TikTok-Based Evaluation of Consumer Purchase Intentions in Tourism

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Abstract: In recent decades, China has experienced rapid economic expansion and urbanization, providing a rich resource base for the growth of tourism. The tourism industry in China offers a wide range of attractions and services, making it an attractive destination for international and domestic tourists. However, the impact of tourism on the local economy and environment is significant, and it is crucial to evaluate the sustainability of tourism development. This article aims to explore the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in influencing tourists' purchase intentions in the Chinese tourism industry. eWOM refers to the online reviews, ratings, and recommendations shared by tourists through various digital platforms. It has become an important source of information for tourists when making travel decisions. The quality, quantity, and valence (positive or negative) of eWOM can significantly affect tourists' purchase intentions. Therefore, understanding the impact of eWOM on tourists' purchase intentions is crucial for the sustainable development of the Chinese tourism industry.

1. Introduction

With the growth of the Internet, the potential impact of other people's ideas has expanded significantly[1]. The Internet is altering consumer communication by creating a forum for the exchange of ideas. Consumer views have a lot of potential since they may be read by other consumers all around the globe[2]. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is a term used to describe this kind of communication. One of the most effective methods of spreading knowledge is word-of-mouth (WOM) (Xia and Bechwati, 2008). Customers are impacted by this issue since the choice to purchase may be significantly influenced by the readily available information.

The remainder of the piece is organized as follows. It demonstrates the impact of eWOM on customer purchase intention after reviewing relevant research on the topic. As a theoretical framework, this conceptual model is also discussed in the research. The article next presents a quantitative investigation on Chinese visitors' usage of TikTok and the variables affecting their purchasing behavior. The next section presents the findings and ramifications. The report concludes by outlining the limitations of the study and offering some suggestions for further research.

2. Literature review

With the advancement of Internet technology, electronic word-of-mouth has become more and more popular among customers looking for information about brands or businesses. Customer contacts have included word-of-mouth (WOM) since 1950[3]. According to Kotler (2003), buyers may look for pertinent public reviews to help them make a choice while evaluating a novel product that is complicated and overloaded with buying information. Customers consider word-of-mouth to be more real than the actual product advertising since it lacks commercial characteristics. Gittell (2002) argued as a result that the transmission of WOM may be seen as an impartial, trustworthy, and dependable source of information while significantly influencing the diffusion effect. Its advantages have been recognized by several academics and marketers, who have used it in their marketing plans[4].

Any positive or negative statement about a product or company made by a potential, actual, or former customer and made available to a multitude of people and institutions over the Internet. In order to help marketers better understand how consumers behave online, researchers are interested in finding out why people seek for and share eWOM[5], as well as why people share or clarify eWOM[6]. Currently, customers are increasingly turning on word-of-mouth recommendations while making purchases. Additionally, by efficiently reducing the risks and uncertainties that customers perceive when buying goods or services, such knowledge might further influence the intents and choices of consumers. Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) study the effect of online product reviews on the relative sales of two online bookshops using publicly accessible data from two top online book retailers[7]. Their findings show that this kind of online interaction may have a big impact on other customers' shopping decisions. Although there is a substantial amount of research on the impact of eWOM on purchase intention, very few studies have been done to explore and determine the significant effects of eWOM on consumers in Chinese traveling sector.

According to Chen et al. (2-10), purchase intention refers to a consumer's anticipated behavior while making a given product purchase. He et al. (2018) outlined that customers' purchase intentions are transactions that occur after they have developed a thorough assessment (such as attitude) of the goods[8]. According to Chang and Chin (2010), customer recommendations are closely related to favorable purchasing intentions[9]. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2003), the phrase "consumer buying behavior" refers to the actions taken by people and families who are the end consumers when making purchases of products and services for their own use[10]. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2010), there are five steps in the customer purchasing process: need recognition, information search, alternative appraisal, purchase choice, and post-purchase behavior. A variety of eWOM features, including valence (the kind of online review), quantity (the number of reviews), review content, and digital platform, have been the subject of prior research[11]. An essential component of online behavior is online shopping behavior, particularly with regard to purchase intention. However, as digital technologies advance, dynamic shifts in the eWOM communication process (in the form of new eWOM features) have an impact on online buying behavior (Erkan and Evans, 2016).

On social media, millions of people—including residents, visitors, and businesses—exchange views, provide criticism, solicit assistance, offer ideas, analyze their needs and requests, assess goods and services, and share their experiences[12]. Travelers can now do an increasing number of chores independently thanks to the growth of social media and online sales channels. They can independently find out information about locations, travel deals, flights, and examine pictures and videos. According to Plummer (2007), there is a causal connection between three key components of the tourism consuming process: trip motivation, visitor satisfaction, and desire to spread the word[13]. Due to their intangibility and inability to be assessed before usage, travel services are a

high-risk purchase. For instance, businesses in the tourism industry are starting to understand how ICT media might affect visitors' purchase decisions. Customer satisfaction is crucial because it affects purchasing intentions, behavioral intentions, and word of mouth related. In other words, the chance of returning to and recommending a product or service increase with overall pleasure[14]. Because they enable customers to influence one another by gathering or disseminating information on businesses, goods, or brands, these new forms of communication have changed consumer behavior as a result of technology advancement[15].

However, Luo et al. (2013) demonstrated how online communications' anonymity might undermine their trustworthiness[16]. Hussain et al. (2017), for instance, believe that consumers prefer to utilize eWOM to lower the risks associated with their selections. Similar to this, eWOM gains credibility when customers have used it in the past[17]. In fact, unlike conventional word-of-mouth communication, where the message vanishes as soon as it reaches the receiver, eWOM refer to evaluations published and communicated through internet, and they may be seen at any time by customers and businesses.

As shown in Figure 1, although eWOM and purchase intention have been the subject of several previous research, these associations vary depending on different research background and situation. Furthermore, research into developing markets like China is scarce. This research intends to evaluate the impact of eWOM's legitimacy, quality, and quantity on purchase intention in Chines traveling sector in order to close this knowledge gap. Based on the suggested theoretical framework, various hypothese have been developed.

H1: eWOM quality positively affect purchase intention.

H2: The quantity of EWOM positively influence purchase intention.

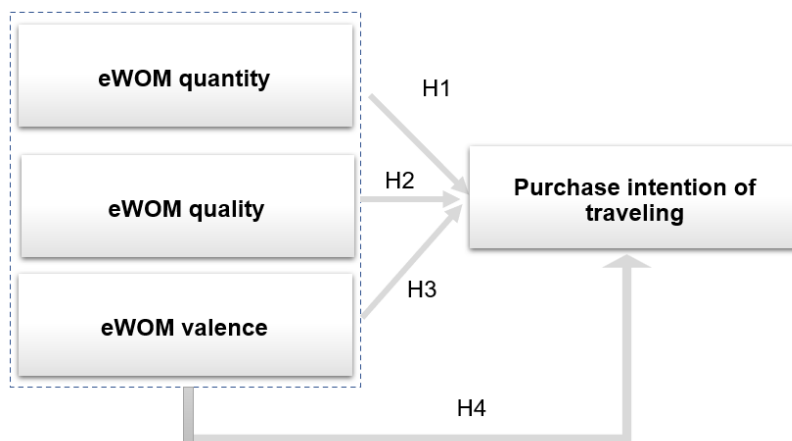H3: The valence of EWOM positively impact purchase intention.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

3. Methodology

In this investigation, quantitative techniques were used. EWOM and purchasing intention in Chinese traveling sector are the topics of this research. A questionnaire was attached to the inquiry in order to test the research. The five elements of the study's survey—EWOM quantity, EWOM quality, EWOM valence, purchase intention, and demographic data—are based on earlier, peer-reviewed and edited investigations.

The primary technique of data collection for the research was an online questionnaire with a guided approach. The questionnaire's components were organized so that respondents may choose

the appropriate rating on a scale from 1 to 5. The study evaluated the three characteristics that can affect customers' propensity of buying using a quantitative research methodology. The quality, quantity, and sentiment of eWOM have been extensively studied (Lim, 2016; Bataine, 2015; López and Sicilia, 2014; Fileri and McLeay, 2014). And, these studies' findings were modified to become the dimensions of the factors in this study[18].

Maintaining participant anonymity while employing a variety of research models that are characterized by several case study questions or items is a key component of conducting consumer surveys. Metric scale Similar to the scale used by Barber et al. (2012), a validation scale was utilized to evaluate source trustworthiness and purchase intention. The dependability study of the components under examination served as the basis for the model's configuration[19]. To examine model assumptions and causal linkages, regression models and ANOVA tests were applied in SPSS.

Snowball sampling was applied in this study to gather information in China. Participants enrolled in the survey had to be familiar with TikTok China. The non-probabilistic technique is based on information gathered from population research participants who gave a sufficient level of involvement. Sending links of online surveys to participants is more environmental friendly and feasible with the developments of technology. Wenjuanxing, a well-known online survey platform in China, is used to conduct the survey. Using an online survey, 289 individuals' answers were gathered for the study. The study's questionnaire was first designed and developed in English before being translated into Chinese. To assure readability, clarity, and linguistic equivalent and to increase the reliability of measurements, use the back-translation procedure. To make sure that all of the components were understandable and that the questions could be completed without being interrupted, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 15 students. Verbal comments on the questionnaire's layout, language, and comprehensiveness were overwhelmingly favorable.

As suggested above, the current survey includes the measurement of four different variables, namely: eWOM quality (QA), eWOM quantity (QT), eWOM valence (VAL) and consumer purchase intention (PI). In addition to the questionnaire, they had other relevant questions, such as PA1-PA6 of eWOM quality, which corresponds to several problems found in the survey (Appendix).

eWOM Quality

The effectiveness of reviews based on educational messages may be used to define the quality of eWOM. Customers' adoption of electronic word-of-mouth communication channels when they seek information may be influenced by the quality of the information they get.

eWOM Quantity

Given how much information people share online, the majority of them definitely require references to boost their confidence and decrease their feeling of danger or mistake while making a desision of purchase. The quantity of online reviews/reviews is certainly a symptom of this. The quantiy of eWOM to some extent show product's worth and popularity.

eWOM Valence

Whether they are good, negative, or neutral, electronic word-of-mouth signals are distilled in Electronic Word of Mouth Valence. Positive word-of-mouth often takes the shape of recommendations to others that reflect a user's enjoyable, engaging, or unusual product experience. Contrarily, unfavorable product experiences, gossip, and complaints are characteristic of bad word of mouth.

To ascertain the link between the variables, this study employed linear regression models. Since all three initial hypotheses rely on the same parameter (PI), the following model may be used to test them:

Model 1: $\quad PI = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 QA + \varepsilon_1$

Model 2: $\quad PI = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 QT + \varepsilon_1$

Model 3: $PT = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 VAL + \varepsilon_1$

Model 4: $PI = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 QA + \beta_2 QT + \beta_3 VAL + \varepsilon_1$

In each case, α_i stands for the intercept term, β_i is the coefficient that has to be calculated and is the primary subject of the current regression analysis, and ε_i is the error term.

4. Finding and discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of responders (45%) were between the ages of 26 and 30. Only 3% of responders have a bachelor's or higher degree, whereas 80% have a bachelor's or master's. The respondents' primary occupations are as employees. Between 5,000 and 10,000 yuan and above 10,000 yuan make up 39% and 38%, respectively, of the total revenue.
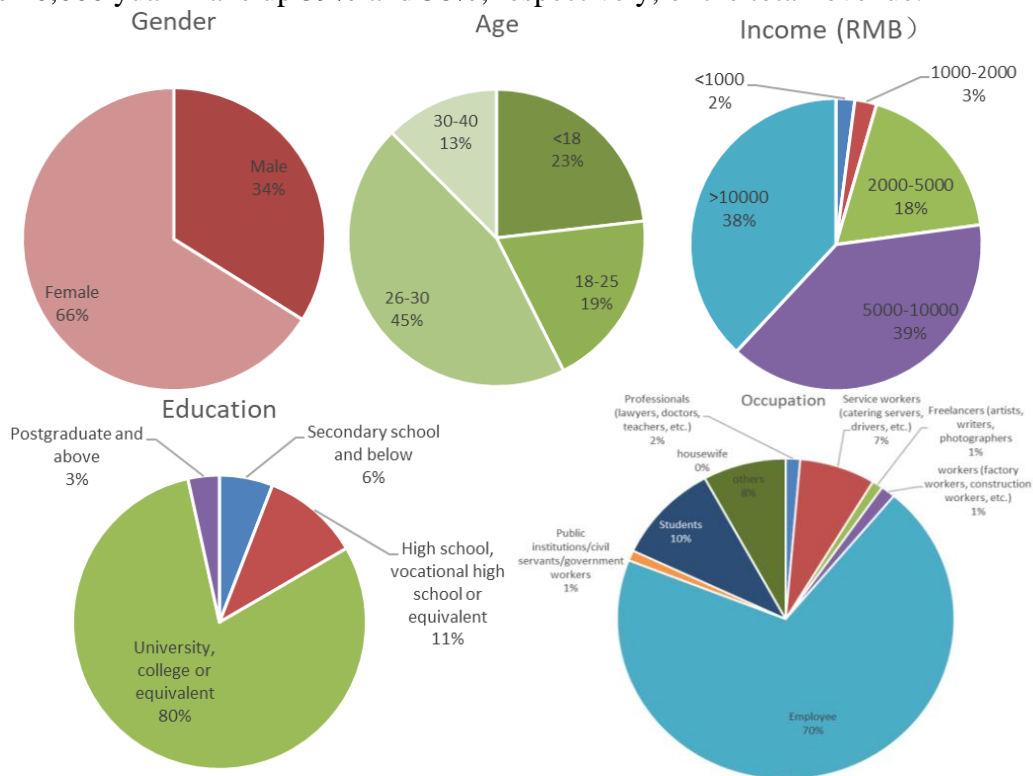

Figure 2: Demographic of repondents

4.2 Reliability Testing

To evaluate if these measurements are trustworthy and valid, their consistency must be examined (Saunders et al., 2012). The degree to which the respondents' evaluations of one indicator correspond to their evaluations of the other indicators, or more simply put, the agreement of the underlying variables of the scale, is referred to as the internal consistency of the measurement, also known as internal reliability (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A coefficient is calculated using the Cronbach Alpha technique, and it has a range of 0 to 1 (perfect agreement). The minimal standard for demonstrating the dependability of the measure, according to Schutte et al. (2000) assessment and suggestion, is 0.7. The scale is unreliable if Cronbach's alpha is less than the suggested value (Zikmund et al., 2013). In this investigation, the value at which measurements are considered trustworthy is set at a threshold of 0.7.

Table 1: Reliability analysis results

Scale	Questions included	Cronbach coefficient
eWOM Quality	QA1- QA 6	0.862
eWOM Valence	VAL1- VAL2	0.925
eWOM Quantity	QT1-QT4	0.756
Purchase intention	PI1-PI3	0.901

The dependability of several instruments was examined in this research utilizing a total of 300 questionnaires. The first row of Table 1 displays the answers to the six questions that make up the eMOW quality scale. The scale has high internal consistency and reliability, with a corresponding Cronbach value of 0.862. The second row demonstrates that perceptions of beauty are similarly quite reliable, with a coefficient of larger than 0.7.

The variables' descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2. The number of data sets is 289. The mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation should be calculated. The questionnaire's mean is more than 2.5 based on the value distribution and standard deviation, which indicates that most respondents agreed with the response.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
QA1	289	1.00	5.00	3.5917	1.07338	1.152
QA2	289	1.00	5.00	3.2907	1.17790	1.387
QA3	289	1.00	5.00	3.2042	1.16511	1.357
QA4	289	1.00	5.00	3.2353	1.14564	1.313
QA5	289	1.00	5.00	3.6471	1.08972	1.187
QA6	289	1.00	5.00	3.8997	.98617	.973
VAL1	289	1.00	5.00	3.7509	.99314	.986
VAL2	289	1.00	5.00	3.8374	1.01611	1.032
QT1	289	1.00	5.00	3.6194	1.08993	1.188
QT2	289	1.00	5.00	3.9308	.91023	.829
QT3	289	1.00	5.00	3.7647	1.05409	1.111
QT4	289	1.00	5.00	2.9723	1.24969	1.562
PI1	289	1.00	5.00	3.7336	1.05159	1.106
PI2	289	1.00	5.00	3.7716	1.02559	1.052
PI3	289	-2.00	5.00	3.6263	1.11436	1.242
Valid N (listwise)	289					

4.3 Regression results

The regression findings show that eWOM quality positively affects purchase intention in a statistically significant way, demonstrating that eWOM quality is more likely to influence customers' purchase intentions (H1). In Figure 3, the purchasing intention improves by 0.597 units for every unit increase in eWOM quality. This result is in line with the findings of Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006), who discovered that eWOM quality impacts purchase intention in a favorable way.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.450	.172		8.427	.000
	QA	.606	.048	.597	12.602	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Figure 3: Impact of eWOM quality on consumers' purchase intention

In Figure 4, the regression results for the relationship between eWOM valence and consumer purchase intention in the tourism industry show that influencers have a statistically significant positive effect on intention to buy, demonstrating that eWOM valence has a significant positive impact on intention to buy (H2).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.618	.169		9.568	.000
	VAL	.511	.043	.573	11.831	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Figure 4: Impact of eMOW valence on consumers' purchase intention

The coefficient between quantity and purchase intention, which is 0.574 in Figure 5 regression findings, indicates a positive association between the two, confirming hypothesis three.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.663	.165		10.083	.000
	QT	.513	.043	.574	11.860	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Figure 5: Impact of eMOW quantity on consumers' purchase intention

With very low p-values, all three independent variables exhibit a statistically significant impact on "PI". The projected increases in "PI" are 0.226, 0.357, and 0.194 units for each unit increase in "QT," "QA," and "VAL," respectively. In Figure 6, the standardized coefficients also show how significant an impact the independent variable has on the dependent variable. A dependent variable is more affected by an independent variable with a high standardized coefficient. The independent variable "QA" in this model has the most impact on "PI," followed by "VAL," and then "QT." Therefore, they also substantially and favorably impact the purchase intention if all three independent variables are included in the same model.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.743	.178		4.187	.000
	QT	.226	.052	.253	4.336	.000
	QA	.357	.053	.352	6.745	.000
	VAL	.194	.053	.217	3.639	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Figure 6: Impact of eWOM on consumers' purchase intention

4.4 Discussion

By concentrating on consumers' buying habits, this study seeks to dispel scholars' skepticism on

the impact of eWOM. According to earlier studies (Bickart and Schindler, 2001), eWOM is more impactful than information produced by enterprises, hence an increasing number of businesses are actively attempting to promote and manage eWOM activities (Lim et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for researchers and practitioners to comprehend how eWOM functions. This research also applies a subjective viewpoint in an effort to supplement earlier results. The study's results provide managers and marketing experts new perspectives. We determine the quality, quantity, and valence of IWOM in this research because it has a significant impact on Chinese consumers' propensity to buy tourism-related items. This indicates that buyers will take into account electronic word of mouth, such as evaluations of the service or product on the Internet, while trying to locate a brand or making a purchase. According to earlier research (e.g. Torlak et al., 2014), eWOM is crucial in influencing brand perception and boosting purchase intent. Torak et al. (2014) believed that eWOM had little impact on customers' desire to make a purchase, nonetheless.

5. Conclusion and limitation

Three key additions are made to the body of literature by this research. It first examines the significance of eWOM and shows how TikTok executives might learn more about consumers' growing propensity for online purchases. Second, it demonstrates how managers may persuade consumers to create multimedia review material as well as the rising significance of online multimedia reviews in influencing online purchase intentions. Third, it explains in detail how managers may create marketing plans that can be put into practice using information gleaned from client feedback expressed via electronic word of mouth.

Only the survey approach is used in this research to learn about Chinese customers. Focus group studies of typical eWOM users or content analysis based on consumer opinion data from online forums might both lead to a more specific knowledge of study goals. The association between eWOM and purchase intention is not examined in this research in terms of how product attributes affect it. However, the nature of the product has a significant impact on the valence, quality, and amount of eWOM (Yang et al., 2012). Future studies may investigate whether the impacts of valence and content apply to all forms of tourism-related items.

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