Informatics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tele

Effects of branded e-stickers on purchase intentions: The perspective of social capital theory



Ya-Ching Lee

Institute of Marketing Communication, National Sun Yat-Sen University, 70, Lien-Hei Rd., Kaohsiung, Taiwan

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16 February 2016
 Received in revised form 19 May 2016
 Accepted 10 June 2016
 Available online 11 June 2016

Keywords:

Brand attitudes
 Branded e-stickers
 Purchase intentions
 Social capital

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impacts of branded e-stickers on brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Analysis of the survey data indicates that featured character-brand fit, intensity, self-disclosure, sociability, and referent ties indirectly influence purchase intentions through brand attitudes. Brand attitudes and majority ties directly influence the intentions. The findings demonstrate that social capital must be considered when applying social innovations for marketing. Theoretical contributions: The findings support the model for examining effects of branded e-stickers, indicating that the structural, relational, cognitive, and situational dimensions of social capital critically affecting purchase intentions. This study provides a notable contribution to the social capital theory, addressing several detailed dimensions and critical antecedents of the intentions. We propose to revise the social capital model by adding situational dimension to the original three dimension of social capital to enhance our practical and theoretical understanding of BES impacts. This study advances our knowledge of BES communication and their effectiveness. This study also elucidates gender differences.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

With the advances of modern technologies, people have come to rely heavily on mobile applications (apps) for communication (Griffith, 2015). Applications in mobile communication technology have facilitated people's mobile-mediated relationships and gained tremendous attentions. The launch of e-sticker function used in messaging applications further facilitates communication exchanges and quickly gains its worldwide popularity (Griffith, 2015). An-sticker is a kind of emoticons, but they are different in illustration and variety. Emoticon, a portmanteau of emotion and icon, developed as a pictorial representation of facial expressions to share an individual's feelings in emails and messages. It is an example of metacommunication using punctuation marks, numbers, and letters (for example,;) equals wink and:(expresses sadness) in computer-mediated communication. However, as people can easily misinterpret the intended meaning of emoticons, users prefer to use graphic emoticons, available on messaging apps and social media, to express their feelings or mood more clearly. Emoticons in Unicode standard version (☺) or graphic format (😊) produce increased understanding of the expressions (Skovholt et al., 2014). e-Stickers are typically pictures or animations of a cartoon character, or even a celebrity, which allow users to express their emotions, moods, and actions. Their elaborate and character-driven nature that clearly portrays body language and facial expressions offers users a greater variety of ways to express their feelings. App users like to use e-stickers to communicate with friends because e-stickers allow them to express opinions and feelings (Griffith, 2015). e-sticker marketing exhibits substantial potential for mobile-commerce channels. It leverages the expansive power of social media

E-mail address: yaclee@cm.nsysu.edu.tw

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2016.06.005>
 0736-5853/© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

marketing to spread brand influence to the circle of friends of the user. Among various formats of e-stickers, messaging apps that involve e-stickers dominate the market (Knight, 2013; Lomas, 2013). Competing apps, such as Facebook Messenger, Viber, and Line, enable companies to promote branded emoticons and text. Using BESs has become an innovative method of expanding market reach and brand-marketing (Knight, 2013; Lomas, 2013). Brands take advantage of e-stickers popularity to provide branded e-stickers (BES) for free in order to build and strengthen long-term relationships with their customers (Griffith, 2015). Strong brand-customer relationships may lead to customers' repurchase intentions and word of mouth recommendations (Keller, 2001; Kotler, 1997). Branded e-stickers become an innovative way to increase favorable brand attitudes and maintain brand-customer relationships. They also advertise and promote a brand with elements that a company wishes to add or emphasize. Marketers expect that the more customers use the stickers, the more they will generate positive and favorable attitudes toward the brand, which eventually affect customers' purchase decisions. In light of this trend, competing apps, such as Facebook Messenger, Viber, and Line, enable companies to promote branded emoticons.

Several gaps exist in the relevant literature. First, no research has assessed impacts of the BES. Therefore, their impacts warrant a detailed investigation. Second, consumer research has ignored the perceived value of social capital. Researchers in sociology (e.g., DeAndrea, 2012; Kobayashi, 2010; de Zúñiga et al., 2012), information management (Chen and Beaudoin, 2016), and management usually examine the relationships between social capital and virtual community in terms of the relational dimension. The remaining dimensions of social capital theory, namely, the structural and cognitive dimensions, are rarely explored. In addition, researchers often assess the relationships among social media members. However, the relationships between brands and social app users remain underexplored. Third, previous research on social capital has focused solely on psychological and social psychological aspects. As individuals may react in certain ways according to situational variations (Wehmeyer, 2007), we propose to revise the social capital model by adding situational dimension to the original three dimension of social capital to enhance our practical and theoretical understanding of BES impacts. Finally, the literature has indicated that men and women react differently in their purchase decisions. As the gender roles are changing, few research indicates that traditional knowledge of gender role stereotype in purchase decisions is not complete to explain how men and women react differently. Further investigation is necessary to understand their responses in the context of branded e-stickers.

To address these ambiguities, we (a) propose a social capital model to elucidate the impacts of BES. Three outcome variables will be used for the impact assessment: Brand attitudes, usage intensity, and purchase intentions; (b) examine determinants that directly and indirectly affect the purchase intentions; and (c) examine whether men and women behave differently. The proposed model fills the gaps in the literature. These findings can help us to understand how social capital dimensions of branded e-sticker affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

2. e-Sticker business

Media research defines the media ecosystem as a combination of the processes, systems, operations, and devices that produce, mix, and disseminate media content including text, image, sound, films, and multimedia (Kallinikos and Mariategui, 2011) to fulfill audiences' needs (Adner and Kapoor, 2010). Based on this definition, we consider the e-sticker business ecosystem a combination of the processes, systems, operations, and devices that make possible the creation, operation, and delivery of e-stickers to fulfill users' needs for communication, intimacy, and sociability.

In the e-sticker business ecosystem, e-stickers are operated on messaging app software on a computer, smartphone, or tablet platform. App developers consider users' daily needs to design various kinds of apps that suit their demands, including games, maps, weather, dining, and travel (Khalaf, 2015). Users can download and install apps on their computers, smartphone, or tablet with a simple click. After authentication, messaging apps allow users to add other users to their circle of app friends (Khalaf, 2015) to whom they can send pictures, sound, e-stickers, and text messages.

The major market players of messaging apps include Line, Skype, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat. These apps have not only changed how people interact with each other, but they have also become a new networked business model. We introduce several famous messaging apps that provide e-sticker services.

2.1. Line

Line was developed by NHN Japan Corp. and first released in 2011. It is available now in 10 languages and is used by 10 billion people worldwide (Su, 2016). It allows users to exchange multimedia files and engage in one-to-one and one-to-many communication with text, pictures, animation, and sound. Users can make voice and video calls for free, and they can play games, such as puzzles, match-three, and battle. Line has a sticker shop from which users can download free or paid e-stickers.

2.2. WeChat

WeChat was created by Tencent Holdings Limited in China and first released in 2011. With one billion users, WeChat is the most used messaging app in China (Tencent, 2016). It is available in more than 20 languages, and supports payment and money transfer. WeChat provides one-to-one and one-to-many communication. Users can use WeChat to transmit text or

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/466935>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/466935>

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