Older Adults' Travel Website Usage and Their Wellbeing Perception

Eunji Han
Pusan National University
Department of Tourism and Convention
Pusan,Republic of Korea
703sweety@naver.com

Eunkyung Joo
Pusan National University
Department of Tourism and Convention
Pusan,Republic of Korea
jooeunkyung@pusan.ac.kr

Junhyung Kim
Pusan National University
Department of Tourism and Convention
Pusan,Republic of Korea
Corps39@naver.com

Insin Kim
Pusan National University
Department of Tourism and Convention
Pusan,Republic of Korea
insinkim@pusan.ac.kr

***Abstract*—This study attempts to identify the impacts of older adults' innovativeness on parasocial interaction, and examine the linkage between PSI and well-being perception. The 201 U.S. elderlyparticipated in survey conducted from online research survey firm. The conceptual suggested model was tested by the data collected from users of travel websites. The results found thatinnovativeness negatively influenced on PSI. Furthermore, older adults'parasocial interaction was found to generatetheir well-being perception. Managerial and academic implications and direction of future research were provided.**

***IndexTerms*: Parasocial Interaction, Innovativeness, Well-being perception, Online Travel Websites, Well-being, Older adults**

I. INTRODUCTION

Avariety of social relationships between an audienceand media such as TV and radiohas beenexamined in a great diversity of settings(e.g., Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Lather & Moyer-Guse, 2011; Lim & Kim, 2011; Rubin & Step, 2000).Horton and Wohl (1956)initially described this relationship as parasocial interaction (PSI).Althougha large number of studies on PSI have been conducted to date in diverse contexts, it has not been identified which predictors lead to PSI in the online contexts(Keng,Ting & Chen, 2011).

Approximately 59% of the elderly use internet and annually a 6 % point increases(Pew Internet and American Life, 2014). That means older adultsarean important segment in the online marketata rapid rate. Therefore, this study focuses onolder adult internet user's investigation in terms of travel website user's personae such as innovativenessto address the research limitation in PSI with websites,

It is critical to understand older adults'parasocial interactionbecause parasocial interaction generates psychological results (i.e., satisfaction, well-being). Thus, this study attempts to verifythe effect of innovativeness as apredictoron PSI and investigate the relationship between PSI and older adults' wellbeing perception as a resultant outcome.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Parasocial Interaction Websites

Horton and Wohl (1956, p. 215) definedparasocial interactionas a "simulacrum of conversational give and take". This is described asimaginary social relationshipand an one-sided interaction (Cohen, 2004; Fetscherin, 2014)such as an interaction between characters in media and an audience or a viewer, generating intimacy.

Existing researchers have highlighted a crucial role of parasocial interaction in internet contexts (e.g., Men & Tsai, 2013; Thorson & Rodgers, 2006; Tsiotsou, 2015). Despite a growing interest in the virtual environment, it is rare to find research onolder adults' parasocial interactionin online context. Therefore,an extensiveunderstanding of a predictor and an outcome of parasocial interactionneeds to be examined.

2.2 Innovativeness

Innovativeness is defined as "the tendency to learn about and adopt innovations (i.e., new products) within a specific domain of interest" (Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991, p. 211). Szmigin and Carrigan (2000, 2001)emphasized that older adults' innovativeness is more important than younger people's in selecting travel productfor holiday or vacation. That is, older adults' innovativeness has a positive impact on favorable attitude toward experiencing new products or services.

Older adults who have a low level of innovative may rely on social presence such as a web-based persona in experiencing travel products in websites and thus enjoy an imaginary interaction. Therefore, following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Innovativenessof older adults decreases the level of parasocial interaction with travel websites.

2.3 Well-being Perception

Consumer well-being refersto "consumer's perception ofthe extent, to which a brand (a consumer good or service)

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contributes to positiveaffect in various life domains creating an overall perception of the quality-of-lifeimpact of that brand" (Grzeskowiak and Sirgy, 2007, p. 291). According to Sirgy, Lee, & Rahtz (2006) asserted it is considered to enhance quality of life as a fundamental personal goal.A large number of researches on online usageillustrated the positive impact on individual's psychological or mental well-being (Cotten, Ford, Ford, & Hale, 2014; Heo, Chun, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2015; Shapira, Barak, & Gal, 2007). Specifically, to improveolder adults'quality of life, it may be necessary toachievetheir fundamental needs associated withnot only psychological, psychosocialmotivations but also interpersonal motivations (e.g., Lim & Kim, 2011; Perloff & Krevans, 1987; Turner, 1993; Wang, Fink & Cai, 2008).

Based on previous literature, hypothesis was designed as follows:

H2: older adults'parasocial interaction with travel websites increases their well-being perception.

III. METHODS

3.1 Measurement Instrument

Three main constructs in current study were measured and validated based on previous literature: innovativeness, parasocial interaction with travel websites, well-being perception. For innovativeness, three measureswere borrowed from Szmigin & Carrigan's (2000) study.For measuring parasocial interaction with travel websites, six items were borrowed from Hoerner (1999)'s research. Four measuresfor well-being perception were borrowed from previous researches: Grzeskowiak & Sirgy (2007); Kim, Jeon & Hyun (2012). All these scale items were measured on a five-point Likert scale rating from 1-point: "strongly disagree" to 5-point of "strongly agree".

3.2 Sampling

For thisempirical research, target was selected as following: those who are 50 years and over, who have purchased goods or services in online travel websites, and who live in the United States. The online survey was performed viaa research company in the U.S.The data gathered from older adults online consumers were utilized foranalysis. The mean age of participants in survey was 59 years. Approximately 53% were female. In terms of yearly income,about 36% reported under $40,000. Approximately 58% of the sample did not have their own job.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 The Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was runbefore structural analysis in order to validate the measure.The fit indices showed the model had an acceptable goodness-of-fit: the chi-square was 131.535 with 61 degrees of freedom ($p < .001$); comparative fit index (CFI) = .962, incremental fit index (IFI) = .962, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = .951, normed fit index (NFI) = .932, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .076 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

All measurement items used in this study revealed that standardized factor loadings were ranging from 0.735 to 0.889. In addition,all factor loadings of items were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). All constructs' average variance extracted (AVE) values surpassed 0.5 cut-off valuerecommended by Fornell & Lacker (1981) (see TABLE 1). Therefore, convergent validity wasachieved. Discriminant validity between latent constructs in this research should beassessed.For Discriminant validity, the AVE valuesand squared correlations coefficient were compared. All AVE values were greater than values of squared correlations, so it was found each latent factor was distinct from other factor. To identify if items and latent constructs are reliable, composite reliabilities were estimated. Because all the values of constructs'composite reliabilityexceeded.7 indicating the threshold (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), reliability was established.

Table I. Correlation Metrics

	Construct	No. of items	AVE	1	2	3
1	Innovative -ness	3	0.638	0.799 [a]	-0.225[b]	-0.160
2	parasocial interaction with travel websites	6	0.678	0.051[c]	0.925	0.857
3	Wellbeing perception	4	0.744	0.026	0.734	0.897

a.composite reliability is indicated along the diagonal; b. correlations are above the diagonal; c. squared correlations are below the diagonal

4.2 The Structural Model

The relationshipshypothesized in this studywere verified through structural equation modeling analysis. The fit indices showed the structural model had anacceptablegoodness-of-fit: the chi-square was 131.995 with 62 degrees of freedom ($p < .001$); CFI = .962, IFI = .962, TLI = .952, NFI = .931, RFI = .914, and RMSEA = .075.

Two conceptual relationships hypothesized in this researchwere all supported. First, older adults' innovativeness (β = -0.220, $p < 0.01$)significantly influenced parasocial interaction with travel websites as proposed. Therefore, H1 receives support. As predicted, older adults'parasocial interaction with travel websites was a positive and strong predictor of older adults'well-being perception (β = 0.857, $p < 0.01$),thus showing that H2 does also receive support.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Because of a lack of empirical study on parasocial interaction in the online context, this study demonstratedpredictors and consequences of internet users'parasocial interaction. Therefore, this research aimed to verifyimpact of innovativeness on parasocial interaction with travel websites, and examine the relationship between parasocial interactionontravel websitesand well-being perception.

First, the result of this study revealed that innovativeness has a significant andnegative impact on parasocial interaction with travel websites (-0.220, $p < .05$).It can be interpreted that older adults' innovative characteristicsdecreaseparasocial

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interaction with online travel websites.These innovative older adults may select a new travel product without exploring postscript in the websites.This research extended the previous literature to the psychology and gerontology literature in tourism field by testing empirically hypothesized relationship between older adults' innovativeness and parasocial interaction with travel websites.

Second, the finding of the current study showed that parasocial interaction with travel websites is positively associated with older adults'well-beingperception (0.857, $p < .05$).This resultconfirmed the positivelink fromparasocial interaction to well-being perceptionin this empirical study. In addition,this study expanded the existing works to the internet context by demonstrating the positive linkage between internet usage and perceived well-being (e.g., Cotten et al., 2014; Heo et al., 2015; Shapira et al., 2007).

VI. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Althoughwe theoreticallyunderstand older adults'PSI on the websites, caution should be made. This study's participants were invited by an online survey company in US. That is, some factors of macro level might be ignored(Ball-Rokeach, 1998). Therefore, macro factors such asorganizational or system effects should be considered in future research. Also, authors suggest that investigating sub-dimensions of PSI should be conducted.

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