



## AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS TO INTERACT WITH BRANDSON SOCIAL MEDIA

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DOI: 10.48047/ecb/2023.12.si4.1680

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look into the elements that influence customers to interact with companies on social media and the effect this has on intentions to buy. As predictors to customer participation in social media, five aspects are investigated: rewards, entertainment, convenience, social influence, and information availability. A research model is developed and tested empirically using a sample size of 339 respondents who have experiences with the internet and social media. Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling is used to investigate the effects of various elements on customer engagement and purchase intent. According to the findings of this study, information availability and rewards are the most influential elements of customer engagement when compared to the others. Further interaction with customers correlates positively with intent to buy.

**Keywords:** customer engagement, purchase intention, social media, consumer behaviour, online marketing, purchase behaviour.

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### 1. Introduction

Social media is a platform for connection that permits users to exchange, share, collaborate, and discuss both user-generated and company-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). To put it another way, such platforms enable customers to generate and disperse content related to one's

own product/service evaluations (Haven, 2007). The new marketing catchphrase "engage or die" stems from customers' growing interest in social media (Taylor, 2012). Furthermore, there has been an unparalleled increase in social media participation that is critical for customer communication and engagement. According to Schultz & Peltier, 2013 customers on social media engage in a number of behaviours such as information searching, distribution, and discussions between others that inform them about product offerings. Customer commitment through e-commerce platforms has tainted the concept of relationship marketing, forcing practitioners to reconsider their approach to customers (Dessart et al., 2015).

Businesses are attempting to connect and slot in with current and budding buyers on e-commerce platforms to grab their attention. These kinds of efforts for businesses and users have directed towards the way to development of consumer commitment, which establishes long term consumers' association with trade name (Kumar et al., 2010). Many review articles disclose that even if, consumer's association is getting top awareness among researchers and academician, there is a lacking techniques which fill the gaps between customer engagement and purchase intention on social platform. Numbers of organizations use social media due to lack of planning and they fail to realize actual profit. This is primarily because such organizations recognize social platforms as a key to advertisement while failing to recognize that social platforms are designed for users and hence any effort to engage with them is above their ability to reach (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Despite its continuing importance, it has been remarked that the partial investigation on e-commerce platforms lead managers' assessment in online production transactions concerning artifact promotion. Behavior is largely prejudiced by the remuneration received, which could include entertainment, social, and Rewards (Mikalef et al., 2013).

It has been observed that fundamental challenge for the researchers is to recognize the factors that give confidence and inspire consumers' engagement on social platforms and by these actions the organization can strongly and expressively engage customers to create purchase plan. The primary goal of this research is to investigate the reasons why social platform customers engage with companies in an online environment. The impact of five factors viz. entertainment, information availability, rewards, social influence, and convenience are considered in this study. In addition, this research article will also focus on the impact of social platform engagement on purchase intent.

## 2. Overview of the Literature and the Development of Hypotheses

The role of motivational factors will lead to customers' rendezvous in social platforms has been discussed by several academics. The entertainment, social, and Rewards that provided by the social platforms have a major impact on engagement behavior of customers. Furthermore, users' browsing the internet and buying intentions are positively influenced by seeking opportunity, convenience, entertainment, conversation and product selection (Enginkaya&Yılmaz, 2014). In terms of product browsing or engagement, literature studies have directed how each aspect explains the hedonic and utilitarian values given by social platforms. The current study, on the other hand, focuses on the impact of entertainment, information availability, Rewards, social influence, and convenience on customer engagement and purchase intent.

### 2.1 Entertainment

Consumers' enjoyment and fun with a company's brand-related web content is referred to as entertainment (Enginkaya&Yılmaz 2014). Taking this into account in terms of customer involvement, users should have this sense when interacting with brands on social media. Entertainment is among the most important elements for social platform interaction and engagement with brands (Rohm et al., 2013). Gummerus et al., 2012, highlighted amusement as one of the inspiring factors for customers to interact in social media . As a result, it is speculated that:

*H1: Customer engagement on social media is significantly influenced by Entertainment.*

### 2.2 Information availability

Social media is widely regarded as the most accessible and efficient means of gathering information. It assists users in obtaining product-related critical information. Product information is essential for customers, both in terms of the supply that provides it and the impact it has on their purchasing targets (Childers et al., 2012). Customers can get all the information they need about a product using social media because it combines data from various sources. Customers expand and contribute to the information about products through interactive proposals, particularly online remarks and social networks(Clemons, 2009).

*H2: Customer engagement on social media is significantly influenced by Information availability.*

### **2.3 Rewards**

Rewards are also considered motivational factors which engage a customer towards a brand on social media. Rewards are a combined term used for discounts, offers, incentives and monetary benefits etc. number of previous studies examine that rewards are one among the main factor which motivate a customer to follow brand's pages on social media platform and leads to brands and customer interactions. Rewards also aid in spreading positive word of mouth about brands on social media (Azar, 2016).

*H3: Customer engagement on social media is significantly influenced by Rewards.*

### **2.4 Social Influence**

One's behaviour on social media is based on behavior of other person with whom they are connected is called social influence. Social influence is the impact of social pressure upon a person to behave in a particular situation (Ajzen, 1991). One's family, friends, coworker, individuals, and groups through which they belong have a strong influence on the notion and action of that person. And when we apply social influence in social media it indicates the influence of other social platform users on individual purchase decisions.

*H4: Customer engagement on social media is significantly influenced by Social influence.*

### **2.5 Convenience**

Various studies have found that online shopping is much more convenient compared to window shopping. Customers easily access a variety of products as per their own schedule and in their comfort zone which was not possible in traditional shopping (Burke, 1997). Searching, browsing, and purchasing products through online platforms add up to the convenience of the customers (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001). Convenience is among the key aspects to motivate the customer in brand engagement process (Dholakia, 2004).

*H5: Customer engagement on social platform is significantly influenced by convenience.*

### **2.6 Customer engagement and purchase intention**

The word "Customer engagement" can also be defined as willingness of a human being to participate and connect to company's services and activities regardless commence by the customer or by the company (Vivek, 2016). "Liking," "sharing," and "commenting" on brand

pages are some of the most used customer engagement parameters (Hollebeek, 2011). Individuals' willingness to purchase a specific product is referred to as consumer buying intentions (De Vries, 2012). Purchase intentions are a useful tool for anticipating the buying process. According to the study, consumer engagement in Facebook online brand groups and purchase intent are linked (Tiruwa, 2016).

*H6: Customer engagement has a positive influence on purchase intentions.*

### 3. Research Methodology

Data collection and analyzing process is explained in the research methodology section. Primary data through a structured questionnaire is collected for this study. Online questionnaires are used for data collection from respondents. 5-point Likert scale is applied in this study which consist of the selection of "Never, Sometime, often, very often, not sure. Convenience sampling method is adopted for this study. A total of 400 questionnaires are distributed, out of these 339 respondents are active on social media and purchase products online are considered for this study. The measurement and structural model suggested in this are evaluated using PLS SEM. The kurtosis and skewness of the data are used to determine the normality of the samples. Cronbach's alpha is used for data reliability and validity, alpha value above 0.7 considered good, and for scaling confirmatory factor analysis has been used.

**Table 1.** Shows the basic descriptive characteristic of sample.

<b>Sample demographic characteristic (N = 339).</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>	25-30	73	21.5
	30-35	210	61.9
	35-40	56	16.5
<b>Total Time spent on social media per day</b>	30 minutes or less	55	16.2
	Between 30min to 1 Hr.	91	26.8
	Between 1-2 Hr.	109	32.1
	More than 2 Hr.	84	24.7
<b>Gender</b>	Male	135	39.8
	Female	204	60.1
<b>Level of education</b>	Post-graduate	175	51.6
	Graduate	102	30.08
	Others	62	18.2
<b>Occupation</b>	Private	199	58.7
	Govt. Sector	40	11.7
	Others	100	29.4

Table 1: shows the sample demographic characteristic, 339 samples were collected through convenience sampling.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The skew values in this sample vary from 0.709 to 0.519, which indicates that the skew value is within the permitted range of 3.0. The reliability and validity of the scale were assessed using principal component factor analysis (PCFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The extracted average variance (AVE) and index load were used to assess the validity of convergence. Table 3 reveals that all of the validation results' average values were greater than the suggested limit of 0.5.

**Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results**

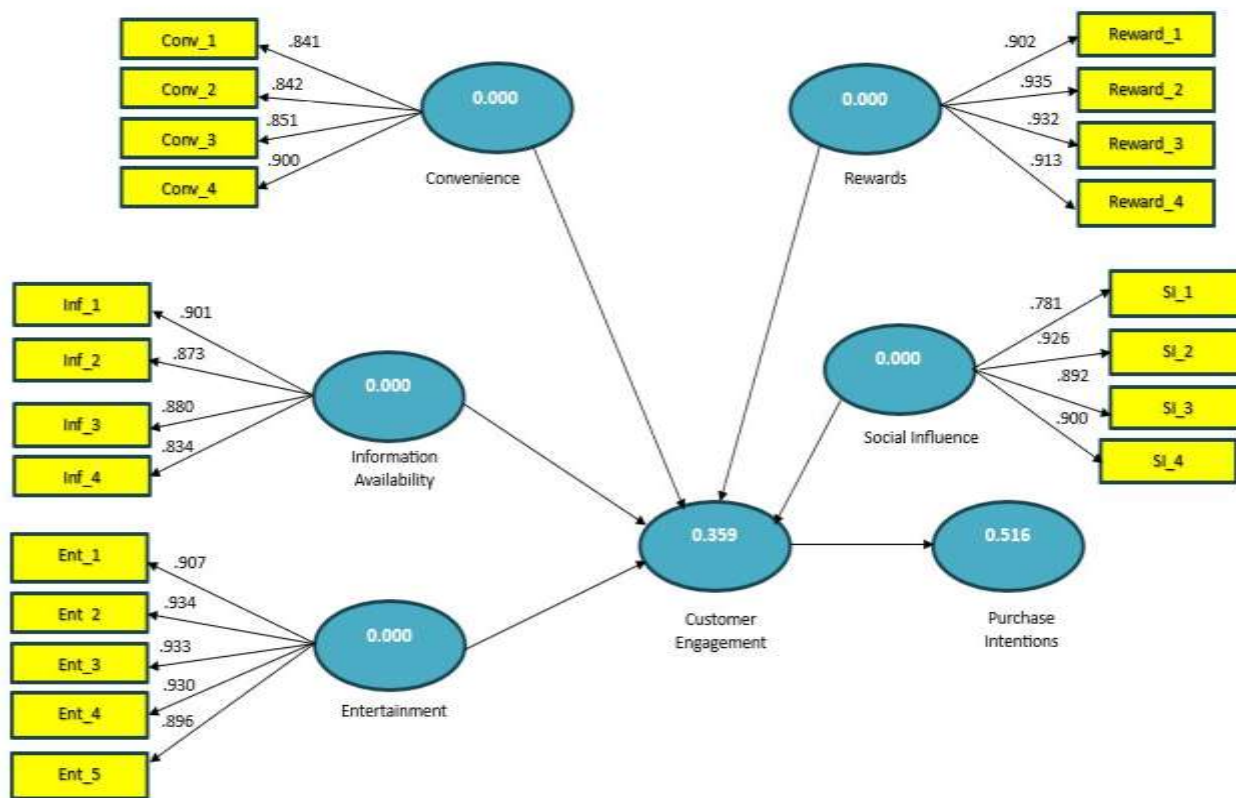
Construct	Measurement items	Standard loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>Entertainment</b>	Ent_1	0.796	0.696	0.873	0.872
	Ent_2	0.861			
	Ent_3	0.845			
	Ent_4	0.776			
<b>Information Availability</b>	Inf_1	0.903	0.692	0.870	0.867
	Inf_2	0.833			
	Inf_3	0.753			
	Inf_4	0.819			
<b>Rewards</b>	Reward_1	0.694	0.542	0.779	0.775
	Reward_2	0.834			
	Reward_3	0.670			
	Reward_4	0.789			
<b>Social influence</b>	SI_1	0.795	0.588	0.810	0.809
	SI_2	0.712			
	SI_3	0.790			
	SI_4	0.783			
<b>Convenience</b>	Conv_1	0.788	0.788	0.917	0.913
	Conv_2	0.949			
	Conv_3	0.917			
	Conv_4	0.834			
<b>Customer Engagement</b>	CE_1	0.776	0.632	0.837	0.837
	CE_2	0.819			
	CE_3	0.789			
	CE_4	0.783			
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	PI_1	0.901	0.851	0.945	0.945
	PI_2	0.923			
	PI_3	0.943			

Cronbach’s alpha of variable entertainment is 0.872 which is greater than 0.5, also all the other variable Cronbach’s alpha are greater than 0.5.

**Table 3.** Correlations Matrix.

Correlations Matrix										
Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1 ENT	4.220	1.948	<b>0.834</b>							
2 IA	4.137	1.993	0.255	<b>0.832</b>						
3 REW	4.713	1.808	0.212	0.101	<b>0.736</b>					
4 SI	3.717	1.582	0.203	0.168	0.207	<b>0.767</b>				
5 CV	4.490	1.843	0.230	0.267	0.167	0.316	<b>0.888</b>			
6 CE	3.480	1.826	0.331	0.331	0.147	0.321	0.138	<b>0.795</b>		
7 PI	3.647	2.047	0.280	0.261	0.022	0.416	0.319	0.161	<b>0.922</b>	

Note. Diagonal bold entries are the square roots average variance extracted (AVE) values; all others are correlations coefficients. M = mean, SD = standard deviation. ENT= entertainment; IA = Information availability; REW = Rewards; SI = social influence; CV= convenience; CE = customer engagement; PI = purchase intention.



**Figure 1:** Structural model

**Table 4.** SEM results

Hypotheses	Structural path	Estimate	SE	T value	p	Results
H1	Entertainment → CE	.087	.064	6.634	***	Supported
H2	Information Availability → CE	.143	.063	7.131	***	Supported
H3	Rewards → CE	.149	.051	3.125	.002**	Supported
H4	Social Influence → CE	.090	.036	3.573	***	Supported
H5	Convenience → CE	.099	.039	3.319	***	Supported
H6	Customer Engagement → PI	.504	.077	9.198	***	Supported

\*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The results show that Entertainment ( $\beta = .087$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Information availability ( $\beta = .143$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Rewards ( $\beta = .149$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Social Influence ( $\beta = .090$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Convenience ( $\beta = .099$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly affected Customer engagement. Therefore, H1 to H5 are supported and customer engagement positively affect purchase intention on social media ( $\beta = .504$ ,  $p < .001$ ) Thus, H6 also supported. Also as shown in fig. 1,  $R^2$  is 0.359, means 35 percent of customer engagement on social media are due to these five variables discussed in the study.

## 5. Conclusion

Social media is a dynamic medium that allows customers to participate and increase brand awareness and brand associations. Regardless of the fact that the theory of customer involvement has received considerable attention in the literature; few research have focused on consumer interaction in the framework of social media platforms. This proposed study seeks to analyze the function of five key elements in increasing customer engagement on interactive platforms such as social media, namely entertainment, information availability, social influence, rewards, and convenience. In addition, this study looked at the impact of customers' social media activity on purchase intent.

The proposed study reveals a significant importance for all five key elements in influencing customer participation in social media. Specifically, the availability of information has been discovered to be the most significant motivating factor in understanding why customers engage in social media sites. According to the proposed research, customers utilize social media to obtain information regarding special deals and to select products offered by such platforms. Other elements that influence customers' social media activity include rewards, entertainment, convenience, and social influence.



The results of proposed research can be correlated with the fact that customers utilize media not only to conveniently extract or receive detailed information about products and services, as well as to have fun and relax. The findings of the proposed study also demonstrated a moderate relationship between customer engagement and purchase intent. It reveals that social media activity by customers has an important influence on purchase intent.

## **6. Implications**

The current study is theoretically and managerially noteworthy since it identifies the aspects that drive consumer interaction and its consequent impact on purchase intention. The proposed study's findings proved the importance of five key aspects in increasing customer involvement on social media viz. information availability, rewards, social influence, convenience, and entertainment. Marketing managers can build effective advertising applications on social media networks by using researched consumer criteria that cause customer interaction on social media.

Also, the marketers should notice and recognize customers' interactions and queries on a frequent basis and reply to them in a timely manner so that they feel affiliated with the company. As a result, greater brand recognition, image, attitude, and loyalty among customers can help to improve their experience and build brand equity. Furthermore, the marketers must focus on the enjoyment motive of their clients. That is, the product's advertisement must be complemented by amusing material that both stimulates and draws their attention.

## **7. Limitations and Future Research**

In the proposed study, we encountered certain inherent restrictions while establishing the association between elements impacting consumer engagement and purchase intention. To begin, the study simply looks at the influence of five self-related motivating components. The impact of these factors on other aspects such as brand engagement, personal advertising, etc. may be explored as a future perspective of the proposed study. In the presented study, a broad perspective of social media has been considered, in the future different social media platforms may be investigated individually. Further studies may investigate the impact of consumer engagement on brand loyalty and brand image.

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