An Empirical Study on the Relationship between Perception Reality of Social Media and User's Urban Brand Attachment

Yingji Li

Department of Business Administration, Chongqing Institute of Engineering, Chongqing, 400056, China

Abstract: With the constant consolidation of brand status in social media, consumers'expectations have been magnified, and technology needs to be constantly developed to coordinate with this interactive process. In the process of escalating interaction, it is indispensable for brands to satisfy consumers'expectations in a one-to-one way and in a way of intimate relationship provided by social media. According to the literature on communication, this paper designs a successful social media strategy from the perspective of quasi-social interaction theory. The results of three experiments support the role of quasi-social interaction in the development of positive outcome relationships. The results of intermediary analysis show that brand-related feelings outweigh interaction itself, and contribute to brand loyalty and willingness to provide information for the brand. The results of this paper show that when consumers realize that the brand's social media response is automatically set, then these effects do not exist. The results of this study provide theoretical guidance for marketing personnel to cultivate the relationship between brand and consumer in the context of social media.

1. Introduction

With the increasing use of social media, consumers'expectations of brands are also increasing. As a recent study shows, more than half of consumers want brands to respond to consumer reviews. With the steady growth of interaction between consumers and brands on the platform, the company is gradually moving towards the use of internal and external social media teams and software for automated participation. Although it has not fully reached the mature level mentioned before, the software can automatically and intelligently respond to consumer information through programming, and this software can integrate a large number of custom variables to achieve personalized interaction. As technological advances continue to be applied to a small number of social media information, it will become more and more difficult to distinguish machine response from manual response. When they have no hesitation to move towards automated participation options, it is very important to understand the intimate interpersonal relationships that marketers get through the platform of social media while satisfying consumers'expectations of response in an environment of escalating interaction.

2. Theoretical Background

The theory of quasi-social interaction originates from the literature of communication, which explains the development of the relationship between consumers and mass media, such as radio and television. Quasi-socialization theory is described as an illusory experience, such as the interaction between consumers and others, as if they were in a reciprocal relationship there. Essentially, people think that they are in a direct two-way communication, and they feel as if they mediate the person who talks directly to them. Quasi-social interaction can develop into consumers'awareness of intermediating them like "real friends". Quasi-social interaction can be fostered through careful construction of mechanisms, such as hints of linguistic and non-linguistic interaction, and quasi-social interaction can also be transmitted to the latter.

Although some studies assume that quasi-social interaction is formed through multiple interactions, others believe that the length of the relationship is not directly related to quasi-social

interaction, and quasi-social interaction occurs in the initial contact. Although sustained interaction builds a sustained relationship, and may reinforce this feeling, quasi-social interaction occurs through isolated interaction. In addition, although the traditional quasi-social interaction research focuses on the relationship between audience and others in the broadcast media, recent studies have shown that it may extend to other areas. For example, quasi-social interaction may be fostered through the design and presentation of information. For example, she does not rely on the words of broadcasters or actors to mediate personality.

3. Perceived authenticity of social media

From the recent quasi-social interaction devices to the computer-mediated environment, this study argues that the development of quasi-social interaction is not limited to the traditional mass media, but can also foster quasi-social interaction through online environment information, because online environment information can close the distance between audience and intermediated people (such as brands and celebrities) through design. Although the Internet is different from traditional quasi-social environments (such as television and radio), because direct two-way communication between individuals and others may be technology-based, consumer-brand interaction on these websites tends to be one-way communication. For example, brand agents usually respond based on pre-approved lines or response outlines. Sometimes these agents are identifiable, but most of them are not, because they do not leave any clues to determine who is responding on behalf of the brand and no information directly from the brand to support this perception (as opposed to employees representing the brand). In addition, in the case of multiple interactions with the brand, brand response may come from different employees, but for consumers, it may come from a certain responder (e.g., brand).

In addition, the emergence of social media has also brought about the development of new technologies that can help marketers manage these interactions without staff strain. The automated response software of social media enables marketers to standardize their responses to consumer reviews, and even create seemingly personalized responses through dynamic generation of scanned information content or geolocation. Whether these responses are from a living person or a pre-programmed process, this type of response tends to be one-way rather than two-way communication, which is consistent with the traditional quasi-social interaction. Just as other media use linguistic and non-linguistic information cues, information cues can be used to maintain a sense of two-way interaction between individuals and brands, thus forming quasi-social interaction.

Correspondingly, the two information components tested in this paper should shift from traditional quasi-social interaction to online environment. The first is the perceptual interaction between the individual and the audience, which can be implied by hinting at information cues of response and listening. The second clue is the openness of communication, which reflects the individual's heart and can also be displayed through information content.

4. User City Brand Attachment

Marketing literature defines interactivity as an important feature of the online environment and defines it in many ways. Although there are many studies on interactivity, there is not a unified definition of interactivity at present. Some scholars define interactivity based on the technical functionality of the website (for example, active browsing, providing feedback and improving the speed of the website); others regard interactivity as a perceived variable.

In terms of communication, openness increases the sense of quasi-social interaction. Because quasi-social interaction is similar to friendship, the act of revealing information to the audience should involve intimacy and trust. Previous scholars of quasi-social interaction described the concept as "breaking the fourth wall", which meant that individuals were separated from their original roles to reveal information about individuals and audiences. The act of revelation gives the audience the feeling that he has acquired the internal information of others in the intimate environment and created such a feeling that they seem to know the person better. In fact, an

individual in a quasi-social interaction expresses his or her desire to understand the details of the person and to imitate the real human relationship. In addition, perceived self-disclosure fosters quasi-social interaction by increasing intimacy in interpersonal relationships and reducing uncertainty.

The study also shows that quasi-social interaction has a better predictive effect on TV viewer relationship than other behavioral variables, indicating that quasi-social interaction is a more important viewing motivation than project content (Conway and Rubin 1991). Quasi-social interaction also correlates with satisfaction with TV shopping experience (Limand Kim 2011) and increases appreciation and commitment to social norms (Hartmann and Goldhoorn 2011).

5. Empirical Analysis

Survey tools measure the relationship between brand and social media through participants'reflection on the situation they encounter in reality. At the beginning of the survey, participants thought about the brand, business or service with which they were connected through social media, and remembered the interaction when they answered the survey questions. Participants gave brand names and then briefly described their memories of social media interactions. Researchers were asked to retain this memory throughout the study; therefore, the interaction of specific brands in the past was significant throughout the implementation of the survey. The researchers then answered questions related to interest (see Table 1), followed by related demographic questions.

We validate the hypothetical relationship. Two independent variables (interactivity and openness) are validated separately in structural equation models, because the addition of the second independent variable as the antecedent variable of the mediation variable will change the focusing mediation path coefficient (Iacobucci, Saldanha, and Deng 2007). In the two models, loyalty and willingness to provide information are taken as dependent variables and quasi-social interaction as mediating variables. Structural equation fitness was good (Openness: 2 (85) = 206.81, p= 000; CFI = 95; IFI = 95; SRMR = 07; RMSEA = 08; Interactivity: 2 (99) = 281.08, P = 000; CFI = 95; SRMR = 07; RMSEA = 101). Results Supported hypothesis H1a and H1b, interaction and openness were significantly directly related to quasi-social interaction (path a). Consumers'perception of interaction and openness will increase their quasi-social interaction. The relationship between quasi-social interaction and loyalty awareness and willingness to provide information was significantly positively correlated (path b), supporting H2a and H2b. Therefore, quasi-social interaction enhances loyalty awareness and willingness to provide information.

6. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the mediating effect between survey methods and structural equation models, this study shows the role of quasi-social interaction in the relationship between information prompting and focus output variables in social media, that is, brand can create quasi-social interaction by showing interaction and openness through information prompting. This quasi-social connection with the brand has gone beyond the interaction itself, but drives the loyalty to the brand and the willingness to provide information.

References

[1] Ko E. Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. Journal of Business Research, August, 1-7[J]. Journal of Business Research,

2012, 65(10):1480-1486.

[2] Chen S C, Lin C P. The impact of customer experience and perceived value on sustainable social relationship in blogs: An empirical study[J]. Technological Forecasting & Social Change, 2015, 96:40-50.

[3] Wickham R E. Perceived authenticity in romantic partners[J]. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 2013, 49(5):878-887.

[4] Rui G. Empirical Study on the Effects of Perceived Value and Social Influence on User Loyalty for Social Networking Sites[J]. Journal of Information Resources Management, 2013, 3(1):10-21.

[5] Chebatf J C. Channel structure, consumer involvement and perceived service quality: An empirical study of the distribution of a service[J]. Journal of Marketing Management, 1995, 11(1-3):227-241.

[6] Popp B, Wilson B, Horbel C, et al. Relationship building through Facebook brand pages: the multifaceted roles of identification, satisfaction, and perceived relationship investment[J]. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 2016, 24(3):1-17.

[7] Süß S, Kleiner M. The Psychological Relationship between Companies and Freelancers: An Empirical Study of the Commitment and the Work-related Expectations of Freelancers[J]. Management Revue, 2007, 18(3):251-270.