Original Research Article

How to Promote WOM from Platform Attachment in Gastronomy Context

Abstract

With the increasing popularity of social media, consumers browsing, evaluating and sharing online content has become a popular electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior. Perceived value and attachment have been the important antecedents of WOM. Fewer studies, however, were presented to clarify the mediating and moderating effect among three variables. Therefore, this study aims to clarify the relationships among user perceived value, platform attachment and word-of-mouth in the relationship between food platform and users; to verify the mediating effect of platform attachment; to validate the influence of involvement on the relationships among these three variables; and to provide managerial implications. Data was collected by online questionnaire survey and a total of 411 samples were received yielding an effective recovery rate of 93%. Findings reveal that positive relationships were confirmed. The mediating role of platform attachment were confirmed while its effect was insignificant. Moreover, user's involvement was proved to be a moderator on perceived value-platform attachment relationships. Managers of food platforms should focus on enhancing the value of food programs and making fans feel the benefits of browsing such programs was suggested to food platforms.

Keywords: perceived value, platform attachment, WOM, user's involvement, gastronomy

1.Introduction

With the increasing popularity of social media, consumers browsing, evaluating and sharing online content has become a popular electronic word-of-mouth behavior [1]. This word-of-mouth (e-WOM) usually refers to any information/content about goods and services shared by consumers through online channels [2]. When they are viewed, shared and trusted by a large number of users, their content becomes compelling [3]. Therefore, social media greatly influences our interpersonal and social relationships and the way consumers interact with online platforms [4]. In the era of social media, it is a very important research topic for platform managers to obtain users' word-of-mouth. Because it represents that the theme or topic published by a specific platform can get users' browsing and attention. If these users' browsing can

be continuously converted into sales volume, it will help platform managers to increase operating profits. Therefore, it is of academic and practical importance to validate the influencing factors of online word-of-mouth.

In response to the above issues, study has demonstrated that consumer attachment can effectively promote word-of-mouth transmission and reduce their willingness to switch to retail outlets [5]. This consumer attachment to retail points can be measured by place dependence, place identity and social connection [5,6]. For the food platform, this means that in the continuous browsing behavior of users on the food platform, users may become dependent on, identify with and social link to a specific platform based on the settings of the application program procedural (app) or browsing habits. This phenomenon of psychological linkage between users and platforms is also known as platform attachment [7]. However, it remains to be seen how attached users are to the platform and how much word-of-mouth they generate in real situations.

Furthermore, in the interaction between users and platforms, previous study has argued that users' perceived value significantly affects their platform attachment, and platform attachment will promote users' future purchase intention [7]. In event marketing, similar results also pointed out that participants' perceived activity value would improve their activity attachment and willingness to revisit [6], and even word-of mouth [8]. However, existing study has confirmed the relationship between perceived value, platform attachment and purchase intention [7], but the mediating role of platform attachment is unclear. Similarly, event value affects revisiting intention through event satisfaction, and the mediating role is also lacking [6]. In the interaction between food platform and users, if user perceived value, platform attachment and word of mouth have the causal relationship of previous studies, platform managers will be able to formulate marketing strategies more clearly. In this way, the platform will benefit from browsing, sales and profit growth. In other words, clarifying the relationship between these variables may contribute to the sustainability of the platform.

In addition, consumers' preferences are changeable, and they generally pay attention to the issues they think are meaningful or interested in [9]. Such consumers' attention to specific issues is the concept of consumer involvement [10]. For social media, the nature of platforms is very different and there are many kinds of programs. Whether they can attract consumers' attention may affect consumers' behaviors. Researches have pointed out that involvement will affect consumers' purchase intention [11,12], improve the word-of-mouth of social media users [13], and moderate the

relationship between variables [14]. In other words, in the relationship between social media and users, involvement may play an important role in influencing consumer decisions. Therefore, clarifying the possible influence of involvement on users' decisions and developing countermeasures can improve the decision-making efficiency of platform managers and benefit the development of social media.

In summary, the objective of this paper is to clarify the relationships among user perceived value, platform attachment and word-of-mouth in the relationship between food platform and users; to verify the mediating effect of platform attachment; to validate the moderating effects of involvement on the relationships among these three variables; and to provide managerial implications.

2.Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 The concept of perceived value and its impacts

In the past two decades, the perceived value of consumers has been viewed to be an important motivation and antecedent of consumer behavior [15]. Consumer perceived value is generally defined as consumers' evaluation of the benefits and costs of obtaining specific products/services [16]. For the users of the food platform, the perceived value can be defined as the ratio of the returns they receive on the food platform and the costs they pay, such as time and money. The larger the ratio is, the higher the perceived value is; otherwise, the lower the perceived value is.

Empirical studies have pointed out that after consumers evaluate the relationship between benefit and cost, consumers' efforts in a specific event can be rewarded if the benefit is greater than the cost [6]. Consumers' perceived value significantly affects their purchasing behavior [17,18], improving positive word-of-mouth [8,18]. For food platform users, they are more likely to give the food platform a positive word-of-mouth if they evaluate that spending time searching and browsing specific programs can get higher benefits, such as fun, knowledge, etc. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed by this study:

Hypothesis 1: In the relationship between food platforms and users, user's perceived value is likely to affect their word-of-mouth.

Secondly, studies have shown that perceived value affects platform attachment [7,19] and influence purchase intention through attachment [7]. This indicates that in the relationship between the food platform and users, they may increase their dependence on the platform and their sense of identity while users dare to know that the benefit is higher than the cost. In other words, they may be mentally linked to the food platform because the overall evaluation benefits outweigh the effort. Moreover, this study considers that this psychological linkage is platform attachment. Accordingly, the

following hypotheses are proposed by this study:

Hypothesis 2: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's perceived value is likely to affect their platform attachment.

2.2 The concept of platform attachment and its impacts

Attachment is a psychological bound between a person and an environment or object [6]. In the relationship between social media and user, social media will affect our interpersonal communication and interaction, and even affect our way of life and consumption. People use social media more frequently and the phenomenon of attachment to social media was then formed [20]. Moreover, these attachment phenomena are driven by social bound, functional usage, emotional expression, etc. [20]. This psychological link between users and media platforms is called platform attachment [7].

Previous studies have illustrated that it helps to gain user's word-of-mouth after users establish an attachment to the platform [5,21]. This indicates that they may have more positive comments on the platforms and are willing to share the characteristics and advantages of these platforms with others after users' sense of dependence on social media and content identification. For food platforms, remaining users' platform attachment may help them gain a positive word-of-mouth. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed by this study:

Hypothesis 3: In the relationship between food platforms and users, user's platform attachment is likely to affect their word-of-mouth.

In addition, in the relationship between food platforms and users, past studies have confirmed the relationship between perceived value and word-of-mouth [8,18], perceived value and platform attachment [6,19], platform attachment and word-of-mouth relationship [5,21]. Studies, however, investigating the mediating role of platform attachment are lacking.

In other words, the mediating role of platform attachment in the relationship between perceived value and word-of-mouth has not been evidenced. If platform attachment has a mediating effect, it indicates that it is not only affected by perceived value, but also will directly affect word-of-mouth, and will also replace the direct impact of perceived value on word-of-mouth. By this way, it may have an impact on the focus of marketing strategy, and it is of theoretical and practical significance to clarify its mediating role. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed by this study:

Hypothesis 4: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's platform attachment is likely to have a mediating effect between perceived value

and word-of-mouth.

2.3 The concept of involvement and its impacts

Studies have confirmed that the more engaged people are in something, the more motivated they are to complete their tasks or achieve their goals [22,23,24]. What consumers pay attention to is important and meaningful to them, so they have strong motivation to invest in it [25,26]. Moreover, different levels of involvement will lead to different ranges of information processing processes [27]. When a consumer has a high degree of involvement in a particular brand/product, she may spend more time evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the product/brand, and they will collect and process their information in detail [24]. Empirical research have pointed out that the level of involvement directly affects their satisfaction and recommendation intention on products [11,25,28,29], consumer involvement has a positive impact on brand image and film and television tourism loyalty [30].

In the relationship between the food platform and users, when users perceive the platform programs as meaningful and important to their lives, they may invest more time and resources to collect and process information. As consumers' information integrity on a particular issue increases, their original beliefs, ideas and values about a particular issue may change and their behavior may be affected. For example, the degree of involvement of consumers will affect their perceived value and willingness to watch movies and TV programs. The higher the degree of involvement, the more rational the consumers may be, and the relationship between perceived value and willingness to watch TV programs will be weakened [31].

In other words, different levels of users' involvement in food platforms is likely to moderate their perceived value-word-of-mouth relationship, perceived value-platform attachment relationship and platform attachment-word-of-mouth relationship. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed by this study:

Hypothesis 5: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's perceived involvement is likely to have a moderating effect on perceived value, platform attachment and word-of-mouth relationships.

Hypothesis 5a: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's perceived involvement is likely to have a moderating effect on perceived value and word-of-mouth relationship.

Hypothesis 5b: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's perceived involvement is likely to have a moderating effect on perceived value and platform attachment relationship.

Hypothesis 5c: In the relationship between food platform and users, user's perceived involvement is likely to have a moderating effect on platform

attachment and word-of-mouth relationship.

Based on the above assumptions, the research framework of this paper is shown in Figure 1.

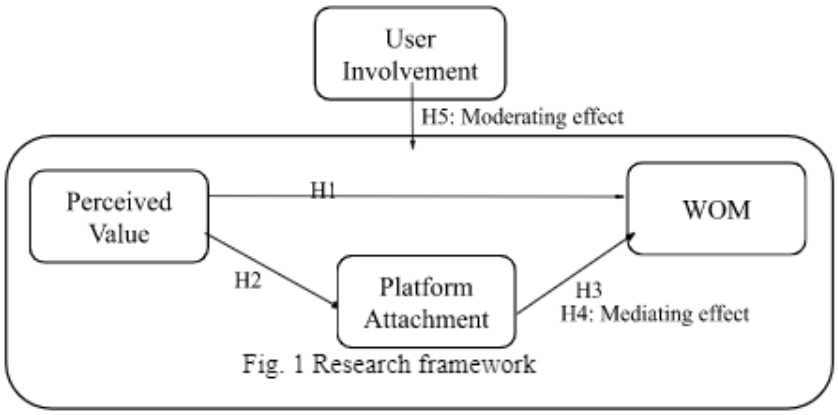


Fig. 1 Research framework

3. Research methods

3.2 Definition and measurement of variables

In terms of the definition and measurement of variables, referring to the studies of Yen (2020a) [6], Lu, Yan, and Chen (2022) [7], perceived value is defined as the evaluation of the benefits over efforts generated by browsing food programs by users on XiaoHongshu. Based on the research of Yen (2020a) [6], Lu, Yan, and Chen (2022) [7] and considering the research objectives and responses, three questions were used for perceived value, such as " With the same amount of time, I will choose XiaoHongshu platform to get more food information", "With the same effort, I will choose XiaoHongshu platform to get more food information", and "With the same amount of money, I will choose XiaoHongshu platform as the food guide to get more returns"

Regarding to platform attachment, it is defined as "the psychological connection of Dependence of XiaoHongshu users to the food program" refer to the studies of Horakova, Uusitalo, & Jokinen (2022), Yen (2022) [5,32]. It includes two aspects: Platform Dependence and Platform Identity. Referring to the studies of Horakova, Uusitalo, & Jokinen (2020), Yen (2022) [5,32], and considering the research objectives and responses, a total of 7 questions are adopted. For example, "It is better than short food videos on other platforms", "it can better meet my leisure and pleasure needs", "it is a very important leisure and pleasure activity for me", "it has a strong

sense of identity", "it has become a part of my life", "the food content has extraordinary significance", "the food content brings me many beautiful memories", etc.

In considering to word of mouth, referring to the research of Yen (2022) [32], word of mouth is defined as "the positive evaluation of Xiaohongshu users on browsing food programs". Three measurement questions are used, such as "I will take the initiative to review the content of the platform" and ". I will tell others about the advantages of the platform ", "I will tell others about the features of the platform", etc.

As regarding to user's involvement, it's defined as "the overall evaluation of the importance and significance of the program by food platform users" based on previous studies [32,33]. Two items, " Food consumption on XiaoHongshu platform has a great impact on my consumption intention", "Browsing the food content of XiaoHongshu platform is one of the focuses of my leisure life" were adopted.

All questions were measured by five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The higher the total score of the dimension, the higher the degree of agreement. In addition, the questions used in the questionnaire have expert validity after expert discrimination and modification.

3.3 Questionnaire Survey

In this study, online questionnaires were used to collect data from fans watching Xiaohongshu platform. In terms of the number of samples, there are 18 questions in this study, and it is generally suggested that the number of samples should be at least 5-10 times of the number of questions. In addition, considering the needs of subsequent model analysis, it is estimated that more than 380 valid samples will be collected in this study. The questionnaire was posted on WeChat in November 2022 and forwarded to WeChat and Microblogging friend groups for recruiting respondents. Respondents were asked to point to a food show they had watched recently (within six months) before they could continue to answer. By the end of December 2022, a total of 450 questionnaires were obtained, excluding 39 samples with single answers, and 411 were valid, with a valid questionnaire rate of 91%.

In terms of sample characteristics, male respondents accounted for 32.4% and female respondents accounted for 67.6%. In terms of age, 17.3% are under 18 years old, 50.1% are between 18 and 25 years old, 14.8% are between 26 and 30 years old, 8.8% are between 31 and 40 years old and 9% are over 40 years old. In terms of educational attainment, secondary schools accounted for 2.4%, higher vocational schools 23.6%, junior colleges 23.1% and universities 50.9%. In terms of occupations, teachers accounted for 4.4%; 13.8% were production technicians; 25.8% were administrative personnel; 8.1% were sales and customer service personnel, and students accounted for

44%. In terms of the average monthly income, 39.9% of respondents are less than RMB 3,000, 33.1% are between 3001-6000, 13.4% are between 6001-8000, and 13.6% are above RMB 8,000. In terms of the frequency of watching food programs in the latest week, 21.7% of respondents watched less than 4, 20.2% watched 5 to 8, 27.7% watched more than 9, while 30.4% of respondents had no fixed viewing habits. In terms of channels on food platforms, TikTok had the most clicks (70.6 percent), followed by Kuaishou (11.9 percent) and XiaoHongshu (11.2 percent). The correlations between variables were shown in Appendix A.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Common method bias (CMB)

This study first adopted Harman's one-factor test to examine CMB [34]. The results show that the unrotated principal component factor analysis accounts for 67% of the total variance, which is lower than four factors factor analysis accounts for 76% of the total variance. Second, we applied the common latent factor method following the study of Belschak et al. (2006) [35]. We included a common factor into the measurement model to obtain the common variance by connecting it to all observed items. We compare the chi-square difference between the single-factor model and the multi-factor model, and the multi-factor model is significantly better than the single-factor model (ΔCMIN/ΔDF= (46.707-83.946)/(21-27)=-37.239/-6=6.2065). These results indicate that CMB is not a concern in this study

4.2Testing the measurement model

The measurement model reveals satisfactory levels of goodness-of-fit (χ^2=46.70, DF=21, p<.001, χ^2/DF=2.22, GFI=.976, AGFI=.948, CFI=.991, RMSEA=.056). Table 1 shows that all item loadings are above 0.70 except IN1 [36]. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, the CR values exceed 0.7, showing that constructs have good reliability. Meanwhile, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores of all constructs are above the benchmark value of 0.4, indicating that they have good convergent validity [37].

Table 1 Results of CFA

Constructs	Indicators	λ	t-value	CR	AVE
Perceived Value	PV1	.837	20.433	.857	.667
	PV2	.807	19.328		
	PV3	.806	19.288		
Platform Attachment	PA1	.904	23.425	.913	.839
	PA2	.928	24.469		
Word-of-Mouth	WO1	.846	20.615	.835	.717
	WO2	.847	20.631		

User Involvement	IN1	.532	10.710	.598	.434
	IN2	.765	15.335		

We adopted two methods to assess the discriminant validity of constructs. Firstly, we adopted the Fornell-Larcker ratio of correlations criterion [37]. Table 2 shows that the square roots of the AVE of all constructs are higher than the correlation coefficients between constructs, indicating that the constructs have good discriminant validity. We then adopted the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion to further examine the discriminant validity of our constructs [38]. The result shows that the highest degree of correlation is 0.831 (<0.85), signaling that discriminant validity is good in this study [38].

Table 2 Discriminate Validity

VAR.	M	SD	PV	PA	WO	IN
PV	12.40	2.82	.817			
PA	28.82	6.34	.831**	.916		
WO	8.16	2.10	.803**	.829**	.847	
IN	8.02	1.94	.688**	.709**	.635**	.659

**p<0.01, PV: perceived value; PA: platform attachment; WO: word-of-mouth; IN: involvement

4.3 Testing the hypotheses for initial model

The measurement model reveals satisfactory levels of goodness-of-fit (χ^2=46.70, DF=21, p<.001, χ^2/DF=2.22, GFI=.976, AGFI=.948, CFI=.991, RMSEA=.056). The variable between relationships are put into the schema in order and the results are shown in Table 3. In the initial model, perceived value had a significant and positive impact on word-of-mouth (β=0.484, t=5.364), perceived value had a significant and positive impact on platform attachment (β=0.937, t=7.847), and platform attachment had a significant and positive impact on word-of-mouth (β=0.495, t=2.797). On the whole, the predictive power of independent variable on word-of-mouth was 0.927, and that of independent variable on platform attachment was 0.877, both of which had extremely high predictive power. Accordingly, hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are supported.

Table 3 Estimate for initial model

Paths	M1		M2		M3	
	Estimate	t	Estimate	t	Estimate	t
PV-WO	.948	5.364	.974	3.560	.484	2.664

PV-PA		.959	7.031	.937	7.847
PA-WO				.495	2.797
R^2_{WO}	.898	.949		.927	
R^2_{PA}		.921		.877	
χ^2 (p)	8.38(.078)	36.9(.000)		29.57(.002)	
DF	4	12		11	
χ^2/DF	2.097	3.075		2.689	
GFI	.992	.975		.980	
AGFI	.971	.942		.948	
CFI	.997	.990		.992	
RMSEA	.052	.071		.064	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, PV: perceived value; PA: platform attachment; WO: word-of-mouth; IN: involvement

4.4 Testing the hypotheses for mediating model

Table 4 and Table 5 reported the results of mediating effect. First, after repeated sampling 2000 times with the Bootstrap method, the model matched the requirements basically (X2=29.6, DF=11, p=.002, X2/DF= 2.689, GFI=.980, AGFI=.948, CFI=.992, RMSEA=.064). In terms of variable relationship, perceived value significantly affected word-of mouth (β=0.484, t=2.66) and platform attachment (β=0.947, t=7.85), and platform attachment significantly positively affected word-of mouth (β=0.495, t=2.80). Hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 were supported. Perceived value not only directly affects word-of-mouth, but also affects word-of-mouth through the intermediary of platform attachment. Platform attachment is the intermediary variable of word-of-mouth relationship of perceived value. The predictive power of the variable is word-of-mouth 0.927 and platform attachment 0.877.

Secondly, in terms of the mediating effect, the indirect effect is 0.463(p>0.01), and the upper and lower limits of the Bias-Corrected 95% confidence interval are -0.030~0.858, including 0 and the p value is greater than 0.01, showing that the indirect effect of the research model is not significant. The mediating role of platform attachment between perceived value and reputation is not statistically significant. In terms of the direct effect of perceived value and word of mouth, the estimated value is 0.484, and the upper and lower limit of the confidence interval of Bias-Corrected 95% is 0.898 to 0.974, excluding 0 and the p value is less than 0.01, showing that perceived value has a significant direct effect on word of mouth.

Finally, in terms of the total effect of the mediating effect, the estimated value is 0.947, and the upper and lower limit of the confidence interval of Bias-Corrected 95% is 0.898 to 0.974, excluding 0 and the p value is less than 0.01, showing that the total

effect of perceived value on word-of-mouth is significant. In other words, perceived value not only directly affects word-of-mouth (direct effect), but also affects word-of-mouth through platform attachment (indirect effect). Platform attachment has a partial mediating effect, but the mediating effect is not significant.

Table 4 Results of Mediated analysis (Bootstrap method)

Path	Estimates	t-value
PV-WO	.484**	2.664
PV-PA	.937**	7.847
PA-WO	.495**	2.797
R^2_{WO}	.927	
R^2_{PA}	.877	

**p<0.01

Table 5 Results of Mediated Effects (Bootstrap method)

Path	Product of Coefficients		Bias-Corrected 95% CI	
PV-WO	Estimates	SE	Lower	Upper
Indirect effects	.463	0.227	-.030	.858
Direct effects	.484*	0.245	.898	.974
Total effects	.947**	0.027	.898	.974

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

4.5 Testing the hypotheses for moderating model

The baseline model was generated by adding proposed paths on the full-metric invariance model. Results (Table 6) showed that the baseline model acceptably fit to the data (χ^2 =44.12, DF=22, p=.003, χ^2 / DF = 2, GFI= 0.970, AGFI= 0.924, CFI= 0.988, RMSEA= 0.050).

Next, this model was compared to nested models in which a particular linkage across IN_H and IN_L groups is constrained to be equivalent. Findings from the chi-square difference test revealed that there were significant differences of the link between PV and PA. Thus, IN have magnitude of the impact of PV on PA. Consequently, there were significantly difference across IN_H and IN_L groups, supporting H5b.

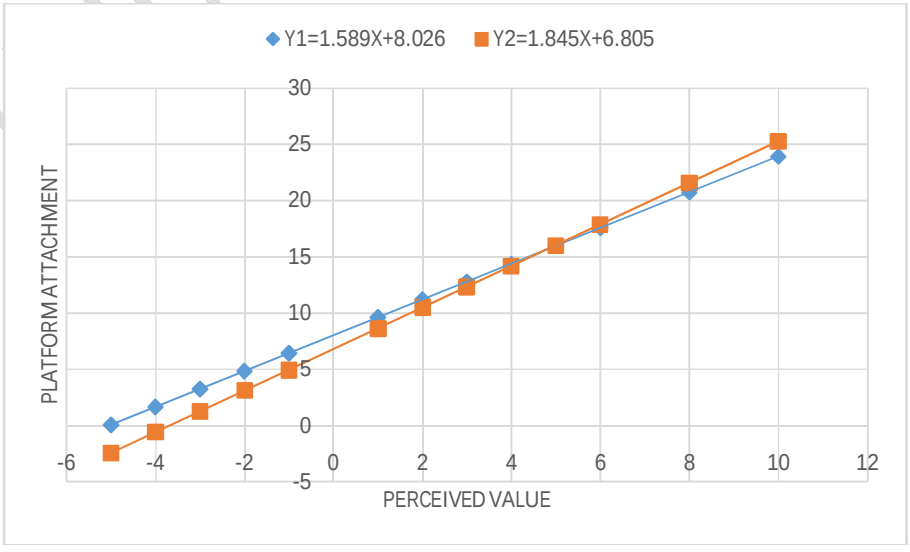
Table 6. Hypotheses testing for moderating effect

Paths	M1(INL, n=224)	M2(INH, n=187)	M3(Baseline model)	M4(Nested model)
	Estimate(t)	Estimate(t)	χ^2 (DF)	χ^2 (DF)
PV-WO	.484*(2.20)	-.200(-.12)	44(22)	44.11 (23)

PV-PA	.871**(6.29)	.988(1.03)	44(22)	53.21 (23)
PA-WO	.500*(2.31)	1.115(0.74)	44(22)	44.30 (23)
R^2_{WO}	.906	.843		
R^2_{PA}	.758	.977		
Chi-squire testing				
H5a	$\Delta\chi^2$ /ΔDF=0.11			
H5b	$\Delta\chi^2$ /ΔDF=13.21, Supported			
H5c	$\Delta\chi^2$ /ΔDF=0.3			

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

From Figure 2, we can see that the slopes of the two regression lines are close, which means that the perceived value-word-of-mouth relationship between the high and low groups in the involvement situation is equal. When the perceived value of respondents was approximately less than 5, the platform attachment of the low involvement group was greater than that of the high involvement group. When the perceived value of respondents is greater than 5, the platform attachment of the low involvement group is smaller than that of the high involvement group. For the low-involvement users, the platform attachment mediation model—that is, value–platform attachment–word-of-mouth is evident. This might be due to the requirement that the information amount is in general higher for users with high involvement than for those with low involvement. Platform attachment is largely assessed by the dependence and identity of user. Hence, for the low-involvement users, platform attachment might lead to word-of-mouth. Nonetheless, for the high-involvement users, who require more information about product/service, platform attachment does not contribute to word-of-mouth.



Y1: Low-involvement group; Y2: High-involvement group

Fig. 2 The moderating effect of user involvement

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This paper attempts to investigate the antecedents of word-of-mouth of gastronomy platform users, that is, to analyze how users' perceived value affects word-of-mouth. Furthermore, it analyzes the mediating effect of platform attachment between users' perceived value and word-of-mouth. Finally, the moderating effect of user's involvement on the relationship between variables is clarified. Overall, the results are consistent with the literature, which proves the validity of the proposed conceptual model. The model of the study was well fitted and the values for the explained variance were acceptable (>60%), supporting all hypotheses.

5.2 Managerial Implications and Recommendations

First, without considering the mediating and moderating effects, as expected, that user perceived value has a significant and positive impact on word-of-mouth, user perceived value has a significant and positive impact on platform attachment, and platform attachment has a significant and positive impact on word-of-mouth were evidenced. Consequently, hypothesis one, two, and three of this study are all confirmed. In the relationship between gastronomy platform and users, the higher the ratio of perceived rewards and efforts of gastronomy platform users, they are willing to give a higher positive evaluation to the gastronomy platform and recommend the characteristics and advantages of the gastronomy platform (hypothesis 1). Moreover, with more revenue and rewards for the same amount of time, effort, and money, they become dependent on and identify with the food platform (hypothesis 2). In addition, when they show a high dependence and sense of identity on the food platform, they will also show a high word-of-mouth for the food platform (H3). By comparing the research on mobile commerce [17], perceived value will affect impulsive purchasing behavior, and perceived value directly affects loyalty [39]. This study extends their research, and shows that perceived value not only affects purchasing behavior, it also contributes directly to consumer word-of-mouth (H1). Second, similar to previous studies, perceived value directly affects attachment [7,19], this study finds that the role of users' perceived value will also promote the relationship between the platform and users. That is, it fosters platform dependence and sense of identity of a user(H2). Finally, similar to previous research, it will help to gain user's word-of-mouth after users establish an attachment to the platform [5,20].

In other words, this study extends the existing research results. In the era of

platform economy, users' perceived value can only generate repurchase intention [7], impulse purchase [17], and generate positive word-of mouth. This word-of mouth for promoting the merits and features of the food platform helps food platform operators to continue to gain traffic and generate more views. If the food platform can take advantage of this benefit and convert the browsing volume into sales, it will help to increase the profit and sustainable development of the platform. Secondly, users' perceived value will generate platform attachment and strengthen the psychological link between the platform and users. As shown in previous studies [7], a gourmet food platform must have functional value and meet users' basic functional needs such as leisure and purchase. With interactive value, to meet the needs of users' instant communication and multiple exchanges and sharing. It has hedonic value and meets users' leisure and entertainment needs. In addition, the psychological link between the food platform and users will also help the platform to obtain user word-of-mouth, maintain and increase browsing.

Further, platform attachment has a partial mediating effect. This suggests that perceived value is a stronger predictor of word-of-mouth than platform attachment. In terms of the coefficient of the two on the word of mouth alone, the whole is almost the same. However, perceived value was the antecedent of platform attachment and could accurately predict 87.7% of the variation of platform attachment. This shows that fans of the food platform will pass on the advantages and characteristics of the platform and form a word-of-mouth after measuring their efforts and benefits. Moreover, when they feel that the benefits outweigh the efforts, they will also rely on and identify with the food platform, and they will generate word-of-mouth through such dependence and identity relationship. Finally, platform attachment has a partial mediating effect, but the mediating effect does not reach a significant level, which is different from the existing studies [7]. This indicates that although platform attachment plays an important role (mediating role) in the relationship between food platforms and users, the its importance may vary from person to person. In other words, users may have different levels of station dependence and identity to the platform. This study suspects that this result is related to the cultural and socioeconomic background of the respondents. Therefore, this phenomenon is worth researchers and food platforms to continue to pay attention to and analyze the reasons.

Accordingly, managers of food platforms should focus on enhancing the value of food programs and making fans feel the benefits of browsing such programs. Fans will rely on and identify with the platform, and pass on the advantages and characteristics of the platform to others. However, the mediating effect of platform attachment on the perceived value-word-of-mouth relationship has not reached a significant level, managers should not have the higher expectations on the role of platform attachment. In

conclusion, in the decision of improving platform word-of-mouth, managers can consider improving program value and platform attachment program. However, it should not be regarded as the primary solution that perceived value will improve word-of-mouth only through platform attachment.

Finally, in terms of the moderating effect of involvement, the analysis results show that the user involvement of food platform significantly moderates the perceived value and platform attachment relationship. In unrestricted mode (regardless of user involvement situation), the influence of perceived value on platform attachment is 0.937. However, the perceived value of low involved users still has a significant impact on platform attachment after considering the context of involvement. But the effect of high involved users is not significant. This evidence shows that when users pay more attentions to the food platform and have experienced its significance and importance, the influence of perceived value on platform attachment will decline. In other words, at this time, the force of users' perceived value on platform attachment has declined. Even if their perceived value increases, they are not easy to derive higher dependence and identification on the platform. On the contrary, before the average level of user involvement is formed, perceived value can indeed significantly improve users' dependence on and identity with the platform.

This finding has the contribution of subverting the established framework of the past research: perceived value directly increases platform attachment. First of all, when users spend time and spirit searching food platform, and hope to get some benefits and returns, they may have a higher chance of forming a sense of dependence and identity with the food platform if their efforts can be rewarded. Second, this platform attachment is a psychological link caused by multiple behaviors. Since they are searched and browsed for several times, it means that users' attention to specific programs and themes has been increased, and these programs have been evaluated and tested for several times. Users have felt the significance of browsing the programs, and have taken a place in the hearts of users (with a certain ranking of importance). At this time, with the increase of browsing times, users are more likely to be affected by the program and their values are also strengthened or changed quietly. In other words, a user's existing values may be changed by viewing a particular program, or the user's increased data collection to verify the information in the program may affect their existing values. This kind of user's investment of time, efforts and money on a specific topic to obtain information to increase the benefit of browsing food programs refers to the user's involvement in food programs. This extra information collection and effort is meaningful and important to her, which is the basic definition of involvement.

5.3Suggestions to Future Research

This study has validated the perceived value, platform attachment and word-of-mouth relationship of food platform users. In this study, only three questions were used to measure perceived value without categorizing perceived value. Regarding to theory, there may still be one more important value factors that affect word-of-mouth, such as hedonic value, functional value, social value, etc. Accordingly, subsequent studies can increase the orientation of perceived value or add antecedents other than perceived value to better predict user word-of-mouth in the context of social media.

Secondly, in terms of platform attachment, only platform dependence and platform identity are used in this study. In considering to theory, it may have one more suitable aspects, such as social linkage, emotional linkage, etc., which can be applied to the context of the use of social media. Future studies may try to verify the relationship between platform attachment and word-of-mouth by using multi-oriented platform attachment measurement.

In addition, this study has teased out the mediating role of platform attachment and obtained preliminary results. However, it is not very effective. The specific reasons remain to be clarified by future research.

Finally, in the relationship between food platforms and users, this study has investigated the moderating effects of involvement on perceived value, platform attachment and word-of-mouth. However, the environment of social media is complex and changes rapidly. It may have multiple situational variables, such as user digital inertia, variety-seeking, social group influence and other internal and external factors. Based on the results of this study, future studies can continue to verify the influence of situational factors on the food platform user behavior.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

APPENDIX A: Correlations of measure variables

VAR.	M	SD	PV1	PV2	PV3	PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5	PA6	PA7	WO1	WO2	IN1	IN2
PV1	4.12	1.071	1													
PV2	4.14	1.074	.675**	1												
PV3	4.14	1.058	.695**	.627**	1											
PA1	4.13	1.050	.639**	.591**	.561**	1										
PA2	4.19	1.008	.609**	.636**	.590**	.633**	1									
PA3	4.08	1.153	.571**	.639**	.551**	.580**	.631**	1								
PA4	4.16	1.015	.633**	.595**	.608**	.589**	.614**	.671**	1							
PA5	4.05	1.165	.679**	.641**	.609**	.594**	.577**	.665**	.667**	1						
PA6	4.09	1.126	.631**	.577**	.604**	.607**	.600**	.693**	.690**	.660**	1					
PA7	4.12	1.077	.668**	.613**	.593**	.654**	.619**	.697**	.700**	.704**	.715**	1				
WO1	4.01	1.181	.636**	.656**	.649**	.638**	.609**	.637**	.619**	.677**	.650**	.702**	1			
WO2	4.15	1.088	.685**	.643**	.668**	.621**	.592**	.608**	.642**	.688**	.638**	.642**	.716**	1		
IN1	3.95	1.192	.419**	.418**	.468**	.391**	.454**	.384**	.432**	.402**	.361**	.399**	.409**	.399**	1	
IN2	4.07	1.123	.577**	.594**	.589**	.578**	.570**	.625**	.587**	.594**	.614**	.612**	.573**	.606**	.407**	1

**p<0.01; PV: Perceived value; PA: Platform attachment; WO: Word-of-mouth; IN: User involvement

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