

## 2017 Sport Marketing Association Conference (SMA XV)

### **The Impact of Online Source Credibility on Online Sport Consumption: A Study of Seller Profile Reputation on eBay**

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**8:00-8:50 AM, Washington Ballroom**

**50-minute poster presentation**

**(including questions)**

According to the e-commerce report released by the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce, e-commerce sales of the United States in 2016 were estimated at \$394.9 billion (DeNale & Weidenhamer, 2017). Of the total e-commerce, sporting goods industry has been recognized as one of the top industries contributing approximately \$10 billion to the e-commerce sales in 2015, accounting for 15% of the total sporting good sales (\$63 billion) in 2015 (Wilson, 2017). Considering the significance of sporting goods market in e-commerce sales, it is important to understand online sport consumption behavior (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007). Hur et al. (2007) investigated significant motivational factors (i.e., convenience, information, diversion, socialization, and economic motive) and major concerns (i.e., security, privacy, delivery, product quality, and customer service). Online sport consumers refer to diverse online sources such as seller profile information and online customer reviews for reducing concern. In particular, reputation of a product seller can be a critical factor that influences sport consumers' decision making when shopping online (Kemper & Breuer, 2015).

Source credibility theory explains why credible information on websites are important for online consumers' decision making (Lowry, Wilson, & Haig, 2014). According to the theory, persuasiveness of a communication is determined based on people's perceived credibility of the source of the communication (Lowry et al., 2014). In other words, individuals are more likely to be persuaded by the source if the source is considered credible. Several researchers have investigated the impact of online source credibility (e.g., electronic Word of Mouth source credibility) on online consumption behavior such as online hotel booking (e.g., Sparks, So, & Bradley, 2016), restaurant choices (e.g., Lu, Ba, Huang, & Feng, 2013), or movie choices (e.g., Moon, Bergey, & Iacobucci, 2010). In the sport context, however, there have been minimal studies regarding how online source credibility affects sport consumers' purchase behaviors (e.g., game ticket purchase or sportswear purchase) on websites. Although understanding the impact of online source credibility (i.e., seller's reputation) on sport consumer behavior is important for sport marketers to establish effective strategies to attract online sport consumers, little is known about the relationship between a product seller's reputation and sport consumer behavior. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of online source credibility (i.e., seller profile reputation) on sport consumers' attitudes and online purchase intentions.

In order to test the effect of online source credibility on sport consumers' attitudes and online purchase intentions, an online survey was employed. A total of 206 samples (Male: 135 / Female: 71) were collected from college students attending universities in the United States through online survey. College students were selected because they are actively purchase products online (Riaz & Raman, 2015). In terms of the seller profile reputation, buyers' reviews about sellers from eBay.com were used in this study. Respondents were asked to answer a survey questionnaire comprised of six subcategories; demographic information (e.g., gender and age), frequency and preference of online shopping, perceived influence of seller profile reputation, attitude toward seller profile reputation, perceived credibility of website, and online purchase intention. A total of 24 items were created based on the previous literature (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; Ohanian, 1990; Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006) and measured through seven-point Likert scale except demographic information.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for scales ranged between .94 and .96., indicating that reliability of the measures was met. The results of descriptive statistics revealed that 56.3% of total respondents enjoy online shopping to purchase sport products and 89% refer to information of the seller profile in their purchase decisions. Regression analyses were conducted to examine the effect of online source credibility on sport consumers' attitudes and online purchase intentions. The results of regression analyses showed that attitude toward seller profile reputation positively

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predicted perceived credibility of website ( $\beta = .37, t(205) = 5.62, p < .05$ ) with  $R^2$  of .13,  $F(1,204) = 31.62, p < .05$ , and online purchase intention ( $\beta = .31, t(205) = 4.73, p < .05$ ) with  $R^2$  of .10,  $F(1,204) = 22.37, p < .05$ .

The results indicate that online source credibility influences online sport consumer behavior. First, online source credibility has a positive effect on online sport consumers' attitude. This indicates that if consumers perceive online seller's reputation to be high, they are more likely to develop positive emotion toward the seller (Kim & Lennon, 2013). This finding also shows that information from other consumers is important in helping people determine the credibility of commercial information online (Flanagin, Metzger, Pure, Markov, & Hartsell, 2014). Second, online source credibility also has a positive influence on online sport consumer's purchase intentions. This finding suggests that online sport consumers are more likely to purchase products online when they read high-quality, positive, and well-written reviews about sellers including specific and product-related information (Lee & Shin, 2014).

The results of the study demonstrate the importance of online source credibility (i.e., website credibility and seller profile reputation) on online sport consumption. In this sense, this study provides important messages to sport marketers. Specifically, sport marketers should focus on maintaining high quality of online contents and website design, and developing an effective management system to screen fake customer reviews or bad sellers on sport websites. Although seller profile reputation was found to have positive influence on attitudes and online purchase intentions, cautions are needed when interpreting the results due to the low  $R^2$  values. Jiménez and Mendoza (2013) suggested that although more credible reviews result in higher purchase intentions, consumers determine the credibility of a review differently for search and experience products. They argued that consumers consider online reviews more credible when the reviews include detailed information about the product while consumers determine the credibility of a review by evaluating the level of reviewer agreement with a review for experience products. As such, researchers should consider the type of products to better understand the influence of online source credibility on online sport consumer attitudes and online purchase intentions.

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