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**DO SOCIAL MEDIA CHARACTERISTICS TRIGGER CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT?
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SMARTPHONE BRANDS***

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ABSTRACT

Social media emerged as a novel way to improve consumer engagement with brands. Soon, companies regardless of their industry realized the strategic importance of social media to establish long-term and steady relationships via media channels. This study aims to examine the social media characteristics, which are entertainment, customization, interaction, word of mouth, and trendiness on customer engagement. A quantitative research type is adopted. The data collection method is an online questionnaire. Convenience sampling is used with a sample size of 334. The Structural Equation Model is used to test the hypotheses. The study has three major findings. First, interactivity is found to be improving both cognitive and emotional engagement. Second, customized entertainment on social media sites seemed to enhance both cognitive and emotional engagement, as well. However, both variables tend to contribute to customer engagement but mainly to emotional engagement. Third, the effects of trendiness and word of mouth (WOM) on customer engagement are not detected within this research. This study contributes to the current literature examining social media characteristics on customer engagement and offering insights into how to cultivate engagement.

Key Words: Cognitive Engagement, Emotional Engagement, Social Media, Interactivity, Entertainment.

JEL Classification: M31.

Sosyal Medya Özellikleri Müşteri Bağlılığını Tetikler mi? Akıllı Telefon Markaları Üzerine Ampirik Bir Çalışma

ÖZ

Sosyal medya, tüketicinin markalarla etkileşimini geliştirmenin yeni bir yolu olarak ortaya hayatımıza girdi. Çok geçmeden, sektörleri ne olursa olsun şirketler, medya kanalları aracılığıyla uzun vadeli ve istikrarlı bir ilişki kurmak için sosyal medyanın stratejik önemini fark ettiler. Bu çalışma, eğlence, kişiselleştirme, etkileşim, ağızdan ağza iletişim ve trend olman gibi sosyal medya özelliklerinin müşteri katılımına etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Nicel bir araştırma türü benimsenmiştir. Veri toplama yöntemi, çevrimiçi ankettir. Kolayda örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak, 334 katılımcıdan kullanılabilir veri elde edilmiştir. Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli ile hipotez testi yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın üç ana bulgusu göze çarpmaktadır. İlk olarak, etkileşimin hem bilişsel hem de duygusal katılımı geliştirdiği bulunmuştur. İkincisi, sosyal medya sitelerinin özelleştirilmiş eğlencesi, hem bilişsel hem de duygusal katılımı artırıyor gibi görünüyordu. Bununla birlikte, her iki değişken de müşteri katılımına katkıda bulunma eğilimindedir, ancak esas olarak duygusal katılım ön plana çıkmaktadır. Üçüncüsü, trendin ve ağızdan ağza iletişimin (WOM) müşteri katılımı üzerindeki etkileri bu araştırma kapsamında tespit

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edilmemiştir. Bu çalışma, müşteri katılımı konusundaki sosyal medya özelliklerini inceleyen ve katılımın nasıl geliştirilebileceğine dair içgörüler sunan mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilişsel Katılım, Duygusal Katılım, Sosyal Medya, Etkileşim, Eğlence.
JEL Sınıflandırması: M31.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the participative role of customers in organizations' current strategies and tactics intensified. Customers do not only take an active role in value creation activities like sharing ideas and commenting on marketing communication activities, moreover pave the way for innovative ideas for product improvement or new product development. In that manner, the new consumer engagement-oriented marketing not only offers an emotional experience for the customer but also leverages brand equity (Scheinbaum, 2016). Namely, the number of smartphone users that are intensively using digital marketing tools, is skyrocketing, emphasizing the importance of consumer engagement (Subramani Parasuraman, et al., 2017). Yet, according to Carlson, et al., (2019), there exists little information as to how consumer engagement ensures the sharing of information in a dynamic social media platform. Thus, organizations have started acknowledging the importance of the value co-creation process via nurturing customer engagement.

This study aims to reveal the effects of social media characteristics such as engagement, customization, trendiness, word of mouth, and interactivity on customer engagement. Customer engagement is fragmented into two forms; cognitive and emotional engagement. To sum up, the study's research objectives can be listed below.

- To identify the impact of social media characteristics on cognitive engagement.
- To identify the impact of social media characteristics on emotional engagement.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Customer Engagement via Social Media

Brands have long appreciated the essential role of social media in forming long-term and close relationships with customers. Prior research showed that loyal customers are always in a demanding position when it comes to their favorite brands (Hamilton et al., 2016). They want their favorite product to be creative and responsive. This is the reason they are always sharing new ideas and innovative measures to make the product even more innovative (Kao et al., 2016). On the other hand, companies need to make sure that these comments put up on social media are handled carefully and that the desired targets are met successfully by the business.

Social media is defined as an online application program, platform, or media facilitating two-way content sharing and interaction among the beneficiaries (Richter & Koch, 2007). As mentioned by Seo and Park (2018), the social media term was coined in 2004 and afterward vastly examined both by scholars and practitioners. The

emergence of internet-based social platforms like brand pages and product pages have made it easier for business to identify their needs and wants and can prepare customized products for the customers. In that case, customers need to engage more in the process and share their thoughts so that the organization can provide better value. It is getting easier for customers to share their thoughts like what they like and dislike about a certain product and how it should develop its services (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Understanding and reacting to the changes is extremely for the business to attain a competitive advantage in the market.

The development of online services has developed interactivity among customers and consumers are most likely to ensure that they are getting the best of the services from each of their purchases. It is important to note that a company generates the value of a certain product based on the comments that are available on the social media website. It is the responsibility of the managers to enable and inspire consumers to make sure that they feel motivated to purchase a particular product (Bredibach et al., 2014). In that manner, the major engagement types are taken as cognitive and emotional. As the first one is appealing the way how consumers receive and process information, however, the latter appeals to how consumers feel. Let's take a closer look at each of these elements.

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive brand engagement is the extent to which the customers think and elaborate on the activities of a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Those customers who implement eager strategies can be cognitively engaged with a brand by adopting promotion-oriented service brand messages (Solem & Pedersen, 2016). The cognitive component of customer engagement is often observed in the form of obsession and concentration of an individual in a brand (Hollebeek, 2011).

Cognitive engagement helps brands in developing personalized content for the customers to which the customers can relate. As stated by Hollebeek (2013: 18), "cognition is an aspect of consumer engagement, which involves immersion, attention and sustained cognitive processing". A seamless experience is offered to the customers when the companies can comprehend and resolve the intentions of a customer. Santini et al. (2020) stated that cognitive engagement is higher when customers have a high degree of involvement with the product or the brand. Such involvement prompts the customers to collect relevant information about the brand or take to social media to express their opinion about the brand. In other words, cognitive engagement is reliant on the degree of involvement that the customers share with the brand. Besides, involvement is high when the brand enables the customers to express themselves and the products can be customized.

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement is related to the brand's positive interaction with the customer as establishing an emotional connection (Cheung et al., 2021; Hollebeek et al. 2014). If the customers are highly satisfied then they can develop a sense of emotional connection with the brand. In the presence of an emotional bond, brands

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have the scope of convincing customers to make a purchase decision by accelerating relationship marketing (Barhemmati & Ahmad, 2015). Furthermore, the organizations at this stage can create an image in the minds of the customers that it intends to get aid for co-creating value and respects the audience at the same time. Most consumers read the comments posted on social networking sites before purchasing any product. As such, emotional engagement with the brands will intrigue the customers to post comments on the social media channels that can be favorable for an organization to grab the attention of its potential customers.

As specified by several research emotional aspects are revealed through passion, enthusiasm, and intrinsic enjoyment (Hollebeek, 2013). Through active consumer participation and focusing on brand interactions, emotional engagement can be developed. Santini et al. (2020) opined that customer engagement is driven by positive emotions that are usually created when customers are involved with a brand that is relevant to their self-concept. In other words, customer involvement contributes to emotional engagement. Emotional engagement by the customers is expressed in terms of loyalty towards a particular brand or product (Jayasingh, 2019: 6). When customers develop an emotional connection, both negative and positive, with a product or a brand, they tend to express a such opinion over social media. Such emotions are typically developed when the customers have a high degree of involvement. The act of expressing an emotional connection with the product or brand on social media, or other platforms, is perceived as customer engagement by the brand, which is driven by emotions. In other words, emotional engagement is predicted by the degree of involvement of the customers.

Social Media Characteristics Triggering Customer Engagement

Social media plays a key role to reach consumers' private worlds and enrich dyadic communication with them (Kelly et al., 2010). In that manner, to understand the effect of social media involvement resulting in customer engagement, this study benefits from two theories: Flow Theory and Uses & Gratification Theory.

Flow Theory is initiated by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), claiming that customer experiences will be better off if they reach a state of flow, that is becoming actively involved and absorbed by the activity (Kim et al., 2020; Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Novak et al., 2000). Yet, flow is taken as an "intense engagement, distorted sense of time, loss of self-consciousness, and heightened motivation" (Pelet, Ettis, & Cowart, 2017, p. 116) which appropriately matches with what social media and consumer interaction. As cited in several studies, Flow theory argues that while using social media, customers are fulfilled with pleasure and curiosity (Zarei et al., 2021; Mahnke, Benlian & Hess 2015).

Within social media and consumer relations, the uses and gratifications theory is also widely used. As one of the major communication theories, it is suggested that consumers use media to satisfy their needs, leading them to distinct gratifications (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Lariscy et al., 2011; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; Katz & Foulkes, 1962). The theory emerged from psychologist Herzog

(1940) when he studied the underlying reasons for audience satisfaction with radio programs. Inevitably, the mass media evolved into new media over time.

In the related literature, how social media is related to consumers' lives is taken from diverse angles. A wave of researchers studied the quantitative nature of social media interaction by how much time they spent on these platforms, and the number of use in specific periods, as well as exploring the qualitative aspect of why they used social media (Seo & Park, 2018; Bolton et al., 2013; Rosen et al., 2013). This paper had taken Kim and Ko's (2012) conceptualization of social media efforts in five dimensions; entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth (WOM). The next part focuses on each dimension's impact on consumer engagement.

Entertainment and Customer Engagement

Over the years, the gap between marketing communication and entertainment has reduced considerably. It has four main activities linked to it, which are relaxation, inspiration, mood management motives, having fun, and some casual time-passing (Jayasingh, 2019). In the modern era, entertainment as a tool for creating brand awareness is facilitated more through the internet instead of utilizing traditional marketing media techniques. The purpose of integrating entertainment to brand messages is to intrigue the customers for starting a relationship. In that vein, social media is a platform where users seek to entertain themselves by sharing information amongst themselves. Consumers like sharing funny, technological-related information or music over social media, which is interesting and entertaining. Thus, the brands while engaging with the consumers need to ensure that their branded messages are funny and entertaining. The research of Jayasingh (2019), exemplified that brand pages that disseminated entertaining content had a high consumer engagement rate. Entertainment results in the development of a robust urge for utilizing the brand community. Thus, consumer engagement is fostered through entertainment.

As studied by Godey et al., (2016), entertainment is an aspect of social media marketing efforts. If the content of a firm on their respective social media platform is entertaining, then the customers are more likely to participate in the online marketing programs. Some social media users utilize brand content for passing time, relaxation, and enjoyment, thereby driving brand awareness.

Likewise, Jayasingh (2019) stated that the marketing content must be entertaining to attract the attention of the customers. Entertainment is one of the crucial factors that encourage customer engagement. When such content is published over social media, the engagement levels can be measured in terms of the number of likes, comments, and shares. In the case of the company website, engagement is measured in terms of page visits and an increase in traffic to determine the impact of the marketing campaign. Entertaining content is widely considered by experts to be a strong factor that encourages customers to visit a website. Social media also provides the brand with the opportunity to use dynamic animations, color filters, and other alluring elements that make the marketing content more engaging for the customers, potential and existing.

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According to Santini et al. (2020), customer involvement is higher when the products have a hedonic value as opposed to a utilitarian value. The hedonic consumption pattern contributes to customer engagement, which is three times stronger than the engagement generated from utilitarian consumption. This is evident if the customers perceive the products or services to be personally relevant. This implies that hedonic consumption, which is typically associated with experience, adventure, fun, and pleasure, triggers an emotional response in the minds of the customers. Such a strong emotional response has the potential for the development of long-term social relationships between the brand and the customers. Hence it can be hypothesized that;

H1: The entertainment of social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H2: The entertainment of social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

Customization and Customer Engagement

Customization indicates the extent to which a service meets the needs of a customer (Godey et al., 2016). Brands have the opportunity to customize the market offer by developing a user-friendly site and promoting individuality. Personalized messages can be sent to customers via social media channels by which the services can be personalized.

Customization refers to the activities undertaken by a firm to personalize the products and services as per the needs of the customers (Loginova, 2010). It is the capability of offering tailor-made products which do not compromise on cost. By adopting customization tactics firms try to replicate that they are willing to pay more attention to the customers. Customization reduces the communicational gap between a consumer and a brand through the facilitation of interaction regarding the specifications of a product or service or service delivery process. Davis, Sajtos, and Chaudhuri (2011) indicated that the more interaction takes place between a consumer and a brand, the more trust is built up. Through customization, the consumers place more trust in the marketer. On the contrary, marketers take advantage of customization by targeting the variety of needs desired by the customers. It increases the chances for a business to engage in effective communication with consumers by aligning the products as per the consumer's preferences.

Thus, personalized or customized products are the predictors of high customer involvement. Besides, the engagement levels of the customer vary from one individual to another (Cano et al., 2017). This is because it is grounded on the emotional response that varies widely across individuals. Therefore, providing customers with personalized products enhances the emotional and cognitive engagement levels with the brand. Thus, it can be hypothesized that;

H3: Customization of social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H4: Customization of social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

Trendiness and Customer Engagement

The latest news and hot topics are easily transmitted via social media for obtaining varied information consumers utilized different social media channels (Godey, et al., 2016). Customers seek trending information that involves knowledge, surveillance, inspiration, and purchase information regarding any brand over social media. Before making any purchase decisions these consumers read the reviews as well as ideas on the brand community.

Contemporary organizations have to keep themselves updated with the current trends so that people can be interested in the organization. According to Geho and Dangelo (2012), organizations that develop content by following current market trends over social media are in a better position to enhance their business capabilities. By utilizing social media marketing efforts, firms can keep a track of the pages that are visited by unique visitors frequently and insights can also be drawn about the contents that are widely clicked upon, talked about, and receive major likes over Facebook. Thus, when organizations utilize trending topics as a marketing tool over social media, then the consumers can co-relate to the brand messages, thereby enabling the development of a bond between a business and its consumers. In other words, social media platforms are used by the organization for increasing awareness about trends. The customers, when they see such marketing efforts are motivated to interact with the brand and collected necessary information. Customers who follow trends tend to be highly involved with such marketing efforts. The customers like and comment on such marketing posts, thereby contributing to engagement. Hence it can be hypothesized that;

H5: The trendiness of social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H6: The trendiness of social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

Word of Mouth (WOM) and Customer Engagement

WOM refers to the interpersonal communication of consumers about products and services (Kim, Sung, & Kang, 2014). Through the brand communities' consumers have the opportunity of communicating with each other (Godey et al., 2016). Word of mouth helps in developing empathy, credibility, and relevant data for the customers since consumers spread the information about a brand to acquaintances, peers, and friends. Through word of mouth, consumers contribute to a firm's brand awareness, thereby ensuring the success of a firm's social media marketing efforts.

In the literature, there exists a debate about whether to take WOM as an antecedent or consequence of social media involvement (Zarei et al., 2021; Kim & Ko, 2012; Seo & Park, 2018; Eigenraam et al., 2018) We believe that, as cited by Chu and Kim (2011) use of WOM helps seek, give or passing opinion, which nurtures

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engagement in the next phase. In that manner, the function of WOM via social media is prioritized and taken as a prior step of engagement. In other words, not only sharing or posting content is taken as an engagement, but the feelings as a result of this word of mouth are regarded as an emotional engagement of consumers with the brand.

Marketers have identified that the information-sharing paradigm over social media has the potential of fostering consumers' sharing of information regarding the brands. As such, this impacts brand electronic word of mouth directly. Twitter introduced promoted tweets, whereby these tweets can be re-tweeted, added to favorites, and replied to like any other tweet. Furthermore, the Twitter brand pages facilitate electronic word of mouth. The followers of the brand pages can read the posted tweets and retweet the same to their followers. 86% of the active brands on Twitter have acknowledged that e-WOM can be utilized as an effective tool for reaching the targeted consumers along with the members who belong to the consumer's network (Kim, Sung, & Kang, 2014). The success of WOM over social media depends upon the predictability of how a consumer can affect the attitudes and opinions of other consumers. Brand followers are most prone to engage themselves in e-WOM (Sahin, Gülmez, & Ersoy, 2019). As a result, e-WOM is generated, which in turn, contributes to customer involvement. Customer involvement brought on positive experiences typically contributed to emotional engagement. Thus, it can be hypothesized that;

H7: Word of mouth within social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H8: Word of mouth within social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

Interactivity and Customer Engagement

According to Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, and Okumus (2015), interactivity refers to the significance of utilizing tools for fostering the flow of information both with as well as amongst the users. Brands utilize the ideas shared by the customers on the brand page that may involve the sharing of personal content and views.

Interactivity between a firm and its customers is embedded in social media networks. Interactivity involves three research streams, the perceptions of interactivity, functional features, and actions or processes of interactivity (Kim & Lee, 2019). Interactivity, as a function, emphasizes illustrating manifest characteristics of interactivity. The second stream signifies the process of actions undertaken for making an element interactive. Interactivity is the process of exchanging user responsiveness and information. It can be either a perception of interaction or an interactional process. Perceived interactivity replicated through advertisements positively impacts the attitudes of the customers, thereby affecting their purchase intentions. The researchers Barreda et al. (2016), found that online interactivity facilitates two-way communication, which impacts different brand dimensions such as brand image and brand awareness positively, thereby enhancing brand value.

The social media platform has been argued to be an effective platform wherein a brand can encourage its customers to express their views and opinions about its

products (Jayasingh, 2019). The platform is also ideal for maintaining an open line of communication between the customers and the brand. The customer expresses their satisfaction with the products of the brand and loyalty on social media. The platform is also used by customers for recommending products to their friends and family members. Therefore, social media platforms may be considered an ideal medium for encouraging interactivity.

Santini et al. (2020) highlighted that interactivity between the customer and the brand arises when the customers have a higher degree of involvement. This indicates that customers that have a high degree of involvement take the time to interact with the brand to learn more about its products and services. Such interactions, in turn, contribute to cognitive satisfaction and positive emotions are developed in the minds of the customers. So et al. (2016) customer brand relationship is built and their quality is improved through interactivity. This also leads to the development of a loyal base of customers. Customer loyalty is responsible for driving repeat business and contributes to an increase in revenue. Moreover, it enhances the image of the brand and provides the business with a competitive advantage over rival organizations. Therefore, to reap the benefits of customer loyalty, it is essential to develop long-lasting favorable relationships with the customers and encourage customer engagement. Hence it can be hypothesized that;

H9: Interactivity of social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H10: Interactivity of social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the empirical research has been collected via Google forms. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. The first part focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part is related to the usage of the social media characteristics such as entertainment, customization, interactivity, word of mouth, trendiness, and customer engagement such as cognitive and emotional engagement. Each variable and original scale item is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables and Resources List

| Variable | Resource(s) | Item Statements |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <i>Social Media Characteristics</i> | | |
| Entertainment | Social media marketing efforts (Kim & Ko, 2012) | 4 |
| Customization | Social media marketing efforts (Kim & Ko, 2012) | 5 |
| Interactivity | Consumer Brand Engagement in Social Media: Conceptualization, Scale Development and Validation (Hollebeek et al. 2014). Interactivity and Mediating Factors Generating Co-creation of Value on social media. (Turan, 2019). The Influence of On-Line Brand | 3 |

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| Variable | Resource(s) | Item Statements |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| | Community Characteristics on Community Commitment and Brand Loyalty (Jang et al. 2008) | |
| Word of Mouth | Social media marketing efforts (Kim & Ko, 2012) | 3 |
| Trendiness | Social media marketing efforts (Kim & Ko, 2012) | 2 |
| <i>Customer Engagement</i> | | |
| Cognitive Engagement | Interactivity and Mediating Factors Generating Co-creation of Value on social media. (Turan, 2019). | 4 |
| Emotional Engagement | Interactivity and Mediating Factors Generating Co-creation of Value on social media. (Turan, 2019). | 4 |

Convenience sampling is adopted as a non-probabilistic sampling technique. The sample consists of 334. A pilot study had been conducted with 64 people to understand the quality of questions being constructed and whether they needed any revision or not. There exists a filter question, whereby the respondent had to be one of the social media brand followers, regardless of the platform. The data is validated and the final data that is being used for the analysis purpose is on 334 people who follow various social media channels. Data were collected from April 5, 2020 to August 21, 2020 which took 138 days.

FINDINGS

In this section, findings of the empirical research related to the proposed model are presented. First, a sample profile is presented covering demographic characteristics. Then, exploratory and confirmatory factor and reliability analyses were presented. In the end, the results of the hypotheses were tested with regression analysis.

Sample Profile

In that part as can be seen from Table 2, 62 % of the respondents are male, 37.4 % are female whereas 0.6% of the respondents prefer not to answer.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

| | <i>n</i> | % |
|------------------------|----------|-------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 125 | 37,40 |
| Male | 207 | 62,00 |
| No Answer | 2 | 0,60 |
| Age | | |
| 20 and younger | 47 | 14,10 |
| 21-30 | 180 | 53,90 |
| 31-40 | 57 | 17,10 |
| 41-50 | 27 | 8,10 |
| 51 and older | 23 | 6,90 |
| Education | | |
| Not Identified | 8 | 2,40 |
| High School Degree | 48 | 14,40 |
| Studying at university | 127 | 38,00 |
| Bachelors Degree | 125 | 37,40 |

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| | <i>n</i> | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Masters / Ph.D. Degree | 26 | 7,80 |
| Monthly Income | | |
| 2.000 TL and lower | 41 | 12,30 |
| 2.001 TL - 4.000 TL | 102 | 30,50 |
| 4.001 TL - 6.000 TL | 83 | 24,90 |
| 6.001 TL - 8.000 TL | 49 | 14,70 |
| 8.001 TL - 10.000 TL | 29 | 8,70 |
| 10.001 TL and higher | 30 | 9,00 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 249 | 74,60 |
| Married | 64 | 19,20 |
| Divorced | 21 | 6,30 |
| Employment Status | | |
| Employed | 286 | 85,60 |
| Unemployed | 48 | 14,40 |
| Daily Internet Usage Rate | | |
| 0-2, 2-4 hours/day | 124 | 37,10 |
| 4-8, more than 8 hours/day | 210 | 62,90 |

Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

The Principal Components method of extraction is selected for all variables' items for factor analysis, as a mandatory step before confirmatory factor analysis. KMO and Bartlett's test had been executed to understand the adequacy of the sample data and the Eigenvalue was selected as 1. For all dimensions, results were significant ($\chi^2 = 9172.598$, $p < 0.00$) and results demonstrated an excellent test result (KMO=.930). It can be said the collected study is appropriate for factor analysis. Moreover, the majority of the factor item loadings are within the range of 0.50 and 0.70, which can be considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2010). Also, as shown through cumulative variance, mentioned factors explain %85.249 of the phenomenon.

Interpreting reliability scores of .968 for Customized Entertainment via Social Media, .952 for Trendiness of WOM via Social Media, .980 for Interactivity, .944 for Cognitive Engagement, and .918 for Emotional Engagement dimensions; all items' reliabilities are above 0.80 so this study can be accepted as quite highly reliable.

Table 3: Pattern Matrix for All Variables

| Factor | Item Statements | Explained Variance (%) | Factor Loadings | Cronbach Alpha |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Customized Entertainment | Ent1The contents found on XXXX's social media seem interesting. | 55,139 | ,977 | ,968 |
| | Cust2XXXX's social media provide customized services. | | ,954 | |
| | Cust1It is possible to search for customized information on XXXX's social media. | | ,905 | |
| | Cust3XXXX's social media provide lively feed information I am interested in. | | ,902 | |
| | Ent2It is exciting to use XXXX's social media | | ,877 | |
| | Ent4It is easy to kill time using XXXX's social media. | | ,867 | |
| | Ent3It is fun to collect information on brands or products through XXXX's social media. | | ,839 | |
| | Cust4It is easy to use XXXX's social media. | | ,821 | |
| | Cust5XXXX's social media can be used anytime, anywhere. | | ,765 | |

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| Factor | Item Statements | Explained Variance (%) | Factor Loadings | Cronbach Alpha |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Trendiness of WOM | Wom3I would like to share opinions on brands, items, or services acquired from XXXX's social media with my acquaintances. | 11,605 | ,920 | ,952 |
| | Wom2I would like to upload content from XXXXX's social media on my blog or microblog. | | ,915 | |
| | Trend1It is a leading trend to use XXXX's social media. | | ,913 | |
| | Trend2Contents found on XXXX's social media are up-to-date. | | ,740 | |
| | Wom1I would like to pass out information on brands, products, or services from XXXX's social media to my friends. | | ,696 | |
| Cognitive Engagement | CE2 At brand XXXX's social media page, I focus a great deal of attention on (brand). | 8,094 | ,959 | ,944 |
| | CE1 At brand XXXX's social media page, my mind is very focused on (brand). | | ,945 | |
| | CE3 At brand XXXX's social media page, I become absorbed by (brand). | | ,913 | |
| | CE4 Using (brand)'s social media page, stimulates my interest to learn more about (brand). | | ,858 | |
| Emotional Engagement | EE2 I am enthusiastic in relation to brand XXXX at its social media page | 6,000 | ,902 | ,918 |
| | EE1 I feel energetic in contact with (brand) at its social media page. | | ,847 | |
| | EE3 I feel positive about brand XXXX at its social media page. | | ,762 | |
| | EE4 I'm proud to use brand XXXX. | | ,670 | |
| Interactivity | INT2 I think brand XXXX actively exchanges information with its followers on its brand page. | 4,412 | ,992 | ,980 |
| | INT3 I think brand XXXX often responds in a timely manner to inquiries or comments from its followers on the brand page | | ,977 | |
| | INT1 I think brand XXXX frequently interacts with its followers on the brand page | | ,966 | |

Consequently, five factors hypothesized beforehand, dropped to three factors. Proposed factors are;

1. Entertainment + Customization = Customized Entertainment via Social Media
2. WOM + Trend = Trendiness of WOM via Social Media
3. Interactivity

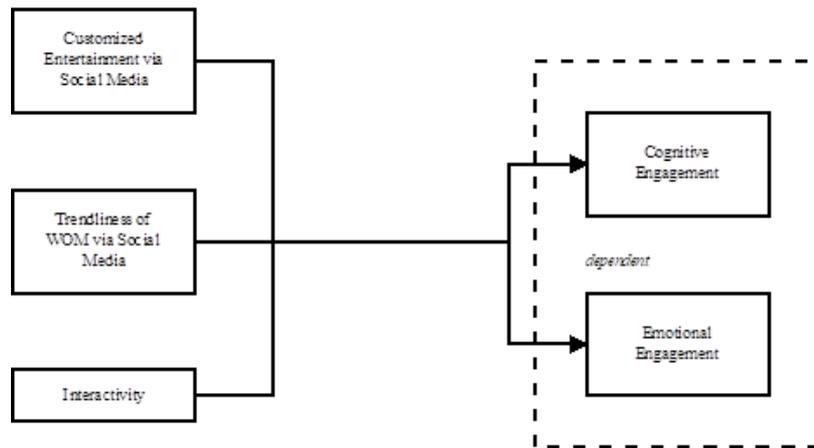


Figure 1: Revised Research Model

Based on the factor analysis and reliability analysis outputs, some of the proposed hypotheses are revised.

H1: Customized Entertainment of social media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H2: Customized Entertainment of social media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

H3: The trendiness of WOM via Social Media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H4: The trendiness of WOM via Social Media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

H5: Interactivity of Social Media has a significant positive effect on cognitive engagement.

H6: Interactivity of Social Media has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is employed to test the appropriateness and validity of existing scales. Convergence and discriminant validity analyses are adopted. For convergent validity, the standard regression weights and average explained variance (AVE) values of the variables should be above 0.50, and the construct reliability values (CR) should be above 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

As seen in Table 4, the construct reliability values (CR) of all the variables in the research scale are above 0.70. Likewise, the average explained variance value (AVE) is above 0.50. Therefore, convergent validity criteria are provided for all variables (Hair et al., 2010).

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method was used to measure the discriminant validity of the model. According to this method, if the square root of the mean explained variance value (AVE) of a factor is greater than the correlation value of this factor with

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other factors and the MSV value is less than the AVE value, it shows the discriminant validity. According to the findings obtained as a result of the analysis, it can be said that the dimensions in the model are separate constructs and discriminant validity is ensured.

Table 4: Validity and Reliability Results

| Variable | CR | AVE | MSV |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Emotional_Engagement | 0,901 | 0,698 | 0,370 |
| Customized_Entertainment | 0,967 | 0,766 | 0,654 |
| Trendinessof_WOM | 0,952 | 0,800 | 0,654 |
| Interactivity | 0,980 | 0,943 | 0,370 |
| Cognitive_Engagement | 0,931 | 0,773 | 0,231 |

According to the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the validity results of the scales were above the threshold values. Looking at the model fit values in Table 5, it is seen that CMIN/DF (χ^2/sd), GFI, CFI, NFI, and RMSEA values are good (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These findings can be interpreted as the scale items loaded on the relevant dimensions with an acceptable fit.

During the analysis, the covariances under the same latent variables (error terms regarding Customized Entertainment 1-2; Emotional Engagement 1-2; Cognitive Engagement 1-2) were linked together to obtain better results in the goodness of fit scores.

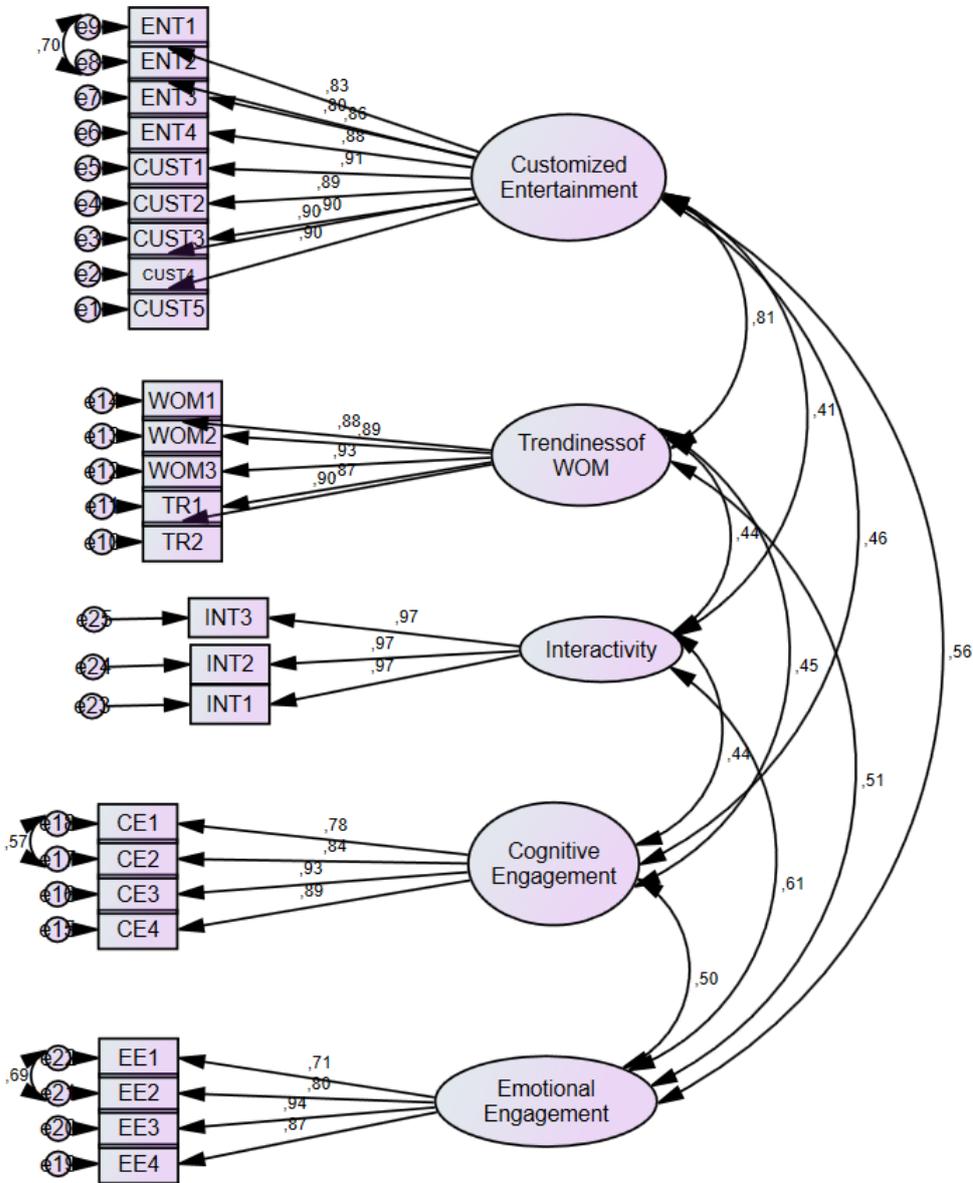


Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

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Table 5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Indices

| Measurement | Acceptable Value Ranges | Extracted Values | Resource |
|--|---|------------------|--|
| χ^2/sd (CMIN/sd) | <3 good ; <5 acceptable | 2,898 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014; Ros et al., 2015 |
| GFI | >0,8 | 0,844 | Hsu & Lin, 2008 |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | >0,95 good; >0,90 traditional, >0,80 acceptable | 0,951 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014; Ros et al., 2015 |
| Normed Fit Index (NFI) | >0,8 | 0,928 | Ros et al., 2015 |
| Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) | <0,08 OR <0,10 | 0,076 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014 OR Park, 2009; Ros et al., 2015 |

HYPOTHESES TESTING

For hypothesis testing, SEM (Structural Equation Model) is preferred to examine all the independent variables' cumulative effects on the dependent variables. According to Path Analysis, the results are presented in Table 6. First of all, multivariate assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, and common method bias (CMB) in the variables are examined. For linearity, curve estimation was adopted, using regression analyses for all relationships in the model and it was found that relationships were sufficiently linear. Subsequently, multicollinearity was tested via linear regressions. All VIF values were found to be less than the threshold value of VIF=4, indicating no signs of multicollinearity. Lastly, common method bias was checked. One way to detect CMB was by examining the correlation matrix, as initiated by Bagozzi et al. (1991). Since CMB is accepted to inflate the internal consistency because of high correlations among the constructs that are attributed to a common source. Bagozzi et al. (1991) indicated the presence of CMV if any pair of constructs have a correlation value above 0.90. In that case, the correlation matrix was checked and there exists no substantial sign of CMV.

The proposed model is statistically significant and the model's fit indices are above the accepted threshold values. The fit index values obtained as a result of the analysis are shared in Table 6 (χ^2 /sd (CMIN/sd) = 4,312; GFI= 0.805; CFI= 0.914; NFI=0.891 RMSEA= 0.08)

Table 6: Path Analysis Model Fit Indices

| Measurement | Acceptable Value Ranges | Extracted Values | Resource |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------|--|
| χ^2/sd (CMIN/sd) | <3 good ; <5 acceptable | 4,312 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014; Ros et al., 2015 |
| GFI | >0,8 | 0,805 | Hsu & Lin, 2008 |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | >0,95 good; >0,90 traditional, >0,80 acceptable | 0,914 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014; Ros et al., 2015 |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|---|
| Normed Fit Index (NFI) | >0,8 | 0,891 | Ros et al., 2015 |
| Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) | <0,08 OR <0,10 | 0,100 | Sanchez & Hueros, 2010; Tarhini et al., 2014 Ros et al., 2015 |

After the validation of the measurement model, the rest of the research hypotheses were tested on the latent variable structural model. Analysis values for the measurement and structural model are shown in Figure 3 and Table 7.

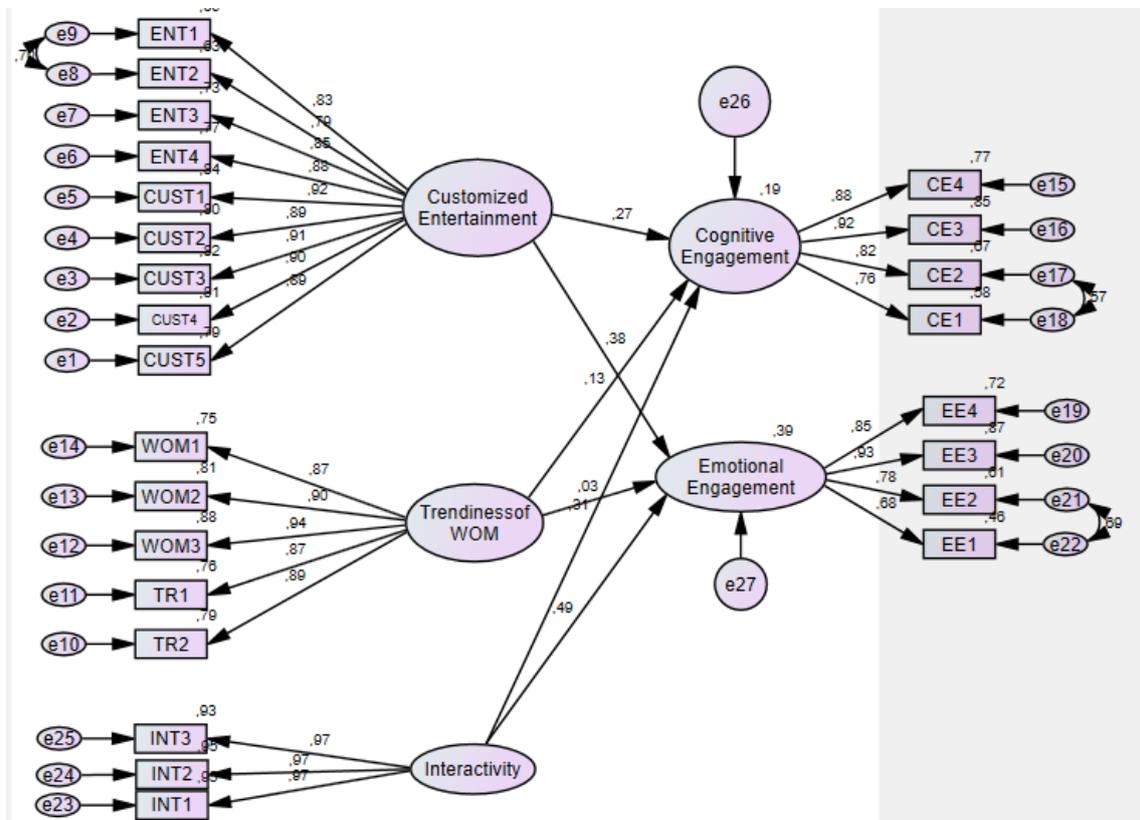


Figure 3: Research Model Standardized Path Diagram

According to the results of the analysis, it was found that customized entertainment ($\beta=0.244$; $p<0.01$) and interactivity ($\beta=0.226$; $p<0.01$) affect cognitive engagement. On the other hand, customized entertainment ($\beta=0.349$; $p<0.01$) and interactivity ($\beta=0.367$; $p<0.01$) affect emotional engagement, as well. However, the trendiness of WOM is found to have no significant effect on any engagement types. In line with these findings, the H1, H2, H5, and H6 hypotheses were accepted. H3 and H4 were rejected.

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Table 7: Path Analysis Results

| | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|--|----------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Cognitive_Engagement <--- Customized_Entertainment | ,244 | ,049 | 4,997 | *** | |
| Emotional_Engagement <--- Customized_Entertainment | ,349 | ,045 | 7,683 | *** | |
| Cognitive_Engagement <--- Trendinessof_WOM | ,120 | ,049 | 2,475 | ,013 | |
| Emotional_Engagement <--- Trendinessof_WOM | ,031 | ,043 | ,724 | ,469 | |
| Emotional_Engagement <--- Interactivity | ,367 | ,037 | 9,893 | *** | |
| Cognitive_Engagement <--- Interactivity | ,226 | ,039 | 5,721 | *** | |

Table 8: Hypotheses Results

| Hypothesis | Result |
|---|--------------|
| H1 Customized Entertainment of social media has a significant effect on cognitive engagement. | Not Rejected |
| H2 The trendiness of WOM via Social Media is a significant factor affecting cognitive engagement. | Rejected |
| H3 Interactivity allows better cognitive engagement with customers. | Not Rejected |
| H4 Customized Entertainment of social media has a significant effect on emotional engagement. | Not Rejected |
| H5 The trendiness of WOM via Social Media is a significant factor affecting emotional engagement. | Rejected |
| H6 Interactivity allows a better emotional engagement with customers. | Not Rejected |

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the effects of social media characteristics, such as entertainment, customization, trendiness, WOM, and interactivity on customer engagement are examined. This study presents three major findings on the anticipated relationship between social media characteristics and consumer engagement.

First, interactivity is identified as a significant determinant of both cognitive and emotional engagement. This finding matches with what literature suggested as the interactivity between the customer and the brand evolving to a higher degree of involvement (Santini et al., 2020; Zheng, 2018; So et al., 2016). Such interactions, in turn, contribute to cognitive satisfaction and positive emotions are developed in the minds of the customers. In line with the existing literature, interactivity seemed to have an incremental effect both on cognitive and emotional engagement. As Godey et al (2016) suggested, brands should spend more attention to interactive content that stimulates engagement. So, the fact that social media is valuable not only for providing vast amounts of content but also as an effective tool for interacting and engaging with customers needs to be emphasized. Also, with that enhanced interactivity, companies gain a profound understanding of the wide range of queries that they might have and also gain knowledge on what the customers are looking for, in terms of the products that the brands decide to produce as the tastes and preferences change quite frequently in the Smartphone industry (Junaid et al., 2019).

Second, customized entertainment is found to be effective on both engagement types, namely emotional engagement. It is interesting to reveal that customization,

which is tailoring the content to the specific needs of the target audience, and entertainment are loaded on the same factor, which means that even while entertaining via social media customers favor customized offers. Entertainment provided via social media is stressed in several studies (Santini et al., 2020; Jayasingh, 2019; Godey et al., 2016). The core reason behind personalized entertainment might be to make the content suitable for every kind of consumer and not generalize it for the mass market, which is in line with the findings of Cano et al (2017). It is intriguing to find out that entertaining function not only cultivates emotional engagement but cognitive engagement, as well. With the increase of technological advancement and affordable devices that enable connectivity, customers have become more tech-savvy than ever before as they are always following the posts of the brand and the recent innovations that they have come up with. Not only customers are fulfilled with recreational content to nurture their mood, but also the entertaining content increases how much attention they pay to the content and feel almost absorbed by the content, as one aspect of cognitive engagement.

Third, this study did not detect any significant effect of trendiness and WOM on customer engagement. As it contradicted, what Standing et al. (2016) suggested as people disseminate their opinions by posting content and referrals through online social networks which helps encourage e-word-of-mouth which leads to emotional responses. In terms of social media, the various channels have made the job of the brands much easier when it comes to adding promotional features and publicized content at large. One reason behind that might be attributed to the fact that people are more prone to share their experiences and the opinions that they have undergone with the brand on their respective social media pages. Even though it is evident that before purchasing any kind of product, customers tend to go on social media channels and tend to seek knowledge and inspiration regarding the brand that they eventually plan to purchase, people are more skeptical about sharing any content, especially with their acquaintants.

The loyalty and the trust that the brand generates over the years play a major role in improving the long-term reputation and the brand image of the brand as that offers it a substantial competitive edge over its rivals (Bazi et al., 2020). Thus, the importance of customer engagement is immense and is essential in building long-term and lasting relationships. There are also dependent variables- cognitive and emotional that have a distinct degree of impact on the strategies surrounding customer engagement. Moreover, the cognitive element surrounding customer engagement is frequently witnessed in the level of concentration and engrossment of an individual in a brand. At the same time, cognitive engagement assists the various brands, which in this case is a smartphone, by further creating a scenario wherein, they can develop personalized content for the prospective customers, as they will be able to co-relate. This gives rise to a seamless experience to be exercised when the organizations can comprehend and at the same time, look to resolve and cater to the necessities of the customers to make it an effortless experience for the concerned customers. Moreover, emotional engagement also serves a pivotal role when it comes to forming an emotional connection with the customers. The emotional angle helps the brands to get

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their message communicated to the customer in a more significant manner. Moreover, the emotional attachment of the consumers to the brands certainly facilitates fostering a profound relationship with the customers as various emotional facets are distinctly revealed via enthusiasm, passion, and intrinsic degree of enjoyment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The study has some limitations, as can be expected from any empirical study. Because of the non-probabilistic sampling technique, the results are not generalizable to the population. In addition, due to the time and fund limitations, the sampling size is restrictive.

A further amount of research would be required to examine the social media characteristics' effect on customer engagement from different viewpoints. Like consumer involvement, which acts as an antecedent to consumer brand engagement, it can be considered as the mediator in defining social media effects on customer engagement. It has a positive impact on the different aspects of consumer brand engagement which involves, affection, activation, and cognitive processing (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014). There are also additional factors like the self-expressiveness of brands that can be studied in further research. Because, according to Hollebeek (2013), hedonic brands contribute effectively to the self-expression of consumers. Santini et al. (2020) similarly stated that customer involvement is higher when the products have a hedonic value, which allows them to express themselves. Moreover, customers are also highly likely to be involved with a brand, which is relevant to their personality. In other words, when the product or a brand enables the customers to express their personality, the customers tend to be highly involved.

Moreover, research needs to be performed to assess the importance of social media as it should be viewed as a moderating factor while studying the relationships between brand attitude and the perception concerning the buying decisions and the intentions of the consumers.

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