DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK BRAND PAGES

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Abstract: *Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube or Wikipedia have become an important element of the communication mix in a number of organizations. A subcategory of Social media is social networks where both customers and businesses can upload their own digital content. The massive amount of this content has to be filtered in some way. The usual and logical choice is the engagement of users as the decisive factor. Content that has the most interaction is also visible to other network members. Therefore, customer engagement on the social network has not only marketing but also technical benefits. This study aims to identify the determinants of customer engagement on Facebook brand pages using a questionnaire survey on a representative sample of 454 Czech Facebook users. The theoretical model was based on Functional, Hedonic and Social Values which were introduced as determinants of Customer engagement. Structural equation modelling methods were used to identify a possible relationship between latent constructs. The final verified model identified Hedonic and Social value as determinants of Customer engagement on social network Facebook.*

Keywords: *Brand, Customer engagement, Facebook, Social media, Social networks.*

JEL Classification: *M31*

Introduction

According to the We Are Social study (2017), 3.7 billion people worldwide are connected to the Internet. This accounts for half of the Earth's population. Of this, 2.8 billion active social media users and 2.6 billion users access social media via their mobile phone. In a year-on-year comparison with 2016, a number of the Internet users raised by 10% and social media users raised even greatly 21%. For active social media users on mobile devices, the growth rate is the highest (30%).

In Europe, there are 839 million people connected to the Internet, which is 73% of the European population. Furthermore, 412 (49%) millions are active in social media and 340 million (40%) use mobile devices to visit social media applications and web pages. However, the growth is a bit slower in Europe. Compared with 2016, there is only 3% more people connected to the Internet, 5% more new social media users and 11% new mobile users. Global usage of the main social networking sites, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, has grown to a scale that can only be described as ubiquitous (Hoffman and Novak, 2012).

The same study (We Are Social) also shows the number of users of individual social networks where Facebook leads with 1.89 billion, far in the hangout is Chinese Qzone with 632 million and Tumblr with 555 million active users. Facebook has 319 million users aged 45 and more daily. Hence, it is no more only „generation Z thing". In the Czech Republic, nearly five million people each month access Facebook. Of which 3.7 million are active on this social network daily. On Czech Facebook, the most numerous group is within the 25-34 years range, the second 35-44 and the third 18-24.

In the environment where communication possibilities are dynamically evolving, the one-way communication paradigm system of thinking is obsolete (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Promotion as a part of the marketing mix is changing to marketing communication and brings new challenges for companies that in many cases require a re-evaluation of the present way of marketing communication strategy. The effort to keep the customer and provide quality customer care goes far beyond the transaction. Moreover, it goes far before transaction on social media. Building a long-term engagement with customers through social networking is a topic that today not only businesses reflects but also a number of research studies does (Doorn et al., 2010; Jahn and Kunz, 2012; Greve, 2014; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vries and Carlson, 2014; Hollebeek, Conduit and Brodie, 2016).

1 Statement of a problem

There are situations where many customers are constantly online and have unlimited access to social media platforms via their mobile phone. Clearly, there are two related concepts that are fundamental to social media. First, it is Web 2.0 which enabled users to upload their own text, pictures and videos and interact more deeply with website environments. Web 2.0 has enhanced content and file sharing applications, which in turn have shaped the creation and distribution mechanisms for user-generated content (Daugherty et al. 2008). The User-generated content (UGC), as a second concept, is equally important for marketing communication discipline. It can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). It is, indeed, the fabric of social media and one of the manifestations of online customer engagement. Consequently, the term Social media is sometimes conveniently substituted by the term Consumer-generated media (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Consumers are doing more frequently information search about brands and products on social media (Vollmer and Precourt, 2008). For companies, these platforms offer opportunities for presentation and communication with customers. There are dozens of ways to manage this communication in favour of the brand, but today, even more than in the past, brand communication has to have a clear meaning for the customer while being up to date. Despite the urgent need for a quality knowledge, there are many unanswered questions in social media marketing area (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016).

1.1 Motivation to use social networks

Before it is possible to define engagement on social networks one should understand the basic motivation to use the platforms. Some research teams have revealed the reasons for entering social networks. For example, the demonstrable effect on the way of use has a personality type. Extroverts generally participate in more groups and have more friends than introverts. However, motivation to use the social network is not affected by personality (Ross et al., 2009). Further, Sheldon (2008) determined the influence of gender on the acceptance of this technology as well as the behavioural specifics. The results of the study among the students led to the finding that women are motivated by the maintenance of friendships, having fun and making time seem to pass more quickly. Men, in comparison, make use of the network more likely to create new friendships and meet new people. The results of another study (Joinson, 2008) show a higher use of the social network among younger people

and women. Age as a determinant of social network acceptance has also been confirmed (Acquisti and Gross, 2006).

Other authors have already devoted their research to the regular users. Therefore, their attempt was not to describe motives for social networking, but reasons for repeated visits (Lin and Lu, 2011). As the two most important factors, they chose the **enjoyment** and **usefulness**. They tested these concepts in relation to the intention to use the network in near future (intentional repetitive behaviour). According to the results, the greatest influence on the intention to use the social network is enjoyment. Furthermore, this empirical study suggests that the closeness to the friends and relatives and the fun the social network offers are key elements that determine whether the user will re-access the Facebook.

Last but not least, the reasons for tracking brands on social networks are studied as well (Logan, 2014). She used a theory of planned behaviour and the technology acceptance model on Facebook and Twitter users. According to her research, it is not possible to use the theory of planned behaviour to describe the reasons for following brands, since it is an impulsive decision supported by the current social pressure and the motivation significantly influences the information needs of the users, the usefulness (the feeling of the benefits gained from the given action) and ease of use (the belief that the network interface user-friendly).

To conclude, people are extensively using social networks all over the world. Specifically, it is Facebook which is the most popular among Internet users. There is a set of motivation to utilize these technologies and to maintain its usage as a common part of the life. We already know from a literature review that the reasons to enter and use social networks are to connect with friends and family, find new friends and to gain access to instant communication platform. In the area of branding and brand, the motivation to follow brands on social networks is twofold. First, it is information gathering and use of this information in decision making. Second, it is the enjoyment of the actions done online and emotional brand building experience. While the research has shown the motives to follow brands, there is still a question which of these antecedents affects Customer engagement as well.

1.2 Customer engagement

Developing Customer engagement allows management to better understand customer needs as it is linked to specific and real customer behaviour. The result of building customer engagement is, in addition to increasing the effectiveness of marketing activities, to increase the economic efficiency of business by saving the cost of marketing research. If companies better understand the reasons for fan involvement, they can use them to interact, integrate and engage their customers and convert them from regular users to real followers of their brands (Jahn and Kunz, 2012).

Customer engagement is defined as a multidimensional concept involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Doorn et al. (2010), believe that the engagement goes beyond the scope of transactions and can be specifically defined as a customer's behavioural manifestation that has a strong meaning beyond buying. Behaviour beyond this purchase can be both positive and negative. The example of negative engagement behaviour toward the brand is an organization of actions against the company. On the contrary, the online following of consumers, who actively

participate in a company's online activities, is regarded to be highly valuable to a company (Dijkmans et al. 2015).

It is also important to note that, although the theoretical concept of engagement is a customer dominant, it may focus on a much wider network of actors, including other potential customers, suppliers, the general public, regulators and employees of the company. For the purpose of this study on the concept of engagement, we will deal with customers, but it is worthwhile to remember that this expression can also be realized by the above-mentioned interest groups.

1.3   Functional, Hedonic and Social value

Information seeking behaviour is one of the motives to visit Facebook fan page. The customer's goal is to get information about the brand itself, its products, provided services, actual prices or any other type of functional value in form of the information. Hence, the fan page works as an aggregator of valuable content for a buying decision. The customer can seek advice or reduce risk during the decision-making process (Muntiga et al. 2011). This **functional value** of the Facebook page is largely under the control of the brand itself. Functional experiences have long been documented in the literature on technology acceptance (Davies, 2011) and provide an important rationale for content creation on the social network. Jahn and Kunz (2012) found empirical evidence of a significant, positive influence of functional value on usage intensity of the brand Facebook fan page. Similarly, Vries and Carlson (2014) argued, that consumers with higher perceptions of functional value are more likely to have higher usage intensity with the page. In conclusion, the functional value can be considered as one of the important determinants of Consumer engagement.

Social networks offer a new dimension of entertainment and connectivity. Sheldon (2008) empirically tested the model in which the entertainment played a major role as a predictor of Facebook usage. People do not go shopping or search for news from their favourite brands there that often. In most cases, they are simply not set up to communicate with a brand when visiting a social network. One of the ways to attract the customer's attention is to create interesting content that will not only be entertaining but also enjoyable and fun. Referring back to Lin and Lu (2011) and the research which showed a significant effect of enjoyment on social network usage, entertainment is a non-disturbing way of getting attention. Customers want to have fun on social networks, enjoy the experience and gain **hedonic value** from it. Vries and Carlson (2014) offer an example of hedonic value: customer using a fan page may do this in their spare time knowing that this particular brand uploads interesting and entertaining content in relation to that brand, and/or topics related to what the brand personifies and symbolises.

The last concept discussed here is grounded in the theory of social network participation. Broadening relationship to others as a determinant of social network usage has been researched in many studies (Dohlakia et al. 2004; Jahn and Kunz, 2012; Sheldon, 2009). Therefor, a value which is generated by the fan page for customers can also have a sociale dimension. Interpersonal communication with other person or persons with similar interests in products and brands is the essence of social interaction. Hence, the **social value** associated with interactions with other fans on the brand page can be hypothesized as an important determinant of engagement. This

topic in online social media context has been previously researched by Daugherty et al. (2008) who discovered that the motivation to form online content is the most affected by the interest in social interaction.

In sum, these three theoretical determinants form the research question: Which one of these three concepts influence the engagement and therefore is a good predictor of Consumer engagement behaviour on the branded Facebook page? The overall goal of the study is to test theoretical assumption about relationships between four constructs related to consumer engagement on social media.

2 Methods

To achieve the goal of this research, it was necessary to use the deductive approach of testing a predefined theoretical framework. Research philosophy was therefore mainly positivism, the nature of the method was quantitative and the research strategy was the survey method. The technique of data collection was an online questionnaire which was sent to 840 respondents. It was distributed through the research agency IPSOS. Though, there was one limitation for respondents to enter the study. Only those who stated their favourite brand on social network Facebook were allowed to proceed since the rest of the questionnaire was related to the specific brand. In other words, they answered the questionnaire about their favourite brand they follow on Facebook. This social network was chosen because of its enormous popularity both here and globally. There are over two billion active users on the planet. The research agency provided raw data without any standardization. The data were subjected to the analysis of suspicious response patterns by measuring the standard deviation (Hair et al., 2017). Respondents (cases) with a negligible standard deviation and those who filled in a number of cases using the same ratings were excluded from the sample for further statistical processing. Respondents who do not track any brand on Facebook and therefore do not use the platform to communicate with companies were also excluded. Specifically, these were people who said they followed some kind of community or interest group and not a brand. Overall, 54% of the respondents were kept in the sample (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Sample Characteristics

N=454	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	207	45.6
Male	247	54.4
Education		
Elementary school	37	8.1
Certificate of apprenticeship	129	28.4
High school	190	41.9
University	98	21.6
Age		
Up to 29	141	31.1
30-39	101	22.2
40-49	98	21.6
50+	114	25.1

Source: own research

The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions about the engagement factors derived from previous studies (Jahn and Kunz, 2012, Vries and Carlson, 2014). Respondents expressed their opinions on the six-point Likert scale ranging from "Totally agree" to "Totally disagree." Neutral response option was not provided to the respondents since it was possible to express their views or report their past behaviour to all questions.

2.1 Measurement model definition

Based on the established scales the questionnaire was designed to measure the latent variables **Functional**, **Hedonic** and **Social value** of the fan page and **Consumer engagement** as a main behavioural construct. For each latent construct, there were at least three questions asked (indicators). The questions were translated to the Czech language by two independent persons to ensure unambiguous meaning. Final translations were then compared and mismatching sentences were further discussed. Each item has its code comprising construct code and a question number. These codes are used later to describe the model and study results.

Tab. 2: Measured Constructs and Indicators

Construct (CODE)	No.	Item (indicator)
Functional value (FUNCVAL)	1	The content of the fan page is helpful for me.
	2	The content of the fan page is functional for me.
	3	The content of the fan page is practical for me.
Hedonic value (HEDONIC)	1	The content of the fan page is fun.
	2	The content of the fan page is pleasant.
	3	The content of the fan page is entertaining.
Social value (SOCVAL)	1	I can meet people like me on this fan page.
	2	I can find out about people like me on this fan page.
	3	I can interact with people like me on this fan page.
Engagement on fan page (ENGA-GEMENT)	1	I react to the content on the fan page with emoticons.
	2	I am active on the brand page and I'm engaging.
	3	I am engaging in discussions that take place on the fan page.

Source: own elaboration based on Jahn and Kunz (2012) and De Vries and Carlson (2014)

From the Tab.. 2 one can assume the relationship between the constructs. There are three constructs with exogenous characteristics. Hence, the Functional, Hedonic and Social value of a Facebook brand page for the customer are independent variables and Engagement as an endogenous variable is theoretically explained by these three factors. All four constructs were used to create a model in Figure. 1. Effects between the constructs are defined by three hypotheses:

H1: Perceived Functional value of brand Facebook page has a positive effect on Engagement on the page.

H2: Perceived Hedonic value of brand Facebook page has a positive effect on Engagement on the page.

H3: Perceived Social value of brand Facebook page has a positive effect on Engagement on the page.

Fig. 1: Structural Model
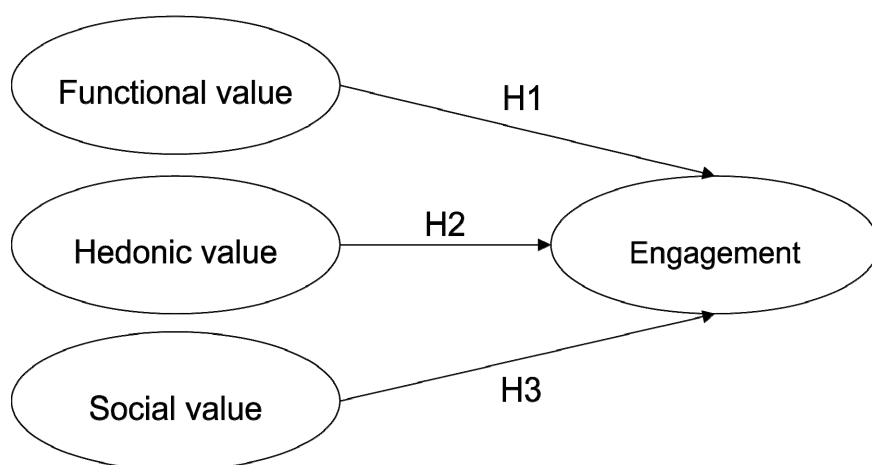
The structural model was tested by the following procedure. First, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis and the calculation of individual correlations of latent and measured variables was performed. This is regarded in literature as evaluation of measurement model (Lei and Wu, 2007). Second, the structural model was assessed and regression weights calculated for statistical hypothesis testing. Last, the model was modified through hypothesis evaluation and modification indices to secure the best possible fit to the data. In this final stage, the research becomes exploratory compared to the first two stages which were confirmatory.

3 Problem solving

In advance of the results of the study, the important measures of reliability and validity are presented. In Tab.. 3 there is a report of internal consistency (Cronbach's Alfa, composite reliability) and convergent validity (average variance extracted). Cronbach's alfa should be at least 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), composite reliability (CR) values between 0.7 and 0.9 can be regarded as acceptable (Hair et al. 2017) and average variance extracted (AVE) levels higher than 0.5 is recommended (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Additionally, the average variance extracted should be lower than composite reliability. Overall, we can assume the measurement model met the basic criteria. There is only a small deviation from the standards in one case. Consequently, the Hedonic value should be treated with caution in further analysis. Cronbach's alfa values were computed using IBM SPSS Statistic 21 and CR and AVE in Excel based on the IBM Amos output.

Tab. 3: Measured Constructs and Indicators Used in Survey

	Cronbach's alfa	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
FUNCVAL	.835	.845	.646
HEDONIC	.734	.738	.493
SOCVAL	.822	.803	.576
ENGAGE	.843	.820	.604
Minimum	.700	.700	.500

3.1 Hypothesis testing

Three hypotheses were verified in the model. Effects of the exogenous variables on endogenous engagement were statistically tested using regression weights from IBM Amos output. First hypotheses, Perceived Functional value of brand Facebook page has a positive effect on Engagement on the page, was rejected. The two remaining were accepted (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4: Results of Hypotheses Tests

| Hypothesis	Paths	Path coefficient (β)	p-values	Evaluation
H1	FUNCVAL -> ENGA	.145	.222	Rejected
H2	HEDONIC -> ENGA	.390	***	Accepted
H3	SOCVAL -> ENGA	.417	***	Accepted

Source: own research

If the statistical significance of path coefficients is not confirmed, the structural equation modelling technique enables model modification. In this case, the hedonic values of fan page content and Social value from interactions on the fan page with others were logically left in the model.

3.2 Modifications and model fit

The model was re-drawn into the statistical program AMOS. Eliminating one of the exogenous variables could result in significant changes in the overall structure. Thus, the statistical significance of path coefficients and modifying indices was re-performed. Program output tables did not show other possible model modifications. The final version of the model is in figure 3.

Fig. 3: Modified Structural Model
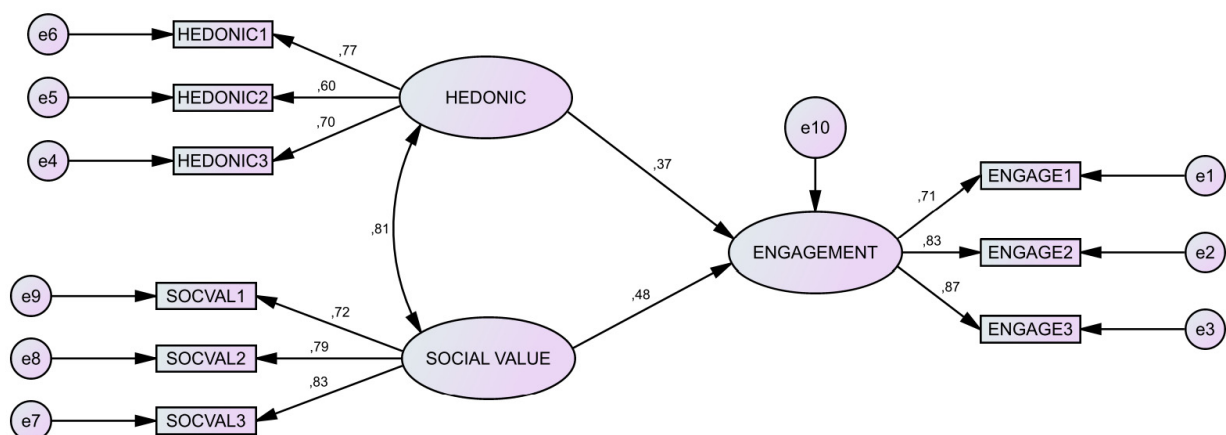
Source: own elaboration in IBM AMOS

Model fit was performed using standard measurement indices recommended by a variety of SEM handbooks (Hair et al. 2017; Schumacker and Lomax, 2016; Kline, 2015). Precisely, it was the normal chi-square (χ^2/df), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). For these indexes measured and recommended model levels are in Tab. 5.

Tab. 5: Modified Model Fit

Fit Index	χ²/df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
Measured Level	1.957	.978	.958	.046	.988	.982
Recommended Level	< 3	>.95	>.95	<.07	>.95	>.95

Source: own research

From resulting scores, all of the indexes met the theoretical assumptions of model fit. Hence, the model can be regarded as a good fit for the data description.

4 Discussion

Interestingly, findings of this research are inconsistent with those from Jahn and Kunz (2012) and De Vries and Carlson (2014). Despite the fact that Jahn and Kunz (2012) used fan-page usage intensity and this research used Consumer engagement as an endogenous variable. The possible explanation for this is the cultural context in which both studies took place. Plus De Vries and Carlson (2014) used students as the research sample. In the Czech Republic, with participants from all age groups and employment status, the results showed no relationship between functional value and engagement. This finding is important for all Facebook page administrators who aim to get user engagement and have a communication strategy which is focused on reach. Informational and fully functional content will hardly deliver the desired outcomes to the content strategy.

People who perceive the hedonic value of Facebook fan page content show significantly more Customer engagement. The relationship between these variables has some implications. If a company wants to gain customer engagement, it must focus on attractive content that does not necessarily relate to products. It should primarily be a pleasure and then sell. The dialogue on different topics beyond the transaction will lead to building a relationship through continuous interaction and form the basis for future engagement. Today, content marketing is spoken in professional practice. The experience from online communication on the Facebook fan page is not only important in terms of positively influencing customer's feelings toward the brand, but according to this research, it will also build up the customer's engagement on the long term basis.

The fact that social value has an important role in social networks is obvious. It is essentially the basic principle of these platforms. So far, however, it has not been clear whether any interactions with others on brand fan page have any commercial significance. Social value has the highest regression scales in the model, which explains a large portion of the variability of the engagement variable. Not only are that social connection interesting and motivational for Facebook usage generally. It has also an important meaning for those who follow a brand and are part of the brand community. Managers should think about whether their Facebook page offers such a platform for the community growth. The question is whether their site is a place where communication beyond the business communication also occurs. If there is a customer-customer communication as well, the sign of a brand community can be seen and work with. Therefore, a good starting point for marketer in analysing own Facebook fan page is to look for interactions between customers and then create a platform for the emergence of these.

Conclusion

Companies that want to succeed in the interconnected social media world must understand the new rules of the game. Specifically, in social networking environments such as Facebook, it is a communication that leads to the increase in Customer engagement, which is behaviour beyond business transactions. Customer engagement has a positive effect on reach on many popular social media platform. Only engaging content is filtered to the most users. Otherwise, the users would be overwhelmed by the quantity of user-generated content. Consequently, such a behaviour in an algorithm-driven environment will ensure the reach of communication to larger target audiences.

The overall goal of the study was to test theoretical assumption about relationships between four constructs related to Customer engagement on the most popular social network Facebook. To achieve the goal, a deductive approach was used when the theoretical model was based on previous studies and concepts. A questionnaire survey among consumers in the Czech Republic has demonstrated the validity of all theoretically designed constructs and, in two cases, their influence on Customer Engagement. Functional Value that customers feel when they follow their favourite brand on the social network does not lead to higher values of Customer Engagement. Hedonic and Social value, on the other hand, does. These results tell us that consumer's entertainment, fun and interaction with another user on the branded Facebook page site is a good predictor of consequent engagement. It does not mean that consumers do not just pragmatically look for brand or product information on Facebook to be sure about the brand trustworthiness. It means it is simply not relevant for Consumer engagement. Depending on the communication strategy, the plan to pursue higher engagement have to be rooted in actions generating hedonic or social value for the user. In everyday business practice, we can see more and more brands recognizing the utility of entertaining content, however, using the Facebook brand fan page as the fans social value creator is still in its infancy.

In managerial practice, it would be also useful to verify the results after implementing the suggested recommendations. As often shown, customers in questionnaire surveys do not always accurately describe their attitudes and behaviour. Subsequent research could, therefore, focus on evaluating the implementation of recommendations, particularly in the field of creating a social interaction platform on branded fan sites. This research showed a strong connection between engagement and social value which is delivered by a fan page. Another stream of research which would be valuable in the domain of marketing communication on social networks is its subsequent effect on business performance and overall market competitive advantage.

Besides, there is a possibility to measure the efficiency of specific determinants of engagement. Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) have already started the research stream dealing with the relation between post characteristics and online engagement. They categorized media types such as text status, picture, video or link, and added also the posting time. However, in this type of research, the survey method should be substituted with data from Facebook pages as an exact representation of the engagement. Moreover, the Facebook Newsfeed Algorithm has to be taken into consideration since this data organizing tool will largely influence the outcomes of any research dealing with Facebook data and thus influence reliability of a study.

Acknowledgement

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