

Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Engagement in Social Media

Nam-Hyun Um

School of Advertising & Public Relations

Hongik University, 2639 Sejong-ro, Jochiwon-eup, Sejong, 339-701, South Korea

ABSTRACT

This study investigates perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust as antecedents of consumer engagement. We measured the attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty as consequences of consumer engagement in social media. Our findings suggest that perceptions of social presence, enjoyment, and trust are significantly related to consumer engagement. Conversely, perceived interactivity has no positive influence on consumer engagement. In addition, consumer engagement is found to have a significant impact on both attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty. The study revealed that, in the modified model, covariance paths among the proposed antecedents of consumer engagement (namely the perceived social presence, interactivity, enjoyment, and trust) are statistically significant. In this paper, we also discuss limitations of the study and future research.

Key words: Social Presence, Interactivity, Enjoyment, Trust, Social Media, Consumer Engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The landscapes of marketing and communication have undergone upheaval thanks to social media. Indeed, social media has changed how marketers promote their brands and interact with their current and potential customers. Social media has become an integral part in the development of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies, where it plays a hybrid element of the promotion mix [1]. In fact, many companies, such as GE and P&G, acknowledge the importance of incorporating social media into IMC strategies and promotional efforts [1].

According to the Social Media Examiner's 2011 annual report on businesses' use of social media, 93% of the 3300 marketers surveyed employ social media for marketing purposes. Compared to traditional media, social media is a unique communication channel, enabling companies to talk to their customers, customers to talk to one another, and customers to also talk to companies. The social and interactive nature of social media presents a unique possibility by enhancing social interactions and creating and increasing consumer engagement [2].

The use of social media in marketing has grown exponentially as consumers spend more time checking updates, "tweeting," sharing, commenting, and uploading pictures or videos. In 2013 social ad spending rose to \$6.5 billion from \$ 4.7 billion in 2012. By the year 2017, analysts expect social media ad revenues to swell to \$11 billion. In 2013, Facebook

alone is expected to make close to \$1 billion from its mobile ad revenue. The driving force of this increased spending on social media advertising is consumer engagement, which can encourage companies to improve the attributes of their brands so as to attract more loyal consumers [3]. Consumer engagement is deemed essential to building brand equity, leading to active consumer communication in social media.

To achieve competitive advantages as a way to create "loyalty beyond reason" research suggests that the most important online process companies need to deliver is engagement. Increased consumer engagement leads to brand loyalty and heavier traffic to stores and websites [4]. Engagement, according to the Advertising Research Foundation is "turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding media context" [5]. Mollen and Willson [6] defined it as "an outcome of repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological, or physical investment a customer has in a brand."

Drawing upon customer management relationship literature, the construct engagement has been studied in a variety of academic disciplines as well as in online contexts. Although a gap separates industry definitions from academic ones, both arenas recognize consumer engagement as an important construct to be measured for online marketing success [4]. The lack of research on consumer engagement through social media warrants further study. The truly social and interactive nature of social media has given rise to a need to explore the antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement with it. This study investigates perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust as antecedents of consumer engagement, as

* Corresponding author; Email: goldmund@hongik.ac.kr
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numerous researchers consider them to influence online consumer engagement [7]-[9].

The new knowledge on antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement derived from this study will enrich the literature on consumer engagement and provide marketing practitioners with practical implications. The current study is designed to look at the relationship between consumer engagement and brand loyalty (i.e., attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty). As discussed above, brand loyalty is believed to be an outcome of consumer engagement, which plays a pivotal role in building brand equity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Use of Social Media in Marketing Arena

As of October 2014, worldwide marketing spending on social media has soared to \$6.97 billion and is expected to increase to \$7.98 billion by 2015 and companies continue to increase investigating in social media. Although initially an entertainment tool, social media has now become a marketing phenomenon due to its remarkable business advantages [10]. To foster relationships and interact with customers, marketing managers favor employing social media [11]. Most companies use social media as tools for engagement and collaboration. Social media has become an important marketing channel, helping companies to boost brand awareness, trial, and sales when marketing campaigns go viral. Social media has been welcome by marketers because, most importantly, it can provide rich, unlimited customer insights and instant customer feedback.

To realize such benefits, companies create brand fan pages on social networking sites. Bagozzi and Dholakia [12] suggested that consumers who became fans of brand fan pages are likely to be loyal and committed to the company and receive brand information more often. Consequently, “brand fans tend to visit the store more, generate more positive word-of-mouth and more emotionally attached to the brand”. A study by DEI Worldwide on the impact of social media on customer behavior found that 70 percent of customers visit social media sites to get information; 49 percent of these consumers made a purchase decision based on the information they found there, 60 percent are likely to use social media sites to pass along information to other online, and 45 percent of people who search in this manner engage in word-of-mouth activities compared to 36 percent who found information on a company or news site [13].

Companies make social media an important element of IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) or use it as a marketing communication channel to certain demographic target audiences. For instance, TBWA/Chiat/Day, an advertising agency well-known for its creativity, developed an integrated marketing communications campaign for The Grammy Awards. In its campaign “We’re All Fans,” the advertising agency combined traditional media with social media. With social media being a centerpiece of the campaign, the Grammy Awards enjoyed its highest ratings in years [14]. In some cases companies such as Dove and Intel/Toshiba utilized social media as an exclusive outlet for their marketing

communication campaigns. Dove used YouTube as a main campaign outlet when it launched its popular “Real Beauty – Evolution” campaign that showed how makeup and digital alterations could make an average woman look like a supermodel. Intel/Toshiba used Facebook to launch its “Beauty Inside” campaign. The campaign won the 2013 Cannes Lions Grand Prix for branded content and entertainment. In short, social media has been changing marketers’ perspectives on what traditional and social media can do for their marketing campaigns. It is clear that the importance of social media is widely recognized among contemporary marketing practitioners.

2.2 Consumer Engagement in Social Media

Consumer engagement in social media has raised a great deal of attention both from marketing practitioners and academics. This attention is driven by the abundance of Internet and social media channels and the plethora of opportunities social media opens up to companies to make themselves more noticeable, reach consumers, and interact with them [3]. Consumer engagement is a vital step in the process of building brand loyalty and brand equity, components that affect sales and a company’s viability. Hence, consumer engagement is regarded as an important marketing concept calling for further investigation.

The notion of consumer engagement originated with customer relationship management [15]. With the Internet’s broad emergence in the 1990’s, researchers and practitioners became interested in online consumer engagement. How the two groups defined online consumer engagement revealed a gap between them. Practitioners emphasize “the act of sharing,” whereas academics focus on “having one’s attention, mind or energy”. Online consumer engagement, as the Advertising Research Foundation [5] defines it, is “a prospect’s interaction with a marketing communication in a way that can be predictive of sales effects.” As the literature defines it, consumer engagement takes on varied meanings. For instance, in psychology and sociology, it is “the act of participating in social activities by interacting with others” [16]. In the advertising literature, Heath [17] stated that engagement is “the amount of feeling going on when an advertisement is being processed”. In marketing, consumer engagement is defined as the level of a customer’s physical, cognitive and emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization.

However, consumer engagement in social media departs from these definitions. Online engagement focuses on “consumers’ cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value” [6]. On the other hand, consumer engagement in social media is more driven by consumers’ voluntary participation such as sharing, commenting, or co-creating information. Hence, what should be added to consumer engagement in social media is the experiential value, that is, the participatory dimension.

2.2 Factors Affecting Consumer Engagement in Social Media

To date, research has been scant on which factors affect consumer engagement in social media. Perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust have been frequently cited as factors influencing consumer engagement and effective company communication. Thus, these four factors were included in this study as possible antecedents of consumer engagement in social media.

2.2.1 Perceived Social Presence

Biocca [18] defined social presence as the degree to which a user feels access to the intelligence, intentions, and sensory impressions of another. The sense of being another on a website is referred to as “social presence.” The social presence is influenced by the structure of the mediated presentation, content in the medium, and media user characteristics [19]. Some scholars have focused on the social presence of a medium as its capacity to transmit information about the facial expressions, postures, dress, and non-verbal cues. On the other hand, other scholars have focused on its close relationship to information richness [20], [21] stressing “the psychological connections where social presence is concerned about warmth” [22]. In this sense marketers are more likely to adopt the last perspective on social presence which leads to a feeling of human contact, sociability, and sensitivity [22].

Social presence is perceived as one of the functional building blocks of social media [23].

Indeed, it is essential to the success of social media. Therefore, social presence, influenced by the intimacy (interpersonal vs. mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs. synchronous) of the medium, is part of the context of social media [24], manifested in sharing status updates and check-ins across networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare display which friends are in close physical proximity). Kietzmann et al. [23] suggested that higher levels of social presence are likely to make conversations more influential. In addition, social presence, depending upon the media content and the user’s characteristics, may enhance a social media user’s enjoyment, involvement, task performance, persuasion, and memory [25]. As a result, social presence influences consumer engagement in social media. The following hypothesis is thus proposed.

H1: Perceived social presence will positively influence consumer engagement in social media.

2.2.2 Perceived Interactivity

There has been no consensus on conceptual and operational definitions of interactivity. In general, a mechanical and interpersonal perspective exists when it comes to definitions of interactivity. From a mechanical perspective, interactivity is defined as “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time” [26]. From an interpersonal communication perspective, however, it is defined as face-to-face communication [27].

In the era of social media, however, these two definitions fail to encompass ‘the true meaning of interactivity. Mollen and

Wilson [6] defined interactivity as the extent to which a user “perceives communication in a mediated environment to be two-way, controllable, and responsive” In a similar vein, perceived interactivity is defined by Cyr, Head, and Ivanov [28] as the degree to which consumers “control and access to information on the site in a variety ways, which is both personally satisfying and responsive”.

Interactivity is deemed to play a pivotal role in building favorable attitude formation for a brand, thereby affecting purchase intent [29], [6]. O’Brien and Toms [30] suggested that interactivity between users and the system facilitate consumer engagement. The level of engagement increases when feedback is present and when users feel they are in control of the interaction. Increased interactivity is likely to result in satisfaction [31], increased performance quality [32], and time saving. Thus, it is plausible to assume that perceived interactivity, in social media, is an antecedent to consumer engagement. The following hypothesis is then posited:

H2: Perceived interactivity will positively influence consumer engagement in social media.

2.2.3 Perceived Enjoyment

Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw [33] defined enjoyment as the extent to which using a system is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, apart from any performance consequences that may be anticipated. Moon and Kim [34] defined enjoyment as the pleasure an individual feels when committing a particular behavior or carrying out a particular activity. Enjoyment in an online context, Zhang and von Dran [9] suggested, is aroused by “website features that are fun, interesting, exciting, and entertaining.”

Studies have found that consumers’ perceived enjoyment results in an intrinsic motivation for adopting technology perceptions of ease of use with subjects, and positive influence on attitude towards a website [35]. Furthermore, research has found that perceived enjoyment has a positive effect on a consumer’s evaluation of a company’s website [36], [37]. In addition, online customer activities increase when customers are given an enjoyable online experience [38]. In social media, companies incorporate entertainment factors such as their brand’s TV commercials, online games, promotional events on their brand fan pages in order to increase consumer engagement. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3: Perceived enjoyment will positively influence consumer engagement in social media.

2.2.4 Perceived Trust

Smith [39] defined perceived trust as the perception that a third party can be relied on with confidence to perform role responsibilities in a fiduciary manner. Moorman, Deshpande, and Zaltman [40] defined it as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence”. Although various definitions of trust exist depending upon interpersonal communication or online communication, prior studies all seem to agree on the importance of trust. Pigg and Crank [41] found that trust greatly influences information exchange and knowledge integration because it allows individuals to justify

and evaluate their decision to provide or attain more useful information. In a marketing communication context, perceived trust has a significant effect on consumers' intention to remain loyal to a brand. Online, trust is deemed essential to virtual community members' intention to exchange information with one another [42].

Trust is particularly crucial to the sharing and word-of-mouth activities of brand engagement on SNSs. Compared to marketer-generated content communicated via the traditional promotional mix including advertising, sales promotion and public relations, according to Mangold and Faulds [1], social media is perceived as a more reliable source of information about brands. Since enhanced trust in social media enables users to engage actively in information exchange and word-of-mouth activities, it is assumed that trust is an antecedent of consumer engagement in social media. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Perceived trust will positively influence consumer engagement in social media.

2.2.5 Consumer Engagement and Brand Loyalty (Attitudinal and Behavioral Brand Loyalty)

Consumer engagement in social media is multi-dimensional, consisting of cognitive, affective, and participation dimensions. Cognitive consumer engagement is involved in consumers' seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing the information presented in SNSs [4]. Prior research has shown that brand loyalty increases when consumers are psychologically or cognitively committed to a brand. Along the same line, another study found that a positive relationship existed between cognitive involvement with a brand and loyalty [43]. Reitz [4] defined affective consumer engagement as "a consumer being affectively present by emotional bonding and connecting with a company that leads to overall consumer satisfaction". Prior research has shown that consumers are more likely to be loyal to a brand when they have positive affective feelings about a brand. In a similar vein, Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, and Kim [44] found that higher levels of brand commitment lead to higher levels of brand loyalty. Lastly, participatory consumer engagement in social media involves posting, sharing, conversing, and co-creating content with the company and or other consumers [4]. Many studies have found a positive relationship between participation and brand loyalty. In a study of the Jeep online community, researchers found that consumer participation in the online community engendered deeper loyalty amongst its members [45].

Brand loyalty has been defined as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" [46]. Jacoby and Chestnut [47] defined brand loyalty as a behavior that leads to the choosing of one brand over others. Brand loyalty has two aspects: behavioral and attitudinal. Behavioral brand loyalty consists of repeated purchases of brand whereas attitudinal brand loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of

some unique value associated with the brand. Attitudinal brand loyalty focuses on consumers' decision making and cognitive processes while behavioral brand loyalty rather focuses on the result of consumer behavior only [48]. Based on past research that found a positive relationship between consumer engagement and brand loyalty, the following hypotheses are posited:

H5: Consumer engagement will positively influence consumers' attitudinal brand loyalty.

H6: Consumer engagement will positively influence consumers' behavioral brand loyalty.

3. METHOD

3.1 Sampling

In order to test the proposed hypotheses a web-based survey was administered among Facebook users in the United States. These users had either liked, visited, or followed a company's or brand's Facebook page. College students attending public university in America's Midwest participated in the study in return for course credits. Facebook was selected because it is the most popular among consumers and companies. Facebook also provides companies with applications to create a way to keep consumers updated on brands, products, and services [4]. For this study, college students were recruited because people between 18 and 24 are the most active social media users. Although college students were considered a convenience sample in a research, they were deemed suitable in this study because of their heavy use of social media and their capacity to make their own purchasing decisions. Whether they are able to make a purchase decision is an important consideration since this study is concerned with attitudinal and behavioral (re-purchase intent) brand loyalty.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

To create an online survey, this study utilized Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool. The web-based survey opened with an informed-consent notice; participants were then asked to click on the "proceed" button if they agreed to participate in the study. Second, they answered the qualifying question of whether they had ever liked, visited, or followed a company's or brand's Facebook page. Third, participants were presented with questions measuring the proposed antecedents (i.e., social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust), multifaceted dimensions of consumer engagement in social media (i.e., cognitive, affective, and participatory engagement), and brand loyalty (i.e., attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty). Finally, they were asked to answer demographic questions such as age, gender, years in college, and so forth.

3.3 Measures

3.3.1 Antecedents of Consumer Engagement in Social Media

First, to measure perceived social presence participants were asked to express their agreement with five statements on a

7-point, Likert-type scale anchored by very strongly disagree/very strongly agree. This measure was adopted from a previous study and modified for this particular purpose of the study [49]. Items included 1) “There is a sense of human contact on the website.” 2) “There is sense of personalities in the website,” and 3) “There is sense of sociability in the website.” Second, perceived interactivity was measured with six items, using a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Statements included 1) “The company’s page that I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed on Facebook allows me to be in control of what I want to see,” 2) “Customers share experiences about products or services with other customers on the company’s page that I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed on Facebook”, and 3) “The company’s page that I ‘liked’, visited, or followed on Facebook responds to my inquiries in a timely manner.” This measure was adopted from a study by Leitz [4] and modified for the current study. Third, perceived enjoyment was measured with four items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Statements included 1) “I found my visit to this website interesting,” 2) “I found my visit to this website entertaining,” and 3) “I found my visit to this website enjoyable.” This measure was adopted from study by Hassanein and Head [22] and modified in accordance with the current study. Lastly, perceived trust was measured with three items, using a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Items included 1) “I can trust this website,” 2) “I trust the information presented on this website,” and 3) “I feel this Facebook fan page company would provide me with good service/products.” This measure was adopted and modified for the current study [49].

3.3.2 Consumer Engagement in Social Media (Cognitive, Affective, and Participatory Dimension)

Consumer engagement in social media is classified into cognitive, affective, and participatory dimensions. First, based on Reitz’s [4] engagement scale cognitive consumer engagement was measured by six items, using a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. The original scale was altered for the study. Statements included: 1) “I feel like I learned a lot about the brand and/or products featured on the company’s page that I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed on Facebook,” and 2) “I was absorbed in the company’s page that I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed on Facebook.” Second, affective consumer engagement was adopted from Reitz’s [4] engagement scale and modified for the current study. The affective dimension was measured using five items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale, ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Statements included: 1) “I feel connected to the company I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed on Facebook because I use the company’s Facebook company page,” and 2) “I found the experience of using the company’s page I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed.” Lastly, participatory consumer engagement was measured using two items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. The construct was adopted and modified from a study by Reitz [4]. The two statements were: 1) “In general, I am very motivated to participate actively on the company’s Facebook page that I ‘liked,’ visited, or

followed,” and 2) “In general, I frequently post messages and responses on the company’s page on Facebook that I ‘liked,’ visited, or followed.”

3.3.3 Consumers’ Brand Loyalty (Attitudinal and Behavioral Brand Loyalty)

Attitudinal brand loyalty, the degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with a brand, was measured using two items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree [50]. The two items were 1) “I am committed to this brand,” and 2) “I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands.” Behavioral brand loyalty, the willingness of the average consumers to repurchase the brand was measured using two items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree [50]. The two items were: 1) “I will buy this brand the next time I buy,” and 2) “I intend to keep purchasing this brand.”

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sample Demographic and Facebook Usage Profile

For this study, a total of 379 subjects participated. However, after removing incomplete responses, 332 subjects (university students) remained for the further analysis. Of 332 subjects, 36.1% (n = 120) were male and 63.9% (n = 212) were female. Their mean age was 20.8 years old. Sophomores made up the majority (41.6%, n = 138); the rest were juniors (31.3%, n = 138), seniors (24.1%, n = 80), freshmen (1.8%, n = 6), and graduate students (1.2%, n = 4). The majority of subjects were Anglo Americans (82.8%, n = 275), followed by African Americans (6.0%, n = 20), others (5.7%, n = 19), Hispanics (2.4%, n = 8), Asians (2.4%, n = 8) and American Indians (.6%, n = 2).

In regard to consumer engagement in social media, engagement pyramid is made up of five levels, with each level representing a higher degree of engagement from watchers on the bottom, sharers, commenters, producers, and curators on the top. In this study 228 subjects (68.7%) identified themselves as watchers; 84 subjects (25.3%) identified themselves as sharers, 18 subjects (5.4%) as commenters, and 2 subjects (.6%) as producers. There was no curator among subjects. The mean years of Facebook use was 6 years and subjects used Facebook 4.9 hours per week. The average number of companies they ‘liked’ on Facebook was 24.6. Product categories of company they ‘liked’ on Facebook were automobile (89.8%), personal care (79.5%), technology (77.1%), apparel (63.3%), food and beverage (57.8%), and entertainment (29.5%). For this question, subjects were allowed to choose multiple product categories they “liked” on Facebook.

4.2 Hypotheses Tests

Shown in Table 1 are the relationships among perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, perceived trust, consumer engagement, attitudinal brand loyalty, behavioral brand loyalty, and their correlates. The correlation results indicate significant relationships among measured

variables. To test the structural model concerning the relationships among the variables, the path analysis was performed via SPSS AMOS 21.0. As shown in Table 2, the overall fit indices for the model were not acceptable, revealing a weak fit of the model to the data ($\chi^2 = 44.77$, $df = 15$, $p < .001$; GFI = .72; AGFI = .79; CFI = .75; IFI = .71; RFI = .84; RMSEA = .164).

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

| (n=332) | PS | PI | PE | PT | CE | AL | BL |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| PS: Perceived Social Presence | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| PI: Perceived Interactivity | .55 ** | 1.00 | | | | | |
| PE: Perceived Enjoyment | .55 ** | .54 ** | 1.00 | | | | |
| PT: Perceived Trust | .47 ** | .48 ** | .56 ** | 1.00 | | | |
| CE: Consumer Engagement | .44 ** | .42 ** | .55 ** | .46 ** | 1.00 | | |
| AB: Attitudinal Brand Loyalty | .41 ** | .42 ** | .44 ** | .41 ** | .62 ** | 1.00 | |
| BL: Behavioral Brand Loyalty | .24 ** | .38 ** | .34 ** | .46 ** | .39 ** | .70 ** | 1.00 |
| No. of Items | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 2 |
| Cronbach's Alpha | .86 | .82 | .90 | .92 | .93 | .73 | .94 |
| Mean | 4.83 | 4.72 | 5.15 | 5.26 | 4.03 | 4.30 | 4.78 |
| SD | 1.10 | .84 | .95 | 1.15 | 1.06 | 1.34 | 1.31 |

** indicates $P < .001$

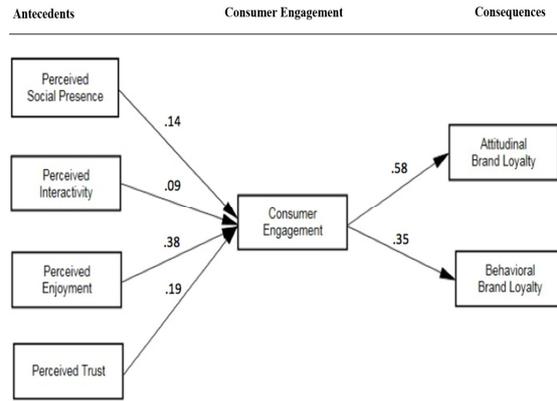
Table 2. Parameter estimates for causal paths: Original Model

| Hypotheses | Causal Paths | Standardized Parameter Estimates | Standard Error | t-value |
|------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| H1 | Perceived Social Presence -> Consumer Engagement | .14 | .042 | 2.85 ** |
| H2 | Perceived Interactivity -> Consumer Engagement | .09 | .055 | 1.91 (ns) |
| H3 | Perceived Enjoyment -> Consumer Engagement | .38 | .049 | 7.74 *** |
| H4 | Perceived Trust -> Consumer Engagement | .19 | .041 | 3.85 *** |
| H5 | Consumer Engagement -> Attitudinal Brand Loyalty | .58 | .061 | 12.88 *** |
| H6 | Consumer Engagement -> Behavioral Brand Loyalty | .35 | .070 | 6.90 *** |

Goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 44.77$, $df = 15$, $p < .001$; GFI = .72; AGFI = .79; CFI = .75; IFI = .71; RFI = .84; RMSEA = .164

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

A model is regarded acceptable if normed fit index (NFI) and goodness of fit index (GFI) exceed .90 and comparative fit index (CFI) exceed .93, and when RMS is less than .08. Thus, as shown in Fig. 1, the original model was rejected and the modification indices were examined as a way of improving the model fit. The modification indices showed that the model fit could be improved by adding covariance paths between the following: perceived social presence and perceived interactivity, perceived social presence and perceived enjoyment, perceived social presence and perceived trust, perceived interactivity and perceived enjoyment, and perceived enjoyment and perceived trust.



Goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 44.77$, $df = 15$, $p < .001$; GFI = .72; AGFI = .79; CFI = .75; IFI = .71; RFI = .84; RMSEA = .164

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Fig 1. Path Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Engagement in Social Media: Hypothesized Model

Previous literature on online consumer engagement suggests that an increase in the level of online interaction occurs with an improved level of social presence, and as social presence increases, trust also increases [51]. Heerink, Kroese, and Wielinga [52] found that the more users experience social presence, the more they perceive contents to be enjoyable. Regarding the relationship between interactivity and trust, Lee [29] found that consumers' perception of interactivity increases customer trust. In an empirical study, Cyr, Head, and Ivanov [28] found a link that supports the idea that perceived interactivity is positively related to consumers' perceived enjoyment of contents. Last, another study found that enjoyment was positively related to online trust in the context of online shopping [53]. Therefore, these covariance paths are justifiable. After the model modification, the goodness of fit statistics demonstrated that the modified model provided a better fit ($\chi^2 = 26.57$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$; GFI = .94; AGFI = .92; CFI = .93; IFI = .35; RFI = .93; RMSEA = .068). Fig. 2 shows the modified model and Table 3 indicates the parameter estimates for paths.

Table 3. Parameter estimates for causal paths: Modified Model

| Hypotheses | Causal Paths | Standardized Parameter Estimates | Standard Error | t-value |
|------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| H1 | Perceived Social Presence -> Consumer Engagement | .13 | .055 | 2.19 * |
| H2 | Perceived Interactivity -> Consumer Engagement | .08 | .072 | 1.41 (ns) |
| H3 | Perceived Enjoyment -> Consumer Engagement | .34 | .066 | 5.73 *** |
| H4 | Perceived Trust -> Consumer Engagement | .17 | .051 | 3.05 ** |
| H5 | Consumer Engagement -> Attitudinal Brand Loyalty | .62 | .055 | 14.29 *** |
| H6 | Consumer Engagement -> Behavioral Brand Loyalty | .39 | .063 | 7.65 *** |
| | Perceived Social Presence <-> Perceived Interactivity | .55 | .058 | 8.77 *** |
| | Perceived Social Presence <-> Perceived Enjoyment | .55 | .065 | 8.78 *** |
| | Perceived Social Presence <-> Perceived Trust | .47 | .076 | 7.70 *** |
| | Perceived Interactivity <-> Perceived Enjoyment | .54 | .050 | 8.59 *** |
| | Perceived Interactivity <-> Perceived Trust | .48 | .059 | 7.93 *** |
| | Perceived Enjoyment <-> Perceived Trust | .56 | .068 | 8.85 *** |

Goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 26.57$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$; GFI = .94; AGFI = .92; CFI = .93; IFI = .35; RFI = .93; RMSEA = .068

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In the current study, H1 posits that perceived social presence will positively influence consumer engagement in social media. A *t*-value of greater than 2 for each coefficient indicates a statistical significance. Study results show that perceived social presence had a significant relationship with consumer engagement ($t = 2.19, p < .05$). H2 proposes that perceived interactivity will positively influence consumer engagement in social media. However, contrary to the original hypothesis, study results show that perceived interactivity did not have a significant relationship with consumer engagement ($t = 1.41, p > .05$). H3 states that perceived enjoyment will positively influence consumer engagement in social media. As expected, the study results show that perceived enjoyment had a significant impact on consumer engagement ($t = 5.73, p < .001$). In terms of the relationship between perceived trust and consumer engagement in social media, H4 posits that perceived trust will positively influence consumer engagement. As shown in Table 3, perceived trust is found to have a significant impact on consumer engagement in social media ($t = 3.05, p < .01$). In sum, H1, H3, and H4 were supported in the study, while H2 was not.

Next, H5 and H6 suggest that consumer engagement in social media will positively influence consumers' attitudinal brand loyalty as well as behavioral brand loyalty. As expected in the current study, study results show that consumer engagement is found to have significant impacts both on consumers' attitudinal brand loyalty ($t = 14.29, p < .001$) as well as behavioral brand loyalty ($t = 7.65, p < .001$). Findings suggest that consumer engagement in social media leads to attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty. Thus, H5 and H6 were supported in this study.

indicates that people with a sense of social presence are more likely to have a high level of trust and vice versa. The perceived interactivity-perceived enjoyment path coefficient was .54 a *t*-value of 8.59 ($p < .001$), suggesting that people with a sense of interactivity in social media are more likely to enjoy social media contents, and vice versa. The perceived interactivity-perceived trust path coefficient was .48 a *t*-value of 7.93 ($p < .001$), indicating that people with a sense of interactivity in social media are more likely to trust social media contents, and vice versa. Lastly, the perceived trust-perceived enjoyment path coefficient was .56 a *t*-value of 8.85 ($p < .001$), which suggests that people who trust social media contents are more likely to enjoy them, and vice versa.

5. DISCUSSION

This study is designed to examine antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement in social media, in particular, on Facebook. Consumers' perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust were considered as four antecedents whereas attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty were considered as two consequences. Study findings, with regard to antecedents of consumer engagement in social media, suggest that perceived social presence, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust have significant impacts on consumer engagement in social media while perceived interactivity is found to have no significant relationship with consumer engagement. To sum up, perceived social presence, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust positively influence consumer engagement in social media contexts.

Contrary to the proposed expectation, perceived interactivity is found not to have a positive relationship with consumer engagement in social media. In order to increase consumers' level of engagement in social media, marketers take perceived social presence, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust into consideration, rather than perceived interactivity. When consumers feel a sense of others on a company's Facebook page, when consumers consider contents on a company's Facebook page enjoyable, and when consumers trust a company's Facebook page, consumer engagement in social media is likely to be fostered and enhanced.

When it comes to consequences of consumer engagement, the study results suggest that consumer engagement in social media is found to have significantly positive relationship with both consumers' attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty. To wrap up, as expected in this study, and as supported in prior literature, consumer engagement in social media positively influences consumers' attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty.

Engagement is the most important online process companies need to deliver to achieve competitive advantages via increased brand loyalty. In a similar vein, Reitz [4] suggested that increasing consumer engagement leads to brand loyalty and to increases in traffic at its stores and websites. From the practitioner's perspective, online environment, especially social media, can be perceived as the best media to enhance consumer engagement due to its interactive nature. In the brand-building process, marketers seeking to increase brand

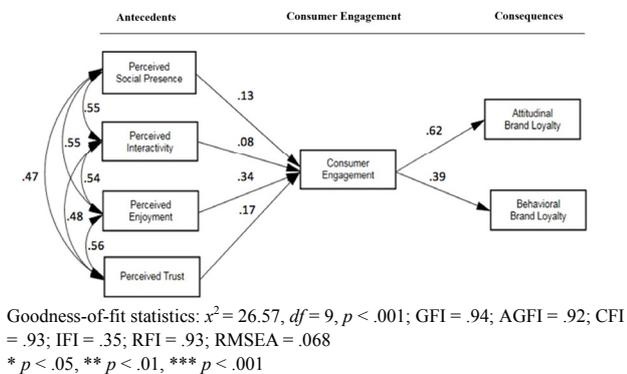


Fig 2. Path Model of Antecedents. And Consequences of Consumer Engagement in Social Media: Modified Model

Six additional paths were added in the modified model. As shown in Table 3, study results suggest that the perceived social presence-perceived interactivity path coefficient is .55 with a *t*-value of 8.77 ($p < .001$). It is plausible to assume that people with a sense social presence are likely to have more sense of interactivity and vice versa. The perceived social presence-perceived enjoyment path coefficient was .55 with a *t*-value of 8.78 ($p < .001$). This indicates people with a sense of social presence are more likely to enjoy social media contents, and vice versa. The perceived social presence-perceived trust path coefficient was .47 with a *t*-value of 7.70 ($p < .001$), which

loyalty need to integrate social media into their marketing strategy.

As shown in the modified model, this study also found that covariance paths among perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust are statistically significant, suggesting these factors have positive relationship with one another. In other words, if consumers' perceived social presence increases, perceived interactivity also increases, perceived enjoyment also increases, and perceived trust also increases. If consumers' perceived interactivity increases, then their perceived enjoyment also increases and perceived trust also increase. Lastly, if consumers' perceived enjoyment increases, then their perceived trust also increases. As the finding suggest, these factors interact with one another, and have strong positive correlations, as shown in Table 1.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study are tempered by several limitations. Limitations naturally provide a basis for further investigations of consumer engagement in social media and its various consequences. First and foremost, this study limited its responses to students from a university. A student sample is justifiable in this study, as people between 18 and 24 are the most active social media users. Nonetheless, this sample may not be representative of the consumer population that "likes" companies on Facebook. For future research, broadening samples demographically by including various age groups could be useful in investigating the consequences of consumer engagement in social media. To make the study results more representative and generalizable, it is essential to use the general population. College students may have different opinions on consumer engagement than the general population. Where appropriate, such studies should be conducted using nationwide samples that are more broadly inclusive in terms of both age and income group.

Second, this study only measured attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty as consequences of consumer engagement in social media. Previous literature has suggested that brand loyalty increases when consumers are psychologically or cognitively committed to a brand [54]. Furthermore, prior research indicates a positive relationship between participation and brand loyalty [12], [55]. Thus, brand loyalty was selected as an important consequence of consumer engagement. However, for further research, researchers need to look at other variables such as eWOM (electronic Word-of-Mouth). In the area of computer-mediated communication eWOM has become a common topic of research. Effects of eWOM have been an important research topic in the context of e-commerce and online advertising.

Third, the current study included only four antecedents of consumer engagement. Many studies have pointed to antecedents of online consumer engagement as being perceived social presence, perceived interactivity, perceived enjoyment, and perceived trust. However, future studies may measure other possible antecedents such as perceived information quality, and

other social relationship factors with Facebook page such as social identity and need for affiliation.

Lastly, this study measured consumer engagement in social media based on subjects "liking" a company's Facebook page. In other words, the study findings such as antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement in social media may be limited only to a Facebook context. Nowadays, companies use multiple platforms when it comes to using social media. A company's Facebook page is a multi-social media platform that companies employ to be connected with its customers. Consumers may have different reasons for why they use a company's Facebook page and why they follow and "tweet" about a company or brand on Twitter. Future research could focus on consumer engagement in different social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Flickr, taking into account consumers' social relationship with each social media.

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Nam-Hyun Um

He received Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin. Currently, he is an assistant professor in the school of Advertising & Public Relations at Hongik University, Korea. His research interests include political advertising, celebrity endorsement, social commerce, gay and lesbian consumers, and current issues in advertising industry. His work has been published in conference proceedings, *Psychology & Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising*, *International Journal of Advertising*, *Asian Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *Journal of Promotion Management*, and *Journal of Global Marketing* among others.