

SELF-PERCEIVED BRAND RELEVANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Branding efforts represent the promise of consistency and quality an organization makes to its constituents, typically through traditional media such as advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and sponsorship. Focus on social media marketing was initially viewed as yet another way for organizations to tell their story. With the explosive growth of social media networking sites, however, social media is now viewed as the 'glue' that holds together an organization's marketing campaign because it touches across each promotional medium. The purpose of this study is to investigate the self-perceived brand relevance of and satisfaction with social media as a brand. In this study, the social media site (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) represents both the brand and the brand community. We found that frequency and duration of use, gender, and other activities positively impact self-perceived brand relevance, however, these relationships change somewhat when social media is examined as high/low self-presentation and self-disclosure. Integration of the individual into a brand community positively impacts satisfaction with the brand on many levels: brand image, marketing communications, overall marketing strategy, relationships built through social media, and with social media in general.

INTRODUCTION

A company's brand is often nearly as valuable as the products or services that they offer (Steinman and Hawkins, 2010). Branding efforts represent the promise of consistency and quality an organization makes to its constituents, typically through traditional media such as advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and sponsorship. Focus on social media marketing was initially viewed as yet another way for organizations to tell their story. With the explosive growth of social media networking sites, however, social media is now viewed as the 'glue' that holds together an organization's marketing campaign because it touches across each promotional medium. For example, LEGO fans are united worldwide through forums, web pages, and services on lugnet.com that enhance their relationship with the brand and facilitates online shopping for LEGO products. The

purpose of this study is to investigate the self-perceived brand relevance of and satisfaction with social media as a brand. In this study, the social media site (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) represents both the brand and the brand community. Respondents were asked to consider the social media brand they use most frequently in relation to how they engage in this brand community. This study represents the first time an established brand community scale has been used to investigate a community in the social media brand context.

Theoretical Background

Branding. Researchers have long accepted that brand image may serve as a halo which influences consumers' beliefs of individual attributes (Beckwith and Lehman, 1975). Given the competitive forces facing most firms today, branding strategy is an important 'clutter buster' of differentiation in saturated, global markets. A brand, or "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate

them from those of competition” (Keller, 2003, p. 3), represents a promise of consistency and quality. Literature supports that a strong brand is correlated with improved brand loyalty, brand-based price premiums and higher margins, improved new product introductions, greater shareholder and stakeholder returns, and clear, valued and sustainable points of differentiation as well as the simplification of consumer decision making, the reduction of consumer risk, and the establishment of expectations (Davis, 2000; Keller, 2003).

Brand Communities. Initially, marketers envisioned a brand community as geographically bound. Earlier ethnographic fieldwork of subcultures of consumption among bikers (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) and skydivers (Celsi, Rose, and Leigh, 1993) provided greater understanding of how consumers organize their lives and identities. However, Muniz, Jr. and O’Guinn (2001) subsequently envisioned a brand community as a “specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand.” McAlexander, Shouten, and Koenig (2002) state that, “A brand community from a customer-experiential perspective is a fabric of relationships in which the customer is situated. Crucial relationships have typically included those between the customer and the brand, between the customer and the firm, between the customer and the product in use, and among fellow customers.” (McAlexander et al., 2002, p. 38)

Devasagayam and Buff (2005, 2008) later proposed that a limited conceptualization of community may not be congruent with modern technological advances. Their research illustrated that brand communities may be conceived and nurtured in the virtual world as well as the physical world. Just as physical brand communities meet in predetermined locations to share their affinity for Harley-Davidson, for example, a virtual brand community can meet online at Kleenex.com to share their photos and emotions at the “Just Let It Out” web page. The virtual community

develops its own rituals beyond the control of the brand owner, and the brand identity establishes its own existence. In both cases (physical and virtual), strong brand communities exist when customers form relationships with fellow customers that all center on the brand.

Virtual Brand Communities. Brand communities in which individuals interact online (non-geographically bound) offer many advantages to organizations as compared to physical brand communities (geographically bound). For example, some geographically bound events are choreographed by the brand owner and necessitate infrequent gatherings due to the overwhelming logistics of organizing the event as well as the extensive commitment of resources. Virtual participation usually is less resource dependent and might facilitate more frequent participation in the community. When Mattel launched BarbieGirls.com in 2007, this microsite represented the first ever online, global site designed exclusively for bringing girls around the world together (“Barbie Launches...”, 2007, April 20). As another example, Nintendo supports an online rewards program that rewards participants for sharing information about their products. The Club Nintendo coins earned online can be used to purchase more Nintendo games. The very nature of the brand, the culture of the firm or organization, characteristics of the products or services produced, and attendant consumer behavior may also determine the frequency of member participation. The two extreme ends can be conceptualized according to the ‘Exchange’ continuum: Transactional and Relational.

Delanty (2010) studied the work of three notable social and philosophical theorists who draw similar conclusions regarding the virtual community medium as ‘complementary’ to the physical community. The first theorist, Howard Reinhold, believes that virtual communities are separate from the physical entity and represent a new space where people come together. A second theorist, Manuel Castells, views virtual communities as a complementary channel for

users of similar interests, but views the relationships as ‘thin’ as opposed to physical community where relationships are ‘thick’ (or closer) due to personal bonding. The third theorist, Craig Calhoun, views virtual community as strengthening already existing communities more than connecting diverse individuals to create new platforms. While the adoption of the products may increase the likelihood of membership in a brand community, the virtual community appears to be viewed as ‘complementary’ which may further increase the adoption of the preferred brand products.

Just as marketers can strengthen brand communities among consumers by facilitating shared experiences among their consumers (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, 2002), the same could potentially serve to strengthen brand communities using social media. Because an organization’s consumers must accept a mental association of the brand on their own terms, it becomes very important for them to socially negotiate the brand. A virtual brand community within an organization could potentially enhance the consumer social negotiation process. Thompson and Sinha (2008) found that higher levels of participation and longer-term membership in a brand community increased the adoption of the preferred brands’ new products and also decreased the likelihood that they would adopt products from the competition. Thus, it is likely that a virtual brand community for consumers may lead to greater allegiance and in turn, increased customer retention. For this reason, Ford has syncmyride.com where consumers can interact and share information about the Sync product found in Ford automobiles, and owners of the Mini Cooper and Subaru have online brand communities to voice their comments.

Social Media. Although the Internet has represented a society of communicators from its onset, the concept of ‘social media’ is derived from a paradigm shift that took place during the web 2.0 evolutionary phase of the Internet. The emergence of web 2.0 led to the rapid growth of social media and mobile internet use over the

course of the last several years (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, 2010; Ruzic and Bilos, 2010). This shift enabled social media to become interactive and provide constituents with a ‘voice.’ For this reason, social media is often referred to as consumer-generated media or user-generated media.

Ahlqvist, Back, Heinonen, and Halonen (2010) describe this paradigm shift as road maps comprised of three thematic areas: society, companies, and local environment. The major shifts have crystallized into five development lines: (1) greater transparency in society, (2) a ubiquitous participatory model, (3) reflexive empowerment citizens, (4) the duality of personalization/fragmentation vs. mass effects/integration, and (5) new relations of physical and virtual worlds. Evans (2008) defines social media as, “The democratization of information, transforming people from content readers to content publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers.” (Evans, 2008, p.1) These conversations bring to mind the customers who are making sense of information and attempting to accept the brand promise.

Kaplan and Haelein (2010) provided a classification of social media by grouping applications as collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds. These social media are classified on a matrix according to two key elements: (1) high/low self-presentation and self-disclosure and (2) high/medium/low social presence and media richness. These key elements are derived from the work of Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) on the social presence theory which states that the higher the social presence, the more likely communication partners are to influence each other’s behavior. The key elements are also derived from the work of Daft and Lengel (1986) on the media richness theory in which the goal of any communication is to resolve ambiguity and reduce uncertainty.

Social Media Branding. As consumers seek to resolve ambiguity and reduce uncertainty about brands, social media has been taking branding to new heights due to faster deployment and turnaround of information (Chordes, 2009). Social media is a catalyst that works most effectively when it is finely woven into the brand's other promotional activities (Allison, 2010). For example, when Progressive organized a Twitter 'pet chatter' with a pet expert, it was more about branding the company name than providing their customers with an opportunity to talk about pet insurance coverage (Chordas, 2009). Time spent thinking about Progressive when you are chatting about pets translates into powerful brand engagement. Social media can serve as a catalyst for brand engagement by driving the consumer to the 'pet chatter' via a link on Facebook, a pin on Pinterest, a video on YouTube, or a tweet on Twitter that a friend and fellow dog-lover might have shared just because they find the 'pet chatter' helpful.

Technology-assisted branding initiatives reinforce the brand promise with greater consumer empowerment, authenticity, and transparency. Rapid technological changes have altered expectations for communications significantly among individuals across all demographics. These changing expectations have been reflected in popular social networking sites, blogs, text messaging, and video postings on YouTube (Cooke and Buckley, 2008). The degree of brand awareness and engagement can intensify from basic salience-identity or recognition of the brand, to resonance-intense, active, loyal relationship (Keller, 2008). Achieving resonance is no simple task given the growth in social media tools: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, GoogleDocs, Delicious, Flickr, SecondLife, World of Warcraft, YouTube, Farmville, etc. Utilizing current technology to regularly communicate brand messages could significantly enhance brand loyalty, developing into brand allegiance, or resonance. Through technologically-progressive branding initiatives, organizations can seek to achieve brand resonance.

Digitally-supported communications offer personalized, relationship marketing opportunities and greater brand engagement through interactive communities. Innovative methods, including Facebook group pages, YouTube videos, Webinars, Podcasts, Tweets, or text messages, can be tailored to individual recipients. While return on paid social media advertising on Facebook has been reported as low by powerful companies such as General Motors (Hanlon, 2012), a social media presence appears to be increasingly important to an overall promotional campaign. Social media impacts a brand by generating goodwill, increasing brand engagement, and driving momentum and thus, analysts are searching to define how these constructs will be assessed (Tuten and Soloman, 2012). Professional groups use LinkedIn to network (Cashmore, 2006), friends stay in touch through Twitter (York and Bush, 2010), and political campaigns garner contributions through blogs (Hall, 2008). Interactive media and web 2.0 techniques yield advantages that include broad reach, continuous availability, greater brand engagement, and the ability to micro-target at a relatively low cost per interaction.

For this study, we examined these relationships facilitated by social media according to the individual's perception of brand relevance ($H_1 - H_{1B}$) and the individual's perception of satisfaction with the brand following integration into the brand community ($H_{2A} - H_3$):

- H_1 : Frequency of visitation and the duration of unique visits to a social media site positively impact the self-perceived relevance of the social media to the respondent.
- H_{1A} : Respondent characteristics will have a significant impact on self-perceived relevance of social media.
- H_{1B} : An increased level of self-presentation and self-disclosure will have a positive impact on the level of self-perceived relevance of a social media.

- H_{2A}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher level of self-perceived relevance of the social media
- H_{2B}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with the brand image of the social media
- H_{2C}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with the marketing communications received from the social media
- H_{2D}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with the overall marketing strategy of the social media
- H_{2E}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with the relationships built with others that like the social media
- H_{2F}: Integration in social media brand communities will lead to a higher overall satisfaction with the social media
- H₃: An increased level of self-presentation and self-disclosure will have a positive impact on the above mentioned (H_{2A} to H_{2E}) hypotheses.

Methodology

The survey was administered to undergraduate students from two large, public Midwestern universities. Students were selected as the sample because of their familiarity with and frequent use of social media. A study conducted by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research examined social media adoption rates of university students at four year accredited institutions. In 2007-2008, their findings reflected that 61 percent of respondents used social media. In 2010-2011, the Dartmouth study concluded that 100 percent of the respondents used social media (Miller, 2011). All students were business majors, in either

their junior or senior year at the university. A total of 515 respondents completed the survey and 432 surveys were deemed to be usable. Following data collection, the data were de-identified by a certified researcher before any data analysis took place. Instructors were notified of student participation for the sole purpose of awarding extra credit and did not have access to the respondents' survey responses at any time.

Respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey to read through a list of social media brands and indicate the social media brand they use most often. The comprehensive list included fifteen popular social media sites: Wikipedia, BookCrossing, GoogleDocs, SlideShare, Delicious, Flickr, Facebook, SecondLife, MySpace, World of Warcraft, LinkedIn, EverQuest, YouTube, Farmville, and Twitter. Respondents were then instructed to answer the remaining questions based on their use of that particular social media brand. For the purposes of this study, we examined (1) users of Facebook/Twitter which reflects high self-presentation and self-disclosure and (2) users of YouTube which reflects low self-presentation and self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

With their primary social media brand in mind, the respondents were first asked how relevant the brand was to them and then how integration into a brand community impacted their satisfaction of various aspects of the brand (brand image, marketing communications, overall marketing strategy, and the relationships they build through the brand community), as well as overall satisfaction with social media.

Findings

Brand community was assessed using eleven items (Table 2), each measured with a five point Likert scale verbally anchored with "Strongly agree" and "Strongly disagree." The brand community integration scale was tested for reliability and validity. It was found to be robust with an Alpha value of 0.867 with all items exhibiting high inter-item correlations,

TABLE 1:
Sample Profile

CHARACTERISTIC	N	%
GENDER		
Male	189	37.3
Female	318	62.7
CLASS		
Freshman	0	0
Sophomore	4	0.8
Junior	397	78.5
Senior	103	20.4
Graduate	2	0.4
AGE		
<18	0	0
18-19	6	1.2
20-21	310	60.9
22-23	118	23.2
24-25	28	5.5
26+	46	9.0
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: Frequency		
Over 5 times a day	145	28.5
4-5 times a day	72	14.1
2-3 times a day	122	24.0
Once daily	47	9.2
4-5 per week	49	9.6
2-3 times per week	36	7.1
Once weekly	18	7.5
Once every two weeks	7	1.4
Rarely	13	2.6
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: Duration per visit		
Over 3 hours	151	29.7
2 – 3 hours	115	22.6
60 - 119 Minutes	92	18.1
31 - 59 Minutes	65	12.8
21-30 Minutes	49	9.6
11 - 20 Minutes	22	4.3
1-10 Minutes	15	3.0

the psychometric properties of this scale are in line with those witnessed in past use of this scale (Devasagayam and Buff, 2005; 2008; Devasagayam, Buff, Aurand, and Judson 2010). This is in line with prior research that based on Nunnally's (1978) recommendations. The results are especially gratifying in light of

the fact that this is the first time this established scale has been used in the social media context.

Relevance and Composite Data. The personal relevance of a social media to the respondent was measured on a seven point Likert scale ranging from "Extremely Relevant" to "Not at

TABLE 2 :
Brand Community Integration Scale

	<u>Disagree</u>				<u>Agree</u>
a. I love this social media	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am proud of this social media	1	2	3	4	5
c. I value this social media’s heritage	1	2	3	4	5
d. I value the traditions that this social media upholds	1	2	3	4	5
e. I admire this social media	1	2	3	4	5
f. I would recommend this social media to my friends.....	1	2	3	4	5
g. This social media is of the highest quality	1	2	3	4	5
h. I have met wonderful people because this social media	1	2	3	4	5
i. I feel a sense of kinship with others in this social media	1	2	3	4	5
j. This social media understands my needs	1	2	3	4	5
k. This social media cares about my opinion	1	2	3	4	5

All Relevant.” We found that the perception of relevance of a given social media to the respondent is dependent on frequency of use and the duration of each visit. Both are significant and in the expected positive direction, and the overall model is significant as well (F=51.347; p: 0.0001, df 2) with an adjusted R-square of 0.190. We further looked at the relevance of a given social media in terms of gender, age, and other activities that respondents undertake (sports, theater, etc.), and found the results to be compelling. We discovered that ‘gender’ and ‘other activities which respondents undertake’ have a significant impact on their reported relevance of a social media (F=6.433; p: 0.012; F=2.736; p: 0.029, respectively), the mean response to relevance of social media was higher for females (mean 5.28) as opposed to males (mean 4.98). The age of the respondent did not significantly impact their perceived relevance at the 0.05 level (F=2.166; p: 0.072).

Relevance and High Self-Disclosure: Facebook/Twitter. Perception of relevance of a given social media to the respondent is dependent on frequency of use and the duration of each visit. The overall model was significant

(F=40.906, p: 0.0001, df 1) with an adjusted R-square of 0.257. Both variables display relationships in the expected (positive) direction, however only the frequency of visit to the site had a significant impact. The duration of time one stayed on the site was not significant (t=0.497; p: 0.620) at the 0.05 level. One possible explanation for this could be that the sites are visited fleetingly throughout the day.

We further looked at the relevance of a given social media in terms of gender, age, and other activities that respondents undertake (sports, theater, etc.). Results were interesting as we discovered that gender (mean females= 5.41 and males=5.03) and other activities respondents undertake have a significant impact on their reported relevance of a social media (F=6.665; p: 0.010; F=2.891; p:0.025, respectively), while the age of the respondent did not significantly impact their perceived relevance at the 0.05 level (F=1.150; p: 0.334). This is in line with our findings that the composite data has both high and low levels of self-presentation and self-disclosure attributes.

Relevance and Low Self-Disclosure: YouTube. Perception of relevance of a given social media to the respondent is dependent on frequency of use and the duration of each visit. The overall model was significant ($F=18.700$; $p: 0.0001$) with an adjusted R-square of 0.152, which is significantly lower than the explanatory power displayed in the previous two models. Both variables display relationships in the expected (positive) direction, however, this differs from the high self-disclosure model.

We further examined the relevance of a given social media in terms of gender, age, and other activities that respondents undertake (sports, theater, etc.). We found the results were interesting because gender (mean females= 5.09 and males= 4.93) of the respondent did not have significant impact on their self-perceived relevance of the social media site ($F=0.660$; $p: 0.418$). This differs from the composite model and the high self-disclosure models. Similarly, other activities respondents undertake did not have significant impact on their reported relevance of a social media ($F=0.574$; $p: 0.633$), which was different from the previous two models. In low self-disclosure model we found that contrary to the other two models, age of the customer had a significant impact on their self-perceived relevance of the social media ($F=2.198$; $p: 0.071$). These findings are not in line with findings from composite data that has both high and low levels of self-presentation and self-disclosure attributes, or the high self-disclosure model.

Integration and Composite Data. We then proceeded to examine the impact consumer integration in brand community of the social media has upon the variables mentioned in H2A through H2E. All results were significant and supported our hypotheses in the expected (positive) direction. Integration of the individual into a brand community positively impacts satisfaction with the brand on many levels: brand image, marketing communications, overall marketing strategy,

relationships built through social media, and with social media in general.

Integration and High Self-Disclosure: Facebook/Twitter. Analysis of the high self-presentation and self-disclosure data was undertaken to examine the impact consumer integration in brand community of the social media has upon the variables mentioned in H2A through H2F, this time for social media that has a high level of self-presentation and self-disclosure. All results were significant and supported our hypotheses in the expected (positive) direction.

Integration and Low Self-Disclosure: YouTube. Analysis of the low self-presentation and self-disclosure data was undertaken to examine the impact consumer integration in brand community of the social media has upon the variables mentioned in H2A through H2F, this time for social media that has a low level of self-presentation and self-disclosure. All results were significant and supported our hypotheses in the expected (positive) direction.

To further explore differences in respondent perceptions across the two levels (high and low) of self-presentation and self-disclosure, we conducted an Analysis of Variance. Results further confirmed that the frequency of visits to the social media site was significantly different between the two groups ($F=60.074$; $p: 0.0001$), the high self-disclosure group reported a higher frequency. The amount of time spent during these visits was also significantly different across the two levels ($F=7.062$; $p: 0.008$), the low self-disclosure group spent slightly more time per visit. However, the personal relevance of the social media brand missed the 0.05 mark with a p value of 0.061 ($F=3.527$). The level of integration into the brand community was not statistically significantly different for the two groups ($F=0.706$; $p: 0.401$). Similarly, the level of satisfaction with the overall brand image of the social media was not influenced by the two levels of self-disclosure and self-presentation ($F=0.012$; $p: 0.912$). The two groups did significantly differ on their satisfaction with the brand communications of the social media

TABLE 3:
Composite Model

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statistics	Coefficient of Determination (adjusted)	Conclusion
H _{2A} . Self-perceived relevance of social media	F = 101.838 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.191	Supported*
H _{2B} . Satisfaction with brand image	F = 249.792 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.368	Supported*
H _{2C} . Satisfaction with marketing communications	F = 143.626 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.250	Supported*
H _{2D} . Satisfaction with overall marketing strategy	F = 150.434 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.259	Supported*
H _{2E} . Satisfaction with relationships built with others that like the social media	F = 143.264 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.250	Supported*
H _{2F} . Overall satisfaction with the social media	F = 369.418 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.462	Supported*

*0.001 level of significance; df 1.

(F=4.577; p: 0.033), the high self-disclosure group was more satisfied in this area. Regarding satisfaction with the overall marketing strategies employed by social media brands, the high self-disclosure group exhibited a higher level of satisfaction (F=4.870; p: 0.028). Finally, when asked about the overall satisfaction with the relationships built with others that visit the social media site, the high self-disclosure group was significantly more satisfied than the low self-disclosure group (F=29.140; p:0.0001).

Implications

In this study, respondents consistently indicated that social media delivers a high level of brand relevance which reflects that social media may be very important for resolving ambiguity and reducing uncertainty. The high levels of relevance indicate the new perception that social media is not just another promotional option, but is indeed the 'glue' necessary to strengthen any communication strategy. Across all industry sectors, it appears that some very

TABLE 4:
High Self-presentation/Self-disclosure Model

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statistics	Coefficient of Determination (adjusted)	Conclusion
H _{2A} . Self-perceived relevance of social media	F = 60.181 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.205	Supported*
H _{2B} . Satisfaction with brand image	F = 140.255 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.377	Supported*
H _{2C} . Satisfaction with marketing communications	F = 86.342 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.271	Supported*
H _{2D} . Satisfaction with overall marketing strategy	F = 75.806 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.245	Supported*
H _{2E} . Satisfaction with relationships built with others that like the social media	F = 143.264 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.307	Supported*
H _{2F} . Overall satisfaction with the social media	F = 193.625 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.456	Supported*

*0.001 level of significance; df 1.

real benefits exist for organizations to implement social networking tools: (1) acquiring new customers, (2) gathering feedback from consumers, (3) raising awareness of community efforts and connections, (4) building a community network, and (5) fund-raising (Blakeman and Brown, 2010).

With high self-presentation and self-disclosure, duration was not significant possibly due to frequent checks (of shorter duration) on the social media brand. This finding suggests people multi-task while on social networking sites and communicate with others intermittently. This finding is supported by a

recent study conducted by Innerscope Research for Time Inc. in which 'digital natives' (consumers who grew up with mobile technology) were found to switch media every two minutes (Steinberg, 2012). On average, young consumers switch media platforms 27 times per hour as compared to 'digital immigrants' (consumers who learned about mobile technology during their adult lives) who switch media platforms 17 times per hour. The Innerscope study also reflected constraints on emotional engagement with the content when multiple platforms are used simultaneously. Thus, our study affirms the challenges social media content creators face in attaining emotional engagement. The data from this

TABLE 5:
Low Self-presentation/Self-disclosure Model

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statistics	Coefficient of Determination (adjusted)	Conclusion
H _{2A} . Self-perceived relevance of social media	F = 42.989 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.175	Supported*
H _{2B} . Satisfaction with brand image	F = 111.223 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.358	Supported*
H _{2C} . Satisfaction with marketing communications	F = 56.388 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.219	Supported*
H _{2D} . Satisfaction with overall marketing strategy	F = 73.762 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.269	Supported*
H _{2E} . Satisfaction with relationships built with others that like the social media	F = 55.319 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.216	Supported*
H _{2F} . Overall satisfaction with the social media	F = 179.503 p: 0.0001	R ² = 0.473	Supported*

*0.001 level of significance, df 1.

study suggest that social media content must allow ‘digital natives,’ such our respondents, to grasp the story or message in an intuitive, non-linear manner. For advertisers on social networking sites, perhaps value should be based on metrics that are less concerned with how long someone engages with the brand and more concerned with frequency of interaction. In other words, an argument can be made within the social media context for quantity (of brand reminders) rather than quality (of brand engagement). With this in mind, organizations are encouraged to explore their social media initiatives more systematically, recognizing that network analysis techniques are only as good as the data they assess (Hansen, 2011).

For low self-presentation and self-disclosure social media (YouTube) users, brand relevance by gender and other activities was not significant. This finding supports the notion that gender and other activities are less important because YouTube consumers are not disclosing much information on themselves, unlike high self-presentation and self-disclosure social media (Facebook/Twitter) users. As consumers increasingly seek a ‘voice,’ YouTube could become their preferred social media tool because greater communicative autonomy encourages the development of media citizens (Pierson and Heyman, 2011). In 2009, a disgruntled airline passenger produced a YouTube video titled “United Breaks

Guitars” after United allegedly smashed his \$3500 guitar. This consumer-generated video garnered nation attention and was rated by Time magazine #7 in the top ten of all videos for 2009 (Fletcher, 2009). Yet in spite of the immense negative publicity on United Airlines, Dave Carroll was relatively unknown to most viewers at the time.

The findings also suggest that respondents who engaged in high self-presentation and self-disclosure social media sites were more likely to be satisfied with the brands’ marketing strategies and the relationships built while interacting on these sites. This seems to support the notion that the more you give to a community, the more you can expect in return. Visits to high self-presentation and self-disclosure sites (Facebook and Twitter) were significantly higher in frequency while visits to low self-presentation and self-disclosure sites (YouTube) were significantly higher in duration. In accordance with the Psychological Continuum Model (Funk and James, 2001): if ‘creating awareness’ is the promotional objective, Facebook and Twitter may be the best promotional investment, but if ‘creating allegiance’ is the promotional objective, YouTube may be the best promotional investment. This area provides an opportunity for future research.

How individuals use social media tools presents another opportunity for future investigation. For example, one may ‘use’ YouTube (interact with it) very often by watching many videos, but he or she may have never personally posted a video to YouTube. This individual’s use of YouTube would be very different from that of someone else who regularly posts videos to YouTube. Is it possible that someone uses Facebook very frequently – but he or she does not post anything about himself or herself? Could they be simply ‘using’ it or integrating into the brand community to see what others are saying about themselves?

Integration into brand community enhances satisfaction of the brand on many levels: brand image, marketing communications, overall

marketing strategy, relationships built through social media, and with social media in general. Thus, social media appears to provide a critical link between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which in turn, drives revenue growth and profitability according to the Service-Profit Chain (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, and Schlesing, 1994). In the future, we can expect to see social media branding strategies guiding organizations’ relationship marketing initiatives. We can also expect to see a continued increase in job opportunities in the area of social media marketing.

CONCLUSION

While the emergence of web 2.0 has led to rapid growth of social media among teens and young adults in the past several years (Lenhart et al., 2010), we know that increasing numbers of older adults are using social media sites. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, senior citizens are the fastest growing segment of Facebook users in the U.S., and could number 55 million by 2020 (“How to appeal to Facebook’s fastest growing demographic...”, 2011, October 4). A limitation of this study is the young adult age demographic of the respondents. Now that social media is being increasingly adopted by older age groups, a study comparing the differences as it relates to self-perceived brand relevance and satisfaction upon integration into the brand community is recommended. Another study could examine social media comparing social presence/media richness in addition to self-presentation and self-disclosure. For example, Pinterest is now the number three social networking site behind Facebook and Twitter (Wasserman, 2012). Clearly, Pinterest users could offer insight into media exhibiting high levels of media richness which would expand our study.

This study was the first to implement an established brand community scale to investigate a community in the social media context. We learned that social media provides a high level of self-perceived relevance to the brand. In addition, integration into the brand

community reflects higher levels of satisfaction with a brand. Customer satisfaction with a brand is important to firms because as the familiar mantra states, if you are not moving forward, you are moving backward. Thus, it is extremely important for organizations to establish a strong digital presence through the use of brand community in the social media context.

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