Investigating the ripple effect in virtual communities: An example of Facebook Fan Pages

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ABSTRACT
Integrating the uses and gratifications theory (U&G theory) with the dual mediation hypothesis (DMH), this research proposes and empirically tests a model aimed at understanding how a ripple effect, a phenomenon that causes marketing messages to diffuse more extensively due to the message receivers' decisions to spreading the messages through their social networks, is created in virtual communities. A total of 599 Facebook (FB) Fan Page users in Taiwan were recruited and the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the research hypotheses. The results of our revised model showed that both perceived news entertainment and perceived news informativeness positively influenced the interestingness dimension of attitude toward the news, the hedonic dimension of attitude toward the FB Fan Page and the utilitarian dimension of attitude toward the FB Fan Page. The hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of attitude toward the FB Fan Page resulted in eWOM intentions (intention to give, pass and obtain information). The interestingness dimension of attitude toward the news plays an important mediating role in the proposed model. Based on the findings, implications and future research suggestions are provided.

Keywords: Facebook Fan Page; Uses and gratifications theory; Dual mediation hypothesis; eWOM intentions; ...

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