

Social Media Platforms and Customer Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Consumer engagement can alternatively be defined as "interactions that go beyond transactions and may be characterised as a customer's brand or corporate-focused behavioural manifestations beyond purchase". When social media platforms are utilised to foster connections, users' devotion to them leads to engagement. Social media marketing gives channels for engagement, which creates trust, devotion, and goodwill between consumers and businesses, whether they buy the brands' goods or not. The current research on consumer engagement on social media sites does not agree on the ubiquity of its dimensions. This study is an effort to conceptualise the dimensions of customer engagement from the viewpoint of social media marketing and to provide the meaning of obtaining customer engagement via social media platforms, as obvious from practice and theoretical background in existing research, to put forth some relevant principles of using social media marketing to achieve customer engagement.

Keywords: Customer Engagement, Social media marketing, Impact of social media marketing on customer engagement. Measurable dimensions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet and its services have grown in importance. Information exchange and communication have also changed. In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, customer involvement changed. Internet and social media revolutionised consumer-business interactions. Companies must catch and hold customers' attention. Social media platforms connect customers with merchants, companies, and brands. Customer involvement is hard to achieve but a current asset. The transition from in-person to online consumer dialogues matches contemporary culture's shift from analogue to digital communication and entertainment. Even as consumer scepticism develops, social media platforms remain a vital source for advertising and company communication.

Marketers sell their products on social media platforms (phrased as "social media marketing"). Social media has become a communication structure between marketers and consumers (Benyoucef & Zhang, 2016). Marketing helps organisations meet client demands. It may be used to communicate with individual customers as an effective customer engagement technique (Constantinides et al., 2008). Marketers educate and convince consumers and reduce ownership hurdles. Conventional techniques are less successful. Traditional channels are losing efficacy due to increasing competition, and organisations or brands can no longer be differentiated by quality and functional advantages alone (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006). In response, marketers are leveraging

social media as a new Internet-based marketing platform. Businesses (or brands) and consumers exchange user-generated content symbiotically (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media has superseded traditional media in building relationships, engaging customers, and encouraging ongoing interactions (Andrews & Bianchi, 2015; Stephen & Lamberton, 2016). Interactive media allows users to share information, produce content, and construct networks, altering how participants engage. Social media complicates marketer-consumer interactions. Nearly a third of the world's population used social media by 2021. Social media marketing benefits include targeted reach, ongoing engagement, and relationship building (Shawky et al., 2019). Social media is crucial for marketers looking to engage consumers.

Customer engagement is key to organisational performance in retail, services, public health and behavioural change, sports, and other sectors. More scholars and practitioners are studying how social media influences customer engagement in complex ecosystems (Brodie et al., 2013). Brand communities, which increase a company's competitiveness and success, are key to consumer involvement. Recent research is examining how consumers' social media usage affects customer engagement. Customer engagement literature (Leeflang et al., 2014; Bianchi and Andrews, 2015) lacks facts on how digital communications affect organisations. Despite social media's prominence in consumer contact, marketing literature on managing and measuring customer engagement is limited. In a complex setting, social media-based customer contact is inefficient. Businesses still depend on one-on-one online push marketing with a single customer (Shawky et al., 2020). Social media encourages purchasers to 'like, share, and comment,' which boosts sales. Marketers are increasingly focused on social media advertising's influence on customer engagement. An organization's social media marketing influence and efficacy may be assessed by customer engagement (Schivinski et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2018).

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The terms social media and customer engagement has been individually defined extensively in marketing literature, but in combination, their effect on one another has not been considered. Individually, "Social media" is identified as "a group of Internet-based applications which build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010), and "Customer engagement" refers to "a psychological state, which occurs by interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object within specific service relationships" (Brodie et al., 2011). This paper's primary goal is to conceptualise the dimensions of consumer engagement from the perspective of social media marketing.

III. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

User collaboration may be facilitated by a wide range of technologies including blogs (and microblogs), networking sites, virtual communities and collaborative projects (Alves et al., 2016). Thus, internet-based programmes that are in keeping with Web 2.0 are referred to as "social media." User-generated content (UGC) may be developed and

shared using social media platforms (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2010; Dabrowski and Schivinski, 2016; Alalwan et al., 2017). It's becoming more common for firms looking to save costs and increase profits to use social media as a replacement for conventional advertising methods. More than a decade of study has been done on digital advertising, social media marketing, and mobile advertising (Michaelidou et al., 2011; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Stephen, 2016). It is of no surprise that researchers have begun to pay attention to how social media can help marketers better integrate their communications, engage their target audiences, increase their return on investment (ROI), and gain a competitive edge by replacing more traditional advertising methods (Castronovo & Huang, 2012; Lipsman et al., 2012; Jobs & Gilfoil, 2014).

Since the early 2000s, social media researchers have taken a keen interest in studying the main elements of social media uses from various perspectives, including those based in different cultures, countries, and regions (Berthon et al., 2012). According to the findings, the great majority of social media studies are oriented toward the marketing aspect of such platforms. Social media marketing issues have been investigated by researchers across several dimensions and many frameworks. Additionally, researchers have used a wide range of techniques and procedures in their efforts to comprehend this issue.

For the most part, practitioners and academics have focused their attention on social media to get a better understanding of how such applications might be effectively deployed (Sanderson, 2014). So why do we need to understand more about what it takes to deploy this technology effectively and how much money can be invested in it? To have a better understanding of these major social media issues, scholars need to explore social media in a variety of contexts. Although many studies have examined social media and its usage in different sectors, a theoretical model is still needed to identify the most important factors that affect the efficacy of implementing such systems. Since social media platforms are unique in nature, more research is required in this area to better understand how these platforms affect people's lives as well as marketing strategies (Pegoraro, 2014).

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is a result of social media marketing. Customers' online interactions with a brand or firm are all included in e-WOM. It includes customers who have used the brand and those who haven't, both are included in this aspect (Chu and Kim, 2011). Since Web 2.0 and the Internet, Word-of-mouth (WOM) has progressed to incorporate viral communication or e-WOM. Consumer interaction with social media marketing is supported by e-WOM (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014; Doh & Hwang, 2009). Researchers and marketers are equally interested in the impact of real WOM and e-WOM on purchasing intentions (Kapoor et al., 2018).

From a "hyped up term" to an essential part of every successful marketing plan, social media has evolved. To reach and engage consumers, assess existing online browsing or purchase-related behaviour and build loyalty, businesses have realised the enormous potential of this strong asset. On social networking sites, consumers may join their favourite brands' communities and participate in the latest informational communication. The rise of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook has given consumers a new way to connect with and show their love for

their favourite companies to friends, family members, and acquaintances. In recent years, customer engagement has gained a lot of attention from marketers and practitioners because of the rise of social media marketing.

IV. DEFINING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

The engagement has been discussed in schools, organisations, and public policy for decades. In marketing, practitioner publications rather than academic journals include most consumer engagement research. Marketers concentrate on consumer behaviour. Researchers constructed a total engagement measure by integrating click depth, loyalty, recentness, length, and interactivity (how often people download, upload, or attend a video or audiocast). Various marketing research defines, dimensions, and operationalizes client involvement ambiguously. Customer involvement is a new marketing concept. Businesses, brands, and items and brand forums are key engagement areas.

Customer engagement is "an emotional relationship between a firm and its customers, with the focus on communication and interaction." Personal relationships are helping firms promote two-way contact with customers (Kumar et al., 2010). Information and communication technology provides a multitude of alternatives for organisations and consumers to share knowledge and engage customers (Vivek, 2009).

"Customer engagement" is also described as "individual interaction with a company's offerings and activities" (Vivek et al., 2012). The client or the company may have started this engagement. Bowden (2009) defines "customer engagement" as "a psychological process that mimics how new consumers build brand loyalty and how repeat customers sustain that commitment".

When researchers picture all the ways a client may "connect" with a firm, they assume sales will follow. Customer involvement is incomplete without including purchase behaviour (Kumar et al., 2010). Previous research reveals that consumer inclusion is not a systematic, sequential process (Brodie et al., 2013; Abdullah and Siraj, 2018). Consumer engagement implies a back-and-forth dialogue spanning successive times. Trust, commitment, and satisfaction inspire customers to engage with a firm. It was also found that customer engagement activities are cyclical and recurring. We've also made consumer involvement a two-way street. Online customer engagement is "the consumer's cognitive and emotional commitment to an active interaction with the business"

Though previous definitions suggest that most utilise a three-dimensional perspective of customer engagement, it's important to note that the self-expression of these generic dimensions may vary dependent on the engagement concept used and the relative significance of each in the circumstance. Thus, we envisioned social media consumer involvement as "bidirectional, two-way, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural expressions of customers, positive or negative, including transactional behaviour."

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social networking platforms have become more important in the exchange and dissemination of information, and corporations are taking advantage of this opportunity

to provide consumers with relevant and timely information by developing marketing strategies on social media platforms. When it comes to how people interact with one other, things have evolved tremendously in recent times (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). With the advent of social media, customers no longer have to rely only on corporations to spread their brand messages to thousands of other customers across the globe. By using social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter organisations may engage with their customers at a level they've never experienced before, according to a new study (Solis, 2010). It was also noted that companies hosting online forums for commercial objectives to create consumer connections, upon getting feedback improved their brand. Especially good "word of mouth" contact between customers and businesses affected firms' branding via communities' discussion and sharing of subjects connected to their interests.

As such, surveys done by EConsultancy in 2008 found that 90% of businesses considered online client involvement to be "vital" or "important." As a result, the Natural Marketing Institute designated customer engagement as a top priority for its 2010–2012 research agenda (MSI, 2010). According to research conducted by Kumar and Pansari, 2016, a company's capacity to generate higher levels of profitability, sales growth, brand loyalty (De Vries and Carlson, 2014), and competitive advantage (Sedley and Perks, 2008) depended on its ability to keep their customers engaged (Voyles, 2007). Another study emphasised that the idea of customer engagement has to include both positive and negative kinds of participation by dissatisfied consumers (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Many organisations do not use analytics to measure the efficiency of their social media marketing methods, which is a problem for marketing scholars and practitioners (Michaelidou et al., 2011). The term "consumer engagement" may be used to describe how a customer responds to a company's social media post (de Vries et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2017). Researchers have looked at methods to assess this kind of connection or degree of engagement, including the number of people who join social media sites like Facebook and Twitter (Michaelidou et al., 2011). As per the research conducted by Barger et al., (2016) commenting on a post requires more focus and work than just following a user's feed. Despite being the most evident sign of engagement, having a large number of followers might be regarded as a shaky barometer of success. Consumers might interact in different ways across different platforms, which makes it difficult to standardise engagement metrics across them all (Coursaris et al., 2016; Barger et al., 2016). Researchers have discovered that "reactions to the ad" and the "chance to click through," two measures of social media marketing success, were linked to the level of interactive engagement during research on online advertising (Calder et al., 2009). There are no retweets or share options on Instagram, for example, unlike Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The degree of customer engagement and attention rises in direct proportion to each other on these platforms: engagement increases with increased attention (Barger et al., 2016). When it came to engagement on a post, more "comments" than "likes" would indicate a greater degree of participation than either "liking" or "sharing" (de Vries et al., 2012; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017).

VI. SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

When social media platforms are utilised to foster connections, users' devotion to them leads to relationships. Social media users comment on a company's goods, voice support and criticism, and exchange information with support networks and other customers. Customer interaction in social media marketing includes prospective and existing customers, non-clients, society, and sellers. Social media marketing may establish trust, goodwill, and commitment between individuals and organisations, even if consumers don't buy (Vivek et al., 2012).

Most scholars think social media may help companies retain solid client relationships. The social media platform used may affect how customers create connections with firms. Facebook improves customer engagement, while Twitter offers more interaction and new content. With social media, firms may enhance client involvement significantly and favourably.

Dedication to social media accounts leads to involvement in relationship-building communication. Online stakeholders may make direct efforts with the firm and other consumers by commenting on the business and its goods, offering support and criticism, and exchanging ideas with social connections. Customer engagement includes interactions between consumers and merchants, existing and future customers, non-clients, society at large, and sellers, or stakeholders.

Customer engagement is accomplished via interactions with firm products, services, and activities. These interactions need customer participation. Social media marketing offers doors for involvement, which creates connections between consumers and organisations based on mutual trust, devotion, and goodwill (Vivek et al., 2012). e-WOM-based social network marketing influences client engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty (Kasavana et al., 2010).

Customers' engagement with Facebook businesses may boost their views of relationship benefits and outcomes. Consumers may obtain social benefits, hedonic rewards, and practical value from Facebook brands. Similar research examined how companies may utilise Facebook to engage customers (Pereira et al., 2014). A similar study indicated that although customers are interested in following firms on Facebook, they are less interested in staying in contact and re-sharing their content.

In the aftermath of past research, corporations are seeking brand loyalty and engagement (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing, but active players in value-producing interaction processes. Direct sales, e-mail, social media sites, and groups are used to engage customers. Customer involvement improves sales, competitiveness, success, psychological connection, empowerment, and customer value (Kumar et al., 2010; Chan and Li, 2010; Hollebeek, 2011).

These conversations have changed in touch, loudness, tempo, and tone. Companies may reach otherwise unreachable individuals (Newman and Park, 2003). Social media is more popular than traditional communication. When individuals connect, they establish a "small-world" centre where many may readily share information (Newman and Park, 2003). Social media marketing expands organisations' ability to participate in the firm-customer discussion and strengthens their messaging.

VII. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MEDIA: MEASURABLE DIMENSIONS

There is a lack of unanimity in the current literature on the dimensions of consumer involvement. To describe the level of customer brand involvement, Hollebeek, (2011) posited three dimensions: "immersion", "passion", and "activation". Online customer engagement may be categorised as "cognitive, emotional, and behavioural" (Dessart et al., 2015). Or there could be four elements of customer engagement: cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and social (Vivek et al., 2012). Dimensions of consumer engagement also include "dynamic and sustained cognitive processing, instrumental value (utility and relevance)", and experience value. Again the five characteristics of customer engagement suggested are "valence, form or modality, scope, nature of the impact, and customer goals" i.e., consumers learn about goods on social media and get emotionally linked to the brand communities, which gives them the chance to exhibit their co-creative nature (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Customer engagement is divided into three components: "cognition, affection, and activation" (Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Dessart et al., 2015). Studies by Gummerrus et al. (2015); Brodie et al. (2011), the dimensions of customer engagement correspond to cognitive, affective, and behavioural factors, and this was established experimentally in a qualitative study by Hollebeek (2011). In any field, the notion of engagement denotes three basic characteristics (Hollebeek, 2011). The first is an indication of constructively positive expressions, like social engagement in sociology or engagement in marketing. The second factor of engagement is the ease with which it may be interacted (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Roberts & Alpert, 2010; Vivek et al., 2012). The concept's multidimensionality is the third characteristic. According to Kuvykaite and Tarute (2015), customer engagement might be a multidimensional construct comprising three dimensions: "cognitive (consumer concentration and attention towards a certain brand), emotional (emotions of encouragement or satisfaction produced by a specific brand), and behavioural (customer actions and vigour required for brand interaction)". According to So et al. (2014), participation differs from engagement in that involvement consists only of cognitive components, whereas engagement includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012). Many think that consumer involvement is one-dimensional, however, this is not the case at all (Islam and Rahman, 2016). As it is considered appropriate for a service business setting, the multidimensional method was used for this review. So, the five dimensions of customer engagement in the social media marketing context can be mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Five dimensions of Customer Engagement

DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	DEFINITION	WHAT TO TRACK (precursors)
Identification	"The degree of a consumer's perceived oneness with or belongingness to the brand."	Self-identity, Rapport, Brandpersonality, Relevancy

	(Bhattacharya et al., 1995)	
Attention	“The degree of attentiveness, focus, and connection that a consumer has with the brand.” (So et al., 2014)	Motivational alliance, Customer friendly behaviour
Enthusiasm	“The degree of excitement and interest that a consumer has in the brand.” (Vivek, 2009)	Brand Enthusiasm
Absorption	“A pleasant state which describes the customer as being fully concentrated, happy, and deeply engrossed while playing the role as a consumer of the brand.” (Patterson, et al., 2006)	Brand belongingness, Attitude, Dearness & Bonding
Interaction	“Various participation (both online and offline) that a customer has with the brand organization or other customers outside of purchase.” (So et al., 2014)	Social Group Interaction & Consciousness, Brand Cocreation, Accommodative Response

Source: So et al., 2014 and primary.

However, it is offered as a second-order component where the five dimensions reflect and measure the more abstract customer engagement construct, which may be understood using its five dimensions. Entropy across the five dimensions captures customer engagement as a wider abstraction. Customer engagement literature supports the suggested second-order model considered as the precursor of customer engagement in table 1 (Patterson et al., 2006). Studies of consumer engagement's theoretical framework have supplied information on social media marketing's beginnings and impacts. “Involvement, interaction, rapport (for current customers), commitment from existing consumers, trust, brand attachment, and brand performance judgments might all be factored in the development of customer engagement. Co-created value, brand experience, customer pleasure, trust, commitment, customer value, brand loyalty, customer equity, firm reputation, brand recognition, and financial results are all outputs of customer engagement” (van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This research examines the link between social media marketing and customer involvement, highlighting their relevance. The results may also motivate brand page admins to interact and retain followers. Marketers may utilise social media to expand their market share and engage with consumers, while customers can talk to each other and the company. The research will help marketers advertise successfully. To network with new and current customers, organisations should update information and be online.

This assessment concentrated on social media in business, neglecting education, politics, and socio-culture. Multi-area studies should be studied further. This meta-analysis research adds conceptually by examining the primary literature, but

quantitative proof from these studies is needed. As a new trend and topic, researchers must examine how this phenomenon may vary among platforms, countries, cultures (collectivism vs. individualism), and conditions (i.e. tourism, sports, government). This study explores social media marketing's fundamental elements, but not how they interact (which antecedences and which consequences). This might guide the future study. This helps develop a theoretical foundation for researching this new area's problems. In this study, primary research methods were seldom discussed. Future studies may analyse these techniques to see which ones produce more accurate and reliable results. Future research must build new tools and methodologies to study social media marketing client behaviour.

IX. REFERENCES

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