A CHRONOLOGY OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH RESEARCH IN TOURISM

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Abstract:

The development of eWOM has influenced the tourism industry by providing opportunities for tourists to communicate with each other. And as there has been an increasing number of studies on eWOM in the tourism industry in recent years, there is a need to summarize these studies. The purpose of this study is to analyze the situation of eWOM research in the tourism industry since 2008, so as to summarize the development of eWOM research in the tourism industry and expand the scope of eWOM research. This study uses the published literature as the basis for research on eWOM in tourism according to the time sequence. By combing through the literature of previous studies, it is found that with the development of time, there are more and more research results on eWOM in the tourism industry, and the directions of research are becoming more and more diversified, and the research in recent years involves new science and technology, such as VR and AI technology. This study provides a necessary reference role for scholars and tourism practitioners.

Keywords:

Chronology, Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWOM), Online, Tourism, Travel Behavior

Introduction

Since its creation, eWOM has been used by researchers in various industries, with tourism being one of the industries where eWOM research has been more involved. This is because tourism products are experiential and it is impossible to fully evaluate them before travel, making eWOM particularly important in the tourism industry (Kakirala & Singh,2020). Meanwhile, available evidence suggests that 78% of online users are influenced by online reviews when making purchase decision, thus online consumer reviews have become a relevant source of information for tourists and play an important role in the purchase of tourism services (Mauri & Minazzi,2013).

Although there have been researchers in the academic field who have summarized the research results on eWOM in tourism, these summaries have not comprehensively covered the various research directions of eWOM. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically review the relevant research results of eWOM in tourism in chronological order. This study examines previous related research, summarizing the research directions of eWOM in tourism, the key findings of related studies, and research trends. This research provides essential references for future studies on eWOM in tourism.

Literature Review

2008-2010

Through the literature review, it is evident that since 2008, research on eWOM in the tourism and hotel industry has been increasing, with academic publications on this topic growing every year. A survey conducted by a researcher shows that, as shown in Figure 1, from 2008 to 2013, the number of publications in hotel and tourism management increased by at least 1.5 times each year (Chen & Law, 2016). It is worth noting that in 2008, only one academic article specifically focused on this area, however, in 2013, the number of publications reached 16 (Chen & Law, 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that research on eWOM in the tourism industry is receiving attention from researchers.
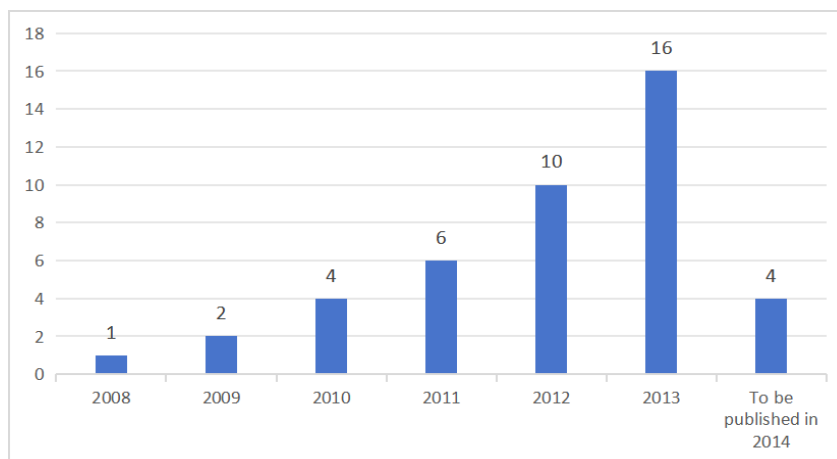
Figure 1: Number Of Studies In Tourism And Hospitality Published Between 2008 And February 2014

Source: Chen & Law 2016

Litvin et al. (2008) presented a marketing model of the WOM concept from an interpersonal perspective and discussed a range of available strategies for eWOM as a potential marketing hotel and tourism tool to promote tourism and hotels, and discussed some of the emerging technical and ethical issues facing marketers seeking to exploit the emerging eWOM technology. In 2009, studies focused on the impact of eWOM in the tourism industry: Zhu and Lai (2009) used empirical evidence to examine how eWOM influences tourists' destination choices and found that eWOM information is an important influence on tourists' choice of destination; Ang (2009) studied the impact of eWOM on hotel sales and the results showed that eWOM does influence customers' choice of hotels. In addition, this year scholars have also studied the impact of user-generated content on tourism (Burgess et al.,2009; Cox et al., 2009). In 2010, researchers began to focus on eWOM information generation and dissemination (Lee & Tussyadiah, 2010).

2011-2013
During this period, there has been a gradual increase in the number of studies on eWOM in tourism, which have focused on the mechanisms of eWOM generation in the tourism industry, and the impact of eWOM on tourism purchasing behavior. As shown in Table 1. For example, in 2011, Bronner and De (2011) explored what types of holidaymakers post reviews, what motivations they have for posting reviews, what online platforms they post on, and what are the characteristics of the information. Jeong and Jang (2011) found empirically that service quality, food quality, ambiance, and price fairness of restaurants were the main motivations for customers to post eWOM from a motivational perspective. Yi (2011) explored the moderate effect of brand awareness of tourist destinations on eWOM intention through an empirical study.

In a 2012 study of eWOM in the tourism industry, which focused on the influential role of eWOM, Jalilvand, and Samiei (2012) used TPB theory as a guide to study the impact of eWOM on destination choice and showed that eWOM communication had a significant impact on attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and travel intention to visit Isfahan. Meanwhile, Fakharyan et al. (2012) explored the impact of eWOM on attitude and tourism intention towards Islamic destinations and showed through an empirical study that eWOM communication has a positive impact on tourists' attitude and travel intention toward Islamic destinations. In addition, Sidali et al. (2012) explored the impact of eWOM on consumer behavior from an agritourism perspective.

In 2013, researchers continued to focus on the influential role of eWOM, such as some researchers studying the impact of eWOM on destination choice and purchase (Tham et al.,2013; Hawkinson,2013; Wang & Jie,2013; Ningkan,2013). Meanwhile, researchers have once again explored the reasons for the formation of eWOM in the tourism industry (Liang,2013; Liang et al., 2013; Luís, 2013). On the other hand, for the first time in the year, a researcher examined the causes of negative eWOM in the restaurant industry and the impact on restaurant sales (Boo & Kim,2013).

Table 1：Summary of the eWOM Research In Tourism from 2011 to 2013

Research directions	Key findings	Authors
The mechanism of eWOM generation in tourism.	Factors such as review motivation and destination brand	Bronner and De (2011); Jeong and Jang (2011); Yi (2011); Liang (2013); Liang et al. (2013); Luís

	awareness lead to eWOM generation.	(2013).
The impact of eWOM on travel purchasing behavior.	eWOM influences destination choice, tourist attitude, and travel intention, as well as the impact of negative eWOM on sales.	Jalilvand and Samiei (2012); Fakharyan et al. (2012); Sidali et al. (2012); Tham et al. (2013); Hawkinson (2013); Wang and Jie (2013); Ningkan, (2013); Boo and Kim (2013).

Sour: Based on the compilation of literature

2014-2016

In this timeframe, unlike the previous state of research, research review articles on tourism eWOM emerged. Cantallops and Salvi (2014) used a qualitative analysis to review eWOM research in the tourism and hospitality industry, identifying two main areas of research: review of production factors and the impact of eWOM. Where review production factors include customer dissatisfaction, failure and recovery, and service quality and satisfaction; while the impact of eWOM includes the purchase decision process, booking intention, corporate reputation enhancement, and improved product and service quality. Chen and Law (2016) provide an overview of tourism eWOM research from 2008 to 2013, concluding that the main elements of research during this period include the nature and eWOM characteristics, the antecedents of tourism eWOM, and the impact of eWOM.

The impact of eWOM continues to dominate research on tourism eWOM from 2014 to 2016. For example, the impact of eWOM on tourism decision (López & Sicilia,2014; Hapsari et al.,2014; Lerrthaitrakul & Panjakajornsak, 2014; Chen et al.,2015; Abd-Elaziz et al.,2015; Hernández -Méndez, 2015; Wang, 2016; Ariani & Wandebori, 2016); the impact of eWOM on tourism purchase intention (Albarq, 2014; Lee et al.,2014; Zarrad & Debabi, 2015; Wang et al.,2015; Doosti et al., 2016; Lim, 2016; Wang, 2016). In addition to eWOM impact studies, the antecedents of tourism eWOM formation have also been the focus of researchers (Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Llamero, 2014; Khan & Khan, 2015; Liao,2015; Yang & Lee, 2016; Hur, 2016). Meanwhile, some researchers have studied the relationship between restaurant attributes and positive and negative WOM, and the results show that food taste, restaurant environment, and service have an impact on customers' positive eWOM; while food taste, physical environment, and price all have an impact on negative eWOM (Zhang, 2014). On the other hand, Luo and Zhong (2015) used social network analysis to study the eWOM characteristics of communication on social media and showed that travel-related eWOM communication via SNS relies on existing social relationships, which can be classified as strong, moderately strong, or weak; the impact of the information conveyed is stronger than influential decision makers. In addition, a unique study is that of Buzova et al. (2016) who studied the perceptions of European and North American tourists about their guide services through their posted eWOM, showing that European tourists valued the efficiency of their guides' trips, while North American tourists praised their guides' performances and tailor-made tour services. Meanwhile, the research summary of this period is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the eWOM Research In Tourism From 2014 to 2016

Research directions	Key findings	Authors
The influence of eWOM in the tourism industry.	The eWOM influences the decision-making behavior of tourists; The eWOM influences tourists' purchase intention.	Bronner and De (2011); Jeong and Jang (2011); Yi (2011); Liang (2013); Liang et al. (2013); Luís (2013).
The prerequisite factors for the formation of eWOM in tourism.	Satisfaction, opinion leader characteristics, incentive factors, and social acceptance are all factors contributing to the generation of eWOM.	Cetin and Dincer (2014); Llamero (2014); Khan and Khan (2015); Liao et al. (2015); Yang and Lee (2016); Hur (2016).

Sour: Based on the compilation of literature

2017-2019

During this period, tourism eWOM research became more diverse. Regarding the impact of tourism eWOM, researchers have diversified their studies extensively. The specific research findings are summarized as shown in Table 3. For instance, Nieto-García et al. (2017) examined the influence of external information (eWOM valence and quantity) and internal information (internal reference valence) on consumers' intention to pay for accommodation through an experimental approach. Their findings revealed that eWOM valence, quantity, and internal reference prices affect intention to pay. Notably, consumers with high reference prices exhibit greater sensitivity to the impact of price increases.

Meanwhile, Luong et al. (2017) empirically studied the link between tourist eWOM and purchase intention, decision, and brand image in Vietnam and revealed that there was a substantial association between buy intention and decision and a favorable relationship between tourism eWOM brand image and purchase intention. On top of that, Yang et al. (2018) studied the tourism eWOM impact on hotel performance through a meta-analysis and discovered that eWOM significantly affected hotel performance and that the elasticity of eWOM based on valence was twice as high as the elasticity of eWOM based on quantity; the elasticity of eWOM was higher for mid-to-high-end hotels. Like previous studies, Lin et al. (2019) conducted empirical research on the purchase intention of group packaged tours through eWOM. Their findings indicated that trust in eWOM positively impacts perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and consumer attitude towards group packaged tours, meanwhile, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have a beneficial impact on consumer consumer attitude and purchase intention toward group packaged tours. In addition, some scholars continue to make efforts to the eWOM impact on tourism intention and decision-making (Krishnapillai & Ying, 2017; Martins et al.,2018; Ahmad et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2019).

The antecedents of tourism eWOM have been more abundantly and deeply researched during this period, with scholars examining the factors influencing the formation of tourism eWOM in more directions. Wang (2017) found that the number of user engagements had a positive impact on the number of people participating in eWOM by doing an empirical investigation into how user involvement affects eWOM on hotel Facebook. Meanwhile, Fine (2017) found that the impact of internal and external incentives, alongside service reliability, has been found to exert a notable influence on eWOM conduct through an empirical examination of the factors

driving eWOM engagement among tourism consumers. Besides, Serra et al. (2018) showed through empirical research in the UK and Germany that positive emotional experiences are powerful generators of positive eWOM in a hotel setting and concluded that customer satisfaction alone does not guarantee positive eWOM generation.

At the same time, based on empirical evidence, Hu and Kim (2018) discovered that the study found that self-enhancement and enjoyment played critical roles in determining favorable eWOM actions while venting and financial rewards were notable factors in predicting unfavorable eWOM behavior exhibited by American hotel patrons. Further, Chu et al. (2019), using an empirical case study of Chinese WeChat friend circles, observed that self-enhancement positively influenced Chinese tourism agents' eWOM behavior. They also found that consumer engagement was positively associated with eWOM participation intention, and devotion mediated the impact of self-enhancement needs on eWOM intention. Meanwhile, Sijoria et al. (2019) show empirically that loyalty, satisfaction, trust, information quality, and social relationships are antecedents of hotel eWOM; eWOM has been recognized as a pivotal mediating factor in the relationship among consumer satisfaction, loyalty, trust in online reviews, and brand equity.

On top of that, Jalilvand and Heidari (2017) found through an empirical study that eWOM in tourist destinations significantly influences destination image, travel intention, and attitude more significantly than WOM. Yan et al. (2018) empirically studied the influence of emotions on the choice of eWOM platforms through Chinese tourists and showed that positively influenced tourists tended to share their experiences on social media, whereas negatively influenced tourists favored integrated tourism websites. Similarly, several scholars have examined the role of emotions in travel eWOM. For example, a study by Buzova et al. (2019) found that North American eWOM articles tend to be more emotional compared to European eWOM texts.

Table 3: Summary of the eWOM Research In Tourism from 2017 to 2019

Research directions	Key findings	Authors
The impact of eWOM in tourism.	The eWOM has influenced the intention to pay for accommodation, the intention to purchase in tourism and hotel performance.	Nieto-García et al. (2017); Luong et al. (2017); Yang et al. (2018); Ahmad et al. (2019); Leong et al. (2019).
Factors of eWOM formation in tourism.	the number of user engagements, internal and external incentives, self-improvement, loyalty, and satisfaction are all factors contributing to the formation of eWOM in tourism.	Luong et al. (2017); Yang et al. (2018); Wang (2017); Lin et al. (2019); Hu and Kim (2018); Chu et al. (2019).
The impact of emotion on eWOM in tourism.	Emotions have an impact on the selection of eWOM platforms in tourism, as well as the expression of eWOM texts.	Yan et al. (2018); Buzova et al. (2019).

Sour: Based on the compilation of literature

2020-2024

During this period, there have been new changes in the study of eWOM in tourism, a phenomenon not observed in previous research. For instance, due to the outbreak and resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic during this time, researchers have begun incorporating the pandemic as a factor in the study of tourism eWOM. Additionally, another research focus during this period is the integration of new technologies in tourism with eWOM.The specific research findings are summarized as shown in Table 4.

In a departure from previous studies, Filieri et al. (2021) by using dual coding theory to analyze the effects of verbal and visual eWOM cues on consumer intention and behavior, researchers were able to determine that tourist intention and decision to visit a destination and their attractions were influenced by popularity heuristics, performance visual heuristics, and user-generated pictures. Surprisingly, they discovered that the quality of the information did not significantly impact tourists' judgments. Also, Setiawan et al. (2021) found through an empirical study of Japanese and Indonesian tourists that it positively affects tourists' image of the destination and their intention to come. However, it has no bearing on the destination's level of confidence. The destination's image has also been shown to significantly moderate eWOM impact on visit intention.

On the contrary, Kim and Hwang (2022) examined positive and negative eWOM behavior in catering tourism by conducting an empirical study with Korean gourmet tourists. They discovered that negative eWOM resulting from bad experiences holds more sway than positive eWOM stemming from pleasant experiences. Food taste emerged as the vital attribute influencing negative and positive eWOM. Meanwhile, González et al. (2022) conducted an empirical study on Chinese tourists, which revealed that perceived risk associated with destination visits had a significant impact on tourists' perceptions of the usefulness of e-tourism information, as those with lower perceived risk tended to perceive e-tourism information as more beneficial. This, in turn, increased their exposure to eWOM and their intention to visit the destination.

On the other hand, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic during this period, Researchers have looked into how eWOM affected tourists' desire to travel during the pandemic (Rani & Shivaprasad, 2021; Azhar et al.,2022; Nilashi et al., 2022). In addition, some scholars used new data analysis methods to study the impact of eWOM characteristics on hotel guest satisfaction. For instance, Aakash et al. (2021) found through artificial neural network-based research that eWOM regarding "hotel rooms" is a fundamental characteristic for predicting hotel guest satisfaction.

During this period, one eWOM characteristic research in the travel and tourism sector is that scholars are paying more attention to the study of eWOM in tourism destinations. Scholars have discussed the impact of eWOM from various aspects, such as destination image and destination loyalty. For example, Goyal and Taneja (2023) conducted empirical research and found that the image of wellness destinations significantly influences wellness tourists' satisfaction and eWOM intention. The mediating role of tourist satisfaction is crucial from destination image (after visit) to eWOM intention. Hussain et al. (2023), using Chinese tourism destination as a case study, found that eWOM indirectly impacts the link between destination loyalty and service quality, which can be attributed to tourist satisfaction and eWOM. Abbasi et al. (2023) used an empirical case study based on the ELM model and SOR theory to show that destination image characteristics of social media (entertaining, informative, stimulating,

credible, personalized, and motivating) influence consumers' perceived value and eWOM through consumer engagement.

Another research hot spot in this period is the combination of new technologies in tourism with eWOM. For instance, scholars have examined the correlation between artificial intelligence and eWOM in the tourism sector and the association between virtual reality technology and eWOM in the tourism industry. By exploring the case of AI implementation in the tourism and hospitality sector, Alam et al. (2023) found that AI trust is a mediator in the connection between eWOM and engagement intention. Their study revealed a significant positive correlation between AI trust and eWOM, with eWOM exerting a notable improvement in the intention to use AI-enabled services. Likewise, Elkhwesky et al. (2024), in their investigation of VR technology's utilization in the tourism industry, discovered that VR usage intention significantly influences eWOM. Their findings suggest that tourism companies should prioritize adopting new technologies like VR to enhance eWOM. Meanwhile, Hao et al. (2024) examined the use of blockchain technology in the tourism and restaurant industry and found that blockchain technology transparency affects the restaurant's perceived food safety, quality, and naturalness. These factors affect eWOM through consumer satisfaction as a mediator.

In addition, during this period, the visual content research in eWOM has also received increasing attention from researchers. For example, Li et al. (2024) utilized computer vision technology and panel data analysis to study the impact of consumer-generated images in eWOM on subsequent consumer engagement. The study revealed that the proportion of text and image comments positively influenced the volume of subsequent comments and the average comment length. However, it had no significant impact on the valence of subsequent comments. The differences in emotional expression between text and photo comments had a complex impact on consumer engagement. Other research results on visual content in eWOM include Zaib et al. (2023); García-Carrión et al. (2023); Filieri et al. (2023) and Qiu and Choi (2024). In conclusion, research on eWOM in tourism during this period is characterized by the fact that, in addition to a greater diversity of research content, scholars have combined eWOM with new technology and trends in the tourism industry.

Table 4: Summary of the eWOM Research In Tourism from 2020 to 2024

Research directions	Key findings	Authors
The impact of eWOM in the tourism industry.	eWOM impacts destination visit intention; the influence of positive and negative eWOM on consumer behavior in the catering industry; and the impact of eWOM on tourist behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Fileri et al. (2021); Purbadharmaja et al. (2021); Kim and Hwang (2022).
The study of eWOM in tourism destination.	The destination image, destination loyalty, and destination image characteristics can all have an impact on eWOM.	Goyal and Taneja (2023); Hussain et al. (2023); Abbasi et al. (2023).
The combination of new technologies in tourism with eWOM.	AI trust, VR usage intention, and blockchain technology can all have an impact on eWOM in the tourism industry.	Alam et al. (2023); Elkhwesky et al. (2024); Hao et al. (2024).

Sour: Based on the compilation of literature

Conclusion

With the development of the tourism industry and information technology, the role of eWOM in promoting the development of the tourism industry is becoming increasingly important. Meanwhile, since 2008, there have been more and more research outcomes on eWOM in the tourism industry in the academic field, and the research directions have become increasingly diverse. This study reviews the research outcomes on eWOM in the tourism industry since 2008 and draws the following conclusions:

Firstly, research in the tourism industry on eWOM primarily involves studying the impact of eWOM, such as how it influences consumers' travel behavior. Secondly, studying the reasons for the formation of eWOM in the tourism industry, such as the influence of the tourism environment on the formation of positive and negative eWOM. Finally, with the advancement of new technologies, eWOM has evolved from simple textual descriptions to forms like images and videos. Technologies such as VR and AI contribute to diversifying eWOM in tourism.

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