

Exploring the factors of gastronomy blogs influencing readers' intention to taste

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Abstract

In recent years gastronomy blogs providing an important channel for electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to take place are quickly becoming a popular new source of reading material for blog readers. However, little is published to understand what factors from gastronomy blogs play critical roles in predicting readers' intention to taste local food and beverages. Based on reviewing previous studies, this study developed a research model containing three main categories of variables: (1) inspiring taste desire (i.e., experiencing appeal and generating empathy), (2) forming taste awareness (i.e., providing image, delivering knowledge and presenting guides) and (3) facilitating interpersonal interaction (i.e., social influence and cybercommunity influence), and suggested that these potential variables can influence readers' behavioral intention to taste directly. Data collected from 329 respondents in Taiwan were tested against the research model using the structural equation modeling approach. The results indicated that excluding delivering knowledge, all the other proposed variables (i.e., experiencing appeal, generating empathy, providing image, presenting guides, social influence and cybercommunity influence) were the critical components significantly influencing online readers' intention to taste, and the proposed model accounted for 70% of the variance. The findings of this study will not only help hospitality and tourism practitioners in understanding the perceptions of potential customers, but also provide insights into research on technology's influence on hospitality and gastronomy.

Keyword : Gastronomy blogs, eWOM, Behavioral intention, Structural equation modeling