



IZMIR UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING

CMC2015

20th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON CORPORATE AND MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS

**Excellence in Corporate and
Marketing Communications:
*Present and Future Challenges***

April 16-17, 2015

Proceedings Book

<http://pra.ieu.edu.tr/cmc2015/>

20th International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communications

**Excellence in Corporate and Marketing Communications:
Present and Future Challenges**

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Published by

Izmir University of Economics,

Faculty of Communications

Izmir, Turkey, 2015

Izmir University of Economics Publications No: 58

ISBN 978-975-8789-55-9

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Available at pra.ieu.edu.tr/cmc2015

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April 16-17, 2015

PREFACE

With growing digitalization and technological advancement everywhere, individuals have opportunity to access information, which make them savvier, more sophisticated, and well informed, resulting in empowerment. They are no longer passive recipients of messages. Thus, managing communication has become more complex for corporations, strategic business units and individual brands. This complexity necessitates a new understanding of excellence and communication.

Excellence in corporate and marketing communications can vary from unique ideas to long-term consistent implementations, which develop brands and corporations toward measurable success through appropriate, inventive, and innovative communication strategies and tactics. Therefore, it is important to explore the 'excellence in communication' in companies today and tomorrow

The pivotal theme of the 2015 CMC conference concerns discovering, analyzing and seeking to take advantage of current and future challenges in regard to the achievement of excellence in corporate and marketing communications. The Conference concerns excellence in communication.

- What does excellence in communication mean?
- How can excellence be achieved?
- How do firms develop excellence through sustainable and accountable communication strategies?
- How can brands and organizations consider excellence from the perspective of consumers in order to gain advocacy?
- What metrics can be used to measure excellence in communication?

These questions, along with other topics, were addressed at the conference.

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**MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS**

Impression Communication through Architecture: A Framework for Architecture as a Process of Marketing Communications

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Abstract

This study aims to fill a gap in the marketing strategies theory concerning the use of architecture as a tool of impression communications. Current literature investigates the subjects of impression management, impression marketing and architecture as a brand in a fragmentary way without integrating them within a coherent model. More specifically the use of prominent architects as a tool of impression marketing -especially in the case of city branding- has not been investigated from the perspective of impression communication. The study proposes a conceptual framework which incorporates notions from the existing literature in order to approach the relationship between architecture and impression communications. The findings reveal the interaction of four variables: city image, architect's reputation, museum's reputation and architectural design. The use of these variables within the scope of marketing strategies results to the creation of a message aimed at influencing the perceptions of a target group. The importance of the media for the transmission of the message is fundamental. The case of Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao was discussed as an example of the application of the above marketing strategies.

Keywords

Architecture, impression marketing, city branding, perceptions, Bilbao, Guggenheim

Introduction

Visual orientation determines more and more today's business environment (Foroudi, Melewar and Gupta 2014). Architecture as well as art in general are regarded as valuable assets reflecting the organization's identity and contribute to brand image and to the communication of its values. In particular, buildings are perceived as another marketing tool representing the status of each company and communicating its intentions to internal and external stakeholders. The contribution of architectural design to corporate identity is based on the interconnectedness of three different components which are taken into account during the creation of marketing strategy: distinctive design, celebrity architect and media (Kirby and Kent 2010).

Kirby and Kent (2010) investigate the relationship between the architectural design of shops and brand identity. Architectural design is used as creation, augmentation, and communication of corporate identity. Corporate identity is partially contained in the visual identity. Visual identity is the creation of favorable public images transferred by visual channels which may be symbols and logos (Balmer 2001). Visual identity through name, logo, typography, color contributes to the augmentation of brand awareness (Balmer and Greyser 2006). A recognized architect, who enjoys an international reputation, can be characterized as a brand and therefore can be connected to the brand identity. This in turn, helps a company to create a competitive advantage and differentiate itself in the market creating particular impressions in a target group.

The transmission of the message as a means of communication in the today's globalized world moves around three axes. The first involves the networks and the rapid transmission of electronic data through the Internet in general. The second is the dissemination of static images of objects (e.g buildings) generating pleasant impressions. Today's society might rather enjoy the depiction of pleasure than the pleasure itself. The third involves the objects themselves. These objects stand and function within the scope of global consumerism: globalization of coffee is the globalization of brand Nescafe, the globalization of beverage is the globalization of Coca-Cola. To this extent, anything that might happen in one place can happen everywhere through the transmission of image (Tournikiotis 2006).

Since the beginning of the 1980s, famous fashion companies such as Armani, Gucci & Comme des Garçons had realized that architecture could be a very useful marketing tool. This strategy was applied in the design of the interior and of the exterior of shops by prominent architects. The objective was the differentiation of the company from its competitors through the enhancement of corporate image and identity and the creation of uniqueness feelings to prospective customers. Thus stores were considered to be as three-dimensional advertisements that send out powerful signals to a number of stakeholders (Kirby and Kent 2010). At the same time the enhancement of the company's prestige through these buildings inevitably led to the improvement and establishment of the profile of the respective architect. The collaboration between luxury fashion brands and the most prominent architects and artists, both in stores and in "third spaces" outside of stores, such as "the mobile art" for Chanel and the "Prada transformer" used for cultural exhibitions and live events reveals that brand image is communicated through architecture.

In modern architecture, it is observed that many cities have iconic buildings which are characterized by large scale and dynamic form. Many companies with strong brand name pursue to connect their logo and brand identity with iconic buildings designed by famous architects. In

addition, iconic buildings are called upon to create the language for a society in search of a new identity, for corporations and cities in order to provide a new myth (Kaika 2010). Building history reveals that companies use architectural design and symbols to communicate their brand image and identity (Messadat 2005; Bargenda 2015).

Research Gap

There is a wide variety of literature related to atmospherics effects as a marketing tool (Kotler 1973-1974; Donovan and Rossiter 1982; Baker, Grewal and Pasaruman 1994; Sherman, Mathur and Smith 1997). Kirby and Kent (2010) investigate the contribution of architecture to retail store design and the communication of brand identity. The exploration of the form and function of fashion designer and architect partnership in collaborative space has been recently discussed by Anderson, Nobbs, Wigley and Larsen (2010). Moreover, large attention has been given to issues such as the form and function of flagship stores (Manlow and Nobbs 2012), the influence of store image on store own brand perceptions (Collins-Dodd and Lindley 2002) and the importance of lighting design in stores (Areni and Kim 1994). When surveying the above literature, many of the ideas presented have not been connected to the end of establishing a uniform model concerning the contribution of the overall architectural design to integrated impression communications, even though such a model can be asserted from the above literature in a fragmentary way. It is important to consider the holistic nature of architecture as a communication tool.

In addition to the absence of a comprehensive literature review, the existing models and frameworks have not been integrated in order to form a general and coherent structure. The existing models describe the cooperation of architecture and fashion designers in terms of stores, products and “third space” (Anderson, Nobbs, Wigley and Larsen 2010). Indeed, the categorization of the literature related to this study has proved a difficult task. As Bitner (1992) states: “In marketing there is a surprising lack of empirical research or theoretically based frameworks addressing the role of physical surroundings in consumption settings. Managers continually plan, build and change an organization’s physical surroundings in an attempt to control its influence on patrons, without really knowing the impact of a specific design or atmospheric change on its users”. The terms of atmospherics, aesthetics, environmental psychology and purchase behavior have been used over the last 30 years in order to explore this literature stream.

Objective of this study is to initiate the move from abstraction to the development of a new marketing tool that focuses on the use of architecture by companies or other entities in order to send a message and create brand impressions. To that end the creation of a comprehensive conceptual picture of the relationship between architecture and marketing and more particularly of the contribution of architectural design in terms of marketing impression will be attempted.

This paper attempts to provide a literature review on the subject of the connection between architecture and impression marketing that is structured around the development of an integrated conceptual framework. The framework is conceptualized gradually along the discussion of the ideas and has as a reference point the basic model of communication. Complementary theories by various authors will be presented together so that possible commonalities can be found. Integrating the perspectives of architecture and marketing from a number of authors will provide a structure by which the subject may be better understood. Moreover, purpose of this study is to combine the basic

term of architecture with that of impression marketing in order to fill a gap in the research agenda. Finally, in this paper the museum as a commercial product and the architect as an international star influencing the perceptions and impressions of a target group will be discussed.

Literature Review of Integrated Impression Communications

Impression Management

Literature provides numerous definitions which describe impression management not only at individual but also at macro-organizational level. In the centre of all these definitions is the comprehension that people perceptions about a phenomenon can be directed and controlled by others (Grove and Fisk 1996). Organizations use impression management techniques in order to manage their image and convey a desired impression successfully to a target audience.

Since the introduction of the impression management theory, research efforts have been focused on interpersonal exchange. According to Bozeman and Kacmar (1997), impression management theory was first introduced by Goffman and his dramaturgical model according to which many dramaturgical devices such as gestures, expressions, dressing were used by persons to stimulate a particular response from others.

Impression management can not only be used at individual level but also at corporate level. In this case, an organization or its representatives act as guards of information in order to influence an audience's attitude, perceptions and ultimately behavior (Grove and Fisk 1996). Harris and Spiro (1981) define impression management as an influence attempt regarding the manipulation by a salesperson of the impressions he creates in order to achieve a predetermined favorable response. Impression Management at organizational level is used in order to manage stakeholder perceptions and evaluations (Mishina, Block and Mannor 2012). Most studies related to impression management theory tend to focus on the application of impression management techniques in order to explore forms of corporate communications such as annual reports (Merkl-Davies and Brennan 2011; Rahman 2012; Schleichner 2012). A close examination of the literature reveals a lack of empirical research into how the associations between impression management and architecture could be applied to growth strategies of an organization. Corporate branding literature reveals that through brand communications stakeholders develop particular impressions of the organization (Abratt and Keyn 2012). Impression management theory could therefore use architectural design as a tool of communication to build the corporate brand.

Impression Marketing

In recent years many inventive ways have been used to describe the activity of marketing. Marketing strategy is described as "warfare", marketing of services as "theater", consumer transactions as "performance", consumption as "experience" (Grove and Fisk 1996). The characterization of marketing as impression management is another way to investigate the nature of marketing. Objective of impression marketing is to study all the factors which influence the consumers' impressions and to reach conclusions useful to their manipulation. An important factor which indicates consumer's satisfaction is his preconception about the company which is confirmed by the impression attained after he has visited it.

Impression management techniques can be found in interpersonal marketing exchanges such as buyer-seller interaction (Harris and Spiro 1981; King and Booze 1986). It has also been discussed

by Evans, Kleine, Landry, and Crosby (2000) how first impressions of customers impact effectiveness in an initial sales encounter. It can also be observed in more general marketing areas such as product positioning, corporate image advertising or even integrated marketing communications (Grove and Fisk 1996). Since a great deal of marketing activity can be classified as impression management, that is actions aimed at conveying a particular image through symbols, words and movements in order to provoke a desired response, it is suitable to explore marketing through impression management.

Impression management techniques are presented at various elements of the traditional marketing mix. For example, physical features such as the product's color, shape and size are important elements of a product which transmit particular meaning and may affect consumer response. The brand name, the packaging and the logo that might be chosen for a product are all capable of influencing consumer perceptions and impressions as well. If a product is to cause a positive response, the company needs to understand and take into consideration consumer reactions at the stage of its planning. From this aspect, the process of product planning depicts the effort of a marketing strategy to manage consumer impressions about the product and the company itself. In addition, the price of a product influences and manages consumer impressions related to its quality (Grove and Fisk 1996).

Product promotion among all the elements of marketing mix is most closely related to impression management. The capacity to develop and maintain a desired image for a product, manufacturer, store, company is one of the significant objectives that a promotion strategy can accomplish. An understanding of impression management during the process of personal selling may enable sales personnel to adapt their communication tools in order to impress clients. Sales promotion techniques such as contests, special deals and other various incentives are possible to cause feelings of excitement that might be transferred to the offering, ultimately affecting consumer's perception and impression for the brand (Grove and Fisk 1996).

Advertising and public relations are regarded valuable tools to a marketing strategy in order to create and manage consumer impressions through the development of a desired image about a product, company and manufacturer. Words, pictures, actions, colors and other means of communication are used to create and transmit a particular message in symbolic form (Grove and Fisk 1996).

Similar considerations can be examined regarding the application of impression management in another element of traditional marketing mix which is distribution. The atmosphere of a store in which the product is merchandised, the quality of customer service, the type of outlet where a product can be found such as discount store or speciality store and other critical functions represent the effort of the company to manage consumer impressions of a product (Grove and Fisk 1996).

Conceptual Framework

In order to study the association between architecture and impression communications it is necessary to start from an overview and initial structure of the field. The structure of this field begins with the basic model of communication (following the model of Crilly, Moultrie and, Clarkson 2004, adapted from Shannon, Figure 1), continues with the application of this model in product design (according to Monö in Crilly, Moultrie, and Clarkson 2004, Figure 2), leading to the conceptual framework developed in this study (adapted from Crilly, Moultrie, and Clarkson 2004, Figure 3).

A basic system of communication consists according to Shannon of five elements: source, transmitter, channel, receiver and destination. The message produced by the information source is transmitted to the receiver through a channel. The receiver decodes the signal and the message arrives at the destination.



Figure 1. Basic model of communication (adapted from Shannon).

Monö has adopted this basic model of communication in order to study the product design: products send out messages formulated in a ‘language’ that we perceive with our senses. The producer of the product has the responsibility of design and manufacture. As the source of the message are regarded the designer or the design team. The transmitter of the message is the product itself and the channel can be viewed as the environment in which the consumer interacts with the product. The receiver of the message is the consumer’s perceptual senses and the destination is the ability to respond to this message. The response of consumer includes three further elements: cognition, affect and behavior.

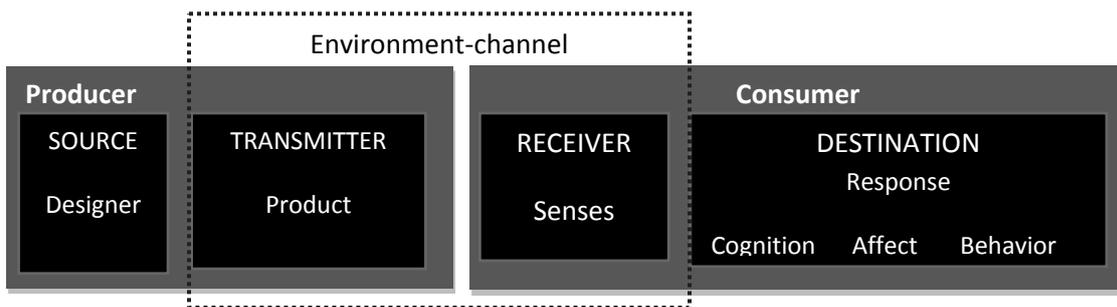


Figure 2. Basic framework for design as a process of communication (Crilly, Moultrie, and Clarkson 2004).

The relationship between architecture and impression communications requires the development of a new conceptual framework. The extended conceptual framework adopted in this research is mainly based on the model of Crilly, Moultrie, and Clarkson (2004) on the context of consumption as well as on the existing literature.

This model demonstrates:

1. The association between the products of architectural design and the impression marketing causing a response.
2. The benefits from this association for organizations and more specifically for non-profit organizations.
3. The relationships between other empirical and theoretical variables related to the subject.

The literature discussed below reveals that customer’s impressions and perceptions can be directed by others in order to convey a particular message about the corporate image and reputation.

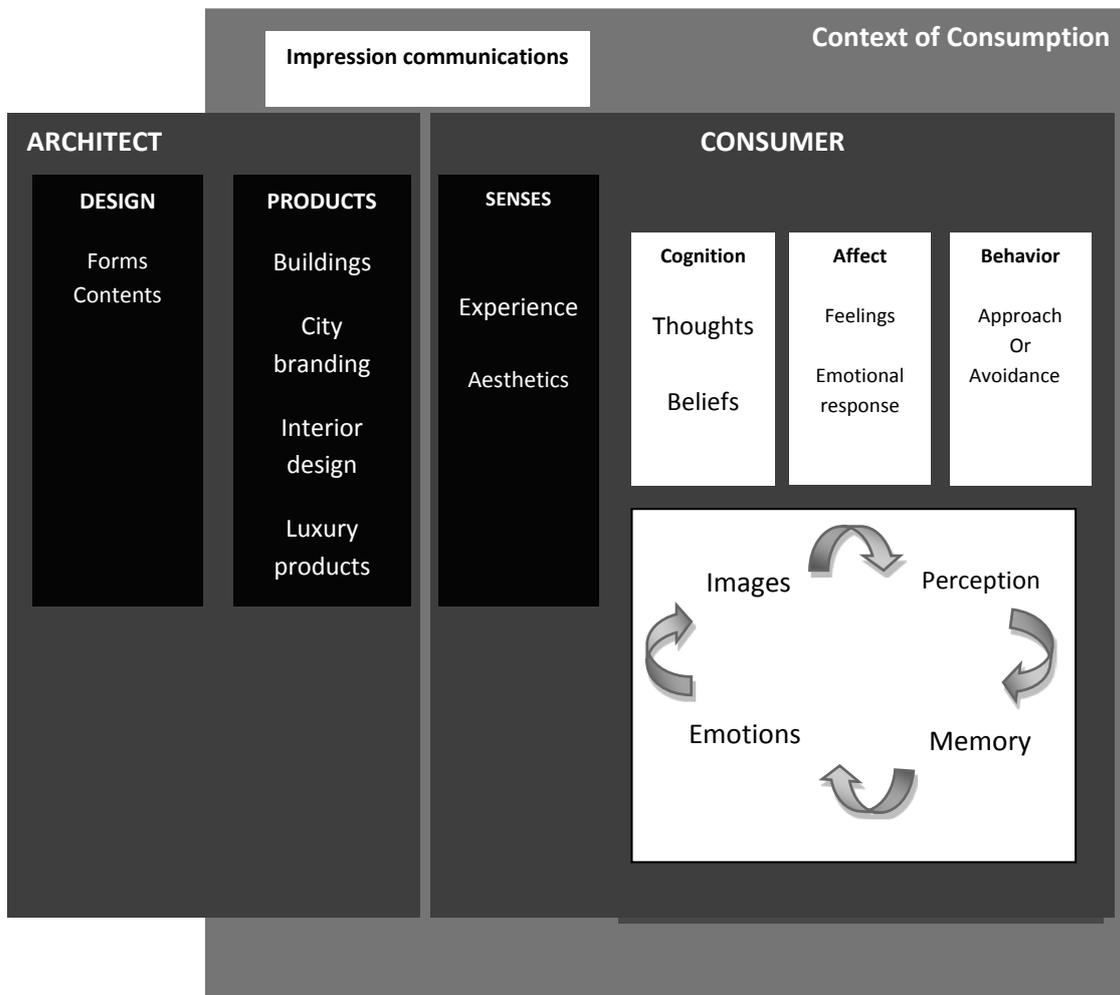


Figure 3. Conceptual model for architecture as a process of communication.

The study starts by discussing some key assumptions that lay underneath the research agenda. The design team (source) is the architect who determines the form and studies the visual effect which an iconic building should convey. More specifically the architect uses a distinctive design in his impressive constructions in order to command media attention and attract more customers or visitors in a store or in a museum respectively.

The products of the architectural design are:

1. Iconic buildings which are contemporary architectural icons operating as branding objects for transnational corporations or as speculative objects for real-estate investors (Kaika 2010). These buildings have been typically designed to convey the message of the urban regeneration and communicate place marketing strategies (Kirby and Kent 2010).

2. City branding includes not only the architectural design of iconic structures but also the architectural design of the landscape. City branding has the intention to change the way places are perceived by specific target groups (Kavaratzis 2005).

Within this context, iconic architecture can be better understood as a symbol for an organization or for city management agencies in order to communicate their corporate identity and image.

1. Interior design of a building includes many variables which are mainly associated to the atmospheric tools of a store. Extensive research on retail environment has been limited to the store interiors and how store atmospherics affect shopper's behavior (Kotler 1973-1974; Turley and Milliman 2000). On the contrary the research largely overlooks the interior design of a museum.
2. Luxury products are designed by well-known architects in order to communicate the differentiation strategy of an organization. Many architects have collaborated with fashion luxury companies: Zaha Hadid with Louis Vuitton, Lacoste and Swarovski, Frank Gehry with Louis Vuitton and Tiffany&Co. The design of luxury fashion brands from celebrity architects is a way for organizations to strengthen and maintain control of their image, to promote an identity that enhances the brand and to attract more customers to the stores. Of course this collaboration enhances simultaneously the image and the prestige of the architects.

The definition of "product" has recently been expanded in order to describe the non-profit organization marketing, social marketing and image marketing (Ashworth and Voogd 1994). In this study, places are the products which are characterized as brandable entities if their features can differentiate them from each other (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005).

The environment within which the product is to be perceived includes the impression communication techniques which convey a particular message in order to manipulate the perceptions of a target group and create the desired impressions about the product.

The message which is transmitted by the product is perceived by the senses. Architectural products are used strategically from impression communication elements to create multisensory experience for a target group. Manlow and Nobbs (2012) in their research for the meaning of the flagship store for managers and customers suggest that branding through luxury flagship stores is a way not only of promotion and advertising for the brand but also a method of connecting emotionally with customers through the creation of meaningful experiences that might finally lead to relationships. A real architectural experience is not a series of images; a building is approached and confronted by the human body as a whole (Holl, Pallasmaa, and Perez-Gomez 2007; Bargenda 2015). The challenge for an architect is to stimulate and influence the perceptions of a target group through the building and its environment in this holistic manner.

The term "aesthetics" is defined as the sensual perception of the reality and is associated to consumer research as far as it describes experience as the apprehension of something via the sensorial and the physical, underlining the significance of embodiment and connection between the mind and the corporeal feeling (Joy and Sherry 2003).

Cognitive response refers to thoughts, beliefs or any of a number brain-related activities connected with perception, memory or learning. Perception is a mental process which starts with the conception of basic and important structural features. Rudolf (1974) suggests that perception is necessary for the comprehension of shapes, colors, movements, compositions, structures and features. Perception is different from person to person and is influenced by each person's experiences. The image of an object perceived by a person is formed by all his visual experiences which this person has developed about the object during his life. Experiences are printed in the human memory within the framework of time and space. Accordingly memories of experiences in a specific space play a central role in the perception of an environment and subsequently in the creation of a specific impression (Rudolf 1974).

Affect has been conceptualized variously as feeling, mood and emotion in order to explain the emotional consumer's response towards products. Consumer's potential feelings towards objects may be variable and contradictory such as admiration, disappointment, amusement or disgust (Crilly Moultrie, and Clarkson 2004).

The environment psychology model of Mehrabian and Russel (1974) suggests a framework on the impact of merchandising on perceptions of store brand quality. This model consists of environmental stimuli, the intervening emotional state which can affect approach or avoidance behavior. Such behavior can be observed in retail environments and influences the consumer perceptions of brand images.

Research Questions Development

Effects of Impression Marketing Orientation of Cities

As the contemporary market place is characterized by economic and culture globalization and fierce competition, improving product recognition and differentiation is a major theme for organizations (Kavaratzis 2005; Kaplan, Yurt Guneri, and Kurtulus 2010). As a result cities, regions and countries develop competitive strategies in order to attract anything that might generate wealth (Zenker, 2009; Darchen and Tremblay 2010). In an effort to respond to the demands and the challenges of the competition and to meet the needs of more target groups, public administrations have recognized the importance of the application of marketing methods in order to built the city image. These strategies aim mainly at stakeholders such as residents, investors, tourists, students, artists, cultural events.

There are a number of articles which discuss the application of marketing techniques in places (Gomez 2000; Kavaratzis 2005; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008; Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, and Kurtulus 2010; Eshuis, Braun, and Klijn 2010; Saez, Perianez, and Mediano 2013). In city marketing theory, city is regarded as a product which consists of a number of tangible assets such as buildings, constructions, roads and a number of intangible assets such as image, brand, identity, value, culture. Just as in the case of any other product, these assets are a tool through which the city can differentiate itself from others and meet the needs of different target groups. City marketing literature investigates the definition of a city's product and its brand image and identity in such way that its recipients will perceive it as it is intended to be marketed. Yet the aforementioned literature does not examine the above findings from the specific aspect of architectural constructions in the form of iconic buildings within the scope of impression communication, as it largely overlooks the

place branding techniques related to the creation of intended perceptions and impressions of a target group, such as the commissioning of well-known architects to the end of enhancing the city's image.

Kavaratzis (2005) identifies that the built environment such as iconic structures and the effectiveness of city authorities and urban development agencies can communicate a message about the image of the city. The context of the message has to change the way the image of a city is perceived by a number of stakeholders (Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, and Kurtulus 2010). Many declining cities such as Bilbao in Spain created a narrative model of place branding in order to communicate the urban regeneration and development based on culture and heritage (Kavaratzis 2005). Curtis (2006) points out that every city needs iconic architecture which functions as anchor on which the stakeholders of city can be moored not only spatially but also spiritually. It is the architect and his work that promise uniqueness and an international reputation to organizations. The majority of the studies has examined the collaboration of celebrated architects with fashion luxury flagship stores and has paid little attention on how architectural structures such as museums, theatres and opera houses have contributed to urban regeneration. In their research of architecture as a brand, Kirby and Kent (2010) stress the need for more research on how iconic architecture influence the perceptions related to the urban redevelopment through buildings designed by well-known architects. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that city authorities use iconic architecture and well-known architects in order to influence positively the impressions of target groups. Iconic architecture in this study is operationalized as a communication tool for urban management as a means of affecting the stakeholder's perceptions who is on the other hand not supposed to perceive it as an intended marketing strategy.

The research questions are developed based on existing literature on architectural design, consumer behavior and impression management. Each one has been the topic of research, but a connection between them has never been exploited. The first research question is as follows:

R1: Iconic architecture in cities is used as a communication tool in order to influence the stakeholder's perceptions.

Applying the philosophy and principles of marketing in cities, it is vital to explain the literature related to brand image and identity. According to Kotler et al (2000) a brand is a name, a design, a symbol, a sign, a term or a combination of these elements that characterizes the goods and services of a seller or a group of sellers differentiating them from the competitors. Kapferer (1992) identifies that the brand is not the product and its physical characteristics; instead, "it is the product's source [and] [...] meaning". Moreover, as defined by De Chernatony and McDonald (1992), a successful brand is "an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique, sustainable added values, which match their needs most closely". Based on this approach, the brand of a city is its name and logo related to a group of assets (tangible, intangible) perceived by its target group that provoke positive or negative responses-reactions (Saez, Perianez, and Mediano 2013).

Herzog (1963) defines image as "the sum of the total impressions the consumers receive from many sources". Ger and Askegaard (1996) define image, as "a mental representation, a network of meanings stored in the memory, in a particular structure, and along with affective, motivational and sensory aspects". Brand image refers to the meaning that the consumers create an association with the

product (McGrath 2005), based on experiences, impressions and perceptions of the functional, emotional and symbolic attributes of the product (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990; Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, and Kurtulus 2010). According to Aaker (1996), brand identity is defined as “a unique set of associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain”. Brand identity is referred to sender’s side and indicates how the organization wants the brand to be perceived. Within this context and having taken into consideration that a place/city might be regarded as a product, a premise is developed based on the way people understand the city through their own perceptions and use those perceptions in order to create an understandable image of it in their memory. On this premise it is assumed that “the best way to attempt to influence peoples’ perceptions and image of a city is the same way that the private sector has been using for years for its goods and services, i.e. by creating and developing its brand” (Saez, Perianez, and Mediano 2013). Therefore, based on the discussion suggesting that people’s impressions and perceptions are influenced by the image of the city, the administration of which intends to communicate, it is easily asserted that the impression communication theory latently exists in the respective literature even not expressly elaborated in it. According to Kirby and Kent (2010), the brand image is communicated through architecture and architectural design. A prestige architect with global reputation plays an increasingly central role in the success of the communicative power of buildings. These opinions suggest the following research question:

R2: The use of a reputable architect by city administrations affects significantly the brand image and identity of the city perceived by stakeholders.

Kavaratzis (2005) suggests that city branding through culture and entertainment enhances the brand image of the city and attract the interest of new audiences. Museums belong to cultural activities related to city branding. The application of marketing methods by museums is a recent research area while the adoption of these techniques to museums is still on discuss. Marketing in Non-Profit Organizations, Image Marketing and Services Marketing are used in order to explore the application of marketing tools to museums (McLean 1994; Kapplinger 1997; Kotler and Kotler 1998; Kavaratzis 2005; Pusa and Uusitalo 2014). In addition, experiential marketing might be applied to museum marketing (Kirezli 2011). Museum marketing is characterized as a relationship with museum stakeholders such as visitors, staff, local administrators, museum professionals, researchers, sponsors and the media (Rentschler and Reussner 2002). Museums are historical places that offer experience and happenings which intend to appeal to all the senses of the public. The museum building and its architecture have become a recognizable symbol, representing the brand image of the museum and the cultural and financial power of the city. It has been observed that the design of a museum with a distinctive brand name (Guggenheim, Louvre) by a famous architect attracts the media attention. Such an event communicates the message that tourists from all over the world should visit the city possessing this emblematic structure. Consequently, the market value of the city is increased and the city image is enhanced (Kapplinger 1997; Pusa, and Uusitalo 2014). When a museum is perceived as a commercial product and an architect as an international star, architecture plays a significant role in building a museum’s brand image and identity. All these features influence the subjective preferences and the impressions of a target group (Pusa and Uusitalo 2014). Therefore, based on the previous literature, an argument has been made that the museum building and its iconic architecture has a significant effect on the image of the city. Thus the following research question is derived:

R3: The architect and his architectural design in museums affect significantly the impression of a target group about the brand image and identity of the city.

Empirical Study

The research conducted seeks to analyze the connection between architecture and impression communication and to focus on the role of the architecture of museums related to the creation of city image, using the content provided by articles and books. The analysis uses a set of different variables supporting positively the hypotheses which have been developed in this research. Additionally, strategies of indirect forms of communications related to the manipulation of holistic impressions of a target group are discussed. This paper thus offers a different perspective which complements the existing literature.

Research Methodology

The methodology for collecting information for this research was based on content analysis and its application on articles and one book related to Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is selected as a plethora of publications investigates and describes how this unique phenomenon changed the city image from a declining industrial city into a revitalized metropolis. More specifically, emblematic urban projects functioned as a symbol of the city's image providing a modern, innovative and attractive environment for business.

Content analysis method has been applied in many managerial researches such as impression management, downsizing, negative organizational outcomes, corporate crises, corporate reputation, strategy reformulation, CEO succession. At its most basic, word frequency has been considered to be an indicator of cognitive centrality or importance. The change in the use of one word reflects a change in attention. As Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer (2007) state "content analysis assumes that groups of words reveal underlying themes, and that, for instance, co-occurrences of keywords can be interpreted as reflecting association between the underlying concepts" (Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer 2007).

In the current study content analysis has been chosen as a flexible method revealing underlying themes related to the comprehension of the subject. In line with this scope, this research analyzes the architectural thinking and methodology of the famous architect Frank Gehry and explores the way in which his distinctive architectural design and the impression marketing decisively contributed to the re-evaluation of the city image and identity. This study seeks to ascertain the strategies of city marketing applied in Bilbao and especially how city administration authorities communicated a message to the receivers making use of marketing tools not directly perceivable by the latter.

Content analysis can identify relationships and correlations between different variables. Key words selected from articles and one book examine the connection between architecture and impression communications.

More specifically, the following material has been examined:

Table 1. Material has been examined in content analysis method.

Number	Author	Year	Title	Type
1	Dolan D.	1999	“Cultural franchising, imperialism and globalization: What’s new?”	Article International Journal of Heritage Studies, Vol 5 No 1, pp. 58-64.
2	Kapplinger C.	1997	“Architecture and the marketing of the museum”	Article Museum International (UNESCO, Paris), No 196, Vol 49, No 4, pp. 6-9.
3	Cerro G.	2013	“The alleged Bilbao Miracle and its discontents, Santamaria, Urban Megaprojects: A Worldwide View”	Article International Journal of Heritage Studies, Vol 5 No 1, pp. 58-64.
4	Boland, J., Jr., Collopy, F., Lyytinen, K., and Yoo, Y	2007	“Managing as Designing: Lessons for Organization Leaders from the Design Practice of Frank O. Gehry”	Article Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Design Issues: Vol 24, No 1, Winter 2008, pp. 10-25.
5	Isenberg, B	2009	“Conversations with Frank Gehry”	Book Edition Alfred A. Knopf.

The variables which have been explored in the content analysis are:

Table 2: Variables analyzed

Variables
Reputation
Image
Design

According to Kassirjian (1997) words are used as symbols in content analysis method as a means of a systematical examination of the content. In the Table below are summarized the basic words (units) that describe best the variables mentioned before.

Table 3: Units of measurement

VARIABLES	UNITS	SAMPLE
ARCHITECT'S REPUTATION	Fame, International renown	Article 1
	Asset, Big names, Prestigious	Article 2
	Global architect	Article 3
	High powered, Episode in Simpsons	Book
MUSEUM'S REPUTATION	Brand name, International brand, Guaranty of quality, Franchise	Article 1
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN	Spectacular, Recognizable, Symbol & Sign, Cause the media	Article 1
	Identical, Calculable individuality, Exciting reptile forms, Attractive, virtuoso	Article 2
	Unique products, Unique approach, Unique experience, Unconventional shapes	Article 4
	Prestige, Emblematic, Culture theme park, Unusual, Surprising, Shocking	Article 3
	Monroe picture	Book
CITY IMAGE	International Attention, Cultural identity, Appeal	Article 1
	Limelight, Impact on the market value of the city	Article 2
	Metropolis	Article 4
	Modern, Competitive, Revitalized, Dynamic, Successful, Revived, Positive	Article 3

Results

The use of a signature architecture designed by a prestige architect enhances the image of the city and influences the way it is perceived by a number of stakeholders. Of course, this objective was assisted by the fact that “Guggenheim” has been marketed as a brand name within the scope of the museum’s strategy of creating the first global museum brand (Dolan 1999). The Guggenheim museum in Bilbao is regarded as an emblematic structure which has changed the impressions of the public through the communication of a message: Bilbao city from a declining city was converted into a successful, competitive and revitalized metropolis (Cerro 2013). At the same time, this new urban landmark, with its image of innovation and dynamism, is regarded by many as the most important reason to visit Guggenheim Museum, since it is believed that the building itself is more interesting and attracting than the context of collection it was designed to house (Sainz 2012). The museum put

Bilbao on the world map thanks to the innovative architectural style of Frank Gehry. Cities should try to differentiate themselves from their competitors positioning themselves with a defined image. The strategy of positioning in the chosen target market includes an image and a brand (architecture) in order to communicate the city values and assets.

Urban design based on iconic buildings inspired by recognizable architects is one of the strategies of place marketing which is used in order to re-generate and re-develop the image of the city. A museum functioning as a brand develops its strategy using symbols such as the museum's name, architecture, the culture of the city. All these elements create associations between the brand and the target group, influencing the impressions related to the communication of the success story of the museum.

Limitations of the Research and Future Directions

The methodology set out in this paper provides researchers with tools to examine architecture as a process of impression marketing communications. Content analysis has been used in order to approach a theoretical subject in the marketing literature which has never been analyzed extensively before. Therefore much of the analysis relies on common-sense interpretation and insight which have been recast and enriched by existing theory. Given its limited extent, this paper by bringing together a body of work from a cross-disciplinary perspective can serve as a guideline for a more integrated understanding of architectural design as an impression marketing tool to the end of communicating a message to a particular target group of interest.

Future research on the use of architecture as a communication tool -not only by organizations but also by cities and museums- may benefit from the incorporation of ideas from complementary disciplines such as history of art and culture and psychological theory which have been studied from marketing theory for many years. Taking the research further would require a comparison of impressions of the museum's stakeholders (e.g. the visitors, the staff, the local authorities, the researchers, the sponsors) using other means of data collection, such as in-depth interviews. This would serve the authentication of the above findings and it would allow the eventual transposability of the findings. Finally, for future study it is recommended that further research is undertaken on other cities with emblematic buildings presenting similar characteristics as the Bilbao case. Thus the general validity of the outcome could be tested.

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Exploratory Study on Integrated Marketing Communication Practice in Malaysia Government-Linked Company

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the level of IMC practices in selected Malaysia Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) and to provide insights into the four stages of IMC framework and the four pillars of IMC. This study utilizes the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology in order to examine factors influencing the subject's perceptions and to penetrate their internal logic and interpret their subjective understanding of the IMC practice in selected GLCs. Informants of the present study are senior managements, managers, executives, and stakeholders of eight selected GLCs in Klang valley, Malaysia. Findings show that majority of the respondents perceived the eight selected GLCs have already implemented and practiced most of the elements of IMC. Results also suggest that the four stages of IMC framework, is very suitable as a measure for assessing the level of IMC practices in the organization.

Keywords

Integrated marketing communication, government-linked companies, the four stages of IMC framework, the four pillars of IMC and level of IMC practice.

Introduction

The contemporary business trends show that the importance of IMC approach in the commercial sector is inevitable. Kitchen and De Pelsmacker (2004), consider IMC as a major marketing communications development of the last century and as a key competitive advantage of marketing. They concurred, based on the studies on advertising agency in the 1990's, IMC has been proven as a factor in increasing communication effects, makes creative ideas more effective, provides consistent communication and most importantly increases customer return on investment. As the marketing communication landscape continues to experience change, especially with the advance of information technology, IMC has emerged as one of the strategies to gain business competitive advantage. IMC could offer more coordinated and strategic approach in relation to the overall marketing communication functions and future direction of the organization. This is in line with Dewhirst and Davis's (2005) findings that the IMC process achieves greater brand equity and shareholders' value. Nowadays, the continuous development and changes occurring in the field of marketing communications have lead to the increasing relevance of research on IMC. Due to the fast pace of technological innovations, IMC is most likely going to be a very strong and dynamic discipline (Porcu, Garcia, Kitchen , 2012).

A number of business organizations in many countries including those in Malaysia have implemented IMC strategies to maintain and enhance their competitiveness. However, despite IMC immense popularity, there is a lack of empirical study conducted on the IMC practice with regards to the four stages of IMC frameworks and the four pillars of IMC variables. The objectives of the study are designed specifically to explore IMC practices in Malaysia Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) and to provide insights into the four stages of IMC framework and four pillars of IMC. Subsequently, findings from the study and new perspectives of IMC will be a small contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Malaysia Government-Linked Companies

GLCs are defined as companies that have a primary commercial objective and in which the Malaysian Government has a direct controlling stake. GLCs form an integral part of the Malaysian economy as they provide mission-critical services (e.g. electricity, telecommunications, financial services, transportation, and infrastructure development) and catalyze development of strategic sectors in the country. GLCs constitute a significant part of the economic structure of Malaysia. GLCs account for an estimated 5% of the national workforce. Even with active divestment and privatization, GLCs remain the main service providers to the nation in key strategic utilities and services including electricity, telecommunications, postal services, airlines, airports, public transport, water and sewerage, banking and financial services.

A recent study conducted by Ab Razak, et al, (2011) on GLCs' performance has revealed that most of the GLCs have tendencies to exhibit higher valuation as compared to non-GLCs. According to the report, these are due to GLCs' ability to earn higher returns on their investments. GLCs have also been reported to have run and efficiently managed with lower operation expenses as compared to non-GLCs. In short, the results of the previous study depicted that GLCs have outperformed non-GLCs in market based valuation measures. On another note, based on Khazanah Nasional Berhad's Report (2013), the GLCs' business performance and the strategy of state capitalism has been considered successful in Malaysia. GLCs have evolved into an important national institution that bears a close resemblance to private enterprises that are driving the nation economy. In fact, many high performing GLCs have been partially privatized

and listed in the Malaysian stock exchange, the Bursa Malaysia (formerly known as Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange). Many Malaysia GLCs have also been reported as having strengthened their financial capacities and they are on clear track to be at par with local and international competitors. Some of them have even become regional champions. It was also reported that the market capitalization of the 20 large GLCs (G20) have tripled to RM425 billion as of May 16, 2014 from RM140 billion a decade ago. While at the same period, the total shareholder return has grown by 13.4 per cent per year. The report also mentioned that the GLCs have paid RM93 billion in dividends and RM57 billion in taxes for the past ten years from financial year 2004 to financial year 2013. In view of these achievements, beyond 2015, the GLCs are expected to enhance further their value creation through stronger performance and business execution. (Khazanah, 2013)

How did GLCs managed to achieve those significant performances? Is it due to the ongoing efficiency and continuous initiatives of the top management? What about the role of the IMC in GLCs' business operations and how much IMC's concept contributes to GLCs' success? Hence, this study is conducted with the aims to address those questions and fill up some of the gaps in the empirical study on IMC and at the same time to explore and determine the level of IMC practices in Malaysian GLCs based on the Schultz and Schultz's four stages of IMC framework and the Kliatchko's four pillars of IMC.

The Four Stages of Integrated Marketing Communication Framework

The Shultz and Schultz's (1998) framework shows four stages of IMC development in an organization. The first stage, i.e., tactical coordination marketing communications refers to the lowest stage of IMC practice. This is followed by redefining the scope of marketing communications on the second stage. The third stage is referring to the application of information technology in the organization, and finally the fourth stage focus on the financial and strategic integration of the organization. At the highest level, the organization monitors the marketing communications using Return on Investment (ROI) as an indicator of performance, and customer information and knowledge used to evaluate each market segment served. In 1997 the American Productivity Quality Centre (APQC) carried out an observation focusing on organizations that employed IMC at various organizations in North America, Europe, Latin and Asia Pacific. The said study analyzed 22 national organizations that practiced IMC in its effort to determine the level of IMC practice in each of these organizations. According to Mc Goon (1998), in order to understand the development process of an IMC approach within organizations, the findings of the study were summarized and analyzed using the Four Stages of IMC Framework as follows. (See Figure 1)

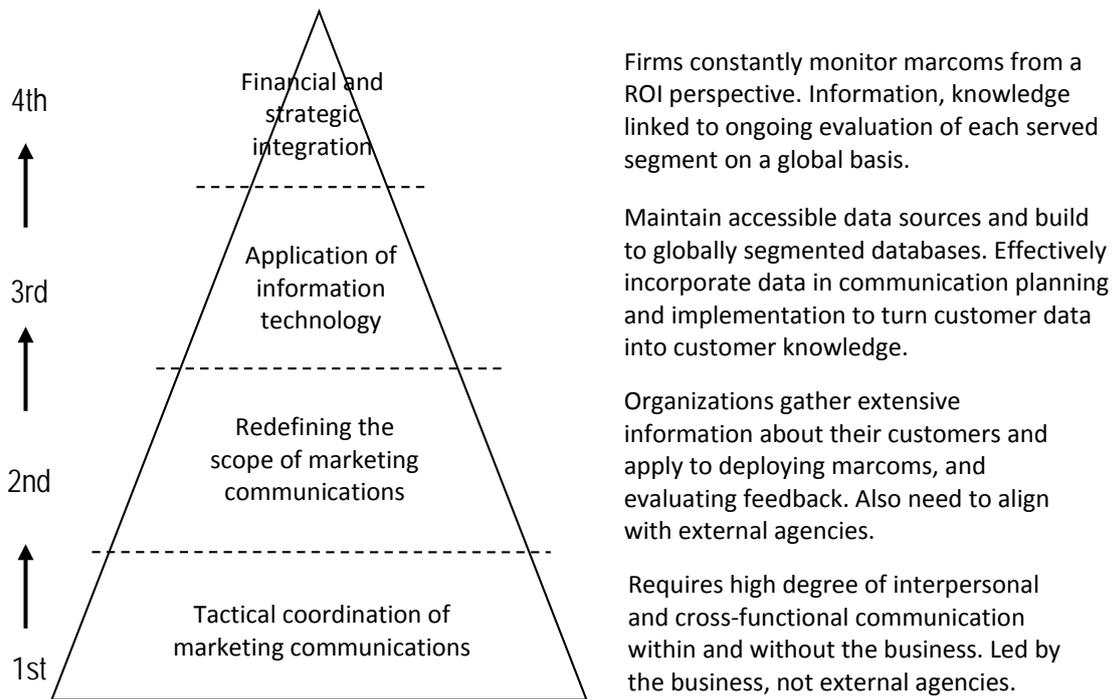


Figure 1. Four Stage of IMC (Source: Kitchen and Schultz 2001: 108)

Stage 1: Tactical Coordination of Marketing Communications

According to Schultz & Schultz, (2004), stage 1 is the entry point into IMC for most organizations. It reflects the tactical coordination of marketing communication activities of the organization. Basically at this stage the company is already coordinating its diverse communication activities across products, divisions, regions and countries. Company also creates tailored campaigns to deliver distinctive messages to specialized segments. Other aspects of this stage can be related to the employment of direct marketing, sales promotion, event marketing, custom publishing, cooperative ventures, sponsorships, and electronic and interactive tools in their marketing activities.

At this stage also, the company is seen involved in establishing an overall structure to consolidate communication planning to create ‘one sight, one sound’ by adopting centralization of marketing communication in its efforts to achieve greater synergy by planning all campaign elements in concert. Based on the literature, another remarkable aspect of this stage is in which the company establishes strong corporate guidelines on usage, tone and message development, and practice cross-functionality to achieve a high level of competency, synergy and dynamism across all activities. (Schultz & Schultz, 2004),

Stage 2: Redefining the Scope of Marketing

This stage is classified by the APQC’s study as a “redefinition the scope of marketing communication” (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). At this juncture company is switching its point of view from a corporate operation driven to that of its customer, consumers and end users, and the company is also considering all of the possible points through which the customer comes in contact with the brand. Ideally, at stage 2 company puts its communication programmes through a critical reality check that allows it to shift the focus from the messages that it wants to transmit, to an understanding of what the customer receives. Company ensures the internal marketing and communication programmes support or

align with the external marketing and communication programmes. Besides, company at this stage also extends 'brand values' to the management of behaviour at every point of transaction along the internal supply chain. (Schultz & Schultz, 2004),

Stage 3: Application of Information Technology

According to Schultz & Schultz, (2004), this stage emphasizes on how a company applies information technology in its business operations in support of its marketing communication efforts. Basically, company at this stage is seen as using sophisticated mailing systems to create personalized messages and customized offers, and distributes information through the internet or intranets. Some companies at this stage are reported as using in-house satellite television to communicate with employees and suppliers. On another note company is also pairing technology with appropriate customer needs and requirements. At the same time company gives customers and other stakeholders' options on how and when information will be available to them, to be assessed at a time and place most convenient to them, with a message or an offer that is highly relevant to their circumstances. Company also plans and develops its communication from the customer's point of view to understand customer brand contacts. Utilizes database to capture and store information about customers, consumers and prospects, and uses data-driven marketing as the underlying source for all marketing initiatives and to provide the ultimate framework for creating closed-loop evaluation systems.

Stage 4: Financial and Strategic Integration

At stage 4 it was reported that few companies have substantially progress at this level. One of the aspects of this stage is when senior management of the company is the one who drives and provides framework for dealing with resource allocation and organizational alignment. At this stage, company is said as having the ability to measure the return on customer investment and the ability to relate investment in customers to the returns received from these same customers. Company is also able to put marketing communication investments on the same analytical footing as any other financial investment decision. Ideally, this can be done when company moves away from its operation-driven, inside-out approach to an outside-in approach focuses on creating value for customers in all dimensions of the brand experience. Another aspect at this stage is in which company reviews every aspect of the company, from customer correspondence to product quality to human resources recruitment and training to compensation structures, and brought into alignment with the promises made to customers. Finally, company at this stage is seen as adopting a cross functional process that has a corporate focus, a new type of compensation system, core competencies, a database management system that tracks customer interactions, strategic consistency in all brand messages, marketing of the company's mission, and zero-based marketing planning. (Schultz & Schultz, 2004),

Integrated Marketing Communication Pillars

The IMC Pillars refers to "the articulation of the distinguishing elements of IMC that encapsulates the various principles surrounding the concept of IMC" (Kliatchko 2005 p. 144). These distinctive attributes referred to as the four IMC pillars. The first pillar is the 'Stakeholders', followed by 'Content' as the second pillar. 'Channels' represent the third pillar and finally 'Results' as the fourth pillar of IMC. According to Kliatchko, (2008), the IMC approach to planning follows a certain process, hence, the IMC pillars may be considered both as antecedents and consequences. Kliatchko further stresses, the IMC pillars will function as antecedents when considered in the planning and execution of any new IMC programme. In sum, improvements, changes and other adjustments derived from the analysis undertaken

on a programme in any of the four pillars will then function as consequences of the IMC process at that particular stage.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders, the first IMC pillar refers to all the relevant publics or multiple markets with which any organization interacts. According to Schultz and Shultz (1998), an organization's publics are both external and internal audiences. Customers, consumers, prospects and other entities outside the organisation are the external audiences, while those within the organisation, such as employees, managements, and shareholders are the internal audiences for an organization. Kliatchko (2005) further explains that managing external markets in IMC assumes that the entire process of developing an integrated brand communications programme has put target markets in the heart of the business processes. This is inevitable in order to address their needs and desires effectively and subsequently will establish a long term relationship that is due to benefit from them.

Content

Content, the second IMC pillar is developed from a deep knowledge and understanding of multiple markets that an IMC programme of an organization is intended to address. It is essential to understand consumers beyond traditional marketing descriptors, such as demographic and psychographic data (Schultz & Schultz 2004). According to Fortini-Campbell (1992), based on consumer understanding, it gives rise to consumer insights and the discovery of the consumer 'sweet spot' which is considered as the perfect connection between the brand and the customer. This will ultimately leads to the creation of compelling content. Content in IMC can have different messages or different incentives. Brand concepts, ideas or associations, and all other values or perceptions that marketers transmit to customers are part of messages. Incentives on the other hand, are short-term offers or rewards to consumers from the organization for having done something of value to both the firm and the consumer (Schultz & Schultz 2004).

Channel

The expanded notion of marketing communications channels is a fundamental concept in IMC. This includes those that in the past may not have been considered or strictly classified as communication channels (Schultz, 1996; Schultz & Schultz 1998). Based on integrated view, IMC provides a broader understanding of channels that include not only traditional tools such as radio, TV, and print, but also other possible contact points or touch points where customers or prospects experience getting in contact with a brand. According to Schultz & Schultz (2004), in deciding which marketing or brand communication channels to utilize, there are two main determinants to consider in preparing an integrated media plan namely, relevance and preference. The existing IMC planning approaches are deliberately take on the consumer's perspective in deciding which channels that would be most effective. This is in contrast with a common misconception that media planning in the era of IMC implies 'ambushing consumers' at all possible points of contact and for maximum exposure.

Results

Swain (2004) states, the integrated approach to planning and implementing marketing communication programmes has been accepted as another hallmark that characterizes today's business environment that demand for results or effectiveness. Swain further stresses, even though the concept of measuring results in itself is not new, the complexity of today's marketing communications landscape continues to be a major challenge for organisations. Measurement has been, still is an unending issue, and will continue to be a subject of ongoing research and debate by academics and practitioners.

Methods

This research utilizes a mixed method approach contains elements of both quantitative and qualitative methodology. Through quantitative research, the researcher generally obtains data with minimal interaction between the researcher and respondent(s) Disassociation from the respondent(s) allows the researcher to make neutral categorizations of the data and is imperative to the validity of quantitative research. By contrast, the qualitative aspect of this research attempts to describe, translate, and interpret phenomena in specific situations on the basis of interview data and content analysis.

This study utilizes the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology in order to examine factors influencing the subject's perceptions of IMC practices in selected GLCs. As Brewer and Hunter (1989) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) indicated, qualitative methodology in combination with quantitative methodology in this study helps to understand the complexity of a research problem than either method alone.

The present study is aimed at determining the level of IMC practices at selected Malaysia GLCs. The objectives of the study called for quantitative and qualitative studies. Hence, the present study utilizes a survey research and a structured self-administered questionnaire as the means of data collection. The self-administered research survey design was chosen in this study so that large samples feasible. Besides the type of research question posed in the present study, another equally important reason for using this research design was the collection of data from a relatively large number of GLCs which are located in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

The quantitative research design is appropriate for developing theoretical constructs of the four stages of IMC framework being studied. It seeks to determine the level of IMC practice primarily through objective measurement and quantitative analysis. According to Cooper and Schindelar (2006), a dominant method for quantitative research is the survey measurement. Thus, the four stages of IMC framework are selected for its record of use in earlier researches and for the applicability at the local level. Specifically, the research will be fixed in design and use the modified survey instruments.

The qualitative methodology on the other hand is chosen by researchers in order to get close to participants, penetrate their internal logic and interpret their subjective understanding of the IMC practice. For the purposes of this study, the focus on GLCs' top management interviews will result in a greater understanding of IMC's implementation and practices among selected GLCs. This approach is really an appropriate tool to capture the complexity and depth of the issues. It allows the researcher to focus on control variables, and add more questions to the survey if needed in order to understand and explain management influences toward IMC concepts.

Although the survey instruments include specific questions, the interview form is flexible and allows for lengthy responses and further clarification by the researcher. This qualitative and flexible approach give more complex answers in some areas while the quantitative and fixed method approach define the numerical measures (Robson, 2002). Thus a mixed methodology approach using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies is the best way to fully capture all respondents' perceptions toward IMC's practices in the selected GLCs.

The initial research design plan consists of the collection of data from the Senior Managements, Managers, executives, and stakeholders of the selected GLCs. By collecting data from the group, detailed data of the companies IMC programmes would have been made available. The study focuses on the perception of the senior managements, managers, executives, and stakeholders of the selected GLCs towards IMC practice and implementation; therefore, data from the public are inappropriate. Hence, the collection of data in the present study is restricted only to the senior managements, managers, executives, and stakeholders of the eight selected GLCs.

Respondents

Cooper and Schindler (2006) defined sample as a "group of cases, participants, events or records consisting of a portion of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population" (p. 717). The focus group methodology employed for this study used non-probability, convenience sampling. This sampling method is considered purposive in that it targets the experiences and opinions of subjects regarding a specific research phenomenon. Purposive designs such as judgment and quota sampling allow researchers to choose participants who have unique characteristics that they wish to study. The targeted informants of the present study are the senior managements, managers, executives, and stakeholders of eight selected GLCs in Klang valley, Malaysia as per Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of the selected GLCs

No	Name of company	Core business
1.	BIMB Holdings Berhad	Islamic financial banking
2.	Sime Darby Berhad	Plantation, property, industrial equipment
3.	Malayan Banking Berhad	Financial services (including Islamic)
4.	Telekom Malaysia Berhad	Telecommunication services
5.	CIMB Group Holdings Berhad	Financial institution
6.	Axiata Group Berhad	Telecommunication services
7.	Tenaga Nasional Berhad	Electricity generation and distribution
8.	Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad	Airport management

Questionnaires

The design of the questionnaire is based on the construct recommendations made by Bart et.al. (2001), which was to construct only questionnaire items with clear options should be used to gain the participant of the busy senior officers. The research instrument for the study is specifically designed to meet the busy schedule of the senior officers of the selected GLCs. The self-administered questionnaire consists of two parts in the following order: Part A contains four statements on general information and Part B contains

26 items relate to the four stages of IMC framework. 450 questionnaires and self-addressed envelopes were hand delivered to CEO's office and marketing departments of the selected GLCs. A personalized cover letter was included in the questionnaire. The letter explains the aims, and objectives of the research and assurance regarding the confidentiality of data. The letter also provides general instructions and information as well as the name, phone number and email of the researcher for communicating purposes. Through the letter, the informants were requested to return the answered questionnaires to the researcher within two weeks using the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Interview Questionnaires

The questions were developed for the purpose of getting the respondents talking about their perspectives and initiatives toward IMC practice in respective organizations central to the theoretical constructs based on the Four Pillars of IMC concept guiding this dissertation. Researcher administered 20 structured questions in six selected GLCs in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Interview appointments with the respondents of the six top managements were arranged via telephone calls and conducted in the privacy of the office of each respondent. The appointments began with an introductory overview of the purpose and content of the interview. The Universiti Sains Malaysia consent letter was given to each respondent. The interviews took place between February and March of 2014. The instruments were given before the interview sessions in order to provide the respondents with a frame of reference for answering the open ended questions.

The interview sessions were conducted in bi-lingual (English and Malay) by the researcher. All interviewees were given a list of interview questions ahead of time in order to facilitate interviewees for answering the questions. During the interview, the respondent may change his/her interpretation and therefore, researcher followed up with more probing questions for clarification and understanding. The key reason is to establish rapport and trust. Answers from interviewees were recorded by the researcher. Interviewees were also requested to verify their answers in order to ensure accurate recoding of the responses. Before the interviews end, respondents were given the opportunity to review their responses. This process gave the respondents a chance to catch any errors in the material and to express their opinion as to whether the report accurately captures what they were trying to say.

Quantitative Results

Perceived Tactical Coordination of Marketing Communication

According to Schultz & Schultz (2004), the level of tactical coordination of marketing communication for stage 1 of the IMC framework is influenced by endogenous factors and the degree by which company's policies, procedures and practices for branding efforts are communicated effectively across the organization through written and verbal methods. Schultz & Schultz suggest that it is important for company to consider the three related endogenous factors namely, the establishment of formal and informal communication mechanisms, centralization of the ultimate control and approval of all marketing communication efforts, and consistency on all visual elements and messages featured by the physical marketing communications outputs such as brochures and pamphlets.

Results for perceived tactical coordination of marketing communication in Table 2; show that 208 or 72.3% of respondents agreed that the selected GLCs coordinate diverse communication activities across products, divisions, regions and countries. 76.7 % or 221 respondents agreed that GLCs create tailored campaigns to deliver distinctive messages to specialized segments. Respondents also said that the

selected GLCs employ direct marketing, sales promotion, event marketing, custom publishing, cooperative ventures, sponsorships, and electronic and interactive tools in their marketing activities as reflected by 217 responses or 75.3% agreed. Meanwhile 195 or 67.7% of the respondents perceived the selected GLCs have established an overall structure to consolidate communication planning to create 'one sight, one sound'. GLCs are also perceived by 210 or 72.9% respondents as adopting centralization of marketing communication to achieve greater synergy by planning all campaign elements in concert. 220 respondents or 76.4% perceived the GLCs as having established strong corporate guidelines on usage, tone and message development. The selected GLCs are also perceived by 209 or 72.6% of the respondents as practicing cross-functionality to achieve a high level of competency, synergy and dynamism across all activities. On average, 73% of the respondents perceived selected GLCs as already at this stage.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage for Perceived Tactical coordination of marketing communications

Item	Item/Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Company coordinate diverse communication activities across products, divisions, regions and countries.	1 (0.3%)	11 (3.8%)	68 (23.6%)	137 (47.6%)	71 (24.7%)
2.	Company creates tailored campaigns to deliver distinctive messages to specialized segments.	4 (1.4%)	6 (2.1%)	57 (19.8%)	161 (55.9%)	60 (20.8%)
3.	Company employs direct marketing, sales promotion, event marketing, custom publishing, cooperative ventures, sponsorships, and electronic and interactive tools in their marketing activities.	3 (1.0%)	17 (5.9%)	51 (17.7%)	157 (54.5%)	60 (20.8%)
4.	Company establishes an overall structure to consolidate communication planning to create 'one sight, one sound'.	0	20 (6.9%)	73 (25.3%)	129 (44.8%)	66 (22.9%)
5.	Company adopts centralization of marketing communication to achieve greater synergy by planning all campaign elements in concert.	1 (0.3%)	11 (3.8%)	66 (22.9%)	144 (50.0%)	66 (22.9%)
6.	Company establishes strong corporate guidelines on usage, tone and message development.	0	15 (5.2%)	53 (18.4%)	133 (46.2%)	87 (30.2%)
7.	Company practices cross-functionality to achieve a high level of competency, synergy and dynamism across all activities.	4 (1.4%)	13 (4.5%)	62 (21.5%)	148 (51.4%)	61 (21.2%)
	Total (%)	0.006	0.046	0.213	0.500	0.233

Perceived Redefining the Scope of Marketing

At stage 2; of the IMC framework, company that practice IMC emphasizes on broader understanding of customer and prospects, a shift from tactical coordination of marketing communication. As explained by Schultz & Schultz (2004), there is a “concerted effort to identify, understand and create cross-functional communication opportunities across customer contact points” (p. 25). In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of customer behaviour, data of market research results needs to be broadly disseminated to staff across the organization. Internal practices and policies of the company need to be aligned accordingly, while members of the staff needs to know and be aware of all promises conveyed to customer by external communication.

Results for perceived ‘Redefining the Scope of Marketing’ as per the following Table 3: show that 181 or 62.9% of the respondents agreed that GLCs have switched from a corporate, operation driven point of view to that of their customer, consumers and end users. While 196 or 67.7% of the respondents perceived GLCs as having considered all of the possible points through which the customer comes in contact with the brand. GLCs are perceived by 200 or 69.5% of the respondents as putting their communication programmes through a critical reality check that allows them to shift the focus from the messages that they want to transmit, to an understanding of what the customer receives. Meanwhile, GLCs are also perceived by 194 or 67.4% of the respondents as ensuring the internal marketing and communication programmes support or align with the external marketing and communication programmes, and 193 or 67% of the respondents as extending ‘brand values’ to the management of behaviour at every point of transaction along the internal supply chain. On average, 67% of the respondents perceived selected GLCs as already at this stage.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage for Perceived Redefining the Scope of Marketing

Item	Item/Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Company switches from a corporate, operation driven point of view to that of their customer, consumers and end users.	0	21 (7.3%)	86 (29.9%)	141 (49.0%)	40 (13.9%)
2.	Company considers all of the possible points through which the customer comes in contact with the brand.	0	17 (5.9%)	76 (26.4%)	128 (44.4%)	67 (23.3%)
3.	Company puts their communication programmes through a critical reality check that allows them to shift the focus from the messages that they want to transmit, to an understanding of what the customer receives.	4 (1.4%)	17 (5.9%)	67 (23.3%)	143 (49.7%)	57 (19.8%)
4.	Company ensures the internal marketing and communication programmes support or align with the external marketing and communication programmes.	4 (1.4%)	14 (4.9%)	76 (26.4%)	129 (44.8%)	65 (22.6%)
5.	Company extends ‘brand values’ to the management of behaviour at every point of transaction along the internal supply chain.	0	6 (2.1%)	89 (30.9%)	136 (47.2%)	57 (19.8%)
	Total (%)	0.005	0.052	0.273	0.470	0.198

Perceived Application of Information Technology

According to (Schultz & Schultz (2004), at stage 3; of IMC development, organizations use the power and potential of information technologies to improve their integration performance. The proper use of emerging technologies to facilitate internal and external communications is the basis of this stage. An effective IMC at this stage depend upon adopting technologies for market research and data management purposes. Identification of individuals who have the potential to deliver the highest value (financial or service contributions) to the organization became a particular interest to GLCs.

Results for perceived 'Application of Information Technology' as per Table 4: show that 176 or 61.1% of the respondents agreed that GLCs use sophisticated mailing systems to create personalized messages and customized offers. GLCs are perceived by 197 or 68.4% of the respondents as distributing information through the internet or intranets and uses in-house satellite television to communicate with employees and suppliers. Majority or 217 or 75.3% of the respondents perceived GLCs as pairing technology with appropriate customer needs and requirements. Meanwhile, 175 or 60.7% of the respondents agreed that GLCs give customers and other stakeholders' options on how and when information will be available to them, to be assessed at a time and place most convenient to them, with a message or an offer that is highly relevant to their circumstances. GLCs are perceived by 185 or 64.2% of the respondents as planning and developing their communication from the customer's point of view to understand customer brand contacts. On another finding, 207 or 71.9% of the respondents perceived GLCs as utilizing database to capture and store information about customers, consumers and prospects, and 191 or 66.3% of the respondents also agreed that GLCs uses data-driven marketing as the underlying source for all marketing initiatives and to provide the ultimate framework for creating closed-loop evaluation systems. On average, 67% of the respondents perceived selected GLCs as already at this stage.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage for Perceived Application of information technology

Item	Item/Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Company uses sophisticated mailing systems to create personalized messages and customized offers.	9 (3.1%)	28 (9.7%)	75 (26.0%)	127 (44.1%)	49 (17.0%)
2.	Company distributes information through the internet or intranets and uses in-house satellite television to communicate with employees and suppliers.	5 (1.7%)	12 (4.2%)	74 (25.7%)	129 (44.8%)	68 (23.6%)
3.	Company pairs technology with appropriate customer needs and requirements.	1 (0.3%)	19 (6.6%)	51 (17.7%)	151 (52.4%)	66 (22.9%)
4.	Company gives customers and other stakeholders' options on how and when information will be available to them, to be assessed at a time and place most convenient to them, with a message or an offer that is highly relevant to their circumstances.	8 (2.8%)	18 (6.3%)	87 (30.2%)	134 (46.5%)	41 (14.2%)
5.	Company plans and develops its communication from the customer's point of view to understand customer brand contacts.	1 (0.3%)	15 (5.2%)	87 (30.2%)	153 (53.1%)	32 (11.1%)
6.	Company utilizes database to capture and store information about customers, consumers and prospects.	1 (0.3%)	9 (3.1%)	71 (24.7%)	144 (50.0%)	63 (21.9%)

7.	Company uses data-driven marketing as the underlying source for all marketing initiatives and to provide the ultimate framework for creating closed-loop evaluation systems.	1 (0.3%)	17 (5.9%)	79 (27.4%)	133 (46.2%)	58 (20.1%)
	Total (%)	0.012	0.058	0.259	0.481	0.187

Perceived Financial and Strategic Integration

At Stage 4; of IMC framework, company is concerned more with the issues facing management of the organization than those specific to the marketing communication division. “The highest level of integration occurs as organizations begin to operationalize the assets and skills developed during Stages 1 to 3” (Schultz & Schultz, 2004, p. 29).

Result for Perceived Financial and Strategic Integration as per Table 5: show that 194 or 67.3% of the respondents agreed that senior management of the GLCs drives and provides framework for dealing with resource allocation and organizational alignment. GLCs is perceived by 195 or 67.7% of the respondents as able to measure the return on customer investment, and 183 or 63.6% perceived GLCs as having the ability to relate investment in customers to the returns received from these same customers. Meanwhile the GLCs are also perceived by 175 or 60.7% of the respondents as able to put marketing communication investments on the same analytical footing as any other financial investment decision. On another findings, 184 or 63.9% of the respondents agreed that GLCs are moving away from its operation-driven, inside-out approach to an outside-in approach focuses on creating value for customers in all dimensions of the brand experience. While 213 or 70.5% respondents agreed that the GLCs review every aspect of the company, from customer correspondence to product quality to human resources recruitment and training to compensation structures, and brought into alignment with the promises made to customers regularly. The GLCs are also perceived by 171 or 59.4% of the respondents as adopting a cross functional process that has a corporate focus, a new type of compensation system, core competencies, a database management system that tracks customer interactions, strategic consistency in all brand messages, marketing of the company’s mission, and zero-based marketing planning. On average, 65% of the respondents perceived selected GLCs as already at this stage.

Table 5: Frequency and Percentage for Perceived Financial and Strategic Integration

Item	Item/Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Senior management of the company drives and provides framework for dealing with resource allocation and organizational alignment.	2 (0.7%)	9 (3.1%)	83 (28.8%)	150 (52.1%)	44 (15.3%)
2.	Company is able to measure the return on customer investment.	1 (0.3%)	6 (2.1%)	86 (29.9%)	134 (46.5%)	61 (21.2%)
3.	Company is able to relate investment in customers to the returns received from these same customers.	1 (0.3%)	14 (4.9%)	90 (31.3%)	137 (47.6%)	46 (16.0%)
4.	Company is able to put marketing communication investments on the same analytical footing as any other financial investment decision.	1 (0.3%)	28 (9.7%)	84 (29.2%)	128 (44.4%)	47 (16.3%)
5.	Company moves away from its operation-driven, inside-out approach to an outside-in approach focuses on creating value for customers in all dimensions of the brand experience.	3 (1.0%)	8 (2.8%)	93 (32.3%)	131 (45.5%)	53 (18.4%)
6.	Company reviews every aspect of the company, from customer correspondence to product quality to human resources recruitment and training to compensation structures, and brought into alignment with the promises made to customers.	0	13 (4.5%)	72 (25.0%)	156 (54.2%)	47 (16.3%)
7.	Company adopts a cross functional process that has a corporate focus, a new type of compensation system, core competencies, a database management system that tracks customer interactions, strategic consistency in all brand messages, marketing of the company's mission, and zero-based marketing planning.	1 (0.3%)	18 (6.3%)	98 (34.0%)	136 (47.2%)	35 (12.2%)
	Total (%)	0.004	0.047	0.300	0.482	0.165

Qualitative Result

Interviewees' Responses Related to the Stakeholder

With regard to the concept of internal and external audiences, interviewees were asked on the method used by the company for making their customers and employees to perceive the brand in the same way. According to respondent 1, the company communicates using same language within and outside the organization, while respondent 2 said they share the same coherent story lines to all. For respondent 3, they practice and operate the same way as others that will make everything consistent, and respondent 4 states that the company uses the deployment of internal and external brand integration strategies which are consistent. On the other hand, respondent 5 explains that they do it through brand positioning, while respondent 6 said the company puts vision and mission and tagline alongside with the logo, thus make everyone perceived the brand in the same way.

With regard to the concept of multiple markets, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by the company in targeting different target market needs. According to respondent 1, in order to reach all the different target market's needs, the company uses multiple marketing communication tools. Respondent 2 said they conduct research regularly to understand the customers, while respondent 3 stresses on conducting research to understand different target market's needs. For respondent 4, the company uses product differentiation and market segmentation strategies. Respondent 5 says through market and pricing study while respondent 6 said they look seriously at business cycle, and prediction of market's trends.

With regard to the concept of aggregation, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by the respective companies in identifying a company's customers' needs, and the approaches used by the companies in identifying potential customers. According to respondent 1, to identify a company's customers' needs and company's prospects, they carry out survey and information gathering. Respondent 2 said they conduct research and plan long-term strategy for customers and prospects. On the other hand, respondent 3 conquers that market share and business climate are their benchmarking in identifying customers' needs and prospects, while respondent 4 said the company uses market research to evaluate the needs of their customers and views all public as potential customers. On the other hand, respondent 5 said through customers' feedback via complaint form, and market research, while respondent 6 looks at the international business standard as bench marking.

With regard to the concept of needs, wants, behaviour, and values, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by respective companies in understanding customers' needs and behaviours. According to respondent 1, company uses data from formal reports describing customers' needs and behaviours. Respondent 2 states they understand customers' needs and behaviours by interpreting their knowledge on each chosen target markets. Meanwhile, for respondent 3, they conduct market analysis to understand customers' needs and behaviours. Respondent 4, on the other hand said that the company uses a guest satisfaction index to measure needs and behaviours, while respondent 5 answers through various communication channels such as social media, email, and two-way communication. Finally, respondent 6 concurred that they understand customers' needs and behaviours through survey.

With regard to the concept of database management, interviewees were asked on the methods used by respective companies for collecting information about purchase patterns, and the methods used by respective companies for collecting customers' data. According to respondent 1 they collect information about purchase patterns from social media databases and focus group, and respondent 2 conduct analysis on target markets to know about purchase patterns. On the other hand respondent 3 said they conduct market research and use customers' database to analysis purchase patterns. Meanwhile, respondent 4 says that the company uses points of sales and system management tools to evaluate information, and customer data is collected via online forms and physical hard copy application forms. Respondent 5 on the other hand, states that they collect data through sales and marketing analysis through "interest" form - downloaded through corporate website, while respondent 6 explains that they collect information through regular survey.

With regard to the concept of long-term profitable relationship, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by respective companies in creating value for customers, and the approaches used by the companies in creating long-term relationships with customers. According to respondent 1 they build trust with customers by understanding and listening to their opinions. Respondent 2 said that they create values

for customers by being open and maintain personal contacts. Meanwhile, respondent 3 explains that they fulfill customers wants based on their expertise in the business and ensure customers' satisfaction with their services. On the other hand, respondent 4 concurs that the company utilises product pricing strategies that add value so as to cater for loyal customers. Respondent 4 further explains that the company also utilises interactive platforms such as online media channels and customer engagement such as road shows or 'meet and greet,' or 'brunch' with CEO. Respondent 5 says that the company creates long-term relationships through product value such as, quality and innovative sales activity through two-way communication. Respondent 6 on the other hand states that the company achieved the above by improving the quality of services provided to the customers.

With regard to the concept of dignity of the human person, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by respective companies in finding out customer's moral standards, personal beliefs, and values. According to respondent 1, they get to know the customers moral standards and personal beliefs through their feedbacks and discussions with them. While respondent 2 said that the company analyses feedbacks or comments from customers. Respondent 3 on the other hand explains that the company conducts surveys and communicates with customers in order to find out their moral standards, personal beliefs and values. On the other hand respondent 4 says that the company evaluates and analyses information provided on their social media platforms. Meanwhile, respondent 5 states that the company conducts background and profile check, and respondent 6 concurred that the company looks at customers' commitment and personalities to find out customers' moral standards.

Interviewees' Responses Related to the Content

With regard to the concept of content, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company for making content appealing to a customer. According to respondent 1, they give heavy emphasis on sincerity when communicating with customers. While respondent 2 claim they use knowledge and previous experiences on points that create interest to the customers. Respondent 3 said they conduct research about customers' feedbacks on interesting content. On the other hand respondent 4 said the company creates consistent content that is relevant, interesting and useful to customers, and respondent 5 make content appealing through marketing planning and research. Respondent 6 said they will introduce new methods and techniques that attract customers.

With regard to the concept of messages and incentives, interviewees were asked on the company's short-term offers to consumers and the short-term rewards by the company to consumers. According to respondent 1 they offer discount on booking fees and down payment to customers, while respondent 2 said they solve customer's problems and offer suggestion for improvement. Meanwhile respondent 3 said they offer discounts for short term offer and give vouchers as a reward to repeat customers and respondent 4 said they use retention campaigns that promote value rewards campaign for loyal customers. On the other hand respondent 5 achieve the above through sales discount such as 'bumiputra' discount and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile respondent 6 mention about offering discounts for their products and after sales service.

With regard to the concept of controlled/uncontrolled, interviewees were asked on how the company pursue consumers that having same particular needs. According to respondent 1 they ensure their prices are competitive and attractive as perceived by customers compared to competitors. While respondent 2, uses valid information from reports or news to generalize the target groups. Meanwhile respondent 3 use information and content relevant to the particular target groups. Respondent 4 said the

company uses product differentiation strategies, and respondent 5 through customer understanding via feedback form. On the other hand respondent 6 say they use regular advertisement.

With regard to the concept of ethical considerations, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by the company to avoid offending people with content, the approaches used by the company in creating contents that are trustworthy, problems the company encounter when creating contents, and the things that company has to consider when creating contents. Respondent 1 said they always make sure the use right message in the content that will not offend anyone and it suit any particular culture. Meanwhile, respondent 2 states that they use proper media channels to find out what is right and adhere to the regulations. Respondent 3 on the other hand argues that they should be responsible in using content without being offensive and double check contents before it is communicated. Respondent 4 said the company emphasizes on content that is relevant and useful to customers. Respondent 5 stress on getting legal advice, while respondent 6 ensure verification and justification for all sentences and phrases used for ethical normality.

Interviewees' Responses Related to the Channels

With regard to the concept of multiple channels, interviewees were asked on the approaches used in managing traditional marketing, the IMC tools that company used to make consumers see and know company brand, and the methods used by the company in getting messages out to people.

Respondent 1 said they consider all aspects and ensure they are better off as compared to competitors. While respondent 2 states they emphasize on customers' engagement to their brand, and use traditional marketing as a complement to other channels, since all channels are good. According to respondent 3, they maintain clear strategy for the traditional channels. Meanwhile respondent 4 explains that traditional marketing is managed via budget availability, as well as via smart collaborations with media owners. Respondent 5 on the other hand said that they manage traditional marketing through sales activities (two-way communication) between sales person and potential purchasers, and respondent 6 said they have the marketing centre and put up advertising through newspaper.

With regard to the concept of Contact points/expanded view, interviewees were asked on the methods used to get customers in touch with the company's brand. Respondent 1 said they consider every available marketing tool. While respondent 2 states the company uses electronic and printed advertisement. According to respondent 3, they maintain regular marketing activities, Meanwhile according to respondent 4, they get in touch in person via phone and email and online (website, face book, twitter), while respondent 5 said customer get in touch with the brand through social networking channels. Meanwhile respondent 6 use advertisement, gift and corporate social responsibility activities to get customer in touch with their brand.

With regard to the concept of relevance/preference, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company in deciding which marketing channels to use and the methods used by the company for finding the best channel for a specific audience. Respondent 1 said they use relevant channels that can reach their target audience. Meanwhile respondent 2 use marketing channels that can effectively influence target customers. Likewise, according to respondent 3 they use channels that are effective and suit the specific target audience. Respondent 4 on the other hand said that marketing channels used by the company depend on the project size, budget allocation and overall effectiveness. For respondent 5,

decisions are made through market research and monitoring. While respondent 6 said they look at the group of customers, through market segmentation.

With regard to the concept of above-the line/ below-the line, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company for getting the messages out in an efficient and cost-effective way. According to respondent 1 they get the message out based on the range of audience segments and they use relevant channels to suit each segment. For respondent 2, they create awareness amongst people. While respondent 3, look at the target groups' meeting points and media usage. On the other hand respondent 4 states that they utilize the total approach with a strong emphasis on online platforms. For respondent 5, they get the message out through company's website and social networking channels, and respondent 6 use email, memo, official letter, meeting, and monthly 'taskirah' based on the needs.

With regard to the concept of non-traditional channels, interviewees were asked on their opinion on the range of communicational channels in their company that have changed over time. Respondent 1 emphasizes more on web, and mobile services. For respondent 2, clarify that previously the company spent more on newspaper advertisement in targeting different target market needs and now focus on the internet, and social media platforms. Meanwhile respondent 3 said the company move from printed advertisement to IT. On the other hand, respondent 4 said that the traditional approach has been minimized with more focus now placed online. For respondent 5, the range is based on situation, for examples, crisis communication, and public and media announcement. However, respondent 6 mentioned about communication medium, where they depend to the age group or generation group such as generation Y and generation E.

With regard to the concept of new media/digitization, interviewees were asked whether digitization affect the ways the company sends out messages. According to respondent 1, digitization is more effective and cheaper to produce. While respondent 2 said that the company embarks on internet and social media as the medium for sending out messages. Meanwhile, respondent 3 said the company use new media for sending messages to the target market. For respondent 4, digitization has allowed for messages to be sent out more efficiently and cost effective. Respondent 5 said digitization has created communication distortion. On the other hand, respondent 6 states digitization made it became very easy and fast at very low cost in sending out messages.

With regard to the concept of media neutrality/synergy, interviewees were asked on the differences between doing advertisement on a flat fee and doing it on a commission. Respondent 1 said that the company spends more on advertisement based on a commission. For respondent 2, commissions bring more risk and involve business ethics. On the other hand, respondent 3 states that based on commissions the company get better influence over advertisements, while respondent 4 say yes, and it will have to be situation-specific. Respondent 5 also say yes, however it depend on the advertising strategy. Likewise, respondent 6 said it depends on the cost effective factor.

With regard to the concept of fragmentation/proliferation, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by the company in differentiating messages against competitors'. According to respondent 1, creativity helps in differentiating messages amongst competitors, while respondent 3 said the company ensures messages are clear and specific. For respondent 4, messages are product and service specific, and respondent 5 stress on competitors' monitoring. On the other hand, respondent 6 said that in term of using IT and social media, it is very similar, but using TV advertisement is still the best option.

Interviewees' Responses Related to the Result

With regard to the concept of financial measurements, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company for evaluating the effects of a marketing campaign. Respondent 1 explains that they look at the company's performance. Meanwhile, according to respondent 2, standard measurements used by the company are based on sales figures after each marketing campaign. For respondent 3, it depends on the increase in customer base, and respondent 4 look at the total sales, revenue and earning value is measured, and respondent 5 said they evaluate the effects of a marketing campaign based on sales return. On the other hand respondent 6 said in terms of marketing, the numbers of customers will show whether the marketing campaign is successful.

With regard to the concept of behaviour-based measures, interviewees were asked on the methods used in order to know which customers to pursue. According to respondent 1, they based on customer information, while respondent 3 carry out market survey on regular basis. Meanwhile, respondent 4 said the gap analysis is conducted on product and service satisfaction levels. Respondent 5 said feedback forms and marketing analysis from creative agency, and respondent 6 said they conduct market analysis regularly.

With regard to the concept of customer valuation, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company in knowing which customers worth to invest on. According to respondent 1, the company knows which customers worth to invest on through customer information. While respondent 2, said that standard measurements are based on analysis on customers' spending pattern. According to respondent 3 the company carryout market research to know which customers worth to invest on. Meanwhile, respondent 4 said the company evaluates opportunity along their route network. Respondent 5 knows it through market and pricing research, and respondent 6 said from the analysis of history, and relating to the results.

With regard to the concept of ROCI: income flows/returns, interviewees were asked on the methods used by the company to measure return-on-customer-investments of customers (ROCI). Respondent 1 said they measure return-on-customer-investments using multiple financial tools. Meanwhile, respondent 4 said the company does not use the ROCI framework and measures ROI via total sales, revenue and PR value. Respondent 5 said they measure through sales profit. While respondent 6 states by looking at the mode of advertising and the prospective customers responses.

With regard to the concept of wealth contribution, interviewees were asked on the approaches used by the company in identifying opportunities for expansion, and whether the company employed ROCI to expand the market. According to respondent 1, they assess the opportunity through sales analysis. Respondent 2 said they conduct market survey. Meanwhile, respondent 3 explain on new product development. As for respondent 4, the company identifies opportunities that are service specific such as line extension for LRT and monorail, integrated ticketing nationwide, bus rapid transit and 'transit oriented' development. Respondent 5 said through financial prospective, while respondent 6 said looking at the highest response.

Discussion and Conclusion

Results obtained demonstrate that most of the respondents of the study perceived the eight selected GLCs have already implemented and practiced most of the elements of IMC. Based on the Schultz and Schultz's four stages of IMC framework, it is noted that, on average 74 percent of the respondents perceived the

selected GLCs have implemented tactical coordination of marketing communications at respective organizations. 67 percent agreed that the GLCs redefine their Scope of Marketing, and another 67 percent of the respondent also agreed that Application of information technology is widely used in those GLCs. However, for Financial and Strategic Integration stage, only 65 percent of the respondents perceived the GLCs already at this stage. Thus, it is concluded that the IMC framework in the selected GLCs is in line with the Schultz and Schultz's framework progression beginning from Stage 1 (technical coordination of marketing communications) to Stage 2 (redefining the scope of marketing communications) to Stage 3 (application of information technology) and to Stage 4 (financial and strategic integration). The findings of this study show the four stages of IMC framework is very suitable as a measure for assessing the level of IMC practices in the organization.

Senior management who were interviewed also stated that they recognize the role of IMC in improving the performance of the company. They conquered that some marketing communication activities in their organization meet the requirement of IMC concept. However, respondents' opinion is moot because, based on researcher's observations; most of the GLCs' organizational structures do not reflect a comprehensive IMC practice and implementation. GLCs' organizational structures are mostly in the form of functional and divisional structure in which each department or division operate individually. Based on some of the studied structures, it was revealed that certain marketing communications activities were performed in specialized units and placed under the corporate communications or marketing department. There is no clear indication of interdependency between departments as required in the IMC concept. Finally, the findings in this study will be a great help for the management of GLCs to better utilize the tools in their marketing programmes. Empirical results of the present study will also assist researchers and practitioners in understanding the function of IMC and use them more effectively.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was carried out to determine the level of IMC practices in GLCs based on the four stages of IMC framework. The study also explores senior management's perspectives and initiatives towards IMC's implementation and practices at respective organization. Researcher strongly believed that management of GLCs may find the results of this study very useful especially in formulating and implementing integrated marketing communication programmes for their organizations. In view of the above, researcher suggests further research efforts to focus more specifically on how organizations define elements discouraging IMC such as mind set and structure of organizations. Furthermore, it would be interesting to determine how IMC can assist in improving companies' business performance and achieve financial objectives.

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Towards a Marketing Communications Strategy for Promoting Electric Vehicles to Fleet Managers

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Abstract

This paper explores fleet motor vehicle buyers' attitudes and intentions regarding electric vehicles (EVs). Fleet sales account for over half of all west European new car registrations, with consequent implications for the private used-car market. It follows that the mass marketisation of EVs can only occur if fleet managers incorporate substantial numbers of EVs into their fleets. A survey of 364 UK based commercial and public sector fleet buyers was completed with the aim of identifying personal and organisational factors that might encourage fleet managers to purchase EVs. A model based on the extended theory of planned behaviour guided the research and was estimated using the method of partial least squares. Few of the fleets in the survey included EVs and intention to buy EVs in the future was low, even among fleet managers holding highly favourable attitudes towards electric vehicles.

Keywords

Electric cars, marketing communications, car fleet buyers, promotional strategies, environment.

Introduction

In April 2010 the European Union introduced a set of regulations (introduced in 2012) intended to reduce average EU tailpipe emissions by 40% by the year 2020, based on 2009 levels. The UK government had in fact already committed itself (via the 2008 Climate Change Act) to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the year 2050, including an 80% reduction in transport emissions (Houses of Parliament, 2010). This, the government acknowledged, would require the rapid and extensive development of the market for electric vehicles (EVs), certainly by 2020. In 2013 the government affirmed its support for the mass marketisation of EVs (and other ultra-low emission vehicles) through a series of measures including the part-funding of EV research and development, the provision of a financial subsidy of (currently) up to £5000 against the purchase price of an ultra-low emission vehicle, payment to certain local authorities of half the cost of installing recharging posts, and the offer of a £10 million prize to encourage the development of a non-rechargeable long distance car battery (OLEV, 2013). The stated objective of these measures was to ensure that 50% of all cars and vans would be zero or ultra-low emission by 2050 (Gov.UK, 2013).

At least half of all new vehicle registrations in west Europe are attributable to commercial or public sector fleet sales (Koetse and Hoen, 2014). In the UK, rather more than half of all annual new vehicle registrations (typically 52%-56%) involve fleets of 25 or more vehicles, with a further five per cent of new vehicle sales going to businesses that own fewer than 25 vehicles (Hutchins and Delmonte, 2012; Green, 2013; Gray, 2014). However, fleet sales of *electric* vehicles have been very low: just 4200 units out of a total of 1,265,600 fleet sales in 2013 (Gray, 2014). This matches the low take-up of privately owned EVs among the general public. In 2012 only 1.4% of UK new car sales to private individuals were all-electric (Milmo, 2013).

Clearly, the mass marketisation of EVs will occur only if fleet managers begin purchasing EVs in greater numbers; given that fleet vehicles represent half of all vehicles entering the second-hand private car market. The UK government recognised this in its December 2013 Autumn Budgetary Statement which pledged £5 million for a project designed to prepare *public sector* fleets for EV technology (Gray, 2014). The present study sought (i) to assist policy makers to devise EV marketing communications strategies aimed at fleet managers, and (ii) to help answer the European Commission's call for the development of a model of business consumer attitudes towards the purchase of electric vehicles and for research into fleet buying decisions (Hutchins and Delmonte, 2012). The study dealt only with wholly electric powered vehicles and not with hybrids. This was because hybrids rely on fossil fuels and since purchase decisions relating to hybrids are likely to involve factors different to those connected with EVs (see Sierchula, Bakker, Maat and van Wee, 2014) due possibly to hybrid cars being closer to conventional technologies than is the case with EVs, resulting in less uncertainty.

Marketing communications strategies involve decisions concerning which potential customers to target, the media to be used to reach potential customers, and the themes and messages to incorporate into campaigns (Fill, 2002). The execution of a marketing communications strategy requires knowledge of the preferences and views of target groups. Accordingly, the present study attempted to identify personal and organisational variables likely to encourage fleet managers and their organisations to purchase (or purchase greater quantities of) electric cars. Additionally the research examined the degree to which the extended theory of planned behaviour explains fleet managers' EV purchase intentions. Data was collected through

the distribution of a questionnaire to UK fleet managers and via the administration of the questionnaire at an event run by a trade association concerned with vehicle fleet management.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underlying the study draws on the extended theory of planned behaviour (ETPB) (Conner and Armitage, 1998); the core of which (see Ajzen, 1998) comprises an assumed connection between attitudes and intended behaviour. The latter is hypothesised to depend on (i) perceptions of being able to control performance of the behaviour, and (ii) subjective norm, i.e., beliefs about what other people think about the behaviour. Intended behaviour is posited to represent a sound predictor of actual behaviour. Attitude is regarded as a function of pre-existing beliefs and of the presupposition that performing the behaviour will result in certain outcomes. Subjective norm relies on perceptions of whether significant others regard the behaviour as good or bad. Throughout the theory assumes that decisions are based on the careful consideration of available information.

A number of additional variables have been posited to improve the operational performance of the ETPB (see Conner and Armitage, 1998), some of which are relevant to the present research; namely the strength of pre-existing beliefs, self-efficacy, moral norm, and self-identity. An individual may hold many prior *beliefs* about a behaviour, a number of which will be held more strongly than others and will help determine attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). *Self-efficacy* refers to a person's feelings of capability and competence in a specific sphere. Individuals and organisations tend to engage in (or intend to engage in) behaviours in which they believe they are highly competent. (Self-efficacy is not the same as perceived behavioural control.) *Moral norm* relates to perceptions of the moral correctness of performing a certain behaviour and could represent an antecedent of attitude (Ajzen, 1991). *Self-identity* (in the present context environmental self-identity) involves the ways in which people see themselves as fulfilling the criteria associated with a role (e.g., as 'someone who is concerned about environmental issues' [Sparks and Shepherd, 1992 p.392]) and might influence behaviour via its impact on attitudes (see Conner and Armitage, 1998).

Fleet Buying Behaviour

Certain factors apply to fleet purchase decisions that might not be considered by private car buyers (see Rijnsoever, Farlo and Djist, 2009; Prieto and Caemmerer, 2013). Fleet buyers are known to place great importance on vehicle reliability and maintenance (Lane, 2005), on fuel consumption, and total lifetime vehicle costs (including depreciation) (Nesbitt and Sperling, 2001). Normally, fleet buyers are knowledgeable about the technical aspects of vehicles and should be among the first to be informed (through trade associations, industry magazines and professional colleagues) of advances in vehicle technology (Nesbitt and Sperling, 1998). Company cars are usually driven for more miles than privately owned vehicles, due in part to their use for employees' personal journeys (e.g., commuting to and from work) as well as for business purposes. Sometimes higher grade employees are allocated better quality models than lower status individuals.

Several considerations suggest that fleet buyers should be interested in buying EVs. Vehicles within a fleet can be shared among many drivers and thus may be booked out to employees requiring relatively short journeys; centralised recharging facilities can be established; fuel costs are zero; and research has found that EV maintenance and repair costs are up to 20% lower than for conventional vehicles (Gray, 2014). Nesbitt and Sperling (1998) noted how, given that the annual mileages of fleet vehicles are

on average double those of private household cars, the cost savings accruing to EVs should be particularly attractive to fleet buyers. Fleet vehicle journeys, Nesbitt and Sperling (1998) continued, occur mainly in urban areas (often with fixed daily routes) and are usually fuelled and serviced at a single location. Despite higher purchase prices, the lifetime costs of EVs are, according to Nesbitt and Sperling (2001), lower than for conventional vehicles due to greatly reduced operating expenses. Moreover the use of EVs can improve an organisation's corporate reputation. A study of 14 Dutch and US businesses completed by Sierzchula (2014) confirmed the perceived benefits to a company's public image resulting from the visible use of EVs.

Nevertheless there exist significant barriers to the adoption of EVs by company and public sector fleet buyers. Operational difficulties include restricted range, high purchase price (although prices will fall as the mass production of EVs ensues), long battery recharge durations, battery replacement costs, and the limited availability of charging stations (see Carley, Krause, Lane and Graham, 2013). A survey of 420 fleet managers who did *not* intend purchasing EVs undertaken by the Institute of Car Fleet Managers in 2014 found that 35% of the respondents specified range concerns as their primary reason for eschewing electric vehicles, with 13% citing 'lack of knowledge' (ahead of 'lack of a comprehensive charging structure') (ICFM, 2014). A similar study conducted in the Netherlands by Koetse and Hoen (2014) concluded that company car users' preferences for EVs were substantially lower than for conventional cars due to negative assumptions regarding limited driving ranges, long recharging periods and limited charge point availability.

Although companies purchase fleet vehicles, the vehicles themselves are driven by employees who may hold negative perceptions of EVs (Nesbitt and Sperling, 1998). This could be especially problematic in situations where employees are allowed to purchase their company car at a discount after a certain period (Vavasour and Vignoli, 1999). Drivers of company cars do not themselves buy the fuel consumed by their vehicles, so that EV fuel cost savings have little personal relevance (Koetse and Hoen, 2014).

Further Possible Influences on Fleet Managers' Purchasing Decisions

Literature in the organisational buying field (for reviews see, for example, Johnston and Lewin [1996] and Sheth [1996]) has identified a plethora of variables with the potential to affect corporate purchasing behaviour. Some of these variables are relevant to the present investigation, as follows.

Organisational Factors

Major considerations here include fleet size, organisation structure, sector (public or private), decision making processes, corporate policies on the environment, and employees' opinions regarding the desirability of EVs. Fleet size is relevant because managers of large fleets have greater opportunities for deploying EVs for exclusively short journeys. Structure is important as it may determine whether fleets are purchased centrally or by an organisation's sub-divisions. Decision making processes may involve the number and specialisms of the people concerned with fleet decisions and the degree of formalisation of the purchasing process. For example, can the fleet manager take decisions alone; who are the main stakeholders in fleet decisions? Leggatt and Snoop (2009) observed how the fleet management role was located in disparate departments in different organisations: sometimes in finance, sometimes in human resources, marketing, a secretariat, or in a dedicated transport department. The existence of general corporate policies favouring environmental preservation may encourage a fleet manager seriously to consider buying EVs. A negative organisational factor is the possibility that employees allocated company cars may be opposed to EVs and thus might dissuade fleet managers from buying them.

Personal Factors

These include a fleet manager's training, knowledge and experience of EVs, status within the organisation and degree of authority over decisions, personal attitudes towards the preservation of the physical environment, and attitudes towards risk. Fleet managers who have received training in the techniques of fleet management might analyse the economics of EVs more closely than others. The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association, for instance, offers (in conjunction with the Institute of Car Fleet management) a four day course designed to equip attendees with fleet management skills including asset and risk management, cost analysis, planning, environmental concerns, discounted cash flow and budgetary management. The syllabus incorporates consideration of EVs. Knowledge of EVs might be obtained from fleet management trade association publications, attendance at trade shows, word-of-mouth from colleagues, or from newspaper articles or advertisements.

In some organisations the fleet manager will be a very senior executive who is personally empowered to take high value purchasing decisions; in others the person might be subordinate to, say, a human resources director or finance manager. A fleet manager with positive attitudes about environmental preservation might be more inclined to incorporate EVs into a fleet than managers without this predilection. Electric vehicles are at the forefront of technology and their purchase and use in a fleet will necessarily involve some degree of operational and financial risk. A fleet manager's willingness to accept such risk could affect the person's EV purchasing decisions. The higher the perception of the level of risk associated with fleet EV purchases then possibly the greater the effort expended on the decision.

A model informed by the extended theory of planned behaviour and incorporating the above mentioned considerations is presented in Figure 1.

Methodology

A sampling frame for the investigation was constructed from (i) a rented list of 1000 email addresses of fleet car buyers, (ii) email addresses of members of a fleet managers' professional body (602 contacts excluding 26 appearing in the rented list), and (iii) examination of fleet trade magazines (generating 102 further contacts). A questionnaire (see below) was drafted and pre-tested through discussions with two fleet managers of large organisations (one public and one private) and by face-to-face administration of the document to four fleet managers belonging to a fleet trade association. The final document was emailed in *Survey Monkey* form to all the contacts, resulting in 324 replies (19%). Additionally the questionnaire was distributed at a fleet management trade association event, this exercise generating a further 40 responses. The questionnaire itself contained items relating to the extended theory of planned behaviour plus queries involving personal and organisational variables.

Measurement of the theory of planned behaviour core constructs was undertaken according to Ajzen's (2006) guidelines, as employed in many previous studies (for examples see Pakpour, Zeidi, Emamjomeh, Asefzadeh and Pearson, 2014). Attitude towards electric vehicles was assessed via three reflective items (five-point agree/disagree scales) worded 'Including electric vehicles in my organisation's fleet would be (is) good/beneficial/wise. The internal consistency of this scale as evaluated by Cronbach's alpha was 0.9. An adaptation of a single item recommended by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) was used to assess subjective norm, i.e., 'Most people who are important within this organisation are in favour of electric vehicles' (five-point agree/disagree scale). Perceived behavioural control was measured by adaptations of Ajzen's (2006) two suggested reflective items for tapping this construct: 'I am confident

that if I choose to do so I can introduce electric vehicles into this organisation's fleet' and 'It is up to me whether the organisation uses electric vehicles' (Pearson's $R=0.89$). Self-efficacy was measured formatively using two items adapted from Lee, Huang, Hawkins and Pingree (2008): 'I am fully confident that I have the ability to evaluate the usefulness of EVs for inclusion in the organisation's fleet' and 'I am confident that I know enough about EVs to be able to take correct decisions about whether to buy them' ($R=0.5$). An individual's knowledge and experience of EVs was assessed formatively by three items: 'I have owned or driven an EV'; 'I have obtained a lot of information about EVs from reading trade or other magazines, by attending events, from the Internet or from conversations with colleagues'; and 'I have attended a formal training course in fleet management that covered EVs' ($R=0.25$). A formative index of pre-existing beliefs about EVs was created by asking the respondents (five-point agree/disagree scales) whether they regarded the following as major barriers to EV adoption: range, net purchase price, availability of battery recharge facilities, battery replacement cost. The degree to which a participant thought that buying and using EVs carried a high degree of risk was tapped by a single item (cf. Dowling and Staelin, 1994) worded 'Incorporating EVs into our fleet involves a large amount of risk'. An individual's willingness to accept risk was assessed through three reflective items adapted from Matzler, Grabner and Bidman (2008) and Donthu and Gilliland (1996), i.e., 'When purchasing vehicles for the fleet I tend to feel more comfortable when buying models I am familiar with'; 'I would rather stick with models I usually buy than try models I am not very sure of'; and 'I usually prefer to be safe rather than sorry when taking fleet purchasing decisions' ($\alpha=0.88$).

Moral norm was evaluated via three reflective items informed by Kurland (1995): 'It is morally correct to use electric vehicles'; 'Every socially responsible organisation should consider using EVs'; and 'Fleet managers have a moral responsibility to take EVs seriously' ($\alpha=0.89$). Following Werff, Steg and Keiser (2013), environmental self-identity was measured by three reflective items worded 'Protecting the environment is an important part of who I am'; 'I am very much the type of person who behaves in an environmentally friendly way; and 'I see myself as the type of person who acts to preserve the environment' ($\alpha=0.89$). Behavioural intention was assessed (cf. Ajzen, 2006) by a single item: 'We intend introducing electric vehicle (or more electric vehicles than we already have) to the organisation's fleet'. Actual planned behaviour was evaluated reflectively by two items worded 'We are implementing detailed plans for introducing EVs to our fleet (or for buying more than we already own)' and 'We have put in place policies and processes for selecting and purchasing EVs' ($R=0.88$). The organisational factors included in the questionnaire are listed in Table 1. Queries concerning the types of journey undertaken by fleet vehicles comprised items about whether most journeys were short (up to 60 miles return) or long or mixed. An organisation's geographical coverage was also questioned as this could relate to the availability of charge points. The questionnaire additionally asked for the participant's age category, gender, and for how long the person had worked in fleet management.

As the model contains a mixture of constructs with formative and reflective indicators and because many of the variables were not normally distributed, the model was estimated using the method of partial least squares with bootstrapped standard errors. The constructs with reflective indicators had high reliability statistics (α values and R -squares) and hence were averaged to form composite variables (composite reliability and variance extracted diagnostics obtained from the PLS analysis confirmed the Cronbach's α outcomes).

Results and Conclusion

Descriptive Results

Members of the sample had a median age of 39 years and all were male. On average they had worked in fleet management for 12 years. The fleets in the sample had an average of 744 vehicles (range seven to 59,000). Fifty-five of the fleets (15%) were in the public sector. Only seven of the 364 fleets contained electric vehicles (1.9%), and intention to introduce EVs to fleets (or to increase representation) was low (14% of the sample). Even fewer of the sample members had implemented practical measures for incorporating EVs into fleets (i.e., 12 organisations [2.3%]). Attitude towards EVs was evenly divided across the five categories of the composite formed for the variable, with 40% of the responses falling in the top two divisions and 35% in the bottom two divisions. Similar distributions applied to environmental self-identity and to knowledge and experience of EVs. Subjective norm was low, with just 15% of the participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that important people within the organisation favoured EVs. Moral norm was also low (nine per cent of responses falling in the top two categories of the moral norm composite). A third of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that employee vehicle drivers were likely to be hostile to EVs. Most fleets undertook a mixture of long and short journeys, with a minority operating vehicle share among drivers (see Table 1). Two thirds of the organisations allowed employees to take their cars home at night. Perceived behavioural control and self-efficacy were high (80% and 90% respectively). The use of EVs in fleets was generally regarded as carrying a high degree of risk (80% of responses falling in the top two categories). Thirty per cent of the sample members were personally risk averse, in the sense that they responded in the top two divisions of the risk aversion composite.

Test of the Model

Table 2 presents the significant ($p < 0.05$) pathways emerging from the PLS estimation of the model shown in Figure 1. A striking feature of the results is the absence of a significant link between attitude and intent ($\beta = 0.11$; $t = 0.98$). It seems that even the most favourable attitudes towards electric vehicles do not translate into intentions to purchase them! This obviously creates problems for marketing communications strategy as it implies that marketing messages, policies and (possibly very expensive) activities designed to improve fleet managers' attitudes concerning EVs may be wasted. Clearly, research into the influences upon and the characteristics and moderators of this link is urgently needed. Many of the organisational factors listed as possible determinants of intent in Table 1 failed to attain significance at the 0.05 level; namely fleet size, decision making arrangements, journey type, geographical coverage, the belief that EV use improves organisational image, and whether employees may eventually buy their company cars. Respondent age and number of years in fleet management did not significantly affect purchase intention.

Otherwise the ETPB performed well in the present context. All the hypothesised influences on attitude were significant, as were the posited impacts on the intent variable of risk, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm. Certain organisational factors also affected intent. The finding that organisations with concrete policies for preserving the physical environment were more inclined than others to intend introducing EVs suggests the desirability of campaigns designed to encourage organisations overtly to link their environmental policies to EV purchase. Employee attitudes to EVs warrant further investigation, given that employee drivers' hostility to EVs apparently reduces fleet managers' levels of intent. Employees who are permitted to take their company cars home in the evening might not have off-street parking facilities where batteries can be recharged, possibly leading to negative

employee perceptions of EVs. It follows that day time recharging opportunities at employees' work premises must be provided for employees who cannot recharge at home. Government and or European Commission agencies could perhaps help finance in-house campaigns to promote EVs to employee drivers within organisations.

Fleet managers who believed that incorporating EVs into their fleets carries high levels of financial or operational risk were less likely to intend buying EVs. Hence information campaigns configured to lower the perception of risk are necessary, and should be especially effective among risk averse individuals. Campaigns that seek to reduce perceptions of risk that are delivered through fleet trade media might be particularly valuable as a means of improving perceptions of EV purchase risk. Subjective norm was low, a situation that might be rectified by the government communicating favourable information about EVs to chief executives and other senior managers of fleet-owning organisations. Articles in business magazines and other publications seen by top executives could be a useful way of reaching this specific audience. Knowledge and experience of EVs affected pre-existing beliefs about EVs significantly and favourably. Again this suggests the desirability of government agencies encouraging trade and professional bodies to (i) disseminate information about EVs, (ii) generally stimulate wider media coverage of EVs, and (iii) try in whatever ways are possible to increase business executives' awareness of EVs.

The study revealed that few fleet managers (12 out of 364) were actually implementing practical measures for incorporating EVs (or more EVs) into their fleets. Statistically the link between intent and planned behaviour was significant, but essentially meaningless given the very small number of organisations involved. (Likewise for the significant moderating effect of perceived behavioural control on the relationship between intent and planned behaviour.) Considering the enormous importance of fleet purchases for the volume of new vehicle registrations, and the secondary impact of fleet sales on the second-hand car market, it is clear that both the national UK government and the European Commission need to do a great deal more to motivate fleet managers to buy EVs. Critics of government policy sometimes allege however that state authorities have failed to develop centralised systems for co-ordinating EV related activities, have not rolled out a comprehensive recharging network using a standard multiple-plug interface, and have left private third party investors (rather than government agencies) to promote EVs (see ICFM, 2014). Macharis and De Witte (2012) identified several quite different kinds of company car driver, each with different reasons for using their vehicles, implying the desirability of applying different promotional policies to each group. Government policies could vary with respect to, for example, the specific media used to carry promotional messages, depreciation allowances on vehicles, information on price comparisons, assistance with battery scrappage, or the content of social media campaigns (cf. Stewart, 2012). It is relevant to observe that the Inland Revenue authorities tax individuals who have company cars, on the assumption that such vehicles are a perquisite of employment. This tax could be waived on electric cars. Also worth noting is that the most expensive and luxurious company cars are often allocated to an organisation's most senior managers (Vavasour and Vignali, 1999). If senior and high-profile politicians (e.g., of ministerial or shadow cabinet rank) were to be seen conspicuously using high value electric vehicles their example might be followed by top managers in companies and public sector organisations.

Acknowledgement

This investigation was sponsored by the UK Department of Communities and Local Government and financed by the European Commission as a component of the European Union Regional Development fund Interreg IV project North Sea Electric Mobility Network, grant number CC! 2007CB163PO055; NSR 35-2-6-11.

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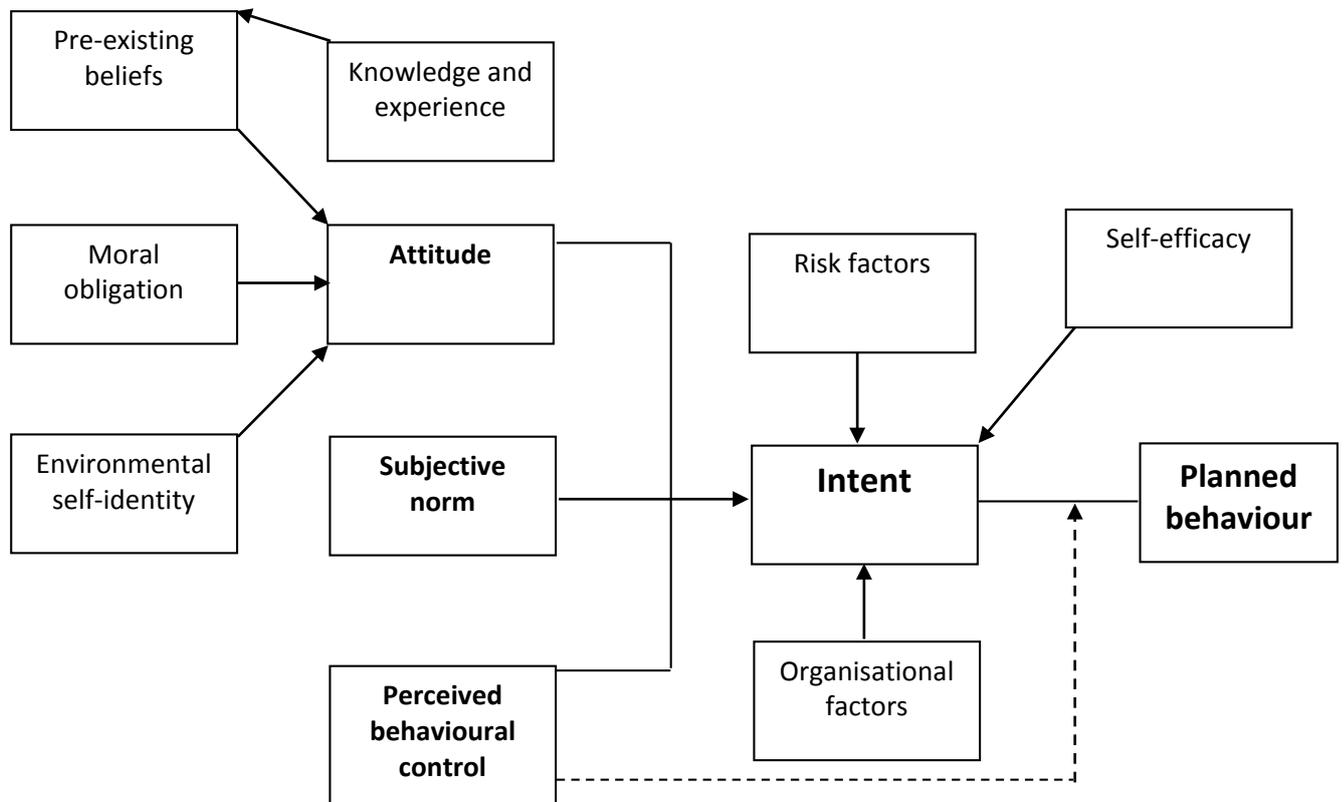


Figure 1. A Suggested Model

Alongside each item is the average value of the answer given by the sample, or the percentage of the participants giving a ‘Yes’ answer, or the percentage responding in the top two categories of a five point scale.

Table 1. Organisational Factors

Size of fleet	744
Sector	85% private
Is fleet buying centralised or decentralised?	80% centralised
If you already use EVs how many do you own?	4
Who takes fleet buying decisions:	
- yourself acting alone	30%
- the chief executive	14%
- another department, e.g. HR or Finance	19%
- a team?	37%
Is the fleet’s geographical journey coverage national or regional?	68% regional
Does the organisation have formal policies favouring environmental preservation?	28% Yes
Senior management believes that using EVs will improve the organisation’s image	14% Agree/Strongly Agree
Average numbers of hours per day for which a fleet vehicle is in use	4.5
Types of journey undertaken:	
- Mainly short	30%
- Mainly long	10%
- Mixture of short and long	60%
Are individual vehicles shared among several drivers?	34% Yes
Do employees keep their fleet vehicles overnight?	64% Yes
Can employees eventually purchase their fleet vehicle?	12% Yes
Employees are likely to be hostile towards electric vehicles?	33 % Agree/Strongly Agree

Table 2. Significant Influences

	Beta	T-value
Influences on Intent:		
- Perceived level of risk	.27	2.33
- Attitude towards risk	.28	2.56
- Subjective norm	.36	3.04
- Perceived behavioural control	.27	2.42
Organisational influences on Intent		
- Number of hours per day for which fleet vehicles are in use	.26	3.03
- The organization already owns some EVs	.29	3.14
- The organisation already owns some EVs	.31	3.06
- The organisation has policies on environmental protection	.32	2.92
- Employees are hostile towards EVs	.25	2.88
- Employees take their vehicles home at night		
Influence of Intent on Planned Behaviour	.25	2.25
Moderating influence of perceived behavioural control on the link between intent and planned behaviour	.01	2.67
Influences on Attitude		
- Environmental self-identity	.36	3.93
- Moral norm	.29	3.03
- Pre-existing beliefs	.25	2.44
Influence of Knowledge and Experience on pre-existing beliefs	.41	3.98

Understanding the Complexity of Customer Advocacy Intentions Resulting from Continuance Commitment and Its Antecedents

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Abstract

The role of continuance commitment in the relationship marketing literature is highly elusive due to the mixed findings reported, thus illuminating the need for further research along this line of enquiry. This study aims to add clarity between the constructs of continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions by taking a sample of 155 international students from within a Thai mobile phone telecommunications service industry. This research also evaluates two potential antecedents of continuance commitment namely (1) perceived switching cost and (2) discount and related packages offers. Through Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the results confirm the existence of a positive relationship between continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions, as well as both aforementioned antecedents serving as significant predictors of the continuance commitment behavior. As, additionally, there is no measurable harm or hindrance to be expected or anticipated on customer advocacy intentions from continuance commitment, continuance-based relationship marketing strategies can also be recognized as being useful in the development of overall relationship marketing plans.

Keywords

Customer advocacy intentions, continuance commitment, word of mouth, perceived switching costs, discount and packages offers, constraint-based relationships

Introduction

Marketeers are always interested to know those factors that enhance customer advocacy intentions (Morgan, and Hunt 1994; Fullerton 2003, 2005, 2011; Gounaris, Stathakopoulos, and Athanassopoulos 2003). The construct of customer advocacy intentions, which is also known as word-of-mouth intentions or attitudinal loyalty, has been extensively studied in the last two decades. It is recognized as one of the most important gauges to evaluate the likelihood of a customer's willingness to recommend his/her service provider in front of others (Dick and Basu 1994; Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra 2002; Evanschitzky et al. 2006). There is an academic consensus among marketing scholars that constructs such as perceived service quality, customer satisfaction and trust are all positively related to customer advocacy intentions (Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Lee, Huang, and Hsu 2007; De Matos and Rossi 2008; Fullerton 2011).

On the other side, when we take into account the role of commitment relating to customer advocacy intentions, marketing scholars have highlighted three types of commitment; namely affective (desire-based), continuance (cost-based) and normative (obligation-based) commitments (Bansal, Irving, and Taylor 2004; De Matos and Rossi 2008; Fullerton 2011). For the most part, marketing scholars have ascertained that affective commitment is also positively related to customer advocacy intentions (Fullerton 2003; Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Lee, Huang, and Hsu 2007). In contrast, when we take into account the role of cost-based commitment, that is also known as, "high sacrifice commitment" (Harrison-Walker 2001) or "calculative commitment" (Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos 2005) in the marketing literature, mixed findings are reported with respect to its effect on customer advocacy intentions (De Matos and Rossi 2008). For instance, there is an ongoing debate taking place within this particular domain as to whether those customers who consider themselves being within a 'lock-in' state with their service providers will still be likely to recommend their service providers to others or not. In this sense, the effect of continuance commitment on customer advocacy intentions is highly elusive within the marketing literature. Empirical evidences do not reveal a clear answer to this question. There are some studies that reveal a significant, positive and direct link (Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Lee, Huang, and Hsu 2007); whilst others studies ascertain a significant but negative and direct link (Fullerton, 2003; 2005; 2011; Ranaweera and Menon, 2013), with some even divulging no significant, direct relationship at all (Harrison-Walker 2001; Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra 2002; Chu and Li 2012). Thus, considering these mixed findings, it is argued that further study is needed to explore the complexity of the relationship between continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions. This current study aims to provide contributions to further enable the discourse. In addition, this research also aims to explore the antecedents of continuance commitment that relate to the costs and benefits orientation, namely (1) discount and packages offers and (2) perceived switching cost influences, that should help us better understand whether these proposed antecedents are actually found to serve as significant predictors of continuance commitment or not.

This study is one of the pioneering Asian-based customer perspective studies in understanding the antecedents of continuance commitments as well as the complex relationships that exists between continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions within the telecommunications sector. We take into account that most of the research along this line has been conducted in Western-based retail service contexts (e.g. Harrison-Walker 2001; Fullerton 2003, 2005; Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Fullerton 2011; Ranaweera and Menon 2013).

The following sections of this paper will focus on relevant aspects of our literature review with an aim of helping elucidate the complexity that exists between continuance commitment and customer

advocacy intentions. After establishing and developing the hypotheses proposing the conceptual model for this study, the research methodology and data analysis will be presented. Finally, the discussion section will cover the most important theoretical and practical implications derived as the conclusive findings of this research.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Understanding Continuance Commitment and Its Relationship with Customer Advocacy Intentions, Perceived Switching Costs and Discount And Packages Offers

Continuance Commitment and Customer Advocacy Intentions

Odekerken-Schröder and Bloemer (2004) studied the health-care industry of Belgium and reported that constraint-based commitment encouraged healthcare customers to continue their service provider relationships. Furthermore, several marketing scholars posit that, due to certain economic benefits such as convenient location, service provider expertise, strong interpersonal relationships with employees of the service provider, continuance commitment should also be considered as an antecedent of customer advocacy intentions (Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Lee, Huang, and Hsu 2007; Chu, and Li 2012). For instance, Evanschitzky et al. (2006) study of a Western European mass transit service provider obtained a large sample of 2,389 observations. These scholars found a positive relationship between continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions. Similarly, Lee, Huang and Hsu (2007) conducted a study involving a cross section of different retail service contexts, such as food, coffee shop, theater and cosmetics sectors. They ascertain that continuance commitment had a general and broad positive effect on customer advocacy intentions. Taking into account the findings of the aforementioned studies, we hypothesize that within the context of telecommunication sector, continuance commitment will be positively correlated with customer advocacy intentions. Therefore, we present our first hypothesis that is given below;

H1: Continuance commitment directly and positively affects customer advocacy intentions

Continuance Commitment and Perceived Switching Costs

Aydin and Özer (2005) define perceived switching costs as “switching costs [that] can be seen as a cost that deters customers from demanding a rival firm’s brand”. According to them, these costs can be monetary (sunk and termination costs) as well as psychological (a fear of not being treated as well by a new service provider). In this sense, scholars also argue that customers do feel a certain level of anxiety when they think of switching towards a new service provider due to the fact that they have not tried the new service provider, and therefore this risk deters them from switching (Sharma and Patterson 2000). Bendapudi and Berry (1997) discuss constraint-based factors such as switching costs, and posit that these will lead to constraint-based motivations. Moreover, empirical studies also show evidence for a positive relationship between perceived switching costs and continuance commitment (Fullerton 2003; Bansal, Irving, and Taylor 2004). For instance, Fullerton (2003) experimentally reveals that when customers have measurable levels of continuance commitment, their switching intentions will tend to be on the lower side. Bansal, Irving and Taylor (2004) customer sample study within the Canadian auto-repair market found also that perceived switching costs are positively related to continuance commitment. In order to confirm whether this relationship will exist in the telecommunications industry, we present our second hypothesis in the following manner;

H2: Perceived switching costs directly and positively affect continuance commitment

Continuance Commitment and Discount and Packages Offers

Evanschitzky *et al.* (2006) posit that various incentives such as discount vouchers and membership loyalty programs provide meaningful benefits to customers, which, in turn, serve to deter a customer's intention towards new service provider. These benefits force him/her to maintain a longer term relationship with the existing service provider. This looks logical due to the fact that when customers get various benefits, they are more likely to become enthusiastic advocates on behalf of their service providers (Lee, Huang, and Hsu 2007). Nowadays, within the context of telecommunication industry, several companies offer free talk time, discounted internet, sms and call packages with the aim to enhance perceived economic benefits. In this regard, Ou *et al.* (2011) study Taiwanese department store customers and found that minimum purchase gift cards, membership card rebates and lottery draws increase customer dependence on the department stores and these loyalty programs deter them from switching towards a new , alternative department store. Along this line, we hypothesize that discount and packages offers will lead to continuance commitment within the context of telecommunications market. We present our third and last hypothesis as below;

H3: Discount and package offers directly and positively affect continuance commitment

The hypothesized model of this paper is given in below in the Figure 1.

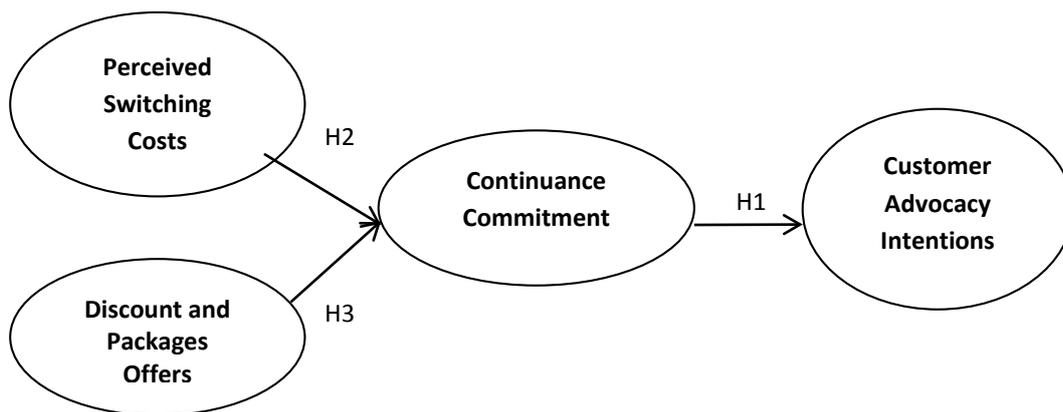


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of this research

Methodology

Measurement

In developing a reliable measurement design to evaluate the proposed model being hypothesized, a three-item scale for customer advocacy intentions was used from the study of Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996). Within our six-item construct for continuance commitment, the first four items were taken from the study of Schechter (1985), whilst the last two items were derived from the study of Harrison-Walker (2001). All of these six items were also evaluated by Harrison-Walker (2001) in their study of the hair-salon and veterinary industry. A four-item construct for perceived switching costs was adopted from the studies of Jones, Mothersbaugh and Beatty (2002) and Burnham, Frels and Mahajan (2003). All of these four items were also evaluated by Aydin and Özer (2005) in their study of the Turkish telecommunications industry. For the construct of discount and packages offers, two items relating to lucky draws and discounted packages have been conceptualized from the study of Ou *et al.* (2011),

whereas the other two items were developed by the authors of this research study after the detailed discussion with two doctoral students in marketing group and five customers in Thai telecommunication industry. All of the items were administered on a seven-point Likert scale.

Sample and Data Collection

Based on the literature review, the hypothesized model of this study has been tested by taking an international student sample of mobile phone service providers within Thailand's telecommunication industry. The sample was taken from within a degree awarding institute, based in Thailand. With respect to establishing a degree of generalization, the sample consisted of international students who represented nationals of twelve Asian countries. A total of 159 responses were collected through online and paper-pencil questionnaires, providing participants with an incentive offer for some food coupons and a pen-drive IT memory based on a lucky draw. After initial screening, data entries of four questionnaires were deleted based on giving wrong answer to the attentive question "what is the name of the capital of Thailand". This cross-check question was introduced as a quality check in order to detect any non-rigorous form filling behavior of the questionnaire by the respondents. A total of 155 responses were used in the final data analysis. The twelve Asian countries and their respective number of national students (in brackets) that participated in this survey include Myanmar (26), Pakistan (25), Vietnam (25), Thailand (14), India (11), Nepal (10), Cambodia(10), Sri Lanka (9), Bangladesh (6), Indonesia (5), Malaysia (2), China (2), whilst 10 respondents' nationality could not be identified.

Survey results showed that 53 (34%) respondents belonged to Advanced Info Service, 79 (51%) customers belonged to DTAC, 22 (14%) belonged to True Move while 1 (1%) respondent did not reveal his/her mobile phone service provider. 85 (55%) respondents were male, while 70 (45%) respondents were female. 9 (6%) respondents reveal their age as below 20 years, 114 (74%) respondents were between 20-30 years and 31 (20%) were above than 30 years. 48 (31%) classify themselves as bachelors, 87 (56%) were masters students while 18 (12%) belonged to the 'others' category, whereas only 1(1%) did not answer to this question. In term of mobile service use, 58 (37%) respondents were using their mobile phone service provider service less than one year, and similarly 58 (37%) respondents were in the category of 1-2 years. Moreover, 12 (8%) respondents revealed that they had been using the services of their existing mobile phone service provider since last 2-3 years, and similarly 12 (8%) respondents classified themselves in the category of 3-4 years. Whereas, the rest of the respondents 14 (9%) were using the services more than four years.

Common Method Variance (CMV) was examined through Herman's one factor test for the whole model (Podsakoff et al. 2003). An un-rotated principal component factor analysis was conducted and it revealed that as the first factor explained no more than 32% of the total variance and thus failed to explain the majority of the variance, there is no serious threat to be concerned about with respect to CMV within this study.

Analysis and Results

Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) has been applied to evaluate the measurement model and the hypothesis testing. Ideally, Covariance Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) is the most rigorous SEM technique to apply; however, there are limitations to its applicability. PLS-SEM has many distinctive advantages over CB-SEM which is why it has received considerable attention in the field of customer behavior research (Hair et al. 2012). For instance, while it achieves high

levels of statistical power even with a small sample and it also yields similarly reliable results to CB-SEM in large datasets (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2011). Through the meta-analysis of over two hundred PLS-SEM based articles in leading marketing journals, Hair et al. (2012) reveal that marketing scholars apply PLS-SEM due to non-normality of data, small sample sizes and/or presence of formative constructs in their respective models. We have applied PLS-SEM in this research due to the concern of small sample size.

SmartPLS version 2.0.M3 was used for path modeling and data analysis (Ringle, Wende, and Will 2005). It should be noted that prior to testing the relationships among variables, a comprehensive examination of outer and inner structural model is required for the precision of PLS-SEM estimates (Hair et al., 2012).

Outer Model Evaluation: Reliability and Validity

For outer model assessment, indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity should be examined (Hair et al., 2012). The results of outer model evaluation are shown in Table 1 and 2. All of the item loadings were greater than 0.50 which is quite satisfactory. (Hulland 1999). Construct reliability can be achieved if Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct is greater than the threshold value of 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). For convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.50 for each construct (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). All values of CR and AVE for each construct exceeded the minimum threshold values as shown in Table 1. Discriminant validity of all the four latent variables were assessed through Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria. As the square root of each construct’s AVE should be greater than the construct’s highest correlation with any other construct, table 2 depicts that satisfactory discriminant validity was broadly achieved. Having acceptable construct reliability and validity, the measurement model was able to be subsequently used to test the hypothesized relationships.

Table 1. Summary of outer model evaluation: item reliability, construct reliability and convergent validity

Latent Construct	Loadings	CR	AVE
<u>CUSTOMER ADVOCACY INTENTIONS</u>		0.861	0.827
I say positive things about X to other people	0.901		
I recommend X to someone who seeks my advice	0.926		
I encourage friends and relatives to do business with X	0.901		
<u>CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT</u>		0.861	0.509
The longer I stay with X, the harder it is to leave	0.710		
It would be difficult for me to adapt to a new service provider	0.790		
Many changes would have to occur in my present circumstances to cause me to stop doing business with X	0.671		
I would give up a lot if i stopped doing business with X	0.727		
I continue to do business with X because it would be difficult to make a change	0.735		
	0.638		

Changing to a new service provider would be impractical		0.800	0.503
PERCEIVED SWITCHING COSTS			
Switching to a new service provider causes considerable monetary cost	0.762		
I am not sure that the billing of a new service provider would be better for me	0.776		
Even i have enough information, comparing the service providers with each other takes a lot of energy, time and effort	0.708		
To switch to a new service provider, i should compare all service providers (on account of services, coverage area, billing, etc.)	0.574		
DISCOUNT AND PACKAGES OFFERS			
X provides me relatively better packages and value added services	0.725	0.838	0.565
X provides me free talk time and messages	0.790		
X frequently announces lucky draws in which i try to participate	0.691		
X frequently offer discounted or cheap packages (talk time/SMS/internet) which i usually subscribe	0.796		

Table 2. Outer model evaluation: construct correlations and discriminant validity

Latent Constructs	1	2	3	4
Customer advocacy intentions	0.909			
Continuance commitment	0.454	0.713		
Perceived Switching Costs	0.228	0.369	0.709	
Discount and packages offers	0.558	0.436	0.222	0.752
Square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) on the diagonal				

Inner Model Evaluation: Predictive Relevance

After having acceptable evidence of reliability and validity through outer model evaluation, the inner model assessment can be conducted (Hair et al., 2012). The coefficient of determination (R^2), the Average Variance Accounted for (AVA) and the Stone-Geisser test (Q^2) are the indices to test the predictive relevance of the structural model (Fornell and Cha 1994; Hair et al. 2012). The results of inner model evaluation are shown in table 3.

All of the individual R^2 's for each endogenous construct exceeded the threshold value of 0.10 (Falk and Miller 1992). The R^2 values obtained for continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions are greater than the threshold value, and therefore, these are considered acceptable. The AVA is calculated as the mean of the R^2 's of all the endogenous constructs. In this study, the AVA value was 0.24

which is quite acceptable (Falk and Miller 1992). As a high level of R^2 is most desirable the integrity of the results also depends on the research fields. R^2 in customer behavior studies is considered to be high if greater than 0.20 (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2011). The value of Q^2 can be calculated through blindfolding process in which the cross-validated redundancy is obtained for each endogenous construct and this value should be greater than zero in order to have an acceptable value of predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2012). The values of Q^2 obtained for continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions are greater than zero and confirm the predictive relevance.

Table 3. Hypotheses results and inner model evaluation

Hypothesis No.	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta (path coefficient)	t-values	p-values	Result*
1	Continuance commitment	Customer advocacy intentions	0.454	9.962	0.000	Supported
2	Perceived switching costs	Continuance commitment	0.287	6.174	0.000	Supported
3	Discount and packages offers	Continuance commitment	0.373	8.290	0.000	Supported

R^2 and Q^2 values for customer advocacy intentions obtained 0.206 and 0.163, respectively

R^2 and Q^2 values for continuance commitment obtained 0.269 and 0.123, respectively

AVA of the model obtained: 0.238

* Significant at 0.01-level

Hypothesis Testing of Structural Model

A nonparametric bootstrapping approach (5,000 samples, 155 cases) was used to examine the precision of the PLS estimates and to test the hypothesized relationships (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2011).

With respect to continuance commitment effect on customer advocacy intentions, hypothesis H1 is evaluated. A positive relationship between continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions ($\beta=0.45$, t -value=9.6) reveals that an increase in the continuance commitment causes an increase in customer advocacy intentions; therefore, **H1 is supported**.

With respect to the antecedents of continuance commitment, the hypotheses H2 and H3 are examined. For H2, the role of perceived switching costs has been investigated as the antecedents of continuance commitment. The construct of perceived switching costs establishes a positive relationship with continuance commitment ($\beta=0.29$, t -value=6.17) **supporting H2**. This implies that an increase in the perceived switching costs in a customer's mind will increase his/her lock-in state with the existing service provider. With respect to the last hypothesis, the impact of discounts and packages offered by mobile phone service providers is evaluated as an antecedent of continuance commitment. Result reveal that there exists a positive, significant and direct relationship between these constructs ($\beta=0.313$, t -value=8.29) therefore **H3 is supported**. This particular finding illustrates that the greater the discount and packages offered by a mobile phone service providers, the greater the customers will feel difficulty to switch towards a new service provider, therefore, lock-in state is to be further enhanced with the existing service provider.

Discussion

This research intends to add meaningful contribution in the existing marketing literature in two distinct ways. Firstly, it adds clarity among the complex and highly elusive relationship between constructs of continuance commitment and advocacy intentions. Secondly, this study confirms two antecedents of continuance commitment namely perceived switching costs and discount and packages offered by service providers in the Thai telecommunication mobile phone service industry. This is recognized in an Asian-based customer perspective.

A stream of marketing scholars have reinforced the concept of continuance commitment within relationship marketing programs as serving to have a negative, almost undermining relationship when viewed alongside the construct of advocacy intentions (Fullerton 2003, 2005, 2011; Ranaweera, and Menon 2013). This research contradicts the findings of these scholars and posits that continuance commitment is also a comparably important and vital factor for the relationship marketing program, as it not only creates a lock-in state in customer's mind, but also helps to increase the likelihood of customer referrals. This research highlights some contradictory results when compared with the study of Ranaweera and Menon (2013), which was recently conducted within the UK's telecommunications industry. Our research finding though is consistent with the findings of Evanschitzky et al. (2006), Lee, Huang and Hsu (2007). There are also other marketing scholars who ascertain the role of constraint-based motivation in order to nurture the long-lasting relationships within the domain of retail service markets (Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Odekerken-Schröder, and Bloemer 2004; Aydin and Özer 2005). Therefore, we posit that there is no ill-effect to be found between the constructs of continuance commitment and advocacy intentions and thus marketers can add termination/switching fines while providing best possible service to their customers without the fear necessarily of losing advocacy support from the consumer.. The finding of this research is consistent with the work of Bansal, Irving and Taylor (2004) with respect to the antecedent role of perceived switching costs with continuance commitment. While increasing perceived switching costs, Marketers should also focus on various customized talk-time, sms and internet discounted packages, as well as free talk-time and lucky draw offers so that customers should think of these comparative benefits before considering a switching intention decision. The development of a reliable and valid construct of discounts and packages, as well as its role as an antecedent towards continuance commitment is also a significant contribution of this study.

The scope of this study can further be extended into next phase while considering its limitations. One should give some consideration to the generalization of the findings of this research as student samples were employed to evaluate the conceptual model. As the study sought to understand the broad acceptance scope of this phenomenon and selected international, cross Asian culture contexts, care should also be taken to generalize the findings on a Thai customer behavior in the Thai telecommunication industry. As pioneering Asia-based research of continuance commitments within the telecommunications sector, further research should be considered. A more detailed cross-cultural study in a host nation context may be useful to elaborate the generalizability and variances underlying patterns that exist between constraint-based motivation and customer advocacy intentions. A comparison between various service contexts can also serve as a useful context so as to consolidate the present findings not only from a cross cultural context within Asia, but more from a cross service sectorial context to the relevance of commitment and switching intentions in the service industries. Another stream of future research is also viable to understand the antecedents of continuance commitment as there is little empirical support found in evaluating those factors that may cause increased (or decreased) lock-in state while developing relationship marketing plans.

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2

**BRAND
COMMUNICATIONS**

The Evolving Nature of Political Brands: A Comparative Study Exploring the Internal and External Brand Orientations of David Cameron's Conservative Party from 2010 to 2015

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Working Paper

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the internal brand identity and external brand image of the UK Conservative Party prior the 2015 UK General Election. This study builds on the work of Pich (2012) that generated insight into the internal and external orientations of David Cameron's Conservative Party before the 2010 UK General Election. The findings from both studies will be compared and contrasted to create a deeper understanding of the evolution of the UK Conservative brand, which will add to the limited longitudinal studies in political branding research. As there are very few frameworks to explore both brand identity and brand image, this research will adopt the *brand identity-image network* developed in Pich (2012) as a tool to structure and explore the internal and external perspectives. Furthermore, this highlights an opportunity to critically assess the operationalisation of the *brand identity-image network* beyond the work of Pich (2012). The findings will have implications not only for political parties but also for politicians, candidates and other political entities. Organisations will be able to evaluate their brands comparatively and

longitudinally from an internal and external orientation. This will also highlight whether their projected brand identity is coherent with the understood external brand image. Furthermore, this will also reveal if deep seated associations and imagery have evolved or adapted between the 2010 and 2015 UK General Election. Ultimately, this research may provide political entities a mechanism to periodically understand their brand from a dualistic perspective.

Keywords

Brand image; brand identity; political brands

Study Motivation

There is a paucity of longitudinal and comparative studies within the area of political marketing with a distinct focus on political branding (Baines *et al* 2011; Ioannides 2010; Smith and Speed 2011). Furthermore, there are explicit calls for more research in this area that will ultimately assist political entities understanding their political offering and environment (Baines and Harris 2011; Dann *et al.* 2007; Ormrod 2011; Ormrod *et al.* 2007). In order for the subject area to develop, researchers must revisit and reapply established theory, topics and concepts which will reveal a deeper understanding in pursuit of theory development (Baines and Harris 2011; Dann *et al.* 2007; Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy 2007).

Political brands are complex and multifaceted entities (French and Smith 2010; Peng and Hackley 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Pich *et al.* 2014). However, there are calls for more in-depth research and understanding focused on political brands particularly from an internal and external perspective (Needham 2006; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Pich 2012; Smith and French 2009). The limited research that explored a political brand from a dual perspective adopted the concepts of brand identity and brand image (Pich 2012). Brand identity can be conceptualised as the intended projection formulated and communicated by the brand's creator with the aim of attempting to establish a desired identity in the mind of the consumer (de Chernatony 2007). In contrast, brand image can be considered as the current associations perceived and formulated in the mind of the consumer which is often out of control of the brand's creator (Nandan 2005; Rekom *et al.* 2006). The concepts of brand identity and brand image are considered relational nevertheless distinct (Nandan 2005) and can be adopted to explore whether a communication gap exists between the two concepts. The possibility of gaps between identity and image need to be routinely monitored to prevent potential crises for the brand (Davies and Chun 2002; de Chernatony 1999). In corporate branding it is argued that gaps between identity and image can be considered negatively and ideally identity and image should be aligned (Davies and Chun 2002:145). Similarly, the gap needs to be as small as possible or eliminated for the brand to be considered strong, trusted and valued which can also increase loyalty (Nandan 2005). Nevertheless in order for identity-image gaps to be measured, the two concepts have to be qualitatively explored and assessed to determine whether there are any gaps between brand identity and brand image (de Chernatony 2007).

Pich (2012) explored the internal and external orientation of the UK Conservative Party brand prior the 2010 UK General Election. More specifically, the study generated a deeper understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand identity from the perspective of internal members ranging from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, European Members of Parliament and professional and voluntary-grass-roots members. In addition, the study explored the external political brand image of the

party from the perspective of young adults aged 18-24 years. Exploring the political brand from a dual perspective revealed its complex and multilayered nature and highlighted the lack of internal coherency to the UK Conservative Party 'brand identity'. Moreover the study presented the idea that the external political 'brand image' was ambiguous and remained associated with previously held perceptions. Further, Pich (2012) indicated some disparity between how the political brand was communicated and how it was understood prior the 2010 UK General Election. This incoherency between its internal brand identity external brand image was contradictory to the existing literature on successful brands (Gurau and Ayadi 2011; Smith and French 2009; Smith and Saunders 1990). Nevertheless Pich (2012) highlighted some detoxification of the 'Tory brand' and uncovered some key problems that still faced the UK Conservative Party including that they focused upon the paradox of a 'broad church' whilst factional in nature. Therefore the work by Pich (2012) seems an appropriate study to contextualise the demand for more longitudinal and comparative research (Baines *et al* 2011; Ioannides 2010; Smith and Speed 2011). Responding to the identified gap, this research will provide an in-depth current understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from a dual perspective prior the 2015 UK General Election and highlight how/if the political brand has developed following the 2010 UK General Election.

Research Objectives

This research focuses on three objectives. The first objective will explore the political brand identity of the UK Conservative Party prior the 2015 UK General Election from an internal orientation. The second objective will generate a deeper understanding of the political brand image the UK Conservative Party from an external perspective. The third objective will compare and contrast the findings with the insight generated in Pich (2012) with the aid of the brand identity-image network

Research Method

Stage one will involve conducting in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders of the UK Conservative Party, spanning all three elements; Parliamentary, Professional and Voluntary. Stage two of the study will focus on conducting focus group discussions with external stakeholders aged 18-24 years. As young citizens aged 18-24 years were considered an untapped and potentially lucrative market and specifically targeted by David Cameron's Conservative Party (Ashcroft 2010; Charles 2009) it can be argued that it is appropriate to consider young citizens aged 18-24 years as external stakeholders. Data collection will be conducted by the researcher between 1st December 2014 and 6th May 2015 (polling day - UK General Election). The transcribed in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions will be thematically analysed using a two-staged process based on the work of Butler-Kisber (2010).

As this study is a longitudinal and comparative case exploring the development of the UK Conservative Party brand from a dual standpoint; this research will adopt the *brand identity-image network* developed in Pich (2012) as a tool to structure and explore the internal and external perspectives. The '*brand identity-image network*' (Pich 2012) built on the work of Kapferer (2008) and Bosch *et al.* (2006) and considered the applicability of the findings to the brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008) and the brand image framework (Bosch *et al.* 2006). Furthermore, this highlights an opportunity to critically assess the operationalisation of the *brand identity-image network* beyond the work of Pich (2012) and reaffirms that there are very few tools to understand both internal identity and external image.

Findings

The findings will reveal the current internal understanding of the political brand identity of the UK Conservative Party. Further, the findings will highlight the current image of the political brand from the perspective of young adults aged 18-24. The findings will determine the coherency and consistency of the UK Conservative Party brand compared to the original findings uncovered in Pich (2012). This will reveal if the political brand identity-image has evolved or adapted between the 2010 and 2015 UK General Elections.

Original Value

As there are limited studies that offer longitudinal and comparative research in the area of political branding, this research will seek to address this gap in the body of knowledge (Baines *et al* 2011; Ioannides 2010; Smith and Speed 2011). More specifically, this study will compare and contrast its findings with the work of Pich (2012), which will offer current and retrospective understanding of the UK Conservative Party brand from a dual perspective. This will also answer calls for more in-depth research devoted to political brands from an internal and external orientation (Needham 2006; Phipps *et al.* 2010; Pich 2012; Smith and French 2009), which will ultimately provide more insight into brand identity and brand image research (Alsem and Kosteljik 2008; Chen 2010; Davies and Chun 2002).

Theoretical/Managerial Relevance

The findings have implications not only for political parties but also for politicians, candidates and other political entities. The findings will offer organisations guidance of how to evaluate their brands comparatively and longitudinally from an internal and external orientation. This will also highlight whether their projected brand identity is coherent with the understood external brand image.

As this study intends to adopt the *brand identity-image network* developed in Pich (2012) as a tool to structure and explore the internal and external perspectives; this will provide an opportunity to critically assess the operationalisation of the *brand identity-image network* beyond the work of Pich (2012). This will ultimately provide political entities with a mechanism to understand their political offering and environment from a dual perspective, which will allow them to adapt or reposition their brand based on their findings (Baines and Harris 2011; Dann *et al.* 2007; Ormrod 2011; Ormrod *et al.* 2007). This revisiting and reapplication will also offer theoretical development in the field of political marketing (Baines and Harris 2011; Dann *et al.* 2007; Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy 2007).

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Transforming into a Thought Leader with the Big Brand Idea: The Case of “Jaago Re” with Tata Tea

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Extended Abstract

More than one hundred years ago, Swami Vivekananda who is considered to be one of India's most prominent philosopher and social reformer, gave a clarion call to the youth at that time : “Arise, Awake, and Stop Not Till the Goal is Reached”, at the World Parliament of Religions in the year 1893. Over one hundred years later in the year 2007, Tata Tea gave a similar call to the youth of the India with their slogan “*Jaago Re*” implying awaken and not just wake up.

The Tata Group is the oldest and among the most respected industrial conglomerates in India with diverse interests from steel to software, salt, retailing, hotels, hospitals, automobiles etc. The Tata Group foray into beverages started when Tata Finlay was set up as a joint venture between Tata Sons and the UK-based tea plantation company, James Finlay and Company in 1962. In the year 1983, Tata Tea was born after James Finlay sold his shareholding to Tata. The company set out on a path of global ambitions with the acquisition of Tetley in the year 2000. This was followed by a string of strategic acquisitions including Good Earth, Jemca, Vitax, Eight O' Clock Coffee and Himalayan Water.

Tata Tea was renamed as Tata Global Beverages with effect from July 2, 2010. All companies in the Tata Tea group would eventually become individual brands. Thus, the new company would be one big cohesive group of brands. As a result of this restructuring, Tata Tea became a brand in the new scheme of things along with Eight O Clock Coffee, Tetley, Himalayan and Tata Coffee. This would enable the company in its transformation to become a global leader in the branded “good-for-you” beverages through innovation, strategic acquisition and organic growth.

Brand Tata Tea was launched in 1985 and started the polypack revolution in tea in India. Tata Tea was built on the support of the garden fresh story and a unique and powerful platform of ‘Asli Taazgi’ (freshness) and rapidly began to eat into Brooke Bond share and registering gains against branded and local competition alike. Currently, Tata Tea has four variants with distinct identities and end benefits: Tata Tea Premium, Tata Tea Gold, Tata Tea Agni and Tata Tea Life.

In the year 2007, though Tata Tea was the market leader, it was not perceived so by all the sections of Indian society. Also, the category as a whole was seen to be boring and hardly engaging with the youth while other beverages like coffee were doing it far better. The challenge was to unify the four variant brands with their own distinct identities under one positioning platform. The solution was to move beyond product benefits to reposition the role of tea from a “wake-up” drink to a medium of “social awakening” in the consumer’s life.

Thus was born the campaign “Jaago Re” .. to lead the brand from a position of volume leadership to thought leadership. This 360 degrees communication strategy transformed the way beverages are marketed by positioning tea as a catalyst for social change. “Jaago Re” campaign aligned itself with the 2009 General Elections being held in India at that point of time and became a cry for social awakening and arousing people from their slumber to go and vote during the elections.“ Jaago Re ” campaign was a huge success and Brand Tata Tea now enjoys a super brand status. The brand idea through its astute execution justifies how a social cause can be used to create brand leadership in a category that is habit driven and has already well established players.

The market shares of various brands with their market shares over the last four years is given in Table – 1 below :

TABLE – 1 (Brand & Company Share for Tea in India)

Brand	Company name (GBO)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Tata Tea	Tata Global Beverages Ltd	20.50	19.40	19.40	20.00	20.70
Brooke Bond Red Label	Unilever Group	12.10	11.50	11.60	12.10	12.10
Brooke Bond	Unilever Group	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.50	8.70
Lipton	Unilever Group	7.20	6.90	7.00	7.20	7.30
Wagh Bakri	Gujarat Tea Processors & Packers Ltd	4.90	5.40	5.60	5.90	6.10
Kanan Devan	Tata Global Beverages Ltd	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60
Duncans	Duncans Industries Ltd	3.40	3.30	3.10	3.00	3.00
Tetley	Tata Global Beverages Ltd	1.60	1.80	2.00	2.20	2.40
Society	Amar Tea Pvt Ltd	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60
Twinings	Associated British Foods Plc	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40
Goodricke	Goodricke Group Ltd	1.50	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.30
Girnar	Girnar Food & Beverages Pvt Ltd	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Gaia	Cosmic Nutracos Solutions Pvt Ltd	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.30
Taj Mahal Tea	Unilever Group	-	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.30
Private label	Private Label	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.80	2.80
Others	Others	30.90	32.10	31.30	28.90	27.40
Total	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Hot Drinks: Euromonitor from trade sources/national statistics

Date Exported (GMT): 14/01/2015 06:52:02

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The objectives of this case study are as follows :

1. To understand the strategies followed by Tata Tea over time to challenge the established players in the tea category.
2. To understand how communication strategies have helped brand Tata Tea to transform from a transactional brand to an experiential one.
3. To understand the impact of Cause Related Marketing on the status of a brand.
4. To understand the effectiveness of the 360 degrees communication campaign Jaago Re launched by Tata Tea.
5. To prove that a good brand idea can be used to transform consumer behavior in a category like tea which has low image and displays habitual buying into a brand that actively engages the customer.

The research methodology being used is a combination of secondary data analysis and primary research to understand the impact of the communication strategy on consumer behavior with respect to the brand.

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Conceptualizing and Modeling Employer Brand Equity

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Abstract

The development of an effective employer brand is becoming a prominent concern of organizations. This article reviews the employer branding literature to organize and structure the knowledge accumulated in this area to develop a conceptual framework of employer brand equity. The proposed conceptual framework identifies the key variables that influence employer brand equity and categorizes them into five main sets of variables. We posit that this framework has great usefulness in research and practice. We suggest that employer brand equity should play a crucial role in organizational success, as it will help organizations build, monitor, and develop their employer brands.

Keywords

Employer brand equity, employer branding, employer brand management

Introduction

Human resources are becoming the key element to building and sustaining competitive advantages in most modern organizations (Wright, McMahan, & McWilliams, 1993). The realization of this fact has intensified the competitive demand for talent among employers. The more organizations become capable of attracting, retaining, and developing talented personnel, the better they perform compared to their rivals (Heilmann, Saarenketo, & Liikkanen, 2013). In their landmark book, *The War for Talent*, Michaels and his associates argued that this war will be severe in the next two decades (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001).

Driven by these competitive pressures, the internal marketing concept has emerged. As Kotler & Keller (2009) maintained, internal marketing is utilized to hire, train and motivate employees. Because branding has a long lineage in the marketing discipline (Balmer, 2001), employer branding is considered as the core of internal marketing, and an important distinction must be made between *employer branding* when organizations use branding for their employees and *corporate and product branding* when promoting organizations and their products.

This is important because employer branding has two main characteristics. First, it is specifically based on the type of employees that the organization hires, which aids in creating the organization's identity as an employer. Second, employer branding must be directed toward both internal (*current employees*) and external (*prospective candidates*) audiences, as opposed to corporate and product branding, which focuses mainly on the external audience (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sivertzen, Nilsen & Olafsen, 2013).

Previous employer branding studies have addressed several issues, including the conceptualization of employer branding (e.g., Aggerholm, Andersen, & Thomsen, 2011; Edwards, 2010; Melin, 2005), the measurement of employer branding primarily in terms of employer attraction (e.g., Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005), the attraction process of current and prospective employees (e.g., Jiang & Iles, 2011), and the organizational motives for and practices of employer branding (e.g., Heilmann, Saarenketo, & Liikkanen, 2013). Despite its significant contributions, the current literature lacks a clear description of what constitutes employer brand equity (EBE). It does not fully answer questions about how this equity can be maximized. This is surprising given that the concept of equity is increasingly considered as a central branding component that can facilitate the achievement of strategic branding objectives. The building of employer brands is a crucial activity. Thus, further work must be done to identify the constituents of EBE (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002).

Ewing et al. (2002) were the first to shed light onto the importance of the EBE concept. However, their EBE conceptualization was not sufficient to capture its constituting attributes. To our knowledge, little, if any, research has deeply investigated EBE.

The purpose of this study is to address this gap and make two contributions to the literature. First, we apply an equity perspective to the study of employer branding and its practical implications. EBE may be the metric by which employer branding efforts will be judged in the future (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002).

Second, we address the call for the adoption of a holistic view of employer branding (Thorne, 2004) in which multiple components are manifested, such as people, products/services, process/systems and environment. Studies that have examined employer branding have focused exclusively on some of

these components but not on all of them. However, a more comprehensive understanding of EBE will assist managers in successfully measuring and managing employer branding.

This paper is divided into five sections, with this introduction as the first section. The following section reviews the concept of employer brand. The third section lays the groundwork for extending the equity perspective to employer brand. The fourth section addresses the proposed conceptual framework and research propositions. The last section concludes the paper and makes recommendations for future research.

Employer Brand

Employer brand (EB) is a relatively new concept; one of its objectives is to create a perception of the organization as a desirable place to work for its prospective employees (Sullivan, 2004). Ambler & Barrow (1996) introduced the “employer brand” concept in their seminal paper entitled “The Employer Brand.” They defined employer brand as the set of benefits furnished by the employer to the employee in a functional, economic, or psychological format. They explored the process of extending branding principles to human resource management in different industries and concluded that the concept of branding can also be applied to the recruitment function. They maintained that this application of branding principles to recruitment could lead to increased trust and commitment among the employees.

As such, employer branding was defined as the process of creating an internal and external promise that the organization is a distinguished and desirable employer (Lievens, 2007). To succeed in delivering this promise, the employer brand’s value propositions should be created to ensure that its emotional and rational benefits are aligned with current and prospective employees’ aspirations and expectations (Mosley, 2007). According to Backhaus & Tikko (2004), human resource practitioners perceive employer branding as a three-stage process. First, an organization develops a value proposition for current and prospective employees; this value proposition is embodied in the internal culture of the organization. Second, the organization markets the value proposition to its targeted potential employees, which is known as “external marketing.” Third, the organization must fulfill the brand promise made to the recruits, which can be described as “internal marketing,” by ensuring that the organization incorporates brand promise into the organizational culture.

Assuming that current and prospective employees are the organization’s customers, jobs are considered as the organization’s products. These job products must be able to attract, develop, and motivate employees so that their needs and desires are satisfied (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Employer branding is expected to have a significant positive impact on employees’ perceived affinity, satisfaction, differentiation, and loyalty (Davies, 2008). The attainment of staff loyalty, commitment, and performance, consequently, results in customer loyalty, advocacy, and satisfaction (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Research has found that employer branding is useful in marketing the brand to the external public and positively affects organizational performance (Collins & Stevens, 2002). To explain these internal and external contributions of employer branding, Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) proposed an employer branding framework. They argued that employer branding generates the following two major organizational assets: employer brand associations and employer brand loyalty. Brand associations are the thoughts and ideas that a brand name evokes in the minds of consumers (Aaker, 1991). These ideas and thoughts determine the employer image, which, in turn, influences the attractiveness of the organization to prospective

employees. Employer brand loyalty, the other asset—which is analogous to organizational commitment—contributes to enhancing employee productivity.

Achieving synergy between employer branding and corporate branding is necessary. Provided that prospective employees could be a segment of the organization's customers, organizations align their corporate branding process with employer branding efforts. Rynes et al. (1991) noted a relationship between how frontline employees behave with customers and customers' perception of employer brand image. Specifically, they maintained that employer brand image is formed through the behavior of frontline employees rather than through the employer's management of the recruitment processes and materials. Negative experiences with frontline employees can influence how individuals perceive an organization as a place to work. Therefore, it is important to ensure that every organizational member is engaged in the effective delivery of the corporate brand promise to avoid inconsistencies that may arise in delivering the brand promise to customers (Olins, 2004). Because of these inconsistencies, the corporate brand may have a negative impact on the employer brand or vice versa (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

Extending the Equity Perspective to Employer Brand

Brand equity research has largely concentrated on customer-based as opposed to other perspectives such as employer-based brand equity. Brand equity is “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers” (Aaker, 1991, p. 15). While Aaker's (1991) definition of brand equity highlighted customer-based brand equity, brand equity can be considered from a number of different perspectives, including the employer's perspective (Supornpraditchai, Miller, Lings, & Jonmundsson, 2007).

In 2011, Mourad and her associates slightly modified Vorhies's (1997) brand equity attributes and classified them into five distinct categories. These categories are consumer attributes (relating to consumers' socioeconomic characteristics and experience with the brand), provider attributes (relating to attributes of the organization such as its staff), product attributes (e.g., quality and after sales service), marketing activities, and symbolic attributes (associations relating to brand personality and identity). We propose an adaptation of these categories from the employer's perspective to explore the attributes of EBE. Employer brand equity may help explain job seekers' decisions to join certain organizations over others.

Employer Brand Equity: A Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

Our previous discussion lays the groundwork for a sound EBE conceptual framework. The starting point in developing our conceptual framework was an extensive literature review that aimed to develop an initial list of attributes that might constitute EBE. The theoretical basis of the proposed framework is EBE's conceptualization as a “set of employment brand assets and liabilities linked to an employment brand, its name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by an organization to that organization's employees” (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002, p. 14). However, Ewing and his associates maintained that this definition is only the beginning and will have far-reaching implications on research and practice.

“This definition has far-reaching implications, and poses significant questions and challenges to managers and researchers alike. For example, what are the ‘assets’ of an employment brand that enhance its EBE? Does ‘liability’ mean that some firms would have negative EBE—mentioning the name in a recruitment ad would put prospective applicants off? What are the effects of names and symbols, and how do they interact to shape EBE?”

How should the value provided by an organization's employment brand to its potential and present employees be calculated?' (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002, p. 15)

We agree that Ewing's et al. (2002) definition was overly simple to some extent and deserves a more sophisticated gaze if conceptual development is required. Thus, our proposed framework categorizes attributes of EBE using a more integrative approach to pave the way for answering these pivotal questions. We define employer brand equity as a set of attributes comprising (1) the employer's symbolic attributes, such as employer brand awareness, employer brand image, employer product brand experience, and corporate reputation; (2) the working culture and environment; (3) the stance of current and prospective employees; and (4) the firm's marketing activities that add to or subtract from the value provided by working for the organization.

In other words, employer brand equity can be described in terms of the attributes that encourage (or discourage) current employees to stay and support the organizations and motivate (or discourage) potential applicants to apply for positions. As Backhaus & Tikoo, (2004) asserted, EBE applies to the impact of brand knowledge on both the prospective and current employees of organizations (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Based on this conceptualization, modeling employer brand equity takes the form depicted in Figure 1. In the following sections, we explain and analyze the variables of this model.

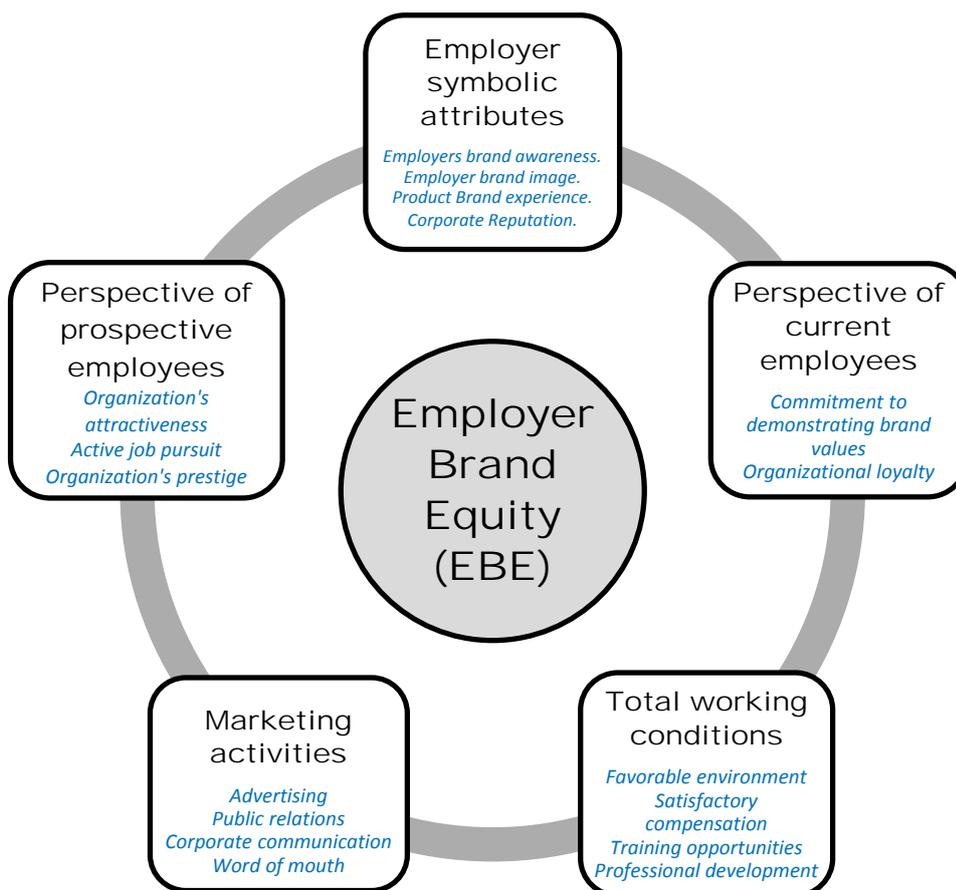


Figure 1. Employer brand equity model

The Employer's Symbolic Attributes

Much of branding strength lies within the power of the symbolism of the brand (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004). The employer's brand symbolic attributes include employer brand awareness, employer brand image, employer product brand experience, and corporate reputation.

The first symbolic attribute is employer brand awareness. Awareness is considered as a part of the legitimate measurement of brand equity even for employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Based on Mkhitarian's (2014) definition of customer-based brand awareness, we define employer brand awareness as the potential employees' ability to recall and recognize the employer under different conditions. Companies should ask themselves questions such as how many prospective employees had heard about the company before their recruiting efforts began? What is the level of employer brand awareness now? Ambler & Barrow (1996) asserted that awareness was identified as a key factor in recruiting the caliber of applicants desired.

Employer brand image is the second attribute. Whereas brand image is the sum of associations held of a specific brand in one's memory (Keller, 1993), these associations eventually form brand personality (Davies, 2008). Kapferer (2004) argued that the capability to differentiate brands is associated with corporate and consumer brand health and a major step in the brand building process. One way to differentiate brands is using employer brand image. Employer brand image is defined as "the image associated with an organization uniquely in its role as an employer" (Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 697). Employees—current and prospective—attempt to associate with distinguished organizations. Thus, organizations should pay attention to their brand image as an employer and should distinguish their employer brand in the minds of prospective and current employees by focusing not only on tangible benefits but also on symbolic benefits (Davies, 2008). Positive regard for an employer encourages potential recruits to apply and present employees to stay and contribute to employer brand equity (Wilden, Gudergan, & Ling, 2010).

The third symbolic attribute is employer product brand experience. Experiential marketing (Schmitt B. , *Experiential Marketing*, 1999) revolves around providing sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values that replace functional values. Customers are influenced by their experiences while interacting with an organization's representatives. Successful experiences are those that consumers consider unique, memorable and sustainable over time and that they desire to repeat (Vila-Lo'pez & Rodriguez-Molina, 2013). Brand experience reflects an individual's relative degree of familiarity with a brand due to some form of exposure to that brand (Ha & Perks, 2005). Ha and his associate maintained that brand experience has a crucial impact on consumers' understanding, enjoyment, enhancement and fostering of the brand. This experience can affect the perception of an organization as a desired place and a favorable employer. In addition, potential recruits' experiences of the firm's products or services may enhance or undermine the company's value proposition as an employer (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Finally, corporate reputation is considered as an intangible and valuable resource in the resource-based view, which can contribute to the creation of a long-term competitive advantage (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013). Corporate reputation has been perceived as important for attracting the best employees (Cappelli, 2001). According to Cable & Turban (2003), job applicants are more likely to pursue jobs at organizations with good reputations for two reasons: they use reputation to make inferences about job attributes and they expect to derive more pride from membership in these organizations.

Proposition 1: Employer brand equity is enhanced by boosting (a) employer brand awareness, (b) employer brand image, (c) product brand experience, and (d) corporate reputation.

Perspective of Current Employees

The second set of attributes is related to the attitudes and caliber of current employees. Attitudes, loyalty, trust, and commitment (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) can be used to assess employer brand equity. Becoming an employer of choice entails more than success in recruiting and retention. They also enhance employees' loyalty and commitment and are identified by their visions and values (Melin, 2005). Commitment is considered a core concept in the relationship marketing literature (See Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Employees' commitment to the company's brand is defined as "the extent to which employees experience a sense of identification and involvement with the brand values of the company they work for" (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009, p. 532). Kimpacorn and Tocquer maintained that employees must be committed to demonstrating the brand values. Their commitment to brand-supporting behaviors is a necessity, especially because such behaviors are considered a major source of brand equity. This conceptualization is a cascaded version of Allen & Meyer's (1990) and Mowdays, Porter, & Steers' (1982) definitions of organizational commitment at the brand level.

Furthermore, Ambler & Barrow (1996) suggested the utilization of the same techniques that build customer loyalty in building employee loyalty to cover the costs of recruiting, training and developing the best employees and enhancing their tenure in the organization. We believe that as the current employees become more loyal and committed to demonstrating the brand values, the employer brand equity increases.

Proposition 2: Employer brand equity is enhanced by boosting the present employees' (a) commitment to demonstrating the company's brand values and (b) organizational loyalty.

Perspective of Prospective Employees

Applicants are attracted to a certain firm depending on the degree to which they perceive the firm as a well-regarded work place. We draw on Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar's (2003) integrated components of organizational attraction, as follows: attractiveness, intentions, and prestige. First, company attractiveness is manifested in individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts about particular organizations as potential places for employment. The second component is potential applicants' intentions. Intentions extend beyond the passivity of company attractiveness to include the direct involvement in active pursuit of a job in a company. Intentions are likely limited to a smaller subset of potential employers because intentions are more active than the attitudes implied in organization attractiveness. The perception of the company as a prestigious entity is the third component of the attraction model adopted here. An organization is prestigious if it stimulates thoughts of fame and renown in the minds of those who hear of it. This prestige reflects the social consensus on the degree to which the organization's characteristics are perceived as either positive or negative. We argue that these three components formulate the degree of real brand attraction in the eyes of prospective employees. Accordingly,

Proposition 3: Employer brand equity is enhanced by the degree to which an applicant (a) is attracted to the organizations, (b) is directly involved in active pursuit of a job in this organization, and (c) perceives the organization as a prestigious place to work.

Total Working Conditions

Job and work environments are the organization's internal products that motivate the employees to satisfy the management's demand of that they have a customer orientation (Gronroos, 1985). Therefore, we propose job and work conditions as the fourth set of attributes that influence employer brand equity.

Lievens (2007) argued that these attributes originally stimulate interest among potential job applicants' utility in terms of maximizing their own benefits and minimizing costs. This notion is consistent with the product-related attributes suggested by Mourad et al. (2011) in their discussion of customer-based brand equity. Moreover, a central assumption of the "employees as customers" concept—in the internal marketing literature—is that internal customers are similar to external customers in that they have desires to satisfy their needs (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). The literature indicates the importance of using the existing HRM tools with a marketing perspective for internal marketing (Ahmed, Rafiq, & Saad, 2003). In line with this literature, Tansuhaj et al. (1988, p. 32) stated, "a comprehensive internal marketing program is concerned with employee recruitment, training, motivation, communication and retention efforts."

Working conditions variables may include work tasks or other conditions, including compensation, professional development, training, interpersonal relationships and wellbeing (Wallace, Lings, & Cameron, 2014). The basic premise of this category of attributes is that the fulfillment of employees' needs increases employees' motivation and retention and, consequently, stimulates a higher degree of employee satisfaction and a greater possibility of generating external (customer) satisfaction and loyalty (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). In other words, while job-related attributes contribute directly to internal marketing, they contribute indirectly to external marketing. Thus, our fourth proposition can be stated as follows:

Proposition 4: Employer brand equity is enhanced when job applicants perceive the employer as having (a) good work conditions, (b) satisfactory compensation packages, (c) training opportunities, and (d) potential professional development.

The Firm's Marketing Activities

The fifth and final determinant of employer brand equity is proposed to be the marketing activities of the firm. These activities intend to promote the company's brands and create a good image of the company and of its brands in the minds of targeted consumers. External marketing efforts that aim to enhance employer brand establish the company as an employer of choice to increase the possibilities of attracting top talent and support the product or corporate brands. Research has shown that a firm's marketing activity—such as advertising—affects the company's employees and customers (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002; Gilly & Wolfenbarger, 1998). Moreover, another important external marketing tool is public relations (Miles & Mangold, 2004). The efforts of external public relations are often directed toward building brand images for companies and their products and services (Kotler, 2003). The distinctiveness of the company's brand enables the company to obtain distinctive human capital (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Internal marketing aids in building valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable human capital that enables organizations to outperform their rivals (Heilmann, Saarenketo, & Liikkanen, 2013). While well-known internal marketing tasks include hiring, training and motivating employees (Kotler & Keller,

2009), internal corporate communications have also been considered as a crucial aspect of internal marketing (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). Internal corporate communication is defined as “a process between an organization’s strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organization, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims” (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 186).

Furthermore, potential applicants search for information about recruiting organizations beyond that provided by the organization. Information sources may include the widely held perceptions of peers and word of mouth from existing employees or those connected with such employees (Wilden, Gudergan, & Ling, 2010). We state the fifth proposition as follows:

Proposition 5: Employer brand equity is enhanced by the firm’s internal and external marketing activities as represented by (a) advertising, (b) public relations, (c) internal corporate communications, and (d) word of mouth.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

In this paper, we draw on the categorization of brand equity attributes as illustrated by Mourad et al. (2011), as well as the HR and marketing literature, to propose specific determinants of EBE. We modeled EBE as encompassing five sets of variables. The idea behind the employer brand equity framework is simple. To build a strong EBE, organizations should address the perceptions of current and prospective employees and promote the employees’ positive attitudes about their affiliation with the organization. This can be accomplished by building the proper type of experiences around the company’s brand so that prospective employees develop positive thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions about it. When organizations have strong brand equity, their employees will seek to work for it, recommend it to other people, and tend to be more loyal; thus, organizations will be less likely to lose their employees to rivals. The model takes full consideration of the realities of today’s changing and competitive environment. This proposed framework can strongly help top management to articulate, assess, and develop employer branding strategies.

Our conceptualization extends the concept of *employee-based* brand equity proposed by Supornpraditchai et al. (2007), which emphasizes the current employees only. According to Supornpraditchai and his associates (2007), the favorability and uniqueness of company brand associations affect current employees’ perception and behavior and, subsequently, their decision to stay. However, because customers are one of the basic domains from which organizations select future candidates, we argue that this sense of favorability and uniqueness can persuade prospective employees to work for the organization. This notion is consistent with Jiang & Iles’ (2011, p.98) statement that, “employer branding ... represents a further extension of branding theory and research, involving efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff that the organization is a desirable place to work, creating compelling, distinctive employee value propositions.”

Future research should be conducted to assess the validity of the proposed model. Empirical investigations can be conducted using mixed methods to reveal the dimensionality of EBE. Additionally, future research might explore how various functional strategies of HR and marketing integrate to build, monitor, and maximize employer brand equity. A further research avenue is to examine how interaction effects among two or more of the five proposed sets and/or their manifested attributes contribute to EBE.

This framework can serve as the basis of future research that aims to establish a measurement tool for employer brand equity. The decisions that skilled potential employees will make in the future may undoubtedly be articulated by measuring EBE. EBE will be utilized by the employment branding strategies that firms formulate and implement and the many tools that they use to do this (Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002).

As we know, researchers can generate scale items using either a deductive or an inductive approach (Hinkin, 1995). The proposed framework, which is based on an extensive literature review, can serve as the basis for generating items using the deductive approach. According to this approach, a pool of items that are related to each construct can be readily formulated with the help of prior studies. Such an approach has been used in the development of various related scales, such as consumer-based brand equity (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Acknowledgements

The researchers thank Prof. Ahmed A. Soliman, Prof. Nabil Mzoughi and Dr. Randeer Koko for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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The Role of Political Brand in the Relationship between Self-Identity and Intention to Vote

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Working Paper

Introduction

An important part of research in political marketing has focused on understanding how voters' decisions are developed, combining literature on marketing, sociology, politics, psychology or even behavioral economics. In this working paper we seek, by leveraging the existing literature, first, to show the relevance of psychology to political marketing; second, to examine the political brand's role in the construction of voter's self identity and third, to understand the influence of the self identity on behavioral intention towards voting. To support the above goals we propose a consistent conceptual model, as a raw material for further research.

The Political Brand

While it is not generally accepted (Scammell, 1999; Lilleker and Negrine, 2003; Needham, 2005), there is an extended literature supporting the stance that political parties can operate as brands (Kavanagh, 1995; Kotler and Kotler, 1999; Harris and Lock, 2001; Smith, 2001; White and de Chernatony, 2002; Schneider, 2004; Needham, 2006; Reeves, de Chernatony and Carrigan 2006; Scammell, 2007; Smith and French, 2009). The subject's development was strongly aided by O'Cass's (2003) work on political product identification and also O'Shaughnessy's and Henneberg's (2007) later work clarifying the key elements of the political brand concept, namely the brand image of the political party, the politician's image and the policies that the party offers to the electorate. Based on these key elements there are two ways of analyzing brands. The brand management perspective and the consumer perspective (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Focusing on the latter, it is important to see how voters, as individuals, are exposed at a political persuasion process (Reid, 1988) and get motivated from the political brands.

Voting Intention and Behavior: The Role of Self-identity

Different models in social psychology examine in what way attitudes can predict people's behavior (Terry, Hogg and White 1999) with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior being a dominant one (Ajzen, 1985, 1987; Ajzen and Madden, 1986). In order to enhance the sufficiency of this model several contributions examined the role of self-identity, as part of identity theory, in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Terry, Hogg and White 1999). Latest developments in the Theory of Planned Behavior indicate that self-identity stands as a significant independent predictor of behavioral intention (Thorbjørnsen, Pedersen and Nysveen 2007). The term 'self-identity' refers to the way that people describe themselves towards a social role they possess, when answering the question "Who am I?" (Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg 2010). Reviewing the academic studies concerning the relation between self-identity and behavioral intention, no study found to examine voting for a political party, in the context of the above relationship (Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg 2010).

Following this statement, we propose that every voter develops a unique self-identity influencing the voting decision process. As self-identity encompasses the most significant aspects of one's self-perception lasting over time (Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg 2010), political self-identity is a kind of political self-definition.

The Conceptual Model

It is essential to note that voting can be viewed as an act of consumption, in a way that consumers as citizens try to engage and influence the political environment (Dickinson and Carsky, 2005; Shaw, Newholm and Dickinson 2006; Micheletti and Follesdal, 2007; Shaw, 2007; Soper, 2007; Tormey, 2007; Peng and Hackley, 2009; Moraes, Shaw and Carrigan 2011). Yet, given that it is the perceived psychological benefits of a brand that consumers based on in order to make up with purchase decisions (Edson Escalas, 2004), it can be argued that, voters may be influenced by the psychological and symbolic benefits of the political brand (Reid, 1988).

To illustrate the importance of the relation between self-identity and the brand, it is worthwhile noting its binary utility. On the one hand it contributes in constructing one's self and on the other hand it helps communicate one's self to other people (Moore and Homer, 2008).

In the spectrum that brands can be used to construct and cultivate one's self concept (Edson Escalas, 2004), we propose that the political brand variables influence voters' self-identity formation which, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior, stands as a significant independent predictor of behavioral intention. For instance, the personal characteristics of the party leader can be used to formulate and cultivate one's self concept or help voters to express themselves through them. This, in turn, can be an important reason for the political consumer to vote for the party that the party leader represents.

In line with this, political parties need to adopt a societal orientation focusing at a long-term responsiveness to the needs and wants of society (Ormrod, Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy 2013) and gaining deeper knowledge on how voters think and act as individuals (O'Cass, 2003). Owing to the fact that self identity is a way of understanding voters, political parties may use this knowledge and develop persuasive communication strategies for specific target groups (Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg 2010; Yoon, Pinkleton and Ko 2005) while engaging voters and parties in a permanent fruitful dialogue.

Integrating the concepts and theories expressed in this working paper, the model development is summarized in that, political brand elements have an effect on voter's self-identity construction which in turn constitutes an important factor affecting intention to vote for a political party.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model showing first, the influence of political brand variables on self-identity and second, how the self-identity interacts with behavioral intention towards voting for a political party.

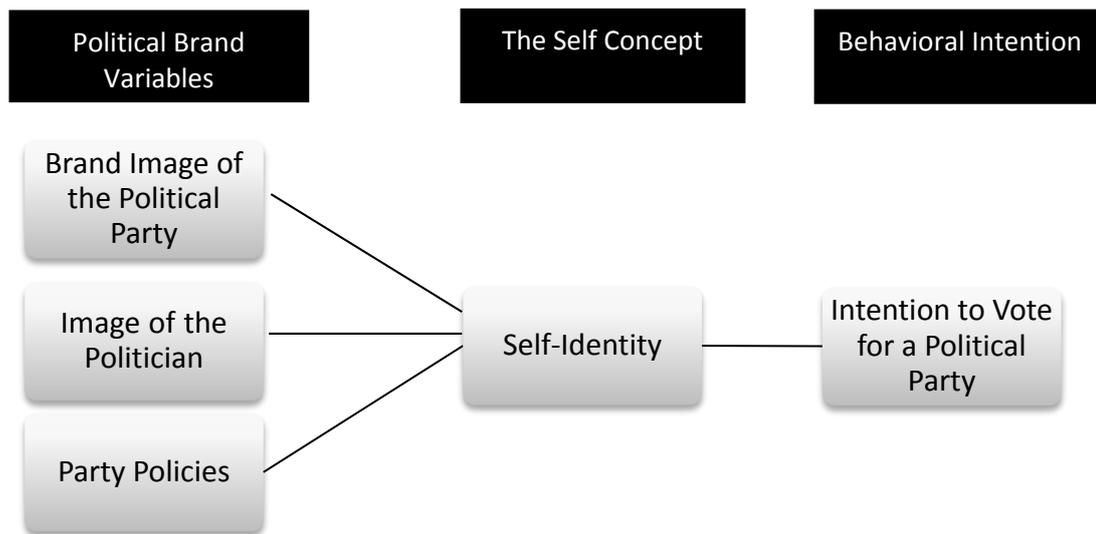


Figure 1. A Conceptual Model

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3

**CORPORATE
COMMUNICATIONS**

Developing Corporate Reputations in a Global Context: A Consulting Firm Case

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Abstract

This paper challenges the notion of organizations having a single reputation and shows empirically how a global management consulting firm has built multiple reputations. Through a rich cross-country qualitative case study, we show the importance of specifying both contextual factors and the different perceptions of individuals, which builds on existing research on the significance of dimensions for building reputation. We find that stakeholder groups differed markedly in their perceptions and highlight how reputation varied between and within such groups. We also find that reputation differed geographically and in some cases emotive language and benchmarking was used by employees of some offices to describe their reputation compared to other offices. This is an important contribution because it shows the reputational distinctiveness of an organization within particular geographic locations and how reputation can be shaped by the relative internal standing of offices. A significant outcome of this reputation asymmetry is that some reputable offices found themselves exporting talent within the organization to help build capacity in new emerging markets, while some less reputable offices found themselves having to import talent to compensate for expertise deficiencies. This complements the celebrity firm and celebrity CEO literature because offices and partners play a critical role in building the reputation of global organizations.

Keywords

Corporate reputation, management consulting, stakeholders

Introduction

In ancient Roman mythology, Janus is known as the god with two faces. By looking both left and right, he represents beginnings and endings, war and peace. In modern times, the multiple faces of Janus have come to represent something duplicitous or unethical in character. If someone is Janus-faced, their dual reputations bring an element of distrust to those who interact with them since it is assumed that someone cannot be two things to two people. So too with organizations, business scholars and the media alike often apply corporate reputation as if companies are “cut from a single cloth”, so to speak. *Fortune's* Most Admired Companies (FMAC) index, for example, ranks organizations based on a single score. Yet such depictions of corporate reputation betray deeper strands shaping the way in which corporate reputations are built and maintained in global business environments.

In this paper, we examine the notion of multiplicity in corporate reputation, building on more recent work that suggests companies may maintain multiple reputations simultaneously (Fombrun 1996; Gotsi and Wilson 2001). We examine how this might be possible by conducting an in-depth qualitative study of a multi-national professional service firm. On the one hand, professional service firms are an unlikely candidate to study multiple reputations since they strive to project a single, ethical, socially responsible and ‘upmarket’ corporate image to clients despite the multifarious components of their human resource management systems (Empson 2001). Yet, this makes them an ideal candidate for theorizing by capturing how multiple reputations emerge in spite of efforts for uniformity across countries, practice groups, and hierarchical levels inside the organization.

In addressing our research aims, we make two contributions to the corporate reputation literature. First, we argue that multiple reputations are sustained through variations in two dimensions and perceptions. We argue that these two dimensions frame how ‘corporate reputation’ is a distinct concept to other notions in the literature such as organizational identity and image that attend to similar concerns. Second, we provide empirical richness on recent theorizing in the emerging corporate reputation literature by showing how multiple reputations can co-exist and be inter-related. We then extrapolate on these findings for the potential research implications for the corporate reputation literature, which has an enduring interest in notions of duplicity and perceived regard.

Corporate Reputation

What Constitutes the ‘Face’ of an Organization

How organizations are perceived, and how they perceive themselves, has a long heritage of inquiry across many literatures in organizational behavior, human resource management, strategy, marketing, and geography (Fombrun and Shanle 1990; Fombrun et al. 2000; Glückler and Armbrüster 2003; Balmer and Greyser 2006; Helm 2007; Walsh et al. 2009; Foroudi et al. 2014). In each case, scholars place different elements in focus based on what they regard as most important to the underlying behaviours and ethical conduct of the organization. For organizational identity scholars, for example, the notion of what is central, enduring and distinctive (CED) to an organization remain key units of analysis (Albert and Whetten, 1995). Thus, studies describe “who we *are* as an organization”, which attends to the beliefs that an organisation holds about itself. By contrast, studies on desired identity take a different focus on “what we *say* we are”. This is less about the central beliefs of an organization, and more about the beliefs that the organization communicates to others, and how this is done (Chun 2005). A third and related concept is that of intended image, which is “what we *want* others to think about us” (Brown et al. 2006). This implies a strategic intention on the part of the organization to instil particular thoughts and beliefs about

the organisation. Finally, studies on construed image examine the perceptions amongst organizational members about the actions of the organizations. This focuses on “what we *believe* others think about us” (Brown et al. 2006).

We acknowledge corporate reputation as the perceptions of *stakeholders* towards the organization (Fombrun 1996). Corporate reputations are not momentary opinions about an organization, but refer to a repeatable and consistent set of beliefs held by diverse perspectives – that is, “what internal and external stakeholders *actually* think about us”.

Corporate Reputation: Perceived by Whom and for What?

Delineating ‘corporate reputation’ as a distinct concept raises questions regarding *whose* perceptions should be included in forming reputation, and whose perceptions should be discarded. This is important in the context of stakeholder theory because it is questionable whether an organisation can and should hold equal relationships and allocate even resources to different stakeholder groups (Donaldson and Preston 1995). For example, in the context of business ethics, certain opinions and views may have more influence than others but we need a framework for accounting for how these perceptions are prioritized.

Chun (2005) has suggested that corporate reputation may be categorised into three perspectives based on a comprehensive overview of the literature: evaluative, impressional and relational. First, the evaluative and impressional schools are focused on the perspectives of a single stakeholder group. With the evaluative school, which stems from economics and strategy, the emphasis is on the financial performance of organisations, particularly from the perspective of CEOs, shareholders and investors. This has been a popular proxy for reputation by ranking surveys such as FMAC, particularly because reputation has been considered an important intangible asset as well as a source of competitive advantage (Chun 2005, 93; Rindova and Martins 2012). With the impressional school, there has been a growing recognition that the perceptions of other stakeholders such as employees and customers can have an equally strong impact on the organization as its financial performance (Mahon 2002; Walsh et al. 2009). The relational school, influenced by stakeholder theory, recognises that groups may differ significantly in their engagement with and expectations of organizations (Donaldson and Preston 1995). This perspective is important in the context of corporate reputation because as Fombrun (2012) recognises the reputation of an organization does not exist in a silo, but is perceived in relation to other related organizations.

A second concern in the corporate reputation literature relates to *what* perceptions constitute a corporate reputation. Reviewing the reputation literature, Barnett et al. (2006) delineated three different types of meaning: reputation as a state of awareness, reputation as an assessment, and reputation as an asset. Awareness is when observers will have some broad understanding of the organization, but not a deep-level of insight and therefore tend to hold perceptions, which when aggregated represent reputation. Assessment is when individuals have a deeper level of involvement in the organization and may be making judgments about its activities, products or services based on their opinions and beliefs. Asset is when stakeholders see reputation as holding a particular value for the firm, which could be financial, economic and cultural, and tangible or intangible.

Although, there is some overlap between these clusters, Barnett et al. (2006) suggest that they are also quite distinct, depending on the individual’s knowledge of and engagement with the organization. Related to this work, Lange et al. (2011) have extended the elements of what constitutes a corporate

reputation by identifying three important components: “being known”, “being known for something” and “generalised favourability”. Being known, or prominence, is when stakeholders are familiar with the activities, products and services of an organisation. Being known for something, or quality, is when an organization is known among stakeholders for something particular such as producing highly reliable products. Generalised favourability is a broader assessment of the organization based on multiple attributes (see also Rindova et al. 2005). Rindova et al. (2005) use different terminology: perceived quality to describe how stakeholders evaluate particular attributes of an organization, and prominence to describe the collective awareness and recognition that an organization has accumulated in its field. Like Lange et al. (2011), Rindova et al. (2007) use favorability and argue that it is more difficult to build than other dimensions and therefore highly valuable for an organization.

The Possibility for Multiple Reputations?

The literature on corporate reputation has given greater definition to its constitutive elements in contrast to other concepts in the management literature, and identified the key stakeholders involved. Yet outstanding questions remain regarding whether and how corporate reputations exist when these stakeholders have various and multiple views. Indeed, highly popular and influential reputation rankings in both academia and the media such as FMAC imply that organizations have single reputations (Brown and Perry 1994; Roberts and Dowling 2002; The Economic Times 2012). Yet other research on geography suggests that “Janus-faced” organizations may be more common. For example, Soleimani et al. (2014) found that geographic contexts played a significant role in shaping public perceptions of companies. Specifically, public perceptions were more important in influencing stock market returns for organizations located in countries where shareholder rights and wealth creation are privileged. Thus, corporate governance structures in different places may explain differences in how corporate reputations emerge and their attendant effect on firm value. Whatever the merits of these findings, they point to a need for greater understanding of how multiple reputations may be sustained within multi-national organizations. Newburry (2012) has argued that the globalization of business has made the need to link country level reputations with organizational level reputations more urgent. By contrast, Walker (2010, 369) has taken a micro level focus, arguing that reputation is ‘issue specific’ and tied to discrete organizational decisions, such as profitability, employee treatment, social responsibility, governance or product/service quality. In this paper we take an organizational level of analysis. Our research inquiry is guided by a focus on how multiple corporate reputations emerge within a single organization, and the elements that support these differences.

Methods

Case Selection

We selected a large global management consulting firm for our study because it was a suitable site in two respects. First, the management consulting sector has long been regarded as sensitive to issues of business ranking, client regard, and prestige as conferred Glückler and Armbrüster (2003). Second, the participating firm in this study, ‘Novel Insights’ was appropriate given the multi-jurisdictional nature of its operations, which was spread across five continents. This allowed us to examine how corporate reputations stretched geographical boundaries, both in terms of external client perceptions as well as the location of different regional offices.

Data Collection

In order to assess corporate reputation from the perspective of both internal and external stakeholders, qualitative interview data was collected with 119 participants across 8 countries. First, internal respondents (n=58) were selected in consultation with an experienced Novel Insights partner and senior consultant based on a range of tenures within the firm: senior (6+ years tenure); middle (3-6 years) and junior (0-3 years) employees. Initial introductions to internal respondents were snowballed in order to achieve a larger sample to avoid selection biases, and validate our findings across a larger population of employees and geographic locations.

In addition, we interviewed external stakeholders (n=61), which included clients, non-clients, competitors, and alumni. In some cases, interviewees occupied more than one category, for instance they were a client and an alumnus. These respondents were identified in consultation with senior members within Novel Insights, and a similar snowball approach was adopted.

Interviews were typically conducted face-to-face in a conference room within the organization. They took place between May and November of 2010 and the average interview lasted for 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and the majority of interviews were recorded (n=108; 91%). All interviews were transcribed, uploaded and coded thematically on the qualitative data analysis software, QSR NVivo9.

A semi-structured interview format was chosen because we wanted to gain a rich qualitative insight into how reputation was perceived by different actors. Interviews commenced with a series of key themes which we had identified prior to conducting the interviews. These themes emerged through a deductive process of examining the theoretical literature on corporate reputation and outlining a protocol from which our questions emerged (Yin 2009).

The major themes we explored included: impressions of the company before interviewees started working for or working with the company and their impressions at the time of the interview, what shaped their impressions of the company, what functional areas and qualities did they see as strong or weak within the company, their perceptions of the quality of the company's consulting work at an office and at a global level and based on what criteria, their perceptions of the company's reputation compared to its competitors, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of different offices of the company.

In order to triangulate these findings and increase reliability (Yin 2009), interviews were complemented with two other data sources: focus groups and three one-day meetings with Novel Insight partners. Two focus groups were conducted towards the end of the fieldwork with employees, clients and students, to probe key topics that had been highlighted during the course of the interviews. Three one-day meetings were arranged at the end of the fieldwork with 24 partners from different practice areas in order to understand how Novel Insights managed its reputation as well as to probe further from the findings from our interviews and focus groups.

Data Analysis

Before coding the data, all transcripts were re-read by the lead author and a third party expert on reputation to double-check the establishment of our propositions and proposed codes as well as to identify if any critical questions or themes had been missed. The coding of first order themes derived from what service area the interviewee worked in as well as their geographic region. This basic structuring meant that responses across different service areas and geographic locations could be easily compared.

The coding of second order themes focused on three areas where the data suggested that reputation differed, according to our first order themes as well as the fieldwork diary notes: particular qualities that the organisation became positively and negatively known for (e.g. pragmatism and implementation versus lack of creativity), variation in perceptions across stakeholders (e.g. senior, middle and junior employees) and differences in reputation across countries (e.g. China versus the UK).

We present our results in the subsequent section by providing subheadings for the two themes we identified that informed the emergence of multiple reputations. The first theme was context, which includes reputation with someone and in someplace; the second theme was perceptions, which includes reputation for something.

Findings

Context: Reputation with Someone

We provide evidence of perceptions of Novel Insights among internal and external stakeholders and this section focuses on the perceptions of different employees. The responses are stratified into senior (e.g. Partners and Principals), middle (e.g. Senior Consultants and Project Managers) and junior (e.g. Consultants and Internees) employees and indicate the multiple layers of perceptions. Senior members argued that the perception of Novel Insights improved once they started working for the firm, compared to their perceptions externally. A Principal of Novel Insights in France, said that his perception of the firm beforehand was: '[...] part of those guys who are doing strategic consulting', whereas his impression appeared to shift to seeing it as a 'very high-end company' once he started working for them. In other words, his perception of the firm changed once he started working for Novel Insights. With this example, the perception of Novel Insights shifted from some degree of prominence when he was aware of the organization to favourability when his impression of its general work was positive (Rindova et al. 2005, 2007; Lange et al. 2011).

Employees holding middle-level positions also indicated a different perception towards Novel Insights before and after working for the firm. A Senior Consultant for Novel Insights in Eastern Europe, admitted that she '[...] before I started working for [... Novel Insights] I would say maybe that [... our leading competitor] is number one' and therefore they 'deliver higher quality'. However, this perception has shifted since she has started working for the company and now she argues that the firm's leading competitor is not delivering higher quality, but 'we are about the same'. Again, it is clear that Novel Insights lacked prominence among employees before they started working for the company, but once they were employed they were confident that the organisation delivered high quality outputs to clients and were known for this (Rindova et al., 2005; Lange et al., 2011).

Among junior employees, the perception of Novel Insights varied geographically, which is important for the discussion below on reputation in someplace. In China, students considered the reputation of the firm as very strong. An Internee of Novel Insights in China, described the firm as 'prestigious' and a lot of his contemporaries were looking to 'pursue a full time position' in the firm. A Consultant of Novel Insights in China admitted that before he started working for the firm, '[...] you always have some dream' about working for a 'big name' and an 'international company', but when you start working for the firm you become more 'objective' and '[...] see both the good sides and the bad sides'. These quotations illustrate that students were strongly focused on the strength of the firm's brand, as well as its international prowess when they are applying for jobs, which links to Lange et al.'s (2011)

and Rindova et al.'s (2007) concepts of favourability and prominence. However, junior employees were more critical and aware of the firm's core and peripheral strengths for multiple functions once they were working within the firm, which relates to the concept of quality. In short, junior employees considered all of the dimensions of reputation discussed by Lange et al. (2011) and Rindova et al. (2005, 2007) as important at different stages when making perceptions of Novel Insights.

Context: Reputation in Someplace

This section analyses the reputations of Novel Insights among interviewees in two different global locations (China and the UK) to explore whether there were any marked similarities or differences. Although we interviewed people for this research project in eight countries where expertise differed significantly, we focus on these two countries here to illustrate in some depth the contrasting reputations of the same organization.

China

Most employees interviewed from Shanghai and Beijing considered both offices collectively when they perceiving the firm in China. An HR Manager for Novel Insights in Shanghai, for example, said: 'I would not distinguish Shanghai and Beijing, I think I would rather to see it together because they're the China office.' This reinforces the collaborative and supportive nature of work conducted between both offices, which as we show shortly was not necessarily reflected in other global locations.

The impression that many respondents from China gave was that the office had developed very quickly, particularly given the relative infancy of the management consulting sector in China. In addition, employees held positive perceptions in relation to other global offices. One Manager of Novel Insights in Shanghai said that she was 'very proud' of the Chinese office which was 'number three' within the firm in terms of size and profit and despite the fact that she felt the firm needed to 'invest more in China', the offices in Shanghai and Beijing have demonstrated that they are able to 'stand on [our] own feet'. This response is important because although the Shanghai and Beijing offices did not consider themselves competing with one another on reputation, it is clear that they collectively under the banner of the China office benchmarked their office's reputation compared to other Novel Insights offices, and also expected investment and resources. This is an important finding because it suggests that reputation is not only a relative standing between competing organizations (Fombrun 1996, 2012), but also in this context a relative standing between competing offices within the same global organization.

Because the management consulting industry is quite new to many clients in China, it was not surprising that respondents said that Novel Insights tended to focus on smaller-scale projects. A Senior Consultant for Novel Insights in Beijing, described the firm as a 'local consulting company' despite the industry being 'global'. To some extent this reflected the firm's reputation for providing applied solutions and being the 'operational one' for clients.

The examples above suggest that Novel Insights in China were perceived as holding strong qualities through focusing on local projects with the Chinese Government, but they sometimes missed out on global projects because they lacked prominence and favourability in the region compared to their major high profile competitors.

United Kingdom

In the UK, the perception among employees and clients towards Novel Insights was more specialist and lower in profile. A Consultant of Novel Insights in the UK said that the opinion of

colleagues in other offices was that the UK was a ‘[...] slightly more easy going or chilled out office than some of the other European offices.’ He also argued that, unlike other offices which had a strong functional expertise for restructuring, the UK office had employees with a greater diversity of skillsets and therefore ‘[...] don’t do necessarily things the same way that they do’.

The example indicates that the UK office either lacked prominence and favourability, or was known for something different (perceived quality) to the other offices. In both cases there was the acknowledgment from other offices that the company was known in the UK, but not known in a particularly high profile or favourable light compared to some other high profile offices. In both cases, the implication is that perceptions of different global offices varied significantly across countries within the same organization. The perception of the UK office of Novel Insights also depended on the stakeholder, which is consistent with other multi-stakeholder studies of corporate reputation (Shamma and Hassan 2009). A Partner of Novel Insights in the UK admitted that the perception was divided. On the one hand, the perception was ‘non-existing’ with potential clients, who would say ‘[...] Novel Insights, who?’ because they had not heard of the firm. He said that when he moved to the UK from another office, it took him some time to adjust to the fact that the company’s prominence was much weaker:

But when I came over, it took me six months I think for the first project I got, which was then a large one, which was good, but I thought like there’s something wrong here, but I had to change the mindset of people.

On the other hand, clients who have worked with the firm in the UK have tended to be very satisfied: ‘If people know us and have worked with us, there is a strong reputation, so we also have a lot of repeat clients.’ The above example from a partner suggests that the UK office was not even known among many potential clients in the UK, but clients who had worked with the UK office were generally very satisfied with their work, which suggests that favourability is built from the accumulation of positive client experiences and loyalty over time in relation to their prior expectations. This aligns with the theory of expectancy-disconfirmation in that clients create a frame of reference and set a series of expectations against which they make comparative judgments in relation to their experiences (Oliver 1980). In this instance, the experiences of clients with Novel Insights were better than their expectations, which over time will arguably build favourability.

The implication of different office reputations is that the global reputation of Novel Insights has not developed to the same extent as its major competitors because of the inconsistent experiences of its employees and clients across different geographic locations. Although Novel Insights has attempted to instil core values, expertise and qualities across its different offices through internal branding and communication, there remain significant differences, which have affected the strength of the company’s reputation globally. This has been true both in newer markets such as China where the company has built a strong reputation, but not to the extent of one of its major competitors, and in established markets such as the UK where it is generally not ranked in the top-tier of management consulting firms by third parties.

Perceptions: Reputation for Something

The responses from the interviews, focus groups and final partner meetings indicated that the firm held a particularly strong reputation internally and externally for providing pragmatic and implementable solutions to clients, but also a reputation for sometimes lacking creativity during the project delivery stage.

Pragmatic Reputation

A core value that the firm projected to multiple stakeholders was its emphasis on providing practical and realistic solutions to clients. This was reflected through the responses that clients gave of the firm. A Strategy Director of a global manufacturing company in China, for example, said that she knew the firm 'very well' and that the company's strength is '[...] very much results-driven, goal-oriented.' A Senior Regional Manager of a consumer goods company in Germany agreed that the firm was seen as the '[...] more pragmatic consultants out there'. These responses demonstrate a core quality dimension (Lange et al. 2011) which the firm attempted to project internally and externally. This endeavour of providing clients with customised and tailored solutions to their problems is also something that many professional service firms strive for with varying degrees of success (Morris and Empson 1998).

The firm's reputation for pragmatism was mirrored internally. As a Principal of Novel Insights in Germany argued:

But if you really have a problem and if you want to get it solved, regardless on how, regardless on the timeline, regardless on resources, regardless on whatever, then I definitely would go for [... Novel Insights.] We've really proved to getting things done and getting it solved - like in mission-critical projects, you know, projects where other strategy consultants already proved to fail.

The above respondent argues that clients perceive Novel Insights as a company which, unlike its competitors, delivers results, which suggest that in Lange et al.'s (2011) and Rindova et al.'s (2007) terms they are perceived among employees as holding favourability among a broad group of stakeholders. Novel Insights were in Lange et al.'s (2011) terms 'known for something' (hands-on and practical with their advice on restructuring projects) which at times had been useful during the global financial crisis, but its lack of prominence meant that it also struggled to compete with 'celebrity firm' (Rindova et al. 2006) competitors in multiple countries.

Lacking Creativity

One of the negative perceptions of Novel Insights internally and externally was a weakness in creativity. This seemed to be recognised in the student market with a graduate of a prestigious university for business studies in Germany describing them as '[...] not the most creative.' This perception of a lack of creativity seemed to be held by employees at all positions across the company. A junior consultant of Novel Insights in Austria, said the firm: '[...] has a more pragmatic and concrete reputation than an artistic, extremely creative, strategic one.' Despite the perception that Novel Insights lacked creative thinking across different levels of the firm, some offices such as France, for instance, considered their reputation to be strongly creative, which was reflected in their external PR activities and was mirrored with how their clients articulated their expertise in internal surveys (see Table 1 for illustrative quotations).

Table 1: Multiple reputations quotations

CONTEXT	
Reputation with someone	<p>Senior-level positions</p> <p>“That’s certainly something that’s come across quite clearly from a lot of people, that the quality of [Novel Insights] work is very much down-to-earth, about implementation, pragmatic” (Managing Partner of Novel Insights, UK).</p> <p>“I think we are very pragmatic, so we don’t only develop nice charts and leave our clients alone with this, but we also support them in the implementation phase. We are really people who roll up the sleeves, getting things done. Probably a little bit more down-to-earth than the others” (Head of HR of Novel Insights, Germany).</p> <p>“[Novel Insights] is much more into implementing projects, being a coach and a partner for the client and helping the client” (Founder and CEO of a specialist consulting firm, Germany).</p> <p>Middle-level positions</p> <p>“We stand for close cooperation with clients, tailor made. We don't copy and paste” (Project Manager of Novel Insights, Eastern Europe).</p> <p>“But the weakness would probably be I think that, in terms of the strategic level, and also professional level, I think that [... Novel Insights] is still lower than, you know, some other international brands” (Director of a Global Manufacturer, China).</p> <p>Junior-level positions</p> <p>“I don’t think that, at least among my friends from university, we had a very strong reputation for being the most strategic, the most creative, the most diversified consultancy firm. I don’t think we do. We have a more straightforward, concrete, operational reputation” (Junior Consultant of Novel Insights, Austria).</p> <p>“I would say, from my experiences, it’s the restructuring that sort of was what the company was founded on, and it’s what we are still recognised today as being a strong restructuring focused company” (Consultant of Novel Insights, UK).</p>
Reputation in someplace	<p>China</p> <p>“so if I give my business card to someone, it will range from, “[Novel Insights], what?” to “Oh, I know this company – this is a good company.” Of course, sometimes people don’t say, you know, they don’t like it, but the range is very broad, okay, of reaction when you issue the card, which is a bit sometimes annoying because the range is too broad” (Partner of Novel Insights, China).</p> <p>“we are not so aggressive like other American consulting firms. We are down-to-earth. We like to know what clients really want and will deliver according to their exact needs, and so that we win a lot of local clients in even the second and third tier Chinese cities” (Consultant of Novel Insights, China).</p> <p>UK</p> <p>“I think we are strong in achieving change, so engaging with people. That’s because we work alongside management, so we support management. So I think we are strong in building up trust and giving confidence, managing difficult situations, and in really becoming a partner” (Partner of Novel Insights, UK).</p> <p>“my conception of their reputation was that they were an international firm, but more focused in Europe and in Asia than in the US” (Senior Consultant of Novel Insights, UK).</p>
PERCEPTIONS	
Reputation for something	<p>Pragmatic and implementation</p> <p>“the strength is that the company is very much results-driven, goal-oriented” (Strategy Director, Global Manufacturer, China).</p> <p>“they are seen as the more pragmatic consultants out there” (Head of Global Conglomerate, China).</p> <p>“they’re more practical in their approach, they’re more grounded, they don’t try to come up with solutions that are too clever by half and will show the client up – they actually try and solve the problem” (Founder and CEO of an Executive Search Firm, UK).</p> <p>“we are known for a hands-on approach, not being as analytical maybe such as others, and being pragmatic, being out-of-the-box thinkers, not being creative” (Consultant, Eastern Europe).</p>

Discussion and Analysis

This paper has drawn on data from a management consulting case study and has challenged existing assumptions in the literature that organizations project single corporate reputations. The results suggest that organizations can build and maintain multiple reputations simultaneously, that is, they can be Janus-faced to both internal and external stakeholders alike. Our findings delineate two separate themes underpinning reputation - context, and perception – and show how employees and clients held contrasting and sometimes contradictory reputations of Novel Insights.

In addition to the empirical novelty of this study in the management consulting sector (Fombrun 1996, 2012; Rindova et al. 2005, 2007), this paper makes a conceptual contribution to the emerging literature on corporate reputation. Existing studies on corporate reputation depict reputation as a single concept in which the criteria of stability and endurance cohere around a common or singular corporate reputation. Scholars have tended to focus on the perceptions of particular stakeholders and overlooked marked differences in perceptions across stakeholder groups, which therefore does not adequately represent the multiplicity of reputation (Helm 2007, 251). Yet, our findings suggest that internal and external actors can come to different understandings of corporate reputation across geography (what we call ‘contexts’) or form competing views of the organization (what we call ‘perceptions’), yet these still satisfy the requirements of ‘corporate reputation’. For example, the Chinese office of Novel Insights was considered as the ‘rising star’ and ‘number three’ within the organization, whereas the UK office was seen as one of the firm’s ‘Achilles’ heel’ and near the bottom of the organization’s office hierarchy in terms of reputation. Similarly, perceptions of the qualities of Novel Insights varied depending on context and in particular on the stakeholder and the geographic location. Employee perceptions often differed significantly, with senior employees, for example, saying that their perceptions of the firm had improved once they had started working for Novel Insights, whereas the perceptions of junior employees more closely aligned with the strength of the company’s prominence and what their contemporaries thought, which varied geographically.

This is an important contribution since it suggests that corporate reputation is a more composite construct than hitherto portrayed in the literature. As already intimated, corporate reputation is related by distinct organizational identity and image, which attend, respectively, to internalized and externalized conceptions of what an organization is. Corporate reputation has been described as a ‘meta-construct’ that emphasizes the perceptions of various stakeholders (Lange et al 2011). Extending this concept to incorporate multiple reputations means that organizations need to do more than build and position their reputations in relation to their competitors (Fombrun 1996, 2012), but also relative to other internal offices, departments and practice areas within global organizations because internal unevenness in reputation seems to signal externally reputational asymmetry.

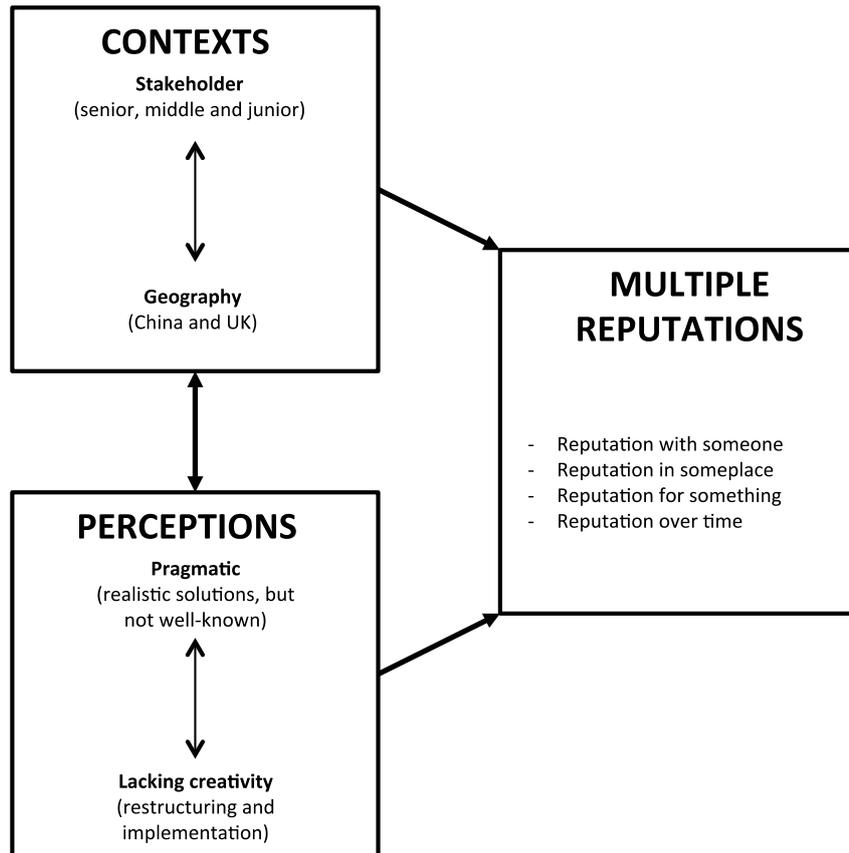


Diagram 1. Building multiple reputations from contexts and perceptions

Although the theoretical literature has emphasised the significance of perceptions and dimensions for building reputation (e.g. Rindova et al. 2005, 2007; Lange et al. 2011), there has been little discussion on the impact of different contexts (see Diagram 1 for a summary). We argue that this is a significant oversight because certain contexts such as the stakeholder (e.g. senior, middle or junior level employees) and geography (e.g. China and the UK) influence different perceptions. Although our data showed a prevalence of two perceptions across the firm (e.g. pragmatism and lacking creativity), these perceptions also differed according to the stakeholder and geographic context. Hence, we argue that both perceptions *and* context are important when considering how reputation is perceived internally and externally.

Conclusions

In summary, our argument challenges assumptions in the corporate reputation literature and in management practice that centre on singular reputations for organizations. While we recognise the intuitive appeal for marketing and public relations of this assumption, we also wish to highlight some of the complexities that this approach masks. One issue alluded to but not pursued further in this paper is the extent to which certain issues are more important in framing corporate reputation than others. A suggestion in our findings was that ‘quality’ served as a relatively important driver for corporate reputation, especially during the global financial crisis. However, it is not clear why this issue might prove more important than other issues, such as discounting, ethical service, or historical performance. This attends to a broader conceptual question about the interdependences between related concepts in the

reputation literature such as prominence, favourability and quality (Rindova et al. 2005, 2007; Lange et al. 2011). We suggest that perceptions and context are important considerations for understanding how reputation is built, but further research is needed to understand why these issues are important, and how individual level variation relates the reputation as an organizational-level construct. Empirically, this may mean that future studies examine a broader group of stakeholders beyond customers, shareholders and employees.

Second, we have a limited understanding about how reputation influences labour market mobility. For example, employees join (and leave) firms due to their intangible value and corporate reputational advantage (Harvey and Morris 2012). Our findings show that certain offices imported labour while other offices exported partner expertise as a means of redistributing their reputation between offices. This implies that certain prestigious offices and celebrity actors have a disproportionate ability to build reputations. Again, our evidence is limited to a single large qualitative study, but future contribution may examine the literature on celebrity firms and celebrity CEOs (see Hayward et al. 2004; Wade et al. 2006; Rindova et al. 2006; Pfarrer et al. 2010), as well as cross-boundary knowledge flows (Tortoriello and Krackhardt 2010). At issue here is when, how and why corporate reputations influence labour mobility as a way of quantifying the intangible ‘value’ associated with reputational benefits.

Finally, the data indicate perception change over time among employees. However, much richer longitudinal research is needed to explore what internal and external factors drive reputation to change over time, both from the perspective of internal and external stakeholders. For example, it is not clear what the interplay is between internal and external stakeholders as well as between intermediary actors who sit on the fringes of the two groups such as investors, clients and alumni. In other words, how far may reputations change externally to internally (e.g. from outsiders to employees) and internally to externally (e.g. from employees to outsiders)? Herein lies a limitation with the generalizability of our findings and whilst we seek to make a conceptual contribution to concepts in the corporate reputation literature using rich qualitative data, we are aware that these findings need to be complemented by larger, quantitative datasets, such as FMAC, the RepTrak™ Pulse and other valuable surveys of corporate reputation.

The findings of this research hold important implications for practitioners engaged in building, retaining, and restoring corporate reputations. In multi-national, multi-business organizations, reputation is becoming more complex to manage and there are a growing number of internal and external stakeholders who can affect and disproportionately change a company’s reputation in both a positive and negative way at unprecedented speeds, particularly through social media. Given this, there is a danger of relying exclusively on popular annual surveys in making reputational judgments. Although such surveys are valuable for providing a broad overview, it is important to understand the limitations such as their emphasis on the perceptions of a particular stakeholder group, or their focus on a certain geographic location, as well as the methods used to collect data. A single score or ranking of an organization’s reputation can be seductive and easy to share, but it can also misrepresent or only present a small fraction of a company’s reputation. Of course, all measurements of reputation, including those in this paper, have their limitations, and it is important to critically reflect on what is being judged, who is judging, where they are judging, and over what time periods.

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Customer-Based Corporate Reputation, Perceived Risks and Intentional Loyalty: Examining the Differences between MNEs and Local Firms

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Abstract

Liability of foreignness refers to relative disadvantages foreign multinational enterprises (MNEs) face in comparison with domestic firms. The extant literature on international business has long theorized differences between MNEs and local enterprises with respect to challenges and their customers' expectations. Research in the area of customer-based corporate reputation (CBR), however, largely ignores to study the impact of such differences on the management of CBR and its relationship with customer-outcome variables. This study, therefore, examines the differentiating effects of type of firm (MNE *versus* Local) on the relationship between CBR and its key outcome variables of customer perceived risk and intentional loyalty. We surveyed a sample of 1059 customers from the fast-food services industry to test our proposed conceptual model. The results suggest differential effects of CBR components (cognitive CBR and affective CBR) on outcome variables for MNEs in comparison with local enterprises. Perceived risk is found as an important outcome of CBR components for MNEs, but not for local enterprises. Similarly, perceived risk has mediated the effects of CBR components on intentional loyalty in case of MNEs. However, no such mediating effects are found for local enterprises. The findings suggest some useful implications for managers from both MNEs and local firms.

Keywords

Customer-based corporate reputation, foreign multinational versus local firms, customer-outcome variables, customer perceived risk, intentional loyalty

Introduction

This study examines the relationship of customer-based corporate reputation (CBR) with its outcome variables for multinational enterprises (MNEs) in contrast to local firms. For this purpose, we draw on two streams of research: (1) the literature on international business management; and (2) the literature on management of CBR.

The literature on international business management has long theorized relative challenges (i.e., liability of foreignness) faced by MNEs operating in foreign markets, in contrast to local enterprises (Zaheer, 1995). These challenges for MNEs mainly emerge from their relative unfamiliarity with the business environment of foreign market/s, differences in cultural values and norms, dissimilarities in economic factors, and differences in political and regulatory environment of businesses abroad (Asmussen, 2009; Hymer, 1976). Such challenges put MNEs at relative disadvantage in contrast to local enterprises, and are thus, expected to make reputation management a relatively more difficult task for managers at MNEs.

Management of corporate reputation has earned strategic importance for the practitioners due to its association with business-to-customer relationships, financial performance and competitive advantages of organizations (Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011; Eberl & Schwaiger, 2005; Hall, 1992). Corporate reputation, by definition, refers to perceptual evaluation of an organization by its stakeholders (Walker, 2010). As different stakeholder groups may have different evaluations of the same organization, corporate reputation should be studied separately for each stakeholder group (Ali, Lynch, Melewar & Jin, 2014). This study focuses on CBR, because customers are considered the most important stakeholder group of an organization (Walsh, Mitchell, Jackson & Beatty, 2009a). The strategic importance of customers is mainly derived from being a major source of revenues, and their central role in setting the strategic direction of organizations (Walsh et al., 2009a; Kotler, 2011).

Researchers have proposed minimizing customer perceived risk and winning loyal customers as two important outcomes of reputation management (Sun, 2014; Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011). Positive reputation serves as a signal for the quality of products and services, and ability of an organization to fulfil its promises with customers (Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Kim, Ferrin & Rao, 2008). It therefore reduces the perceived risk of customers. The reduction in perceived risk is further associated with increase in intentional loyalty of customers (Sun, 2014). Therefore, perceived risk can be considered a mediator for the effects of CBR on intentional loyalty. However, literature in this regard does not provide any insight about how the effects of CBR on perceived risk and intentional loyalty are different for MNEs in comparison with local enterprises. Drawing on international business perspective, we expect differences in such effects because of relative disadvantages theorized for MNEs (Zaheer, 1995; Hymer, 1976), and higher expectations of customers from foreign MNEs (Gamble, 2006). Therefore, the first objective of this study is to test the relative effects of CBR on customer perceived risk for MNEs as compared with local enterprises. Similarly, the second objective is to test the mediating effects of customer perceived risk on the relationship of CBR with intentional loyalty for MNEs as compared with local enterprises.

For testing our proposed conceptual model/hypotheses, we select fast food services industry and conduct a self-administrative customer survey.

Theory and Hypotheses

Attitude-based Conceptualization of CBR

Drawing on attitude theory, this study differentiates between cognitive and affective components of CBR. This attitude-based conceptualization of CBR and usage of two CBR components as two distinctive constructs have been suggested in the extant literature (see e.g., Schwaiger, 2004; Raithel & Schwaiger, 2014). Cognitive CBR is based upon customers' evaluations of a firm's competence; whereas affective CBR refers to customers' feelings or likability towards the firm (Schwaiger, 2004). Regarding the relationship between cognitive CBR and affective CBR, Ray's (1973) standard learning hierarchy model and extant literature (e.g., Einwiller, Carroll & Korn, 2010) suggest affective CBR to follow cognitive CBR.

Key Outcomes of CBR Management

We take intentional loyalty and customer perceived risk as two key outcomes of CBR management, based on the extant literature. Customer perceived risk here refers to the loss expectancy that the customers determine subjectively (Mitchell, 1999), whereas, intentional loyalty refers to customers' willingness to continue purchases from and recommend the service provider organization to others in future (Bartikowski, Walsh, & Beatty, 2011; Selnes, 1993). Drawing on cognitive consistency theories, researchers have been considering intentional loyalty as a desired objective of cognitive CBR (see e.g., Walsh, Bartikowski & Beatty, 2014). Similarly, drawing on social exchange theory, an individual's affect or positive emotions play a central role in social exchange processes, and can make an exchange partner loyal to the other (Lawler & Thye, 1999; Chaudhuri, 2006: 28). Therefore, intentional loyalty can be considered an important outcome of affective CBR also. Moreover, the extant literature suggests perceived risk as an important outcome/objective of managing both cognitive CBR (Lacey, Bruwer & Li, 2009) and affective CBR (Kim et al., 2008).

Differentiating Effects of Type of Firm

We theorize the differentiating effects of type of firm for the impact of CBR on outcome variables based on international business literature. MNEs face various challenges while operating in foreign markets, in contrast to local firms (Hymer, 1976). These relative challenges or disadvantages for MNEs are also termed as 'liability of foreignness' in the extant literature (Zaheer, 1995; Rugman, Verbeke, & Nguyen, 2011). MNEs face such challenges in foreign markets due to their relative newness in those markets, costs associated with spatial distance, and cross-border differences in political, sociocultural, institutional, economical, technological and other environmental factors (Zaheer, 1995; Rugman et al., 2011). On the other hand, customers' expectations from the foreign companies are likely to be higher in contrast to the local companies operating in the developing markets (Gamble, 2006). Such higher expectations of customers from the MNEs and liability of foreignness may expose MNEs to a relatively higher level of customer perceived risk in contrast to local enterprises. MNEs may also be required to put relatively more efforts in developing CBR and minimising customer perceived risk through CBR. We therefore hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Cognitive CBR has an impact on customer perceived risk for MNEs, but not for local enterprises.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Affective CBR has an impact on customer perceived risk for MNEs, but not for local enterprises.

Customer perceived risk can further affect the customers' future decisions and intentional loyalty (Grewal, Iyer, Gotlieb & Levy, 2007). A higher risk perception about the delivery of expected services enhances the customers' intentions to leave the service provider organization and reduces the word-of-mouth (Sun, 2014). The relationship of CBR with perceived risk (as in H1 & H2), and the relationship of perceived risk with intentional loyalty suggest the possible mediating effects of perceived risk in the CBR-intentional loyalty relationship. In other words, organizations are expected to win loyalty of their customers by minimising customer perceived risk, through effective management of cognitive and affective components of CBR. However, drawing on the literature on international business, and following the development of H1 and H2, we hypothesize perceived risk to mediate the effects of both the CBR components on intentional loyalty for MNEs, but not for local enterprises.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Customer perceived risk mediates the effects of cognitive CBR on intentional loyalty for MNEs, but not for local enterprises.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Customer perceived risk mediates the effects of affective CBR on intentional loyalty for MNEs, but not for local enterprises.

Based on the hypothesis (H1-H4) and evidence from the extant literature, we propose our conceptual model (Figure 1), which consists of four constructs: cognitive CBR, affective CBR, customer perceived risk and intentional loyalty. The proposed differentiating effects of type of firm are highlighted for the respective inter-construct relationships.

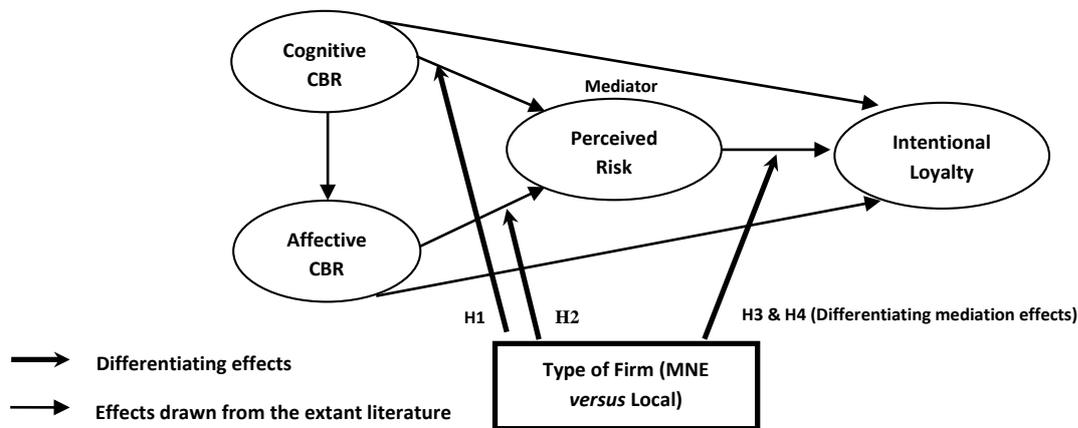


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Method

Market Selection

For this study, we selected three US-based multinational fast food restaurant chains (KFC, Subway and McDonald's) and one local fast food restaurant chain (Fri-Chiks) operating in Pakistan. The selected organizations represented the four largest fast food chains operating in Pakistan, with respect to number of their operating outlets. Pakistan provides appropriate settings for this study due to following major reasons. *First*, there is an emerging need for research on corporate reputation in the context of developing countries, as the extant literature in this regard is highly concentrated in developed countries (Walker, 2010). *Second*, Pakistan offers promising market potential for MNEs and local enterprises in various sectors, particularly, in the retail food sector. It has sixth largest population in the world (over 180

million), a per capita income growth rate of 3.4 per cent (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2013), and an emergent middle income class, which is estimated to comprise of one quarter of the whole population (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2011). Moreover, the expenditures on food and beverages are estimated at 42% of an individual's income in Pakistan (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2011).

We followed Bartikowski et al. (2011), Bartikowski and Walsh (2011) and Walsh and Beatty (2007) to study the hypothesized effects in fast-food industry. Fast food customers can easily switch from one service provider to the other, which makes the task of relationship marketing more difficult for the concerned managers in this industry (Bartikowski et al., 2011). Similarly, customers can be exposed to various types of risks while making a fast food purchase decision. These risks may include physical, financial, functional and time risks as suggested by Schiffman, Kanuk and Hansen (2008). Moreover, MNEs have rapidly penetrated into the foreign markets over the last few decades, and they are facing a close competition from small, medium and large-sized local enterprises in this industry. Therefore, fast food industry provides appropriate settings for studying the relative impact of type of firm (MNE *versus* Local) on the role of CBR in managing perceived risk and intentional loyalty.

From within the fast food services industry, we selected four groups of customers. These four groups correspond to four companies (i.e., restaurant chains) that we shortlisted for this study. Selecting customers from the same industry is helpful to control the influence of other factors deemed important in customer decision making. These factors, such as, product features, pricing, methods of promotion and distribution strategy remain similar within the same industry, in contrast to other industries. Moreover, across the four shortlisted companies, especially among the three MNEs, such other factors which may influence customer decision making are very similar. This further helps us to focus on the objectives of the study.

Respondent Selection

Customers of the shortlisted fast food restaurants were surveyed within the premises of restaurants. We used simple random sampling to select three outlets of each restaurant for this survey. Further, customers were selected through systematic sampling (Chandon & Wansink, 2007), where a team of surveyors were instructed to approach every third customer served from the service counter. In this way, 1236 responses were collected in almost four week time period. The responses were refined through deletion of invalid and incomplete responses. Finally, 1059 responses were available for further data analysis. Applying *z-test for independent proportions* (Sheskin, 2003), no significant differences were found (at 0.05 significance level) between the original and filtered datasets, with respect to firm surveyed and customer demographic variables (e.g., customer age, gender and marital status).

Sample Profile

Table 1 presents the profile characteristics of selected respondents. Youth (18-29 years) was the major age group (65%) of sample respondents and most of the respondents were single (55.9%). Almost two third respondents (64%) held bachelor or masters degrees, or the equivalent. A visible majority (79.1%) of customers visited the restaurants with family or friends which can be attributed to the collectivist culture in Pakistan (Hofstede, 2012). The percentage of male respondents was higher than females in the selected sample (69.3% and 30.7% respectively). However, by applying independent samples t-test for comparison of means, no significant gender differences were found (using 95% confidence interval) for each of the four key constructs included in the conceptual model (Figure 1).

Table 1. Sample profile (n = 1059)

Descriptors	Percentage of sample respondents
Restaurant	
Fri-Chiks	24.0
KFC	25.6
McDonald's	26.3
Subway	24.1
Gender	
Female	30.7
Male	69.3
Customer age (years)	
15-17	7.0
18-29	65.0
30-39	20.3
40-49	6.0
50-59	1.3
60 or above	0.5
Highest qualification	
Less than Matriculation	2.1
Matriculation/O-Levels	6.3
Intermediate/A-Levels	12.3
Diploma/Certificate	3.2
Bachelors or Equivalent	34.2
Masters or Equivalent	29.8
Other Higher Qualification	12.1
Marital status	
Single (Never married)	55.9
Married	40.9
Others	3.2
Customers visiting restaurant with family or friends	
No	20.9
Yes	79.1

Measurement of Key Constructs

For development of construct measures, we followed the procedures recommended by Churchill (1979: p.66). Domain of the key constructs was specified while developing theoretical framework. An exploratory research of the extant literature was conducted to adapt multiple-item measures of the study's constructs. Table 2 presents the list of initially adapted measures.

Table 2: Initially adapted measures of the key constructs

Constructs/ Dimensions	Measures	Sources
Cognitive CBR		
<i>Customer orientation</i>	CUS1- The restaurant has employees who treat customers courteously.	Walsh, Beatty and Shiu (2009b)
	CUS2- The restaurant has employees who are concerned about customer needs.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	CUS3- The restaurant is concerned about its customers.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
<i>Good employer</i>	EMP1- The restaurant looks like a good company to work for as an employee.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	EMP2- The restaurant seems to treat its employees well.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	EMP3- The restaurant seems to have excellent leadership.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
<i>Financial strength</i>	FIN1- The restaurant tends to outperform competitors.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	FIN2- The restaurant seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	FIN3- The restaurant looks like it has strong prospects for future growth.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
<i>Product and service quality</i>	PRO1- The restaurant develops innovative services.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	PRO2- The restaurant offers high quality products and services.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
<i>corporate social and environmental responsibility</i>	CSR1- The restaurant seems to make an effort to create new jobs.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	CSR2- The restaurant seems to be environmentally responsible.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
	CSR3- The restaurant would reduce its profits to ensure a clean environment.	Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
Affective CBR	AFF1- You have good feeling about the restaurant.	Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever (2000)
	AFF2- You have admiration and respect for the restaurant.	Fombrun <i>et al.</i> (2000)
	AFF3- You can better identify yourself with this restaurant as compared with other fast food restaurants.	Eberl and Schwaiger (2005); Schwaiger (2004)
	AFF4- You are enthusiastic about the restaurant.	Einwiller <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Customer Perceived Risk	RIS1- There are chances that fast-food would not taste good.	Lacey <i>et al.</i> (2009); Schiffman <i>et al.</i> (2008)
	RIS2- There are chances that fast-food would contain ingredients which are harmful for health and fitness.	Lacey <i>et al.</i> (2009); Schiffman <i>et al.</i> (2008)
	RIS3- There are chances that fast-food would not be a good value for money spent.	Lacey <i>et al.</i> (2009); Schiffman <i>et al.</i> (2008)
	RIS4- There are chances that it would be wastage of time to purchase from this restaurant.	Lacey <i>et al.</i> (2009); Schiffman <i>et al.</i> (2008)
Intentional Loyalty	LOY1- You intend to purchase from this restaurant again or remain a customer of this restaurant.	Bartikowski <i>et al.</i> (2011)
	LOY2- You will consider the restaurant your first choice to buy fast food.	Mattila (2004)

LOY3- You will gladly recommend this restaurant to other people that you know. Methlie and Nysveen (1999)

The selected measures were translated into *Urdu* (the national language of Pakistan) using translation/back-translation technique (following Walsh et al., 2014). The purpose of translation was to ensure the equivalence of scale items for their usage in our study context. We pre-tested the construct measures through unstructured informal interviews with five experts from academia (university faculty members) and 14 actual customers. Moreover, a pilot study with the valid sample size of 137 customers was also conducted. This extensive pretesting and results of pilot study helped to refine the research design and selected construct measures. The final list of measures used in the major survey is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Selected measures of the key constructs for the major survey

Constructs/ Dimensions	Measures	Sources
Cognitive CBR		
<i>Customer orientation</i>	CUS1- Employees of the restaurant are courteous.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	CUS2- The restaurant has employees who are concerned about customer needs.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	CUS3- The restaurant as an organization is concerned about its customers.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
<i>Financial strength</i>	FIN1- The restaurant tends to perform better than competitors.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	FIN2- The restaurant seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	FIN3- The restaurant looks like it has strong prospects for future growth.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
<i>Product and service quality</i>	PRO1- The restaurant develops innovative services.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	PRO2- The restaurant offers high quality products.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
	PRO3- The restaurant offers high quality services.	Walsh et al.(2009b)
Affective CBR	AFF1- I have good feeling about the restaurant.	Fombrun et al. (2000)
	AFF2- I have admiration for the restaurant.	Fombrun et al. (2000)
	AFF3- I have respect for the restaurant.	Fombrun et al. (2000)
	AFF4- I can better identify myself with the restaurant as compared with other fast food restaurants.	Eberl and Schwaiger (2005); Schwaiger (2004)
	AFF5- I am enthusiastic about the restaurant.	Einwiller et al. (2010)
Customer Perceived Risk	RIS1-There are chances that food at the restaurant would not taste good.	Lacey et al. (2009); Schiffman et al. (2008)
	RIS2- There are chances that food at the restaurant would contain ingredients which are harmful for health and fitness.	Lacey et al. (2009); Schiffman et al. (2008)
	RIS3- There are chances that food at the restaurant would not provide good value for money spent.	Lacey et al. (2009); Schiffman et al. (2008)
	RIS4- There are chances that it would be wastage of time to purchase from the restaurant.	Lacey et al. (2009); Schiffman et al. (2008)
Intentional Loyalty	LOY1- I intend to purchase from the restaurant again or remain a customer.	Bartikowski et al. (2011)

LOY2- I will consider the restaurant my first choice to buy fast food.

Mattila (2004)

LOY3- I will gladly recommend the restaurant to other people that I know.

Methlie and Nysveen (1999)

Controlling Common Method Bias

Controlling the common method bias was an important concern to ensure the validity of results. For this purpose, several procedural remedies were adapted as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) and Lindell and Whitney (2001). First, the survey data was collected at different points of time (i.e., different days of the week, and different hours in a day). Second, the respondents were assured (in the introduction section of the survey questionnaire) about their anonymity, confidentiality, and the fact that there were no right or wrong answers. Third, the length of the questionnaire was kept short in order to avoid respondents' boredom or fatigue. Fourth, different response formats were used for different variables, for example: five-point Likert scales for measuring CBR components (Walsh et al., 2009b); whereas, seven-point Likert scales for measuring customer perceived risk (Lacey et al., 2009). Fifth, two different versions (version 1 and version 2) of the questionnaire were prepared with different placement of two major sections.

Moreover, two statistical remedies were also applied, which included: Herman's one factor test (Chang, Witteloostuijn & Eden, 2010) and post hoc marker variable technique (Walsh et al., 2014). These remedies helped to ensure the absence/minimal impact of common method bias.

Data Analysis Techniques

We used structural equation modelling (SEM) for data analysis. The sub-group analysis technique was used to test the relative direct and mediated effects (Rigdon, Schumaker & Wothke, 1998; Edwards & Lambert, 2007). We used bootstrap procedures to test the relative mediating effects through assessing the significance of indirect effects as recommended by Zhao, Lynch and Chen (2010). The software package of AMOS was used for data analysis.

Results

We analysed the collected data in four stages. In the *first stage*, through confirmatory factor analysis, we tested first-order measurement model consisting of three dimensions of cognitive CBR (including *customer orientation*, *financial strength*, and *product and service quality*). Similarly, in the *second stage*, second-order measurement model was tested, which included cognitive CBR, affective CBR, perceived risk and intentional loyalty. In both the stages of data analysis, all the scale items loaded significantly (at 0.001 level) on their respective constructs. The composite reliabilities and average variances extracted exceeded/met the theoretical benchmarks of 0.70 and 0.50 respectively for all the constructs, as suggested by Malhotra (2010). The only exceptions were three dimensions of cognitive CBR (i.e., *customer orientation*, *financial strength*, and *product and service quality*) for whom, average variances extracted were 0.49, 0.44 and 0.47 respectively. However, composite reliabilities for all those dimensions were above 0.70. Therefore, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), the results revealed the convergent validity of all the constructs. Further, we ensured the discriminant validity of all the constructs/dimensions using the procedures recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Malhotra (2010). The fitness-of-model indices also fulfilled the theoretical benchmarks suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Hair, Black,

Babin and Anderson (2010) (i.e., for first and second order models, respectively: GFI=0.97, 0.93; CFI=0.95, 0.93; RMSEA=0.08, 0.06; CMIN/df= 7.11, 4.54, with p=0.00, 0.00).

In the *third stage*, structural model (consisting of inter-relationships among four key constructs) was evaluated for the whole dataset. Finally, in the *fourth stage*, structural model was evaluated separately for both the sub-groups (i.e., MNE and Local enterprises). We computed direct and indirect effects using bootstrap procedures for evaluation of structural model in both the stages (Zhao et al., 2010). A bootstrap sample size of 5000 was used following the recommendations of Byrne (2010) and Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011). Table 4 reports the results for the third and fourth stages.

Table 4: The results of structural model evaluation- Standardized effects

Hypothesized/Direct Paths	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects
Overall		
Cognitive CBR → Affective CBR	0.822***	-
Cognitive CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.159	-0.244**
Cognitive CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.048	0.613***
Affective CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.296**	-
Affective CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.683***	0.038**
Perceived Risk → Intentional Loyalty	-0.129**	-
MNEs		
Cognitive CBR → Affective CBR	0.790***	-
Cognitive CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.140	-0.251***
Cognitive CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.041	0.591***
Affective CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.318***	-
Affective CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.686***	0.039***
Perceived Risk → Intentional Loyalty	-0.123**	-
LOCAL		
Cognitive CBR → Affective CBR	0.899***	-
Cognitive CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.307	-0.128
Cognitive CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.054	0.679*
Affective CBR → Perceived Risk	-0.142	-
Affective CBR → Intentional Loyalty	0.684*	0.021
Perceived Risk → Intentional Loyalty	-0.147	-

*** p≤ 0.001; ** p< 0.01; * p< 0.05. All the remaining effects are not significant.

The results suggest that cognitive CBR had significant *indirect* effect on perceived risk through affective CBR, for MNEs. However, for local firm, the effects of cognitive CBR on perceived risk were not found significant. *H1* was thus supported. In contrast to cognitive CBR, affective CBR had significant *direct* effects on perceived risk for MNEs. However, no significant effects of affective CBR on perceived risk were found for local enterprise. These results supported *H2*.

For the hypothesized mediating effects, we found perceived risk to mediate the effects of cognitive CBR on intentional loyalty for MNEs, but not for local enterprise (in support of *H3*). For MNEs, perceived risk mediated cognitive CBR-intentional loyalty relationship jointly with affective CBR. However, the significant indirect effect of cognitive CBR on intentional loyalty for local enterprise revealed the mediating effects of affective CBR only in this relationship. Similarly, perceived risk was also found to mediate the effects of affective CBR on intentional loyalty for MNEs, but not for local enterprise (in support of *H4*). In this regard, the mediating effects of perceived risk for MNEs were *partial*, as the direct effects of affective CBR on intentional loyalty were also found significant (Zhao et al., 2010).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides evidence for the differences in the management of CBR by MNEs and local firms. Minimizing customer perceived risk has been found as an important outcome of cognitive and affective components of CBR in case of MNEs, but not for local firms. Similarly, customer perceived risk mediated the effects of both the CBR components on intentional loyalty in case of MNEs, but not in case of local enterprises. The findings get support from the literature on international business which suggests relative disadvantages for MNEs (while operating in foreign markets) in contrast to local firms (Zaheer, 1995). The higher expectations of customers from MNEs, as compared with local enterprises (Gamble, 2006) also justify the relatively higher importance of customer perceived risk for MNEs.

This study, through its findings, contributes to two streams of extant literature: (1) international business, and (2) CBR and its relationship with customer-related outcome variables. We extend the theorized relative disadvantages of MNEs in the foreign markets (as compared with local firms) into the emerging area of reputation management. Researchers have already identified that relationship of corporate reputation with its antecedent/consequence factors may vary across different stakeholder groups, reputational measures employed and countries of study (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Ali et al., 2014). In the same vein, we introduce a new variable of 'type of firm' that differentiates the effects of CBR on two key outcome variables of perceived risk and intentional loyalty.

The results of our study offer several implications for managers of both MNEs and local enterprises. The managers at MNEs should put more efforts to win intentional loyalty of their customers in contrast to managers at local enterprises. As we have found for MNEs, minimizing customer perceived risk through cognitive CBR and affective CBR can play a strategic role for increasing their customers' loyalty. In contrast, local service providers may capitalize on their comparative advantages and win the loyal customers by building positive cognitive CBR and affective CBR. Minimizing customer perceived risk may not be among the strategic priorities of local firm management. Moreover, managers of both MNEs and local enterprises should consider cognitive and affective CBR as two distinctive constructs, where cognitive CBR can be a determinant of affective CBR.

Our study has the following limitations which provide opportunities for future researchers. First, we have theorized and tested the relative effects of 'type of firm' only, on the relationship of CBR with its outcome variables. However, the search for new such factors should continue in response to call from the extant literature (see e.g., Walsh et al., 2014). Relationship age, gender and income class of a customer; type of product/service/industry; and level of customer involvement in purchase decision may be tested as some other potential factors which may differentiate the effects of CBR. Second, several other outcomes of CBR have been examined in the extant literature, for example, customer trust, customer commitment and customer satisfaction (Walsh & Beatty, 2007; Ali et al., 2014). Future researchers may modify/enrich our proposed conceptual model by including other outcome variables of CBR. Finally, the findings of our research should be tested in industry settings other than fast food restaurants also. Restaurants are classified as experience-based services (moderately difficult to be evaluated); however, there are certain services where customers may face a higher selection risk and difficulty in evaluation, for example, financial services (Hsieh, Chiu, & Chiang, 2005; Walsh et al., 2014). Therefore, it is expected that comparative effects of both CBR components on perceived risk and intentional loyalty; and mediating effect of perceived risk may vary for high risk services, in contrast to experience-based services.

In conclusion, this study finds differential effects of CBR on customer-outcome variables for MNEs in contrast to local enterprises. By doing this, we contribute to the literature streams of international business and CBR management. Future researchers are encouraged to test our proposed model in various contexts, and explore new variables that may differentiate the effects of CBR.

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How Do Social Media Contribute to the Construction to SMEs' Corporate Identity?

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Extended Abstract

Corporate Identity is defined as “the presentation of an organisation to every stakeholder. It is what makes an organisation unique and it incorporates the organisation’s communication, design, culture, behaviour, structure, industry and strategy. It is thus intrinsically related to both the corporate personality and image” (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006, 864). Whereas corporate identity has been extensively studied in relation to larger organisations, very little research has considered the specificities of the concept as it applies to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This may be explained by the fact that, until now, SMEs have put limited emphasis on branding, image and communication efforts (Wong and Merrilees, 2005; Pacitto et al., 2006; Ojasalo et al., 2008).

If SMEs’ managers generally accept that a good company’s reputation is important in gaining legitimization from different stakeholders (Goldberg et al., 2003), the difficulty often arises when translating this viewpoint into specific reputation-building activities (Abimbola and Kocak, 2007). Indeed, there is a wealth of literature showing that small firms generally suffer from a lack of resources. Commonly acknowledged constraints include cash, time, marketing knowledge and expertise (e.g. Carson, 1990; Gilmore et al., 2001).

In this context, social media can prove an effective tool. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 61) define social media as “A group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. Both academics and practitioners acknowledge that social media applications represent a huge opportunity for SMEs in developing their marketing and communication efforts and communicate cost-effectively and

creatively about their products, brands and identity (e.g. Harris and Rae, 2010; Barnes et al. 2012; Michaelidou et al. 2012; Stockdale et al. 2012). According to Barnes et al. (2012, 688) “many of the tools of Web 2.0 are cheap to acquire and operate and require little technical expertise”, making them particularly suitable for smaller businesses.

Of this literature, most studies investigated the benefits small businesses can gain from social media technologies (Chua et al., 2009; Harris and Rae, 2010; Barnes et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2012; Persaud et al., 2012; Stockdale et al., 2012). Authors' suggestions and empirical findings show that SMEs hope to achieve three central goals when using social media tools: increasing brand awareness (Michaelidou et al., 2011; Persaud et al., 2012; Chua et al., 2009; Stockdale et al., 2012), building their brand (Harris and Rae, 2010; Chua et al., 2009) and strengthening relationships with a variety of stakeholders (Barnes et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Stockdale et al., 2012). Most of these uses and resultant benefits tend to support the way the SME presents itself to every stakeholder and contribute to the construction of SMEs' company identity.

Nevertheless, the initiatives a growing number of SMEs are developing on social media have not been studied in relation to the concept of corporate identity. In this framework, the research will seek to answer the following question: *how do the social media efforts implemented by SMEs contribute to the construction of their corporate identity?*

More specifically, this research will consider two important sub-questions:

1. What are the dimensions of CI in SMEs and how is it managed?
2. How do social media contribute to the construction of SMEs' corporate identity?

In order to answer these questions, the research will draw on a literature review of the main concepts pertaining to the phenomenon under study. The works related to corporate identity, SMEs' marketing and social media are reviewed in order to build an adequate theoretical framework.

So as to empirically investigate the way SMEs are using social media applications to build their company identity, we will use a qualitative approach based on a multiple-case study (Yin, 2009). The preliminary results of these investigations will be presented.

Two streams of data collection will be considered. Firstly, to identify the peculiarities of the corporate identity concept in the context of SMEs, semi-structured interviews will be realised with the variety of players involved in the activities related to the company identity construction and communication. These include, when applicable, players such as the owner-manager, the marketing manager, the persons in charge of social media management, employees, the communication agency, etc. Secondly, the data collected from the interviews will be triangulated with information gathered from the content generated on social media by the SMEs under examination. The data collected will allow us to highlight how social media are used in order to communicate company identity and which dimensions of the latter are impacted by the use of these technologies.

Keywords

SME, social media, corporate identity, communication, case study

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4

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Culture, Consumption Culture and Public Relations: North Cyprus, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) Case Study Review

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Abstract

The relationship between culture and consumer culture is a topic frequently discussed in the academic field. Prevailing across the world capitalist economic order on the fact that people have to consume and how consuming gave a rise to the emergence of consumption culture. In this study, the transmission of culture, transporting and effective transforming of communication, while maintaining the consumption of consumer culture has been argued that its audiences need to be internalized. Afterwards, the publications of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) being the professionally active GSM operator in Northern Cyprus, PR news have been studied upon. As a result, two months of scanning the archives of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus)'s reports on quantitative and qualitative content analysis were analyzed. Keeping in mind the meanings which can be extracted from the obtained news on the distribution of PR events and the news stories of the practical ways to influence the formation of consumer culture were examined. The news was read in the triangle of the media, shareholders and consumers

Keywords

Culture, consumer culture, public relations, North Cyprus, Telsim (Vodafone Northern Cyprus)

Introduction

Culture is a fundamental concept which covers the theoretical framework of this study. In this study, emphasis will be given to sociological and anthropological recognition of culture. According to Siegelau "culture is; a unique way of reproduction and development historically determined with the existence of a group or class by the creation of their own material and social existence, "(Tomlinson, 1999: 25). Here, as culture, its people and the values and practices that shapes the life of society is discussed as a whole, the relationship with the production and consumption conditions, ideology, hegemony, lifestyle, is intended to be associated with concepts such as consumer culture.

When culture and cultural studies are mentioned Frankfurt School comes to mind first, in a conceptual and theoretical sense. The Frankfurt School theorists have developed the foundation of the basis of the cultural studies of thought. Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse were looming in Europe as theorists of the Frankfurt School, escaping going into exile in America from the fascist political events being the leading names in the school. Kellner (1989: 147), escaped from the roots of fascism the theorists had taken in Europe, whom lead a life in the United States suggesting the basis for determining the formation of their cultural criticism. The theorists who lived in the United States after the 1930s had the chance to observe the changing lifestyles of the developing Fordist mass production manufacturing systems and the effect of the increase of the mass of mass media. Theorists have made their first studies on the cultural industry and consumer society for the U.S mass society. Creating a culture of theories was influenced by Gramsci's theory of hegemony. "In this area, school reveals the conception of culture industry with mass culture further. Cultural aspects of capitalism emerged late in society's main feature as hegemony and persuasion being a process leading them to focus on these issues "(Şan ve Hira).

The aim of this study was written by how the press of Northern Cyprus Telsim (Vodafone) had issued news about Cyprus via PR were being put forward, which attempts to shape the patterns of consumption. Using tangible opportunities, with ads both in the media, as well as spending their advertising budget money, they were given the privilege of establishing PR news where Telsim (Vodafone) is trying to determine ways to affect the Cyprus audience. Today, the way to influence the target audience of the company passes through their consent. To win the consent of a potential audience and create a specific consumer group, to be considered within the scope of the consumption habits must be adopted in ways of working.

Background and Review

Culture, Consumer Culture, Public Relations

In the first half of 1960, Frankfurt British School opened, basing themselves on the concept of culture industry. Raymond Williams developed a path for the school with the approach which has been developed on culture. Özbek (1994: 75) nowadays, the extent that studies the affect of culture's two basic definitions which has its roots starting at the end of

18th-century with Raymond Williams as naming 'Culture and Society' debate states the critical tradition. Classic and conservative according to the primary definition, culture is a measure of aesthetic excellence which defines high culture-low culture. Williams's culture rests against this form of assessment. The origin of the second definition of culture is based on Herder and its origin of anthropology. Being descriptive and ethnographic, culture is 'a way of life' according to the definition used by Williams.

Culture, in this study is considered as a social phenomenon that shapes all vital activities of people. When consumption becomes a cultural practice, it's possible for firms to take advantage of the circumstance of the media's versatility to reach a wider audience. To plan and implement appropriate activities as business objectives are located next to the manager of PR professionals in the strategic decision-making for business.

Culture

The Frankfurt School theorists are has affected by the Marxist theory. Therefore Marx's false consciousness and approach to economy politics was the instrument in the formation of cultural theory. According to Marx (1996: 76) the power holders in society, also adopted their ideology to the masses. Those who hold financial power, also own the mentality field at the same time. "Marxist approach, is the Marx's owners of the ruling class in ways of power and economic power, by a means of the tools in their hands, starting with the theory that internalizes the dependent class of memory of their ideology, who hold elites of mass media, arguing that ideology's tool has a direct influence on the discourse" (Arik, 2004: 330).

Althusser, Marx's most important follower states (1989: 37), "capitalist social formation of production relations as in those who are oppressed by the exploited reproduction of an entire section of relations also with the exploited exploiters drawing attention in sustaining the importance of the ideology of the ruling class through non-coercive means by placing the bulk head of the ideology. Hegemony for the management of a sovereign power refers to the strategy which can be defined as the area in gaining the consent of the people under domination"(Arik, 2004: 332). Gramsci identifies to hegemony as the state printing devices (hard to use) instead of Ideological State Apparatuses (winner of consent) are activated until engaged. "Hegemony is associated with 'civil society' field between infrastructure and superstructure. Media, family, school, army, etc. are all individuals seen as very compliant connecting devices to print to the dominant hegemonic power "(Arik, 2004: 332).

Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse who revealed cultural theory, domination of cultural dimension, commercialization and standardization, have worked on the alienation of the individual. Adorno and Horkheimer, revealed the concept of culture industry and according to them the continuance of culture industry produced by capitalism mass of culture. "Adorno and Horkheimer in short, see media as a cultural industry power of affirmation, the creation of media relations of power, protection, reduced and adapted to popular culture in an aesthetic form" (Arik, 2004: 335). According to Adorno (2003: 1) based on the mass of industries, is arranged by the consumption of the masses largely determining the structure of consumption of the products, more or less is produced according to a plan in all sectors. All sectors are structurally similar to each other or at least turning deficits, they almost form a completely glitch-free system. Culture industry deliberately adapts itself to the consumers.

Adorno titled in 'the Culture Industry Reconsidered' states that "thus, although the culture industry undeniably speculates on the conscious and unconscious state of the millions towards which it is directed, the masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object. (...),The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment, in which, as Horkheimer and I have noted, enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves. (1991, 2-6).

According to Marcuse, "individuals, not only in exchange for the richness the metal brings to life via labor, they also sell their free time" (quoted from Oktay, Arik, 2004: 334). "Frankfurt School just as Althusser concludes, family, church, school business workplaces, argues that a monolithic structure between mass the media and the way it will be able to create a hegemonic ideology all together, serves as a fully compatible and equal to the one that operates with socialization tools" (quoted from Oskay's Arik, 2004: 336). Supplying false needs by false consciousness are routed using manipulative media and advertising industry.

Raymond Williams is the name who shaped cultural studies in the English School influenced by the study of cultural theory in the Frankfurt School. Williams exhibited a critical approach to mass culture; the hegemony of social assumptions namely could be possible by the development of common sense. According to Williams, culture is for everyone. Williams (1980: 38), states that arrangement in any society: at any time; as we might call is an absolutely dominant and effective, values, meanings and practices. Gramsci uses this combination, in the hegemony of subclass in terms of opposition to the ruling class. Therefore, hegemony is achieved not only by the above imposed ideas and manipulation. Hegemony; can only be a combination of all the experiences and practical experiences that can take place between mutual life and harmony.

"Culture, for people includes beliefs, in a permanent basis as well as in routine communication and social interaction variability in featuring activities, world views, concerns, referring to the dynamic and complex environments. Therefore, culture is environment. It is the development of certain patterns related to talking, dressing, nutrition and the preparation and consumption of food. Culture also covers our worship, our ways of worship, how we format time and space, how we dance, how we socialize over what values our children have and many details beyond this which constitute our daily lives "(Lull, 2001: 95).

According to Marshall (1999: 2) adaptive culture is a term used to meet the values and traditions of the area based mainly on the American cultural anthropology, manufactured objects of the material culture (buildings, consumer goods, and so on) over ideas and beliefs.

Culture as a socializing agent: Society, by making their own perspective to the corresponding ideas and norms of behavior rises against the norms to be observed in individuals within a society. The individuals in the society, they feel obliged to act in accord with those norms to avoid being marginalized.

"The human scientists interested in the subject, have tried to prove that enabling the hereditary nature is important to the socialization of the individual cultures; however, the research findings showed that the important characteristics of the individual is genetic. Today, especially as adopted opinions are received in 'learning and behavior' with the theory where the individual receives the culture of learning via the pathways in the community, showing in their self-behavior and how the society after them is affected in the way it also outweighs the opinion. "(Aziz, 1982: 14).

Not being consent to the suppression of compliance with social norms that point this out in the Ideological State Apparatuses where Althusser set seems to be activated. Sometimes religion and institutions, our family from the moment we were born, education at the very beginning to teaching methods and curricula, the regulations under the legal name of the opinions of the political parties, civil society's point of view placed in the organizations, mass communication tools adopted and spread broadcasting policy, certain cultural adoption is known to be shaped by ideology. Althusser (2002, 34), if

the state has a single printing device, there might be several Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), it can detect the presence of specific areas of the largest regions in the apparent mess of ISAs' where Government Printing distinguishes the device: the state of the device using 'hard' whereas the ISA is of 'ideology' to state which process is being used.

PR specialist in areas of strategic tasks due to having power in hand which includes (managers, shareholders, power, power, etc.), institutions or organizations are positioned as consent engineers in directing the opinion of the public to establish their dominance.

Culture and Human

Individuals within a society, the carrier of culture, transmitter, and users undertake work as a natural converter. Settled transportation of cultural practices, individuals naturally assume the transfer task, the time is affected by changing environmental conditions and are affected by environmental conditions, cultural practices have learned to reshape themselves. Being naturalize and internalized, social norms go through the placement of individual's habits by producing a kind of consent is socialization of the individual and determines their everyday life practices. This is compatible with Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Adorno's definition of culture. Adorno (1998: 166) a culture worthy of human self-delusion which helps wakening of the living in a society, people are numb and relaxed. However, Williams' contribution to the definition of culture must be shown here and be compatible to the extent that each individual encounters against accepting cultural impositions state should be considered.

PR, anthropology, sociology acts in cooperation with other disciplines such as psychology and social psychology. In this way, PR professionals, with scientific data gained from other branches of science, with the history of the audience, in the social working masses being affected and the psychological state and with its causes, behavior patterns ways of influencing, the reactions it can give to events can determined in advance.

Williams (2005: 321) based on our practical material, sociality in organization, life and the world constitutes the general framework for our universes patterned style. Also subsistence activities, production and distribution, organization and sociality relations change the world, living, in our interpretation patterns concerning social relations are subject to change.

"Culture is, doing things in a different way and making them differently as though they would be otherwise, in this way to keep them in an artificial way. Culture is to create an order and protect it, in terms of this order to fight chaos in the distorting layout and everything appears to be. (...) culture not only makes such an order it also gives value. Culture is a matter of choice. Culture brings the best order and perhaps the only good order to the skies "(Bauman, 2004: 161). Featherstone (2005, 58) states today's consumer culture does not control what is being revoked nor represents the development of more stringent supervisory authority.

Consumer Culture and Representation Problem

Spending patterns draws the boundaries which are formed according to earnings or income levels of individuals in reach of products or services (clothing, nutrition, leisure). "According to Bourdieu, influencing consumption patterns is not only income; it is also family's cultural and symbolic value" (Bockock, 2005: 71). Consumption requirements of firms that offer products or services to be produced require consideration by the firms having the factors that make their consumption patterns.

According to Bockock (2005: 61) modern consumerism, in a sufficient number of unique groups of people in a series of values has to be encouraged to become valid and understandable, and thus depends on the sale of consumer goods. "This is not only the symbols that are imposed on consumer goods via the ads imposed by the capitalist companies; they adhere to the lifestyle of the consumer requiring it to be effective. Therefore, the design of the product, labeling, ad making, and variable subculture that has potential consumers of various products in a complex interaction between the values "(as cited in Bockock by Kellner, 2005: 62). "The claim they want to give to the masses (as positivist), cannot be regarded as an undeniable reality. This claim itself is under the supervision of 'manipulation'. Adorno" (Slater, 1998: 235) confirms this manipulation depending on the problem only occurring programmatically to manipulate the masses in the production side. Adorno and Horkheimer (2010: 215) qualify the elixir of life as the ad culture industry. Advertising and other marketing agencies have requested the market that can pay exorbitant prices being constantly on the gates; those who cannot pay for the war conceded defeat in the competition. Sales-related expenses, ensures the arbiter to remain closed to the outside.

According to Chomsky (2003, 221) the marketing communication method used to ensure the control of the mind and the desire to be directed is the communication tools of marketing in PR on behalf of shareholders, through the media.

"Fashion is located in the heart of modernity, including science and revolution; because the means of communication from sexuality to art and policy, the entire layout is dominated by this logic of modernity "(Baudrillard, 2001, 158). Fashion as a concept is to understand the changes in consumption habits, as well as having the necessary to look at who has created fashion. Individuals with the products they consume become their personal image, they aim to be accepted in society, and embracing the brand / service to the state they consume symbols as objects of desire. "Not the product, the brand! ', rather than being producers' of products they see themselves as 'meaning brokers' who has become a rallying slogan of Marketing Renaissance that took place under the leadership of a new generation of companies. What was changing was the idea of what was sold to in advertising and in brands (...) Marking the company's advantage with the most accurate and most advanced branding is the concern. (...) Brand seized creators of the market was born with a new consensus: the products which will give fruit in future won't be presented as 'merchandise' it will be those presented as a concept: With experience, brand as a lifestyle "(Klein, 2003, 44-45).

"Commoditization of social relations and relations of exploitation, when their turn came, allowed the development of large industries which created the world market" (Uzunudis and Boutillier, 2003, 155). According to Başkaya (2004, 169) without the consent of the ruling class, its sovereignty cannot be maintained only by brute force on the basis of naked violence. Therefore sovereignty rests on two pillars: Naked violence and voluntary servitude. Voluntary slavery is possible to create the illusion of people who are aware about the nature of the regime.

According to Habermas (2003, 325-326) publicity is clearly separated by targeting the political public with administration of opinion from advertising. Special advertising, to the extent that they are concerned with the consumer, is addressed to another private person; making PR the address of the "public" who are private individuals and not as a public community directly named as consumers. The sender hides the commercial purpose of entering into the role of someone in pursuit of public interest. Being in the consumer's domain, composed of private individuals, publicity cited functions and the

articulation of organizational competition between private interests by not implicating the classic forms of civic community as developing ideas that would legitimize the abuse of public assets.

Bokock (2005: 54) says, in industrial capitalism, which was organized as a result of method production, shows that people are moving away from the process of creating something and is moving away from each other. These changes are increasing individual seclusion, alienation and having the production process lead to rupture where the individual is not trying to show what they produce instead of what they consume.

Northern Cyprus Media GSM Operator Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) Public Relations Practices

In this section of the study, the state of consumer culture is studied about PR shaping the reception in the news media and the subject of culture as the GSM operator which is centered in Turkey, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) began to operate for the first time in 1995 in Northern Cyprus.

Purpose of the Study

This chapter includes the following quantitative qualitative content analysis using the research answer questions of the study as a method can be expressed as follows:

Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) GSM operator showing professional activity in Northern Cyprus with news media in public relations practice on how to communicate in a processed and communicate the practice of this relationship on how the consumer culture established?

The hypotheses for the study were as follows:

(H1) public relations carried out by the GSM operator in the press are presented are held for the practical news agenda.

(H2), the press trade on the issue, public broadcasting policy in line with advertising in exchange for public relations news to broadcast journalism, understanding of (mutually beneficial relationship) has adopted and determined the nature of the published news regarding the status of GSM operators.

Methods

Between the dates of 01 January 2013 - 28 February 2013, in the light of the variables in the coding table, developed for content analysis in order to test this hypothesis from Kıbrıs, Havadis and Yenidüzen newspapers on how the news is published on the subject, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) stepped forward with what the content of the publications related to the GSM operators have tried to determine news stories with the aim to obtain a statistical results. Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) news published in some issues related to the classification of GSM operators has enabled analyzing in a qualitative sense.

While coding:

In the first stage, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) news published on the GSM operator is encoded by the number of publications in sixteen local published newspapers.

In the second stage, the news contained from Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) public relations related to the GSM operators coded as event types.

In the third stage, sponsorship-based public relations news is subjected to coding according to the sponsorship landscapes. Sponsorship landscapes are coded as music, arts, sports, causes and entertainments. News adhered by content has been made the subject of an objective coding.

Media Structure Overview in North Cyprus

Means of mass communication serves as a bridge for carrying information to the masses. According to Burton (1995: 39-40) studying on media is the studying on meaning that is where they come from, what they are, how purposeful they are, how they are built in media material and how they reflect into our way of thinking. In short, meaning is pointed out to us in terms of media communication. Headlines in the newspapers, photographs and who and what should be considered important is pointed out to us.

The local newspaper press are the most effective media in North Cyprus. Because TV channels which are broadcasted in Turkey can be monitored directly in Northern Cyprus, and this lowers the monitoring of local TV channels.

Newspapers operating in Northern Cyprus, the news content will be included in newspapers are usually from TAK (Turkish News Agency) and are occasionally taken from other news agencies. News, are sometimes carried out by their own reporters or are prepared in-house by the company and sent to the press as a ready to publish release to newspapers. The company news content prepared in-house has a concept in advertising when submitted for publication.

Research Held Joint Media Selection

The study examines sixteen newspapers published in North Cyprus. It is impossible to say anything about the circulation in Northern Cyprus. According to Hüdadoğlu while normally independent data providers share the rate of newspaper sales to the market in the world, in Northern Cyprus it is not available to explain the circulation of newspapers on a regular basis by independent institutions. Newspapers in particular are refraining from explaining the rates of the sales ratio. Distribution dealers also do not share the sales reports of newspaper with the public. Therefore, it is hardly possible to specify the average circulation of newspapers in the TRNC, however some unofficial estimates related to sales ratio can be made. Hence, the current ten out of fifteen newspapers, sell less than 1000 per day.

According to research made by Media Research Center about newspaper reading habits in North Cyprus conducted on 312 people over age 18 within 11-17 March 2014, reads newspaper at least 3 days a week (Kadem Research Center, March 2014).

According to the Figure 1 those who read newspapers three days a week, 83.8% Kıbrıs, 23.4 % Yenidüzen, 22.2% Havadis, 22.1 Kıbrıs Postası, 17% Afrika, 13.2% Star Kıbrıs and Halkın Sesi, 11.8% Realist, 10.6% Diyalog, 9.6% Kıbrıslı, 6.6% Ortam, 6% Vatan & Volkan, and finally 5.4% Güneş and Demokrat Bakış preferred to read. The daily reading rate with the Kıbrıs newspaper, in fact, is also an indicator of its potential to influence public opinion. Havadis, Yenidüzen, Kıbrıs Postası and Afrika are four newspapers that are followed the Kıbrıs newspaper.

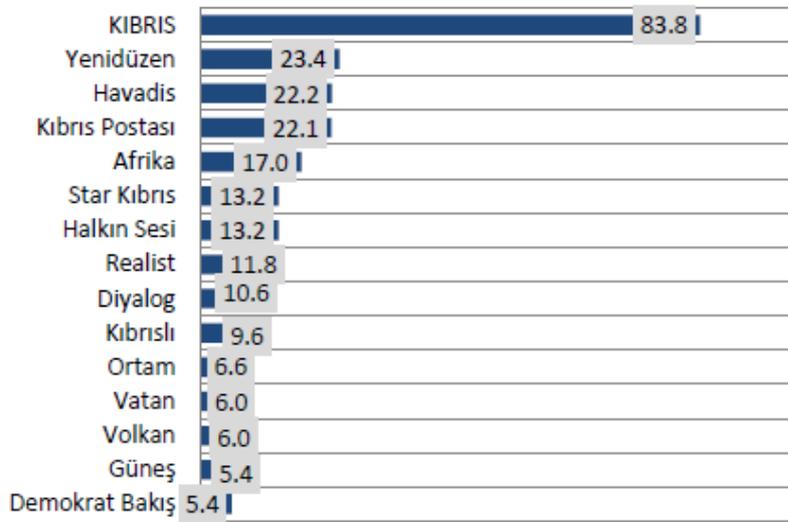


Figure 1. North Cyprus Media Research (11-17 March 2014): Which North Cyprus Published newspapers are you reading at least 3 Days of the week? - Newspaper Readers.

Results

Covering the period of 1st January 2014 – 31st March 2014, in a three-month time period in the archives of thirteen newspapers, 566 PR news have been published about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus).

In Figure 2 and Table 1, 32 different themes have published as PR news within 1st January 2014 – 31st March 2014. It means PR is a strategic marketing communication tool for Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus).

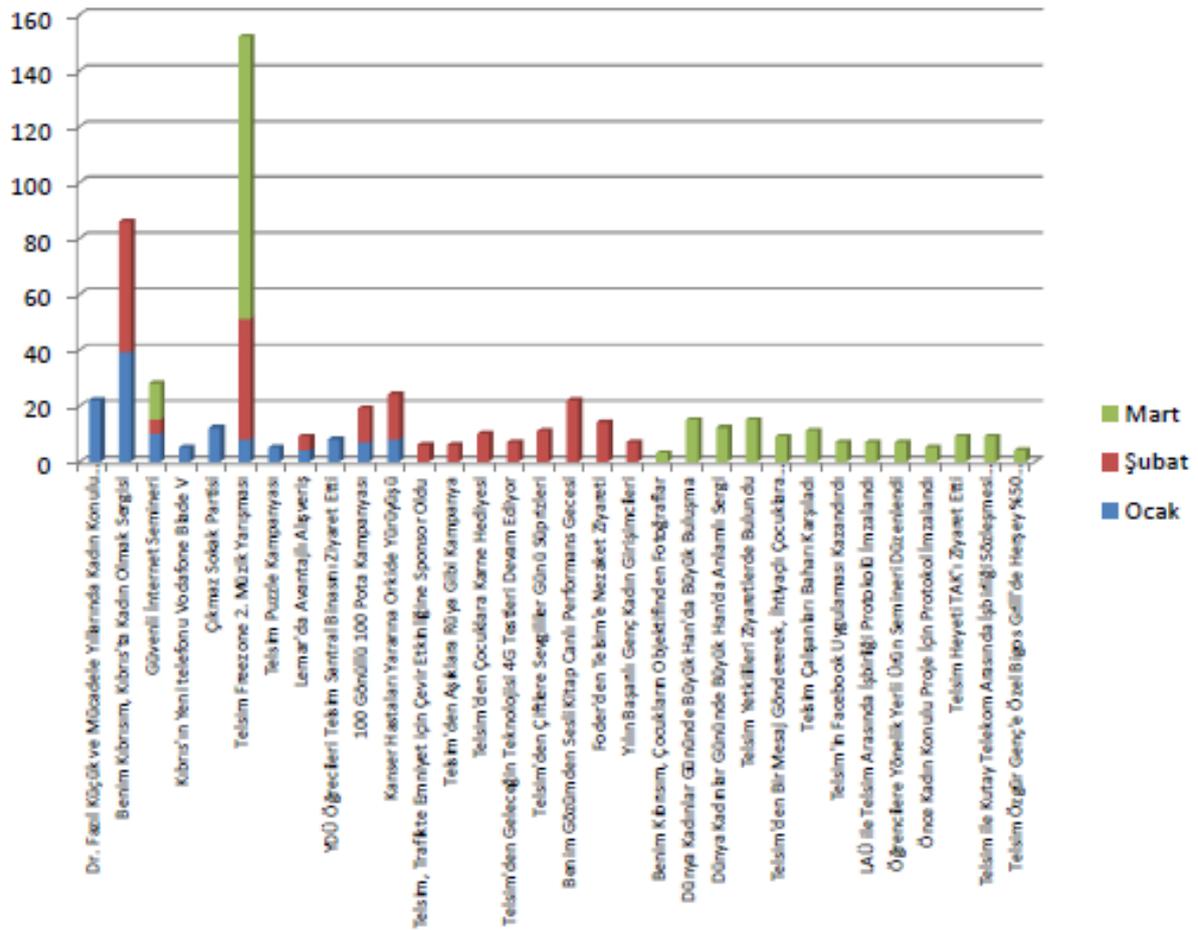


Figure 2. PR public relation news about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers according to Months and news headings

Table 1. PR news about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers according to Months and news headings

News Headings	Kind of activity	Target Market	Jan.	Feb.	March	Total
Dr. Fazıl Küçük ve Mücadele Yıllarında Kadın Konulu Kompozisyon Yarışması	Composition contest	Primary School-Children	22	0	0	22
Benim Kıbrısım, Kıbrıs'ta Kadın Olmak Sergisi	Exhibition	Women	39	47	0	86
Güvenli İnternet Semineri	Seminar	Secondary School-Teenagers	10	5	13	28
Kıbrıs'ın Yeni telefonu Vodafone Blade V	New Product Marketing	Potential Market	5	0	0	5
Çıkmaz Sokak Partisi	Party (entertainment)	Young	12	0	0	12
Telsim Freezone 2. Müzik Yarışması	Music Competition	Secondary School-Teenagers	8	43	101	152

Telsim Puzzle Kampanyası	Marketing Campaign	Potential Market	5	5	
Lemar'da Avantajlı Alışveriş	Sales Management	Potential Market	4	5	9
YDÜ Öğrencileri Telsim Santral Binasını Ziyaret Etti	Visit	Primary School-Children	8		8
100 Gönüllü 100 Pota Kampanyası	Sport Campaign	Primary School-Children	7	12	19
Kanser Hastaları Yararına Orkide Yürüyüşü	Walking for Cancer	Potential Market	8	16	24
Telsim, Trafikte Emniyet için Çevir Etkinliğine Sponsor Oldu	Sport Campaign	Potential Market		6	6
Telsim'den Aşıklara Rüya Gibi Kampanya	Valentine's day sales management	Potential Market		6	6
Telsim'den Çocuklara Karne Hediyesi	Sales management	Primary School-Children		10	10
Telsim'den Geleceğin Teknolojisi 4G Testleri Devam Ediyor	Marketing Campaign	Potential Market		7	7
Telsim'den Çiftlere Sevgililer Günü Süprizleri	Valentine's day sales management	Potential Market		11	11
Benim Gözümden Sesli Kitap Canlı Performans Gecesi	Social responsibility	Blind People		22	22
Foder'den Telsim'e Nezaket Ziyareti	Visit	Corporation		14	14
Yılın Başarılı Genç Kadın Girişimcileri	Best Entrepreneur (women) Selection	Women		7	7
Benim Kıbrısım, Çocukların Objektifinden Fotoğraflar	Photography competition	Primary School-Children		3	3
Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Büyük Han'da Büyük Buluşma	Women Days' Meeting	Women		15	15
Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Büyük Han'da Anlamalı Sergi	Women Days' Exhibition	Women		12	12
Telsim Yetkilileri Ziyaretlerde Bulundu	Visit	Potential Market		15	15
Telsim'den Bir Mesaj Göndererek, İhtiyaçlı Çocuklara Yardım Eli Uzatabilirsiniz	Social Responsibility campaign for children	Adults via Children with needs		9	9
Telsim Çalışanları Baharı Karşıladi	Corporate relations	Personell		11	11
Telsim'in Facebook Uygulaması Kazandırdı	Marketing Campaign	Real Market		7	7
LAÜ ile Telsim Arasında İşbirliği Protokolü İmzalandı	Corporate Protocol	Corporation		7	7
Öğrencilere Yönelik Yerli Ürün Semineri Düzenlendi	Seminar	Secondary School-Teenager		7	7
Önce Kadın Konulu Proje İçin Protokol İmzalandı	Project Protocol	s women		5	5
Telsim Heyeti TAK'ı Ziyaret Etti	Visit	Corporation		9	9

Telsim ile Kutay Telekom Arasında İşbirliği Sözleşmesi İmzalandı	Corporate Protocol	Corporation	9	9		
Telsim Özgür Genç'e Özel Bigos Grill'de Herşey %50 İndirimli	Sales management for Young People	Young People	4	4		
Total			128	211	227	566

The research results obtained on Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in PR news headline, kind of activity, target market, month and the number of news including the name of Telsim/Vodafone in the news is categorized into results in the following table. 128 published in January, 211 in February and 227 in March of total 566 news. Here, the impact factor of each newspaper has vital role. An indication of newspapers potential to influence public opinion has main importance rather than total number of news.

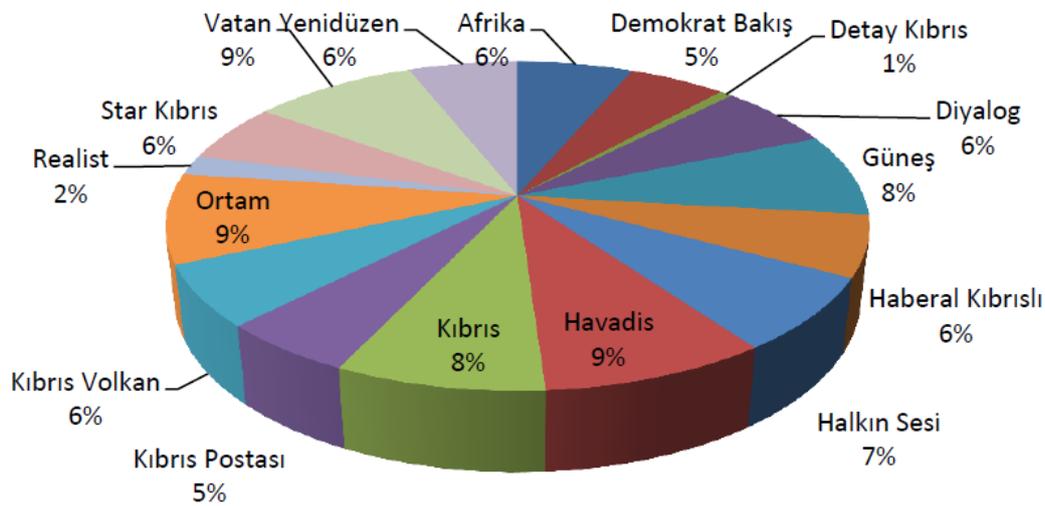


Figure 3. PR news about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

Figure 3 and Table 2 shows that, 28% of the 566 news (46 of them) in Kıbrıs, 9% (50 of them) Havadis and 6% (34 of them) Yenidüzen and 5% (30 of them) Kıbrıs Postası and %6 (36 of them) Afrika was published. Examination of five newspapers with the highest read rates; in the various new regarding Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) have provided the ability to see the published news on PR.

Table 2. PR news about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers																	
Newspaper Name	Afrika	Demokrat Bakış	Detay Kıbrıs	Diyalog	Güneş	Haberal Kıbrıslı	Halkın Sesi	Havadis	Kıbrıs	Kıbrıs Postası	Kıbrıs Volkan	Ortam	Realist	Star Kıbrıs	Vatan	Yenidüzen	Total
Number of News	36	30	4	36	46	34	41	50	46	30	34	50	11	33	51	34	566

As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) has managed to find a place in the most effective media within a short period in time as three months in Northern Cyprus 566

times of the public relations news printing press in the sixteen newspaper and 196 times of PR news in first five local newspapers with the highest readability rate. When analyzing the table, both the differentiation of content news and targeted audience is noteworthy. Companies can at the same time carry out activities received under the influence of different people from many walks in PR.

PR News Categories in Media

The news archive scan collected in the second stage, containing news of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) related to the GSM operator, is coded as PR type of activity

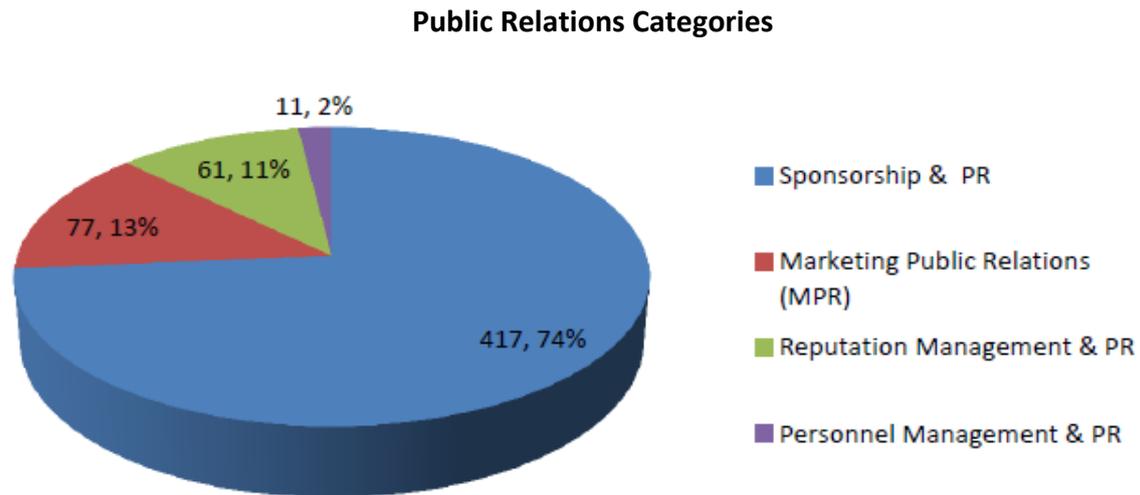


Figure 4. PR Categories about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

Table 3. PR Categories about Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

PR Categories	Number of News
Sponsorship & PR	417
Marketing PR (MPR)	77
Reputation Management & PR	61
Personnel Management & PR	11
Total	566

Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in sixteen newspapers published PR news 74% in sponsorship and PR, 13% in marketing PR, 9% of reputation management and PR, 11% of the news on reputation management and PR and 2% of the news on personnel management and PR. Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) generally depends on Vodafone centered in Turkey. Vodafone, being a professional PR firm blends local culture by following the Vodafone campaigns in the same or similar style made worldwide which are implemented in Northern Cyprus.

In this study, culture, is a social concept that is learned, taught and taken as a socialization tool, Marshall taking advantage of the distinction between 'adaptive culture' and 'material culture' in line with the relationship between 'adaptive culture' and material culture, manufactured objects of material culture (buildings, consumer goods, and so on) on cultural ideas, beliefs, values and traditions has been accepted

as a term in the area to be fulfilled. Even considering the news headlines above, the original ideas that will affect different groups in Northern Cyprus such as local beliefs, values, traditions, customs, and behavior patterns are being used in the news. And this is made visible through the support of the material culture. With the PR news of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) after affecting the level of spiritual consciousness of the people living in Northern Cyprus, is ensuring the adoption of material elements. For example, examining such events of the subject within two months, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) aimed for secondary school students in the FreeZone Music Competition held between High Schools, contributing to cancer patients in a Traditional Orchid Walk with sponsorship of communication, Dr. Küçük Essay Contest who is known as a leader among Turkish Cypriots, held on behalf of Dr. Fazıl Küçük, for the women Telsim organizes many activities.

Domination of Sponsorship Based on Public Relation News

In the third stage, sponsorship-based PR news is subject to coding according to the sponsorship landscape.

Table 4. Sponsorship landscape of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

Telsim (Vodafone Kıbrıs) Sponsorship Landscape	Sports	Music	Arts	Cause	Entertainment	Festivals & Fairs
Dr. Fazıl Küçük ve Mücadele Yıllarında Kadın Konulu Kompozisyon Yarışması				22		
Benim Kıbrısım, Kıbrıs'ta Kadın Olmak Sergisi			86			
Güvenli İnternet Semineri				28		
Çıkmaz Sokak Partisi					12	
Telsim Freezone 2. Müzik Yarışması		152				
100 Gönüllü 100 Pota Kampanyası	19					
Kanser Hastaları Yararına Orkide Yürüyüşü						24
Telsim, Trafikte Emniyet için Çevir Etkinliğine Sponsor Oldu				6		
Benim Gözümden Sesli Kitap Canlı Performans Gecesi				22		
Benim Kıbrısım, Çocukların Objektifinden Fotoğraflar			3			
Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Büyük Han'da Büyük Buluşma				15		
Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Büyük Han'da Anlamli Sergi			12			
Telsim'den Bir Mesaj Göndererek, İhtiyaçlı Çocuklara Yardım Eli Uzatabilirsiniz				9		
Öğrencilere Yönelik Yerli Ürün Semineri Düzenlendi				7		
Total	19	152	101	109	12	24

36% of the news published in music, 24% of art (except music), 26% was found to be of cause sponsorship, 6% on festivals & fairs, 5% on Sport and 3% on entertainment. Selected sponsorship area, tries to perform the transfer of the company's brand image by making it visible. Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) has identified different areas for different target groups by sponsoring events and being able to give a different image transfer for each target audience.

Sponsorship Landscape

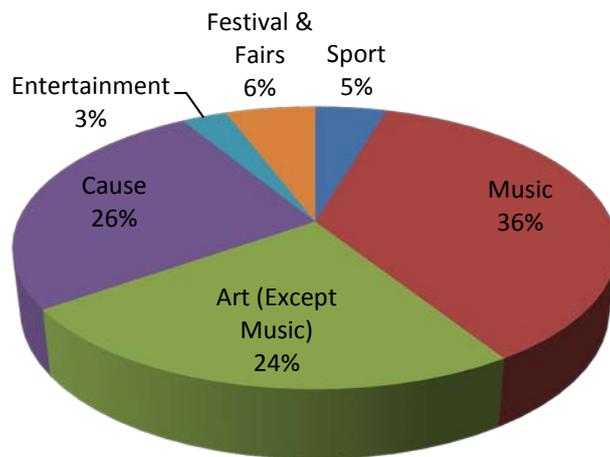


Figure 5. Sponsorship landscape of Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) in North Cyprus daily newspapers

In carrying out music competition 'FreeZone' having the concept of free for young people, was careful in emphasizing that it is a young brand. 'Safer Internet' concept in collaboration with the Ministry of Education gave the message of 'we think for the safety of your child as much as you do' in the sponsored training conducted for students which was actually for the students' parents. Here, the attempt to protect the family is conscious social protection to creating a corporate image with the structure of the hazards of the internet for young people. Created for the children who needs help gives the message to those in need for care in childhood age and reinforces a perception campaign stating 'We stand by all segments of the society'.

Conclusion

Continuous self-renewal, the consumers who need to refresh their image is actually the same thing that should show company's they are just like them, one of the units that will direct PR as image of producers are consent manufacturers or consent engineers. PR professionals who come to help companies, to influence potential consumers by affecting them with using internal sense is working to ensure the development of sympathy in the company, brand, product, service or person. To do this, the potential consumer should be analyzed in an anthropological, sociological and a psychological point of view. People's upbringing, habits, lifestyle, events, determine the shape of their understanding. Altering the results are those that are transferred from their ancestors, family, as well as lessons learned from the schools, technical changes brought by time and lessons learned from transformations in the creation culture.

Production and consumption patterns with the changing time and circumstances have also been transformed. Human relationships, human relationship with goods, vary in the state of self-realization. As competition for companies increase, market share, continuity, concerns of continuity creates a competitive advantage, will remain on the agenda, will show itself, making it necessary to be preferred by coming to the fore with the activities they provide. One of the methods of communication marketing is fulfilling these requirements in the area of specialization in PR. PR specialists edit events by planning

studies for lifestyles in taking care of their target audience. The purchased, product or service offered by the company, with its presence promises to make a difference in society, if favored and consumed.

The research is consisted of a period of three months. Even though Northern Cyprus is small scale, personal relationships in this country is still at the forefront, Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) professionally prepared PR news are published for different audiences in the press.

Continuity of PR news is a very important issue. In strategic PR activities being successful, planned and constantly aware of the cultural value, depends on having the attributes that can be shaped according to the target audience. The research made on Telsim (Vodafone North Cyprus) shows, in having all these qualities has an effective way of keeping in its hands with controlling the media. Using types of activities in many different PR at the same time, with sponsorship activities increasing its image in the community on one hand, development of their relations with the persons and institutions will increase their reputation on the other hand, showing the success of in-house PR activities to the masses and announcing to the market its campaigns on their service by including the customer into the practice.

Today, when consumers decide to spend money for products or services they accordingly impose much value the image. On one hand while this turns into image community or a society show, on the other hand with the consumers who know what they want refer to the format of affecting the decisions of producers. It is not wrong to review, if the research-based study of 61% sponsorship of PR studies stand out, the communities valuations in activities increase social welfare. This is an indication of potential consumers to use the manufacturer's indirect power over the masses by not only investing in contributing to the welfare of the entire community but also using the consumers' tastes and preferences of customers. Consumers only give their 'consent' if they want to. Individuals, embrace brands as their personal image as their purpose is to be accepted in society, with the consuming of products / services in having the objects of their desire as symbols and spending their money to buy meaning to what 'brands' is for.

Activities carried out in of sponsorship areas, in specific to the Turkish Cypriot people, include sensitive points such as (cancer, education, child, youth, women, the environment, endangered charms) are found to be defined. As the credibility of the company strengthens with sponsorships, transferring the image to themselves on the field they support, the target audience within the criteria set about their image should also be remembered. These findings of Telsim (Vodafone) Cyprus, shows that it created a brand image that supports Cyprus, Cyprus culture, its people and its community.

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The Challenges of Intercultural Crisis Communication: Revisiting the Arla Boycott

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Abstract

In the field of crisis communication, the stance has been moving towards a reflexive perspective to allow recognition of the complexity encountered by organizations when faced with a crisis (Seeger et al 2011; Knight et al 2009; Frandsen and Johansen 2010a,b,c). To exemplify the challenges of intercultural crisis communication, the case of the boycott of *Arla* in the Middle East as part of the Mohammad crisis is revisited, including new perspectives and information. The analysis focus on a particularly controversial use of issues advertising: Arla's attempt to distance the company from the Mohammad cartoons (and the Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten). This was a complex dilemma as this strategy at the same time threatened the relations to important stakeholders in the home markets (Johansen and Frandsen 2007; Jensen 2008). The findings suggest that even sender-controlled crisis communication such as issues advertising is very difficult to manage due to fragmentation and complexity of the situation, audiences and the rhetorical agency of communication management.

Keywords

Crisis communication, issues advertising, intercultural communication, strategic transparency, rhetorical approaches

How Can Corporate and Marketing Communication Meet the Challenge of Complexity?

Albeit paraphrased and condensed, this is one of the pertinent questions on the agenda for the CMC 2015 conference (CMC2015 call for papers), and in this paper we will focus on *how to understand and manage the complexity of intercultural crisis communication*. Crisis communication theory has tried to address this challenge for some time, looking to Chaos Theory for inspiration (e.g. Murphy 1996; Knight et al 2009; Johansen and Frandsen 2007): Frandsen & Johansen even include complexity in their definition of crisis communication (2010c:431; Johansen and Frandsen 2007:18). While this literature offers more questions than answers, there is one clear gap in the crisis communication theory in general: international and intercultural perspectives are underdeveloped (Frandsen and Johansen 2010b). Even the international case studies of public relations that exist simply extrapolate one region, typically the USA (Gaither and Curtin 2008), and Falkheimer and Heide (2006:186) goes so far as to claim, that “Multicultural public relations have virtually no theories.”

In this paper, we will analyse a case related to an extremely complex international crisis and focus on one particular instance of issues advertising. This communication was an attempt to manage a highly critical situation: the boycott of Arla’s dairy products in 2006 in the Middle East following the publication of the Mohammad cartoons in Jyllands Posten (JP). It is an iconic case that has already received considerable attention in the literature on marketing, public relations and crisis communication (Johansen and Frandsen 2007; Frandsen and Johansen 2010; Gaither and Curtin 2008; Jensen 2008; Knight et al 2009). By revisiting this case, we hope to go deeper (on specific aspects) and contribute to an appreciation of the complexity in intercultural crisis communication, as well as offer new information and alternative perspectives on the iconic case through our analysis. With the reinterpretation of the Arla case, we also wish to unfold how the crisis communication of Arla is not just dialogue but a complex *performance* of corporate transparency that “do not *simply report or reflect some real state of affairs in the world*” (Flyverbom et al 2011:6 emphasis in source). Because of the global interest in the boycott, Arla also needed to translate their communication to English and Danish speaking audiences. The point is that ‘arenas’ are never transparent to the actors or the audiences that is part of them. ‘Transparency’ as a concept, condition or ethical principle is by no means a given thing, (Christensen 2002). If we invoke a framework such as *The Rhetorical Arena*, it would be appropriate to consider the concept of transparency as a rhetorical constraint, meaning that it is a condition, ideal and a strategy (Christensen 2002).

The Imperative of Complexity

Discourses on corporate communication, corporate branding, PR and crisis communication, has many different notions of *complexity*, and just as many answers to this challenge. Of the earliest notions are the vaguely defined concept of *noise* found in many classic models and descriptions of communication (e.g. Shannon and Weaver 1949), and in more recent terminology lives on in notions of the ‘oversaturated’, ‘cluttered’ world where information is overabundant (Simon 1971, Baudrillard 1988, Schultz et al 1994, Lowrey et al 2005). A historically strong stance in corporate communication literature has been that the solution to the problems of ‘clutter’, noise and fragmentation is some form of *integration* (e.g. Schultz et al 1994) that may achieve *consistency* (Ind 1997). Christensen et al (2008) point out that this logic seems to produce even more communication ‘clutter.’ Connected to the notion of *noise*, is the notion that globalization and communication technology (global mass media, mobile communication technology, social media) is accelerating the complexity and ‘clutter’. Paradoxically, these dynamics are at the same

time envisioned as a promise of a new form of empowering *transparency* as a consequence of the potential for diminishing, or completely abolishing, barriers and control over information, leveraging power and control over information and media (e.g. CMC 2015 call for papers; Flyverbom et al 2011). The challenge of transparency is claimed to be a condition, both in the form of a 'basic requirement' in the expectations of stakeholders, and a strategic response to this expectation performed as 'self-transparency' (Christensen 2002). The 'requirement' of transparency increases the stakes in contexts of current or impending crisis, as the crisis challenges the stakeholders' perception of the legitimacy of the organization (Massey 2001), and it is very likely to also heighten stakeholders' expectations of the performance of self-transparency.

This interconnected 'globalized' context opens new discursive spaces and power relations between citizens, social groups, NGOs and big business as the communication technology potentially empowers even small and spatially dispersed stakeholders, as they gain a new potential to emerge, to be visible to each other, and eventually form a group identity and discourse (Dahlberg 2012).

The Rhetorical Arena

In this context of 'democratized' media access and complexity from globalised discursive spaces, Frandsen and Johansen (2007) suggest the need for a 'multi-vocal' approach. As a way to develop more novel ways of thinking in 'multi-vocal communication', they present an ambitious model called *The Rhetorical Arena* to meet the challenges of complexity (Frandsen and Johansen 2007; . It is also intended to integrate the text-oriented research traditions (e.g. Hearit 2007) with the context-oriented traditions of PR and crisis communication (e.g. Coombs 2007) (Johansen and Frandsen 2007, 2010). To this end, they propose both a *macro-model* (or level) describing the contextual elements of actors, relations and strategies, and a *micro-model* (or level) describing the textual and rhetorical elements of the communications (the *text*).

As evident already by the name of *The Rhetorical Arena*, it conceptualizes crisis communication as taking place in an *arena*, thereby invoking a very eristic metaphor of the communicative relationship with many 'actor's competing for attention and legitimacy. The communicative relations are here described as actors potentially communicating "with, against, about or past" each other. If we analyse the conceptual metaphors invoked in the Rhetorical Arena model, they are clearly related to the conceptual metaphor of *argument is war* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The *arena* as metaphor could also suggest that some actors may work in unison as teams against other teams, in order to 'defeat' others and thereby the win admiration and applause of some part of (but not necessarily all) the audience. The arena metaphor also entail transparency, as the audience in a Roman arena are poised on seats above the combatants and therefore has perfect overview over all the actions and actors that are placed in the arena on the ground centre level. While the individual members of the audience may in principle, be visible to all others in the arena, the sheer multitude of individuals in the audience offers the individual in the audience some privacy not afforded the combatants. Every action may be scrutinized by any member of the audience, at any time. Frandsen and Johansen (2010c) do not elaborate how we should understand mediation inside an arena, or 'out' of the arena as mass communication broadcast, or even 'between' arenas.

The notion of *one* global arena with all combatants and audiences visible to each other seem quite questionable even though Frandsen and Johansen (2010c) warn against comparing with the concept of a Habermasian *public sphere*. Kjeldsen (2008) argues that the basic assumptions in communication theory of 'discreet rhetorical situations' have to give way to "the fragmented and mediated situationality of contemporary culture" (p. 125). Extending the Rhetorical Arena model and the arena metaphor, it could

be suggested that *several* related arenas may emerge, underlining the complex stressing the challenges of the organization to monitor and communicate in every arena, sometimes mediate or prioritize between the 'battles' and interests within them. Kjeldsen (2008) suggests a *situational-contextual model* where situations (arenas) compete for attention and may be more or less disconnected, incompatible in their constraints and conditions. Consequently, some arenas may be more effortlessly interpreted and managed by the organisation in question and other may be obscured, misinterpreted or ignored from lack of cultural knowledge or reflexivity (Banks 2001). For every arena, an interpretation of the actors, the audience, is crucial for the organisation to be able to manage the crisis communication. The complex structures of crisis communication are probably much better conceptualized as a campaign of discursive 'battles' performed in series of fragmented small and large arenas, each performed for different though overlapping audiences. But yet these battles cannot be viewed as isolated and independent battles occurring continuously. Barriers (or constraints) can be bridged thus merging different battles and potentially forming new arenas with new rules and new audiences. It is crucial for the organization involved in a crisis to have an overview of the actors and the communication that goes on in the various arenas. As mentioned earlier, there is a perceived imperative of fast paced dialog (or communication) in times of crisis (Barton 2000; Coombs and Halliday 2001; Johansen and Frandsen 2007; 2010). This suggests that there may be many dynamics of lack of internal- or self-transparency as managers, CEOs and communication staff lack an overview and cannot 'see the arena from a privileged point of view' (even given the power of present information and communication technology).

What is perhaps less salient in The Arena Model metaphor is the 'battleground' itself: the culture, the dominant discourses and inherent ideologies. Falkheimer and Heide (2006) underline the point that these are not objective realities, but social constructions that any theory on crisis communication needs to acknowledge.

In sum, analyses of a complex intercultural crisis situation (such as the boycott of Arla) need to consider the fragmentation and interrelation of:

- stakeholders (consumers, employees, NGO's, media, politicians, competing organisations)
- time (previous related incidents, relations of actors, relational history e.g. Coombs and Holladay 2001)
- place (geographical and metaphorical/discursive)
- culture (e.g. organisational, national, ethnic, religious, urban/rural/subcultural)
- knowledge (both specific and linguistic/cultural affordances)

The list above is not suggested to be exhaustive, but simply as a starting point for elaborating the complex dynamics as contingencies, rather than discreet or deterministic (Frandsen and Johansen 2010b).

The Arla/Muhammad Cartoon Boycott

The overall Mohammad cartoon conflict is very, very complex (Knight et al 2008; Klausen 2009, Johansen and Frandsen 2007, Frandsen and Johansen 2010c). However, both the overall crisis of the cartoons and the Arla boycott have been treated extensively in the literature of several fields (Johansen and Frandsen 2007; Frandsen and Johansen 2010; Gaither and Curtin 2008; Klausen 2009; Jensen 2008; Knight et al 2009). In 2014 Ahmed Akkari published an autobiographical account of the cartoon crisis in which he completely denounces Islamism and apologises for his role in stirring up the global conflict

(Akkari and Jensen 2014). This account is not surprisingly somewhat controversial, but it offers a personal perspective on the internal dynamics of the instigators of the conflict. The account is co-authored by the journalist Martin K. Jensen and offers extensive notes on fact- and cross checking of the information in the account. Together with original communications from Arla (downloaded from their corporate web site and one supplied by the Danish embassy in Riyadh), JP and other media these sources have informed the condensed representation below. Due to the points of relevance in the present paper, the focus is on the pivotal point in which Arla communicates their distancing of the cartoons and JP to the Middle Eastern/Arabic speaking stakeholders. This is mediated through an advertising campaign and - as a simultaneous act of 'transparent' PR - Arla publicises their own translation of the statement from the ad into English and Danish as a press release to Danish and global media.

The Macro Model (level):

Actors and the Contingencies of the Crisis Situation

The newspaper JP is best described as national conservative (not radical or 'right wing') and located in the rural province of Jutland. The relational history of this actor (JP) is important, as it was known to be critical of Islamism and radical Imams, and had prior to the cartoons ran a series of critical stories attacking the imams Raed Hlayhel and Ahmed Akkari (for amongst other things, endorsing religiously motivated violence). On the 30th of September 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten (JP) published twelve cartoons claiming that they were depicting the prophet Muhammad. JP framed this as a demonstrative act of *freedom of expression*, claiming that the newspaper reacted to rumours that cartoonists were afraid to depict the prophet due to reprisals from the Muslim community (Frandsen and Johansen 2010c; Jakobsen 2009). Most of the cartoons was as least as much an ambiguous portrayal of the fear of the artists in portraying Mohammad as an actual portrayal, a few actually ridiculing the newspaper itself rather than Islam, but five could be seen as satire about Islam and at two could be interpreted as direct and hostile portrayals of militant Islamism. Most iconic of these is the image by Kurt Vestergaard of a bearded man with a lit bomb held in the turban (or perhaps 'being the turban' as a form of visual metaphor). Frandsen and Johansen (2010c) present this moment as the initial emergence or opening of *the arena* that Arla is later drawn into as a consequence of the boycott of Danish goods.

On the 2nd of October representatives of 16 important – but otherwise internally highly diverse and competitive - Muslim organizations met in Copenhagen to discuss how to protest the Mohammad cartoons. A committee was formed to lead the protest against JP and the cartoons. Raed Hlayhel became the official head of the group. Few of these Muslim leaders were proficient in Danish, some only in Arabic. Therefore it fell upon the youngest, Ahmed Akkari, to be the spokesperson, as he was the only one fluent in Danish, Arabic and English (Akkari and Jensen 2014: 238).

On the 8th of October, the committee issued a statement demanding a full retraction of (some of) the cartoons and an apology from the newspaper. The editor of JP flatly rejected this on the same day. By the 11th of October the conflict is taken Global, as Raed Hlayhel appears on the TV station *Al Jazeera* where he criticise not only the cartoons and JP, but the conditions of Muslims in general in Denmark (Klausen 2009). The committee met with the Egyptian ambassador in Copenhagen and gained a very active support from the ambassador Mona Omar, not only in assembling a group of 11 ambassadors demanding a meeting with the Prime Minister of Denmark to get a reaction against the paper, but also in sponsoring a tour in the middle east to stir up the protests for a delegation from the committee, including Hlayhel and Akkari. As part of this tour of the Middle East in December 2005, the Danish delegation

showed religious and political leaders a portfolio with not only the original cartoons but also three other strongly defamatory images unrelated to JP (none the less presented as part of the offensive publications from JP) (Klausen 2009; Jensen 2008, Johansen and Frandsen 2007). The delegation was fully aware of the misrepresentation, but wanted to increase the conflict (Akkari and Jensen 2014).

Danish Prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen denied that the government could interfere in the work of the free press and he refused to meet with the 11 ambassadors who had complained and requested a meeting, because “the government has no influence what the press writes”. In the meantime, demonstrations had started to form in the Middle East protesting against the cartoons and the perceived passiveness from Western countries and leaders in this matter. January 2006 saw the beginning of a boycott of Danish products in the Middle East. The boycotts effectively became a top-down boycott after the 10.th of January when the influential imam of Mekka, as-Sudais, in his sermon called out for action against the blasphemy of Denmark to receive damnation and ‘painfull punishment in this life and the next’ (Akkari and Jensen 2014).

Arla suffered a total boycott in the Middle East from the beginning of February. Tension rose among Muslims protesters culminating with the burning down of the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria and the Danish embassy in Lebanon in February. On the 8th of February, the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* reprinted all the JP cartoons together with one of their own (thus initiating a series of events eventually leading to the tragic massacre of the editorial team in January 2015).

The financial impact on Arla Foods and Danish export in general was severe - Arla Foods alone losing 1.3 million euro a day (Knight et al 2009). Throughout the boycott in January and February Arla’s management communicates directly and indirectly (through the press) with the Danish Government, exerting pressure to get the Prime Minister more involved in solving the crisis (Frandsen and Johansen 2010c). The Danish Prime minister had already addressed the crisis in his New Year’s speech (1st of January 2006) in an attempt to clarify the concept of freedom of expression and repeated earlier statements: although insulting to many Muslims, the cartoons had not violated Danish law and therefore prevented the Danish government from taking legal action against JP. On the 2nd of February, the Prime Minister appeared on the TV station *Al Arabiya* explaining his personal respect for Muslim values, but repeating the principle of an independent free press he could not control to a very baffled TV host, that seemingly did not believe him and turned hostile in his tone of voice (Akkari and Jensen 2014).

Arla translated the Prime Minister’s New Year-speech into Arabic and published it in the major Arabic newspapers in a first attempt of mass communication to resolve the boycott. This campaign of explanatory defence of the *discourse of free speech* (Jensen 2008) had no effect at all in the Middle East arena, as it was simply not credible to the Arabic audiences that the Danish Prime Minister did not control the media (Akkari and Jensen 2014; Jakobsen 2009; Knight et al 2009). This lack of positive response apparently surprised Arla (Gaither and Curtin 2008), and this incidence in the crisis indicates that (from both sides) the limitations in the knowledge on culture and societal institutions.

At the end of February Arla has witnessed a failure of managing the crisis and with no end in sight of the boycott, had seen its competitors Nestlé and Fonterra using issues advertising condemning the cartoons and reminding Arabic audiences that they are *not* Danish brands (Jensen 2008). Arla decided to take a more direct action through an advertising campaign that were executed on the 19th of March 2006 in 25 main newspapers across the region. Already on the 18th of March Arla released a Danish and English translation of the ad. It was accompanied by a press release reiterating in condensed form, what they

claimed to be communicating together with a statement from divisional manager Finn Hansen that he ‘hoped the ads would make Arab consumers reconsider the fairness of boycotting a Dairy company that is unrelated to the cartoons’ (Arla 2006).

Table 1. Translations in verbatim

	The official translation of Arla of the text from the ad of 19 th of March	Re-translation of the original Arabic text from the Arla ad (see main text for explanation)
Heading	Arla Foods has distanced itself from cartoons	Statement from Arla – food producer
Sub-heading	Statement from Arla Foods	The company Arla Foods condemns and disapproves of the cartoons
Main text	<p>Arla Foods believes that it is our duty to convey our opinion about the unfortunate events of recent months. We will also set out our position for the conference for International Support for the Prophet in Bahrain from March 22-23, 2006, to clarify where we stand.</p> <p>Arla Foods has distanced itself from the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten’s actions in publishing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. We do not agree with the newspaper’s reasons for publication.</p> <p>On the backdrop of our 40 year history in the Middle East and as an active and integral part of society here, we understand why you feel insulted. Our presence in the region has given us an insight into your culture and values and about Islam. This understanding has, over many years, enabled us to supply high quality products which meet your preferences. Through your confidence in our products, we have succeeded in building up brands such as Lurpak, Puck, The Three Cows and Dano. Therefore, we understand and respect your reactions that have led to a boycott of our products following the Danish newspaper’s irresponsible and unfortunate action.</p> <p>We would also like to take this opportunity to give you some important information</p>	<p>We wish to take the opportunity of the “world conference for support of the Prophet - peace be upon him” and the gathering of many Islamic scholars, leaders and Islamic charity organizations in Bahrain 22-23 March 2006, to talk to you about our thoughts regarding the regrettable incidence that happened a few months ago and to explain to you some important matters:</p> <p>Firstly, Arla Foods strongly criticises, condemns, and disapproves of the publication of the cartoons by the Danish newspaper ridiculing the Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him. We also reject every reason put forth by the newspaper to justify this act.</p> <p>Secondly, throughout forty years we have been operating in the Middle East, and we are a part of society and we believe that we understand your feelings toward the publication by the newspaper. We respect your reaction to this irresponsible and regrettable act by the newspaper that has led to a boycott of our products.</p> <p>Thirdly, throughout this long period of time we have learned about the culture and Islamic values and that justice and tolerance are fundamental teachings of Islam. From this point of departure we hope that you will review your attitude towards us and we are ready to work together with you to find a</p>

about our company. Arla is a Danish-Swedish co-operative which is owned by farmers. Our business in the Middle East has attracted investors and business partners from across the Arab world. Arla employs around 1,000 Muslims in the Arab and Islamic world as well as more than 250 Muslims in Europe. They have all felt insulted by these cartoons. However, Arla's business in the Middle East has been affected not by its own actions, but because of the actions of others.

Esteemed citizens, the years that we have spent in your world have taught us that justice and tolerance are fundamental values in Islam. We wish to co-operate with Islamic organisations to find a solution to the boycott of Arla's products. We would simply ask you to reflect on this in the hope that you will reconsider your attitude to our company.

Now you know more about who we are, about our attitudes and beliefs. We leave the rest to you.

Sender identification Arla

solution to this boycott of Arla products.

Arla is a cooperative owned by Danish and Swedish farmers and include many Muslim shareholders and investors from the Arab world. In addition, the company employs more than a thousand Muslim employees from Arab and Muslim countries and more than two hundred and fifty Muslims in Europe. Most of them suffer these days, because of sales figures in the region. Furthermore, they have not committed any offence, but disapprove of it and condemn it.

We are proud of our success throughout the many years where we have provided you with high quality products such as Lurpak, Puck, Dano, and the Three Cows, which have always earned your trust.

Now, after explaining our attitude and who we are, we leave the rest to you and your sense of justice and fairness.

Peter Tuborgh
General Manager – Arla Foods
On behalf of management and the co-workers at Arla, the food company

Micro Model (level):

A Comparative, Rhetorical Analysis of the Translations of Arla's Dissociation Ad

The second author obtained a copy of the original advertising from the Danish Embassy in Riyadh (by e-mail in the form of a PDF scan containing the image of the relevant newspaper page from 19th of March 2006). The second author (having a degree in Arabic business communication) and a scholar from the Centre of Middle East studies at the University of Southern Denmark (which is a researcher on Middle Eastern culture and has Arabic as mother tongue – see notes for credit) made two independent translations of the text in the ad. These two translations were then re-interpreted jointly in a collective process of careful and detailed hermeneutic discussion (on term, sentence, whole, etc. in several rounds) and synthesised into one translation that both interpreters agreed was a precise, balanced and as loyal as possible towards wording, structure and cultural meanings in the original and target language. It has to be noted that the intended directness of this interpretation is not in line with normal practices of translation that would 'iron out' some awkward passages (e.g. excessive parataxis: mostly such as '...and...and...and'), reformulating them as to be more appropriate for the target language and audience

(here: English). Arla's official translations into Danish and English are structurally and semantically very similar, so for the purpose of this paper we will treat them as identical.

A comparative analysis reveals very significant differences between our re-translation of the original Arabic text and Arla's official English/Danish translation.

The primary findings are significant differences in respect to how Arla expresses its attitude towards the act of publishing the cartoons and JP. These differences we interpret as so significant that they are beyond an explanation in the form of a culturally reflexive translation by Arla.

Arla's own translation states "Arla Foods has distanced itself from the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten's actions in publishing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. We do not agree with the newspaper's reason for publication". In contrast, the alternative re-translation of the Arabic text states; "... Arla Foods strongly criticises, condemns, and disapproves of the publication of the cartoons by the Danish newspaper ridiculing the Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him. We also reject every reason put forth by the newspaper to justify this act". Clearly, this wording makes Arla's distancing much stronger and condemning as Arla actively exhorts itself from the actions of the newspaper using very strong, emphatic wording (*strongly criticises, condemns, and disapproves of*) to describe the company's stance. Further, Arla finds no redeeming factors in the conditions of free speech or anything else that JP may invoke to legitimise or justify the publication, as Arla *rejects every reason put forth* for publishing the cartoons. The tri-part sentence structure of *tricolon* is rhythmically emphasising the condemnation that is even further underlined by "*strongly*".

None of this is evident in the official English translation by Arla: The wording is relatively neutral using words such as *distancing itself from* and *not agreeing with*. There is no *tricolon*, no condemnation, and no direct rejection of the newspapers reasons or motivations. Arla's own translation describes only their dissociation with the affair and not their explicit, direct opinion of the actions of neither the newspaper nor the publication itself. This we consider very substantial semantic differences, not easily justified by cultural conventions or linguistic choices.

In addition, we find structural differences in the way the original Arabic communication and the English translation are constructed: The first line of the Arabic text announces that this is 'a statement from Arla Foods' followed by a headline with the wording: "*Arla Foods condemns and disapproves of the cartoons*". The headline in Arla's official English translation only states in a rather formal way that "*Arla has distanced itself from the cartoons*" followed by the stipulation of "*statement from Arla Foods*". The switching round of the 'statement' label and headline is perhaps insignificant, but the declarative damnation of the cartoons in the headline are clearly more severe in the expression of Arla's explicit attitude, as the headline is the most significant element of such a communication.

When assessing which audience Arla is explicitly addressing in the ad, there seem to be some ambiguous signs: addressing consumers and citizens with the broader use of advertising, but performing this for the benefit of the religious leaders and governments. Both the re-translation of the Arabic text and the official English translation have a clear reference to the "World Conference for Support of the Prophet" in Bahrain in March 2006, and this may be where the real rhetorical audience will be. The official translation of Arla has a *Salutatio*: "*Esteemed citizens*" but this is actually completely absent in the Arabic original text. Adversely, the re-translation show that the original Arabic text use an explicit three-part structuring: *Firstly, secondly* and *thirdly*, to emphasise the statements presented. This three-part

structuring is not in the official English translation. In addition, the sequence of some of the information and paragraphs are very different in Arla's official translation. We can find no explanation as to why Arla would choose to make these changes of structure and sequence in their translation.

Discussion

After the advertising campaign of the 19th of March, Arla was accused in Denmark of 'selling out' to Islamic suppression of free speech and oppression of women (Frandsen and Johansen 2010c; Jensen 2008). Finn Hansen (executive manager) tried to defend Arla's communication in the ad by explaining how the Danish audience needed to be culturally reflexive in the interpretation of the advertising (in the form of the official translation), allowing for the Arabic culture and its use of emphatic language. According to Hansen, Arla was not being especially servile and appeasing, as this was supposedly the way Arla has to communicate with Arabic audiences: "Arabic is much more polite and official in tone than the Danish language. This is why we use phrases such as 'honourable citizens', which in Danish sounds rather old-fashioned...The languages are different that way" (quoted from Frandsen and Johansen 2010c). Here, the *salutatio* that was actually missing in the original Arabic text becomes an alibi for insisting that the audience in the Danish arena should be reflexive of cultural and linguistic barriers when interpreting communications from the Middle Eastern arena. In effect, Arla invokes a fragmentation or 'decoupling' of the arenas when they point to these constraints of a Danish audiences reacting on an action taking place in the 'decoupled' arena, that they do not have absolute knowledge about or direct access to. This insistence of Arla for the critics to 'tone down' and interpret an already substantially interpreted translation could have backfired and escalated the crisis, but it seems no one was aware of this at the time.

The statement from manager Finn Hansen indicates that also for him there is no 'direct' access to his own communication in the Middle Eastern arena. He only knows what the official interpretation tells him, but seem to believe that this is '*simply [a] report or [that] reflect some real state of affairs in the world*' (Flyverbom et al 2011:6 emphasis in source), and in effect he becomes a victim of 'self-transparency'.

One could argue that this is of no consequence to Arla, that it is best to 'believe your own hype' and that to persuade others you need to persuade yourself. These truisms aside, there is a clear danger of this condition where it seems the rhetorical agency and the locus of strategic decisions becomes fluid and unclear. Who made the decision to declare that Arla *condemns* the publication and *rejects every reason the newspaper put forth*? If it was not the general manager Peter Tuborgh, executive manager Finn Hansen or even the corporate communication director Astrid Gade Nielsen, then who was it? The corporate communication director claimed in an interview in January 2007 that the message in the ad was "born into Arabic" – composed directly in Arabic by Arla's own interpreter, and subsequently translated into English and Danish (Salquist et al 2007). If this is true, and the management did not know anything but the official translation, it does pose some questions as to meaning and value of the communicative act performed with the ad.

It also points to a potential 'decoupling' of the *macro* and *micro model* of The Rhetorical Arena: it is supposed to describe 'a merging of text and context into one socio-rhetorical model' (Frandsen and Johansen 2010c:434). If the rhetorical agency of 'sender' is fluid, the strategic choices and actors of the macro model becomes equally opaque.

Conclusions and Implications

Arla's crisis was accentuated by being based on branding as *Danish*, country of origin, essentially modern and secular. For Danes, the history of Arla is intertwined with narratives of national identity (Mordhorst 2014), and it probably never occurred to the management of Arla that this could turn out to be such a problem in the Middle East. When the crisis broke out, Arla fell into the category of *infidel brands*, at odds with the values of Islam, becoming *haram*, joining a whole category of 'forbidden brands' (such as McDonalds and Barbie) that can be very hard to get out of once there (Izberk-Bilgin 2012). After the "damnation advertising" in March 2006 where OIC/"The World Conference for Support of the Prophet" decided to lift the fatwa against Arla, Arla has regained some of the market share in the Middle East, but not all, and the market in Saudi Arabia seems unlikely to be regained for Arla in the foreseeable future. The home markets account for more than ten times the total sales in the Middle Eastern markets. What if the crisis re-erupts in response to the shifts in attitudes and public discourses on free speech after the Charlie Hebdo massacre? The interrelation of situationality/time/previous incidents is unpredictable. The Charlie Hebdo massacre may just become a 'discursive bifurcation point' that dislodge discourses of 'free speech' to challenge or even dominate discourses of 'insult'/'victimage', making the communication of Arla in 2006 look more unacceptable in hindsight. No one knows when a crisis is 'over'. The critique of Arla related to the crisis management of 2006 re-emerged briefly in 2014 following the publication of Akkari's autobiographical account of the crisis (Berlingske 2014).

Since Gruning and Hunt (1984) presented their "models of PR" with a model of symmetric two-way communication leading to mutual understanding, it has been a strong discourse in PR and crisis communication to consider dialogue as not just an appropriate choice, but an ethical norm (Banks 1995; Ulmer and Sellnow 2000; Johansen and Frandsen 2007; Frandsen and Johansen 2010a; Gonçalves 2012). It is necessary with more conceptual clarity and rigour before communicative relations are considered as *dialogic* relations: even when organizations communicate directly with consumers and other stakeholders, they often have a *performative* logic. Perhaps simultaneously functioning as *auto communication* (Christensen et al 2008), as act of transparency (Christensen 2002) or as marketing communication (Christensen 1994). When Arla communicated the appeal in the advertising, they addressed the religious leaders (indirectly as occasion and context for their communication) and they *acted*, they legitimized their leadership and invoked their economic power to gain access to media and Middle Eastern audiences: to a much lesser degree conceivable as *dialogue* with the Middle Eastern consumers. *The Rhetorical Arena* model, and its related conceptual metaphor of *argument is war*, seem to match the findings well in the sense that the crisis communication of Arla's issues advertising is performative, a declaration (a speech act) that is an action in a larger conflict of values. Arla tries to balance between discourses and ideologies, wanting to appease Arabic audiences in the Middle Eastern 'arena' without alienating the Western/home market arena. Consequently, this pose a challenge to the discourse in PR and corporate communication insisting on *dialogue* as the basic paradigm. Although Frandsen and Johansen themselves admit that dialogue is only *one* possibility amongst several communication processes in the Rhetorical Arena (2010c:433), they still conclude that in the Arla case "the overall strategy across the three sets of processes is *dialogue*" and consider the advertising campaign 'a dialogue' with Arab consumers (2010c:442). The seeming determination on *dialogue* is unfortunate for the further development of *The Rhetorical Arena* model, as it could actually serve to open the field of crisis communication to a much wider understanding of the many complex dynamic relations already suggested by Frandsen and Johansen (2010c) as actors communicating 'with'/'against'/'past'/'about' each other. For example: 'one way' information/mass

communication, persuasion, manipulation, dialogue (reasoned, two-way) and ‘performative dialogue’/ ‘trialogue’ (two parties performing a dialogue to influence a third party, (Jørgensen 1998)).

The findings illustrate quite well the point of Flyverbom and associates (2011), that “[t]he power-transparency nexus is thus far more complex than the information provision perspective tends to assume, and all forms of disclosure have multiple and layered effects” (ibid:26). The acts of transparency in intercultural crisis communication has many layers of cultural and linguistic translation, and this complexity seem to reproduce itself infinitely.

Frandsen and Johansen (2010a:362) conclude with a call for the development of crisis communication theory that “take into account the dynamics, complexity and, in some cases, conflictuary created by the ongoing process of globalization and the many political, religious, social and cultural differences.” They present The Rhetorical Arena as an example of such theory, and by revisiting the case of Arla we have found that we need to consider how this takes place in fragmented, disconnected arenas. A promising research agenda would be to further define and investigate the dynamics of these communicative relations in contexts of crisis, where organisational challenges are particularly strong and salient; how does ‘an organisation’ actually know what it is saying and who is saying it? Moreover, how can we believe in ‘corporate transparency’ if corporations are unable to be transparent to even themselves?

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Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 Results in More Dialogic Communication: Dialogic Communication of Fortune 500 Turkey Web Sites

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Abstract

This study examined dialogic communication of *Fortune* 500 Web sites of corporations in Turkey. Random sample of 100 corporations was drawn and content analysis was applied. Content analysis of 100 *Fortune* 500 companies' Web sites showed that the corporations that are ranked in the first 250 companies designed their Web sites better according to the principles of dialogic communication than the companies that are listed in the last 250. There was a positive correlation between responsiveness of organizations and some aspects of dialogic communication of the Web sites. The results are discussed based on dialogic communication theory in order to guide relationship building between organizations and their Internet publics.

Keywords

Dialogic communication theory, Fortune 500 Turkey, Web site, social network sites.

Introduction

Dialogue, with its ability of separating truth from falsehood, has been considered as one of the ethical forms of communication by philosophers and rhetoricians (Kent and Taylor 2002). Dialogic communication is an important characteristic of relationship building and enables publics and organizations create and share messages (Uzunoğlu and Misci-Kip 2014). The main principle of dialogic communication is its ability to allow the receiver of the message to communicate back (Madichiea and Hinsonb 2014). If organizations design their Web sites strategically, they can build dialogic relationship (Rybalkoa and Seltzerb 2010). “Dialogic theory suggests that for organizations to create effective organization–public communication channels, they must be willing to interact with publics in honest and ethical ways” (Kent, Taylor, and White 2003, 67). Naudé, Froneman, and Atwood (2004) state that both interactivity and two-way symmetry are crucial elements of dialogic theory and the interactive nature of the organization’s Web sites can make this dialogue possible. Liu and Shrum (2002, 54) define interactivity as “The degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronized”. For both a successful stakeholder and media relationship, the golden rule is interactivity in a relationship-driven world (Madichiea and Hinsonb 2014).

Since Kent and Taylor’s proposal of dialogic principles of public relations, numerous studies were devoted to investigate it in organizational level and displayed that most of those Web sites failed to meet the dialogic criteria (Sommerfeldt, Kent and Taylor 2012). McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013), for example, investigated the dialogic features of Fortune 500 companies’ mobile websites and found that the sites specifically targeted to consumers, while ignoring other important stakeholders (e.g., journalists, investors). Uzunoğlu and Misci-Kip (2014) examined the dialogic potential of Turkish environmental non-profit organizations’ Web sites and found that Web sites were not successful for meeting the criteria of a sufficient level of relationship building. Boztepe (2013) investigated Web sites of Ministries in Turkey and found that dialogical public relations tools were not sufficiently incorporated with the corporate Web pages. Madichiea and Hinsonb (2014) researched dialogic potential of sub-Saharan African police service Web site and found that the Web sites only to receive communication, but fail to send adequate messages such as allowing visitors to give their opinions on concerns and issues, letting them chat online, and giving opportunity to subscribe for e-newsletters. Park and Reber (2008), on the other hand, found that Fortune 500 companies were successful for designing their Web sites according to the requirements of dialogic communication, for example, 100% of them had major links to the rest of the site, 73% had a search engine box, and 64% had a site map.

“Most Fortune 500 companies use Web sites for external communication, focusing on promoting the company image and enhancing public relations rather than for direct sales or other revenue generating activities” (Hill and White 2000, 31-32). Although, dialogic communication of Fortune 500 organizations was majorly investigated in the US in different years, there is a research gap for Turkey. The purpose of this study is (1) to investigate the dialogic features of Fortune 500 Turkey Web sites and (2) to examine (if any exist) dialogic differences between the organizations that are listed in the first and the last half of the Fortune list.

Dialogic Communication Theory

The concepts of “prosumer”, which means proactive consumer (Sheehan, B. 2010), “alpha consumer”, which means trend setter (Trenrove-Jones, Malczyk, and Beneke 2011), and “crowdsourcing” which means getting wise crowd around company brand and giving opportunity them for working to develop products and/or solutions (Surowiecki 2005) underline the interactive nature of publics for their active leisure time spending by using Internet and social media and their ability of forming and shaping marketing communication and corporate communication of organizations.

Internet by offering new strategic tools to public relations, organizations have more opportunity for having interactive communication with their publics; and today, compared to the past, their communication is more flexible, transparent, democratic, and in turn reliable (Kirat 2007). This is the ideal condition which has been characterized by PR practitioners as excellence in communication. But does the condition of Web sites offered by organizations really fulfill this mission? McAllister-Spooner (2009) states that the most of those Web sites are not characterized as having dialogic features; because they are not fully interactive, although their interface is easy to use and offer useful information.

It is an ongoing debate among public relations practitioners that organizations which emphasize development and sustainment of relationships with their publics are the ones that comprehend dialogue and symmetry in communication (Wirtz, Ngondo, and Poe 2013). “To fully understand symmetrical communication, however, one must first understand dialogic communication” (Kent and Taylor 1998, 323). Researching and debating dialogic communication can contribute to the development of symmetrical communication between an organization and its publics. Dialogic communication means “any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions” (Kent and Taylor 1998, 325). While negotiating and exchanging ideas and opinions with publics and stakeholders, different needs and wants of publics and stakeholders should be considered. Kim, Park, and Wertz (2010) state that stakeholders (e.g., media, investors, and customers) are not viewed equally, since their power, effect, and relevance to the organizations are different.

The Usefulness of Web site

Web sites are tools for communication and relationship building (Madichiea and Hinsonb 2014). The Web site offering relevant background and historical information about itself and news stories to its publics will be viewed as useful by its publics. In other words, the site is visited because it offers some value to its users (Kent and Taylor 1998). Rybalkoa and Seltzerb (2010, 337) state that the usefulness of Web site depends on the presence of useful information “such as description of the company, information regarding who is managing the profile, and providing a photo of the user were included as indicators of *usefulness of information*”.

The Generation of Return Visits

Return visit refers to the repeat visits to the Web site of the organization. Downloadable information, calendar of events, bookmark or favorites, and links to other useful web sites help users to visit the Web site of the organization. Although having updated, interesting, and downloadable information on the Web increase the return visit, they may not enough to generate two-way communication. Thus, FAQs or Q&A sessions are also essential parts for interactive strategies (Kent and Taylor 1998).

Ease of Interface

Ease of interface is related to a user's ease of navigation on the Web site (Madichiea and Hinsonb 2014). As long as users understand the Web site easily and finds it practical, they can find the information needed. Easily identified menu links, eye-catching headers, and existence of search engine and site map are all helpful for the ease of interface. Low reliance of graphics is another important aspect of ease of interface, because too many graphics at the beginning of the opening of the Web site may annoy users, especially the ones who are in a hurry. The right harmony of the text with the visuals are more preferable and easier to be caught (Kent and Taylor 1998). There will be different publics and stakeholders of the organizations such as media, suppliers, consumers, and so on. So, while designing Web sites, organizations should consider three important things: (1) who are the most valuable public(s) of the organizations?, (2) if they are multiple, what may motivate both or all of them to stay on a Web site?, and (3) what does make them to browse easily on the net and what make them difficult?

Conservation of Visitors

Organizations should encourage visitors to stay on their sites and discourage them to explore other organization's Web sites (Rybalkoa and Seltzerb 2010). Conserving the visitors on the Web site requires short site loading time, and important information provided on the home page. If a Web site is textual rather being graphical (as it is mentioned in the section called ease of interface), this Web site can be easily loaded, because text loads faster than graphics. A Web site opening in 20-30 seconds to load may only help the users to give up keep staying on the site and to go back to the main search engine site (Kent and Taylor 1998).

The Dialogic Loop

Dialogic loop principle states that companies that engage in discussion with stakeholders are more dialogic than others which don't engage (Rybalkoa and Seltzerb 2010). Web sites that have dialogic loop are the ones incorporating interactivity (Madichiea and Hinsonb 2014). In other words, the objective of intercreativity can be accomplished, if the dialogic loop is established and implemented on an organizational Web site (Capriotti and Kuklinski 2012). Having and publishing an electronic mail will be useless, if organizations do not respond those mails or have an employee who is not capable for answering the mails sufficiently or even worse have an electronic mail that does not exist. Response is the major aspect of the dialogic loop. Dialogic public relations (PR) on the Internet requires the same skills and professionalism as it is with internal or external PR (such as face-to-face communication). Thus, training the member of the organization who will respond to the public queries is a must (Kent and Taylor 1998). Web sites offering contact addresses, telephone numbers, and electronic mails can easily keep in touch with the members of the organizations. Similarly, users can express their opinions on issues and give feedback by voting and filling out electronic survey instruments.

Dialogic loop has expanded by the transition of WWW (World Wide Web) from Web 1.0, which was static, monologic, and one-way communication, to Web 2.0, which is interactive, dialogic, and two-way communication. Capriotti and Kuklinski (2012, 620) explain the change of dialogic loop in the paragraph below:

"We believe that the concept of a dialogic loop has evolved since the idea originally expressed by the authors, and now takes in a broader, more continuous and balanced conception of interaction, i.e. the dialogic loop must be seen as an ongoing interaction between organizations and their publics using Internet tools, which enables information, comments, opinions, assessment and experiences to be exchanged on a continuous basis".

That's the reason why, existence of links to social network sites (SNSs) on corporate Web sites was included in this study. The links to the organization's social network sites are necessities of dialogic communication and valuable assets of dialogic Web sites. The definition of social network sites is: "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd and Ellison 2007, 211). There are many benefits of owning a social network sites and sharing this on the Web site such as sending instant messages, sharing pictures, photos, videos, and blogs with the interested group of people (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Supplying e-newsletters to the users who request more information about the organization is also crucial in dialogic communication. Because, "Information that can be distributed automatically is more desirable than information solicited (Kent and Taylor 1998, 328). Kent and Taylor (1998) caution that Web sites cannot be dialogic if they meet all the requirements of dialogic communication, but fails in offering dialogic loop.

Naudé, et al. (2004) report that organizations that understand and employ the two-way symmetrical model are highly likely to improve the communication channels by establishing the communicative use of organizational web sites. A spontaneous request for more information about a subject concerned with the organization is an opportunity for an organization to provide dialogic communication. Responsiveness of organizations gives information about whether or not the organizations actively engaged in and employ dialogic features on their Web sites (Kent et al. 2003; Taylor, Kent, and White 2001). Thus, it is expected that organizations that responded to researcher-generated questions are more dialogic organizations than those that don't (Taylor et al. 2001).

Based on abovementioned discussion of the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were employed and the research questions were asked:

H1: Organizations that reply to e-mail requests for information are more likely to employ dialogic features on their Web sites than organizations that do not respond.

RQ1: How do effectively web site of organizations employ dialogic principles?

RQ2: What type of sector does adopt dialogic principle on their Web sites better than other sectors?

RQ3: What type of sector does have more SNSs on their Web sites rather than other sectors?

Kang and Norton (2004) and Ingenhoff and Koelling (2009) examined non-profit organizations (NPOs) and to what extend the dialogic capacity of the Web sites related to income. Kang and Norton found that higher income NPOs didn't fully create a dialogic loop and financially limited NPOs were insufficient in dialogic aspect and could create more effective and dialogic Web sites. Ingenhoff and Koelling, in contrast, found that positive and significant correlation existed between total income and dialogic capacity of the Web sites. Whether profit or non-profit organizations with a higher total income may be more likely to use skilled and professional communication staff or agency to design the Web site. Based on this notion, the second hypothesis was decided as below:

H2: Organizations with higher total income (the first ranked 250 companies) create Web sites that are more dialogic than organizations with lower total income (the last ranked 250 companies).

Methodology

The study operationalized five principles of dialogic relationship building deductively from Kent and Taylor's (1998) principles into a 22-item questionnaire.

Sample

This study is based on a random sample of 100 *Fortune* 500 Turkey companies. The sample used in the current study was drawn from the 2013 list of *Fortune* 500 Turkey companies (<http://www.fortuneturkey.com/fortune500-2013>). The *Fortune* Website provides detailed information on these companies. To draw the sample from the list, systematic sampling was employed and every 5th company was selected to be included in the sample.

Net sales of the first 50 organizations ranged from 18 billion, 776 million, 784 thousand, 325 TL (Turkish Lira) to 507 million, 871 thousand, 288 TL; and of the last 50 organizations ranged from 493 million, 731 thousand, 584 TL to 230 million, 351 thousand, 975 TL.

Industry type

The study classified industry types into eight categories: (1) construction, (2) industry, (3) producer, (4) retailer, (5) retailer, (6) service, (7) petrol, and (8) other which includes electric, furniture, textile, tobacco, and the companies with multiple services and products.

Dependent and Independent Variables

Industry rank is independent variables; and dependent variables are the number of SNSs and dialogic features of the Web sites which are dialogic loop, conservation of visitors, ease of interface, return visit, and usefulness of Web sites.

Reliability

To ensure reliability of the 22 items, Taylor, Kent, and White's (2001) principles were applied and each term was operationalized as follows. For up-to-date analysis of the Web pages, 2 items which are "requesting information through e-mail" and "the availability of site maps on home page" were omitted from the scale.

Dialogic loop

The Web sites incorporating interactivity and two-way communication were considered as dialogic and dialogic loop of the Web site was measured with 4 items, namely option to expressing opinions, opportunity to vote on issues, citizen information delivery, and existence of links to SNSs. In order to this, the dialogic capacity of the organizations were evaluated based on giving response to an e-mail request for more information.

Conservation of visitors

Organizations, that keep the visitors on their Web sites and inhibit them to browse to other sites, conserve their visitors. Conservation of visitors was assessed based on 3 items which are home pages providing important information, short loading times (less than 4 seconds), and a clear posting of the date of site's last updates.

Ease of interface

The idea of ease of interface is based upon the notion of the easy navigation and as a result ease in finding information. Shortly, user-friendly Web sites are considered as having ease of interface. Ease of

interface was measured with 3 items, namely incorporating search engine on home page, easy identification of menu links on home page, and low reliance on graphics.

Generation of Return visits

Organizations want their visitors to return back to their Web sites from time to time. Organizations, that understand the value of long lasting relationships, know that relationships are not established with one time contact, but rather it is established with repeated interactions in long terms. Thus, there are certain features of the Web sites that encourage of the users to return back the site. In this study, generation of return visits were evaluated with 7 items which are links to other Web sites, explicit statements to return to their sites, bookmark or favorites, 30 days updates on organizational news, downloadable information, FAQ's & Q&A section, and calendar of events.

Usefulness of Web sites

The last feature of the Web sites is providing usefulness (or useful information) to its users which is another necessary condition for dialogic relationship building. Usefulness of Web sites was assessed based on 5 items, namely presence of updated information, logo display, philosophy/mission/vision/, news stories posted on the Web sites, and details for how to become affiliated/member.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The coder evaluated the dialogic performance features by visiting each home page, and then assessed the relevant content features of each Web site by using the content analysis instrument. For getting accurate measurement about the speed at which the site loaded, the procedure was standardized by using the same laptop and the same browser (Internet Explorer). For assuring the accurate results, Web sites were opened more than once in different days. Other items of the content analysis instrument were also double checked upon the visit of the Web sites for the second time. Dialogic features were coded as either present (1) or absent (2).

Results

Descriptive Results

The majority of the Web sites belong to industry and producer organizations and the minority of them belong to retailer and petrol companies (See Table 1). Other includes electric, furniture, textile, tobacco, and the companies with multiple services and products.

Table 1. Frequency of Industry for Fortune 500 Turkey Web Sites (n=100)

	%
Construction	10
Industry	35
Producer	16
Retailer	8
Service	10
Petrol	7
Other	14

Web Site Characteristics

The first research question asks that how web site of organizations effectively employ dialogic principles. On the one hand, the majority of the organizations with high percentages have an opportunity for user response, provide important information on their home pages, their menu links are easily identified, they have explicit statements to return home page, and all of them have logo display. On the other hand, the minority of the organizations have option for expressing opinions, opportunity to vote on issues, and offers citizen information delivery such as sending e-newsletter upon requesting. For “usefulness of Web sites”, for example, 60% of organizations have their mission/vision statements. Affiliation and membership is one of the powerful aspects and the success of SNSs. However, only 22% of the Web sites explain how the users can be the member of the Web site.

The major lacking part of “ease of interface” is low existence of search engines (55%) on home pages. The most forgotten parts of “return visit” section are calendar of events and bookmark or favorites. Only 1% of the organizations have calendar of events and activities, and 7% of them have bookmark or favorites. Similarly, 19% of organizations have 30 days updates on organizational news which is really a low percentage. FAQ’s are included by 15% of organizations.

To “conserve visitors” on the Web site, short site loading time should be increased for some organizations, as 40% or organizations’ Web site load more than 4 seconds.

Table 2. Occurrence of Dialogic Feature (n=100)

	n %
Dialogic loop (5 items, alpha=.58)	
Opportunities for user response	99
Option to expressing opinions	20
Opportunity to vote on issues	27
Offers citizen information delivery	26
Existence of links to SNSs	60
Conservation of visitors (3 items, alpha=.15)	
Home pages providing important information	97
Short site loading time (less than 4 seconds)	60
Date of site’s last updates	70
Ease of interface (4 items, alpha=.33)	
The availability of site maps on home pages	27
Incorporating search engine on home page	55
Easy identification of menu links on home pages	98
Low reliance on graphics	60
Return visit (7 items, alpha= .10)	
Links to other web sites	52
Explicit statements to return to their sites	99
Bookmark or favorites	7
30 days updates on organizational news	19
Downloadable information	51
FAQ’s or Q&A’s section	15

Calendar of events	1
Usefulness of Web sites (5 items, alpha=.44)	
Presence of updated information	77
Logo display	100
Philosophy, mission, vision	60
News stories posted on the web sites	67
Details of how to become affiliated/member	22

The majority of the organizations on the *Fortune* Web sites (60%) have SNSs and 56% of them have more than one SNSs.

Table 3. Frequency of # of SNSs for Fortune 500 Turkey Web Sites (n=100)

	%
None	40
1 SNS	4
2 SNSs	18
3 SNSs	16
4 SNSs	12
5 SNSs	6
6 SNSs+	4

Dialogic Capacity of Fortune 500 Organizations

The first hypothesis states that organizations that reply to e-mail requests for information are more likely to employ dialogic features on their Web sites than organizations that do not respond. In order to evaluate the dialogic capacity of the organizations, in addition to content analysis, it was needed to see which companies respond to an e-mail request for more information. Taylor, Kent, and White's (2001) follow up question was modified and asked to each organization to see which actually responded to an e-mail request for more information. The e-mail message was as follows: "I am interested in corporate social responsibility issues and I recently found your Web site at *Fortune* 500 Turkey Web page. I have two questions about corporate social responsibility and If you briefly answer the following questions, I appreciate that: (1) what does your organization consider to be the biggest threat to people in the next decade? and (2) what can the common citizen do to help this issue? Thank you". This message was sent to each organizations' e-mail address entitled "more information" and listed on Web site. Some Web sites didn't contain electronic mail and a request for information form was filled for this type of Web sites. Then, if mail was received the organization was coded as "responsive", if not, it was coded as non-responsive. The duration was one month for a responsive message to be sent to the researcher's e-mail address.

The first hypothesis was partly confirmed that organizations that replied to e-mail requests for information were more likely to employ dialogic features on their Web sites than organizations that did not respond. Those companies' Web sites were more dialogic in terms of giving an opportunity to its users to vote on issues, having links to SNSs on their sites, and allocating a space for calendar of events on

their Web sites. Responsiveness (Fortune rank) is positively correlated to opportunity to vote on issues ($r=.202$; $p=.04$), existence of links to SNSs ($r=.191$; $p=.05$), and calendar of events ($r=.320$; $p=.00$).

Table 4. Correlation between Responsiveness to an e-mail request and Dialogic Capacity of the Web Sites (n=100)

	r	significance
Dialogic loop		
Option to expressing opinions	.105	.29
Opportunity to vote on issues	.202	.04*
Offers citizen information delivery	-.027	.78
Existence of links to SNSs	.191	.05*
Conservation of visitors		
Home pages providing important information	.055	.58
Short site loading time (less than 4 seconds)	.043	.67
Date of site's last updates	.018	.85
Ease of interface		
Incorporating search engine on home page	.144	.15
Easy identification of menu links on home page	.045	.65
Low reliance on graphics	.043	.67
Return visit		
Links to other web sites	.037	.71
Explicit statements to return to their sites	.032	.75
Bookmark or favorites	.051	.61
30 days updates on organizational news	.115	.25
Downloadable information	.099	.32
FAQ's or Q&A's section	.161	.10
Calendar of events	.320	.00*
Usefulness of Web sites		
Presence of updated information	.089	.37
Philosophy, mission, vision	-.029	.77
News stories posted on the web sites	-.002	.98
Details of how to become affiliated/member	.086	.39

* $p \leq .05$; Responsive (n=9), non-responsive (n=91).

The second hypothesis states that organizations with higher total income (the first ranked 250 companies) create Web sites that are more dialogic than organizations with lower total income (the last ranked 250 companies). Results indicate that a positive and significant correlation exists between total income and dialogic capacity of the Web sites, as expected. The total income (Fortune rank) is positively correlated to the dialogic loop ($r=.194$; $p=.05$), conservation of visitors ($r=.207$; $p=.03$), and ease of interface ($r=.273$; $p=.00$). Only return visit ($r=.108$; $p=.28$) and usefulness of Web sites ($r=.036$; $p=.724$) were not significantly correlated with total income. It can be said that enough evidence exists to conclude that, the dialogic capacity of Fortune 500 Turkey Web sites is related to the financial situations of the organizations. The organizations with higher income either tend to or understand the importance

to create Web sites with a higher dialogic capacity than the organizations with lower income (See Table 5). Thus, H2 was confirmed.

Table 5. Correlation between Total Income (Fortune Rank) and Dialogic Capacity of the Web Sites (n=100)

	r	significance
Dialogic loop	.194	.05*
Conservation of visitors	.207	.03*
Ease of interface	.273	.00*
Return visit	.108	.28
Usefulness of Web sites	.036	.72

* $p \leq .05$

The second research question asks that what type of sector adopt dialogic principle on their Web sites better than other sectors. According to cross tabulation chi-square results, “statements on their philosophy, mission, and/or vision” was significant with “industry type” ($\chi^2=18.18$, $df=6$, $p=.006$). Philosophy, mission, and/or vision statements existed 70% within construction, 80% within industry, 62.5% within producer, 25% within retailer, 40% within service, and 71.5% within petrol industries.

The third research question queries that what type of sector have more SNSs on their Web sites rather than other sectors. Industrial corporations’ Web site included more number of SNSs (e.g., 23 SNSs for industry, 4 SNSs for construction, 9 SNSs for producer, 5 SNSs for retailer, 8 SNSs for service companies, and 3 SNSs for petrol) than other industry types.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Further Suggestions

Is the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 resulted in more dialogic communication of organizations? Under light of literature review and with the result of this study, it is difficult to say fully yes. The result is consistent with Madichiea and Hinsonb’s (2014) research results in a way that they found Web sites as good at receiving e-mails, but bad at sending enough feedback. In the current study, seven electronic mails of Web sites returned back to the researcher, as they were not up-to-date, and only nine organizations replied to e-mail request, confirming McAllister-Spooner’s (2009) statement that most of those Web sites are not enough interactive, and therefore cannot be characterized as having a total feature of dialogue.

Although nine out of hundred organizations show very small number of responsiveness rate, there was a positive correlation between responsiveness to e-mail request and some aspects of dialogic communication. For example, when responsiveness of organizations increase, they allocate more space for opportunity to vote issues, calendar of events, and links to SNSs on their Web sites. However, total picture show us that those Web sites are monologic rather than being dialogic and the result is consistent with Uzunoğlu and Misci-Kip’s (2014) findings of dialogic feature of Turkish environmental NPOs and Boztepe’s (2013) findings of dialogical public relations tools for Web sites of Ministries in Turkey.

Organizations also fail to allow users to reflect their opinions on concerns and offer opportunity to subscribe for e-newsletters. Unfortunately, the minority of the organizations (n=20) have option for expressing opinions, opportunity to vote on issues (n=27), and offers citizen information delivery (n=26) such as sending e-newsletter upon requesting. Citizen information delivery such as e-newsletter

subscription is important, as Kent and Taylor (1998) stated automatic distribution of information is more desirable and therefore more valuable in “dialogic loop” than it is solicited.

The corporations need permanent interactions with their stakeholders for ongoing relationship where credibility and good reputation can be established. Since there will be different stakeholders of the organizations (e.g., media, suppliers, and consumers), while designing Web sites different needs and wants of them should be considered. It shouldn't be forgotten that one Web site design may be effective on one type of stakeholder but useless with another. Thus, organizations should choose their priorities on certain type of stakeholder(s), and then consider the motivational factors and effective interactive tools for them.

There are varieties of publics of organizations and one of them is media. Only 1% of the organizations have calendar of events and activities and 19% of organizations have 30 days updates on organizational news and these percentages show us that there is missed opportunity to communicate with the media as well as other members of the publics. Those results are consistent with the result of a research by Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) from the fact that FAQ's/Q&A's are included by 15% of organizations and 7% of them have bookmark or favorites. Based on this results, it is seen that limited information is available for media publics and therefore little reason for them to revisit the Web sites. The findings also confirm the result by McCorkindale and Morgoch (2013) who found that Fortune 500 companies' mobile Web sites targeted at consumers but not journalists or investors.

It is also seen that total income of organizations are important indicators for designing Web sites with dialogic features. This correlation confirms the result of a study by Ingenhoff and Koelling (2009) who found a correlation between total income and dialogic capacity of the NPO's Web sites. Organizations with higher net sales may be working with more specialized Web design agencies that understand the dialogic communication and its importance. The organizations listed within the first 250 organizations rather than the last 250 organizations have more option to expressing opinions on their Web sites (14% vs. 6%), short site loading time less than 4 seconds (36% vs. 24%), opportunity to vote on issues on their Web sites (20% vs. 7%), low reliance of graphics (35% vs. 25%), and existence of links to other web sites (32% vs. 20%).

Usefulness of Web sites depend on many factors, namely philosophy/mission/vision and details of how to become affiliated/member. Philosophy/mission/vision is a statement of the reason why an organization exists and reflects its values and contributions. However, 60% of organizations have their clearly identified mission/vision statements. Industrial organizations reveal philosophy/mission/vision statements with higher percentages (80%) and have more links to social network sites (23 SNSs) on their Web pages compared to the other sectors.

Because of high reliance on graphics on their Web sites, 40% of Web sites load more than 4 seconds. Those Web sites should be designed in a way to be used easily and to allow its loading time less than 4 seconds as first appearance are most effective during the early stages of relationship building with publics. The availability of search engine is slightly more than half of the organizations (55%). The results of this study is not consistent with the results found by Park and Reber (2008). Park and Reber in their studies for *Fortune* 500 companies found that the examined companies were successful in designing their Web sites' dialogic communication (e.g., a search engine box with 73%).

When the user of the Web site shares the information on the Web site with other visitors or potential visitors, the site traffic and its value increase. More than half of the organizations (60%) have

SNSs and links to other web sites (52%). Half of those links belong to other national and international organizations; while other half belong to the designer of the Web page. In order to talk about real interactivity, however, both the number of SNSs and the linkages to local, regional, national, and international organizations ought to be increased. Furthermore, affiliation and membership is one of the most powerful aspects of SNSs. But, only 22% of the Web sites explain how to become a member.

The main limitation of this study is its inability of looking at the dialogic capacity of the organizations' Web sites from users' perspective. Future studies may investigate the users' impressions of the Web sites.

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Appendix

Content analysis items

Dialogic loop (5 items): interactivity

- 1: Option to fill out survey instruments and expressing opinions on issues
- 2: Opportunity to vote on issues or feedback options
- 3: Offers regular information through e-mail (citizen information delivery)
- 4: Existence of links to SNSs

Conservation of visitors (3 items)

- 5: Home pages (1st pages) providing important information
- 6: Short site loading time (less than 4 seconds)
- 7: Posting of last updated time and date (date of site's last updates)

Ease of interface (4 items)

- 8: Incorporating search engine on home page
- 9: Easy identification of menu links to the rest of the sites on the home page
- 10: Low reliance on graphics

Return visit (7 items)

- 11: Links to other web sites
- 12: Appealing to visitors with explicit statements inviting them to return to their sites
- 13: Bookmark or favorites
- 14: Updates on organizational news items within last 30 days
- 15: Availability of downloadable information and graphics
- 16: FAQ's or Q&A's section
- 17: Calendar of events

Usefulness of Web sites (5 items)

- 18: Presence of updated information
- 19: Logo display
- 20: Statements on their philosophy, mission, and/or vision
- 21: News stories posted on the web sites
- 22: Details of how to become affiliated/member

“We Are Different!” Emancipation through Professionalization in the Field of Internal Communication

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Extended Abstract

In organizations around the globe people are claiming the formal title of “internal communication professional”. Scholars too are beginning to show more interest in internal communication as a field of research. Formal recognition was apparent when *Public Relations Review* became the first international peer-reviewed journal to devote a special issue to the topic in 2012. A new class of practitioners argue that internal communication needs to be a profession in its own right. Some scholars (Welch 2013; Ruck and Welch 2012; Welch and Jackson 2007) back the idea of internal communication as a specialism. However, with this study we challenge the idea of internal communication as an independent discipline and emerging profession.

By reviewing the literature on professionalism and professionalization we found that professions act as communities of practice (Wenger 2000) defending common interests (Larson 1977). Central to the idea of professionalization is the creation of a social identity. In this study we used the Social Identity Theory (SIT), as developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) and later applied to the organizational setting by Ashforth and Mael (1989), to test whether internal communication practitioners do indeed share a common identity.

We operationalized our theoretical framework by organizing 50 in-depth interviews with practitioners taking up internal communication responsibilities in their organizations. All respondents were working in both national and international private corporations counting 1000+ employees. The interviews were organized from January 2014 until September of the same year.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed with the qualitative data analysis software package Atlas Ti for Mac. We performed a thematic analysis as described by Guest et al. (2012) and Saldaña (2013). A set of codes were clustered around central themes and used to test the assumptions of the SIT against our data.

We found that there is a minority group of internal communication professionals who identify themselves as such and act as interest groups separate from other domains of organizational communication. Almost all of them carry the formal title of internal communication professional. However, in the majority of cases our respondents indicated that internal communication was not considered as needing a specific skillset different from those in other domains of organizational communication and therefore does not qualify as a new profession. From our data we conclude that the company’s formal recognition of internal communication as a profession, in the form of allocating resources to hire a dedicated professional, is central to the creation of a social identity.

This is the first study in the field of organizational communication where the SIT has been used to understand the process of emancipation through professionalization in internal communication as a specialism. Our research has confirmed the idea that the formation of a distinct social identity is essential to the recognition of internal communication as a profession. In line with the SIT it is safe to assume that as the social identity of internal communication practitioners grows stronger the group will try to defend its interests against out-groups. Measures to restrict access to the profession, like the certification of in-group members, might lead to the disintegration of older overarching disciplines like Public Relations.

Keywords

Internal communication; professionalization; corporate communication; professionalism; qualitative research; social media; enterprise social networks

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5

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media for the Creation of Strong Brand Relationships? The Critical Role of the Self

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Introduction

According to Forbes, in 2014 92% of marketers characterized social media marketing as fundamental for their business, 80% of which also identified increased traffic to their websites due to these operations. Consumers interact with brands online as they do offline (Novak, 1996) and considering the increased demand for meaningful value-creation, consumers' connection to brands online has recently gained an important renewal in interest.

Since the last decade, the study of social media has been inscribed in the managerial perspective. For several years, scholars have been focusing on the field of social media communication in an attempt to understand its effects on brands and brand management by studying relevant topics such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Rezvani, Hoseini, and Samadzadeth 2012), online reviews (Karakaya and Barnes 2010), virtual brand communities (Cova and Pace 2006), advertising (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, and Schaefer 2012), and user-generated content (Smith, Fischer, and Yongjian 2012; Hautz et al. 2013). Yet, despite the increase in empirical research into the topic of social media, there is still little understanding of how firm-created and user-generated social media communication influence consumer perceptions of brands and consumer behavior. This is of fundamental importance as one form of communication is controlled by the company, whereas the other is independent of the firm's control.

Practitioners seem to praise the viewpoint that engagement is the critical online process to strengthen brand equity and lead to increased sales (Passikoff et al., 2007). Engagement, however,

pinpoints the level of customers' investments in certain brand interactions, not reassuring a strong bond or connection to the brand. The next level of connection is crucial for online marketers today, a point in which a strong bond is created with the brand. The concept of brand attachment, referring to the bond created with the brand, can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage in the online world, where competition is fierce and consumers are skeptic.

In summary previous studies have focused on including the concept of brand engagement in their studies of consumers' perceptions of social media marketing activities. None, however, to our knowledge, have examined the subsequent level of connection to a brand, connecting it to a relational concept. Using a cross sectional survey design, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the effects social media marketing communication on brand engagement and the subsequent level of brand attachment created, through the mediating role of brand self connection.

Underlying Theory

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model from environmental psychology, advocated by Eroglu et al. (2003) and refined by Sautter et al. (2004), is the underlying theory for this research (Molen and Wilson, 2010). The S–O–R model supports the viewpoint that online consumer experience consists of three components. The first are the social media marketing activities. The second is the consumer's internal state—her/his experiential response to the aforementioned stimuli. This 'experience' may be more than an interaction with the mechanical features of the website and the properties of the environment: it can be a "holistic" response (Petre et al., 2006). The consumer's extant psychographic state may also temper this experiential response (Bart et al., 2005), relating it to consumer's self concept. Finally, this experience generates 'approach and avoidance' brand attitudes and behaviors, such as brand attitude (Eroglu et al., 2003; Sautter et al., 2004). We will use this theoretical framework to frame our examination of the nature and role of consumer engagement and subsequent brand attachment.

We suggest that the consumer's experiential response can be characterized as a dynamic, tiered perceptual spectrum, beginning from perceived social media marketing activities, leading to engagement, and subsequently to brand attachment.

We will now review the literature pertinent to each model stage and derive associated propositions. A working definition of engagement emerges from the analysis.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Brand Self Connection

Consumers show a strong attachment to anything self-expressive, that is, an object congruent with the self, which reflects the extent of "me-ness" (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). Likewise, in the infant-parent relationship, similarity of personality or temperament increases the extent of emotional bond (Perry 1998). Experimenting with different brands enables consumers to expand and develop a variety of self-concepts (Belk, 1988). It is intuitively appealing and generally accepted by our society that people use products and brands to create and represent desired self-images and to present these images to others or even to themselves. One reason why consumers value psychological and symbolic brand benefits is because these benefits can help consumers construct their self-identity or present themselves to others. Consumer research on the significance of important possessions finds that possessions can be used to satisfy psychological needs, such as actively creating one's self-concept, reinforcing and expressing self-identity, allowing one to differentiate oneself and assert one's individuality, and connecting one's self to

significant others (e.g., Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Belk, 1988; Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Other researchers have extended some of these possession findings to brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Fournier, 1998). For example, recent research indicates that consumers construct their self-identity and present themselves to others through their brand choices based on the congruency between brand-user associations and self-image associations (or possible self-image associations; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Given the link between the consumer's self concept and the attachment created, it is plausible to theoretically infer a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and brand self connection. Hence:

H1: Social media marketing activities positively affect Brand self connection.

Brand Engagement

Customer brand engagement (CBE) is defined as 'the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions' (Hollebeek, 2011). Generally speaking, Customer Engagement is representing a very significant role in marketing and service management research due to the fact that is based on its relational foundations of interactive experience and the cocreation of value (Brodie et al., 2011). The theoretical foundations of Customer Engagement (CE) and Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) are viewed from the scope of Relationship Marketing and Service-Dominant logic perspectives (Brodie et al., 2011 and Hollebeek, 2011). With its conceptual foundations in interactivity (Ganbetti & Graffigna, 2010) it is expected to complement scholarly insights in the broader theoretical areas of Relationship Marketing and the Service-Dominant perspective alike.

The conceptualization of engagement comes from the fields of psychology, sociology and organizational behavior (Brodie et al., 2011). Specifically in marketing, research that has been done, indicates a variety of several sub-forms concerning the concept of engagement, like 'customer engagement' (Patterson, Yu, & De Ruyter, 2006), 'customer engagement behaviors' (Van Doorn et al., 2010), 'customer brand engagement' (CBE; Hollebeek, 2011), 'consumer engagement' (Vivek, 2009) and 'engagement' in more general terms (Higgins & Sholer, 2009).

The majority of the conceptualizations share a multidimensional perspective of engagement that appears dominant in the existing marketing literature and entails a generic, tri-partite (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) dimensionality. This specific expression of dimensionality may vary across different contexts (Brodie et al., 2011). The existence of a focal, two-way interactions between a subject (customer/consumer) and an object (brand/product) is pointed out in the original study of Bowden (2009), in order to demonstrate this condition as a necessity for the appearance of relevant engagement levels. The vast majority of academic research adopts an individual, consumer-based perspective, whereas Van Doorn et al. (2010) have a more company centric view by observing the effects of specific customer engagement behaviors through an organizations lens. In their original study the authors develop a conceptual model of Customer Engagement Behavior and as a final result, they suggest that corporates should have a more integrative and comprehensive approach towards CEB.

Recent research in consumer behavior has concluded to the idea of BESC (Spratt et al., 2009), which is a new construct that characterizes self-brand connections. This new idea is trying to broaden the existing perspectives among brands and the self-concept by stating that consumers vary on their way of possessing brand-related schemas. In their original study, Spratt et al. (2009) refer to the nature and the importance of BESC, in a way that focus on how consumers are trying to get involved with their favorable brands in their self-concept.

A similar view is held by Goldsmith et al. (2012), which refer to three main consumer motivations; materialism, BESC and status consumption, and how these three constructs affect clothing involvement and brand loyalty. The findings of their research task were promising, stating that all three constructs mentioned above, influence positively the two significant outcomes of the study. We predict a positive effect of social media marketing activities and brand engagement self concept. Moreover, since it has been suggested that brand self connection can predict the engagement created, we hypothesize that:

H2: Social media marketing activities positively affect brand engagement self concept, through the mediating role of brand self connection.

Brand Attachment

Consumer attachment toward a brand is a strong affective concept (Fournier 1998). Consumers become attached to a specific brand in the process of **defining and** maintaining their sense of self (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). The concept of attachment and its formation have been dealt with in the context of infant behavior (Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980) as well as in the area of adult relationship, especially romantic relationship behavior (Collins and Read 1990; Feeney and Noller 1990; Hazan and Shaver 1987). The concept has been also studied in explaining the formation of consumer-brand relationships (Fournier 1998). Attachment is basically the process of developing an emotional bond (Collins and Read 1990), which is facilitated by consistent and repeated experiences between relationship partners (Perry 1998). It can be measured on the basis of dependence, anxiety, and closeness (Collins and Read 1990). Attachment provides psychological comfort and pleasure, and its loss evokes strong distress (Perry 1998). Fournier (1998) also describes love and passion as part of the affective attachment involved in the consumer-brand relationship, and reports that attachment is a condition of emotional dependence involving separation anxiety and irreplaceability. Given the link between the consumer's self concept and the attachment created, it is plausible to theoretically infer a positive relationship between the brand engagement self concept and brand attachment. Hence:

H3: Brand engagement self concept positively affects brand attachment.

Research Methodology

In order to test the proposed hypotheses an online survey was conducted and the respondent indicated a brand that he or she had liked on facebook. A total of 180 questionnaires were completed during the period of November 2014-December 2014.

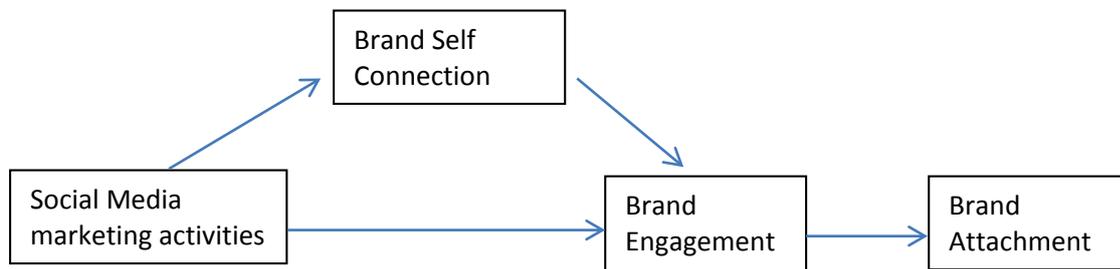
The survey instrument contained 30 items measuring a total of 4 constructs. Since the constructs of social media marketing activities, brand engagement, brand attachment and brand self connection are already established in the academic marketing literature, the choice of scales was based on previously published research. The measurement of social media marketing activities was adapted from a scale developed from Kim and Ko (2012), including 11 items. Brand engagement was approached as suggested by Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg (2009) and measured with 8 items. The scales for brand self connection were taken from the paper by Escalas (2004) and included 7 items. Finally, the scale for brand attachment included four items also taken from Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci (2010). All items were measured on a seven point Likert scale anchored by 1="Strongly disagree", 7="Strongly agree" or 1="Never", 7="All the time".

Table 1. Construct definitions

Social Media Marketing Activities	Social media marketing activities (SMM) are a two-way communication seeking empathy with young users, and even enforcing the familiar emotions associated with existing brands to a higher age group.
Brand Self Connection	the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept
Brand Engagement	a general tendency for some consumers to engage their favorite brands in their self-concept
Brand Attachment	the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self

Construct	Scale taken from	Items
Social Media Marketing Activities	Kim and Ko (2012)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using Brand X 's social media is fun 2. Contents shown in Brand X 's social media seem interesting. 3. Interaction Brand X 's social media enables information sharing with others. 4. Conversation or opinion exchange with others is possible through Brand X 's social media. 5. It is easy to deliver my opinion through Brand X 's social media. 6. Trendiness Contents shown in Brand X 's social media is the newest information. 7. Using Brand X 's social media is very trendy. 8. Customization Brand X 's social media offers customized information search. 9. Brand X 's social media provides customized service. 10. Word of mouth I would like to pass along information on brand, product, or services from Brand X 's social media to my friends. 11. I would like to upload contents from Brand X 's social media on my blog or micro blog.
Brand Self Connection	Escalas (2004)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brand X reflects who I am. 2. I can identify with Brand X. 3. I feel a personal connection to Brand X 4. I (can) use Brand X to communicate who I am to other people 5. I think Brand X (could) help(s) me become the type of person I want to be. 6. I consider Brand X to be "me" (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way that I want to present myself to others 7. Brand X suits me well.
Brand Engagement	Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg (2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have a special bond with the brands that I like. 2. I consider my favorite brands to be a part of myself. 3. I often feel a personal connection between my brands and me. 4. Part of me is defined by important brands in my life. 5. I feel as if I have a close personal connection with the brands I most prefer. 6. I can identify with important brands in my life. 7. There are links between the brands that I prefer and how I view myself. 8. My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am.
Brand Attachment	Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci (2010)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "To what extent is [Brand Name] part of you and who you are?" 2. "To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [Brand Name]?" 3. "To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?" and 4. "To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] come to you naturally and instantly?"

Conceptual Framework



Results

After data coding and clearing, the reliability and the underlying linear components of the multi-item scales used in the study were examined. Principal Component Analyses for the scales (Social media marketing activities, brand self connection, brand engagement, brand attachment) yielded one factor solutions which respectively explained 30,42%, 63,84%, 70,95% and 82,9% of the total variance; thus, the items in each scale were averaged to form corresponding indices with high reliability estimates (respective Cronbach's α values were 0,760, 0,905, 0,941 and 0,929).

Given the exploratory nature of the study, we were interested in finding out, initially, whether social media marketing activities were correlated with brand engagement; as expected, a significant relationship was found ($r = 0,415$, p (one-tailed) < 0.001). Further, social media marketing activities were correlated with brand self connection ($r = 0,443$, p (one-tailed) < 0.001) and brand self connection with brand engagement ($r = 0,660$, p (one-tailed) < 0.001). Moreover, brand engagement self concept was also correlated with brand attachment ($r = 0,749$, p (one-tailed) < 0.001). In order to test the proposed mediation model, statistical methods described in Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) and a corresponding SPSS macro file were used. The macro (INDIRECT) estimates the unstandardized coefficients a , b , and c' for the following regression equations (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Preacher, Rucker & Hayes, 2007):

$$M = a_0 + aX + r$$

$$Y = b_0 + c'X + bM + r$$

The macro also calculates confidence intervals for the population value of the conditional indirect effect through bootstrapping. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric method, alternative to normal theory testing, for assessing the indirect effect of X on Y through M ; it has been argued that bootstrapping is preferable to other methods (cf. Baron & Kenny, 1986) for examining indirect paths (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010). As recommended by Preacher, Rucker & Hayes (2007), 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a bias corrected and accelerated 95% confidence interval were used.

The results of the analysis are shown in Table 1. As evidenced by the regression coefficients, a unit increase in social media marketing activities increases brand self connection by $a = 0.4140$, while if social media marketing activities is held constant, a unit increase in brand self connection increases brand engagement by $b = 0.4453$. Interestingly, the direct effect is also significant, indicating that a unit increase

in social media marketing activities increases brand engagement by $c' = 0.1504$ even if brand self connection is held constant.

Hence, H1 is supported whereas H2 gains support only to the extent that brand attachment is a partial, and not a full, mediator of the effect of emotional value on brand loyalty.

Given that $a \times b$ and c' are significant and $a \times b \times c'$ is positive, complementary mediation is established in Zhao, Lynch and Chen's (2010) terms, who argue that in such cases the possibility of an additional omitted mediator needs to be explored. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Rucker, Preacher, Tormala and Petty (2011), since the total effect of emotional value on brand loyalty is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), it might also be the case that despite the mediator being appropriately measured and the intervening process being strong, the size of the total effect per se could lead to the observed mediation pattern.

Table 1. Results of Mediation Analysis – Effect of social media marketing activities on brand engagement through brand self connection

Results of Mediation Analysis (Summary Table)

Regression Coefficients				
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance (2-tailed)</i>
Social Media Marketing Activities to BRAND SELF CONNECTION (<i>a</i> path)	0.4140	0.0677	6,1135	0.0000
Direct Effect of BRAND SELF CONNECTION on BRAND ENGAGEMENT (<i>b</i> path)	0.4453	0.00668	6,6683	0.0000
Total effect of Social Media Marketing Activities on BRAND ENGAGEMENT (<i>c</i> path)	0.5919	0.0615	9.6183	0.0000
Direct effect of Social Media Marketing Activities on BRAND ENGAGEMENT (<i>c'</i> path)	0.1504	0.0616	2.4428	0.0155
Bootstrapping Results				
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Lower Limit of 95% Confidence Interval</i>	<i>Upper Limit of 95% Confidence Interval</i>
Indirect effect of Social Media Marketing Activities on BRAND ENGAGEMENT through BRAND SELF CONNECTION (<i>ab</i> path)	0.2638	0.0525	0.1372	0.3743

NOTES: Values represent selected output obtained through the Preacher and Hayes (2008) macro. Bias corrected confidence intervals and unstandardized coefficients are reported. The number of resamples for bootstrapping is 5000.

Discussion and Conclusions

The aforescribed study sheds some light on the outcomes of social marketing activities on the creation of strong brand relationships with the customers, acknowledging the importance of the consumer's self concept; the results indicate that social media marketing activities can help towards the creation of brand engagement, which can lead to even stronger brand attachment. Further, the findings show that this effect is partially due to an increase in brand self connection. From a managerial standpoint, the fact that the consumers self concept positively related to these activities, showed a positive ground for more customized activities. The required push is given to brand managers, not only to invest in these activities but also to better understand their customers self concept for a deeper and more meaningful connection. Furthermore, engagement alone should not suffice, but a deeper connection such as attachment can and should be sought for. From a theoretical point of view, this study responds to the need for more empirical evidence on customer's perception on social media marketing activities and is a step towards demonstrating the usefulness of the brand attachment construct in the brand literature.

Since brand self connection only partially mediates the effect of the social media marketing activities on brand engagement, it is important to examine other potential mediators of this relationship; hence, as a next step, we intend to extend the present study to also assess the impact of these activities on other relationship constructs, such as brand trust and/ or brand commitment (cf. Esch, Langner, Schmitt & Geus, 2006; Louis & Lombart, 2010), which could presumably predict a behavioral outcome such as brand loyalty. Moreover, given the exploratory nature of the reported study, it would be of interest to explore the existence of possible moderators, such as attachment style (Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009), and intrinsic intellectual motivation (Lloyd & Barenblatt, 1984).

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Fashion Bloggers: Virtual Communities with Passion for Fashion

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Virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on ... public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.
(Rheingold, 1993, p.5)

Introduction

Fashion blogging has become considerably effective over the last years; its followers have grown and its influence has been strong on fashion world (Bollier and Racine, 2005). The most famous fashion bloggers, such as Kimberly (Eat.Sleep.Wear blog) and Blair Eadie (Atlantic-Pasific blog) are applauded by fashion designers and invited to fashion shows, having a chance to collaborate with fashion brands (Okonkwo, 2007; Guzelis, 2010). Fashion magazines like Instyle and Elle give space for fashion spreads inspired by fashion bloggers since these people have a large audience through repeated displays of good taste. This audience attracts the attention of the fashion world, providing social and economic resources to the blogger, augmenting the audience (McQuarrie, Miller& Philip, 2012). Within this perspective, we examine how fashion bloggers work as a virtual community.

The bloggers behind Blond Salad, What I Wore, and Lauren Conrad have published books on new fashion trends and beauty tips (<http://heartifb.com/members/>). Interestingly, they are now not independent individuals; they became a community. The Independent Fashion Bloggers coalition has more than 50000 members (<http://heartifb.com/about/>). They are meeting up in most famous fashion weeks, launching new topics to fashion arena, such as *Fatsbion*, meaning fat people's fashion (Fisher&Scaraboto, 2012). The community of fashion bloggers is a rising trend, started in the USA (Marwick, 2011); however, it is now increasing all over the world. They are a powerful group in the

marketplace because they are able to influence consumers via word of mouth (Stokberger-Sauer & Hoyer, 2009).

Fashion bloggers can be considered as both producers and consumers of fashion content. They are consuming by attending in the global flow of consumption by buying goods such as clothes, shoes, and accessories; and they are producing via writing blog posts, taking photos to contribute fashion as a concept (Marwick, 2011). Elizabeth Chin (2001) suggests that consumption is not only limited to buying and selling; it is a larger social process which involves thinking about goods, talking about purchases, collecting objects, imagining fantasy purchases, and a diverse step of other activities, ideas, and engagements with objects. Fashion blogging has an impact on both marketing and communication literature, since the growth and popularity of online social communities has created a new world (Murray & Waller, 2007) by allowing fashion customers to communicate with each other without any restrictions of time and place (Brogi et al. 2013).

At our era, there is no restriction of time and place as a result of the advent of social networking and computer based communications (Kozinets, 1999). 2000's are the years of virtual communities as Kozinets argued (1999), and we are all witnessing. Within these communities, members may not only exchange information; they may also develop friendly relations on the basis of their common interest or passion like in the fashion bloggers' example. It is due to the fact that the longer people use the Internet and spend time online, the more likely they compose an online group (Kozinets, 1999). Additionally, a consumer connects and interacts with others online; it is prone to become a member of these online gatherings. In the end, they increasingly turn into social communities (Kozinets and Handelman, 1998; Kozinets, 1999).

In this paper, we aim to explain how fashion bloggers construct a virtual and online community; how they built their imagined community. Our aim is to show how these bloggers can affect the consumer culture through their online community, and the dynamics behind. What are the underlying reasons that they come together? How do they consume and affect consumption activities of others? By answering these questions, we aim to contribute "community" literature in the context of online fashion blogs.

Literature Review

Community

Lexical meaning of community according to Oxford dictionary is "A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common," and "the condition of sharing or having certain interests in common" as a noun. On the other hand, Cohen (1985) uses the word community as more revealing than its lexical meaning. He mentions that one of the main characteristics of community is "that the members of a group people have something in common with each other, which distinguishes them in a significant way from members of other putative groups."

The concept of community is a core construct in social thought, which has been historically placed in critiques of modernity (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) since modernity is not only challenging the concept of community but also destroy it; it makes people more individualistic (Anderson, 2011). When its intellectual history is analyzed, Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887) *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (i.e: community and society) differentiate between the customary, familial, emotional rural community and the mechanical, contractual, individualistic, rational urban society (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). In the 19th

and the 20th centuries, many social theorists like Durkeim and Weber showed concerns related to communities' condition, market capitalism, and consumer culture. According to Lush (1991), commerce as a great engine of community and the emerging consumer culture replaced communities because individual consumer replace the community members.

Although there are many definitions and explanations of community, the sociology literature show that there are three core markers of community: consciousness of kind, the presence of shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Gusfiel, 1978; Douglas& Isherwood, 1979; Marshall, 1994). The most expansive emphasis about the concept of community is the shared consciousness, rituals and traditions among community members. Moreover, a sense of belonging is the key concept for developing community identity and a sense of community. Puddifoot (2003) explains a dimension of community identity, composed of community members' perceptions. In the same way, McMillan (1996) identifies a sense of community with two elements: belonging and acceptance. Belonging and human collectivity are core concepts for Barrett and Lennard's (1994) theory of community. On the other hand, Newbrough and Chavis (1986) indicates "I-You" sense from the side of a personal knowing, whereas there is strong "we" sense of belonging together. The vague of sense of belonging in community shows that the meaning and feeling that people create sense of belonging is a crucial aspect to form communities and identify their communities. It is a shared knowing of belonging (Weber [1922], 1978).

Furthermore, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) note that communities are no longer restricted by geography. New technologies pave the way of the notion of community and social consciousness (Carey, 1989; McLuhan, 1964). After the 20th century, the notion of community continued to widen with the internet and internet base technologies. Wilson (1990) argues that new technologies based on internet open a new era and unite dispersed individuals with a commonality of purpose and identity. The rise of modern communication technologies also helps the rise of mass media, which makes contemporary imagined communities feasible; all communities larger than small villages are, to some extent, sustained by notions of imagined, understood others (Anderson, 1983).

Fashion Bloggers as a Community

The beginning of the twenty-first century was the turning point for the growth of the fashion blogs. They have impact both on other consumers and on the fashion retail industry (Evans, 2014). These blogs are one of several forms of online social communication. Blogs works with a word-of-mouth approach when communicating with their audience who are at the same time digitally native consumers (Evans, 2014). Fashion blogs are usually owned by a stylish person who begins sharing his or her interest through photos or written pieces online. By this way, followers feel connected with the blogger and build a relationship with her/him (Halvorsen et al, 2013). From the follower perspective, the blogger is seen as a fashion idol but also as the voice of a friend (Halvorsenet. Al, 2013). This idea is supported by an international blogger from NewYork, Leandra Medine who stated on her blog "The Man Repeller" in 2010 (Burcz, 2014):

"Reading fashion from a person like your self's point of view is something really special, and I think it's great that fashion blogging is letting everyone feel like an insider."

Accordingly, fashion bloggers' followers are increasing day by day. For instance, Blondesalade blog has now officially 3.3 million followers in her Instagram account.

As seen in Figure 1.

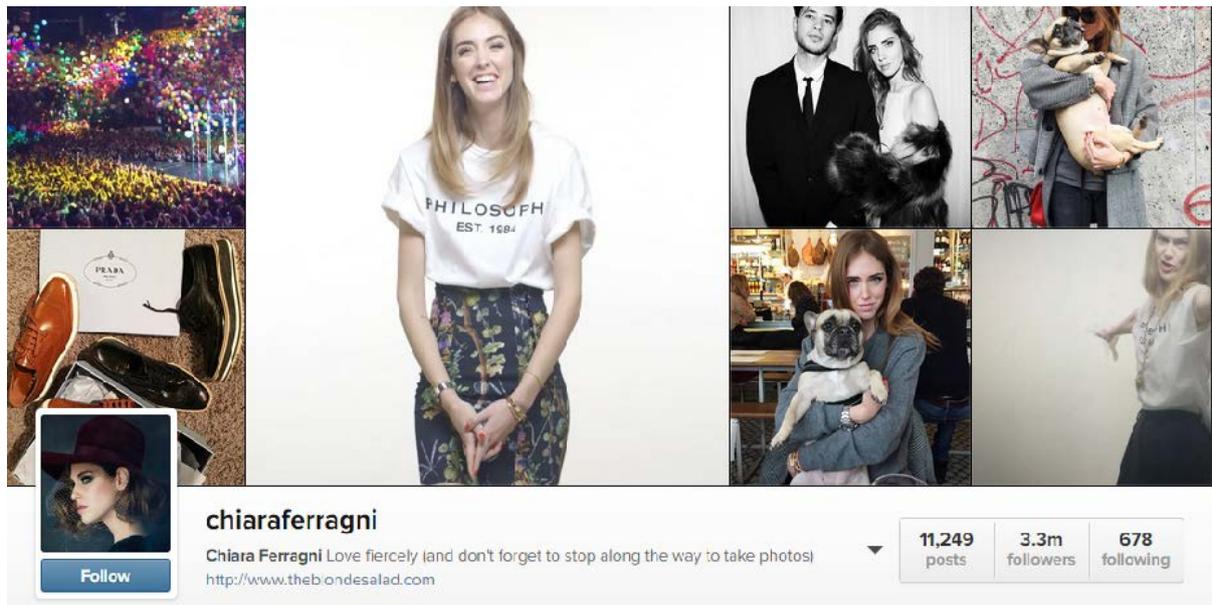


Figure 1. <https://instagram.com/chiaraFerragni>.

This is due to the blogosphere in social media: it means fashion blogs have increasingly become a place in which fashion consumers want inspiration for their styles and purchases (Sedeke& Arora, 2014). Bloggers have an interactive approach to their followers and other bloggers. It is different from the mainstream media because it is possible for every individual to contact with kind of celebrities (bloggers) about current trends and attitudes. According to Kaye (2005), there are three motivations for using blogs which are: community, convince, and information seeking. Blogs are created with a sense of community among readers (Frauenfelder& Kelly, 2000). As seen in Figure 2, fashion bloggers also have a good reputation; for example, being offered front row seats in many fashion shows (Wilson, 2009).



The sense of community motivates fashion bloggers to write blogs through communications with like-minded people in the blogosphere (Levy, 2002). According to Palin Ningthoujam, one of the bloggers, (2007), blogging can be a lonely business, for that reason bloggers should come together in communities for bloggers to join. The biggest fashion bloggers community is known as Independent Fashion Bloggers with 55743 members (<http://heartifb.com/members/>). The website state that “Independent Fashion Bloggers cultivates a community for fashion bloggers to share their experiences and create a resource so everyone can built a better blog. We do this by posting helpful articles, host a community linking group, forums and our newest feature, Little Birdy, a platform to connect bloggers and PR in a safe a mutually beneficial way” (<http://heartifb.com/members/>). It would help to create a community of shared knowledge, and create the way through which fashion bloggers all have a better blogging experience. As a result, it can be said that blogging is not only autonomous acts of the blogger but also series of interactions with audiences or community as a collaborative act (Robinson 2007; Schmidt 2007; Kozinets et al. 2010).

Virtual Communities of Fashion Blogging

Considering the nature of virtual communities, CMC (computer mediated communications) should be briefly discussed because it is the most recent communication technology development within the postindustrial era (Fernback& Thompson, 1995). Constituted of different systems like electronic mail, bulletin board systems, and real-time chat services, CMC is considered as both an interpersonal, one-to-one medium of communication and a one-to-many, or even many-to-many form of mass communication (Fernback& Thompson, 1995). With a huge base of CMC users worldwide, computer-mediated communications affect the nature of social life in terms of both interpersonal relationships and the character of community (Calem, 1992). The concept of "Virtual" community surrounds the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of community (Van Vliet and Burgers, 1987). Community within cyberspace emphasizes a community of interests that can lead to a communal spirit and apparent social bonding.

From the view of CMC, the key elements of a virtual community are shared resources, common values, and reciprocal behavior (Hummel&Lehner, 2002). Whittaker et al. (1997,p.597) state that “*members have a shared goal, interest, need, engage in repeated, active participation, have access to shared resources, reciprocity of information, shared context of social conventions*”. Preece (2000, p.243) broadened this view to involve the necessity of common rules “*an online community consists of: People, who want to interact socially, a shared purpose that provides a reason for the community, policies that guide people’s interactions (and) computer systems, to support and mediate social interaction*”.

After CMC, the fast advent of internet usage and web technologies such as Web 2.0 has created online media that turn the former mass information consumers to the present information producers (Brogi et al., 2013). Examples could be blogs, wikis, social annotation and tagging, media sharing, and other such services. These web technologies enable users to communicate and collaborate with each other as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community (Adebanjo, 2010; Capece, 2013). Moreover, with the rise of mass media and internet usage, community is expanded and reproduced very efficiently. This notion allows community members to have a well-developed sense of vast unmet fellow community members, to imagine them. Bender (1978) defined community as: “a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds.” This conceptualization is consistent with a social network analytic perspective of community, which stresses the functioning of primary ties over notions of local solidarity as

Granovetter 1973; Oliver 1988; Wellman 1979; Wellman and Wortley 1990 emphasize in their works. This approach has also been referred to as a community-liberated perspective, with community being liberated from geography (Wellman, 1979), as a result of the presence of inexpensive and accessible communication.

The turn regarding the concept of virtual community is when Howard Rheingold talked the zeitgeist of the emerging Internet with his book (1993) as *Virtual Communities: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (Park, 2011). Actually before him, Licklider & Taylor (1968) stated that the image of online settings as communities can be traced to the Internet's founding documents. However, Rheingold's characterization obtained the imagination just as Internet use began to enter the mainstream of public consciousness. The community as a metaphor was really successful that it effectively excluded alternative metaphors of the day such as "information superhighway" (Park, 2011). Moreover, the community metaphor continues to affect the way we think about the social Internet and communities.

In consumer behavior literature, research contains the intentions of community with unique social and interpersonal dynamics that Cova (1997) stated as "tribes". One step further, tribes are online now with Rheingold's virtual communities as Kozinets (1999) explained in his work. Virtual community is defined clearly by him as "affiliative groups whose online interactions are based upon a shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a specific consumption activity or related group of activities (Kozinets, 1991, p.3)."

Today, blogging is becoming a popular means for mass Web users to form their special virtual communities (Wu S. C., 2010). The fundamental characteristic of these virtual communities resides in the ability of their members to communicate with each other, exchanging information (on the trends in fashion bloggers case) or simply expressing their passion for ideas (McAlexander, Shouten & Koenig, 2002). Thus, virtual communities support the social environment for transactions and community members provide to creating value online by forming virtual environment (Hagel & Bughin, 2001). In time, a number of communities have arisen, and they differentiated themselves by the actors, their roles, and their social environment (Hummel & Lechner, 2002). The trigger factor for the birth of bloggers as virtual communities is the social media, which allows consumers to both search for opinions on products during the pre-purchase information search phase and to share post-purchase experiences and attitudes (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Virtual communities are regarded more influential than traditional reference groups because people/consumers join these groups for their common interests (de Valck et al., 2009).

In order to define them as a virtual community, blog concept should also be mentioned. Blogs or weblogs can be defined as "web-pages with frequently updated posts that are arranged so the newest material is at the top of the page...they provide a mechanism for personal publishing, encouraging the expression of thoughts, feelings, and commentary" (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005, p.970). Therefore, blogs are a kind of user generated content because they are composed of content that has been prepared by an individual (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Kent (2008) identifies three strong qualifications of blogs. The first one is their ability to connect people with similar interests over the Internet. Secondly, blog readers can connect with the blogger and other blog readers; this is indicating the interactive element of blogs (Kent, 2008). The last one is that the bloggers are like opinion leaders; they have strong voice because they have the power to influence followers (Kent, 2008). In reality, many contemporary communities are imagined (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983) as in the case of fashion bloggers. Their characteristics are suited with Anderson's (1983) suggestion about communities: All communities larger

than small villages are, to some extent, sustained by notions of imagined, understood others (Muniz&O'Guinn, 2001). Community members also emphasize some type of consumption as cloth, fashion ideas, or lived experiences as Celsi, Rose, and Leigh (1993) noted skydivers.

Fashion bloggers have similar characteristic of virtual communities, because they show growing influence and range of social activities consumption and their activities may help researchers to contribute community literature. Literature on news blogs (McIntosh, 2005; Banning & Sweetser, 2007) and blogs in general exists (Kent, 2008; Haung, Chou & Lin, 2008), but there is still gap to our knowledge regarding fashion blogs. As we stated earlier, our aim is to understand how virtual communities of fashion bloggers work and their effects on consumption activities of followers.

Methodology

Community studies are important for the consumer research field. Regarding all behavioral sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and so on, it is accepted that qualitative research methods are stronger to explain the reasons behind human behavior (Carson et al., 2001), which are usually hidden in human's mind. With the help of qualitative research, researchers have a chance to access reasons behind human action. As Silverman (2008) argues, the research technique should be chosen according to the research question, which in this case, the qualitative research methods were used in order to explain the community feeling and behind the behaviors of fashion bloggers.

We used netnography to study blogging, observing how these ongoing 'bloggers 'community' come into being. There are many different methods for studying consumers' interactions such as surveys, focus groups and so on. However, netnography is different from all these methods because it focuses on cultural insides (Kozinetz, 2010). In netnography, online interactions are regarded as cultural reflections, which involve deep human understanding Kozinetz, 2010). In similar vein with ethnography; netnography is naturalistic, immersive, descriptive, multi-method, adaptable, and focused on context (Kozinetz, 2010).

The new world is coming through online world, and this world gives us unlimited access to data. For the researchers, it is a new way to collect data and get the information. Kozinetz explains this process in his 2010 paper. He gives examples from his research period in 2000s when the Internet was not that mature. He state "Beginning my research career with this amazing new tool, I became convinced that online communities had momentous implications for marketing. I believed that the Internet's ability to connect consumer to one another would change the marketing world forever (Kozinetz, 2010,p.3)". This statement triggered the idea to use netnography in our research. According to Kozinetz (2010), netnography is a good way to adapt ethnography to the complexities of our contemporary, technologically mediated social world.

With the help these methods, we gathered information about fashion bloggers in Turkey and abroad from the Internet. Before conducting netnography, we draw a set of pre-planned themes, which contained keywords and questions about fashion bloggers content, followers, and comments as well as various feelings related to these areas. The idea behind was to allow systematic structure across fashion blogs and bloggers as an imagined community in the Internet. We set out to understand the broader context around which fashion bloggers work. At the very beginning, we planned to observe as careful as an array of blogs showing virtual community qualifications. By this way, we aimed to achieve a rich understanding of the topic under investigation. We initially observed and followed nearly 50 fashion

blogs in detail, regarding the recommendations of Kozinets about netnography (2006, 2010). We followed the online interactions of bloggers and their audiences in the fashion bloggers by observing, reading, and archiving selected posts and comments published in various blogs.

In April 2013, Tumblr.com estimated that there are over 101.7 million blogs with 44 million blogs posts worldwide (<http://snitchim.com/how-many-blogs-are-there/>). It is increasing everyday with their followers' interests. We choose the fashion blogs that were most fruitful blogs with their posts, their followers and comments of their followers. At the very beginning, we started to follow fashions blogs in general. Then, we took a specific way. The online ranking materials about fashion blogs were studied. For example, Vogue Top 100 Fashion bloggers, Glamour Top 15 Fashion Bloggers, Independent Fashion Bloggers, and Teen Vogue were the main sources that we chose to follow. The first cut left us with 30 fashion blogs that were stated most often in the sources as stated above (Vogue, Glamour, and Teen Vogue). We looked for fashion blogs, which have a sizeable followers and are top ranked in several sources like fashion online magazines and in Independent Fashion Bloggers website. Additionally, posting frequency was considered because some of selected bloggers were posting everyday providing rich data for our research.

Fashion Blog	Followers*	Post
The Blond Salad	3.4 m	11450
Kayture	1.4m	6485
Atlantic Pacific	573k	1865
Karla's Closet	87.5k	466
Nunu's Closet	14.1k	1814
Stilettomeetsespresso	13.2k	485
Jadoreffashion	131k	4815
Eatsleepwear	160k	8021
Seemsforadesire	193k	1624
Styleandglaze	105k	7572

*Number of followers are taken from each blogs' accounts on 15.03.2015

We eliminated the fashion blogs with fewer followers. We also followed these bloggers' Instagram account and considered the relationship between the chosen fashion bloggers due to our research question regarding fashion bloggers' community. We also eliminated fashions blogs according to men's blog or women's blog, since men's and women's blog are different from each other's regarding the content of the fashion blogs. At the end of the elimination, there were 10 fashion blogs left in the final sample.

According to our method, netnography, we conducted analysis with the visual and verbal text in the fashion blogs and followers' comments. We followed and scan their online space and tried to observe

the relevant data. We took relevant notes, screenshot the visuals, and archived all relevant information. It was textual and visual analysis; we treated these blogs' post as primary sources; so we examined their development over time. We tried to answer questions such as; how and how often did the bloggers come together? Which events did they select? How did their followers comment on their posts? What was the content and style of the photographs?

Fashion blogs are different from many other blogs because of the frequency of the pictures posted, the centrality of these pictures, and comments on these pictures. Each blog were studied until we felt that we have a good understanding on these blogs and bloggers. We usually studied 20-40 current posts, because fashion bloggers are posting everyday and we want to take the most updated info. Post were analyzed with the question of how often the blogger came together with other bloggers and share the activity in her blog page. Moreover, we also analyzed 20-200 comments attached to these current posts. The comments were explored whether blogger has an effect on consumption activities.

When we analyzed the data, we also looked at the initial posts of the selected bloggers. These blogs had archives of every post; therefore we could read to the very beginning posts and again examined 20-40 archived posts. Interestingly, we found that there were differences in early versus later blogging practices. In time, their followers increased and their photograph quality and textual strength increase too.

Preliminary Findings and Potential Contribution

With this ongoing research, we once more observe the power of word-of-mouth as a communication tool. From the data we have collected and analyzed so far, we see that many of the successful fashion bloggers first start blogging as ordinary people. However, with the help of the social media channels and their blog pages, they create their own community, which is a virtual community since not all fashion bloggers have the chance to come together without the online platforms. They form online groups such as the "Independent Fashion Bloggers Community." In these groups, they give tips about the new fashion bloggers, writing blog posts, taking photographs, and showing collaborations with brands. Through a sense of belonging, they help each other feel as members of this community. Some of the fashion bloggers who live in the same country or the same city attend fashion shows together, those in Paris, Milano or New York, often sitting at the front row. They take pictures in these events, sharing them instantly in their blogs or Instagram.

These fashion lovers also come together at the openings of new stores and launchings. In these gatherings, they are popular faces for the firms because they have a strong power on consumers. They have many followers, some of whom are addicts of their fashion blogs, wanting to use the same products and brands that fashion bloggers use. These bloggers usually mention their clothes' and cosmetics' brands, and give out the name of designers. This is an incentive for the companies to give them new products, especially new lines, to spread the word-of-mouth. The bloggers are like celebrities, but even better since they are also ordinary people. Consumers can identify themselves better with these bloggers, feeling closer to them since they are in close contact through communicating with each other, having bloggers writing replies to consumers, creating social networks with a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, the power of fashion bloggers is undeniable in the market influencing consumers. They can be more effective than celebrities, better than any tool of marketing communication, even better than informal opinion leaders such as friends, thanks to their speed in spreading the word-of-mouth, being visible with the help of the social media and the new communication technologies. With the

extended version of this paper, we thus hope to contribute to literature not only laying out the dynamics of online fashion blogging communities, but also bringing new insight regarding the word-of-mouth communication, opinion leadership, and viral marketing.

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Understanding the Role of Social Media in Political Corporate Branding Research in the Context of Indian Politics

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Working Paper

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore how political actors within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) use social media in their communication campaigns and how these social media platforms are understood by citizens following the 2014 Indian General Election. This research attempts to address the limited understanding of social media in the context of politics (Barnard and Kreiss, 2013; Burton and Shea, 2010; Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011; Ganz, 2009; Gulati and Williams, 2007; Kumar 2009; Owen and Davis 2008). Furthermore, the limited research on political branding and social media has predominantly focused a western context neglecting eastern perspectives including the republic of India. This study will use the adapted Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism developed by Pich *et al.* (2014) to a political setting. This framework will ground the study and offer the opportunity to examine the role of social media from an internal brand identity and external brand image perspective. The findings will have implications not only for political parties but also for politicians, candidates and other parties interested in social media. This study will offer organisations a mechanism that will allow them understand how their social media is projected and understood and allow them to investigate whether their projected brand identity is coherent with the understood external brand image.

Keywords

Brand image, brand identity, social media

Study Motivation

It can be argued that the use of social media platforms are important tools within political communication campaigns to secure victory and encourage interaction between political parties/candidates and voters (Austin 2008). According to Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011:208) the 2008 USA Presidential Election was a “watershed moment in the use of social media for campaigning” in democratic elections. Furthermore, each electoral cycle presents new marketing and communication tools aimed to strengthen the relationship between political parties, candidates and citizens (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011; Panagopoulos 2009; Shea and Burton 2006). Despite the growing relevance of research on social media and political communication, there is still so much not understood compared in this area (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013). Additionally, studies that focus on the use of social media platforms in political branding research remain limited (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011; Owen and Davis 2008; Kumar 2009; Burton and Shea, 2010; Ganz, 2009; Gulati and Williams, 2007). More specifically, there is a paucity of social media and political branding research from an eastern political context with the majority of research focusing on a western perspective. The limited research tends to highlight a content analytical review of the social media platforms used within election campaign periods (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013). For example, this content analytical view is evident in the work by Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011). The authors explored the communication strategy used during the 2008 Obama campaign with the aid of researcher-led content analysis. Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011) concluded that the social media tools used during the 2008 Obama campaign were developed and supported at a grass-roots level and fully integrated with their offline activities. Therefore, the existing research neglects the use and communication of social media tools from the standpoint of internal political actors. This presents an opportunity to examine the role of social media from an internal brand identity and external brand image perspective. This will illustrate how internal stakeholders use social media tools and highlight how these platforms are understood from the perspective external citizens in the context of political branding. This is currently missing from the existing literature.

As the limited existing studies in social media and political branding have predominantly focused on a western context, this research will focus on an eastern perspective namely the republic of India. India has been described as an emerging economic and political power with a population of over one billion citizens (Castells 2011). Furthermore, there are projections that the population of India will surpass the population of China by 2030, which will increase by an additional four hundred million citizens (Whitty 2010). This will make India one of the largest democratic nations home to numerous political brands. This study will focus on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the current largest party within the centre-right coalition; the National Democratic Alliance. After ten years as the official opposition, the BJP-led coalition returned to power following the 2014 General Election thereby electing Narendra Modi as the country’s Prime Minister (North 2014). The BJP was successful in winning over young voters 18-30 and first-time voters compared with their political rivals (Vaishnav 2014). The BJP attracted young voters making them the largest supporting age group of their party by using social media as a major element of the party’s election strategy (Ali 2014). Therefore, BJP successfully adopted social media platforms as campaign tools to communicate and interact with young citizens. However, there is little research on how the party uses social media platforms particularly following the 2014 General Election. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding of how young citizens interpret the social media platforms used by BJP.

Ultimately, this study will use the adapted Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism developed by Pich *et al.* (2014) as a framework that will ground the study and offer the opportunity to examine the role of social media from an internal and external perspective. Therefore, this research aims to study how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) uses social media platforms and how this is decoded by Indian citizens following the 2014 Indian General Election campaign.

Research Objectives

This research focuses on two objectives. The first explores the role of social media of the BJP political from an internal orientation with the aid of the adapted brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008; Pich *et al.* 2014). The second objective involves generating a deeper understanding of how Indian citizens understood the use of social media by BJP following the 2014 Indian General Election. This will be supported by a focus on political brand image (Pich 2012).

Research Method

Stage one involves conducting in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders of the BJP, spanning the Parliamentary, Professional and Voluntary bodies. Stage two of the research involves conducting focus group discussions combined with qualitative projective techniques and netnographies with external stakeholders aged 18-30 years. The sample of 18-30 year old citizens were chosen as they represented a third of the Indian voting population (Dasgupta 2014) and shaped the outcome of the 2014 Indian General Election (Virmani 2014). Interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted between November 2014 and April 2015. Interviews/focus groups will be transcribed by the researchers and analysed using Butler-Kisber's (2010) two stage thematic inquiry analytical process.

Findings

The findings will add to the limited understanding of the role of social media in the context of political branding. The findings will also highlight insight into how social media is used by internal stakeholders of the BJP and assess its consistency with how it is understood in the minds of external stakeholders (citizens). This study will also add to the growing body of research that focuses on both internal brand identity and external brand image. Additionally, the findings will provide an applied example of the adapted brand identity prism developed by Pich *et al.* (2014) in action. This may result in further adaptation and refinement of the political brand identity prism (Pich *et al.* 2014). Finally, the findings will provide a greater understanding of the BJP, which will address calls for more detail and knowledge on political brands (Baines *et al.* 1999; Rawson 2007; Smith 2005; Smith and French 2009).

Original Value

This research will add to the limited understanding of the role of social media platforms set within political branding from an eastern context. This will go some way in addressing the western dominated perspective that currently exists within the political branding literature. This study will also generate deeper insight into the use and communication of social media tools from the standpoint of internal political actors and assess how these messages are understood from the perspective of external citizens. This rich insight will compliment and build on the existing research that tends to adopt a content analytical perspective (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011). Finally, this study will present insight into the role of social media platforms outside the election campaign period following the success of BJP in the 2014

Indian General Election. This will provide some understanding of a time period that is often overlooked compared with the pre-election campaign period.

Theoretical/Managerial Relevance

The findings have implications not only for political parties but also for politicians, candidates and other political entities. Organisations will be able to generate a deeper understanding of their social media tools and communication from an internal and external orientation. Furthermore, this will allow organisations to investigate whether their projected message is coherent with their understood external brand image. In addition, this will empower organisations to assess the suitability of the social media platform when communicating with citizens. Inconsistencies between internal brand identity and external brand image can then be addressed. This research could be used as grounding for an in-depth comparative study with a western political brand to explore similarities and differences between social media platforms and understanding of citizens across cultures. Finally, this research will also highlight whether post-election communication warrants equal attention as pre-election communication in the long term development of political brands.

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Seeking Excellence in Social Media Advertising: Case Study of a Higher Education Institution from Turkey

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Abstract

Digital communication has become a source of daily research and information with ever-growing penetration in every sphere of life. This case study aims to address the question of how Facebook can be used more effectively and efficiently as a promotional tool by a higher education institution in the highly competitive education market; since social media and websites have become one of the main sources of information for potential university students while making decisions on their universities. In that sense, reaching potential students on social networks, in which they are active and are spending a vast amount of time daily, has gained a crucial importance for universities during university selection periods. However, there is a lack of research in marketing and communications literature on *how* social media advertising can be a beneficial tool in communicating a higher education institution to its publics. This exploratory case exemplifies a Facebook advertising campaign of a higher education institution in Turkey, during the university selection period in 2014. The study elaborates upon issues in Facebook campaigning and proposes a number of phases for developing and maintaining an efficient social media strategy; before, during and after campaign process: optimizing web pages and Facebook pages according to dialogic principles; utilizing search engine optimization and/or search engine advertising; determining specific areas of interest for the target audience; implementing the campaign in accordance with social network algorithms and current trends; supporting the social media campaign with traditional marketing communication tools and ultimately, transforming social media campaigning into relationship marketing. As social media usage in marketing communications campaigns of universities is rather a new practice, outcomes of this case study will help to guide higher education institutions as well as other non-profit organizations that seek excellence in communication. This study can serve as a starting point for future research on the domain of social media campaigning.

Keywords

Social media advertising, higher education, Facebook, marketing communications, Turkey

Introduction

One of the many recognized facts in our highly digitalized world is that many members of the population around the world have increasingly gained access to the Internet through one mean or another. Among the population, however, we witness the apparent domination of *digital natives*, who are born into this world of technology, in terms of frequency, connectedness and activeness on the Internet. On a global scale, frequency of Internet usage is increasing yearly and more than 50% of Internet users in the majority of the countries admit that they go online on a daily basis (Connected Consumer Survey, 2014). With the emergence of devices that connect users to internet-based technologies in various ways, Internet users do not feel obliged to find a computer and ‘get online’ anymore. Many people use at least one device or more to stay connected; whether it is a smartphone, a tablet, a Smart TV or a wearable technology. In terms of activeness on the Internet, only a quick look to social network usage can unfold how much time users devote to being online. With more new and diversified ways of staying connected, on a global scale, we have been spending 1.72 hours daily on social networks according to GWI Social Q4 2014 report (Mander, 2015).

Coming back to digital natives, research in the United States reveals that 95% of teens aged between 12 and 17 now have access to the Internet and 81% of them are actively using social networking sites – most of them more than one site (Rainie, 2014). In Turkey, while most Internet users go online at least once daily, 84% of young people aged between 16 and 24 are dominating in frequency of Internet usage among age groups (Connected Consumer Survey, 2014). Similarly, according to national statistics, there is an inverse proportion between age and rate of Internet usage in Turkey as elsewhere: With the highest percent in age groups, 73% of young people aged between 16 and 24 in Turkey have access to the Internet (TUIK, 2014). In terms of purposes for Internet usage, recent Turkish data reveals that top three reasons are, “participating in social networks” (78.8%), “reading online news/newspapers/news magazines” (74.2%) and “finding information about goods or services” (67.2%), respectively (TUIK, 2014). Turkey is a particularly significant case for marketing professionals, as 92% of the online population is active on social media networks; having the highest usage of social media around the world (Connected Consumer Survey, 2014). Another extensive research on Turkish youth indicates that only 4.9% of young people between ages 15 and 17 do not indulge in any of the social networks (Taylan, 2014). The same research findings further pinpoint that Facebook is the top used social network with an 89% rate among ages between 15 and 29; followed by more visual-based networks Youtube and Instagram (Ipsos, 2014).

As statistics demonstrate, Internet-based technologies have become not only a part of our lives, but also a source of daily research and information. Specific to teens and young people, these available sources become more significant while making decisions on their universities to study and correspondingly, their way of direction for a future career. Published on Turkish daily newspaper *Hurriyet*, a recent study conducted by Hacettepe University Psychometrics Research and Application Center (HÜPAM) with 11.444 high school seniors indicate that Internet plays an effective role on their decision-making process. Other than factors directly related with universities (such as cities in which universities are located in, social activities and facilities, scholarship options, and language options), in terms of sources of information taken into consideration while choosing a university, faculty or a department, results are as such: influence of others, i.e. acquaintances or teachers (50%), academicians met in promotional activities (48%), guidance of others, i.e. school counselors, parents or relatives (42%), brochures or posters (42%), promotional activities (41%), alumni (38%), promotional material in

media (35%) and Internet-based promotions (33%) (Hurriyet Egitim, 2014). For these very reasons, reaching potential students on an Internet-based platform, in which they are active and are spending a vast amount of time daily, has gained a crucial importance for schools and universities during university selection periods.

Regarding the relationship between social media use and higher education, existing literature in the field indicates that these are mostly associated with concepts such as distance learning (Blankenship, 2010) and lifelong learning (Chen and Bryer, 2012; Ranieri, Manca and Fini, 2012); or social media networks are prescribed as an aid to new trends in learning (Friesen and Lowe, 2012; Gikas and Grant, 2013; Rasiah, 2013; Selwyn, 2013; Tess, 2013) and also as a new complementary method for teaching activities that are more engaging for digitally native students (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011; Rosmala & Rosmala, 2012). However, there are few studies in the marketing and communications literature on *how* social media advertising can be a beneficial tool in communicating a higher education institution to its publics. There are older articles that help to guide professionals on how to employ social media as marketing and communication strategy (Reuben, 2008) or that suggest establishment of customized, institutional social networks for universities and colleges that may create a virtual community for students, staff, alumni, administrators and parents (Hayes, Ruschman and Walker, 2009). Furthermore, Constantinides and Zinck Stagno (2011) argue that in what ways potential students interact with social media tools while deciding on universities and programs to choose is worth exploring; therefore, they have conducted a national survey on university candidates in the Netherlands and provided insights for social media marketing by documenting a behavioral and demographic segmentation. While these studies give direction to the relationship between social media, marketing and higher education, they do not offer practical ways on employing social media advertising as a promotional tool for higher education institutions. Only Chan (2011) demonstrates and documents how to benefit from paid advertising on social networks for promoting a Facebook page of a Chinese university library; and concludes that Facebook advertising can be utilized as a cost-effective strategy for small budget organizations.

An overview of aforementioned research in the literature indicates that digital environment is changing with technological developments and social media is one of the marketing communications tools that can be used effectively and efficiently for an organization in the education sector. Therefore, we believe that there still exists a gap in the relationship of social media advertising and higher education. Our case study addresses the research question of how Facebook can be used more effectively and efficiently by a higher education institution in the highly competitive education market. As social media usage in marketing communications campaigns of universities is rather a new practice, outcomes of this case study will help to contribute to organizations' know-how; particularly for non-profit organizations (NPOs) that need expertise on social media usage.

Methodology

This exploratory case exemplifies a social media advertising campaign; executed between the dates of June 30 and July 17, which was the university selection period in Turkey in 2014. The promotional campaign was designed to increase awareness for Faculty of Communication (FC) of Izmir University of Economics (IUE) and its departments in general. This Facebook campaign aimed at getting new likes on official Facebook pages of these divisions during the university selection period from potential students who are at the age of university. The case study draws upon both managerial and theoretical implications of

advertising in Facebook in the market of higher education. Case study method is preferred in this research, since it gives a chance to examine one aspect of a real-world problem in detail (Erdoğan, 2012).

Data collection employed in this case study is non-participant observation whereas the researchers monitored the campaign through Facebook insight reports which were discussed on daily basis during the campaign to observe flow of promotional activities. The campaign was discussed and evaluated with the campaign team on weekly basis, were adjusted if needed, and rest of the campaign was managed according to these learnings. Therefore, planned design of the campaign was altered during the course of the campaign.

In many cases, big advertisers usually tend to avoid making their social media strategies and optimization tactics public because of the competition. Using social media and their metrics effectively is mainly a task attributed to agencies; however, experts working in such agencies usually share their knowledge only within the agency people. The implications of this study can be used by NPOs, especially in the education sector, to optimize campaigns more efficiently. This case study can be considered as an attempt to bridge academic and professional experiences. On the one hand, every organization and target audience has different attributes and culture in an environment; on the other hand, the algorithm of social media changes rapidly. Although every social media campaign is unique, the suggested phase of digital marketing communication campaign drawn from this case study can be used as a guideline for organizations that seek excellence in social media.

Case study of a higher education institution from Turkey

Turkey is a country of young population; consisting of approximately 5,5 million university students in 181 universities all around the country. New universities are established each year, either by the government or foundations, in order to support the higher education system in the country. All universities in Turkey are considered as non-profit organizations since they depend on student fees, donations, or some fundings from various organizations. The main aim is to invest these incomes in universities to increase quality of education, optimize infrastructures and develop new research that serves to the society. As the number of universities increase day by day, higher education becomes an arena of competition. In order to overcome this competition and attract successful students, even government universities – which used to usually have reserved opinions on promotional activities – have started to advertise both in traditional and digital media channels. As of 2014, 45 universities in Turkey have faculties of communication; incorporating various departments such as public relations, advertising, journalism, radio, television and cinema, visual communication and so on. Student quota for all communication faculties was 10.568 in 2014. Total number of students who entered the 2014 university examination was 2.007.659. Student quota of IUE Faculty of Communication for 2014 selection period was 161 in total. IUE is a foundation university located in Balçova, a student district in Izmir. Faculty of Communication is a 571 student faculty with three departments, Public Relations and Advertising (PRA), Media and Communication (MC), and Cinema and Digital Media (CDM); which had 296, 216 and 59 students in each department respectively.

In order to fully understand the context and significance of this case for Faculty of Communication, some hard times they had experienced during the summer of 2013 should further be mentioned. Just before 2014 university selection period, *Gezi* protests started all around Turkey; which was originally an opposition to the shopping mall construction at Gezi Park in Istanbul that transformed into a rebellious protest against the ruling party in Turkey. These protests suddenly spread all around the

country; particularly among university students who were against the government's activities. Effects of these protests even sprang to many university graduation ceremonies; including IUE. Students of IUE wanted to demonstrate their support for Gezi protestors at the graduation ceremony. However, this attempt was intervened by the upper administration of the university, in a way that students feared they would not receive their diplomas at all during the ceremony. The main reason for this intervention was that at such a politically critical time, IUE upper administration did not want to be seen as an opposing force towards the government. The day after graduation ceremony, IUE, particularly the Faculty of Communication, was featured in newspapers and social media with this incident. After this resulted in a crisis for IUE, the second day of the graduation ceremony was much more peaceful. Although the upper administration chose not to intervene in any of the protests on the second day of graduation, many students were not able to forget the first days' events.

Another noteworthy happening of the summer 2013 for Faculty of Communication was the dismissal of the Dean. Although there were other reasons, the public related this dismissal with *Gezi* protests of students during the graduation ceremony. The news spread rapidly among IUE students and the public, and word of mouth information became the main source of news. Although the Dean gave a declaration which was featured both in social media and newspapers, negative gossip heard through the grapevine affected the image of the Faculty and tough times began in the middle of competition ahead. The number of new students enrolled to the Faculty after 2013 selection period was 93 out of 182 in total; which means that nearly half of the student quota was left unfilled. From all the departments, CDM had the most difficulty, since this department was a brand-new addition to the Faculty which had not been heard by potential students before. While this situation surrounding Faculty of Communication was being discussed in numerous administrative meetings, an even bigger rumor was spread around; regarding a shut-down of the Faculty as a whole. CDM department with fewest students was about to collapse with the department head's resignation. Faculty members had several meetings together discussing how to gain leverage for the Faculty. The decision from these meetings was concentrating on new ideas about the Faculty. Organizing a documentary summer school in collaboration with University of the Aegean (Mytilene – Lesbos), internationalizing the Faculty with reputable visiting scholars and implementing a Facebook advertising campaign during the university selection period were all outcomes of those meetings. Under this context, Facebook campaign was designed as a brand awareness campaign; which aimed to persuade potential university students on how competent, dynamic, and successful Faculty of Communication was.

Before starting the campaign via Facebook, web pages of the Faculty were optimized according to dialogic features proposed by Taylor, Kent and White (2001). Each department had their own web content administrators who provided updated and dialogic content in department and faculty web pages. The Faculty had professional support for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Relevant search keywords for each department were determined and embedded in each web page in a way that is suitable for efficient search engine indexing. Generic keywords (i.e. cinema, digital media, etc.) were avoided in SEO in order to produce more 'intelligent', more relevant, semantic search results in the sense that these carefully selected keywords would respond to natural language search done by users. Facebook campaign was started after the restructuring of the web pages with SEO implementation.

The aim of this Facebook campaign was to create awareness about how competent the Faculty is and to persuade potential students to choose the Faculty among competitors. The campaign targeted only the direct audience for the faculty, which was determined as females and males aged between 17 and 25;

since students usually take the university examination around the age of 18 in Turkey. Intended audience for the campaign was limited to certain cities of Turkey since previous data acquired from IUE's in-house promotional activities office revealed that students who are interested in promotional activities of IUE in their hometowns and students who actually make their final choices in favor of IUE departments are coming mainly from five cities. In accordance with this data, Facebook campaign location was determined as people living in Izmir, Istanbul, Manisa, Aydın and Muğla and nearby 50 miles for each city. Even though Facebook enables campaign managers to enter more specific subjects among demographics as education, work, relationship, politics and such, it was observed prior to the campaign that high school students tend to leave most of their demographic data empty or fill them out with false information. Thus, specifying demographics were envisioned to decrease potential reach of the campaign.

Duration of this promotional campaign for IUE Faculty of Communication was 18 days in total; in line with the allowed period for students to select universities. The campaign aimed to employ a strategic approach, within a platform in which potential students can be reached where they are most spending time at. In recent years, Facebook has proved itself as an effective communication tool with target audiences (Needleman and Marshall, 2014). While this social network is a medium that encircles the target audience and enables advertisers to pinpoint their potential audience and reach, it is also a much more optimized and to-the-point effort compared to traditional above-the-line (ATL) promotional activities. For such a short-term campaign, ATL moves would have been inadequate and overpriced but Facebook advertising can be an alternative campaigning tool to big-budget campaigns. One of the main benefits of Facebook campaigning is being able to determine areas of interest among the audience. Facebook provides a handful of interests for campaign managers; classified by themes such as 'business and industry', 'entertainment', 'hobbies and activities', 'shopping and fashion', 'sports and outdoors', 'technology' and so on. With a mode of operation similar to a search engine, Facebook advertising tool shows campaign managers name of the interest, a brief description of it and how many people have actually "liked" this interest from their personal Facebook accounts. Moreover, as areas of interests are added to the campaign portfolio, similar areas of interests are offered by Facebook as suggestions. This enables the campaign to be expanded beyond the previous scheme; towards the benefit of the advertiser. For IUE Faculty of Communication campaign, 70 different areas of interest for young people aged between 17 and 25 were determined in collaboration with a digital agency. Among these, many Facebook pages which correspond to the interests of the targeted 17-25 age group and competing universities that potential students may be interested in were added to the selection. Choosing other universities as significant areas of interest for the said age group was important for the campaign because web insights had revealed that in recent years, especially during university selection period, web searches of IUE had succeeded to reach or exceed the level of its close competitors (Google Trends, 2015). As the campaign gained recognition and pages earned new likes, a further analysis was conducted on the profiles of new 'fans' who have liked these campaigning accounts and 30 new areas of interest that resonate with this age group were added during the course of the campaign.

The campaign strategy was divided into three main phases. Facebook pages to be promoted in this campaign were official accounts of IUE Faculty of Communication (FC) and its three departments; Cinema and Digital Media (CDM), Media and Communication (MC), and Public Relations and Advertising (PRA). As FC account can be considered as an umbrella brand that encompasses the departments, the campaign team followed a continuous strategy that covered all three weeks to benefit from *halo effect*. At the time, as CDM was a newly opened department that needed more awareness, a

continuous strategy was applied for CDM account. For PRA and MC accounts, a flighting strategy was followed for two weeks within the campaign. Total budget for the campaign in Facebook was 4.000 TRY (around 1.880\$ at the time) and the budget was distributed in proportion per post and per department.

Facebook as a marketing tool enables campaign managers to plan different types of campaigns, tailored to needs and goals of each organization. At the time of the campaign, Facebook offered seven different objectives for campaigning (Facebook, 2014): *Clicks to website, website conversions, page post engagement, page likes, application installs, application engagement, offer claims, and event responses*. *Local awareness* and *video views* were added as new objectives in 2015. As this campaign aimed to increase awareness of the Faculty among current and potential students, the objectives of “page likes” and “page post engagement” were selected within the campaign. “Page likes” as a campaign objective promotes pages through paid advertisements, which deliver a combination of text and images. By choosing this option, campaign managers can upload up to six different images accompanying the same message within an ad set. Paid content that aims at gaining new likes for the page can appear on both desktop and mobile news feeds and Facebook’s ad placement in the right column. As right column ads do not appear in the mobile interface and can be eliminated by simple programs and add-ons even by the average user, the campaign team chose not to select this option in order to optimally distribute the budget. The same principle was applied to post boosts. Rather than directly promoting the page, engaging content for the target audience can be boosted per post. In relation to social media learnings (Tuten and Solomon, 2012; Ross, 2014; Ross, 2015), the campaign team designed both image and video content, accompanied by messages aiming at compelling the target audience to think about IUE Faculty of Communication during their decision-making process in the selection period and ultimately influencing their final decisions in favor of IUE. These messages were designed in accordance with the interests of the young target audience and also carried a tone that would not be boring for them. Moreover, campaign messages for the Faculty were in line with IUE’s campaign messages. Images and videos used in these paid content intended to represent the Faculty in general; by displaying its opportunities for students, activities held and testimonials of students, alumni and academic staff.

With this small budget campaign, IUE Faculty of Communication campaign acquired 10.609 new likes in total. Between June 30 and July 17, the designed messages reached 517.201 people among the specifically targeted audience. Reach numbers and budget distribution of each official account is as follows:

Campaigning accounts	Budget (TRY)	Unique Reach
FC	1.181	217.701
PRA	775	215.328
MC	875	213.813
CDM	1.275	239.897

As there were four different accounts campaigning mostly at the same time to similarly defined audiences, many Facebook users among the target audience were exposed to more than one account's messages; thus making the total number of unique reaches of each account nearly doubling the number of unique visitors. Within this time limit and a tight budget, campaign advertisements in total acquired 1.233.908 impressions.

	Budget (TRY)	Impressions	Page Likes
FC	1.181	344.769	2.996
PRA	775	299.665	2.545
MC	875	287.136	1.924
CDM	1.275	370.249	3.170
TOTAL	4.006	1.233.908	10.609

Among these impressions, messages of the campaign got 15.548 unique clicks and 12.009 people visiting the official Facebook pages actually took action; meaning that they either liked the page or liked, commented and/or shared posts. On the other hand, cost per click (CPC) for the campaign in total is 19 cents (TRY).

Results of IUE Faculty of Communication campaign indicate that the campaign period was optimally and efficiently completed; considering number of people reached, new likes earned and click rates; in view of the fact that cost per click rates for the campaign are close to Facebook ad rates average for Turkey, according to the most recent data provided online (Salesforce, 2013). Moreover, campaign reports reveal that messages have been delivered to the right target audience in terms of age and demographics; which means that Facebook as a campaigning tool has the ability to pinpoint audiences and deliver tailored messages at a low cost. For example, percentages of paid content reach for FC account during the campaign was 71% for 18-24 age group and 64% of fans of this account are of this age group.

During the university selection period, social media campaign was also supported with another tool of the marketing communications mix; personal selling in the university. Faculty staff was present at the university everyday to deliver detailed information to parents and potential students visiting the Faculty during the selection period. With all its mechanism, personal selling also helped to leverage the social media campaign. Even though it is considered as a traditional tool, personal selling nevertheless provides first-hand interaction with target audiences and helps to build relationships (Clow and Baack, 2007; Perreault, Cannon, McCarthy, 2009); just as social media networks attempt to do with online engagement. Therefore, the Faculty benefited from personal selling as well as digital campaigning for building and maintaining relationships with the target audience. The summer school of the CDM department was also organized at the campus of IUE during university selection period in 2014. Although this event was a below-the-line activity, it supported the social media campaign indirectly; in the sense that the organization generated fresh, real-time and engaging image and video content for the Facebook

campaign that demonstrated the international atmosphere of activities done in the Faculty. During the university selection period, other than these efforts by the Faculty, the only ATL support coming from IUE was one full-page newspaper ad that contained information about success of many faculties within the university certified by an independent organization.

At the end of the university selection period, Faculty of Communication has filled its student quota by 97%. 131 students out of the 161-student quota were enrolled in the final registration period. In terms of departments, PRA increased its enrollments from 54 students in 2013 to 63 in 2014; MC from 30 to 43; and CDM from 9 to 25 students. Overall, there is a significant recovery in the decreasing trend of student enrollment and by the help of this campaign, not only the Faculty increased awareness among potential students but also it regained its prestigious position within the university. Furthermore, considering that 131 students are enrolled with a 21.000 TL registration fee per person and the Faculty has spent only 5.000 TRY in total (1.000 TRY for SEO and 4.000 TRY for Facebook campaign), it can be argued that social media advertising is a cost-efficient tool to be used in promotion of small budget organizations.

Discussion and Conclusions

Facebook campaign of the Faculty of Communication during June 30 and July 18, 2014 had its antecedents and consequences within the campaign itself. At one hand, the campaign synergized the Faculty members and uplifted spirits of everyone involved; on the other hand, it helped Faculty members to gain first-hand experience on how to manage social media campaigning tools; which methods should be employed in the future or which activities need to be supported with more tools before, during and after campaigning process.

The campaign process started with the optimization of web pages according to dialogic principles offered by Taylor, Kent and White (2001). This stage is suggested for every organization; particularly for NPOs, which can utilize their own web pages to activate their publics. When users among the targeted audience of a social media campaign are directed to the web page of the organization for more information, they should be greeted with a clear *user interface*, *usefulness of information*; which will result for the organization in gaining *conservation of visitors*, *generation of returned visits*, and a *dialogic loop* (Taylor, Kent, and White, 2001). If there is sufficient time before the campaign, SEO can be considered as an effective tool by selecting and embedding relevant keywords. SEO requires a long period of time to work efficiently. However, if time is limited, search engine advertising (SEA) can be an alternative tool with selected and *paid* keywords. Besides web pages, optimizing Facebook accounts according to the parameters of dialogic communication through social media, which are defined in the studies of different scholars (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas 2009; Bortree and Seltzer, 2009; Rybalko and Seltzer, 2010; Baumgarten 2011; Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton 2012), is also suggested as Facebook pages have become an integral part of corporate identity just like websites (Umul, 2012; Kostamo, 2013; Badea, 2014).

Determining the interests of the target audience can be considered as the crucial point of the social media campaign. In order to specifically narrow the target audience, the interests should be defined in detail. If there is not a professional support for the social media campaign, analyzing the interests of fans who have already liked the page and fans of competitors may provide insights for potential fans. Campaign implementation which incorporates decisions on copies, visuals, and videos are directed towards a carefully selected audience according to location, age, gender, areas of interest. Another tool provided specifically in Facebook campaigning is determining custom audiences that will help increase the

impact of the campaign. Campaign managers can decide on including or excluding audiences that have already liked their page, target friends of fans, or even target people that have liked competing pages. Furthermore, during the course of the campaign, adjusting posts in accordance with insights gathered from analysis of campaign reports and supporting the social media campaign with traditional marketing communication tools deliver significant impact on the performance of the digital communication campaign.

In accordance with campaign objectives, Facebook post content must be tailored to the age group and interests of the target audience; while delivering fun and engaging content with a sincere tone of voice. Moreover, frequency of content is as significant as quality of content. While providing updated content for the audience, brands and organizations must maintain a healthy and careful balance in communication and engagement; without cluttering news feeds of the target audiences with too many posts daily. Social media content must be frequent enough, but not too often to bore audiences. While there is no definite answer on how frequent to post on social media networks, it must be determined in relation to algorithms of these platforms. A few years ago, an ideal average number of posts per week on Facebook were ranging five to ten posts and more than one post per day tended to decrease response levels from audiences (Socialbakers, 2011; Dorng, 2012). However, at the beginning of 2014, Facebook went through a major algorithm change that ranks engaging, original and fresh content higher and prioritizes them to be shown in news feeds of users. Since Facebook is an ever-growing network in which there is a vast amount of content being produced each second, there is an increasing competition of delivering content within this limited space. In this case, another challenge is proposed by the platform itself. Organic reach of posts has been significantly declining after this algorithm change; meaning that more posts must be promoted (paid) in order to gain meaningful impressions. On the other hand, ideal average number of posts per day has been increased to at least one or two to keep audiences engaged and interested. In that sense, IUE campaign can be considered as effective since at least two posts per day were delivered and many of them were backed up as paid content.

As the case study and reviewed literature reveal, developing and maintaining an efficient social media strategy requires aligning a number of phases, which can be illustrated as follows:

- Optimizing web pages according to the dialogic principles offered by Taylor, Kent and White (2001)
- Optimizing Facebook accounts according to the parameters of dialogic communication through social media (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas 2009; Bortree and Seltzer, 2009; Rybalko and Seltzer, 2010; Baumgarten 2011; Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton 2012)
- Optimizing search engine and/or advertising via search engine
- Determining specific areas of interest for the target audience
- Implementing the campaign: Decisions on copies, visuals, and videos; selecting audience according to location, age, gender, areas of interest and including or excluding custom audiences; adjusting posts consistent with campaign insight reports; and supporting the social media campaign with traditional marketing communication tools
- Building relationships by responding to posts and comments and maintaining these relations by providing a flow of fresh and engaging content.

A general evaluation of IUE Facebook campaign demonstrates that there are some lessons learned. First of all, even though IUE campaign featured relevant content for potential students through

videos and video posts had the best performance out of post types utilized in the campaign; duration of videos should have been shorter in relation to rising social media trends. Secondly, due to the fact that this was the very first campaign conducted in IUE for raising awareness of a faculty and it was fairly limited in terms of time and budget, some accompanying steps for a better campaign could not be employed. For example, influencers for the campaign such as guidance counselors and parents could have been included in a much bigger campaigning process. Moreover, each year during the selection period, there occurs a difference between number of students that select the Faculty and number of students that are actually enrolled. A subsequent promotional campaign should be designed for selection periods in the future; in order to retain interest of students who have selected the university but have not been enrolled yet. Finally, Facebook campaigning should be turned into a relationship marketing process rather than a single attempt for attracting attention. Once Facebook is employed as a tactic within the marketing communications plan, it must be fully explored and utilized for building and maintaining relationships with various publics of the organization. Thus, the lack of well-defined Facebook campaigns is clear evidence of the need to explore this field in more detail.

Implications

Managerial Implications

The insightful results derived from the case study have implications for both managerial implementations and academic studies. From the managerial perspective, the influence of Facebook messages, shares, likes and comments should not be ignored by practitioners since these interactions have peer to peer effect.

One of the most beneficial features of implementing a Facebook campaign for small to mid-scale organizations is that with its progressive reporting tools, Facebook campaigning enables campaign managers to understand their target audiences and find patterns of attitude and behavior towards promoted content. While Facebook ad manager provides a manual for optimizing the campaign, campaign managers can also figure out their own ways of reaching the audience in the best way possible by monitoring the course of the campaign. As Facebook campaign is still running, campaign messages or images can be deleted or altered, demographics and areas of interest for target audiences can be modified, or even the campaign can be paused, restarted or canceled altogether. In that sense, unlike big-budget ATL efforts, Facebook campaigns are flexible enough to be tailored en route. For example, in Faculty of Communication campaign, it was found out that video content are more successful in generating clicks and prompting visitors to take action such as liking, commenting or sharing the paid content in comparison to images. As this was measured by the campaign team while the campaign was still running, they decided to give weight to engaging video content rather than delivering images with campaign messages and more videos were filmed, edited and run during the campaign. In that sense, Facebook campaigning also enables campaign managers to rearrange their budget plans in order to manage advertising expenditures more efficiently. Social media networks, when utilized as marketing platforms, have proved themselves in recent years not only as cost-effective, but also as a considerably strong alternative or complement effort to other marketing activities. Especially for organizations operating under tight budgets, social media advertising delivers quick-fix remedies for marketing and organizational communication problems that can also be measured in terms of return of investment. Social media tools can be used for developing relationship marketing between brands and consumers (Meadows-Klue, 2008; Shaik and Ritter, 2012). Consumer insights can be derived from likes, shares, and comments not only in

positive, neutral, and negative forms, but also in discursive forms that can give valuable ideas to campaign managers in designing posts.

Among the implications of this case, Facebook campaign for FC proved that in today's high-stimuli media environment, pinpointing target audience and optimizing a campaign for serving the audience's true needs and interests have become the core of a social strategy. However, communication efforts must be tailored in line with a carefully developed prior research; covering not only different tastes and habits of the audience by varying demographics, but also an extensive comprehension of true dynamics of social media platforms to be utilized. Even though social media advertising is relatively inexpensive compared to other efforts, it is a very powerful tool to make or break a campaign for the organization in terms of reputation. Furthermore, in order to stand out among various messages, campaign messages ought to be natural, simplified, insightful, challenging or triggering, creative, personalized and honest while still being produced professionally. In social media campaigning, communication and promotion through videos has emerged as a rising trend. As tactics employed in IUE Faculty of Communication also reveal, visually stimulating posts have proved to be more successful in terms of calling visitors into action. On the other hand, campaign monitoring during the course of the campaign demonstrates the fact that even though delivering a message via video is far more effective than still images, links or status posts, a mix of other features are also crucial for video messaging. Firstly, videos should be limited to the attention span of the target audience. While video posts distinguish themselves among other kinds of posts, a clear-cut video that delivers the message is more preferable for the audience. In that sense, understanding the audience and learning what interests them and how to interest them in return is very important. A very recent Nielsen Media research on video viewing behaviors in social media points out that gaining high impressions by video posts, regardless of being organic or paid, does not necessarily indicate that people are actually impacted by the organization's messages (Cohen, 2015). The findings of this research underline the fact that while the number and length of viewing done by a Facebook user and total video impressions on Facebook are still an indicator of creating awareness among the target audience, interestingly enough; there is no direct proportion between the length of viewing and creating awareness among the target audience. According to the results of the research, it was found out that an average of ten second viewing of a video message is sufficient for brands and organizations to convey their messages to audiences, to create awareness or call to action. This is a repeating pattern in social media learnings in recent years; with the emergence of short video trends in networks such as Vine and Instagram, pushing users to create very short videos that are still successful in delivering the intended message. In a similar manner, the Faculty of Communication Facebook campaign results report that both content and length influence the success of a video ad in terms of generating engagement and action. Prior research insights pointed out to the fact that among the source of information that university candidates found trustworthy, 'testimonials' from students and alumni were undeniably influencing. As IUE Faculty of Communication campaign was designed to create and increase awareness of the faculty among potential students, testimonials in video form were heavily used as paid content. On the other hand, campaign reports have revealed that the longer videos were, the less likely potential students were inclined to take action on video posts. In that sense, while video posts are the most expressive way to reach the target audience and deliver messages successfully, it is recommended that videos as paid content should follow the recent trends in social media and be limited to some seconds instead of minutes, to be effective for the target audience.

As a second indicator of evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of a campaign, frequency of content is also a key determinant in social media strategies. In other words, content marketing is a way that can be adopted by organizations for building relationships with their target audiences. Digital learnings acquired in recent years show that content marketing is a rising strategy (Rowley, 2008; Lieb, 2012; Stein, 2015) since social networks, which are based on interaction, engagement and relationships, came into being. In comparison to traditional marketing strategies and tactics, content marketing in a digitalized environment is relatively cheaper but at the same time, it needs more precision than ever. Other than creating relevant and engaging content that establishes empathy with the target audience, there are three main challenges faced by campaign managers. Firstly, even though Facebook as a medium has proved to be impactful in marketing; campaigning for a short period of time is not enough for organizations. Men and Tsai (2012) state that social media platforms have the power of humanizing organizations through the functions such as “friends”, “like”, “follow”, “share” options; but in that case, it should be taken into consideration that target audiences now expect continuous efforts out of their relationships with organizations. Although digital communication has significantly lowered time and money spent, it has not diminished organizational efforts in importance. A consistent delivery of quality and relevant content requires research, strategic planning, originality and persistence for creating value in return (Lieb, 2012). In Faculty of Communication case, it is important for the faculty to continue conversation and relationship with the audience after gaining new likes and increasing awareness; because this will undoubtedly contribute to the image of the organization as a whole. One-shot campaigning on social media platforms can be beneficial for an organization in short term, but in the long run, it may weaken the hard-earned bond between the organization and its audience by losing their interest. Social media advertising should not be adopted as a tool to achieve an objective single-handedly, but should be consistently and fully employed as a total social strategy. Remarketing methods such as ‘multi-product ads’, which offer up to three different units of ads that will liken Facebook pages to multi-unit brands (Chen, 2014) and also addressing custom audiences such as people visiting your own page, people who have visited another specific page or people who have not visited a page for a long time can be targeted to broaden reach of the organization in social media. These methods can be utilized for higher education social network accounts as well; to keep the students interested as ‘fans’ of the account and to gain more students.

Theoretical Implications

One of the main aspects of integration in marketing communications is that, lacking consistent, clear, and unique message supported with various marketing communications mix elements can bring failures for communication campaigns of organizations. As IMC is defined as “the **interactive** and systemic process of cross-functional **planning** and **optimization of messages to stakeholders** with the aim of communicating with coherence and transparency to achieve synergies and **encourage profitable relationships in the short, medium and long-term**” (Porcu, Barrio-Garcia, and Kitchen, 2012: 326; bold added), it is important to create a synergy between traditional and current trends in marketing communications in order to increase the impact of digital campaigning. Furthermore, campaign managers should keep in mind that there is a significant shift in marketing communications from traditional 4P model (product, price, place and promotion) to 5R model: relevance, receptivity, response, recognition and relationship (Schultz and Schultz, 2003). In that sense, the significance of social media networks as a tool for building and maintaining relationships with target audiences comes forefront once again. Having a constant flow of relevant content, paying attention to attitudes and responses of the audience, measuring

the campaign during the course of action; therefore, constantly fine tuning and optimizing the campaign (Meadows-Klue, 2008) and finally, turning social media campaigning into long-term relationship building can be a guiding point for organizations while seeking excellence in social media advertising.

Limitations and Further Research

As the current study is significantly limited given that it is based on only one case, it could be regarded as a starting point for future research. More cases from Facebook campaigns need to be explored, classified and discussed in detail to generalize findings. Regarding the present study, IUE Faculty of Communication Facebook campaign has gained significant likes to each account and expanded its reach within the target audience in a short time with a limited budget. However, while this Facebook campaign has generated a certain amount of awareness, it cannot be deduced that the campaign has singlehandedly delivered what was aimed to the fullest extent. Statistics of the campaign do indicate a success in numbers, but it does not provide how promoted posts have actually influenced potential students in choosing this faculty. A further qualitative study on if and how these promoted content during the campaign had an impact on the decision making process of new students of the Faculty can be examined. Another further research can be conducted between peers, regarding the factors that encourage them to disseminate messages. This research can help to understand main motivation factors for Facebook messages.

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6

ADVERTISING

Oddvertising: A Route to Building Brand Saliency and Brand Conversion Using Kinky Creative in Low-Risk, Low Involvement, Low Unit Priced Product Category Combined with Ubiquitous Distribution

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Extended Abstract

Advertising creative has always been a black box equally for practitioners and communication researchers and its effectiveness has been rather nebulous to understand. Bizarre, kinky, out-of-the-box, unconventional creative used by brands has always been a bigger question mark in understanding its effectiveness in creating positive consumer responses. Advertisers have felt that in certain product categories especially in low involvement, low consumer risk categories with low unit price such as kinky advertising has had a positive impact in creating the right consumer responses.

This research paper is based on understanding how unconventional, bizarre, or kinky advertising termed by the authors 'Oddvertising' is used by advertisers to open a window of opportunity into the mind of the consumer, deliver a single standalone brand proposition which triggers off brand recall at the point of purchase aided by ubiquitous distribution that culminates into sales.

Creativity in advertising is the generation of new ways of doing previously known constructs relating to imaginative ideas to sell products and create strong brands in the marketplace. Modern society's span of attention in general has decreased significantly. Time pressures including alternate areas

that compete for a person's attention and interest has made it more compelling for advertisers to open a window of opportunity that can communicate significantly the brand's message. This waning attention has intrigued advertisers who have built creatives that could open this window of opportunity in the mind of the target audience. When low involvement category is involved, advertisement looks at bizarre, kinky, and often outlandish advertising creative to open this window of creativity (Killoran, NA).

Creating a brand which stands out from the crowd is increasingly difficult as numerous advertisements compete to be the quirkiest or coolest and tap into whichever stream of accepted lunacy the public might enjoy at any particular time (O'Neil, 2012). In low involvement category products kinky advertising can open this window of opportunity and create 'likeability' for the product through such creative.

Oddvertising is defined as a set of creative that builds on this kinky bizarre advertising that jolts the customer and makes him sit up and take notice, thereby opening this window of opportunity and driving the brand message into deep memory. Impact in terms of customer response is generated through sales pick up at ubiquitous occasions of purchase of the brand.

Fundamentally brands achieve strong memorability and brand recall using Oddvertising format of creative. This also becomes a talking point in offices, campuses, parties etc. in turn creating a buzz for the brand through its kinky advertising.

Unconventional advertisements aid to get the brand into deep memory by leveraging repetition opportunities through YouTube and other unconventional media thus keeping the brand's communication alive in the mind over time. Advertising agencies have been pushing the limits and stretching the truth since they began working. That is how they keep themselves relevant and the products they are selling fresh in the mind's eye (Page, 2011).

A measure of involvement—independent of the behavior that results from involvement—would allow the researcher to use the same measure across various research studies. This measure should also be sensitive to the proposed areas that affect a person's involvement level. These areas might be classified into three categories (Bloch and Richins, 1983; Houston and Rothschild, 1978).

1. Personal—inherent interests, values, or needs that motivate one toward the object
2. Physical—characteristics of the object that cause differentiation and increase interest
3. Situational—something that temporarily increases relevance or interest toward the object

In this paper, the definition of involvement used for the purposes of scale development is:

A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985).

A low involvement product category can be defined as:

Consumable items that entail minimal effort and consideration on the part of the consumer prior to purchase since they do not have a substantial effect on the buyer's lifestyle and hence are not that significant an investment. A low involvement product can also be an item that is habitually purchased and so the decision to do so requires little effort (Business Dictionary).

A Matrix showing Product Involvement and Social Visibility- the candy category which falls in the Low Involvement Low Social Visibility quadrant of the Matrix is the focus of research.

	Low Social Visibility	High Social Visibility
High Involvement	Products with an extended research and consideration phase that aren't readily visible to others (i.e. Financial Instruments, Insurance, Banking)	Products with an extended research/consideration phase & highly visible to peers & reference groups (i.e. Cars, Home electronics)
Low Involvement	Products which are purchased at a relatively low thought or routinized level and have little social impact (i.e. Kitchen Goods & Products)	Products with little consideration or research, but that have a noticeable social impact or visibility (i.e. Entertainment options such as music or film)

Hypotheses Testing

The three hypotheses listed below were tested out:

- H1:** Oddvertising emphasizing functional benefit influences brand purchase
- H2:** Oddvertising creates strong positive feelings resulting in frequent brand purchases
- H3:** Oddvertising triggers impulse purchase at ubiquitous and unconventional outlets.

The Research Methodology used Qualtrics online data collection technique in a real-world online setting to assess consumers' responses to select Brand Advertisements selected for this research. The questionnaire addressed information needed for the three hypothesis developed to assess how Oddvertising generates response from consumers. Links of the advertisements from YouTube were embedded in the Questionnaire.

Using quantitative data analysis all the three hypotheses was accepted.

Research Conclusions

1. The research throws light on how Oddvertising works in creating consumer responses in low involvement, low price and low risk product categories.
2. Oddvertising drives the consumer's motivation to try and repeatedly buy the product by getting into the deep memory by triggering off a strong functional benefit.
3. Oddvertising by its outlandish and bizarre creative create positive feelings –“Likeability” for the communication and the brand in question which is another take-out from the research findings.
4. Oddvertising when strongly complemented by ubiquitous availability at unconventional retail outlets creates relevance and interest in the product to convert into purchase.

Keywords

Low involvement category, impulse buying behaviour, kinky advertising, bizarre creative, humor based creative, benefit based proposition, ubiquitous distribution.

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How to Increase Acceptance and Brand Recall of Skippable Online Video Advertising: A Study on Sequential Brand Logo Position

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Abstract

Video advertising is becoming widely used by companies which aim to improve their online communication strategies. However, consumers tend to avoid such commercial messages due to prior negative experiences and the advertising clutter (e.g. ad overexposure across channels) leading to a lack of efficiency. To solve this issue, advertisers are changing their communication vision by boosting new ad formats focused on satisfying the requirements of users. This is the case of skippable ads in which users play a more active role in contrast to captive audience media. However, companies often apply the same traditional advertising designed for television to their online campaigns. In this context, our research investigates how different sequential patterns of brand logo and arousal stimuli could increase the level of skippable ad acceptance and brand recall. Our study tests whether brand logo placed at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the online skippable ad affect to its effectiveness. Additionally, neurophysiology and self-reported techniques are combined in the study to expand the use of new research techniques in marketing research. Results support the prediction that brand logo placed at the beginning of the advertisement could be beneficial in terms of efficiency for skippable ads.

Keywords

Skippable ad, ad acceptance, brand recall, brand logo presentation

Introduction

Consumers are exposed to thousand of ads every day, but their processing capacity is limited (Lang 2000). Even in times of economic difficulties, companies spend part of their limited resources in advertising. For instance, in 2014 global advertising investment has reached 523,000 million (US Dollars) which represent a 5.3% over the 3,6 of 2013 (Adage 2014). Firms are in a fight to better address their target audiences and plan alternative communication strategies for their investments. In the pursuit of advertising efficiency, companies are taking advantage of the Internet technologies and are moving their campaigns to social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, YouTube) (Kaplan and Haenlein 2012), where users play a more active role (Walsh et al. 2010).

Internet advertising is the fastest growing segment of advertising media in the world. In 2014, the global spending in online advertising has reach 137.53 billion (US \$), which represents a 14.8% annual growth, and over one-quarter of total spending in advertising worldwide (eMarketer 2014). In this context, the proliferation of technological devices (e.g. tablets, smartphones, etc.) and the development of Internet have favoured the development of new forms of online advertising. Users are already familiar to Internet based advertising such as banners, pop up or pops under (McCoy et al. 2008); nevertheless, other relatively new formats such as skippable online video ads are more and more frequent. To increase advertising effectiveness, advertisers try to decrease users' overexposure to commercial information and facilitate users' control over the ads (Astolfi et al. 2008). In this way, our research is focused on skippable online advertising which is employed by an increasing number of online platforms. This new format allow users to accept watching the complete ad or skip it after some initial non-skippable seconds, giving a higher control on ad watching, and reducing the negative ad consequences (Pashkevich et al. 2012). Skippable advertising is very frequently used by online monetization business models such as video sharing platforms and many mobile apps and games. Although ad acceptance has been already studied in other contexts (Sultan, Rohm, and Gao 2009), ad acceptance (in contrast to ad skipping) is particularly relevant to effectively communicate commercial information. Although these online video ads are similar to traditional television spots, there is still little information about its effectiveness (Logan 2013). Thus, there is a need to investigate and better understand this phenomenon and the processes leading to skippable ad effectiveness.

The way in which consumers represent, attend and perceive incoming information have a key influence on advertising campaign success in terms of consumer's behaviour (Plassmann, Ramsøy, and Milosavljevic 2012). One of the most important indicators of ad effectiveness is recall, for this reason many researchers have investigated the factors that enhance memory (Baack, Wilson, and Till 2008; Jin 2003; Newell, Henderson, and Wu 2001; Pavelchak, Antil, and Munch 1988; Putrevu 2008). Advertising hierarchy models, such as AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) (Aaker, Batra, and Myers 1992) and AIETA (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Trial, Adoption model) (Krugman 1977), describe attention as a crucial element preceding recall (Kuisma et al. 2010). In video advertising, in which visual attention is a key factor to reach ad effectiveness, salient ad characteristics help increase the viewer's attention (Kuisma et al. 2010). Several audiovisual stimuli are used as arousal triggers which increase consumers' interest in advertising. For instance, motion effect theories suggest that movement leads to an inherent preference for stimulating video advertising, positively associated with higher physiological arousal (Detenber, Simons, and Bennet 1998); also animation effects leads to a better attention to ads (Yoo and Kim 2005), and generate a higher recall (Yoo, Kim, and Stout 2004). In this sense, animated ads elicit stronger behavioural oriented responses (Lang et al. 2002) in which arousal is

used as an attention-getting mechanism (Sundar and Kalyanaraman 2004). Thus, arousal has been described as a key factor to get and keep the viewers' attention to an ad, which could involve a higher preference to watch the ad and to activate memory processes.

In this sense, this research tries to expand the knowledge on consumers' reactions to advertisements which have different temporal placement of the brand name in relation to the arousal stimuli in terms of ad acceptance and ad effectiveness. Brand name position could have an important role in skippable in stream video ads which has been almost unstudied in previous research (Li and Lo 2014). Attract and keep the viewer attention continue being one of the biggest challenges that professionals of advertising have to face, particularly in skippable advertising in which users have the choice to accept watching or to skip the commercial message. Thus, in order to reduce the gap found in the literature related to brand logo and arousal influence on skippable advertising (van Grinsven and Das 2014), our study attempt to answer the following research questions: What advertising patterns are more effective in skippable video ads, traditional or new ones?, How alternative sequential orders of brand name logo and arousal influence ad acceptance and ad recall in skippable video ads?

Alternatively, in order to advance on marketing and communication research, we use complementary measure methods to have a more complete knowledge of consumer behaviour (Poels and Dewitte 2006), and combine neurophysiological techniques to measure consumers' level of arousal caused by video ads, and self-reported measures of brand recall for the empirical section of our research.

The remaining of this work in progress presents a literature review section, which is followed by a hypotheses formulation section. After that, we present our experimental study and their principal results and findings. Finally, this work presents the main conclusions, limitations and implications of this research.

Literature Review

Arousal

Arousal is a fundamental dimension in the study of emotions, and is related to both simple processes such as awareness and attention (Boucsein 1992), and complex processes such as information retention and attitude formation (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). From a physiological perspective arousal is defined as the degree of energization, activation, inner tension or alertness, and from psychology, as a state of wakefulness or preparation of thoughts generation (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002). Thus, arousal is a physiological and psychological variable directly related to cognitive and affective processes which represents the level of general activation of the body, from the low arousal of deep sleep to the high arousal of the intense excitement (Gould and Krane 1992). Arousal, together with valence, is one of the fundamental dimensions in the study of emotions (Delplanque et al. 2006) as a mechanism to react to external stimulus (Benedek and Kaernbach 2010). Autonomic arousal is embodied as a physiological change (e.g. heart rate, sweat) and is related with affective reactions; while cortical arousal is more related with attention and information processing (Detenber and Reeves 1996). This variable has been widely researched in advertising but findings about its properties are controversial. Some researches argue that arousal affects positively to ad effectiveness, brand desirability (Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986), and memory decoding (Jeong and Biocca 2012). In this sense, several authors suggest that a stimulus that generates a high arousal state or excitement is best decoded in memory (Sharot and Phelps 2004), gets a better long-term memory (Mickley Steinmetz et al. 2012) and is remembered more accurately (Jeong and

Biocca 2012); however, other researchers question this positive effect (Heath, Brandt, and Nairn 2006). From a theoretical perspective, the limited capacity model of mediated message processing assumes that persons are information processors with a limited ability to process this information (Lang 2000). There are three major tasks in information processing, (1) perceiving the stimuli, (2) turning them into mental representations, and (3) reproducing them (Lang 2000). The model proposes another three major subprocesses (encoding, storage, and retrieval) which require the same resources, thus, a message will not be thoroughly processed if individuals allocate fewer resources than it requires or if message processing requires more resources than are available (Lang 2000). In this way a high arousal stimuli, need more cognitive resources to be encoded (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002) making recall more difficult (Singh and Hitchon 1989), and complicating individuals' identification of attributes presented in the ad (Singh and Hitchon 1989).

Arousal is also characterized as a complex scientific variable to analyse (Öhman and Birbaumer 1993). Despite the different techniques used for its measurement (e.g. surveys), some authors claim for more accurate measurement of arousal and defend the advantages that different neuroscience techniques could provide to consumer behaviour research (Ariely and Berns 2010), demanding the combination of both traditional and neurophysiological techniques (Öhman and Birbaumer 1993). Following the latter approach, our researcher combines both surveys and a physiological technique, skin conductivity (SC). SC is a simple and low cost technique previously employed in marketing research (Peacock, Purvis, and Hazlett 2011) and other related areas (Gómez and Danuser 2004; Kunzmann, Kupperbusch, and Levenson 2005). This technique estimates the degree of secretion of active sweat glands, controlled by the sympathetic nervous system, by measuring the level of electrical conductance through the skin (Watson and Gatchel 1979; Sundar and Kalyanaraman 2004). Given its advantages in terms of costs and accuracy, SC application to arousal measurement has been widely used and validated by previous literature (Stewart and Furse 1982; Vecchiato et al. 2014; Wang and Minor 2008).

Ad Acceptance

Some researchers have already studied user acceptance of online ads (Kelly, Kerr, and Drennan 2010), and found personal, technological and structural determinants (Sultan, Rohm, and Gao 2009). The process by which viewers interact with online ads can be categorized in three steps: preattention, attention, and behavioural decision (i.e. ad acceptance) (Chatterjee 2001). The new skippable format allow users to decide about ad acceptance in a short period of time but recent literature rarely examines consumer responses to these new formats of online video advertising. Literature suggest that online advertising is perceived as more intrusive than traditional media ads (Li, Edwards, and Lee 2002), and that user navigation in the online medium is oriented to a goal, which increases the perception of ads as impediments (Cho and Cheon 2004; Flavián, Gurrea, and Orús 2012). Thus, ad acceptance could be considered a basic objective for advertisers and a principal variable of advertising effectiveness in the skippable context.

As we noted before, some researchers posits that arousal stimuli are crucial in ad acceptance because it favours ad viewing (Kuisma et al. 2010) and generates a more intense user experience (Newell, Henderson, and Wu 2001). Traditional media which include non-skippable ads usually rely on “linear increase” designs, where arousal and logo are placed in this order at the end of the ad (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2012). This arousal pattern allows advertisers to build a short story that supposedly get the attention of the users with high arousal stimuli and prepare them to process and better encode the brand

name, usually at the end of the spot. However in skippable video advertising, users take the decision to skip or accept watching the ad along the ad displaying time, after the five initial non-skippable seconds (YouTube Advertise 2014). Thus, in contrast to non-skippable advertising, in this new format the ad sequential pattern design (brand logo, arousal stimuli) seems to play a critical role to increase users' acceptance to continue watching the ad (Bellman, Schweda, and Varan 2010).

Ad acceptance could be considered an indirect measure of attention (Zufryden, Pedrick, and Sankaralingam 1993) in opposition to ad skipping. In turn, skipping could be essentially described as a relief from a high level of ad exposure or a particular form of zapping. However, due the initial seconds of non-skippable time, a partial exposure to the ads almost guaranteed for skippable advertising (Pashkevich et al. 2012). Literature suggests that partial exposure to advertising is less effective than complete exposure to the ad, but that it delivers some residual effect in viewers (Bellman, Schweda, and Varan 2010). Thus, our research explore whether the moment and order of appearance of arousal and brand logo could lead to different levels of ad effectiveness in terms of ad acceptance and brand recall. Specifically, we propose three alternative patterns: brand logo before high arousal, brand logo just after high arousal, and brand logo after arousal.

Brand Recall

Brand recall is one, if not the most relevant dependent variable dealing with advertising effectiveness (Donthu, Cherian, and Bhargava 1993). It is also a simple indicator to test whether online ad characteristics such as format and animation influence users' attention and memory (Kuisma et al. 2010). Different advertising frameworks, such as AIDA (Aaker, Batra, and Myers 1992) or AIETA models (Krugman 1977) propose as a general premise that attention is a prerequisite which precedes information processing (Kuisma et al. 2010). Thus, capturing viewer's attention is a key factor to reach commercial purposes successfully (Heath, Brandt, and, Nairn 2006).

Attention gives viewers more opportunities to encode and store messages (Li and Lo 2014; Pieters, Warlop, and Wedel 2002) passing from sensory memory to short-term memory (Solomon 2013). One of the most common techniques to secure the visual attention to video ads is the use of salient characteristics such as colour, sound, orientation or motion (Kuisma et al. 2010). In this sense, high arousal stimuli is a very useful resource to generate high attention (Bakalash and Riemer 2013), influencing the likelihood and the vividness of the memory (Kensinger and Corkin 2003), information processing, and recall of the central stimuli (Mundorf, Zillmann, and Drew 1991). However, arousal has a positive influence on information retention, attitude formation (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), on perceived ad, brand desirability in TV (Aaker, Stayman and, Hagerty 1986), radio messages retention (Bolls, Lang, and Potter 2001), an motivational power in printed ads (Poels and Dewitte 2008).

However, the effectiveness of video advertising is decreasing (Li and Lo 2014). To solve this troublesome situation, advertisers are trying to better communicate with consumers and better meet with their preferences, boosting user controls and skip options that allow users to not to see all the commercial (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2010). A partial watch of the ad could involve that the user is not receiving the complete information or even not identifying the announced brand, especially when then brand logo is placed at the end. This problem affect both companies and consumers because an important goal of video advertising designers is ensuring that consumers' associate the ad message with the brand name or logo (Baker, Honea, and Russell 2004).

In general, previous research suggests that brand logo helps to identify and remember users' personal experiences and memories, and to establish a context of reference (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2010). Branding literature is ambiguous about the use and placement of brand name logos: some researchers defend the use of small, nonintrusive logos, e.g. in print ads (Aitchinson 1999); whereas others recommend large and intrusive ones for all media (Book and Schick 1997). In the same line, some researchers propose to place the brand logo at the beginning (Baker, Honea, and Russell 2004), at the end (Fazio, Herr, and Powell 1992), or even in the both moments in television commercials (Stewart and Koslow 1989). Thus, this research also investigates the differences in ad effectiveness depending on brand logo placement during the ad.

Hypothesis Formulation

The active audience of internet is very different from the captive audience (forced exposure to advertising) typical from traditional media (Ha 2003). In the online setting, and particularly for skippable advertising, users determine when where and how surfing the web, and in most of the cases there is not forced exposure. This active audience of online media have the choice to accept the ad, even when it disrupts the flow of the media content (Ha 2003), thus, ads needs to include stimuli that get the attention and interest of users. Sometimes, consumers could have difficulties to link advertising messages to brand names, (Keller 1991; Kent and Allen 1994), as it could be the case of users that watch the ad partially. For all this, and differently from other ad formats, the first seconds of the skippable video ads are widely important to make users accept the advertising and improve its effectiveness. However, literature on skippable video ad is very scarce (Li and Lo 2014), so that our research framework explores how different arousal cues in the first five seconds influence ad effectiveness and ad acceptance.

Previous literature reveals that in online media consumers have demand a higher control over commercial exposure (Ha 2003). Thus, when consumers do not accept to watch the ad, branding activity cannot have the beneficial effects that have been reported for forced exposure conditions (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2012). The partial exposure to the ad could be less effective, nevertheless it still delivers some residual effect in viewers (Bellman, Schweda, and Varan 2010). The new skippable advertising formats, which normally only have a short initial period of forced exposure, could lead to partial watching behaviour by users. On this skippable setting, advertisers tend to employ the same video spots used in other media (Pashkevich et al. 2012), usually following the linear increase pattern (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2010), in which brand logo is presented at the end, after high arousal. Challenging this insight, we propose two alternative patterns of ad design: (1) placing the brand logo at the beginning of the ad before the high arousal peak, and (2) placing the brand logo just after the high arousal peak. In this research, we consider that an arousal peak refers to a perception of stimuli causing a high arousal in users for a short period of time (e.g. a specific sequence of a video ad). Figure 1 in the methodology section describes graphically the three proposed patterns.

As we noted before, academic research in brand name placement is ambiguous. Some researchers rely in memory organization and associative learning models to provide support for a better recall when the brand name is placed at the beginning of an advertisement (Baker, Honea, and Russell 2004; McEwen and Leavitt 1976). Placing the brand logo at the beginning of the ad guarantees brand exposure for a greater number of viewers given that all of them start watching the ad and usually cannot skip the ad during the first seconds. In addition, an initial brand logo could be interpreted as a presentation of the message sender, which could be perceived as a sign of honesty (Ha and Perks 2005) in contrast to a video

commercial sequence (sometimes senseless for the first seconds) to which the users have no information about the sender. Similarly, a brand name could create certain level of expectancy about the commercial story linked to the brand, which could also favour ad acceptance. As well, users that are surfing on the web behave in an active way, sometimes described as a state of flow, that could contribute to a better message processing during the initial time of the ad, favouring brand recall when brand logo placed at the beginning (Baker, Honea, and Russell 2004).

In contrast other authors found a better recall when the brand logo is placed at the end as a result of a goal directed information processing, viewers watching the ad wanted to know what is the content about, producing a stronger relationship in memory (Fazio, Herr, and Powell 1992). Placing brand logo after high arousal stimuli could be positive thanks to arousal related attention and processing activation (Fazio, Herr, and Powell 1992). Or research proposes that, in order to avoid brand logo missing due to users leaving the ad before the end, the exposure to brand logo may be anticipated, placing it just after the high arousal peak. This way, the high arousal stimuli would increase users' attention to the ad just before the brand logo presentation. However, literature suggests that placing brand logo close to a high arousal stimuli could be counterproductive. Arousal effects are powerful after stimuli and decay slowly extending their effects during the ad (Vanden and MacLahlan, 1994). Individuals processing high arousal stimuli seem to be unable to pay attention to the immediate subsequent scenes (Mundorf, Zillmann, and Drew 1991), and this could be due to a kind of blocking effect due to recent arousal intensity. The intensity theory argues that high arousal levels lead to a decreased ability to recall advertisements (Newell, Henderson, and Wu 2001). A high arousal peak usually involves a high degree of alertness which requires as much cognitive resources as possible, complicating a clear processing of information for some seconds (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002, Singh and Hitchon 1989), thus reducing the level of brand recall when brand logo placed close to the high arousal stimuli.

Figure 1 summarizes the graphs employed for the following research hypotheses:

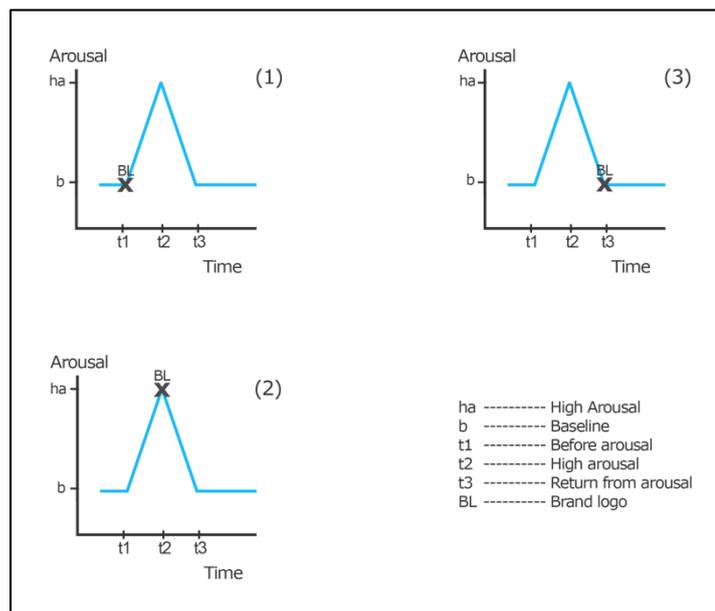


Figure 1. Graphical description of sequences employed for hypothesis test: (1) Before arousal condition, (2) High arousal condition, (3) return from arousal condition

All in all, considering both the literature review and the theoretical underpinning applied to the skippable context, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1a Brand logo just after a high arousal peak reduces ad acceptance in skippable online video ads.

H1b Brand logo just after a high arousal peak reduces brand recall in skippable online video ads.

H2a Brand logo before a high arousal peak increases ad acceptance in skippable online video ads.

H2b Brand logo before a high arousal peak increases brand recall in skippable online video ads.

Method

Pretest: Arousal Measurement and Ad Selection

The objective of the pretest was to select the video ad to be used in the experiment. A sample of 42 persons participated in the pretest, who were informed about the study objectives and signed the consent forms. The instrumentation used were: a) 32 water-based EEG channels amplified with a unipolar CAR amplifier, b) a skin conductance sensor and c) other bio-instrumentation like electrocardiogram, SpO₂, etc. The instrumentation and the video presentation were synchronized within the common amplifier and the software. The participants were invited to sit comfortably to watch 24 videos of different nature (ranging from TV advertisements to other different thematic obtained from the web). The videos were presented randomly in 3 blocks of 8 videos. The inter-video time was 10 seconds and the inter-block time was 3 minutes. An aggregated measurement of the arousal was obtained for each video by the superposition of the arousal of each subject measured on the skin conductivity sensor. Arousal was derived by a sliding mask-type response filter type in addition to a posterior Gaussian smoothing. One of the videos with a higher variation in arousal in terms of aggregated activations was selected for this study, which corresponded to a movie spot. Neurophysiological data were collected and analysed by the company BitBrain Technologies®, and then provided to the authors of the present study.

Experimental Design of the study

Based on the video selected in the pretest, three experimental scenarios were created to test the hypotheses of the research. The first manipulated scenario presented the brand name logo 5 seconds before the high arousal peak, which correspond with the before arousal condition (Graph 1 in Figure 1). In the second scenario, corresponding with the high arousal condition, the brand name logo was presented just 1 second after the high arousal peak (Graph 2). The third scenario corresponds with the return-from-arousal condition and presented the brand name logo 5 seconds after the high arousal peak (Graph 3).

All scenarios showed the same brand name that was created for the experiment and do not correspond to any real movie; this is a usual procedure in research on advertising in order to avoid bias due to previous brand knowledge by participants (Cauberghe and De Pelsmacker, 2008). The brand name logo was presented in white colour fonts in a black background inserted for a 3 second period, the total length of each ad was 17 seconds.

Participants and Procedure

One hundred and forty three graduate and postgraduate students from a Spanish university participate in the study in exchange of course credit. Approximately, one third of them were randomly assigned to each of the three brand logo conditions: before arousal condition (N=44), high arousal

condition (N=49), and return-from-arousal condition (N=47). All of them were invited to participate in a study about online video watching.

Initially, they were instructed to take a seat and feel comfortable to use the computer as they were at home. Initially, each individual computer post was displaying a musical video in order to facilitate participants to adjust their head sets. After that, they were invited to click on any of the titles of videos in a list of a variety of entertaining topics for young users such as sports, music or travels. However when they clicked on any of the selected videos an ad appeared before the subsequent requested video. The ad was one of the three video ads created for this research and assigned to each participant depending on the three conditions. The videos were presented in an online platform with a similar appearance to YouTube and specifically designed for this research. Accordingly to our research focus on this new trend of online advertising, the ads present a skippable format in which participants could accept to continue watching the video ad or skip it after the initial 5 non-skippable seconds. Computers were programmed to record the ad time watched by each participant. Finally, after the intended video watching, they respond to a questionnaire including brand recall about the ad and other basic information such as sociodemographics. At the end of the study, participants were thanked and debriefed.

Measurement

Ad acceptance was measured in time of ad watching (in seconds) for each participant. In addition, to facilitate the interpretation of ad acceptance along the ad displaying time we also include the percentage of users that continue watching the ad at each quarter of the displaying time. Brand recall was measured by a direct question asking the name of the announced brand and coded as correct or incorrect by two external coders blind to the hypotheses of this research.

Results

Table 1 summarizes the principal results and findings of this research.

Analysis of participants responses partially confirms our hypotheses 1a and 2a, suggesting that placing brand logo just after a high arousal peak reduces ad acceptance whereas placing brand logo before the high arousal peak increases ad acceptance. Participants in the high arousal condition watched the ad for a lower time in average (M=11.6) whereas participants assigned to the brand logo before arousal condition present the higher value in terms of time watch (M=13.2); however these differences are not significant according to ANOVA analysis, $F(1,142) = 1.36, p > .10$.

On the other hand, observing the percentage of users that watch the ad at each quarter of the ad displaying time, the differences are not significant at the first and second quarters. This result is as expected, given that all participants started watching the ad and were unable to skip the ad during the initial seconds of the ad displaying. Interestingly, the brand logo experimental conditions influence ad acceptance at the third quarter, $\chi^2(2) = 4.58, p = .10$, and fourth quarter, $\chi^2(2) = 4.58, p = .08$, reaching values marginally significant. Specifically, for the third quarter, 59.1% of participants continue watching the ad with the brand logo before arousal, only 38.8% of participants continue watching the brand logo placed in the high arousal period, and 56.0% of participants continue watching the ad when then brand logo is placed in the return-from-arousal period. Similarly, at the fourth quarter of ad displaying time, the before arousal condition and the return-from-arousal condition reach 50.0% and 54.0% of users' acceptance respectively, in contrast to the 32.7% of users that remain watching the high-arousal condition advertising. In sum, in partial support to H1a, results suggest that placing the logo just after the high

arousal peak is not a good choice to increase skippable advertising acceptance among users. In turn, in partial support to H2a, placing the brand logo before the high arousal peak seems a better choice with a similar level of acceptance than the return-of-arousal condition (usually employed as effective in traditional advertising [Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2012]).

Results clearly support our hypotheses H1b and H2b. Analyses reveal that the experimental brand logo conditions influences significantly brand recall, $\chi^2 (2) = 6.52, p < .05$. Specifically, in support of H1b, brand logo just after high arousal peak presents the lower brand recall percentage (8.2%). In support of H2b, a higher percentage of users (27.3%) recall the brand in the brand logo presentation before the arousal peak. The third condition, return-from-arousal, present an intermediate level of brand recall (14.0%), suggesting that placing the brand logo before arousal could be the best strategy in the context of skippable online video advertising.

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses tested, and the conditions and results of the studies.

Table 1. Summary of principal results and findings.

	Ad acceptance					Brand Recall (%)
	Average time in seconds	% of users at each displaying time				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Conditions						
Before arousal	13.2	100.0	75.0	59.1	50.0	27.3
High-Arousal	11.6	100.0	65.3	38.8	32.7	8.2
Return-from-arousal	12.3	98.0	58.0	56.0	54.0	14.0
Significance p-value						
F	.26					
χ^2		.39	.22	.10*	.08*	.04**

Note: * significant at .10, ** significant at .05

Conclusions and Discussion

This study attempts to provide an innovative insight for the understanding of brand recall and ad acceptance as ad effectiveness indicators in the new online skippable video advertising setup. As we noted before, viewer attention is limited and selective, meaning that not all the messages in video ads may be noticed (Wedel and Pieters 2008). Arousal may favour attention and recall, but high arousal impact can sometimes harm recall (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002). Traditional patters of video advertising, both in TV and Internet, usually present arousing stimuli in the ad to attract users' attention, and then the brand logo, often at the end of the ad (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2010). In contrast to traditional advertising, and in order to better achieve advertisers commercial purposes, we propose that in the context of skippable video ads brand logo information could appear at the beginning of the ad or just after the high arousal stimuli. Following this approach, and based on literature review, our research found that the inclusion of a brand logo at the beginning of the skippable ad increases ad acceptance (non-skipping) and brand recall as a consequence of attention increase (Boucsein, 1992); whereas presenting the brand logo

just after the high arousal stimuli is counterproductive in terms of acceptance and effectiveness due to a limited cognitive capacity (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002).

As an additional contribution, this work in progress combines neurophysiological techniques and traditional methods in consumer behaviour research in order to contribute to the current research on physiological reactions of marketing stimuli (Poels and Dewitte 2006). Some further specific findings and conclusions derive from the results of our empirical analyses.

First, our work tries to expand the knowledge about ad acceptance and its relationship with arousal stimulus and brand logo position. The study compares ad acceptance levels of a brand logo placed five seconds before the arousal peak, just one second after the high arousal peak and five seconds after the arousal peak. We found that, in average, a higher percentage of users accept to watch the ad in the first condition, brand logo placed before the arousal peak. The study confirmed our expectations proposing that placing brand logo before the high arousal peak increases ad acceptance which is due to the specific characteristics of skippable advertising and the residual but effective benefits of partial exposure to the spot in this format of online video ads (Bellman, Schweda, and Varan 2010). In contrast, placing brand logo just after a high arousal peak reduces ad acceptance, revealing this choice as a defective strategy. Placing brand logo just after arousal is proved as ineffective because of a possible confusion effect resulting of the combination of high arousal stimuli and brand logo in a short period of time; this particular sequence could break the flow state, which makes users skip the ad more easily (Ha 2003). Indeed, both the brand logo before arousal and the return from arousal conditions were accepted by a higher number of users than brand logo just after high arousal, reflecting the relevance of place the stimuli when the cognitive resources are available, ready or recovered to face the next step (that seems to be at the beginning of the ad, or at the end).

Analogously, the alternative brand logo position experimental conditions also influence brand recall. Specifically, video ads presenting the brand logo before a high arousal peak reach the highest brand recall ratio. The appearance of the logo before the high arousal peak and at the beginning of the ad is crucial to increase brand recall. This finding has a great importance if we take in account that usually traditional and online video advertising place brand logo at the end (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2012). In contrast, video ad presenting brand just after the high arousal peak scores the lowest brand recall ratio. In this sense, the significant difference suggests that a high arousal peak generates attention but its intensity decreases individuals' information processing capacity. The high arousal stimuli need so many cognitive resources that the other stages of the information process are negatively affected. In this line, this finding agrees with previous research suggesting that a high arousal stimulus could reduce the level of concentration and the ability to process and remember information (Pavelchak, Antil, and Munch 1988; Shapiro and MacInnis 2002). This is probable because of the limited human capacity to process the information during the arousal period (Lang 2000) which require more cognitive resources to be encoded (Shapiro and MacInnis 2002) and recalled (Singh and Hitchon 1989). Finally, the return-from-arousal condition presenting brand logo at the end of the ad did not reach the same ratio than the before arousal condition, questioning the applicability of non-skippable advertising tactics to the skippable setting.

Overall, these findings are particularly relevant considering that, very often, brands use the same video ads in television than in online campaigns. Although, traditional patterns based on brand logo endings may be useful in terms of ad acceptance; their performance in terms of brand recall is not as good as placing brand logo at the beginning. Specifically, our findings reveal that different levels of ad

effectiveness result as a consequence of skippable advertising time restriction and user's processing capacity to alternative combinations of arousal and brand logo sequences. Consequently, the results of our study suggest a dramatic change in terms of online video ad design.

Implications for Management and Further Research Lines

Research devoted to online video advertising could take many different approaches. These preliminary findings of our work in progress involve specific management implications for video advertising design, challenging the traditional sequential order ad pattern (Teixeira, Wedel, and Pieters 2012). Internet is a new media full of possibilities and much more interactive than traditional media. Compared with traditional passive audience suffering advertising submissively, an active audience has different characteristics and needs (Ha 2003). In this sense a change in the traditional video ad design adapted to the new technological context and to the users' needs could increase ad acceptance and brand recall. Our findings suggest that time and brand logo position are crucial in skippable online video ads. Therefore, advertisers, community managers and other stakeholders operating with skippable video ads should consider a change in the advertising pattern. The results of our study reveal that introducing the logo in the first non skippable seconds improves its acceptance and effectiveness. In this sense advertisers should consider that a logo brand placed after the arousal stimuli may be more effective to the captive audience of television but not to the active audience of internet media (Ha 2003). Focusing on brand logo entrance during the ad, our findings suggest that it should be placed before or some seconds after the arousal peak but never just with the arousal peak.

However, this work in progress also entails several limitations that open new research lines. Our approach describes and operationalizes arousal as a general psychophysiological activation not directly related to any specific emotion. Further research lines should study our proposed relationship under different positive and negative valenced emotions. Finally, our principal hypothesis proposes brand logo appearance at the first seconds of the skippable ad as a tactic to improve ad effectiveness. It would be interesting to test the perceptions of users toward the brand logo. Although unfamiliar brands and ads were deliberately employed in this study, a more familiar brand or ad could be perceived differently. In this way, a faster identification of the brand or the ad by users could have influenced ad effectiveness. As well, participants' arousal could be increased as a consequence of the video context instead of by the high arousal experimental condition. Further research should be focus on testing our hypotheses under alternative scenarios (e.g. in terms of familiarity) and to explore the potential scope of our current findings.

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Understanding the Effect of Product Placement Prominence and Repetition on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Responses: A case of Malaysian movie “*Istanbul: Here I Come*”

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate on the effects of product placement prominence and the level of repetition of a product placement display, and how it is reflective of cognitive, affective and conative responses. In this research, a Malay film entitled ‘Istanbul Aku Datang’ (*Istanbul: Here I come*) was used as the experimental stimuli. A 2X2 between groups experiment was conducted involving 120 participants, who were randomly assigned to four different groups with each one showing the same movie, but different version of product placement i.e Version 1: Subtle & Low Repetition, Version 2: Subtle & High Repetition, Version 3: Prominent & Low Repetition and Version 4: Prominent & High Repetition. Results established significant main effect of Placement Prominence and Level of Repetition on cognitive response. However, no significant interaction effect of Placement Prominence and Level of Repetition were found on the cognitive, affective and conative responses.

Keywords

Product placement, prominent placement, subtle placement, repetition, cognitive, affective, conative response, skepticism, betrayal

Introduction

In today's world, the marketers will always find the new alternative approaches to reach their target market as the market industry are becoming more competitive. One of the approaches, which have received great attention from the public since the past decades, is product placement. Product placement is defined as a planned and paid insertion of a brand or product in a medium like a movie or television show or even a song, with the intention to influence audience (Balasubramaniam et al, 2006). Paid product message can also be described as an easily identified presence of a product or brand name (Fontaine, 2006) or a product appearance in a scene, and/or the name of a brand or product being mentioned in dialogues (Lehu and Bressoud, 2009, p.8).

The interest in brand or product placement as a communication tool is largely contributed by the well-known success of Reese's Pieces placement in E.T, in 1980's, which boosted the candy's sales by 66% (McCarty, 2004). Brennan, Dubas and Babin (1999) have suggested the original motivation for brand or product placements was on the part of the motion picture studios in their effort to add greater levels of reality to the movies by having real brands and products in the stories. Over time, motion pictures producers became aware of the commercial value of these placement avenues and the practice continues (McCarty, 2004). The depleting efficiency of conventional advertising methods and competitive environment had lead marketers and advertisers to explore something new. Product placement has not only capture the attention of marketing and advertising practitioners as the alternative promotional technique, but also has constantly surface to becoming the subject of discussion of many researchers (Hung, Yu-An, Brodowsky & Hyun, 2011).

Due to its benefits, product placement has increasingly gained popularity among marketers and advertisers, specifically in its capacity to provide them with the extended reach to the audience. Marketers and advertisers, who invest for placement in movies for instance, will also obtain the benefit of getting their product message being conveyed to a larger audience, especially when the movie is converted to a DVD, or made available on TV. These will indeed lead to greater reach beyond the cinema screen to other venues, where it may be seen multiple times by individuals *American Idol* is certainly the runaway leader in television product placement, where advertisers pay to have their brand mingles with the judges and contestants. Nielsen Media Research reported that advertisers paid to have their brands featured on "Idol" for 4,086 times (Brunker, 2007).

Placement Prominence

Product placement is generally categorized based on its level of placement prominence, which is mainly divided into two main types – prominent and subtle. Prominent placement or known as the 'on-set placement' occur when a brand or product is made highly visible by the virtue of the size and/or position on the screen or its centrality to the action in the scene (Gupta and Lord, 1998) or when the brand or product is being paired with a character (Brennan, Dubas and Babin, 1999) or being mentioned in the dialogue (Russell, 2002) and/or being integrated into the story itself (Lehu & Bressoud, 2008).

On the other hand, subtle placement or known as the 'creative placement' happens when the product or brand only appears in the background with an amount of exposure that is barely noticeable (Cowley and Barron, 2008). Products and brands that undergo this type of placement is typically given only less than 5 seconds of visual exposure as props; not related to the plot and seen only briefly by the audience. Bhatnagar, Aksoy, Malkoc (2004) posited that subtle placement will lead to greater efficacy of the placement compared to that of the prominent placement.

To provide greater understanding of the relationship between placement prominence and placement efficacy, the Inverted U-shaped Model was proposed by Bhatnagar, Aksoy, Malkoc (2004). Based on the model, placement efficacy which is operationalised based on the audience response, such as recall of the brand or product name, is anticipated to rise, parallel with the amount of brand mentions i.e. placement strength. In other words, audience response is expected to be more positive as the brand gets to be extensively exposed. However, too much of brand mention or repetition is expected to eventually lead to audience being skeptical towards the brands. In this case, when placement gets too obvious or prominent, audience are likely to realize the manipulative intent of the brand or product exposure and become less receptive to the persuasion attempts; resulting to an absolute decline in the level of placement effectiveness.

Contrary to the proposition by Bhatnagar et al. (2004), Lai-man and Wai-Yee (2010) however proved the opposite when examining placement effectiveness in a TV soap opera. The output of the study indicates that prominent placement generated more positive response as compared to subtle placement. The findings of the study showed that when the product mention was less direct, it would lead to negative evaluation and unethical perception by audience because it was associated to having concealed effects. On the other hand, based on the same study, the audiences tend to show greater preference for the prominent placement (i.e. brand products were expressed formally and more direct in the TV program) than that of subtle placement. The study further concluded on the greater influence of prominent placement on audience's cognitive and affective responses.

Other than placement prominence, past research also investigate several other factors that would influence the placement efficacy. Steinberg (2004) pointed out several other factors that remarkably affect product placement effectiveness (Steinberg, 2004), such as time span displaying product, foreground or background placement, the role played by a spokesman, direct or indirect usage of the product, availability of the images of the sponsors of the product and others.

A study by Astous (1999) investigated four variables, namely types of product placement advertisements (vague display and integration into the plot, clear display but vague integration into the plot, vague display but clear integration into the plot, clear display and integration into the plot); images of sponsors of the product (positive, negative or neutral); types of TV programs (entertainments, soap opera, news programs). Result found were as follows: 1) types of product placement advertisements exerts great influence on effects of product placement advertisements; 2) types of product placement advertisements interacts with types of TV programs; 3) product placement advertisements embedded in soap opera are lowly appraised, while those embedded in news programs are regarded as immorality.

While most of studies on product placement used experiments, Mei-ling Liu (2003) used questionnaire to investigate product's brand awareness, consumers' attitude toward the movie script, actor, product placement and life style (Mei-ling, 2003). Findings are as follows: 1) brand awareness has a significant influence on advertising effects; when the brand awareness is high, the positive attitude which leads to greater recall; 2) when the brand has a certain level of awareness, the positive attitude toward product placement will have significant influence on the recall rate, attitude and intention buying; 3) No matter how high or low the brand awareness may be, audiences' attitude toward the actor will not have any influence on advertising effects; 4) people with different life style have different attitude toward product placement; people who watched more movies per month will have better advertising effects.

Gupta and Lord (1998) conducted an experiment to compare the recalled effects of common product-placement strategies with advertising. The result of the study showed that prominent placements elicited higher recall than did advertisements, which, in turn, outperformed subtle placements. The explicit mention of a product in the audio script (without a visual depiction) led to better recall than a subtle visual placement (without audio reinforcement). However, the addition of a complementary audio message did not significantly enhance the recall of a product that already enjoyed prominent visual display.

Repetition Effects

Repetition effect is another important variable in this study. According to Keele (1969, pg 211) '*reaction time to a repeated stimulus is faster than to non-repeated stimuli*'. This means that one can remember a brand based on how many times he saw a brand or advertisement. At the same time, Campbell and Keller (2003) proposed that, consumers would respond differently to the repetition of a familiar brand compared to that of an unfamiliar brand. Consumers will process a brand with an unfamiliar brand sponsors more extensively than a brand with a familiar brand sponsors. As a result, the number of exposures and advertising effectiveness begins to decrease when the brand from an unfamiliar comes as compared with a familiar brand. Additionally, attitudes engendered by an ad are less likely to influence attitudes toward familiar than unfamiliar Brands.

Previous studies on repetition effects in advertising also tend to support that repetition is non-monotonically related to persuasion, that is, increased exposures from low to moderate levels enhance persuasion, but at high repetition levels, wear-out and tedium lead to declining liking of that stimulus (e.g., Anand and Sternthal 1990; Batra and Ray 1986; Campbell and Keller 2003). The underlying premise is that increasing exposure from a low to moderate level provides greater opportunity to elaborate on the content of the message, to become more familiar with the stimulus, and to scrutinize relevant details and characteristics of the message, thus facilitating retention in memory. At higher levels of exposure, however, the message recipient becomes fully habituated to the stimulus and boredom/irritation and satiation tend to result in message reactance, increased counterarguing (e.g., Cacioppo and Petty 1979), and viewer wear-out (Calder and Sternthal 1980).

In spite of some empirical evidence as described above many studies still fail to confirm the effect of repetition on placement effectiveness (e.g., Belch 1982; Rethans, Swasy, and Marks 1986). In response to this social scientists have explored a number of factors believed to moderate the relationship between repetition and message effectiveness, such as message complexity (Cox and Cox 1988), ease of message processing (Anand and Sternthal 1990), message involvement (Batra and Ray 1986), message variation (Haugtvedt, Schumann, Schneire and Warren, 1994; brand familiarity (Campbell and Keller 2003). This study proposes that the impact of repeated product placements within a movie will vary depending on the type of product placement (subtle versus prominent), that is, the type of placement moderates the relationship between repetition and placement effectiveness.

Impact of Product Placement on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Responses

Attitude comprises three primary dimensions (cognition, affect and conation), which together, result in an individual responding favorably or unfavorably to a phenomena they are exposed to (Ajzen, 1989). Perceptions of, and information about, the attitude object refers to an individual's cognitive response (Ajzen, 1989).

In a product placement context, cognition can refer to brand recognition and recall, and associated product learning (Balasubramanian, 1994). Affect refers to feelings about the attitude object (Ajzen, 1994). These 'feelings' are often referred to as persuasion in advertising (Balasubramanian, 1994), for example, a consumer's feelings towards a brand are often indicative of how persuasive the advertising message (such as a product placement) is.

On the other hand, "*responses of a conative nature are behavioral inclinations, intentions, commitments and actions with respect to the attitude object*" (Ajzen, 1989, p. 244). From a marketing perspective, this can refer to an individual's purchase intention as a result of exposure to a product placement.

The three dimensions do not operate independently of each other; rather, they are linked in a causal chain (Ajzen, 1989). That is, cognition imparts a direct influence on affect, which in turn leads to conative behaviors. As such, it is posited that learning and recall of brands impacts on the degree to which an individual is persuaded by product placements of those brands. Subsequently, the degree to which an individual is persuaded by product placements is directly related to that individual's purchase intention of brands featured in the placements.

Experimental Design

The study utilized a 2x2 Between Group experimental design to investigate on the effects of the placement prominence and level of repetition of Maggi Assam Laksa in the film, 'Istanbul Aku Datang', on the audience's cognitive, affective and conative responses.

The stimulus material of this experiment is a 95-minute film of the 'Istanbul Aku Datang' or 'Istanbul: Here I come'. 'Istanbul Aku Datang' revolves the story of a ditzy but kind hearted blogger girl named Dian, who travels to Istanbul, determined to get her boyfriend to put a ring on her finger. When she arrives, her boyfriend Azad grows increasingly distant from her, and she is forced to find her own place to stay. She is then cheated into staying with annoying Haris, and has no money to find another place. Although the two begin to rub each other up the wrong way, Haris slowly starts to hold a soft spot in her heart, and Dian must choose between the two men in her life.

The film depicted one instant noodle brand namely Maggi Asam Laksa. Originally, the product was featured many times in the film; appeared at the background, was mentioned in the script and was integrated with several characters in the movie. To facilitate the manipulation of the two independent variables, four versions of the movie were prepared. To manipulate subtle/low repetition, version A of the movie was prepared featuring visual image of Maggi Asam Laksa that appeared only once during the movie duration. To manipulate subtle/high repetition, version B of the movie was prepared featuring visual image of Maggi Asam Laksa with at least 4 visual repetitions. As for the prominent/low repetition, version C of the movie was prepared featuring both visual images and audio references to the brand and appeared once throughout the movie duration. As for the prominent/high repetition, version D of the movie was prepared featuring both visual images and audio references to the brand and appeared at least 4 times throughout the movie duration. Prior to the actual experiment, manipulation check test was performed to assess the effectiveness of the manipulation of independent variables - placement prominence and level of repetition.

Participants of the Study

A total of 120 undergraduate students in one public university in Malaysia participated in this study. The participants who were earlier volunteered, were screened out for their awareness towards the film. Only those who have never watched the film were allowed to take part in the experiment. Filtering the participants of this study based on this criterion is deemed crucial particularly to eliminate possibilities of participants having prior knowledge on the product placed in the movie, which may lead to greater recall and positive feeling towards the brands.

At the beginning of the experimental session, participants were given overview of the experiment. They were told that the experiment aimed to understand the level of engagement of the movie. The true intention of the research was withheld from the audience until the end of the experimental session.

The experiment was conducted in one theatre-like room in one public university in Malaysia and it is well equipped with audio and video facilities. The seating arrangement is in a theatre style, providing comfortable setting for the participants of the experiment.

After the briefing session, the participants were randomly arranged to one of the each treatment condition: (a) low repetition/low prominent placement; (b) low repetition/high prominence placement; (c) high repetition/low prominent placement; and (d) high repetition/high prominent placement. Immediately after the exposure, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to measure their cognitive, affective and cognitive responses.

Instrument

To measure audience response at the *cognitive* level, participants were asked to indicate their recall of the product placed in the program (i.e. rate your level of agreement on whether the following products appeared in the program). Several brands were listed including those which were unavailable in the movie. As for the *affective* level, participants were required to indicate their favourability towards the brand as seen in the program. Using Semantic Differential Scale, liking and favourability of the brand was measured based on the participants' feeling of love-hate, delicious/unpleasant, tasty/tasteless. At the *conative* level, participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on the following statements namely "I will immediately purchase Maggi Assam Laksa after watching this movie"; "I can't wait to eat Maggi Assam Laksa right after watching this movie"; "Maggi Assam Laksa flavor would be my choice in the future"; and "Among the various flavours of instant noodles, I would always recommend Maggi Assam Laksa to my friends".

Finding

The sample indicates that the majority of the respondents are female (66.7%) students. The mean age of the respondents is 23 years old and they were mainly from the social science and applied arts fields. The respondents also were asked about their experience with Maggi Assam Laksa. Most of the respondents are very familiar ($M=5.458$, $SD=1.619$) with Maggi Assam Laksa before they see the movie, but they don't frequently eat it ($M=2.717$, $SD=1.397$).

Table 1 indicates the awareness of the presence of brands in the film 'Istanbul Aku Datang' based on the Likert Scale from (1) 'Not Aware' to (7) 'Most Aware'. Descriptive analysis showed that respondents were most aware of Maggi Assam Laksa compare to other brands, ($M=5.917$, $SD=1.728$).

Table 1. Cognitive response to product placement

No.	Brand	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Samsonite	1.958	1.531
2.	Samsung Galaxy S4	2.383	1.848
3.	Maggi Kari	3.100	2.228
4.	Maggi Assam Laksa	5.917	1.728
5.	iPad	2.633	2.045
6.	BMW	2.250	1.573
7.	Malaysia Airlines	2.666	1.876
Total		3.210	1.880

Based on Table 2, most of the participants stated that they 'love' (M=5.275) the product, think that the product is 'delicious' (M=5.375) and 'tasty' (M=5.342). Table 3 shows the respondents' conative responses towards Maggi Assam Laksa after they are watched the movie. Based on Likert Scale from (1) 'Strongly Disagree' to (7) 'Strongly Agree'. result in Table 3 shows moderate level of intention to purchase the product and to recommend it to friends.

Table 2. Affective response to product placement

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev
1.	Love	5.275	1.443
2.	Delicious	5.375	1.409
3.	Tasty	5.342	1.325
Total		5.331	1.392

Table 3. Conative response to product placement

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	I will immediately purchase Maggi Assam Laksa after watching the movie.	3.683	1.861
2.	I can't wait to eat Maggi Assam Laksa right after watching this movie.	3.567	1.990
3.	Maggi Assam Laksa flavor would be my choice in the future.	3.792	1.748
4.	Among the various flavours of instant noodles, I would always recommend Maggi Assam Laksa to my friends.	3.667	1.707
Total		3.210	1.880

To the test the hypotheses of the study, a two-way ANOVA test was conducted and the first analysis was conducted on the first dependent variable namely cognitive response. Cognitive response was measured based on the ability of the respondents in recalling the brand name in the film. Table 4 indicates the descriptive statistic for placement prominent and level of repetition for the four groups treatment (Subtle-Low, Subtle-High, Prominent-Low, Prominent-High). Audience in the Subtle-High group shows the higher mean value (M=4.456, SE=0.153) compared to the audience in Subtle-Low group (M=2.611, SE=0.153). Audience in Prominent-High group indicates the highest mean value (M=6.967, SE=0.153) for cognitive response while audience in Prominent-Low group showed the mean value (M=5.144, SE=0.153). The overall analysis in cognitive response shows that the highest mean value is Prominent-High group.

Table 4. Mean Cognitive Response across the four treatments

Prominence	Repetition	Mean	Std. Error
Subtle	Low	2.611	0.153
	High	4.456	0.153
Prominent	Low	5.144	0.153
	High	6.967	0.153

The result of two-way between group analysis of variance indicates that was significant main effects for placement prominence $F(1, 116) = 273.238, p < .05$ (Sig. = .000). Prominent placement generated higher recall than subtle placement (Prominent $M = 6.056, SE = 0.108$; Subtle $M = 3.533, SE = 0.108$). Hence, hypothesis was supported.

As expected, hypothesis was supported for a main effect for level of repetition $F(1, 116) = 144.364, p < .05$ (Sig. = .000) shown in Table 12. Audience's level of awareness of the product was found higher for the high repetition group compared to that of the low repetition group (High $M = 5.711, SE = 0.108$; Low $M = 3.878, SE = 0.108$). The result of two-way between group analysis of variance demonstrated no significant interaction effects between the two independent factors $F(1, 116) = 0.005, p > .05$ (Sig. = .942). This indicates that the effect of placement prominent on the audience's recall of the Maggi Assam Laksa does not depend on the level of repetition of Maggi Assam Laksa in the film. Hence, the hypothesis was not supported. See Figure 1.

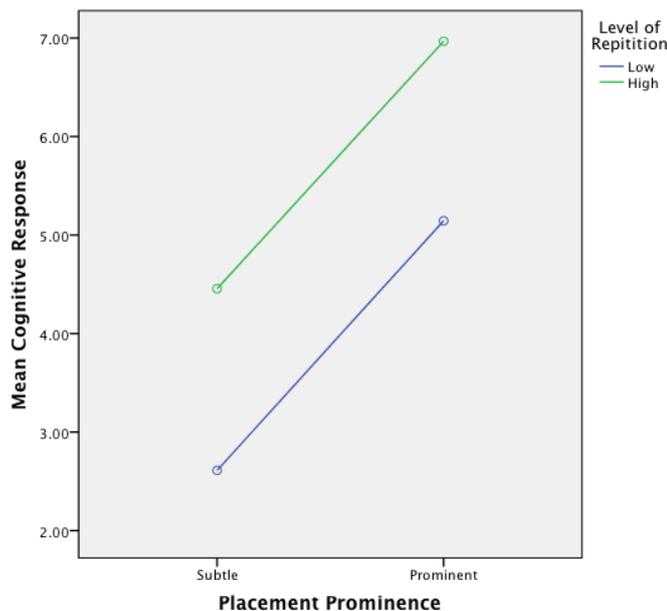


Figure 1. The Effect of Product Placement and Repetition on Cognitive Response

The analysis was conducted on the second dependent variable namely affective response. Affective response was measured based on the favorability and liking of the respondents to the brand name in the film. Table 5 indicates the descriptive statistic that shows the mean value and standard error for placement prominent and level of repetition for the four treatment groups (Subtle-Low, Subtle-High, Prominent-Low, Prominent-High). Audience in the Subtle-Low group shows slightly high mean value ($M=4.775$, $SE=0.210$) compare to the audience in Subtle-High group ($M=4.767$, $SE=0.210$) as shown in Table 13.

Table 5. Mean Affective Response across the four treatments

Prominence	Repetition	Mean	Std. Error
Subtle	Low	4.775	0.21
	High	4.767	0.21
Prominent	Low	4.758	0.21
	High	5.050	0.21

Audience in Prominent-High group indicates the highest mean value ($M=5.050$, $SE=0.210$) for affective response while audience in Prominent-Low group show the mean value ($M=4.758$, $SE=0.210$). The overall analysis in affective response shows that the highest mean value is Prominent-High group.

The result of two-way between group analysis of variance indicates there were no significant main effects for level of prominence $F(1, 116) = 0.533$, $p > .05$ (Sig. = .527). Audience degree of liking Maggi Assam Laksa (Prominent $M = 4.904$, $SE = 0.149$; Subtle $M = 4.771$, $SE = 0.149$) does not differ between the participants in the subtle and prominent placement group. Hence, hypothesis is rejected. The hypothesis was also not supported for this affective response measure. Output demonstrated no significant main effects for level of repetition $F(1, 116) = 0.454$, $p > .05$ (Sig. = .502). Audience's level of awareness of the product was found higher for the high repetition group compared to that of the low repetition

group (High $M = 4.908$, $SE = 0.149$; Low $M = 4.767$, $SE = 0.149$). The result of two-way between group analysis of variance demonstrated no significant interaction effects between the two independent factors $F(1, 116) = 0.509$, $p > .05$ (Sig. = .477). This indicates that the effects of placement on audience's liking towards the Maggi Assam Laksa does not depend on the level of repetition of Maggi Assam Laksa in the film 'Istanbul Aku Datang'. As such, the hypothesis was not supported. See Figure 2 below.

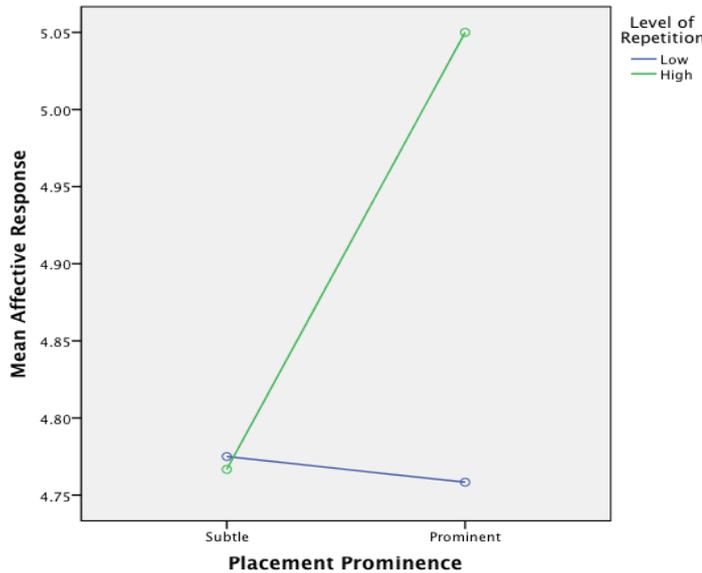


Figure 2. The Effect of Product Placement and Repetition on Affective Response

The analysis was conducted on the third dependent variable namely conative response. Conative response was measured based on intention of the respondents to the brand name in the film. Table 6 indicates the descriptive statistic that shows the mean value and standard error for placement prominent and level of repetition for the four groups treatment (Subtle-Low, Subtle-High, Prominent-Low, Prominent-High). Audience in the Subtle-High group shows higher mean value ($M=3.642$, $SE=0.261$) compare to the audience in Subtle-Low group ($M=3.200$, $SE=0.261$) as shown in Table 15. Audience in Prominent-High group indicates the highest mean value ($M=4.058$, $SE=0.261$) for conative response while audience in Prominent-Low group show the mean value ($M=3.808$, $SE=0.261$). The overall analysis in affective response shows that the highest mean value is Prominent-High group.

Table 6. Mean Conative Response across the four treatments

Prominence	Repetition	Mean	Std. Error
Subtle	Low	3.200	0.261
	High	3.642	0.261
Prominent	Low	3.808	0.261
	High	4.058	0.261

The result of two-way between group analysis of variance indicates there was no significant main effects for level of prominence $F(1, 116) = 3.854$, $p > .05$ (Sig. = .052). Prominent placement does not

significant with subtle placement on audience degree of intention to purchase Maggi Assam Laksa (Prominent $M = 3.933$, $SE = 0.185$; Subtle $M = 3.421$, $SE = 0.185$). Hence, hypothesis is rejected. The hypothesis was also not supported for the conative response measure. Output demonstrated no significant main effects for level of repetition $F(1, 116) = 1.755$, $p > .05$ ($Sig. = .188$). Audience's level of awareness of the product was found higher for the high repetition group compared to that of the low repetition group (High $M = 3.850$, $SE = 0.185$; Low $M = 3.504$, $SE = 0.185$). The result of two-way between group analysis of variance demonstrated no significant interaction effects between the two independent factors $F(1, 116) = 0.135$, $p > .05$ ($Sig. = .714$). This indicates that the effects of placement on audience's purchase intention towards the Maggi Assam Laksa does not depend on the level of repetition of Maggi Assam Laksa in 'Istanbul Aku Datang'. Hence, the hypothesis was not supported. See Figure 3.

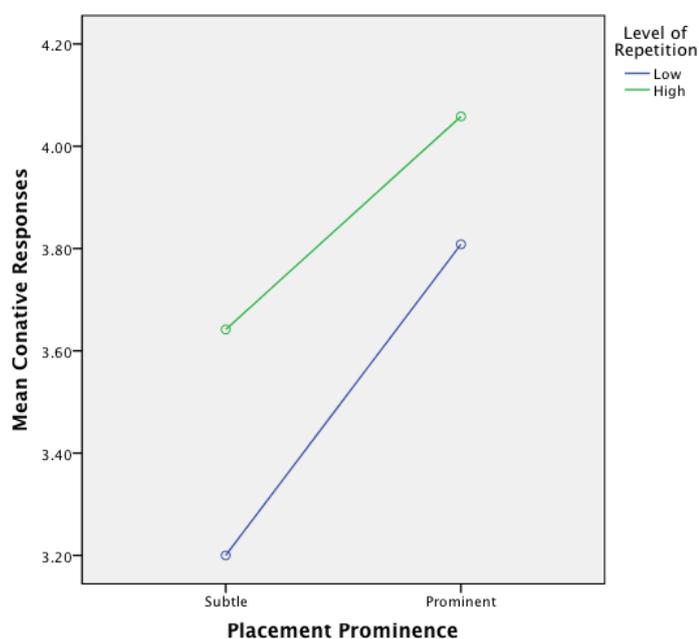


Figure 3. The Effect of Product Placement and Repetition on Conative Response

Conclusion

The study found that placement prominence of Maggi Assam Laksa plays a significant effect on a person's cognitive memory; the more prominent the placement of Maggi Assam Laksa, the greater the recall ability of the audience of Maggi Assam Laksa, and vice versa. Based on the study, it can be concluded that if the advertisers want the audience to remember or recognize the presence of their brand or product, it should be displayed clearly and sufficiently prominent to the public. This is also in accordance to what was said by Argan, Velioglu, and Argan (2007), that brands need to be visible just long enough to attract attention. Almost all of previous research showed a similar finding, i.e. the more prominent display of a product is, the more likely people recognize it, which then leads to them having a strong memory of the product. According to Hackley, Tiwsakul, Preuss (2008), product placement must be integrated into the media vehicle through the use of the branded product as a prop in a scene, or as a word in the script.

In this study, most of the respondents can properly detect the presence of Maggi Assam Laksa as the brands and products displayed, but the researcher also asked about some other brands to determine whether the respondents were paying full attention whilst watching the film, 'Istanbul Aku Datang'. But in truth, the names of other brands suggested in the list (see Appendix 1: Research Question Set) never appeared at all in the film.

Thus, the results showed that the respondents were focused when watching the film, even though they have their own assumptions about something they saw in the film. For example, there was a scene on the plane in the film, and there was no display whatsoever on the name of the airline used; however, the respondents assumed it was the Malaysia Airlines. Another example is, the use of mobile phones by the characters in the film; the respondents assumed that the brand was Samsung S4, but in fact, there was no apparent brand being shown in the film.

Next, the findings of this study showed no significant main effect of placement prominence of Maggi Assam Laksa and level of repetition on the audience's affective and conative response. This may be due to their high familiarity and awareness of the brand Maggi Assam Laksa itself that the level of prominence in the movie did not contribute to their decision-making in choosing to love or to buy the product. Additional question asked on the audience's familiarity with Maggi Assam Laksa before they watch the movie, revealed that all of the respondents said that they are very familiar with the brand Maggi Assam Laksa based on scale of 1-7.

In other words, data shows that the Maggi brand is quite popular among Malaysians, and as such, almost all of the respondents indicated interest in the Maggi Assam Laksa, despite it was displayed in a subtle or prominent manner, low or high repetition. Based on the findings in this study also, demonstrate that intention in buying the product Maggi Asam Laksa was not influenced by how much the product placement they were watching or how often they watched it, but the experienced that they already had about the product were very helpful.

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The Unintended Consequences of Advertising Growth

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Abstract

Advertising growth is common. This study, however, illustrates that continual growth of media forms and media messages, may have unintended consequences for society. Rates of consumer reported depression were compared to rates of media usage. Two CHAID trees were developed, one for depressed respondents, the other for non-depressed. Higher rates of depression were found among heavier media users. Explanations for the findings are offered along with study limitations. A new advertising research agenda is proposed.

Introduction

Advertisers, Marketers, Media and the Demand for Growth

Marketing and advertising have always been about growth...bigger, faster, more choices, more messages, more incentives, more of any and everything that would encourage consumers to spend more, buy more, use more. It has been a seemingly never ending chain of marketer persuasion and advertising messaging designed primarily to grow the marketer's or advertiser's business and reward its shareholders.

That, of course, is a direct result of the free market capitalism system in place around the world. Investors want to invest and they want returns. The fastest and easiest way to generate those returns is through organizational growth resulting in increased sales which will produce dividends or increased stock

value. Oh, cost reductions can sometimes help, but, it is the all-powerful concept of growth, expansion, extension and so on that really is the most seductive of all management theories and concepts.

As a result of this focus on growth and expansion, advertising and marketing communications, as the handmaidens of capitalism and marketing concepts, have naturally been focused on growth as well. More product forms, more brands, more media choices, more messages, more promotions, more incentives and on and on. More of everything, commonly developed in pursuit of the positive growth that management, and by definition investors, demand.

So, over the past century or so, we have seen incredible growth, not just in the proliferation of messages and incentives, but, in the communication tools and media forms that make those additional consumer exposures possible. From printed forms like broadsides to newspapers and magazines, all constrained by their physical distribution properties, to radio and television, with their ability to provide blanket coverage for well-defined geographic areas to today's, seemingly almost unlimited, global communication alternatives such as digital and cellular, i.e., computers and telephones which make communication possible to most of the developed world. And, who knows what next technology will become available to marketers and advertisers as they continuously seek to expand and extend their influence to every person on earth?

Today, there is little question that marketers and advertisers can “dish it out”, i.e., that they can continually increase the number, volume, intensity and exposure of their advertising messages through new forms and types of “media” (assuming such a term is still relevant). The real question, though, is how much of this “advertising and promotion expansion can consumers absorb” without serious consequences to their physical and mental health?

That is the issue discussed in this paper.

How This Study Came About

It was the discovery of the likely unintended consequences of increased media forms and the concomitant growth of advertising messaging, the soaring number of promotional incentives and the like which drove the development of this manuscript. Please note: we did not set out to identify and quantify the results of this study, that is, we initially were focused on whether or not big data, that is, large sets of captured or evolving data could be used to help determine and define how and in what ways consumers access, process and use the increasing plethora of information available to them. All that has been made possible as a result of the massive message distribution systems to which consumers increasingly have access. For example, social media, in the form of Facebook, twitter, You Tube and the like have grown from zero users in 2007-2008 to having billions of consumers accessing their facilities all over the world. (White, 2013)

Our initial inquiry was an attempt to determine how and in what way big data, whatever definition one might wish to use to define that phenomenon. (La Valle, et al, 2013; Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, 2013) could be understood in terms of media consumption and use. From that, we discovered some very interesting relationships that help to expand and extend our understanding of human conditions, in this case, those which are health-related. The results of that investigation resulted in a paper titled “The Relationship between Self-Report of Depression and Media Usage” (Breiter, et al, 2014), that manuscript will be published in a forthcoming issue of “Frontiers in Human Neuroscience” (frontiersin.org). The work, described below, provided some initial clues to what may well be the

unintended or, at least, the unmeasured effects and impact on the human condition brought about by the explosion in the number of communication vehicles, many of which were developed primarily to help marketers and advertisers expand and extend their ability to present and deliver commercial messages to consumers in the marketplace.

Thus, this paper is not a traditional one with a literature review (while there are related academic studies on advertising distribution, reach, frequency and the like, they do not deal with the relevant issues in this paper), a set of hypotheses to be proven or rejected or even a set of research questions, although that could likely be developed should there be a felt need. Instead this paper is an exposition on a set of unexpected findings that have come from the ability to capture, store, study and consider data (big data) gathered from a large group of U.S. consumers who, through their responses to a common online questionnaire, have provided indications of issues and concerns that should be socially troubling to the advertising and marketing community. Further, the findings in this paper identify a new set of research issues which should be brought to the attention of the academic research community, too.

In short, the massive growth of advertising and promotional forms seems to be having an impact on the health and well-being of a substantial segment of the U.S. population. It is for this reason that this paper has been developed with the hope that presenting it at the American Academy of Advertising Conference in 2015, so that a start can be made on generating interest in the issues discovered. Since it is the advertising community in total which is creating the issues discussed, we believe it will take an effort by the entire advertising community to address the challenges, and, hopefully to develop solutions to the issues described in this paper. It is our sincere belief that these issues need to be identified and discussed since they will only continue and grow without positive actions.

As previously stated, this paper relies heavily on a soon-to-be published paper which will appear in a health-related journal "Frontiers of Human Neuroscience". (Breiter, et al, 2014) That publication is directed to the health and psychological community. Thus, the development of this paper, while relying heavily on the original work for content and support, is directed to the advertising and marketing academic community in the hope that it will generate comment and discussion among a different set of researchers who have a direct and vested interest in the findings.

The Original Paper

This paper is based on a new study by the Applied Neuroscience Group (ANG), a multidisciplinary group at Northwestern University working within the facilities of the Integrated Marketing Communications Department in The Medill School. This group has been operative for approximately two years and includes faculty and researchers from the Feinberg School of Medicine, the Department of Integrated Marketing Communications, the Kellogg School of Management, the McCormick School of Applied Engineering, the Bienen School of Music and additional interested external groups. The goal of the ANG is to investigate the impact and influence of the field of neuroscience as it applies to marketing and marketing communications. More information can be found at the ANG website. (<https://sites.google.com/site/neuromarketingmidwest/>)

It was within this structure, and the faculty and research associates interests, that this study was developed. The original paper on which this manuscript has been excerpted contains extensive additional detail of a medical/psychological nature. Sections of that paper have been used in developing this more focused paper on the apparent impact and potential results of media advertising exposure on the general

population. A particular emphasis has been placed on those who have self-diagnosed themselves as being “depressed” or suffering from “depression”.

A Study of Depression among Adults 18+ in the United States

Depression is known to affect many kinds of human behavior, and is quite common. As of 2005, the lifetime prevalence of major depressive disorder in the U.S. population was reported to be 16.5% (Kessler et al., 2005a), with 6.7% prevalence in a 12-month period, 30.4% of which were severe (or 2.0% of the U.S. population) (Kessler et al., 2005b). Given the prevalence of depression, there is interest from a neuromarketing perspective in how that field of study might be related to patterns of media consumption. Such issues are of fundamental concern for mechanisms of behavior change research and psychology (e.g., Morgenstern, et al., 2013).

There is a developing literature evaluating the relationship between various types of media use and psychiatric conditions. For instance, one study found a high positive correlation between internet addiction and depression among university students (Orsal, et al 2012). Another study found that adults with major depressive disorder spent excessive amounts of leisure time on the computer, while those with dysthymia, panic disorder, and agoraphobia spent more time watching television than the control group or those with other disorders (de Wit, 2011). However, results have not always been consistent, particularly in the domain of social media use. A recent paper failed to find any association between social network use and depression in older adolescents (Jelenchick, et al 2013), while other studies have found positive associations between Facebook use and depression in high school students (Pantic, et al, 2012), and Facebook use and a lack of subjective well-being in young adults (Kross, et al 2013).

Given the heterogeneity across previous studies, and the rapid evolution of media formats over the past decade, we used a large consumer database (> 19,000 subjects) to assess the relationship between self-reported depression (SRD) and media usage, taking into account demographic information which may impact the incidence of SRD such as employment status and disability. We used SRD since major depression cannot be diagnosed with big data surveys, and compared the rate of SRD to published incidence data on the diagnosis of major depression.

This study differed from previous studies in the following ways. (1) The sample size of the dataset was substantially larger than any previous study evaluating the relationship between media use and depression. (2) We evaluated the link between depression and multiple domains of media use, whereas most previous studies have focused primarily on single domains. For example, recent work with a smaller database has suggested there is an increase in digital media usage in “depressed” adolescents (Primack et. al, 2009), but this study did not investigate its relationship to different subcomponents of media, such as social media, internet, and television.

The Data Set

The dataset used in this study was derived from the Media Behavior and Influence Study (MBIS), a syndicated online study of American adult (i.e., >18 years of age) consumers, conducted twice yearly since 2002 by BIGinsight of Columbus, Ohio. The current wave of 19,776 participants was completed in December, 2012. Using a double opt-in methodology, each MBIS study was balanced to meet demographic criteria established by the U.S. census. MBIS data has been used by a variety of well-known, commercial marketing organizations. Variables of interest included depression by gender, age, employment status, marital status, race and ethnicity, income, education, measures of isolation, and

internet, TV and social media use. These variables were selected because they have been variables of interest in previous depression studies, and have been shown to have predictive value (e.g., Catalano, 1977; Wilkowska-Chmielewska, 2012).

Media usage for internet, television, and social media are based on yes / no responses to several day-parts of variable hour durations for a typical weekday. These blocks of time were shorter for typical waking hours and longer for overnight and weekend periods. Block length was used to weight media usage probability during the calculation of total hours of consumption (i.e., divided by the number of hours in each block of time). Average hour exposure probabilities were calculated for a 24 hour period, and minutes per day were estimated by multiplying the result by 1440. Internet, TV, and social media usage were hence composite variables created as probabilities of number of minutes of daily usage, derived from data indicating whether or not subjects used the respective services in seven discrete variable-hour blocks.

Data Analysis

Three types of analysis were performed with this data. First, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed, inclusive of correlations between depression and media consumption variables to facilitate interpretation of the subsequent analyses. Second, the results of that analysis were used to inform a type of recursive partitioning (Breiman et al., 1984; Friedman, 1977; Gordon & Olshen, 1984; Mingers, 1989; Morgan & Sonquist, 1963; Quinlan, 1986), namely CHAID tree analysis (Biggs et al., 1991; Kass, 1980). Third, a multivariate discriminate analysis was conducted. Given the descriptive statistical analyses were standard, these are not further discussed. In all analyses below, except in the CHAID analysis, fewer than 50 total comparisons were made; to correct for multiple comparisons. A Bonferroni correction for 50 comparisons, requiring a $p < 0.001$ to be considered a significant result was used.

CHAID Tree Analysis

Two recursive partitioning analyses were conducted. One focused on SRD and the second on a variable not of interest, namely non-SRD, to act as a control for the SRD results. The working hypothesis for both was that the control analysis of non-SRD subjects would not replicate or provide an opponent (i.e., completely non-overlapping) set of nodes to the analysis of SRD subjects.

Construction of statistical CHAID trees (SPSS tree) evaluated the interaction among a number of predictor variables of SRD, and separately non-SRD. Typically, such schemes are defined in terms of demographic variables such as age and gender; however analyses by occupation, education, marital status and media use were also conducted. Splitting criteria included minimum parent node size of 100 and child node size of 50, and a p-value threshold of 0.05. These splitting criteria were used for both CHAID analyses.

Analytical Results

Descriptive and Analyses

Rates of SRD in the current study wave were nearly identical by gender as shown in Table 1, with males slightly lower at 11.8%, compared to females at 12.3%.

Table 1: The three columns of numeric values represent (i) the percentage of all adults in the survey with the given attribute (excepting income and age, which lists the survey mean), (ii) the percentage of subjects having the given attribute that that self-reported depression, and (iii) the index of the given attribute as it relates to depression. Rows on the left of the table are clustered around demographics, relationship status, education, and work identification. Rows on the right are clustered by illnesses separate from depression, and with race/ethnicity (Note: these do not follow National Institute of Health definitions of race and ethnicity).

Depression by Demographics December 2012							
	All Adults %	Adults with Depression	Index		All Adults %	Adults with Depression	Index
Age (average years)*	45.4	43.8	96.3	Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	2.1	9.8	458.1
Male	48.3	11.8	97.5	Anxiety	12.9	54.8	425.8
Female	51.7	12.3	101.7	Dyslexia	0.8	2.6	334.5
Income (000)*	62.8	49.0	78.0	Fibromyalgia	2.3	7.4	327.5
Have Children	29.1	30.2	103.9	Insomnia / Difficulty Sleeping	8.4	27.5	325.8
Live in Top 10 MSA	24.7	10.0	82.6	Restless Leg Syndrome	4.1	11.6	279.8
				Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) / Crohn's Disease	2.4	6.3	262.6
Married	42.5	9.5	78.5	Chronic Bronchitis/COPD	2.9	7.3	252.5
Living with Unmarried Partner	7.2	15.5	128.1	Sleep Apnea	6.6	16.4	248.2
Divorced or separated	10.2	15.4	128.3	Heartburn/Indigestion	9.9	22.7	230.3
Widowed	3.0	12.4	102.5	Headaches/Migraines	14.0	29.6	211.5
Single, never married	25.7	14.1	116.5	Back Pain	21.5	42.7	198.4
Same Sex Union	0.5	22.2	183.5	Acid Reflux	15.8	30.5	192.9
				Heart Disease	3.2	5.9	185.9
Have not graduated high school	1.5	21.7	179.3	Hearing Impairment	4.3	8.0	184.6
Graduated high school	16.8	13.1	108.3	Overweight	21.2	37.6	177.1
Technical school or Vocational training	5.7	13.8	114.0	Arthritis	15.5	27.3	176.4
1 – 3 years of college (did not graduate)	20.2	15.1	124.8	Asthma	9.7	17.0	174.8
Associates or Professional degree	8.9	13.2	109.1	Vision Impairment	15.0	24.8	165.2
Bachelor's degree	22.5	9.4	77.7	Enlarged Prostate / Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)	2.2	3.6	162.6
Post college study or degree	13.5	8.8	72.7	Diabetes	9.3	15.0	162.1
				Osteoporosis	2.5	4.1	161.6
Business Owner	4.2	11.7	96.7	High Cholesterol	18.8	29.3	155.9
Professional / Managerial	25.5	8.2	67.8				
Salesperson	3.6	11.5	95.0	Black	18.0	8.7	71.9
Factory worker / Laborer / Driver	3.3	9.6	79.3	Asian	3.0	7.9	65.3
Clerical or Service Worker	9.5	11.9	98.3	Multi	0.8	16.9	139.7
Homemaker	3.6	14.7	121.5	Native	0.4	15.5	128.1
Student, High school or College	8.4	13.0	107.4	White	58.4	13.6	112.4
Military	0.7	11.6	95.9	Other	0.5	9.9	81.8
Retired	13.7	10.8	89.3	Hispanic	18.9	10.9	90.1
Unemployed	5.5	18.8	155.4				
Disabled (unable to work)	2.0	42.7	352.9				

Bivariate analysis suggested an inverse linear association of SRD with age, which is consistent with previously reported studies (Henderson et al 1998). Individuals who were married were also different than those who were unmarried as shown in Table 1, with married respondents representing a large portion of the sample (42.5%), and reporting a lower SRD rate of 9.5%. The highest rate of SRD was from those in same sex unions, at 22.2%. Those living with an unmarried partner, divorced or

separated, or single (never married) reported rates between 14.1% and 15.5%, while those that were widowed reported rates (12.4%) nearly the same as the overall average.

Both income and education (Table 1), also demonstrated a strong inverse linear association with SRD, similar to age (statistics not provided given omnibus analyses to follow). Non-high school graduates self-reported a 21.7% depression rate compared to those with post college study or degree at 8.8%. The overall average income was \$62,800, with those reporting depression indicating an average of \$49,000. Occupation levels showed similar effects, as shown in Table 1, with those disabled (unable to work) reporting a 42.7% depression rate. Other high reporting categories included the unemployed at 18.8%, and students at 13.0%. The lowest category was professional and management at 8.2%.

SRD was also related to the reporting of other health conditions as shown in Table 1. Generally, those reporting depression were likely to say they had other health-related conditions, such as anxiety (54.8%). Other conditions more prevalent in SRC subjects included: back pain (42.7%), overweight (37.6%), acid reflux (30.5%), headaches/migraines (29.6%), insomnia/difficulty sleeping (27.5%). (Table 1)

Residents of states with large urban areas and those living in the top 10 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), have lower rates of SRD. The top 10 MSAs include Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, Detroit, Phoenix and Houston. This suggests that residents of rural areas tend to report higher rates of depression.

a. Media Use

Overall there were low but significant positive linear correlations between SRD and media consumption. In these descriptive analyses, the three most consumed media were television, on average 129 minutes per day per adult (18+), the internet, on average 143 minutes per day, and social media, on average 83 minutes per day. The bivariate association (r) between SRD and television consumption was 0.089, surfing the internet was 0.089 and social media was 0.063 (all $p < 0.001$).

Media usage quintiles, a method commonly used in the media industry, were created using the composite media usage variables described above. Those showed higher rates of depression among the most active users of media. Figure 3 shows that for the highest 20% of television users (quintile 5, 289 minutes per day) the SRD rate was 16.9%. The SRD rate among the highest internet users (327 minutes per day) was also 16.9%. SRD was slightly lower among the highest social media users (279 minutes per day) at 15.4%. The patterns among all three media categories were the same: higher consumption of any form of media was associated with higher rates of reported depression.

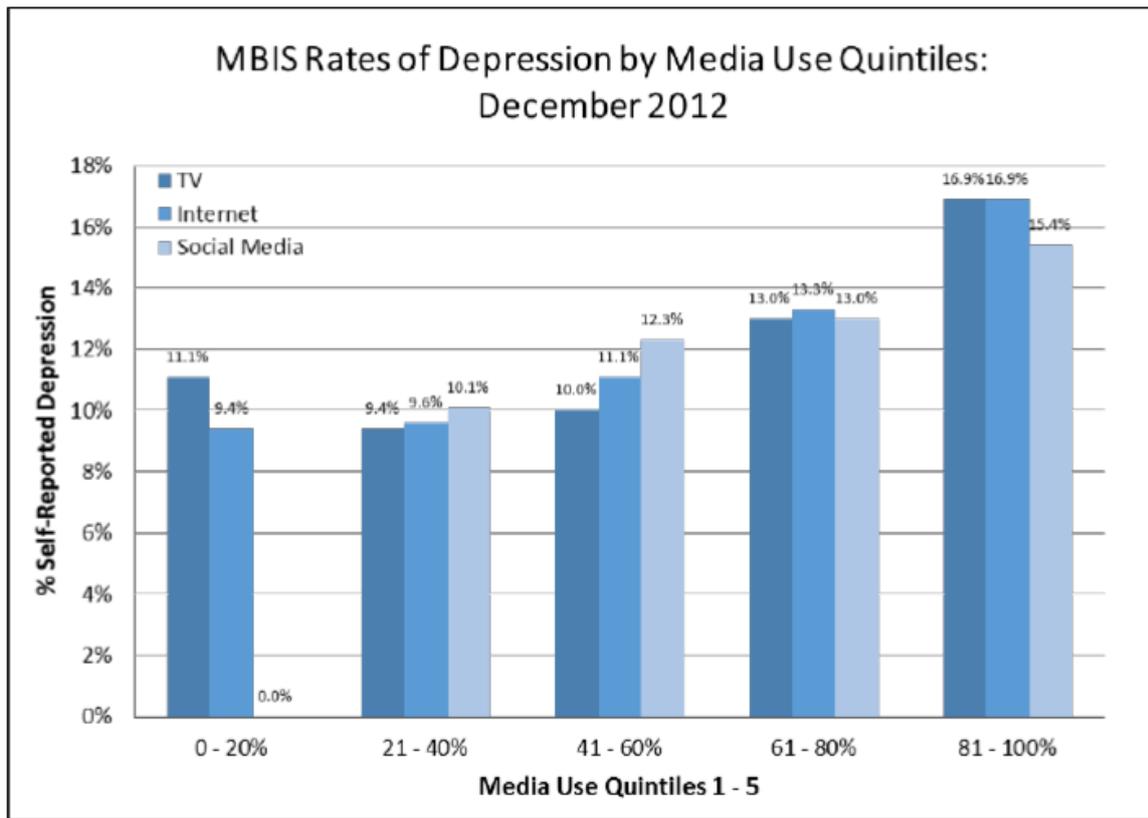


Figure 1

CHAID Tree Analysis

The analyses reported above were limited to bivariate correlations. To better understand how multiple variables for media consumption and other demographics/activities related to SRD, a multivariate segmentation scheme was employed based on recursive partitioning (Breiman et al., 1984; Friedman, 1977; Gordon & Olshen, 1984; Mingers, 1989; Morgan & Sonquist, 1963; Quinlan, 1986). The first CHAID tree (Biggs, et al., 1991; Kass, 1980) (Figure 2) shows the interaction among the predictor variables on the rate of SRD (the target variable). The second CHAID tree (Figure 3) shows the interaction among the predictor variables and those who did not self-report being depressed. The first analysis on depressed individuals generated 22 terminal nodes, while the second on non-depressed subjects generated 21. The trees (Figures 2 and 3) were pruned to include only 8 and 10 terminal nodes where the depression rate was 15% or more and the non-depression rate was 87% or higher, respectively. The tree nodes showed the variable used to create the node, the depression rate, and the percent of all adults that the node represented. In figure 4, those that were unemployed, for example, were 6.0% of the sample and reported a depression rate of 18.8%.

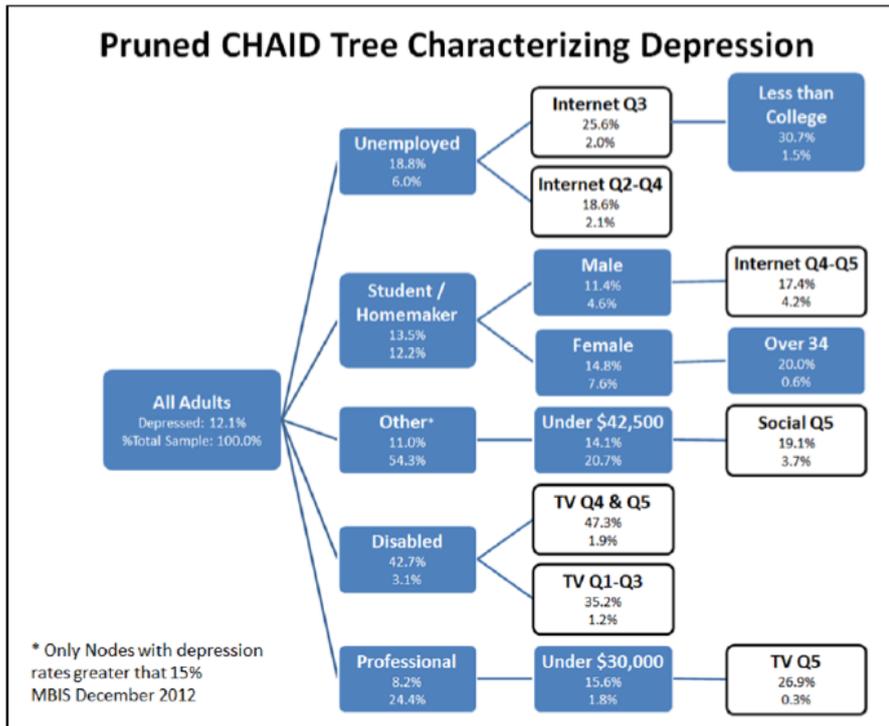


Figure 2

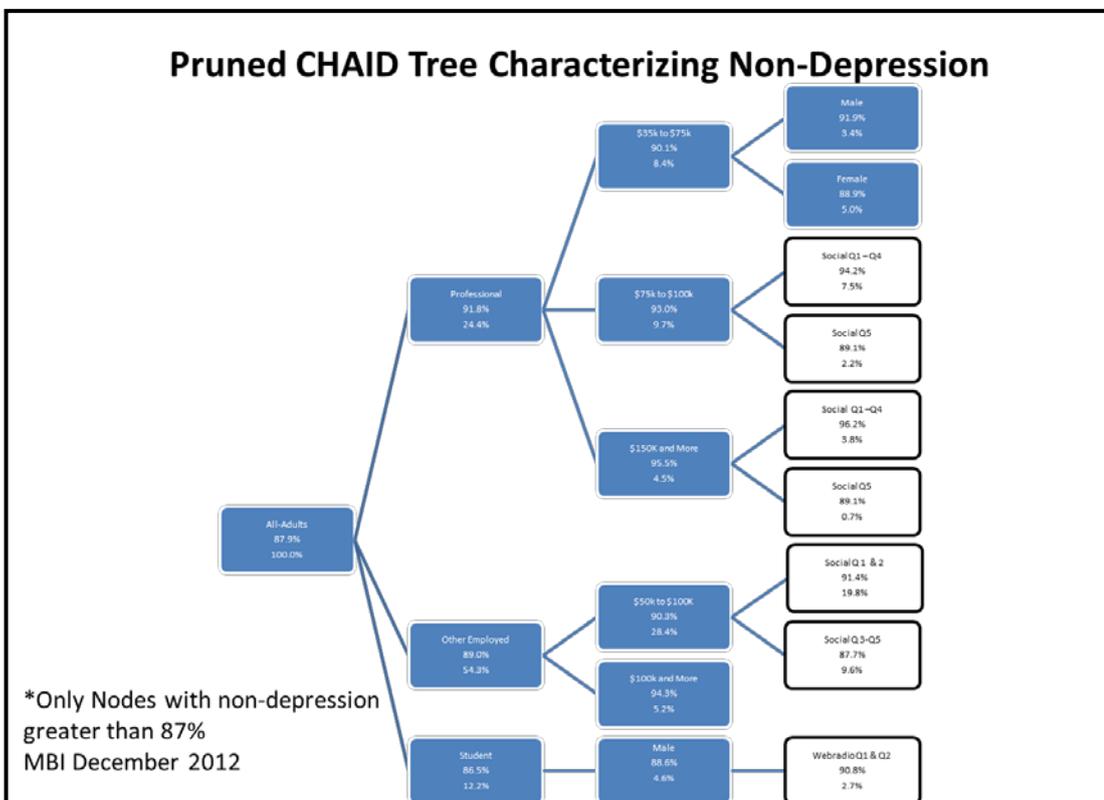


Figure 3

In the analysis of SRD subjects, the CHAID tree segments (Figure 2) that were the basis for understanding the relationship of depression to media and other variables were as follows. In general, factors such as disability, unemployment and lower incomes were associated with higher rates of SRD. Media consumption tended to significantly leverage the rate attributable to these characteristics. Six nodes of interest are briefly described. The node with the highest depression rate (47.3%) was being disabled (1) and in the top two TV consumption quintiles. This was compared to being disabled and in the bottom three TV quintiles with a somewhat lower depression rate (35.2%). The next highest depression node (30.7%) consisted of (2) those who were unemployed, in the top internet quintile, and had less than a college education. Those in a professional or managerial occupation that made \$30,000 or less, and were in the highest TV quintile (3), reported a depression rate of 26.9%. (4) Female students or homemakers older than 34, reported a 20.0% depression rate. (5) Those in other occupations, including workers, sales, military and retired, that make less than \$42,500 and were in the highest social media quintile, reported a depression rate of 19.1%. (6) Male students or homemakers in the highest two internet quintiles reported a depression rate of 17.4%.

Life challenges may not be the only experiences related to depression. As noted with our descriptive statistical analysis, persistent environmental factors such as isolation can also contribute to the prevalence of a psychological experience. Generally, isolation is a known correlate of depression symptomology, and our data suggest that residents of rural areas tend to report higher rates of depression. Within the context of isolation, one can distinguish between physical and non-physical isolation; and within non-physical isolation one can look at social and emotional isolation. These various subclasses of isolation find ample support in the literature. Weiss (1973) first distinguished the two types of non-physical isolation – social and emotional – which have subsequently been empirically shown as distinct (DiTommaso and Spinner 1997). Although conceptually distinct, the various types of isolation interact. Physical isolation has been shown to affect social and emotional isolation, especially for the elderly (Dugan et al 1994) and adolescents (Brage and Meredith 1993). Social isolation was measured through the proxy of living alone and physical isolation through the proxy of place of residence, finding that both correlate to rates of self-reported depression. For instance, those living in more populated cities (top 10 MSAs) tend to report lower rates of depression.

In addition to the current state of depression, the data analyzed revealed that SRD has been in a state of flux over the past decade. At the beginning of this time frame, the rates observed were low compared to 2005 MBIS data where the depressive rate was reported to be 14.9%; a figure consistent with a co-occurring 2005 study wherein a lifetime prevalence rate of 16.5% for major depressive disorder was reported (Kessler et al., 2005a, 2005b). Interestingly, the 2005 MBIS data and the Kessler et al. (2005a, 2005b) data show remarkable concordance despite differences in inclusion criteria (exclusion of non-English speakers in the Kessler et al., 2005a/2005b studies), the use of a structured clinical interview versus self-report data, and overall subject demographics. This flux in reported incidence of depression over the past decade is further supported by the MBIS data showing self-reported depression has been on the rise in adults (18+) over the last 4 years in the United States.

It is worth considering the demographics of individuals (e.g., gender) reporting SRD in the context of a flux in depression rates over time. As recently as 5 years ago, females were more likely to report being depressed (i.e., SRD). However, in the most recent MBIS study, the data shows SRD to be similarly associated with both genders, with males reporting only a slightly lower rate of depression. This is different than the rates reported by Primack and colleagues (2009) where females were shown to be

significantly more likely to be depressed, as was also observed in the December 2005 MBIS data. In comparison to prior big data reports, there appears to be a narrowing in the gap of reported depression in females and males, which could potentially reflect a change in the likelihood of genders to self-report. One factor that has remained constant was that depression is inversely related to age, with those younger than 24 reporting the highest rate, and older married persons reporting the lowest.

Limitations

There are several important limitations to this study that are worth mentioning. First, the data used was self-reported depression, which does not necessarily reflect whether the subject has ever received a clinical diagnosis of depression. The subjective phenotypes of those who have a clinical diagnosis of major depression versus those that self-report depression could skew the data in a number of different ways.

Second, the variables computed for amount of television, internet, and social media use are not direct measures. These variables are composite variables computed from self-reports of whether or not subjects used those various media during discrete variable-hour-length blocks. This can introduce inter-subject variability along a number of dimensions. For instance, some subjects may report “yes” for one of the intervals based on an hour’s worth of use, while others may respond the same based on several hours’ worth of use. The probabilities computed represent just that, a probability of time spent using a given media relative to other subjects.

Third, the analyses done cannot speak to a causal relationship between media consumption and depression, or to any directionality between the observed associations. The likeliest explanation of that finding is that these two variables form a complex bi-directional relationship with autocatalytic properties. An alternative explanation is that depression and increased media use are a byproduct of a third confounding factor. It should also be noted that the direction of causality between depression and media use could also vary across individuals (i.e., whether media usage helps to ameliorate depression or whether it contributes to it). Whatever the exact relationship between depression and increased media use, it is clear that the two are closely associated.

Fourth, it is important to acknowledge the potential confounds of concurrent medical illness on assessing associations with SRD. In the literature on major depression, hypotheses have been raised that depression in association with a medical illness does not necessarily reflect the same structural and functional circuitry alterations seen in depression with strong familial heritability (e.g., see Breiter and Gasic, 2004; Breiter et al., 2006). There is a strong possibility of biological subtypes in depression (e.g., see Blood et al., 2010) meaning depression comorbid with other illnesses may reflect a directionality with media that is distinct from other putative depressive subtypes.

What Does All This Mean to the Advertising and Marketing Communication Research Communities?

Clearly, this study points out that there are new, and perhaps unintended impacts and effects on consumers emanating from the massive growth in the commercialization of most forms of human communication, ranging from increases in traditional media to the new forms of the rapidly emerging digital communication spectrum. While advertising researchers have naturally focused on trying to identify and illustrate the effects of all these new media alternatives on traditional areas such as purchase intentions, brand meanings, promotional influences and the like, there seem to be several additional areas which this study has identified which may be below the traditional advertising and marketing

communication researcher's radar. Some of the examples of those research areas, which have come from this study, might be:

1. Impact on Health: Historically, the health of the overall population which is impacted by advertising has been a subject of great interest. For example, the effects of advertising have generally focused on the physical health of the population, that is, does advertising encourage unhealthy consumer actions? Areas such as obesity (Lesser et al, 2013) high blood pressure (Schudson, 2013) diabetes (Schudson, 2013) and even breast cancer (Harvey and Strahilevitz, 2009) all have been areas advertising researchers have and continue to investigate. Alternatively, mental health, such as depression have not been well developed nor extensively researched. Some limited work on the concept of "empty self", as cited earlier, has been done. (Cushman, 1990) The emotional and mental health of consumers as a result of the increased advertising volume and expanded media forms has not generated much researcher attention. Generally, the premise in the advertising community has been that "more is better", i.e. more media, more advertising frequency, more promotional inducements have been good for the advertiser and marketer. Yet, this initial study seems to suggest that there may well be socially undesirable effects of too much media and too much advertising exposure. That seems to be an area that could provide some socially valuable insights.

2. Activity Impact: What people do with their leisure time and how that influences and impacts their consumption of goods and services is another area of seemingly under developed advertising research. Increasingly, consumers are adopting and adapting to new uses of their leisure time. Historically, watching television filled the idle hours. (Marling, 1996) That seems to have been replaced by surfing the net (Griffiths, 2000) or increasingly using social media to keep in contact and continuously communicate with others. These areas are just starting to be investigated by advertising researchers. It is our belief that new and different media forms may impact and influence consumers differently than they have in the past. Thus, is an "advertising exposure" in one media form the same as an exposure in an alternative form? The issue between the relative impact of print vs broadcast has raged for decades. (Shah, et al, 2001) We likely need to start investigating the impact and effect of media consumption and advertising delivered through numerous other communication channels and forms. Those may be more important than our historical studies of simple reach and frequency.

3. Social Media/Social Activities and Usage: Clearly, this study points up the increasing use of social media and the resulting social activities consumers engage in as a result of those media forms. We are just starting to understand how this impact and affect the lives of consumers. In a related study, Schultz and Block (2013) found high correlations between consumer use of social media and the growth of no brand preference for a large number of consumer brands. They argued that the availability and use of social media, and its partitioning and disassembling effect within consumer communities has and is having an impact on consumer's acceptance and preference for major national brands in the U.S. The resulting impact seems to be increased commoditization of brands in the marketplace. Thus, in this instance, increased use of and involvement with social media may be a bad, not a good thing for marketing organizations. This issue at this point, is that we really don't know. That is one area that seems to be worth learning more about.

This paper is, we believe, only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the impact and effect of the increases in media availability and consumer media consumption and advertising frequency. The opportunities are great and the impact may be enormous. At this point, we simply don't know.

Thus, our closing argument is to challenge the advertising and marketing communications community to expand, extend and embrace the use of new tools and methodologies such as big data, different analytical techniques and most of all, new thinking on what the impact and effect of the interactive, digitalized systems may be having on consumers both to the advantage of marketers but also to the potentially harmful impact and effect they may be having on consumers as well. Those types of initiatives would seem to offer not only substantial research and learning opportunities; it could well serve both marketers and consumers, and likely the entire society as well.

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Role of Account Planning in Creativity: A Research Proposal

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Working Paper

Introduction

It has been almost 50 years since the establishment of account planning in advertising by Stanley Pollit at BMP and Stephen King at JWT. But academia has shown much greater interest in other areas of advertising. Crosier and Pickton (2003:411) states that “it is abundantly clear that the discipline of account planning may lack a definition or a significant body of formal literature, but it does have founding fathers, school of thought, professional conventions, a textbook (Cooper, 1997), and a house journal *Admap*”.

Even though there is little interest in account planning in academia, there is an endless debate about whether advertising is an art or a science. Feldwick (2002) reveals that the discussion could have been lit by Walter Dill Scott in 1901, a professor of psychology at Northwestern University, when he gave his speech at a businessmen club in Chicago under the topic of 'The psychology of involuntary attention as applied to advertising'. His book *The Psychology of Advertising* (1903) was dedicated to “that increasing number of *American businessmen* who successfully apply science where their predecessors were confined to custom” Feldwick (2002:2).

Business world can be more familiar with numbers and therefore can feel close to science but as Bill Bernbach, the most influential man in advertising in the 20th Century according to Advertising Age-1999, puts it “advertising is fundamentally persuasion, and persuasion happens to be an art, not a science” (Bernbach, 1987).

Diamond and van Halen-Faber (2002) states that art and science are not competing ways but rather two related issues that help us understand the world. Even though science can be considered as rational and art can be considered as irrational, “the artist and the scientist, far from being engaged in

opposed or incomparable activities, are both trying to extend our knowledge and experience by the use of creative imagination subjected to critical control” (Popper, cited in McGee, 1973: 68). Unsurprisingly, one of the founding fathers of account planning, Stephen King, concludes that “there isn’t the slightest degree of conflict between art and science” (Lannon and Baskin, 2011: 45). In the late 1960’s, Stephen King initiated the idea of account planning in JWT and Stanley Pollitt created the department (Baskin, 2001). Account planning is imported to the US advertising industry by Jay Chiat in (Aksoy, 2005). Advertising, a pioneering member of creative industries, necessitates benefiting both from planning (science) and creative (art) processes. As King argues (1989: 2) “advertising has always been planned and campaigns have always been post-rationalized. People like James Webb Young, Claude Hopkins, Rosser Reeves, David Ogilvy and Bill Bernbach were all superb planners.” Scarcity of geniuses like them, evolution of brands, rise of research, and competition in advertising industry may be the triggering reasons which led the way to create a department and a process.

Literature review

Account planning may have drawn great interest throughout the years in the advertising industry but the interest of academia may be considered not as much (Crosier, Grant and Gilmore, 2003). Review of the literature points out that studies are mostly done by academics and professionals together where the content mostly gathers around perception, evolution and job descriptions of account planning (Butcher and McCulloch, 2003; Zambardino and Goodfellow, 2003; Baskin and Pickton, 2003; Frazer, Sheehan and Patti, 2002; Patwardhan, Patwardhan and Vasavada-Oza, 2009; Crosier, Grant and Gilmore, 2003). Thus it can be said that process of account planning and the role it plays in creativity is often neglected by academics. Hackley (2003: 446) describes the role that account planners play in campaign development as ‘midwifery’, which “involves facilitation rather than execution”. And Account Planning Group in the UK defines its member’s role as “... guide and facilitate this process via astute application of knowledge or consumer/market understanding (Baskin, 2001: 3). According to Account Planning Group UK, “the planner has brought an added dimension of understanding to the process of developing ads by stimulating discussion about purchasing decisions, the brand–consumer relationship and how advertising works in specific circumstances, helping to win new business by instilling confidence in the prospective client as a result of a comprehensive and disciplined approach” (1999). Jane Newman consider planners as “the voice of a thousand consumers in the agency” (Aksoy, 2005: 171) and Feldwick (2009: 2) adds the notion of “the account manager's conscience”.

As the literature reveals that account planning provides directions for the teams in brands and agencies, it can be said that the knowledge about brands, categories, the target groups, competition, point of differentiation etc. is introduced to the creatives by account planning. Account planning distills the issues, which helps the creative people to deal with the essence of the communication problem. (Feldwick et al., 2010; Crosier and Pickton, 2003; Baskin and Pickton, 2003; Grant, Gilmore and Crosier, 2003; Barry, Patterson, and Todd, 1987).

Hedges (1997: 85) also provides some evidence about the possible mayhem if planner and creative people do not team up: “Creative people who are handed the creative brief tend to ignore it and throw up their own unrelated ideas for an ad; partly because they are not involved in the planning process or committed to its output, and partly because the output is simply not useful for them”.

Moreover, in his work Hackley (2003) reviewed published research and interviews with professionals and aimed to reveal the integration of insights into creative advertising development process.

He concludes that even though progress has been made regarding account planning the integration of insights into creative advertising development process is still at the center. According to Hackley (2003: 452) there are three important issues about account planning's integrative function:

- Market research perceived as the dynamic consumer insight rather than a passive input
- Market research perceived as a process of interpretation of data instead of a data collection exercise
- Embracing the power of quantitative research data with the insights developed through qualitative studies.

Regarding the literature review, it can be said that most of the scholars, keep the discussion around the topic of the role of the account planners, leaving a door open for a research in understanding of the role i.e. the process of account planning in creativity.

The history and literature of account planning in Turkey resembles the history and literature in the world. It was when Manajans (pioneer advertising agency of Turkey) joined forces with JWT in 1985; advertising industry in Turkey met with account planning (Aksoy, 2005). Regarding a 30 years of history, it can be argued that there is little interest in articulating local knowledge for account planning where, until now, there is only one dissertation by Saban Aslan from University of Selcuk (2008), 'The Concept of Account Planning and Implementation in Advertising Agencies: A Research on The Account Planners of Advertising Agencies in Turkey and Implementation of Account Planning'. Aslan (2008), in his dissertation has an objective of revealing the perceptions of account planners, in implementation of account planning and future, perception of the profession, requirements and expectations, problems of the profession and solutions to those problems and thus contribute to development of account planning in advertising agencies and advertising as an industry. Until this date, there is only one book focusing on account planning in Turkey which is 'Starteji*' by Erol Batislam (now Managing Director of HAVAS Turkey). Batislam mostly demonstrates how tools of account planning will work in experienced hands. And just a few chapters in books like Strategic Brand Management (2014) by Associate Professor Uğur Batı (Yeditepe University) and 'New Advertising' (2005) by Atilla Aksoy (Founder of Y&R Reklamevi, President of Advertising Association in 1992-1995, Coordinator of Advertising Department at Bilgi University) Atilla Aksoy, one of the leaders of advertising industry in Turkey, in his book (2005), tries to acknowledge the readers about both the fundamentals and new approaches in advertising. Aksoy tends to describe the process of account planning but stays in the framework of job description of the planners.

There seems to be similar issues like the ones experienced in the UK and the USA in Turkey. It could be stated that, determining the role of account planning in creativity will bring a new horizon for the academia and also a fresh knowledge for the advertising industry in Turkey.

Theoretical Framework

Account planners can be innovative in finding things out, distilling and crystallizing them and making that knowledge useful for creative people who are expected to come up with better ideas faster (Steel, 1998). This approach can assure the most important duty of the account planning as "to leverage effectiveness of advertising by inserting the real insights of the consumer into creative process and determines that every phase of the advertising process is within the big picture" (Aksoy, 2005: 171).

As Kozbelt, Begheuo, and Runco (2010: 20) clearly states: "to understand creativity in all of its richness, there is a need for moderation, where no one theoretical perspective is emphasized at the expense

of others”. They have set ten categories of contemporary creativity theories: Developmental, Psychometric, Economic, Stage and Componential Process, Cognitive, Problem Solving and Expertise-Based, Problem Finding, Evolutionary, Typological, and Systems in their Theories of Creativity chapter. Their categorizing was not only based upon “orientation to signal that these two basic types (scientific vs. metaphorical)” or upon “levels of creative magnitude” but also upon “which aspect or facet of creativity they emphasize and called the six p’s of creativity: *process*, *product*, *person* (or personality), *place* (or press), *persuasion*, and *potential*.” (Kozbelt, Begheuo, and Runco, 2010: 20-24).

Among these theories, cognitive theories can be a good leverage for this research as they “emphasize the creative process and person: process, in emphasizing the role of cognitive mechanisms as a basis for creative thought; and person, in considering individual differences in such mechanisms” (Kozbelt, Begheuo, and Runco, 2010: 31). An account planner will enable creative people not only to understand the requirements but also focus on the voice of the consumers which account planning process delivers. Cognitive theories will help to understand how two different sets of information can bring creative solutions to problems and ideation. Creativity can be explored in terms of cognitive psychology i.e. metaphor, conceptual combination and expansion, creative imagery etc. while generating ideas and exploring their implications (Kozbelt, Begheuo, and Runco, 2010).

But any idea to be creative not only should be original (different, fresh, unexpected), but also (right for the product and the target group) strategic (Well, Burnett and Moriarty, 2003).

This approach may help to understand how creative people see account planning process as well as how account planners see this process. Comparing and contrasting the processes that try to explain the role of account planning in creativity can unleash the potential of creating a model for account planning model powered by both account planners and creative people.

Methodology

This research will attempt to explore the integration of account planning and creativity in a context Hackley (2003: 446) explains as “there are clearly potential benefits to be gained if account planners are capable of generating actionable consumer insights through their research activities and able to integrate these insights into the creative advertising development process in a way that staff can and will use”.

The objectives of this research are:

- To discover the relationship of creative and account planning processes
- To understand how creative people feel and think about account planning process
- To understand how account planning people feel and think about account planning process
- To create a model of account planning process empowered by creative process

One of the three hypothesis stated in Aslan’s dissertation (2008) was ‘account planning means the success of the creative work thus advertising campaign’ and was accepted. The universe of the research only consisted of account planners, and therefore views of creative people in the advertising agencies cannot be determined. And also the research was a quantitative one, leaving us without the understanding of why and in what sense the planners have that view.

The research will be carried out using qualitative methods as it helps the researcher to understand the experience lived about a phenomenon (Fill, 1999). The participants will be account planners and

creative people from agencies, which are members (105 agencies) of Turkish Foundation of Advertising Agencies.

At first, a focus group study will be done to encapsulate the verbatim and concepts, which are associated with account planning and creative processes. Later an in-depth interview with account planners and creative people is planned to understand the relationship of concepts identified in focus groups thus determine the role of account planning in creativity.

The representatives of account planning and creative departments will be chosen according to their 7-10 years of experience as they need to be the ones who are the decision-makers in their agencies. Any awards won (Effie or creativity) will also be a criterion as the awards won have a potential to indicate they follow a process while practicing their profession. Executing the research with the participants who worked with both local and global brands will enable the research to frame a broader view

Some areas to explore in the research:

- Importance of account planning in creative process
- Convergence of account planning and creative
- Efficiency created by account planning
- Value created by account planning
- Clients' perceptions on account planning according to the participants
- Clients' perceptions on integration of account planning and creativity according to the participants
- Duties of account planning and creative
- Evaluation of creative work by account planners and creative people separately
- Evaluation of creative briefs by account planners and creative people separately

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7

**CORPORATE
COMMUNICATIONS II**

Ethical Branding: A Path to Excellence in Corporate Reputation

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Extended Abstract

Purpose

A (corporate) brand is one of the key components of corporate reputation and “living the brand”, beside the actions related to the quality of offer at the service or product level, also refers to the increasingly important socially responsible and ethical actions of the employees and organisation as a whole. A recent emphasis on socially responsible and ethical behaviour has brought to the forefront the issue of ethical branding where ethical commitments of organisations vis-à-vis various stakeholders are emphasised. The aim of this paper is to conceptualise ethical branding and to further explore the relation between ethical brand and corporate reputation.

Design/methodology/approach

Based on the theoretical underpinnings the paper develops a scale for measuring ethical brand both on corporate and product level. It also empirically explores the relationships between both dimensions of ethical brand on corporate reputation together with the perceived quality of company’s offer. The research approach is based on qualitative methodology. The online survey is conducted among 219 respondents and the preliminary data analysis is based on the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression.

Findings

The results of the EFA indicate that ethical branding can indeed be considered as a two-dimensional construct, consisting of the corporate as well as product level ethical decisions. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis show that the model with the three selected independent variables explains more than 77 % of variance of corporate reputation, however only corporate ethical branding and quality of offer are significant predictors of reputation.

Research limitations/implications

The results are based on the preliminary analysis which will be upgraded in the next step of this working paper. To further verify the measurement instrument the confirmatory factor analysis will be used together with the structural equation modeling to explore the relations among variables in the model. In this instance, one of the limitations of the study is related to the fact that the sample is relatively small and based on convenience sampling.

Practical implications

For corporate communications and brand managers, this study informs the development of ethical branding on different levels and provides them with the knowledge about how ethical brand should best be managed to enhance its importance vis-à-vis corporate reputation.

Originality/value

To date, no research has conceptualised and developed an instrument to measure ethical brand on two different levels – corporate and product. There is also a lack of research examining the relationship between the ethical brand and corporate reputation. This study has therefore implications for theory and practice for the effective ethical branding.

Excellence in Health Communication: Health Literacy

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Extended Abstract

Nothing is permanent except change. In today's living conditions, developing communication technologies, urbanization and cultural exchanges accompany to think about and interrogate our lives again and again. These interrogations prompt scientists and private-public sector cooperation to generate new notions and constitute new theories. Numerous notions and theories are identified again these days. One of them and maybe the most vital one is health literacy. Alongside the traditional definition of health literacy, after the development of new communication technologies, there are different types of literacy notions such as visual literacy, media literacy, information literacy, health literacy, cine-literacy, tele-literacy and computer literacy are held in last year (Nielsen-Bohlman et. al, 2004; Tuzel, 2010; Onal, 2010).

In a daily life, adults can encounter with health literacy notion during the choice or purchase of drugs, health implementations or reading health articles. For instance, parents are responsible to manage their own children's health care services or old grown-ups are responsible to read and learn about drugs' prospectuses. All these activities require the talent of reading and understanding all written and published information. (Ozdemir et. al, 2011) Also, interpersonal communication which is held between individuals, communication between physician and patient and all health information exchanges that held by communication tools are evaluated in the scope of health literacy. In the world and in our country, it is enormously important to identify health literacy notion and make appropriate studies to reach excellence in health communication.

When we consider the health literacy's impacts on health condition, health propriety, reaching health services, perception of health data and ability to make decisions about health; it is appropriate to analyze those actions to evaluate patients' health literacy (Mancuso, 2009).

In this study, main idea is to designate and develop the health literacy level in our country; meanwhile there aren't any developed scale to measure health literacy is one of the deficiencies in this scientific field. Nowadays, individuals are exposed too much health information from lots of communication media tools. Understanding and evaluating these information by individuals is in direct proportion to their health literacy levels (Sezgin, 2011).

In Turkey, general (reading-writing) literacy ratio is 88.9% of women, 95.1% of men and totally 92.0% of whole society (TUIK, 2012). Average education duration of men is 5.1 years; women's average education duration is 4.5 years. So, average education duration of men is 0.6 years more than women's duration (TNSA, 2008). In Turkey, there isn't any society-based research or study about health literacy but if we consider that average education duration is 4.65 year/per person then health literacy ratio can be accepted as very low. Studies about health literacy generally focus on word recognitions or text comprehensions. In the scope of "Health Services Project", Parker and friends (1995) developed "Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults-(TOFHLA)" to evaluate health literacy notion more widely, to measure functional health literacy and to generate conceptual framework for understanding the low health literacy ratio's impact on health conditions. Mentioned test's aim is measuring the individual's level of health literacy, understanding the health system and proper communication skills. TOFHLA heads towards especially to quantitative and verbal understanding skills. The test has two parts; reading comprehension part (verbal) and quantitative part (Paker et. al, 1995; Pawlak, 2005; Betz et. al, 2008; Mancuso, 2009; Ozdemir et. al, 2010) To complete the test, 22 minutes needed. Total of reading comprehension and quantitative parts give a value between zero and 100. Each part's participation to the total value is equal. (Reading comprehension: 0-50 points; Quantitative: 0-50 points) According to the TOFHLA, individual's health literacy levels are named in three different categories: 1) Insufficient Health Literacy (0-59 points); 2) Low Level / Restricted Health Literacy (60-74 points); 3) Sufficient Health Literacy (75-100 points).

According to the point scoring system, individuals who have Sufficient Health Literacy are able to read, understand and interpret health texts; Individuals who have Low Level / Restricted Health Literacy have difficulties to read, understand and interpret health texts (Paker et. al, 1995; Pawlak, 2005; Betz et. al, 2008; Mancuso, 2009).

This study is held as a pilot research during 2014, between May and November in Dokuz Eylul University Children's Hospital for 6 months period. This hospital has 135-inpatient bed availability. Also, the hospital has Pediatric Emergency, Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Unit, General Pediatrics, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Services, Pediatric Nephrology, Pediatric Endocrine, Pediatric Neurology, Pediatric Gastroenterology polyclinics and laboratories. In conducted study, 250 volunteer participants are provided. Data collection form was applied to the individual parents who admitted to the Children's Hospital. In mentioned periods, individuals who applied to the hospital are informed about the study and their verbal attendance confirmations are taken. While summarizing the data; score (number), percentage, average (mean) and standard deviations are used.

Health literacy is a very important notion to catch excellence in health communication and health marketing; both in individual and corporate way. When study group's findings were evaluated; one

of the third participants are not able to read basic health materials but their usage ratio of mass communication tools such as newspaper and television is 90%. Participants indicated that they reach health information by 55% media tools such as internet and mobile phones; by 78% from their closed friends, immediate surroundings and relatives. Beyond other findings from the research; face-to-face communication and mass communication tools hold remarkable health data. In this context, individuals need some physical and infrastructural solutions to affect their health conditions in positive way. There is an enormous need to global and national scales for designating and developing individuals' health literacy levels. Low health literacy level generally indicates the poor and insufficient health communication. In today's progress, both notions like health marketing and health business start to rise; but most important part of the health, "the individual" should not be ignored. Both public and private sector health care services should examine the notion of health literacy and conduct studies to increase the ratios of health literacy.

Keywords

Health Communication, health marketing, health literacy, public health

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Exploring Stakeholder Engagement: A Corporate Citizenship Approach

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Extended Abstract

The role corporations should play in society in terms of their social engagement and ethical responsibilities has been increasingly questioned in recent times (Aßländer & Curbach, 2014; Buchholtz & Carroll, 2009; Leisinger, 2009). Stakeholders' expectations are reconfiguring the rationale and the dynamics of business-society relations (Logsdon & Wood, 2002; Matten & Crane, 2005) since corporations are now recognizing that it is their duty to fulfil obligations to society rather than to just government (Stokes, 2002). This imbues firms with an ethical ethos that leads to corporation social responsiveness (Fukukawa, Balmer, & Gray, 2007) to include stakeholders in processes and structures related to strategic management to better respond to expectations (Palazzo & Basu, 2007; Vallaster, Lindgreen, & Maon, 2012).

Therefore, beyond their engagement as responsible players in respect to the law, corporations are claimed to act as if they were metaphorically citizens in that their commitments to society resemble those of citizens (Moon, Crane, & Matten, 2005). Citizenship emphasizes participation in the public good by fostering community ties (Crane, Matten, & Moon, 2004; Wood, Logsdon, Lewellyn, & Davenport, 2006), and honest and respectful engagement of stakeholders as a vital part a viable firm's strategy (Noland & Phillips, 2010) informed by the ongoing exchange between business and society jointly shaping purposes, rights, and duties (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009). In that sense stakeholder engagement (SE) has been understood as a mutually beneficial and just scheme of cooperation which

takes the form of a moral partnership of equals (Phillips, 1997) based on collaborative work for the sake of the common good (Sison & Fontrodona, 2012).

In this working paper we dig into the existing controversial conceptualizations of SE, which according to dominant perspectives is torn between moral and strategic motives. Then we put forth three perspectives of analysis informing our in-depth interpretive study aimed at inductively substantiating controversy in SE. This paper attempts to discern the nature of moral and strategic SE as depicted in the representations of current corporate SE practices. Our empirical investigation outlines the constraints which inherently undermine the ethical ethos of moral engagement. Doing that we try to contribute to existing knowledge in the field by providing a critical inductive reconstruction of current meanings and actual constraints embedded in enacting SE as an ethical management practice.

Based on our findings, the emergent conception of SE reveals a corporate sensitivity that is far from that dialogic parity among equal moral partners (Phillips, 1997) that the democratic principles of a legitimation-driven strategic management claim for in the manifestations of corporate citizenship (Hielscher, Beckmann, and Pies, 2014). The tension between idealism and current practice stems from corporate governance logics and organizational business models of firms that are often not prone to guarantee the participatory and genuinely dialogic exchange between company and stakeholders advocated by the idealistic mandate of SE.

Keywords

Stakeholder engagement, stakeholder dialogue, moral engagement, ethical management

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Communicating Corporate Social Performance: A Research on Twitter

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Working Paper

In competitive business environment, the survival of organizations relies not only on the achievement of economic objectives, but also the extent of their social and environmental responsibility towards their stakeholders. Stemming from this approach, organizations are expected to perform as socially responsible, sensitive and humanized entities, considering both their actions, and consequences of their behaviors. In this respect, corporate social performance (CSP), which is a broader and more widely encompassing concept, emerges as a distinctive indicator of organizations' stance with regard to their stakeholders' expectations and concerns. Broadly, CSP is defined as "corporate behavior rather than to principles that guide the behavior" (Salzmann, 2008: 9).

Unquestionably, in the contemporary world, where communication is embedded into every practice of life, it is inevitable that organizations need to build strong relationship with their stakeholders. Thus, communicating CSP has become a priority for organizations, in order to inform their external and internal publics about their actions and the reasons behind them. Moreover, the concerns of stakeholders regarding social and environmental issues could be reduced with the strategically managed CSR communication (Türkel et al., 2015). For organizations, CSP communication is facilitated with the existence of several channels, varying from traditional to digital media. Particularly, the increasing employment of social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter by the organizations enabled them to convey their CSP related messages in a more interactive, dialogic, immediate and continuous way. Through this dialogue, based on CSP, organizations not only aim to inform their stakeholders, they also utilize this dialogue to achieve a positive brand perception; because, as Klein and Dawar (2014: 203)

argue that CSR, which is a substantial constituent of CSP, “plays a role in consumers’ brand and product evaluations, over and above economic or rational considerations”.

In differentiation of CSR and CSP, Carroll (1979) points out the lack of measurability in CSR, whereas CSP provides a more operational understanding through the concept of ‘performance’ (Wood, 2010). Although the initial conceptualization of CSP used to embrace economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities, the model was first revised in 1991 and again in 2003, shifting from his commonly used pyramid (formed by economic, ethic, legal, and philanthropic domains) to a Venn diagram model developed by Schwartz and Carroll (2003). New intersection areas (Purely Economic, Purely Legal, Purely Ethical, Economic/Ethical, Economic/Legal, Legal/Ethical and Economic/Legal/Ethical) in the recent version of the model have led to a more comprehensive and realistic representation of corporate life. .

In the measurement of corporate social performance and the categorization of CSP activities of organizations, the mostly commonly used criteria are those developed by Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini & Co., Inc. (KLD) (Montiel, 2008). The main dimensions included in the KLD social rating service are employee relations, product quality and safety, community relations, natural environment, human rights and diversity (Deckop, Merriman and Gupta, 2006). In a broader sense, employee relations stand for the concerns over retirement, union relations, employee involvement etc.(Jalilvand and Malliaris, 2013), whereas product quality and safety incorporates consideration of aspects such as quality, safety R&D and innovation (Bartkus and Glassman, 2008). Some of the major issues in community relations are support for housing, support for education, charitable giving, innovative giving and volunteer programs, while the dimension of environment includes strengths such as preventing pollution, supporting clean energy, recycling, and beneficial products and services (Kotchen and Moon, 2008). The human right dimension concerns sensitivity towards human rights-related issues, and diversity is based on tolerance of diverse groups in their publics, including disabled, gay and lesbians, and providing equal opportunity for all.

Methodology

In the context of understanding the role of CSP communication on consumer responses, this study aims to identify what significance consumers attach to different CSP domains within dimensions when evaluating attitudes towards message, brand and purchase intentions. With the increasing use of social media to engage with consumers about CSP issues, it is specifically intended to examine the persuasive effect of Twitter as a channel of communication with the consumer public. Thus, the following hypotheses are posited:

H1: Exposure to a message with CSP product dimension will differ in the effect on (a) attitude towards the message, (b) attitude towards the corporate brand, and (c) purchase intentions than exposure to a similar message of CSP community relations dimension.

H2: Exposure to a message of purely economic domain within product dimension will differ in the effect on (a) attitude towards the message, (b) attitude towards the corporate brand, and (c) purchase intentions than exposure to a similar message of economic and ethical domain.

H3: Exposure to a message of purely ethical domain within community relations dimension will differ in the effect on (a) attitude towards the message, (b) attitude towards the corporate brand, and (c) purchase intentions than exposure to a similar message of economic and ethical domain.

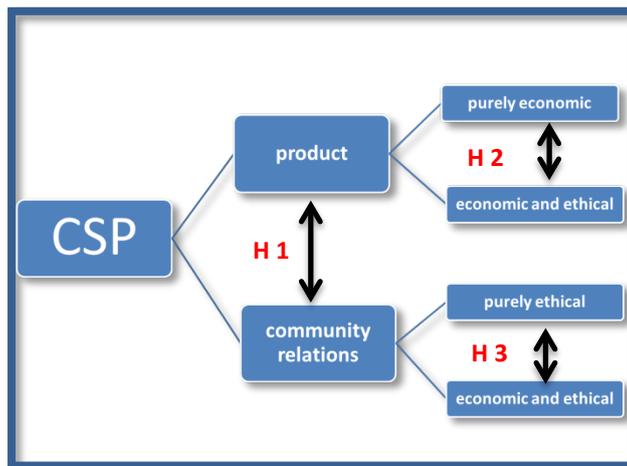


Figure 1. Research Model

Research design:

The research involves three phases. The first phase is an exploratory stage, which encompasses a content analysis in order to identify the most frequent CSP dimensions and domains to be utilized in the experimental phase. The sample consisted of companies from the list of *Companies with the Best CSR Reputations* (2013), which also have an active Turkish Twitter account. Since there were two car brands in the list, a top of mind awareness test was run on 80 people. Accordingly, the car brand BMW was incorporated into the content analysis with Microsoft, Intel, and Sony. The most frequent items were 'purely economic' and 'economic and ethical' domains within product, and 'purely ethical' and 'economic and ethical' within community relations dimension.

The second phase entails three pretests in order to both develop stimuli and ensure the quality of variables that will be operationalized in the experiment. The first pretest involves assessment of hypothetical corporate brand names and identification of the name which neither elicits negative and positive feelings.

The second and third pretests will be conducted to develop the stimuli used in this study. After being provided with training, independent coders will analyze tweets and categorize them with regard to CSP domains within the dimensions. They will be also expected to rate their answers on 5-point scale. Subsequently, in the third pretest, a sample of respondents will evaluate the tweets identified in pretest 2 on measures of valence, arousal, cognitive, and behavioral, in order to ensure equal impact of tweets in each experimental group.

For the third phase, a 2x2 factorial design will be utilized as experimental design. The subjects will be randomly allocated to four conditions, as purely economic within product, economic and ethical within product, purely ethical within community relations, and economic and ethical within community relations.

Table 1. Research Design

CSP dimensions	CSP domains	
	<i>Purely economic* or ethical**</i>	<i>Economic and ethical</i>
<i>Product*</i>	Group 1	Group 2
<i>Community relations**</i>	Group 3	Group 4

The study will employ convenience sampling. A matched sample of 240 students will be provided with a booklet including both the stimuli and a questionnaire. Following exposure to the stimuli, the questionnaires measuring attitude towards the message, attitude towards the corporate brand, and purchase intentions will be completed.

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8

DIGITAL MARKETING

Factors Influencing Customers' Purchase Intention via Mobile Apps in the Fast Fashion Industry

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Extended Abstract

As mobile devices evolve, technological developments reflected in features such as Wi-Fi, 3G and 4G connections, have allowed the creation and enhancement of smartphones and a new way to deliver mobile commerce: mobile apps. From this perspective, it is predicted that revenues derived from this industry will increase to \$38 billion by 2015, only through mobile apps (Bilton 2011). Although much research has considered mobile commerce, little attention has been given to mobile apps, in the context of fashion, despite their significant contribution to the economy of the UK (£26 billion in 2014) (British Fashion Council, 2014). Motivated by this, we aim to analyse the factors that influence customers' purchase intention via mobile apps in the fast fashion industry. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis 1985), this study investigates how personal innovativeness, usefulness, risk, attractiveness and emotion influence customers' purchase intention, in the context of fashion and mobile apps. Emotion, particularly, is considered a mediator in this study, where it is hypothesised that its response to usefulness, risk and attractiveness will consequently impact positively on the purchase intention of customers. Similarly, considering the remarkability of individual traits, personal innovativeness was hypothesised to have a positive effect on usefulness, attractiveness and purchase intention, while also having a negative effect on risk. Moreover, perceived usefulness and perceived attractiveness were hypothesised to have a positive impact on the customer's emotion, and attractiveness was believed to have the same effect on perceived usefulness. Finally, perceived risk was considered to have a negative impact on emotion, hence affecting the likelihood of the purchase intention.

The measures used to operationalise the constructs were adapted from previous studies and pre-tested. This research carried out a survey questionnaire with a total response of 304 participants, from which 193 were female and 111 male. Furthermore, more than 80% of the respondents were of ages between 18 and 35, which are the ages of “heavy” users of mobile phones (Salesforce 2014; Millward Brown Digital 2013). Results were analysed using statistical software (SPSS and AMOS). During Confirmatory Factor Analysis, all factor loadings presented were over 0.50 and all constructs were found to be highly reliable (Cronbach's Alpha>0.80). Convergent validity is achieved due to C.R.>1.96, AVE>0.50, CR>AVE and CR>0.60 (Janssens et al., 2008; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity is confirmed since the square root of each AVE is greater than each inter-construct correlation. The final SEM model presented the following values: CMIN/DF=1.687, GFI=0.861, AGFI=0.836, NFI=0.915, RFI=0.906, IFI=0.964, TLI=0.96, CFI=0.963; all meet the respective cut-offs (Janssens et al. 2008; Hu and Bentler 1999; Scott 1994). Through the confirmation of a well-fitted model, this research concludes that emotion and personal innovativeness have a positive effect on the purchase intention via mobile apps ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.656$ / $p<0.001$; $\beta=0.309$). Moreover, perceived attractiveness resulted as the factor with the highest impact on emotion ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.486$), while perceived usefulness also proved to have a positive effect on emotion ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.383$). Simultaneously, perceived attractiveness was also found to have a positive effect on the perceived usefulness ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.477$). However, perceived risk was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.331$; $\beta=-0.04$). Thus, its consideration in the customers' purchase intention via mobile apps was discarded. This suggests that app users do not feel afraid when shopping on their mobiles, specifically from a performance, finance and information-risk perspective. Finally, personal innovativeness also proved to be significant in its relationship with perceived usefulness ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.362$), perceived risk ($p<0.001$; $\beta=-0.124$), perceived attractiveness ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.442$), and purchase intention ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.309$). Moreover, approximately 70% of the variance for purchase intention via mobile apps is accounted for by the variables in the model ($R^2=0.703$).

It is concluded that the perceived attractiveness of the app, through its layout and imagery content, is the most important factor to generate a positive emotional response from the customer. This indicates a clear relationship between visual appearance and a potential purchase decision, which is remarkable in the fashion context. Similarly, the usefulness perceived by the customer is also a driver for a positive emotional response, demonstrating that convenience, rapidness and promotion information are strong determinants for the usage of mobile apps as a new way to shop. Moreover, emotion is determined as a key construct in the shopping behaviour of the customer, evidenced in a positive response in the user's satisfaction, pleasure, happiness, calmness, excitement and interest. Finally, this study also highlights the importance of individual traits such as personal innovativeness, concluding that curious and novelty-seeker customers are more likely to purchase via mobile apps.

In sum, this study complements the current research on mobile apps by identifying factors that influence customers' use of mobile apps to buy apparels.

Moreover, this research may benefit fashion retailers and app developers, because usefulness and attractiveness can enhance customer's shopping experience and increase the likelihood of their purchase intention.

Keywords

Mobile apps, innovativeness, usefulness, risk, attractiveness, emotion, purchase intention.

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Look Who's Talking: Monitoring the Discourse Regarding Marketing Communication Campaigns on Facebook Brand Fan Page

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Extended Abstract

The concept of social media is top priority for many business executives today. Previous research demonstrates a correlation between satisfied Facebook brand page fans and the brand's success (RightNow 2011). In addition, according to Gamboa and Gonçalves (2014), the discourse between consumers and brands on Facebook is a vehicle for cultivating and winning consumers' loyalty. But, while *quintly.com* (<https://www.quintly.com/blog/2014/05/response-rates-by-facebook-pages-improved-by-5-percent/>) reports that brands improve their online response rate, the content of the response has not yet been widely investigated.

The purpose of this preliminary study is to examine characteristics of discourse between brands and consumers in the light of the two-way symmetric model (Grunig and Hunt 1984) indicating the outcome of brand's response on consumer perception of brand image.

The study examines the consumer-brand discourse on socially controversial advertisements, by content analysis of Facebook brand page posts of two well-known Israeli brands chosen as case studies. In order to adjust to the new rules of discourse, organizations' persuasive communication orientation has shifted from one-way brand to consumers message transmission, to creating two-way discourse with consumers about the brand (Brodie, Illic, Juric and Hollebeek 2013). Still, the study's main claim is that following the one-way brand message transmission in traditional media advertising, brands do not pay enough attention to the two-way discourse on its Facebook brand pages. The latter discourse is initiated

in the form of consumer posts as response to brand messages. In addition of brands mismanaging the reply rate to the consumers the also mismanage the reply manner, that is, a reply that is respectful and attentive that leads to consumers satisfaction.

The study is formulated according to the touch point model (Ouwersloot and Duncan 2008) derived from the integrated marketing communication approach (IMC) (Schultz and Schultz 2004), which addresses all situations in which brands and customers communicate. According to the touch point mode, the advertising campaigns examined are brand initiated touch points, and fan posts on brand pages are initiated consumer touch points.

The study uses quantitative content analysis and qualitative semiotic analysis of Facebook page posts. Data collected using Netvizz software. Out of 1,998 posts collected by the software, a month since the beginning of the advertising campaigns, only posts which focused on the advertising campaigns were analyzed. For comparison, talkbacks to all articles about the two advertising campaigns published during the study were analyzed. Coding reliability: A two-judge panel separately coded all the items, without being privy to the research goals. Krippendorff's Alpha inter-coder reliability yielded the following figures: $[\alpha] = .920$ for Facebook page brand posts; $[\alpha] = .889$ for talkbacks.

The coding categories were consistent with the research questions as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of fans' discourse on brand Facebook pages about the traditional media campaigns? - Post subject and post tone were coded.
2. What are the characteristics of marketers' responses to the fans' discourse on brand Facebook pages? - Brand response rate and brand response manner were coded.
3. What are the differences between discourse on brand Facebook pages and talkbacks to digital media articles about these campaigns? - All talkbacks were analyzed in a similar manner to Facebook posts coding with an adjusted codification.

The Findings indicate that consumer regard the brand page as a platform for discourse including reactions to conversations initiated by brands on other media. Consumers discourse is mostly negative and focuses on ad creativity rather than brand intended message; Brands response rate, compared to international brands, is average to below average, and is often disrespectful in manner; Talkback discourse raises similar subjects, but is blunter than Facebook discourse. The semiotic analysis of fan's posts points out that consumers' reaction to the advertisements may be grouped into four protesters categories ("It's a waste of money"; "It's a campaign about gays!"; "The Appalled Parents" and "The Boycotters"). It is suggested that protesters find gratification in the internet social environment (Stafford, Stafford and Schkade 2008).

In conclusion, the current study focuses on brand image management aspects of mediating discourse evoked due to controversial advertising campaigns in which the implied message sparked intense debate on the brand Facebook fan page. The study refines the customer initiated touch point model, presents thought-provoking findings and offers practical conclusions to be gleaned from the current case studies.

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How Digital Platforms Influence Luxury Purchase Behavior in India?

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Abstract

In an emerging country such as India, consumers are willing to pay for luxury products as their emphasis is on how the brand adds value to their lifestyle. Increasingly, this brand-value add is being displayed via social media. Many luxury brands are aggressively using social media and other digital platforms to integrate their strategies and to provide a 'seamless purchase experience'. This study aims to explain how digital platforms influence customers' decision for luxury brands in India. Two qualitative studies were conducted with young Indian consumers as they are the heaviest users of digital platforms and increasingly are using luxury brands. The first study consisted of 156 respondents in 15 focus groups. The second was made up of 95 on-site customer observations in retail luxury stores and 45 interviews with brand managers and retail managers to validate the consumer observations. During the pre-purchase phase of luxury purchases, customers conducted searches through digital channels. They then switched to making actual product purchases in the retail outlets, for the sensory experiences. Before their purchase, the consumers used various media forms to share the pictures and views of intended purchases with their friends and peers. After the purchase, they posted pictures of their purchases on social media to garner Facebook 'Likes' along with the appreciation from their friends in a very short span of time. Responses from friends are also used to plan their next luxury purchases.

Keywords

Luxury brands, Indian consumers, digital platforms, pre and post purchase behaviors

Introduction

Luxury sales globally are expected to reach US\$40 trillion by 2020, with India and China being the leading markets (Assocham.org 2013). The Indian luxury market, growing by double digits, would reach US\$ 14.7 billion and will increase by 25% annually by 2015 (Assocham.org 2013). India would also account 10% of global luxury market by 2025 (Schultz and Jain 2013a). High Net worth Individuals (HNIs) with more than US\$1 million in investable assets also increased in the country. Additionally, the income of middle class would also increase by 2025 to \$1.16 trillion (Schultz and Jain 2013a). Luxury brand awareness is high among the Indian consumers. These individuals are educated with high spending habits (Jain et al. 2012). Additionally, luxury brands are explored extensively by consumers through digital media (Schultz and Jain 2014).

In Asian markets, online sales of luxury brands increased by 28% in 2013. Thus, luxury goods are growing faster than the overall market and now account for 5% of the total products sold in the overall Asian luxury market (Warc 2013). Typically, digital platforms are not considered as additional channels because most marketers are trying to develop an integrated strategy. Many luxury brands have developed seamless consumer purchasing journeys and thus can target relevant consumers via social media (Warc 2013). These digital luxury consumers tend to use the major search engines such as Google, Bing, Baidu and Yandex for their search activities (Warc 2012). Broadly, in the global market in 2011, 94% of luxury brands used Facebook, 84% twitter, 78% you tube, 24% Instagram and 18% Foursquare and Tumblr, 33% uses apps related to i-phone, 24% uses i-pads, 35% have a mobile site and 18% offers m-commerce facilities. Moreover, many luxury brands would like to expand further through their Facebook fans, Instagram, photo-sharing apps, blogging platforms, Tumblr, geo-location service, foursquare, and tweet with their followers, and develop official videos for YouTube. Many put much of their focus in exploring opportunities on mobile phones (Warc 2011).

In India, 22 million people have an internet connection (Jhunjhunwala 2014). Therefore, India is third in the world for the Facebook users in 2013. There are 61.7 million registered users on Facebook in 2013 and around 3 million Twitter accounts are used by the Indian consumers (Simplify360 2013). Companies and brands use different digital platforms to interact and engage with the consumers (Redsicker 2013) but this approach lacks integration. Marketers still appear to rely on traditional media even though many consumers have moved to the digital space. Consumers need innovation on a constant basis, but, marketers seem unable to deliver it (Jhunjhunwala 2014).

Moreover, Indian consumers widely use mobile phones as their digital platforms. In India the 'young Indians' are tech savvy (Ranjit 2014) and like to do experiments even with the luxury brands.

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of academic research on these consumers in India. The research that has been done on luxury products has focused on various cultures (Eng and Bogaert 2010), levels of luxury (Schultz and Jain 2014), experience and purchase (Venkatesh et al. 2010; Sierra and Hyman 2011). There are few studies on Indian consumers, developed primarily to understand their purchase behaviors. Based on a thorough review, we were unable to find any study that dealt with luxury branding and digital platforms for this promising market. The lacuna of knowledge to be addressed by this paper is: how digital platforms affect consumer's luxury purchase behavior in India?

Review of literature

Luxury Branding for Developed and Developing Nations

Luxury branding research has been conducted primarily in developed countries. There are primarily two types of drivers for buying luxury brands in the developed nations: personally-oriented, that is related to self-indulgence and socially-oriented, which is associated with conspicuous consumption (Truong 2010). The drivers for luxury products are indulgence, exclusivity and status (Uyenco et al. 2008). Consumers of the developed nations perceive luxury products to be aesthetic, hedonic (Hudders et al. 2013), exclusive (Cervellon 2013) and of premium quality (Nueno and Quelch 1998). Thus, the primary rationale for purchase appears to be emotional. The little research conducted in emerging countries suggests that the factors driving luxury purchase differs from those in developed countries. Consumers from the emerging or developing countries are influenced more by their value system and place more emphasis on internal rewards than the drive for recognition factors or conspicuous consumption. They interact and associate with the brands even more emotionally. Thus, the challenge would seem to be to develop emotional and personal engagements with various consumers (Atwal and Khan 2009).

Luxury Branding and Indian Consumers

Indian consumers are more emotional than those found in the developed nations. They focus more on their value systems and feelings for luxury branding. Indian consumers have social upbringing and familial relationship (Schultz and Jain 2013b). Historically, the focus was on price but now they emphasize quality, preferring stylish, aesthetic (Jain et al. 2012), experience, uniqueness, self-identity (Schultz and Jain 2013b) and value oriented luxury brands (Jain et al. 2012) which seems to be more hedonic in nature. These common factors within the developed countries appear as western influences on the Indian consumers. The basic difference is related to emotions, feelings and the individual value system.

A major factor is that India is a very young country, with individuals under the age of 20 making up more than 50% of the current population. These young consumers are also consuming luxury brands. They are well travelled and increasingly many have high disposable incomes. They like to explore new products but they make decisions based on their value systems (Atwal and Khan 2009). Additionally, the Indian market appears to be based on the existing value system, emotions, feelings which are all influenced by western practices.

Consumers have shifted from needs to aspirations and therefore prefer associations of traditional and western style luxury brands that provide a subtle projection of brands in which they may be interested. The emotional intensity also differs within the Indian consumers as there are primarily two types of luxury consumers: global Indians who are the affluent consumers and live in metro areas and have “old money” and young Indians who have emigrated from small towns to metro areas with high aspirations and dreams and would like to get accepted in the social circle with “new money”. Young Indians are more emotional than the global Indians.

Metro natives indulge in luxury for themselves but emigrants believe in conspicuous consumption as they would like to be known among the peer groups (Schultz and Jain 2013b). Additionally, they extensively use mobile phones and digital devices which they associate with the luxury brands. They are always online and connected with the world via these platforms. Moreover, both the segments of consumers are well educated and tech savvy and have high awareness about the luxury brands via digital media. However, young Indians usage of digital media is higher as they share their liking, preference,

emotions and feelings about the luxury brands via digital media primarily with their friends (Schultz and Jain 2013b).

Luxury Branding and Usage of Digital Platforms

Indian luxury consumers are emotional and express their feelings easily on digital platforms. Their digital projection is more important than the offline portrayal for luxury brands. Friends' perception is more important than the campaigns or ads used by the luxury brands. When Indian consumers buy luxury brands they then digitally send pictures to their friends and seek their perceptions and views about their recent purchase. They express their feelings and views on digital platforms. Indian consumers have developed "we society" where 'we' is associated with the friends' group who may be in different geographical locations. Consumers connect with their friends who are the 'we' community via digital platforms (Schultz and Jain 2014) to exchange feelings, views and expressions about luxury brands. Additionally, Indian consumers develop a complicated network in the virtual space as they use three screens (mobile, computer and TV) to portray their luxury purchases and express their feelings and views. They upload pictures of luxury brands on Facebook to generate a "feel good factor" as people would like it eventually. Indian consumers also read reviews, blogs and online platforms and discuss luxury purchases with their friends on digital media (Schultz and Jain 2013b). Moreover, the complexity increases further as Indian consumers acquire their knowledge about the luxury brands from websites, sitcoms and twitter and use mobile apps to evaluate the brands and products within the stores and then upload the pictures on Facebook about the final luxury purchase (Jain et al. 2014). These networks and complexities are important to understand as the expression of feelings, views and emotions needs to be known by the luxury brand marketers.

To understand this very complicated process and the role of digital media in Indian purchase behaviors, cue utilization and purchase behavior theory were used.

Cue Utilization and Purchase Behavior Theoretical Framework

Many cues are used by the Indian consumers for luxury brands on the digital platforms. Cue utilization enables consumers to use multiple extrinsic and intrinsic sources to make decisions about the products (Olson 1972). Extrinsic dimensions are associated with characteristics of products and brands and intrinsic elements are related with the inherent traits of the products. Digital media is the extrinsic cue used by the consumers. Additionally, in order to understand the purchase behavior of Indian consumers for luxury branding we have used the Keegan et al. (1992) model. This theory states that individuals react in different ways when they process multiple stimuli. Intrinsic stimuli are the individual characteristic of the person and the extrinsic stimuli are the external factor such as marketing, messages and digital media. These stimuli affect the purchase decision of the consumers (Monga and Chaudhary 2011) based on three stages; pre-purchase, purchase and post purchase. Additionally, reference groups also affect the overall purchase behavior (Jalalkamali and Nikbin 2010).

Purchase Behavior and Influence of Reference Groups

Reference group plays an important role in influencing the luxury purchase behaviors of Indian consumers. Consumers seldom take purchase decisions in isolation as they integrate information from multiple sources and channels (Shukla 2011). Internal elements such as personality, attitude, values, motivation, perception and lifestyle and external stimuli such as marketing or reference groups can influence the purchase behavior of many consumers (Jalalkamali and Nikbin 2010). There also is a verbal conversation with reference groups that enable consumers to understand the various evaluations they can

make. Group behavior is keenly observed and decisions are made by the consumers on the bases of the reference communities' perspective (Bearden and Etzel 1982). Products recommended by the reference groups and consumed by the individuals significantly impact the degree of influence on various products. Additionally, for luxury products there is a significant external impact on consumers since most of them are conspicuous in nature (Childers and Rao 1992).

Objective of the Study and Methodology

This study aims to understand the role of digital media in influencing Indian consumers' luxury brand purchases. Qualitative methods are used to uncover how consumers engage with social media and in how they develop relationships with the brands. This study is just one part of an ongoing investigation of the luxury product domain where the authors are continuously exploring and adding new elements to their findings. This approach is common in qualitative research (Marshall et al. 2006) primarily when the scholars have to explore a unique phenomenon (Carson et al., 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The research methodology consisted of two studies conducted in India in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Pune in different stages of the investigation. Video recordings were made (with prior participant permission) for both the qualitative studies and notes were developed by the second author while moderating the respondents.

Study 1

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to understand respondents' perception, attitude and behavior towards digital media and luxury branding. There were 15 FGDs based on 156 respondents all within the age of 18-35 years. The average age was 25 years. These respondents belonged to socio economic class 'A' (developed by 'Indian Marketing Research Society) and had purchased luxury brands in the last year from the list that was drafted from the CII- A.T. Kearney report, 2013. Projection technique such word association tools were embedded in the FGDs to capture the subconscious level of respondents. FGDs were conducted for 60 minutes in three phases; pre-purchase, purchase and post purchase with the role of digital media discussed in all stages. Questions of the respondents were addressed at the end and gift and snacks were given as a token of appreciation. These data were supplemented by conducting one FGD with nine industry professionals who were the brand managers and store owners/managers of luxury brand products.

Study 2

The second study was conducted in four stages; observations, interviews with consumers, discussions with luxury retail store managers and luxury brand managers. In the observation and interview stages, usage of digital media was recorded and discussed at the pre-purchase, purchase and post purchase stages with respondents. Additionally, other extrinsic and intrinsic cues were also discussed to generate a broader understanding of luxury products and the challenges and opportunities which faced brand managers and retail managers. A total of 95 observations were conducted in 18 stores and 45 interviews were undertaken with the consumers, each lasting about 60 minutes. These data were supplemented by 32 industry professionals, 20 luxury brand managers and 12 retail managers through a 60-minute interview with each.

Major stakeholders were involved in the study that was related with the digital media and luxury brands. Purposive and snowball sampling was used as the luxury consumers were selected from these cities, luxury brand managers who have managed different products were selected and store managers of

premier luxury stores were interviewed for the study as well. Characteristics and Lifestyle of the respondents are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Interviews were conducted until the convergence of thoughts, perspectives and ideas were reached (Miles et al. 1994). Interviews were undertaken until no new insights were obtained from the additional 'interview'. The interview protocol used a recursive model (Minichiello et al. 1995) where a funnel approach was used and questions were developed from the broader perspective to reach the specific issues required (Thietart 2001). Interview protocol had a logical sequence but used a semi-structured approach so that respondents could reflect on their responses and enhance the validity of results (Dey 1993). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was video recorded with permission of the respondent and transcribed.

Data analysis was done in three steps; data reduction, data display and conclusion or verification (Miles et al. 1994). Data reduction was conducted for all the interviews using Nvivo 6 by axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). This software facilitates in organizing the codes in a matrix that synthesizes cross cases and encapsulates the perception and attitude of the respondents. Categories, themes and codes emerged from the principle of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1976) that were compared and classified for further analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The themes are presented in the Table 3 and the comprehensive model developed is presented as Figure 1. The model was developed from the cue utilization and purchase behavior frameworks, results and research objective.

Results

The various themes that emerged from these categories were digital and hedonic pre-purchase, experiential and enjoyable with digital media purchase and aspirational, lifestyle oriented and virtual post-purchase and the high influence of friends via digital media.

Hedonic and Digital Pre-Purchase:

Luxury consumers seem to feel that the luxury pre-purchase search is symbolic and hedonic as the intrinsic cues were quality, exclusivity, style, elegance, aesthetics, customization and product characteristics. These were the key drivers in their purchase of luxury products. A respondent said, "When I want to buy a luxury product then I would like to know the quality, style and exclusivity of brand" (Male, Bangalore). Another respondent said, "I want that the luxury brand should be unique and should not allow other people to use the same product, it should be for me" (Female, Mumbai). Consumers also emphasized aesthetics and beauty as one respondent mentioned, "I want a luxury brand to be elegant and stylish as it makes me happy" (Male, Pune).

Similar responses were received from the brand managers as one male professional from Mumbai stated, "We emphasize aesthetics, elegance, style and quality while we develop luxury apparel products for differentiation". Extrinsic cues are a statement of identity, expression of personality, enhancing confidence, self-satisfaction, increasing happiness, comfort, value and social influence. Respondents mentioned that luxury brands portray their identity and personality and they accordingly select those products. Respondents also stated, "Luxury brands reflect my identity and personality so I am very choosy while I select the products" (Male, Delhi). Another respondent stated, "I buy luxury to be happy and self-satisfied" (Female, Hyderabad). However, we could not get the same response from the brand managers as no one mentioned that their brands reflect identity and the personality of an individual.

One interesting area was discovered: respondents stated that they carry out all the activities related to pre-purchase on digital media as they explore, compare, discuss and evaluate the luxury brands with their friends. They use social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Skype for those purposes. A respondent stated, “We do all our exploring and comparisons of luxury brands on social media as it is easy to use and effective” (Male, Delhi). Another respondents stated, “I like to carry out my pre-purchase research on digital media as I cannot meet any friends physically and all the information related to products are available to internet so we send links and videos and then discuss” (Female, Bangalore). Interestingly, however, most brand managers stated, “We focus more on traditional media for our luxury brands”.

To summarize, it can be said that pre-purchase behaviors of these young Indian consumers are hedonic and driven by digital platforms.

Proposition 1: Pre-purchase of the luxury consumers is hedonic and digital in nature.

Experiential and Enjoyable Purchase with Digital Media

Respondents like to purchase luxury products from retail stores as they like to experience the exclusivity, customization of the stores and enjoy the shopping moments. A respondent stated, “I can do the search on a digital platform but would like to buy luxury from the stores to feel it” (Female, Mumbai). Another respondent stated, “I would like to indulge in luxury brands while I purchase them and it can happen at stores” (Male, Delhi). The respondent stated, “I would like to be happy and would not like to think while I buy luxury. That cannot happen online but I share my feelings on digital media” (Male, Bangalore).

Interestingly, respondents said they do not like to be intellectual while they indulge in luxury. A respondent stated, “I want to be lazy and stop thinking while I experience luxury” (Female, Pune). They thus, like to indulge in the luxury experience. Respondents would also like to receive royal treatment in the stores. A respondent mentioned, “When I go to a luxury store for a purchase, I should be treated like a king as I have money and am looking for excellent service without bother.” (Male, Mumbai).

However, when brand managers were interviewed, they mentioned that “training and delivering customized services at their luxury stores is difficult”. A respondent expressed the views about the store experience and stated, “when I was in a luxury store, staff members pitched products and I hate it as I was looking for royal treatment but I never received it as the focus is always on sales and not on consumers and their experience” (Female, Delhi). Similarly, other respondents were also looking for more pleasurable and memorable moments while they buy luxury to be able to share it digitally. Therefore, it can be implied that luxury consumers like to purchase the brands and products from the experiential and enjoyable retail store with digital media but stores and staff may not always live up to their expectations.

Proposition 2: Luxury consumers believe in experiential and enjoyable purchase of brands and have high expectations for retail services with digital media.

Aspiration, Lifestyle Oriented and Virtual Post Purchase:

After the purchase, respondents mentioned that their desire, lifestyles and aspirations need to be thoroughly studied by the marketers. That would enhance the value of the luxury products and could affect the intrinsic cues from the brands. Consumers said this type of retailer knowledge and understanding would help them in buying luxury products.

Respondents felt that after the purchase, luxury brands should carry out the purchase process thorough research on their lifestyles and desire. That would help the marketer develop new and more interesting products. A respondent stated, “The real work of luxury brands starts when we buy the products, they need to study and know everything about us that includes aspirations and lifestyle and make new products that will make us happy” (Female, Delhi). Another respondent stated, “Luxury brands should not pitch for more product sales after I have purchased. Rather staff should look into my portfolio and study me thoroughly for better products” (Male, Mumbai). Additionally, respondents also mentioned that they post their purchase digitally and wait for likes and responses from their friends and peers. A respondent said, “After my luxury purchase, I take a picture and post it on FB (Facebook) and wait for the number of likes and compliments” (Female, Mumbai). Consumers are eager for likes but they want it in a specified time period. A respondent stated, “When I post a luxury purchase picture on social media, then the number of likes and responses within an hour is important for me” (Male, Bangalore). However, when the post purchase situation was discussed with store/brand managers it was found that they do not carry out the research consumers want. A brand manager stated, “After the brands are bought by the consumer, we develop a database which is used for future sales”. This is the exact area of conflict between consumers and marketers. Marketers want to increase sales without understanding the consumers and thus, customer rejections occur. Hence, it can be implied that post purchase behavior of the luxury consumers is based on their aspiration and lifestyle and is portrayed on the digital platforms but, is not experienced in the retail store.

Proposition 3: Post purchase is based on aspirations and lifestyle of the consumers that can be displayed on virtual platforms. There is conflict with consumers when additional sales are attempted.

High Influence of Friends via Digital Media:

Friends have a great influence on the purchase decisions that luxury product consumers make. Friends are considered to be the product experts who guide them about the luxury brands according to their knowledge and expertise. A respondent stated that, “we discuss everything about the luxury brands with our friends as we select them in our life and are more credible than anyone else” (Female, Mumbai). Another respondent stated, “We have experts in our circle of friends who guide us about the luxury brands and that affect our purchase” (Male, Bangalore). Respondents stated that: “we buy only those luxury brands that are accepted by our friends”. Interestingly, communication between the consumers and reference groups takes place more on online platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook and other digital platforms since many times, they cannot physically meet while luxury products are being purchased. A respondent stated, “We do all the discussion about luxury brands on digital media with our friends as it is easy and we are always online” (Female, Delhi). Another respondent stated, “digital media helps us to undertake all the decisions about luxury as our friends are always online and new trends of various countries can be easily known” (Female, Pune). They also discuss some products with their family. A respondent stated, “We also discuss luxury brands with our family after discussing them with our friends” (Male, Hyderabad). These findings were also supported by the retail store managers as they stated that consumers are always on digital platforms, clicking pictures in the stores, sharing them with friends, receiving feedback and making choices accordingly. A store manager stated, “Consumers always use Whatsapp, click pictures of the apparel and send them to their friends for their views when they are in the stores” (Male, Mumbai). However, the strong influence of friends is not been capitalize by the luxury

brands as the manager stated, “ we only know the consumer and we do not get into their friends and what they do as we think it does not affect us”. Therefore, it seems clear from this study that purchase behavior of the luxury consumers are primarily influenced by their friends via digital media.

Proposition 4: Luxury consumers are highly influenced by their friends in buying and consuming luxury brands via digital media.

Discussion and Implications

Much of the present study supports current research, i.e., consumers want luxury products to be of good quality, stylish, elegant and aesthetic. This finding matches previous research, which found that Indian luxury consumers also wanted innovation, style and comfort (Atwal and Khan 2009; Jain et al. 2012). Much of this study also contradicts what seems to be current knowledge. Interestingly, we found that consumers believe that luxury brands are associated with the identity, personality, confidence, satisfaction and happiness of an individual. These elements had not been discussed in previous studies.

Consumers extensively use digital and social media to explore, compare, discuss and evaluate the luxury brands. They prefer to buy the luxury brands from retail stores. This seems to support the existing literature (Jain et al. 2012). Our study finds, however, that consumer also needs an experiential and pleasurable environment while purchasing luxury brands. That seems to explain why the retail store is still so important in the Indian market.

We also found in the study that post-purchase is affected by the desires, aspiration and lifestyle of the consumers and is commonly displayed on digital platforms, making it possible for them to receive feedback and reaction from their various social groups. These elements should be further associated with the intrinsic cues of the pre-purchase.

Previous studies commonly discuss the multiple need for and sources of information (Shukla 2011) external and internal stimuli (Jalalkamali and Nikbin 2010) but, no study seems to have addressed the usage of digital media at all the stages of the consumer purchase cycle or, the feedback from post-purchase activities which seem to include the psychographic and behavioral trait used for the intrinsic cues of luxury brands. Previous studies stated that reference groups affects the product choices (Bearden and Etzel 1982) and luxury consumption (Childer and Rao 1992) but no study has mentioned the influence of social groups at all the stages of the purchase journey and that many of those seem to have occurred primarily through digital media. The present study found that friends play a leading role in at all the stages of luxury purchase in India.

These findings have also extended the cue utilization and purchase behavior model (Keegan et al. 1992) by adding more variables and integrating it into other areas to enable the development of more comprehensive purchase model for luxury purchase behavior. The present study found that when consumers are at the different stages of the purchase cycle, they rely heavily on friends and social media rather than using their own resources to make decisions. This finding appears to be supportive of Kahneman’s concepts of humans having a System 1 and System 2 mental processing approach since it states younger people have adopted a proxy system 2 as they do not want to make the investment to make their own decisions (Vishwanathan and Jain 2013).

Luxury brands should focus on the subtle and hedonic attributes at the pre-purchase stage. Managers need to focus on quality, aesthetics and personalization of brands as they drive the consumers

towards product purchase. Brand managers have to emphasize identity, personality, satisfaction and happiness as consumers look for these elements while purchasing the products. Luxury brands can also focus on performance in delivering superior experience at the product and experiential levels. We also found that consumers believe in customization and exclusivity. Luxury brands should use sophisticated profiling of the consumers as it would help in personalization and contextualization of products. Luxury brands can place additional emphasis on natural scarcity, technology-driven paucity and tactical restrictions for personalization of products. Consumers also focus on their self-identity while buying luxury brands. Thus luxury marketers should focus on persona of the luxury brands through visual identity joined with familiar brand imagery; consumers touch points are critical in most luxury brand communication strategies. How the consumer uses digital communication needs to be understood thoroughly as the entire conversation is related to purchase and post purchase of luxury products and is often carried out on virtual platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Skype.

Luxury brand managers should also understand that consumers believe that luxury product purchases should occur in experiential and pleasing purchase situations. Consumers may extensively use virtual platforms for pre-purchase and post purchase, but they want to buy the luxury brands physically from the stores as they would like to indulge in the 'luxury world'. Luxury brands might consider providing audio-visual videos on i-pads within the stores to enhance the retail experience. Additionally, consumers would like to post the pictures of their recent luxury purchases on digital media to receive compliments from their friends and relatives. Consumers also want luxury brands to thoroughly study their aspirations, desires and lifestyles and, from this, develop luxury brands that would specifically fit their needs. This approach would help them to identify brands that suit their requirements easily and companies would also be able to target them with the customized products and exclusive offers. Luxury brands also need to develop seamless integration between the physical store experiences with the digital media as consumers want to indulge in both situations, many times, simultaneously. Finally, luxury brands have to be like a 'friend' of the consumers in order to understand the "friend circle" that consumers create for themselves. That might include such things as 'friendship pair interviews' (Uyenco et al. 2008). This reference group plays a significant role in developing purchase decisions for the consumers. Luxury brands can develop inspiring stories related to the products in an online video format that can be shared by the consumers with their friends and a semi-viral effect can be developed. Luxury brands can provide some interesting themes that can be discussed by the consumers' "friends' circles".

Luxury brands have high potential in developing markets such as India. They need to get connected with the younger and more enthusiastic consumers and they can do that through various forms of social media. Consumers are ready to pay higher prices, but, they would like the luxury brands to add some value in their lifestyle and identity. We also found that luxury product purchasers in India are impulsive and impatient and do not want to wait long to see their ambitions achieved. Therefore, brands need to be quick and fast in comprehending consumers and their networks to deliver effective results.

This study was carried out in India but similar research can be formulated for other emerging and developed economies. It would be particularly interesting to conduct studies on the influence of peers and friends on the purchase decision made about luxury products as they seem have a significant role to play in the product buying and post-purchase process. Luxury and consumer behavior is wide area to be explored as it has multiple networks at different levels of consumption. It appears that digital media is crucial for luxury brand marketers in the future as it would help in penetrating in the market and deliver brand stories to the consumers.

Acknowledgements

Authors thank MICA and the president and director of MICA Dr. Nagesh Rao for financial support for this research. We also thank Mr. Dhruvinkumar Chauhan for help in transcription and references.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

City	Gender		Age (Mean)	Education	
	Male (%)	Female (%)		Bachelor's Degree (%)	Master's Degree (%)
Bangalore	48	52	24.34	46	54
Delhi	46	54	23.12	45	55
Mumbai	47	53	22.56	42	58
Pune	45	55	23.98	43	57

Table 2. Lifestyle of Respondents:

City	Lifestyle Consumption			
	Holiday Abroad (%)	Premium Car (%)	Dinner in 4and5 star (%)	Premium Credit Card (%)
Bangalore	88.70	45	43	43
Delhi	85.76	48	59	48
Mumbai	88	67	56	49
Pune	82	43	59	44

Table 3. Themes and Evidence developed after Analysis

Themes	Evidence
Hedonic and Digital Pre-purchase	<p>“When I want to buy luxury product then I would like to know the quality, style and exclusivity of brand”</p> <p>“I want a luxury brand to be elegant and stylish as it make me happy”</p> <p>“We do all our exploring and comparisons of luxury brands on social media as it is easy to use and effective”</p> <p>“I like to carry out my pre-purchase research on digital media as I cannot meet any friends physically and all the information related to products are available to internet so we send links and videos and then discuss”</p>
Experiential and Enjoyable Purchase	<p>“I want to be lazy and stop thinking while I experience luxury”</p> <p>“I would like to indulge in luxury brands while I purchase them and it can happen at stores”</p> <p>“I would like to be happy and would not like to think while I buy luxury and it cannot happen online”</p>
Aspiration, Lifestyle Oriented and Virtual Post Purchase	<p>“The real work of luxury brands starts when we buy the products, they need to study know everything about us that includes aspirations and lifestyle and make new products and make us happy”</p> <p>“When I post luxury purchase picture on social media then number of likes and responses within an hour is important for me”</p>
High Influence of Friends	<p>“We discuss everything about the luxury brands with our friends as we select them in our life and are more credible than anyone else”</p> <p>“We have experts in our friend circle who guide us about the luxury brands and affects our purchase”</p>

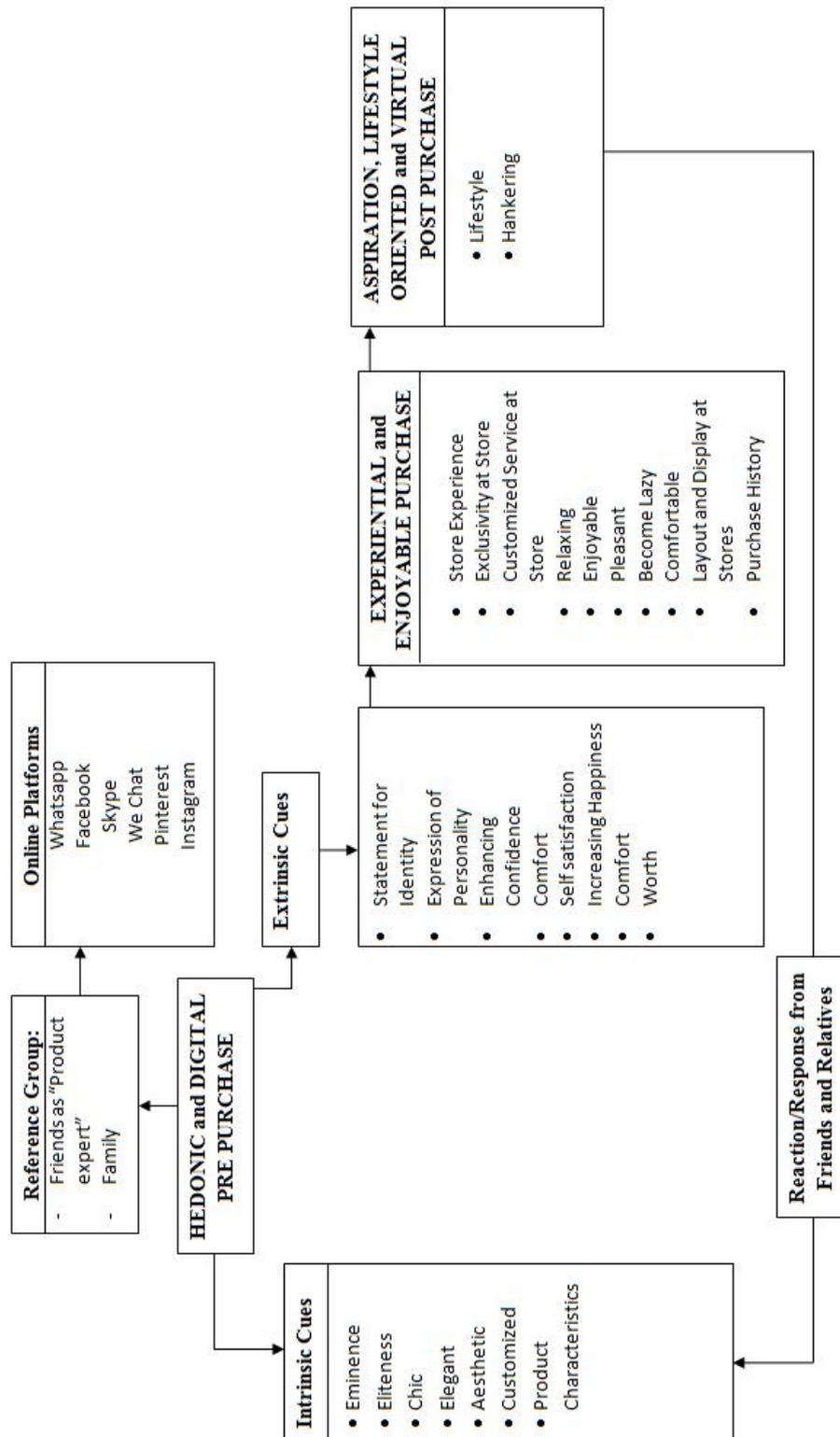


Figure 1. Role of Digital Media and Other dimensions in Purchase Behavior for Luxury Products

Re-visiting Two-step Flow Communication Model: Bloggers as Intermediaries

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Working Paper

This study is based upon *brand communication through digital influencers model* (Uzunoğlu, Misci Kip and Yaman, 2012) and *framework for strategic blogger endorsement* (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014) developed by the authors in their previous researches. Adhering to this model and framework, new propositions are suggested for further researches in the field of digital communication. The purpose of the study is to expand on previous findings and provide new discussions and deliberate research questions to enhance previously recommended models. We also propose that existing theories of communication can be re-visited and re-defined with regard to digital transformation. As digital media are still evolving, related researches would provide a deeper understanding by further developing suggested propositions and enhancing literature on digital communication.

In order to enhance presence and improve the value of dialogue on the digital platform, which has its own dynamics in comparison to conventional media, brand communicators can leverage bloggers' intermediaries role, thus facilitate the dissemination of the extended brand message. According to the proposed framework on *Strategic Blogger Endorsement* (Uzunoğlu, Misci Kip and Yaman, 2012), digital intermediaries may become brand ambassadors if satisfied with experiences offered by the brand communicators in the process of building relationships. As addressed by the authors, "the achievement of *framework for strategic blogger endorsement* would help companies to encourage bloggers to talk about their brands, to leverage the network effect of bloggers to strengthen their communication with other target groups, and to disseminate their messages" (Uzunoğlu, Misci Kip and Yaman, 2012: 282).

The brand communicators already recognizing the importance of bloggers as intermediaries have started to develop strategic plans resulting with blogger endorsements. When existing blogger

endorsements were analysed, the cases reveal a general process, which can be summarized in the following points. Uzunoğlu, Misci Kip and Yaman, 2012: 280):

- Analysing and finding relevant bloggers with the potential to reach brand's target groups
- Developing an awareness program as a prelude to creating interest in the brand
- Involving bloggers in a satisfying positive experience
- Building a relationship via powerful bonds created through satisfying experiences
- Gaining the support of bloggers as references who can transmit positive messages to the target audience
- Converting bloggers and digital influencers into brand ambassadors through consistent, sustainable and continuous endorsement programs



Figure 1. Framework for Strategic Blogger Endorsement

Stemming from *Framework for Strategic Blogger Endorsement*, our next research was conducted with in-depth interviews among 17 brand and digital agency representatives, aimed at acknowledging the initiation and the maintenance of blogger endorsement programs. Seven major issues arose from these interviews: definition of bloggers, blogger selection criteria, digital integration, power of bloggers, long-term relationship building with bloggers, measurement, and budgetary issues in blogger communication (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014: 592). The results of the interviews encouraged us to re-visit and reconstruct the two-step flow model of communication developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) who claimed that a common geographical environment and face-to-face communication are crucial for the social interaction. However, in today's digitally dominated world, individuals interact through digital platforms rather than shared geographical environment. Information flows through individuals within the digital environment by intermediary bloggers, who can be considered as influential opinion leaders. The

message flow from the brand information source to the followers through digital influencers were constructed as below (Uzunoglu and Misci Kip, 2014: 599):

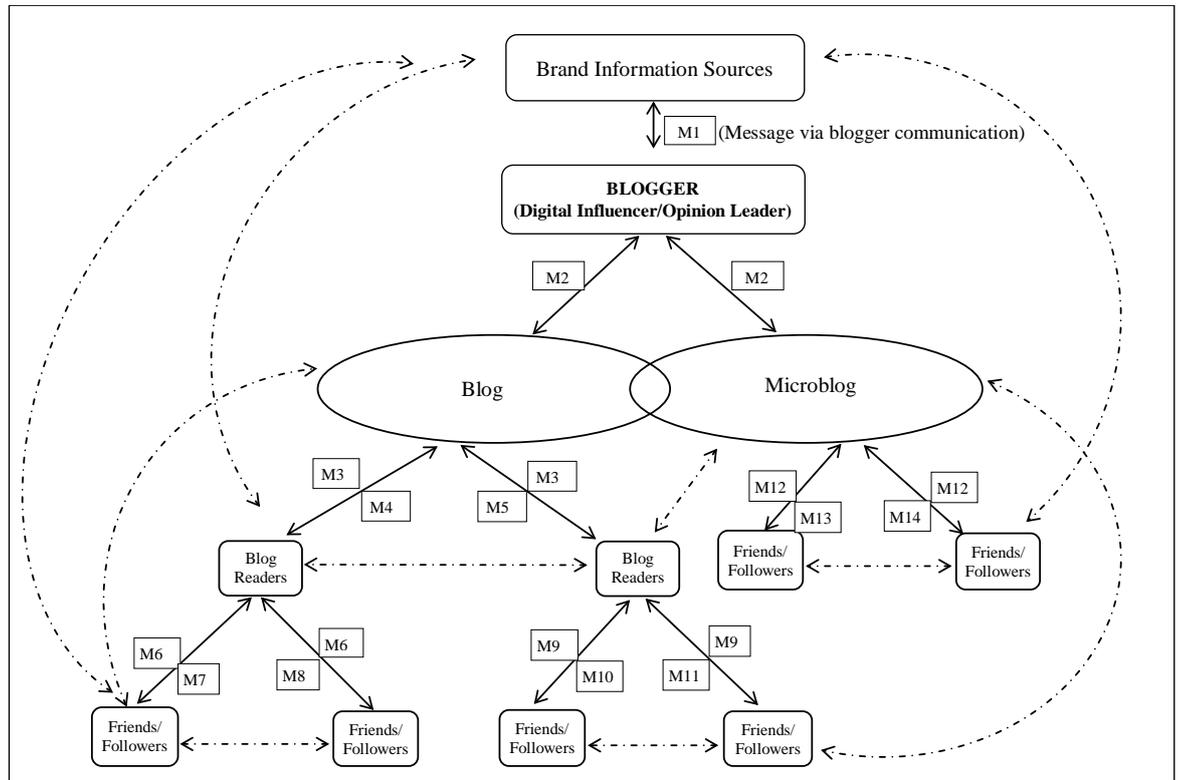


Figure 2. Brand communication through digital influencers model

When *brand communication through digital influencers* model is articulated, it is clearly seen that the traditional two-step model is transformed to multi-step-flow model, in which recipients also become senders within digital environment.

The proposed model, which is based on digital opinion leaders, allows for the building and maintaining of relationships with these intermediaries. According to the outcomes of our previous research, more research propositions can be offered for the scholars aiming to enrich the field of digital marketing communications. Consequently, our paper aims to shed light on possible research areas arising from proposed framework.

It is revealed that brand communicators identify bloggers with various roles, i.e. experts, celebrities. This distinction can be explored by the classification of blogger categories according to consumers' involvement in buying decision process (Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman, 1981). The effects of different blogger categories can also be examined in terms of their influence on brand message dissemination. Based on this discussion, we propose that:

- P1: Expert bloggers are more influential in endorsing high-involvement products, whereas celebrity bloggers are more influential in endorsing low-involvement products.

In our previous study (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014), the brand representatives stated that when choosing which bloggers to consider as brand ambassadors, they have certain criteria, such as *blogger and brand match, tone of voice, number of followers, content, popularity, and reliability*. To clarify *blogger and brand match* it can be stated that “the blog’s relevance to the brand has a supportive role in increasing the intimacy of brand communication” (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014: 595). Regarding this point, the following propositions may be researched in further studies.

P2: The match of brand essence and blogger positioning provide positive effect on consumers’ attitudes towards a) brand message, b) brands, c) purchase intention

As observed before, the bloggers’ major communication tools are their own blogs, micro-blogs, and social media accounts. Integration of these tools allows brand communicators to reach wider audience in terms of brand message dissemination. Re-visiting McLuhan’s (1964) statement “medium is the message” can inspire new researchers investigating digital communication. Stemming from this statement below proposition can be advanced:

P3: Digital integration between a) blogs and micro-blogs, b) blogs and social media, c) micro-blogs and social media, will result in greater engagement of the target audience when compared with message dissemination through blogs alone.

According to the balance theory (Heider, 1958), receivers of the messages feel uncomfortable, or out of balance, when their attitude toward the sender of the messages does not match their attitude about the topic of the message. This theory can be adapted to digital communication, and another study can be conducted in order to compare the influential role of bloggers and journalists with below research proposition.

P4: Brand messages disseminated by bloggers have a different effect on consumer attitude to those disseminated by journalists.

Bloggers’ experiences are crucial in creating strong relations between themselves and brands. After creating awareness and holding interest of bloggers, brand communicators should provide implementations of blogger communication which have the potential to achieve satisfying experience. This can be achieved by involving bloggers in innovative events, gatherings or meetings organized by brand communicators. The following proposition can be derived from this point:

P5: Satisfied bloggers in brand activities organized as blogger communication implementations will share more brand messages than unsatisfied bloggers.

Another proposition derived from blogger communication implementations is as follows:

P6: Supporting the activities of the bloggers themselves will bring positive word-of-mouth to brands.

Some more research ideas can be formulated based on brand communication, through *digital influencers model*. As the previous study was conducted among brand and digital agency representatives, a different perspective could be revealed by designing study with bloggers to discover and promote the factors which are likely to engage bloggers. It would be valuable to explore the differences between the messages conveyed through brands’ own social channels on the one hand, and bloggers’ blogs and social media accounts on the other. With developing digital channels, the individuals do not rely on solely one information source, rather they share information among each other. Therefore, peer communication, its

effects on brand message dissemination, and on consumer decision process can be advanced in further studies. Peers' motivating factors to share brand messages can be better understood within the same study. Engagement related subjects are suggested for scholars aiming to examine the field of digital communication. Accordingly, investigating the motivations of bloggers and their readers in their involvement with brands are proposed as areas for further studies.

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9

**ISSUES IN
MARKETING**

Disabled People: Is Media a Disabling or Abling Actor?

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Abstract

Being historically an old concept, disability and disabled people took the attention of various parties in society. Compared to previous decades, today, disabled people are more welcomed due to regulations imposed by governments and increasing awareness of individuals. However, many of us still behave differently to physically disabled people and treat them like aliens, as their bodies do not meet societal norms. Moreover, as an important socialization agent, media imposes the ideal body images through commercials. With this study, our aim is to shed light on the role of media in disability phenomena in the age of communication and understand whether media is an abling or disabling actor. Through a qualitative inquiry, we conducted 20 interviews with disabled individuals, and 5 interviews with managers of global companies. In addition to interviews we made a content analysis of 8 public service announcements (PSAs). Initial findings reveal that most of the representations are disabling.

Keywords

Disability, ideal body images, media, public service announcements, normality, qualitative.

In today's globalized world, mass media is an important socialization agent (Ward, 1974). To name a few, radio, television, newspapers, and magazines are some of the mediums with the power to influence and shape the social norms and consumption desires of people. To understand its power, statistics of media usage could be useful. About 98 per cent of Turkish homes have a TV, 74 per cent of homes have a computer, and 64 per cent of them have internet connection (RTUK Report, 2013).

Especially, the idealized body images imposed by the media have a crucial impact on how people construct their identity (Finkelstein, 2004). For instance, women are continually bombarded with advertisements and commercials for weight-loss programs and cosmetic products promoting younger look (e.g. Bordo, 1993; Wolf, 1991). Moreover, the message "the thinner body you have the more beautiful you are" has a great pressure on especially young girls aged between 14 and 18 (NTV News, 2015). Many of us constantly observe and criticize our appearances and engage in activities such as buying specific styles of clothes or employing body-focused practices like dietary and exercise regimens, to transform the body into a more desired form. These activities enable individuals to accomplish goals and feel more contented with their lives (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995); however, they have also caused social problems like reduced self-esteem, eating disorders, body image distortions, and increased tendency for cosmetic surgery (e.g. Bordo, 1993; Wolf, 1991). The situation gets even worse when it comes to people with physical disabilities.

"Since the media often constructs simulated identities, based around product and brand ensembles, which are portrayed as successful, healthy, secure, happy, youthful, and sexy, consumption sometimes becomes a source of false promises (Murray 2002, p. 436)." This brings out an ethical concern about media not always necessarily working for the well-being of consumers, but instead working on the perpetual recreation of these insatiable desires for the system's own economic well-being (e.g. Bordo 1993; Wolf 1991).

As Foucault (1988) emphasizes, "we" normals have constituted ourselves through the exclusion of others, criminals, mad people, disabled people (p.146)" and the media often endorses that. With this research paper, we, thus, aim to develop a deeper understanding on how the disabled individuals feel under these circumstances and how they survive.

Among minority groups such as the ones based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality and religion, disabled people constitute one of the largest in society. About 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4% experience significant difficulties in functioning (WHO, 2011). Beginning from the childhood, most of the people believe that physical perfection is the norm and the disabled body is the problem (Stone, 1995). Even the main characters of famous tales such as the Notre dame de Paris or the Beast and the Beauty have played roles in the creation of negative perception of disability while the representation of disability in media has never changed: clichéd, stereotyped and archetypal (Darke, 2004).

Bonnie (2004) and Barnes (2004) state that disabled people often are not exposed in films, TV programs and advertising, mostly being excluded from the mainstream media. "How often have you seen disabled people on the catwalks of London, Milan or Paris Fashion Week or on the pages of Cosmo, Vogue or FHM? (Bonnie, 2004; p. 125)". The mass media usually represents the rich minority and their desirable lives in the soap operas rather than representing the lives of the majority of the population (Lichter et al. 1994, O'Guinn and Shrum 1997). When it comes to representation of disabled individuals the mass media prefers portraying the lives of able-bodied people (the majority). Taking into

consideration the several representations of disability and disabled people, Barnes (1992) makes a classification of portrayals of them on media such as an object of violence, as sinister and evil, as burden, and more which have negative meanings.

Most individuals learn about disabilities and shape their attitudes towards disabled people based on what they get from the media. Considering the tales, myths and several beliefs from the old times, media is a part of creating stereotype assumptions, discrimination for people with disabilities (Barnes, 1992). Taking into consideration the under-representation of the disabled people both in media and academic literature, we aim to shed light to the role of the media in the identity construction process of individuals, labeled as disabled. We further explore if media is a disabling or abiling actor and how media can be used to change negative attitudes towards disabled people.

Methodology

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, through a qualitative inquiry, we started conducting semi-structured in depth interviews, which are suitable for data collection, allowing informants to express themselves freely at their own pace (Mariampolski, 2001), at the same time analyzing advertising content, which are commercial and public service announcements (PSAs).

20 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with physically and visually disabled people from different ages 20 to 50. Moreover, to get a deeper understanding of the media and marketing sides, 5 managers were interviewed from 2 global companies and advertising agencies. Building a trust relationship during the interviews was one of the most critical issues in this study (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Each interview began with necessary warm-up sessions in order to build trust. The interviews lasted about an hour, tape recorded with the permission of the informants, then transcribed. Considering the importance of the ethical issues, the participants were informed about the aims of the study, and they were assured about the anonymity of the personal information (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

The transcriptions from the interviews were analyzed using selective and axial coding, following the guidelines provided by Spiggle (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Two coders who were experienced in the coding process analyzed the content. All essays were analyzed according to the main themes, comparing and contrasting the findings, which were then categorized into main and sub-categories (Carson et al., 2001). By using axial coding, our aim was to relate categories to sub-categories and construct a better clarification of the topic as a whole (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As axial coding was not the ultimate point of coding in the study, the process was supported with selective coding to “integrate and define categories (Strauss and Corbin 1998; p. 143)”, based on the data. Finally, we conducted constant checks with each transcript and our interpretations to avoid any possible bias. During the interpretation phase, we got some help from a psychologist, who is working with disabled individuals, to have a better understanding of our findings.

In addition to in-depth interviews, 8 PSAs about disability and disabled people were analyzed. During the analysis phase, all relevant aspects of the messages and the exact words used in the statements were noted. Then, coding and categorization process was similar to that of the interview analysis (Berg, 2001).

Findings

Our preliminary findings reveal the role of three major actors (government, marketing, and society/family) in disability phenomena. For those actors, especially for the first two, media is an important tool to shape attitudes towards disabled people.

Some of our findings suggest that disabled individuals often feel as an outsider of the social system, also because of the by able-bodied “normal” people. For most of the participants, media is disabling and abnormalising.

Even normal people cannot meet the norms of the society, how could a disabled individual do? We are being excluded from the society. Role models (e.g.; teachers, athletes, or politicians) helped me to notice that I could change my life and do something. . In contrary to media and society, they showed that disabled people could make something for themselves and society (M, 45, former MP with visual impairment).

Taking into consideration the misbelief about disabled people, firms do not produce appropriate products or advertisements ignore us. We have money, but they do not consider that (M, 22, physical disability, cannot find a job, unemployed).

Another finding reveals that idealized body images may negatively affect people with disabilities. Those images make them aware of their deficiencies. This is also another disabling factor.

I am a physically disabled person. I cannot walk without help... An ideal male should be tall (e.g. 180cm), a muscle man, brunette, and wear fashionable dress. Kivanc Tatlitug (a very famous actor) is my idol. He is very handsome, and I like his style. I wish I were like him (M, 22, physical disability, unemployed, feeling disabled).

Media representations could be more harmful for young disabled people because youth values physical attractiveness and body shape during the stage of adolescence (Lerner and Karabenick, 1974).

At the age of 19, when I saw the poster of an Indian film, the actress's back took my attention. I could not take my eyes off. I remember that I was really impressed by the image. I know I will never be like that because of my disability (F, 27, physical disability, she has a back problem, psychologist)

Social media can be a useful tool for disabled individuals to feel normal and act as a normal person. They can easily socialize and create a normal body and personal image via social media.

While using Twitter, Facebook, or my blog, I feel comfortable because people are not aware of my disability... I have a chance to act as a person without disabilities while I am online (F, 21, physical disability, student, feeling disabled in society).

Taking into consideration the oppression and exclusion, some global firms have attempts to include disabled people into society by preparing social responsibility projects and producing appropriate products. Below the quotation belongs to a manager of a global car manufacturer:

Our aim as a global manufacturer is to create positive attitudes towards disabled people. If normal people are aware of disability and disabled people, they will not isolate them. Isolation and oppression are the results of lack of knowledge. During our social responsibility projects we actively use Twitter and Facebook. We are planning to make a 3-year project which aims to reach nearly 1 million people and increase their awareness.

During the content analysis of the PSAs, the paradox of media took our attention. While TVs represent and impose the idealized images as a norm in the advertisements, PSAs emphasize that disabled people are like everyone. The advertisements sell or market “normality”. For most of the PSAs, disability

is a tragedy, pain, and illness. People with disabilities are victims of it. The common message of the representations is overcoming the disability, achieving the impossible, and performing a miracle.

Different disability groups have different needs. Even trying to make changes in perceptions, there is discrimination among disabled individuals. Most advertisements or PSAs exclude visually and hearing impaired people. For instance, there is no use of sign language in the PSAs. It seems that the word disability evokes an image of physically disabled person.

Conclusion

In this ongoing research, the preliminary findings show that society and marketing exclude and abnormalise disabled people through media. Idealized body images and similar representations negatively affect them. In order to avoid those effects, social media and social responsibility projects can be useful to decrease oppression and increase awareness.

Taking into consideration the consumer culture messages for disabled people, media personnel should know that they have the power to influence people and they should develop a strategy to protect disabled people from negative effects of the consumer culture. Because, the disabling language, the negative terminology could make things worse for disabled community by increasing discrimination. Portrayal of disabled individuals should not be based on tales, myths, and beliefs that come from the past. It should enhance the existing knowledge of society about disability and disabled people. The society should aware of the social and environmental barriers and be sure about representing all disability groups rather than focusing on physically disabled ones.

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The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Retention: The Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction

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Working Paper

Summary

This empirical paper examines the effect of relationship marketing (RM) through its various constructs (trust, commitment, conflict handling, communication, empathy, shared values, reciprocity and equity) on customer retention. Customer satisfaction is used as a mediating variable. A questionnaire derived from extant literature was completed by 305 customers of Egyptian small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). The initial findings, using multiple regression analysis, indicate that RM constructs have a significant direct effect and predict a substantial proportion of the variance in the customer retention. There is also a significant indirect effect through customer satisfaction. The findings of this study provide useful and valuable insights and benefits for SMEs intending to apply RM as using the RM will improve the customer satisfaction as well as customer retention.

Introduction

Currently, both academics and practitioners agree that establishing strong, high-quality relationships with various stakeholders is an influential element in doing business worldwide, particularly in present-day complex and highly competitive markets. This paper seeks to investigate the direct effect of relationship marketing on customer retention as well as the indirect effect using the mediation effect of customer satisfaction. The effect of all constructs of RM on customer retention in the Egyptian SME context has

not been studied before. While several studies considered the effect of RM on customer retention, there are few published researches on the extent to which RM constructs have been diffused in emerging economies and developing countries, such as Egypt. This paper addresses the under researched and poorly understood area of business relationships within SME at one of the developing countries, 'Egypt'. The findings of this study will enable managers of SMEs in Egypt to become more aware of the concept of relationship marketing and take the opportunity of applying this concept to enhance the satisfaction with their customers, thus increasing their retention.

Literature Review

Relationship marketing is a Western concept that emerged from the field of services and business-to-business marketing to challenge the traditional marketing approach which was based completely on transactions and the notion of the marketing mix (Berry, 1983; Christopher *et al.*, 1991; Gronroos, 1994; Gummesson, 1987; Jackson, 1985).

Accordingly, relationship marketing has been designed as an approach for marketing which is capable of absorbing the dynamics in the customer relationships and interactions (De Burca *et al.*, 1995; Gronroos, 1994; Kotler, 1991). Where Berry (1983, 25) describes relationship marketing as "attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships". With this definition, he introduced relationship marketing as a new marketing paradigm with a "strategic viewpoint", which focuses on the significance of "attracting" new consumers, as a first step in marketing activates, and also stresses on maintaining or retaining customers (Berry, 1983; de Burca *et al.*, 1995; Bruhn, 2003, 10).

In addition, The literature has revealed a number of the constructs for relationship marketing, as shown in figure 1, such as trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), commitment (Grossman, 1998), conflict handling (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987), communication (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), empathy (Sin *et al.*, 2002), shared values (Sin *et al.*, 2002), as well as reciprocity and equity (Ndubisi, 2003).

Moreover, relationship marketing has a long list of benefits. These include helping to raise the company's market share; increasing the company's profits; preserving loyal customers; and decreasing many types of costs (Bruhn, 2003; Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Oliver, 1999; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Rosenberg and Czepiel (1983) argue that the cost of attracting one new consumer is more than five times the cost of retaining one consumer, and Reichheld (1993) also found that profits climb steeply when a firm increases its customer retention rate because the expense of acquiring new customers to replace defecting customers is higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. Firms were found to improve profits by between 25 percent and 85 percent by improving customer retention by just five percent.

Moreover, relationship marketing stresses the building and management of relationships with customers (Gronroos, 1994), which implies a change in focus from products and firms as units of analysis to people and organizations (Webster, 1992).

In addition, it is argued that customer retention 'fits well' within the main objective of marketing actions. Thus, relationship marketing focuses mainly on the customer retention and recovery of customers before gaining new consumers (Bruhn, 2003), since customer acquisition is considered to be between five and ten times more expensive than customer retention (Gummesson, 1999). Further, customer retention is perceived as offering significant direct and in direct advantages (Bruhn, 2003; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996).

The discussion so far has shown the overall importance of the relationship marketing paradigm for Western academics. However, despite its growing importance in both theory and practice, there has been little published research on the extent to which relationship marketing concepts have been diffused in emerging economies and developing countries such as Egypt (Sabine, 2005) as well as applying RM in the SME.

Regarding the customer satisfaction, Oliver (1981) defines satisfaction as “a summary psychological state resulting from the emotion surrounding expectations [which] is coupled with the consumer’s prior feeling about the consumption experience”. This means that, consumers regard consumption as a mean by which they can accomplish some needs, requirements, aims, etc. and that this accomplishment is pleasant. Thus, consumers feel satisfied when the outcomes of the consumption process offer a specific level of happiness contrasted with unhappiness (Oliver, 1997). From a post-purchase perspective, Churchill and Surprenant (1982, p.491) define satisfaction as “a major outcome of marketing activity and services to link processes culminating in purchase and consumption with post purchase phenomena such as attitude change, repeat purchase and brand loyalty”.

A high and professional level of relationship marketing results in high levels of customer satisfaction which have many benefits. Several studies suggest that satisfaction has a great influence on customer retention, reduces price elasticity, saves company’s market share from competitors, lowers transaction costs, reduces the costs of attracting new customers, and improves the firm’s reputation in the marketplace (Lovelock *et al.*, 1998; Egan, 2001). In addition, satisfied customers positively use word-of-mouth communication and consequently become a walking, talking advertisement tool for an organization whose service has pleased them.

Theoretical Framework

Figure (1) illustrates the proposed model for this paper, which investigates the direct effect of relationship marketing (independent variable) on customer retention (dependent variable), as well as the indirect effect through the customer satisfaction (mediating variable).

This model is constructed in the light of the fact that relationship marketing by definition involves “attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships” (Berry, 1983, 25). Here, the goal of relationship marketing is to maintain and enhance the quality of the relationship with the customer over the long run and increase customer satisfaction and retention.

The final hypothesized outcome of this model is an improved customer satisfaction thus retention. Firms promote relationship marketing mainly to increase customer satisfaction and retention and recovery by using various bonding tactics to stay connected with the current customers (Bruhn, 2003; Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001). Prior research also reveals that relationship marketing plays a key role in retaining customers by building trust, affection (Tang *et al.*, 2008), and commitment with them (Palmatier *et al.*, 2009). Tseng (2007) notes that the purposes of relationship marketing are to gain the maximum value from customers and retain them, thus contributing to the firm’s long-term profits. Smith and Barclay (1997) argue that the main purpose of investing in relationships with customers is to create strong bonds and retain valuable customers. Finally, Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995, p. 398) note that when the company and the consumer deal with each other directly, greater potential exists “for emotional bonding that transcends economic exchange. Parties can understand and appreciate each others’ needs and constraints better, are more inclined to cooperate with one another, and thus, become more

relationship oriented.” Because gaining one new customer is five to ten times more expensive than retaining one loyal customer (Gummesson, 1999) and because relationship marketing focuses mainly on increasing customer retention and recovery before attracting new consumer (Bruhn, 2003), as mentioned previously, the final result of applying relationship marketing is improved customer retention.

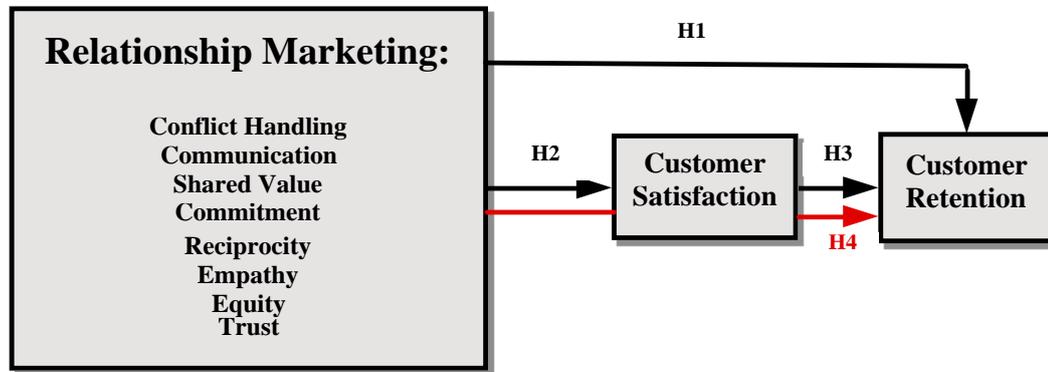


Figure 1. The Research Model

Hypotheses

H1. There is a significant positive relationship between relationship marketing and customer retention.

H1a. There are significant positive relationships of trust, commitment, conflict handling, communication, empathy, shared values, reciprocity, and equity with customer retention.

H2. There is a significant positive relationship between relationship marketing and customer satisfaction.

H2a. There are significant positive relationships of trust, commitment, conflict handling, communication, empathy, shared values, reciprocity, and equity with customer satisfaction.

H3. There is a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer retention.

H4. Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between relationship marketing and customer retention.

Contribution

The findings of this study will enable managers of SMEs in Egypt to become more aware of the concepts of relationship marketing and take the opportunity of applying this concept to enhance the satisfaction of their customers, thus increasing their retention. It will also give guidelines for managers of SMEs to improve the effectiveness of their current marketing systems by providing a deeper understanding of the constructs of relationship marketing which are more important and relevant to SMEs in the Egyptian context and have an effect on customer satisfaction and retention. Moreover, this study will enable managers of SMEs to evaluate their marketing programs and identify which constructs have most influence on costumers when they make their decisions and formulate their intensions toward relationship marketing.

Comment about the future development of the paper after the conference

To date the questionnaires have been developed, and data collected as well as part of the analysis and initial findings are finished. After the conference presentation, the analysis will be finished then the findings will be linked to the literature and the writing-up process for the paper will begin.

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Political Marketing, Social Media and Democracy: The Case of North Cyprus 2013 Election

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Abstract

This study departs from the findings that social media attention contributed to the electoral success of political parties in the Turkish-Cypriot election of 2013. While the author observes an impact of social media attention on the number of preferential votes for each political party, in this study they put an emphasis mostly on the detrimental elements that explain this social media attention in a meaningful way. Political parties and politicians can communicate with citizens on social media in essentially two ways: directly through messages that they share with those users who follow or like them on a given platform, and indirectly, through messages that their supporters get from them and re-circulate to their own contacts on social media. The paper asks how do people use microblogging messages to exchange political messages. In other words, is the social media's interest in a political campaign a consequence of computer-based political marketing? Besides providing an overarching analysis of how Twitter and Facebook use was fashioned during the 2013 Turkish-Cypriot election campaign, this study clearly indicates different researches on how users utilized Twitter and Facebook. As the study's analysis indicates media logic and partisan logic are both relevant, with the party logic outweighing the media logic. However, the question remains to what extent the social media incorporated a partisan logic in the selection of political parties and politicians.

Keywords

Cyprus Politics, election campaigns, social media, political marketing, the theory of campaign professionalization.

Introduction

A change in the modern campaigning strategies of governments and parties demands more detailed research on the campaigning effects in communication research studies. Although only a few existing studies have addressed political marketing and election campaign strategies, there is now a growing literature on the relationship between political campaign strategies and third age communication (Blumer and Kavanagh, 1999). The concept of democratization has now penetrated communication studies as it has in election studies. Political marketing and modern campaigning (including political ads/spots, political brands, spin doctors) have influenced democratic events, such as voter turnout during elections and referenda to prevent an undesired outcome (Kinder and Sears, 1985: 682). These technological changes reduce the uncertainty of the elections/referendums results. However, political marketing with modern campaigning strategies do not always prevent the functions of democracy. There is a clear parallel between the process towards mediatization which has occurred in Western democracies, and the tactics developed by political strategists. Recent studies prove a strict connection with the developments occurred in modern media systems, where the mediatization of politics has constructed (Strömback, 2008).

The introduction of new communication technology has consequences for democracy and the 2013 Turkish-Cypriot election has been the first “Twitter and Facebook general election”. As with the Internet itself, social media have been heralded for their potential for increasing political deliberation whether or not political parties’ activity on social media has been relevant in determining the outcome of the citizens’ reactions among previously unengaged citizens. Although many initially held high hopes for e-democracy (Chadwick, 2008; Hilbert, 2009) most new digital tools of political communication are often characterized by excessive media hype. However, the successful employment of social media during the 2008 Obama US presidential campaign (Smith, 2009) yet again raised the profile of social media applications, suggesting that social media exposure and electoral success are considered to go hand in hand.

In particular, the final week before the Election Day during the election campaign is seen as crucial to the election outcome (Harrop and Miller 1987). This line of reasoning shows that a larger amount of voters tend to postpone their final choice and most of the voters made their choice during the actual campaign period (Norris et al., 2006). As such, there is a pertinent need for empirical studies to examine if and how new campaigning strategies such social media services effect political participation and public debate. Indeed, previous research has suggested that studies into Twitter and Facebook use is becoming a relevant arena for political participation and public debate that goes beyond the characterization of ‘interesting novelty’ (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009: 10) given their use is integrated with other media channels, outlets and messages (Larsson and Hallvard, 2012).

However, not all political scientists and media scholars are convinced of the extended role of the media in general and more precisely social media in the electoral arena (van Aelst et al., 2008). Opposing views and conflicting research results have indicated different conclusions ranging minimal mass media effects (Scheufele, 1999). According to the research on elections and political campaigns, the role of media (radio and newspaper) in the mid-20th century was limited (Berelson et al., 1954; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944), whereas interpersonal relations and selective use of information were relatively high. Dramatically, the media atmosphere was changed with the expansion of television, when media have become a more central player in campaigning (Swanson and Mancini, 1996). Social media (Twitter and Facebook) shows

characteristics of being more inclusive and resonating arenas of political communication and public debate, since the internet is a selective medium (Bimber and Davis, 2003).

From Old Political Marketing order to New Political Marketing

Undoubtedly, owing to partisanship, most press and broadcasting functioned as a platform of the socio-economic political elite. There was no room for political marketing, partisan media inform the electorate about the ideas and plans which the elite decided were relevant for the public to know. Moreover, independent journalism did not exist; therefore the partisan logic informing media behavior could be described as making it more a lap dog than watchdog (Brants & Van Praag, 2006). However, as it is clear from most cases, with the increasing trends in political advertising, overall political knowledge is steadily increasing. Therefore, political ads have effects on learning about issues and the perception of political actors. In other words, the advertising stimulates interest in political campaigning (Benoit & et al., 2009). Certainly political advertising seems to be effective as more people engage in a political process and participate in it (Moorman & Neijens, forthcoming; Franz & Ridout, 2010). For example, over the last five years, Australian politics has undergone a revolution by killing off political parties with long-term ideology and platforms and replaced them with leaders/politicians that are market-driven, short-term in focus and chase after electoral success at any cost (Brants & VanPraag, 2006; Benoit& et al., 2009).

Advertising can be understood as agenda-setting. By considering the 2008 election campaign in Turkey, several examples of advertising becoming news or at least having the premise adopted by the news industry (Alniacik, 2009). One example is the AKP (Justice and Development Party) campaign ad trying to frame RecepTayyip Erdogan as “Conqueror of Istanbul” by putting him in a video with both celebrities and the public. This frame dominated media images for days after it was launched. The main issue is that politics is becoming more commercial and that journalists are playing a bigger role in leading the ‘dance’ with politicians than they did before (Brants & Van Praag, 2006). No doubt that with the way of commercialization, we are moving towards a sound bite democracy. The big question is whether this evolvement is turning politics into a show or not? It is clear that nowadays, parties are trying to deliver their messages in short sound bites of around 30 seconds. Going back to news criteria, most common such criteria are relevance, identification, sensation, actuality and conflict (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001). Such a sound-bite strategy could be seen as detrimental for democracy, since relevance is pushed aside in favour of sensationalism as sensational stories capture people’s attention and persuade people to register online interest, by clicking ‘like’ and following ongoing discussions and blogs.

On the other hand, although political branding provides a conceptual framework to distinguish links between perception of parties and leaders, it also has damaging effect of branding on the democratic process (Reeves & et al., 2006). In addition, sensationalism, emotionalism, over-simplification of complex issues with short-bite political ads can serve as an alternative public sphere for new forms of public discourse (Örnebring&Jönsson, 2004). The fragmentation of the public sphere linked to changes in political marketing strategies leads to a higher degree of specialization and professionalization (Plasser, 2000). Significantly, the attribute of modernization is increasing social complexity, which undermines traditional structures of social inclusion (Scammell, 1999). Yet despite this media abundance due to the increased political marketing strategies, we are witnessing a spiral of cynicism in almost all democracies. Generally speaking, the liberal model media system with American style political advertising has constructed public sphere. This media constructed public sphere has resulted in political cynicism, alienation, decline of political trust and loss of social capital (Schulz, 1997).

Due to modern campaigning strategies citizens have more opportunities to learn about single-issue politics. Personalization referring to individual competence, private lives and emotion of individual politicians has been identified as the increasing ‘Americanization’ of media trends (Van Santen & Van Zoonen, 2011). Clearly, personalities matter in politics nowadays more than ever before. This increased focus about politicians being in focus more than ever before is something that has exploded in the third age. However, the most important point is that ideologies have declined as personalities have risen to prominence. Thus, if the demand for personalization in politics increases, than the political marketing strategy party should act accordingly, as illustrated by the rise to power of former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair (Scammell, 2007) which saw a decline in the ideological content of the Labour Party’s policies and a much more media-focused presidential-style of leadership.

The Americanization of the Election Campaign

The Americanization fear is something crucial in political marketing and democracy trends. Butler and Collins (1996) point out the predominance of the Anglo-American experience in the political marketing literature while Plasser et al. (2000) highlight the fundamental variation in institutional contexts of political marketing between Europe and the United States. Plasser et al. (2000) findings emphasize that the diffusion of Americanization political marketing techniques in Europe is not a linear process. The transformation and professionalization of campaigning might be as part of a process of strategic change on the part of political parties (Wring, 1996). In other words, “the adaptation of marketing strategies does not necessarily mean the dilution of party ideology” (Wring, 1996: 660).

Americanization trends have been adopted by many parties around the world leading to the need for a political ‘superstar’, such as Clinton, Blair, or Berlusconi. The illustration of the different aspects of political branding (Baines, 1999; Reeves, De Chernatony & Carrigan, 2006; Scammell, 2007) seems to be leading in that sense. Consequently, ideology is often being pushed aside on behalf of what can be called populism. This raises the fundamental question: is it the case of the successful politician being the candidate with the most money essentially buying victory through extensive advertising and branding. If this is the case then it poses worrying questions about the fundamental features of democracy- ‘fairness’. This example has been observed in the case of Turkey, with business and celebrities bankrolling the Justice and Development Party by pumping millions of Turkish Liras into the party’s political campaign during election periods when spending are not regulated.

Negative campaigning is a common trend where negativity and aggression are historically more common place. Yet, when negative campaigning goes wrong and backfires it can have terrible effects not only on sponsors but also for democracy more broadly. During the last election in Turkey, Kilicdaroglu portrayed himself as an outsider running in opposition to the favorite Erdogan who is the ‘establishment candidate’ (Brants, 2006), but this has serious implications for democracy in a broad sense. Perhaps after hearing these attacks people will become skeptical and mistrusting of politicians, reducing voter turnout in subsequent elections. This negative campaigning, often described as ‘dirty tricks’, will most likely continue for some time to come and have come to occupy a prominent position in election campaigns in Europe and some non-European countries as well. It is interesting to note that similar to Americanization, the recent technological developments in communications may homogenize voter-manipulating political communication practices (Esser, 2001). The increasing participation of the media in the political process may not necessarily result in a corruption of political institutions and to their replacement by the media (Schulz, 1999). A movement has taken place away from the industrial model of political message

dissemination towards one in which messages emerge through distributed production. Whether or not one accepts the claims for Web 2.0 as a new era in which the Internet is returning to its original purpose. No doubt, the rise of social networking shifts the locus of political communication further than ever before from the broadcast model (Coleman & Wright, 2008).

Spin doctoring is considered as a form of propaganda and as being detrimental for democracy as it turns politicians into celebrities and privileges presentation over substance. PR is perhaps the most important aspect of how the representation of politics in the media has changed over the years of the 'third age'. However, it is hard to demonize this new trend as totally 'negative' and detrimental to democracy. This greater emphasis on communication techniques seems more likely to be part of the overall process that changes the public's perception. Thus, there is a case for the idea that spin doctoring can bring politics back to a more virtuous behavior (Moloney, 2001). Referring back to Web 2.0 statement, this question has been raised: *How will politics be spun rather than whether it will or will not be spun?* This issue about new technology was corroborated somewhat through the statement: 'the truth kept intruding into peoples' living rooms. Therefore, in the information age that we live in, with multiple sources of information, citizens have a more rounded view of public issues and politics and as such might make more informed judgments. If one argues that politicians have a responsibility to present information without spin the press should do likewise and cover a story without spinning it either. However, especially in Cyprus and Turkey, there is an acknowledged right wing bias in the press, particularly among those newspapers which claimed to be influential in determining the outcome of the 2003 general election in Turkey and the 2004 Annan Referendum in Cyprus. As such, some argue that spinning information increases cynicism in politics, politicians and the political process. Together with the already existing white lies of politics, this inclines people to become more disenchanted.

Social Media and Democratic Participation

Various scholars have already focused specifically on the 'political use' of Twitter by politicians, parties and citizens during electoral campaign (Tumasjan et al., 2010; Golbeck et al., 2010) that indicates interesting results on the analysis of political activity on social media. Larsson and Moe (2012) distinguished the specific styles of Twitter use by politicians by "senders" and "receivers" of messages on the 2010 Swedish election. The impact of social media on the production and consumption of political news on the same idea of "hybridity" is in the construction and contestation of news at multiple points (Chadwick, 2012). Twitter is important "not simply as a space in its own right, but as a means of disseminating information alternative to the mainstream media coverage and mass-mediated political discussion, and connecting such information to current debates" (Burgess and Bruns, 2012: 23). The internet is a selective medium that encourages users who are already informed and engaged citizens to become even more interested, whereas it has very little effect on everyone else (Bimber and Davis, 2003).

Social media researchers have studied political Twitter and Facebook use by focusing on either political parties or politicians' uses of these services. The majority of existing studies deal with the US use of such services, like tweets from Members of the US Congress (Golbeck et al., 2010). Social media may contribute to patterns by providing a mode of use more akin to one-way, top-down communication than actually engaging with the citizenry (Golbeck et al., 2010), addressing instead the most informed and partisan and reinforcing their attitudes, while microblogging in general has evolved towards becoming more conversational and collaborative (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009: 10) as it has tended to remain isolated from direct political stimuli. While some of their affordances still enable ample room for

users' selection of contents, which could thus lead uninterested citizens to simply avoid politics, others might allow opportunities for unintended exposure to political contents (Vaccari and Valeriani, 2013:4). Moreover, the most active and involved social media users in terms of tweets posted in political conversations on Twitter have been described as "political junkies" (Coleman, 2003), who remain a subculture (Burgess and Brunson, 2012). On the other hand, Twitter mostly attracts highly engaged voters, whereas it could not bridge gaps between the least politically interested citizens (Schlozman et al., 2010). In other words, Twitter is mostly offering a viable avenue for self-expression and advocacy to "political omnivores" (Chadwick and Howard, 2010), which echoes the definition of political junkies (Coleman, 2003).

A number of studies have shown that the reflection of the digitally enhanced public sphere (Drezner and Farrell, 2008), which has focused on real world politics ignoring the reflection of offline politics. For instances, Williams and Gulati (2008) have found that the number of Facebook supporters can be considered a valid indicator of electoral success, which can be used to accurately predict political outcomes (Zarella, 2009). Clearly, the Net is now and will continue to be a boon to those who already have an active and sustained interest in public affairs, which the Internet by itself will increase the attentive public (Margolis and Resnick, 2000: 212). Together with some technical issues related to passive citizens during the period of campaigning (Kollock and Smith, 2002), normative preference for voice-as-democratic participation has highly influenced critical accounts of online activities (Crawford, 2009).

With respect to the reflection of politics on Twitter, for instance in German federal election 2009 the existence of 577 political Twitter accounts (i.e., official accounts of parties and politicians) demonstrates the interconnections between politics and social media (Meckel and Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2009). Thus, in analyzing politicians' social media presence, communication and potential influence on the political debate online have focused on social media websites, such as Twitter and Facebook. Previous research classification based on "uses" of Twitter in terms of interactions is described within a spectrum going from engaging activities that users entertain around certain hashtags. Although, the reference to tweets in some political commentaries (Skemp, 2009) shows that analysts are already turning to the Twittersphere as an indicator of political opinion, there are no scientific studies systematically investigating the political sentiment in social media.

In this study, I aim to shed light on these issues by analyzing the Twitter and Facebook presence and activity of the main Turkish Cypriot political parties' leaders and their audience size during the 2013 general election campaign. Turkish Cypriot users grew massively between the end of 2010 and the end of 2012. While the amount of media attention did matter for electoral success, the media exposures for individual politicians and political parties have a favorable impact on the media attention for a candidate. Although social media is still only a niche outlet compared with mainstream media arenas, this social media platform is a vital part of the contemporary Turkish Cypriot information ecosystem. The central question here is whether social media provide a platform for political deliberation online or not?

Research question and design

The research is based on a data set containing information about all five political parties for the 2013 general election and the Turkish-Cypriots parliament. The dependent variables are the amount of social media attention for these political parties in both Twitter and Facebook during the six-week period running up to Election Day. The amount of social media attention is measured by the number of

accounts that followed one political party (UBP, CTP, BKP, DP-BG and TDP) both Twitter accounts and Facebook pages.

In the light of this information, the goal of the present explorative study is to address the following research question:

RQ: Does Social Media (Twitter and Facebook) provide a platform for political deliberation online? (Political deliberation by looking at ‘how people use microblogging messages to exchange political messages?’).

Method

The aim of this research is to examine ‘How people use microblogging messages to exchange political messages?’ The main subject of interests is the active usage of social media of the government party and coalition party and the lines between these activeness and the general election results. I am interested in features indicating the prediction of election results with social media in the 2013 Turkish-Cypriot General Election. The object of my study is social media content-analysis. I will accomplish this through an attempt to understand and analyze the impact of social media or more precisely microblogging activities, implemented by election results. Observations and analysis are based solely on the actual material published in social media [i.e. Facebook and Twitter]. Moreover, the content is examined to derive its substances and meaning, which could enable me to anticipate or make inferences as to its effects. Thus, my research applied social media content analysis to a limited extent.

Results

As stated in the methodology section, this research applied social media content analysis to a limited extent. I examined over 1000 political tweets which were published on Twitter’s public message between July 1st and August 30th 2013. After four years in a single-party government with UBP, Dervis Eroglu- was running for presidency. Many commentators have called the parties’ campaigns uninspiring due to unwillingness of the main candidates to use social media as a campaign tool. The left side of the political spectrum was fragmented by the rise of the CTP. Ozkan Yorgancioglu was declared the winner after receiving 38.4 % of all votes cast compared İrsen Kucuk’s 27.3%. Turnout was %69.61, significantly less than 2009 parliament election; i.e. 81.70%. CTP was the winner in 21 seats whilst UBP was victorious in the 14. (See Table 1)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the TRNC 2013 General Election

Turnout	69.61%
Registered Electors	172.803
Valid Votes	1.242.484

Twitter as a platform for political deliberation

In this section, I will evaluate my sample along two-widely accepted indicators of computer-based political deliberation. Table 1 shows the number of mentions and a random sample of tweets for all parties in my sample. While this is only a small selection of the information stream in my sample, tweets can contain a

lot of relevant information, that the substantive issues can be expressed in 140 characters or less. (See Table 2)

Table 2. Tweets by Party

Party Tweets	Number of Tweets	Examples*
UBP	145	We are here, yesterday, today and tomorrow.
CTP	913	We have 'Green Hopes'.
BKP	-	-
DP-BG	242	We need renovation.
TDP	-	-

*Examples shortened for citation and translated into Turkish to English

Facebook as a platform for political deliberation

In this section, I will evaluate my sample along two-widely accepted indicators of computer-based political deliberation. Table 2 shows the number of shares and a random sample of messages for all parties in my sample. While this is only a small selection of the information stream in my sample, shares can contain a lot of relevant information, that the substantive issues can be expressed in video or photo shares. (See Table 3)

Table 3. Shares by Party

Party Shares	Number of Shares	Examples*
UBP	549	We do not stop serving our society.
CTP	1002	We are against fascist attitude.
BKP	-	-
DP-BG	467	The revolution is started in our heart.
TDP	178	We suggest local reform.

*Examples shortened for citation and translated into Turkish to English

I analyzed over 1000 Twitter messages mentioning parties or politicians prior to Turkish Cypriot 2013 General Election. Overall, I found that Twitter is indeed used as a platform for political deliberation. The mere number of tweets reflects voter preferences and comes close to modern political campaign trail. My results demonstrate that Twitter can be considered a valid indicator of political opinion.

Discussion & Conclusion

Are interactive computer mediated communication and the internet qualitatively different from TV and the traditional media? What do the new media offer that old media cannot provide? What difference does it make if I talk about politics in a computer discussion group instead of the local coffee shop? Such transformations in the societal, political, and media domains provide evidence to support the concerned alarms of an irresistible drift toward a media-driven democracy. These trends provide evidence for my hypothesis that the third age of political communication in general and specifically in North Cyprus witnesses an intense yet harmless process of mediatization of politics and democracy. As we have seen, the evidence is far from clear cut; it seems to offer support for interpretations that media-driven democracy views are based on interpretation of the real attitude or extent of certain key trends in political marketing. In fact, despite general trends, the experiences of North Cyprus have been significantly different from the experiences of other countries. Moreover, some proponents of critical perspectives seem to have difficulty in distinguishing between phenomena that reflect the sheer mediatization of democracy with the help of Americanization.

My brief account of trends in the North Cyprus context shows a simple but significant reality, that the media systems and political systems in European countries interact with patterns that protect each from excessive influence of the other. The existence of undoubted media power is counterbalanced by the power of political marketing. In the European experience, there is some limited evidence that politics has migrated from the old campaign strategies and party-centered arena to professionalized campaign and party-free arenas. But in both the old and the new arrangements, democracy and political forces still retain their monopoly of the election game, much like in previous times.

It is widely accepted that 'professionalization' is the hallmark of modern campaigning and North Cyprus meets with the professional campaigning and Americanization. Yet, this investigation is problematic in the North Cyprus case. There are some emerging signs: the growth of common computerized campaigning is further down the professional road than the rest of the democratic world. However, as yet, North Cyprus experience of Americanization is characterized more by mediatization than professionalization. It is less the professional paradigm and more media-driven democracy. In higher party profile races, the traditional party campaign management has been largely displaced by full-time consultants offering an ever-wider range of technical and other specialisms. Political marketing is a prospering business. Yet, the examination of the literature found campaigning to be largely undeveloped in any theoretical sense. There is little evidence of any overt influence of social science in the campaign war room and democracy. Despite the mass of social scientific research into elections and voter behavior seem relatively influenced by political marketing. The most significant single source of ideas continues to come from within countries' campaign themselves. One's own experience and the North Cyprus case reflected in common folk wisdom, remain the predominant influences. Lessons from commercialization also emerge as a force in campaigners' thinking strategically, in the increasing reliance upon market research methods and in the management of resources. The political marketing influence is clear, although the literature suggests that campaigners do not believe that the marketing approach is entirely appropriate for all aspects of electoral campaigning. It can assist but not replace the skills and experience necessary for success in political battle to win elections.

The point is not merely to suggest that there are consequences for Americanization, which folk wisdom develops from experience and learning by results. Moreover, this article cannot claim to be more

than an introductory, based on existing literature and a relatively small and necessarily selective sample on a vast subject. And it raises a number of questions which go well beyond North Cyprus. "Where is the limit then?" When asking a simple question we might face a difficult answer. To be able to say whether political marketing helps democracy or threatens it, one should consider the fine line between influencing and manipulating the voters, and where to draw the borderline between these two. Political parties use at least 50 to 70 percent of campaigning funds on advertising, however political marketing nowadays means more than just a number of paid commercials. In particular, it includes the public relations efforts, which are based on daily strategies created by experts, which help people to decide for whom to vote. Clearly, marketing can be considered part of the democratic process, since there is competition. Within this competition, every candidate stands an equal chance to be elected. Nevertheless, lobbies, disinformation, manipulation and using private data are the multiple concerns on the effects of political marketing over democracy. On the other hand, as has been noted in this paper, political marketing is a most powerful tool in modern politics, their role in manipulation of information and using dishonest practices consequently threatens democracy. As it is clear that there is no consensus on the definition of political marketing, it is also acceptable to say that there is no consensus to stand on one point about whether political marketing is beneficial or detrimental for democracies in general.

Problems and Limitations

One major problem inherent to this paper is that there is not adequate empirical data to support the extended literature review. Given the large volume of literature on the new media strategies, technological developments or more precisely technologisation could be included in this paper. A detailed report would have made necessary data from election periods, and therefore a volume of material should be increased. However, the choice of concepts for study including is extremely important to reveal the eventual shifts and changes in Americanization, campaign strategies, which constituted the goal of this research. On the other hand, some crucial concepts should necessary to share all the possible explanations clearly, such as; social movements and new public spheres or discursive public spheres. Finally, the traditional literature review has its limitations; however not only existing researches results, but also combination of related concepts supports the idea of change in campaign strategies and indications of Americanization in new political marketing phenomenon. With all existing and possible problems and limitations, this study applies the indications of Americanization and fragmentations in public sphere in relation with the media and democracy. It is sure that this study will contribute to further research as a literature basis on the new political marketing conceptualization. Future studies should zoom in on specific constituents of contemporary political communication in light of growing emphasis on personalization and social movements by new media as an alternative public sphere. They should also zoom in on how public opinion effected from those new campaign strategies and, how new media effects the campaign strategies as being an alternative public sphere.

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**RE-VISITING
MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS**

Diffusion Marketing: An Innovative Marketing Approach for Social Media

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Working Paper

Abstract

Advertising was so easy with the good old ads in conventional media of the twentieth century - cars, banks, FMCG brands, oil companies, apparel, fast food, computers, toys, etc. Select the target audience, find a creative concept, deliver a value proposition, compose a relevant message, find a catchphrase, choose the medium, make your deals, and let it go. All mechanisms of influence were so linear. Today, there is a major paradigm shift in all media businesses. Social technologies together with the user-generated content approach have been marking the dawn of a new era related to such a thing called Social Media.

As a game changer, social media have set new rules of engagement for the media of the twenty-first century. We are no more looking for a target audience, for we know that it is the key influencer we need to target. We shall no more compose messages, because messages emerge collaboratively through engagement of that key audience. Accordingly, catchphrases, slogans, and mottos do not matter as much as they did in the last century. But more than that, we may not let it go, anymore.

Social media as a novel social structure are indeed network structures that reflect both relationships (edges) and actions (vectors) between users (nodes). All nodes are free agents that have the ability to make choices of what action to take. Thus, these free agents produce and reproduce the content together with the diffusion of this content. All these are realised within the context of a network. As a matter of fact, free agents may also have the ability to choose to what message to engage to. So, primarily there are diffusion patterns of content of social media. Accordingly, any diffusion pattern of content in social media is indeed a game, as a consequence of choices made by free agents. Secondly, there are engagement rules that produce and reproduce messages. Consequently, messages in social media are

reconstructed meanings that are triggered by diffusions of content, but formed by the rules of engagement.

As an innovative marketing approach, Diffusion Marketing is based on a conglomerate of three theoretical frameworks: Diffusion Theory, Graph Theory, and Game Theory. Diffusion Theory initiated by Rogers (2003) is devoted to analysing diffusion patterns. Graph Theory concentrates on topologically analysing morphological structures of these diffusions represented by graphs (Easley & Kleinberg). Whereas, Game Theory focuses on analysing these diffusion patterns as games. All three approaches are due to make use of large datasets derived from social media data that incorporate data on users (node data), relationships (edge data), interactions (vector data), as well as textual and audio-visual data of content clusters. This enormous amount of data is only due to be analysed by all these three approaches jointly with a fourth one: Big Data.

A variety of prototypical analyses, such as Network Structure Analysis, Active and Passive Engagement Analysis, Structural Organization Hole Analysis, Network Partitioning Analysis, Structural Balance Analysis, Strategic Reasoning Analysis, and Business Network Cluster Analysis may be originated from this novel framework.

Besides, visual models, such as Influencer Mapping, Network Activity Mapping, Key Audience Mapping, Shortest Path Mapping, Flow Determination Mapping, Homophily Mapping, Heterophily Mapping, Best Response Mapping, Viral Mapping, Key Audience Mapping / Boundary Spanner, Key Audience Mapping / Information Broker, Key Audience Mapping / Peripheral Specialist, Key Audience Mapping / Central Connector, Voting Action Mapping, Epidemic Mapping, and Networked Coordination Game Mapping may be resolved from the analyses mentioned above.

In addition to these, two innovative marketing solution attempts may be summarized under Epidemic Modelling and Networked Coordination Game Modelling. Both of these deliver the value proposition of Diffusion Marketing as an innovative marketing approach for social media.

The primary objective of this paper is to deliver a descriptive and theoretical framework for the concept of Diffusion Marketing as an innovative marketing approach for social media. A Research Question for that objective may be formulated as: “how can a prototypical framework for Diffusion Marketing be defined?”. Therefore, the methodological approach for this will rather be descriptive in nature.

Empirical observations on actual social media data will be delivered within this framework, reflecting on social media data of the private Facebook network of the author of this paper. These empirical observations may provide scientific conclusions that may help to comprehend and to investigate the theoretical framework for Diffusion Marketing explained above.

Broadly taken, the novel and prototypical nature of this innovative approach, is due to further clarification and research, as well it is due to be developed further in practice. Consequently, the enormous speed of development of social media, both quantitatively and qualitatively, makes further research and modelling a necessity. Besides, analysis and modelling techniques that are in constant development themselves, deliver a positive contribution to this necessity.

Keywords

Diffusion theory, graph theory, game theory, network science, social epidemics

Introduction

Morpheus, the cult-figure in the blockbuster movie the Matrix, explains: “The Matrix is everywhere, it's all around us, here even in this room. You can see it out your window, or on your television. You feel it when you go to work, or go to church or pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.” (<http://thematrixtruth.remotewindowlight.com/html/original-matrix-script-9.html>, accessed 17.03.2015). It would be fair to say that we similarly live, work, think, and act in an unusually amorphous ecosystem called Social Media, without even being totally aware of its settings, dynamics and structures, as it is the case of the Matrix.

As Solis defines it: “Social media is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers” (Solis, 2011, p. 20). Thus, ordinary people as free-agents in the Matrix, define dynamics of the system in addition to constructing its structure, by this many-to-many model of relations and actions.

This paper intends to deliver a descriptive and theoretical framework for the concept of Diffusion Marketing as a proposed innovative marketing approach for social media. It's Research Question is formulated as: “how can a prototypical framework for Diffusion Marketing be defined?”. Therefore, the methodological approach is unquestionably descriptive in nature. As an innovative marketing approach, Diffusion Marketing is based on a conglomerate of three theoretical frameworks: Diffusion Theory, Graph Theory, and Game Theory. Diffusion Theory initiated by Rogers (2003) is devoted to analysing diffusion patterns. Graph Theory concentrates on topologically analysing morphological structures of these diffusions represented by graphs (Easley & Kleinberg). Whereas, Game Theory focuses on analysing these diffusion patterns as games. All three approaches are due to make use of large datasets derived from social media data that incorporate data on users (node data), relationships (edge data), interactions (vector data), as well as textual and audio-visual data of content clusters. This enormous amount of data is only due to be analysed by all these three approaches jointly with a fourth one: Big Data.

Social Media: a Theoretical Framework for an Emerging Discipline

The theoretical framework of this paper is based upon three principal theories that are interdisciplinary in nature: Diffusion Theory, Graph Theory, and Game Theory.

Diffusion Theory

Everett Rogers (1931-2004), with his so-called “citation-blockbuster” book *Diffusion of Innovations*, delivers a comprehensive framework for Diffusion Theory. Explaining the Diffusion Process (Innovation-Decision Process, in his own words) as a sequential combination of Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and Confirmation phases (2003, p. 170).

Indeed, Rogers' model seems to provide an alternative model to Bob Cialdini's well-known six principles of influence: Reciprocation, Commitment and Consistency, Social Proof, Liking, Authority, and Scarcity. While Cialdini is approaching the subject through psychological phenomena, Rogers delivers a more systemic and functional framework to explain the subject as a process in whole.

Diffusion theory delivers a principal explanation for our proposed approach to social media marketing. It provides a foundation to reveal dynamics of social media structures and processes in which

an unconventionally novice approach to marketing is based. Categorically, dynamics of social media structures are what social media marketing is about. Without revealing these, there is no explanation for Solis' Engagement concept found. The Engagement Process is realised through these dynamics of social media structures. All other communications related activities on social media, such as listening, monitoring, sentiment analysis, etc. should therefore be classified under public relations, but not marketing.

Graph Theory

According to Easley & Kleinberg, so-called graphs “serve as mathematical models of network structures” whereas Graph Theory is the “study of network structure” (2010, p. 21). Social media structures as matrix shaped network structures are made-up of nodes and edges. In Easley & Kleinberg's wording: “A graph consists of a set of objects, called nodes, with certain pairs of these objects connected by links called edges”.

Graph Theory is all about the study of networks and their dynamics. The utilisation of Graph Theory in our proposed model is based on analysing social media structures to define dynamics of social media, which is indeed an approach to define diffusion patterns.

Game Theory

Game Theory is called to be “a theory of decision making” (Morton 2012). In other words, Game Theory deals with how decisions are made or how they should be made. It is obvious to say, that all diffusion patterns are results of such games. Thus, game theory provides another theoretical pillar of our proposed model by delivering a fundamental framework to analyse decisions that trigger dynamics of social structures.

Network Science: a Small World of Six Degrees

Although having a relatively short history itself, phenomena of social media are rooted deep in sociological and social-psychological concepts and related research on these. But not limited to this, social media research or so-called Network Science is influenced by a variety of disciplines such as applied mathematics, economics, education, etc.

Euler's Königsberg Bridge problem of the sixteenth century opened the scene for graph theory by introducing the Euler Path concept of network science. In 1933 Moreno introduced the concept Sociogram in a New York Times article on social structures of elementary school education. In 1959 Erdős & Rényl proposed a model on nodes and edges to explain networks. In 1967 Milgram realised his famous Six Degrees experiment to test his Small World Hypothesis. In 2002 Barabasi published his famous book “Linked: the New Science of Networks”, besides coining the term Network Science, Barabasi transformed our perception of everyday networks and explained a broad range of related phenomena by integrating all previous efforts and scientific contributions.

A New Science: Idea Machines in a Random Universe

As a matter of fact, network science is based on the premise, that “the interactions of individuals in a large system can generate greater complexity than the individuals themselves display, and sometimes much less” (Watts, 2004, p. 27). Larger complexity is the elementary state of social media. Dynamics of social structures (as free-agents) that cause diffusion of ideas, emotions, sentiment, etc. also cause this kind of complexity.

Complexity in social networks and social media is generated by human beings as free-agents that have the ability to make choices. It is us who make up social networks with our choices on relationships. It is again us who cause dynamics in social networks and social media by producing, reproducing, and diffusing our ideas, emotions, sentiment etc. around along our choices. We are so-called idea machines that generate this diffusion patterns along our choices.

It is a game plan that constructs random networks on physical ones. We as idea machines, propose and supply a random universe on social networks and social media, along our choices. And finally, it is again us idea machines, to show our demand for this random universe by liking, sharing, retweeting, favoriting, etc. other machines supply as our Engagement.

New Rules of Engagement

Solis in his bestseller “Engage!: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web” (2013) explained the utilization of social media for business, a phenomenon underexploited for businesses at that time. Solis had set new rules for brand management in social media, along the Engagement concept. But Solis’ influence was not limited to brands or marketing. His game changing approach defined as well, what unconventional publishing as a new means of mass communication was about.

While conventional media and publishing is based on synchronous or asynchronous but linear messages, in social media the message is something that emerges from content. It is not the message that is disseminated, but the content. Thus, while content might be linear, the message is not linear, but rather structural. It is the audience that actively interacts with the content and engages to the message, positively or negatively. While conventional publishing and media is about speaking and broadcasting, social media is about listening and monitoring.

The Monitoring Issue

Monitoring is a way of listening actively to social media content and defining positive or negative engagement. This might look very simple or mechanical but language problems have a major stake in problems that are observed in computerized approaches. Analysing content and discourse to define sentiment is not always that easy. There are commercial solutions such as Crimson Hexagon and Radian6 but their majority is devoted to Indo-German languages, principally English, which makes the rest inadequate, i.e. Turkish as a member of Ural-Altaic languages.

Influence: Pathogen vs. DNA

Influence on social media has been pursued habitually by offering content that has high potential for diffusion, in terms of liking, sharing, retweeting, and etc. Engagement with messages emerging from this diffusion was the anticipated ideal final result. Although there is insufficient empirical evidence of direct relationship between diffusion and engagement, especially businesses and commercial applications preferred to concentrate on content instead of engagement. The result was contagious content examples in the form of visuals or video: so called viral content. Indeed, the contagiousness of some viral content is certainly high, which unfortunately does not necessarily mean that its effect or engagement potential is consequently high. As a matter of fact, measured engagement of some highly contagious viral content is naively very low, if not null.

The solution resides in the viral epidemic analogy. As a disease reason, viruses have two principal features: contagiousness and infectiousness. While contagiousness defines its speed of dissemination (diffusion), its infectiousness is matter of its replication ability (engagement) in other organisms. In other words, in diseases the virus as the pathogen outlines contagiousness, the DNA of it delineates its infectiousness. Thus in viral activities on social media, the content shall diffuse, while the message shall become the very object of engagement.

Big Data and Beyond

Regarding all the given facts and issues above, one may say obviously, that a huge mass of data is necessary to make all these analyses and measurements. Talking about data three basic types of data derived from social media must be taken into consideration: data on users (node data), relationships (edge data), and interactions (vector data). Besides, it makes sense to take textual and audio-visual data of content clusters into consideration, as well. This enormous amount of data is only due to be analysed by a novice approach called Big Data.

McKinsey&Company entitles Big Data as the “next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity” (2011). Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier state that “Big Data is about seeing and understanding the relations within and among pieces of information that, until very recently, we struggled to fully grasp” (2013). Without much doubt, big data is not very distant from conventional business analytics. But the mass effect it delivers with new and basically technological capacities it delivers, reflects its core value for empirical observations.

Regarding 1.39 billion monthly active users of Facebook and 500 million daily Tweets in Twitter, the enormous amount of data utilisation becomes clear. Not to forget that the figure 1.39 is the number of nodes; the number of edges is usually exponentially more than this and it is quite possible to find ourselves in a massive pool of nodes and edges. Not limited to this, if the daily interaction of these nodes is taken into consideration, it is easy to say that vector data will be beyond any borders.

Diffusion Marketing: Creating New Capacities

Our proposed model entitled Diffusion Marketing relies on the conglomeration of four principal approaches: Diffusion Theory, Graph Theory, and Game Theory, and Big Data.

Diffusion Marketing, as an innovative marketing approach for social media delivers new capacities to the field by utilizing the above mentioned approaches that make all sense for constructing a controlled social epidemic as a marketing campaign.

Social Network Analysis

There are a variety of programming languages such as R, Python or Pajek that are adequate to gather data from social media resources. Besides open source applications such as Gephi or NodeXL are also used effectively for such analyses. In addition to these there are also some commercial applications such as Neo4J or Tableau available for business and scientific use.

Under diffusion Marketing we may propose a variety of prototypical analyses that may be originated from this novel framework:

- Network Structure Analysis,
- Active and Passive Engagement Analysis,

- Structural Organization Hole Analysis,
- Network Partitioning Analysis,
- Structural Balance Analysis,
- Strategic Reasoning Analysis,
- Business Network Cluster Analysis.

Modelling the Diffusion Game

Diffusion Marketing proposes a wide range of visual models that deliver visualised representations of social media figures and dynamics:

- Influencer Mapping,
- Network Activity Mapping,
- Key Audience Mapping,
- Shortest Path Mapping,
- Flow Determination Mapping,
- Homophily Mapping,
- Heterophily Mapping,
- Best Response Mapping,
- Viral Mapping,
- Key Audience Mapping / Boundary Spanner,
- Key Audience Mapping / Information Broker,
- Key Audience Mapping / Peripheral Specialist,
- Key Audience Mapping / Central Connector,
- Voting Action Mapping,
- Epidemic Mapping,
- Networked Coordination Game Mapping.

Creating the Critical Mass: Synthesizing Social Epidemics in the Lab

In addition to these, two innovative marketing solution attempts may be summarized under *Epidemic Modelling* and *Networked Coordination Game Modelling*. Both of these deliver the value proposition of Diffusion Marketing as an innovative marketing approach for social media.

Some Empirical Observations

Empirical observations are realized on actual Facebook data of the author of this paper taken from a dataset collected on October 15th, 2014. The dataset was extracted through the Netviz application on Facebook. The data file was analysed and visualised the open source application Gephi (Version 0.8.2 beta for Windows). Due to ethical reasons person's names were anonymised.

The dataset reflects a coverage of 1.181 people (nodes) and 17.371 relationships (edges). A majority of nodes are from the native country of the author (72.23 %). This is followed by the US (19.81 %), UK (6.01 %), and Germany (0.93%). The rest is distributed to The Netherlands, Romania, France, Argentina, Spain, Canada, Denmark, Switzerland, and Italy. 56.9 percent of the population is male and 37 percent is female, while 6.1 percent have no gender data.

Figure 1 reflects the location distribution graph and Figure 2 reflects the gender distribution graph. Both graphs were rendered with Force Atlas layout in Gephi.

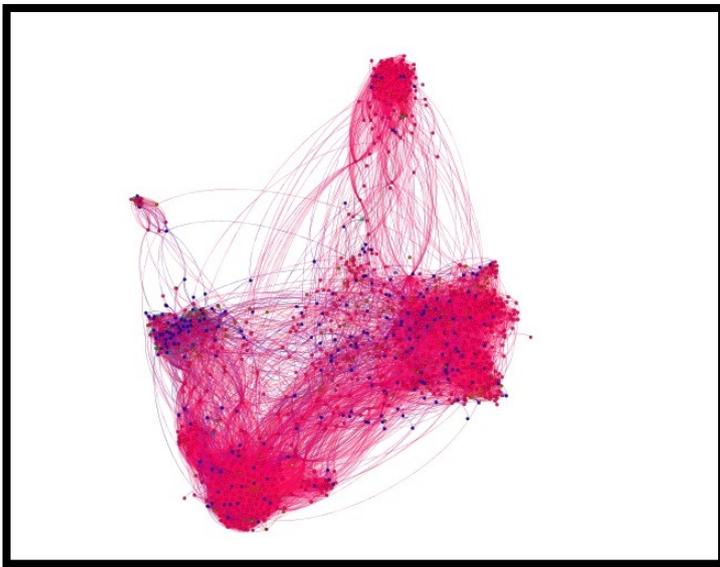


Figure 1. Location Distribution Graph

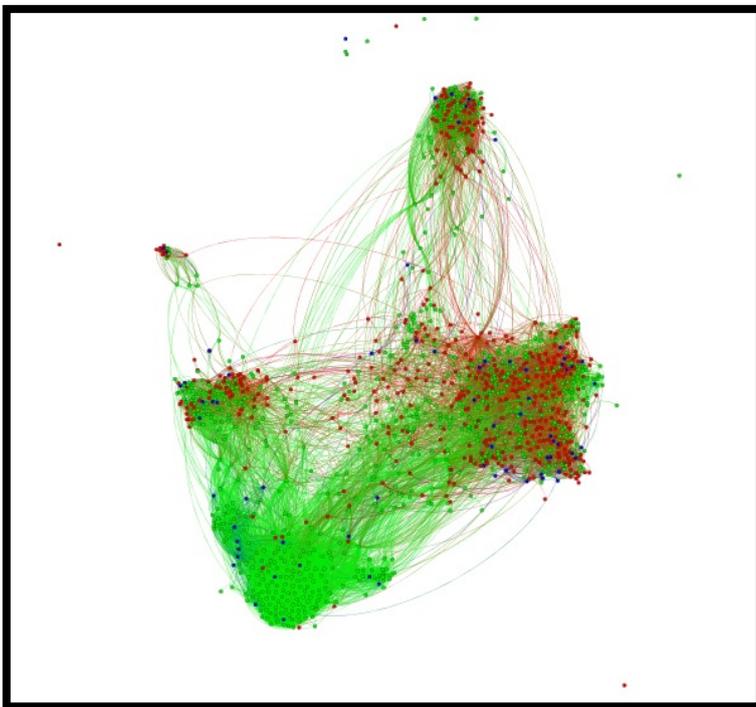


Figure 2. Gender Distribution Graph

Conclusion and Further Research

Diffusion Marketing, as an innovative marketing approach for social media delivers new capacities to the field by utilizing the above mentioned approaches that make all sense for constructing a controlled social epidemic as a marketing campaign. Consequently, the innovative and prototypical nature of Diffusion Marketing, makes further clarification and research a necessity, as well it is due to be developed further in practice. Accordingly, the enormous speed of development of social media, both quantitatively and qualitatively, makes further research and modelling a necessity. Besides, analysis and modelling techniques that are in constant development themselves, deliver a positive contribution to this necessity.

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Promoting Themselves or Devaluing the Opponent: Rethinking Female Responses to Stereotypes in Advertising from an Evolutionary Psychology Standpoint

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Abstract

The stereotyped presentation of women in advertising is a prolific research topic, yet extant literature regarding the responses of female consumers to such stimuli is both scarce and mostly descriptive. Drawing on the principles of evolutionary psychology, the present paper proposes a conceptual framework that seeks to account for female responses to decorative depictions of women in advertisements via the evolved mechanism of intrasexual competition. It is argued that decorative portrayals in advertising are effective when female consumers compete through a self-promotion strategy. Additionally, the role of the medium context is identified as a source of situational input for the competition mechanism. Corresponding hypotheses are put forward to fuel further research into the topic.

Keywords

Evolutionary psychology, female stereotypes, advertising, intrasexual competition

Introduction

Portrayals of women in advertising have been a widely studied topic. In particular, the use of beautiful models has raised societal concerns about the pressure put on women by these idealized images. Yet, most research on this topic has been descriptive in nature, with only limited focus on theoretical explanations of women's responses to these portrayals. The present paper aims at addressing this gap in the literature and at fueling further research in this area of inquiry by putting forward a conceptual framework that seeks to account for female responses to stereotypical depictions of women in advertisements via the evolved mechanism of intrasexual competition. In this spectrum, this paper seeks to respond to calls for further research bridging the scientific fields of marketing and evolutionary psychology (Colarelli and Dettman 2003; Garcia and Saad 2008) and to extend evolutionary theoretical accounts of male responses to female stereotypes in advertising (Saad 2004) to address female responses to such depictions.

Evolutionary psychology is a paradigm which aims to provide explanations for cultural phenomena via the biological underpinnings of humans (Saad and Gill 2000). It thus attempts to explain a wide scope of aspects of human behavior, such as mating preferences, consumption of foods rich in salt or sugar, fear of snakes etc. through the identification of domain-specific psychological mechanisms which have evolved to respond to adaptive problems faced by the human species (Colarelli and Dettman 2003). In this respect, evolutionary psychology challenges what Tooby and Cosmides (1992, 23) refer to as the 'Standard Social Science Model', ie. the "intellectual framework for the organization of psychology and the social sciences" which advocates that human behavior is mainly influenced by social norms. It is important to clarify that evolutionary psychology does not negate the impact of culture or socialization processes; it considers the latter as proximate explanations of how cognitions, emotions and behaviors operate, as opposed to the ultimate explanations that concern why cognitions, emotions and behaviors exist in the first place (Saad 2004).

Within the last few years, several promising theoretical implications of evolutionary psychology for marketing have been identified and repeated calls have been put forward for more research bridging the two fields (Bagozzi and Natarajan 2000; Colarelli and Dettman 2003; Garcia and Saad 2008; Saad 2006). However, with the exception of a few very recent papers (Durante *et al.* 2014; Griskevicius *et al.* 2009a; Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibanez 2013; Wang and Griskevicius 2014), relevant empirical studies in the field of advertising and marketing remain scant. Nonetheless, evolutionary psychology has the potential to offer explanations for diverse aspects of consumer behavior, including responses to advertising (Saad and Gill 2000). Regarding the latter, the evolved mechanism of mate preferences has been suggested to account for male responses to portrayals of women in advertising (Saad 2004). Yet, given that advertisements that portray women stereotypically often target a female audience, the examination of female responses to such depictions under the prism of evolutionary psychology represents a thus far unexploited research direction, relevant to practitioners and academicians alike.

In this context, the present paper pursues the afore-discussed research direction by first reviewing extant literature regarding female reactions to stereotyped images of women in advertising and drawing theoretical insight from the evolutionary psychology literature focusing on the evolved mechanism of intrasexual competition. Subsequently, a conceptual framework which is centered on the notion that female responses to stereotypical ads featuring women are underpinned by the female intrasexual competition mechanism is discussed and relevant hypotheses are formulated. The paper concludes with a

discussion on the potential implications of the proposed framework for future research and its intended managerial relevance.

Theoretical Background

A brief Review of the Advertising Literature on Female Responses to Stereotypical Depictions of Women

Gender stereotypes are beliefs about the traits, characteristics, roles and behaviors that differentially characterize men and women (Ashmore and Del Boca 1981). Within academic research in the field of advertising, the issue of gender stereotypes has received attention for more than 40 years now (Eisend 2010; Wolin 2003); researchers' vivid interest in the topic can be justified by the extensive use of stereotypic depictions by the advertising industry and the potential social implications of this phenomenon (Gulas and McKeage 2000; Lysonski and Pollay 1990). Despite the prolificacy of this research area, surprisingly little is to date known regarding the actual responses of female consumers to stereotypic presentations of women in specific ads, for the majority of the relevant literature consists of either content analyses aiming at assessing temporal and cultural differences in relevant advertising practices (e.g., Gilly 1988) or of studies investigating general attitudes toward the phenomenon of stereotypes in advertising (e.g., Ford and LaTour 1996; Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977).

Stereotypical depictions of women in advertisements typically involve their portrayal in decorative, traditional or non-traditional roles or as being equal to men; women are portrayed in decorative roles when they are presented as concerned with their physical appearance or as sex objects (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos 2009). Despite the fact that there is little agreement among researchers who have reviewed the multitude of extant content analyses as to whether gender stereotyping in advertising in general is increasing or decreasing over time (cf. Eisend 2009; Wolin 2003), there is evidence that suggests that even in recent years, more than half a century after the surge of the feminist movement, advertisements depicting women in decorative roles are a frequent occurrence both in general audience magazines (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos 2009) and in female-oriented magazines (Taylor, Landreth and Bang 2005).

In terms of the literature concerning actual consumer responses to stereotypic ads, there seems to be considerable agreement among researchers that: 1) women are more sensitive than men in identifying stereotypical portrayals of females in ads (DeYoung and Crane 1992; Rossi and Rossi 1985) and 2) women tend to believe that advertising in general does not portray them in a realistic manner (Ford and LaTour 1996; Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1977). Nonetheless, we note that the few extant studies dealing explicitly with attitudinal reactions of female consumers to specific stereotypic advertisements have come up with diverging evidence, often with little theoretical justification. Some early studies have shown that female participants rate non-stereotyped portrayals of women in advertising more favorably in terms of liking (Duker and Tucker 1977) and preference (Leavitt 1978 as quoted in Whipple and Courtney 1985), whereas opposing results have also been reported (Bettinger and Dawson, 1977 as quoted in Whipple and Courtney 1985). Moreover, Jones, Stanaland and Gelb (1998) report that women express negative attitudes toward stereotypic ads featuring a sexy female model. Jaffe and Berger (1994) conclude that egalitarian role portrayals are the most effective in terms of female responses to advertising, whereas Orth and Holancova (2004) have found that women have unfavorable reactions toward non-stereotypic ads that depict women as being superior to men. It has also been found that attitudes to stereotypic ads vary by individuals' age (Theodoridis *et al.* 2013) and gender-role orientations (Morrison

and Shaffer 2003). To further complicate matters, past research has found that attitudes toward stereotypic ads differ accordingly with the advertised product category and its perceived 'gender' (Debevec and Iyer 1986; Whipple and Courtney 1985), while it has also been reported that the extent that individuals self-reference an advertising portrayal positively affects their attitudes, with stereotypic portrayals encouraging less self-referencing than progressive ones (Debevec and Iyer 1988; Morrison and Shaffer 2003).

Insights from Evolutionary Psychology on the Evolved Mechanism of Female Intrasexual Competition

Within the field of evolutionary psychology, the mechanisms underlying sexual attraction and mate selection have long attracted researchers' interest (cf. Buss 1989; Feingold 1990), given that there are more differences than similarities between the two sexes in these domains (Buss and Schmitt 2011). According to parental investment and sexual selection theory (Trivers 1972) men value traits such as youthfulness and physical attractiveness in their potential mates, whereas women favor mates with a high social status (Buss 1989). The mechanisms of sexual attraction, apart from offering explanations for various aspects of male-to-female and female-to-male interactions, are suggested to also lie behind some behavioral predispositions toward members of one's own sex in the context of what is commonly referred to as *intrasexual competition*, ie. "competition between members of the same sex for mating access to members of the opposite sex" (Buss 1988, 616). Evolutionary psychology considers intrasexual competition an evolved mechanism which attempts to solve the adaptive problem of scarcity of suitable mates (Campbell 2004; Geary 2000); in line with parental investment theory, males, as the sex investing less in parenting, tend to express more aggression toward other competing males for access to constrained resources with the latter resources in this case being the higher investing sex (Schmitt 2005; Trivers 1972). As a consequence, evolutionary literature is replete with instances of competition and aggression among males and relevant supporting evidence (cf. Buss 1988; Wilson and Daly 1985).

Although male intra-sexual competition is well acknowledged ever since Darwin's era (Buss 1988), female-to-female competition is still a relatively unexplored territory, even within the realms of evolutionary psychology where it long remained a "politically taboo subject" (Campbell 2004, 23). As of late though, evolutionary psychologists show increasing interest in female intrasexual competition. A growing volume of contemporary studies provides evidence that intrasexual competition also exists among women who, not unlike men, compete for access to desirable mates (Fink *et al.* 2014; Piccoli, Forroni and Carnaghi 2013; Vaillancourt 2013). However, female intrasexual competition is less visible; women are less likely than men to employ directly aggressive competitive tactics, often engaging in acts of indirect or relational aggression, such as gossip or manipulation (Campbell 2004; Vaillancourt 2013). This inclination toward indirect aggression can be explained by parental investment theory; women, as the sex investing more in parenting, seek to improve the chances for survival of their offspring by avoiding more risky behaviors, such as direct aggression (Campbell, 1999). In line with the distinction between behavior and psychological mechanisms discussed by Buss (1998)*, the manifest behavior of indirect aggression toward same-sex rivals can be viewed as the output of the evolved psychological mechanism of intrasexual competition. In stark contrast to this evolutionary account of female competition, the explanation for female competition advocated by the Standard Social Science Model is that women compete among themselves because of their internalization of patriarchal values and their tendency to conform to socially predefined gender roles (Bussey and Bandura 1999; Wood and Eagly 2002).

Returning to the fundamentals of intrasexual competition, it is interesting to note that mating preferences operate as a 'selective force' on intrasexual competition (Buss 1992, 252); in other words,

members of the same sex employ competitive tactics that are closely aligned to the traits favored by the opposite sex. For instance, competing females tend to enhance their physical appearance more than competing males, mirroring the male tendency to favor physical attractiveness in potential mates (Buss 1992). As Campbell (2004, 19) notes, “attractiveness appears to be the currency of female competition even when no mention is made of what the competition is about”.

Intrasexual competition can assume the form of either *self-promotion*, whereby one seeks to acquire or appear to have the traits favored by the opposite sex, or *competitor derogation*, whereby one seeks to persuade members of the opposite sex that their competitors do not embody the desired traits (Buss and Dedden 1990; Schmitt and Buss 1996). Hence, from an evolutionary psychology perspective, it would make adaptive sense for a female to either seek to embody (or even appear to embody) the traits favored by men, such as youth and physical attractiveness, or derogate her same-sex “opponents” in terms of these traits so as to enhance her own competitive standing. In the context of female competition, self-promotional tactics include the display of resources and the enhancement of one’s appearance while derogatory tactics involve acts such as gossip and rumors (Buss 1992). Extant evidence from women’s self-reports on the competitive tactics they use indicates that women mainly tend to attract attention to their physical appearance in the interest of self-promotion (Cashdan 1998 as quoted in Campbell 2004; Fisher and Cox 2011; Walters and Crawford 1994 as quoted in Campbell, 2004). Nonetheless, gossip aiming at the derogation of other women (Buss and Dedden 1990) and criticism of their appearance (Vaillancourt 2013) has also been reported as a female intra-sexual competition tactic.

From an evolutionary standpoint, competition among females can vary depending on a variety of ecological factors, such as age, family status, sexual maturity, resource availability and mate value (Campbell 2004). For instance, during adolescence and early adulthood when a young women’s fertility is high, indirect aggression toward other women is increased (Massar, Buunk and Rempt 2012). It has also been reported that women in a relationship are more likely to use competitor derogation than other competitive strategies (Fisher and Cox 2011). Further, Lydon *et al.* (1999) have found that women’s level of commitment to a romantic relationship affects ratings of attractiveness of potential same-sex opponents. Hormonal fluctuations over the course of the ovulatory cycle can also affect intrasexual competition; it has been found that women with high estrogen levels are more likely to give other women lower attractiveness ratings (Fisher 2004) and to dehumanize them (Piccoli, Forroni and Carnaghi 2013).

In order to optimize the outcome of the competition and to avoid wasting resources, females as well as males tend to assess their opponents’ relative mate value before competing (Sugiyama 2005). As is the case with most evolved mechanisms, which are both functional and context sensitive (Buss 1998), the mechanism of intrasexual competition is activated only in the presence of specific *immediate situational input* (Buss 1995, 11), that is, only if relevant cues exist in a certain context. Exploring the motives for same-sex aggression acts, Griskevicius *et al.* (2009b) have found that both status and mating goals (*competition* and *courting* motives respectively) triggered women’s indirect aggression toward other women. In another study by Maner *et al.* (2007), a mate-guarding prime was found to increase attention to physically attractive members of the same sex among participants concerned about intrasexual competitors.

Towards a Synthesis of Gender Issues in Advertising and Evolutionary Principles

How can evolutionary principles aid the understanding of consumer responses to gender stereotypes in advertising? Saad (2004), in a conceptual paper discussing this very question, argues in favor

of the evolved mechanism of mating preferences underlying men's and women's responses to stereotypic representations of the opposite sex in advertisements; in terms of female responses, he posits that women in decorative roles embody desirable characteristics, such as youthfulness and physical attractiveness, eliciting favourable attitudes on the part of the male audience. Notwithstanding the fact that the paper in question broke new ground in advertising research, calling attention to the merit of evolutionary psychology for the comprehension of consumer responses to gender stereotypes in advertising, Saad's (2004) rationale does not provide an ultimate explanation to the fact that, as previously mentioned, women are portrayed in decorative roles not only when advertisers target male audiences, but also when there is an intended audience comprised exclusively of females.

Extending Saad's (2004) line of thinking and in an attempt to move beyond the "Mirror versus Mold" debate (Pollay 1986) and other proximate explanations of why women in advertising are still portrayed in decorative roles, we stress the need to provide a theoretical account of female responses toward stereotyped depictions of women in advertising and especially their portrayal in decorative roles. In this respect, we echo Saad's (2004, 593) view that "...advertisers are concerned with providing messages that are maximally effective to their relevant target audience... they are well aware that in certain situations the use of decorative female models will appeal to a particular group". Evolutionary principles could substantially aid the understanding of responses to gender portrayals in advertising, since inquiry on the latter is both scarce, as previously mentioned, and dominated by the Standard Social Science Model viewpoint. In other words, not only do we know little regarding the actual reactions of female consumers to stereotypical advertisements, but, more importantly perhaps, we have solely tried to explain such reactions through the socialization patterns of women (see for instance the explanations put forth by Orth and Holancova 2004 or Zawisza and Cinnirella 2010).

A very recent paper by Durante *et al.* (2014) which provides evidence that female consumer behavior has a strong evolutionary basis with women's hormonal fluctuations significantly affecting their consumption patterns so as to improve their competitive standing relative to other women, demonstrates the relevance of the evolved mechanism of female competition for understanding female consumer behavior. The authors of the paper explicitly highlight the importance of further research on the implications of female competition in a marketing communications context.

In the authors' view, it is imperative that scientific inquiry in the area of gender issues in advertising explicitly focus on providing an ultimate explanation for the depiction of women in advertising in decorative roles. Such an explanation can only result from a theoretically sound account of the mechanism underlying female attitudes toward decorative portrayals of women in advertising; on the basis of the previous discussion, a synthesis of extant knowledge regarding the evolved mechanism of female intrasexual competition and factors influencing consumers' processing of advertising has the potential to provide advertising researchers with this much needed conceptual framework. In the section that follows, we first outline the basic tenets of the proposed conceptual framework and we subsequently discuss in detail the corresponding hypotheses.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The central premise of the proposed conceptual framework is that female attitudes toward advertisements depicting women in decorative roles can be explained via the evolved mechanism of female competition. We argue that the previously discussed tendency of advertisers to portray women in a stereotypic manner

is used because it is effective, in that it elicits favorable attitudes on the part of the intended target audience.

As discussed previously, extant research on gender stereotypes in advertising has come up with diverging evidence regarding the favorability of female attitudes toward stereotypic depictions of women in specific ads (cf. Jaffe and Berger 1994; Orth and Holancova 2004). A distinct stream of research, that concerned with spokespersons' physical attractiveness, has established that women can have positive (for a review, see Belch, Belch, and Villareal 1987), as well as negative (e.g. Caballero, Lumpkin, and Madden 1989), affective reactions to attractive female models in advertising. Under a social comparison perspective, Bower (2001, 53) refers to the former positive reactions as the "what is beautiful is good" effect and seeks to account for the latter negative reactions through social comparison jealousy and derogation, thus arguing that female consumers compare themselves with the model and act as "threatened comparers" (Bower 2001, 54), experiencing negative affect.

Under an evolutionary psychology perspective, we view attractiveness as the currency of female competition (Campbell 2004) and suggest an alternate and in our view ultimate explanation of why women would derogate a female model in an advertisement. Acknowledging that competition by definition requires an 'opponent' of the same sex, we distinguish between the instances when female consumers compete with other, 'real-life' women and when they compete with the female model in the advertisement. We argue that when women are motivated to compete with other female consumers, they tend to employ a self-promotion strategy (Fisher and Cox 2011) and have favorable attitudes toward ads depicting women in decorative roles, because the latter as seen as a means to enhance their own competitive standing through the acquisition of the advertised product. Conversely, we anticipate that when women are motivated to compete with the female model, they assess that 'opponent's' relative mate value (Sugiyama 2005) and turn to a competitor derogation strategy, thus devaluing the model and the advertised product. Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: When women are motivated to compete with other female consumers, they engage in a self-promotion strategy.

H2: When women are motivated to compete with female models in ads, they engage in a competitor derogation strategy.

We therefore propose that stereotypic ads portraying women in decorative roles in female-oriented media may be effective when they aid female consumers in engaging in intrasexual competition through a self-promotion strategy. However, although such favorable outcomes might reasonably be the advertisers' intention, in practice this might not always be the case, since under different circumstances, ads showing women in decorative roles could result in less favorable attitudes resulting from female consumers employing a competitor derogation strategy. Thus, we posit that:

H3: When women compete through self-promotion, attitudes to ads depicting women in decorative roles will be more favorable than attitudes to ads depicting women in non-decorative roles.

H4: When women compete through competitor derogation, attitudes to ads depicting women in non-decorative roles will be more favorable than attitudes to ads depicting women in decorative roles.

We further posit that the aforementioned circumstances may result from situational aspects of the exposure (the motivation elicited by the medium context and the type of self-referencing). Therefore, we essentially argue that ads in female-oriented media showing women in decorative roles are likely to lead to favorable attitudinal outcomes on the part of the targeted female audience in certain contexts, with context being the operative word.

Effects of Motivation Elicited by the Medium Context

While the few past studies that have examined consumer responses to stereotyped ads have only dealt with the advertising stimulus per se, we propose that media context influences female attitudes toward ads depicting models in decorative roles. Media context is defined as “the characteristics of the content of the medium in which an ad is inserted [...], as they are perceived by the individuals who are exposed to it” (De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Anckaert 2002, 49). Past advertising literature offers abundant evidence supporting the influence of media context on advertising effects (for a review, see De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Anckaert 2002). Media context characteristics can be subjective or objective (Van Reijmersdal, Smit and Neijens 2002); for the purposes of the present paper, we focus on the influence of motivational state (the “subjective mental reactions that people experience after confrontation with medium content”; Van Reijmersdal, Smit and Neijens 2002, 281) as a subjective medium context characteristic. Therefore, we posit that the motivational state (neutral or competitive) that the female audience finds themselves in after reading an article in a female-oriented magazine or a website, can operate as situational input for the evolved mechanism of female intrasexual competition. We suggest that the activation of the intrasexual competition mechanism resulting from their motivational state will affect female consumers’ attitudes toward ads depicting women in decorative roles. Such a view appears to concur both with the context-specific nature of the intrasexual competition mechanism (Buss 1995; Campbell 2004) and the notion that media viewing context functions as situational input for evolutionary mechanisms that explain responses to advertising (Griskevicius *et al.* 2009a). Hence, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H5: The motivational state induced by the medium context will influence attitudes toward ads depicting women in decorative roles.

Effects of Type of Self-referencing

Moreover, we posit that self-referencing moderates the previously hypothesized main effect. One of the mechanisms proposed to account the effect of media context is that it operates as a cognitive prime that “activates a semantic network of related material that guides attention and determines the interpretation of the ad” (Dahlen 2005, 90). A related aspect of the interpretation of a stereotypic ad is self-referencing, which is defined as “a cognitive process whereby individuals associate self-relevant stimulus information with information previously stored in memory to give the new information meaning” (Debevec and Iyer 1988, 74). It has been repeatedly shown that consumers relate advertisements to their own selves (e.g. Burnkrant and Unnava 1995; Hong and Zinkhan 1995), with high self-referencing leading to more positive attitudes (Chang 2005). Research on source similarity has similarly shown that perceived similarity with the model depicted in an ad positively affects attitudes (cf. Feick and Higie 1992). More importantly, self-referencing has been found to mediate the effect of role portrayals in advertising on attitudinal responses to stereotyped portrayals by encouraging less self-referencing than progressive (non-stereotypical) ones (Debevec and Iyer 1988; Morrison and Shaffer 2003). However, the latter two studies have not addressed the possibility of different types of self-referencing resulting in diverse processing of advertisements illustrating women in decorative roles.

Nonetheless, previous research has indicated that the temporal orientation of self-referencing (ie. whether consumers engage in retrospective self-referencing processing of the ad by referencing memories about their past selves or whether they engage in anticipatory self-referencing whereby the ad is processed with reference to their imagined or anticipated self) differentially affects ad processing (Dimofte and Yalch 2010; Krishnamurthy and Sujana 1999).

In order to deduce the potential effects of anticipatory and retrospective self-referencing, we return to evolutionary principles regarding the self. Within evolutionary psychology, the *symbolic self* or one's own self-concept is defined as "the language-based and abstract representation of one's own attributes and the use of this representation for effective functioning in affective, motivational and behavioral domains" (Sedikides and Skowronski 1997, 83). The symbolic self is considered an adaptation which has evolved over time either as a response to ecological pressures or as a result of social pressures (Sedikides and Skowronski 1997, 2002). Self-referencing has been found to play an important role in mate selection (Allen and Hauber 2013). Campbell and Wilbur (2009) have demonstrated that the self-concepts of both women and men mirror the preferences of prospective mates.

On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, we anticipate that the temporal orientation of self-referencing (essentially thinking of the past, i.e., retrospectively vs. thinking of the future, i.e., anticipatorily) will have an impact on how positively a stereotypic ad is perceived. More specifically, we hypothesize that under *retrospective* self-referencing instructions, the activation of the competition mechanism will lead women to engage in a competitor derogation strategy which will result in less favorable attitudes toward the advertised brand. Given that ad processing under retrospective self-referencing instructions is a top-down process (Krishnamurthy and Sujana 1999), we propose that women process the stereotyped ad with reference to their past "actual" selves (Sedikides and Skowronski 1997, 84) and compete by seeking to devalue their 'opponent', i.e., the model in the ad. This would ultimately result in less favorable attitudes toward the ad among women. The underlying logic behind this prediction is based on the assumption that the portrayal of the female model in a decorative role is appealing to males (Saad 2004); such a portrayal suggests to female consumers that the model possesses traits favored by the opposite sex and that these traits are an integral part of women's self-concepts (Campbell and Wilbur 2009). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: When the self-referencing process is retrospective, a competitive context will lead to less favorable attitudes toward ads depicting women in decorative roles with respect to a neutral context.

Conversely, we hypothesize that under anticipatory self-referencing instructions, the triggering of the intrasexual competition mechanism will lead women to engage in self-promotion, thereby expressing more favorable attitudes toward the advertisement. Given that ad processing under anticipatory self-referencing instructions is a bottom-up process (Krishnamurthy and Sujana 1999), we propose that women implicitly reference the ad with regard to their "symbolic self far into the future" (Sedikides and Skowronski 1997, 83) and set corresponding goals, thus competing by seeking to improve their relative standing. The idea here is that the idealized model becomes representative of what the woman herself wants to look more like in the future. In this context, the ad will be better liked the advertised brand may be implicitly seen as a means toward this end, resulting in favorable attitudes toward the stereotyped ad. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H7: When the self-referencing process is anticipatory, a competitive context will lead to more favorable attitudes toward ads depicting women in decorative roles with respect to a neutral context.

Conclusions and Implications

Advertisers have long used stereotypical depictions of women in advertising to appeal to a female audience. This paper reviewed the extant conflicting findings of studies on the responses of such an audience, concluding that the effectiveness of this advertising practice has not thus far been adequately supported by empirical evidence. It also became apparent through the examination of the literature on the topic that the theoretical explanations put forward for female reactions to advertisements showing women in decorative roles have been both limited and dominated by the rationale of the Standard Social Science Model. Nonetheless, the principles of evolutionary psychology can provide some much-needed insight into this topic, since female attitudes toward advertisements presenting women in decorative roles can be theoretically accounted for by the intrasexual competition mechanism. This paper has put forward a conceptual framework grounded on this rationale and has suggested corresponding hypotheses which, in the authors' view, represent interesting directions for future research. The theoretical propositions hereby outlined need to be addressed by empirical studies and it is strongly recommended to researchers in the field to revisit the critical issue of whether decorative portrayals of women in advertising are actually effective in terms of a marketing communications standpoint. This is also critical for advertising practitioners for whom effectiveness is a major issue, in a time when advertisers are increasingly concerned with advertising accountability.

As a concluding remark, we point attention to a very important distinction: it is one thing to seek to understand the innate mechanisms of human psychological architecture, which is after all what evolutionary psychology advocates, and another to resort to idealizing them or to criticizing them. Competition with same sex rivals is an innate mechanism that has evolved through time and, as such, it is outside our purview to label it as 'good' or 'bad', in much the same way that we cannot dismiss sexual instincts as 'immoral'. Female competition has been shoved under the rug as a controversial issue for far too long, not only in marketing but also in social studies; it is high time to bring it to light.

End note(s)

*Buss (1998) distinguishes between evolved mechanisms and manifest behavior in the domain of sexual selection and argues in favor of formulating relevant hypotheses on the basis of inward psychological mechanisms rather than behaviors, since the latter is limited by numerous constraints

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Generational Influences: Big Data Facts and Fallacies

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Abstract

Generational data is widely used, and misused in marketing management today. In this exploratory paper, it is argued that big data (longitudinal studies of age cohorts as they change and evolve over time) is a more useful method of understanding generations than the single, snapshot-in-time research approaches often used today. Five postulates are developed and demonstrated to support the view offered and demonstrations of their value are discussed. Managerial implications are provided along with study limitations.

Keywords

Consumer generations, age cohorts, big data longitudinal analysis, snapshot research, generational postulates

Introduction

Much has been written (Ward, 1974; Solomon, 2009; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990), researched (Solomon, 2009) and discussed (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; Solomon, 2009) about the influence and impact of age on consumer's buying decisions (Solomon, 2009) with authors often citing various generational examples. While there is no widely agreed upon definition of a "generation", (Kertzer, 1982;

Edmunds and Turner, 2005) the concept that persons of a general age cohort, often called “social generations”, are similar in many ways, including thinking, hobbies, purchasing patterns and the like is often, therefore, widely used as a segmentation variable. That has been well documented in the literature. (Kertzer, 1982; Spitzer, 1973) The most well-known and studied of these “generations” from a U.S. marketing perspective have been the “Baby Boomers”. “Baby Boomers” are those persons born in the U.S. shortly after the end of World War II, and who, because of their number and economic impact on the overall U.S. economy, have been widely studied and researched. Thus, Baby Boomers and their generational cohorts have dominated much American marketing thought for the past 60 or so years. (Wey Smola and Sutton, 2002) Most recently, the identification of a new generation of young persons who are extensively using the new digital technologies has resulted in another research “boom”. (Jones, et al, 2010) Terminology such as “Millennial” (Howe and Strauss, 2009; Lenhart, et al, 2010) or the “Digital Generation” (Montgomery, 2007) is widely found in current research studies.

These “generational tags” seem to assume that most persons born within a certain calendar-period or those using various cultural icons provide sufficient information to be able to categorize them for marketing purposes. Therefore, people having certain lifestyles, media habits, consumption patterns and the like are used to reference fairly large groups of a common population. (Kahle and Valette-Florence, 2012) While some of the assumptions used have proven right, others are beginning to show flaws as the generations to which they have been assigned ages. It is a review, test and projection of these generational facts and fallacies, using newly available big data, which are explored in this paper.

Based on this, the following paper has been developed. As will become apparent, this discussion is exploratory and directional and will need further verification to be accepted. There is, however, enough solid, big data evidence presented so that a reasonable set of research postulates can be developed. Those are presented in the following paragraphs.

Background

Historically, the most common approach to researching various generational groups has been to use traditional social science research approaches, that is, to conduct snapshot, point-in-time research studies, often with rather limited numbers of questionnaires or observations and then to project those findings to the entire age cohort. (Stringer, 2013) More recently, big data, that is, large samples of captured behavioral and other data which can be related to various consumer groups has begun to be employed. (Manovich, 2011) It is the increasing availability and potential analysis of this big data, when viewed over time, i.e., longitudinally, that has begun to expose some of the true facts and fallacies about generational beliefs marketers have developed over time. This paper reports on how and in what way, big data can provide more extensive and enhanced views of a population “generation” or an “age cohort” than has been possible in the past and also exposes the lack of support for others.

Increasingly, researchers and marketers are learning that, because of the shifting nature of these generational age groupings, their initial findings on what generations actually do and don’t do, can change quickly and therefore become outdated. Indeed some generational data is proving to be more fad than fact. For example, it has only been within the past half-dozen years that social media, the current darling of most marketing managers, has been widely used commercially and has started to appear in the marketing and communication literature. (Covet and Saucet, 2014) Yet, much of the breathless prose being written in the popular press about the large groups of young people who use these tools and techniques has often been based on rather limited, snapshot samples, speculation and often, only media

hype by the technology organizations involved. (Covet and Saucet, 2014) Since social media is less than a decade old, we argue most assumptions and projections about this new digital or millennial generation have yet to stand the test of time, and thus, are subject to interpretation and adaptation as we learn more.

While there is clear evidence that age and age groups likely do create cohorts on which marketing analysis and decisions can be made, in this paper it is argued that the generational classifications, while useful, may often be misleading for four basic reasons: (a) they are often not necessarily representative of the entire age cohort discussed, that is the infamous “iceberg principle” where only the most visible tip of the activities or events are being observed and reported, (b) most reports assume that observations taken today will continue into the future, that is, what the various generations or cohorts are doing now is what they will be doing in the future, (c) there is no common agreement of what comprises a “generation” in terms of years, and (d) finally, the assumption that if the generation is age specific, they will suddenly turn into another generation once a certain age marker is reached, similar to an automobile speedometer reaching a decile milestone.

The greatest challenge we have found in our research is that when a generation is defined or an age group identified, it is often assumed by researchers that everyone in that same “generation” or cohort group, takes on the same characteristics. After numerous research projects, we have often found that the proclaimed generations are often made up of quite different behavioral groups or units within that generation or cohort. In short, a generation is not a generation and a cohort is not necessarily a cohort for all those falling within a certain age group.

Structure of the Paper

In this paper, we mine the increasingly rich lode of consumer information found in big data resources and evaluate that data over time (longitudinally). We have found that this type of analysis can provide a richer and more useful view of the generations; that is, how they have been described and discussed in the past and the value that concept may provide for marketers going forward.

We start first with a description of the data sets used in this analysis, most of which have come from a commercial database organization, Prosper International. (www.goproprosper.com) Prosper is an online research supplier for some of the largest marketing organizations in the U.S. such as Walmart, Kohl's, American Express, National Retail Federation and others. They have been collecting consumer questionnaire responses online in the U.S. since 2001 and in China since 2006. Using some of that data, a historical view of consumer generational research is provided. That illustrates some of the advantages and pitfalls of any type of generational analysis. In other words, we “mine” the available Prosper data to investigate, confirm, reject or adapt some of today's most commonly held beliefs on the various generations described in the marketing literature today. Much of our analysis focuses on age groups born after 1980 since that or those “generations”, i.e. the millennials or the digital generation has received the most attention among marketers, media and pundits.

In the sections that follow, a number of investigatory areas that have not commonly been discussed in the literature but which, we argue, are necessary to provide a holistic view of the real impact of generational data and the findings that are being distributed today, are discussed. As with much big data research today, we do not create a set of hypotheses to be tested. Instead, we propose a set of research questions, investigate them in the data sets and then let the results speak for themselves. We term these

investigations “postulates”, that is, they are assumption of the existence, fact or truth of our findings as a basis for reasoning, discussion or belief. (Merriam-webster.com, 2014)

Data Source for Generational Research

Prosper International (www.goprosper.com) is a major supplier of online research for a large number of global commercial and media organizations. Headquartered in Worthington, OH (USA), Prosper has been conducting online research in the U.S. since 2001 and in China since 2006. Thus, they have created and provided continuing, track-able and analyze-able data sets since their founding. They have made some of that data available to academic institutions for investigatory research. That provides the research base for this paper.

Prosper conducts ongoing online consumer research through a number of syndicated vehicles in addition to their bespoke research for individual companies. The primary resources used in this paper are the Media and Behavior Intentions (MBI) online studies, conducted twice yearly in the U.S. since 2001. This study gathers data from consumers age 18+ on their media usage, habits, the influence media has on their purchase decisions and the like. The normal participation in the MBI study is approximately 20,000 consumers per wave which are weighted and balanced to provide a representative sample of the U. S. population each time it is conducted. The second data set comes from monthly studies called Consumer Intentions and Actions (CIA). These are also conducted online with adults 18+ years of age. These studies too are weighted and balanced to provide a representative sample of the entire U.S. population. These smaller studies (average response rate 8,000) focus on what consumers bought in the last 30 days and what they anticipate purchasing in the next 30, 60 and 90 day periods along with their media usage patterns and other useful variables. The third form of data is specialized studies conducted for individual firms which are focused on specific topics. Called the American Pulse Studies, these specialized, focused, occasional studies are also based on online questionnaires, which may or may not have a preliminary screen to identify the persons of interest. They are generally based on samples of 2,500 to 3,000 respondents.

The Prosper data sets have been widely used in academic research. For example, *Shopper Cards: Beyond Data and Discounts* and *Retail Store Shopper Cards: Competitive Differentiator? Journal of Retail Analytics* (Schultz and Block, 2014) it is these data sets which are used in the analyses which follow.

A historical View of Generational Data

Use of the Prosper data sets to specifically focus on and investigate generational differences began in 2004-2005. The first output of those research studies was published in 2009 as a book on consumer media usage. The text “Media Generations: Media Allocation in a Consumer-Controlled Marketplace” (Block and Schultz, 2009) explained and illustrated the impact and effect of age cohorts/generational classifications the changing nature of media consumption in the U.S. That publication was followed by “Retail Communities: Customer-Driven Retailing” (Schultz, Block and Schultz, 2010) again using age/cohort-focused consumer reported actions to define and develop an explanation of the changing retail purchasing patterns of consumers in the U.S. The focus shifted in the next text. “Understanding China’s Digital Generation: A Marketer’s Guide to Understanding Young Chinese Consumers”. (Schultz, Block and Schultz, 2013) That used consumer data gathered in China which was then compared to similar data gathered in the U.S. Similarities and differences among and between the various age groups in the U.S. and China was the focus of that text.

This paper is an addition to that stream of literature but, with a more longitudinal and generalized view of consumer behaviors over time, that is, the “generations” and specific age groupings which have developed and become measurable.

This paper is based primarily on Prosper’s MBI data. The makeup of that group, in terms of age and gender, based on the December, 2013 wave of MBI responses is shown in Exhibit 1. As can be seen, in this respondent base of 15,411 consumers, the male/female ratio is approximately, but, not absolutely the same in each of the various age categories, i.e., the female group is larger in the 18-24, 45-54 and the 55-64 age bracket. Thus, we begin to see the need for longitudinal data to provide true generational understanding.

	Male	Female	Total
18-24	18.5	21.2	19.9
25-34	16.9	15.9	16.3
35-44	17.0	16.3	16.6
45-54	18.4	19.9	19.2
55-64	14.8	15.1	15.0
65+	14.3	11.7	13.0
Total	47.6	52.4	100.0

Exhibit 1. Size of Age and Gender Groups

Exhibit 2 shows the media generations which were constructed from the MBI data for the 2009 “Media Generations” text, (Block and Schultz). The most relevant events in U.S. history have been organized to provide a “generational view” rather than simply age groups or cohorts. Thus, we argue that many of the “generational cohort” examples which are commonly used in marketing and communication research are greatly influenced by events, technologies and activities which the group experiences. Thus, unless the surrounding venue or context is understood, generational analysis is often not only difficult to interpret but, also may be misleading.

Mass Generation (Leading Boomers)	Space Generation (Trailing Boomers)	Hippie Generation (Generation Jones)	Computer Generation (Generation X)	Internet Generation (Millennial)
1940: The first commercial television station signs on the air.	1957: Soviet Union's Sputnik.	1955: Vietnam War becomes first war to be televised.	1975: Home version of Pong from Atari.	1991: Internet made available for commercial use.
1948: Cable Television becomes available	1958: First U.S. satellite, Explorer I.	1966: In China, the Cultural Revolution.	1975: HBO bounces signal off satellite to reach cable systems and customers.	1991: Collapse of Soviet and Gorbachev plot aided by the Internet.
1950: Nielsen's Audimeter tracks television audiences.	1960: Tiros I is the first weather satellite.	1969: Astronauts send live photos from moon.	1975: Bill Gates and Paul Allen start Microsoft.	1995: Direct Broadcast Satellite
1951: Color television sets go on sale.	1961: FM stereo broadcasting.	1969: The Woodstock music festival.	1976: Small satellite dishes go into residential backyards.	1998: HDTV broadcasts begin in the United States.
1952: Atomic bomb test in Nevada show on live television.	1962: Cable companies import distant signals.	1970: FM stations target population segments.	1981: The laptop computer.	2001: Satellite radio; XM begins broadcasting.
1953: CATV system uses microwave to bring in distant signals.	1962: John Glenn's earth orbit is televised.	1971: Email.	1981: The IBM PC.	2001: Instant messaging, short messaging service (SMS), grows in popularity.
1954: President Eisenhower's news conference is televised.	1963: The Beatles shake up music.	1972: Videocassette moves for sale or rent in stores.	1983: Japan's NHK presents HDTV.	2001: The iPod music player.
	1963: Communications satellite.	1972: HBO starts pay-TV service for cable.	1983: AT&T forced to break up; 7 BabyBells are born.	2003: MySpace.com.
	1963: Martin Luther King gives "I have a dream" speech.	1974: President Nixon resigns; 110 million viewers watch.	1986: A fourth U.S. television network, Fox, is added to ABC, CBS, NBC lineup.	2004: "Podcasting" coined as term for internet delivery of radio-style content.

Exhibit 2. U.S. Media History and Generations

What is interesting about this analysis and the one that follows on music, is that it appears that media habits, established primarily in the teen years, seem to continue for the balance of the person’s life. This is one of the basic “truths” in media usage although it does not necessarily hold true in other categories or other activities. That’s what creates much of the difficulty in generational analysis. Some behaviors, once established become static or continuing while others change and evolve over time. It is this “mixing and matching” which often creates problems and challenges in generational analysis.

For example, both the “Mass Generation” and the “Space Generation” shown in the exhibit above, include the first consumer groups that were widely exposed to television, either through over-the-air or cable delivery. Our studies and others (Gerbner, et al, 1986) have shown that people who grew up during that time period have tended to remain primarily TV viewers throughout their lives (Gerbner, et al, 1986), that is, they tend to be very heavy television users/consumers even today. That is, people in their 60s make up a large portion of TV viewers in 2014. This, in spite of all the new media forms which have appeared in the past few years, the persons who grew up with television in their teen and early adult years, have a much lower incidence of using online and mobile than the younger groups. They seemingly don’t adapt or adopt the new or emerging technologies as quickly as they did in their youth and rely on habits developed years earlier.

That “teen age” establishment of lifetime consumption habits is illustrated/confirmed in Exhibit 3. This is a timeline of contemporary music formats created by a commercial radio group. (katzmediagroup.com) where most music usage in the 1960s was focused on the Top 40 (most popular songs among the entire population) niches or a focus on various themes and formats in music began to develop in the 1970s. Radio stations quickly spotted those trends in music formats and focused their “over-the-air play lists” toward that form of music and the consumers who preferred it. Classical, Rock, Heavy Metal, Hip Hop and other music genres quickly became the business model for radio stations, all of whom hoped to attract that generational cohort as an audience for their advertisers.

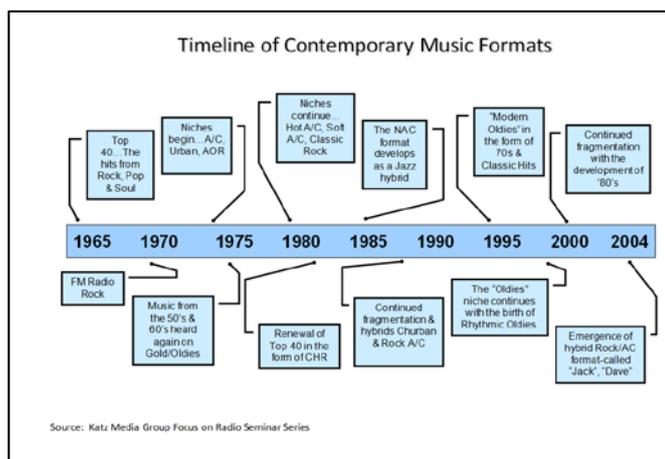


Exhibit 3. Timeline of Contemporary Music Formats

The generational aspect of music is easily recognized and confirmed simply by attending any music concert or gathering. One will see a disproportionate number of people in their 70s and 80s attending concerts featuring the music of The Beatles, the 60s age group makes up much of the Rolling

Stones concert audience and, those in their 50s are followers of first wave of Bruce Springsteen music and so on. Thus, it is clear that age and generational morés have much to do with music appreciation and that those preferences, developed early in the lives of those U. S. consumers, have continued over the years.

Using the concept of music genres, this approach was tested using a data set from an American Pulse study (respondent base = 2,547), conducted in September, 2013 on music preferences. An analytical structure was used to create age-related groupings, similar to those used in most media analytical models. That analysis is shown in Exhibit 4.

		Social Identity	Transportive	Emotion	Listening per Day
18 - 24	Male	0.69	0.03	-0.40	311.8
	Female	0.56	0.15	-0.10	270.9
	Total	0.62	0.10	-0.24	291.3
25 - 34	Male	0.82	-0.12	-0.30	273.1
	Female	0.62	0.17	0.09	311.6
	Total	0.71	0.05	-0.08	295.4
35 - 44	Male	0.43	-0.08	-0.36	202.4
	Female	0.27	0.12	0.11	205.9
	Total	0.34	0.03	-0.09	204.4
45 - 54	Male	-0.05	-0.07	-0.12	179.6
	Female	-0.06	0.07	0.32	186.1
	Total	-0.06	0.01	0.14	183.5
55 - 64	Male	-0.38	0.01	-0.14	148.2
	Female	-0.34	0.02	0.40	151.0
	Total	-0.36	0.01	0.15	149.8
65+	Male	-0.64	-0.22	-0.30	135.2
	Female	0.75	-0.06	0.32	112.4
	Total	-0.69	-0.15	-0.02	124.5
Total	Male	0.01	-0.08	-0.26	194.3
	Female	-0.01	0.07	0.22	195.1
	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	194.7

Exhibit 4. Music Engagement Factors by Age and Gender

The engagement analysis was based on media engagement measures developed by Calder and Malthouse (2008). Only three factors, Social Identity (what I and my friends use and enjoy), Transportive (takes me away from my current situation) and Emotion (makes me feel better) were used in this particular analysis. The amount of radio listening per day provided another factor. As can be seen, radio listening is heaviest in the younger age groups with females gradually becoming heavier users in total time spent with radio as they age. There also appears to be a bias in terms of Social Identity which is highest in the 18 to 44 age male groups. That engagement factor declines over the years while the Emotional connection for females begins to grow after age 25 and continues through middle age. The negative Z values mean that the response of this group was below the mean for all respondents.

Using Canonical Correlation, this “the music you liked as a teen continues for the rest of your life” finding is demonstrated Exhibit 5. This data is based on an American Pulse study conducted in September, 2013 based on 2,547 respondents.

Correlations of Genre preference with Preference as a Teen Canonical Correlation = .248		
	Same Teen	Other Teen
Rock	0.453	0.139
Pop	0.389	0.192
Classical	0.571	0.343
R&B	0.636	0.343
Rap	0.512	0.319
Jazz	0.666	0.385
Country	0.559	0.275
Oldies	0.454	0.296
Average	0.530	0.287

Exhibit 5. Correlations of Genre Preference with Preference as a Teen

The correlations shown are based on two factors, either you preferred the same music genre today (Same Teen on chart) as you did when you were a teen ager or you didn't (Other Teen). As can be seen the Same Teen correlations, while somewhat lower for Rock and Pop than those of R&B, Rap and Jazz, seem to indicate that once the listener locked into those two genres, they stayed with them. The others (R&B, Rap and Jazz) seem to indicate a much wider palette of musical tastes but still conform to the premise that "the music you preferred as a teen, is still the music you prefer today).

That supports our first postulate. As illustrated, it is fairly easy to describe generational groups based on their musical or media preferences as a teen and what music they prefer today. That then, makes up our first postulate:

Research Postulate #1: some habits and preferences generated in various generations continue throughout the life of the person while others change and evolve.

In the use of media forms, that seems to be particularly true. That finding has major implications for marketers seeking to generate long-term brand loyalty. Unfortunately, not every product, service or activity follows this postulate.

What is needed to differentiate among and between various factors which do and don't become life-long consumer habits? That requires a conceptual understanding of why these generational differences occur. That is discussed in the next section.

Some Theoretical Underpinnings of Generational Differences

While it is interesting to speculate on the differences in generations and their impact on marketing and marketing communications activities and results, to truly understand the impact of age generations and cohorts, a theoretical structure is helpful. Two approaches are identified below.

Erikson's Stage Theory

Erikson's Stage Theory is used here to illustrate how richness and understanding of generational or age cohorts can be developed. (Erikson, 1980) Erikson's concepts, as shown in Exhibit 6, correlate very closely with the age-based generations which have been used by many marketing and communication scholars although references to Erikson's work is not always recognized or cited. That too, is another

factor in generational research. Many analysts and researcher do not acknowledge the basic underpinnings of their findings and therefore present them as “new”, “novel” or “innovative” when in truth, they have often already been studied and codified by academic researchers. Thus, we argue that a thorough search of the academic literature should precede any professional research study.

Erikson's Stage Theory in its Final Version			
Age	Conflict	Resolution or "Virtue"	Culmination in old age
Infancy (0-1 year)	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Appreciation of interdependence and relatedness
Early childhood (1-3 years)	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Acceptance of the cycle of life, from integration to disintegration
Play age (3-6 years)	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Humor; empathy; resilience
School age (6-12 years)	Industry vs. inferiority	Competence	Humility; acceptance of the course of one's life and unfulfilled hopes
Adolescence (12-19 years)	Identity vs. Confusion	Fidelity	Sense of complexity of life; merging of sensory, logical and aesthetic perception
Early adulthood (20-25 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Sense of the complexity of relationships; value of tenderness and loving freely
Adulthood (26-64 years)	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Caritas, caring for others, and agape, empathy and concern
Old age (65-death)	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Existential identity; a sense of integrity strong enough to withstand physical disintegration

Exhibit 6. Erikson's Stage Theory in its Final Version

Erikson’s approach is based on his psycho-social theory which creates broad, general classifications based on human development. As shown in the chart, Erikson compares and contrasts the Conflict which humans experience at various stages of their maturation and development. Those changes each create a Resolution or Virtue at a specific time in the person’s or group’s life. Erikson suggests these drive the person’s behaviors and are what enable the transition to the next stage of development. Erikson’s final stage is how all these changes culminate in old age.

It is interesting to note that many of the traits of today’s so-called “Millennial” generation can be observed in those persons currently found in the ages 12-19 (Adolescence) group who exhibit Erikson’s Identity vs Confusion Conflict and those in Early Adulthood (ages 20-25 years) where conflicts between Intimacy and Isolation commonly occur. Thus, while general observation of the morés and activities of certain age groups may appear to be obtuse and confusing to marketing executives, commonly there are some theoretical underpinnings which can often be applied.

Generally, for marketing managers, identifying the factors that influence the generational groups they want to influence or persuade is difficult. We’ve often found in our consulting work that occurs because the managers, faced with a marketing decision, come from or are living in a different Conflict situation and experiencing different “Resolution” or “Virtues” in their own lives. That is what often makes it difficult for them to understand current consumer behaviors in different age groups. In sum, there are often psychological or physiological underpinnings which can be used to explain the behaviors of various aggregated “generations” or “age cohort” groups. Unfortunately, these types of analyses are not commonly used since they are based on longitudinal evolutions, not on current social science snapshots. (Note: Some additional details on Erikson’s psychosocial theory are provided in the appendix.)

Heggstad and Kanfer's Motivational Traits

Another useful base for understanding how humans behave during various periods of their calendar lives are their Motivational Traits. (Kanfer and Heggstad, 1997) Developed and formalized by Heggstad and Kanfer, when applied, their MTQ questionnaire can identify various motivational traits which can be used to explain and illustrate observable behavior of people over time, i.e., generations. Heggstad and Kanfer developed a typology of motivations which is explained briefly below.

1. Desire to learn – examples: I am intellectually curious; I thirst for knowledge, etc.
2. Mastery of goals – examples: I compete with myself; I work hard at everything I undertake, etc.
3. Other referenced goals – examples: It really upsets me when someone does something better than I do, I compare my performance to that of others, etc.
4. Competition Seeking – examples: I perform best when I compete with others, I like to turn things into a competition, etc.
5. Worry – examples: When working on important projects, I am constantly fearful that I will make a mistake, I get tense other people assess my progress, etc.
6. Emotionality – examples: My heart beats fast before I begin difficult tasks; I lose sleep because I am troubled by thoughts of failure, etc.

Using these concepts and applying the various questions and responses to those inquiries found in the MTQ questionnaires, it was possible to classify respondents to a Prosper custom survey. Their responses were then plotted against their age classifications to create the chart found in Exhibit 7. Thus, we can begin to see how the motivational traits change over time. The charted study illustrated below was conducted in September, 2014 with a response base of 2,154 consumers age 18+.

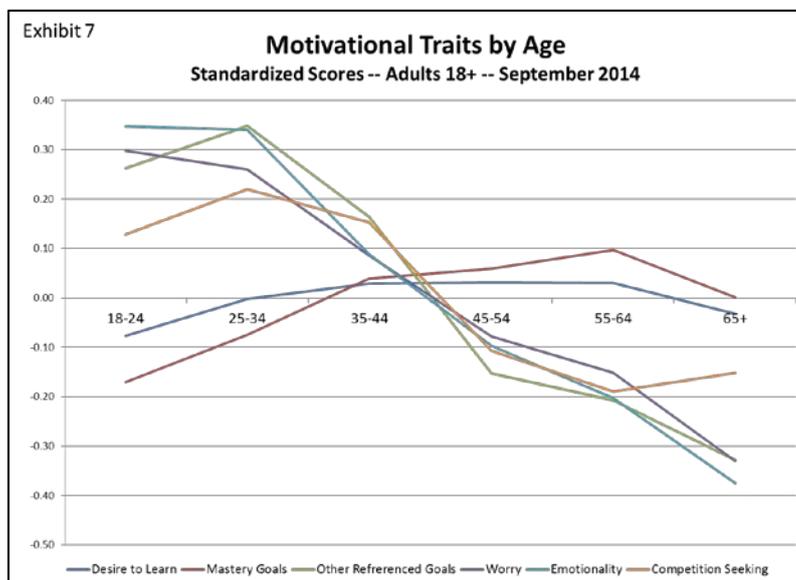


Exhibit 7. Motivational Traits by Age

There are clearly two generational groupings in the Trait responses. Desire to Learn and Mastery of Goals are evident in the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups, suggesting these are inherent in people from an

early age. They increase slightly during the balance of the age tracking, only starting to decline after age 55 and continue to slide at age 65+. The other four traits, Other Referenced Goals, Worry, Emotionality and Competition Seeking start at a much higher level in the early ages, but, begin to decline rapidly after age 34. This suggests that these are learned traits and as a person gains experience in life, their importance declines. It is interesting to note that Competition Seeking reverses that downward trend at age 64 and starts to rise again. Whether or not this rebellion against aging and a clear end to life is not known but is likely worth investigating in the future.

What the measurement of these Motivational Traits does illustrate is that general changes occur with age cohorts and they can likely be used to predict consumer behaviors during a consumer's lifetime. They would appear to be relevant foundations for all generational research although in our work, we have not found them widely used.

Both Erikson's Stage Theory and Heggstad and Kanfer's Motivational Traits are important psychological tools to help understand various generations and age cohorts. Most important, it is clear that people do change over time, thus, generational snapshots, taken at a point in time would appear to be less valuable than understanding the prior context of the person and the likely direction they will experience going forward. That will likely more clearly explain their behaviors in the future than many of the variables used in traditional generational research. Clearly there are other tools the manager should employ but these seem to be exemplary in terms of understanding generations and age cohorts.

From these two examples, we can posit Research Postulate #2:

Research Postulate #2: There are a number of psychological measures which define and explain how and why consumers behave as they do during certain age or generational periods. Thus, it is important to understand the underlying context in which generational or age cohort research is or has been conducted.

Generational Influences

In our investigations, we have found some factors of particular interest which can be used in understanding the observable generational behaviors. While these may initially seem to be unrelated, when they are included and combined in generational analysis of age cohorts, they can help enhance and expand our basic understanding of the observed behaviors of each group. In this section, we provide some of the factors which we have observed from our ongoing research. We believe when combined, they can help the marketer or market analyst paint a very vivid picture of the differences between age groups and generations. We start with a generational view of Beliefs compared to Attitudes.

Generational Differences between Beliefs and Attitudes

Beliefs are mental attitudes of acceptance or assent toward a proposition without the full intellectual knowledge required to guarantee its truth. (Dictionary.com) Attitudes on the other hand are the manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc. with regard to a person or thing; a tendency or orientation of the mind. (Dictionary.com) Beliefs are assumed to be more strongly held and thus more lasting than attitudes which often can change quite rapidly as witness the attention given to corporate blunders as reported on twitter or Facebook. (Plattner, 2012) Most twitter, Facebook and other social media, therefore likely have to do with current attitudes, which are not necessarily supported by beliefs. In too many instances, it appears marketing managers confuse the two concepts, often to their later dismay.

In an American Pulse omnibus study conducted by Prosper International in April, 2013, 3,538 consumers were asked to give their beliefs on a number of unrelated subjects, i.e. global warming, belief in angels, that humans will eventually be replaced by robots and the longevity of shopping malls. The responses by age grouping, as shown in Exhibit 8, are somewhat surprising.

		Global Warming	Believe in Angels	Replaced by Robots	Shopping Malls
18-24	Male	66.1	60.7	30.1	45.2
	Female	74.1	72.7	26.5	47.8
	Total	69.9	66.3	28.4	46.4
25-34	Male	66.9	57.5	26.9	42.2
	Female	73.3	70.4	25.0	44.7
	Total	70.1	64.0	25.9	43.4
35-44	Male	66.2	55.8	25.3	37.9
	Female	76.3	79.1	23.1	33.4
	Total	71.2	67.2	24.2	35.7
45-54	Male	63.4	67.3	27.8	41.0
	Female	71.0	75.9	25.7	43.2
	Total	67.5	72.0	26.7	42.2
55+	Male	64.7	62.8	23.5	36.6
	Female	66.9	76.3	22.5	45.0
	Total	65.8	69.7	23.0	40.9
Total	Male	65.9	59.7	27.4	41.6
	Female	73.2	74.1	24.9	43.1
	Total	69.5	66.8	26.1	42.4

Exhibit 8. Beliefs by Age and Gender

While there are different belief patterns among the generations in terms of the four questions, there is little difference in age groups or in gender. Two-thirds or more believe in global warming while roughly the same percentages believe in angels. Only about 20% believe they will eventually be replaced by robots and one-third or more in all age groups think shopping malls are good and that they will continue to operate well into the future. Significance tests were found for all correlations other than Global Warming and Angels, Global Warming and Age and Age and Angels. The correlations were low but the sample size was large.

Attitudes are a different matter. In an American Pulse study conducted in May, 2013, among 2,638 respondents, all age 18+, respondents were asked to provide responses to large battery of attitudinal questions. Only two have been selected for this paper, but, they do provide a glimpse into the differences between generations or age cohorts. Again, the basic marketer groupings were used, i.e., ages 18-24, 25-34, etc. While not necessarily generational groups, it is interesting to see the differences among the various age cohorts. That is shown in Exhibit 9.

		Sports (in hours) On Daily Basis*	Practice a Religious Faith**	Overall state Economy***	Money or Enjoy Life****	
18 - 24	Male	1.76	57.8	2.47	4.03	*0=none, 1=1 hour or less, 3=3 or more hours **Percent yes ***1=Excellent, 4=Terrible ****1=Make Money, 7=Enjoy Life
	Female	1.61	51.6	2.60	4.34	
	Total	1.69	54.7	2.53	4.18	
25 - 34	Male	1.92	54.9	2.53	3.75	
	Female	1.76	59.3	2.54	4.26	
	Total	1.84	57.5	2.54	4.04	
35 - 44	Male	1.93	52.5	2.75	4.03	
	Female	1.51	57.6	2.88	4.36	
	Total	1.71	55.5	2.83	4.22	
45 - 54	Male	1.53	63.4	2.98	4.02	
	Female	1.39	66.7	3.11	4.26	
	Total	1.46	65.4	3.06	4.17	
55 - 64	Male	1.47	63.0	2.92	4.54	
	Female	1.32	66.1	3.01	4.64	
	Total	1.40	64.7	2.97	4.60	
65+	Male	1.43	61.2	3.02	5.10	
	Female	1.38	77.7	3.07	4.93	
	Total	1.41	68.9	3.04	5.02	
Total	Male	1.65	59.4	2.82	4.36	
	Female	1.49	64.1	2.91	4.49	
	Total	1.57	62.0	2.87	4.43	

Exhibit 9. Attitudes and Age and Gender

Some explanation of the chart is required. Column 1 is scored on a simple “Yes or No” response. As can be seen, more than 50% of all respondents reported they practiced a religious faith. The response pattern is approximately the same until Age 45 is reached. At that point, all responses increase into the 60%+ range. In the 65+ age category, female positive responses increase dramatically, reaching 77% by the time they meet that age requirement. Thus, we can see that practicing a religious faith, at least in the U.S., tends to grow with age, but, does not increase dramatically until age 65+ is reached by females.

Column 2 consists of scores on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7, with 1 being Make Money and 7 being Enjoy Life. These are what could be assumed to be bi-polar differences often found in the millennial work force, at least, those are the ones most discussed in the marketing press. What is surprising about these results is that age seems to have little to do with discriminating between age groups, that is when asked whether “Making money” or “Enjoying Life” are compared, only males in the 25-34 age group fall below 4.0 on the Likert-type scale. Recall that on a 7 point scale, 3.5 might be considered the mid-point. Thus, there is seemingly less interest in making money than in enjoying life, something which is often challenged in not only the commercial press but the academic reporting as well. It is not until males reach 65+ does their score reach 5.0 on the 7 point scale. The balance of the age cohorts all fall within a fairly limited range of responses with males and females scoring roughly the same throughout their lifetimes. Thus, we begin to see the impact of short-term analyses of various age groups. If one only looked at 18-34 year age group, one would assume that a focus on generating short term income was a trait of that group. And, while it seemingly is at that point in time, it is not necessarily a lifetime trait as some research has seemed to propose.

Giving and Seeking Advice

The rapid growth of the new social media forms has raised questions about whether or not consumer responses about giving and seeking advice have changed by generations or age cohorts based on the development of the new social media. Each of these is worth exploring as is done now.

There has been much speculation as to the impact and effect of social media on young people. Seeing multitudes of young adults, trailing white ear phones as they walk down the street or having their eyes glued to mobile devices as they cross intersections makes one feel that all of them are totally devoted to the new media forms. That variable, the impact of social media, is easily tracked in the longitudinal

data found in most big data sets. Since most recognized social media forms began to appear in roughly 2007, i.e., Facebook, twitter, You Tube, etc., all one has to do is look at data prior to 2007 and compare it with current data. While social media did exist prior to 2007, it was not considered a dominant media form prior to that time. To understand the actual impact and effect of social media on various generational groups, comparisons of MBI studies conducted in 2007 (the beginning of the social media explosion) and 2013 were developed. We were interested in two factors. (a) has social media had a major impact on age groups getting or giving advice, and (b) has the advent of social media had an impact on the growth of online shopping in the U.S.? Those are shown as Exhibits 10 and 11 below.

Age	Gender	Regularly Seek Advice			Regularly Give Advice		
		2007	2013	Yearly Change	2007	2013	Yearly Change
18-24	Male	26.94	29.95	0.43	39.26	29.51	-1.39
	Female	16.36	26.90	1.51	34.55	27.54	-1.00
	Total	20.51	28.25	1.11	36.40	28.41	-1.14
25-34	Male	24.55	29.05	0.64	39.09	34.87	-0.60
	Female	15.07	25.06	1.43	33.87	31.38	-0.36
	Total	18.39	27.02	1.23	35.70	33.09	-0.37
35-44	Male	18.43	19.63	0.17	33.51	24.46	-1.29
	Female	15.59	24.43	1.26	31.12	28.76	-0.34
	Total	16.52	22.10	0.80	31.91	26.67	-0.75
45-54	Male	17.83	13.39	-0.63	27.77	16.94	-1.55
	Female	14.89	21.00	0.87	27.39	24.24	-0.45
	Total	15.87	17.52	0.24	27.51	20.90	-0.94
55-64	Male	15.41	11.03	-0.63	23.81	12.22	-1.66
	Female	11.83	22.05	1.46	20.71	20.33	-0.05
	Total	13.32	16.85	0.50	22.00	16.51	-0.78
65+	Male	10.64	6.37	-0.61	15.89	7.99	-1.13
	Female	11.41	7.50	-0.56	18.94	7.29	-1.66
	Total	11.06	6.91	-0.59	17.56	7.66	-1.41
Total	Male	18.36	18.80	0.06	28.96	21.59	-1.05
	Female	14.34	22.04	1.10	27.80	24.23	-0.51
	Total	15.85	20.50	0.66	28.23	22.97	-0.75

Exhibit 10. Giving and Seeking Advice by Age and Gender

It has been assumed, or at least reported by many researchers and media professionals, that social media has greatly expanded consumer’s capability and involvement in giving or seeking advice.

Indeed, many marketers list “starting a conversation with customers” (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) or “developing brand advocates” as being some of their primary marketing and marketing communication goals with the Millennials. (Boone and Kurtz, 2013) Indeed, much research today suggests that social media, being a manifestation of electronic word-of-mouth, is having a major impact of what consumers buy or use. (Hennig-Thurau, et al, 2014) Commonly, snapshot research suggests that “I do, or want to do what my friends do” or “I use what my friends use” are two of the catch phrases often used today to explain the purchases and product usage of today’s younger generations. (Hennig-Thurau, et al, 2014)

In the chart below, the two marketing age groups, i.e., 18-24, 25-34 likely make up what are called “Millennials”. The reported giving or getting of advice by gender is shown initially for the year 2007, the development year for social media. The same data points in the MBI studies were performed seven years later. This 7 year age grouping fits very well with standard research data. Thus, if a person was 18 years old in 2007, they would be 24 in 2013, still within the Millennials category. The age brackets used in this analysis conform fairly well in terms of a person progressing through the cohort grouping.

We focus first on the first two age groups which reportedly have been most impacted by the development of social media in terms of “Seeking Advice” and “Giving Advice”. A glance at the chart

shows that Seeking Advice is growing while Giving Advice is declining in both the 18-24 and the 25-34 age groups. The meaning of this can likely be explained by those Seeking Advice having transferred their reliance from personal contact to searching or following social media. If this is done, the personal need/desire to give advice may no longer be required. That too, likely has been replaced by social media. Thus, while we might still refer to social media as electronic word-of-mouth, it seems like a much more complex concept than it has been in the past and not well explained or illustrated by current research.

One thing that quickly becomes apparent in this chart is that giving and getting advice is much more a female than a male trait. That is borne out in the individual age groupings and also in total.

When we look at the later age groups, i.e. those 35 years of age and up, what is most striking is that both giving and getting advice starts to decline at age 45 or so and giving advice declines consistently from age 35 onward. Thus, the rise of social media does not seem to have impacted those over the age of 35. This is a most interesting finding and one that deserves greater analysis than is possible in this paper.

From the information above, we can create postulate #3.

Research Postulate #3: getting and giving advice has changed dramatically with the introduction of social media. It may well be that what is considered traditional “word-of-mouth” is being replaced by social media.

There are many social implications that come from this Postulate, not the least of which is confirmation that younger consumers, while they may move in crowds, appear to be much most influenced by electronic than human contact. This too deserves considerable research attention going forward.

Online Purchasing

One of the major marketing growth factors over the past decade has been the rapid increase in the volume and frequency of online shopping/purchasing. Online is commonly defined as electronic purchasing which occurs either through the internet or via other electronic means. Online volume has grown rapidly, not just in the U.S. but in other established and emerging countries and economies. Indeed, online shopping in China over the past few years have surged far more rapidly than in other established markets where the concept developed. (McKinsey, 2013) Little seems to be known however; about that generational group that is driving that growth. Given the prevalence of mobile media among the younger generations it has been assumed that much of that increase has come from the activities of the Millennials age group. To test this or those hypotheses, we again used MBI data starting with the time frame of 2007 (before the advent of today’s social media) with the reported use of online purchasing in 2013 by age cohort. The result of that analysis is shown in Exhibit 11.

Online Purchase and Purchase Frequency Age and Gender 2007 vs. 2013							
Age	Gender	Regularly Purchase Online		Yearly Change	Purchase Frequency*		Yearly Change
		2007	2013		2007	2013	
18-24	Male	22.54	23.25	0.10	2.91	2.71	-0.03
	Female	14.32	19.71	0.77	2.98	2.94	0.00
	Total	17.54	21.28	0.53	2.95	2.84	-0.02
25-34	Male	29.32	33.58	0.61	3.48	3.29	-0.03
	Female	22.96	33.26	1.47	3.51	3.22	-0.04
	Total	25.19	33.41	1.17	3.50	3.26	-0.03
35-44	Male	28.99	30.89	0.27	3.60	3.68	0.01
	Female	24.64	34.52	1.41	3.54	3.30	-0.03
	Total	26.07	32.76	0.96	3.56	3.48	-0.01
45-54	Male	26.93	24.48	-0.35	3.95	4.04	0.01
	Female	24.13	28.85	0.67	4.03	3.58	-0.06
	Total	25.06	26.85	0.26	4.01	3.79	-0.03
55-64	Male	27.17	24.82	-0.34	4.62	4.54	-0.01
	Female	20.6	29.75	1.31	4.76	4.02	-0.10
	Total	23.33	27.43	0.59	4.70	4.27	-0.06
65+	Male	20.78	18.17	-0.37	4.74	4.90	0.02
	Female	13.75	20.7	0.99	4.98	5.47	0.07
	Total	16.94	19.37	0.35	4.87	5.17	0.04
Total	Male	25.8	26.02	0.03	3.93	3.80	-0.02
	Female	21.25	27.72	0.92	3.96	3.63	-0.05
	Total	22.96	26.91	0.56	3.95	3.71	-0.03

*Average in weeks

Exhibit 11. Online Purchase and Purchase Frequency Age and Gender

Two measures are reported, i.e., “Regularly Purchase Online” and “Frequency of Online Purchasing”, i.e., average in weeks. The same age categorizations are used in this analysis as those before.

In terms of Regularly Purchasing Online, three factors are easily identified. In almost every age category, increased regular shopping online is reported between 2007 and 2013. The only two exceptions on are males 45 through 65+. Females all reported a greater propensity to regularly shop online among all age groups, with major changes in females in age groups after 35 years. While we can't attribute that directly to the growth of social media, it would seem likely it had some impact. What is clear, however, is that the social media boom did not impact younger people any more than it did those the older groups. In fact, if we look at the Yearly Change in Regularly Shopping Online, the results skew much more heavily toward the older groups than the younger. Thus, it does not appear that the growth of social media availability has had much to do with the growth of online shopping in terms of whether or not it is done regularly by the younger age cohorts, i.e. the Millennials.

If we look at Online Purchasing Frequency, again comparing the age groups in 2007 with the same age groups in 2013, we see that frequency did not grow at all, indeed, it declined. It is not until we reach the 65+ age groups that online purchasing frequency increased. Thus, if social media has increased online shopping either in terms of consistency (regularly purchasing) or frequency, it appears that the millennial generation is not the one primarily creating that impact and the availability of social media does not appear to be a driving factor. This is a most interesting finding and one that is contrary many of the reports and speculation that has appeared in the trade press. (Bolton, et al, 2013)

Research Postulate #4: From this analysis, it is possible to develop Postulate #4: The sheer availability and prevalence of online and social media is not the primary reason for the growth of online shopping. Indeed, the younger groups of people do not appear to be impacted substantially more than other age groups or cohorts. Thus, social media, whether that be mobile or from a fixed location does not appear to be driving online shopping in the United States.

Forecasting with Generational Data

One of the major values attributed to generational analysis is the ability to forecast future marketing results or returns based on the movement of an age cohort through the various life stages over time.

While that seems to be true in some instances, as shown above with media usage, it has proven not to be as effective in other areas, i.e., online shopping. That naturally raises the question: can generational data be used to forecast the attitudes, beliefs, and therefore the behaviors of consumers as they pass through the various age groupings? Many have tried to answer those questions, often by looking at short term results, i.e., intent to purchase, preference and the like. (Kim, 2011) While these short-term impact factors are clearly important to marketers, the longer term implications would seem more valuable for such things as identifying long-term trends, development of brands and branding policies and the like.

To investigate this question, data from a continuing Prosper study was used. Using responses to monthly questions posed in an American Pulse-type study, Prosper researchers set up what they call a “Happiness Index”. Similar to the measurement of consumer sentiments which are measured by a number of organizations, (Prosper Insights and Analytics, Goprosper.com) this index was created to determine the emotional quotient of the U.S. consumers on an ongoing basis. Using a scoring format, respondents are asked to say how “Happy” they are with ten major factors in their lives, i.e., (1) house/apartment/condo, (2) love life, (3) home life, (4) work life, (5) neighborhood where they lived, (6) relationships with family, (7) relationships with friends (8) health, (9) government, and (10) religion/faith. Prosper and their clients use these measures to forecast such things as likelihood of moving, changing jobs, health concerns, etc. We use that same data but in a somewhat different way, i.e., to forecast and classify respondents and investigate how they likely will or will not change as they move through the aging process. While we should note that these factors are highly inter-correlated, they do provide some insights into what occurs generation to generation and as people move from one life / age stage to another.

We start with a discriminant analysis of the data from the November, 2014 measurement which consisted of 6,593 respondents. Exhibit 12 shows the result of that exercise.

Exhibit 12

Happiness Structure Matrix
Monthly Survey – November 2014

Happiness with...	1	2	3	4	5
House/Apartment/Condo	.60*				
Love life		.84*			
Home life		.72*			
Work life		.62*			
Neighborhood		.53*			
Relationships with family		.50*			
Relationships with friends			.55*		
Health			.53*		
Government				.61*	
Religion/faith					.52*

Exhibit 12. Happiness Structure Matrix

As can be seen, that analysis created five groupings. The first has to do with house and home, the second with relationships, the third with friends and health, the fourth with government and the fifth

with religion or faith. As can be seen, the elements with the highest loadings are love life and home life. Not a surprising finding but, one that seems to ground the entire study.

The question next was could age groupings or cohorts add some predictive value to this initial identification of the data groupings. Exhibit 13 shows how the age groups relate to each other when plotted on the Love and Health Happiness (Y axis) compared to Housing Happiness (X axis). (Note unlike other plots of similar data, the size of the dots in this chart is locational only. It does not indicate the size of the respondent base. Also, only two of the functions are plotted on this chart, simply to reduce the information overload).

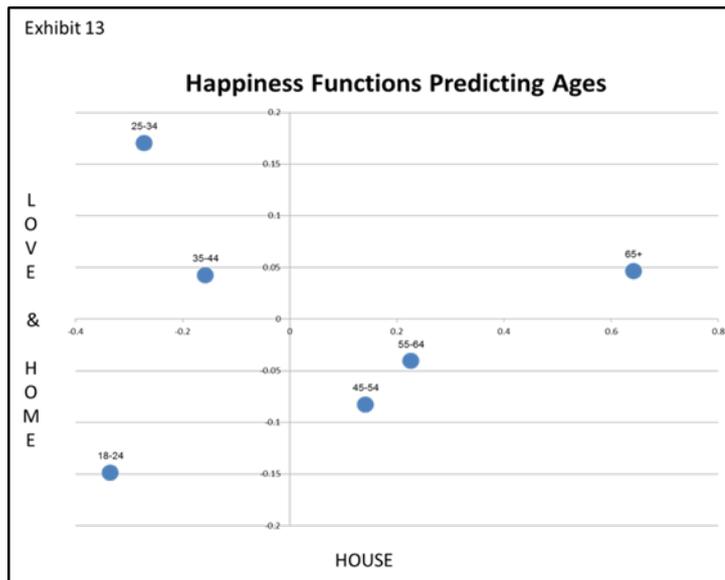


Exhibit 13. Happiness Functions Predicting Age

What this chart shows is a prediction of the age when each of the two Happiness Functions are most likely to occur. Clearly, age has much to do with the happiness people have with their home and housing. The older they get, the more settled they are and seemingly the happier they are with their surroundings. Alternatively, those who are less happy with their housing are found in the 18-24 group, while the 25-34 group is only a bit happier, while those in the 35-44 group seem to be moving forward in their housing happiness.

When we look at the Love/Relationships plot, clearly the 18-24 groups are the least happy with their situation. In fact, it is this Millennium or Digital group which seems the least happy of all the various age groups. In spite of this age group's aggressive social life, as characterized in the media and advertising, this age cohort appears to be the least happy with both of the two factors. While these results are preliminary and exploratory, they do appear to explain the less settled, more transitory nature of this age group. The encouraging thing, however, is that this type of big data does seem to suggest that it might well be possible to forecast and/or predict the impact and effect of any number of social and behavioral factors and the stages these age groups might pass through. That could be most helpful to the long-term planning by marketers and researchers.

Based on this preliminary analysis, it seems safe to propose the next research postulate.

Research Postulate #5: From this preliminary analysis, we postulate that it might be possible going forward, to forecast and anticipate any number of behavioral factors beneficial to

marketers. These might be provided by big data through various consumer tracking studies and the like. In short, this might provide additional insights and value to traditional product and consumer life cycle analysis.

Conclusions and Next Steps

This paper is clearly exploratory and directional. It was developed primarily to create a scholarly discussion on the value and use of generational or age cohort data and variables in terms of generating a better understanding of how and in what way this type of data can be used by researchers and marketers to improve marketing results. Much of this paper is devoted to suggesting that generational analysis can be best understood using longitudinal or data gathered over time, i.e., big data. In too many instances today, we have seen researchers and marketers alike make pronouncements on marketplace situations using only one-time or snapshot results of limited groups of consumers. In this paper, we have argued that only by understanding the preceding or following age group can any sense be made of what is happening in the moment. Context, we argue is critical in understanding the various generations as they are the outcomes of a wide variety of factors, many of which cannot be understood unless evaluated in the context in which they are occurring. We strongly believe, and feel we have demonstrated in this paper, that generational analysis, or age cohort development is a moving element in the marketing landscape. It cannot be captured or understood unless viewed over time, something which too few researchers and marketers do today.

In conducting our analysis, we developed six postulates. These came directly from the data and analysis which we conducted. We developed these factors as postulates rather than hypotheses. The data on which these were taken came directly from consumers. Thus, we did not inject any researcher bias or speculation. The data is what it is, which we feel, is the only true way for researchers to present their findings in the age of big data. That said, our postulates are:

Research Postulate #1: some habits and preferences generated in various generations continue throughout the life of the person while others change and evolve.

Research Postulate #2: There are a number of psychological measures which define and explain how and why consumers behave as they do during certain age or generational periods. Thus, it is important to understand the underlying context in which generational or age cohort research is or has been conducted.

Research Postulate #3: Getting and giving advice has changed dramatically with the introduction of social media. It may well be that what is considered traditional “word-of-mouth” is being replaced by social media.

Research Postulate #4: The sheer availability and prevalence of online and social media is not the primary reason for the growth of online shopping. Indeed, the younger groups of people do not appear to be impacted substantially more than other age groups or cohorts. Thus, social media, whether that be mobile or from a fixed location does not appear to be driving online shopping in the United States.

Research Postulate #5: From this preliminary analysis, we postulate that it might be possible going forward, to forecast and anticipate any number of behavioral factors beneficial to marketers. These might be provided by big data through various consumer tracking studies and

the like. In short, this might provide additional insights and value to traditional product and consumer life cycle analysis.

As noted earlier, while there is no substantial proof that these postulates are true or accurate, we believe they are substantial enough to enter the literature stream to be tested and refined or rejected as determined by future scholars. Thus, they are presented in this manner in this paper.

Limitations

There are clearly limitations on the findings, recommendations and even the postulates presented in this paper. That comes primarily from the data and the analysis used in this paper. Those are briefly listed below.

1. All data was gathered only from online respondents in the United States. Other countries and other cultures may demonstrate significantly different responses and non-online consumers may be different as well.
2. While an argument is made in this paper for the use of longitudinal big data, many of our results have necessarily been truncated simply to fit the requirements of the conference organizers. While we do not feel our results would change substantially with the inclusion of longer analytical periods or more depth of analysis, that is, of course possible.
3. This paper is clearly directional and exploratory. We have included a number of non-traditional elements and factors in the analyses conducted. That was done primarily to illustrate what is or can be possible once the blinders of traditional research have been removed. While we do not believe a re-analysis of the data will invalidate our points, which are always possible.
4. We have used only data available from Prosper and their ongoing data gathering systems. It is possible that other sources may provide different results or researchers may come to different conclusions. We do believe, however, that this paper can withstand the most rigid scrutiny and would compare favorably with other research reports conducted using similar data and asking similar research questions.
5. Much of the data used in this analysis relies on the responses of consumers. A re-survey or re-test of these same subjects might well find different responses. We believe, however, that the number of respondents (at least 2,000 in each data set) takes away many of the traditional challenges which plague traditional respondent data.

We believe we are entering a new era of market and marketing research. Thus, we feel new and different methodologies will be required. Big data and the proper use and analysis of this new data source can provide a major improvement in existing research programs.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Psychosocial Theory

- Trust vs. Mistrust (Birth to 1 year)
 - To develop trust – infant's needs must be met
 - Must be played with, cuddled
 - When care is inconsistent or rejecting, mistrust develops – child becomes suspicious and fearful
- Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Ages 2-3)
 - Child developing new motor and mental abilities
 - Parents should encourage autonomy
 - If parents are impatient and does things for child, or if they are critical, the child will begin to doubt themselves and feel shame
 - Caution: don't give too much autonomy
- Initiative vs. Guilt (Ages 4-5)
 - Child becomes master of his body
 - Begins tasks like riding a bike, running, cutting
 - Children who are given the freedom and opportunity to engage in tasks have sense of initiative reinforced
 - Parents should not try to hinder fantasy or play
 - If parents make the child feel bad or feel like a nuisance with their questions, the child will develop a sense of guilt
- Industry vs. inferiority (Ages 6-11)
 - Elementary school years
 - Love for opposite sex parent is repressed
 - Children really begin to learn and play by rules
 - Concern for how things work, how things are made, and what things actually do
 - Children who are encouraged to make things, do things or build things will develop a sense of industry
 - Parents who see their child as mischievous or as messy will help the child develop a sense of inferiority
 - School plays a critical role during this period-friends and teachers play an integral role in development
 - It is in this stage that lifelong academic failure can begin
 - May see the person beginning to question how prosperous they were or how well they have done for themselves.
 - Men may go through a mid-life crisis; women may go through empty nest syndrome

Appendix 2

Psychosocial Theory

- Identity vs. Role Confusion Ages 12-18 (some argue up to 23 today)
 - Seeks to find a romantic partner due to reawakened Oedipal complex
 - Begin hypothetical thinking, thinking about what others think of them
 - Adolescent works to integrate everything they know about themselves to create an identity
 - When an adolescent cannot attain a sense of personal identity, they show role confusion, a sense of not knowing who they are or where they belong to.
 - Role confusion often seen with delinquent adolescents or promiscuous young girls
 - For some, having a negative self identity is better than having no identity at all
- Intimacy vs. Isolation Ages – late adolescence to young to early middle age
 - People will reach out to find an intimate relationship
 - Able to care about another without losing oneself in the process
 - Parent's have indirectly contributed to the individual's success or failure at the earlier stages.
- Generativity vs. Self-Absorption (Stagnation) Ages – middle age
 - Concerned with others beyond immediate family, with future generations, nature of society
 - Those who don't meet this need tend to fall into focus only on their personal needs and comforts
 - May see the person beginning to question how prosperous they were or how well they have done for themselves.
 - Men may go through a mid-life crisis; women may go through empty nest syndrome
- Integrity v Despair (~65 years and up)

Elaborating upon the Elaboration Likelihood Model: Revisited, Replicated, Re-Visioned

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Extended Abstract

This paper will theoretically critique and explain issues pertaining to the ELM since its development 30 years ago. Four major research areas surrounding the model will be discussed: the development and descriptive nature of the model, continuum questions, multi-channel processing and a sampling of the mediating variables affecting elaboration likelihood. In addition to some of its more formal critiques, the replication record will be examined as well as the process and possibility of replication now.

The ELM model was developed during the mass-media marketing communication days of the 1980s. Thus, it is likely that the media environment and the way consumers' process advertising exposures may well have changed, possibly dramatically (see Kitchen, 2010; 2013). Theories underpinning the marketing discipline have largely been left unexamined and, when tested, have a poor record of replication (Evanschitsky, 2007).

Recent studies have emphasized an online component whose inputs seem to affect persuasion. For instance, Hershberger (2003) expanded upon the ELM, developing an electronic ELM (eELM) in order to understand the process of turning advertising content into enhanced brand and advertisement attitudes. However, when aspects of the ELM's traditional study were replicated, Hershberger (2003) found that message involvement did not play a moderating role in the formation of attitudes in an online context. Thus, while facets of the ELM were widely supported in other aspects of this study (Hershberger, 2003), its applicability to current advertising environments was questioned (Karson and Korgaonkar, 2001). Even studies which replicate the ELM using different age groups have found that the model does not apply there either (Te'eni-Harari, et al., 2007).

Without showing the dynamic nature of the persuasion process, which is referred to in most ELM literature conducted after 1984, the very framework upon which the ELM is founded remains questionable. Thus, the need for replication of the model in its old or any new form is needed. Along with testing the model in its current form, future opportunities exist for researchers to determine when message processing shifts from predominantly central route processing to predominantly peripheral route processing. Understanding when these shifts occur will allow for a better understanding of the elaboration likelihood continuum itself, and the ELM as a whole.

This paper argues that the strong literature base, which both supports and institutionalizes the ELM, is the result of the model's inherent descriptive and accommodating nature and strong academic precedent and investment, rather than an artefact of its generalizability based on a strong replication record. The number of citations of any work is insufficient support for the wholehearted acceptance of any particular concept, approach or experiment and we recommend that some of the discipline's most cited works might prove a good base to begin (Kerr and Schultz, 2010). As a result, this paper encourages researchers to consider further elaboration of the ELM, and perhaps advocates to spring to its empirical defence and applicability in today's world.

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11

**CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

Philanthropy in Developing Countries: Context of Ghana

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Over the decades, defining corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been a challenging one, as there are several areas of focus depending on which dimension it is looked (Fill, 1999). However, the different perspectives on CSR agreed on the fact that decisions and actions of organisations have varied impacts on the lives of the citizens (Porter and Kramer, 2006). For this reason, companies have progressively included a social purpose in their corporate mission and their CSR practice.

This paper aims to analyse the contribution philanthropy offers to CSR and the approach to stakeholder engagement. The main objective is to explore philanthropic practices in domestic retail banks, and to investigate the prioritisation of philanthropy in communicating CSR in a Ghanaian context.

The study indicates that generally the socially oriented CSR practice of banks in Ghana mirror the cultural expectations of the community from the viewpoint that less privileged members of the community are supported. Thus, the otherwise discretionary social considerations cannot be taken for granted; underpins the way of doing business for business development purposes and provides the license to operate in society. However, there is recognition of disparity in the integration of philanthropy with core business to address sustainability.

The paper demonstrates the significance of philanthropy to Ghanaian banks as CSR strategy and the subsequent outcomes to the society.

Research Problem

Several studies carried out in the last decade show that companies understand the importance of building up relations with communities but for the majority, philanthropic initiatives are not strategic. Philanthropy seems to be implemented more on a “voluntary” basis, and deemed more as “the icing on the cake”, and the top of the pyramid (Carroll, 1991). Waddock (2001) on the other hand, argues that businesses are progressively moving toward engagement strategies focused upon processes of mutual responsibility, information-sharing, open and respectful dialogue and an ongoing commitment to problem solving.

Therefore, this paper highlights and explores the nature of philanthropic activities and how they are related to the bank’s core competencies, thus, leaving a gap between the banks CSR practice and the overall business strategy.

The analysis in this paper also gives some indications on the future developments of CCR actions and how such activities can be integrated in the overall communications and business strategy.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to primarily identify how the banks prioritise philanthropy to meet stakeholder’s perception and expectation, and how this ultimately translates in their communications. According to research, a gap between stakeholder perception of a company’s socially irresponsible behaviour and CSR communication may lead to negative effects for the company and its products (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Swaen and Vanhamme, 2003). The paper also considers the relationship between philanthropy and the overall business strategy.

Research Question

What role does philanthropy play in contributing to the strategic approach of CSR in Ghana’s domestic banks?

Research Methodology

This is a multiple case study approach using three units of analysis which are domestic banks in Ghana. The analyses of the cases are interpretive, based on multiple data sources including official publications, archived documentations and semi-structured interviews of top managers in each of the banks.

Findings/Results

This paper will use the five main priority sectors – education, health, sport, art and environment - of these banks in the period between 2008-2012 to position their philanthropic practice along a strategic framework.

To analyse the banks philanthropic actions, Carroll’s (1991) CSR framework will be useful to identify and distinguish the nature and impact of organisations philanthropy in CSR processes with society in the context of Ghana. This is based on their potential for creating shared value and social capital between company and society.

Research Outcomes/Implications

The study conducts the capacity of the banks to integrate their philanthropic practices in their CSR strategy in such a way that there is a clear and coordinated approach that evaluates both the opportunities and risks addressed by stakeholders, and the business operations.

Originality

This paper contributes to research into CSR by providing an insight to philanthropic practices of the domestic banks to bridge the gap between stakeholder's perception and the banks' business strategy and core operations.

Keywords

Philanthropy, developing countries, corporate social responsibility, banks

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Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility: A Corporate Identity Perspective

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Working Paper

Organisations are encouraged and nowadays expected to behave in ethical and socially responsible ways (Berrone et al., 2007) by, for example, competing fairly with competitors, acting responsibly toward the environment, treating employees fairly (David et al., 2005), and implementing appropriate codes of conduct (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001). Such pursuits may be due to the recent spate of corporate scandals, which have generated renewed attention to ethics in business and attracted the interest of researchers and the business press alike. Furthermore, the growing importance of government regulation, amplified scrutiny of off- and online media, and increased pressure from various stakeholders have placed business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the strategic agenda of virtually all firms (Berrone et al., 2007).

Accordingly, the importance of CSR has led to developments in CSR theories and related classifications schemes (Carroll, 1999; Wood, 1991) associated with the common belief that external organisational factors are the primary drivers behind CSR adoption. Although organisational practice plays a major role in interpreting and implementing CSR (Linnenluecke et al., 2009; Maon et al., 2010), research lacks clarity on how best to implement CSR (Bansal, 2005; Linnenluecke and Griffiths, 2010), and may place too little emphasis on the organisation itself (internal environment).

This study addresses these gaps by positioning CI management as a new mechanism for implementing CSR through its integration in internal and external dimensions of CI. CI is a strategic resource and a valuable tool for addressing the needs and demands of a firms' stakeholders (Van Riel,

1995), which include legitimate demands for product safety, workplace non-discrimination, business performance, and environmental interaction. Managers also have a moral obligation (and an enlightened self-interest) to direct firm activities to maintain an appropriate balance among stakeholder interests (Hay and Gray, 1974). Thus, the way firms manage their interactions with these domains contributes to the shaping of CI because their values, actions, and stance present a means of differentiation from other organisations (Berrone et al., 2007).

Thus, the objective of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship between CI and CSR, from the viewpoint of organisational managers in UK leading companies. Initially, this begins with a conceptual overview to define and establish CI and CSR dimensionality and the relationship between the two concepts. Then, an empirical phase deploys a qualitative approach, using semi-structured depth interviews with 25 individuals from fourteen leading companies in the UK, as well as with three public relations (PR) agency executives who work closely with these firms in related areas. The interviews target senior managers responsible for the CI mix (van Riel and Balmer 1997; Melewar and Karasomaoglu, 2006) and CSR management. The companies involved in the study come from a broad spectrum of industries including: one automotive, one bank, one broadcasting, five food & beverage, three food and drug, one healthcare, one IT, one telecommunications, one tobacco and three PR consultancies. The interview sample is chosen purposively and an interview schedule designed and applied to guide the interviews and gain insights about related research objectives. In data analysis, this study utilizes Nvivo8, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

The preliminary findings reveal the association of CSR with CI, manifest through one or more elements of the CI mix, including corporate, behaviour, culture, values, mission, founder, and communications. Drawing on a multidisciplinary, dynamic perspective, we aim to present a consolidative framework that interfuses several theoretical domains for understanding the relationship between CI and CSR. The framework highlights the role of three dimensions for adopting and implementing CSR, integrated under the overarching umbrella of CI. We articulate this framework through the theories of stakeholder, organisational culture, organisational identification, leadership, and corporate communication.

The findings of this study offer some important implications. On the theoretical level, it emphasises the relevance of adopting a multidisciplinary approach in examining the relationship between CI and CSR. CI is an overarching concept that derives insight and legitimacy from various domains of knowledge. Accordingly, grounding the analysis of CI and its relationship to other concepts (i.e., CSR) in one field provides a significant, though partial, view. The findings show that utilising the theoretical and managerial lenses of CI are useful for understanding its relationship to CSR, in developing complementary theories. Despite the considerable support found for each theory, a collective understanding derived from all these theories has not been explored so far in the same study.

On the managerial level, this study also provides a new mechanism for adopting CSR through CI management. In order for CSR to be more than mere rhetoric, CSR should be institutionalized and actively integrated into the daily routines of the organisation. This can be achieved by collectively aligning organisational thinking, behaviour, and corporate design in a homogeneous corporate culture (Balmer and Gray 2003; Balmer and Greyser, 2006), which enables the organisation to speak with one voice and create a unified impression of what the organisation stands for (Lauring and Thomsen, 2009). With the help of

mission statements, companies can also signal the quality of their products and legitimise their attempts to serve local communities through an ethically driven view of CSR (Atakan and Eker, 2007).

Top managers and founders can provide leadership by defining corporate values shared by other managers and employees within various departments of a company. Thus, management can create an environment in which employees identify with their [own] organisations and live the values through behaviour (Atakan and Eker, 2007). In addition, top management leadership should be open to external influence by managing organisational image (Hatch and Schulz, 1997). Using a mix of both internal and external elements of CI management, organisations can grow, develop culture, and shape identity, with CSR as an integral part that runs throughout the firm.

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Corporate Social Responsibility Understanding in Islamic Banking: The United Arab Emirates as an Example

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Extended Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a highly researched field for business and communications scholars. One area of investigation is CSR understanding in different sectors such as the banking or pharmaceutical sectors. The current research focuses on a sector analysis as well—banking, but looks at CSR in a less-investigated area: Islamic banking. Although researchers have begun to examine in depth the role of corporate social responsibility in international banks, less research has been done in either local banks or in the fast-growing finance sub-sector of Islamic banking. A second aspect of CSR with less research activity to date is its role in emerging economies. CSR is practiced in the Gulf Region and in the United Arab Emirates, but the few empirical studies conducted in the region show that the understanding of CSR and its application are varied. Moreover, CSR is understood and practiced more as philanthropy. In addition, its communication is affected by the Islam religion. This study examines the CSR practices of Islamic banks in the emerging economy of the United Arab Emirates through in-depth qualitative research.

First, the paper discusses CSR and understanding/practices of it within the context of the UAE, an Islamic country. Secondly, it introduces the concept of Islamic banking. The data collection is a qualitative approach: semi-structured interviews with high-level Islamic bank executives. The current study is limited to Islamic banks only and does not include international banks with an Islamic banking division. Out of 23 national banks, four of the nation's seven Islamic banks are included in the research. The study examines the scope of the executives' understanding of CSR, the extent to which they consider

the fundamental principles of Islamic banking to be congruent with principles of CSR, whether they consider communication of CSR activities to be important to their stakeholders, and their current thoughts on whether CSR is integral to the Islamic banking business models. The research will help develop further research paths as well as recommendations on next steps in research on CSR and Islamic banking at a larger scope.

Corporate Culture Management on Social Media

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Abstract

Radical changes caused by digital information communication technologies, globalization, increased education and social activism, diminishing returns on traditional media, more demanding stakeholders have created a new dynamic. In the new digital era, companies need different communication strategies. Monumental shifts in digital communication landscape today are transforming how and what companies communicate with their stakeholders. In this period all of the communication tools are used effectively but the new media appeared to be more important compare to others. Especially for the companies that would like to build effective relationships with their stakeholders so as to create competitive advantage, social media becomes an essential communication platform. Corporate culture is a process which should be managed through effective communication. In this digital age, corporate culture management on social media is an important thread for corporate communication managers.

Keywords

Corporate culture, social media, new media, communication, brand.

The Concept and Scope of Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is the most distinguishing element which separate companies from their rivals. The quality of governance and types of communication, corporate behaviour are all shaped in the framework of corporate culture. Corporate culture consists of spoken and unspoken rules, assumptions, values and way of thinking. These features define how managers and employees dress, feel and behave within the companies. Different definitions have been made for corporate culture which helps us to understand the symbolic fundamentals of an organization. Some are indicated as below:

The dominant values espoused by an organization (Deal and Kennedy 1982: 18).

- The philosophy that guides an organization's policy toward employees and customers (Pascale and Athos 1981: 10).
- The way things are done around here (Martin and Bartol1991:103).
- The collective programming of the mind (Hofstede 1980: 25).
- Corporate culture is the pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and expectations which shape the way people act and interact in an organization and underpin the way things get done (Armstrong 1990: 206).
- A set of symbols, ceremonies and myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of that organization to its employees (Ouchi 1981: 41).

Taking all these definitions into consideration, it is possible to define corporate culture shortly as "a common understanding and a belief system widely shared by an organization's members on which they act" (Akıncı 1997: 4). There are patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals and practices in every organization which in turn, create common understandings among its members as to what the organization is and how its members should behave. Corporate culture presents internal variables that are shared among its members, that give a feeling of identity and of being different that strengthen the organizational commitment of its members.

Corporate Culture Management

Former researches have shown that most successful companies have strong and positive cultures. Corporate culture is considered strong when its core values are intensely held, clearly ordered and widely shared. It is also considered positive when it contributes to effective performance and productivity. Such companies with strong and positive cultures have their own unique styles and usually publish their core values and missions as a statement and also encourage all the members to keep up with them (Kotter and Heskett 1992: 15). On the other hand, corporate culture is considered weak when its core values are not intensely held, clearly ordered and widely shared. It is also considered negative because of not contributing to effective performance and productivity. That is, existing culture doesn't serve on behalf of organizational goals and it is not managed consciously.

The characteristics of strong and positive cultures are defined as distinctive, stable, implicit, symbolic, integrated, and accepted and a reflection of top management (Newstrom and Davis 1993: 80). If companies pursue strong and positive cultures, then they need to manage it consciously and effectively from the date of foundation till then. The ultimate source of an organization's culture is its founders. They traditionally have a major impact in establishing the early culture since they have a vision of what the company should be. Actually corporate culture results from the interaction between the founders' biases, assumptions and what the original members learn subsequently from their own experiences. Apart

of founders, three other forces play a particularly important part in managing and sustaining strong and positive cultures- selection practices, the actions of top management and socialization methods. The original culture is derived from the founder's philosophy. This, in turn, strongly influences the criteria used in hiring. The actions of the current top management set the general climate of what is acceptable behavior and what is not. How employees are to be socialized will depend on the degree of success achieved in matching new employees' values to those of the organization in the selection process and top management's preference for socialization methods.

The Concept of Social Media

New communication technologies have been changing our lives significantly. Almost a decade ago, no one has ever imagined a globe where interactive communication would take place via wireless devices enabling us being in touch with friends without time and space restrictions, managing business without offices, doing all financial transactions virtually, sending substantial amount of information from one point to another within seconds, reading virtual books and news and even commending on these news or participating on air programs on TVs and radios.

Due to major shifts and changes in information communication technologies, it is possible to observe various contents on web based applications. Emergence of Internet has been facilitating the lives of human beings and changing the ways things are done. Actually Internet as a highly preferred medium has the characteristics of connecting many computer networks, allowing getting fast, easy, secured and cheap information, allowing the storage, sharing and disseminating of any kind of information including voice, photographs, graphics and so forth (Geçikli 2008: 118). Internet applications have gone through a major transition from web 1.0 to web 2.0. Transition from web 1.0 to web 2.0 has developed communication substantially and as a result of web 2.0 mass communication has evolved from one way to two way interactive process which caused new discussion and information exchange environments to emerge as the receivers of messages are able to involve in instant communication through online newspapers and social media tools without any time and space restrictions. Actually this new media is shaped with digital coding and simultaneous, intensive capacity and high-speed interaction communication tools and differs from traditional media (such as newspaper, broadcast and cinema) with the above mentioned attributes (Dijk 2004: 146; cited in Binark 2007: 5). Web 2.0 applications have different qualifications from the web 1.0 based applications. Web 2.0 technologies have caused three effects. These can be categorized as a shift in locus of activity from the desktop to the Web, a shift in locus of value production from the firm to the consumer, and a shift in the locus of power away from the firm to the consumer. Indeed, Web 2.0 can be thought of as a series of technological innovations in terms of both hardware and software that facilitate inexpensive content creation, interaction, and interoperability (Berthon et al. 2012).

Social media is attributed as the product of Internet-based applications that build on the technological foundations of Web 2.0. And also this Web 2.0 transforms broadcast media messages from one to many to the social media messages which is many to many (Berthon et al. 2012). This can be accepted the most important feature of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is described as social media applications like facebook, twitter, flicker, blogs, wiki, social networks. The new media which is described as digital media provides a mechanism for the audience to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites (Correa, Hinsley, and Zúñiga 2010). We are indeed in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made

of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive (Castells 2007).

Social media is a concept which facilitates the share of information, opinions and thoughts among users and it conveys the online tools which create bilateral interaction (Sayimer 2008: 123). Wikipedia (source), MySpace (social network), Gather.com (social network), YouTube (video sharing), Second Life (virtual reality), Digg (news sharing), Flickr (photograph sharing) and Miniclip (game sharing) are some of the leading social media applications (Malita 2011). With these new applications users now have the chance to share their experiences, their thoughts about events and people as well as their daily encounters of any kind that they find interesting and produce contents that are worthy to share. 7/24 accessibility of these applications via internet, their wide utilization either on computers, PDAs, tablets, smart mobile phones make social media much more attractive especially for youngsters who accept social media as an indispensable part of their lives.

Why Do Companies Prefer Social Media?

Social media is defined as a communication process where individuals identify and differentiate themselves on the internet, experience different cultures and communicate with each other effectively and also use these networks in order to cover their socialization in a virtual environment (Bat and Vural 2013: 191-192). Nowadays, social media is referred as a strategic tool for companies as to understand and to be understood effectively by their stakeholders. Actually the more companies use social media strategically the more they have the chance to create competitive differentiating advantage in rigorous competitive markets.

Social media is accepted as the most recent communication channel which spread messages faster and at a low-cost and also supports the field of corporate communication such as crisis management, event management, creating public awareness and co-operation with stakeholders (Onat 2010). Mobile technologies and social media serve the most practical ways to communicate with the stakeholders and the whole society. They allow companies to get directly communication on time and at a lower cost at the point of the end consumers (Kaplan and Haenlein 2009). Companies and customers can share their opinions, thoughts and expectations about products and services and customers also have the chance to make suggestions or even complaints. Thereby information obtained from this environment influence and shape competitive strategies of the companies (Mayda and Aytekin 2013).

In traditional media the time and content of messages depends on the company whereas in social media the time and content production depends on the mutuality and interaction. On this platform, new and different stakeholders, target audiences emerged who can effect and be affected by the company's activities (Göztaş and Topsümer 2012: 456). Thereby, taking into consideration these stakeholders in the digital era, new and different communication strategies are required for companies. According to Harvard Business Report, companies started new communication techniques among customers against traditional marketing and brand management by the emergence of internet based social media (The Harvard Business Review 2010: 12).

Social media seems to be preferred more than the traditional media due to its advantages such as worldwide connectivity, commonality of interest, real time information sharing, free advertising and increased news cycle speed. The term of social media is meant to get relationship and communication or share content on social networks such as Facebook or MySpace, and also it consists of sharing activities on

blogs (Kirtiş and Karahan 2011). Companies accepting social media as a significant and effective medium apart of traditional media frequently prefer these networks in their corporate communication campaigns. Although marketing activities occupy the foremost place in social media, it is possible to observe the intense interest in almost every activity such as corporate social responsibility, stakeholder communication, corporate advertising, corporate news and stories. Furthermore, traditional media usually follows up social media networks and applications such as blogs, news and forum groups, video and photographs sharing platforms (Uzunoğlu et al. 2009: 131). When individuals face of a new idea, product or service in traditional media, they are more likely to communicate through social media and word of mouth (Mangold and Faulds 2009). According to the findings of an empirical research, only 14% of Internet users rely on traditional advertising while 78% of Internet users think that the mentions and 'likes' of users are much more reliable (Davey 2010; cited in Kara 2012).

Ultimately, companies prefer social media 'to engage in important conversations' and to enhance understanding of markets, customers, competitors, and employees. It is the era of a new kind of conversation among consumers and companies, challenging traditional ideas about marketing and brand management while creating new opportunities for companies to understand customers and connect with them instantly. Social media is seen as a cost effective way to receive greater reach for research and timely targeted dialogue (DiStaso, McCorkindale, and Wright 2011). Companies create their own social networks to protect corporate interests. They design their own corporate social media networks to initiate a relationship and communication period with their publics (Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin; 2015).

"The implementation of new media based corporate communication faces two primary challenges. The first is that communication utilizing new media requires several different disciplinary skill sets. For instance, corporate communication departments usually handle all facets of a communication campaign, which use traditional media. New media campaigns, however, frequently require the amalgamation of different disciplines (for example, creative producers, software designers, technical systems engineers). The second is that new media changes frequently. This happens both in terms of their content and message and in their technology platforms. Content in many applications is not controlled by corporate communication departments, instead it is somewhat self-organizing" (Hearn, Foth, and Gray 2009). The content, timing, and frequency of the social media-based conversations occurring among consumers are out of managers' direct control. This stands in contrast to the traditional integrated marketing communications paradigm whereby a high degree of control is present. Therefore, managers must learn to shape consumer discussions in a manner that is consistent with the organization's mission, vision, and strategy and performance goals.

Corporate Culture Management on Social Media

This new web based media can be used for organizations and their employees, suppliers, customers and stakeholders to participate on management of corporate culture content (Hearn, Foth, and Gray 2009). Especially companies seeking a strong corporate identity in the short run and a strong reputation halo in the long run need to manage their corporate cultures on social media.

The global intense interest of millions of people in social networks such as Facebook and Twitter caused companies to generate and implement new strategies in corporate culture management processes especially on social media (Güçdemir 2012: 142). Corporate culture is a phenomenon that is shaped by various variables. The effective management of corporate culture has an unreserved acceptance as a strategic tool in achieving organizational goals (Tuna and Tuna 2007: 38).

The reflections of intangible assets of the companies on social media such as core values, philosophy, principles, mission and vision, news and stories about brands have a strong impact on culture management which in turn lead to positive perception of target audiences. (Mengü 2013: 222). In this perspective, it is significant to manage the values, philosophy, and employees' behavior and so on which are elements of corporate culture (Flamholtz 2001).

Throughout corporate communication processes, public relations practitioners should be on tight track of social media in order to learn the opinions of stakeholders about the company and then revise and plan their communication strategies accordingly (Taş and Kestellioğlu 2011). Actually digital communication and social networks are preferential for most of the companies in communicating their cultures to both internal and external stakeholders. The most important and differentiating factor in organizational success is to take an active part on social media through corporate culture management (Büyüksener 2009).

The components of corporate culture can be managed on social media. Reflections of corporate culture on social media or topics that provide information are classified as followings:

- History
- Founders
- Leaders and Heroes
- Company Messages
- Mission
- Vision
- Core Values Statement
- Human Resources Policy
- Stories and Myths
- Information about in- house events
- Information about events for external audiences
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Corporate Advertising.
- Logo/emblem (History, meaning)
- Slogan
- Stakeholder Communication

Having a successful corporate culture management on social media and having started the business with two cafes in Seattle, the USA and then reached approximately over 2.500 shops all around the world, Starbucks Coffee serves as an example. The attitudes of company towards its employees, in turn, affect their attitudes towards customers and as a result, it reflects the financial performance (Uzunoğlu et al. 2009: 27). Companies' social media preferences, active coverage rates and styles vary. For instance, Coca-Cola is one of the brands which use social media in the most effective way. Considering April 2012 rates, it has 41 million faces in Facebook and 529.000 followers in Twitter. Through producing different campaigns for its various stakeholders, it aims to provide an effective and progressive communication process. Coca-Cola has determined its social media strategies as the launch of a new product, development of communication with the target audiences, strengthening, maintenance of already-existing communication and development of loyalty on the brand (Güçdemir 2012: 143-146).

Another active company seen on social media platform very often, Mavi Jeans is also in contact with its approximately 500.000 Facebook faces. Along with innovations in organizational context, it shares the information on products and company activities with its stakeholders. In particular it utilizes Facebook as a publicity and advertisement channel. It has been engaged in connecting its followers to be in touch with the brand all the time and creating a brand loyalty (Güçdemir 2012: 152).

Even though social media is not regarded only as a product lansman channel but also as a channel selling experience, reputation and safety, the social media purposes and strategies of companies differ in organizational context. For instance, the overseas blog of Dell Company shares its organizational values through the message of “regarding your brand, embracing the world is the point. I don’t only sell computers. I make people’s lives easier via technology.” On social media, corporate culture components are managed differently. Another example is that Starbucks gets its own employees’ opinions under the title of *My Starbucks Idea* in social media platform and assesses those during the process of corporate culture management. Also McDonald’s brings together its content producers through their videos and visual sharings by creating a franchising communication network on social media. IBM has 280.000 users in Beehive social network and with this way it may be claimed that it has succeeded to create a digital lawyers from its employees (Mengü 2013: 226-230).

One of the prominent digital agents in Turkey, 41? 29! held an symposium in which its own employees would be a speech giver. During the whole day, ‘What’s Next in Digital’ subject was discussed in social media event where different topic and subjects of digital world were tweeted by 41? 29! staff and afterwards, it was turned into an organizational broadcasting (As of January 12, 2015, Sosyal Medya Etkinlikleri, <http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/etkinlikler/sosyal-medya-etkinlikleri/>). Another example comes from KIA. It draws attention with a different social media project: Through the catchphrase “Sportage is kidnapped! We kindly ask you that if you have seen or found it, for the sake of humanity please enter www.sportagekacirildi.com, fill in a form and raffle!”, the brand invites its followers to follow the clues and to answer questions in microsite prepared for Sportage in order to find the automobile. The project is also supported by all social media channels in Turkey. (As of January 12, 2015, Kia Sosyal Medya Projesi Spotage Kaçırıldı, <http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/kia-sosyal-medya-projesi-sportage-kacirildi/>).

Another effective user of social media, Turkish Airlines shares its organizational values and news with its stakeholders in the process of corporate culture management through Facebook. Recently, it has performed recruitment processes as well as the activities for its own employees on this platform. With the title of “A career opportunity is waiting for you above the clouds! For the best one in Europe, are you up working together? We are waiting for our new female friends to serve as a cabin attendant!” it accepts the applications made for the corporation. With the message of “We all thank our passengers who deem us worthy to be the champion in the the field of “The Best Catering” just as the last year’s APEX Passenger Choice Awards which is held every year.”, the corporation’s aim of effective and progressive communication attempt with its stakeholders by announcing its organizational successes (As of January 12, 2015, Türk Hava Yolları, <https://www.facebook.com/turkishairlinesTR>).

Garanti Bank is also listed among the most effective users of social media especially through corporate communication process. Through the titles such as “Our new commercial ‘It Is All Yours’ is on broadcast for you for the first time! Under the sponsorship of Garanti Bank, Kite Academy Freestyle Team keeps contesting until 21st September in Kiteboard Turkish Open 2014! The team of miracles,

#12DevAdam_did it again. Our national team players are quarter-finalists after defeating Australia 65-64!” it shares organizational news and also cultural values (As of January 12, 2015, Garanti Bankası, <https://www.facebook.com/Garanti>).

Corporate Culture Management on Social Media: A Content Analysis of Top 5 Brands

Research Subject

It is composed of exploring how companies manage their cultural values and components on social media applications.

Research Purpose

It aims to explore companies' posts related to their corporate cultures, how they manage their cultural values and components on social media and to make a contribution to area of corporate culture management on social media.

Research Method

A content analysis has been conducted with main reference to the process of culture management on social media. This research is based on the report results of Socialbakers regarding the social media usage in various countries. Because of the fact that Facebook is the most commonly used and preferred social media application in Turkey, Facebook report by Socialbakers has been taken into consideration while determining the companies within the scope of research. In addition to Facebook pages of the companies, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram applications have also been examined. Due to the lack of a scale used before in analyzing corporate culture on social media, a research form has been prepared depending on the established methods used in web site analysis. There is no time or period limitation while conducting the analysis on Facebook and Instagram, all related posts from the first day till January 2015 have been analyzed. On the other hand, there is a period limitation for Twitter; all related tweets in the closing year have been analyzed. Considering that Twitter has the characteristics of instant messaging, continuity and variability, particularly the tweets between January 2014 and January 2015 have been examined. As for YouTube, only videos shared by the official pages of companies are included.

Research Sample

According to January 2015 report by Socialbakers, the top 5 brands in Turkey being the most commonly followed companies on Facebook are the samples of this research. These companies are Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve. Accordingly how these companies manage their cultural values and components on social media have been analyzed.

Research Findings

Different research forms have been developed and prepared depending on the nature and features of social media. It has been observed that companies manage their cultural values and components more frequently on Facebook. While companies have almost the same frequency on Twitter and YouTube usage, Volkswagen Türkiye even has no official Twitter account. It is clear that companies use social media platforms variously while managing their cultural values and components.

Facebook Analysis

Within the scope of corporate culture management on social media, Facebook pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have been analyzed. It has been observed that all of companies have got an official Facebook account (see Table 1).

Information about corporate history, philosophy, mission/aim, vision/objective, and core values have not taken place on official pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve.

Regarding corporate human resources policy, posts about internship and job application are available on pages of Turkcell and Sefamerve. However, such posts are not available on pages of Bukombin.com, Avea and Volkswagen Türkiye.

There is no information or posts about corporate training and career development on the pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve. On that of Turkcell, information and posts about training and career development such as “Turkcell Akademi (Turkcell Academy)” and “Geleceği Yazanlar (Those Writing the Future)” are available. Also on page of Avea, under title of corporate training and career development, posts about projects such as “Kırmızı Kuşak (Red Generation)” and “Kişisel Gelişim Yolculuğu (Personal Development Journey)” have been shared. Besides, an announcement of free ticket for public exhibition named “İnsanın Yaşam Döngüsü (Life Cycle of Human Being)” has been made.

In terms of public training, none of the companies have shared anything on their Facebook pages.

Regarding information about corporate social responsibility (CSR) on Facebook pages, it has been observed that while Bukombin.com has no posts on this issue Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have shared information and posts about social responsibility projects. Avea has presented some information about CSR projects and has made announcements. Some companies have shared multiple posts about their running projects: Turkcell with “Ekonomiye Kadın Gücü (Woman Power for Economy)” and “Engel Tanımayanlar (Those Stopping At Nothing), Sefamerve with “Karınca Yuvası Yetimlere Yardım (Ant Nest –Donating to Orphans)” and Volkswagen Türkiye with “Trafik Hayattır (Traffic is Life)”.

While Volkswagen Türkiye has shared some videos and images about ecological production of cars and eco-friendly fuel on its page, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have no posts about their environmental policy. Also, Turkcell and Avea have emphasized that they are eco-friendly companies by applying eco-bill/e-bill.

Regarding the message of corporate spokesman/leader and information about corporate characters, none of five brands have shared anything on their pages.

Regarding information about corporate events, it has been observed that Sefamerve, Volkswagen Türkiye, Avea and Turkcell have shared posts and videos while there is no post on the page of Bukombin.com.

While none of the companies have shared information about investment profile on their pages, only Avea and Turkcell have shared posts about their investor relations and partnerships.

While none of the companies have shared information about corporate fabric infrastructure, only Volkswagen Türkiye has shared some images of their production department.

Regarding corporate magazine, newspaper or journals, Avea has shared its “Avea Mobil Dergi (Avea Mobile Magazine)” on its Facebook page, so does Sefaverme with “Say”, its corporate magazine. Any information about magazines has not been available on those of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell and Bukombin.com.

Regarding customer-oriented magazine, newspaper and journals, all the researched companies have shared posts. It has been revealed that Sefamerve sends their corporate magazine (Say) to their customers for free. Avea, Turkcell, Volkswagen Türkiye and Bukombin.com have also shared posts about their customer-oriented events and special offers.

While none of the Facebook pages examined have shared posts about corporate reports, all the Facebook pages except Bukombin.com have shared posts about corporate awards.

Regarding former employees and employee opinions, corporations have not shared any information on their Facebook pages.

Regarding product/service information, product images and sponsorships, all companies have shared posts in the form of either videos or images.

Corporate ads have been the center of interest to all companies, and additionally, corporate visual identity such as logo, slogan and color can be found on all pages.

Posts about corporate events, press relations/press room (journals, news etc.), sponsorships and corporate news have taken place on all pages. Even though corporate logo/emblems have been used on all pages; none of the companies have shared their corporate identity brochures.

Story of corporate logos is not available on the Facebook accounts of companies. Companies have preferred to transfer their visual identity in terms of logo. Main slogan of each company has been used on all pages and corporate videos.

A special section for contact information has been reserved on all pages including official web sites. On the page of Turkcell, in addition to corporate web site, there has been a form and a section named Turkcell Customer Services.

Other social media links and web site links have taken place on all the pages.

Twitter Analysis

Within the scope of corporate culture management on social media, Twitter pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have been analyzed. All companies except Volkswagen Türkiye have got an official Twitter account. Hence, Twitter analysis has been made only on these four companies (See Table 1).

Information about corporate history, philosophy, mission/aim, vision/objective, and core values have not been found on official pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve.

Regarding corporate human resources policy, it has been observed that Turkcell has made announcements about internship on its page while Sefamerve has made announcements about its job adverts. However, Bukombin.com and Avea have got no tweets about this subject on their pages.

In terms of corporate training and career development, Turkcell has made announcements about projects such as “Turkcell Akademi (Turkcell Academy)” and “Geleceği Yazanlar (Those Writing the Future)”, and Avea has made announcements about “Avea NBA Kampı (Avea NBA Camp)” while Sefamerve and Bukombin.com haven’t got anything.

There have not been any tweets about public training and environmental policy on the pages of Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve.

Considering corporate social responsibility policy, while Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have got some tweets on their pages, Bukombin.com have got none.

Tweets about message of corporate spokesman/leader cannot be found on Bukombin.com’s page while on those of Sefamerve, Turkcell and Avea, interviews of corporate spokesman and senior managers can be found.

Turkcell, Avea and Bukombin.com have not included information about corporate heroes. However, corporate interviews related to founder/heroes have taken place on Twitter page of Sefamerve.

While information about corporate events has been existed on those of Avea, Turkcell and Sefamerve, Bukombin.com has got no tweets about corporate events.

Considering corporate investment profile, it has been observed that Turkcell has shared information about its investments and has got some tweets including what they do in order to strengthen their technology. Other companies have not got any tweets on this issue.

Tweets about investor relations have not been encountered on Avea’s and Bukombin.com’s pages. Yet, Turkcell and Sefamerve have shared news of partnership on their own Twitter pages.

None of corporations have got tweets about corporate fabric infrastructure.

Considering corporate magazine, newspaper or journals, Sefamerve has shared information about “Say” and “Aysha”, their corporate magazines. Avea has got some tweets about “Mobil Dergi (Mobile Magazine)”. On the other hand, Turkcell and Bukombin.com have not shared any information on this subject.

Considering customer-oriented magazine, newspaper and journals, corporate reports, information about former employees and employee opinions, none of companies have shared anything on their own Twitter pages.

While Sefamerve and Turkcell have got tweets about corporate awards, Bukombin.com and Avea have got none.

All corporations have got tweets related to product/service information and product images. Bukombin.com has only provided links to its web site for product images.

Considering corporate sponsorships and corporate ads, while Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have got tweets Bukombin.com has got none.

Of all companies, only Turkcell and Avea have got some imaginative and informative tweets about product and service ads.

Except Bukombin.com, all corporations have got information about press relations/press room (journals, news etc.) on their Twitter pages.

Some images related to corporate logo/emblem have taken place on the pages of Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve. None of these companies have got tweets about the stories of their own corporate logos and their corporate identity brochures.

Considering the transfer of corporate visual identity, all four companies have used their own logos and corporate colors especially on their commercial posters, ads and announcements. Main slogan of each company has taken place on Twitter accounts of Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve. Likewise, all Twitter pages mentioned have contact information, other social media links and web site links.

YouTube Analysis

Within the scope of corporate culture management on social media, YouTube pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have been analyzed. All companies have got an official YouTube account except Bukombin.com (See Table 2)

When the videos of these companies are examined within the scope of corporate culture, it has been observed that Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have shared their corporate movies, corporate news, events and corporate ads. Volkswagen Türkiye has shared corporate news, events and corporate ads but not its corporate movie. Of all companies, Turkcell is the single company that has shared video about its founder.

Instagram Analysis

Within the scope of corporate culture management on social media, Instagram pages of Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have been analyzed. All companies have got an official Instagram account (See Table 3).

When the photos of these companies are examined within the scope of corporate culture, it has been observed that photos of external corporate building, design etc. have been shared only by Turkcell and Volkswagen Türkiye, photos of internal corporate building only by Turkcell and Avea, corporate ad posters and ad-like images only by Turkcell, Avea and Bukombin.com. While photos of corporate events have been shared by all companies, photos of company employees have not been shared only by Bukombin.com. Additionally, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have not shared photos of corporate managers while others have shared. Turkcell, Avea and Sefamerve have posted some photos of corporate awards. On Instagram, Turkcell and Avea are those that seem to be sharing maximum information about their corporate cultures.

Conclusion

Due to changes in information communication technologies the communication process has changed profoundly. The communication structure ranges both in organizational and interpersonal settings alongwith preferred channels. Due to internet based web 2.0 applications one way communication has left place to two way communication. Social media being used frequently especially by most of the stakeholders has been accepted as the most important and preferential channel in organizational activities.

Particularly the management of corporate culture - being an indispensable asset and the core of organizational sustainability – has gained importance on a totally new and distinct channel - social media. Corporate culture is a communication process that requires strategic management. Thus, it needs to be

managed effectively on social media. As part of corporate culture management on social media, companies try to communicate and share their core values, philosophy, mission, vision and their corporate communication activities.

Corporate culture management on social media should be handled from two different viewpoints – being internal and external communication. Whilst all corporate social media and intranet applications used merely by employees facilitate the adoption and management of corporate culture; official web sites, social media accounts accessible to almost all stakeholders and career sites intended for potential employees enable the communication of cultural values and create a strong corporate image.

Regarding the companies researched in the content analysis, Volkswagen Türkiye, Turkcell, Avea, Bukombin.com and Sefamerve have their own official Facebook and Instagram accounts. Of all companies, only Volkswagen Türkiye lacks an official Twitter account while Bukombin.com lacks an official Youtube account.

Taking into consideration the Facebook accounts of the researched companies, it is observed that none of the companies have got information about history, philosophy, mission, vision, core values, public trainings, heroes/leaders, investment profile, corporate reports, former employees, existing employees' opinions, corporate logo story and identity brochure. On the other hand, it is observed that all the researched companies have got information about product/service, corporate social responsibility policy, corporate events, corporate reports such as newspapers, magazines and e-bulletins, corporate awards, sponsorships, product images, product/service advertisements, corporate advertisements, press relations/room, corporate logo/emblem, corporate visual identity, slogan, contact adress and all other related company social media links.

Taking into consideration the Twitter accounts of the researched companies, it is observed that none of the companies have got information about history, philosophy, mission, vision, core values, public trainings, enviromental policy, heroes/leaders, investment profile, corporate reports such newspapers, magazines and e-bulletins, former employees, existing employees' opinions, corporate logo story and identity brochure. Regarding the Twitter accounts of Turkcell, Avea ve Sefamerve, it is observed that *Turkcell* has got information about its human resources policy, corporate trainings and career development, social responsibility policy, corporate spokesman/leader's message, corporate events, investment profile, investor relationships, corporate awards, product/service, product images, sponsorships, product/service advertisements, corporate advertisements, press relations/room, corporate logo/emblem, corporate visual identity, slogan, contact adress and all other related company social media links while *Avea* has got information about corporate trainings and career development, social responsibility policy, corporate events, investor relationships, corporate reports such as newspapers, magazines and e-bulletins, corporate awards, product/service, product images, sponsorships, press relations/room, corporate logo/emblem, corporate visual identity, slogan, contact adress, and all other related company social media links. The twitter account of Sefamerve has got information about human resources policy, coprorate spokesman/leader's message, heros/leaders, corporate events, corporate reports such as newspapers, magazines and e-bulletins, product/service, product images, sponsorships, corporate advertisements, product/service advertisements, press relations/room, corporate logo/emblem, corporate visual identity, slogan, contact adress, and all other related company social media links. Bukombin.com seems to be the weakest runner in Twitter usage since it only has got information about product/service, corporate visual design, slogan, contact adress and all other related company social media links.

Companies like Turkcell, Avea ve Sefamerve seem to be managing their cultures on their Twitter accounts in a more effective manner.

Taking into consideration the Instagram and YouTube accounts of the researched companies, even though they all have got an Instagram account, only Bukombin.com hasn't got an official YouTube account. The companies having an account on Instagram and YouTube mostly share information about their cultural values through various photographs, images or videos. Turkcell seems to be the strongest runner in YouTube usage since it has shared its all about its corporate culture such as corporate movie, corporate news/events and founder video. Turkcell and Avea seem to be the strongest runner in Instagram usage since they have shared their all about their corporate cultures such as photos of external corporate building, photos of internal corporate building, photos of corporate events, corporate ad posters and ad-like images, photos of company employees, photos of corporate awards, photos of corporate managers.

The usage of social media is sunrise industry in organizational settings since it is an important and preferential channel to reach target audiences. Depending on findings of this research, it is possible to put forth the below suggestions into the consideration of managers:

- Information about the core components of corporate culture such as core values, corporate mission/vision, history, heroes/leaders should be covered and intensified on social media.
- The clear declaration of corporate human resources and environmental policy should be handled as an important issue in corporate culture management.
- Keep in mind that the share of corporate advertisement and related publicity videos on social media is an important source of information for the ones who follow these accounts.
- To share information about former employees, existing employees' opinions might be worthwhile in communicating and intensifying cultural values.
- The use of corporate visual design such as exterior and interior spaces and the photographs of managers and employees on social media should be considered important in reinforcing the perception of followers.
- Depending on the nature of social media, it is important to share tweets, texts, videos or photographs/pictures on a daily basis in order to keep the dialogue with the followers.
- It is important to design all social media accounts with main reference to culture management and to use these accounts in an effective manner.
- It is also important to develop a social media policy depending on the overall corporate communication strategy and to make cultural management a part of it.

In an era where a digital generation is moving up, social media will be much more preferential and outstanding channel for most of the stakeholders and target audiences. Consequently, just as in the case of corporate communication activities, the effective use of social media in cultural management seems to be inevitable for the companies that would like to create and maintain relationships with their stakeholders.

Acknowledgement:

This research was conducted at Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity, Ege University, Izmir, Turkey. All authors declare that there is no conflict of interest or financial support

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Tables

Table 1. Facebook and Twitter Analysis

Facebook (F) and Twitter (T) Analysis	Volkswagen Türkiye		Turkcell		Avea		Bukombin. Com		Sefamerve	
	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T
Corporate History	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Philosophy	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Mission / Aim	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Vision / Objective	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Basic Values	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Human Resources Policy	-		+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
Corporate Training and Career Development	-		+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Public Training	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Social Responsibility Policy	+		+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
Environmental Policy	+		+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Message of Corporate Spokesman/Leader	-		-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
Corporate Heroes	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Corporate Events	+		+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
Corporate Investment Profile	-		-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investor Relations	-		+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
Corporate Fabric Infrastructure	+		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Magazine, Newspaper or Journals	-		-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+
Customer-oriented Magazine, Newspaper and Journals, and Information about them	+		+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Corporate Reports	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Awards	+		+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
Information about Former Employees	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee Opinions	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Product/Service Information	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Product Images	+		+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Corporate Sponsorships	+		+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Corporate Ads	+		+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Product and Service Ads	+		+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Press Relations/Press Room (Journals, News etc.)	+		+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Corporate Logo/Emblem	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Story of Corporate Logo	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Identity Brochure	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer of Corporate Visual Identity	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Main Slogan	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Contact Information	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Other Social Media Links and Web Site Link	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

No official Twitter account.

Table 2. YouTube Analysis

YouTube Analysis	Volkswagen Türkiye	Turkcell	Avea	Bukombin. com	Sefamerve
Corporate Movie	-	+	+	No official YouTube account	+
Corporate News	+	+	+		+
Founder Video	-	+	-		-
Corporate Events	+	+	+		+
Corporate Ads	+	+	+		+

Table 3. Instagram Analysis

Instagram Analysis	Volkswagen Türkiye	Turkcell	Avea	Bukombin. Com	Sefamerve
Photos of External Corporate Building, Design etc.	+	+	-	-	-
Photos of Internal Corporate Building	-	+	+	-	-
Photos of Corporate Events	+	+	+	+	+
Corporate Ad Posters and ad-like images.	-	+	+	+	-
Photos of Company Employees	+	+	+	-	+
Photos of Corporate Awards	-	+	+	-	+
Photos of Corporate Managers	+	+	+	-	-

12

**MARKETING
MANAGEMENT**

The Effects of Audience's Perceived Sensory Experience on Satisfaction and the Intention to Visit or Revisit: A Case Study of X-Plorasi Travelogue Programme in Malaysia

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the effects of audience's perceived sensory experience in the travelogues and its relation to audience's satisfaction, intention to visit or revisit the featured destinations using *Experiential Marketing Theory*. An online survey was conducted involving 216 audiences who had watched X-Plorasi travelogue program. The results indicated moderate-high level of satisfaction and the intent to visit or revisit the featured destinations. To increase audience satisfaction towards the programme, intention to visit or revisit the featured destinations, emphasis should be made towards engaging the audience's sense of sight and feel. By capitalizing on interesting visual and generating experience through reaching the emotions of the audience, higher sense of *satisfaction*, better *intention to visit* and *revisit* would be generated.

Keywords

Television, travelogues, travel programme, documentary, tourism, Experiential Marketing Theory

Introduction

Despite being more than a century old, the concept of travelogue hasn't been a popular subject for studies. Established in the late 19th century by John Lawson Stoddard (History Camera, n.d.), the concept evolved from travel lectures to documentaries at cinemas and later to television as the latter medium became popular. According to Hanefors and Mossberg (2002), television travel shows became popular during the final 20 years of the 20th century. Terms such as 'tv travel show', 'travelogue', 'travel magazine' and 'travel documentary' were used to describe and discuss television programmes that were designed to disseminate information, promote tourism and suggest vacation destinations, in the form of factual and informative entertainment.

The term travelogue is now accepted as a reference to programmes of travel nature and features depiction of destinations in the form of random or designated locations, whether in form of actual physical travel or journeying from one location to another in a designated route. Some programmes are more specific in intention, for example travel for specific subjects like culture, forests, beaches, entertainment or even cuisine. Audience are treated to a presentation of a usually "*unique experience*", even to the point of glamourizing or fantasizing the locale. Rao (2013) described travelogue as an exposition of travel experience which can be classified as fantasy described or given as fact: literature or depiction of recorded fact; or literature of recorded impressions and feeling during travel. In the context of television, Ranker (2013) further explained that the best travel shows inspire audience to venture out into the unknown, and allow people the opportunity to enjoy exploring some of the most interesting locations in the world without having to leave the home.

Travelogue programmes on television are either presented on its own in the form of documentaries or as a short capsule in a magazine or daily talk show programme. They are produced in either observational or presenter-led style, where the former looks at how people live their everyday lives as if from an objective viewpoint and the latter, which is more popular, features a presenter who is designed as a guide and friend. The advance of filming technologies allowed travelogues more facility to produce with the use of modern digital cameras of broadcast-quality and are therefore easier to access locations with less hassle than conventional television cameras.

Limited studies on movies or television and its role in promoting tourism have been conducted to look at the impact on various destinations in the world. Wang and Lin (2010) conducted a survey on the impact of Taiwan drama "Black and White" and found that tourists gained better information on the city of Kaoshong, the destination featured in the drama. Kim, Agrusa, Lee and Chon (2007), studied on the impact of Korean television dramas on the flow of tourists and found that the prominence of locations in Korea via dramas like 'Winter Sonata', 'Secret Garden' and 'Tamra' contributed to the increase of international tourists from 5 million (2002) to 11.1 million (2012), according to official records (Korea Tourism Organization, n.d.). Statistics also implied the influx of visitors to New Zealand, from 1,693,924 (2000) to 2,501,264 (2010) when the country was featured as the background to the successful movie franchise 'The Lord of The Rings' (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). Similarly, in mid 60s, The Sound of Music, dubbed the world's most popular movie musical, prompted fan to visit Salzburg, the location of the movie. A survey conducted in 2002 stipulated that 300,000 visitors went on a special Sound of Music tour to enjoy the experience of the movie (Salzburg Museum, n.d.).

Television or film is known as a potential medium to create what is known as '*Experiential Marketing*' or '*sensory marketing*'. The power of good storytelling, combined with good direction and

digital cosmetics, provided psychological associations and sentiments in the minds of audience to become iconic attractions and induce the intention to travel. However, the effectiveness of the medium in inducing intention to visit the featured destination, have yet to confirmed.

A study by Wang and Lin (2010) provided empirical evidences that the Experiential Marketing effect “actually enhances the audiences’ overall experiential value and satisfaction” (Wang & Lin, 2010, p. 120). Realistically, travelogues are costly to produce, even though with the support of sponsors and advertisers, and added with the hustles of production work, but the end result is nonetheless an interesting visual and informative entertainment for the consumers. Although not as high-rated as news, dramas or musicals, the impact it has on local industry, especially for tourism, hospitality and food & beverage industries are unknown. The questions that arose would enquire whether the audience actually enjoy the experience provided by the programme, and would they be willing to travel. Would the number of audience watching the programme transfer to numbers taking vacations to visit the various locations or for some, would it mean repeat visits? These are some points which provided reasons to explore the issues.

Audience's Sensory Experience from the Perspective of Experiential Marketing Theory

Pine and Gilmore considered experience as the fourth economic offering (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). They further claimed that customers want experiences to generate value for them that would lead them to purchase. The experience generated by the travelogue would engage them to generate value, or satisfaction, which would in turn create the intention to visit or revisit the location.

The origins of *Experiential Marketing* was pioneered by Pine and Gilmore (1998), as cited by Kirezli (n.d.), who acknowledged that society is on the verge of the “*Experience Economy*”, in which all businesses must orchestrate memorable events for their customers. This observation led to scholars studying experience as a possible marketing tool and the creation of emotional attachment a product or service can have with the consumer.

A psychologist, Bernd Schmitt (1999), made a note that *Experiential Marketing* is “usually broadly defined as any form of customer-focused marketing activity, at various touch points, that creates a sensory-emotional connection to customers” (Keller, 2013, p. 182). Schmitt further claimed that the shift from the traditional “*features and benefits*” marketing to creating experience occurred as a result of three simultaneous developments in the broader business environments – (1) the omnipresence of the information technology; (2) the supremacy of the brand; and (3) the ubiquity of communications and entertainment (Schmitt, 1999). Pine and Gilmore (1998) distinguished four stages of the new economic value: (1) commodities; (2) goods; (3) services; and (4) experience.

Sensory experiences occur as a result of encountering, undergoing or living through times, providing sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational values which replaced functional values. Kotler and Keller (2012) explained that a firm can create, stage and market experiences by orchestrating several services and goods together, and some can even be customized.

Keller (2013) recognised *Experiential Marketing* as one of two types of marketing that emerged due to the rapid expansion of the internet and the continued fragmentation of the media. He defined *experiential marketing* as promoting a product by not only communicating a product's *features and benefits*, but also connecting it with unique and interesting consumer experiences (Keller, 2013). Lee,

Hsiao and Yang (2010) explained *Experiential Marketing* as “*unforgettable memory or experience rooted deeply in people’s mind*” (Lee, Hsiao, & Yang, 2010, p. 356). Their research proved that it can allow consumers with sentimental and impressive emotion to intensify purchase desire and increase additive value in modern consumption.

Schmitt’s five aspects: *sense, feel, think, act* and *relate*, are known as *Sensory Experiential Modules (SEMs)*, and in this study, the travelogue programme is the medium used to create the experience. Producers played the role of the marketers by unconsciously applying the elements during the creation of the programme to elicit responses from the audience. The idea recalls ‘sensory marketing’, the process of systematically managing consumers’ perception and experiences of marketing stimuli, which appeals to the human’s five sense of vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2013, p. 83). Schmitt later developed his research through various studies on brand experience and together with Brakus and Zarantonello, developed the Brand Experience Scale, which would explain results in four different factors – sensory, affective, behaviour and intellectual (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Conceived by Bernd Schmitt, he first defined it in 1999 as “*individual consumer, after direct observation or participation of event, feels certain stimulus that induces motives and generate identified thoughts or consuming behaviour*” and proposed that the definition on products by conventional marketing is more constricted (Wang & Lin, 2010). It means “*unforgettable memory or experience rooted deeply in people’s mind, can be from the definition of experience, in modern consumption environment, consumers emphasize their own experience during the consumption process*” (Lee, Hsiao, & Yang, 2011, p. 356).

All five SEMs have a role of their own. “*Sense*” attempts to create sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, relating to achieve sensory impact. “*Feel*” appeals to inner feelings and emotions, to create affective experiences. By appealing to the intellect, “*think*” has the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage customers creatively. “*Act*” aims to affect bodily experiences, lifestyles, and interactions while “*relate*” expands beyond the personal and private feelings, adding to the experience and relating the customer (or audience) to the ideal self, other people or cultures. The SEMs needed to be strategically managed and combined to produce good results. The identification of the appropriate “*experience providers*” or *ExPros* would further enhance the campaign and create the intended touch point for the customer.

The Effect of Audience’s Perceived Sensory Experience on Satisfaction towards the Program

Past research has generally shown association between audience’s perceived sensory experience with the television dramas, travelogues and movies and the level of satisfaction among the audiences (Wang & Lin, 2010). Audience/customer satisfaction is defined as the mental status of consumers on whether their satisfaction is achieved after evaluating examination on their input for the products purchased and the rewards they obtained. Furthermore, the American Marketing Association defined satisfaction as “*a positive or negative reaction to a purchase decision or product after purchase*” (American Marketing Association, n.d.). In the context of this research, audience, in viewing the product experiential, have intertwined value and satisfaction (Woodruff, Schumann, & Gardial, 1993).

A study by Bassi (2010) concerning film and satisfaction, found that viewers were more satisfied when the film (or programme) was able to surprise, attract attention, generate strong emotions, generate discussion with friends, and/or was good (Bassi, 2010). Respondents expressed satisfaction on memorable

scene, a message, or a new point of view to be kept as memory. It is also sometimes linked to recommendation of relatives or friends. Thus the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Audience's perceived sensory experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) gained by watching the travelogue is positively related to their satisfaction towards the program

Audience's Perceived Sensory Experience and Intention to Visit or Revisit the Destinations

Travelogue programmes, designed to promote travel through different ways – by displaying locations, events, food or activities, if successfully executed, should incite excitement, and can induce pleasurable emotional feeling and response, thus affecting consuming behaviour. Chalip quoted Hyun (1990), who estimated that the Seoul Olympics of 1988 would generate approximately 640,000 additional visitors in the long term, whereas Kand and Perdue (1994), estimated the number to be closer to 1 million (Chalip, 2002). The classic study by Ritchie and Smith (1991), who measured the salience and attractiveness of Calgary and found that there was an increase in terms of salience and attractiveness during and immediately following the Winter Olympic games, but it wasn't sustainable.

Lasalle and Britton (2002) explained experience as an interaction or series of interactions, between a customer and a product, a company or its representatives that would eventually lead to a reaction. Kishka (2003) considered the management of experience as a systematic approach to measuring and managing customer feedback. Pine and Gilmore (1999) mentioned that experience are events which would engage individuals and create reaction in them in a personal way. The five *SEMs*, either on its own, or a combination of them, would incite the emotions that would eventually motivate them towards having an intention to visit.

A research by Bilei and Kim (2009) mentioned intention to visit as an indication of whether a visitor will go to a destination and has relevance to a time perspective because the intention often changes over time (Bilei & Kim, 2009). Changes can be suggested or induced by a programme, especially when other programmes which are aired could affect the customer's initial intention. Intention to visit is personal for each person, because it is related to the image he formed in his mind and based on his exposure to information sources, motivations, vacation experience and socio-demographic characteristics (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Intention to revisit refers to a return visit to the destination to audience who have previously visited the location. The persuasive value of the programme may induce a different feeling when seeing the location again in a different light. Revisit sometimes also refers to a '*bond*' or attachment created with the destination, with the bond rekindled and strengthened by the programme.

H2: Audience's perceived sensory experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) gained by watching the travelogue is positively related to the intention to visit the featured destinations.

H3: Audience's experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) gained by watching the travelogue is positively related to the intention to revisit the featured destinations.

Method

In the present study, the survey research was used since the same method was also utilized by other scholars researching on similar topics, like Wang and Lin (2010); Kim et al (2007); Kim, Agrusa, Lee and Chon (2007); Mat Som and Badarneh (2011); Lee Hsiao and Yang (2010); Alkilani, Kwek and Abzakh

(2013); Che and Yang (2011); and Obonyo (2011). The number of sample was set at 250 due to unknown sample population, but only 216 questionnaires were fully completed by the respondents. The present study used purposive sampling technique by specifically selecting audiences who have watched any episodes of the X-Plorasi programme. The online survey was posted on the program's Facebook and frequent announcements were made to invite participation in the research. X-Plorasi, which aired on Sunday evening, was chosen since it was a high-rated program in one of the free-to-air channels in Malaysia. The program depicted mainly island destinations in Malaysia and explore various recreational activities especially deep sea diving and snorkelling.

Item questions was based and adapted from Obonyo (2011). There are five dimensions of perceived sensorial experience namely sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. To measure sight, eight items were used (i.e. When I watch the programme, I could see the specialty or uniqueness of the destination). To measure sound, five items were developed (i.e. when I watch the programme, I can hear the different sounds of the sea at the destination). Touch was measured by five items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I could imagine touching the corals). Taste was measured by five items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I could imagine a taste of the sea water) and smell was measured using four items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I could imagine smelling the sea"). Feel was measured by seven items (When I watch the programme, I feel relaxed") and think was measured using six items (Watching the programme provokes my mind concerning certain issues like ecology"). Act was measured using five items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I google information related to the destination"). Variable satisfaction was measured using six items (i.e. I enjoy watching the program") and Intention to visit was measured using four items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I feel that I want to visit the destination"). Variable Intention to visit was measured by four items (i.e. When I watch the programme, I feel that I want to revisit the destination"). For all the variables, the 5-point Likert Scale was used.

Findings

Female are majority among the respondents, comprising 56.9% of the total 216, with Malays being the majority of total ethnic group at 55.6%. The mean age is identified at 31 years old and 41.7% who participated are degree holders (41.7%). 56.5% are single and 36.6% are employed in professional or management roles. The average monthly income is USD 1389. In terms of the frequency of watching the program, 88.5% of the respondents watched it at least once a month. The episode on Lang Tengah Island in Langkawi, Kedah, was the most watched episode among the featured episodes. Further analysis conducted to test for significant differences between gender, level of income and education on the level of satisfaction, intention to visit and revisit did not yielded significant findings.

As shown in Table 1 below, all variables recorded high mean value of above the mid-point of 3 which reflect moderate-to-high perceived audience experience with the destinations featured in the program. The level of satisfaction and intention to visit or revisit also exhibited the same trend.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the Main Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sense (Sight)	3.8594	.6719
Sense (Sound)	3.6167	.8851
Sense (Touch)	3.6037	.9411
Sense (Taste)	3.4167	.9872
Sense (Smell)	3.1412	1.0117
Feel	3.7196	.8557
Think	4.0054	.6687
Act	3.4444	.8843
Relate	3.6376	.6979
Satisfaction of the Program	3.6906	.8840
Intention to Visit	3.7271	.9029
Intention to Revisit	3.7984	.8399

Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality (based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics), multicollinearity (based on Tolerance and VIF value) or reliable measurement of all variables (Cronbach alpha greater than 0.7) before further analysis was conducted. Hypothesis testing was conducted using *Multiple Regression* analysis, considering that there are nine independent variables against each dependent variables namely satisfaction, intention to visit and intention to revisit. The first hypothesis of the study, *H1: Audience's experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) is positively related to the level of satisfaction towards the program.* By taking into consideration the *p* value and the *Beta* values, significant relationships existed for four variables: Sense (Sight) recorded $p=.000$, $\beta=0.490$, Sense (Touch) recorded $p=.001$, $\beta=-0.249$, Sense (Taste) displayed $p=.001$, $\beta=0.250$ and finally Feel recorded $p=.000$, $\beta=0.398$. Based on the *beta* value, the variable *Sense (Sight)* was found to be the best predictor variable if the audience experience. This indicated that interesting pictures or visual of the programme are extremely important to gain satisfaction among the audience. Overall, the model explained 0.69% of the dependent variable. See Table 2 below

Table 2. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Satisfaction		Intention to visit		Intention to revisit	
	Beta	P value	Beta	P value	Beta	P value
Sense (Sight)	0.490	0.000	-0.032	0.679	0.070	0.597
Sense (Sound)	-0.073	0.176	-0.227	0.003	0.162	0.211
Sense (Touch)	-0.249	0.001	0.089	0.387	-0.063	0.719
Sense (Taste)	0.250	0.001	0.029	0.783	0.142	0.425
Sense (Smell)	-0.063	0.369	-0.087	0.373	-0.338	0.046
Feel	0.398	0.000	0.560	0.000	0.357	0.040
Think	0.138	0.014	0.016	0.839	0.214	0.113
Act	0.050	0.320	0.322	0.000	0.105	0.377
Relate	0.010	0.814	0.170	0.006	0.226	0.032
R Square		0.690		0.608		0.452
Adjusted R Square		0.676		0.581		0.375

The second Multiple Regression analysis was conducted towards Intention to Visit, relating to the second hypothesis of the study, H2: Audience's experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) is positively related to the intention to visit the featured destinations. The analysis was conducted using Split file function in the SPSS datafile to separate audiences who have never visited or have visited the destinations featured in the program. Results showed significant relationship existed for the variable Feel ($p=.000$, $\beta=0.550$), which indicated a significant relationship at a moderate strength in a positive direction. Significant relationships were also observed for Act ($p=.000$, $\beta=0.324$), Relate ($p=.005$, $\beta=0.173$) and Sense (Sound) ($p=.003$, $\beta=-0.234$). The variable Feel is the best predictor variable of the intention to visit the featured destinations, based on the beta value of 0.550 with the model explaining 61.3% of the dependent variable. See Table 2 above.

The final *Multiple Regression* analysis was conducted to study the connection between the nine independent variables and *Intention to Revisit*, as suggested by the third hypothesis, H3: Audience's experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate) is positively related to the intention to revisit the featured destination. Three of the variables recorded p value of below .05, meaning significant relationship existed, for *Relate* ($p=.032$, $\beta=0.226$), *Feel* ($p=0.40$, $\beta=0.357$) and *Sense (Smell)* ($p=.046$, $\beta=-0.338$). From the findings, the variable Feel is the best predictor of the intention to revisit the destinations featured in the travelogue. Overall the whole model explained 45.2% of the dependent variable. See Table 2 above.

Discussion

The conceptual framework developed in this study suggested significant relationship between *Audience's Perceived Sensory Experience (sense, feel, think, act, and relate)* with *Satisfaction of the Programme* for the audience. Schmitt's *Experiential Marketing Theory* is applied here with the five dimensions of *Sense, Feel, Think, Act* and *Related*, as a model to incite an experience to the audience via the creation and production of the travelogue. From the results of the hypothesis testing, the best predictor of satisfaction is *Sense (Sight)*. A good production in terms of shots, choice of visual and presentation, is paramount in providing experience to the audience. The creative visual of the programme played a role in generating the intended experience or desire. This echoed Bassi's study that audience were more satisfied when the film (or programme) was able to surprise, attract attention, generate strong emotions, generate discussion with friends, and/or was good (Bassi, 2010).

For hypothesis testing between *Audience Perceived Sensory Experience* and *Intention to Visit*, it is discovered that the best predictor of intention to visit is *Feel* which further explained that when the programme managed to incite feelings of happiness, thrill, excitement and awe etc, it would be able to invoke and provoke interests, and eventually intention to visit the destinations. For those who have visited the featured destinations, findings derived from the study exhibited that the same variable *Feel* predicted greater *Intention to Revisit*. In the case of X-Plorasi, the depiction of visuals and activities which are popular with tourists and considered iconic, will provoke good memories or even to suggest better 'fun' than previous visit/s.

To summarise, the findings concludes that two dimensions in *Experiential Marketing* – *Sight, and Feel*, are the crucial variables that needed to be engaged in the programme to particularly increase the level of satisfaction and induce visit or revisit intentions. As television programmes can be considered the *Experiential Provider (ExPro)* for *Experiential Marketing*, or in other words, travelogues the *ExPro* for

tourism, the choices made should contain these dimensions to provide better results to the audience. 'Sight' and 'Feel', should be given higher priority as it is proven that the higher the stimuli based on those, the higher the level of satisfaction, intention to visit or revisit the destination. By capitalizing on interesting visual and generating experience through reaching the emotions of the audience, and by relating that experience to the audience themselves, higher sense of *satisfaction*, better *intention to visit* and *revisit* would be generated.

Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

Several limitations are obvious in this study. Firstly, the sampling, which was limited to only the Facebook fans of the program. Hence the findings may not be definitive to generalise total Malaysian audience.

Secondly, the choice of programme is limited to only one – *X-Plorasi*, which targets the young audience. It may not be receptive to older audience. In this study, the youngest respondent is 20 years old while the oldest is 66 years old. This range covers generations from *baby boomers* (born between 1946 and 1964), *Generation X* (born between 1965 to 1979) and *Generation Y* (born between 1980 and 1994) (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2013). With three different generations it may not be the definitive choice of programme to be used as generalized sample. '*X-Plorasi*' is also limited to Malay-speaking audience. The programme doesn't include English subtitles, therefore only Malay-fluent audience can understand the script. Travelogues in other languages like English, Mandarin and Tamil could also be studied, or even ethnic travelogues in Kadazan/Dusun or Iban. With more channels set to begin in the near future due to digitalisation project, studies could be made in terms of *Experiential Marketing* to truly benefit from the opportunities that the broadcasting and tourism industries would be able to provide for content providers.

Thirdly, the program is centred on island and deep sea diving activities, which may not be everyone's first choice. Those who have an aversion towards the sea may not be receptive towards the programme, especially people with *thalassophobia*. During the pilot test, one respondent commented that the programme did a good job in creating an experience for the audience but as she is *thalassophobic*, she found the programme to be scary and discomforting. As the study of travelogues is still new in academia, it would be good to do further research that would be beneficial for both the broadcasting and tourism industries. For this study, '*X-Plorasi*' deals with locations and activities (for the young generation), other programmes of the same nature could be included, or different programmes with the same themes targeting for different target audience could be included. Studies could also be conducted on other themes in travelogue, like Islamic travelogues like '*Syahadah*' and '*Jejak Rasul*', and since Islamic content has been more pronounced in recent years, with the establishment of Astro's Oasis channel and the government-supported AlHijrah, it would be interesting to study whether *Experiential Marketing Theory* could be applied to travelogues of Islamic nature, or even travelogues on other faith journeys.

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The Effects of Business Intelligence on Strategic Management of Enterprises

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Abstract

Discipline of Informatics must contain one of the significant issues that need to develop for especially processing systems of large-scale enterprises. At this point, a well-designed Business Intelligence (BI) system, which includes a structure of regular business activities and analyses within whole an enterprise, requires to manage stored data and transform the data into information as an output, and forecasting targets, provide sustainable growth for an enterprise or an organization. Information Systems (IS) support to constitute these processes by using the Information Technologies (IT) that cause to capture data which will be transformed into information, integrate whole subsystems that need to develop for all departments of the enterprise. Business Intelligence tools organize all parts of these business analyses and processes and effect on the top management level of enterprises or organizations. Decision makers at the top-level of management must use these information and knowledge to orient future decisions for the enterprise that includes investments, company policies, precautions for the future negotiations etc. This study shows that the Business Intelligence is not only an Information System, but also reinforcement for strategic decisions of the enterprises and/or organizations.

The Information Systems Towards BI

Nowadays, especially big and middle-scale enterprises need to develop their business systems in order to decrease costs and save time during their business processes. To manage an enterprise's data, attendantly information and knowledge by using Information Technologies require continuous improvement. At this point, the data processing emerges to collect, transform it into information, and discover qualified knowledge for future decisions of the enterprise in the long term.

Gathering, cleaning, and restructuring the data which are parts of data mining techniques like classification such as algorithms of decision trees, neural networks, clustering, prediction, association rules such as market basket analysis, are considerable in parts of analyzing the data and discovering the knowledge for building a BI system into the enterprise (Dinçerden, 2010).

Figure 1 shows system stages included feasibility, analysis, design, implementation, and maintenance (Yeates and Wakefield, 2004) that cause to reveal a well-designed a system to manage business processes. Each stage has different speciality according to system analysts and/or IT developers to establish an influential information system.

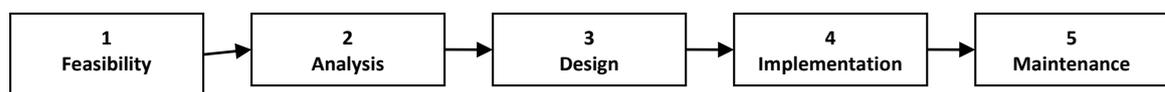


Figure 1. Stages in system development

Main IS components included input, output, models, control, technology, and database arrange whole data of an enterprise to obtain consistent estimates for especially top-level executive decisions of an enterprise. Processing the data requires a well-designed information system that enable to form the data within database management systems. After collecting and processing the data, outputs that guide prudential top-level management decisions can be managed by decision-makers. In this context, the major influential factors of the IS are specified as follows (Burch and Grudnitski, 1990):

- Data processing requirements
- System requirements
- Information quality and usability
- Competitive forces
- User/System interface
- Cost-effectiveness requirements
- Feasibility requirements
- Organizational factors
- Integration
- Human factors

In this context, data source types separated as operational, private, and external are handled in database management systems. The operational data involves financial, logistics, sales, order entry, personnel, billing, research and engineering. The private data concerns with product analysis spreadsheets, regional product usage spreadsheets, and prospective customer databases. And the external data can be

counted as health care statistics, customer profile information, and customer credit reports (Moss and Atre, 2003).

The data analysis that needs to develop consistently is built by using data management techniques such as Online Analytical Processing (OLAP), Relational Online Analytical Processing (ROLAP), Multidimensional Analytical Processing (MOLAP) in order to attain real-time reports of the business process regularly (Efraim Turban, et al., 2011). Thus, these analyses are stated like basic supporting activities of the BI during business process of an organization.

The BI and Strategic Decisions

BI is a platform that stored data is processed and transformed into information by using Information Technologies tools and applications within an organization. So that it causes to attain outputs as business reports which are effected forward-looking decisions of the enterprise.

One of the important issue of making decision for strategic goals is analyzed into two stages as design and execution according to internal and external analysis (Forgang, 2004). Forgang describes that design stage determines choices to differentiate enterprise's good and/or service to get competitive advantage versus its other rivals. The execution stage is related to functional area decisions that the enterprise implements.

A well-designed BI system prepares the accumulated data for processing and transforming information and discovering the qualified knowledge by using extract, transform, and load (ETL or ELT) phases. This process of transforming the data to the information requires BI techniques such as data warehousing and data mining during accessing the information as an output which will be used for strategic decisions of an enterprise in the long-term (Dinçerden, 2015).

Figure 2 shows a sample model how a BI system progresses with its components. In addition to this, BI architecture as a tool of a project process must be adopted each the project phase such as gather requirements, design solution, test, implement, and maintain (Howson, 2014).

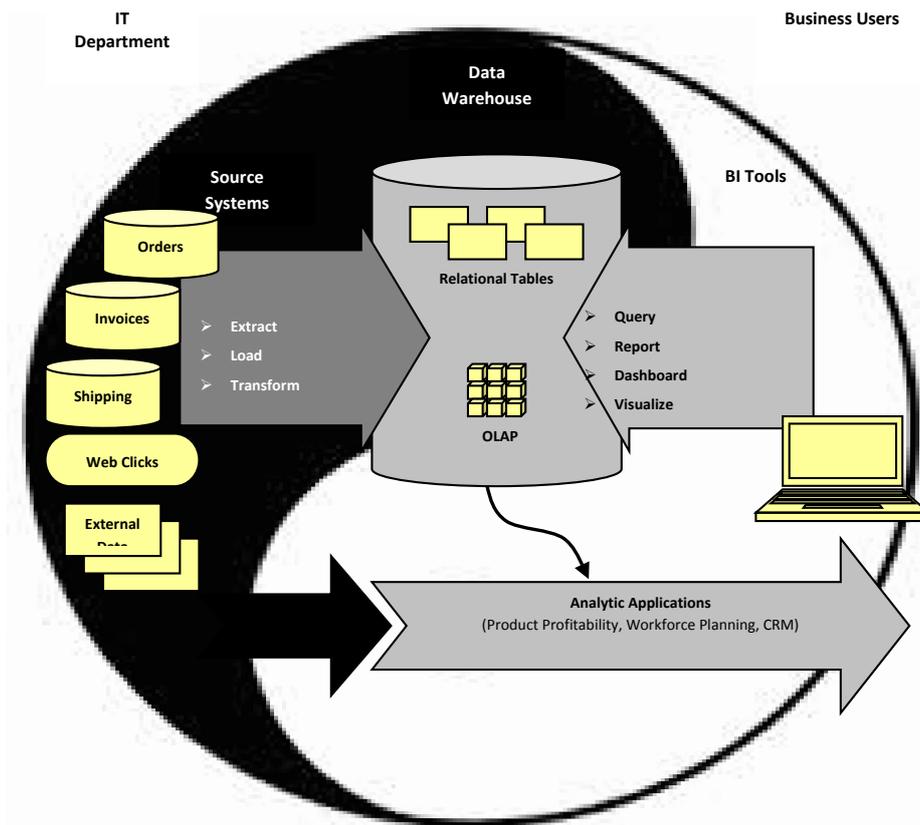


Figure 2. Major components in the BI life cycle

BI components support connection between departments in an enterprise is facilitated by using some information system applications such as Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Supply Chain Management (SCM). BI techniques enter into business activities to arrange whole business system and integrate each departments of an enterprise such as manufacturing, finance, marketing, sales, logistics, human resources, accounting.

As can be seen in Figure 3, some departments of an enterprise related to the BI that can be developed phase by phase such as analysis, insight, decision, and evaluation (Vercellis, 2009).

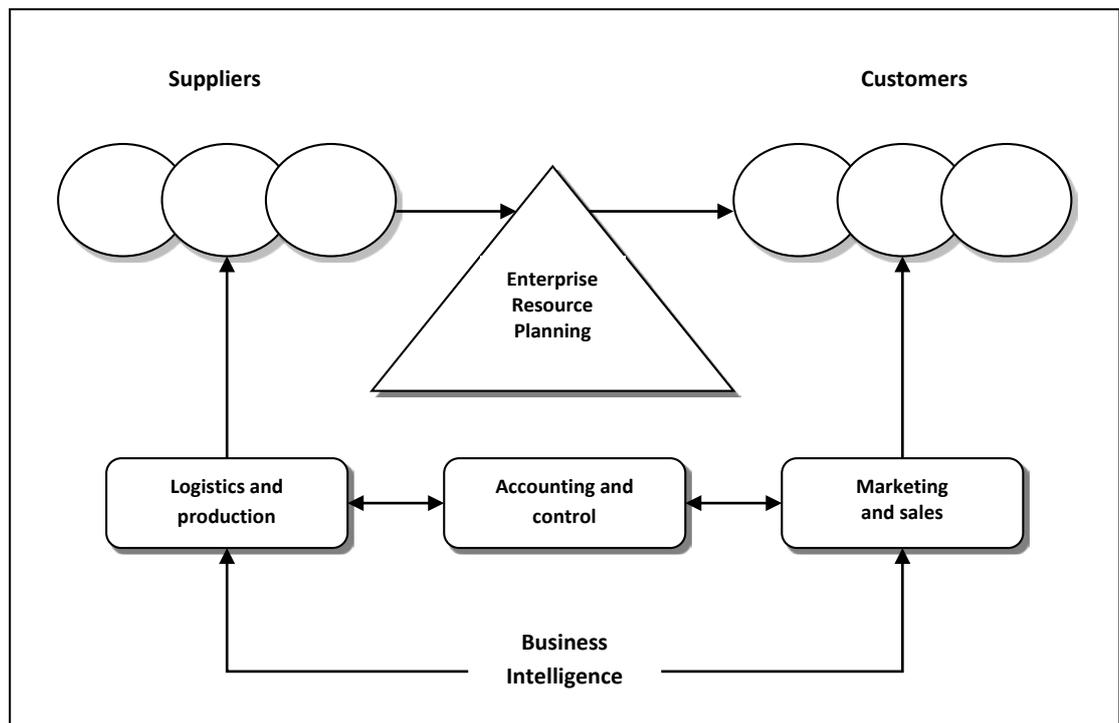


Figure 3. Departments of an enterprise concerned with business intelligence systems

From the point of managerial perspective, if management levels of an enterprise are accepted at three stages as operational, managerial, and executive (Valachich and Schneider, 2010), the BI applications support managers in all aspects of forward-looking decisions. Especially, executive management is at the top-level in the enterprises that strategic decisions are made for the enterprises' sustainability.

Business strategies can be examined within four intersections as industry-wide, industry-segment focus, and cost leadership, and product differentiation. These sections are focused on maintaining quality and being fair to the customers (Gendron, 2013). Meanwhile, BI opportunities enable to challenge in terms of competitive strategies for the real-time, short-term, mid-term, and long-term decisions (Williams and Williams, 2007).

Conclusion

BI systems are used for a part of formation of the enterprises' sustainability. Some of benefits of a BI system are to analyse all data for gaining information in their database management systems, to regulate their routine operation speedily, to decrease their costs, to return on investments for the long term in the end of whole this progress.

The BI system included processing the data by using data warehousing and data mining techniques supports to obtain consistent and qualified information, and consequently knowledge that can be used in order to reach strategic goals and targets by end-users and executive managers in the future. In addition to this, developing IT that is significant infrastructure of the BI system; gives opportunities and provides a competitive advantage in the global market for the enterprises. Thus, the enterprises must keep abreast of the new economy and digital world by using and improving new solutions.

In conclusion, the BI is defined as a technology that gathers, analyses, and reports the data for decision-makers in an enterprise. However, the BI is not only a technical set of business analysis, but also a complex and effective structure for strategic decisions of the enterprises directly and/or indirectly.

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Mindful Consumption and Communicating with Gen Y

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Abstract

Environmental degradation which is caused by excessive consumption is currently at its peak, calling for novel ways in marketing communication, integration and interaction, to provide a sustainable presence of Earth in nearby future. Literature proposes mindful consumption as a possible solution for overconsumption, which requires a change in both mindset and behaviors of individuals. This paper aims to explore how Generation Y defines mindful consumption, and looks for identifying alternative patterns for communication to enhance sustainable consumption. Through a qualitative analysis employing seven in-depth interviews, our findings suggest that members of Gen Y are likely to benefit mostly from supportive marketing communications strategies to help them raise their consciousness about mindful consumption.

Keywords

Mindful consumption, generation Y, marketing communications, sustainability

Introduction

Environmental degradation now threatens human health, welfare and many other valued things in life (Stern, 1997), accompanying the grim evidence that global environmental situation will continue to deteriorate in nearby future (European Environment Agency, 2000; United Nations Environment Program and Stockholm Environment Institute, 1999). OECD (2001) reports that unfavorable trend in consumption is a major factor that contributes to this problem. This fact itself explains the increased attention for sustainability, social issues and concerns such as global warming, as well as the pressure on organizations to account for their environmental performance, such as socially responsible production or labeling of products with environmental claims (Mc Donald and Oates, 2006).

Global unsustainability is enrooted in the very beginning of “consumption” phenomenon. Although consumption has always been a reality of humanity, its negative influence on global resources became increasingly visible since 19th century. This period was marked with the geographical and social expansion of the market, the rationalization of the form and organization of production (Aglietta, 1979; Boorstin, 1973; Fraser, 1981; Pope, 1983), and a period when the world was considered to be modernized through consumption. This post-war era was the new age of conformity, a colonization of everyday life by corporations and consumption norms, highlighting consumption as a route to mass conformity (Leviss, 1922). Such consumption orientation then expanded to the service sector, turning the world into a carnival where people began to perceive entire world as a consumable experience, willing to pay the fee for the experience of modernity (Slater, 1995).

The commercial revolution boosted the consumption desire, as technology facilitated the production process and therefore making commodities more available and easy to reach. Ever-growing consumption during and after industrial revolution heightened to a degree where people work more to consume more and enjoy the luxury of buying as much commodities as they wish (Campbell, 1989:18; Cross, 1993; Cunningham, 1980). The insatiable, unlimited, impersonal and universal needs of the human beings, coupled with the effect of capitalism to increase consumption severely damaged the world resources and paved the way to the sustainability problem of today. As mentioned by Assadourian (2009), how to consume in a world that is overtaxed by human consumption patterns, and where two billion people barely survive due to unfair distribution of resources should be the basic questions to ask if one wants to talk about sustainability. To make matters worse, a recent report by the United Nation’s Environmental Program has revealed that only four out of the 90 most important environmental goals show significant progress, CO₂ emissions are the highest in history, and it looks like the Rio+20 and Millennium Goals will fail to get any half-way.

In addition to environmental degradation, financial security is also another big problem risking the continuity of sustainable world conditions. Despite the capitalism and economic progress of some countries, poverty is a global phenomenon affecting more and more categories of people. According to the latest World Bank Development Indicators*, 2.6 billion people live on less than \$2 per day. The poorest 40 percent of the world’s population accounts for five percent of global income, while on the other hand, the richest 20 percent enjoys three-quarters of the world income. Although UN Millennium Development Goals** long before set a sustainability target until 2015, in 2013, two years before this target, the above mentioned fact that only 4% of these goals have been realized despite billion dollars spent. This fact clearly reveals that, attempts are insufficient to prevent the addiction of consumption which destroys world resources and prevents sustainability initiatives.

Given all these facts and figures regarding overconsumption, a recent concept of “mindful consumption” is now receiving attention in academia, based on the pillars of “mindfulness” and how it can facilitate more sustainable consumption patterns.

This paper aims to question how Generation Y, both as the victims and contributors of current consumption phenomenon define “mindful consumption”, and to propose marketing communication strategies that may enhance this group to redirect their mindset and behaviors towards mindful action based on their conceptualization of the issue. The paper first provides a brief overview about the concepts of mindfulness and mindful consumption, followed by research methodology and findings. Based on the analysis, we recommend strategies for effective marketing communications that may attract Gen Yers.

Mindfulness and Mindful Marketing

“Although consumption takes place in all human cultures, it is only in the present [20th] century that consumption on a truly mass scale has begun to appear as a fundamental, rather than merely epiphenomenal, characteristic of society” (Peter Corrigan- 1997, p.1)

As frequently highlighted by the consumer literature, consumption today has moved beyond its primary utilitarian function of serving basic human needs (Shaw and Newholm, 2002) to that of a living experience, mostly triggered by the marketing discipline undertaking a dominant role in the process. Parallel to this move in literature, marketing scholars offered concept of mindfulness, and mindful consumption and marketing as a tool to provide different consumption habits. In this section we will analyze how the concept of mindfulness evolved in literature, how it is defined from a variety of perspectives, and how mindful marketing might help create a mindful mindset.

Although mindful consumption has recently been included in marketing literature, concept of mindfulness research stems from a variety of disciplines. These include social psychology and education (Langer, 1989), quality research (Fiol and O’Connor, 2003), as well as reliability subjects in organizational behavior (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001), individual and organizational reliability (Butler and Gray, 2006), reliability and conflict handling (Ndubisi, 2012), relationship quality (Saavedra et al, 2010), customer orientation (Ndubisi, 2012), innovation and information technologies (Swanson and Ramiller, 2004), ideal school and classroom education (Demick, 2000; Richard and Perkins, 2000), creativity (Reilly et al, 2010), organizational media uses (Timmerman, 2002), and past experiences on mindfulness of habitual entrepreneurs (Rerup, 2005).

Conceptual definitions of mindfulness encompass several philosophical and psychological traditions including ancient Greek philosophy, naturalism, phenomenology, existentialism and transcendentalism. Aspects related to mindfulness are defined as a sense of wonder, a feeling of union with nature, a sense of peace of mind, a feeling of wholeness, a feeling of joy, a feeling of living in the present movement, and a sense of being accepted within the universe (Jacob and Brinkerhoff, 1999). The research of Jacob and Brinkerhoff (1999) show that people with a tendency to over-consume are those who do not have a mindfulness mindset and that the factors contributing to the long term sustainability of the planet coincide with what make people happy and satisfied.

Mindfulness at individual level involves openness to novelty, alertness to distinction, sensitivity to different contexts, awareness of multiple perspectives, and orientation in the present-paying attention to the immediate situation (Sternberg, 2000). It is assumed that mindfulness requires a desire to update situational awareness on a continuing basis, to cast doubt, and probe further to resolve doubtfulness

(Malhotra, Lee and Uslay, 2012); while mindlessness is defined by decreased activation of cognitive, a resulting state of a reliance on past categories like an automatic pilot (Langer, 1989).

Psychologically, mindfulness refers to the cognitive qualities of individuals' state of alertness and awareness that is characterized by active information processing, continual creation of new categories and distinctions, explore and attention to multiple perspectives (Langer, 1989). Another definition states that it is a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience (Brown et al., 2007). Studies of mindfulness concept in business context defines it as an ongoing identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and current functioning; connection and sharing of the mindfulness of individuals to create new meaning and knowledge that will help individuals and organization to achieve greater congruence between their intentions and outcomes (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006) Accordingly, organizational mindfulness includes preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience and deference to expertise.

Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas (2011) emphasize on the necessity for redirecting the consumption patterns for a more sustainable world with the help of market operations. They define mindful consumption as a way to reach this goal. Accordingly, mindful consumption represents a confluence of mindful mindset and mindful behavior. While mindful mindset is associated with "a sense of caring for self, for community and for nature", the mindful behavior is characterized by "tempering of excesses associated with acquisitive, repetitive and aspirational consumption modes". In the recent decades, there has been an increase in choosing alternative lifestyles in an attempt to contribute to this ideal. It is evident that a mounting number of consumers are now resisting the consumption culture and trying to minimize consumption, which is sometimes referred to as "voluntary simplicity" behavior. Voluntary simplicity is a "system of beliefs and a practice, [...] centered on the idea that personal satisfaction, fulfilment, and happiness result from a commitment to the nonmaterial aspects of life" (Zavestoski, 2002). Voluntary simplifiers tend to restrict their consumption in favor of a simpler life, based on the idea that the majority of commercial products are in fact unnecessary. These individuals also express a heightened sensitivity to environmental and social issues as well as a preference for natural products (Craig-Lees, 2006; Craig-Lees and Hill, 2002; Klein et al., 2004). Voluntary simplification can take a variety of forms, such as the recent The 100 Thing Challenge (100TC), where some individuals limit their possession to 100 goods. Consumer activism in terms of active (e.g. boycotts, hate groups, self-reflective art) or passive (e.g. brand avoidance) responses are other variations of individuals' efforts to somehow escape the market system (Kozinets, 2002) in the hope for a sustainable life. The customer-centric sustainability is defined as the consumption-mediated impact of marketing actions on environmental, personal and economic well-being of the consumer (Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas 2011).

Marketing, in comparison to managerial approaches, has less focused on mindfulness until recent years. Mostly, in managerial context, mindfulness approaches focus on individuals' and organizations' ability to achieve reliable performance in changing environments depends on how they think, how they gather information, how they perceive the world around them and whether they are able to change their perspective to handle the existing situation (Langer, 1989, 1997). A recent study in marketing field is offered by Malhotra, Lee and Uslay (2012) focusing on the mediating role of mindful marketing. However this study does not focus on the consumption side, but instead on the impact of mindful marketing on quality orientations, their interaction and consequences.

Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas (2011) point that attitudes and values of people shape the consumption patterns. Therefore, a change in both behavior and mindset levels of people through bringing consciousness in thought, referred as mindful consumption, is deemed as a particular solution to the problem of overconsumption. The obligation of the humanity to preserve the environment regardless of utilitarian concerns is real and thus, caring for self, caring for the community and caring for the nature are defined as the motivators for behavior change towards mindful consumption (Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas 2011). In this process of behavior change, marketing is suggested to have a potential role to facilitate the mindful consumption and to enhance it by encouraging and reinforcing through the use of marketing mix.

Mindful marketing is referred as an increasingly important notion that aligns marketers' and consumers' interests. The expected mission of such marketing is claimed to be cultivating mindful consumption through effective, efficient, and ethical ways, while instantaneously considering the interests of both buyers and sellers (Sheth and Sisodia, 2006) Accordingly, marketers should seek ways to find win-win strategies by aligning marketing functions with consumer interests and therefore prevent wasteful and unethical marketing practices. In order to mind the gap between consumers and marketers, mindful marketing is assumed to lead to mindful consumption, value co-creation which in return again leading mindful consumption (Malhotra, Lee and Uslay, 2012).

Mindful consumption-oriented marketing takes into account environmental, personal and economic well-being of the consumers (Sheth et al., 2011). Accordingly, the core value of such consumption is dependent on consumer's mindset of caring for themselves, the community and the nature through transforming behavior into tempering their self-defeating surpluses associated with acquisitive, repetitive and aspirational consumption. Such marketing orientation is expected to lead mindful behavior in the consumers, thus a change in their long term habits and result in a less mindless action.

Mindful behavior is defined as novelty in response to changing and unique circumstances whereas, in contrast, mindless behaviors emphasize the role of continuity as a mechanism to preserve accumulated experience (Malhotra, Lee and Uslay, 2012).

In the current consumption world of wonders, the Gen Y is increasingly more active in terms of spending. Many studies define this generation analyzing who they are and their consumption habits, therefore suggesting a locus of mindless spending. Gen Yers, those who born after 1981, are currently between the ages of 18-35. Different studies may refer them with slightly different age groups or years (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Arsenault, 2004; Chowdhury and Coulter, 2006; Lescohier, 2006; Pew Research Organization, 2010) but the Y generation currently represents a large sector of the population in developed countries (Rugimbana, 2000). The term Generation Y is first coined in 1993 by Advertising Age as the last generation to be born entirely in twentieth century (Reisenwitz and Iyer, 2009), while they are also referred with nicknames as Echo Boomers, Millennials, the Internet Generation, iPod Generation, Generation Why, Boomerang Generation, and Nexters" (Eisner, 2005; Reed, 2007; Durkin, 2008; Tyler, 2008). This generation is raised by helicopter parents with a great degree of financial support (Fingerman et al., 2009), in an era of wealth (Howe and Straus, 2000), forming a powerful market segment with disposable income from indulgent parents (Gronbach, 2000; Fingerman et al., 2009). Gen Yers are affirmed to have increased awareness of environmental, social and economic ills and are skeptical about marketers' claims to be concerned about such issues (Hill and Lee, 2012; Bhaduri and Ha-

Brookshire, 2011; Kagawa, 2007; Jayson 2006). In this context, our study focuses on a sample selected from Gen Y those who born between years of 1981-2000, as detailed in the next section.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative means for analyzing data. To this context, we conducted a total of seven in depth interviews with a selected sample from Gen Y. The research is conducted with respondents from a high context culture, people who, regardless of their birth places, currently live in the third metropolitan city of Turkey, İzmir.

The sample was chosen from an age group of 15 to 35. The participants were first selected based on their date of birth as mentioned in the literature, and then were proportionally divided into three segments. The first segment was chosen between years of 1980-1987, which refers to a group of young adolescents who graduated from the university a few years ago and already started working, with a regular amount of income received monthly. The second segment was chosen between the years of 1988-1994; referring to those who have very recently graduated from or in the last years of their university education. The last segment was chosen from those who were born between the years 1994-2000, identifying a group currently studying in high school, living with their parents, and in the very beginnings of their career orientations.

In order to provide a wide range of variability, aside from birth years, the sample was also selected from different backgrounds, ideological dispositions, and socio-economic status groups.

Semi-structured interviews were designated in a systematic flow in five sections, starting with the questions related to the informant profile and their worldview, followed by how they define consumption and mindful consumption, and ending up with what type of marketing communications might facilitate and direct them in alternative mindful patterns of consumption. Because an individual from a high-context culture is more likely to sensitive to nuances in advertising, interview questions were also designed to explore what sort of a marketing strategy would influence their consumption habits, or motivate them to refrain from excessive consumption.

The interviews were conducted in settings where the informants could feel at ease during the conversation, such as at home or cafes. Silent places were chosen to enable smooth conversation and prevent interruptions that may lead to distractibility.

The data analysis was conducted in line with the guidelines provided by experienced scholars such as Spiggle (1994) and Kvale (1996). All interviews were transcribed and then systematically coded to discover key emergent themes (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The next section presents the findings on how the Gen Y define mindful consumption and marketing communication strategies that might facilitate this behavior.

Findings: Defining Mindful Consumption & Motivations for Alternative Consumption

The findings are grouped based on mindful consumption definitions and strategic approaches of Gen Yers about possible behavior change. The analysis reveals that most of the Gen Y defines mindful consumption on a variety of grounds. These include utilitarian needs, logical thinking and state of psychological alertness and awareness, and environmental concerns.

While mindful mindset is associated with “a sense of caring for self, for community and for nature”, the mindful behavior is characterized by “tempering of excesses associated with acquisitive, repetitive and aspirational consumption modes” (Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas 2011). The findings suggest that Gen Y mindset is also associated with sense of caring for self, community and nature while their behavioral attitudes are very much open to be shaped by external stimulants and factors. The interviews reveal out that individualism versus collectivism are two main approaches behind mindful consumption definitions and motivators of Gen Y for more mindful action.

This generation prefers ads that expand their awareness levels, needs any kind of strategy that may lead to emotional stability which will decrease the consumption levels resulting from unhappiness, and calls for a system that includes re-production instead of boosted consumption.

Individual Focus

Most of the responses show out that Gen Y care about their personal psychological and physical well-being while they are cautious about how and what they consume. Two basic themes shaping their definitions are need orientation and process of logical thinking in terms of individual concerns. As noted by a young Gen Y consumer,

“Consuming and buying only the amount you need.” (M, 25)

While most of the respondents show similar attitudes to the above quote, another response even further limits the amount a person needs to a basic level.

“Consuming the minimum of your need, that’s what mindful consumption is. Not wasting, not splurging.” (F, 31)

The second basic theme of individual focus is associated with logical thinking process where people expect to buy or consume logically and through self-questioning. Most of the interviewees pointed out the individual level of mindfulness aspects in their responses.

“Consuming through thinking the next step, and questioning whether I need this or thinking what I could do instead of spending that money. Shall I travel instead? It means acting through thinking...” (F, 24)

Another female Gen Y defined it in terms of cost-benefit analysis:

“Buying through cost-benefit analysis... Through thinking whether that product really costs that much and how much it will fit with my needs.” (F, 28)

One of the consumers attracted attention to the mindful mindset through focusing on situation of consciousness with the following sentences:

“If we start by the question of what consciousness is, we talk about a mood of awareness. This means, I buy through being aware of what I need.”

Openness to novelty, alertness to distinction, sensitivity to different contexts, awareness of multiple perspectives, and orientation in the present-paying attention to the immediate situation (Sternberg, 2000) are visible in above responses.

One of the definitions directly addresses the psychological dimension of mindfulness, the cognitive qualities of individuals’ state of alertness and awareness that is characterized by active

information processing, continual creation of new categories and distinctions, explore and attention to multiple perspectives (Langer, 1989).

A female Gen Y consumer clearly defines the process of buying and consuming as “*caution economics*” through expressing her state of consciousness among various messages received from diverse marketing tools:

“Consuming through paying attention to ‘caution economics’. Being a smart consumer... I try to be cautious because a lot of information is received, a lot of messages we receive every day. We use phones, TVs, we go out and there are billboards and they always somehow appeal to you, I mean those who want to sale something. This is why I try to make caution economics” (F, 28)

Another male consumer focuses the concept on knowledge which is again closely related to information processing:

“It means, a consumption habit that includes knowing what you buy and why you buy and for what you use it, and also knowing where it comes from.” (M, 23)

Emotions are one of the most important determinants of consumption expressed by most of the interviewed consumers of Gen Y. Especially; unhappiness is the ultimate fuse of spending money. A 23 year old male Gen Y, after explaining his internal combustion, expressed the need for personal spiritual stability as a response to the need of overconsumption with the following sentences:

“If my emotional and spiritual stability is complete, I might consume less. I mean, if I am really and fully happy, all my relations with my family, my girlfriend is all well, I would consume less.” (M, 23)

The above definition encompasses both the mindset level and the behavioral level of mindful consumption more from the individual point of view where the Gen Y puts himself to the center with a certain level of mindset with awareness, consciousness, and attention to any outside stimulant that shapes their behaviors.

Collective Orientation

While individualism is apparent in the answers of many Gen Yers, “We versus me” approach is the other side of the coin that is pointed out by most of them throughout the research. Most of the responses reveal out that Gen Y truly have a tendency for collective orientation. Either through ads, or any kind of educational system, they support any incentives or promotional campaigns that foster mindful consumption and are open for consuming less or at least with more attention.

Mindfulness aspects are defined as a sense of wonder, a feeling of union with nature, a sense of peace of mind, a feeling of wholeness, a feeling of joy, a feeling of living in the present movement, and a sense of being accepted within the universe (Jacob and Brinkerhoff, 1999).

Independent of age or gender, most of the interviewed Gen Y, mentioned their sensitivity to environment and nature while they define mindful consumption through pointing that they have a sense of belongingness to the nature and do care about this feeling.

“Mindful consumption means not damaging the environment. I think I may control the nature, because I want to exist in nature. I exist in nature, I feel a part of it and I try to find a way to live without damaging it.” (F, 23)

One of the consumers, one who is familiar with the literal definition of the mindful consumption, also added another dimension of environmental alertness to her definitions, human and health orientation:

“Buying products that will not be harmful for others. For instance, paying attention to the GDO products, not buying them and preventing others to buy it and thus contributing to the efforts made for removal of these products from the market.” (F, 28)

Being part of an exterior reality, makes them feel the importance of “we” notion and results in alertness to collective living on earth and other creatures on earth. Either it is environment, nature or animals, their sentences show that they care about being responsible towards not only self but also to others.

A state of balance between production and consumption and we versus me approach, in other terms individual and collective dimensions, is addressed in one of the responses of a male Gen Y student.

“A balanced consumption style that does not damage the environment and where you do not consume more than you produce, that’s what mindful consumption, is.” (M, 23)

A supporting quote comes from a 23 years old female consumer:

“Consuming in a way that will both satisfy your need -but your need will be really satisfied-; and at the same time you will not give harm to the environment or anyone else.” (F, 23)

Aside from the definitions they made, they consider collectivism as an important motivating stimulant in terms of ads. Gen Y mostly calls for less advertising or an ad style that helps them feel themselves a part of nature and belongingness to universe. Although most of them declare that they are not much affected by the ads, they still feel the necessity to be under less pressure from marketing tools around them.

Another 23 year-old consumer expressed this need with the following sentences:

“If there were no ads, we would probably consume less. I would like to see ads that show me the fact that I am also a part of the nature. I mean, the message that when the nature no more exist, I will no more exist...” (F, 23)

A complementary message comes from another female consumer who usually uses plastic cans just because the glass water cans are so heavy and more expensive. She explains what kind of an ad can change her long term habit of consuming plastic bottles and concern for others is much more significant in her sentences:

“Those poor animals that are trapped in packages or turtles trapped in hoops... I feel really bad when I see them. So if they make such an ad that shows those poor fishes trapped in plastics, when the plastics are thrown out into the sea,, I would most probably never buy it again.” (F, 23)

In addition to ads, this generation sees all educational channels as an important source of information and motivation for collective action. In an era of social media popularity and when there are diverse channels of marketing available today, some consumers mentioned that one channel of communication is not enough to decrease the consumption levels. Instead, she pointed out the necessity of public announcements to enhance the consciousness levels of consumers and redirect consumption patterns with the following sentences:

“We generally use internet actively and I especially try to read blogs. I follow them. This and this damaged the nature, this is harmful for human health, etc. I read them and try to change my habits or addictions. Public announcements and conferences that may redirect towards mindful consumption is necessary. I mean, not only increasing the individual level of awareness, but instead societal level of awareness is should be enhanced and it should be a a habit at societal level. A mass transaction is necessary in order to achieve something. Smart campaigns or ads should be done.” (F, 25)

Rediscovering the production phase and replacing it with perpetual consumption is finally expressed by one of the consumers as a transaction phase. A young new graduate female who makes installation at home expresses this transaction need as follow:

“How we can go back to the basics? What we really need? Do we really need all we use right now? We need a system that we produce through knowing what we need, a system we produce more, not only consuming without reason, a system that we buy after we question what we want. A system that we ourselves may produce... Because when we are away from production, our health is also negatively affected. We are distanced from nature and environment. Everything comes to us with packages. I mean, I can dream of a system that is away from packaging, a little bit more organic and that includes people” (F, 23)

The cultural background where the consumers grew up mostly determines how they behave throughout their life. Those who were raised by parents that mindfully consume expressed that encouragement and direction of people for common use of materials is necessary to decrease consumption levels.

“As I grew up in a family that always consume at minimum levels, I also behave like that. That’s what I see. I believe that, it is necessary to encourage, support and redirect people towards common usage; at least those who belong to the same family, may apply this.” (F,31)

Discussion and Conclusions

Mindful consumption-oriented marketing takes into account environmental, personal and economic well-being of the consumers (Sheth et al., 2011) and it considers the formulation of a mindful mindset and redirection of consumption behaviors towards sustainable action.

All of the interviews showed that Gen Y segment of the population, despite the fact they formulate a huge potential with buying power, is aware of the necessity to consume more mindfully. They are sensitive to nature, current environmental problems and the fact that overconsumption is a problem for the future sustainability of earth. Independent of their consumption orientations, they feel the necessity to take action.

Gen Y individuals define mindful consumption basically in three categories as “consuming in accordance with your needs”, “consuming on a level without damaging the exterior world and nature”, and “a process of logical thinking and state of awareness”. This points out that they consider about needs, nature and awareness as much as they love shopping. While individual physical and psychological well-being has a lot importance for this generation, they have a big tendency for collectivism. Independent of age or gender, they are well aware of the problems overconsumption creates, and feel the obligation to at least contribute to a change in this trend that threatens sustainability. Ads, promotional campaigns, public announcements and any incentives that support collective action are valuable for them and they feel ready to change their consumption behaviors.

When they are asked of potential strategies that may change their consumption behavior, they addressed the advertisements that will show the natural and environmental facts, give messages of consequences of overconsumption, thus increase the awareness levels of society and encourage more mindful consumption. They also mentioned the need for encouragement of common usage and any kind of marketing strategy through any marketing channel that will lead to mass transaction towards more mindful consumption at societal level.

Mindful behavior is defined as novelty in response to changing and unique circumstances (Malhotra, Lee and Uslay, 2012). Within the roadmap of the above findings and quotes described by the Gen Y, any kind of marketing communication strategy that aims to decrease mindless actions may address the emotions of the target segment and their logical processes at the same time.

A high-context culture is going to respond better to a more direct and formal style of marketing. Tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and posture are all non-verbal cues that can be utilized when reaching out to high-context consumers (Hall, 1976). Therefore, to this generation, emotional visuals, texts, or sounds supported by logical arguments seem to be effective in redirecting their habits. Any communication strategy that persuades them to the balance between the disadvantageous and advantageous sides of a product/service would be an initial step for affecting their thinking process. For instance, in order to sell glass water instead of plastic, a glass water company shall promote its product through showing the positive outcomes and effects of its usage on other creatures on earth by using images, words, pictures and any kind of arts. Once the company may justify the higher price of glass water through showing how plastic bottles endanger the lives of other creatures on earth, for a considerable amount of consumers with enough income, it seems to be a better alternative despite its price. Alternatively, any kind of message given through ads or other marketing channels showing the facts and figures of what human beings cause in the nature, really helps to discouragement of overconsumption. Statistics from Greenpeace, and non-governmental organizations, UN Environmental Program and any related official organization may be used in forming a marketing communication strategy. This will not only enhance the information shared, but also foster the expansion of reality much faster.

Attitudes, habitual and traditional behaviors set inside the family throughout their upbringing seems to be another determinant shaping the awareness and sensitivity level of Gen Y, thus forming purchase choice. Considering this fact, public announcements, ads that educate logically and emotionally, and any marketing campaign that shares the feeling of union with nature, and motivates to common use, anti-consumption, logical thinking process through purchase decision seems to be positively affecting the buying process of Gen Y mindset.

Also, social media shall be used actively in all ads, either directly or as a tool in marketing strategy used by companies. For instance, a company shall first promote a high priced environmentally friendly product or service via social media, and once it is among the top popular trends, ads or other promotional campaigns may include emotional messages.

Whatever marketing communication strategy is followed, the message of balance between need satisfaction plus positive impact of purchase decision on environment, nature, or earth should be included in order to attract the attention of this generation and create an impact in their mindsets.

This research is aimed to figure out how Gen Y defines mindful mindset and what kind of a marketing communication strategy may affect their consumption and purchasing habits. The results show

that Gen Y either grown up or live in a metropolitan city, is sensitive to environmental issues, consumption problems and they are willing to change their behaviors once mentally and psychologically satisfied. Further research may enhance the study through including diverse population from different cultures, make cross-cultural analysis, or expand the context to diverse sub-fields of mindful mindset such as green consumer, voluntary simplicity and/or de-consumption.

Acknowledgement

This paper is extracted from the ongoing thesis of Damla Aktan, which is supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melike Demirbağ Kaplan

Endnotes

*World Bank Development Indicators 2008, World Bank, August 2008

**Eradicating extreme poverty; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; building a global partnership for development

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