6-15-2019

Disentangling the factors driving user satisfaction with travel review websites: content, social or hedonic gratifications

Ping Wang
Central China Normal University, ping.wang@mail.ccnu.edu.cn

Hongxiu Li
Tampere University, hongxiu.li@tuni.fi

Disentangling the factors driving user satisfaction with travel review websites: content, social or hedonic gratifications

Completed Research Paper

Ping Wang
School of Information Management
Central China Normal University
Wuhan, China
ping.wang@mail.ccnu.edu.cn

Hongxiu Li
Information and Knowledge Management,
Tampere University of Technology
Tampere, Finland
hongxiu.li@tuni.fi

Abstract

Travel review websites has become increasingly popular among travelers. But there is a lack of research on the motivations of travel review website use, and it is inconclusive whether customers use travel review websites because of different gratifications obtained in their travel review website use. Most research on travel review websites focuses on the utilitarian use of content on travel review website, such as eWOM, but less is known about whether other gratifications in using travel review websites might shape customers' travel review website use, such as social and hedonic gratifications. In this article, we explore travel review website use among individuals from a Uses & Gratifications perspective. In addition to the content gratification obtained in using travel review website, such as eWOM information, two other categories of gratifications from travel review website use are also examined in this study: social gratification and hedonic gratification. The results indicate that content gratification (eWOM completeness) and hedonic gratification (enjoyment and curiosity fulfillment) in using travel review websites determine user satisfaction with a travel review website.

Introduction

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become popular among consumers worldwide. In recent years we have witnessed the dramatic transformation of the travel industry due to the popularity of eWOM. Travelers are increasingly sharing their travel experiences with others via different travel review websites, meanwhile they also rely heavily on eWOM on travel review websites to support their travel decisions, such as on accommodation, restaurants, destinations, etc. (Filieri and McLeay 2014; Sparks et al. 2013). Users can post eWOM about travel services/products based on their travel experiences, share their travel stories with others, to follow or vote other users, and to interact with other users via asking questions or answer questions regarding specific travel products/services. Travel review websites becomes the most important social media platform for travelers to use when making travel decisions.

The prevalence of eWOM and travel review websites has attracted attention from academia, and there has been an increasing number of studies on eWOM on travel review websites. Prior research have been particularly interested in how and why travelers use eWOM in decision support and how eWOM affects customers' travel product/service choice and sales (King et al. 2014; Sparks et al. 2013). Little research has attempted to examine user satisfaction with travel review websites even though user satisfaction has been proved to be vital in retaining users and enhancing customer loyalty. In addition, prior studies have considered travel review websites as a social media platform primarily for travel information searching and social interaction with other users, and ignored the hedonic aspect of travel review websites. Thus, this study will address the research gap by answering the research question whether travelers use travel review websites for content, social or hedonic gratifications.

To bridge the above research gap, we draw on the uses and gratifications theory to unravel the determinants of user satisfaction with travel review websites. Three categories of gratifications are integrated into our research model to explore user satisfaction, namely content gratification, social gratification and hedonic gratification. Content gratification was measured with four different dimensions of the perceived content quality of eWOM: accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and sidedness. Social gratification consists of social interaction and social presence. Hedonic gratification includes enjoyment and curiosity fulfilment. The justification for those three categories of gratifications is discussed in the third chapter of this article.

The main objective of this study is to examine why individuals use travel review websites. Specifically, this study will investigate the impact of the three different gratifications obtained in travel review websites on user satisfaction with travel review websites. To accomplish our research objectives, this study collected a sample of 312 valid responses among the customers of an online travel service company to validate the proposed research model. Findings from this study not only provides a theoretical framework for investigating the determinants of user satisfaction with travel review websites from the uses and gratifications perspective, but also explain the reason for travel review website use from a mixed view of social, content and hedonic gratifications.

In the following section, we briefly discuss prior research on the theoretical foundation of this study. We then discuss the proposed research model and hypotheses, followed by a description of the research methods and the research results. Next, we discuss the research findings and conclude the paper. Lastly, the research limitations are listed and suggestions for future research are made.

Theoretical background

The users and gratifications (U&G) framework was first developed in radio communication research, and later has been considered as one of the most suitable theoretical frameworks for studying the psychological and behavioral tendencies associated with mediated communication (Lin 1999). The tenet of U&G theory is that an individual's use of media is selective and motivated by a rational self-awareness of their own needs, and the expectation that these needs can be gratified by particular types of media and content (Ruggiero 2000). The U&G approach assumes that people are aware of their needs, and able to identify their sources of satisfaction (Katz et al. 1973). U&G provides a comprehensive theoretical approach for explaining the use of each new mass communications medium (Ruggiero 2000).

The U&G theory has been widely applied in research to explain media usage by individuals, such as traditional media like newspaper, radio and television (Babrow 1987), and new media, like the Internet (Stafford et al. 2004), social network websites (Wang et al. 2015), and social network games (Hongxiu Li et al. 2015). Individuals obtain different gratifications when using a variety of media due to the different characteristics of each media. McQuail (1987) posited that there were four general gratifications obtained from using mass media, which apply to all types of media: entertainment, information, personal identity, and integration and social interaction. And two general categories of gratification were suggested for media usage based on traditional media, namely content gratification and process gratification (Stafford 1996). Later, social gratification was identified as an Internet specific gratification by discovering the arising usage of the Internet as a social environment (Stafford et al. 2004).

Recently, some research has applied the U&G theory to understand social media use for instance social networking websites, social network games, virtual community, review websites, and blogs (Gan and Li 2018; Hicks et al. 2012; Nambisan and Baron 2009). Li et al. (2015) applied the U&G to examine users' intention to continue using social network games and found that users obtain hedonic, social and utilitarian gratifications in social network game playing, and the gratifications will lead to their intention to continue playing social network games. A study by Liu et al. (2016) revealed that users gain content and technique gratifications when using microblogging, which determine their continued use of microblogging. Gan and Li (2018) noted that the utilitarian gratification, hedonic gratification and technical gratification were derived from social media use and determine individuals' intention to continue using social media. Gan (2017) investigated the liking behavior of social media users based on the U&G framework and found that hedonic, social and utilitarian gratifications affect users' liking behavior. The U&G theory has also been applied to explain usage behavior in other contexts, such as social network websites (Xu et al. 2012) and virtual communities (Hsu et al. 2015). Wook Ha et al. (2015) applied the U&G theory in mobile social network website use, and found that gratifications determine users' attitude toward mobile social network websites, which leads to their actual use of mobile social network websites.

Katz et al. (1974) posited that one of the principle objectives of the U&G theory is "understanding the motivations of individual media behavior". The U&G theory has also been applied to explain individuals' media use behavior in different contexts. Thus, the U & G was selected as the basic theoretical framework in this study to investigate user satisfaction with travel review websites which can lead to user actual use of travel review websites.

Research framework and hypotheses

Research model

Following the findings in the prior literature, a research model was developed based on the U&G theory, in which three categories of gratifications are examined: content gratification, social gratification, and hedonic gratification. In the proposed research model, we assume that content, social and hedonic gratifications perceived in travel review website use determine user satisfaction with travel review websites (See Figure 1).
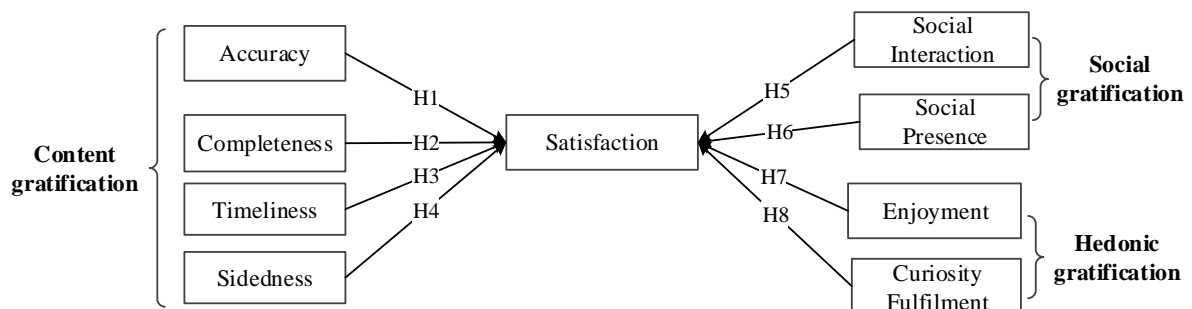

Figure 1. Porposed Research Model

Content gratification concerns the messages carried by the medium (Stafford et al. 2004). In this study, the content gratification refers to the gratification users obtained from eWOM that was specifically

posted on travel review websites, rather than the general information of the review websites. Previous research has provided evidence that individuals use travel review websites for content gratifications obtained from eWOM. The factors in regard to eWOM content quality have been validated as strong predictors in determining eWOM use behavior, such as eWOM relevance, accuracy, completeness, timeliness, understandability and so on (Cheung et al. 2008; Filieri and McLeay 2014). Following the definition of information quality in IS research and taking the specific characteristics of eWOM into consideration, four constructs closely related to the information quality of eWOM are suggested in order to capture the content gratification experienced when using travel review websites: eWOM accuracy, completeness, timeless, and sidedness.

Social gratification has been identified as an important predictor of social media use. Travel review websites is a social media platform, which helps individuals to share their travel experience with others, to browse the review introducing the travel experiences of others, to interact with other travelers by asking or answering questions, or vote for eWOM helpfulness, etc. During the interaction process, they will get a sense of belonging to a travel review community (Cheung and Lee 2012). Individuals will obtain social gratification in their 'interactivity' with other members and the belonging to a community through media (Stafford et al. 2004). Social presence captures the sense of psychological connection with others, who perceives the website as "warm", personal, sociable, thus creating a feeling of human contact (Cyr et al. 2007). Hence, in this study *social interaction* and *social presence* are suggested as the constructors for capturing social gratification when individuals use travel review websites.

Hedonic gratification concerns the actual use process of the medium itself. Hedonic experience and gratifications have been proved to be significant determinants of media use among individuals, such as social networking websites, instant messaging, and online social network games (Li et al. 2015; Premkumar et al. 2008; Xu et al. 2012). Travel review websites not only enables users to experience enjoyment during the eWOM browsing and reading, but also fulfill their curiosity when reading eWOM and travel experience reports. Thus, enjoyment and curiosity fulfilment are set as the two dimensions for capturing the hedonic gratification perceived when using travel review websites.

Research hypotheses

Accuracy represents a user's perception about the correctness of information (Wixom and Todd 2005). EWOM on travel review websites is generated by individual travelers rather than by companies for their commercial marketing communication purposes, thus it tends to be more trustworthy and accurate (Filieri 2015). The accuracy of the eWOM content has been empirically validated to be an important predictor for using eWOM when travelers make decisions on accommodation (Filieri and McLeay 2014). As Filieri and McLeay (2014) suggested, travelers use eWOM to support their accommodation decisions because they believe the information provided by travelers will be more accurate since the evaluation of the accommodation is based on their real consumption experience. Based on the above grounds, we assume that a higher level of perceived eWOM accuracy from a travel review website will increase customers' satisfaction with the travel review website, thus the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived accuracy of eWOM on a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Completeness represents the degree to which eWOM on a travel review website provides all the necessary information (Wixom and Todd 2005). Completeness of information has been proved to positively relate to user satisfaction toward information quality (Xu et al. 2013). Travelers may judge eWOM content as complete based on the extent to which the information contained in the eWOM is comprehensive for their travel planning and travel purchase decisions. In travel review websites, travelers can retrieve rich information related to travel products/services, for instance, price, restaurants, hotels, destinations, travel routes, etc. As Cheung et al. (2008) stated that an eWOM with more complete information will be more useful and will lead to consumer satisfaction with the travel review website. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Perceived completeness of eWOM on a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Timeliness represents a user's perception of the degree to which the information is up to date (Wixom and Todd 2005). EWOM is generated continuously and is available at any time for individual use. Travelers can easily access the latest reviews on travel review websites because the latest published reviews are displayed first. The timeliness of eWOM has been validated to be a significant attribute that has a positive influence on information usefulness (Cheung 2014). The more useful the information is, the more satisfied the users are. Therefore, we propose that when customers perceive eWOM on a travel review website to be with a higher level of timeliness, they will be more satisfied with the travel review website, and the following hypothesis is suggested:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived information timeliness of eWOM on a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Sidedness indicates whether a review contains both positive and negative comments on a product/service or contains only positive or negative comments (Cheung and Thadani 2012). In eWOM communication, a two-sided review is perceived as more unbiased than a one-sided review, which is often perceived as being either negative or positively biased. Prior study found that the provision of both positive and negative information provides travelers with a critical description of the travel products/services and helps them to better evaluate the quality of the travel products/services (Filieri and McLeay 2014). Based on the above discussion, we assume that if the eWOM on a travel review website are two sided, customers will be more satisfied with the travel review website. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived information sidedness of eWOM on a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Social interaction creates the context for active communication, and enables the development of a sense of mutual interdependence and connection (Yadav and Varadarajan 2005). Prior studies have shown that social interaction is an important aspect of social media website and facilitates IS continuance among individuals. In this research, social interaction refers to interactive communication on travel review websites with peers. Travelers write online reviews to share their own experiences with others, which helps others to make their travel decisions. In order to get more accurate or relevant information, consumers would even like to interact with other travelers, for instance, asking for more details not included in the eWOM or for further suggestions. Keng and Ting (2009) conducted research on blogs and found that interpersonal interaction enhances the experiences of the browser and consequently leads to a positive attitude toward reading it. Computer mediated communication with a higher degree of interactivity has been suggested as being more likely to satisfy and retain users (Nambisan and Baron 2007). Based on the above reasoning, we assume that increased social interaction with others on a travel review website might lead to a higher satisfaction with a travel review website, thus the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Perceived social interaction of using a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Social presence is defined as the extent to which a medium allows a user to experience others as being psychologically present (Fulk et al. 1987). Rafaeli (1990) found that social presence is a subjective measure of the presence of others, while "interactivity" is the actual quality of a communication sequence or context. Higher social presence indicates a higher degree of perception of others in that the communication appears to be with a "real" physical person (Kreijns et al. 2004). A higher social presence was found to help reduce ambiguity and increase the online trust and perceived usefulness of a website (Cyr et al. 2007) and retain customer (Gan & Li, 2018). Based on the above, we propose that a higher perceived social presence of a travel review website, a higher level of customer satisfaction with the travel review website, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Perceived social presence of using a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Enjoyment refers to individuals seeking pleasurable experiences for their own sake (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 1992). Enjoyment is operationalized as happiness, pleasure and flow when using any medium (Lin et al. 2008). Enjoyment has been empirically validated to be a determinant of IS use in different contexts, such as websites, social network games, etc. (Heijden 2004). According to (Hsin

Chang et al. 2013), entertaining digital messages reduce other users' perceived intrusiveness, and initiate a more positive attitude toward both the message and the virtual community. Prior research has also found that enjoyment has a significant effect on consumers' online information satisfaction (Ozkara et al. 2016). It was found that using a utilitarian system, e.g. decision support systems, can also enhance user perception of enjoyment, ultimately influencing their intention to use the system as a decision-making aid (Qiu and Benbasat 2009). Travelers obtain pleasure when searching for information on travel review websites and reading other travelers' reviews based on their travel experiences. Thus, we propose that the higher the level of perceived enjoyment when using a travel review website, the more customer will be satisfied with the travel review website. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7: Perceived enjoyment of using a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Curiosity fulfilment reflects an individual's cognitive exploration in seeking out experiences (Agarwal and Karahanna 2000). Curiosity has been proved to play an important role in decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (van Dijk and Zeelenberg 2007). Travel related decision-making, especially for leisure travel, is always emotional and accompanied with uncertainty outcome. A travel review website can support the fulfilment of emotional curiosity when travelers search for other travelers' reviews to fill in their knowledge gaps about travel. The surfing process of peer-travelers' real experiences can also fire their imagination for a new travel experience. Curiosity has been identified to be an important intrinsic factor motivating customer searches for information that facilitates learning in cyberspace (Menon and Soman 2002). Based on the above discussion, it is reasonable to propose that the perceived curiosity fulfilment in using a travel review website might lead to customer satisfaction with the travel review website, thus the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 8: Perceived curiosity fulfilment in using a travel review website positively associates with customer satisfaction with the travel review website.

Research methodology

Instrument development

The proposed research model includes 9 constructs, such as eWOM accuracy, completeness, sidedness, timeliness, social interaction, social presentation, enjoyment, curiosity fulfillment, and user satisfaction. The measurements of each construct were adapted from previously validated scales, and multi-item scales were used to improve the reliability and validity of the measurement. The wording of the items was modified to fit the research context of travel review websites and the user-generated content. The original questionnaire was in English, which was translated into Chinese. A back translation from Chinese to English was performed by two bilinguals who are capable of speaking both Chinese and English, thus ensuring the consistency of the questionnaire. A pilot study among 20 Chinese users of travel review websites was conducted to test the logistics and the understandability of the texts before the data collection. The questionnaire was composed of close-ended questions measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The target sample was focused on the users of online travel review websites.

Data collection

The data collection was conducted with the help of an online travel service company in China. The company offers online travel services to both domestic and international outbound travelers in China, such as local tour guides, customized travel service, ticket booking and so on. The company mainly offers services to individual customers, or self-organized travel groups. The link to the questionnaire was distributed to the customers and the followers of the company's official social media account via its main social media channel, WeChat, in China in 2016. Once a respondent completed the survey, they were enrolled in the draw for a gift. The questionnaire ran for two weeks. A total number of 351 responses were collected. Of those, 31 were excluded from subsequent analysis because the respondents' answers were not complete or not consistent. Another 8 respondents were excluded as they have never used any travel review website. The final sample consists of 312 valid respondents.

The sociodemographic and related descriptive characters of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. Of the respondents, 82 percent had made at least two leisure trips in the previous year and 93 percent of them preferred a self-organized or customized travel style, which indicates a propensity for referring to their peers' travel reviews when making their travel decisions.

Table 1. Sociodemographic and descriptive characteristics of the respondents

Dimension	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	187	40.1
	Male	125	59.9
Age (years)	18-25	97	31.1
	26-30	109	34.9
	31-40	80	25.6
	41-50	23	7.4
	>51	3	1.0
Income (RMB/month)	<=5000	111	35.6
	5001-10,000	124	39.7
	10,001-15,000	42	13.5
	15,001-20,000	13	4.2
	>=20,001	22	7.1
Leisure travel frequency last year	0	9	2.9
	1	47	15.1
	2	113	36.2
	3	60	19.2
	4	25	8.0
	>=5	58	18.6
Preferred travel style	Self-organized	212	67.9
	Group travel	16	5.1
	Customized travel	81	26.0
	Others	3	1.0

Results

We employed PLS-SEM (partial least squares) approaches in this study to estimate both the measurement and the structural equation models with empirical data. As the goal of this study is to examine the factors determining user satisfaction with travel review websites, for which the variance-based (prediction-oriented) PLS-SEM approach is particularly suitable (Hair et al. 2011). Moreover, PLS-SEM is based on a series of ordinary least squares regression and is not sensitive to small sample sizes. Prior research shows that PLS-SEM has higher levels of statistical power than its covariance-based counterpart, especially regarding small sample sizes (Lu et al. 2011). Thus, the PLS-SEM approach is used for the current model's set-up.

Measurement model

Reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were assessed for the measurement model. Reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha for each construct, which is the most widely used measure of reliability. As shown in Table 2, all the Cronbach's alpha values are between 0.819 and 0.936, which indicates good item reliability.

The convergent validity of the measurement model was assessed with average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). The critical values for CR and AVE are 0.70 and 0.50 respectively (Fornell and Larcker 1981). As summarized in Table 2, all CR and AVE values fulfil the recommended threshold with CR all above 0.90. The AVE values are all above the recommended 0.5, which meant that more than one-half of the variance observed in the items was accounted for by their hypothesized constructs. In addition, all the item loadings are higher than the recommended level of 0.70, which also indicated good convergent validity, except that an item for social presence is deleted due to its low factor loading.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which the measurement is not a reflection of other variables. That is indicated by low correlations between the measure of interest and the measure of other constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Discriminant validity can be demonstrated when the squared root of the AVE for each construct is higher than the correlations with all other constructs. The results for the

current research model are summarized in Table 3, which suggests adequate discriminant validity for all the measurements. The correlations between the five dimensions of information quality are relatively higher than others, as they are internally related to user generated information quality. However, these correlation values are still lower than the squared root of AVE respectively, which shows adequate discriminant validity.

Table 2. The measurement model

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Accuracy (IA)	IA1	0.828	0.847	0.907	0.765
	IA2	0.882			
	IA3	0.913			
Completeness (IC)	IC1	0.896	0.864	0.917	0.786
	IC2	0.914			
	IC3	0.848			
Sidedness (IS)	IS1	0.940	0.846	0.928	0.866
	IS2	0.921			
Timeliness (IT)	IT1	0.863	0.849	0.908	0.767
	IT2	0.906			
	IT3	0.857			
Enjoyment (ENJ)	ENJ1	0.934	0.885	0.929	0.813
	ENJ2	0.949			
	ENJ3	0.849			
Curiosity fulfilment (CF)	CF1	0.932	0.936	0.959	0.887
	CF2	0.950			
	CF3	0.944			
Social interaction (INT)	SINT1	0.864	0.819	0.892	0.734
	SINT2	0.839			
	SINT3	0.868			
Social presence (SP)	SP1	0.907	0.882	0.927	0.809
	SP2	0.906			
	SP3	0.886			
Satisfaction	SAT1	0.919	0.907	0.942	0.843
	SAT2	0.918			
	SAT3	0.918			

As data set used in this study is self-reported, the common method bias is a potential problem resulting from multiple sources such as consistency motif and social desirability (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Statistical analysis technique of Harmon's single-factor test is performed to assess the severity of common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003; Podsakoff and Organ 1986). Results from this test showed that five factors are present and the most covariance explained by one factor is 37.45%, indicating that common method biases are not a likely contaminant of our results.

Table 3. Correlation matrix and discriminant assessment

	CF	EN	IA	IC	INT	IS	IT	SP	SAT
CF	**0.942**								
EN	0.801	**0.902**							
IA	0.359	0.439	**0.875**						
IC	0.459	0.519	0.752	**0.877**					
INT	0.560	0.552	0.444	0.515	**0.887**				
IS	0.317	0.376	0.534	0.563	0.525	**0.857**			
IT	0.417	0.479	0.622	0.685	0.511	0.656	**0.891**		
SP	0.457	0.583	0.517	0.562	0.637	0.601	0.578	**0.931**	
SAT	0.634	0.668	0.505	0.579	0.509	0.412	0.489	0.456	**0.952**

Note: Diagonals represent the squared root of average variance extracted for each construct. Off-diagonals are the correlations between latent variables.

Structural model

Having established an adequate measurement model, the structural model of the hypotheses was tested. By using the bootstrap re-sampling procedure, a test of significance for all paths was performed.

Figure 1 shows the overall explanatory power and estimated path coefficients (all significant paths are marked with asterisks). The results illustrate that the exogenous variables explain 55.4 percent of the variations in user satisfaction.

EWOM completeness (β=0.198, p<0.001) was found to significantly influence user satisfaction with travel review websites, supporting H1. eWOM timeliness, sidedness, and accuracy are not significant factors influencing user satisfaction with travel review websites. Social interaction and social presence are not significant factors leading to user satisfaction with travel review websites. Both enjoyment and curiosity fulfillment were found to be significant determinants of user satisfaction with travel review websites, with enjoyment a path coefficient at 0.330 (p<0.001, H7 supported), and curiosity fulfilment a path coefficient at 0.214 (p<0.001, H8 supported).
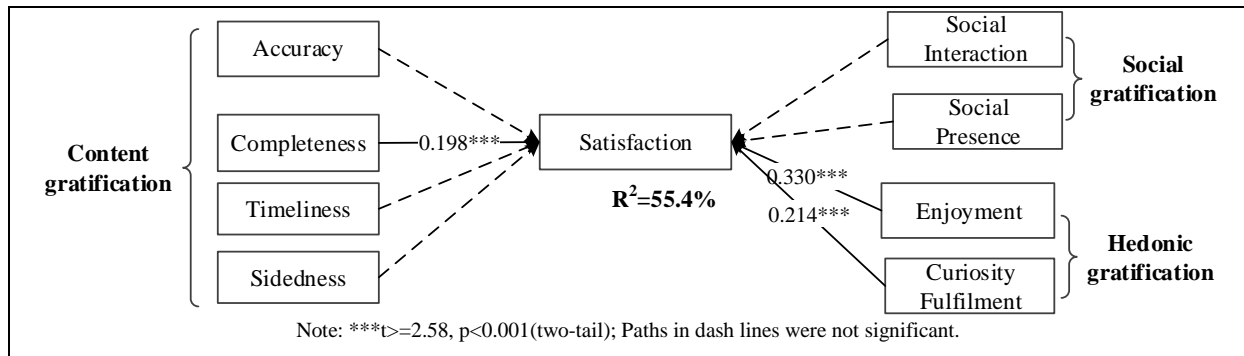

Note: ***t>=2.58, p<0.001(two-tail); Paths in dash lines were not significant.

Figure 2. Result of the Structural Model

Discussion

This study investigates the different gratifications which predict user satisfaction with travel review websites from the U&G perspectives, namely, the content, social, and hedonic gratifications. Several important findings can be derived from this study.

Content gratification (eWOM completeness) and hedonic gratification (enjoyment, curiosity fulfilment) obtained in using travel review websites are found to be significant factors leading to user satisfaction with travel review websites, but social gratification (social interaction and social presence) is not a significant predictor. In other words, user satisfaction with travel review websites depends on the gratifications users obtained in eWOM completeness, perceived enjoyment and curiosity fulfilment in using travel review website.

The finding on content gratification as a significant predictor of user satisfaction is consistent with the finding of Liu et al. (2016) on microblogging. But only one of the four dimensions of content gratification is found to be strong predictor of user satisfaction with travel review websites, i.e. eWOM completeness, whereas eWOM accuracy, timeliness and sidedness have no significant impact on user satisfaction. This indicates that travelers refer to peers' reviews on travel review websites to support their travel decisions, when they believe the eWOM at a travel review website to be more complete than other information, they will be more satisfied with the travel review website. The reason might be that individuals need complete information to help them reduce the uncertainties in their travel decision-making process. The more complete the information, the less risk. Travel decision-making is very complex. It is difficult for customers to see how accuracy eWOM is without real experience of a travel product/service. In addition, customers prefer complete eWOM information for decision support, but not so concerned with when the eWOM was generated and the sidedness of eWOM.

Out of our expectation, social gratification (social interaction and social presence) was found to exerts no significant impact on user satisfaction with travel review websites. The finding is consistent with the work of Gan and Li (2018) in the context of social media and the work of Liu et al. (2016) on microblogging, but contracts to the findings in the field of social network games (Li et al, 2015) and Facebook (Hsu et al. 2015). The possible explanations for this finding might be as following. Unlike Facebook and other social networking websites with higher level of social interaction and social presence, it is difficult for individuals to make lively interactions with eWOM posters and readers on travel review websites though travel review websites provide the function of social interaction to users

(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Individuals use travel review website mainly for supporting their travel-related decision-making, rather than 'social' interaction. Thus, the perceived 'presence' of others and social interaction does not necessarily affect user satisfaction with a travel review website.

Consistent with prior research on Facebook and social media (Gan and Li, 2018, Hsu et al. 2015), hedonic gratification (enjoyment and curiosity fulfilment) was found to have strong influence on user satisfaction with travel review websites. User perceive the use of travel review websites to be with fun and pleasure when they read the travel stories from others. Meanwhile, travel review websites provide rich information based on eWOM for travelers to use. Bednall and Kanuk (1997) designated curiosity and novelty-seeking as motives for customers information seeking behavior on virtual opinion platforms. Satisfactory levels of curiosity fulfillment and perceived enjoyment in using travel review websites will meet travel review website users' needs for hedonic gratification, which leads to their satisfaction with a travel review website.

Theoretical and practical Implications

This study has several theoretical implications. First, this research extends the U&G approach to the context of travel review websites. Prior research on travel review websites mainly focuses on the information quality of eWOM content. This research offers evidence that the U&G approach can also be a good theoretical framework for investigating travel review website use. Second, two categories of gratification are identified in this study as motivations for travel review website use, including content gratification, and hedonic gratification. Travel review website use is not only a utilitarian oriented behavior (content gratification), but also a hedonic oriented behavior (hedonic gratification). This research finding offers new insights into travel review website use by including hedonic gratification together with content gratification. Third, the findings on the dimensions of content gratification shows that travelers are more concerned about information completeness when assessing the gratifications gained from the eWOM content, but not the eWOM timeliness, accuracy and sidedness.

The results of this study have important implications for practitioners. For travel review system developers, they should pay attention to categorize the different attributes of the information contained in eWOM. As eWOM completeness is a significant predictor of user satisfaction with travel review websites, which captures content gratification in travel review website use, travel review system developers should provide more system functions that can help travelers rapidly complete eWOM information rapidly, which will fulfill customers' content need and satisfy them.

Secondly, travelers use travel review websites not only for their utilitarian value, but also for the hedonic value of the system. A recommendation for travel review system designers and e-tourism marketers is that, a persuasive and effective review website should offer high quality eWOM and provide hedonic gratification by taking advantage of information and communication technology.

Limitations and future research

The present study has a number of limitations. First, the sample in this study consists of Chinese respondents, which might limit the results being generalized to customers who have a different cultural background. Secondly, the current study did not distinguish the difference of review websites for different sectors in the travel industry, for instance, accommodation, travel destination and restaurants, etc. EWOM may also vary due to the different attributes of different travel products. Hence, future research might replicate the research model by focusing on a specific travel product.

Acknowledgements

References

Agarwal, R., and Karahanna, E. 2000. "Time Flies When You're Having Fun: Cognitive Absorption and Beliefs about Information Technology Usage," *MIS Quarterly* (24:4), p. 665. (https://doi.org/10.2307/3250951).

Babrow, A. S. 1987. "Student Motives for Watching Soap Operas AU - Babrow, Austin S.," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (31:3), Routledge, pp. 309–321. (https://doi.org/10.1080/08838158709386666).

Bednall, S., and Kanuk, W. 1997. *Consumer Behaviour*, Prentice Hall.

Cheung, C. M. K., and Lee, M. K. O. 2012. "What Drives Consumers to Spread Electronic Word of Mouth in Online Consumer-Opinion Platforms," *Decision Support Systems* (53:1), pp. 218–225. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.01.015).

Cheung, C. M. K., Lee, M. K. O., and Rabjohn, L. N. 2008. "The Impact of Electronic Word-of-Mouth: The Adoption of Online Opinions in Online Customer Communities," *Internet Research* (Vol. 18). (https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10662240810883290).

Cheung, C. M. K., and Thadani, D. R. 2012. "The Impact of Electronic Word-of-Mouth Communication: A Literature Analysis and Integrative Model," *Decision Support Systems* (54:1), pp. 461–470. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008).

Cheung, R. 2014. "The Influence of Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Information Adoption in Online Customer Communities," *Global Economic Review* (43:1), pp. 42–57. (https://doi.org/Doi 10.1080/1226508x.2014.884048).

Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Csikszentmihalyi, I. S. 1992. *Optimal Experience: Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness*, Cambridge university press.

Cyr, D., Hassanein, K., Head, M., and Ivanov, A. 2007. "The Role of Social Presence in Establishing Loyalty in E-Service Environments," *Interacting with Computers* (19:1), pp. 43–56.

van Dijk, E., and Zeelenberg, M. 2007. "When Curiosity Killed Regret: Avoiding or Seeking the Unknown in Decision-Making under Uncertainty," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (43:4), pp. 656–662. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2006.06.004).

Filieri, R. 2015. "What Makes Online Reviews Helpful? A Diagnosticity-Adoption Framework to Explain Informational and Normative Influences in e-WOM," *Journal of Business Research* (68:6), Elsevier Inc., pp. 1261–1270. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.006).

Filieri, R., and McLeay, F. 2014. "E-WOM and Accommodation: An Analysis of the Factors That Influence Travelers' Adoption of Information from Online Reviews," *Journal of Travel Research* (53:1), SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 44–57. (https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513481274).

Fornell, C., and Larcker, D. F. 1981. "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error," *Journal of Marketing Research* (18:1), pp. 39–50.

Fulk, J., Steinfield, C. W., Schmitz, J., and Power, J. G. 1987. "A Social Information Processing Model of Media Use in Organizations," *Communication Research* (14:5), pp. 529–552.

Gan, C. 2017. "Understanding WeChat Users ' Liking Behavior : An Empirical Study in China," *Computers in Human Behavior* (68), Elsevier Ltd, pp. 30–39. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.002).

Gan, C., and Li, H. 2018. "Understanding the Effects of Gratifications on the Continuance Intention to Use WeChat in China: A Perspective on Uses and Gratifications," *Computers in Human Behavior* (78). (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.003).

Gan, C., and Li, H. 2018. "Understanding the Effects of Gratifications on the Continuance Intention to Use WeChat in China: A Perspective on Uses and Gratifications," *Computers in Human Behavior* (78), pp. 306–315. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.003).

Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., and Sarstedt, M. 2011. "PLS-SEM: Indeed a Silver Bullet," *The Journal of*

Marketing Theory and Practice (19:2), pp. 139–152. (https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679190202).

Heijden, H. Van Der. 2004. "User Acceptance of Hedonic Information Systems," *MIS Quarterly* (28:4), pp. 695–704. (https://doi.org/10.2307/25148660).

Hicks, A., Comp, S., Horovitz, J., Hovarter, M., Miki, M., and Bevan, J. L. 2012. "Why People Use Yelp.Com: An Exploration of Uses and Gratifications," *Computers in Human Behavior* (28:6), pp. 2274–2279. (https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.06.034).

Hsin Chang, H., Amin, H., and Rizal, H. 2013. "The Determinants of Consumer Behavior towards Email Advertisement," *Internet Research* (23:3), Emerald, pp. 316–337. (https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241311331754).

Hsu, L. C., Wang, K. Y., Chih, W. H., and Lin, K. Y. 2015. "Investigating the Ripple Effect in Virtual Communities: An Example of Facebook Fan Pages," *Computers in Human Behavior* (51:PA), Elsevier Ltd, pp. 483–494. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.069).

Kaplan, A. M., and Haenlein, M. 2010. "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," *Business Horizons* (53:1), pp. 59–68. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003).

Katz, E., Haas, H., and Gurevitch, M. 1973. "On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things," *American Sociological Review* (38:2), p. 164. (https://doi.org/10.2307/2094393).

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz (Eds.), The uses of mass Communica- tions: Current perspectives on gratifications research (pp. 19e32). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Keng, C., and Ting, H. 2009. "The Acceptance of Blogs: Using a Customer Experiential Value Perspective," *Internet Research* (19:5), Emerald, pp. 479–495. (https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240910998850).

King, R. A., Racherla, P., and Bush, V. D. 2014. "What We Know and Don't Know about Online Word-of-Mouth: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (28:3), pp. 167–183.

Kreijns, K., Kirschner, P. A., Jochems, W., and Van Buuren, H. 2004. "Determining Sociability, Social Space, and Social Presence in (a) Synchronous Collaborative Groups," *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* (7:2), pp. 155–172.

Li, H., Liu, Y., Xu, X., Heikkilä, J., and Van Der Heijden, H. 2015. "Modeling Hedonic Is Continuance through the Uses and Gratifications Theory: An Empirical Study in Online Games," *Computers in Human Behavior* (48), Elsevier Ltd, pp. 261–272. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.053).

Li, H., Liu, Y., Xu, X., Heikkilä, J., and Van Der Heijden, H. 2015. "Modeling Hedonic Is Continuance through the Uses and Gratifications Theory: An Empirical Study in Online Games," *Computers in Human Behavior* (48). (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.053).

Lin, A., Gregor, S., and Ewing, M. 2008. "Developing a Scale to Measure the Enjoyment of Web Experiences," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (22:4), John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 40–57. (https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20120).

Lin, C. A. 1999. "Online-Service Adoption Likelihood.," *Journal of Advertising Research* (39:2), pp. 79–89.

Liu, I. L. B., Cheung, C. M. K., E-mail, H. K., and Lee, M. K. O. 2016. *User Satisfaction With Microblogging : Information Dissemination Versus Social Networking*, (67:1), pp. 56–70. (https://doi.org/10.1002/asi).

Lu, I. R. R., Kwan, E., Thomas, D. R., and Cedzynski, M. 2011. "Two New Methods for Estimating Structural Equation Models: An Illustration and a Comparison with Two Established Methods," *International Journal of Research in Marketing* (28:3), pp. 258–268.

McQuail, D. 1987. "Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction, 2nd Ed.," *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction, 2nd Ed.*, Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc, Xvi, 352-Xvi, 352.

Menon, S., and Soman, D. 2002. "Managing the Power of Curiosity for Effective Web Advertising Strategies," *Journal of Advertising* (31:3), pp. 1–14.

Nambisan, S., and Baron, R. A. 2007. "Interactions in Virtual Customer Environments: Implications for Product Support and Customer Relationship Management," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (21:2), pp. 42–62.

Nambisan, S., and Baron, R. A. 2009. "Virtual Customer Environments: Testing a Model of Voluntary Participation in Value Co-Creation Activities," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* (26:4), pp. 388–406.

Ozkara, B. Y., Ozmen, M., and Kim, J. W. 2016. "Exploring the Relationship between Information Satisfaction and Flow in the Context of Consumers' Online Search," *Computers in Human Behavior* (63), pp. 844–859. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.06.038).

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., and Podsakoff, N. P. 2003. "Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies," *Journal of Applied Psychology* (88:5), pp. 879–903. (https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879).

Podsakoff, P. M., and Organ, D. W. 1986. "Self-Reports in Organizational Research: Problems and Prospects," *Journal of Management* (12:4), pp. 531–544.

Premkumar, G., Ramamurthy, K., and Liu, H. N. 2008. "Internet Messaging: An Examination of the Impact of Attitudinal, Normative, and Control Belief Systems," *Information and Management* (45:7), pp. 451–457. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2008.06.008).

Qiu, L. Y., and Benbasat, I. 2009. "Evaluating Anthropomorphic Product Recommendation Agents: A Social Relationship Perspective to Designing Information Systems," *Journal of Management Information Systems* (25:4), pp. 145–181. (https://doi.org/10.2753/mis0742-1222250405).

Rafaeli, S. 1990. "Interacting with Media: Para-Social Interaction and Real Interaction," *Mediation, Information, and Communication: Information and Behavior* (3), pp. 125–181.

Ruggiero, T. E. 2000. "Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century," *Mass Communication & Society* (3:1), pp. 3–37. (https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301).

Sparks, B. A., Perkins, H. E., and Buckley, R. 2013. "Online Travel Reviews as Persuasive Communication: The Effects of Content Type, Source, and Certification Logos on Consumer Behavior," *Tourism Management* (39), pp. 1–9. (https://doi.org/DOI 10.1016/j.tourman.2013.03.007).

Stafford, T. F. 1996. "Mechanical Commercial Avoidance: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective AU - Stafford, Marla Royne," *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* (18:2), Routledge, pp. 27–38. (https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.1996.10505049).

Stafford, T. F., Stafford, M. R., and Schkade, L. L. 2004. "Determining Uses and Gratifications for the Internet," *Decision Sciences* (35:2), pp. 259–288. (https://doi.org/10.1111/j.00117315.2004.02524.x).

Wang, W., Segev, S., and Liu, Y. 2015. "Use of Social Networking websites for Product Communication: A Comparative Study of Hispanics and Non-Hispanic Whites," *Computers in Human Behavior* (49), Pergamon, pp. 86–93. (https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CHB.2015.02.051).

Wixom, B. H., and Todd, P. A. 2005. "A Theoretical Integration of User Satisfaction and Technology Acceptance," *Information Systems Research* (16:1), pp. 85–102. (https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1050.0042).

Wixom, B. H., and Todd, P. A. 2005. "A Theoretical Integration of User Satisfaction and Technology Acceptance," *Information Systems Research* (16:1), pp. 85–102. (https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1050.0042).

Wook Ha, Y., Kim, J., Libaque-saenz, C. F., Chang, Y., and Park, M. 2015. "Use and Gratifications of Mobile SNSs : Facebook and KakaoTalk in Korea," *TELEMATICS AND INFORMATICS* (32:3), Elsevier Ltd, pp. 425–438. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2014.10.006).

Xu, C., Ryan, S., Prybutok, V., and Wen, C. 2012. "It Is Not for Fun: An Examination of Social Network website Usage," *Information & Management* (49:5), Elsevier B.V., pp. 210–217. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2012.05.001).

Xu, J. D., Benbasat, I., and Cenfetelli, R. T. 2013. "Integrating Service Quality with System and Information Quality: An Empirical Test in the e-Service Context," *Mis Quarterly* (37:3), pp. 777–794.

Yadav, M. S., and Varadarajan, R. 2005. "Interactivity in the Electronic Marketplace: An Exposition of the Concept and Implications for Research," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (33:4), pp. 585–603.