DRIVERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USER-MOTIVATION EXAMINED THROUGH ONLINE BRAND-RELATED ACTIVITIES IMPACTING MARKETING OUTCOMES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Social media's advent has enabled a paradigm revolution in online consumer behavior, altering the ways of consumer-brand interaction. Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) on Social Media (SM) has been widely embraced by marketing practitioners and consultants; despite having enormous potential of this concept, research on CBE is still in its infancy. This study conceptualizes CBE by looking at the drivers behind users' social media time, the aspects of CBE on social media and the effects of CBE on marketing outcomes. The study adds to the body of research by elucidating a distinct conceptual framework for CBE by simultaneously examining the causes and consequences of engagement. By putting out a conceptual model for a theoretical explanation of Social Media Engagement (SME), this research fills this knowledge vacuum by using the uses and gratification theory on several dimensions of consumer engagement (COBRAs) and the impact of COBRAs on marketing outcomes (brand equity and purchase intention). In addition to helping managers create and preserve customer associations with the brand, this work would help future scholars comprehend the theoretical underpinnings of Consumer Engagement (CE).

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Engagement, User's Motivation, Brand Equity, Purchase Intention.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of Social Media (SM) has altered the dynamic between businesses and their customers by enabling more direct, intimate and real-time communication between the two groups (Harrigan, et al., 2015). When consumers willingly engage with the firm on social media, it remarkably increases the brand matrix in terms of awareness of the brand and intention to purchase (Colicev, et al, 2018). As per statista report, currently, there are over 5 billion social media users worldwide and this number will grow to 6 billion by 2028. Every brand seeks to encourage and foster Consumer-Brand Engagement (CBE) on social media because of its wide reach and interactive nature (Kohli, et al., 2015). Social media marketing has become a vital approach for gaining a long-term competitive edge (Devereux, et al., 2020).

Due to its ability to influence behaviour, CE with brand-related information on SM is a topic of great interest for marketers (Schivinski, 2019). In this emerging discipline, marketing scholars have viewed engagement as a promising concept which focuses on the behavior of the consumer instead of the organization and results in brand loyalty (Hollebeek, et al., 2011). CBE have a direct influence on brand equity (Shoaib, et al., 2023). For this reason, the present study focuses on the key drivers and the outcomes of SME. In order to accomplish this effectively, it is necessary to better understand why consumers interact with brand-related information on social media and what the outcomes of this interaction for the company.

The research on the social media framework is still fragmented, despite the fact that many studies have contributed to our understanding of it. Little research has examined how engagement might be achieved, recent studies have concentrated on the causes and outcomes of SME. The majority of investigation has focused on information created by the company, ignoring the viewpoint, motivation and behavior of the user. Developing a theoretical grasp of SME is necessary. This research investigates the consumer motivation and user behavior. Further, the study proposes a unique conceptual framework comprising the antecedents of consumer engagement on social media with respect to COBRAs (reading, watching, commenting, sharing, liking and creating brand-related information). The loop for the proposed model is then closed with the ultimate objectives for any marketer, namely, Band Equity (BE) and Purchase Intention (PI).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the next section consists of a detailed literature view, followed by the proposed conceptual framework with hypothesis development, then the proposed research methodology. Last section discusses the implications of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advancement of internet has originated a new dimension of CE on social media with brands. Marketing practitioners are heavily investing in SM to build online engagement among their customer groups. On social media platforms, consumers are increasingly looking for information about products and brands (Mangold and Faulds, 2009), while marketers advertise their products and brands and build their customer base. Duggan reports that 74% of internet users utilize social media and 50% of these users connect with brands on social media to find information about the brands they are interested in (Ismail, 2017). Tie strength, resemblance and incentives are some of the consumer-specific factors that encourage consumers to interact with brand-related material on social media (Chu, et al, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011).

Motivation to Social Media Use and U&G Theory

Understanding what encourages or drives consumers to interact with brand-related information online is crucial for effectively engaging with them on social media. In the context of media use, motivation is considered as stimulus that propel user to select and use media and media content (Rubin, 2002). Researchers most frequently utilize the Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory to discover why people consume media (Gao, et al., 2016). According to Aitken et al., (2008), the U&G method to communication considers at the effect of media from the viewpoint of the individual or consumer rather than the marketer. This theory presents media in terms of gratification or psychological needs of an individual. Audience consciously choose medium that could fulfil their needs and they are able to recognize their media choices reasons. U&G theory's primary goal is to comprehend:

- How people use the media to satisfy their needs.
- What are the reasons behind media consumption?
- To identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives and behavior.

This theory (U&G) was first penned by Katz, Haas and Gurevitch, originally they developed 35 needs of an individual gratified by media, which were further categorized into five needs: Cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and tension release. Information, personal identification, integration and social contact and entertainment are the four common media motivations, according to McQuail. The four-category classification of media use proposed by McQuail, is thought to be the most useful and relevant to the use of social media for motivation. Mutinga, et al., suggested expanding McQuail's four-category definition of social media use to include two more motivations: Empowerment and remuneration. Many scholars have embraced the six categories used by U&G to classify the

motivations behind social media use (Tsai and Men, 2017; Kitirattarkarn, et al., 2020; Maslowska, et al., 2016; Buzeta, et al., 2020).

Consumer Engagement

Although the term "engagement" has been discussed extensively in academic fields such as organizational behavior, psychology and sociology, it has just recently been introduced in the literature on marketing (Brodie, et al., 2011). Research on SME has been inadequate, despite the participatory approach to value creation (Brodie, et al., 2013; Gummerus, et al., 2012). While some authors emphasize the behavioral component, others view engagement as a psychological concept. According to Brodie et al., Consumer engagement is a "psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal agent/ object (*i.e.,* a brand) in a focal service relationship". As per Van Doorn, et al., consumer engagement is a sum of "behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers". Hollebeek, in their study defined Consumer engagement as "a customer level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions".

In this study, authors have studied engagement as a 'behavioral' construct rather than cognitive, emotional or behavioral construct. Behavioral construct refers to uploading of content, liking and sharing of content, subscribing the brand related content (Ashley, et al., 2015). The behavioral construct of engagement can be termed as COBRAs.

Consumer Online Brand Related Activities

COBRAs has been defined by Schivinski, et al., 'as a set of brand- related online activities on the part of consumer that vary in the degree to which the consumer interacts with social media and engages in the consumption, contribution and creation of media content'. Shao, first proposed the COBRAs concept, further it was extended by Mutinga, et al., and validated by Schivinski et al., as a Consumer's engagement with social media brand-related content (CESBC) scale. According to Shao's exploratory study, consumers can interact with user-generated media in three different ways: *Via* consuming, participating and producing. By analyzing the reasons why consumers interact with brand-related information on social media, Mutinga et al., elaborate on the Shao findings. They then conducted interviews with twenty customers to validate the conceptual framework. In addition, he developed the typology of COBRAs, which has three dimensions: Creating, contributing and consuming activities. Later, Schivinski and Christodoulides, developed a CE with social media brands in order to construct and measure the COBRA framework. This framework helps researchers in gaining a detailed understanding of the concept. There are three dimensions of COBRA consuming, contributing and creating activities as explained below:

Consuming activities: According to Mutinga, et al., these are the most popular things that people do on SM. These actions signify the bare minimum of social media interaction with brand-related content. Instead of participating actively in this activity, users passively read brand-related content on SM (Shao, 2009, Mutinga et al., 2011). One of these activities is viewing brand-related content on social media, such as ads, videos or pictures.

Contribution activities: These activities include peer to peer or peer to content interaction regarding brands (Shao, 2009). These types of activities account to user's contribution to the content which is already created by the brand or any individual (Mutinga, et al., 2011). These activities include liking, sharing or commenting on the content share by others or brands on social media.

Creating activities: These are the most active level of the activities which consumers do on social media. Here, consumer create the content related to the brand and post it on social media (Tsai, et al., 2013). Other users might be persuaded to actively contribute to or consume this content on social media

by it (Schivinski et al., 2016).

Depending on the circumstances, an individual may engage in these three activities differently: They may contribute, create or consume content for the same brand (Schivinski et al., 2016). Additionally, the same user may contribute to or create for one brand while acting as a consumer for another. The primary metric for assessing a brand's social media marketing efficacy is consumer brand-related activities (de Vries, et al., 2012).

Brand Equity

According to prior studies (Brodie, et al., 2011; Cal, et al., 2014; Kuvykaite, et al., 2014), a key result of SM use is the brand equity construct. Two approaches have been used to study brand equity in the marketing literature: Firm-based brand equity (Simon, et al., 1993) and consumer-based brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Because the study is user-centric, the authors of the current study have chosen to use the consumer-based brand equity approach. The cognitive and behavioral components of individual-based brand equity are measured by consumer-based brand equity. While Keller, defined brand equity as brand knowledge in terms of the brand, Aaker, defined brand equity as a collection of brand assets and brand liabilities associated with the brand.

Purchase Intention

Purchase Intention is the conclusively stage where consumer is definitely going to buy the specific product (Yan, 2011). When consumer have an interest and he/ she is willing to buy the product is termed a s purchase intention (Kim, et al., 2012). It is the behavioral outcome of the consumer. Due to simultaneous engagement of consumers and marketers on social media, it has influenced the purchasing decisions of the consumers (Goh, et al., 2013). Bruhn, et al., (2012) in their study analyzed that social media communication (Firm generated content and user generated content) have a strong influence on brand image which further impacts the 'Purchase Intention' of the consumers.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis development

The present study proposes the model which takes six user centric motivations to study the motivations of social media use as antecedents of consumer engagement (COBRAs) and its implications on brand equity and purchase intention. The user motivation has been drawn from the sociological theory "Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT), engagement drawn from COBRAs (Mutinga, et al., 2011).

Uses and Gratification Theory and User's Motivations

In this study, authors have adopted user-centric approach to motivation which was derived from the Uses and Gratification theory (U&G). Authors have explored six dimensions of motivation to use SM, four dimensions of motivations are of McQuil and two dimensions of motivation to use SM have been added from Mutinga, et al., research. So, authors have adopted six U&G drivers of motivation to use SM- entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, information, remuneration and empowerment. These U&G motivations for social media use have been discussed below:

Entertainment: Entertainment motivation is an emotional relief which is generated by diverting oneself from daily routine or problems ((Park, et al., 2009; Shao, 2009; Tsai, et al., 2013). It can be escaping or diverting from the day-to-day activities for various sub- motivations like emotional relief or release, relaxation, cultural enjoyment, passing time and having fun (Mutinga, et al., 2011). Past literature about social media, elaborated that people use social media sites for amusement and fun (Enginkaya, et

al., 2014). Entertainment motivation comes in all three COBRA activities. The entertainment motivation for consuming brand-related content can be enjoyment, passing time or relaxation. For contributing brand-related content entertainment as a motivation can be relaxation and enjoyment. For creating brand-related content entertainment as a motivation can be enjoyment and passing time. So, entertainment as a motivation factor influences all three COBRA activities (Mutinga et al., 2011).

Based on the above discussions, the present study frames three hypotheses:

H1 a: Entertainment as a motivation will have a positive effect on consumption activities.

H1 b: Entertainment as a motivation will have positive effect on contribution activities.

H1 c: Entertainment as a motivation will have positive effect on creation activities.

Integration and Social Interaction

The primary motive of people is to use social media is to connect with brand and people (Qin, 2020). An individual can connect with others to improve their socializing skills and gain a better understanding of other people's circumstances through integration and social interaction motivation (Papacharissi, et al., 2000; Park et al., 2000). Finding emotional support for peers (Bandwagon), improving interpersonal relationships (Community building) and increasing one's sense of belonging (Connection with friends, family and society) are the sub-motivations of integration and social engagement (Mutinga, et al., 2011). Social interaction was cited by Daugherty, et al., as a key incentive for user-generated content creation. The material produced may take the shape of peer pressure to produce brand-related content, social interaction or social identity. According to Boyd, social identification also plays a significant role in social networking sites through sub-motivations include interacting with like-minded individuals, assisting others and preserving one's social identity. After the above discussion, hypothesis framed will be:

H2 a: Integration and social interaction as a motivation will have a positive effect on consumption activities.

H2 b: Integration and social interaction as a motivation will have a positive effect on contribution activities.

H2 c: Integration and social interaction as a motivation will have positive effect on creation activities.

Personal Identity

This motivating factor has to do with forming one's identity by presenting one's characteristics to the group of peers (Jensen Schau, et al., 2003). Several sub-motivations related to personal identification include self-expression, social recognition, self-presentation and self-assurance. The motivation of personal identity is abundant in social media motivation literature. Bumgarner and Boyd identified self-expression and impression management respectively as important motivators of using social media. This motivation encourages users on social media to contribute and create content (Tsai, et al., 2017). From the above discussions, the hypothesis framed for the present study are:

H3 a: Personal identity as a motivation will have positive effect on consumption activities.

H3 b: Personal identity as a motivation will have positive effect on contribution activities.

H3 c: Personal identity as a motivation will have positive effect on consuming activities.

Information

This motivation covers several gratifications related to information received or information shared on social media platforms. Brand-related information, product reviews and creative brand-related ideas started by marketers or consumers are among the things that consumers search for on social media. These things help consumers build trust in the brand (Godey et al., 2016) and further enhance their perception of the brand (Manthiou, et al., 2016). Various sub-motivations related to information are information seeking, information sharing, gaining social information, knowing about other you (Surveillance), obtaining communicatory utility (Community building) and self- documentation (Mutinga, et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009). Wang, et al., considered information to be the most significant driver of COBRA as is engaged customers by posting trending stories and posts. So the hypothesis framed from the above discussions are:

H4 a: Information as a motivation will have positive effect on consumption activities.

H4 b: Information as a motivation will have positive effect on contribution activities.

H4 c: Information as a motivation will have positive effect on consuming activities.

Remuneration

Motivation of remuneration refers to some kind of benefits (discounts, rewards or prizes) which users expect while contributing in online or brand related communities. Various sub motivation of remuneration according to Mutinga, et al., are obtaining economic incentives, job related benefits or personal wants. This act as key motivation that significantly influence consumer reactions on social media platforms on COBRAs (Buzeta, et al., 2020). Previous studies have shown that this motive leads to consumption and creation activities. So in this study, the framed hypothesis is:

H5 a: Remuneration as a motivation will have positive effect on consumption activities.

H5 b: Remuneration as a motivation will have positive effect on contribution activities.

H5 c: Remuneration as a motivation will have positive effect on consuming activities.

Empowerment

This motivation pertains to using one's influence or power on other individuals or organizations; this can be done by expressing one's thoughts about company policies, services and product enhancement (Mutinga, et al.,2011; Tsai, et al., 2013). Buzeta, et al., in their study analyzed that empowerment motive have impact in all three COBRA activities. So, the framed hypothesis of the present study will be:

H6 a: Empowerment as a motivation will have positive effect on consumption activities.

H6 b: Empowerment as a motivation will have positive effect on contribution activities.

H6 c: Empowerment as a motivation will have positive effect on consuming activities.

Consumer Engagement

The concept of COBRAs, which emphasizes the behavioral component of consumer online brand-related activities, is adopted in this study to evaluate engagement. Instead of measuring a user's

involvement with the brand itself, consumer engagement with brand-related material gauges their engagement with brand-related social media content. The consumption, contribution and creative activities that range from lower to higher levels of engagement are all included in the three-dimensional framework known as COBRA. These three levels of COBRA activities are "continuous" in producing engagement with brand-related information, according to previous studies (Mutinga, et al., 2011; Schivinski, et al., 2016) and all three COBRA activities have a hierarchical link. Additionally, a consumer's involvement on social media progresses from consuming information to contributing to it, which ultimately leads to helping to create it. Hence, the next to framed hypothesis are:

H7: Consumption activities will have a positive effect on contribution activities.

H8: Contribution activities will have a positive effect on the creation activities.

Customers who prefer to interact with a brand on SM significantly improve the brand's performance in a number of indicators, such as purchase intention and brand recognition (Colicev, et al, 2018).

Brand Equity

According to recent social media trends, millennials are actively interacting with brand-related information on social media, which builds brand equity (Chahal, et al., 2017). According to the latest study, brand equity perception is significantly impacted by customer involvement with brand-related material (Machado et al., 2019). Therefore, the authors have proposed the Yoo and Donthu scale, which measures customer based brand equity from the consumer perspective, to measure the brand equity construct in the current study. For the above discussions, three set of hypotheses have been framed:

H9 a: Consumption activities will have positive effect on customer based brand equity.

H9 b: Contribution activities will have positive effect on customer based brand equity.

H9 c: Creation activites will have positive effect on customer based brand equity.

Purchase Intention

So, this study analyzed the drivers of social media engagement and its consumer behavioral intention. In this study, authors have adopted Yoo, et al., scale of purchase intention as it shows the direct and positive impact of brand equity on purchase intention. As per the discussions, there are three set of hypotheses framed:

H 10 a: Consumption activities will have positive effect on purchase intention.

H10 b: Contribution activities will have positive effect on purchase intention.

H10 c: Creation activities will have positive effect on purchase intention.

Past literature (Yoo, et al., 2001; Kim, et al., 2012) have accessed that stronger the brand equity the more positive influence it has on the consumer purchase intention. So, the present study frames the following hypothesis:

H11: Customer based brand equity will have a positive effect on purchase intention.

All the hypothesis of the present study explained in conceptual framework are illustrated in Figure
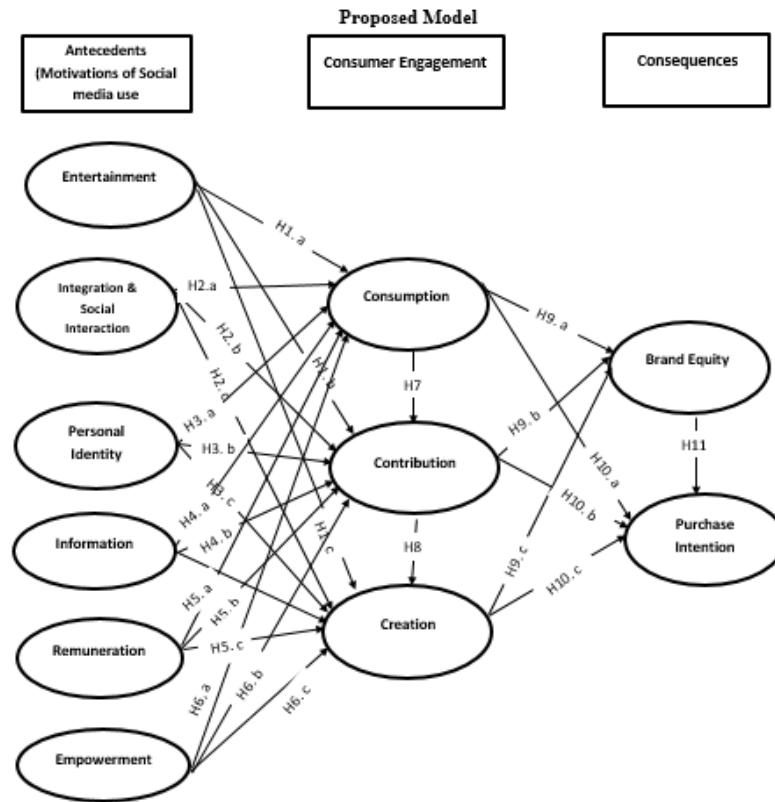
1.

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Proposed Methodology

To study the dimensions of CE on SM and its impact on brand equity and purchase decision, a proposed methodology will now be presented. To investigate the conceptual model; it is proposed to do a quantitative survey on Gen Y consumers of social media because of the growing influence of online social media on this market segment. It is particularly revealing that most of this generation group prefer to interact with firm on social media rather than physical layout (Graeber, et al., 2007) before making a purchase decision. This target segment relies heavily on technology for their entertainment, interaction with peer group and even for emotional outbreaks (Bolton, et al., 2013).

The questionnaire can be featured five point Likert scales (1-strongly agree, 5-strongly disagree) and will use the measurements from the literature pertaining to motivation of social media use, social media consumer engagement, overall brand equity and purchase intention. Table 1 presents the proposed scales (items) for measuring the conceptual model along with the constructs and the sources used in questionnaire.

S.No	Constructs	Scale sources	No. of items generated
	TABLE 1		
	PROPOSED SCALES ALONG WITH CONSTRUCTS AND SOURCES		
1	Social media engagement (COBRA	Schivinski et al.	Consumption-14 items

	framework)		Contribution-18 items
			Creation-10 items
2	User's motivation to social media use derived from U&G theory- Entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, information, remuneration and empowerment	U&G theory framework (McQuail, Mutinga, et al., and Buzeta, et al.)	Entertainment-12 items
			Integration and social interaction- 7 items
			Personal identity-10 items
			Information-18 items
			Remuneration-3 items
			Empowerment-3 items
3	Brand equity	(Yoo and Donthu)	10 items
4	Purchase intention	(Yoo, et al.)	3 items

CONCLUSION

The drivers and outcomes of Social Media Engagement (SME) have been the subject of relatively few studies, despite the fact that many studies have advanced our understanding of the social media framework. Therefore, the current study fills the knowledge gap by putting forth a conceptual model that investigates the connection between users' motivation to use social media and different levels of their engagement on social media. The impact of these levels of engagement on overall brand equity and purchase intention is also evaluated. According to Rodgers, et al., (2007), a user's motivation serves as an initiating factor for their interaction with brand-related content on social media. Users are most likely to interact with information that best suits their requirements and satisfactions and there are a variety of reasons why they might participate in consumer brand-related online activities on SM platforms. These motivations have been derived from the U and G perspective which take in to consideration the user centric approach. U and G theory is considered to be the most relevant for studying the motivational factors of the individual user for media use. From the perspective of the organization, the brands need to know what are the most important motivational factors of the individual user they need to tap into for the highest level of engagement.

As this study measures the behavioral aspect of the consumer engagement, COBRA framework is considered as a single unifying framework to measure all brand related activities, consumer do on social media. It helps in knowing the level of engagement (active or passive) consumer possess with the brand it terms of: Consumption, contribution or creation activities. Our research enables social media specialists in using brand-related material for branding and marketing purposes. The firm's brand equity will benefit from this engagement and customer purchasing behavior will rise as a result.

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