Research article

Effects of information quality on information adoption on social media review platforms: moderating role of perceived risk

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ABSTRACT

With the integration of social media and e-commerce, social media review platforms provide consumers with a place to share information and create electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Information from e-WOM plays an important role in consumers' decision-making process. However, the information adoption process of users of social media review platforms remains unclear. Thus, this study builds a model to investigate how information quality affects individual information adoption on e-commerce platforms and explores the moderating effects of perceived risk on information quality, perceived diagnosticity, and information credibility. Structural equation modeling and regression analysis are used to test the proposed model. Results show that information quality consists of content quality, expression quality, and utility quality, all of which effectively affect the information adoption on socialized e-commerce platforms through perceived diagnosticity and information credibility. Findings also suggest that perceived risk positively moderates the effects of information quality on perceived diagnosticity.

1. Introduction

Internet technology has played a huge role in our daily life and the accumulation of massive information has soared, affecting the transaction model and experience environment of online retail and the sharing economy (Olmedilla et al., 2019). With the maturity of social commerce and Web 3.0, along with the update and optimization of social media, the exchange of information between consumers has been further accelerated. For economic platform carriers and providers of service and product, the electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) information presented on the Internet has an important effect on the selection and purchase of products or services. When product trading was done offline with point-to-point interaction, the dissemination of product quality and value was with the help of retailer advertising, and the real effect perception was transmitted by consumers face to face or through media. At present, consumers' positive or negative online comments on specific products or services on the web are the main form of e-WOM information. Before making purchase decisions, consumers not only search for product or service information but also read reviews posted by other users (Utz

et al., 2012). These online reviews serve as a primary information source for consumers to make purchase decisions (Ahn and Choi, 2012; Jiang et al., 2016). Thus, many e-commerce companies are aware of the value of online reviews and offer special web-based platforms for consumers to communicate and post their online reviews (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006 Jiang et al., 2020a; Jiang et al., 2020b).

Through social media platforms, consumers independently generate, share, and consume information or reviews (Leist, 2013). Many platform enterprises design independent social media systems to encourage consumers to provide comments based on products and services. For example, Airbnb, a housing sharing platform, designed a comment area to facilitate users in generating comments and new users to adopt comments. The level of quality affects users' trust in the platform and their purchase intention (Mao et al., 2020), and users' trust tendency also plays a role in the behavior of accepting and recommending products and services (Tang et al., 2019). In 2011, the research report of the International Data Corporation indicated that the total amount of global data exceeded 1.8 ZB, and is expected to reach 35 ZB in 2020 (Ghasemaghaei and Hassanein, 2016). It can be seen that the ease of data and

information generation and the amount of generation has continued to increase. In terms of online product reviews, the threshold for user-generated content is low, and thus, these platforms can generate considerable information. Faced with so much unstructured and disordered information, how can consumers obtain effective information from massive amounts of data? The enterprise's Internet algorithm technology application and big data identification push product information. How can users determine whether the quality of the information is enough to make them trust the platform and adopt the information? These practical issues are very interesting for academics and practitioners.

The development speed of information technology has made online comment information generated by user interaction an important source of decision-making. The precondition for decision-making lies in the use of information, and the degree of willingness to adopt is affected by a series of factors, such as information quality. In this context, this research intends to address how the quality of the information in online reviews affects users' or consumers' willingness to adopt reviews. The current research on information quality focuses mainly on the information industry (Paggi et al., 2021), the medical industry (Alolayyan et al., 2020), the manufacturing industry (Hong et al., 2021), the construction industry (Sheng et al., 2020), and so on. Decision-makers and managers pay more and more attention to the persuasiveness of online comments information (Liu et al., 2020; Tsao and Hsieh, 2015). Many studies have verified how sales are influenced by online reviews (Forman et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2013; Jensen et al., 2013; Jiang et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2013), ascertained the factors that affect consumers to generate online reviews (Moe and Schweidel, 2012), and justified attitude and measures of management in response to comment information (Proserpio and Zervas, 2017). The current research on online review information are relatively abundant and comprehensive, but the research content focuses on the definition. Although research has taken the role of information quality into consideration (that is, the quality of online reviews), insufficient attention has been given to how information quality at the economic platform affects users' intention to adopt information. In terms of information adoption, existing research has focused mainly on the effects of traffic experience and information on route selection (Zhang et al., 2019), the effect of agricultural product type information selection on the sustainable development of agriculture (Bavorová et al., 2020; Le et al., 2020), the effect of information dissemination on the use of new energy (Palm and Lantz, 2020), the choice of financial services (Zhu et al., 2021), and so on. Regarding the adoption of online review information, some scholars have also explored the effect of review content on user behavior. For instance, Erkan and Evans (2016) confirm the useful information that affects e-WOM information adoption; Lee and Yang (2015) suggest that helpfulness rating and referencing degree exert a positive effect on information adoption; Li (2017) considers the effects of information disclosures from online reviews; and Peng et al. (2016) verify that information sources and the quality of information obviously impacts female user information adoption. Prior literature has proven that information adoption is significantly influenced by the credibility of information sources (Cheung et al., 2008; Peng et al., 2016; Sussman and Siegal, 2003). Compared with some non-mainstream online review systems and communities, few popular online review source platforms, such as Dianping and Douban in China, are highly trusted by consumers. Existing research focuses on the direct effect of information quality on the willingness to adopt, and few studies have focused on other factors in the process of information quality affecting users' information adoption.

Based on the practical issues of online reviews and the current state of related theoretical research, this research takes the information quality of online reviews as a starting point to explore the main factors affecting users' adoption of information. The research idea is as follows: by exploring consumers' attention to the quality categories of review information on the platform with the guidance of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), the paths are divided and an influence mechanism for

consumers to adopt information is constructed. Perceived diagnosticity plays an important role in the sensitivity of consumers to information. Familiar information (such as brand names) will increase the ability of consumers to diagnose information, thereby increasing their willingness to adopt information (Hernandez et al., 2014). The dissemination of misinformation and false information affects the user's information adoption, which causes consumers to focus more on the credibility of the information. However, compared with the credibility of the source, diagnostic factors play a greater role (Yin and Zhang, 2020). Therefore, perceived diagnosticity with higher attention and greater influence is taken as the central route of the influence mechanism for users to adopt information, and information credibility is taken as the peripheral route. At the same time, consumers' risk perception and risk attitude affect their online behaviors (Forsythe and Shi, 2003; Mou et al., 2017; Wu and Gaytan, 2013). Risk-averse individuality affects the perceived usefulness of online reviews (Casalo et al., 2015), and perceived risk shapes information usefulness (Hussain et al., 2017). Therefore, this study also explores how perceived risk moderate information affect perceived diagnosability and information credibility.

This study intends to solve the following questions: (1) In online comments on social media, which aspects of information quality consumers are more concerned with? (2) What path can further promote the effects of information quality on the willingness to adopt information? (3) How does perceived risk affect information quality? To solve these problems, this study uses quantitative research methods guided by ELM and selects Dianping as its case study. Compared with general e-commerce platforms, these platforms contain many unfiltered online comments, which cannot be manipulated by merchants, and thus, the comments are highly credible and influential. The research content is based on the preconditions of information quality and discusses how the central and peripheral routes promote consumer information adoption and enrich the combined research of detailed and possible models with information quality and information adoption. The research results provide system optimization ideas for current platform companies to improve user service perception and the interactive functions of online comment communities.

2. Literature review

2.1. Information quality

Information quality is an important variable for the success of an information system model and is defined as the fitness of information characteristics for information users (Wang and Strong, 1996). Given this definition, information quality refers to users' subjective judgment of whether the information characteristics meet their own needs and intended use. Studies on online reviews described information quality as the information characteristics of the content quality of consumers' reviews (Park et al., 2007). The information quality of online reviews has received considerable attention in the existing literature. Studies have confirmed that high-quality reviews exert a strong influence on product evaluation (Park and Lee, 2008), website evaluation (Ragowsky, 2008), and purchase prediction (Park et al., 2007). Many studies have considered information quality as a multi-dimensional variable and divided it into several dimensions in various contexts. For example, Wang et al. (1995) measured information quality in terms of accessibility, usefulness, comprehensibility, and credibility. Wang et al., (1998) proposed a framework to depict information quality according to four factors, including intrinsic, accessible, contextual and expressive, each consisting of various dimensions of information characteristics. In the online opinion adoption model by Cheung et al. (2009), the dimensions of relativities, timeliness, correctness, and comprehensiveness were identified as the key measures of information quality. Chen and Tseng (2011) adopted the information quality framework of Wang and Strong (1996) to derive representative features and dimensions of online product reviews. Dancer et al. (2014) demonstrated that relevance and

comprehensiveness are two key determinants of information quality concerning consumers' motivation to share information in Dell's community forums. In online review studies, Filieri (2015) measured the information quality of e-WOM by depth, factuality, breadth, relevance, and credibility.

Throughout the existing research, the multi-dimensional variable of information quality cannot be separated from its specific research scenario. As the depth of research content increases, the dimensions of information quality are constantly updated based on research scenarios. Combined with the actual situation of social media review platforms, the present study considers three dimensions: content quality, utility quality, and expression quality. The effectiveness of social media content for user participation is regulated by the content context, but consumers are more concerned with image content than text content (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). The utility and presentation ability (i.e. quality and accuracy) of online information of professionals is higher than that of ordinary people (Yilmaz Ferhatoglu and Kudsioglu, 2020). Content quality refers to the degree of conformity between the content delivered and the objective facts. High content quality truly reflects the actual situation of products or services, and users can benefit from recognizing objective facts, thereby leading to high perception of information quality. Utility quality refers to the degree of completion in which the information itself achieves its mission. In our study, utility quality indicates whether information on social commerce platforms is beneficial to users when selecting the right products or merchants and making the right consumption decisions. If the utility quality of the information is high enough to help users purchase conveniently, then users would perceive a high quality of information. Expression quality is concerned with whether online reviews are comprehensive and sufficient to enable users to obtain useful information. If the information helps users fully understand products or services, then the overall evaluation of the information quality would be enhanced.

2.2. Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

The ELM is widely used as a fundamental model to describe the information processing behavior of consumers with different levels of involvement (Hussain et al., 2017). As proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the ELM suggests that the formation or change of the information of recipient's attitude relies on the level of detail in information processing. People process message information in two ways: central and peripheral. The central route requires the information receiver to exert great energy and effort on information analysis, thereby emphasizing the individual's consideration of the information content itself. The accuracy and authenticity of the information in particular relies on consumers' self-cognition work to process and judge the nature of information (Yoo

et al., 2020). Related research shows that the presentation of the results of decision-making and behavior is often based on the objective evaluation of information, so the formation of the central path is enduring. In the peripheral route, the recipient has little concern for the cognitive factors of the information and pays close attention to the external factors that are associated indirectly with the argument of the message (Cheung et al., 2008; Shu and Scott, 2014). The external environmental factors include information sources, text intonation, brand reputation, etc. These content evaluation costs are lower than the central route and do not emphasize the degree of direct realization of information processing (Zhou, 2012). As a result, the peripheral route will also be associated with the tendency of individuals or organizations to choose. The choice of processing route depends on the information receiver's level of involvement. Under high-involvement conditions, the recipient is motivated to perform detailed information processing and tends to follow the central route to process information. Conversely, under low-involvement conditions, the recipient does not exert much energy on refined information processing and prefers the peripheral route instead.

The e-WOM conversation is a basic information transfer process from the sender to the receiver (Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Nevertheless, the effects of information on different persons could be incongruent. The same content can evoke various notions from one receiver to another (Chaiken and Eagly, 1976; Cheung et al., 2008). Hence, to investigate the mechanism of how individuals internalize their receipt of information, prior studies focused on information adoption and used the ELM to examine the influence mechanism of information or idea adoption. This study applies perceived diagnosticity to the central route of the model, and the credibility of information to the peripheral route of the model. Information quality in the context of e-WOM affects consumers' perceptions and intentions to purchase. Product reputation signals and purchasing expertise also affect consumer perception diagnosis. Consumers believe that highly popular review information is more helpful for consumers to diagnose service quality and performance, but such information requires time and effort to accumulate, which is a long-term process (Filieri et al., 2018). Meanwhile, consumers' perception diagnosis is also affected by their factors. Consumers with low knowledge are more diagnostic of easy-to-understand information. On the contrary, knowledgeable consumers' strong cognitive abilities at the perceptual level enable them to diagnose across conditions (Kardes et al., 1994). Findings have shown that data recognition of perceived diagnosticity and the cultivation of cognitive ability requires more time and effort, and its characteristics match the central route of ELM. Relevant scholars posit that information usefulness influences users' adoption intention and that perceived information usefulness can be affected by the credibility of information sources (a type of peripheral route) (Shen et al., 2013; Sussman and Siegal, 2003). They explain information adoption behavior
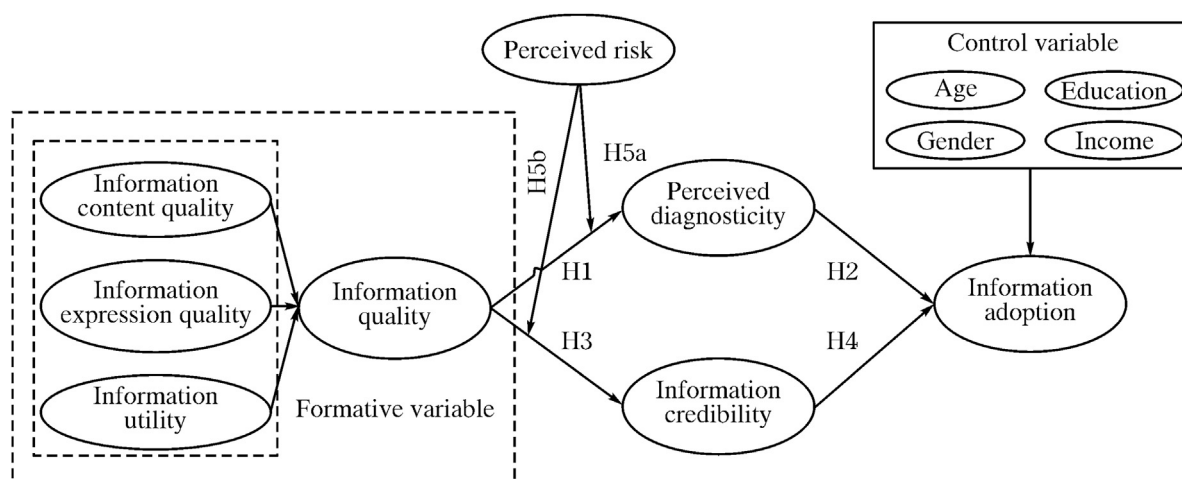

Fig. 1. Research model of information adoption process.

in various situations, such as online Q&A forums (Zhang et al., 2017), service adoption (Zhang et al., 2020), and travel websites (Tseng and Wang, 2016). Online comments generated by social media and economic platforms promote information sharing and dissemination. The design of convenient interactive channels also needs to consider the credibility and information quality; however, the user reputation mechanism of existing websites can quickly solve the credibility of information (Alsmadi and O'Brien, 2020). Related studies also show that information credibility has no obvious relationship with related data literacy, and the interaction with information sources is more significant (Chang et al., 2021). Therefore, it is not difficult to find that the credibility of information is easier to identify and evaluate than perceived diagnosticity; it takes less time and manpower, and the credibility of information is compatible with the peripheral path of ELM.

2.3. Perceived risk

The use of social media is very extensive, and online comment information in the media platform can be generated very quickly. However, when users identify and self-assess the quality of online comment information, they will consciously perceive risks. Perceived risk is the consideration of when users adopt online comment information on social media. Consumers' perception of the value of products and services affects their behavior and decision-making (Liu et al., 2020). The willingness and behavior of users to adopt information is driven by risks identified by self-perception, rather than risks identified by others. Of course, consumers' perceived risk has a low degree of correlation with data factors, which is linked to the risk in self-awareness. At the same time, a user's judgment on whether to use social media to log in or make decisions also depends on the perceived risk (Khalil and Karam, 2015). Perceived risks and consumers' trust in online reviews have a profound impact on consumers' attitude and behavior towards online reviews, while risk-taking has a direct effect on trust intention (Hansen et al., 2018).

3. Research model and hypotheses

According to ELM, central and peripheral routes play roles in information adoption. We select the perceived diagnosticity as the central route and information credibility as the peripheral route. Furthermore, because this study focuses on the quality of online reviews, it integrates information quality into the model and enriches the content of information quality by dividing it into three dimensions: CQ, EQ, and UQ. Finally, perceived risk leads to uncertainty anxiety and affects an individual's level of involvement, which is germane to the route selection for information processing. An individual's risk perception differs in information searching and purchasing. Thus, to improve our understanding of consumers' information adoption processes on social media review platforms, we examine how perceived risk moderates information quality with perceived diagnosticity and information credibility. Finally, to exclude the effect of demographic characteristic factors on the dependent variable, we consider factors consisting of age, gender, education, and income as control variables in the model. Fig. 1 shows our proposed research model.

3.1. Information quality, perceived diagnosticity, and information adoption

Information quality refers to the overall quality of online reviews evaluated by users. The information quality of social media online reviews will have a positive effect when consumers face decision-making needs and behavioral guidance. The inaccuracy, incompleteness, and unreality of low-quality information will affect consumers' perception results and behavioral decisions, and may even produce harmful conclusions (Song et al., 2021). High-quality information presents complete, true, timely, and effective content as much as possible, which can

help consumers fully understand product quality and service levels, thereby enhancing users' confidence in making the right purchase decision, and through online comment information on social media platforms, they can obtain high-quality income. Perceived diagnosticity refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a website as being able to transfer related product information that helps them understand and evaluate the effectiveness of products and services (Jiang and Benbasat, 2004). In this study, perceived diagnosticity denotes consumers' perception of how online reviews help them to understand and evaluate a product or purchase. Therefore, to ensure that consumers understand the actual utility of products and services, they will understand and evaluate the actual quality of the review information, and also consider whether to adopt the information understood and evaluated by consumers based on the quality of information and whether to contribute to subsequent product consumption and services. Consumers make appropriate decisions.

The process of perceiving and diagnosing information quality is easy and simple. First, consumers cannot know whether the website provides comprehensive product information and how well online reviews cover product and service perception information. Second, consumer perception diagnosis is affected by the degree of participation and trust tendency. The higher the degree and tendency, the better the result of consumer perception diagnosis. Finally, consumer perception diagnosis is affected by their cognitive ability. If consumers who browse online reviews believe that these reviews have high diagnostic ability and can help consumers determine the actual quality and performance of the product, then consumers may accept the relevant comments and suggestions for their purchase decision. Therefore, the more detailed the degree of consumer's perception of information quality, the more obvious their tendency to adopt review information.

Thus, we present the following hypotheses:

H1. Information quality positively affects perceived diagnosticity.

H2. Perceived diagnosticity positively affects information adoption intention.

3.2. Information quality, information credibility, and information adoption

Based on relevant literature, this study believes that information credibility is more concerned with consumers' perception of the quality of social media online information and the degree of trust from the perspective of reputation (Song et al., 2021). With the development of Internet communication technology, almost anyone can post online comments on social media comment platforms. Therefore, consumers are skeptical of the quality of online review information on social media and are not sure whether the review information presented by platforms and providers is true and reliable. The quality of information can help users judge the credibility of the information, thereby prompting consumers to consider whether to adopt the information and make corresponding purchase decisions. If users regard the review quality as high, then they would trust it and consider it reliable. On the contrary, if users doubt the quality of reviews, they will consider whether to trust and adopt. Previous research has confirmed that argument quality positively affects the information credibility of online reviews (Luo et al., 2014).

In this study, information credibility is defined as consumers' perception of the information authenticity and credibility on a social media review platform. Consumers are the sources of online reviews on such a platform. On the one hand, consumers can describe their real experiences with products and services by providing more honest evaluations than merchants. On the other hand, consumers may provide unrealistic recommendations or commit malicious slander in case of poor supervision. Consumers would adopt information on a platform to help them make decisions only if they believe that the information is credible. Otherwise, they would not adopt the information. Cheung et al. (2009) found that the perceived credibility of e-WOM is a critical determinant of consumers' information adoption in China's online discussion forums.

Therefore, the degree of information credibility is easier to achieve than perceived diagnosticity. Consumers can observe the reputation mechanism of social media platforms, select user reviews with high reputation levels, recognize choices, and make decisions.

Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3. Information quality has an energetic effect on information credibility.

H4. Information credibility affects the intention to adopt information.

3.3. Moderating effects of perceived risk

Forsythe and Shi (2003) defined perceived risk as the subjective perceptions of any possible losses in online shopping. Conversely, this study describes perceived risk as a consumer's perception of losses caused by the product or the purchase. When consumers purchase products or services at higher costs, the perceived risk of decision-making is higher. Perceived risk considers uncertainty and consequences, and the main categories are financial, psychological, and time losses. Therefore, in the process of adopting online reviews, the risks that consumers focus on have more to do with economic benefits, including product quality and service level (Hussain et al., 2017). When consumers face high perceived risks and high costs, consumers will examine the relevant information on the selected products on social media platforms more closely to avoid losses as much as possible (Wang and Chang, 2013). Under the influence of perceived risk, consumers' attention to the perceived diagnosticity of information quality is also constantly changing. At the same time, when consumers perceive risks, they also begin to attach importance to the credibility of the information. Individuals with high-risk perceptions have high involvement levels. According to ELM theory, a high level of involvement results in the central route of information processing. In this situation, users carefully analyze information. High-quality information is useful for users to judge products' or services' qualities. Individuals with a high perceived risk have a disposition to search for reliable reference data and may focus on information quality to reduce or avoid possible losses. We believe perceived risk positively moderates the effect of information quality on perceived diagnosticity and information credibility.

Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H5a. Perceived risk positively moderates the relationship of information quality with perceived diagnosticity.

H5b. Perceived risk positively moderates the relationship of information quality with information credibility.

4. Method

4.1. Instrument development

The measurement of the constructs was designed following previous studies, and appropriate modifications were made to match our research scenario. Items of information content quality were directed by the research results of Wang and Strong (1996) and Alkhattabi et al. (2010). Scales of information utility quality were based on the achievements of Wang and Strong (1996) and Maltz (2000). Information expression quality was measured using the items adopted from the study of Wang and Strong (1996). Perceived diagnosticity and information adoption were measured following Filieri (2015). Information credibility was measured based on the work of Luo et al. (2013). Perceived risk was measured according to Tseng and Wang (2016). The study was conducted in the Chinese context and we performed back translation to ensure accuracy of the translation. The items were first translated into Chinese. Then, these Chinese measurements were translated back into English by another co-author. Next, the two English versions were compared by the two co-authors, and the original Chinese version was formed. Two professors in information system were requested to provide

suggestions on the validity of the expression. Some modifications were made according to their suggestions. Lastly, 25 students who used online review information in a social media review platform were invited for a pilot test. They were required to evaluate the comprehensibility of the items. Based on the test results, the expression of the measurement was adjusted further, and a formal questionnaire was developed. The detailed items and corresponding references are shown in Table 1, measured by 7-point Likert scale.

4.2. Data collection

Respondents who used Dianping, one of the most popular social media review platforms in China, were chosen to answer the questionnaire. Data were collected by disseminating an online questionnaire link in June 2017, and this procedure lasted for a month. Once the respondents successfully submitted the questionnaire, they had the opportunity to draw their prizes, which included a smartphone, a mobile phone, traffic, or bill. A total of 277 usable questionnaires were obtained.

Among the valid respondents, 57% were female and 43% were male. Furthermore, 2.8% of them were under 18 years old, 66.1% of them were between 18 and 24 years old, and 31.1% were older than 24 years. Most respondents had university- or college-level education (65%), and 56.3% had an annual income of 1000–3000 RMB. The sample demographics are shown in Table 2.

5. Empirical analysis and results

In this study, all constructs were treated as reflective, except for information quality, which was modeled as a formative variable. Partial least squares (PLS)-based applications are convenient for dealing with models containing reflective and formative constructs. Accordingly, Smart PLS 2.0 was used to analyze our model. First, we evaluated the model's validity and reliability. Second, we tested the main effects of the model. Finally, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to test the moderating effects.

5.1. Analysis of measurement model

We ascertained the convergent validity and internal consistency initially by calculating the values of each construct's item-to-construct loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's α, and composite reliabilities (CRs). Cross loadings (Appendix A) were greater than 0.7 (Chin et al., 2003). The loadings between each item and the principal construct exceeded that in the other constructs. These results demonstrate good convergent and discriminant validities. Table 3 presents AVE values > 0.50 and CRs and Cronbach's α > 0.70, all of which indicate acceptable convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 4 reveals that the square root of the AVE of each construct exceeds the correlation of each pair of latent variables. The results show that the discriminant validity of the model is satisfactory.

Considering that the data were obtained from the respondents' self-report, we ran Harman's single factor test for the common method bias. Using principal component analysis, we found seven extracted variables and an explained variance of 71.677%. For the seven variables, the largest explained variance was 29.095%, which indicated that no one factor accounted for the majority of the overall variance. Thus, this study was free from common method bias.

5.2. Hypothesis testing

We discussed the second-order effect judgments of information content quality, information utility quality, and information expression quality on information quality to explore the issue of consumers' willingness to adopt online comment information in social media based on the above models and assumptions. We also analyzed the effects of information quality on consumers' willingness and behavior to adopt

Table 1
Constructs and measurement items.

Construct	Items	Sources
ICQ	The review information is a real consumption experience. The image that the review information contains is an accurate reflection of the product or consumption environment. The review information of the product or consumption environment is objective. My own consumption experience is similar to that described in the comments.	Wang and Strong (1996), Alkhattabi et al. (2010)
IUQ	The review information is up-to-date. The review information is updated frequently. The review information is beneficial to my purchase decision. The review information is appropriate for me to make a purchase decision.	Wang and Strong (1996), Maltz (2000)
IEQ	The quantity of review information is large. The length of review information is suitable. The review information is comprehensive. The point of view of the review information is easily understood.	Wang and Strong (1996)
PD	The review information can help me judge the quality of products. The review information can help me know a merchant's credit. The review information can help me gain familiarity with the product. The review information can help me understand the performance of the product.	Filieri (2015)
IC	The review information is believable. The review information is factual. The review information is credible. The review information is trustworthy. The review information is comprehensive.	Luo et al. (2013)
IA	Reviews made it easy for me to make a purchase decision (e.g., to purchase or not to purchase). Reviews have enhanced my effectiveness in making a purchase decision. Reviews have motivated me to make a purchase decision. I will choose a product according to the review information.	Filieri (2015)
PR	I am concerned about cheating. I worry about a product/service problem. I worry that my consumption will not provide value for my money.	Tseng and Wang (2016)

Note: ICQ: information content quality; IUQ: information utility quality; IEQ: information expression quality; PD: perceived diagnosticity; IC: information credibility; IA: information adoption; PR: perceived risk.

Table 2
Sample characteristics.

Constructs and measurement items	Category	Frequency (N=277)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	119	43.0
	Female	158	57.0
Age	<18 years	8	2.8
	18–24 years	183	66.1
	25–30 years	55	19.9
	>30 years	31	11.2
Education	High school or less	12	4.3
	Junior college	37	13.4
	Undergraduate	180	65.0
	Master's degree or higher	48	17.3
Income	≤1000 RMB	64	23.1
	1000–3000 RMB	156	56.3
	3001–5000 RMB	38	13.7
	>5000 RMB	19	6.9

Table 3
Results of descriptive statistics, Cronbach's α, AVE, and CRs.

Latent variable	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha (>0.7)	CR (>0.5)	AVE (>0.5)
ICQ	4.25 (1.30)	0.88	0.91	0.72
IUQ	4.61 (1.06)	0.85	0.90	0.68
IEQ	4.80 (1.02)	0.83	0.89	0.66
PD	5.11 (0.99)	0.83	0.89	0.66
IC	4.39 (1.03)	0.89	0.92	0.70
PR	2.59 (0.99)	0.81	0.87	0.69
IA	4.94 (1.13)	0.86	0.90	0.70

Note: ICQ: information content quality; IUQ: information utility quality; IEQ: information expression quality; PD: perceived diagnosticity; IC: information credibility; PR: perceived risk; IA: information adoption.

Table 4
Results of discriminant validity.

	ICQ	IUQ	IEQ	PD	IC	PR	IA
ICQ	0.85						
IUQ	0.09	0.82					
IEQ	0.12	0.51	0.81				
PD	0.34	0.34	0.38	0.81			
IC	0.17	0.40	0.49	0.38	0.84		
PR	0.08	−0.11	−0.13	−0.12	0.02	0.84	
IA	0.29	0.37	0.43	0.50	0.49	−0.16	0.83

Note: The square root of AVE is presented diagonally. ICQ: information content quality; IUQ: information utility quality; IEQ: information expression quality; PD: perceived diagnosticity; IC: information credibility; PR: perceived risk; IA: information adoption.

information through perceived diagnosticity (central route) and information credibility (peripheral route), and also focused on the moderating role of perceived risk in the cognitive process (including the effects of information quality on perceptual diagnosticity and the effect of information quality on information credibility), and the effects of gender-based control variables on information adoption is also considered.

Smart PLS 2.0 is used to test related assumptions and opinions, the results are shown in Fig. 2. The results show that the information quality has a positive effect on consumers adoption. Information content quality ($\beta = 0.22$, $P < 0.01$), information utility quality ($\beta = 0.57$, $P < 0.001$), information expression quality ($\beta = 0.52$, $P < 0.001$) (a medium variable), and information quality (formative variable) have a relationship to promote the establishment of subsequent relationships and assumptions. Information quality and perceptual diagnosticity are established ($\beta = 0.47$, $P < 0.001$), which supports H1. Perceptual diagnosticity and information adoption have effects ($\beta = 0.35$, $P < 0.001$), which supports H2. The results show information quality has a positive effect on information adoption through perceptual diagnosticity, and the ELM central
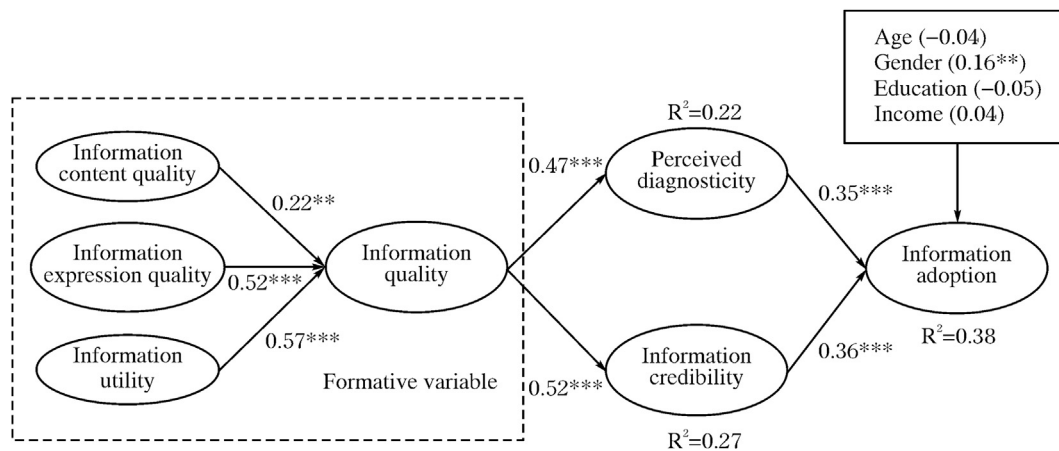
Fig. 2. Hypothesis testing of the research model.

path relationship is established. A positive influence on information quality and information credibility (β = 0.52, P < 0.001) was also observed and thus, H3 is supported. The relationship between information feasibility and information adoption are established (β = 0.36, P < 0.001), which supports H4. The peripheral path based on information credibility plays a role. For the control variables, only the significant effect of gender on information is used (β = 0.16, P < 0.01), while the influence of other variables is not significant.

This study uses PLS to carry out a level analysis to test whether a perceived risk can effectively adjust information quality and perceived diagnosticity, information quality, and information credibility. The theorized predictor variables included stepwise to evaluate the extent to which the variance of the dependent variables was explained. The standardized path coefficients, effect size, and explained variances of the construct are shown in Table 5. A significant amount of variance in both dependent variables can be explained. The main effects of Models 2a and 2b were significant (Table 5), and the results show that the structural equation model is established. Moderating effects of perceived risk on the relationship of information quality with perceived diagnosticity were significant and positive; however, perceived risk insignificantly moderated the path of information quality and information credibility. Therefore, H5a was supported (β = 0.19, P < 0.05), whereas H5b was not. Table 6 summarizes the hypothesis testing results.

6. Discussion

First, information quality is crucial to the process of information adoption, which indicates that in the context of third-party social commerce platforms, higher-quality information causes the consumer's

Table 6
Hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Results
H1: Information quality → Perceived diagnosticity	Supported
H2: Information quality → Information credibility	Supported
H3: Perceived diagnosticity → Information adoption	Supported
H4: Information credibility → Information adoption	Supported
H5a: Information quality × Perceived risk → Perceived diagnosticity	Supported
H5b: Information quality × Perceived risk → Information credibility	Not supported

perception diagnosis process to become shorter and increase information trust, and thus, the information can be used more effectively. Similar to when consumers choose social media to examine the actual quality and service level of the products they demand, the review information available on the platform is an important reference. The better the quality of information content, the more positively it affects perceived diagnosticity and information trust. Because high-quality information content covers the key parts of products and services, the more authentic the review information, the more objective the review experience, and the better its effects. In terms of the quality of information utility, the more information is updated and the more consistent the information with consumer perceptions, the greater the role of information quality. In terms of the quality of information expression, the more vivid the comment graphics and the more comprehensive and easy-to-understand comment content, the more it can help consumers' perception. Therefore, platform providers should focus on presenting high-quality review information to encourage consumers to produce more objective and accurate review information.

Table 5
Hierarchical regression results.

	Perceived diagnosticity			Information credibility		
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 3a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b
Age	−0.04	0.04	−0.05	0.012	0.01	0.024
Gender	0.09	0.06	0.06	−0.039	−0.04	−0.041
Education	−0.04	−0.04	−0.04	−0.129	−0.01	−0.01
Income	0.13	**0.12***	**0.12***	−0.042	−0.03	−0.015
Information quality		**0.47*****	**0.43*****		**0.52*****	**0.51*****
Perceived risk			−0.07			0.12
Information quality × Perceived risk			**0.19***			0.10
ΔR²		0.211	0.038		0.251	0.025
f² (Effect size)		0.275	0.052		0.344	0.036
R² (Process performance)	0.023	0.234	0.272	0.02	0.271	0.296
F Hierarchical		**74.65*****	**14.04*****		**93.307*****	**9.553*****

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Second, consumers' cognitive ability has a positive effect. Users will still consider whether social media online reviews can help them make a purchase decision and whether the perceived information level is comprehensive and the value of the information is effective. Similar to when consumers use social media, they spend more time looking for better and more suitable products. They can perceive the value of products and services conveyed by the review content through browsing of online reviews on media platforms. However, the reading and browsing of review content cannot be completed in a short time. First, the generation of review information is a long-term accumulation process. Second, the understanding of review information and the acquisition of effective information test the ability and level of consumers. Finally, rich and diverse forms of review information can be found, and image content, text content, and video content affect consumers' perception diagnosis. Meanwhile, because of the low threshold for information production on social media comment platforms, consumers' trust in the quality and usefulness of information remains to be seen. Although information users prefer to refer to other consumers' review information to make purchases. Therefore, the information provided by social media comment platforms should be managed strictly, and platform administrators should strive to improve the usefulness and credibility of the information. Consumers' perceived convenience and information credibility prompt them to adopt information.

Third, perceived risk is a moderator in the persuasive process on social media review platforms. Perceived risk has a significant and positive moderating effect in terms of the information quality of perceived diagnosticity. In the process of information quality effect perception diagnosis, a risk in the consumption process is when consumers perceive the invalidity of decision-making results and cost waste. The quality of information has a different effect on consumer perception and diagnosis. When risks exist, the quality of information has a significant effect on consumers' perception diagnosis because when consumers are worried about risks, they will improve their diagnostic ability to judge whether the quality of information is high or low, and then decide whether to adopt the information. When the risk does not exist, that is, the cost of consumption is low, the degree of information quality affecting perceived diagnosticity decreases. However, when risks exist in the process from information quality to information adoption, consumers' trust in information quality is transferred to perceived diagnosticity. At this time, consumers no longer consider whether to trust, and the higher the risk, the more they prefer self-cognition judgment. Therefore, the moderating effect of perceived risk disappears when information quality affects information credibility. This result suggests that persuasive information strategies on social media review platforms for different risk perception groups may be necessary.

7. Implications

Drawing upon the ELM, we explored users' information adoption process on a social media review platform, confirmed several determinants of information adoption, and investigated how perceived risk plays a moderating role. Existing literature has examined the impact of quality and risk on the process of information adoption, while our work examined the indirect and combined effects of information quality and perceived risk on information adoption of online reviews. Previous studies have not integrated the precondition of information quality into ELM but instead focused on consumer perception and trust in the process of information adoption. Thus, the findings of this research not only provide new insights from the consumer perspective for e-WOM management and information adoption based on information quality but also offer practical implications to support managers in effectively enhancing channels to represent and transfer knowledge in online reviews.

7.1. Theoretical implications

The theoretical contributions of this research are fourfold. First, this

study contributes to the eWOM and information quality literature by investigating the indirect effects of information quality on information adoption of online reviews. Information quality, perceived diagnosticity, and information credibility are the three key determinants in our structural model, and empirical results show that the indirect effects of information quality across perceived diagnosticity and information credibility have significant effects on information adoption. Second, the research is based on the ELM theory, and previous studies have also used independent variables, such as path selection. However, in the process of exploring information adoption, the quality of information was not included in the path system, but rather was used as a prerequisite that focused on the perception and trust of consumers in the adoption process as the central and peripheral paths, which resulted in innovations in the application scenarios of ELM. Third, prior research has revealed that perceived risk affects information adoption, whereas our study proved that the moderating effects of perceived risk on the relationships of information quality with perceived diagnosticity are significant and positive but perceived risk insignificantly moderates the path of information credibility. This finding enriches the acknowledgment of perceived risk. Finally, this work also confirmed the effects of control variables on consumer behaviors, with gender, in particular, significantly affecting information adoption; such finding supports that of previous studies (Peng et al., 2016). Thus, the theoretical distinction of gender is necessary for related research.

7.2. Practical implications

This study has the following practical implications. First, platform providers should ensure information quality. Information quality is the basis of survival. Thus, to enhance it, providers should ensure the authenticity of review information to improve content quality, promote timely information updates, enrich the comment content of the information to enhance integrity, and diversify the comment form to strengthen the entertainment and personalization factor while further promoting consumer perception diagnosis. Second, a credit accumulation system should be introduced for credit monitoring. Credit scores accumulate when users and merchants register on a platform, and their credit status is reflected on their basic information in certain periods (e.g., quarterly or yearly). In this way, malicious and false evaluation behavior can be avoided to a certain extent, thereby enhancing the credibility of the information perceived by consumers. Third, the individual needs of users should be considered, and review information should be categorized so that users can retrieve the necessary information quickly. Review information can also be sorted by product or service, in addition to being sorted by merchants. In the social network context, a platform can divide consumers into different groups according to their interests. On the one hand, different groups may be provided with information that they may be interested in. On the other hand, such groups may be encouraged to exchange information internally. The extent and ability of users to obtain and judge information are enhanced through the circulation and transfer of information. Fourth, the platform should focus on users with high-risk perceptions and recommend accurate and high-quality information. Promoting interactions between users with high perceived risk and other consumers enhances mutual trust, and diagnosticity can improve information adoption.

8. Conclusions

This research uses ELM to analyze the relationship between information quality, perceived diagnosticity, information credibility, perceived risk, and users' willingness to adopt to solve the research problem. From the psychological level, more attention was given to user's perception ability. Combined with the technical reliability of information venues, Dianping, a social media platform, was selected as the research case to collect data from 277 users. The structural equation model results show that information quality composed of content quality,

expression quality, and utility quality significantly increases information adoption intention via perceived diagnosticity and information credibility. Moreover, perceived risk positively moderates the effects of information quality on perceived diagnosticity. The results provide a basis for improving the information quality of social media review platforms and promoting information adoption. Our research has drawn several conclusions. However, the following limitations are observed. First, our sample includes many individuals aged 18–25 years. Although young people, especially college students, represent the main force in a social network, these respondents are not representative of existing users and potential users of all social media review platforms. Therefore, the sample collection should cover a larger group. The resulting conclusion in future research should be universal and promotional. Second, this study only emphasizes the effects of information characteristics on the information adoption of social media review platforms. However, other potential factors, such as the characteristics of reviewers and the relationships between platforms' users, affect the adoption of information. Thus, future research should consider the effects of these factors on dependent variables. Third, this work chooses the social media review platform represented by Dianping as the research object and finds the influencing mechanism of information quality on information adoption. Although the research conclusions can guide social media review platforms to some extent, they do not explain specific situations for each social media review platform. Therefore, further in-depth studies are required.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsm.2021.02.004.

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