

Perceived Value and Customer Brand Engagement of Transportation Network Company Facebook Fan Page

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Abstract. In today's fast-paced and interactive business environment, engaging fans is imperative for companies to elevate their competitiveness in marketplace. Internet has ushered a new age of social media marketing where companies are formed their social networking sites (SNSs) presence to promote their businesses online. Due to the increased users in Facebook nowadays, transportation network companies (TNC) have embraced Facebook as a key marketing channel to attract new fans and engage with fans. However, there is a lack of research on fans' engagement in TNC Facebook brand page. The research aims to examine the influence of perceived value on customer brand engagement (CBE). This paper will investigate a TNC's Facebook brand page. A correlational research will be conducted and online questionnaire will be disseminated to the fans of TNC's brand page in Facebook. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) will be adopted to analyse data collected. The findings of this paper are expected to offer useful guidance for companies to formulate better strategies for enhancing fans' engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, integrating the business with social media channels for marketing purpose [1] is the mainstream for today's businesses [2]. Lately, many people are using social media as a platform to exchange and share information such as education, lifestyle, recipes, and medical treatment [3], whereas companies are using them to distribute news and information about the company's products or services to potential customers, for managing consumers' feedback [4], as well as rising brand awareness [5]. Among the social media, Facebook is generally acknowledged as the most popular social networking platform in Malaysia. Companies are inclined to adopt Facebook as the consumer reach of this channel is higher than other channels [6].

The fan page in Facebook is a platform for companies to approach their online brand community (OBC), more informally and more conversationally via promotional materials, inviting user engagement, information distribution and advertising [7]. Users are able to spread their thoughts, "like", share and comment on posts, and communicate with other fans and companies on a brand page. Through this new form of web service provided by the brand page, companies are able to manage, interact, communicate and exchange information with their brand community [8] [9], cultivate deep customer relationships and engage their consumers easily [2].

The popularity of a brand page for customer engagement has received much attention from the scholarly community. Previous studies have found that customer engagement has numerous of benefits, such as increase

customers' satisfaction and loyalty toward the brand [10], enhance company images, encourage eWOM [2], stimulate products' sales [11], and strengthens the relationship between companies and consumers [12]. Thus, some researchers [10][13][14][15][16][17][18] have attempted to comprehend the underlying reasons why consumers engage in a company brand page as it is becoming more important in today's businesses [1][19]. However, relatively little attention has been given to users' perceived value of use through Facebook [20]. According to Baird and Parasnis [13], understanding the values need by consumers in SNSs is very crucial as a first step to engage consumers in SNSs. In the present study, the Theory of Consumption Value (TCV) will be employed to predict customer brand engagement (CBE) by assessing consumers' perceived value, such as interactivity, information quality and enjoyment toward the fan page on Facebook.

In addition, as the concept of customer engagement has just emerged lately, the studies of customer engagement within online marketing and SNS have not yet received sufficient attention in academic research [14][17][21][22], as well as fan pages of specific businesses that are integrated with Facebook (Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, the aim of this research is to understand the CBE in the context of SNSs among TNCs, including identify the antecedents of CBE. The antecedent includes perceived value such as information quality, enjoyment and interactivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)

CBE is initially defined as the behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond the purchase and resulted from motivational drivers [24]. However, Mollen and Wilson [24, p. 923] defined CBE by highlighting the concept of cognitive and affective, which is "the cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value". Still, there are many studies that are measuring the CBE from the aspect of customers' behaviour [16]. Because the definition of CBE is vague and solely stressed on certain aspects in customer engagement, Brodie et al. [21] has extended the CBE definition by combining cognitive and emotional dimensions with the behavioural dimension. Thus, this extension of the definition gains supports from the following researchers. For instance, Hollebeek [25, p. 565] has illustrated the definition of CBE as "the level of customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment in specific brand interactions".

Cognition refers the way of information processed and learned by people [26]. It includes the element of judgment and awareness [27]. Consumers are able to understand and obtain knowledge when in the process of learning about the company's story, brand and product in a mediated space [15]. The customer engagement defined by Brodie et al. [21] is more complex and comprehensive and includes the psychological aspects of customers. Affective in online consumer engagement can be defined as a consumer being affectively present by emotional bonding and connecting with a company that leads to overall consumer satisfaction [15]. In a participative perspective, Gummerus et al. [28] have depicted the engagement of customers into two forms, which are community engagement behaviour (CEB) and transaction engagement behaviour (TEB). CEB includes the actions of liking content, commenting, reading messages, and posting review [29], while TEB consists of the actions like gaming and spending money [28].

Perceived Value

Perceived value is customers' overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perception of what is received and what is given [30]. As customer activities are increasing virtually, and the website is the interface for users to interact with companies, the attributes of the website are essential to determine the image perceived by consumers [31]. Previous literature has addressed that customer value can indicate the attitude and behaviour of customers [32][33]) as multiple consumption value can influence consumers' choice [34]. Thus, understanding the value needed by consumers on a website is critical for companies to effectively use SNSs [13]. Companies have to improve their fan page in terms of functional value, social value, and emotional value which can drive the consumers to engage with the brand page [15][28][32][33].

Due to the proliferation of the Internet nowadays, social media has been increasingly recognised as a main information source [35][36]. Undeniably, people are receiving abundant information about products and services not only from a single source but from a wide range of sources [35]), including user-generated content such as the opinions and experiences shared by users on social media [35][37]. Information is the core of the website [38][39].

Thus, the quality of information is the key role for a consumer to assess a company's website and important in motivating and attracting people to visit websites [40] as well as attracting users to become a fan on the companies' brand page [41].

Information quality defined as "consumer's perception of product and company information based on a set of judgment criteria that cover accuracy, relevance, helpfulness, up-to-datedness and unbiased measures" [42, p. 918]. Poor information quality like insufficient information will precipitate consumers to hinder the site [42][43], as well as provoke users' dissatisfaction [40]. Thus, in order to avoid customer dissatisfaction, the informative quality of a website as one of the vital dimensions in the hygiene factor should be pinpointed by companies.

Another reason for users to visit social media is finding entertainment [44]. Consumers' value perceptions are not solely motivated by utilitarian value in social media but hedonic benefits as products and services are always attached with emotional responses [34]. Wang (2013) highlighted that users are more likely to share interesting things or experiences with friends instead of sharing information of high utilitarian value. Users feel more comfortable if social media is able to provide interested things and experiences to them [45], such as comics, videos, games, jokes or even comments [44]. These could cause social media websites to spread more rapidly and extensively on the Internet [45].

Davis et al. [46] defined perceived enjoyment as the extent to which using a system is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, and it moves customers beyond the fundamental to hedonic [42]. Likewise, some scholars also have defined enjoyment as "the pleasure of individual feels objectively when committing a particular behaviour or carrying out a particular activity" [47]. Zhang and von Dran [48] have found that enjoyment on a website is considered fun, interesting, exciting and entertaining. Previous researchers have discovered that perceived enjoyment would affect people to use SNSs [49][50], purchase online products [33], and continuing participation on SNSs [45]. To improve users' enjoyment on SNSs, firms have to increase website social presence by using emotive text, human pictures, personalized greetings and human audio video [49][50].

With the radical growth of SNSs in past decade, social media gradually changing the way of society and individuals to consume and contribute to the creation of online information, as well as expressing their thoughts, opinions, and creations [52][52]. This kind of new communication technology has increased the possibilities for the manner of people to send and receive information [36]. As firms and users are allowed to post their own content and comment on social media, the marketer-generated content and consumer-generated content exist in the same medium [53]. Thus, as the interactive nature of SNSs enable firms and consumers to communicate on each other, many firms have been attracted by SNSs and employ it as a marketing tool in their businesses [17][54].

On Facebook, the brand page acts as a medium for companies to distribute valuable content for their audiences [29]. All the contents or posts are presented in the form of text, videos, pictures or vote, and the content spread by firms are visible for their audiences [2]. As these contents are social objects, which are the connectors to bridge up firms and consumers based on their interests and topics, this content is able to trigger the interaction and discussion between firms and consumers on the brand page [54]. In addition, the social aspects of Facebook allow users to share information, request help from others and help each other to solve product-related problems [55]. Thus, it is worthy for firms to pay attention to their consumers' opinion and responses. Firms can interact and communicate with their consumers, encouraging consumers to participate, share stories, and integrate as a part of community [35].

With the growing popularity of SNSs such as Facebook, it has raised important interests about the perceived value implications of such usage [56]. Previous studies have argued the importance of perceived value on CBE, particularly, the influences of information quality, enjoyment and interactivity on CBE. Wang [45] has found that information quality, entertainment and relationship quality can motivate consumers to engage with a brand page. In addition, Muk and Chung [41] claimed that informational content and an enjoyable experience could enhance users' attitude toward brand pages. Similarly, Jahn and Kunz [57] and Sabate et al. [54] concluded that informative content can lead to the greatest level of engagement, whereas Lin and Lu [51] suggested that social interaction plays an important role in users' continued use of brand page.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

As shown in Figure 1, the research framework of the study includes the relationship between perceived value and CBE. The perceived value includes information quality, enjoyment and interactivity. CBE incorporates cognitive, affective and participative.

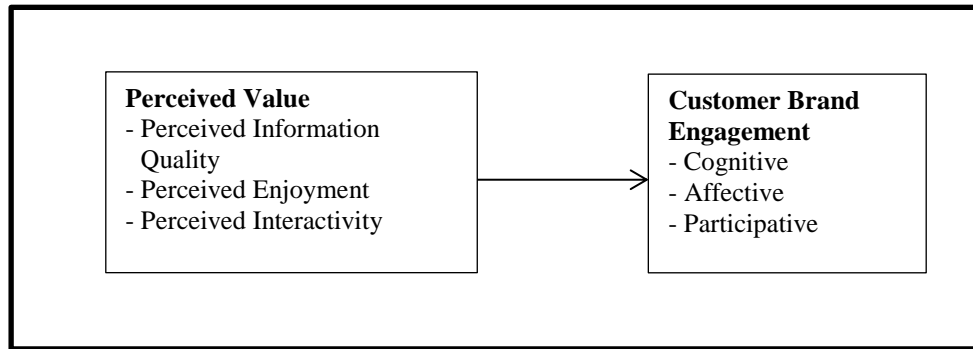


FIGURE 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a non-experimental research using correlational research in which examined the relationships between perceived value and CBE [58]. Quantitative research method will be adopted in this research. Online questionnaire will be distributed to the fans on the TNC Facebook fan page. The target population of this study comprises of all Facebook users who “like” the TNC fan page, namely, the fans. Fans are chosen for this study because fans are easily to interact with companies and access content posted by companies in their personal site [54][59]. The sampling method used in this research is snowball and convenience sampling method. The analysis techniques performed consist of reliability test and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

CONCLUSION

This study offers valuable insights to practitioner of TNC that adopt SNSs. For practitioner, the findings can assist them to understand the determinants of fans’ engagement after fans engaged in the Facebook brand page. As illustrated in present study, fans’ engagement in brand page depends primarily on information quality, enjoyment and interactivity. Thus, these findings may provide a guideline for practitioners in implementing the improvement in their brand page in order to stimulate and sustain fans’ engagement in the brand page.

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