

The Effect of Herding Behaviors on Dual-Route Processing of Communications Aimed at Tourism Crowdfunding Ventures

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Abstract

Communications can be integral in persuading funders to invest in visitor economy crowdfunding. Despite the important role of diverse communications on consumer persuasion, research on the effectiveness of persuasive communications related to crowdfunding ventures has been limited. To bridge the gap, this study aims to verify an elaboration likelihood model to better understand the role of dual-route persuasive communications. Seven hypotheses related to argument quality, source credibility, benefit of crowdfunding, attachment to fundraiser and platform, and continued crowdfunding were examined, using herding behavior as a moderator. The findings revealed that argument quality had a substantial impact on benefit. Further, source credibility was found to have positive impacts on benefit and attachment; benefit had a significant effect on attachment and continued crowdfunding, and attachment had the strongest influence on continued crowdfunding. Additionally, herding behavior was found to moderate five of the six hypotheses.

Keywords

tourism crowdfunding, elaboration likelihood model, herding behavior theory, visitor economy, attachment

Introduction

Crowdfunding offers a way for tourism entities and entrepreneurs to fund their businesses via multiple investors who have relatively small resources (Agrawal, Catalini, and Goldfarb 2015; M. J. Kim and Hall, forthcoming; Mollick 2014; San Martín, Hernández, and Herrero, forthcoming). Recently, some crowdfunding studies have used elaboration likelihood models (ELMs) and found that dual routes of persuasive communications can be successful in attracting potential investors for projects (Allison et al. 2017; Bi, Liu, and Usman 2017; Liang, Wu, and Huang 2019; Z. Wang and Yang 2019; Zheng et al. 2016). Moreover, in tourism and visitor economy sectors (e.g., travel, leisure, hospitality, entertainment, and events), crowdfunding has received academic attention using multiple approaches (Dzhandzhugazova and Ilina 2017; Honisch and Ottenbacher 2017; M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2020; M. J. Kim and Hall 2019b, forthcoming, 2020; M. J. Kim, Hall, and Kim 2020; Lelo de Larrea, Altin, and Singh 2019; Marchegiani 2018; San Martín, Hernández, and Herrero, forthcoming; Simeoni and De Crescenzo 2018; Z. Wang, Li, and Law 2017). However, even

though persuasive communications are likely important for gaining investors, scant research has examined the roles that persuasive messages play in tourism-related crowdfunding projects, especially in an Asian context.

Since crowdfunding is typically accomplished with the input from multiple funders, scholars have also been interested in herding behaviors (Burtch 2011; Greenwood and Gopal 2016; Hornuf and Neuenkirch 2017; Zvilichovsky, Danziger, and Steinhart 2018). Herding behavior has been defined as copying others' behaviors, which can have a very large effect on consumer decisions and product success (Burtch 2011). Past research has consistently shown that high or low crowdfunding herding behaviors can have different influences

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on the success of various projects (Y. Chen et al. 2020; Clauss et al. 2018; Crosetto and Regner 2018; Renwick and Mossialos 2017).

Herding behavior has also been found to have a moderating effect on supporters' participation in crowdfunding (Bretschneider, Knaub, and Wieck 2014; Bretschneider and Leimeister 2017; Chan et al. 2020; Yang, Bi, and Liu 2020). In particular, the South Korean (hereafter Korea/n) government has attempted to stimulate tourism and visitor economy crowdfunding programs by providing funding, consulting, educating, and holding events for startups and venture businesses (E. J. Lee 2019). In Korea, tourism-related crowdfunding has been especially popular for festivals, events, arts, and entertainment venture (e.g., films, games, and music) (K. J. Kim 2019; M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2020; M. J. Kim and Hall 2019b, forthcoming, 2020; M. J. Kim, Hall, and Kim 2020).

One framework that holds promise for better understanding tourism crowdfunding ventures is the ELM, which is a dual process theory that helps to explain the processes underlying changes in individuals' attitudes (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). The ELM suggests there are two main routes/ways that individuals can be persuaded to change their attitudes: via central routes and/or peripheral routes (Z. Wang and Yang 2019). For example, central routes are used when consumers carefully consider the issues presented by the message, while peripheral routes are used when consumers use simple decision rules to evaluate the message rather than analyzing its content (Sussman and Siegal 2003). In particular, given that crowdfunding typically takes place via the Internet and involves entrepreneurs attempting to persuade funders to obtain financial capital (Agrawal, Catalini, and Goldfarb 2015), the ELM has been suggested to have untapped potential for better understanding crowdfunding (Z. Wang and Yang 2019).

Past ELM research has revealed that benefits received is a key mediating factor related to persuading consumers via central cues of social media messages for travel and tourism purposes (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Similarly, attachment has been found to be a significant mediator between antecedents and dependent variables in tourism contexts (Hosany et al. 2017; J. Lee, Kyle, and Scott 2012; Y. C. Wang et al. 2019), and to be a significant mediator of tourism information and communication technology use (M. J. Kim et al. 2015, 2016b, 2016c). Research has further revealed that attachment can play a significant role in attracting users via peripheral routes for tourism and travel purposes related to mobile tourism commerce (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). In particular, ELM has been found to help explain travel consumers' adoption of information from online reviews (Filiari and McLeay 2014). Despite these past findings, little similar research has been conducted in a tourism

crowdfunding context. Hence, the purpose of this study is to build and validate a dual-route ELM, including benefit of and attachment to tourism crowdfunding, using herding behavior as a moderator. It is hoped that the findings will lead to a better understanding of funder behavior in the Korean context.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

Crowdfunding in tourism and visitor economy sectors. The term *visitor economy* has been defined as "the supporting infrastructure that caters for the needs of visitors and residents especially in their leisure time, embracing the hospitality and tourism sector (food and drink provision via cafes, restaurants and accommodation), travel agencies, transport providers, cultural activities like galleries, events and retailing" (Connell et al. 2017, p. 111). Thus, the tourism-related and visitor economy sectors are interchangeably used in this study.

In tourism-related studies, crowdfunding has been found to be positively influenced by charity-oriented themes, high-quality descriptive images, and a small funding goal, showing an inverted U-shaped association between reward scales and success from a large data set (1,807 projects) (Z. Wang, Li, and Law 2017). Crowdfunding can provide a feasible opportunity for restaurant businesses as restaurants have historically had difficulties in generating enough liquid assets and are often considered by financial institutions or capital investors as relatively risky compared to other sectors (Honisch and Ottenbacher 2017). Crowdfunding projects have typically been broadcast via social media and are therefore able to attract the attention of a great number of people, quite quickly. They are also a tool for promotion that enables the sender to easily recruit potential funders, and to have a dialogue with potential investors (Dzhandzhugazova and Ilina 2017).

Tourism and visitor economy crowdfunding projects have received attention from diverse areas of study (M. J. Kim and Hall forthcoming; Lelo de Larrea, Altin, and Singh 2019; Marchegiani 2018; San Martín, Hernández, and Herrero, forthcoming; Simeoni and De Crescenzo 2018). Specifically, it has been found that tourism crowdfunding related to clean energy is likely to entice a high number of cyclists, and to have perceived beneficial impacts on economic, environmental, and social sustainability (Simeoni and De Crescenzo 2018). Further, community orientation, frequent communication with funders, and images with elements of the restaurant concept have been found to be related to restaurant entrepreneurs' success in reward-based tourism crowdfunding (Lelo de Larrea, Altin, and Singh 2019). Crowdfunding has also been found to be a practical model for

overcoming public spending debt associated with cultural heritage, which has been found to be important in boosting creativity and innovativeness for heritage tourists (Marchegiani 2018).

Also, within tourism and visitor economy contexts, venture quality (human, social, and intellectual capital) and uncertainty level (equity share and financial projections) have been found to have significant positive impacts on crowdfunding participation that, in turn, can influence word of mouth and reparticipation in crowdfunding projects (M. J. Kim and Hall forthcoming). Furthermore, the amount invested in crowdfunding has been found to moderate the relationships among those constructs in tourism-related fields from Korean consumers (M. J. Kim and Hall forthcoming). In particular, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have been found to have significant positive effects on trust for crowdfunding platforms and fundraisers (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2020). Further, crowdfunding for tourism and visitor economy projects has been found to be increasing in Korea (M. J. Kim and Hall 2019b, 2020; M. J. Kim, Hall, and Kim 2020). Drawing upon the literature review above cited, this study considers crowdfunding as a significantly emerging market in the tourism and visitor economy sectors in Korea.

Elaboration likelihood model. The ELM has been used to explain different ways (e.g., central and peripheral routes) that various stimuli are processed and the effects

the stimuli have on attitudes/persuasion (see Figure 1) (Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981). The model suggests that persuasion occurs differently, based on whether central or peripheral routes of processing are used (Sussman and Siegal 2003). Central route processing occurs when a person is involved in careful and thoughtful consideration of the true merits of the information (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). Conversely, peripheral route processing occurs when a person engages in positive or negative cues in the stimulus and/or makes simple inferences about the merits (Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981). Hence, different situations typically are processed differently by the dual-routes (Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

The ELM therefore offers a fairly simple framework that can be applied to various sources, messages, receivers, and context variables. Research using ELM related to tourism information and communication technology (ICT) has revealed differing effects of the central and peripheral routes in persuading travel consumers using mobile tourism shopping sites (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a) and mobile social network sites (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Specifically, the central route has been found to be more substantially and positively significant for continued usage of mobile tourism shopping than the peripheral route (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). In addition, the central route has been found to be significantly more related to intention to revisit mobile social

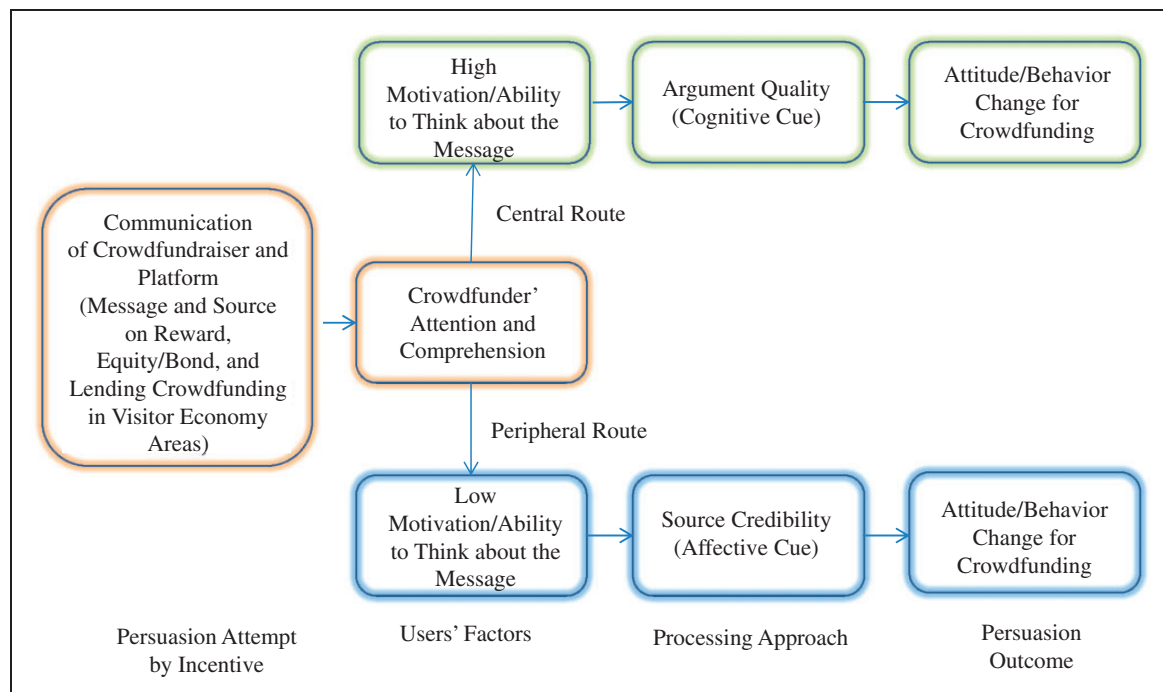


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of dual-route of persuasive communications on crowdfunding.

media than the peripheral route (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017).

Multiple scholars have used the ELM to better understand persuasive communications in the context of crowdfunding (Allison et al. 2017; Bi, Liu, and Usman 2017; Liang, Wu, and Huang 2019; Z. Wang and Yang 2019; Zheng et al. 2016). It has been found that the peripheral route of entrepreneur-sponsor interactions has had significantly greater impacts than the central route of entrepreneur's creditworthiness, as it has been argued that personal and dynamic communications are more powerful than static and historical success stories in reward-based crowdfunding (Zheng et al. 2016). Further, the ELM has been employed to better understand crowdfunding and found that issue-relevant information mattered most when investors used a central instead of peripheral routes (Allison et al. 2017).

Signals of project quality as the central route and e-word of mouth as the peripheral route have further been found to have similar impacts on crowdfunder participation. While the central route has been found to be much more important for science and technology projects, the peripheral route has been found to be more important for entertainment and art projects (Bi, Liu, and Usman 2017). Further, central routes as well as peripheral routes have been found to significantly influence crowdfunder behavior, with knowledge related to the product having moderating impacts on central and peripheral routes (Z. Wang and Yang 2019). Additionally, Liang, Wu, and Huang (2019) examined the roles of variables based on performance and cognition of the central route as well as affect and personality of the peripheral routes in investment intentions related to crowdfunding.

Herding behavior theory

Herding behavior refers to when "everyone does what everyone else is doing, even when their private information suggests doing something quite different" (Banerjee 1992, p. 798). This behavior has long been identified with investors in general, and particularly with venture capital situations including crowdfunding information technology projects (Greenwood and Gopal 2016). Herding behavior often occurs in crowdfunding, as the electronic commerce market can be rife with the potential for social influence, causing individuals to herd with the decisions of others (Burtch 2011).

Peer-to-peer (P2P) crowdfunding has been found to be sensitive to the types of relationships between individual decision makers as herding between socially connected decision makers has been found to differ from anonymous herding (Liu et al. 2015). Equity crowdfunding research has also found that herding behavior can

influence a funder's inclination to invest funds in a fundraiser (Bretschneider, Knaub, and Wieck 2014). Within crowdfunding contexts, herding behavior has further been shown to play a substantial moderating role in a funder's external motivation and participation behaviors in incentive-based forms of crowdfunding, such as reward-, equity-, and lending-based crowdfunding (Bretschneider, Knaub, and Wieck 2014; Bretschneider and Leimeister 2017). Because of the potentially critical role of herding behavior in tourism crowdfunding, this study attempted to explore herding behavior as a moderator associated with the ELM in the context of Korea.

Hypotheses Development

Relationship between argument quality and benefit

In the ELM context, argument quality has been suggested to be "the persuasive strength of arguments embedded in an information message" (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006, p. 811). Use of the ELM has typically included argument quality under high elaboration likelihood conditions as the critical determinant of informational influence (Sussman and Siegal 2003). Perceived benefits, as they relate to ELM, has been defined as the perceived usefulness of crowdfunding as it relates to dual-route persuasive communications (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a; Renwick and Mossialos 2017). Although perceived benefits have some interchangeable meanings with usefulness in the ELM, consumer benefits have been found to have more variation than usefulness in tourism mobile social media (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Benefit in this study was considered to be the funders' perceived usefulness of the fundraiser they were investing in.

In a knowledge adoption environment, greater degrees of perceived argument quality have been found to be related to significantly greater reported degrees of perceived message usefulness (Sussman and Siegal 2003). In an information technology acceptance setting, the argument quality of communications have been found to be significantly influenced by potential consumers' perceived usefulness of information technology acceptance (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). In a mobile tourism shopping context, the argument quality related to persuasive communications has been found to significantly and positively influence perceived usefulness of the messages received by travel consumers (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). Argument quality related to social media information has also been found to have a highly significant and positive relationship with benefits of social media use among potential travel consumers (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and

Lee 2017). Based on the above review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Argument quality of fundraisers' information has a positive impact on the perceived benefits of visitor economy crowdfunding.

Relationship between source credibility and perceived benefit

Source credibility in this study was operationalized as the funders' trust in fundraisers as peripheral route and has been found to be related to peripheral cues, likability, and attractiveness of the message (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Source credibility has also been found to be more influential under low-involvement conditions via the peripheral route (source credibility, attractiveness, etc.) than under high-involvement situations (Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981).

Past research has found that the higher the awareness of the communication source, the more useful the communication is perceived to be (Sussman and Siegal 2003). Hence, the source credibility of the person communicating messages is likely positively related to the usefulness of information technology acceptance by potential users (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). Similarly, source credibility has been found to positively influence website attachment for consumers involved in mobile tourism commerce (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a) and to significantly influence benefits of usage of social network sites for travel consumers (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 2: Source quality has a positive impact on the perceived benefits of visitor economy crowdfunding.

Relationship between source credibility and attachment

Attachment in tourism ICT has been defined as the propensity of consumers to have strong affection toward particular products or services as well as websites or retailers (M. J. Kim, Lee, and Preis 2016d). Attachment to a group buying site has been found to play an important mediating role between antecedents (value/trust) and outputs (altruism/loyalty) among potential tourists (M. J. Kim et al. 2015). Further, the source credibility of informational messages has been found to significantly influence potential users' attitudes (e.g., feeling, disposition, manner, position) toward information technology acceptance (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). Similarly, trust in a group-buying site (e.g., source credibility) has been found to positively

influence travel consumers' attachment to a travel website (M. J. Kim et al. 2015), and source credibility has been found to lead to attachment to travel websites (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). Based on the above, the following is postulated:

Hypothesis 3: Source credibility has a positive impact on attachment to visitor economy crowdfunding.

Relationship between perceived benefits and attachment

Research has also found that usefulness is related to staff's attitude toward technology acceptance (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). It has also been found that mobile tourism shoppers' perceptions of value related to group-buying sites is closely related to their attachment to shopping sites (M. J. Kim et al. 2015). Moreover, perceived usefulness of mobile tourism shopping has been found to positively influence attachment to websites for travel consumers involved in mobile tourism shopping in Korea (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). Further, benefits perceived by network site users have been found to be significantly related to their perceptions of having an authentic experience (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Hence, based on the above, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived benefits have a positive impact on attachment to visitor economy crowdfunding.

Relationship between perceived benefits and continued crowdfunding

Past research has revealed that the perceived usefulness of virtual reality is related to its continued use (M. J. Kim and Hall 2019a) and that the perceived usefulness of information technology leads to the use of information technology in an ELM context (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006). Further, among mobile tourism shoppers, perceived usefulness of mobile tourism shopping has been found to positively influence continued use of mobile travel websites (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). Moreover, benefits of social network sites have been found to significantly influence intention to revisit the social network sites among potential tourists (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017). Hence, the following hypothesis is postulated:

Hypothesis 5: Perceived benefits have a positive impact on continued visitor economy crowdfunding.

Relationship between attachment and continued crowdfunding

Residents' attachment to an interactive place has been found to be related to their participation, ambassador behavior, and word of mouth (N. Chen and

Dwyer 2018). Similarly, attachment to mobile travel shopping websites for purchasers in an ELM environment has been found to be related to continued usage of the websites (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a). Moreover, in tourism ICT contexts, attachment to group purchasing sites have been found to influence loyalty to the websites (M. J. Kim et al. 2015); to continued usage intention to smartphones (M. J. Kim et al. 2016c); and to loyalty to social network sites (M. J. Kim, Lee, and Preis 2016d). Based on the above, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 6: Attachment has a positive impact on continued visitor economy crowdfunding.

Moderating role of herding behavior

Research has consistently found consumers' herding behavior to play a critical role in crowdfunding participation (Chan et al. 2020; Clauss et al. 2018; Crosetto and Regner 2018; Renwick and Mossialos 2017). Specifically, herding behaviors for crowdfunding have been found to be related to project performance (Y. Chen et al. 2020; Renwick and Mossialos 2017), the number of crowdfunders (Clauss et al. 2018), and overall crowdfunding success (Crosetto and Regner 2018).

In particular, the degree of funders' herding behavior has been found to have a significant effect on the success of rewards, investments, and lending (Bretschneider, Knaub, and Wieck 2014; Bretschneider and Leimeister 2017; Chan et al. 2020; Yang, Bi, and Liu 2020). As a moderator, herding behavior has been found to strengthen the associations between internal and external motivation and investments for start-up crowdfunding (Bretschneider, Knaub, and Wieck 2014). It has also been found that herding behavior can reinforce the association between backers' motivation and crowdfunding participation (Bretschneider and Leimeister 2017). Higher levels of herding have been found to influence early crowdfunder behavior in investment-based crowdfunding more than lower levels of herding (Yang, Bi, and Liu 2020). Further, past research has used dual process models to better understand reward-based crowdfunding performance depending on herding behavior (Allison et al. 2017; Chan et al. 2020). Hence, this study assumes that herding behavior will moderate the six proposed ELM relationships and it is postulated:

Hypothesis 7: Herding behavior moderates the relationships among argument quality, source credibility, benefit, attachment, and continued crowdfunding in visitor economy sectors.

Figure 2 displays the hypothesized relationships between argument quality, source credibility, benefit, attachment, and continued crowdfunding, along with herding behavior as a moderator.

Methods

Measurements

The study used an online survey consisting of 28 questions, to measure the seven studied constructs including argument quality, source credibility, benefit of crowdfunding, attachment to crowdfunding fundraiser and platform, continued crowdfunding, and herding behavior. All items were adopted from previously validated scales from related literature and were reworded for a tourism-related crowdfunding context in Korea. The four items addressing argument quality were slightly adapted from previous studies (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006; Sussman and Siegal 2003), with an example statement being: "The information of this crowdfunding provided for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is informative." Source credibility was measured with four items from previous research (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006; Sussman and Siegal 2003). An example of a source credibility statement is "This crowdfunding fundraiser is knowledgeable of the visitor economy crowdfunding project."

Perceived benefits related to crowdfunding were measured with four items adapted from previous research (M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017; M. J. Kim et al. 2016a), with an example item being "This crowdfunding fundraiser shares knowledge or experiences for the visitor economy crowdfunding project with funders." Eight questions were adapted from previous research (N. Chen and Dwyer 2018; M. J. Kim et al. 2015, 2016b, 2016c; M. J. Kim, Lee, and Preis 2016d) to measure attachment to crowdfunding (e.g., "I am deeply involved in investing in this crowdfunding fundraiser for the visitor economy crowdfunding project").

To evaluate continued crowdfunding, four questions were derived from Bi, Liu, and Usman (2017), M. J. Kim and Hall (2019b, forthcoming), and Zheng et al. (2016). A representative statement read as follows: "In the future, I will participate in visitor economy crowdfunding projects." To assess herding behavior, four questions were adopted from previous literature (Bretschneider and Leimeister 2017; Greenwood and Gopal 2016). An example statement read, "I participate in visitor economy crowdfunding because many other funders want to engage in it."

All of the items were evaluated with seven-point Likert-type scales. General questions related to crowdfunding (e.g., characteristics of project, involved in overseas funding, participation career,

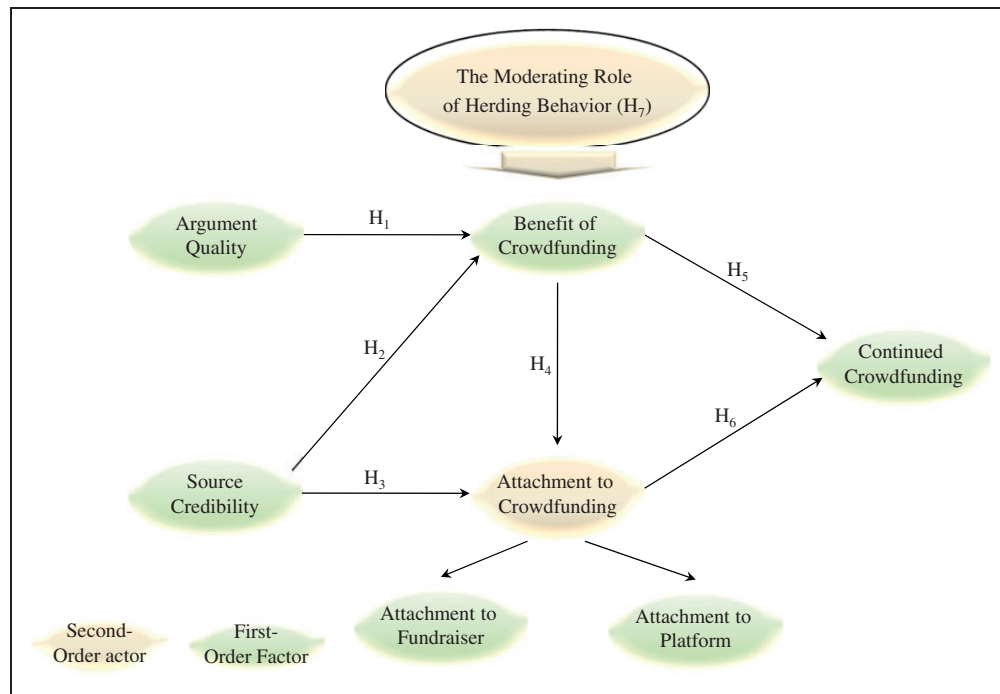


Figure 2. Proposed research model.

experienced fields, frequency of accessing, average amount of investment, primary reason, participated projects, visited platform) were also added according to the existing literature on participation behavior for tourism crowdfunding (Kim and Hall forthcoming). Finally, seven questions related to sociodemographics were included in the study (e.g., age, gender, marital status, monthly income, educational level, occupation, resident area).

The survey instrument was initially written in English, prior to being translated into Korean by three university language experts who were fluent in both English and Korean. The questionnaire was then back-translated into English in order to help identify any potential inconsistencies in the translation process from the Korean expressions (Brislin 1970). This process led to the rewording of many expressions in the Korean questionnaire because of the differences between Korean and English, in particular with conceptual terms (e.g., argument quality, source credibility, herding, elaboration likelihood, and visitor economy).

Three researchers familiar with the topics (e.g., crowdfunding, tourism, visitor economy sectors, information technology) appraised the content validity of the measurement indicators. Further, three crowdfunding managers assessed if the survey suitably evaluated tourism crowdfunder behavior. Based on

these two processes, one item for herding behavior of tourism crowdfunders was deleted from the survey instrument because of having overlapping meanings with another item (i.e., “I would invest in the visitor economy crowdfunding because many people have already invested in it”). Also, several items of attachment were slightly modified in order to more clearly represent the desired meaning of the construct in a tourism-related crowdfunding environment.

The survey was subsequently pilot tested by five third-year hospitality and tourism doctoral candidates at a Korean university who had also previously participated in tourism crowdfunding. The pilot test also included semistructured interviews with the Korean PhD candidates. Based on the Korean PhD candidates’ comments, five items addressing argument quality, source credibility, benefit of crowdfunding, and continued crowdfunding were reworded. Next, a pretest was conducted with 50 individuals who had participated in tourism crowdfunding within the prior year in Korea. During the pretest, participants were asked to provide specific comments on each tourism-related crowdfunding item. This procedure resulted in minor rewordings of items related to argument quality, source credibility, benefit, attachment, continued crowdfunding for tourism projects, herding behavior, and avoidance attachment to maximize clarity for future respondents.

Data Collection

Online surveys are commonly used because they can result in rapid responses, access a variety of populations, and be cost effective for Internet-based populations (Wright 2005). Internet surveys in Korea have been argued to be particularly appropriate for collecting data for this type of study because online crowdfunding is performed via Internet sites among funders, platforms, and fundraisers (M. J. Kim and Hall 2019b, forthcoming, 2020). A Korean Internet survey firm with more than three million panelists, which adheres to strict protocols to help ensure response validity (Embrain 2019), was hired to administer the survey instrument. Subjects were drawn from their panel using a quota sampling method based on the age (20 and older: because individuals must be ≥ 20 years old to invest in crowdfunding for equity, bond, and lending in Korea) and gender (targeted 50% females) of respondents.

Respondents who completed the screening question successfully (Koreans, age 20 and older, and had participated in crowd funding in the past 12 months) were required to name a visitor economy crowdfunding project they had participated in, during the prior 12 months. The tourism crowdfunding participation named by each subject was then presented to the subject on each subsequent item. The multiple-choice items were rotated to help avoid response bias. Respondents who took less than 5 seconds per question were not included since short responding times and unreliable responses to online surveys have been found to be highly correlated (Y. S. Lee, Lee, and Lee 2008). Further, an automated procedure removed respondents who answered too fast or used repetitive patterns as they likely did not fully read the questions.

The Internet survey was conducted between April 1 and 11, 2019. The letter to request participation was emailed to 9,710 panelists in Korea, since the survey company generally gets complete responses from approximately 5% from initial invitations, and comprehensive models like the one used in the current study have been suggested to need approximately 400 responses by structural equation modeling (SEM) (Hair et al. 2010). In addition, the sample profile matched the age and gender profile of Korean mobile Internet users (see Table 1 for details) (Korea Internet & Security Agency 2019).

The e-mail invitation was opened by 2,616 individuals and 2,353 respondents clicked through to the questionnaire online. Each subject was presented with the screening question ("In the past 12 months, have you had any experience with tourism and visitor economy crowdfunding?"). Of those who were presented with the screening question, 1,489 responded in the affirmative, clicking *yes* and, hence, were qualified to

Table 1. Quota Sampling based on Gender and Age.

Factor	Category	The Percentage of the Samples of This Study	The Percentage of Mobile Internet Users
Gender	Male	51.3	51.4
	Female	48.7	48.6
Age	20–29	28.5	27.9
	30–39	28.1	27.7
	40–49	26.6	26.6
	50 and older	16.8	17.8

Note: The percentage is based on Korea Internet & Security Agency (2019).

continue with the survey. A total of 485 respondents from qualified respondents completed the questions. After outliers and other respondents (e.g., do not remember the crowdfunding project name which they participated in) were eliminated, 417 completed responses were used for the analysis. Hence the resultant response rate was 4.3% (final 417 respondents from initial 9,710 panelists).

Data Analysis

To evaluate the proposed hypotheses, partial least squares (PLS)-SEM analysis was employed. This was done, as it has been argued that compared with covariance-based (CB)-SEM, PLS-SEM allows for first-order constructs to be assessed with second-order constructs simultaneously within a model in an effective way (Hair et al. 2017). In addition, PLS-SEM is able to analyze non-normal distribution data and small sample sizes better than CB-SEM (Chin, Marcolin, and Newsted 2003). Further, PLS-SEM has been suggested to be more appropriate than traditional CB-SEM for multigroup analysis (MGA) and complicated and integrated models (Hair et al. 2012). Consequently, SmartPLS 3.2.8 was used (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015) to validate the measurement as and structural models in the research in this study.

To verify the moderating effect of high and low herding behavior groups in tourism-related crowdfunding, the current study applied MGA based on PLS-SEM algorithm, as recommended by Chin, Marcolin, and Newsted (2003) and Keil et al. (2000, p. 315):

$$t_{ij} = \frac{p_1 - p_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1-1) \times SE_1^2 + (n_2-1) \times SE_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}} \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}$$

When P_1 is the path coefficient of the research framework of herding behavior group i , n_1 is the sample

magnitude of the data of herding behavior group i , SE_1 is the standard error for the relationship of the research framework for herding behavior group i , t_{ij} is the t statistic with $n_1 + n_2 - 2$ degrees of freedom, i denotes the high herding behavior respondents, and j denotes the low herding behavior respondents (i.e., 1 = high herding behavior group and 2 = low herding behavior group).

Results

Grouping Check

Herding behavior was assessed with three questions, which had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha (α) (0.780) and the factor loadings of all items were more than 0.7. This suggests the items were reliably measuring the construct (Hair et al. 2017). A K-means cluster technique was employed to create herding behavior groups by partitioning observations as a group of nonhierarchical clustering algorithms (Hair et al. 2010). Respondents were separated into two groups representing a high herding behavior cluster ($n = 243$; mean = 4.74) and a low herding behavior cluster ($n = 174$; mean = 2.90). The differences between the groups suggested that the two groups were appropriate for comparison.

Sample Profile

As shown in Table 2, a slight majority (57.6%) of high herding respondents were male, while a slight majority (57.5%) of low herding respondents were female. Approximately a third of all participants fell in the 40–49-year-old bracket of high herding group (27.2%), whereas a third of all participants fell in the 20–29-year-old bracket of low herding group (31.6%). The majority of respondents attended a university and/or higher for both the high herding (78.2%) and low herding (75.3%) groups. More than a half of the high herding behavior group were married (57.6%), while more than a half of the low herding group were single (58.0%). Further, the majority of subjects earned a monthly family income of Korean Won (KRW) four million and over for high herding (78.2%) and for low herding (60.9%) respondents (US\$1 is equivalent to KRW 1,147). Also, the majority of respondents had full time jobs for both the high herding group (77.4%) and low herding group (71.9%), and more than a half of the sample were living in metropolitan areas for the high herding (67.4%) and low herding (63.3%) groups. In sum, the high herding behavior group appears to be more male, older, highly educated, married, wealthy, having full-time jobs, living in metropolitan areas,

experienced, frequently visiting platform, big investor, and interested in financial reward and travel/leisure than the low herding behavior group.

Measurement Model

All items were found to have normal distributions for skewness and kurtosis as shown in Table 3. Results of the measurement model (CFA) are displayed in Table 4. One benefit of crowdfunding item ("Funders form friendships with others over the visitor economy crowdfunding project") had a less than 0.7 factor loading and thus, was eliminated (Hair et al. 2010). As shown in Table 5, Cronbach's α and Rho_A of all concepts were larger than 0.70, suggesting the constructs satisfied internal consistency (Hair et al. 2017; Stevens 2009). Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs was larger than 0.5, and the composite reliability and the factor loadings of all items were over 0.7 (Hair et al. 2010), suggesting convergent validity.

Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio has been used to test discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2017). Recent studies suggest that the HTMT ratio is a more accurate criterion for examining discriminant validity (cut-off value of below 0.90) than commonly used Fornell-Larcker (Hair et al. 2017, p. 119; Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2014). It was found that all HTMT ratios were below the cut-off of 0.9 (see Table 5). Hence, the measurement model was further deemed to have discriminant validity.

Q^2 values of larger than zero for endogenous variables were found. These have been suggested to be acceptable, and to represent an evaluation criterion for the cross-validated predictive relevance analyzed by the blindfolding method as a sample reuse technique (Geisser 1974; Hair et al. 2012; Stone 1974). Further, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) for the model was less than 0.09, which suggests that the data was a good fit to the model (Hair et al. 2017). Including two subconstructs (attachment to fundraiser and platform) as a second-order factor (attachment to crowdfunding) as well as moderator of herding behavior, the multicollinearity of each item was tested, using variance inflation factor (VIF). Because all outer VIF values of items ranged from 1.39 to 3.46, multicollinearity was deemed to not be problematic (Hair et al. 2010; Hair et al. 2012).

Structural Model

Figure 3 presents the results of the PLS-SEM model that assessed the hypotheses (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015). The variance explained (R^2) for the three endogenous variables were as follows: benefit of crowdfunding (37.7%), attachment to crowdfunding (19.6%), and

Table 2. Comparing Demographic Characteristic and General Information of the High and Low Herding Behavior Groups.

Characteristics	High (%)	Low (%)	Characteristics	High (%)	Low (%)
Gender			Career participation length, months		
Male	57.6	42.5	<7	36.4	43.7
Female	42.4	57.5	7–12	32.5	26.3
Age, years			13–36	28.7	26.3
20–29	26.3	31.6	≥37	2.4	3.5
30–39	26.7	29.8	Experienced fields ^a		
40–49	27.2	25.9	Product reward	58.4	36.2
50–59	13.6	9.8	Nonproduct reward	43.2	47.1
			(e.g., services, experiences)		
≥60	6.2	2.9	Investment	39.2	30.5
Educational level			Lending	24.3	23.0
Less than or high school diploma	11.5	14.9	Other	0.4	1.1
2-year college	10.3	9.8	Frequency of visiting platforms		
University	64.2	62.1	Daily	4.1	0.6
Graduate school or higher	14.0	13.2	Weekly	16.5	9.8
Marital status			Monthly	26.7	18.4
Single	42.4	58.0	Quarterly	32.5	34.5
Married	57.6	42.0	Yearly	20.2	36.7
Monthly household income, KRW			Average investment amount, KRW		
<2.00 million ^b	2.9	4.6	<30,000	11.4	12.6
2.00–3.99 million	18.9	34.5	30,000–99,999	26.4	29.4
4.00–5.99 million	29.6	31.0	100,000–499,999	35.9	35.7
6.00–7.99 million	23.9	15.5	500,000–999,999	8.2	6.3
≥8.00 million	24.7	14.4	≥1 million	18.1	16.0
Occupation			Primary reason for crowdfunding		
Professionals	12.3	11.5	Product reward	46.9	27.6
Business owner	6.6	6.9	Nonproduct reward	26.3	37.9
			(e.g., services, experiences)		
Service worker	4.1	4.6	Investment	17.3	19.0
Office worker	51.9	44.3	Lending	9.1	14.4
Civil servant	2.5	4.6	Other	0.4	1.1
Homemaker	6.6	11.5	Participated projects		
Retiree	1.2	0.0	Travel and leisure	34.6	25.3
Student	10.7	8.0	Sports	3.3	1.1
Unemployed	1.6	5.7	Films	12.8	9.8
Other	2.5	2.9	Game	5.3	4.6
Residential district			Art/culture (fine art, craft, photography)	19.3	25.9
Metropolitan areas	67.4	63.3	Music	2.1	0.6
Nonmetropolitan areas	32.6	36.7	Other (e.g., food/beverage, events, hobbies)	22.6	32.7
Characteristics of project			Used visitor economy-related platforms		
Profit crowdfunding project	63.4	61.5	OhMyCompnay	9.1	3.4
Nonprofit crowdfunding project	22.6	21.3	Wadiz	43.2	40.1
Don't know	14.0	17.2	Crowdy	12.8	10.3
Involved in overseas funding			Tumblebug	11.5	18.4
Yes	14.0	9.2	HappyBean	7.4	5.7
No	86.0	90.8	Other	16.0	21.8

Note: High herding behavior group has 243 respondents and low herding behavior group has 174 respondents.

^aMultiresponse.

^bUS\$1 = KRW (Korean Won) 1,147 as of April 1, 2019.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Normality Test.

Construct	Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Argument quality (AQ)	AQ1	2	7	4.844	0.994	−0.141	0.281
	AQ2	1	7	4.940	0.975	−0.161	0.577
	AQ3	1	7	4.926	0.996	−0.276	0.536
	AQ4	2	7	4.892	0.968	−0.038	0.044
Source credibility (SC)	SC1	1	7	4.705	1.184	−0.453	0.027
	SC2	1	7	4.638	1.131	−0.215	0.229
	SC3	1	7	4.614	1.149	−0.248	0.278
	SC4	1	7	4.441	1.194	−0.205	0.097
Benefit of crowdfunding (BC)	BC1	1	7	4.477	1.262	−0.421	0.140
	BC2	1	7	4.640	1.116	−0.194	0.190
	BC3	1	7	4.803	1.239	−0.589	0.284
	BC4	1	7	3.808	1.440	−0.068	−0.546
Attachment to crowdfunding (AC)	AC1	1	7	3.787	1.434	−0.137	−0.433
	AC2	1	7	3.914	1.400	−0.290	−0.370
	AC3	1	7	4.055	1.371	−0.274	−0.383
	AC4	1	7	4.168	1.305	−0.412	0.171
	AC5	1	7	3.736	1.405	−0.067	−0.592
	AC6	1	7	3.899	1.360	−0.249	−0.262
	AC7	1	7	4.089	1.381	−0.347	−0.172
	AC8	1	7	4.034	1.310	−0.211	−0.015
Continued crowdfunding (CC)	CC1	1	7	5.010	1.195	−0.537	0.333
	CC2	1	7	4.552	1.174	−0.236	0.237
	CC3	1	7	4.583	1.228	−0.368	0.341
	CC4	1	7	4.904	1.152	−0.447	0.562
Herding behavior (HB)	HB1	1	7	4.041	1.394	−0.276	−0.255
	HB2	1	7	3.592	1.465	−0.008	−0.622
	HB3	1	7	4.290	1.199	−0.381	0.302

Note: SD = standard deviation.

continued crowdfunding (39.6%). The path coefficients as well as the evaluated *t* statistics were used to assess the hypotheses using PLS bootstrapping (5,000 resampling) (Hair et al. 2012; Stevens 2009), to evaluate the sampling distribution of statistics using random resamplings (Chin, Marcolin, and Newsted 2003).

The results revealed that the relationship between argument quality and benefit of crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.392$, *t* value = 6.850, $p < 0.001$) was significant. Further, source credibility was found to be positively related to benefit of crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.298$, *t* value = 5.277, $p < 0.001$) and attachment to crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.293$, *t* value = 4.963, $p < 0.001$). Also, benefit was found to be positively and significantly related to attachment ($\beta = 0.213$, *t*-value = 3.656, $p < 0.001$) and continued crowdfunding ($\beta = 0.285$, *t* value = 4.870, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, continued crowdfunding was found to be significantly related to attachment ($\beta = 0.466$, *t* value = 8.636, $p < 0.001$). Hence, hypotheses 1–6 were supported. Among the six hypotheses, the impact of attachment to crowdfunding on continued crowdfunding was the strongest based on the path coefficient (0.466). Regarding the two subconstructs of the second-order factor, attachment to crowdfunding was

found to be strongly and significantly related to attachment to a fundraiser ($\lambda = 0.971$, *t* value = 222.070, $p < 0.001$) and platform ($\lambda = 0.970$, *t* value = 198.678, $p < 0.001$).

Moderating and Mediating Effects

Next, the moderating role of high and low herding behavior, related to the six hypotheses in the research model, were tested (Table 6). Based on Hair et al. (2010), differences between high and low herding behavior respondents were compared using R^2 (explained variance) (Hair et al. 2010, p. 336). It was found that the high herding group had larger R^2 s than their counterparts with regard to attachment (high group = 27.7%; low group = 4.6%), by continued crowdfunding (high group = 37.6%; low group = 37.0%) and benefits of crowdfunding (high group = 37.0%; low group = 36.6%).

The high and low herding models revealed that five hypotheses for the high and low groups significantly differed. The only hypothesis that did not reveal significant ($p < 0.05$) differences was between argument quality and benefit of crowdfunding. Thus, hypotheses 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, and 7f were supported. The magnitudes of the effects of

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Measurement Model.

Constructs	Factor Loading	t value	VIF
Argument quality			
1. The information of this crowdfunding provided for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is informative.	0.835	47.701	2.028
2. The information of this crowdfunding provided for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is helpful.	0.867	58.930	2.310
3. The information of this crowdfunding provided for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is valuable.	0.852	54.113	2.120
4. The information of this crowdfunding provided for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is persuasive.	0.820	36.846	1.874
Source credibility			
1. This crowdfunding is knowledgeable on the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.851	35.697	2.202
2. This crowdfunding is trustworthy for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.886	68.771	3.124
3. This crowdfunding is credible for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.879	72.987	2.961
4. This crowdfunding appears to be experts on the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.843	51.928	2.130
Benefit of crowdfunding			
1. This crowdfunding shares knowledge or experiences for the visitor economy crowdfunding project with funders.	0.824	39.666	1.582
2. This crowdfunding is useful for gathering information for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.849	47.005	1.740
3. Funders benefit from the visitor economy crowdfunding participation (e.g., rewarding products, services, profits, interests).	0.783	28.667	1.386
4. Funders form friendships with others over the visitor economy crowdfunding project. ^a	—	—	—
Attachment to crowdfunding			
1. I am deeply involved in investing in this fundraiser for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.863	55.512	2.348
2. Investing in this fundraiser for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is part of me.	0.836	41.566	2.028
3. I am attached to investing in this fundraiser for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.901	87.120	2.983
4. Investing in this fundraiser for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is important to me.	0.878	69.269	2.598
5. I am deeply involved in investing in this crowdfunding platform for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.863	53.640	2.311
6. Investing in this crowdfunding platform for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is part of me.	0.846	41.030	2.132
7. I am attached to investing in this crowdfunding platform for the visitor economy crowdfunding project.	0.874	58.977	2.445
8. Investing in this crowdfunding platform for the visitor economy crowdfunding project is important to me.	0.881	76.689	2.561
Continued crowdfunding			
1. In the future, I will participate in visitor economy crowdfunding projects.	0.862	52.433	2.973
2. I will often participate in future visitor economy crowdfunding projects.	0.882	77.901	2.543
3. I will regularly invest in visitor economy crowdfunding projects.	0.853	48.209	2.256
4. I will continuously participate in visitor economy crowdfunding projects.	0.896	74.354	3.462
Herding behavior			
1. I participate in visitor economy crowdfunding because many other funders want to engage in it.	0.836	29.317	1.853
2. I follow others in deciding whether or not to contribute to visitor economy crowdfunding.	0.727	15.314	1.605
3. I would invest in visitor economy crowdfunding because many other funders have already contributed to it.	0.901	51.902	1.547

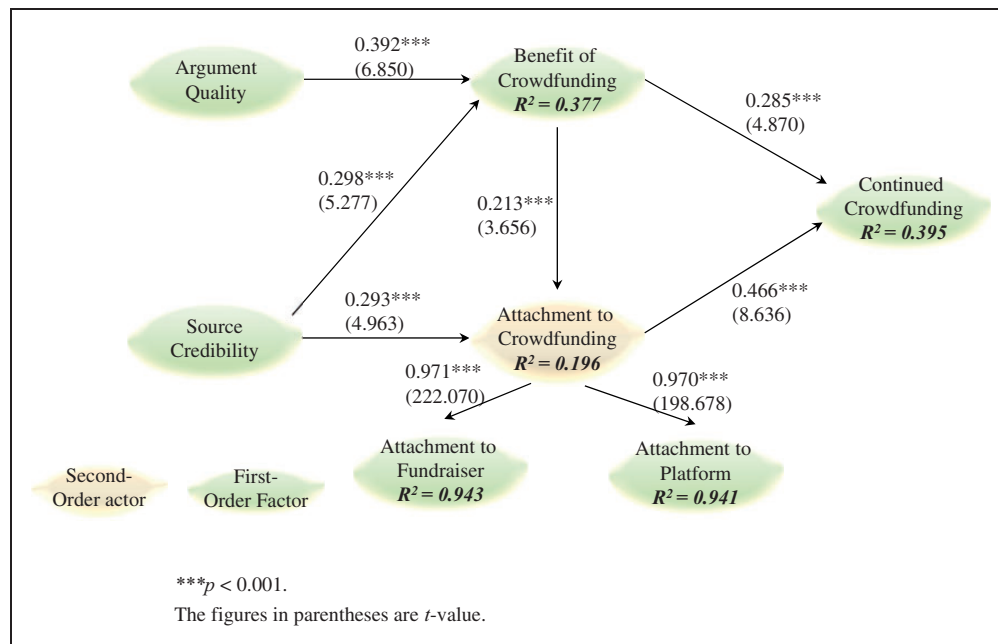
Note: VIF = variance inflation factor.

^aThe item was deleted after CFA because the factor loading is low than 0.7.

Table 5. Reliability and Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio < 0.9).

Construct	Correlation of the constructs				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Argument quality					
2. Source credibility	0.654				
3. Benefit of crowdfunding	0.697	0.638			
4. Attachment to crowdfunding	0.424	0.439	0.431		
5. Continued crowdfunding	0.615	0.588	0.556	0.615	
Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7	0.865	0.887	0.754	0.942	0.897
Rho_A (reliability coefficient) ≥ 0.7	0.866	0.888	0.754	0.942	0.899
Composite reliability ≥ 0.7	0.908	0.922	0.859	0.951	0.928
AVE ≥ 0.5	0.712	0.748	0.671	0.709	0.763
Effect size (Q^2) > 0			0.236	0.128	0.281
SRMR = 0.085 < 0.09					

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; HTMT = heterotrait-monotrait; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

**Figure 3.** Results of path analysis.

source credibility on benefit of crowdfunding (high herding = 0.308 > low herding = 0.170, $p < 0.001$), benefit of crowdfunding on attachment to crowdfunding (high herding = 0.279 > low herding = 0.071, $p < 0.001$), and attachment to crowdfunding on continued crowdfunding (high herding = 0.494 > low herding = 0.416, $p < 0.001$) were greater in the high group than in the low group. However, the magnitudes of the impacts of source credibility on benefit of crowdfunding (high herding = 0.271 < low herding = 0.293, $p < 0.001$) and the perceived benefits of crowdfunding on continued crowdfunding (high herding = 0.203 < low herding = 0.383, $p < 0.001$) were found to be greater for the low group

than for the high group. Hence, the difference between benefit of crowdfunding and attachment to crowdfunding was the greatest based upon the multigroup analysis.

PLS bootstrap with 5,000 resamplings was used to verify the mediating effects in the proposed research model (Table 7). Argument quality was found to positively and indirectly influence attachment to crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.083$, t value = 2.863) and continued crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.150$, t value = 4.486). Also, source credibility was found to positively and indirectly influence attachment to crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.063$, t value = 3.256) and continued crowdfunding ($\gamma = 0.251$, t value = 7.043). Furthermore, benefit of crowdfunding

Table 6. Comparison of the Path Coefficients between the High and Low Herding Behavior Groups.

Hypothesis 7	Path	High Group (A)	Low Group (B)	t Value (A-B)	p Value (A-B)	Hypothesis Test
Hypothesis 7a	Argument quality → Benefit of crowdfunding	0.408***	0.397***	1.393	ns	Not supported
Hypothesis 7b	Source credibility → Benefit of crowdfunding	0.271***	0.293***	-2.819	<0.01	Supported
Hypothesis 7c	Source credibility → Attachment to crowdfunding	0.308***	0.170 ^{ns}	16.128	<0.001	Supported
Hypothesis 7d	Benefit of crowdfunding → Attachment to crowdfunding	0.297***	0.071 ^{ns}	27.071	<0.001	Supported
Hypothesis 7e	Benefit of crowdfunding → Continued crowdfunding	0.203**	0.383***	-23.560	<0.001	Supported
Hypothesis 7f	Attachment to crowdfunding → Continued crowdfunding	0.494***	0.416***	10.451	<0.001	Supported
R ² : Explanatory power (coefficient of determination)						
High group: Benefit of crowdfunding (37.0%); attachment to crowdfunding (27.7%); continued crowdfunding (37.6%)						
Low group: Benefit of crowdfunding (36.6%); attachment to crowdfunding (4.6%); continued crowdfunding (37.0%)						

Note: ns = nonsignificant; The figures in italic are insignificant path coefficients.

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01.

Table 7. Mediating (Indirect) Effects.

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	F Square (Effect Size)
Argument quality → Benefit of crowdfunding	0.392***		0.392***	0.166
Argument quality → Attachment to crowdfunding		0.083**	0.083**	
Argument quality → Continued crowdfunding		0.150***	0.150***	
Source credibility → Benefit of crowdfunding	0.298***		0.298***	0.096
Source credibility → Attachment to crowdfunding	0.293***	0.063**	0.356***	0.077
Source credibility → Continued crowdfunding		0.251***	0.251***	
Benefit of crowdfunding → Attachment to crowdfunding	0.213***		0.213***	0.041
Benefit of crowdfunding → Continued crowdfunding	0.285***	0.099***	0.384***	0.116
Attachment to crowdfunding → Continued crowdfunding	0.466***		0.466***	0.311

Note: ns = nonsignificant.

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01.

was found to have a positive indirect impact on continued crowdfunding ($\beta = 0.099$, t value = 3.375). Thus, benefit of and attachment to crowdfunding were found to have mediating roles in the research model. In addition, according to Cohen (1992), effect sizes (f^2) of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 recommend small, medium, and large impacts. Since the f^2 values ranged from 0.041 to 0.311, the results of the study were deemed to have small to medium effects.

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

The results of this research revealed that the argument quality of fundraisers' communications had a substantial impact on benefit of crowdfunding. This implies that the central route of entrepreneurs' messages is important to potential investors of visitor economy crowdfunding opportunities. It was also found that source credibility significantly influenced benefit and attachment. This

implies that peripheral cues of fundraisers' information also play considerable roles in persuading funders to invest in visitor economy crowdfunding projects.

In addition, benefits were found to positively influence attachment and continued crowdfunding, implying that perceived benefits of crowdfunding are critical elements in attracting support for tourism-related crowdfunding campaigns. Moreover, the findings present that attachment had the strongest influence on continued crowdfunding. Results also revealed that herding behavior moderated five of the six hypothesized relationships. Specifically, the magnitudes of coefficients between source credibility and attachment, benefit and attachment, and attachment and continued crowdfunding were larger in the high herding group than in the low herding group. This suggests that peripheral cues are more important in messages to high herders than low herders, for tourism crowdfunding communications.

Conversely, the sizes of coefficients between source credibility and perceived benefits as well as benefit and continued crowdfunding were larger in low herding

fundes than in high herding fundes. This suggests that benefits of crowdfunding are more critical for low herding group members than for their counterparts when choosing whether to support tourism crowdfunding programs. Interestingly, the effect of argument quality on benefits was not significant ($p > 0.05$) between high and low herding groups, implying that messages from central routes are similarly important for both groups in persuading crowdfundinges for tourism projects.

Theoretical Implications

It is believed the current study provides several theoretical contributions to the field. This research is believed to be the first to verify the ELM in tourism-related crowdfunding settings, comparing the central and peripheral cues on how to better persuade crowdfundinges. Further, it is believed the current study has extended the existing ELM, incorporating critical concepts, such as benefit of crowdfunding, attachment to crowdfundinges and platforms, and continued crowdfunding. Results also revealed that differences exist between high and low herding crowdfundinges, suggesting that herding behavior is an important moderator of dual route persuasive communications for tourism crowdfunding.

Additionally, results helped to solidify past studies that have found argument quality to be related to perceived benefits in persuading highly involved consumers, and by showing the significance of the central route for influencing consumers (M. J. Kim et al. 2016a; M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981). Similar to multiple other studies, results revealed positive impacts of both source credibility and perceived benefits on attachment, revealing the importance of peripheral routes for influencing recipients (Bhattacharjee and Sanford 2006; M. J. Kim et al. 2016a; M. J. Kim, Bonn, and Lee 2017; Sussman and Siegal 2003).

Results revealing the substantial influence of attachment on continued crowdfunding also confirmed past literature on crowdfunding performances in ELM contexts (Allison et al. 2017; Bi, Liu, and Usman 2017; Liang, Wu, and Huang 2019; Z. Wang and Yang 2019; H. Zheng et al. 2016). It is further believed the significant moderating effects that herding behavior was found to have on the variables studied, provided a deeper understanding of the differing effects herding behavior has on consumer decision making, by extending past research (Y. Chen et al. 2020; Clauss et al. 2018; Crosetto and Regner 2018; Renwick and Mossialos 2017).

Practical Implications

The findings of this work also provide managerial contributions to crowdfunding practitioners in visitor

economy sectors. For example, the strong linkage between argument quality and benefit of crowdfunding suggests that tourism entrepreneurs should offer very detailed information about their projects. This could be done by providing highly detailed messages via digital storytelling for their crowdfunding campaigns. Also, the significant associations between source credibility and benefit as well as source credibility and attachment to fundraises/platforms asserts that tourism marketers from visitor economy crowdfunding projects should focus on highlighting peripheral cues for increasing the trust, reputation, or likability of them. They could do this by using positive cues within messages that discuss the merits of the product offered.

Further, the positive relationships between perceived benefits and both attachment and continued crowdfunding suggest that startups and small/medium businesses should emphasize what the advantages are for participating in tourism-related crowdfunding programs in their marketing messages. It is hence recommended that social media messages targeted at crowdfundinges should include the specific benefits, advantages, bonuses, reward, gifts, and so on for sponsors. Moreover, the strong effect of attachment on continued crowdfunding suggests that fundraisers and platforms should advertise their crowdfunding campaigns by trying to increase their emotional bonds with fundes. In order to do this, it is recommended that crowdfunding communications include emotional content in order to attract potential fundes. This could be done by using humor, by giving respondents a sense of belonging, or by showing the potential joy that could be received by funding the project.

Results of the study also suggest that tourism crowdfunding managers should communicate very differently for people who are high, versus low, herders to save resources. While it would likely be difficult to know who high versus low herders are, a bifurcated marketing campaign is recommended, as the differences between groups was so large. Thus, marketing messages geared toward high herding behavior fundes should emphasize messages that include aspects of trust and emotional bonds. An example of these messages would be website content with source credibility and attachment. This could be achieved by including testimonials from other fundes showing how trustworthy the funding agency is, and how attached they are to the project they funded.

Conversely, marketing campaigns for tourism-related crowdfunding projects geared toward low herding behaviors should concentrate on designing their messages toward showing how credible the source is, and the perceived benefits of funding the projects marketed. Hence, these messages should include detailed descriptions showing the multiple benefits (i.e., group membership benefits, tangibles related to the product, follow-up

services that would be provided, etc.) they would receive by funding the project. Further, all messages should include central cues as well as peripheral cues by attempting to improve argument quality and source credibility to persuade general consumers. In order to do so, information from entrepreneurs should include detailed messages with clear, convincing descriptions of the quality of the products sold and promised related to the credibility of the project managers.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although it is believed the current study offers both theoretical and managerial implications to the field, the study was limited in multiple ways, suggesting areas for future study. For example, this work applied a quantitative method to attempt to understand funder behavior regarding the dual route of persuasive communications. Future research should apply different approaches, including qualitative methods and/or big data analytics (e.g., text mining, web crawling) to better identify crowdfunder behavior in visitor economy sectors. Also, future research could include more emotional constructs, such as anticipated emotions and desires using a model of goal-directed behavior (instead of ELM) to provide a more thorough understanding of the phenomena studied. Furthermore, this study used only one sample, from Korea. Future studies should examine whether the current results pertain to other populations in order to better understand if the findings can be generalized. Further, future studies should use crowdfunders to a specific project, to help alleviate the variance associated with examining multiple types of projects in one study.



Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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