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THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER ENGEGEMENT IN ONLINE BRAND COMMUNITY ON PURCHASE INTENTION-THE CASE STUDY OF NEWLY LAUNCHED COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the cosmetics industry; when consumers want to buy newly launched cosmetic products, they cannot go to brick-and-mortar stores to try them. The cosmetics industry must rethink how to reach consumers. Marketers are bound to follow trends to grasp changes in consumer behavior and attitudes and change traditional marketing strategies. Nowadays, social media can help products and online shopping consumer groups to add more diverse connections, and it has become a mainstream platform for communication and information transmission on the Internet. Therefore, many firms have created online brand communities, providing them with opportunities to build further relationships with consumers and promote their businesses and products. Although online brand communities have gained increasing attention over the decade of social media, few studies have investigated the impact of consumer engagement in online brand communities on purchase intentions for newly launched products. Therefore, this study addresses the above problems and proposes a framework that empirically examines consumer engagement in online brand communities for like-minded discussion and up-to-date information, influencing brand awareness, brand attitudes, and purchase intention. This study utilizes a quantitative empirical method, with office ladies in Taiwan as the primary research subjects, and a total of 305 valid questionnaires are collected.
The empirical studies were analyzed using SPSS 26 and AMOS 24. The survey results supported all the hypotheses proposed in this study. The findings further guide brand managers and marketers in the cosmetics industry to use social media through online

brand community engagement strategies to increase consumer purchase intention for newly launched cosmetic products.

Introduction

As female online purchasing power is thought to be greater than that of men, and women are the primary consumers of cosmetics, which has played a significant part in their pursuit of beauty, the purpose of this study is to target office ladies with the online shopping experience in Taiwan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it cannot try newly launched cosmetic products in physical stores. Through consumer engagement in online brand community of social media, they have brand awareness of newly launched cosmetic products to generate purchase intention.

The phrase "social media" has taken on many definitions due to the dynamic nature of these online environments; but in its broadest definition, it describes online platforms that allow user interaction, including creating and disseminating information, content, and ideas (Creevey et al., 2022). As a result, we define "consumer engagement" as the way in which consumers interact with brand content via social media platforms (Labrecque et al., 2020). Social media platforms are the foundation of online brand communities (Zhang et al., 2021). Due to the growing popularity of social media, numerous businesses are utilizing social networking websites to help them build online brand communities (Jibril et al., 2019).

Research Questions

This study influences the purchase intention of newly launched cosmetic products by analyzing the critical role of consumer engagement in online brand community. In addressing the above-mention research gaps, this study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. The extent to which online brand community engagement affects brand awareness.

2. The extent to which brand awareness impacts brand attitude.

3. The extent to which brand attitude influences purchase intention.

Literature Review

This is the literature and the overview of the relevant literature on how consumer engagement in online brand community impacts purchase intention. Based on this review, the hypotheses will be constructed and developments from the relevant literature and theoretical. It will substantiate the relationships between consumer engagement in online brand community and purchase intention.

Consumer Engagement

Theoretical foundations of the notion of consumer engagement as an enlarged application of marketing relationship; relationship marketing based on the concept are the conceptually broader prism to evaluate consumer engagement (Hepola et al., 2020). Consumer engagement encompasses the experiential and interactive character of everyday interactions with things like brands, firms, goods, and brand communities (Morgan-Thomas et al., 2020). The consumer's exposure to, participation in, and interactions with goods and services have been referred to as consumer engagement (Feng et al., 2020).

Online Brand Community

An online brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound community based on a system of social ties between brand aficionados (Islam & Rahman, 2017). Online brand communities are a new kind of human community where brand users are brought together in a social setting with others who have similar interests and life experiences so that they can exchange knowledge, experience, and identity about products (Paintsil & Kim, 2022).

Online Brand Community Engagement

The fundamental elements of online brand community engagement (OBCE) include interactive experiences and create value by community members' learning, sharing, impacting, proposing, socializing, and working together on projects; furthermore, online brand communities are incredibly effective and trustworthy venues for communications between brands and consumers as well as between brands and brand because user interaction fosters brand affinity and customer empowerment (Yuan et al., 2020).

Dimension of online brand community engagement

Baldus et al. (2015) seek to define online brand community engagement as the compelling, inherent motives to continue connecting with an online brand community. Based on past research, they develop a scale with 11 dimensions, namely, brand influence, brand passion, connecting, helping, like-minded discussion, rewards (hedonic), rewards (utilitarian), seeking assistance, self-expression, up-to-date information and validation (Bilro & Loureiro, 2020). The explanation promotes a broader perspective that better reflects the contemporary social media environment (Coelho et al., 2018).

The definition of Like-minded discussion is that "the extent to which a community member is interested in talking with people similar to themselves about the brand" (Baldus et al., 2015, p. 981.). The definition of Up-to-date information is that "the degree to which a community member feels that the brand community helps them to stay informed or keep up-to date with brand and product related information interests" (Baldus et al., 2015, p. 981.).

Brand Awareness

Through frequent and memorable exposure to brand features such as the name, slogan, logo, and packaging, customers develop brand awareness; as a

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result of these exposures, consumers feel more familiar with brands (Langaro et al., 2018). Brand awareness is defined as brand recall or recognition (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Social media can build and enhance brand awareness; in addition, Brand awareness is critical as a first step in positioning a company's brand in the market (Alamsyah et al., 2021).

Effect of online brand community engagement on brand awareness

In order to increase brand awareness by participating in like-minded discussion, social motivation refers to the desire to share one's own product or brand interests with others (Pentina et al., 2018). Some firms create customer communities to facilitate social connections, and these communities give customers the chance to socially integrate into a network of like-minded discussion (Ivens & Valta, 2012). In conclusion, it is one of the best forums for uniting consumers, giving like-minded consumers the chance to discuss their brands and enhance brand awareness (Ali et al., 2019).

According to research by Abbasi et al. (2020), Consumer involvement increases brand awareness by disseminating up-to-date information about brands. More consumers are using social media channels, e.g., online brand communities, to research products and get that information because, compared to traditional methods, it is viewed as more valuable and modern (Cheung et al., 2019). To sum up, the higher consumer engagement in online brand community, the more awareness of customer on the brand. Thus, we proposed that:

Hypothesis 1a: Like-minded discussion is positively related to brand awareness.

Hypothesis 1b: Up-to-date information is positively related to brand awareness

Brand Attitude

Brand attitude comprises mental and affective elements (Santos et al., 2022). When buyers accept the stimulus from the information in the brand characteristics, they do so with a brand attitude, which is an internal psychological assessment of brand generation (Cheung et al., 2020). One's behavior when looking for, acquiring, utilizing, assessing, and discarding goods, services, and concepts that satisfy his needs is referred to as having a brand attitude (Sarteshnizi, 2021). Consumer perceptions and attitudes regarding cosmetic items are critical as it helps identify areas in which information needs the usage of cosmetics (Mohammed et al., 2021).

Effect of brand awareness on brand attitude

The literature review confirms brand awareness's direct, positive influence on brand attitude. (Rivera et al., 2019). Aside from serving as a foundation for brand associations, awareness is also anticipated to have an effect on brand attitudes by increasing brand familiarity (Wu et al., 2020). Consumers' attitudes are more favorable when they are familiar with brands (Yilmazel & Özer, 2021). The following hypotheses is thus proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Brand awareness is positively related to brand attitude.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention (PI) is a metric that measures how confident a customer is in their decision to acquire a product or service (Moslehpour et al., 2022). Price is not the only significant factor in today's rapidly evolving business climate; on a higher level, factors like the quality of the goods and services offered to customers also play a role in determining purchase intention (Lestari & Roostika, 2022). Purchase intention is an attitude variable used to gauge customers' future contribution to a brand; it reflects consumers' interest in and the likelihood of buying a product (Lv et al., 2021). Purchase intention is a popular marketing metric used to determine how well marketing campaigns work and may be utilized to forecast sales and market share (Nugroho et al., 2022).

Effect of brand attitude on purchase intention

According to Previous study, an individual's positive brand attitude may influence their purchase intention and whether they are willing to pay a higher price (Mukherjee & Banerjee, 2019). The familiarity and trust that consumers have in a brand determines its brand attitude; the greater this familiarity and trust, the greater the likelihood that they will make a purchase (Ramesh et al., 2019). The following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Brand attitude is positively related to purchase intention.

Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research stem from naturalism and positivism, respectively (Strijker et al., 2020). Specially, qualitative and quantitative methodologies can be utilized in marketing research (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). To sum up, this research mainly uses quantitative research as research method, and uses verification method to survey. Research design makes sure conceptual frameworks are operationalized, research questions are addressed, goals are accomplished, and hypotheses are tested (Sovacool et al., 2018). In this study, quantitative analysis will be conducted mostly through the distribution of paper questionnaires, and a total of 305 samples was collected.

These items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, the responses to these questions ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Two of the eleven dimensions proposed by Baldus et al. (2015) and Hollebeek et al. (2014) for online brand community engagement are utilized in the present study.: likeminded discussion and up-to-data information. The selection of six items for measuring brand awareness was based on an adaptation of Langaro et al. (2018) and Bilgin (2018). The brand attitude was measured utilizing five items, appealing, good, pleasant, favorable, and likable (Wang et al., 2019). Purchase intention was measured by recommending, buying, or the probability of buying, following Wang et al (2019) and Pather (2017).

Sampling

Sampling is the procedure for choosing a subset of the target popula-

tion as a sample, observing a particular characteristic of the sample, and forming a reliable conclusion about the quantitative characteristics of the target population based on the collected data (Taherdoost, 2016). In this research, the target population was collected from office ladies in Taiwan. The total number of respondents in the study's sample is 305. The questionnaire was administered from Feb 21st to Mar 13th, 2022 in order to complete the data collection process.

Data Analysis and Results

The analysis and survey findings of this study will be summarized. Amos 24 and SPSS 26 were utilized for statistical analysis to code the responses to the survey items out of a total of 305 participants.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is the initial step in the study to determine that the hypotheses are operationally successful. EFA's primary objective is to determine the minimum number of common variables necessary to repeat the initial correlation or covariance matrix (Ferguson & Cox, 1993). 28 items that were significantly above the conservative 0.5 loading threshold were used to create a five-factor solution after four items that did not load beyond 0.5 on any factor or multiple factors were eliminated (Hair Jr. et al., 2016). Convergent validity, a kind of construct validity, denotes the reality of a particular construct being measured. As the sample size for the survey is 305 and the factor loadings ranged from 0.516 to 0.911.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Typically, valid data pertaining to the dimensions and validity of the scale are described as being the result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA); CFA is a valuable statistical technique for providing information about validity (Levine, 2005). In data analysis, CFA is frequently used to analyze the expected causal relationships between variables; additionally, it is primarily utilized to evaluate two things: the model's observable data as well as the associated hypotheses (Canivez et al., 2017).

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's alpha, the most prevalent metric of internal consistency, was used to determine the reliability of the scale's variables (Alakkas, 2022). The measures' convergent validity was investigated utilizing Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extraction (AVE) (Hair Jr. et al., 2016). Surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.70, all measurements were highly reliable, with alpha coefficients ranging between 0.70 and 0.90 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All scales' extracted variances (AVE) from 0.536~0.623 are higher than the recommended level of.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Scale reliability in internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and CR calculations. In this study, the Cronbach‟s α values obtained for each of five factors were in the range of 0.783 to 0.861. All values above the proposed cutoff of 0.70 (Konuk, 2018). According to these results, the internal consistency of every scale is sufficient and high. Therefore, the measurements' conver-

gent validities have been determined. These five factors identified are: like-minded discussion, up-to-date information, brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intention.

Correlations

Following the verification of measuring construct validity, the variables for the supplementary statistical analysis are formed using the averages of items connecting to the extracted factors. The findings show regulation of Like-minded discussion and Up-to-date information were substantially linked with brand awareness (r = 0.451, p < 0.01; r = 0.358, p < 0.01, respectively). Likewise, brand awareness was significantly correlated with brand attitude (p < 0.01, r = 0.572, respectively). In addition, brand attitude was significantly correlated with purchase intention (p < 0.01, r = 0.406, respectively). All of the testing model's hypotheses are strongly supported by correlation results.

Model Fit

A method known as structural equation modeling (SEM) for defining and estimating linear connection models between variables (MacCallum & Austin, 2000). A group of latent (unobserved) constructs and a single or several manifests (observable) variables are the primary purpose of structural equation modeling (SEM), which aims to characterize the pattern of interdependent connections between them (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). The structural model's indices demonstrate a satisfactory model match. As a result of the findings, an acceptable fit was achieved for the hy-

potheses' model. 1.572 was the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.00 to 2.00, indicating a good fit. The chi-square goodness of fit is deemed significant (2 = 462.080, df = 294, p = 0.000). All of the SEM fit metrics show good data that are fit. All goodness-of-fit indexes fall within the predicted intervals: 0.899 is the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), 0.031 is the root mean square residual (RMR), 0.937 is the comparative fit index (CFI), 0.846 is the normed fit index (NFI), 0.938 is the incremental fit index (IFI), and 0.043 is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). In general, the data on the fit indicates the study's model nicely matches the data.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study offers an empirical implication for management in the cosmetic industry. From the data analysis results that the effect of customer engagement in online brand community on purchase intention is measured by the variable of online brand community engagement. Both like-minded discussion and up-to-date information are significantly positively correlated with brand awareness. In addition, the results indicate that brand awareness and brand attitude are positively correlated. Also, the findings of this study indicate that brand attitude and purchase intention are positively associated. In conclusion, the successful support of H1a, H1b, H2, and H3 is assumed. Online brand communities can build a social environment that user might support one another and exchange experiences pertaining to a brand. For example, consumers' engagement in

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online brand communities of social media such as like-minded discussions and up-to-date information to generate purchase intention for newly launched products. The Covid-19 pandemic is still affecting consumers worldwide, resulting in a shift in consumer behavior that forces businesses to respond, among other ways, by utilizing social media for marketing via online brand community engagement.

Theoretical Implications

First, this study contributes to the current lack of customer engagement in online brand community literature exploring this aspect of newly launched cosmetic products on purchase intention. This study was conducted by using online brand community engagement as a variable to customer engagement in online brand community on purchase intention. The findings offer empirical evidence of the impact of online brand community on purchase intention. Therefore, this study echoed the conclusion of previous studies that online brand community engagement is significantly correlated with purchase intention.

Managerial Implications

First, this study's empirical findings demonstrate that the online brand community engagement metric is a viable and valid instrument for measuring consumer motives for engaging with an online brand community that can influence the purchase intention of newly launched products. Therefore, through an online brand community, the cosmetic industry should develop practical like-minded discussions and provide up-

to-date information for newly launched products as marketing strategies. Finally, the findings of this research have crucially practical for brand managers and marketers, especially for marketing managers operating with the newly launched product under the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media is a technique that many marketers utilize to improve engagement and brand exposure, as it enables organizations to develop a two-way, direct communication flow with customers that is both rapid and dynamic.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

A cross-sectional structure is used to evaluate each hypothesis. Since this study's data collection is being gathered simultaneously, it is hard to obtain a sense of the sequence of events. Consequently, to address causality more directly, it is advised that one may conduct research and collect longitudinal data to fully comprehend the causal links between consumer engagement and its antecedents. In addition, this study utilizes only variable such as online brand community engagement, brand awareness, and brand attitude to investigate the degree influence on purchase intention. It is suggested that future researchers can add or substitute variables to measure and investigate the effect of online brand community engagement on purchase intention.

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