ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Marketers utilize social media to achieve marketing objectives ranging from customer care to advertising to commerce. Thus, social media marketing is the utilization of social media technologies, channels and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization and its stakeholders (Tuten and Solomon 2018). It is made possible by the digital infrastructure of the web, facilitated on social media vehicles such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, empowered by social software and algorithms, and enabled by smart devices.

Across social media strategies and tactics, one overarching objective unifies, inspires, and frustrates social media marketers—engagement. The meaning and operationalization of engagement remain works in progress with researchers studying the construct from a variety of perspectives. That research is advanced in this special issue. In the lead article, Engagement with Social Media Content: A Qualitative Exploration, Syrdal and Briggs approached the question of what constitutes engagement using a qualitative method. Their studies suggest that engagement is not an outcome of social media marketing stimuli and target response (like brand awareness, for instance), but rather a psychological state of mind. Engagement operates independently from target response behaviors such as post-interaction and sharing (i.e., pass-along). More important, Syrdal and Briggs proposed a formal definition of engagement which will be instrumental in focusing future engagement research.

Carvalho and Fernandes also approached the issue of engagement in their article, "Understanding Customer Brand Engagement on Virtual Social Communities: A Comprehensive Model of Drivers, Outcomes and Moderators." They proposed and tested a comprehensive model of drivers, outcomes, and moderators of customer brand engagement (CBE) in the context of social media-based brand communities. Brand communities can be categorized in the zone of social community using the Zones of Social Media Marketing Framework (Tuten and Solomon 2018). Social community describes channels of social media focused on relationships and the common activities people participate in with others who share the same interest or identification. Thus, social communities feature two-way and multi-way communication, conversation, collaboration, and the sharing of experiences and resources. Carvalho and Fernandes' CBE model incorporates precursors such as involvement, engagement process constructs (including interactivity and flow), and sequence effects (including community satisfaction), trust, propensity to engage in WOM, and community commitment. As a comprehensive framework, this too promises to facilitate future social media marketing research.

Sihi and Lawson's article, "Marketing Leaders and Social Media: Blending Personal and Professional Identities," investigates the presentation of role identities and related pressures for social media users. In social communities, participants use avatars and profiles to establish presence. When users play both professional and personal roles in social communities, boundary issues can arise. Social role identities, whether professional or personal, may overlap, blur, crossover, and create contradictions. The authors studied the motivation, benefits, and challenges faced by CMOs who maintain social media accounts with which they play both personal and professional roles.

Identity and/or social identity are to social media marketing what personality is to segmentation and targeting research. Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar add to our knowledge in their article, "Capturing and Co-creating Student Experiences in Social Media: A Social Identity Theory Perspective." Inherent in this article is the discussion of the evolution of the social identity construct. Social identity is the part of one's self-concept that results from perceived membership in a group and/or one's social roles. As social media participants, people express their identity using avatars and other indicators, much of which may be influenced by others in the social community. Drawing on social identity theory (SIT), Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar's article investigated how the perceived social identities of students are influenced by content strategies deployed in social media brand communities using netnography. The results suggest that social media content can play an important "sense-giving" role to community members and help them meet personal psychological and relationship needs.

Data on social identity is an asset to marketers for use in segmenting, targeting, and developing personas. As people participate in social media, the residue, sometimes called social exhaust, becomes a source of social data. Jones (2014)

defines social data in the context of social identity, as "the information about an individual available in social media, including profile data and ongoing activity" (p. 5). As consumers become more aware of the nature, type, and extent of social data, privacy concerns grow. Fox and Royne's article, "Private Information in a Social World: Assessing Consumers' Fear and Understanding of Social Media Privacy," explored consumers' understanding of social media privacy policies (CUSPP) and related fears. Their research produced a scale to measure CUSPP and subsequently examined the influence of text, audio, and pictorial cues used in social media privacy policies, on consumers' CUSPP and physiologically-measured fear. This research is among the first to use self-reported and physiological measures to assess consumer understanding and emotional reactions in a social media context.

In "User-Generated Content as Word-of-Mouth," Ramirez, Gau, Hadjimarcou, and Xu identified proxies for capturing evidence of WOM and tested the construct validity of the proxies. While WOM is respected for its potential influence on buyer decision making both offline and online, effectively operationalizing measures for WOM has proven challenging. Ramirez et al. used data compiled from Facebook on sixty-one firms across nine markets and found that the WOM proxies were positively correlated and related to firms' stock market performance. They also used time-series analysis to demonstrate that these WOM proxies change in tandem with stock prices, implying that they are sensitive to firm behaviors and that UGC is a leading indicator of stock market performance. This approach can serve as a useful tool to more accurately assess firm impressions.

WOM communication in which consumers serve as brand advocates online (OBA) is the focus of the article by Wilk, Harrigan, and Soutar, "Navigating Online Brand Advocacy (OBA): An Exploratory Analysis." Their article established the criteria for OBA as elaborate, purposeful, and impactful brand support and distinguishes OBA from other brand-related online WOM. OBA incorporates cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements identifiable in its expression.

Marketers have lamented the paucity of social media research relevant for B2B applications. Barry and Gironda addressed this gap with their article, "A Dyadic Examination of Inspirational Factors Driving B2B Social Media Influence." The article describes a study of a B2B-focused social media community and the engagement strategies used to illicit brand advocacy. The results were used to establish a model for inspirational motivation in a B2B social community context. The model was tested on 171 influencer/content evaluator dyads. Results showed that inspiration can play a role in social communities just as in traditional leadership settings.

Kim and Chandler's article, "How Social Community and Social Publishing Influence New Product Launch: The Case of Twitter During the PlayStation 4 and XBOX One Launches," shows how Twitter can be used for social community and social publishing strategies. While social community is focused on conversation and collaboration, social publishing facilitates the dissemination of content via social channels while also enabling audience participation and sharing (Tuten and Solomon 2018). Social publishing channels enable participation and sharing, just as social communities do. The distinction between these two zones is in the primary orientation. The orientation of social communities is relational networking while that of social publishing is knowledge-sharing (Tuten and Solomon, 2018). Studying the new product launches of the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One video game consoles, the authors found that shared language and personalized communication facilitated the success of new product launch efforts by activating a sense of social community and social publishing the resultant cocreated knowledge.

Barry and Graca's article, "Humor Effectiveness in Social Video Engagement," sheds additional light on the engagement construct while adding to our understanding of optimizing the use of social entertainment strategies. The zone of social entertainment encompasses events, performances, and activities designed to provide the audience with pleasure and enjoyment, experienced and shared using social media. The distinction between the zones of social publishing and social entertainment is the orientation: Knowledge-sharing versus entertainment-sharing (Tuten and Solomon 2018). The entertainment value of social video serves as an incentive for engagement. There are several genres of social video (e.g., how-to, vlog, gaming).

This study extends research on humor effectiveness to videos intended for social media engagement using a survey and content analysis of 2,911 videos. Results revealed an attitude favorability toward humor over serious entertainment especially when the message is intended for goods classified as low involvement and emotionally motivated. The study also suggests, however, that humor may dissuade social media participants from posting comments.

The final two articles in this special issue relate to the zone of social commerce. Social commerce refers to the use of social media in the online shopping, buying, and selling of products and services. It enables people, both networks of buyers and

sellers, to participate actively in the marketing and selling of products and services in online marketplaces and communities (Tuten and Solomon 2018). Social shopping is the active participation and influence of others on a consumer's decision-making process, typically in the form of opinions, recommendations, and experiences shared via social media (Tuten and Solomon 2018). Online reviews are a staple asset influencing both offline and online shoppers. As online reviews have grown in influence, so has cyber shilling. Cyber shilling includes writing false reviews, either positive or negative; endorsing products/services for profit without actually using or buying them; and/or utilizing false identities to promote the products/services of a company for profit. This is the topic of Thakur, Hale, and Summey's article, "What Motivates Consumers to Partake in Cyber shilling?" They tested the possible motivators for individuals to partake in cyber shilling using a survey of 1,752 consumers. The results shed light on the negative emotions related to brand relationships. When people felt betrayed, they had an increase in desire for revenge and a decrease in brand love. Betrayal did not lead to an increase in cybershopping, though. However, desire for revenge and brand love did, suggesting that revenge and brand love have other precursors. Importantly, the willingness to be involved in cyber shilling increased when it was incentivized with a reward.

The final article in this special issue is Yoon's "A Sociocultural Approach to Korea Wave Marketing Performance: Cross-National Adoption of Arguments on Foreign Cultural Products in Social Media Context." The article reports on a study of the key factors affecting the cross-border adoption of arguments in social media concerning cultural products (i.e., drama, movie, music, food, and so on) of foreign origin. For this purpose, this study examined whether social network traits such as tie strength and centrality influenced the adoption of arguments on foreign cultural products in social media context, with particular attention to the role of argument presentation mode and level of consumer involvement. The results demonstrate that social network traits affect the adoption of product arguments in social media. Further, an experimental study confirms that argument presentation (i.e., text versus image) and consumer's involvement level significantly affect the adoption. Interestingly, the results also suggest that a "country of origin" effect is also a relevant factor.

Without any doubt, the use of social media is now ingrained in our everyday lives. It has become common practice for businesses and consumers to use social media as a tool to connect, build, and develop relationships. Social media marketing is of value globally due to its ability to cross and even share screens. These trends were evident in the response generated by the call for papers for this Special Issue. An overwhelming number of fifty-two research manuscripts were submitted from countries around the world including Australia, Portugal, Ghana, South Korea, Canada, India, Taiwan, Brazil, France, Finland, Denmark, Poland, Lebanon, China, Malaysia, Italy, Spain, and the United States. And, toward achieving our objective of bringing social media marketing research to the forefront of academic research, we believe we have accomplished this with the Special Issue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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