


Studying the Drivers of Consumer Behavioural Engagement With Social Media Brand-Related Content

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ABSTRACT

The actual behavioural engagement of consumers with social media brand-related content is measured by three activities: consumption, contribution, and creation. This type of engagement is considered the true practical indicator of the success of brand presence on social media. The study aims to uncover the drivers of consumer behavioural engagement identified by the key characteristics of social media context. Accordingly, quality dimensions and perceived usefulness of the brand hosting media channel are adopted from the IT use and acceptance models. Data is collected using self-administrated questionnaire from a sample of 366 respondents in the UK. Structural Equation Modeling-V.26 was used to analyse the data. The results support the significant role of cognitive absorption in explaining how perceptions of social media quality dimensions are shaped to motivate consumer engagement behaviour. The findings enrich the extant literature of consumer engagement; additionally, several practical insights can be drawn related to the design of social media marketing strategy.

KEYWORDS

Brand-Related Activities, CESBC, Cognitive Absorption, IS Success Model, Social Media, TAM

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the role of social media in building successful brands and leveraging its online marketing activities is growing. Social media engagement is one of the most influential developments in brand management. Especially, with more than half of the world's population, constituting some of 3.48 billion people are active users they spend on average 144 minutes daily, i.e., most of their working and personal time are on social media sites (SMS) (Smith, 2019; Veloutsou & Guzman, 2017). Consumers are experiencing a high level of engagement with brands on social media; thus, managers are forced to support brand success and secure its presence on social media.

It is expected that companies will raise their investments on social media to reach \$48 billion in 2021 (Guttmann, 2018). Advancements in technology enabled an interactive engagement platform. Brand managers pursue social media users with brand fan pages on social media to interact, build long-term relationships and loyalty, which are used as a new avenue to gain competitive advantage. For example, in February 2020, Samsung has the highest number of followers (160 million) on its

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Facebook fan page and it is ranked among the top companies in the world in terms of market value (Clement, 2020; Statista Research Department, 2020). Moreover, Coca-Cola is one of the most recognisable brands on social media in 2020 with 107 million followers (Clement, 2020), ninety percent of them or even more are interacting with the brand posts on Facebook. The engagement of social media users is expressed by sharing, creating and reviewing brands which contribute much to the successfulness of the company's social media campaign, e.g., #BTS_cocacola and #sharecoke (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, brand managers change their mindset and adopt new strategies to cultivate and stimulate consumer online responses (Kohli et al., 2015), and elicit voluntary interactions of consumers with brand -related content on social media. This type of engagement that support the behavioural manifestation perspective (van Doorn et al., 2010) is a critical element in brand strategy and an indicator of brand performance. It is also used as a quantitative measure of social media engagement (Mishra, 2019; Schivinski et al., 2019a). Therefore, the development of brand engagement that provokes consumer's interaction and participation with the brand-related content expressed by consuming (read the content), creating, and/or contribution (like or comments) is a top priority for executives (de Vries et al., 2017; Gummerus et al., 2012; Schivinski et al., 2019b).

Brands across different industries are creating social media presence by having multiple accounts on different platforms to entice consumer participation. The interactive nature of the hosted media allows the brand to share and create content such as product information, customer services, special offers and other benefits leveraged by consumer engagement (Mishra, 2019; Simon & Tossan, 2018). It is important to understand the drivers of online engagement to encourage and enhance consumers engagement with brand-related social media content.

Social media serves as a new communication tool with consumers that offers an alternative to traditional Web pages (Sanders et al., 2019). These social networking sites themselves work as effective tools that can entice consumer engagement with brand-related content which either generated by the firm or users (Mishra, 2019; Schivinski, 2019a). Since the user interactivity; the ability to personalise information, initiate, sustain, reply and exchange message, is rooted in the features of the medium (engagement platform). At the very basic level, most micro-blogging platforms allow users to communicate with messages and posts but with limited capabilities, for example Twitter provides its users with limited interactive tools (Sanders et al., 2019). However, the cognitive effort required by consumers to interact with brands on the social media engagement platform may hinder the level of participation. It is assumed that the less cognitive efforts required, the more consumers are motivated to spend a long time on social media platforms and engage with brand-related social content (Osei-Frimpong, 2019).

Notwithstanding, the literature on consumer engagement on social media platforms is getting rich, especially in the domain of brand communities (social-media based); however, most of the studies focused on the concept of engagement as a psychological multi aspects (affective, cognitive and behavioural) state. A handful of studies contributed to the accumulated knowledge and define the aspects of consumers behavioural engagement with brand-related social media content, namely: consumption, creation and contribution (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020; Schivinski et al., 2016). Previous studies investigated how brand-related social media engagement is related to individual differences; demographics, self-enhancement and self-affirmation (Sabermajidi et al., 2019), personality traits (Kabadayi & Price, 2014), level of autonomy (self-expression and socialisation) (de Vries et al., 2017), human values (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020) and brand related factors; brand equity (Schivinski et al., 2019b), brand value (Carlson et al., 2018) and brand social-sharing value (Simon & Tossan, 2018), brand social media activities (Mishra, 2019), brand or social media attachment/attitude (VanMeter et al., 2018) but several important issues on behavioural engagement have not yet been discovered.

To deepen the understanding of consumer behavioural engagement, more profound research focusing on the drivers that elicit users of social media to consume, contribute, and/or create brand-related content is required (de Vries et al., 2017; Schivinski, 2019b; Simon & Tossan, 2018).

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