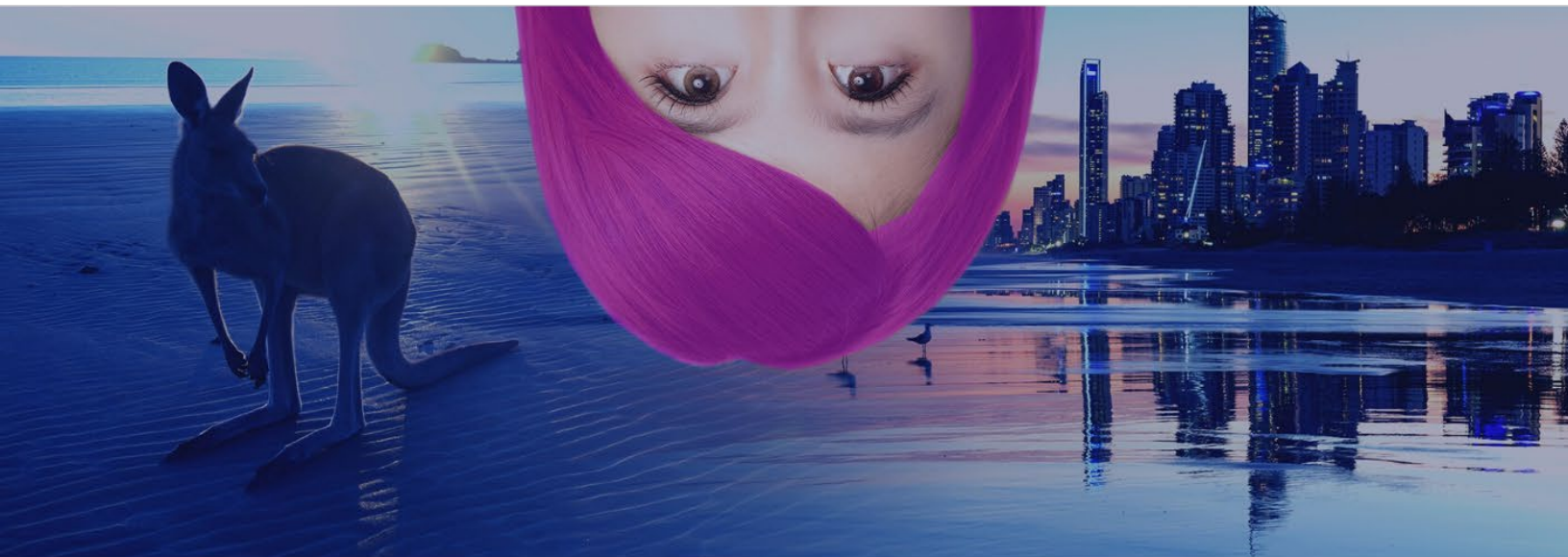# 11th SERVSIG 2020
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BOOK OF
ABSTRACTS

Towards a Typology of Visual Customer Engagement Behaviors (CEBs)

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Track: Customer experience and engagement

Introduction to the research problem

In today's markets, the rise of social media channels has led to a dramatic influencing role for customers. Not satisfied with the passive role of being a receiver of firms' offerings; customers proactively engage in engagement behaviors that influence other social actors embedded within networks. Recently, the digital world has been witnessing consistent technological advancements; hence the way customers influence others extends beyond written statements, to include visual content. Despite the acknowledged influence of visual compared to textual customer engagement behaviors (CEBs) in online contexts, a typology of forms of visual influence is yet unknown.

Literature review

The explosive growth of the internet, has led to the dramatic rise in the influence of customers and a shift in the locus of control from firms to customers (Blasco-Arcas et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2016). Accordingly, customers' online customer engagement behaviors (CEB) are becoming increasingly influential in the service industry (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Mathwick & Mosteller, 2017). Importantly, customers' interactive role extends beyond providing information and incorporate influencing opinions and choices of other customers about products and services (Azer & Alexander, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017).

The rise of a plethora of social media platforms have provided consumers with extensive options for interaction and influence. Recently, customers' online interactions have been increasingly shifting from text-based to image-based social platforms like Instagram or Facebook involving image-based content like pictures and video-logging (V-logging) (Dolan et al., 2016; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Souza et al., 2015). This implies that, not only textual but visual forms of CEBs need to be explored. Despite being an emerging area of study, forms of visual CEB have received very little attention among researchers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; King et al., 2014) although the biggest challenge for managers to handle visual CEBs lies in knowing its different forms and mechanisms of influence (Dolan et al., 2019; Juric et al., 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Therefore, to address this gap and respond to research calls in this regard, this paper aims to study forms of visual CEB within online social contexts.

Method/Approach

Netnography is selected as an appropriate method to guide this study, as several studies in the area of CEB have adopted it to investigate consumers' specific cognitions, emotions and behavioural patterns (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Smaliukiene et al., 2015; Verma, 2014). As a marketing research technique, netnography uses publicly available online information to explore the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups (Kozinets, 2010).

Results/Findings

By analyzing online information from Instagram and Facebook, this study identifies a typology of visual CBE that contributes to the extant knowledge offering a better understanding on how visual stimuli and content may exert influence on users' behavior. Preliminary results are being

processed, identifying how different visual representations elicit different positive and negative forms of visual CEBs in users.

Discussion and implications

Practically, the findings provide managers with a clearer view of visual CEBs which has received little attention to this end and offer data driven recommendations on how to respond to each form when occurs. As more content creation in online media becomes visual, it is important for managers to get an understanding on how visual representations may influence differently on users' behaviors and may also foster different forms of CEBs and other consumer responses.

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