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MENGMENG SONG

Hainan University, Haikou, smmlgl@msn.com

Xianfeng Zhang

Hainan Normal University, Haikou, 35203286@qq.com

Qinyu Liao

The Texas University of Rio Grande Valley, US, qinyu.liao@utrgv.edu

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Recommended Citation

SONG, MENGMENG; Zhang, Xianfeng; and Liao, Qinyu, "Factors Motivating the Customers' SNS Brand Page Behavior: Comparison between China and Korea" (2016). *ICEB 2016 Proceedings*. 27.
<https://aisel.aisnet.org/iceb2016/27>

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Factors Motivating the Customers' SNS Brand Page Behavior: Comparison between China and Korea

Mengmeng Song, Hainan University, Haikou, smmlgl@msn.com

Xianfeng Zhang, Hainan Normal University, Haikou, 35203286@qq.com

Qinyu Liao, The Texas University of Rio Grande Valley, US, qinyu.liao@utrgv.edu

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The wide spread and usage of SNS brand pages in companies has renovated the brand strategy in the new era. Embedded in an organically grown network of social ties, SNS brand pages show great differences from the ordinary online brand community. Called upon by the new research opportunities, this paper investigates the motivating factors (functional benefits, hedonic benefits, economic benefits and intrinsic benefits) influencing customers' SNS brand page behavior (participation/commitment) in the cultural context of China and Korea, so as to provide meaningful implications to the companies' effective use of SNS brand pages, and help global companies in their development of brand strategies for the two countries.

Design/methodology/approach – In all, 407 Chinese and 384 Korean SNS brand page users were surveyed to conduct the above research agenda by structural equation modeling.

Findings – prior motivating factor constructs are valid in influencing the consumers' participation in and commitment to SNS brand pages in both countries, yet with dissimilarities in the significance and strength. Information seeking is not significantly correlated with the SNS brand page behavior in China, and convenience is found not correlate in Korea. Brand reputation in China and reward in Korea are the most influential factors of participation behavior. Interaction plays an important role in affecting commitment behavior in both countries. Participation has a positive impact on purchase intention in two countries, but only Chinese samples' commitment has a positive impact on purchase intention.

Keywords: SNS brand page, brand community, information seeking, reward, participation, commitment, purchase intention

INTRODUCTION

Social Network Site (SNS) has become increasingly popular around the world these years, and has changed the way individuals communicating with the companies and peer consumers. The relative brand information consumers gained from diverse sources will dynamically influence the consumers' consumption experience and even purchase behavior [41]. The appearance of SNS brand pages further develops to represent an emerging form of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) that provides constant connectivity among users worldwide. The wide spread and usage of SNS brand pages in companies has renovated the brand strategy in the new era. Companies can easily deliver varied contents regarding the brands, and timely communicate with the potential or existing customers [10].

Being a profile in a social network website and a mixed information warehouse co-established by different entities [28], SNS brand pages (also known as fan pages) form specific online brand communities. The SNS brand pages can help to direct messages and posts to subscribing users, lead to varied discussion topics related to the brand, and contribute to tight social networks among the subscribed users. Once the member consumers perceive the benefits they received as worthwhile, they are likely to become more active participants [46]. The consumers with commitment to the business [43] or those psychologically attached to the brand during the participation [41] will even generate their long-term commitment to the SNS brand pages.

However, the SNS brand page is more like an organically grown network of social ties, instead of an online brand communities based on pure brand-likeness [10,31]. Great differences still exist regarding the fundamental running functions between brand pages and online brand community.

Abundant literature have expanded the research of online brand community in exploring the participation or commitment behavior, discussing the antecedents [20,30,40]; investigating its behavioral consequences [9,22,72], and even discovering the potential cultural differences [1,71]. However, a lack of systematic work in examining the consumers' benefits and costs through the use of SNS brand pages has been pointed out [68], and new research opportunities are also called upon. Since the SNS brand page featured by the convenient mass communication and vast social connectivity will apparently differ from the ordinary online brand community, and accordingly lead to different influential roles of the recognized motivating factors.

It is therefore meaningful to explore the motivators-participation/commitment-intention relationship in the context of SNS brand pages. This paper will investigate the motivating factors influencing customers' SNS brand page behavior in the cultural context of China and Korea, so as to provide meaningful implications to the companies' effective use

of SNS brand pages, and help global companies in their development of brand strategies for the two countries. Extensive literature review is conducted in the second section. The research model and corresponding research hypotheses are accordingly proposed in section three, and followed by the research methodology in section four. The research results are discussed in section five. Theoretical and practical implications are depicted in section six. A brief conclusion and the limitations are described in the final section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the invention and dissemination of the Internet, people from all over world are able to form communities based on common interests, and are no longer restricted by geographically limits. Brand community, being “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” [48], is formed on basis of the attachment to a product or brand. The common interests, socio-economic similarities or similar viewpoints can be the essential foundation of brand community. The members who join the community normally have strong attachment or commitment to the brand, willing to share a system of values, and bearing a sense of moral responsibility.

However, the SNS brand page, being a specific form of online community, still show some differences from the ordinary online brand community in the fundamental running functions. A brand page, also known as SNS brand page, is a profile on a social networking website that is potentially manageable by more than one registered user to represent a non-personal online identity. Organizations or brands owners make use of the SNS brand pages to direct messages and posts to subscribing users, promote a brand, and arouse the consumers’ awareness. It has been formed as a mixed information warehouse co-established by the business and its customers [28]. However, the registered fans may not “like” a SNS brand page because they want to be the real part of the community. Receiving discounts or freebies as the rewards of being followers, or truly attracted by the offline connections to be SNS “friends” also do not guarantee they are real loyal fans. It is because the SNS brand pages are embedded in an organically grown network of social ties, instead of pure brand-likeness value of the online brand communities [10, 31].

According to Uses and Gratifications Theory [58], consumers actively seek out to use new media such as SNS brand pages to satisfy their specific needs. In order to receive the perceived benefits, the consumers will actively participate or even commit to the SNS brand pages, so as to enhance knowledge, self-relax, construct social interactions, or even escape from the reality [44].

Participation in the SNS brand pages mainly refers to the consumers’ engaging activities like creating messages, disseminating information, and providing emotional support to others [9]. However, the definition of commitment is attitudinally rather than behaviorally based [42]. Commitment in the SNS brand pages mainly reflects the strong and positive psychological attachment of consumers to a specific brand [7]. This attachment may be originated from the prior internal emotional involvement towards the brands [76] or generated after active participation in maintaining the long-term relationship with the brands [11]. From this perspective, the participation and commitment behavior differ emotionally, so do the potential needs that the consumers pursue.

The potential benefits consumers pursue from the SNS brand pages can also be deemed as the motivating factors. Motivation is the force that initiates, directs, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors [26], and the participation or commitment behavior is investigated as an action driven by benefits (e.g., [10, 37]). Previous studies mainly focused on the benefits of online communities from the business perspective [4, 8, 9, 24, 42, 47, 63] though they separately explored the benefits-participation/commitment relationship. It is found that active participators are highly motivated by functional benefits (i.e. self-enhancement, problem solving support) and economic benefits (i.e. rewards), to participate in an online community [9]. The perceived benefit-commitment link is also tested to be positive by increasing the intrinsic benefits such as self-esteem or social benefits, and hedonic benefits like entertainment seeking [4, 8]), and functional benefits like learning benefits [24].

The different country context also play an important role in motivating people for using SNS [30, 62, 35, 71]. Different countries have varying inherent values, symbols, and even cultures, the behavior of social network users and their purchase intention may also vary. For instance, information-sharing behavior when using social network sites is different between Chinese and Americans [52]. Kim et al. even found that for brand-loyal Chinese consumers, experiential image is the most important motivator for purchasing the branded apparel, while social image with performance quality assurance play vital influences to Korean consumers [35]. As In the new context of SNS brand pages, there should be great differences on the motivating factors that can affect the participation and commitment behavior of customers from diverse countries.

THE RESEARCH MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESE

Participation, Commitment and Purchase Intention

Active participators of a SNS brand page typically show high levels of interest in the brand and in its products and services,

and continuously update their knowledge through inquiring with the business and communicating with other members. These frequent interactions with the brand can enhance the consumers' brand knowledge and positive attitudes [47], strengthen the consumer-brand bond. Generally speaking, consumers are likely to express their confidence and belief in the brand if they have continually received positive information and interaction from a community [13]. This kind of feeling can help to further reinforce the consumers' psychological attachment to the brand [41], generate consumer trust and loyalty towards the brands [19], and consequently even lead to their commitment to it [2, 23, 53]. Once the consumers develop to be committed followers of the SNS brand page, their commitment efforts then tend to generate enduring attitudes toward a brand, to maintain the relationship with the brand, and to avoid considering alternative offerings from other brands, by means of loyally following and deeply involving [21, 11].

However, the consumers' commitment behavior may also originate from the internal emotional attachment. According to social engagement theory [65], consumers tend to participate in the activities of their recognized social groups. Through committing to the unique SNS brand pages that the offline friends follow, the consumer can continue to interact with their friends of similar backgrounds or interests, and deliver social exchange activities by posting or receiving brand related messages. In this regard, commitment in the brand pages will conversely lead to the active participation, since the SNS brand page has been an extensive usage of the existing social ties.

Hence, the consumers' participation and commitment behavior in SNS brand pages interactively play an important role in building consumer-brand relationships, and also acts as an indispensable precondition to influence consumers' attitude and consequent behaviors [34, 19]. Consumer participation in the SNS brand community is found to significantly affect the online purchase behavior [3, 66]. Commitment to an online brand community is also found to be a primary factor contributing to consumers' continuous usage [39] and brand attachment like trust and loyalty [77]. Brand purchase intention, being the likelihood that a customer will buy a particular brand product/service [14] can further predict the actual buying behavior [19]. Therefore, the consumers' SNS brand page participation or commitment behavior will lead to favorable purchase intention. Here the hypothesis is proposed.

H1. Participation in the SNS brand page will have a significant positive co-relationship with the purchase intention.

H2. Commitment in the SNS brand page will have a significant positive co-relationship with the purchase intention.

Motivating factors of SNS brand page Behavior

As the Uses and Gratifications Theory indicated, consumers seek to use new media to satisfy their needs [58]. Once the perceived benefits are retrieved, the consumers will be motivated to engage in the related new media usage behavior. In the previous research [4, 8, 9, 24], the motivating factors of the consumers' online community behavior can be concluded into functional benefits, hedonic benefits, economic benefits and intrinsic benefits. The four categories of benefits can well define the factors that motivate the consumers to participate, commit, or even being loyal to the online communities. The consumer benefits that encourage active participation, commitment, and loyalty to the community are also found to be consistent [33]. In the study of Casalo et al. (2007) [12], functional benefits and economic benefits are tested to highly motivate the consumers' active participation in an online community. The functional benefits are reinforced in discussing the consumers' online community commitment behavior [24]. The important role of the intrinsic benefits and hedonic benefits also is investigated in other studies [4, 8, 56] specifically explored the motivators of loyalty to Facebook brand pages, and concluded that functional, hedonic and intrinsic benefits play important roles. Therefore, six motivating factors are proposed in this paper.

Functional benefits as the motivating factor

Functional benefits mainly refer to the concrete outcomes that the consumers can receive in using the social media. It normally connects with the information quality or system quality that the new tools can afford in consumers, such as information seeking or convenience seeking benefits.

Information seeking is the most frequently used functionality by the social media users, and the functional benefits consumers perceived from information seeking are found to significantly affect the consequent behavior [20, 51]. The motivation of information seeking encourages consumers to actively and positively take part in online brand community activities [40]. When the community participators are accustomed to seek valuable information, and if the community can always provide them with useful information, the consumers' will even exhibit stronger commitment to the community [38]. Convenience seeking is another important functionality referring the anytime-anywhere benefits consumer's perceived with less effort. The convenience function derives from the ease of usage in either computer-based websites or applications on small devices. Convenience seeking has been identified as one key gratification in using the new media of online community [49]).

When the SNS brand page member consumers immerse themselves into the "information warehouse", they can find timely answers for their inquiries, and also spread useful information among fans without time or distance limitations. Besides,

information dissemination via brand pages is easy and convenient, and the convenience can also further facilitate the smooth interactions among member fans [36,70]. Therefore, the gratification of two functionalities is expected to exert a significant and positive effect on users' attitude towards this service and their subsequent behavior. The following hypotheses are accordingly proposed.

H3-1. Information seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H3-2. Convenience seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H4-1. Information seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

H4-2. Convenience seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

Hedonic benefits as the motivating factor

Hedonic benefits (i.e. fun or entertainment seeking) refer to the various pleasure that members feel in the online brand SNS community [16,48,59], and the utility of feelings or affective states, like pleasure, fun, and enjoyment [72]. The intent to seek entertainment motivates the consumers to spend more of their leisure time on the related activities. Community members engaging in diverse activities (e.g. games, contests, polls) will arouse or elicit the positive emotions and passions [3] that can further motivate them to use the media.

Specifically, SNS brand pages facilitated by the new media can provide individuals with opportunities to gather and explore new things that they seldom experience offline. For instance, users can be entertained through Facebook in various ways like surfing on a friend's page, or learning what their friends are doing by reading through newsfeed on Facebook, and etc [61]. The entertained users are more likely to have a higher satisfaction level of use, which will further motivate them to participate or commit to the SNS brand pages [54]. Therefore the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3-3. Entertainment Seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H4-3. Entertainment Seeking will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

Economic benefits as the motivating factor

Economic benefits (e.g. incentive seeking or rewards) are the general word describing the bonus or compensation that the consumers received through engaging in the online community. Gift certificates offered [25] or special promotions and coupons used [67] in online communities will inevitably strengthen the consumer-brand relationship. The consumers' incentive seeking behavior has been found to be one major reason for customers' loyal attitudes and continued participation in SNS brand communities [64]. According to Gummerus et al. [22], the more favorable the economic benefit is, the greater customers' satisfaction and loyalty will be, and the more likelihood that the consumers will continue engaging with it. The general word of reward is normally adopted to describe the incentives consumers perceived through a variety of compensation activities in the social network sites [45]. Therefore the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3-4. Reward will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H4-4. Reward will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

Intrinsic benefits as the motivating factor

Intrinsic benefits depict the internal psychological outcomes like self-esteem benefits and social benefits that one can perceive in using the new media. Fan-page membership can be used by the individual to show a peer group his social presence, and brand page membership turn to be the signal of a person's self-identity. If the users obtain rapid responses or replies, and can closely connect with others, the feeling of being recognized and paid attention to will lead to the sense of self-concept and self-esteem [75]. They can even share interesting encounters and joy with others, which will rapidly spread to all users of the community [48]. Therefore community interactivity is essential to trigger the consumers' intrinsic benefits, and satisfactory interactions with other community members can consequently encourage the consumers' community behavior [3]. Members of SNS brand pages are offered opportunities to continuously update their knowledge, and eventually leading to active participation or commitment [5]. In the study of Ruiz-Mafe et al (2014), the role of user interactivity of the Facebook brand page is confirmed to be essential in improving user attitude and loyalty [56].

Besides, the well-running interactivity can even enhance the member consumers' perceived functional and hedonic benefits.

Hence, the successful interaction can positively impact consumers' attitudes towards the brand, solidifies their bond with the products, and thus leads to their commitment [2, 53]. Thus the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3-5. Interaction will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H4-5. Interaction will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

Brand Reputation as the motivating factor

The SNS brand community offers consumers new way of knowing the brand, understanding the products, contacting the company, and communicating with the peer customers. However, the lack of the prior brand knowledge or the poor brand image may deter the consumers' interests to participate in the community. Since people make important buying decisions partly based on their level of trust in the product, salesperson, and the company image [27].

Therefore, Consumers tend to search for a reliable and responsible brand as this would help them largely avoid the innate risks of products and services [15]. If they observe a brand and its products or services as trustworthy, they try to actively and positively develop a sense of commitment and affection to the brand [7]. Hence the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3-6. Brand Reputation will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages participation behavior.

H4-6. Brand Reputation will have a significant positive relationship with the consumers' SNS brand pages commitment behavior.

In the study of Sung et al. (2010), six detailed motivators (i.e. interpersonal utility, convenience seeking, brand likeability, entertainment seeking, information seeking and incentive seeking) are declared to affect the consumer's community participation behavior [64]. In their research, brand likeability is specifically forwarded to represent the consumer's level of trust and preference in the brand.

Different Country Context as the influencing factor

It is commonly agreed that culture influences marketing efforts and consumer responses [68]. Evidences show that when making purchase decisions, Korean consumers are more likely to focus on physical appearances and to express concerns about personal achievements, as compared with Chinese consumers [74]. It is also found that brand-loyal Chinese consumers show more concerns to experiential image when purchasing the branded apparel, whereas Korean consumers will rather consider the social image with performance quality assurance [35]. In the research of Fan et al (2013) [18] who studied the website quality factors affecting flow and satisfaction between Korea and China, great differences are also resulted in the varied dimensions between the countries. Generally, the different country context play important role in motivating people for using SNS [30, 35, 62, 71]. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H5. The motivators-participation/commitment-intention relationships of SNS brand pages show differences between Chinese and Korean consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measurement Instruments

In order to well measure the latent variables, multi-item scales are adopted on the basis of previous studies (Table I). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each item. The questionnaire was composed of three parts. Except the demographic profile session, a control session is also set to filter out the qualified respondents who have used SNS brand pages before and attain basic experiences. A separate part measuring the nine latent variables is followed at the end.

Table 1: Dimensions and measurement items

Dimensions	Items	References
Information seeking	The information of the SNS brand page is valuable for me The information of the SNS brand page is up-to-date for me The information of the SNS brand page is exact for me I think this SNS brand page is a valuable information resource	Ducoffe(1996); Yang et al.(2004)
Convenience	I can get any information very easy from this SNS brand page I can use this SNS brand page without any limited by time and place The SNS brand page is very convenient to use	Rohm&Swaminathan(2004); Mckinney(2004); To et al.(2007)
Entertainment seeking	The content of the SNS brand page is fun The content of the SNS brand page is pleasant The content of the SNS brand page is entertaining	Moon & Kim,(2001)
Interaction	I can get answers from the brand on this SNS brand page	Nambisan and Baron, 2009

	I can interact with others on this SNS brand page I can communicate with others on this SNS brand page I can give feedback to others on this SNS brand page	
Brand reputation	In my opinion this brand is respected from Society In my opinion this brand is positive I think favorably about this brand	Coulter, 1998; Day and Stafford, 1997; Stafford, 1996; Escalas and Stern, 2003
Reward	I can get bonuses following this SNS brand page I can get reward following this SNS brand page I can get more points following this brand page	Sung et al.(2010); Mengze SHI & Andrea(2014)
Participation	I frequently provide useful information to other members In general I do my best to participate in activities offered on the brand's SNS brand page I post messages and responses on the SNS brand page with great enthusiasm and frequency	Goodwin(1988); Kelley et al.(1990); Bowen(1990); Cermak et al.(1994)
Commitment	I feel I am part of a community around this SNS brand page I feel the good relationship with others in this SNS brand page I think is important for me to community with others in this SNS brand page I am an active supporter of this SNS brand page	Moorman et al.(1992)
Purchase intention	I intend to remain loyal to this brand in the future I will not stop buying this brand I will have the intention of continuing to buy this brand	Zeithaml et al.(1996)

Data collection

Data was collected from the members of different SNS brand pages (e.g. Coca Cola, BMW, Starbucks, and so on), and the demographic details of the sample profile are provided in Table II. A total of 384 Korean consumers and 407 Chinese consumers ranging from 20~40 years old respond to the survey. All participants were frequent fan-page users. More than 50 percent respondents use their SNS brand pages at least once a week, and 62.2 percent Korean respondent even use their SNS brand pages over one time a day. The research model is analyzed adopting the software of SPSS 20.0 and AMOS21.0.

Table 2: Demographic profiles of the respondents

Characteristics	China		Korea	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Male	180	44.2	183	47.7
Female	227	55.8	201	52.3
Age				
<20 years old	38	9.3	20	5.20
20~40 years old	359	88.2	333	86.7
>40 years old	10	2.5	16	4.20
frequency of use SNS brand				
<1 time(1day)	83	20.4	70	18.2
>1 time(1week)	201	49.3	225	58.6
>1 time(1month)	60	14.7	83	21.6

Common method bias test

As the data for independent and dependent variables are all self-reported and collected from a single source. Several procedural and statistical remedies suggested by Podsakoff et al.(2003) [51] are adopted to minimize the potential common

method bias (CMB) problem[50].

First, participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses in the survey so as to minimize problems of social desirability. Second, measurement items of the same construct are put in different place to reduce the participants' perception of any direct connection between these constructs. Finally, Harman's one-factor test is used to statistically test the severity of CMB. Principal factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to assess whether a single method factor explained a majority of the variance. The results revealed more than one factor with an eigenvalue above 1, with the first factor accounted for 37.83% of the total variance. Therefore, CMB is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study.

Reliability and validity test

A CFA with maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS21.0 was conducted for assessing the measurement model's construct reliability and validity. The reliability of the individual items in the questionnaire was tested by checking the internal consistency which was measured by reliability coefficients called Cronbach's alpha. As in Table III, Cronbach's alpha values for all the constructs are greater than 0.7. In addition, all of the composite reliabilities (CR) are also found to be 0.8.

Table 3: Factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, averaged variances expected and composite reliabilities

Constructs	Items	Factor loading		Cronbach's Alpha		AVE		CR	
		China	Korea	China	Korea	China	Korea	China	Korea
1. Information seeking	Items1	.833	.739	0.898	0.792	.70	.50	.90	.80
	Items2	.803	.555						
	Items3	.843	.773						
	Items4	.843	.724						
2. Convenience	Items1	.874	.822	0.839	0.741	.65	.51	.96	.93
	Items2	.808	.701						
	Items3	.730	.596						
3. Entertainment seeking	Items1	.847	.741	0.900	0.808	.75	.59	.90	.81
	Items2	.885	.794						
	Items3	.868	.757						
4. Interaction	Items1	.840	.567	0.901	0.800	.70	.49	.90	.80
	Items2	.860	.569						
	Items3	.826	.809						
	Items4	.805	.824						
5. Brand reputation	Items1	.842	.710	0.882	0.807	.71	.59	.88	.81
	Items2	.848	.875						
	Items3	.827	.705						
6. Reward	Items1	.844	.857	0.894	0.793	.74	.58	.90	.80
	Items2	.880	.776						
	Items3	.855	.618						
7. participation	Items1	.824	.677	0.871	0.747	.70	.52	.87	.76
	Items2	.807	.659						
	Items3	.864	.791						
8. commitment	Items1	.811	.778	0.879	0.845	0.88	.65	.88	.88
	Items2	.715	.676						
	Items3	.837	.817						
	Items4	.812	.771						
9. Purchase intention	Items1	.845	.812	0.905	0.895	.76	.74	.91	.90
	Items2	.875	.872						
	Items3	.896	.897						

Construct validity consists of convergent validity and discriminant validity. In general, convergent validity can be claimed when t-values are 2.0 or above, standardized factor loadings are 0.5 or above, or averaged variances expected (AVEs) are 0.5 or above [6]. Discriminant validity is confirmed when all the AVEs exceed the minimum level of 0.5[17, 32]. As it is depicted in Table III, all the factor loadings exceed 0.5 and the smallest AVE exceeds 0.6, which demonstrates adequate construct validity.

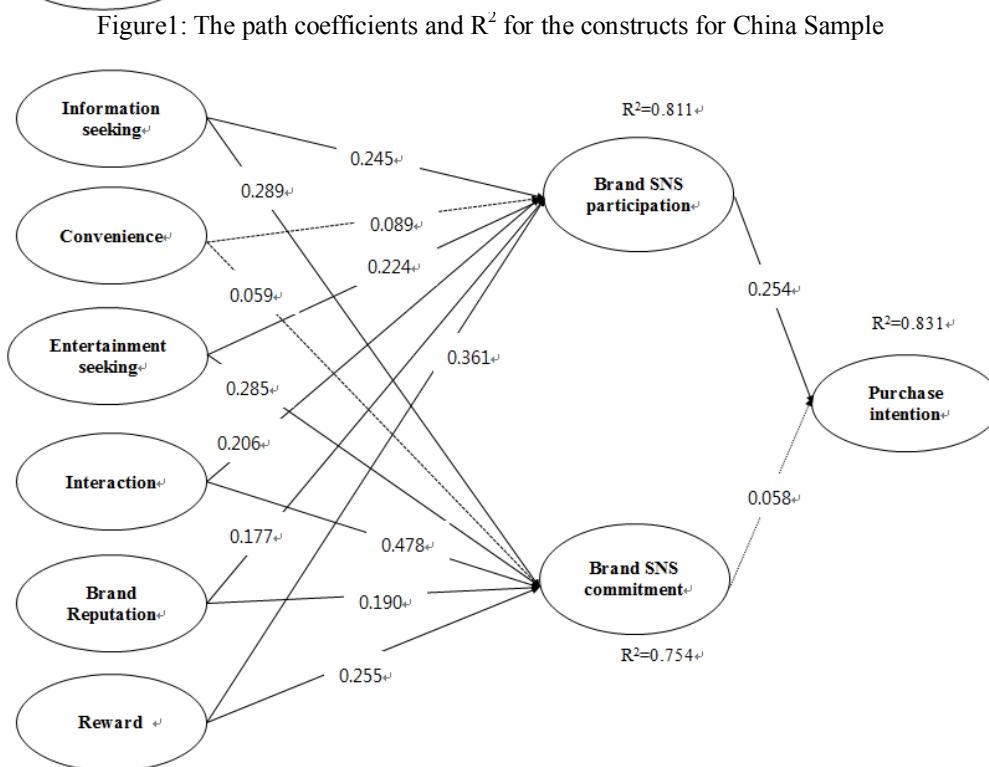
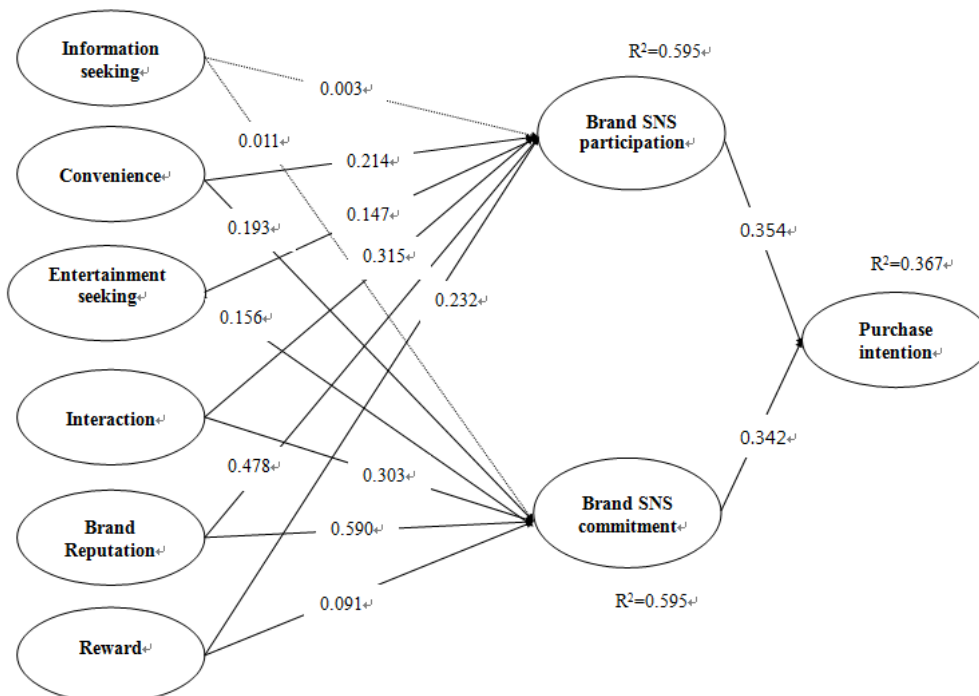
Research model and hypothesis testing

The effects and the statistical significance of the parameters in the SEM were tested using a bootstrapping procedure in AMOS21.0. The test results indicate the structural model of both samples have good fitness, as it is shown in Table IV. The graphical description of the research results for China and Korea samples are presented in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, including both the path coefficients and the variances explained. Almost all of the proposed hypotheses are significant, except for some variables. In detail, H3 is supported in Korea, but not in China, which indicate information seeking has no significant relationship with either participation or commitment behavior of Chinese consumers. H4 is supported in China but not in

Korea, which means the proposed positive relationship between convenience and the consumers' SNS brand behavior is not found significant in Korea. In addition, no relationship is found between commitment and purchase intention in Korea.

Table 4: Structural model fitness indexes

	χ^2	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	RMR	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
China	958.660	2.556	.859	.825	.693	.041	.903	.939	.928	.938	0.062
Korea	877.905	2.341	.869	.838	.701	.059	.843	.903	.887	.902	0.059



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are four main findings in the research. Generally speaking, the motivating factors that can gratify the consumers'

benefit needs will lead to SNS brand page behavior among Chinese and Korean consumers, though the significance and the strength of the motivating factors show dissimilarities in the two countries.

First of all, the motivating factor constructs of SNS brand page behavior generally confirms to the prior dimensions in online community, i.e. functional benefits, hedonic benefits, economic benefits and intrinsic benefits [4,8,9,24]; . Most motivating factors, like entertainment seeking, reward, brand reputation, and interaction, are found to significantly correlate with the consumer's SNS brand page participation or commitment behavior in both countries, and further lead to purchase intentions.

Second, non-significant motivating factors are found to be different between China and Korea. For Chinese consumers, information seeking is not significantly correlated with the SNS brand page participation and commitment behavior in China, whereas convenience is found not correlate to the SNS brand page behavior in Korea. The free access to the worldwide information in Korea, and the partial Internet control of China may explain the findings. This is because the virtual identity in SNS community is required to be officially verified in Korea as compared to that in China, and Korean consumers may freely access to worldwide information from facebook, twitter, google and ect. Consequently, Korean consumers in the safe and free Internet environment, turn to find that convenience does not seem to be a significant problem to participate in or commit to the SNS brand page communities. In China, it happens that some important and sensitive information about the brand may not be easy to obtain, and most members have few chances to get interesting or useful information. Thus the information seeking benefit appears to be nonsignificant in affecting the consumers' SNS brand page behavior.

Third, the most influential motivating factors of SNS brand page behavior also show diversity in both countries. Brand reputation in China and reward in Korea are the most influential factors of participation behavior. Interaction plays an important role in affecting commitment behavior in both countries. The significant strong effect of brand reputation in China still connects with the Internet environment. Due to the lack of diverse and rich information in China, brand reputation appears to be an importance reference to most consumers in SNS brand community. The finding that reward strongly affects the Korean consumers' SNS brand page participation also complies with the prior literature [64,67,75], which conclude that Korean consumers took part in SNS brand communities mostly because of gift certificates, special promotions and coupons. The tight connection between interaction and SNS brand page behavior is related with the unique features of SNS brand pages. Being a profile on a social networking website, SNS brand pages are embedded in an organically grown network of social ties, and have far more posts, replies, and views than the "product information sharing" community. The discussion topics among the tightly connected fans accordingly may reach to a wide range, from products and brands, to interesting happenings. Thus the brand page followers can gain more benefits through community interactions.

Finally, SNS brand page participation and commitment behavior is found to act like mediating factors to positively affect purchase intention in China, whereas only participation behavior correlate with the purchase intention in Korea. In addition, the strength of the effect is greater in China than in Korea. A possible explanation is that committed Korean consumers are likely to take part in the SNS brand page community for benefits like interaction, entertainment, information and rewards, and their commitment behavior does not connect with further purchase intention. Once they actively participate in the related behavior, their purchase intention may be ignited. Chinese consumers' participation and commitment behavior are intertwined, and do not show great differences on further influences towards purchase intention. This may also indicate that the committed Chinese consumers in SNS brand page communities are also those who actively participate in the related activities.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research has two theoretical implications. Through focusing on the SNS brand page community, which is different from general online community, the study restressed the integrative relationships between motivations, participation/commitment, and purchase intention. The findings will enrich the brand community literature, and also contribute the insights for the new research background. In addition, the investigation in two different countries – China and Korea will add some hints to the prior research, in distinguishing consumers' traits from different countries and offering practical support for varied marketing tactics.

There are in general two practical implications.

First of all, in view that SNS brand pages are effective communication means for companies of nowadays, and are useful for the customer-brand relationship, brand managers should consider how to fully utilize this new tool to offer members various gratifications. Marketers should build more sustainable and vigorous SNS brand pages. The inherent benefits are also advised to be clearly identified so that the members can easily seek their needed benefits when visiting brand pages. This will further provide opportunity to convert lurkers into active members. Interesting, entertaining or innovative information, sweepstakes, online events, and rewards are some of the means brand pages can adopt. In addition, companies should also well design the SNS brand pages to support higher interactivity function. Classification of forums by topic attributes makes members easily to join the discussions of interested topics, and use it to make more friends. Group chat

mechanism also creates an interesting community atmosphere. More peripheral functions like easy navigation, topic ranking, and etc. can also be possible choices. Companies should also follow their SNS brand pages, answering questions and solving problems immediately, and communicate proactively even when the information is negative [31, 57, 55]. Finally, more comprehensive scales (e.g., user frequency or log-in time) for measuring a member's behavior can also be developed so as to understand the members' participation and commitment behavior.

Second, Managers of global companies need to understand that the environmental, economic and cultural differences between different countries will lead to varied consumer attitudes and behavior. Therefore dissimilar tactics should be adopted for consumers from different countries. Upgrading brand reputation and image can encourage Chinese consumers to actively take part in and commit to SNS brand page community. Company should have some dedicated employees to join their SNS brand pages, and actively respond to brand information inquires of the members. This will help to minimize the damage to their brand. Monetary rewards such as lotteries, sales, and coupons are suggested to be offered in the SNS brand pages for Korean consumers.

Conclusion and Limitations

In this study, the role of SNS brand pages is stressed as new online community service for the customer-brand relationship. The SNS brand pages participation and commitment behavior, the various motivation factors, and their mediating role to affect purchase intention are investigated in both China and Korea. This study offers new empirical evidence results and meaningful insights for managers of global companies to thoroughly understand the SNS brand pages behavior and their differences in China and Korea markets.

Some limitations of the current research will concurrently provide interesting directions for future study. The moderating effects of demographic variables can be tested to reflect the varied influence of segmented consumers. The effort to distinguish between the consumers and providers, and more cross national studies are also needed.

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