



Abstract

Social Media Use, Value Consciousness, and Brand Relationships [†]

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1. Objectives

In view of the ever-increasing social media use (SMU) from brands and customers [1], authors have highlighted the need to investigate the potential impact of the volume of social media interactions on the quality of customer relationships with brands [2]. Considering that the intensity of SMU varies among consumers and is often associated with certain user characteristics, such as value consciousness (VC), this study investigates the extent to which consumers' SMU influences their relationships with brands.

2. Methodology

During Autumn 2022, a convenience sample of 222 participants, the majority of which were female, university degree holders, and up to 45 years old, participated in an online survey related to SMU. The established measurement scales used for SMU [3], VC [4], brand commitment (BC) [5], brand closeness (BCS) [6], and relational feedback (RF) [7] were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis. To achieve a satisfactory fit of the measurement model, seven out of twenty Likert items had to be removed.

3. Results

The structural model of hypothesized relationships (CMIN/DF = 1.273, $p = 0.075$, CFI = 0.984, TLI = 0.979, RMSEA = 0.035, PCLOSE = 0.857) showed that SMU had a significant and positive effect on VC ($\beta = 0.27$) and BCS ($\beta = 0.28$) (Figure 1). Subsequently, while both VC ($\beta = 0.18$) and BCS ($\beta = 0.60$) had a significant and positive effect on RF, only BCS had a significant and positive effect on BC ($\beta = 0.57$). Based on the above, it appears that SMU fosters VC and perceived BCS, which, in turn, drives RF and BC.



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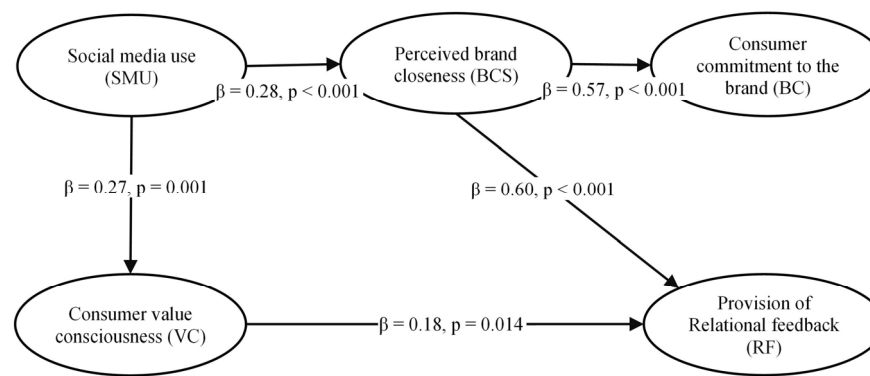


Figure 1. Structural model.

4. Implications

The direct relationship between SMU and VC may be attributed to the ease of conducting online price research and the extensive sharing of offers among users [8]. Subsequently, the provision of feedback from value-conscious users may be driven by their loyalty towards their preferred brands [9] and their emphasis on the post-purchase phase [10]. Nevertheless, active social media engagement appears to create a sense of brand closeness, which, in turn, enhances users’ commitment to the brand.

5. Originality Value

The originality of the study lies in its exploration of the complex relationships between social media use, value consciousness, (perceived) brand closeness, relationship feedback provision, and brand commitment. The present research sheds light on how these variables interplay and consequently allows social media marketers to advance their understanding of social media’s impact on brand–customer relationships and leverage social media platforms to meet marketing objectives.

6. Contribution

By elucidating the complex dynamics between social media use, value consciousness, perceived brand closeness, relationship feedback provision, and brand commitment, this study shows that marketers can harness social media to foster more meaningful and long-lasting customer relationships, increase brand–customer interactions, and ultimately build brand loyalty.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available because they were provided by participants solely for the purpose of the present study.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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