

# An Exploratory Study on the Tourism Electronic Word-of-Mouth Communication Effect among Post-00s of China

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## **Abstract:**

Based on four variables which influence eWOM (Electronic word-of-mouth) of tourists, designing measuring scale to study China's post-00s, analyzing the factors influencing their search and acceptance of eWOM in tourism, it finds out that information source easement, eWOM publishing platform, social engagement and Impression degree positively influence eWOM spread effect of 00s tourists, then get a regression model, analyzing emphasize on social media by 00s, their prudential attitude towards positive or negative eWOM, their faith in friends and appeal person, their construction on ego e-image during tourism eWOM searching period.

**Keywords:** 00s, Tourism eWOM, Effect.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

American scholars segment American citizens into four generations based on year of birth: the silent generation, the baby boomers (1946-1964), the X generation (1965-1980) and the Y generation (1981-1995). Also, there are propositions of the millennial generation (1984-2000), Z generation (1995-2009). The duration between generations is generally around 15 years, but is shortened to 10 years in China, such as post-80s, post-90s, and post-00s. The rapid development of the Internet era brings drastic changes in tourism communication, and the rapid changes in the tourism market make the author agree with narrower classification of generations. The post-00s generation growing up under rapid domestic economic development is the first generation with affluent living conditions, who are internationally defined as the "post-millennial generation". As digital natives, they possess familiarity and affinity with the Internet far beyond previous generations, which are referred to as China's new consumerism generation[1]. China's post-00s travel time is still short, and we don't know much about the travel cognition of this group. Although China's post-00s don't enjoy advantageous income compared with other generations, which is also true for tourist expenditure. Nevertheless, they have long been viewed as the next huge consumer group, who are more positive than their predecessors in tourism activities[2]. This paper studies China's post-00s, analyzes the factors influencing their search and acceptance of eWOM (Electronic

word-of-mouth) in tourism to reveal the preferences and behaviors of the post-00s regarding eWOM in tourism, which will be beneficial to focus tourism marketing on the post-00s generation, the main consumer group after the recovery of the tourism industry in the future.

## II RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper takes eWOM in tourism as the research object. Word of mouth, as the oldest and most effective information dissemination mode in human society, has been extensively adopted in communication with the arrival of the Internet age. Tourist activities characterized by Alienation, simultaneous production and consumption are regarded as the field most susceptible to eWOM[3]. By consulting the relevant literatures on eWOM, it is found that there are four variables influencing tourism eWOM communication effect: the first is information source evaluation, which mainly gives consideration to the degree of trust[4,5]; eWOM is widely used by most tourists on different digital platforms[6], The choice of platform depends on brand familiarity[7]; the third is the degree of social integration[5,8]; the fourth is the impression degree, that is, the previous search experience[9]. Then, by consulting literatures on post-00s' attitude toward tourism eWOM, it is found that no relevant research exists in the domestic literature, and foreign literature only mentions Z generation's attitude towards eWOM in tourism. Namely, Z generation's demand for tourism uniqueness and opinion leadership makes them more likely to share their tourism experiences on social media[10], and one of the key factors deciding Z generation's purchase of tourism products/services is eWOM in tourism[11]. Hence, the author intends to conduct an exploratory study on Chinese post-00s' attitude toward eWOM in tourism. An influencing factor scale is designed based on the above four dimensions regarding tourism eWOM communication effect. From September 6th to 19th, 2021, a questionnaire was distributed via WeChat to the students of grade 2019, grade 2020, and grade 2021 of a junior college in Guangdong, who were mostly born in 2000-2004. 503 valid questionnaires were finally recovered.

Four research hypotheses are proposed for the four scale dimensions:

H1: Information source evaluation positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect among the post-00s

H2: The choice of eWOM publishing platform positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect among the post-00s

H3: Social engagement positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect among the post-00s

H4: Impression degree positively impacts tourism eWOM communication effect among the post-00s

## 2.1 Summary of Personal Information of the Research Samples

**TABLE I. Statistics and distribution of personal information of the research samples**

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	245	48.8
	Female	258	51.2
Monthly household income	RMB 3,000 and below	55	10.9
	RMB 3001-6000	179	35.6
	RMB 6001-9000	127	25.2
	RMB 9000-12000	84	16.7
	RMB 12000-15000	32	6.4
	Above RMB 15000	26	5.2
Internet exposure duration	Less than half a year	5	1.0
	1-2 years	14	2.8
	2-3 years	18	3.6
	Over 3 years	466	92.6
Daily internet use duration	Less than 1 hour	56	11.1
	1-2 hours	68	13.5
	2-3 hours	96	19.1
	3-4 hours	62	12.3
	Over 4 hours	221	43.9

TABLE I reveals that there are 503 post-00s in the research sample. The largest number of them have a monthly household income of "RMB 3001-6000", accounting for 35.6% (179 people); the least number of them have a monthly household income of "over RMB 15,000", accounting for 5% (26 people). Judging from the post-00s' internet exposure duration, the number of people with "over 3 years" of Internet exposure enjoys an absolute advantage, accounting for about 92.6% (466 people in total). It can be seen that most of the post-00s have long-term Internet exposure. The largest number of post-00s have "more than 4 hours" of daily internet use, accounting for 43.9% (221 people).

### III. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TEST ON THE SCALE OF "FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISM EWOM COMMUNICATION EFFECT"

3.1 Reliability Test on the Scale of "Factors Influencing Tourism Ewom Communication Effect" in the Questionnaire

**TABLE II. Reliability test results of the scale on "factors influencing tourism eWOM communication effect" in the questionnaire**

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Item
Information source evaluation	0.860	5
eWOM publishing platform	0.913	5
Social Engagement	0.800	5
Impression degree	0.790	4
Internet word-of-mouth communication effect	0.833	4

Using spss software, it is calculated that the overall Cronbach a coefficient of the scale on "factors influencing tourism eWOM communication effect" is 0.881, which is greater than 0.7, indicating good reliability in overall. The Cronbach a coefficient of each dimension is listed in TABLE II-I. According to the aforementioned reliability analysis criterion, the scale on "factors influencing tourism eWOM communication effect" in this survey has acceptable reliability.

### 3.2 Validity Test of the Scale on "Factors Influencing Tourism Ewom Communication Effect" in the Questionnaire

Using SPSS, KMO and Bartlett's spherical significance tests were performed on the research data, with the results shown as follows:

**TABLE III. Results of KMO values calculated by factor analysis**

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin metric for sampling adequacy	.869	1722.130
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approximate Chi-square	171
	Df	0.000

In validity test of the data, KMO value is 0.869 and greater than 0.7; in Bartlett's test of sphericity, the statistic value has a significance of 0.000, which is less than 0.001, reaching a significant level. It suggests that the usage data has good validity for factor analysis.

#### IV. EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

**TABLE IV. Total variance explained**

Component	Initial eigenvalue			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Aggregate	% of variance	Cumulative %	Aggregate	% of variance	Cumulative %	Aggregate	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	6.541	28.437	28.437	6.541	28.437	28.437	3.792	16.485	16.485
2	2.542	11.052	39.490	2.542	11.052	39.490	3.327	14.464	30.950
3	2.488	10.817	50.307	2.488	10.817	50.307	2.787	12.118	43.067
4	1.825	7.936	58.243	1.825	7.936	58.243	2.696	11.721	54.789
5	1.674	7.279	65.522	1.674	7.279	65.522	2.469	10.733	65.522
6	.891	3.875	69.397						
7	.755	3.284	72.681						
8	.651	2.831	75.512						
9	.595	2.586	78.098						
10	.562	2.441	80.540						
11	.522	2.271	82.811						
12	.482	2.095	84.906						
13	.433	1.882	86.788						
14	.422	1.833	88.621						
15	.367	1.594	90.215						
16	.362	1.575	91.790						
17	.340	1.478	93.267						
18	.303	1.319	94.587						
19	.294	1.278	95.864						
20	.278	1.209	97.073						
21	.263	1.144	98.216						
22	.228	.990	99.206						
23	.183	.794	100.000						

Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Using default method of the system, this paper extracts factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. As a result, 5 factors are extracted, and the cumulative variance contribution rate of the first 5 factors reaches 65.522%, far exceeding 30%. Hence, the extracted common factors reflect most information of the original variables, and it is deemed that these five factors well interpret the scale.

In order to maximally extract information from the original scale, the extracted variables are explained and analyzed based on rotation. Varimax rotation is adopted herein, with the results shown as follows:

**TABLE V. Factor loading matrix after varimax rotation**

	Rotating component matrix				
	Word-of-mouth publishing platform	Information source evaluation	Social engagement	Internet word-of-mouth communication effect	Impression degree
Q1	.121	.798	.034	.101	.115
Q2	.125	.826	.026	.067	.024
Q3	.119	.759	.046	.154	.128
Q4	.142	.832	.030	.102	.129
Q5	.181	.665	.055	.091	.043
Q6	.817	.207	.145	.148	.001
Q7	.759	.139	.082	.157	.005
Q8	.859	.156	.142	.127	.083
Q9	.841	.134	.066	.128	.072
Q10	.863	.121	.105	.148	.065
Q11	.355	.142	.665	.133	.005
Q12	.082	.023	.804	.075	.027
Q13	.059	.033	.728	.036	.106
Q14	.098	-.019	.691	.101	.134
Q15	.014	.045	.729	.095	.113
Q16	.026	.177	.088	.064	.752
Q17	.032	.227	.141	.046	.753
Q18	.054	-.039	.082	.067	.736
Q19	.058	.057	.077	.151	.807
Q20	.161	.153	.112	.687	.131
Q21	.176	.154	.133	.769	.062
Q22	.194	.122	.108	.855	.064
Q23	.102	.066	.071	.817	.098

Extraction method: principal component.

Rotation method: Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization.

a. The rotation converges after 6 iterations.

The above table shows the factor loading matrix after rotation. All indexes meet the requirements, which can be classified into 5 factor categories and named by professional knowledge as shown in the

above table.

## V. CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON TOURISM EWOM COMMUNICATION EFFECT AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS

Using statistical knowledge, the author converts the relationship model regarding Internet word-of-mouth tourism communication effect and its influencing factors into a statistical model: the explanatory variable is the trust degree of internet word of mouth in tourism, and the explanatory variables include information source evaluation, choice of eWOM publishing platform, social engagement and impression degree.

### 5.1 The Actual Performance Analysis on Tourism Ewom Communication Effect and Its Influencing Factors

To facilitate the actual performance analysis on Internet word-of-mouth tourism communication effect and its influencing factors, the author introduces the assignment method. That is, respondents who choose "strongly disagree" are scored 1 point; those who choose "disagree" are scored 2 points; those who choose "neutral" are scored 3 points; those who choose "agree" are scored 4 points; those who choose "strongly agree" are scored 5 points. A higher score indicates greater agreement with what the question describes.

**TABLE VI. Descriptive statistics of each dimension index in the questionnaire**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Information source evaluation	503	1.00	5.00	2.9475	.84076
eWOM publishing platform	503	1.00	5.00	3.5646	.93209
Social Engagement	503	1.20	5.00	3.1789	.67496
Impression degree	503	1.00	4.50	2.7927	.75210
Tourism eWOM communication effect	503	1.00	5.00	3.0944	.84066

TABLE VI reveals that in the statistical results of various dimension indexes in the questionnaire, if we analyze from the perspective of tourism communication effect, the average score of the post-00s for the Internet word-of-mouth tourism eWOM communication effect is 3.09 points, indicating that most post-00s consider eWOM as trustworthy in tourism. The average scores of the post-00s on various influencing factors are ranked in descending order as follows: choice of word-of-mouth publishing platform > social engagement > information source evaluation > impression degree.

## 5.2 Correlation Analysis on Tourism Ewom Communication Effect and Its Influencing Factors

To better examine the correlation between information source evaluation, choice of tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, impression degree and the degree of eWOM trust in tourism, correlation analysis method is adopted for correlation strength assessment. The Pearson correlation coefficient index is mainly used herein, with the results shown as follows:

**TABLE VII. Correlation analysis results of each dimension index in the questionnaire**

		Correlation				
		Tourism eWOM communication effect	Information source evaluation	eWOM publishing platform	Social engagement	Impression degree
Tourism eWOM communication effect	Pearson correlation	1	.316**	.391**	.292**	.254**
	Significance (two-sided)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	503	503	503	503	503
Information source evaluation	Pearson correlation	.316**	1	.364**	.160**	.266**
	Significance (two-sided)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	503	503	503	503	503
Tourism eWOM publishing platform	Pearson correlation	.391**	.364**	1	.319**	.159**
	Significance (two-sided)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	503	503	503	503	503
Social engagement	Pearson correlation	.292**	.160**	.319**	1	.247**
	Significance (two-sided)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	503	503	503	503	503
Impression degree	Pearson correlation	.254**	.266**	.159**	.247**	1
	Significance (two-sided)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	503	503	503	503	503

\*\* . Significantly correlated at the .01 level (two-sided).

TABLE VII reveals a significant positive correlation between Tourism eWOM communication effect and information source evaluation, Tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement and impression degree, and the correlation coefficient is in the range of 0.292-0.391.

## 5.3 Regression Analysis on Tourism Ewom Communication Effect and Its Influencing Factors



Taking information source evaluation, tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, and impression degree as independent variables, and tourism eWOM communication effect as dependent variable, this paper studies the impact of information source evaluation, tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, and impression degree on tourism eWOM communication effect.

The regression model is hypothesized as follows: Internet word-of-mouth tourism communication effect among post-00s =  $a_0 + a_1 \text{ * information source evaluation} + a_2 \text{ * choice of tourism eWOM publishing platform} + a_3 \text{ * social engagement} + a_4 \text{ * impression degree}$

**TABLE VIII. Goodness of fit test results of the model**

Model summary					
Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Standard Estimation Error	Durbin-Watson
1	.481 <sup>a</sup>	.231	.225	.74003	1.602

a. Predictive variable: (constant), impression degree, tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, information source evaluation.

b. Dependent variable: tourism eWOM communication effect

The model has a high goodness of fit (adjusted R-square), indicating good fitting effect of the model. The Durbin-Watson value is 1.602, which is between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating absence of significant correlation between the residuals, so the regression results are valid.

**TABLE IX. F-test results of model equations**

Anova <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.041	4	20.510	37.452	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	272.724	498	.548		
	Total	354.764	502			

a. Dependent variable: tourism eWOM communication effect

b. Predictive variable: (constant), impression degree, tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, information source evaluation.

The significant F test statistics of the model 1 equation has an observed value of 37.452, and the corresponding probability Sig. value of significance (0.000) < 0.05. The partial regression coefficients in the model are not 0 at the same time, indicating feasibility of equations for model establishment.

**TABLE X. Calculation results of model regression coefficients**

Model	Coefficient			t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			Tolerance	VIF
	B	Standard Error	Trial version				
(constant)	.767	.203		3.787	.000		
Information source evaluation	.161	.043	.161	3.724	.000	.823	1.215
1 tourism eWOM Publishing Platform	.238	.040	.264	5.991	.000	.798	1.253
Social Engagement	.186	.053	.149	3.523	.000	.859	1.165
Impression degree	.148	.047	.132	3.173	.002	.886	1.129

a. Dependent variable: Internet word-of-mouth communication effect

The VIF value of each independent variable is smaller than the maximum tolerance value of 10, indicating absence of multicollinearity problem in the regression equation and feasibility of the equation for model establishment. Seen from the test results on the significance of the influence coefficient, in the coefficient significance test on the impact of information source evaluation, choice of tourism eWOM publishing platform, social engagement, and impression degree on " tourism eWOM communication effect", Sig. values are all smaller than 0.05, indicating its significance.

Accordingly, the equation of the model is specifically expressed as: Internet word-of-mouth tourism communication effect among post-00s =  $-0.767+0.161*\text{information source evaluation}+0.238*\text{choice of tourism eWOM publishing platform}+0.186*\text{social engagement}+0.148*\text{impression degree}$

From the above equation, it can be seen that information source evaluation exerts a significant positive impact on the tourism eWOM communication effect among post-00s, with an influence coefficient of 0.161, so hypothesis H1 is established: information source evaluation positively impacts tourism eWOM communication effect. tourism eWOM publishing platform exerts a significant positive effect on the tourism eWOM communication effect among post-00s, with an influence coefficient of 0.238, so hypothesis H2 is established: choice of tourism eWOM publishing platform positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect. Social engagement exerts a significant positive effect on the tourism eWOM communication effect among post-00s, with an influence coefficient of 0.186, so hypothesis H3 is established: social engagement positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect. Impression degree exerts a significant positive effect on the tourism eWOM communication effect among post-00s, with an influence coefficient of 0.148, so hypothesis H4 is established: impression degree positively impacts tourism eWOM communication effect.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

### 6.1 China's Post-00s Use Social Media to Positively Search for and Spread Ewom in Tourism. Social Media Is Ubiquitous In Post-00s' Life

According to the "2020 Research Report on Chinese Teenagers' Internet Behavior", teenagers use communication applications such as instant messaging, Microblog, and forums more often than general netizens[12]. The survey also reveals that the post-00s value "eWOM publishing platform in tourism" the most. WeChat, QQ and Microblog are their main social media platforms and constitute an important part of their daily life. The popularity of social media among the post-00s enables more channels and new forms in tourism marketing: online reviews, word-of-mouth, etc. have become powerful platforms for enterprises to timely grasp market dynamics, understand customer needs and seek information feedback[13]. To start and spread effective eWOM in tourism on such social platforms, tourism enterprises need remarkable contents and forms. On the other hand, social media represents a flat, honeycomb-like organizational structure. Everyone on the platform serves as "self-media", each transient media point will provide processing and re-dissemination of the information to finally form consistent or contradictory tourism opinions amid the continuous interaction between such media points. This represents the agenda setting in the era of social media. Specifically, in terms of eWOM in tourism, to arouse the interest of post-00s, spread and influence their tourism decisions and behaviors, it is quite necessary to run social media accounts and focus on interaction with post-00s.

### 6.2 China's Post-00s Hold a Cautious Attitude Towards Both Positive And Negative Ewom in Tourism, and Have Low Impression on Previous Ewom in Tourism

Among the four factors influencing tourism eWOM communication effect among the post-00s, "impression degree" is the least valued by them. Although post-00s are susceptible to positive and negative eWOM in tourism, they generally do not alter their tourism preferences and decision-making therefrom, but are cautious towards eWOM in tourism. Moreover, tourists tend to be somewhat forgetful, holding little impression on previous eWOM in tourism. The appearance and active involvement of social media greatly impact Y generation's intention to develop eWOM, so that Y generation uses mobile Internet technology to spread positive or negative service experiences[14]. For the post-00s, intuition provides a powerful tool for them to judge the advantages and disadvantages of eWOM in tourism. On the one hand, the information overload in the Internet age makes the post-00s accustomed to information update at any time since childhood. On the other hand, the internet world is full of absorbing resources, making it difficult for the post-00s to keep long-term attention to a certain tourism topic. When studying the millennials, foreign researchers found that "desire for real-time feedback and response" is a prominent feature of millennials[15], which is consistent with the survey results of this paper, "willingness to participate" positively impacts the tourism eWOM communication effect. It also gives enlightenment to tourism marketing among the post-00s: it is prevalent to use social media as a platform for tourism marketing on the ground that continuous interaction and feedback are advantages of such platforms.

### 6.3 China's Post-00s Disdain the Official And Commercial Ewom in Tourism, but Trust Ewom from Friends and Big V Instead

Some scholars examine the moderating role of millennials and X generation in the relationship between online reviews, consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions to interpret the different reactions of millennials and X generation consumers towards internet word of mouth. It is found that online review-generated behaviors create stronger reaction among X generation than among millennials[16]. Similar to foreign millennials, the post-00s disdain and distrust official and commercial internet word of mouth in tourism, a reflection on the characteristic of the social media era under their domination. Nonetheless, they will accept a certain tourist destination because of influencer big V. In 2015, by utilizing influencers on Little Red Book, TikTok, Kuaishou, Microblog, Qinghai Chaka Salt Lake was developed as "Mirror of the Sky", becoming a hot tourist attraction among the post-00s. According to statistics from the Ulan County Tourism Bureau, Chaka Salt Lake merely had more than 54,000 tourists in 2012, but the figure soared to 3.5 million in 2019. "Likeonomics" well illustrates the tourist psychology under the impact of social media: people are more likely to be influenced by people they like and then start actions. This concept in social psychology has particularly prominent reflection among the post-00s.

### 6.4 China's Post-00s Spread Ewom of Tourism in Social Circles in order to Build Online Image in front of Friends and Strangers

Every moment shared by the post-00s is to express their own online image. According to American communication scholar Daniel Boorstin, generation of the image concept is planned and premeditated. In a large part, the image on personal social media is a result of conscious shaping based on self-awareness, that is, "how I want others to know me"[17]. By sharing individual tourism knowledge and feelings, posting selfies or group photos during the trip, and discussing the next tourism plan and arrangement with friends, the post-00s spread eWOM in tourism not by monologue, also building a positive image of "tourism and life enthusiast" in front of friends and strangers. Even more, they establish a good image of "good thinker and helpful adviser" by sharing tourism experiences. Mead, the founder of symbolic interaction theory, divides the self into "subject I" and "object me". The "subject I" is specifically embodied in the activities of the individual as a manifestation of the real self, while "object me" is an individual's evaluation of himself or others, also a reflection of social evaluation and expectation. The self-image constructed by the post-00s on social media through internet word-of-mouth tourist communication belongs to "object me". Tourism eWOM has an obvious effect on the "object me" of the post-00s, which is an online proof that China's post-00s are willing to travel.

### 6.5 Research Deficiencies and Prospects

College students are often selected for surveys in social psychology research, who are also the representative group of the post-00s generation. However, by selecting a public junior college in a region for an overall sampling survey, it is impossible to fully reflect the acceptance and attitude of post-00s on eWOM in tourism. Future research needs to take into account the changes in the dependent variable of

tourism eWOM communication effect owing to independent variables of regional differences, educational differences, and employment status of the post-00s. In-depth and detailed analysis is required. Moreover, the similarities and differences between the post-00s and other generations should be considered in terms of their attitude towards eWOM in tourism. With the effective control of COVID 19 epidemic in China, although outbound tourism is still stagnant, tourism around the province has become popular, and domestic tourism is also recovering. China's post-00s will appear more and more frequently in the tourism market.

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