

EFFECTS OF EWOM (ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH) ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS AMONG ZAKAT PAYERS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Interaction is regarded as one of the most important advantages of the Internet. It is believed that a large portion of internet users, either directly or indirectly participates in at least one online community. With the advent of internet technologies, traditional word of mouth communication has revolutionized and extended to electronic media, such as online discussion forums, electronic bulletin board systems, newsgroups, blogs, review sites, and social networking sites to gather and disseminate product information. As such, the internet has brought forth a relatively new and increasingly crucial form of a globally networked electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). In light of the growth of internet, the eWOM phenomenon has been changing people's behavior and informed decision making. As people count on other users' opinions and information, they sometimes even make offline decisions based on information acquired online. Zakat, one of the five basic pillars in Islam, is the practice of giving a portion of income for charitable use by appointed collection and distribution institutions. Collecting and distributing zakat is one of the essential elements in accelerating the distribution of income and wealth in a Muslim society. Even though media plays important roles for the better understanding of religious teachings, at present, we do not yet have a good sense of how organizations are using social media as an organizational communication and stakeholder tool. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine how eWOM influences the behavioral intentions of zakat payers to perform their duties of paying zakat accordingly and at a timely manner. For that purpose, this survey based study was carried out by self-administered questionnaires via email on a sample of experienced eWOM zakat payers. Findings from this study confirm that eWOM can significantly influence behavioral intentions of the zakat payers to perform their duties.

Keywords: eWOM, Behavioral Intentions, Zakat Payers