

HOW MOTIVATION, ABILITY, AND OPPORTUNITY CAN DRIVE ONLINE SHOPPING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Vita Briliana
Nurwanti Mursito

ABSTRACT

Despite the recognition of social media's significant role in increasing e-commerce, the key drivers of online shopping have been little explored. This paper's author argues that motivation, opportunity, and ability influence customers' intentions to make online purchases and the features that influence online shopping. Drawing on the literature about the applied theory of reasoned action, an integrative framework using the key constructs of motivation, ability, and opportunity is developed. The framework conceptualizes the influences and outcomes of consumer behavior to shop online through social media. Studying information acquisition in the context of the interactions among motivation, ability, and opportunity can provide normative insights on the likelihood of management's active participation in social media. The author develops a typology for the nature of motivation, ability, and opportunity to explain social media users' behaviors with respect to online shopping. The author attempts to make two contributions to the literature on social media users' behavior. One is by setting the stage for a more multidisciplinary, analytical, and deliberate approach to social media use with respect to identifying relevant variables as antecedents of social media users' online shopping behavior. The second is by developing a conceptual framework and advancing research propositions that facilitate empirical testing of these relationships.

Keywords: ability, motivation, opportunity and social media

Paper type: conceptual paper

Introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social media

The World Wide Web is a huge storehouse of knowledge that can be accessed through the internet. Online technologies have significantly influenced individuals' daily activities and quality of life. The popularity of social media is growing day by day; it has now become a revolutionized way of communication. The rapid growth of social media platforms has permanently altered how numerous consumers interact with one another and with organizations. Hence, this development has changed the way that organizations attract prospective consumers and retain them (Leung et al., 2015). Social media is one of the phenomena that has emerged from the development of technology and innovation on the internet. In addition to being a new medium for interaction and socialization, social media wields an enormous influence on various sectors, such as journalism, public relations, and marketing. This phenomenon has led to the popularity of social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, and forums. Consumers engage in conversations about brands (Briliana et al., 2015), in which the brands are not involved, forcing brand owners to listen (Weinberg, 2009). With social media, a negative incident or a consumer's experience with a brand can be shared with millions of people very quickly via the internet. There are dating sites, friendship sites, sites with business purposes, and so on. Facebook and LinkedIn are the leading personal and business sites, respectively. Table 1 lists the social media categories, their descriptions, and examples.

Table 1. Social Media Categories

Social Media	Description	Examples (year launched)
Blogs	Individuals' or firms online journals that are often combined with audio or video podcasts	Blogger(1999); Live Journal(1999); Napster(1999);
Microblogs	Comprise a type of blogging that allows a users to publish short text updates.	Twitter (2006)
Social networks	Applications allowing users to build personal web sites that are accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication.	LinkedIn (2002); Facebook (2003); Myspace(2003); Second Life(2003); Skype(2003); WordPress (2003);
Content communities	Websites for organizing and sharing particular types of content	Flickr (2004); YouTube (2005)
Virtual brand communities	Brand-specific websites where people with a common interests can interact.	Lego's LUGNET P&G's BeingGirl
Forums/bulletin boards	Sites for exchanging ideas and information usually about special interests.	TripAdvisor (2000)

Content aggregators	Applications that allow users to customize the web content they wish to access	StumbleUpon (2003); Technorati(2003);
Collaborative websites (wikis)	Enable online collaboration by allowing multiple users to add, remove, edit or change contents of wikis	Wikipedia(2001)
Social bookmarking sites	Sites where users can recommend and share interesting and relevant content with one another.	Delicious(2003); Digg(2004); Reddit(2005)

Sources : Constantinides and Fountain (2008); Van Zyl (2009); Mangold and Faulds(2009); Stokes(2009); Zarrella (2010)

1.2 Background of study

Originally proposed by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989), the motives, opportunities, and abilities (MOA) model posits that individuals process information based on their underlying MOAs. The model is used in the present paper to explain online shopping through social media. Furthermore, social media is an extremely powerful force in marketing because it amplifies consumer-to-consumer (C2C) conversations in the marketplace.

It was predicted that e-commerce would grow to be a new economic power when it was first introduced in Indonesia in 1996. Generally, e-commerce is not much different from the conventional business trade, except for the intensive use of information technology in online sale, purchase, and payment transactions. E-commerce services utilize the internet as a buying-and-selling tool; in this system, the seller and the buyer do not meet face to face. Since they communicate through the internet, trust is the main capital between the two parties (Cho & Fiorito, 2008). E-commerce has become a popular marketing outlet (Cho & Park, 2001).

Smartphones are increasingly being used 24/7 to access social media, such as Facebook, Instagram etc. People are also using this technology to browse the internet for various needs, such as shopping online (Briliana, 2017). In Indonesia, the commonly used e-commerce terms are e-catalog (the use of a website as a promotional tool), e-order (the use of specific e-commerce applications to provide online purchase features), and e-payment (the use of specific e-commerce applications to provide online purchase and payment features). The acceptance of e-commerce over the years has led to a gradual change in people's lifestyles as many of them began switching from conventional to electronic transactions.

1.3 Purpose of study

Previously, marketers created captivating advertising messages in the mass media in the hope that consumers would recognize the advertised brands and be influenced in their preferences that would ultimately make them purchase the products. However, social media has changed customer behavior in terms of selecting, sharing, and valuing information. With the emergence of social media, traditional media outlets, such as television and newspapers, have lost their audiences and readers, respectively. Social communications in the form of online reviews, posts, and word-of-mouth (WOM) information exchange have played a large role in driving purchase decisions (Priyanka, 2013). Furthermore, marketers have quickly realized the influence of social communities in terms of interactivity that comprises personalized sections, enhanced shopping experiences, greater convenience, and widespread information search (Chandra et al., 2012; Patino et al., 2012; He & Zha, 2014).

Current figures reveal that the largest online social medium on a global scale is Facebook, with 1.96 billion users worldwide (<http://tech.thaivisa.com/>); regionally, Jakarta (Indonesia) trails behind Bangkok in third place with 22 million active users. Facebook is also the largest social commerce site; its mobile advertising revenue represented approximately 84% of its advertising revenue in the fourth quarter of 2016, up from approximately 80% in the same period in 2015 (Facebook, 2016). Edwards (2011) found that companies that employed social media enhanced the elements of the purchase funnel, such as awareness, consideration, and purchase, while Carrillat and colleagues (2014) pointed out that Facebook messages must be entertaining to have a positive impact on attitudes.

The ultimate aim of marketing is to change behavior (Brennan et al., 2007). When MOA are antecedents of consumer behavior, the marketer plays a role in maintaining or enhancing an individual's MOA toward the intended outcome (MacInnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991). Gruen, Osmonbekov, and Czapslewski (2006) suggested that marketers could implement strategies to increase an individual's MOA to participate in C2C exchanges. A research study found that travelers' motivation and opportunity had positive relationships with their involvement in hotel social media pages, and travelers' social media involvement positively influenced their revisit intention pages (Leung & Bai, 2013).

In the existing literature, research about Facebook is still limited and primarily descriptive. To fill the literature gap, this empirical study attempted to apply the MOA theory, in exploring shoppers' social media involvement in order to provide insights into e-retailers. The study focused on media channels, mainly Facebook, because it provides the most useful and utilized social media tools for marketing purposes (Facebook, 2016).

1.4 Research questions

Two main issues should be examined, as follows:

- 1) Do customers' a) motivation, b) opportunity, and c) ability (referring to the MOA theory) act as antecedents of their involvement in social media?

- 2) Are customers' online buying behaviors the outcomes of their involvement in social media?

1.5 Research objectives

In line with the research questions, two objectives should be met, as follows:

- 1) to develop a hypothesized model of online shoppers' social media involvement based on the MOA theory and the involvement concept and
- 2) to provide information for the benefit of e-retailers

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Referring to the established theory of attribution or the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the MOA theory, the researchers built a suitable framework for this study (Figure 1).

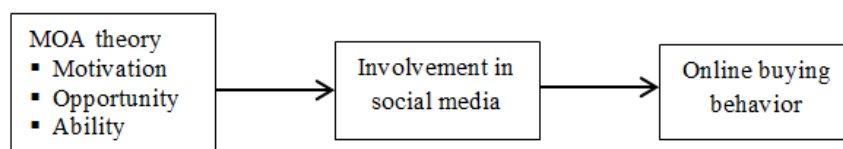


Figure.1. Theoretical Framework

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action)

The attribution theory or the TRA is rooted in the work of Heider (1958), who was interested in knowing how people made attributions to the causes of events and the conditions under which attributions of stable dispositions to a person were made. The individual decides whether his or her behavior is due to a function based on two dimensions—internal and external. The attribution theory discusses the efforts carried out to understand the causes of people's own behaviors and those of others.

Marketing has applied the concepts of the attribution theory in a variety of areas, such as children's reactions to television advertisements (Robertson & Rossiter, 1974) and advertiser credibility (Settle & Golden, 1974). While the applications may differ, they all probe into the general area of how consumers process market information in order to make consumption decisions. The attribution theory focuses on how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for a particular behavior. For a member of the online community forum, the focus is on perception, involving discussions about wide-ranging subjects that include styles, patterns, colors, designers, and product brands.

2.2 MOA Theory

According to the MOA approach, motivation incorporates readiness, willingness, interest, and a desire to engage in a determined behavior (MacInnis et al., 1991). The motivated customer is energized and eager to be involved in value-creating, social media activities with other customers (Gruen et al., 2007). Extending the theory to the context of this research, motivation refers to consumers' desire to make online purchases because of the perceived benefits of using social media (e.g., Facebook), and it positively influences their intentions.

According to MacInnis et al., (1991), opportunity refers to the availability of time and favorable conditions that enable action. Opportunity reflects the extent to which a situation is conducive to achieving a desired outcome (Gruen et al., 2006, 2007). If the information is unavailable, the opportunity does not exist. Extending these definitions to this study, opportunity is assumed to be the availability of Facebook members to access Facebook without any practical or theoretical restriction (downtime of the webpage, not enough time to navigate, or restrictions imposed by organizations). The customers' perceived opportunity to use social media (e.g., Facebook) positively influences their intentions to shop online.

Ability is defined as the customer's skill or proficiency to engage in valuable exchanges with other customers. Without the necessary skills, even a motivated individual is not likely to be involved in social media activities with other customers (Gruen et al., 2007). Extending the original definition to the context of this research, ability can be defined as Facebook members' set of skills and competencies that makes them capable to communicate with other members. It is during this stage of attitudinal development that online retailers can influence shoppers' propensity for purchasing behaviors (Yu & Wu, 2007). Therefore, this study's researchers consider that customers' ability to engage in social media activities positively influences their intentions to shop online.

2.3 Involvement to social media

The conceptualization and the measurement of involvement have been contentious issues in marketing and advertising research. Zaichkowsky (1985) defined involvement as a person's perceived relevance of an object, based on inherent needs, values, and interests. One common aspect among prior definitions is that involvement suggests the degree of a person's arousal for an object of personal relevance (Mittal, 1989). Similar to motivation, the concept of involvement requires a goal object (Mittal, 1989).

This goal object can be a product; thus, this might lead to the concept of “product involvement,” or the purchase decision could lead to the concept of “purchase involvement” (Antil, 1984; Mittal & Lee, 1989). However, it is generally accepted that involvement constitutes “an individual, internal state of arousal with intensity, direction, and persistence” (Andrews et al., 1990).

Previously, Havitz and Dimanche (1990) revealed that information search as part of consumers’ social media involvement could be used to predict their attitudes and behaviors. This statement is confirmed in more recent research findings (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010; Lehto, Kim, & Morrison, 2006) that information search behavior, information processing, and persuasion are consequences of involvement and WOM communication (Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Research on the buying behavior and the factors influencing the decision-making process of online consumers has revealed similarities as well as differences between them and traditional customers. Online buying behavior refers to the process of purchasing products or services via the internet. The process consists of five steps, similar to those related to traditional shopping behavior. In the typical online shopping process, first when potential consumers recognize their need for some merchandise or service, second they browse the internet to search for need-related information. Third however, rather than searching actively, potential consumers are at times attracted by information about products or services associated with their felt need. Fourth they then evaluate alternatives and choose the one that best fits their criteria for meeting their felt need. The fifth finally, a purchase transaction is conducted, and post-sale services are provided. Online shopping attitude refers to consumers’ psychological state in terms of making purchases on the internet (Li & Zhang, 2002).

Studying consumers’ online shopping behavior has been one of the most important research agendas in e-commerce (Briliana et al., 2015). The research on online consumer behavior has been conducted in multiple disciplines, including information systems, marketing, management science, psychology, and social psychology, among others (Briliana, 2016; Cheung et al., 2005; Gefen et al., 2003; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Koufaris, 2002; Pavlou, 2003, 2006; Zhou et al., 2007).

Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) discussed online community members’ motivations to share their thoughts with strangers. They also suggested that the same motives involved in charitable acts of giving were at work in social media exchanges, rationalizing that these acts reinforced self-identity and were rewarding experiences. Although the MOA theory was originally proposed for information-processing behavior, it has been applied broadly in a variety of contexts, even in the online community setting, to explain customers’ online knowledge sharing (Gruen et al., 2005, 2006). Considering that the online community is a type of social media and information sharing is an important component of travelers’ involvement in hotel social media pages, this study applied the MOA theory in the context of online shopping through social media. Motivation can be suggested as a driving force behind online community members’ exchanges of information. Opportunity refers to the circumstances that allow and/or facilitate public involvement in sharing knowledge and experience. Ability is a complex phenomenon comprising a combination of many factors, such as awareness, experience, knowledge, skills, accessibility to information, and financial resources (Briliana et al., 2015). Personal needs or MOA are characterized as antecedents of involvement, while information search behavior, information processing, and persuasion are proposed as consequences of involvement. Modern consumers are involved, independent, better informed, and more critical. They are smart and demand openness and transparency. Furthermore, the media advertisement-, brand-, and technology-literate consumer presents one of the major challenges facing marketers.

Managers should be aware of the importance of social media sites in influencing online shopping. Consequently, they should identify and target different types of customers and take initiatives to recognize and highlight customer interests. To be successful in social media marketing and achieve long-term business goals, companies need to create buyers’ personal profiles and then develop and constantly adjust their online marketing strategies according to customer interests.

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Vita Briliana
Trisakti School of Management
Jl.Kyai Tapa No.20 Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: vita@stietrisakti.ac.id

Nurwanti Mursito
Trisakti School of Management
Jl.Kyai Tapa No.20 Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: wanti@stietrisakti.ac.id