THE IMPACT OF BRAND COMMUNICATION ON BRAND EQUITY DIMENSIONS AND BRAND PURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH FACEBOOK

Bruno Schivinski*, Dariusz Dąbrowski**

* Gdansk University of Technology, Faculty of Management and Economics, Department of Marketing
bschivinsk@zie.pg.gda.pl (corresponding author)
** Gdansk University of Technology, Faculty of Management and Economics, Department of Marketing
ddab@zie.pg.gda.pl

The Impact of Brand Communication on Brand Equity Dimensions and on Brand Purchase Intention Through Facebook

Bruno Schivinski[*] and Dariusz Dabrowski

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management and Economics, Gdańsk University of Technology, Gdańsk, Poland

Abstract
Companies are now using social networking sites, such as Facebook, to enhance their brand communication and to promote and disseminate their product information among consumers. Such brands as Coca-Cola, Converse, and Starbucks reach millions of people through their social media communication; however, companies do not have complete control over this phenomenon. Consumers actively "like" brands, comment on posts, share information and share their opinions with other people on the Internet. The purpose of this study is to fill the gaps in the discussion of the ways in which firm-created and user-generated social media communication techniques impact consumer-based brand dimensions through Facebook. Moreover, we studied brand purchase intentions to achieve a behavioral understanding of the influence of these two communication instruments. We evaluated 302 data sets that were generated through a standardized online-survey to investigate the impact of social media communication on brand equity metrics. We subsequently applied structural equation modeling techniques for data analysis. The results of our empirical studies showed that user-generated social media communication had a positive impact on two measures of consumer-based brand equity, which included brand loyalty and perceived brand quality. In addition, the analysis indicated that firm-created social media communication had no influence on consumers' brand purchase intention. This study also offers valuable insights for brand managers and scholars.

---

[*] Corresponding author. Email: bschivinsk@zie.pg.gda.pl

1. Introduction

By taking advantage of Web 2.0 technologies, companies are using social networking sites to promote and relay information about their brands (Kaplan & Haenlein 2012). Such brands as Coca-Cola, Converse, and Starbucks seek to connect with customers and enhance their brand communication using Facebook and other social media channels.

This article provides a better understanding of firm-created and user-generated communication through the social networking site - Facebook, a topic of relevance in the era of social media as evidenced by Villanueva, Yoo and Hanssens (2008), Taylor (2013) and many other recent papers (Christodoulides *et al.* 2012; Smith *et al.* 2012). We also investigated their effects on the metrics of consumer-based brand equity and brand purchase intention, leading us to two following research objectives that are relevant not only for companies but for brand management in particular (Roderick J. Brodie et al., 2013; Schau et al., 2009):

(1) Determination of the impact of firm-created and user-generated social media communication on the metrics of consumer-based brand equity.

(2) Determination of the impact of firm-created and user-generated social media communication on the consumers' brand purchase intentions.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section presents a literature review and findings from previous research. In the second section, we provide a description of the conceptual framework and the hypothesis of this study. The third section presents our data sources and empirical model, as well as our estimations. In the fourth section, we introduce the outline for the quantitative empirical analysis used to verify the suggested model. The last section provides a summary and a discussion of our results. Suggestions for further research are also included in this article.

2. Literature Review

Social media and brand communication

The latest interactive technologies are changing lifestyle patterns and corporate innovative praxis. Organizations have begun to understand the importance of and have taken control of the Internet (Berthon *et al.* 2012), demonstrating both interest and involvement in online communities (Shankar & Batra 2009; Winer 2009). The ascendency of Web 2.0 technologies has led Internet users to a wealth of online exposure, the most important of which is social media (Chen *et al.* 2012).

Social media channels offer both firms and customers new ways of engaging with each other. Companies hope to engage with loyal consumers and influence individuals' perceptions about their products, spread information, and learn from and about their audience (Roderick J. Brodie *et al.* 2013). Among traditional sources of communication, social media have been established as mass phenomena with a wide demographic appeal (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). One of the reasons for such rapid popularity of social media among companies is the viral dissemination of information via the Internet. Social media currently have a far greater capacity for reaching the general public than do traditional media, such as television, radio, and magazines (K. L. Keller 2009). Moreover, Internet users are turning away from traditional media and are increasingly using social media to search for information (Mangold & Faulds 2009).

Social media provide opportunities for Internet users to create and share content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2012). The content created by Internet users involves different topics, including brands and products, making companies no longer the primary source of brand communication (Berthon *et al.* 2008). Studies have shown that consumers consider social media as more trustworthy sources of information than the traditional instruments of

marketing communications used by companies (Hennig-Thurau *et al.* 2004; Karakaya & Barnes 2010; Kietzmann *et al.* 2011). Thus, marketing and brand managers may assume that brand communication will increase through user-generated social media communication (Smith *et al.* 2012).

To examine the impact of social media communications, it is necessary to distinguish between two different forms of them: (a) firm-created and (b) user-generated social media communication (Godes & Mayzlin 2009). This distinction between communication sources is relevant because firm-created social media communication is under the management of companies, while user-generated social media communication is independent of the firm's control (Vanden Bergh *et al.* 2011).

Academic researchers in the topic of firm-created social media communication mainly focus on word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) studies (Balasubramanian & Mahajan 2001; Chu & Kim 2011). Firm-created WOM may be perceived as a fusion between traditional advertising and consumer word of mouth, characterized as being firm initiated but consumer implemented (Godes & Mayzlin 2009). Moreover, in WOM literature, there is a consensus that online communication between customers is an influential source of information dissemination (Dellarocas *et al.* 2007). Social media channels are a cost-effective and an alternative way for companies to access and gather consumer-to-consumer communication (Godes & Mayzlin 2004).

According to the definition provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD 2007), user-generated content (UGC) is defined as the following: "(a) content that is made publicly available over the Internet, (b) content that reflects a certain amount of creative effort, and (c) content created outside professional routines and practices". Previous studies of UGC suggested that customers participate in the process of content creation for a variety of reasons such as self-promotion, intrinsic enjoyment, and hope of changing public perceptions (Berthon *et al.* 2008). In this study, emphasis is placed on brand-related UGC, focusing on content generated by users on Facebook, its impact on brand equity metrics and brand purchase intention.

Consumer-based brand equity and its dimensions

Brand equity is an essential concept for modern organizations, and it has been the subject of interest and academic investigation for over a decade. Marketing and branding practices, such as differentiation and service quality, generate customer-based brand equity (CBBE) - a concept that predicts that individuals will react more favorably toward a branded product than they would react toward a generic product in the same category (Aaker 1991; K. L. Keller 1993). According to Keller (1993), CBBE can be defined as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand".

Previous research has found that CBBE enhances loyalty toward companies and their products (K. L. Keller 1993; Moradi & Zarei 2012) and helps generate higher margins, brand-extension opportunities, protection against competitors, effective communication power, and stronger consumer preferences (Aaker 1991; Allaway *et al.* 2011; Buil *et al.* 2008). CBBE also directly affects consumers' psychological judgment of a brand by making them willing to pay premium prices (Aaker & Biel 1992; Aaker 1991; K. L. Keller 1993; Kim & Kim 2005; Styles & Ambler 1995; Tauber 1988), increases the value of products and services (Fombrun 1996), and increases the sustainability of cash-flow and competitive advantage (Srivastava & Shocker 1991; Szymanski *et al.* 1993).

Despite receiving substantial attention among scholars and practitioners, there is no consensus about which are the best measures to capture this multi-faceted construct (Mackay 2001; Raggio & Leone 2007). There are several propositions for conceptualizing and

measuring brand equity. Aaker (1991) suggested a framework that adopts a managerial view of brand equity. Keller (1993) introduced a psychological, memory-based view of brand equity with his framework. Park and Shrinivasan (1994) integrated both Aaker's and Keller's concepts of brand equity and developed a survey-based method for measuring and understanding brand equity. Krishnan (1996) extended Keller's framework using a memory-based view of brand equity to identify various associations underlying consumer-based brand equity. Based on economic information and the signaling theory, Erdem and Swait's (1998) framework presented a different approach to this topic. Yoo and colleagues (2000) extended Aaker's framework by specifying the dimensions of brand equity and its antecedents. Netemeyer (2004) enriched Keller's framework view of brand equity by developing and validating measures of the facets of CBBE.

During the last decade, consumer-based brand equity has been measured using such dimensions as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Aaker (1996, p. 10) defines brand awareness as the "strength of a brand's presence in the consumers' mind". In other words, brand awareness refers to a customer's ability to recognize or recall a brand in its product category (Aaker 1991; Pappu *et al.* 2005). Brand association can be understood as "whatever that consumer relates to brand. It can include consumer image-making, profile of the product, consumer's conditions, corporate awareness, brand characteristics, signs and symbols" (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000). However, empirical evidence show that brand awareness and brand association can be combined into a particular dimension named brand awareness/association (Yoo *et al.* 2000). Perceived quality can be considered as "the overall preference or superiority, quite the same as approach assessment" (Aaker 1991; Netemeyer *et al.* 2004). Brand loyalty is "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver 1997). Brand loyalty indicates the motivation to be loyal to a brand, and it is reflected when consumers select the brand as their first choice (Yoo & Donthu 2001). Drawing on these theoretical proposals, a large number of studies conceptualize and measure consumer-based brand equity using the dimensions of brand awareness/association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (e.g., Baldauf et al. 2009; Gil et al. 2007; Yasin et al. 2007; B. Yoo and Donthu 2001, 2002; B. Yoo et al. 2000).

3. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

The purpose of our study is to fill the gaps in the discussion of the ways in which firm-created and user-generated social media brand communication impact consumer-based brand equity metrics and their influence on brand purchase intention. Communication stimuli trigger a positive effect in the customer as recipient; therefore, brand communication is positively correlated with brand equity as long as the message leads to a satisfactory customer reaction to the product in question, compared to a similar non-branded product (Yoo *et al.* 2000). Moreover, brand communication improves brand equity by increasing the probability that a brand will be incorporated into the customer's consideration set, thus shortening the process of brand decision making and turning that choice into a habit (Yoo *et al.* 2000). Consequently, we assume that a positive evaluation of firm-created and user-generated social media brand communication will positively influence the consumer-based brand equity dimensions. Thus, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

H1. A positive evaluation of firm-created social media brand communication positively influences *(H1a)* brand awareness/association, *(H1b)* brand loyalty and *(H1c)* perceived quality.

H2. A positive evaluation of user-generated social media brand communication positively influences *(H2a)* brand awareness/association, *(H2b)* brand loyalty, and *(H2c)* perceived quality.

To assess the behavioral influences of brand communication on CBBE constructs among Facebook users, we added to the conceptual model brand purchase intention. Findings about the behavioral effectiveness of online advertising are not consistent. The majority of them suggest a positive relationship between advertising and behavior or behavioral intentions (Manchanda *et al.* 2006; Martin *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, strong positive correlations have been found between advertising stimuli and purchase intention (Goodrich 2011; Groenhaug *et al.* 1991; Haley & Baldinger 2000). We therefore hypothesize that:

H3. A positive evaluation of firm-created social media brand communication positively influences purchase intention.

Customers perceive online opinions to be as trustworthy as brand websites and newspaper articles (Li & Bernoff 2011). Some researchers have also indicated that user-generated content are an important means whereby customers obtain information about products or service quality (Chevalier & Mayzlin 2006; Riegner 2007), so in this way UGC can influence their decision-making process and purchase intention (Chatterjee 2001). User-generated content is a strong reference for consumers when they take a purchase decision. Thus, we assume that:

H4. A positive evaluation of user-generated social media brand communication positively influences purchase intention.

Brand communication creates awareness and associations with products and increase the probability that the brand is included in the customer's evoked set (Cobb-Walgren *et al.* 1995). Moreover, brand communication can contribute to brand associations which, when stored in one's memory, translate into "nonconscious but reliable behavioral predispositions" (Krishnan 1996). Thus, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H5. Brand awareness/association positively influences brand purchase intention.
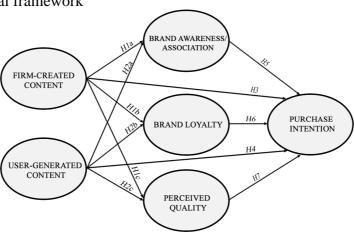
Previous studies suggest that high levels of brand loyalty drive permanent purchase of the same brand (Lee *et al.* 2009). Loyal customers tend to buy more than moderately loyal or new costumers (Yang & Peterson 2004; Yoo *et al.* 2000). Therefore, we propose that:

H6. Brand loyalty positively influences brand purchase intention.

Perceived quality involves consumers perception and attitude towards a brand that influences on the consumer's purchase intention (K. Keller & Lehmann 2003). In addition, the higher is the costumer's perception of the quality or superiority of a brand, than stronger the intentions of purchase (Aaker 1991). Thus, we postulated:

H7. Perceived quality positively influences brand purchase intention.
A conceptual framework of our study is presented in the scheme below:

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

4. Methodology

Sample and procedure

To examine the impact of brand communication on CBBE metrics and brand purchase intention through Facebook, we collected data using a standardized online survey on Facebook. A link to the questionnaire was available online for three weeks, from 5th October 2012 to 26th October 2012. In total, 308 questionnaires were completed fully. After data screening and detecting univariate outliers (Carter *et al.* 2009), however, six questionnaires were excluded from the analyses, resulting in a total of 302 valid questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered in Polish. To ensure that the original items were translated correctly, a back-translation process was employed (Craig & Douglas 2000).

All questions in the survey were identical to those in the original version, except for the brand names. The majority of the items in this study were adapted from relevant literature and measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Brand awareness/associations were measured using a four-item scale adopted from Yoo et al. (2000) and Villarejo-Ramos and Sánchez-Franco (2005). Brand loyalty was measured by using three items adapted from Walsh et al. (2009). Perceived quality was measured by using three items adapted from Yoo et al. (2000). Finally, firm-created and user-generated social media communication were measured by using three items adopted from Mägi (2003), Tsiros et al. (2004) and Bruhn et al. (2012), and two new items from the authors. The complete list of items can be found in Table 1.

Table I. List of constructs and measurements used

CONSTRUCTS AND MEASUREMENTS	Standardized Loading	CA	CR	AVE	AUTHORS
Firm-created social media communication [FC1] I am satisfied with the company's social media communications for [brand]	0.90	0.944	0.944	0.808	(Mägi, 2003) (Tsiros et al., 2004) (Bruhn et al., 2012)
[FC2] The level of the company's social media communications for [brand] meets my expectations	0.91				
[FC3] The company's social media communications for [brand] are very attractive*	0.91				
[FC4] This company's social media communications for [brand] perform well, when compared with the social media communications of other companies	0.88				

User-generated social media communication					(Mägi, 2003) (Tsiros et al., 2004) (Bruhn et al., 2012)
[UG1] I am satisfied with the content generated on social media sites by other users about [brand]	0.89	0.924	0.925	0.756	
[UG2] The level of the content generated on social media sites by other users about [brand] meets my expectations	0.91				
[UG3] The content generated by other users about [brand] is very attractive*	0.81				
[UG4] The content generated on social media sites by other users about [brand] performs well, when compared with other brands	0.85				
Brand awareness/association					(Yoo et al., 2000) (Villarejo-Ramos and Sánchez-Franco, 2005)
[BAS1] I easily recognize [brand]	0.75	0.836	0.850	0.657	
[BAS2] Several characteristics of [brand] instantly come to my mind**	0.63				
[BAS3] I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of [brand]	0.74				
[BAS4] I can recognize X among other competing brands	0.93				
Brand loyalty					(Walsh et al., 2009)
[BL1] The prospect of lower prices would make me switch to another company	0.93	0.946	0.946	0.854	
[BL2] If it were possible to do so without problems, I would choose another company	0.92				
[BL3] I intend to remain the company's customer	0.92				
Perceived quality					(Yoo et al., 2000)
[PQ1] Most of the products of [brand] are of great quality	0.86	0.891	0.897	0.744	
[PQ2] The likelihood that [brand] is reliable is very high	0.91				
[PQ3] Products of [brand] are worth their price	0.81				
Brand purchase intention					(Yoo et al., 2000) (Shukla, 2011)
[PI1] I would buy this product/brand rather than any other brands available	0.86	0.937	0.936	0.830	
[PI2] I am willing to recommend that others buy this product/brand	0.90				
[PI3] I intend to purchase this product/brand in the future	0.96				

Notes: * Items added by the authors
       ** Item excluded from the analysis

For brand selection, three different industries were used in this study, namely, clothing, telecommunications, and non-alcoholic beverages. The selection was based on considerations regarding relevance and variance criteria. The industries differed in their social media engagement according to estimated expenses on social media communication in Poland (SoTrender 2012). For each industry, the respondent indicated a brand that he or she have "Liked" on Facebook. This approach is based on the assumption that consumers have been exposed to social media communication from both companies and users from the companies they have "Liked" on the social networking site. The profile of the sample represented the Polish population, which are using frequently social media (SoTrender 2012; Wątła & Donajski 2011). Females represented 56.7 per cent of respondents. The majority of the respondents were young people and their age ranged from 15 to 19 years old (23.5 per cent); 20 to 24 years old (59.7 per cent); 25 to 35 years old (15.3 per cent); and the remainders were 36 to 46 years old. Considering the level of education of the researched sample, 35.7 per cent of the respondents had at least some college education; 52.9 per cent had accomplished a high

school diploma; and the remainders had a secondary school leaving certificate. The total monthly household income ranged from ~300 USD to ~810 USD to 24.3 percent of the sample; 27.7 per cent declared to have from ~810 USD to ~1460 USD; and the remainders declared an income ranging from ~1460 USD and higher.

Measurement procedures

We utilized reflective measurements to evaluate the conceptual model (Edwards & Bagozzi 2000). To assure the reliability and validity of the measurements, we used Cronbach's α and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Cobb-Walgren *et al.* 1995). The constructs used in our analysis show that the alpha coefficients ranged from 0.83 to 0.94. Additionally, we performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation on each scale. All of the items loaded on a single factor, suggesting that user-generated social media communication, firm-created social media communication, brand awareness/associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand purchase intentions are unidimensional. All factor loadings exceed the 0.70 level, as suggested in literature (Byrne 2010). One item used to measure brand awareness/association was excluded from the analysis because of a low loading value (0.63).

To establish convergent and discriminant validity, as well as reliability, we used the following measures: composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared squared variance (MSV), and average shared squared variance (ASV) (Hair Jr. *et al.* 2010). The CR values ranged from 0.85 to 0.94, which exceeded the recommended 0.70 threshold value (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). The average variance extracted of the constructs showed values higher than the acceptable value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker 1981), ranging from 0.65 to 0.85. All the CR values were greater than the recommended AVE values (Byrne 2010). For the discriminant validity of the model, the measured values for MSV and ASV were lower than the AVE values (Hair Jr. *et al.* 2010). Convergent and discriminant validity values are presented in table II.

Table II. Convergent and discriminant validity table chart

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	BL	BAS	FC	PQ	UG	PI
BL	0.946	0.854	0.359	0.116	*0.924*					
BAS	0.850	0.657	0.065	0.041	0.159	*0.811*				
FC	0.944	0.808	0.328	0.081	0.072	0.199	*0.899*			
PQ	0.897	0.744	0.219	0.108	0.383	0.254	0.157	*0.862*		
UG	0.925	0.756	0.328	0.108	0.208	0.183	0.573	0.293	*0.869*	
PI	0.936	0.830	0.359	0.135	0.599	0.203	0.077	0.468	0.219	*0.911*

Notes: The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) values are marked in italics

All independent and dependent latent variables were included in one single multifactorial CFA model in AMOS 21.0 software. The model demonstrated an acceptable goodness of fit. The Chi-square/df (cmin/df) value was 1.93, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value was 0.97, the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value was 0.87, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value was 0.03, the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI) was 0.96, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value was 0.05. All the values were above the permitted threshold (Hair Jr. *et al.* 2010). For model fit, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 21.0 software. The model led to a good fit as recommended in the literature (Hair Jr. *et al.* 2010). The cmin/df value was 2.12, the CFI value was 0.96, the AGFI value was 0.87, the SRMR value was 0.07, the TLI value was 0.95, and the RMSEA value was 0.06.

5. Results and Implications

Main effects of the study

Firm-created social media communication showed no positive influence on the dimensions of brand equity, which did not confirm hypotheses *H1a* (p-value 0.07; *t*-value 1.77; β 0.14), *H1b* (p-value 0.31; *t*-value -1.00; β -0.08) and *H1c* (p-value 0.47; *t*-value *-0.71*; β -0.05). User-generated content on Facebook had a positive effect on the two dimensions of brand equity, brand loyalty and perceived quality, which supported *H2b* (p-value 0.001; *t*-value 3.37; β 0.26) and *H2c* (p-value 0.001; *t*-value 3.78; β 0.29). Nonetheless, no significant effect was detected for brand awareness/association, thus rejecting *H2a* (p-value 0.17; *t*-value 1.36; β 0.11). Moreover, firm-created and user-generated social media communication had no impact on brand purchase intention, thus rejecting *H3* (p-value 0.48; *t*-value -0.69; β -0.04) and *H4* (p-value 0.40; *t*-value 0.82; β 0.06).

Brand awareness/association showed no positive influence on brand purchase intentions, thus rejecting *H5* (p-value 0.24; *t*-value 1.16; β 0.06). Finally, perceived quality and brand loyalty had a positive effect on brand purchase intention, leading to the confirmation of *H6* (p-value 0.001; *t*-value 9.65; β 0.51) and *H7* (p-value 0.001; *t*-value 4.87; β 0.27). The tests of our hypotheses and standardized structural coefficients are displayed in table III.
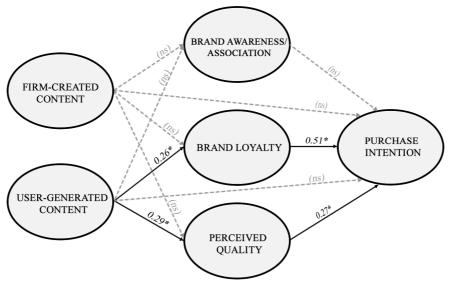
Table III. Standardized structural coefficients of the model

HYPOTHESIS	STANDARDIZED STRUCTURAL COEFFICIENTS	ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION
H1a. Firm-created social media → Brand awareness/association	0.14	REJECTED
H1b. Firm-created social media → Brand loyalty	-0.08	REJECTED
H1c. Firm-created social media → Perceived quality	-0.05	REJECTED
H2a. User-generated social media → Brand awareness/association	0.11	REJECTED
H2b. User-generated social media → Brand loyalty	0.26 *	ACCEPTED
H2c. User-generated social media → Perceived quality	0.29 *	ACCEPTED
H3. Firm-created social media → Purchase intention	-0.04	REJECTED
H4. User-generated social media → Purchase intention	0.06	REJECTED
H5. Brand awareness/association → Purchase intention	0.06	REJECTED
H6. Brand loyalty → Purchase intention	0.51*	ACCEPTED
H7. Perceived quality → Purchase intention	0.27*	ACCEPTED

Notes: * $t \geq 3.37$, p-value ≤ 0.001; cmin/df = 2. 12; CFI = 0.96; AGFI = 0.87; SRMR = 0.07; TLI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.06

The standardized estimates for the structural equation model are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Standardized estimates for the model

Notes: Non-significant paths are marked as *(ns)*; * $t \geq 3.37$, p-value ≤ 0.001

6. Summary and Discussion

This study offers two important contributions to scholars and brand managers. First, the study provides conceptual insights into how different types of social media communication foster CBBE dimensions. Second, for a better understanding of the behavioral impacts of these two communication instruments, we analyzed their influence on brand purchase intention.

The examination of the impact of social media communication on CBBE constructs demonstrates that user-generated social media communication positively effects brand loyalty and perceived quality. In contrast, firm-created social media communication shows no influence on brand equity dimensions. Despite the growing expenditures in social media marketing (Simmons 2008), consumers are reluctant to internalize the value that firms are creating. One relevant aspect of these findings is the source of credibility. The distinction between firm-created and user-generated social media communication reveals that consumers consciously differentiate between these sources of information, thereby confirming the findings of Bruhn and colleagues (2012). This finding demonstrates that consumers rely heavily on the opinions of family, friends, and other users regarding the quality of the services provided by these firms. Therefore, eWOM is thought to be unbiased because other consumers adopt the content as credible and trustworthy (Christodoulides 2012), thus serving as a validator of a brand's attractiveness.

We added brand purchase intention in our study to investigate the behavioral influences of CBBE constructs over Facebook users (Cobb-Walgren *et al.* 1995; K. L. Keller 1993). Once brand loyalty and perceived quality are strongly related to purchase intention, it is recommended that companies encourage consumers to generate content. In contrast, companies that try to control user-generated content may experience unnecessary negative eWOM (R. J. Brodie & Hollebeek 2011; Cova & Pace 2006). Moreover, neither firm-create content nor user-generated content had a direct impact on Facebook's users brand purchase intention.

Corporate brand profiles on Facebook should be managed to explore the interests of the consumers and to encourage them to create content and, consequently, word of mouth recommendations (Muntinga *et al.* 2011). Moreover, eWOM is a brand communication technique that should be explored by brand managers. A benchmark of the correct utilization of this technique is the Starbucks case study (Gorry & Westbrook 2011). As part of eWOM

marketing strategies, special discounts and text messaging with promotional updates could also be implemented (Shankar *et al.* 2010).

In summary, social media platforms provide unlimited ways for consumers to interact, express, share and create content about brands and products (Camarero & San José 2011). Thus, the joint implementation of firm-created social media communication (eliciting eWOM) and user-generated social media communication offer numerous opportunities for increasing brand equity dimensions, consequently growing brand equity.

Brand managers should incorporate social media communication as part of their marketing communication agenda (Laroche *et al.* 2012). Marketing and brand managers must recognize that social networking sites are an essential aspect of the Internet, and many consumers use them in their daily routines. Social networking sites offer firms the opportunity to engage with consumers and even to influence their conversations (Amichai-Hamburger 2008). Furthermore, brand managers should integrate the findings of this study into their social media strategies to enhance the performance of their companies.

7. Research limitations and directions for future research

There are some limitations of our study that can provide guidelines for future research. We suggest that all leading social networking sites be analyzed to gain a broader understanding of social media communication. This type of analysis would provide academic researchers and managers a better understanding of the nuances of social media communication.

Moreover, a broader range of industries should be examined in future studies. This type of research would give an indication of how consumers perceive brands of different industries in social media platforms.

For a broader understanding of the benefits that social media communication can have on brand equity, future research should also relate social brand communication to company financial performance indicators.

Finally, a Polish sample was used in this research, making it difficult to generalize the results to other countries. The majority of social media users in Poland are still young people, therefore one should take social, economic, and cultural differences into account when replicating this study. Future research in this field should be conducted in different countries to a produce a stronger validation and generalization of the findings.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991) *Managing brand equity*. New York, New York, USA: Press, The Free.

Aaker, D. A. & Biel, A. (1992) *Building strong brands. Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 11. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540156

Aaker, D. A. & Joachimsthaler, E. (2000) *Brand leadership. Building Assets in the*. New York, New York, USA: Free Press.

Allaway, A. W., Huddleston, P., Whipple, J. & Ellinger, A. E. (2011) Customer-based brand equity, equity drivers, and customer loyalty in the supermarket industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 20(3), 190–204. doi:10.1108/10610421111134923

Amichai-Hamburger, Y. (2008) Internet empowerment. *Computers in Human Behavior* 24(5), 1773–1775. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2008.02.001

Bagozzi, R. P. & Yi, Y. (1988) On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the academy of marketing science* 16(1), 74–94.

Balasubramanian, S. & Mahajan, V. (2001) The economic leverage of the virtual community. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* 5(3), 103–138.

Baldauf, A., Cravens, K. S., Diamantopoulos, A. & Zeugner-Roth, K. P. (2009) The Impact of Product-Country Image and Marketing Efforts on Retailer-Perceived Brand Equity: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Retailing* 85(4), 437–452. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2009.04.004

Bergh, B. G. Vanden, Lee, M., Quilliam, E. T. & Hove, T. (2011) The multidimensional nature and brand impact of user-generated ad parodies in social media. *International Journal of Advertising* 30(1), 103. doi:10.2501/IJA-30-1-103-131

Berthon, P. R., Pitt, L. & Campbell, C. (2008) Ad lib: When customers create the ad. *California Management Review* 50(4), 6–31.

Berthon, P. R., Pitt, L. F., Plangger, K. & Shapiro, D. (2012) Marketing meets Web 2.0, social media, and creative consumers: Implications for international marketing strategy. *Business Horizons*. "Kelley School of Business, Indiana University". doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2012.01.007

Brodie, R. J. & Hollebeek, L. D. (2011) Response: Advancing and Consolidating Knowledge About Customer Engagement. *Journal of Service Research* 14(3), 283–284. doi:10.1177/1094670511415523

Brodie, Roderick J., Ilic, A., Juric, B. & Hollebeek, L. (2013) Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research* 66, 105–114. Elsevier B.V. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.029

Bruhn, M., Schoenmueller, V. & Schäfer, D. B. (2012) Are social media replacing traditional media in terms of brand equity creation? *Management Research Review* 35(9), 770–790. doi:10.1108/01409171211255948

Buil, I., Chernatony, L. De & Martínez, E. (2008) A cross-national validation of the consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 17(6), 384–392. doi:10.1108/10610420810904121

Byrne, B. (2010) *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*, Second edi. New York, USA: Taylor & Francis Group.

Camarero, C. & San José, R. (2011) Social and attitudinal determinants of viral marketing dynamics. *Computers in Human Behavior* 27(6), 2292–2300. Elsevier Ltd. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.07.008

Carter, N. J., Schwertman, N. C. & Kiser, T. L. (2009) A comparison of two boxplot methods for detecting univariate outliers which adjust for sample size and asymmetry. *Statistical Methodology* 6(6), 604–621. Elsevier B.V. doi:10.1016/j.stamet.2009.07.001

Chatterjee, P. (2001) Online reviews: do consumers use them? *Advances in consumer research* 28, 129–134.

Chen, S.-C., Yen, D. C. & Hwang, M. I. (2012) Factors influencing the continuance intention to the usage of Web 2.0: An empirical study. *Computers in Human Behavior* 28(3), 933–941. Elsevier Ltd. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.12.014

Chevalier, J. & Mayzlin, D. (2006) The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research* XLIII(August), 345–354.

Christodoulides, G. (2012) Cross-national differences in e-WOM influence. *European Journal of Marketing* 46(11), 1689–1707. doi:10.1108/03090561211260040

Christodoulides, G., Jevons, C. & Bonhomme, J. (2012) Memo to Marketers: Quantitative Evidence for Change. How User-Generated Content Really Affects Brands. *Journal of Advertising Research* 52(1), 53. doi:10.2501/JAR-52-1-053-064

Chu, S.-C. & Kim, Y. (2011) Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *International Journal of Advertising* 30(1), 47. doi:10.2501/IJA-30-1-047-075

Cobb-Walgren, C., Ruble, C. & Donthu, N. (1995) Brand equity, brand preference, and purchase intent. *Journal of Advertising* XXIV(3), 25–40.

Cova, B. & Pace, S. (2006) Brand community of convenience products: new forms of customer empowerment – the case "my Nutella The Community". *European Journal of Marketing* 40(9/10), 1087–1105. doi:10.1108/03090560610681023

Craig, C. & Douglas, S. (2000) *International marketing research*, 2nd ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Dellarocas, C., Zhang, X. (Michael) & Awad, N. F. (2007) Exploring the value of online product reviews in forecasting sales: The case of motion pictures. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 21(4), 23–45. Elsevier. doi:10.1002/dir.20087

Edwards, J. & Bagozzi, R. (2000) On the nature and direction of relationships between constructs and measures. *Psychological methods* 5(2), 155–174. doi:10.1037//1082-989X.5.2

Erdem, T. & Swait, J. (1998) Brand Equity as a Signaling Phenomenon. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 7(2), 131–157. doi:10.1207/s15327663jcp0702_02

Fombrun, C. J. (1996) *Reputation Realizing Value from the Corporate Image*. Boston M.A.: Harvard Business School Press.

Fornell, C. & Larcker, D. (1981) Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of marketing research* 18(1), 39–50.

Gil, R. B., Andrés, E. F. & Salinas, E. M. (2007) Family as a source of consumer-based brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 16(3), 188–199. doi:10.1108/10610420710751564

Godes, D. & Mayzlin, D. (2004) Using Online Conversations to Study Word-of-Mouth Communication. *Marketing Science* 23(4), 545–560. doi:10.1287/mksc.1040.0071

Godes, D. & Mayzlin, D. (2009) Firm-Created Word-of-Mouth Communication: Evidence from a Field Test. *Marketing Science* 28(4), 721–739. doi:10.1287/mksc.1080.0444

Goodrich, K. (2011) Anarchy of effects? Exploring attention to online advertising and multiple outcomes. *Psychology and Marketing* 28(April 2011), 417–440. doi:10.1002/mar

Gorry, G. A. & Westbrook, R. a. (2011) Can you hear me now? Learning from customer stories. *Business Horizons* 54(6), 575–584. "Kelley School of Business, Indiana University". doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.08.002

Groenhaug, K., Kvistastein, O. & Gronmo, S. (1991) Factors moderating advertising effectiveness as reflected in 333 tested advertisements. *Journal of Advertising Research* 31(November).

Hair Jr., J. F., Black, Wi. C., Babin, B. J. & Anderson, R. E. (2010) *Multivariate data analysis. vectors*, 7th Editio. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Haley, R. & Baldinger, A. (2000) The ARF copy research validity project. *Journal of advertising research* 40(11), 114–135.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G. & Gremler, D. D. (2004) Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 18(1), 38–52. doi:10.1002/dir.10073

Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons* 53(1), 59–68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2012) The Britney Spears universe: Social media and viral marketing at its best. *Business Horizons* 55(1), 27–31. "Kelley School of Business, Indiana University". doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.08.009

Karakaya, F. & Barnes, N. G. (2010) Impact of online reviews of customer care experience on brand or company selection. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 27(5), 447–457. doi:10.1108/07363761011063349

Keller, K. L. (1993) Conceptualizing, measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing* 57(January), 1–22.

Keller, K. L. (2009) Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment. *Journal of Marketing Communications* 15(2-3), 139–155. doi:10.1080/13527260902757530

Keller, K. & Lehmann, D. (2003) How do brands create value? *Marketing Management* 5(May/June), 27–31.

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P. & Silvestre, B. S. (2011) Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons* 54(3), 241–251. "Kelley School of Business, Indiana University". doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005

Kim, H. & Kim, W. G. (2005) The relationship between brand equity and firms' performance in luxury hotels and chain restaurants. *Tourism Management* 26(4), 549–560. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2004.03.010

Krishnan, H. S. (1996) Characteristics of memory associations: A consumer-based brand equity perspective. *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 13(4), 389–405. doi:10.1016/S0167-8116(96)00021-3

Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M.-O. & Sankaranarayanan, R. (2012) The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. *Computers in Human Behavior* 28(5), 1755–1767. Elsevier Ltd. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.016

Lee, Y.-K., Back, K.-J. & Kim, J.-Y. (2009) Family Restaurant Brand Personality and Its Impact On Customer's eMotion, Satisfaction, and Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 33(3), 305–328. doi:10.1177/1096348009338511

Li, C. & Bernoff, J. (2011) *Groundswell: Winning in a world transformed by social technologies*. Boston M.A.: Harvard Business Review Press.

Mackay, M. M. (2001) Evaluation of brand equity measures: Further empirical results. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 10(1), 38–51.

Mägi, A. W. (2003) Share of wallet in retailing: the effects of customer satisfaction, loyalty cards and shopper characteristics. *Journal of Retailing* 79(2), 97–106. doi:10.1016/S0022-4359(03)00008-3

Manchanda, P., Goh, K. Y. & Chintagunta, P. K. (2006) The Effect of Banner Advertising on Internet Purchasing. *Journal of Marketing Research* XLIII(February), 98–108.

Mangold, W. G. & Faulds, D. J. (2009) Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons* 52(4), 357–365. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002

Martin, B. a. S., Durme, J. Van, Raulas, M. & Merisavo, M. (2003) Email Advertising: Exploratory Insights from Finland. *Journal of Advertising Research* 43(03), 293–300. doi:10.1017/S0021849903030265

Moradi, H. & Zarei, A. (2012) Creating consumer-based brand equity for young Iranian consumers via country of origin sub-components effects. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 24(3), 394–413. doi:10.1108/13555851211237885

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M. & Smit, E. G. (2011) Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of Advertising* 30(1), 13–46. doi:10.2501/IJA-30-1-013-046

Netemeyer, R. G., Krishnan, B., Pullig, C., Wang, G., Yagci, M., Dean, D., Ricks, J., *et al.* (2004) Developing and validating measures of facets of customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Business Research* 57(2), 209–224. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(01)00303-4

OECD. (2007) Participative web and user-created content: Web 2.0 wikis and social networking. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Retrieved from http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1554640

Oliver, R. (1997) *Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer*. New York, New York, USA: McGraw-Hill.

Pappu, R., Quester, P. G. & Cooksey, R. W. (2005) Consumer-based brand equity: improving the measurement – empirical evidence. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 14(3), 143–154. doi:10.1108/10610420510601012

Park, C. & Srinivasan, V. (1994) A survey-based method for measuring and understanding brand equity and its extendibility. *Journal of marketing research* XXXI(May), 271–288.

Raggio, R. D. & Leone, R. P. (2007) The theoretical separation of brand equity and brand value: Managerial implications for strategic planning. *Journal of Brand Management* 14(5), 380–395. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550078

Riegner, C. (2007) Word of Mouth on the Web: The Impact of Web 2.0 on Consumer Purchase Decisions. *Journal of Advertising Research* 47(4), 436. doi:10.2501/S0021849907070456

Schau, H. J., Jr, A. M. M. & Arnould, E. J. (2009) How Brand Community Practices Create Value. *Journal of Marketing* 73(September), 30–51.

Shankar, V. & Batra, R. (2009) The Growing Influence of Online Marketing Communications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 23(4), 285–287. Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, Inc. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2009.07.006

Shankar, V., Venkatesh, A., Hofacker, C. & Naik, P. (2010) Mobile Marketing in the Retailing Environment: Current Insights and Future Research Avenues. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 24(2), 111–120. Elsevier B.V. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2010.02.006

Simmons, G. (2008) Marketing to postmodern consumers: introducing the internet chameleon. *European Journal of Marketing* 42(3/4), 299–310. doi:10.1108/03090560810852940

Smith, A. N., Fischer, E. & Yongjian, C. (2012) How Does Brand-related User-generated Content Differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter? *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 26(2), 102–113. Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, Inc. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2012.01.002

SoTrender. (2012) *Fanpage Trends*, Sierpień. Warszawa: SmartNet Research & Solutions.

Srivastava, R. & Shocker, A. (1991) Brand equity: A perspective on its meaning and measurement, 91–124. Boston M.A.: Marketing Science Institute.

Styles, C. & Ambler, T. (1995) *Brand management*, 581–593. Pitman, London: Financial times handbook of management.

Szymanski, D., Bharadwaj, S. & Varadarajan, P. (1993) An analysis of the market share-profitability relationship. *The Journal of Marketing* 57(July), 1–18.

Tauber, E. (1988) Brand leverage: strategy for growth in a cost-control world. *Journal of Advertising Research* 26, 26–30.

Taylor, C. R. (2013) Editorial: Hot topics in advertising research. *International Journal of Advertising* 32(1), 7. doi:10.2501/IJA-32-1-007-012

Tsiros, M., Mittal, V. & Ross, Jr., W. T. (2004) The Role of Attributions in Customer Satisfaction: A Reexamination. *Journal of Consumer Research* 31(2), 476–483. doi:10.1086/422124

Villanueva, J., Yoo, S. & Hanssens, D. M. (2008) The impact of marketing-induced versus word-of-mouth customer acquisition on customer equity growth. *Journal of Marketing Research* XLV(February), 48–59.

Villarejo-Ramos, A. F. & Sánchez-Franco, M. J. (2005) The impact of marketing communication and price promotion on brand equity. *Journal of Brand Management* 12(6), 431–444. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540238

Walsh, G., Mitchell, V.-W., Jackson, P. R. & Beatty, S. E. (2009) Examining the Antecedents and Consequences of Corporate Reputation: A Customer Perspective. *British Journal of Management* 20(2), 187–203. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2007.00557.x

Wątła, A. & Donajski, J. (2011) *Raport strategiczny IAB Polska Internet 2011*, 1–75. Warszawa: VFP Communications.

Winer, R. S. (2009) New Communications Approaches in Marketing: Issues and Research Directions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 23(2), 108–117. Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, Inc. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2009.02.004

Yang, Z. & Peterson, R. T. (2004) Customer perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty: The role of switching costs. *Psychology and Marketing* 21(10), 799–822. doi:10.1002/mar.20030

Yasin, N., Noor, M. & Mohamad, O. (2007) Does image of country-of-origin matter to brand equity? *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 16(1), 38–48. doi:10.1108/10610420710731142

Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001) Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of business research* 52(1), 1–14. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00098-3

Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2002) Testing cross-cultural invariance of the brand equity creation process. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 11(6), 380–398. doi:10.1108/10610420210445505

Yoo, B., Donthu, N. & Lee, S. (2000) An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 28(2), 195–211.

Bruno Schivinski is Assistant Teacher of Marketing Research at the Gdansk University of Technology. He is a Doctoral Student at the Department of Marketing at the same university. He graduated from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University with a BS in Management and Marketing. He also has a Master's Degree in Sociology with a concentration in Marketing Research. He is an Internet professional with more than 12 years of experience. His work has been presented in several conferences in Poland and abroad.

Dariusz Dąbrowski is a Marketing and Research Professor. He is the Chair of the Marketing Department at the Faculty of Management and Economics at the Gdansk University of Technology. His research focuses on consumer behavior, marketing relations, and the development of new products. Professor Dąbrowski is the author of more than 60 articles and publications. His work has appeared in leading Polish management and marketing journals and other scholarly venues.

All GUT Working Papers are downloadable at:
http://www.zie.pg.gda.pl/web/english/working-papers

GUT Working Papers are listed in Repec/Ideas
http://ideas.repec.org/s/gdk/wpaper.html