Effect of Language Style in Virtual community On Consumer Purchase Intentions

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introduction

Communities of transaction

Communities of interest

Communities of relationship
Literature Review and Research Question

- Language style not only reveals individual personality but also affect social interaction (Pennebaker et al., 1999)

- Intimacy is conveyed by the language style, not just the content (Hornstein, 1985)

- Source credibility effectiveness depends on the language style (wegner et al. 1981)

- A positive change in LSM between a product review and the interest group's linguistic style results in positive changes in conversion rates (Ludwig et al. 2013)

Research Question: How language style in virtual community affects consumers’ purchase intention?
underlying process

- **written exchange** is the main form of virtual community interaction.
- language style serves as a *heuristic cue* in virtual community.
Study 1----field study

✧ **Design:** language style (formal vs. informal)

✧ **Procedure**
- collaborated with an online store
- post a topic called “group buying of clothes” in virtual community

✧ **Manipulation** of language style
- Formal style: written language
- Informal style: slangs, casual phrase, popular online expression

✧ **DV:** interest in this group buying activity
- number of actual purchase
Study 1—Field Study

- Preliminary test

- Sample: 42

- Manipulation check:
  - Language style: $M_{\text{formal}} = 4.68$, $M_{\text{informal}} = 3.10$, $P < 0.001$

- Alternative explanation:
  - Humor: $M_{\text{formal}} = 3.09$, $M_{\text{informal}} = 3.80$, $P > 0.1$

- Field study

- Stage one: interest ($M_{\text{formal}} = 29$, $M_{\text{informal}} = 37$)

- Stage two: actual purchase ($M_{\text{formal}} = 7$, $M_{\text{informal}} = 12$)
Study 2

✿ **Design:** 2X2 between subject (250 students)

_language style_ (formal vs. informal) X _Suspicious_ (high vs. low)

✿ **Manipulation** of language style

• Formal style: written language

• Informal style: slangs, casual phrase, popular online expression
(40 sample: \(M_{\text{formal}}=5.10, M_{\text{informal}}=2.85, P<0.001\))

✿ **Manipulation** of Suspicious

• the regulation of the virtual community

✿ **DV:** _purchase intention_

✿ **Other measures:** _online trust, psychological distance, mood_
Results

Purchase intention

- For suspicious high:
  - Formal language style: 3.32
  - Informal language style: 3

- For suspicious low:
  - Formal language style: 2.97
  - Informal language style: 3.58

P=0.27

P=0.02
Bootstrap analysis indicate a significant sequential mediators’ indirect effect with a 95% CI from 0.035 to 0.156 (effect size=0.077, SE=0.029)
Study 3

- **Design:** 2X2 between subject (307 students) language style (formal vs. informal) X Suspicious (high vs. low)

- **Manipulation of language style**
  - Formal style: written language
  - Informal style: slangs, casual phrase, popular online expression

- **Manipulation of Suspicious**
  - order of positive review (earlier vs. later)
    \[ M_{\text{earlier}} = 5.39, M_{\text{later}} = 5.01; P=0.01 \]

- **DV:** purchase intention

- **Other measures:** online trust, psychological distance
Results

purchase intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>formal language style</th>
<th>informal language style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>suspicious high</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspicious low</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P=0.50  P=0.00
Sequential mediation

Bootstrap analysis indicate a significant multiple mediators’ indirect effect with a 95% CI from 0.055 to 0.243 (effect size=0.129, SE=0.046)
Conclusion

- Comparing to formal language style; informal language style in virtual community can increase consumers’ purchase intentions, when there is low suspicion.

- Psychological distance and online trust are the sequential mediators of the effect of language style on consumer purchase intentions.