

The Influence of Customer's Sharing Behavior in Social Commerce

Emergent Research Forum (ERF) Papers

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Abstract

All transaction behaviors between enterprises and customers directly take place on social media. Using social media for people to interact with their friends and family become a routine in the daily life. This study aims to figure out the critical factors and relations of brand community and social commerce. Meanwhile, this study is to investigate the influence on consumers' engagement by considering the building of a brand community for social commerce. This study reviews many key literatures of social commerce and brand community. This study employs a survey base strategy to figure out the proposed research questions.

Keywords

Social commerce, brand, customer relationships, helping.

Introduction

With the development of information technology and the spread of Internet, enterprises gradually invest lots of resources in running their e-commerce businesses (Wang and Zhang, 2012). Compared with a traditional retail business, an e-commerce business reduces costs, time and searching efforts of consumers who would like to purchase specific products within the virtual space. Meanwhile, enterprises also can collect and analyze customer needs in real time to provide attractive products in order to maintain customer relationships and business sustainability through the platform of e-commerce.

Consequently, enterprises attempt to employ social media and social network tools to implement e-commerce businesses. By using the advantages of social media, enterprises have lots of opportunities to increase the success of e-commerce businesses. Social-commerce is gradually emerged on account of practical circumstances and the necessity of business operation. The definition of social commerce is that social commerce is the business area new of the e-commerce using social networks. Social commerce is regarded as an important combination of social computing technologies and the rising social networking effect in an online situation that have deep impact in shaping commercial channels on and off the Internet. (Hajli, 2015).

Social commerce is a new category of e-commerce businesses. All transaction behaviors (for instance, selling, marketing, searching or purchasing goods and services) between enterprises and customers directly take place on social media. Using social media for people to interact with their friends and family become a routine in the daily life. Hence, people have spent much time on social media to manage their virtual identities. Enterprises comprehend that social media has been an important customer service channel. Social media can drastically affect more customers' purchasing decisions than retails' static websites (Liang et al., 2011). Enterprises begin to apply social media to e-commerce businesses in order to retain customers and continue to increase their profits. Social commerce nowadays becomes an important on-line business.

Accordingly, according to the proposed research background and motivation, this study aims to explore the following research question: How do enterprises adopt brand co-creating strategies within the ecosystem of social commerce to figure out the effects of information sharing? In order to deal with the proposed research questions, the research purposes of this study is addressed as follows: This study is to investigate the influence on consumers' engagement by considering the building of a brand community for social commerce.

Literature review

Social commerce

The term of social commerce was coined in 2005 and there have been a lot of studies focusing and dealing with essential issue within it. Social commerce generally is considered that the transaction activities and purchasing behaviors of e-commerce business take place via the social media. That is, social commerce also is a subset of e-commerce that involves using social media to implement business transactions and activities (Liang and Turban, 2011). According to Yadav et al. (2013), social commerce refers to exchange-related activities that occur in an individual's social network, where the activities correspond to the need recognition, pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages of a focal exchange.

Social commerce can be regarded as a new type of commerce via social media including the business activities in online and offline environments. Social commerce refers to a sort of social media that enterprises and consumers can actively participate in on-line marketplace and communities to promote and sell products and services (Hajli, 2015). According to Kim (2013), social commerce is an emerging category of e-commerce through social media (e.g., social network services). Social commerce is a new stream of e-commerce based on more individual, communicating and social interactions in social media and social network.

As mentioned earlier, social commerce is an emerging research topic which includes the research issues between e-commerce and social media. After reviewing pioneer literatures, the valuable contributions and merits have been delineated and applied in practice. Meanwhile, many studies addressed the potential research directions and research gaps for social commerce research. Hence, to our knowledge, how to keep consumers to continuously participate in activities of social commerce should be an important issue. For enterprises, how to create an appropriate environment of social commerce and adopt suitable strategies for consumer retention should be needed to investigate.

Brand community

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) defined a brand community as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand." That is, a brand community can be regarded as a group of brand loyalists who congregated together but strictly unrestricted in reality. McAlexander et al. (2002) noted that a brand community is composed of four relations including the relationships between customers and products, the brand, the enterprise, and other customers and products. Hence, customers can share their interests of products and experiences to strongly increase the connection in the brand community.

A brand community also provides a platform to customers to generate consumer feelings of empowerment. According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), brand communities are the important platform for service providers and customers in virtual world to share information, retain and create the culture of a brand, and enhance brand loyalty. Besides, brand communities are composed of three traditional principles of community including shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Consumers can understand different sense from others and acquire the histories, cultures and customs of the brand community.

According to the notion of brand community and the theory of brand resonance, enterprises can employ brand communities as a strategic goal to increase customers for their market segment (Hur et al., 2011). Enterprises also implement operational tactics to enable customers to achieve the high level of brand resonance. To our knowledge, there is less research investigating the issues of social commerce by applying the notion of brand community and the theory of brand resonance. As mentioned earlier, the motivation for customers who have high intention to purchase and maintain long-term relationships with others in social commerce should be important. Two critical theories can be solid foundations for researchers to deal with the proposed issue.

Research model and hypothesis

According to Brakus et al. (2009), customers' past experiences would directly influence their attitude for the company or products. Besides, customers are willing to purchase product because their affect causes higher brand attitude. Singh et al. (2012) addressed that engaging in behavior that enables people to have a positive impact on affective state. Hence, we built H1. Brand affect has a positive relationship with brand attitude.

Previous research described that brand attitudes are strongly associated with their purchase intentions (He et al., 2016). Jung et al. (2014) mentioned that customers' behaviors could be affected by their attitude. Therefore, H2 was built. H2. Brand attitude has a positive relationship with share behavior. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) stated that brand affect could have a direct effect on brand performance and customers' behaviors. Brand affect has long relation with customers' actions. H3 was built. H3. Brand affect has a positive relationship with share behavior. Brand fans are easy to visit the store and generate positive word-of-mouth (Ho and Wang, 2015). Zhang et al. (2016) noted that the high quality of the relation between customers and companies leads to customer purchase behaviors. Hence, this study built H4. H4. Customer relationships have a positive relationship with share behavior. Besides, customers with a favorable experience are likely to represent concern by helping other customers to make the correct purchase decision (Fu et al., 2015). Liu et al. (2016) proposed that customers like to share their experience and information because they do enjoy doing it. Accordingly, H5. Enjoyment of helping has a positive relationship with share behavior.

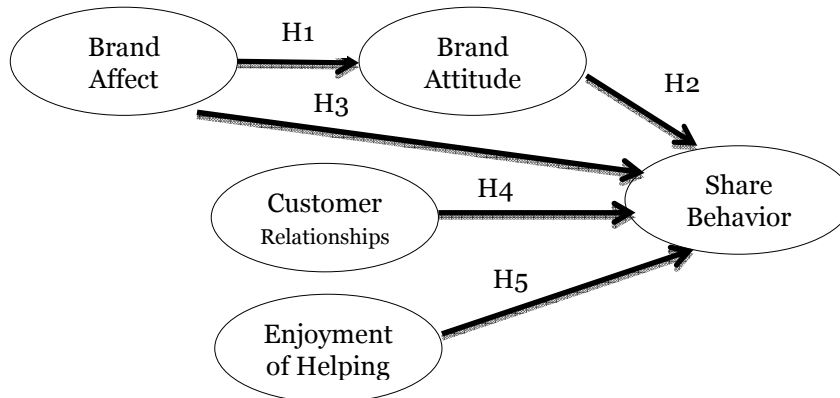


Figure 1. Research model

Result analysis

In order to obtain empirical evidence, this study conducted questionnaire survey. Data was collected from members of several social communities with a widely known brand in Taiwan and 134 responses were collected. To investigate the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was computed. The reliability scores for brand affect, brand attitude, customer relationships, enjoyment of helping and share behaviors as well as the overall instrument were 0.87, 0.76, 0.90, 0.88 and 0.81, respectively. The values of AVE are also appropriate are 0.73, 0.59, 0.73, 0.74 and 0.64 respectively. This suggested a high internal consistency among the items in each dimension and the overall questionnaire (as shown in Table 1). Table 2 shows that the values of latent variable correlations. The results present the validity scores for brand affect, brand attitude, customer relationships, enjoyment of helping and share behaviors were sufficiently proper for respondents.

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbachs Alpha
Brand affect	0.733576	0.916688		0.878891
Brand attitude	0.594112	0.852331	0.271205	0.768672
Customer relationships	0.734373	0.932304		0.908847
Enjoyment of helping	0.748326	0.922252		0.887126
Share behavior	0.641510	0.876367	0.715135	0.814516

Table 1. Construct measurements

	Brand affect	Brand attitude	Customer relationships	Enjoyment of helping	Share behavior
Brand affect	1.000000				
Brand attitude	0.520774	1.000000			
Customer relationships	0.441950	0.679754	1.000000		
Enjoyment of helping	0.306853	0.465342	0.805814	1.000000	
Share behavior	0.404469	0.493858	0.787880	0.807720	1.000000

Table 2. Latent variable correlations

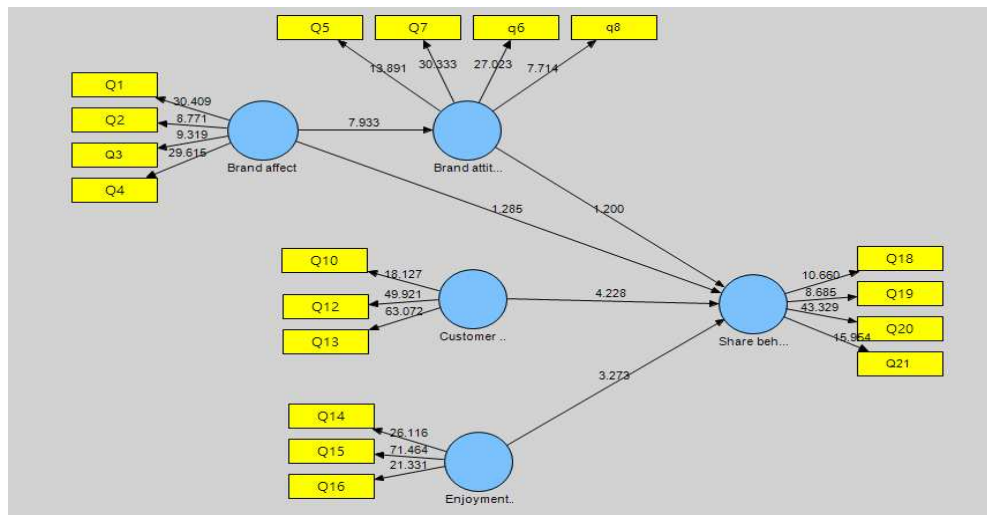


Figure 2. Structural model and findings

The research model was tested with the structural equation modelling (SEM) method. The results of PLS analysis are as shown in Figure 2. H1 (t value=7.933), H4 (t value=4.228) and H5 (t value=3.273) are supported. The results means that brand affect has a positive influence with brand attitude. Customers' experiences directly influence their attitude of the products and companies. However, H2 (t value=1.2) and H3 (t value=1.285) are not significantly supported. The possible explanations for H2 and H3 are as follows. Even though customers are familiar with the brand, the motivation to share their experiences and information are insufficient. Customers do not strongly identify with the brand or companies so that they do not have the sharing behaviors finally.

Conclusion

Using social media for people to interact with their friends and family become a routine in the daily life. Enterprises begin to apply social media to e-commerce businesses in order to retain customers and continue to increase their profits. Social commerce nowadays becomes an important on-line business. This study aims to figure out the critical factors and relations of brand community and social commerce. Meanwhile, this study is to investigate the influence on consumers' engagement by considering the building of a brand community for social commerce. This study reviews many key literatures of social commerce and brand community. This study employs a survey base strategy to figure out the proposed research questions.

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