**Motives and Impacts of Online Community Participation on e-WOM and Purchase Intention for Sports Team Products**


**Running head: Online Community of a Sports Team**

Nizar Souiden*
Faculty of Business Administration, Quebec, Canada
Nizar.souiden@mrk.ulaval.ca

Riadh Ladhari
Faculty of Business Administration, Quebec, Canada
Riadh.ladhari@mrk.ulaval.ca

Walid Chaouali
Faculty of Law, Economics and Management of Jendouba
University of Jendouba, Tunisia
ERMA Laboratory, LR11ES07, University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia
Chaouali.walid@yahoo.fr

Nour-Eddine Chiadmi
La Rochelle Business School – Excelia Group, La Rochelle, France
nchiadmi@gmail.com; chiadmine@excelia-group.com

Jacob Gagnon
Faculty of Business Administration, Quebec, Canada
jacob.gagnon.1@ulaval.ca


(*): Corresponding author

**Abstract**

This study, grounded in Uses and Gratification theory, explores the motives behind members' active participation in an online community dedicated to their favorite sports team. It expands the theory by introducing psychological engagement gratification as a sports-specific motivation. The research examines how active participation influences members' recommendations (e-WOM) and purchase intentions of team products. Analyzing data from 305 Canadian participants, the study finds that online social, information seeking, entertainment, and psychological engagement gratifications significantly drive active participation. This participation strongly affects members' e-WOM and purchase intentions. The paper concludes with key theoretical and managerial implications.

**Keywords:** online community, sports teams, psychological engagement gratification, e-WOM, and purchase intention.

**Introduction**

Many businesses increasingly use online social networks (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) to stay connected with their target communities and customers, who actively seek closer ties with their favorite brands. This trend of online brand communities is growing significantly (Wong, 2023). To gain a competitive edge, companies must effectively capitalize on these online communities (Park and You, 2021) to build lasting customer relationships. Like offline groups, online consumer communities share interests and experiences with a specific brand (Zollo et al., 2020). There are two main types of online consumer communities: those initiated by individuals and those by firms (Li et al., 2022). This study focuses on the latter.

Sports industry companies are pioneers in developing online communities, whether they are sports teams, garment companies, or professional athletes. These communities enhance brand value by improving communication with fans (Underwood et al., 2001), who become co-producers and advocates of the brand (Alhashem et al., 2020).

This study aims to understand the motives and consequences of participating in a sports team's online community. It uses the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) to explore why and how members engage in these communities and how their participation affects recommendations (e-WOM) and purchase intentions. UGT posits that people use media to meet psychological and social needs (Lu and Lin, 2022). In sports, social gratification, information seeking, entertainment, and psychological engagement may motivate participation. This study also suggests that involvement in online sports communities may lead to higher purchase intentions and e-WOM.

**Literature Review**

**Uses and Gratification Theory**

UGT explains why people engage with certain media types (Katz et al., 1973) and is applicable to various media contexts, including radio (Rosales, 2013), TV (Sahu et al., 2021), video streaming (Menon, 2022), and social media (Zadeh et al., 2023). Technological advances have shifted users from passive consumers (radio, TV) to active content creators and sharers (Pantano et al., 2023). UGT posits that media use is deliberate, goal-directed, and motivated by users' needs, with selected media competing with other options for gratification (Bawack et al., 2023). Gratifications are the perceived fulfillment of needs through media use, influenced by psychological, societal, and environmental factors (Katz et al., 1973; Athwal et al., 2019). This study identifies online social, information-seeking (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022; Nguyen & Veer, 2024), and psychological engagement gratifications (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2022) as key motivators for social media use in sports. Furthermore, this study assumes that the gratifications generated by sports communities differ from those of other online environments. Sports communities are often the carrefour that relate fans sharing interests in teams or athletes. The emotional intensity surrounding sport is singular. Fans experience a wide range of emotions (e.g., joy, frustration, pride and grief) depending on their team's performance. This intense emotional connection gives rise to discussions, celebrations and collective experiences that are more powerful than in other communities (Ladhari et al., 2022).

**Online Social Gratification**

Social motives are key reasons for participating in online communities (Miranda et al., 2023). The need for social affiliation strongly influences brand community involvement (Tsai et al., 2012).

Members seek social connections for support, friendship, and belonging, which fosters participation (Zadeh et al., 2023; Madupu and Cooley, 2010). Identification through socialization encourages active engagement and positive interactions (Tsai et al., 2012). Social affiliation with a brand community drives rewarding interactions, including peer recognition and social status (Chou and Lin, 2023; Zadeh et al., 2023; Füller, 2006). Sports communities similarly enable networking and relationship-building (Astakhova et al., 2022; Hedlund, 2014). For instance, McCarthy et al. (2014) found that online sociability is crucial for growing sports communities. The first hypothesis tests whether sociability motivates participation in online sports team communities.

**H1**: Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team is positively influenced by their online social gratification.

**Information Seeking Gratification**
Several studies confirm that the need for information is a key driver of online community participation (Nguyen and Veer, 2024). The desire to be informed is often the primary motivation for joining online communities (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022). Supporting this, Jung et al. (2013) argue that knowledge sharing is a major activity in these communities. Social media offers fast and easy access to information, a key advantage over traditional media (Pantano et al., 2023). Members learn about brands by asking questions and reading comments (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2022). Lin and Wu (2023) state that useful information strengthens users' attachment to the community. In the sports industry, the need for relevant information is crucial, with members seeking news as a main reason for social media use (Gibbs et al., 2014; Filo et al., 2015). Witkemper et al. (2012) also confirm that information-seeking drives sports fans to social media. Consequently, those looking to gain knowledge are more likely to participate in online brand communities.

**H2**: Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team is positively influenced by their information seeking gratification.

**Entertainment Gratification**
Entertainment is a key reason for joining online communities (Lyu et al., 2023), often driving social media use (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022). Enjoyable activities (Dessart et al., 2015) and the pleasure derived from community interaction are crucial for member integration (Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001). The hedonic aspects of a community (Nguyen and Veer, 2024) and emotional benefits (Tonteri et al., 2011) significantly influence participation, satisfaction, and identification (Cheung and Lee, 2009; Tsai et al., 2012). Fun and sensory immersion, such as games or brand interactions, enhance engagement (Nelson et al., 2004; Wasko and Faraj, 2000), particularly among sports fans (Liebl et al., 2022). Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H3**: Members' active participation in the online community page of their preferred sports team is positively influenced by their entertainment gratification.

**Psychological (Engagement) Gratification**
The psychological engagement with a sports team is likely to modulate the behavior of community members (Bauer *et al.*, 2008). Psychological engagement is described as a state of motivation,

excitement, and interest in a product, activity or object (Rothschild, 1984). Unlike buying behavior, the level of psychological engagement with a sports team is more representative of consumer intentions. A good relationship with a brand (i.e., a team) increases interactions and enthusiasm among consumers (i.e., fans) with the same mindset (Algesheimer *et al*., 2005). People who are satisfied with their relationship with a brand are more likely to have a strong psychological connection with the brand community and to perceive this link as unique (Yang *et al*., 2022).

Within sports communities, fans are voluntarily willing to perform tasks for the good of the team they support and other fans. Knowledge sharing, cooperative communications, and help of others are among the tasks that members do in online communities (Yoshida *et al*., 2014). Members of sports-related communities feel that they have a responsibility and a sense of obligation to the whole community to create, improve, and maintain links between members (Ghazali *et al*., 2019). Sports teams are among a few 'brands' that can bond and emotionally touch members by having them engage and talk about them over a long period of time (Dreher and Ströbel, 2023). Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H4**: Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team is positively influenced by their psychological engagement gratification.

The above-mentioned motives are all hypothesized to influence members' active participation in online communities of sports teams. However, for a brand or sports team, understanding the potential benefits of these online communities is crucial. This study aims to highlight two key outcomes, often emphasized in marketing literature: electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention.

**e-WOM**

e-WOM refers to any positive or negative online comment made by a former, current, or potential customer about a product or brand (Kumar et al., 2023). Its uniqueness lies in the long-term availability of these comments on online platforms (Akbari et al., 2022). Positive e-WOM from brand communities is crucial due to minimal costs and rapid diffusion (Akbari et al., 2022). In sports communities, active participation often results in positive brand recommendations (Vale and Fernandes, 2018). Engaged members act as brand evangelizers, promoting their teams (Ladhari et al., 2022). Emotional and social ties within these communities enhance positive brand recommendations (Yoshida et al., 2015), leading members to actively participate and spread e-WOM (Augusto and Torres, 2018). Strong brand attachment fosters proactive behaviors like positive e-WOM (Japutra et al., 2018; Ismagilova et al., 2021). Hence, the following hypothesis:

**H5**: Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team has a positive impact on their e-WOM.

**Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's conscious plan to purchase a product (Tseng and Wang, 2023). Regular participation in an online brand community likely increases members' purchase intentions. Interpersonal communication within such communities can shape attitudes and purchasing decisions by enhancing product knowledge (Kumar et al., 2023). Engagement in these communities helps members develop cognitive skills useful for purchasing decisions (Brodie et al., 2013). Continued involvement in sports communities and team-related activities boosts

purchase intentions (Dionisio et al., 2008). Hedlund (2014) found that participation in team rituals and activities is significantly related to future purchases of team products. The following hypothesis tests whether participation in an online sports team community influences members to consider purchasing the team's products.

**H6**: Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team has a positive impact on their purchase intentions of the teams' products.

Consumers trust the opinions of peers more than those of corporations before making a purchasing decision (Lee and Koo, 2012). The e-WOM is thought to be one of the elements that most influences consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions (Kumar *et al*., 2023; Ventre and Kolbe, 2020), and is even considered to be the most serious and credible source positively influencing the choice of products (Ventre and Kolbe, 2020).

**H7**: Members' e-WOM about their preferred team's products has a positive impact on their purchasing intentions.

Insert Figure 1 about here

## Methodology

**Measurements**
All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). To measure online social gratification, Bruch et al. (1989) was used, retaining and adapting four out of five items. Information-seeking and entertainment gratifications were measured using Tsai and Pai's (2013) three-item scales, adapted for the study. Mahony et al.'s (2000) scale, with five relevant items, measured psychological engagement. Active participation in hockey teams' Facebook pages was measured by six items from Tonteri et al. (2011). The e-WOM variable was measured using five items from Wallace et al. (2014), while purchasing intentions were measured using five items from Lu et al. (2014), both adapted to the study. Table 2 lists the items. The questionnaire also collected demographic data, including age, gender, education, marital status, occupation, and income.

**Data collection and sample**
Among online social networks, Facebook was chosen for its popularity. Given hockey's cultural significance in Canada (Lorenz, 2015), seven Canadian teams were selected: Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers, Montreal Canadiens, Ottawa Senators, Toronto Maple Leafs, Vancouver Canucks, Winnipeg Jets, and an "other" option. Participants were asked if they followed their favorite National Hockey League (NHL) team on Facebook and for how long. The questionnaire was pretested with individuals following their favorite Canadian NHL team on Facebook. Of 329 respondents, 24 incomplete surveys were discarded, leaving 305 participants. Most respondents were men (74.75%); 47% were aged 24-45, 43% aged 18-23, and 10% over 46. Nearly half (45.90%) had over 450 Facebook friends. These demographics align with Statista (2023a), which found that men are more avid NHL fans than women (21% vs. 7%). Another Statista study (2023b) showed NHL fandom percentages as 18% for ages 18-34, 19% for 35-44, 11% for 45-64, and 7% for 65 and older.

Insert Table 1 about here

## Results

SPSS and SmartPLS 4 were used for data analysis. Table 2 indicates that Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$), Jôreskog's rho ($\rho c$), and the reliability coefficient $\rho A$ are satisfactory (all above 0.7, except for the $\alpha$ of information seeking gratification, which is slightly below 0.7). These results confirm good internal reliability. Convergent validity is also confirmed, with AVE values ranging from 0.533 to 0.707. Table 3 shows all HTMT ratios are below 0.85 (Hair et al., 2022), and Table 4 confirms discriminant validity, with all AVE square roots exceeding inter-construct correlations. No multicollinearity is found (Table 5) as VIF indices are below 3 (Hair et al., 2022).

Insert Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 about here

Tables 6 and 7 report the SmartPLS4 regression results of the structural model. Members' active participation in the online community of their preferred sports team is significantly and positively determined by their online social gratification ($\beta$= .362; p< .001), information seeking gratification ($\beta$= .130; p= .009), entertainment gratification ($\beta$= .174; p= .002), and psychological engagement (with the preferred sports team) gratification ($\beta$ .250; p< .001). All together they explain 38.3% of the variance of active participation ($R^2$= .383) and their $Q^2$ (.357) indicates that they have a strong predictive relevance for active participation (Hair et al., 2022). Hence, $H_1$ to $H_4$ are supported. Also, active participation is found to influence members' purchase intention ($\beta$= .172; p= .022) and e-WOM ($\beta$= .538; p< .001). The latter also has a significant impact on purchase intention ($\beta$= .194; p= .009). Active participation explains 28.9% of the variance of e-WOM ($R^2$= .289), and both active participation and e-WOM explain 10.3% of the variance of purchase intention ($R^2$= .103). The $Q^2$ value of active participation (.188) indicates that it has a predictive relevance for e-WOM, though moderate. Likewise, the $Q^2$ value of active participation and of e-WOM (.096) indicate that both have a predictive relevance for purchase intention, though moderate as well. In addition, the PLS-SEM analysis, compared to LM, shows that RMSE values are lower for 50% of the indicators, suggesting the model exhibits a borderline medium predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019). Hence, $H_5$, $H_6$, and $H_7$ are all accepted. Further results indicate that in addition to its direct impact on purchase intention, active participation has an indirect impact on it through e-WOM ($\beta$= .104; p= .014). Thus, members' active participation in the online communities of their preferred sports team has both direct and indirect impacts on their purchase intentions of the team's products.

Insert Table 6 and Table 7 about here

## Discussion and Theoretical Implications

This study is the first to explore the relationships in online sports team communities. It examines members' motives for participating in these communities and the impact on e-WOM and purchase intentions. Four key factors were found to drive participation, with online social gratification having the strongest effect, aligning with previous findings (Tonteri et al., 2011). Information seeking, while significant, had the least impact, consistent with earlier studies (Gibbs et al., 2014; Witkemper et al., 2012). The study also shows that entertainment and psychological engagement gratifications positively influence participation, supporting earlier research (Tonteri et al., 2011;

Popp & Woratschek, 2016). Psychological engagement is especially relevant in sports, leading to active community involvement and increased e-WOM and loyalty (Ladhari et al., 2022).

The study contributes by filling a gap in research on motivations in online sports communities, enhancing UGT by highlighting the importance of social, information seeking, and entertainment gratifications. Additionally, it introduces psychological engagement as a crucial factor in the sports context, reflecting fans' passion and sense of duty to their community (Ghazali et al., 2019). Lastly, the study offers insights into how participation in these communities influences purchase intentions and e-WOM, a previously unexplored area, and provides valuable strategic insights for sports marketing.

## Managerial Implications

This study offers several managerial implications for enhancing participation in sports teams' online communities. With the rise of social networks, it is crucial to create engaging environments that cater to members' needs. The research highlights that beyond social ties, information seeking, and entertainment, psychological engagement significantly motivates members to participate. Managers should incorporate these elements when developing online content. For information gratification, teams can host regular online sessions with team members and managers, use chatbots for quick responses, and provide exclusive content like in-depth analyses and match summaries. To enhance social gratification, teams should foster interactions through discussion forums, collective viewing sessions, and virtual rewards for active members. For entertainment, they can develop video games and co-create content with community members. Psychological engagement can be strengthened through loyalty programs, exclusive offers, and inspirational content showcasing players' achievements. Developing loyalty and maintaining relationships with fans are crucial, as commitment and attachment strongly influence fan behavior. By leveraging these motivations, managers can promote team products and stimulate positive e-WOM and purchase intentions.

## Limitations and Future Research Avenues

This study has several limitations to consider. First, the sample is not fully representative of the Canadian population, despite similarities to NHL demographics reported by Statista (2023a). Most respondents were from the Montreal Canadiens community, so the results may primarily reflect this specific team's online community. Additionally, the overrepresentation of men could introduce bias. Second, the study's focus on hockey in Canada must be considered, as each sport interacts with a country's history and culture differently. Given these limitations, future research could explore similar studies with other NHL teams in the U.S. to compare behaviors in online communities across different countries. This could help determine if cultural values influence these behaviors. Additionally, the model could be tested in Europe with sports like soccer, which is deeply embedded in European culture, much like hockey in Canada.

## Conclusion

The results of our study provide insights on a few motives and consequences of members' active participation in an online community of their sports team. The different motives leading to participation analyzed in the study - online social gratification, information seeking gratification, entertainment gratification, and the psychological engagement gratification with the team, all have a significant impact on members' active participation. This study also supports the fact that the more members actively participate in the online communities of their preferred sports team, the

more they are inclined to recommend the teams' products to others and ultimately purchase the team's products.

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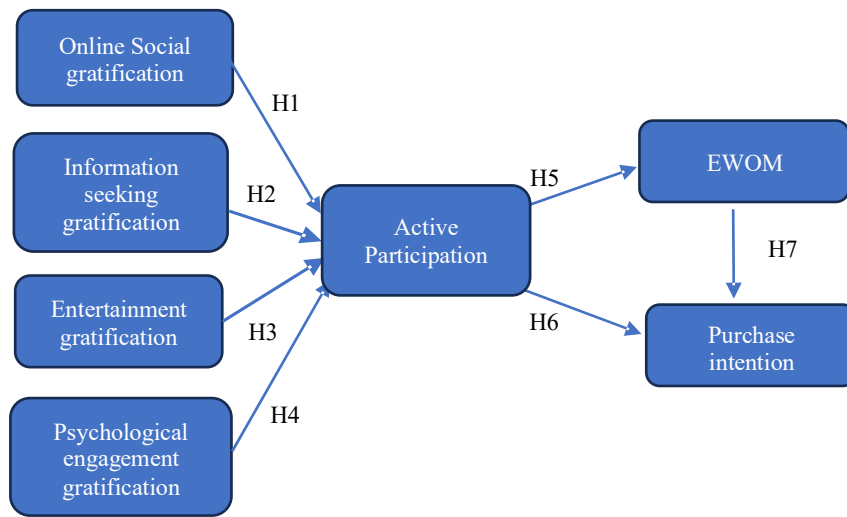
Figure 1: Motives and consequences of participation in an online community of a sports team

*Table 1. Sample's sociodemographic variables (N= 305)*

| Variable | % | Variable | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | **Education** | |
| 18 to less than 20 years old | 22.6 | Less than high school | 3.9 |
| 20-23 | 20.0 | High school | 26.6 |
| 24-30 | 31.1 | College | 33.1 |
| 31-45 | 16.1 | University | 31.5 |
| 46-55 | 5.9 | Graduate school | 4.9 |
| 56-65 | 2.6 | **Marital Status** | |
| Over 65 | 1.6 | Single | 67.9 |
| **Gender** | | Married or common law | 29.9 |
| Female | 25.2 | Divorced/separated | 2.3 |
| Male | 74.8 | | |
| **Occupation** | | **Yearly income (CAD$)** | |
| Government/public sector employee | 16.7 | $20,001-$30,000 | 14.1 |
| Private sector employee | 28.9 | $30,001-$40,000 | 8.2 |
| Owns a private business | 3.9 | $40,001-$50,000 | 12.8 |
| Retired | 3.0 | Less than $20,000 | 37.7 |
| Unemployed | 4.6 | Over $50,000 | 27.2 |
| Other (e.g., student) | 43.0 | | |
| **Number of Facebook friends** | | **Years following the Facebook page of preferred team** | |
| More than 450 | 45.9 | More than 4 years | 34.8 |
| Between 300 and 450 | 24.6 | Between 3 to 4 years | 13.1 |
| Between 150 and 300 | 22.3 | Between 2 to 3 years | 21.0 |
| Less than 150 | 7.2 | Between 1 to 2 years | 21.6 |
| **Preferred Hockey team** | | Less than 1 year | 9.5 |
| Calgary Flames | 2.3 | | |
| Edmonton Oilers | 6.6 | | |
| Montreal Canadiens | 61.0 | | |
| Ottawa Senators | 4.9 | | |
| Toronto Maple Leafs | 5.2 | | |
| Vancouver Canucks | 3.9 | | |
| Winnipeg Jets | 16.1 | | |

*Table 2: Factor Analysis results and Reliability Coefficients*

| Variables and Items | Loadings | Internal Consistency | | | Convergent Validity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | α and loadings | ρ_A | ρ_c | AVE |
| **Online social gratification (SOCI)** (KMO= 0.716; Cumulative Variance = 54.246 %; Eigen value = 2.170) | | 0.715 | 0.743 | 0.820 | 0.536 |
| I like to be with members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.576 | | | | |
| I welcome the opportunity to mix socially with members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.795 | | | | |
| I find members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team more stimulating than anything else. | 0.820 | | | | |
| I'd be unhappy if I were prevented from making online social contacts with members of my preferred hockey team. | 0.712 | | | | |
| **Information seeking gratification (INFO)** (KMO= 0.639; Cumulative Variance = 61.260 %; Eigen value = 1.838) | | 0.681 | 0.717 | 0.823 | 0.610 |
| The information provided by the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team is useful. | 0.847 | | | | |
| The information provided by the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team is valuable. | 0.817 | | | | |
| The Facebook page of my preferred hockey team is a very good source of information. | 0.668 | | | | |
| **Entertainment gratification (ENTE)** (KMO= 0.691; Cumulative Variance = 70.707 %; Eigen value = 2.121) | | 0.792 | 0.797 | 0.878 | 0.707 |
| I find being a member of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team entertaining. | 0.793 | | | | |
| I find being a member of my preferred hockey team enjoyable. | 0.874 | | | | |
| I find being a member of my preferred hockey team fun. | 0.853 | | | | |
| **Psychological engagement gratification (PSYC)** (KMO= 0.748; Cumulative Variance =65.003 %; Eigen value =2.600) | | 0.820 | 0.824 | 0.880 | 0.648 |
| Being a fan of my preferred hockey team is important to me. | 0.800 | | | | |
| Nothing could change my allegiance to my preferred hockey team. | 0.831 | | | | |
| I am a committed fan of my preferred hockey team. | 0.784 | | | | |
| I could never switch my loyalty from my preferred hockey team even if my close friends were fans of another team. | 0.804 | | | | |
| **Active participation (PART)** (KMO= 0.794; Cumulative Variance = 53.356%; Eigen value = 3.201) | | 0.825 | 0.827 | 0.872 | 0.533 |
| I read the discussions on the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team to get information. | 0.750 | | | | |
| I get well-informed answers to my questions posted on the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.725 | | | | |
| I get general information from other members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.711 | | | | |
| I enjoy reading about the personal experiences of other members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.735 | | | | |
| I share information with other members of the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.735 | | | | |
| I willingly answer questions on the Facebook page of my preferred hockey team. | 0.723 | | | | |
| **E-WOM** (KMO= 0.854; Cumulative Variance = 67.989 %; Eigen value = 3.399) | | 0.882 | 0.884 | 0.914 | 0.679 |
| I click "Like" for products carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team to talk up the brand to my online friends. | 0.824 | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I click "Like" for products carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team as it enhances my Facebook profile. | 0.827 | | | |
| I click "Like" for products carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team in order to spread the good word about this brand. | 0.826 | | | |
| On Facebook, I write a lot of positive comments about products carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team. | 0.828 | | | |
| On Facebook, I recommend products carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team to friends and family. | 0.817 | | | |
| **Purchase Intention (PINT)**<br>**(KMO= 0.854; Cumulative Variance = 58.318 %; Eigen value = 2.916)** | 0.819 | 0.870 | 0.871 | 0.578 |
| I would consider buying products (e.g., jerseys, hats, T-shirts, accessories, etc.) carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team. | 0.869 | | | |
| I have no intention of buying products (e.g., jerseys, hats, T-shirts, accessories, etc.) carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team (R). | 0.753 | | | |
| It is possible that I would buy products (e.g., jerseys, hats, T-shirts, accessories, etc.) carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team. | 0.670 | | | |
| I will purchase products (e.g., jerseys, hats, T-shirts, accessories, etc.) carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team. | 0.834 | | | |
| If I am in need, I would buy products (e.g., jerseys, hats, T-shirts, accessories, etc.) carrying the brand name of my preferred hockey team. | 0.649 | | | |

*Table 3 : Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios (HTMT)*

| | E-WOM | ENTE | INFO | PART | PSYC | PINT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ENTE** | 0.230 [0.121;0.385] | | | | | |
| **INFO** | 0.202 [0.114;0.342] | 0.537 [0.379;0.681] | | | | |
| **PART** | 0.626 [0.500;0.735] | 0.487 [0.348;0.622] | 0.402 [0.260;0.555] | | | |
| **PSYC** | 0.339 [0.216;0.463] | 0.469 [0.344;0.588] | 0.317 [0.172;0.474] | 0.502 [0.359;0.626] | | |
| **PINT** | 0.307 [0.180;0.464] | 0.273 [0.154;0.401] | 0.208 [0.125;0.368] | 0.311 [0.171;0.463] | 0.468 [0.360;0.578] | |
| **SOCI** | 0.536 [0.400;0.656] | 0.277 [0.140;0.435] | 0.209 [0.133;0.374] | 0.575 [0.439;0.701] | 0.266 [0.181;0.405] | 0.250 [0.160;0.401] |

e-WOM: Electronic word-of-mouth; SOCI: Online social gratification; ENTE: Entertainment gratification; INFO: Information seeking gratification; PSYC: Psychological engagement gratification; PART: Active participation; PINT: Purchase intention. Confidence Interval [2.5 %; 97.5 %]

*Table 4: Fornell-Larcker Criteria*

| √AVE | E-WOM | ENTE | INFO | PART | PSYC | PINT | SOCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **E-WOM** | **0.824** | | | | | | |
| **ENTE** | 0.200 | **0.841** | | | | | |
| **INFO** | 0.158 | 0.392 | **0.781** | | | | |
| **PART** | 0.538 | 0.395 | 0.309 | **0.730** | | | |
| **PSYC** | 0.299 | 0.380 | 0.251 | 0.423 | **0.805** | | |
| **PINT** | 0.287 | 0.221 | 0.160 | 0.276 | 0.403 | **0.760** | |
| **SOCI** | 0.436 | 0.207 | 0.134 | 0.467 | 0.207 | 0.215 | **0.732** |

√AVE values are reported in bold on diagonal. e-WOM: Electronic word-of-mouth; SOCI: Online social gratification; ENTE: Entertainment gratification; INFO: Information seeking gratification; PSYC: Psychological engagement gratification; PART: Active participation; PINT: Purchase intention.

*Table 5: Multicollinearity of independent variables (VIF)*

| IV \ DV | E-WOM | PART | PINT |
|---------|-------|------|------|
| **E-WOM** | | | 1.406 |
| **ENTE** | | 1.333 | |
| **INFO** | | 1.201 | |
| **PART** | 1.000 | | 1.406 |
| **PSYC** | | 1.208 | |
| **SOCI** | | 1.068 | |

e-WOM: Electronic word-of-mouth; SOCI: Online social gratification; ENTE: Entertainment gratification; INFO: Information seeking gratification; PSYC: Psychological engagement gratification; PART: Active participation; PINT: Purchase intention.

*Table 6: Structural Equation Model Results*

| Hypotheses | ß | *p* | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| Online social gratification -> Active participation | 0.362 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Information seeking gratification -> Active participation | 0.130 | 0.009 | Accepted |
| Entertainment gratification -> Active participation | 0.174 | 0.002 | Accepted |
| Psychological engagement gratification -> Active participation | 0.250 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Active participation -> e-WOM | 0.538 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Active participation -> Purchase intention | 0.172 | 0.022 | Accepted |
| e-WOM -> Purchase intention | 0.194 | 0.009 | Accepted |

*Table 7: Coefficient of determination ($R^2$), Effect size ($f^2$), and Predictive relevance ($Q^2$)*

| Exogenous variables | Endogenous variables | $f^2$ | $R^2$ | $Q^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Online social gratification | Participation | 0.198 | 0.383 | 0.357 |
| Information seeking gratification | | 0.023 | | |
| Entertainment gratification | | 0.037 | | |
| Psychological engagement gratification | | 0.084 | | |
| Active participation | E-WOM | 0.406 | 0.289 | 0.188 |
| e-WOM | Purchase intention | 0.030 | 0.103 | 0.096 |
| Active participation | | 0.023 | | |