

# A conceptual framework for relationship between symbolic risk consumption with Electronic Word of Mouth

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## **A conceptual framework for relationship between symbolic risk consumption with Electronic Word of Mouth**

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### **Abstract**

The study aims to investigate a conceptual framework for the relationship between symbolic risk consumption with Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) to experience sharing via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result, epistemic value is created when a product arouses curiosity, gives new things and or satisfies the desire of knowledge. In conclusion, businesses can implement the findings of this study to improve destination management which prioritizes the value that tourists will get when visiting a destination.

**Keywords:** Symbolic, Experience, Value, Risk consumption.

## Un marco conceptual para la relación entre el consumo simbólico de riesgo con Electronic Word of Mouth

### Resumen

El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar un marco conceptual para la relación entre el consumo simbólico de riesgo con Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) para compartir experiencias a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, el valor epistémico se crea cuando un producto despierta curiosidad, da cosas nuevas y satisface el deseo de conocimiento. En conclusión, las empresas pueden implementar los resultados de este estudio para mejorar la gestión del destino, que prioriza el valor que los turistas obtendrán al visitar un destino.

**Palabras clave:** Simbólico, Experiencia, Valor, Consumo de riesgo.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Shifting patterns of tourist consumption for managers of tourist destinations allows managing and marketing tourist destinations to be an important part. In general marketing products' leisure, tourist destinations mean designing the destination to be able to meet the desires and expectations of tourists. For this reason, a management pattern is needed by emphasizing the competitive advantage of the tourist destination, not only being different. The rationale is then behind how a tourist destination should be able to have a differentiation that excels so that it can be consumed by tourists and tourism operators can provide the best experience for tourists, visitors will undertake positive activities after the visit, telling the destination

to the other party through the media social (E-WOM) with social sharing of the experience he has gained. Factors that give rise to the willingness of visitors to share activities in social media (E-WOM) for the experience gained need to know its constituent factors, including the desire for symbolic consumption of tourists (EKINCI, SIRAKAYA-TURK & PRECIADO, 2013), and antecedents through the perceived value of experience need to be linked to the consequences of subsequent behavior from the tourism experience, customer value perception is described as a critical element in consumption and decision-making behavior in the E-WOM.

Symbolic consumption at this time not only on tangible goods but also on intangible goods such as services and unforgettable experiences although current research is concerned with symbolic consumption more mainly on luxury goods as a symbolic identity itself (ESMAEILPOUR, 2015), whereas intangible symbolic consumption involves an experience (EKINCI ET AL., 2013), however, these studies have not accommodated the risks in it, that risk has always been associated with avoidance but in the context of symbolic consumption, risk is perceived, sought even taken as part of an experience or in strengthening satisfaction in visiting destinations tourism, especially (adventure tourism).

BOLTON & DREW (1991) have investigated the perspective of risk in the context of tourism, a perspective where risk is something that tourists really want rather than avoid it. Until now, however, there has been little, research on symbolic consumption that is associated

with sharing noisy experience so on social media (E-WOM), some studies that previously symbolic consumption emphasized more on the destination side without involving an adventurous experience that contained risks (HEN, LEASK, & PHOU, 2016) as well as in the context of adventure tourism have not shown that there are symbolic needs for their consumption (Aghaei et al, 2015).

Thus, a risk consumption is said to have symbolic meaning if the destination consumption is in conformity with itself (self congruence), the consumption is in accordance with the lifestyle congruence of risk-taker. Referring to previous research CHEN, LEASK & PHOU (2016) talk about the adventure destination in accordance with the concept of a person. If tourists see other travelers similar to how he was, if tourists message other travelers the same as seeing him, the image of an adventure destination the same as tourists and tourist destinations consistently in accordance with the wishes of tourists. It can also be said that the destination brand will be able to identify with tourists if tourists feel proud. If there are tourists who praise adventure destinations, tourists interested in other people's opinions about the destination. If there are others who talk badly with the destination tourists feel ashamed too and that the destination will be able to become part of the lifestyle if tourists travel to the destination become part of their lifestyle, adventure tourism activities can support their lifestyle and if the whole activity is a lifestyle of tourists (OYELANA & NINI, 2015).

Research on the relationship between the value of experience with intention to behave has been carried out including linking with E-WOM activities, but making experience a whole variable while in an experience value there are many dimensions of measurement that need to be adjusted to the research setting, in consumption behavior including values, such as functional, conditional, social, emotional, and epistemic value utilities, consequently, these elements must be included when analyzing consumer values from a product, price, or experience (BOLTON & DREW, 1991).

Based on the results of these studies it becomes important in research into symbolic consumption in adventure tourism associated with E-WOM. Likewise in the context of symbolic consumption, the dimensions of symbolic consumption are still unclear in explaining brand loyalty, so also in product research that is associated with special products such as luxury brands, self congruence has not been able to explain brand loyalty. Finally, the formulation of the problem in this study is whether there is an influence of symbolic risk consumption on E-WOM with emotional value and epistemic value as mediating variables in adventure tourism.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

WOM recommendations from friends and close relatives are the most important source that can shape the image of a tour. Because it comes from colleagues and closest relatives, E-WOM is the

digitalization of traditional WOM. WOM is delivered directly from one party to another, while the delivery of EWOM requires an intermediary media, namely through electronic media. Several studies on CHU & KIM (2011) generally discuss a product from the company so that the lack of EWOM research is found in the scope of travel. Consumers usually receive and respond to EWOM messages as a reliable source of interesting and useful information in BOLTON & DREW (1991) revealed that EWOM will change the structure of travel information and then change tourists' knowledge and perceptions of various tourism products. CHU & KIM (2011) express it as a common thing that electronic media provides benefits as a place for sharing photos, videos to personal blogs, giving ratings, evaluate, view maps online and so on to share and recommend to fellow users. E-WOM is also an embodiment of attitudes and desires to behave in the future resulting from visitors' assessment of experiences after consuming risk from a destination.

### *2.1. Symbolic Risk Consumption*

Since the introduction of self-concept by BOLTON & DREW (1991), where in deciding to buy consumers not only buy products but how products purchased can identify themselves, consumers, there is a symbolic consumption that they buy is not merely functional value. Symbolic Consumption is describing a <sup>10</sup> fundamental part in the creation, improvement, maintenance, transformation, disposition, expression, association, and self-differentiation. EDSON &



BETTMAN (2005) the use of products as a mechanism for the creation, development and maintenance of individual images, as well as BOLTON & DREW (1991), describe symbolic consumption as Acquisition, creation, maintenance and show the existence of their identity through consumption. So in the context of adventure destination risk, Symbolic Risk Consumption can be defined as the way consumers do identify themselves through risk consumption.

## 2.2. Self Risk Congruence

Newman introduced the concept of self-image in 1957. Along with other important findings, research shows that the act of consuming a product can be motivated by the uncertainty between individual images and products. BOLTON & DREW (1991) defines self-congruency as the conformity of product image with consumer self-concept. Some authors focus on this definition in their research when analyzing self-congruence (GIDDENS, 1991). In this study self-congruence that exists at the destination risk, the authors call self-risk congruence. Self-risk congruence is the compatibility between self-concept and adventure destination image.

The idea that self-congruity with brand image will reflect the level of conformity between product image and individual self-image. High conformity occurs when the image of tourists matches the image of a tourist destination. So that greater conformity, the brand image of the tourist destination reflects who the tourist is, the brand image of the

tourist destination becomes important for tourists, when the tourist destination brand is visited by other tourists who are similar to the character of tourists, the brand of tourist destination matches the character that tourists want, brand image of a tourist destination in accordance with what tourists want to see from him, brand image of a tourist destination according to how others want to see tourists.

The effect of self-congruity on the perceived value of tourists is supported by relevant previous studies. The effect of self-congruity on tourist E-WOM activities is supported by relevant prior research such as; (HAN, NGUYEN & SIMKIN, 2016). Thus the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

**H1:** Self-risk congruence <sup>6</sup> has a positive effect on the emotional value

**H2:** Self-risk congruence has a positive effect on epistemic value

**H3:** Self-risk congruence has a positive effect on E-WOM with social sharing;

### *2.3. Lifestyle Risk Congruence*

Lifestyle refers to everyday behavior that is oriented towards the side of people. Each type of lifestyle is characterized by a unique

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lifestyle that is based on various activities, interests, and opinions. Lifestyle is conceptualized as a function of individual characteristics that are inherent and modified through social interactions. Lifestyle studies consist of attitudes or beliefs about people, places, products, etc. used to assess consumer purchasing behavior. Lifestyle is expressed by customers throughout work and leisure in the form of activities, interests, opinions, and grades (CHANARON, 2013).

Lifestyle is very helpful in understanding the soul of the customer and therefore can be used as a basis for communication and marketing for them (BRENGMAN, GEUENS, WEIJTERS, SMITH & SWINYARD, 2005). Previous studies such as; EKINCI, ET AL. (2013) have supported the influence of lifestyle congruity on the perceived value of tourists. This support shows that the greater the suitability of the concept of lifestyle with the brand allows the greater the consumer has a favorable attitude towards the brand. In the context of the tourist destination brand, only the destination brand reflects the lifestyle, which is in accordance with the lifestyle and that supports the lifestyle of tourists which will affect the value felt by tourists.

Consumer lifestyles and brand loyalty exist (FOXALL, GOLDSMITH & BROWN, 1998). For example, consumers develop a personal attachment to a brand because they help to maintain a certain lifestyle. BOLTON & DREW (1991) assumes that there is a relationship between lifestyle suitability and brand loyalty, BOLTON & DREW (1991) show that lifestyle-congruence positively influences consumers' intention to recommend. Lifestyle risk congruence in this

study is the attitude of consumers, one's interest in risk, and opinions related to the relationship between consumption of destinations tourism adventure. Thus the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

**H4:** Lifestyle risk congruence has a positive effect on the emotional value

**H5:** Lifestyle risk congruence has a positive effect on epistemic value

**H6:** Lifestyle risk congruence positively affects E-WOM with social sharing

#### *2.4. Emotional Value*

Values have a role in what will be done in the future. Emotional value (emotional value) comes from positive feelings or emotions arising from the results of consuming the product (when or using). In the context of destination consumption if the customer experiences positive feelings when consuming the destination then the destination provides emotional value. Emotional value towards the brand is related to positive feelings when using the brand, which increases consumer loyalty to the brand, and that the value felt was a direct antecedent of the purchase decision. Emotional value is defined as the benefits derived from feelings or affective (ie pleasure or pleasure) produced by a product.

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Emotional value is the benefit gained from the experience of something new or different. This emotional value also shows that emotions are associated with consumption that is formed in response to considerations made by consumers.

**H7:** Emotional value has a positive effect on E-WOM with social sharing.

### 2.5. Epistemic Value

That epistemic or novelty is very important in relation to the consumption of experience and reflects consumer curiosity and needs to learn and experience variations in consumption. Epistemic value (novelty value) was not originally included in the framework of perceived value (PERVAL), this value is a key component of the adventure tourism experience because it includes destination activities (HALL, 1992). Epistemic value is created when a product arouses curiosity, gives new things and or satisfies the desire of knowledge. BOLTON & DREW (1991), refers to the aspect of surprise or the uniqueness and originality of a product; the capacity of a product to generate curiosity), provide unique and original (novelty) or satisfying the desire for knowledge.

**H8:** Epistemic value has a positive effect on e-WOM with social sharing.

### 2.6. The Conceptual Framework

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The conceptual framework in this study is in accordance with the model developed by HAN, NGUYEN, & SIMKIN (2016), the conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1:

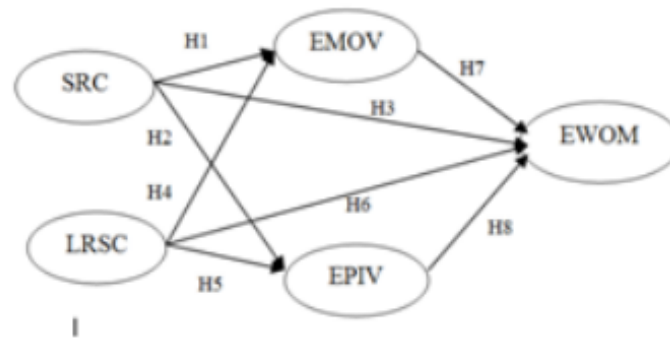


Figure 1: Conceptual Research Framework

Description: SRC: Self Risk Congruence, LRSC: Lifestyle Risk Congruence, EMOV: Emotional Value, EPIV: Epistemic Value, EWOM: Electronic Word of Mouth

### 3. CONCLUSION

The research framework developed in this paper can be tested and refined in future research that can help academics learn this topic. From an academic perspective, this research will add research related to risk consumption that is bundled with symbolic consumption as well as the relation of sharing behavior in social media networks. This

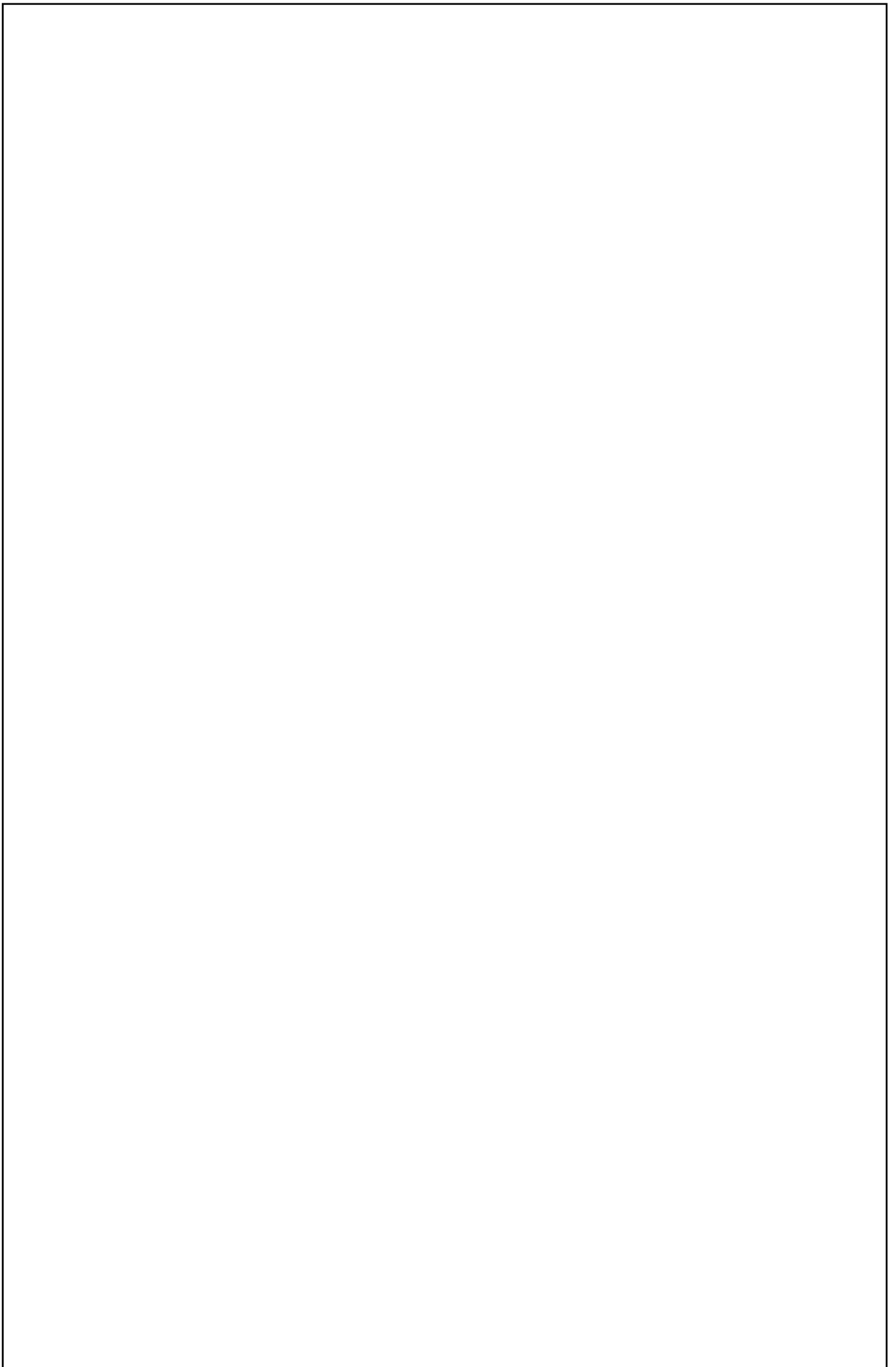
framework investigates the relationship between symbolic consumption in risky destinations and the sharing of experiences of risky destination visits through E-WOM. From a business perspective, businesses can implement the findings of this study to improve destination management which prioritizes the value that tourists will get when visiting a destination so that it can lead to desirable behavior that is sharing experiences of risky destination visits through E-WOM. The main objective of this research is to develop a theoretical framework to investigate the relationship between symbolic risk consumption and EWOM mediated by emotional values and epistemic values in the context of consumption of risky destinations, adventure destinations.

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