

Print ISSN: 2288-4637 / Online ISSN 2288-4645  
doi:10.13106/jafeb.2019.vol6.no2.147

# Brand Public Benefits and Consumer Engagement

Nak-Hwan CHOI<sup>1</sup>, Jing WANG<sup>2</sup>, Chang CHEN<sup>3</sup>

Received: December 19, 2018 Revised: January 18, 2019 Accepted: March 30, 2019

## Abstract

Compared with the research on consumer engagement in brand community, the research on consumer engagement in brand public has been relatively less. This research aimed at exploring how brand public characteristics such as information variety, various communications and no limitation in expressing self affect the brand public engagement. 274 questionnaires answered by Chinese consumers are used to conduct analysis. Principal component analysis is used to test the reliability and validity of each construct, and structural equation model is used to test hypotheses. The study finds the positive effects of information variety on information benefits, those of various communications on social benefits, and also positive roles of no limitation in expressing self to brand-related self-expression motivation. And each of the information benefits, social benefits and brand-related self-expression motivation is proved to positively affect brand public engagement. The study implies that marketers should give attention to characteristics of brand public, and provide the ways by which members of brand public engage the brand. Additionally, marketers should pay more attention to both direct and indirect engagement activities of consumers toward brand public in social media to better understand their target consumers.

**Keywords:** Brand Public Engagement, Information Benefits, Self-Expression Motivation, Social Benefits.

**JEL Classifications Code:** C83, L81, M31, P46.

## 1. Introduction

Brand public is an organizational space, which requires intermediary device to attract and maintain a series of activities. And brand public members are mutual strangers and not bound by any responsibility, morality or common values (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). These characteristics of brand public in social media could enable individuals to have opportunities of expressing brand-related self-images or interests without any limitation of responsibility and morality, and also make them the opportunities of obtaining various information and making various communications, which could satisfy personal and social needs of consumers. Brand public engagement in this research refers to a series

of direct or indirect activities of consumers towards brands in the brand public of social media. These direct activities refer to participating in brand public directly while indirect activities include consumer feedback, consumer influence and consumer referral. Through the brand public engagement, he or she is able to post, retweet and make comments and so on, which can satisfy his or her symbolic interactionism instincts.

On the other hand, the emergence of brand public points out the stewardship for many enterprises. Brand public on social media can not only bring visibility and publicity to consumers, but also make the brands and products of enterprises known to more consumers, which could help enterprises save a lot of resources and costs at the place of getting the information about their products or brands. The characteristics of brand public enable marketers to attract opinions from various members. Through brand public engagement, members post their own opinions and provide feedback based on their brand experience, which can be used by enterprises as a reference when making corresponding adjustments to the current products, as well as designing and producing future products.

There have been many literatures exploring consumer engagement in brand community recent years. However, up to now, few researches have focused on the brand public

1 First Author and Corresponding Author, Professor, Department of Business Administration, Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, Korea. E-mail: cnh@jbnu.ac.kr

2 Master Candidate, Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, Korea. E-mail: 812830164wj@gmail.com

3 Doctoral Candidate, Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, Korea. E-mail: 546285894@qq.com

engagement. New researches are needed to explore consumer engagement in the brand public context. Considering that brand public is an emerging and promising concept, our research could be meaningful and valuable to the brand public theory and the enterprises who are concerned with taking advantage of the brand public.

This research mainly focuses on brand public engagement considered as dependent variable in this study. Through brand public engagement, members of brand public post, comment and provide various opinion and feedback. Therefore, brand public can provide various information to each other because of the mass characteristics of members in brand public (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). In addition, brand public is an important information-getting channel through which consumers can master brands information, as well as an important driving force for consumers to consume products (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011).

Previous studies have shown that people participate in social media for the purposes of achieving growth, maintaining and expanding their interpersonal relationships (Sheldon, 2008; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). The characteristics of the brand public in social media enable the public members variously access to the public to communicate brand information with each other which could help meet the members' social needs.

Many people also have personal needs to express themselves. And the emergence of brand public makes it possible to express themselves without any limitation of morality and responsibility. Therefore, the purposes of this research are established as follows.

First, this research will review the concepts and characteristics of brand public and brand public engagement. Second, the role of information variety in brand public on information benefits will be explored. Third, the positive effects of various communications in brand public on social benefits, and positive roles of no limitation in expressing self through brand public to brand-related self-expression motivation will be identified. Fourth, information benefits, social benefits and brand-related self-expression motivation will be checked to explore whether each of them positively affect the brand public engagement.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

### 2.1. Brand Public Engagement

#### 2.1.1. Characteristics of Brand Public

Brand community is formed by a group of consumers with organizational and social relations. In a well-developed

brand community, members have a strong sense of identity and consider themselves as a part of community. Meanwhile, they pay attention to the common ritual and tradition in the community, actively participate in community activities, and have a strong sense of moral responsibility to the members in the community (Muniz & O'guinn, 2001). However, brand public members have no common value and identity and they are not bound by any limitation, responsibility (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015).

In recent social media research, the concept of "public" has been used to describe the form of social media development. In current research, people consider the public as a chaotic phenomenon, rather than an interactive form. This phenomenon was once called private dialogue by Tarde (1969). Scholars propose the public is a kind of mediation that enables strangers to communicate each other. But it doesn't last as long as the community does (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). Like Weibo, users can post or participate in topic discussion through Weibo, which can be considered as behavior of users in the public.

Members in the community are constantly posting, expressing their opinions and communicating with each other. In the public, although they post, comment and express their opinions like the people in the community, they are independent and have no actual interaction with each other (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). In other words, the public will not provide interactive communication space for interaction. In the public, users may just refer to other people's opinions and feel no limitations in expressing their opinions again, and most likely participate in the public only once or twice.

Brand public is formed when intermediary device attracting and gathering people's opinions is maintained. In public, members post their opinions on the Internet, and social media enables members to express their own opinions or retweet others' opinions (Page, 2012). Tags can also be thought as an intermediary device that could sustain the public (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012).

In the public, the brand is thought as device for member collection rather than identity, reflecting various consumers (Lury, 2004). In the public, members are various, heterogeneous and unique. Members individually express their opinions and have no common identity. Like Weibo users, the users' identities are different from each other. They will not form common value and identity to maintain the public. Users post, comment or participate in topic discussion independently, compared with the members of community where common identity and value are necessary.

On social media such as Twitter and Instagram, people often use tags to express their opinions, and rarely discuss them again in the same environment (Zappavigna, 2011).

Although hot tags can stimulate people to participate in brand public, the majority is based on the connection between the brand and the environment. The brand tag function can render the appropriate environment atmosphere, so that photos can be posted through the theme tab on the relevant social media. For example, if a person wears a pair of famous shoes at a scenic spot and sends the picture on Twitter via a tag, it can be thought as a certain action of a user of the public. That is to say, in the brand public, participation is not through the interaction between members but through independent individual or collective influence (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015).

As a platform for people's activities, brand public encourages people to express themselves (Arvidsson, 2006). People will not think about how to discuss with others in social platform but use it as a means to express themselves (Marwick, 2013; Marwick & Boyd, 2011). So brand public is a kind of tool gathering opinions, wherein common value is not needed. Compared with the brand community, the number of people who participate in the brand public is larger. In the public, there are no fixed members to discuss with each other and any members do not form an interaction. They express their opinions propelled by the emotional atmosphere generated by the intermediary devices. For example, when tags are associated with emotional atmosphere and cause a wave of imitation, people will follow that trend to participate in the brand public. Truthfulness, subversive and public nature coexist in brand-related things, but they will not break down into common value (Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2012). Different from the brand community, the brand public as a communication tool does not have common value, but can provide brand's visibility and publicity to consumers (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015).

Based on the above description, the comparison between brand community and the brand public is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Differences between Brand Community and Brand Public

	<b>Brand Community</b>	<b>Brand Public</b>
Social Form	A form of interaction	A form of mediation
Mode of Participation	Participation affected by interaction	Participation affected by private or collective influence
Form of Identity	Forming a common identity	A collection of different opinions of people without blending in common value
Form of Value	Having common identity and value	Offering visibility and publicity

Source: Arvidsson, A. & Caliandro, A. (2015). Brand public. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(5), 727-748.

### 2.1.2. Brand Public Engagement

Previous research has paid much attention to the concept of customer engagement. The definitions of customer engagement in existing literature are shown in Table 2. In the field of marketing, scholars believe that customer engagement is a series of activities of consumers to enterprises (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Brodie, Hollebeek & Juric, 2011; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). However, the researches on consumer engagement in brand public are relatively less. Since brand public, as an emerging concept, has been proposed recently, it is necessary to explore consumer engagement in the brand public, namely, brand public engagement.

**Table 2:** Definitions of Consumer Brand Engagement in Previous Research

Author	Concept	Definition	Dimension
Patterson, Yu & De Ruyter (2006)	Consumer engagement	The degree to which consumers perform in their relationships with service organizations, including behavioral, cognitive and emotional performance	focus, dedication, vitality
Vivek, Beatty & Morgan (2012)	Consumer engagement	The degree of personal engagement and connection with the company's brand and activities	emotion and behavior
Bowden (2009)	Consumer engagement process	Consumer engagement is regarded as a psychological process to promote consumer loyalty	cognition, emotion and behavior
Hollebeek (2011)	Consumer brand engagement	Cognitive, emotional and behavioral activities of consumers with positive valence in consumer- or brand-related interactions	cognition, emotion and behavior
Mollen & Wilson (2010)	Online brand engagement	Consumers' cognitive and emotional commitment to brand relationships	cognition, emotion
Van Doorn et al. (2010)	Consumer engagement behavior	The behavior of consumers towards products or brands, including posting, comment and participation in co-creation of products and services, beyond purchase	behavior
Pansari & Kumar (2017)	Consumer engagement	Consumer engagement is a series of activities of consumers to enterprises	behavior

Brand public engagement in this research refers to a series of direct or indirect activities of consumers towards the brand public. Consumers engage in brand community due to the common purpose, and all of their engagement behaviors are based on common identity, responsibility and ritual (Nambisan & Baron, 2009). However, compared with brand community engagement, little or no research has been done on brand public engagement. Therefore, this paper compares the differences between brand community and brand public, so as to well understand consumer engagement in brand public.

The public, different from the concept of community, is built by a group of people mutually unknown, which means people in the public are not bound by common identity, ritual or any responsibility. People gathering in the public do not catch a pre-purpose related to a specific brand. Inversely, some take part in the public due to their own interests; others may be in the public to be just out of mere conformity. Therefore, brand public engagement refers to a series of activities of members of the public towards the brand.

The brand public provides the visibility and publicity of the brand to the consumers, and the consumers may feel their uniqueness and self-satisfaction through their engagement in the public. When consumers perceive some benefits and values from the brand public, they could produce a series of engagement behavior.

Specifically, compared with direct purchase behavior as brand engagement, direct brand public engagement behavior can refer to actively and voluntarily being a member of the brand public. Namely, when consumers enjoy the public flow cognitively and affectively, they are willing to join the public and provide their opinions about the brand without considering a consensus between the public members. This behavior can be regarded as the antecedent of consumer brand public engagement. If consumers do not want to join the public, they won't make subsequent engagement behavior.

On the other side, referral behavior as a kind of indirect brand public engagement, refers to others' opinion exposed to them at the public when making decision about the brand. And consumers' influence on others as the indirect brand public engagement can be found in the situation where individuals actively post their own experiences specific to the brand. Through this kind of word of mouth behavior, consumers can influence others in the public. Finally, consumers' knowledge or feedback can be reflected to their giving online comments or just retweeting other's posting that they agree with. Take together, brand public engagement is regarded as consumers' direct or indirect activities toward the brand public.

## 2.2. Benefits Perceived from Brand Public and the Public Engagement

### 2.2.1. Information Benefits Based on Information Variety

Information benefits come from the influence contributed by various information for consumers, which help them make decision and judgment (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Consumers are more likely to be open to informational influence when they are selecting a complex product which is difficult to operate (Ford & Ellis, 1980; Price & Feick, 1984), or when they perceive a sense of risky in purchasing products (Woodside & Delosier, 1976), or when they are confused between brands (Assael, 1984). The diverse information helps consumers to learn more brand products (Fonner & Timmerman, 2009). And the brand information is an important driving force for consumers to consume the brand-related products. For example, people will search for the specifications of HuaWei mobile phones on the Internet and the latest series of Nike shoes, because the information could meet needs of pre-purchase surveillance, knowledge (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011).

Prongsajapan (2009) shows that the information has a positive and significant influence on users' participation in social media. And the degree of informational influence is affected by characteristics of both the information receivers and influencers (French & Raven, 1959; Lascu, Bearden, & Rose, 1995; Wooten & Reed, 1998). The diversity of members of brand public determines difference of the information benefits from brand public. Inexperienced members tend to pay more attention to the information offered by authority or expert in brand public.

The brand public provides meaningful and various information about brand products, which is generated by posting, commenting or retweeting of the brand public members. Consumers could participate in the brand public when they want to benefit from the information and brand experience provided by other members, so as to meet their needs of information. Members can be positive to learning about interesting experience related to the brand products (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Therefore, the various types of brand information provided by the brand public will affect the information benefits perceived by the public members.

**H1:** Information variety in brand public positively affects information benefits to consumers.

The information benefits perceived by the brand public members can usually refer to the valuable information obtained from the brand public. The brand public can provide a platform for feedback to members, and members

can quickly obtain brand-related information and learn about information related to brand products, which will bring information benefits. Perceived valuable information benefits are important motivation for consumers to engage the brand online (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). When the information provided by the brand public is largely in line with the expectations of consumers and meets their information needs, they will actively retweet the information or make comments. Retweeting, posting and making comments are considered as brand-related activities in the brand public, namely, brand public engagement behavior. Therefore, formally,

**H2:** The information benefits positively affect brand public engagement.

### 2.2.2. Social Benefits Based on Various Communications

Consumers living in a society are usually influenced by norms, which can be considered as social pressure generated to cause conformity to mass (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Such normative influence coming from the society can bring significant impacts to consumer behavior (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Specifically, interaction between social members is able to affect members' brand-choice congruence, which means consumers tend to purchase offerings that others buy (Reingen, Foster, Brown, & Seidman, 1984). That is, members of brand public may make same brand choice through communicating with others. Besides, consumers have a tendency to behave in an expected way simply because most people do the same thing (Stafford, 1966). Members of brand public are more likely to buy the same brands or products if they find most of other members choose those offerings. However, consumers also will do the opposite of what members want them to do (Clee & Wicklund, 1980). For example, a member of brand public may decrease his purchase intention toward a specific brand if he feels most comments of the brand are fake.

On the other hand, one important need is social need which suggests individuals have needs for affection, friendship and belonging (Maslow, 1975). Symbolic interactionism theory also indicates that people who live in a society are motivated to interact with others based on instinct and physiological weakness (West, Turner, & Zhao, 2010). And individuals construct meaning about the world through communication with others. Literatures with regarding to the motivation of participating in social network suggest that people's engaging in social network stems from the drivers of growing, maintaining and broadening interpersonal relationships (Sheldon, 2008; Ellison,

Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007). Through social interaction and communication with others, individuals are able to reveal their true feelings to satisfy their inner communication needs regardless of others' responses.

Because brand public is built by a variety of people who are mutual strangers, the members of brand public are neither trapped by ritual and responsibility, nor share a common identity or value. People can freely present their own views without any burden. And there is even no barrier stopping interpersonal communication as long as people are on line. Around a brand-related conversation, individuals can present various communications according to their independent thoughts, affects and interests. Cocanougher and Bruce (1971) point that the degree of contact with reference group determines its influence to members. Members of brand public as secondary reference group can indirectly affect others' behavior in the public. Therefore, members of brand public can contribute social influence to each other through various communications. Thus, it is various communications that give consumers an opportunity of gaining social benefits from brand public.

**H3:** Various communications in brand public positively affects social benefits to consumer.

Even though the members of brand public are not gathered by interaction, brand public can be a discursive public square, and the public members are able to communicate with each other based on their inclinations. In other words, brand public could play intermediary roles in providing opportunities of interacting and communicating with each other. Social benefits come from the communication between the members (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998). Consumers engage in discussions to provide advice to others and to receive others' experience. Customers seek social advancement when they have a need to feel useful to and recognized in, society (Hars & Ou, 2002; Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2010). People usually communicate with others out of instinct as well as they are living in a society (West, Turner, & Zhao, 2010). When people perceive that they are able to present their inner voice freely and willfully to the public, they are more likely to become a member of the public and give their comments to the public. In addition, they are more likely to provide their own experiences which have an influence on others. If people agree someone's opinion in brand public, they are willing to retweet it based on symbolic interactionism theory (West, Turner, & Zhao, 2010). Also they would like to take others' advices if they agree with them. In one word, the more social benefits consumers perceive from the public, the more possibility there will be that they will engage in brand public. Formally,

**H4:** The social benefits positively affect brand public engagement.

**2.2.3. Brand-related Self-expression Motivation Based on No Limitation in Expressing Self**

In brand public, consumers are not affected by the common values, identity or moral traditions in expressing brand-related opinions independently. Their expressions based on their individual brand experience are not affected by any conformity limits. These characteristics enable the members to freely express themselves through the platform of the brand public.

The brand public as a specific form of social media provides consumers with space for private dialogue, and it is used by members to carry out brand-related self-expressions. Consumers associate the brand with themselves by using the brand to express their personality and personal identity (Aaker, 1999) and have the opportunity of thinking about what brand content can be connected to themselves when they want showing their best sides. Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) pointed out a brand can be used to build a consumer's identity or personality. For example, in a certain brand game, consumers could independently establish their new role in playing the game, and they will express and shape their identities and personalities through conducting the established roles. The characteristics of the brand public that allow consumers to express their brand-related selves without limitation could promote their brand-related self-expression motivation. Formally,

**H5:** No limitation in consumers'expressing themselves positively affects the brand-related self-expression motivation.

**2.2.4. The brand-related self-expression motivation and brand public engagement**

Through brand-related self-expression, consumers can better establish and maintain their individual identities to engage in brand-related activities (Belk, 2013; Schau & Gilly, 2003). The identities of consumers encourage them to form and express identity-based beliefs and behavior that distinguish themselves from others (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Brand public members do have not common but individual identities. Consumer labeling behavior associated with the consumer self will lead them to the appearance of triggering a range of identity-driven affects including actions based on identity (Reed II, Forehand, Puntoni & Warlop, 2012), such as engaging a series of brand-related behavior which make it possible to express themselves.

Aaker (1999) believes that when consumers make brand-related posts online, they can associate the brand images with themselves, and by thus, achieve the purpose of expressing their own personalities and personal identities. Ryan and Deci (2000) also believe self-expression is more likely to help people achieve a higher degree of brand engagement activities. The act of posting their pictures wearing a pair of Nike shoes on Twitter might be thought as a kind of Nike brand public engagement behavior based on the needs of expressing their brand-related selves. In this way, consumers who will express their brand-related selves will post their pictures with the brand on the brand public platform. Thus,

**H6:** Brand-related self-expression motivation positively affects brand public engagement.

In sum, all the hypotheses in this research can be delineated by Figure 1.

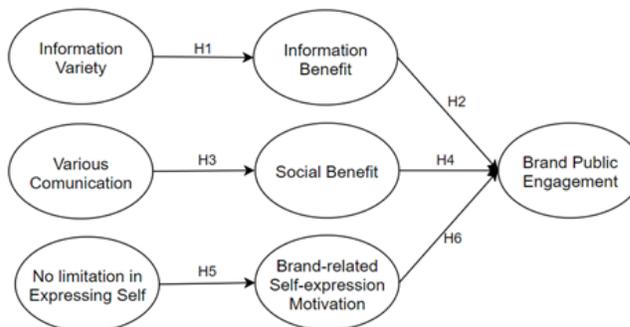


Figure 1: Research Model

**3. Research Method**

**3.1. Measurement of Construct Concept**

**3.1.1. Measurement of Brand Public**

Considering that consumers usually have their own interested brand, this study can not just choose one certain brand to conduct the empirical research. Therefore, firstly, we provide a definition of brand public to let participants better understand this concept, that is, "Brand public refers to an organizational space in social media where individuals can do a series of direct or indirect activities toward a specific brand, such as being a member of this public, commenting, posting and liking, but they here are not bound by any responsibility, morality or common values".

And following the illustration we select two representative examples presented in the form of pictures, one is the lipstick brand MAC-related conversations in social media which is popular to females; another is the shoes brand NIKE-related conversations in social media which is popular to males.

Finally, four questions are presented to measure consumers' interests in brand public and their experience of participating in the brand public. The first question is "Are you interested in joining any brand public focusing on the brand you are interested in?" with the options of "Yes, I am" and "No, I am not". The second question is "Have you ever directly or indirectly participated in a special brand public such like the examples in the pictures (e.g., joining the public, posting, giving comments or following other's opinion)?" with the options of "Yes, I have" and "No, I haven't". The third question is "Do you feel some responsibility, morality, or limitation at writing your opinions to the brand publics?" with the options of "Yes, I do" and "No, I don't". The final question is "Which brand public are you interested in?" Participants can response freely.

### 3.1.2. Measurement of Information Variety

Because there are the characteristics in brand public such as large amount and fast dissemination speed of information and wide participation groups, brand public can provide its members with diverse information which could satisfy their needs for knowledge or information. Referring to the information quality scale of Ahn, Ryu, and Han (2007), this research developed a scale of information variety to measure consumers' perception of information variety in brand public. Four items with 7-points scales (1= not at all, 7= very much) consist of "brand public provides me with various brand information", "brand public provides me with abundant brand information", "brand public provides me with complete brand information", "brand public provides me with sufficient brand information".

### 3.1.3. Measurement of Various Communications

Since brand public is built by mutual strangers who are not bound by responsibility, rituals and shared value, members in the public can present their own opinions to the extent to which they like to do. Thus various communications means that members in brand public are able to make communication with others diversely. According to the definition of various communication, five items with 7-points scales (1= not at all, 7= very much) were developed, which include "brand public provides me with a wide communication space", "brand public provides me with a free communication platform", "brand public provides me

with various communication means", "brand public can provide me with diverse communication channels", "There is no limitation in the range of communication contents for members in brand public".

### 3.1.4. Measurement of No Limitation in Expressing Self

Individuals usually possess more than one identity, and whether they tend to present one of their self-concept depends on situations. And considering the characteristics of brand public, there are not bounds formed by any responsibility, morality, rituals or a common identity, which make them freely show their individual identity or social identity as long as they like. Thus, based on the self-expression scales used in the research of Baldus, Voorhees, and Calantone (2015), four items with seven-point scales (1= not at all, 7= very much) were developed to measure the construct of no limitation in expressing self. They are "there are no barriers in expressing my self image to brand public", "There are no restrictions in expressing my true beliefs to brand public", "There are no limitations in expressing what kind of person I am to brand public". "There are no limitations in expressing who I really am to brand public".

### 3.1.5. Measurement of Information Benefit

Benefits in this study are regarded as the value that consumers can get from brand public. Thus, information benefit means that consumers can get contents valuable to them from brand public. Therefore, referring to Ahn, Ryu, and Han (2007), four items were developed to measure information benefit. They are "I can get reliable brand information from brand public", "I can get accurate brand information from brand public", "I can timely get brand information from brand public", "I can get useful brand information from brand public", which are measured on a seven-point scale (1= not at all, 7= very much).

### 3.1.6. Measurement of Social Benefit

Because brand public can play an intermediary role in providing opportunities of interacting and communicating with others, it is necessary to measure the social benefit that members in the public perceive. Referring to the meaning of social benefit defined in this research and the scale of social benefits used in Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, and Pihlström (2012), four items were developed to measure the social benefit. They are "I can communicate with other members in brand public with freedom", "I can interact with other members in brand public with no limitation", "I can share my ideas with other members in brand public freely",

"I can present my own experiences to other members in brand public wilfully", which are measured on a seven-point scale (1= not at all, 7= very much).

### 3.1.7. Measurement of Brand-related Self-expression Motivation

Brand can be regarded as a meaningful symbol to help the users express their specific identity. Because of the symbolic value of brand, consumers could form motivation of using the brand to express their self-image. This psychological state is called as brand-related self-expression motivation. Thus, according to self-expression scales used by Baldus, Voorhees, and Calantone (2015) and Roy and Machado (2018), this research developed four items to measure this motivation, which are made of by "I want to express my self-image by using this brand", "I want to express my true beliefs by using this brand", "I want to express what kind of person I am by using this brand", "I want to express my real self by using this brand", all items are with a seven-point scale (1= not at all, 7= very much).

### 3.1.8. Measurement of Brand Public Engagement

Brand public engagement refers to consumers' activities toward the brand public in social media. Specifically, direct activity refers to actively and voluntarily being a member of a brand public. Indirect activities include individual members' referring to others' opinion exposed to them, actively posting their own experiences, and giving online comments or retweeting other's posting. Based on the definition in our research, the study developed eight items with 7-points scales (1= not at all, 7= very much), which consist of such four dimensions as direct activity, referral behavior, influence and feedback behavior.

Particularly, direct activity measurements include "I will voluntarily join this brand public", "I will actively register this brand public to become a member".

Measurements of referral behavior include "when making decision about the brand, I will refer to the experiences of other members in this brand public", "when making decision about the brand, I will think about the opinions of other members in this brand public".

Measurements of consumer influence behavior include "I will actively post my own experiences related to the brand", "I will actively provide information I have known related to the brand".

Finally, measurements of feedback behavior include "When facing to others' postings related to the brand, I will retweet actively if I agree with them", "When facing to postings related to the brand, I will present my own view actively".

## 3.2. Data Collection

We made an English version of the questionnaire and then translated it into Chinese. We first collected 50 questionnaires for the pretest, and then adjusted the questionnaires according to the test results. In main survey, we have collected a total of 300 questionnaires, and after deleting 26 invalid questionnaires, we conducted analysis with 274 questionnaire data.

## 4. Empirical Investigation

### 4.1. Demographic Analysis Results

The last section of the questionnaire was about the demographic information of participants. The characteristics of the sample are shown by Table 3. The results show that there are more female participants (N=184, 67.2%) than male (N=90, 32.8%). As for the age, the most participants were at 21-30 years old, which take 76.6%.

Table 3: Demographic Analysis Results

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender	Male	90	32.8
	Female	184	67.2
Age	under the age of 20	38	13.9
Age	21-30	210	76.6
Age	31-40	17	6.2
Age	41-50	7	2.6
Age	Over the age of 50	2	0.7
Household Income	under 3000CNY	56	20.4
Household Income	3000-6000CNY	83	30.3
Household Income	6000-10000CNY	67	24.5
Household Income	10000-CNY	68	24.8

### 4.2. Frequencies of Using Brand

In the questionnaires, the participants were asked to write down the topics (i.e., brand name) of the brand public that they were interested to discuss. The result is shown in Table 4. Mac(N=33, 12.0%) is most mentioned and the following brands are Lipstick(N=8, 2.9%), Nike(N=7, 2.6%), Ysl(N=6, 2.2%), HuaWei(N=4, 1.5%), Dior(N=3, 1.1%), Gucci(N=3, 1.1%), Sulwhasoo(N=3, 1.1%), Cpb(N=3, 1.1%), Benz(N=3, 1.1%), XiaoMi(N=3, 1.1%), Longines(N=3, 1.1%) and others (N=195, 71.2%).

**Table 4:** Frequency Result

Brand	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Mac	33	12.0
Lipstick	8	2.9
Nike	7	2.6
Ysl	6	2.2
HuaWei	4	1.5
Dior	3	1.1
Gucci	3	1.1
Sulwhasoo	3	1.1
Cpb	3	1.1
Benz	2	0.7
XiaoMi	2	0.7
Longines	2	0.7
Others	198	72.3

### 4.3. Reliability and Validity

Before analysing the hypotheses SPSS22.0 software was used to verify the reliability and validity of the measurement structure. To ensure reliability, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was used to

test internal consistency. In order to explore validity, we adopted a principal component analysis based on Varimax. By the analysis, we removed items 'brand public provides me with various brand information' and 'brand public provides me with abundant brand information' of information variety; the item 'there is no limitation in the range of communication contents for members in brand public' of various communication; the item 'I want to express my self-image by using this brand' of brand-related self-expression and the items 'I will voluntarily join this brand public' and 'when making decisions about the brand, I will refer to the experiences of other members in this brand public' of brand public engagement to ensure a better result. The analysis results are shown in Table 5.

Seven components are brand public engagement ( $\alpha=.934$ ), no limitation in expressing self( $\alpha=.955$ ), various communication( $\alpha=.935$ ), information benefit( $\alpha=.947$ ), brand-related self-expression( $\alpha=.919$ ), social benefit( $\alpha=.944$ ), information variety( $\alpha=.921$ ).

**Table 5:** Results of Analyzing Components

Construct	Item	Component							Cronbach's $\alpha$
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Brand Public Engagement	BPE5	.784	.236	.191	.093	.162	.198	.139	.934
	BPE3	.744	.202	.184	.189	.309	.209	.125	
	BPE6	.742	.259	.213	.120	.257	.124	.224	
	BPE4	.710	.189	.184	.219	.325	.200	.114	
	BPE1	.669	.192	.241	.369	.203	.131	.133	
	BPE2	.610	.203	.313	.411	.138	.206	-.043	
No Limitation in Expressing Self	LE4	.238	.814	.177	.202	.206	.227	.137	.955
	LE2	.295	.808	.231	.218	.101	.179	.091	
	LE3	.246	.776	.182	.175	.264	.239	.186	
	LE1	.220	.745	.306	.186	.256	.231	.163	
Various Communication	VC3	.293	.206	.777	.220	.181	.164	.219	.935
	VC1	.213	.178	.773	.177	.168	.181	.260	
	VC4	.249	.209	.763	.340	.116	.132	.103	
	VC2	.210	.284	.738	.179	.074	.318	.174	
Information Benefit	IB3	.220	.204	.358	.726	.154	.281	.149	.947
	IB2	.284	.233	.220	.693	.309	.209	.303	
	IB1	.318	.212	.231	.692	.307	.172	.231	
	IB4	.238	.307	.309	.689	.115	.307	.186	
Brand-related Self-expression Motivation	SE3	.341	.212	.183	.157	.791	.133	.117	.919
	SE2	.325	.216	.104	.196	.764	.233	.133	
	SE1	.318	.264	.157	.246	.720	.270	.066	
Social Benefit	SB2	.291	.333	.251	.191	.214	.668	.235	.944
	SB1	.285	.277	.256	.292	.271	.665	.190	
	SB3	.267	.318	.294	.277	.245	.663	.177	
	SB4	.246	.307	.265	.346	.268	.658	.137	
Information Variety	IV1	.188	.221	.320	.240	.149	.203	.775	.921
	IV2	.230	.214	.324	.282	.131	.226	.748	
Eigen value1		4.526	3.823	3.731	3.335	2.868	2.812	1.900	
Variance Explained2		16.763	14.161	13.817	12.351	10.621	10.416	7.038	
Variance Cumulative3		16.763	30.924	44.741	57.092	67.713	78.129	85.167	

### 4.4. Correlations among Constructs

The correlations among information variety, various communication, no limitation in expressing self, information benefit, social benefit, brand-related self-expression motivation and brand public engagement are shown in Table 6. The results include correlation coefficient and AVE. As Table 6 shows, all values of AVE are bigger than .7, and all of them are bigger than the squares of each correlation coefficient.

Table 6: Results of Analyzing Correlations

AVE	I.V.	V.C.	N.L.E.S.	I.B.	S.B.	B.S.M.	B.P.E.
I.V.	.854						
V.C.	.737 (.543)	.784					
N.L.E.S.	.627 (.393)	.739 (.546)	.841				
I.B.	.716 (.512)	.555 (.308)	.627 (.393)	.816			
S.B.	.667 (.445)	.744 (.553)	.747 (.558)	.576 (.331)	.809		
B.S.M.	.704 (.496)	.695 (.483)	.784 (.615)	.68 (.462)	.702 (.493)	.793	
B.P.E.	.813 (.661)	.71 (.504)	.759 (.576)	.752 (.566)	.761 (.579)	.789 (.623)	.705

Note: The figures on diagonal line mean AVE, and the figures in ( ) are the squares of correlation coefficients. The abbreviations' meanings are as follows: I.V. is Information Variety; V.C. is Various Communication; N.L.E.S. is No Limitation in Expressing Self; I.B. is Information Benefit; S.B. is Social Benefit; B.S.M. is Brand-related Self-expression Motivation; and B.P.E. is Brand Public Engagement.

### 4.5. Testing Measurement Model

AMOS 22.0 was used to verify the measurement model. The model fit results shows that  $\chi^2=828.045(DF=303, p=.000)$ ,  $GFI=.816$ ,  $AGFI=.770$ ,  $CFI=.937$ ,  $TLI=.927$ ,  $IFI=.938$ ,  $RFI=.890$ ,  $NFI=.905$ ,  $RMSEA=.080$ , and all the C.R. values are above 2. And all the AVE values which are calculated by the formula of Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006) are all above 0.7.

Table 7: Results of Testing Measurement Model

	Item	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	AVE
Information Variety	IV2	1.000				.854
Information Variety	IV1	.973	.044	22.236	.000	.854
Various Communication	VC4	1.000				.784
Various Communication	VC3	1.100	.048	22.749	.000	.784
Various Communication	VC2	1.040	.053	19.733	.000	.784
Various Communication	VC1	1.002	.051	19.610	.000	.784
No Limitation in Expressing Self	LES4	1.000				.841
No Limitation in Expressing Self	LES3	1.003	.037	27.451	.000	.841
No Limitation in Expressing Self	LES2	.959	.038	25.194	.000	.841
No Limitation in Expressing Self	LES1	.943	.035	26.770	.000	.841
Information Benefit	IB1	1.000				.816
Information Benefit	IB2	1.054	.037	28.365	.000	.816
Information Benefit	IB3	.987	.044	22.494	.000	.816
Information Benefit	IB4	.966	.042	22.774	.000	.816
Social Benefit	SB1	1.000				.809
Social Benefit	SB2	.998	.047	21.028	.000	.809
Social Benefit	SB3	1.017	.042	24.197	.000	.809
Social Benefit	SB4	1.046	.044	23.720	.000	.809
Brand-related Self-expression Motivation	SE1	1.000				.793
Brand-related Self-expression Motivation	SE2	1.125	.052	21.499	.000	.793
Brand-related Self-expression Motivation	SE3	1.081	.051	21.112	.000	.793
Brand Public Engagement	BPE1	1.000				.705
Brand Public Engagement	BPE2	.890	.059	15.021	.000	.705
Brand Public Engagement	BPE3	1.093	.060	18.327	.000	.705
Brand Public Engagement	BPE4	1.017	.058	17.631	.000	.705
Brand Public Engagement	BPE5	1.022	.062	16.426	.000	.705
Brand Public Engagement	BPE6	1.020	.059	17.281	.000	.705
$\chi^2=828.045(DF=303, p=.000)$ $GFI=.816$ , $AGFI=.770$ , $CFI=.937$ , $TLI=.927$ , $IFI=.938$ , $RFI=.890$ , $NFI=.905$ , $RMSEA=.080$						

### 4.6. Testing Hypotheses

The AMOS 22.0 was used again to test the model. The model fit results shown in Table 8 are  $\chi^2=1103.770(DF=315, p=.000)$ ,  $CFI=.906$ ,  $TLI=.895$ ,  $IFI=.906$ ,  $RFI=.859$ ,  $NFI=.874$ ,  $RMSEA=.096$ . The results of testing hypotheses are shown as followings.

First, the hypotheses 1, which explored whether information variety in brand public positively affects information benefit to consumer, is supported (C.R.=15.378, p=.000).

Second, the hypotheses 3, which explored whether various communication in brand public positively affects social benefit to consumer, is supported (C.R.=14.202, p=.000).

Third, the hypotheses 5, which explored whether no limitation in expressing self positively affects the brand-related self-expression motivation, is supported (C.R.=12.562, p=.000).

Forth, the hypotheses 2, which explored whether information benefit positively affects brand public engagement, is supported (C.R.=6.127, p=.000).

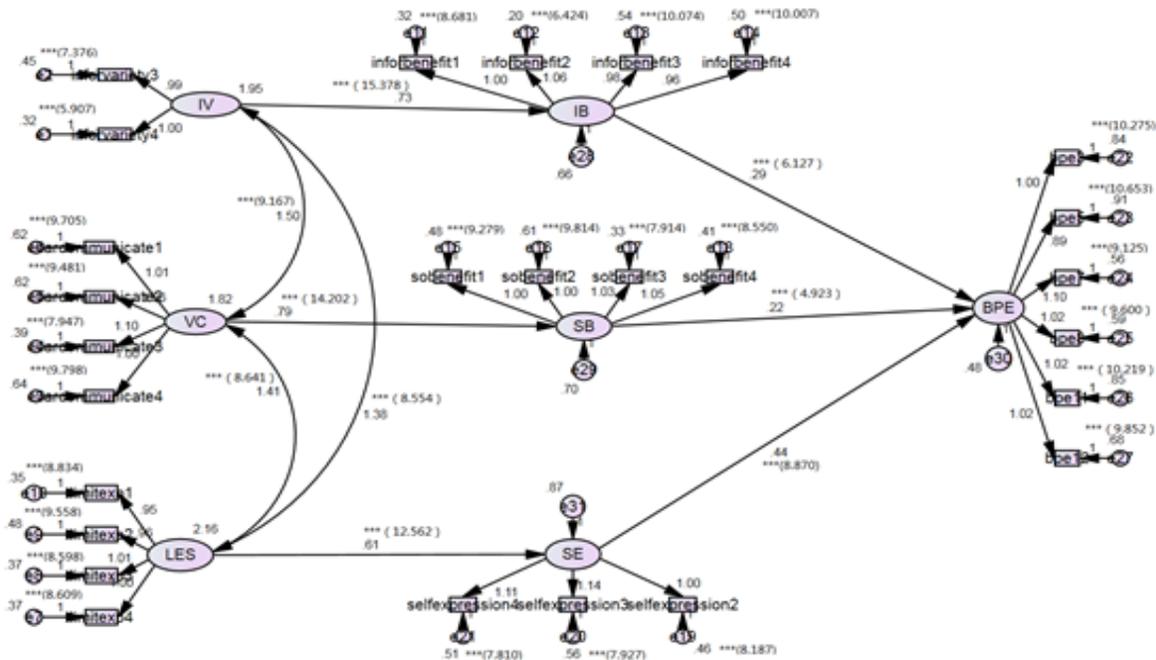
Fifth, the hypotheses 4, which explored whether the social benefit positively affects brand public engagement, is supported (C.R.=4.923, p=.000).

Sixth, the hypotheses 6, which explored whether consumers'brand-related self-expression motivation positively affects brand public engagement, is supported (C.R.=8.870, p=.000).

**Table 8:** Results of Testing Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
H1	Information Variety → Information Benefit	.733	.048	5.378	.000	Accepted
H3	Various Communication → Social Benefit	.793	.056	4.202	.000	Accepted
H5	No Limitation in Expressing Self → Brand-related Self-expression Motivation	.610	.049	2.562	.000	Accepted
H2	Information Benefit → Brand Public Engagement	.290	.047	6.127	.000	Accepted
H4	Social Benefit → Brand Public Engagement	.224	.046	4.923	.000	Accepted
H6	Brand-related Self-expression Motivation → Brand Public Engagement	.440	.050	8.870	.000	Accepted

$\chi^2=1103.770(DF=315, p=.000)$ , CFI=.906, TLI=.895, IFI=.906, RFI=.859, NFI=.874, RMSEA=.096



Note: \*\*\* means P<.001 , and the figures in ( ) are CR. IV is Information Variety; VC is Various Communication; LES is No Limitation in Expressing Self; IB is Information Benefit; SB is Social Benefit; SE is Brand-related Self-expression Motivation; and bpe is Brand Public Engagement.

**Figure 2:** Results of Testing Hypotheses

## 5. General Discussion

### 5.1. Research Summary

In this paper, the factors affecting the brand public engagement as activities of consumers toward the brand public in social media were explored. The public members who do not know each other (Arvidsson & Caliendo, 2015) can obtain various information from brand public which could bring information benefits to the members, and make various communications to meet their social needs of maintaining and expanding interpersonal relationships which could induce social benefits. Furthermore, because the brand public is not subject to common responsibility and moral limitation, it could enable the members to express themselves without limitation. The members who perceive the information benefits, social benefits and self expression motivation related to the brand will produce a series of engagement behaviors toward the public.

We put forward the hypotheses according to theoretical background explored like the above. 274 questionnaire data from Chinese consumers were used to conduct empirical analysis. The results of testing hypotheses are as followings.

First, information variety in brand public positively affects information benefits to consumers. Second, various communications in brand public positively affects social benefits to consumers. Third, no limitations in expressing themselves positively affect brand-related self-expression motivation. Fourth, each of the information benefits, social benefits and brand-related self-expression motivation positively affects the brand public engagement. In sum, the brand public engagement activities including both participating in the brand public directly and posting, commenting, retweeting, or giving feedback etc. indirectly were affected by the information benefits, social benefits and self expression motivation from the public.

### 5.2. Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

The contributions of this research can be divided into two categories, namely theoretical contributions and managerial implications.

In the perspective of academics, brand public engagement is a relatively new concept, and there has been little research on it. This study focuses on brand public engagement to verify the hypotheses by using structure model. Therefore, this research could have the significance to improving the brand public engagement theory by exploring the factors that affect the brand public engagement.

In the perspective of enterprises, if an enterprise wants to make the connection between the brand and consumers closer, it needs to make consumers have a deeper understanding of brand and identify with the brand.

Results of this study show information variety in brand public enables the members to obtain information benefits. As information providers in brand public, the members play an important role. The more information benefits members get, the more engagement behavior they will do. Therefore, marketers should actively advocate and encourage them to provide their product experience information to the brand public, so that the information could bring information benefits to, could be referred by, other members. When formulating the strategy of driving brand public engagement, marketers should fully understand the needs of consumers. At the same time, marketers also need to make full use of the characteristics of brand public to design sound and reasonable functions, so that public members can quickly and conveniently search for the brand-related information and meet their information needs.

Various communications provided by brand public makes it possible to acquire social benefits in brand public. Thus, through brand public platform, marketers should open up more communication channels and organize some offline activities to promote the communication between members of the online public to better meet their social needs. The integration of online and offline social relations can further deepen and strengthen the social connection between members. The more social benefits a marketer provides to its members in brand public, the more likely they are to engage the brand in brand public, thus making it more likely to maintain and attract more consumers.

The study also finds the positive effects of no limitation in expressing self on brand-related self-expression motivation. The characteristics of the brand public enable members to express themselves without limitation. Marketers should master the characteristics of the brand public so as to create more space to allow members to express their selves associating with brand, since, this kind of brand-related self-expression motivation will positively influence consumer engagement in the brand public.

### 5.3. Limitation and Future Research

However, this study has some limitations. First, the data collected in this study were mainly from China. Geographical distribution was not diverse. In future studies, the distribution should be considered to be more general.

Second, the researches on the dimension of brand public engagement have not formed an unified understanding or consensus in academic circles. In the future, it is necessary

to explore operational indicators of brand public engagement.

Third, future studies could consider other variables such as rewards (Hwang & Jung, 2018), social media acceptance (Hooda, 2018) and lay theory (Choi, Wang, & Chen, 2018) to find the influence mechanism model by which marketers could understand the process of promoting the brand public engagement.

## Reference

- Aaker, J. L. (1999). The malleable self: The role of self-expression in persuasion. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36(1), 45-57.
- Ahn, T., Ryu, S., & Han, I. (2007). The impact of Web quality and playfulness on user acceptance of online retailing. *Information & Management*, 44(3), 263-275.
- Arvidsson, A. (2006). *Brands: Meaning and value in media culture*. London, England: Routledge.
- Arvidsson, A., & Caliandro, A. (2015). Brand public. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(5), 727-748.
- Assael, H. (1984). *Consumer behavior and marketing action*. Boston, MA: Kent Publishing.
- Baldus, B. J., Voorhees, C., & Calantone, R. (2015). Online brand community engagement: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(5), 978-985.
- Belk, R. W. (2013). Extended self in a digital world. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(3), 477-500.
- Bowden, J. L. H. (2009). The process of customer engagement: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 17(1), 63-74.
- Brodie, R. J., Hollebeek, L. D., Jurić, B., & Ilić, A. (2011). Customer engagement: conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3), 252-271.
- Burnkrant, R. E., & Cousineau, A. (1975). Informational and normative social influence in buyer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(3), 206-215.
- Choi, N.-H., Wang, I., & Chen, C. (2018). Interaction effects of lay theories and failure type on adaptive versus compensatory consumption behavior. *International Journal of Industrial Distribution & Business*, 9(7), 19-32.
- Clee, M. A., & Wicklund, R. A. (1980). Consumer behavior and psychological reactance. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 6(4), 389-405.
- Cocanougher, A. B., & Bruce, G. D. (1971). Socially distant reference groups and consumer aspirations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8(3), 379-381.
- Deutsch, M., & Gerard, H. B. (1955). A study of normative and informational social influences upon individual judgment. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51(3), 629-636.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends": Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143-1168.
- Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2005). Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(3), 378-389.
- Fonner, K. L., & Timmerman, C. E. (2009). Organizational new(ust)omers: Applying organizational newcomer assimilation concepts to customer information seeking and service outcomes. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 23(2), 244-271.
- Ford, J. D., & Ellis, E. A. (1980). A reexamination of group influence on member brand preference. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(1), 125-132.
- French, J. R., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150-167). Oxford, England: University Michigan.
- Gummerus, J., Liljander, V., Weman, E., & Pihlström, M. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 857-877.
- Gwinner, K. P., Gremler, D. D., & Bitner, M. J. (1998). Relational benefits in services industries: The customer's perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26(2), 101-114.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (Vol. 6). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Hars, A., & Ou, S. (2002). Working for free? Motivations for participating in open-source projects. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6(3), 23-37.
- Ho, J. Y., & Dempsey, M. (2010). Viral marketing: Motivations to forward online content. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9-10), 1000-1006.
- Hollebeek, L. (2011). Exploring customer brand engagement: Definition and themes. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(7), 555-573.
- Hooda, A. (2018). Acceptance of social media as a marketing tool: A quantitative study. *East Asian Journal of Business Management*, 8(3), 5-12.
- Hwang, S., & Jung, H. (2018). The interaction effects of motivation and contingent rewards on employee creativity. *International Journal of Industrial Distribution & Business*, 9(7), 71-82.
- Lascu, D. N., Bearden, W. O., & Rose, R. L. (1995). Norm extremity and interpersonal influences on consumer conformity. *Journal of Business Research*, 32(3), 201-212.
- Lury, C. (2004). *Brands: The logos of the global economy*. London, England: Routledge.

- Marwick, A. E. (2013). *Status update: Celebrity, publicity, and branding in the social media age*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Marwick, A., & Boyd, D. (2011). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. *Convergence*, 17(2), 139-158.
- Maslow, A. H. (1975). *Motivation and personality*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Mollen, A., & Wilson, H. (2010). Engagement, telepresence and interactivity in online consumer experience: Reconciling scholastic and managerial perspectives. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9-10), 919-925.
- Muniz, A. M., & O'guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), 412-432.
- Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. (2011). Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), 13-46.
- Nambisan, S., & Baron, R. A. (2009). Virtual customer environments: testing a model of voluntary participation in value co-creation activities. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 26(4), 388-406.
- Nambisan, S., & Baron, R. A. (2010). Different roles, different strokes: Organizing virtual customer environments to promote two types of customer contributions. *Organization Science*, 21(2), 554-572.
- Page, R. (2012). The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags. *Discourse & Communication*, 6(2), 181-201.
- Pansari, A., & Kumar, V. (2017). Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(3), 294-311.
- Papacharissi, Z., & de Fatima Oliveira, M. (2012). Affective news and networked publics: The rhythms of news storytelling on# Egypt. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 266-282.
- Patterson, P., Yu, T., & De Ruyter, K. (2006). *Understanding customer engagement in services*. Advancing Theory, Maintaining Relevance, Proceedings of ANZMAC 2006 Conference, Brisbane.
- Price, L. L., & Feick, L. F. (1984). The role of interpersonal sources in external search: An informational perspective. *ACR North American Advances*, 11, 250-255.
- Prongsajapan, R. (2009). *Liminal entities: Identity governance, and organizations in Twitter*. Doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University.
- Reed II, A., Forehand, M. R., Puntoni, S., & Warlop, L. (2012). Identity-based consumer behavior. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 29(4), 310-321.
- Reingen, P. H., Foster, B. L., Brown, J. J., & Seidman, S. B. (1984). Brand congruence in interpersonal relations: A social network analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11(3), 771-783.
- Rook, D. W., & Fisher, R. J. (1995). Normative influences on impulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(3), 305-313.
- Roy, S., & Machado, J. C. (2018). Social media brand community enjoyment (smbce): Scale construction and validation from an etic perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(4), 390-411.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- Schau, H. J., & Gilly, M. C. (2003). We are what we post? Self-presentation in personal web space. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(3), 385-404.
- Sheldon, P. (2008). The relationship between unwillingness-to-communicate and students' Facebook use. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 20(2), 67-75.
- Stafford, J. E. (1966). Effects of group influences on consumer brand preferences. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 3(1), 68-75.
- Tarde, G. (1969). The public and the crowd, and opinion and conversation. In T. Clark (Ed.), *On Communication and Social Influence*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas, T. C., Price, L. L., & Schau, H. J. (2012). When differences unite: Resource dependence in heterogeneous consumption communities. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(5), 1010-1033.
- Van Doorn, J., Lemon, K. N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P., & Verhoef, P. C. (2010). Customer engagement behavior: Theoretical foundations and research directions. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), 253-266.
- Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., & Morgan, R. M. (2012). Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 122-146.
- West, R. L., Turner, L. H., & Zhao, G. (2010). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Woodside, A. G., & Delozier, M. W. (1976). Effects of word of mouth advertising on consumer risk taking. *Journal of Advertising*, 5(4), 12-19.
- Wooten, D. B., & Reed, A. (1998). Informational influence and the ambiguity of product experience: Order effects on the weighting of evidence. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 7(1), 79-99.
- Zappavigna, M. (2011). Ambient affiliation: A linguistic perspective on Twitter. *New Media & Society*, 13(5), 788-806.