Statement of Purpose and Study Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the message structure of an online word-of-mouth referral influences the booking intentions of lodging consumers. The objectives were (1) determine what aspects of the message structure of an online word-of-mouth referral influence the booking intentions of lodging consumers and (2) determine whether message structure moderates the relationships between beliefs, attitudes, norms, and booking intentions of online lodging consumers.

Research Questions

1. Does the structure of an online word-of-mouth message influence the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
2. Does the type of claim (positive vs. negative) influence the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
3. Does the "momence" (one-sided vs. two-sided) of the message influence the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
4. Does the type of conclusion (implicit vs. explicit) influence the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?

Research Questions for the First Phase of the Study

1. Does the structure of an online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of behavioral beliefs on the attitudes of online lodging consumers?
2. Does online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of attitude on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
3. Does one-word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of attitudes on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
4. Does online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of subjective norms on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?

Research Questions for the second phase of the study

1. Does online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of behavioral beliefs on the attitudes of online lodging consumers?
2. Does online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of attitude on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
3. Does one-sided word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of subjective norms on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?
4. Does online word-of-mouth message structure moderate the effect of subjective norms on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers?

Overview of Data Capture

Participants: Undergraduate Students
Sample Selection Method: Non-Probability
Procedure: Web-based Questionnaire
Unit of Analysis: Post-treatment

Data Analysis

Data Analysis to address first objective:
The following approach was taken to determine aspects of the message structure of an online word-of-mouth referral influence the booking intentions of online lodging consumers.

Two Independent Two-Way Factorial Design Analyses

One-sided Message

Type of Claim
Positive
Negative

Type of Conclusion
Implicit
1
2

Explicit
3
4

Two-sided Message

Type of Claim
Positive First
Negative First

Type of Conclusion
 Implicit
5
6

Explicit
7
8

Data Analysis to address second objective:
The following approach was taken to determine whether message structure moderates the relationships between beliefs, attitudes, norms, and booking intentions of online lodging consumers.

Methodology and Procedures

Type of Study: Confirmatory, Quantitative Methodology

Research Design

Research Strategy: Quasi-experimental, post-only, pre-formed groups, random assignment to message structures

Research Setting: Computer Laboratory

Constructs

Endogenous
Attitudinal Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, Attitude, Subjective Norm, Booking Intentions

Exogenous
Type of Claim, Message Sideness and Explicitness (conclusion)

Data Analysis continued

Preliminary Findings

Summary of Hypotheses and Results First Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Hypothesized Relationship</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1.</td>
<td>Positive online word-of-mouth messages would have a more positive influence on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2.</td>
<td>Two-sided online word-of-mouth messages would have a more positive influence than one-sided online word-of-mouth messages on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3.</td>
<td>Two-sided online word-of-mouth messages that present positive claims first would have a more positive influence than two-sided online word-of-mouth messages that present negative claims first on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4.</td>
<td>Messages with explicit conclusions would have a more positive influence than messages with implicit conclusions on the booking intentions of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Hypotheses and Results Second Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Hypothesized Relationship</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H5.</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth structure (i.e., type of claim, type of conclusion, and sidedness) would moderate the relationship between behavioral beliefs and the attitudes of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Partially Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6.</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth structure (i.e., type of claim, type of conclusion, and sidedness) would moderate the relationship between the subjective beliefs of online lodging consumers and the subjective beliefs of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7.</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth structure (i.e., type of claim, type of conclusion, and sidedness) would moderate the relationship between the subjective norms of online lodging consumers and the subjective beliefs of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8.</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth structure (i.e., type of claim, type of conclusion, and sidedness) would moderate the relationship between the subjective norms of online lodging consumers and the subjective beliefs of online lodging consumers.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications and Contributions

The current study has valuable implications and contributions to research and practice. This research model and the human-centered approach to online word-of-mouth message structure can be extended to study the impact of referrals of all types, including not only lodging intentions and other consumer-to-consumer product recommendations, but also the future design of effective and efficient social recommendation systems. From a practical perspective, this research demonstrates the importance of online word-of-mouth involving booking intentions. This research suggests that, in consumer-to-consumer product referrals, a lodging company would be better off understanding not only what is said in an online word-of-mouth message but also how consumers frame their hotel recommendations. By better understanding the structure of online word-of-mouth referrals, lodging practitioners taking a long-term view of service quality will be able to address the expectations of their guests.