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ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT: INVESTIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA DISPOSITIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS, AND BRAND ENGAGEMENT

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ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT: INVESTIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA DISPOSITIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS, AND BRAND ENGAGEMENT

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
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By
BRIAN A. VANDER SCHEE

Dr. Jimmy Peltier, Dissertation Chair
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Consumers are comfortable with social media and accept firms occupying the same digital space. They consume and create content in social media at varying levels as some consumers more readily engage with firms online than others. Those consumers may not only communicate with the brand, they may also develop a brand relationship as a consequence. The progression of brand relationship may develop from brand involvement to brand advocacy where consumers speak positively on the brand’s behalf without compensation. Knowing the consumer factors that lead to online consumer engagement and having a better understanding of branding outcomes will help firms to more effectively plan and execute a social media marketing strategy. Although many studies have considered antecedents, consequences, and measures of online consumer engagement, a comprehensive review of current studies with recommendations for future research is needed to have a better understanding of online consumer engagement. Essay 1 addresses this need.
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In addition, research is needed to examine social media dispositions and social media goals as antecedents of consumer engagement in social media, as well as a progression of brand engagement outcomes as a consequence. Essay 2 fills the gap by investigating the effect of consumer antecedents, namely social media dispositions (social media information sharing and social media trust) and social media goals (social media information seeking and social media experience) on consumer engagement. The foundation of the study is grounded in uses and gratifications theory. Further, the study considers the effect consumer engagement has on brand engagement including brand involvement and brand advocacy. Regression analysis and structural equation models (SEM) were used to analyze the data from the completed surveys. The results provide implications for firms, including how to more efficiently spend on social media marketing by targeting consumers who are more likely to engage online with appropriate content strategy, leading to brand advocacy.

*Keywords: social media marketing, consumer engagement, brand engagement*
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Antecedents and Consequences of Online Consumer Engagement:

Investigating Social Media Dispositions, Social Media Goals, and Brand Engagement

Consumers and businesses alike are interested in the benefits of using social media. Although the connections fostered by social media are complex, the interactions are beneficial for consumers and brands as they co-create value via consumer brand engagement. Therefore, marketers have transitioned from strictly using traditional media to social media as a more interactive platform. The average percentage of the marketing budget spent on digital in 2019 was 54% and is expected to grow to $172 billion by 2021 and further grow to 67% by 2023 (Enberg, 2019).

Businesses have a vested interest in knowing whether their approach is effective and provides a healthy return on investment. Twitter and Facebook, two of several popular social media platforms, earned over $1.57 billion and $68.7 billion, respectively, from advertising in 2019 (Facebook, 2020; McClelland, 2020). As a result, a categorization of consumer engagement antecedents and branding relational outcomes is needed to help inform marketers on how to better prepare and execute social media marketing strategies (Rasool, Shah, & Islam, 2020). A greater understanding of consumer engagement measures is also needed given the diversity in research design and execution (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016).

Many studies have examined online consumer engagement as interactive, multi-dimensional, and complex (Hollebeek, Srivastava, & Chen, 2019). The implications for social media marketing therefore merit further investigation. This dissertation will add to the body of knowledge in consumer engagement and social media marketing by providing a categorization of consumer engagement antecedents, measures, and outcomes. Moreover, the research will fill the
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gap in the literature by adding clarity regarding social media dispositions and goals and brand engagement based on behavioral measures of consumer engagement in a mediating role.

This dissertation is arranged as a two-essay study. Essay 1 provides a literature review and model development for consumer engagement. Consumer engagement and related constructs, as well as measures of consumer engagement, are examined. Consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement are then investigated and categorized. Similarly, consumer engagement branding outcomes are reviewed and categorized. The conceptual framework approach provides a comprehensive model for consumer engagement from which future studies in this area can be generated. A version of Essay 1 has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal and is in the publication process.

Essay 2 is a model testing study built on the literature review provided in Essay 1 and is based on the uses and gratifications theoretical perspective. In this essay, social media dispositions, namely social media information sharing and social media trust, are considered as antecedents to consumer engagement. Social media goals, including social media information seeking and social media trust, are also considered in their association to consumer engagement. Consumer engagement plays a mediating role from social media dispositions and social media goals to brand engagement. Brand engagement in this model follows a sequential pathway from cognitive and emotional to behavioral via brand involvement and brand advocacy.

The two-essay approach in this dissertation provides a contextual background for studies in consumer engagement with a comprehensive conceptual framework. Testing the model developed in Essay 2 based on the consumer engagement literature presented in Essay 1 offers insights into social media marketing. Both essays add to the body of literature in consumer engagement fostering future research studies.
Essay 1: Review of the Online Consumer Engagement Literature: Consumer Antecedents, Measures, and Branding Consequences

Consumer engagement has been described as the interaction and relationship amongst consumers as well as between consumers and brands (Hollebeek, 2011a). Studying consumer engagement in the context of digital marketing enhances the research associated with this line of inquiry given the multiplicity of connections and global presence of social media. Consumer engagement is multi-dimensional with various aspects of engagement expressed as distinguishable constructs, including online customer engagement (Hinson, Boateng, Renner, & Kosiba, 2019; Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019), consumer brand engagement (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019; Florenthal, 2019), social media engagement (Dessart, 2017), and brand community engagement (Baldus, Voorhees, & Calantone, 2015), to name a few. This essay develops a consumer–brand engagement framework examining consumer factors that act as antecedents as well as branding relational outcomes that result as consequences of consumer engagement.

Overview

The growth of digital marketing platforms and user dynamics have greatly impacted how consumer–brand engagement is created, enhanced, and sustained (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019). Brand engagement models have traditionally viewed customers as passive recipients of information (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Marketers traditionally created consumer engagement through varied outward communication flows, including advertising, public relations, direct marketing, personal selling, and other seller-directed content (Ots & Nyilasy, 2015). More recently, social media platforms have placed customer-to-customer communications at the nexus of brand acceptance and engagement (Dahl, D’Alessandro, Peltier, & Swan, 2018; Sreejesh, Sarkar, Sarkar, Eshghi, & Anusree, 2018). Information flows have thus transitioned
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from at-arms-length communication processes to interactive processes in which consumers access and share information from a multitude of digital sources (Dahl, Milne, & Peltier, 2019). Of particular interest in the academic community is how brand relationships are created and maintained through multiple customer touchpoints and information flows ranging from marketer-generated to consumer-generated content (Kucharska, 2019; Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019).

Scope and Importance of the Study

Most businesses (87%) invest in knowing more about their customers and their social media behavior (Stelzner, 2018). Brands post content online; however, consumers also make posts about their perceptions of products and services, experiences, and evaluation of firm performance. U.S. consumers frequently post user-generated content (UGC) every week, including 59% of WhatsApp users, 53% of Facebook users, and 48% of Snapchat users (Audience Project, 2019). Such UGC commonly includes feedback about brands, with 72% of consumers posting a product rating or review within the last year (Ipsos, 2018) and consumers expecting an average of 112 reviews to trust the product (Salsify, 2019). Consumers also increasingly rely on social influencers, individuals compensated for their perspectives, which gives brands some control over the content (Florenthal, 2019; Hughes, Swaminathan, & Brooks, 2019). Replication of online content without control is considered viral and can have positive or negative brand effects (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Firms that choose not to engage or provide only one-way communication risk lost opportunity and potentially negative feedback. Alternatively, firms can gain consumer insight from feedback posted online (Agnihotri, Kothandaraman, Kashyap, & Singh, 2012). Consumers can become content cocreators, offering value for firms and other consumers. As a consequence, a comprehensive marketing strategy now includes reaching and engaging customers through
social media as one of many touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; R. J.-H. Wang, 2020). This essay categorizes consumer factor antecedents and consequential branding outcomes of consumer engagement from prior studies as well as future research needs to provide a comprehensive overview of consumer engagement and brand engagement research.

Although firm and consumer utilization of social media is extensive, it is not clear whether it has a significant return on investment (Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016; Moro & Rita, 2018; Rasool et al., 2020). Despite marketers’ efforts to leverage social media technologies, marketers must acknowledge that the social web was created not as a marketing tool but as a way to bring people together through collective conversational webs (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). Marketers are beginning to realize that consumers may see brand messages as intrusive, irritating, and inauthentic (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Logan, Bright, & Gangadharbatla, 2012). Social media has thus shifted from a marketing-empowered technology to one that increasingly is a consumer-empowered channel, often without the permission of the firms involved (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011).

A growing consensus exists that consumer engagement is enhanced when firms and consumers are aligned regarding the nature and scope of the messages they create and share (Hinson et al., 2019). Despite this belief, few conceptual frameworks exist that investigate the myriad of consumer factors that impact consumer engagement activities. Given this dearth, researchers have called for comprehensive frameworks that offer insights into how consumer factors serve as antecedents to consumer engagement (Barger, Peltier, & Schultz, 2016; Florenthal, 2019; Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017). These authors further suggest that the consequences of consumer engagement with the firm merit consideration, particularly noting branding factors as a relevant stream of inquiry.
Problem statements. The first problem is that studies regarding antecedent consumer factors to consumer engagement are numerous and disjointed. Results regarding particular antecedent factors are mixed or contradictory (John, Emrich, Gupta, & Norton, 2017; VanMeter, Syrdal, Powell-Mantel, Grisaffe, & Nesson, 2018) with an inconsistent number of dimensions considered (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Providing clarity regarding the scope and dimensionality of antecedent consumer factors is needed.

The second problem is that research on branding outcomes related to consumer engagement is unstructured and in some cases contradictory. Some studies have branding factors as antecedents while others reverse the relationship with branding factors as outcomes. For example, Gligor, Bozkurt, and Russo (2019), Loureiro, Gorgus, and Kaufmann (2017), as well as Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) found brand involvement as an antecedent to consumer engagement, whereas Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) and Brodie, Ilić, Jurić, and Hollebeek (2013) noted brand involvement as an outcome. A categorization of branding outcomes will provide a basis for future studies in this area.

The third problem is that measures of consumer engagement are not consistent in that they range from one (Simon & Tossan, 2018) to several dimensions of the construct (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018; V. Kumar & Pansari, 2016). This inconsistency in the research should be addressed to provide more meaningful insights for social media marketers. A first step is to categorize the scales measuring consumer engagement considering the dimensions addressed in each.

Research objectives. Prior studies have listed a summary of research in consumer engagement, noting antecedent factors (Florenthal, 2019). However, none have considered such factors in relation to each other and consumer engagement. The first research objective of this
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ey essay is to provide a categorization of antecedent consumer factors associated with consumer engagement from which future studies can be generated.

Similarly, one can find research that highlights branding antecedents to consumer engagement (Gómez, Lopez, & Molina, 2019) as well as individual branding outcomes (Chahal, Wirtz, & Verma, 2019). Not found in the literature is a categorization of consumer engagement branding outcomes and their relationship to each other. Therefore, the second research objective in this study is to provide a categorization of consumer engagement branding outcomes.

Measures of consumer engagement are often premised on the scale developed by Hollebeek et al. (2014) however the affective, cognitive, and behavioral approach has been called into question (Obilo, Chefor, & Saleh, 2020). The third research objective is to document and contrast measures of consumer engagement.

**Research questions.** This essay seeks to answer three research questions. The first research question is, what is the relationship between various consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement and consumer engagement? In this essay, consumer factor categories include consumer status, consumer disposition, personality trait, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and cultural dimension.

The second research question is, what is the relationship between consumer engagement and various branding relational outcomes of consumer engagement? In this essay, branding categories include brand status, brand disposition, brand attribute, brand connection, brand affirmation, and brand aversion.

Measures of consumer engagement capture one to several dimensions with a focus on affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements. Measures range from attitudes to feelings and actions. This leads to the third research question which is, how do scales measuring consumer
engagement differ regarding scope, dimensionality, and comprehensiveness? In this essay, consumer engagement measures have one or more scales rather than individual survey items.

**Contribution to Theory and Practice**

This essay contributes to the literature by digging deeper into our understanding of consumer factors that lead to consumer engagement and the resultant brand relational outcomes of consumer engagement. Prior research has investigated brand-based initiatives (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Labrecque, Swani, & Stephen, 2020; Tellis, MacInnis, Tirunillai, & Zhang, 2019), branding factors, (Meire, Hewett, Ballings, Kumar, & Van den Poel, 2019; Rabbanee, Roy, & Spence, 2020), and conceptual considerations for future studies regarding consumer engagement (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Prior studies have also focused on consumer engagement as an antecedent or mediator (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019; Molinillo, Anaya-Sánchez, & Liébana-Cabanillas, 2020; Rather, 2019). There still remains a gap in the literature regarding antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in categorization, relationships, and practical implications.

**Organization of Essay 1**

The essay first defines consumer engagement and its key dimensions based on the existing literature. Next, a discussion of consumer factors within a consumer–brand engagement framework, as shown in Figure 1, is followed by a section that addresses brand relational outcomes of consumer engagement. The essay then reviews existing measures of consumer engagement, with a summary of quantitative scale measures in Table 1. Finally, the essay concludes with suggested future research opportunities to explore.
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Current Research

Re-examining Consumer Engagement

Marketing researchers continue to define and operationalize the consumer engagement construct in diverse ways (Barger et al., 2016). The continued growth of consumer cocreation, brand activation experiences, and shifts in how social media platforms publicly display consumer engagement metrics (i.e., the removal of likes on certain platforms) necessitate a re-examination of how consumer engagement is defined and operationalized. Schultz and Peltier (2013) noted a strong connection between consumer engagement and consumer–brand relational aspects that remains a consistent theme in the literature and one that requires a closer examination. Hollebeek et al. (2014) considered consumer engagement in light of consumer-brand relational aspects, including affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements. Dessart (2017) made the important distinction that consumers may exhibit the three engagement dimensions (affective, cognitive, and behavioral) in relationship to either a brand (consumer-to-brand) or community (consumer-to-consumer) focus, with community engagement leading to enhanced brand engagement. Based on a comprehensive review, in this essay consumer engagement is defined and operationalized as a multi-dimensional consumer–brand relational construct incorporating affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements of consumer–brand interactions that may originate from consumer-to-consumer or brand-generated experiences.

Most of the literature has considered consumer engagement from a behavioral perspective that encompasses either passive elements such as content consumption (i.e., following, learning, reading, watching), or more active behaviors such as contribution (i.e., reacting, commenting, sharing) and creation (i.e., posting UGC). For example, in their review, Barger et al. (2016) operationalized consumer engagement as consumers’ contributions and
creation interactions with brand-related social media content. Meanwhile, Dessart et al. (2016) and Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016) considered similar behavioral elements, while also including passive consumption of brand content (i.e., reading or watching brand-related posts or videos) and active cocreation efforts involving sharing ideas with the brand, actively learning about the brand, or endorsing the brand via UGC. Marketing practitioners and social media platforms have similarly focused on behavioral interactions associated with likes, comments, and sharing when reporting online consumer engagement metrics.

While marketing practitioners have primarily continued to investigate consumer engagement in light of consumer–brand behavioral interactions, the academic has literature considered consumer engagement as a multi-dimensional construct that also encompasses psychological components of emotions and cognitions (Brodie et al., 2013; Carlson, Gudergan, Gelhard, & Rahman, 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Researchers have included positive emotional states (i.e., enjoyment, enthusiasm, and social connection) and cognitive dimensions (i.e., absorption, attention, and cognitive processing) when examining consumer engagement (Dessart, 2017; Dessart et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, & Morgan, 2014) in combination with some of the behavioral components. Loureiro et al. (2017) showed that affective and behavioral states are particularly important components of online consumer brand engagement that lead to positive brand outcomes. In a later section, the essay will elaborate on the operationalization and common scales used in measuring consumer–brand engagement, including the affective, cognitive, and behavioral states.

Since the conceptualization of the consumer engagement framework by Barger et al. (2016), research attention has explored a variety of the proposed dimensions. Much of this attention has focused on brand, product, content, and social media factors, while comprehensive
research on consumer factor antecedents remains lacking. In this essay, attention is more narrowly focused on consumer factors that drive consumer–brand interactions and the resultant brand relational consequences. Figure 1 conceptualizes the consumer–brand relational engagement framework to provide structure for further research on the consumer–brand relational elements. Central to this framework is a more robust perspective of consumer engagement, including the previously explored affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions.

The framework focuses on consumer factors investigated in the literature that drive online consumer engagement; in this essay, these are categorized as consumer status, consumer disposition, personality trait, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and cultural dimension. Brand outcomes identify the consumer–brand relational consequences of consumer engagement, further categorized into status, disposition, attribute, connection, affirmation, and aversion. The following sections of this essay review the literature on these consumer factor antecedents and psychological brand consequences, respectively.
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**Figure 1.** Consumer–brand relational engagement framework
Consumer Factors as Antecedents to Consumer Engagement

An extensive review of the literature uncovered many consumer factors that may act as antecedents to consumer engagement. A more thorough understanding of consumer factors may help firms more effectively target consumer segments that have the potential to engage with brands online. The framework developed in this essay is based on an investigation of the literature that examines consumer factors that drive online consumer engagement. Figure 1 organizes these factors into six categories: consumer status, consumer disposition, personality trait, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and cultural dimensions. The six categories of consumer factors identified in the literature are discussed in the following sections.

**Consumer status.** The marketing literature has explored three factors related to consumer status and consumer engagement, including opinion leader status, organic or social influencer status, and popularity.

*Opinion leader status.* Aleahmad, Karisani, Rahgozar, and Oroumchian (2016) defined opinion leaders as “those who are able to shape the minds and thoughts of other people in their society” (p. 659). Risselada, Verhoef, and Bijmolt (2016) found that self-reported opinion leaders think that they affect the behavior of others; however, this is more often the case only among others with whom they have strong social ties. Similarly, Aleahmad et al. (2016) indicate that self-reported opinion leaders exhibit higher levels of consumer engagement. However, they also suggested that opinion leadership may only indicate confidence, and opinion leaders primarily foster consumer engagement among their close social network connections (Aleahmad et al., 2016).

*Organic or social influencer.* Litterio, Nantes, Larrosa, and Gómez (2017) defined organic influencers as unpaid online influencers who emerge naturally and are motivated by the
enjoyment of interaction. Conversely, social influencers are compensated for their online presence and represent a more complex social dynamic. Forbes and Vespoli (2013) found that online recommendations from uncompensated organic influencers encourage consumer engagement. Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Guidry Moulard (2018) suggested social influencers perceive their role as a form of product placement and that brand encroachment may compromise social influencer authenticity. Even though social influencers encourage consumer engagement, they also desire to be authentic regardless of remuneration. Authenticity includes passionate authenticity reflecting sincere intrinsic motivation (Moulard, Raggio, & Folse, 2016) and transparent authenticity where the social influencer explicitly discloses the contractual terms of the brand relationship (Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, & Farrelly, 2014). As influencer marketing continues to grow, the notion of authenticity within UGC remains an important area of investigation as it relates to consumer engagement and brand-relational elements.

**Popularity.** Zywica and Danowski (2008) investigated the influence of popularity on online consumer engagement. Their research suggests that popularity encompasses diverse elements of online and offline popularity, incorporating a more objective status indicator identified by the number of Facebook friends (online popularity), along with a user-defined subjective notion of popularity (offline popularity). Grounded in social enhancement theory and the Matthew effect, Zywica and Danowski (2008) concluded that more sociable and higher self-esteem consumers are more popular and engage more online than those who are less popular.

**Consumer disposition.** Researchers have considered the influence of six consumer dispositions on consumer engagement. What follows is a discussion of the six dispositions, namely, self-esteem, trust, altruism, involvement, attachment to social media (ASM), and self–brand congruence.
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**Self-esteem.** Zywica and Danowski (2008) drew upon protection enhancement theory to examine self-esteem’s influence on consumer engagement; consistent with the protection-enhancement hypothesis, they found that motivation for using Facebook varied based on self-esteem levels. Facebook users with high self-esteem are social status seekers, while those with low self-esteem engage online to increase their social acceptance. Zywica and Danowski (2008) also determined that consumers with low self-esteem who have higher levels of online engagement strive to look more popular, view popularity as important, or engage more due to the comfort of being online as opposed to in-person. J. Kumar & Kumar (2020) found that brand community engagement is driven in part by self-esteem based benefits.

**Trust.** Based on uses and gratifications theory, Azar, Machado, Vacas-De-Carvalho, and Mendes (2016) examined trust as one of five consumer dispositions that motivate online consumer engagement. Azar et al. (2016) argued that when consumers place greater trust in brands protecting consumer privacy or place greater trust in UGC about brands, they are more likely to seek out and engage with brand-related content. Their typology of consumer engagement suggests that consumers with higher levels of trust feel safer to engage online. Generating trust among consumers has economic benefits via engagement and retention (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019). Consumer engagement may rely on diverse sources of trust, such as UGC, brand-generated content, and brand actions, among other aspects requiring examination.

**Altruism.** Altruism is a disposition to generously seek to help others (Mowen & Sujan, 2005). Marbach, Lages, and Nunan (2016) concluded that consumers with high levels of altruism are more inclined to engage online. Accordingly, one can assume that consumers with high altruism may be more likely to engage online as an organic influencer. Likelihood to engage is particularly high when the brand’s purpose or key message involves a cause that aligns with the
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consumer’s altruistic disposition (Dahl, Barber, & Peltier, 2019). Altruism has also been found to moderate the influence of customer outrage on consumer disengagement (Do, Rahman, & Robinson, 2019).

**Involvement.** Zaichkowsky (1985) described involvement as the degree to which consumers perceive the relevance of an object based on their inherent needs, values, and interests. Higher levels of consumer involvement are associated with higher levels of online consumer engagement (Vivek et al., 2012). Leckie, Nyadzayo, and Johnson (2016) found similar results in that involvement had a positive impact on the cognitive processing, affection, and activation dimensions of consumer engagement. Moreover, in the context of social media, Gómez et al. (2019) found a positive association between involvement and brand engagement.

**Attachment to social media.** VanMeter, Grisaffe, and Chonko (2015) examined ASM as a consumer disposition related to consumer engagement. Grounded in attachment theory, the researchers noted that ASM is not a subjective appraisal or attitude, rather ASM reflects the strength of a bond between a person and social media. The results demonstrate that a higher level of ASM is associated with higher consumer engagement. However, John et al. (2017) noted that consumer engagement measured by Facebook likes does not necessarily translate into meaningful offline behaviors. Yet VanMeter et al. (2018) found that ASM predicts meaningful online consumer engagement behaviors.

**Self–brand congruence.** Self–brand congruence refers to the fit between consumers self-concept and their brand image perceptions (N. J. De Vries & Carlson, 2014). Loureiro et al. (2017) showed that self–brand congruence positively influences online consumer engagement among Facebook users. Adhikari and Panda (2019) also found that self-brand image congruity is associated with consumer brand engagement. Consequently, brands may need to consider self-
congruency theory to fully activate consumer engagement and encourage consumers to participate in more active behaviors such as contribution and creation.

**Personality trait.** Prior research has examined various consumer personality traits and their relationship to consumer engagement. In this essay, personality traits are categorized into four factors, including conscientiousness, escapism or sensation seeking, extraverted personality or openness, and online interaction propensity.

**Conscientiousness.** Ross et al. (2009) considered conscientiousness as the degree to which one is organized, diligent, and scrupulous. They hypothesized conscientious students would be less likely to engage on Facebook; however, their results did not find a significant relationship. Similarly, Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) found that consumers with a higher level of conscientiousness had more connections online but did not have any higher level of engagement. The results suggest conscientiousness may have a stronger correlation with affective and cognitive dimensions of online consumer engagement than behavioral dimensions.

**Escapism or sensation seeking.** Escapism is a state of psychological immersion and absorption (Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004). Consumers exhibit escapism when they have a desire to use social media to escape from everyday concerns and responsibilities (Abrantes, Seabra, Lages, & Jayawardhena, 2013). Sensation seeking represents one form of escapism and is also known as novelty-seeking behavior (Farley & Cox, 1971). Abrantes et al. (2013) investigated escapism and consumer engagement using uses and gratifications theory, finding that escapism has a highly positive impact on online social interaction, and indirectly leads to electronic word of mouth (WOM). Meanwhile, S. S. J. Lin and Tsai (2002) demonstrated that high school students with higher levels of sensation seeking had higher online engagement.
Extroverted personality or openness. Extroverted personality refers to a person’s tendency to be sociable and to experience positive emotions (Butt & Phillips, 2008). Research on the relationship between extroversion and consumer engagement has been inconclusive. On the one hand, Kabadayi and Price (2014) showed that consumers with an extroverted personality are more likely to make posts online for the attention they receive from the broadcasting behavior. Ross et al. (2009) found extroversion associated with higher membership in Facebook groups, a passive form of consumer engagement. However, Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) found that extroversion did not necessarily correlate to higher online engagement. The conflicting results may suggest a complex relationship between extroversion and other consumer factors in motivating consumer engagement.

One such personality factor that might further explain extroversion’s relationship to consumer engagement is openness. Openness reflects an individual’s “dispositional inclination towards new or different intellectual and cultural experiences” (Woo et al., 2014, p. 29). Saef, Woo, Carpenter, & Tay (2018) found that openness has a positive association with online engagement behavior in the context of Facebook and the MyPersonality app. They also found partial support for an interaction effect between openness and extroversion. Marbach, Lages, Nunan, and Ekinci, (2019) also showed that openness is positively correlated with online consumer engagement.

Online interaction propensity. Online interaction propensity refers to an individual’s willingness to communicate with others (Wiertz & de Ruyter, 2007). Although consumers exhibit different levels of propensities to interact, online interaction propensity’s relationship to online consumer engagement is relatively unexplored (Dessart, 2017). Blazevic, Wiertz, Cotte, de Ruyter, and Keeling (2014) developed a scale to measure general online social interaction
propensity and demonstrated its explanatory power for online engagement and related behaviors. Likewise, Dessart (2017) showed online interaction propensity is associated with higher levels of Facebook community engagement and indirectly leads to higher brand engagement and other positive brand relationship outcomes.

**Intrinsic motivation.** Five consumer factors are explored in the consumer engagement literature under the intrinsic motivation category. This section discusses consumers’ intrinsic motivations via their need for closure, cognition, information, socialization, and social influence.

**Need for closure.** A need for closure is defined as “an individual’s desire for a firm to answer a question and an aversion toward ambiguity” (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996, p. 264). Amichai-Hamburger, Fine, & Goldstein (2004) examined the relationship between the need for closure and website interactivity via an experiment. When no time pressure existed, individuals with a low need for closure preferred a more interactive website, while those with a high need for closure preferred less interactivity. However, time pressure has a significant interaction effect that reverses the relationship and increases the desire for interactivity among consumers with a high need for closure. Consumers may seek closure online to help determine whether to purchase a brand (Sharifi, 2019) or in response to negative brand experiences (Kucuk, 2018). More research is necessary that explores how consumers’ need for closure impacts the different dimensions of consumer engagement, including across consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand interactions.

**Need for cognition.** The need for cognition is an intrinsic motivation that reflects an individual’s tendency to engage in and enjoy effortful cognitive endeavors or thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Individuals with a high need for cognition are curious (Olson, Camp, & Fuller, 1984), seek to acquire more information (Verplanken, Hazenberg, & Palenéwen, 1992), and have
a strong need for environmental control (E. P. Thompson, Chaiken, & Hazlewood, 1993). However, Amichai-Hamburger, Kaynar, and Fine (2007) found in their study assessing the need for cognition and online consumer engagement that participants with a high need for cognition did not necessarily interact more with websites. Consumers’ need for cognition has otherwise remained under researched in the context of social media and consumer–brand engagement.

**Need for information.** An individual’s need for information reflects a motivation to find content related to products and services, brands, events, or social opportunities (N. Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Consumers prefer receiving communications from brands they know, thus reducing the need for further information. Shao and Ross (2015) explored the relationship between the need for information and consumer engagement in a Facebook context. They found that the need for information is not only a primary motivation to initially engage online and join a Facebook brand page community; it is also an enduring motivation that explains a consumer’s involvement with a Facebook brand page and frequency of posting on the page. Similar results were found in other studies where need for information had a positive association with consumer engagement (Chahal & Rani, 2017; Nery, Sincorá, Brandão, & Carneiro, 2020).

**Need for socialization.** The need for socialization represents an individual’s need for social interaction and connection to family, friends, and other contacts (N. Park et al., 2009). N. Park et al. (2009) demonstrated that the need for socialization is a primary motivation for participating in Facebook groups. Similarly, Shao and Ross (2015) identified the need for socialization (along with a need for information) as a primary reason individuals initially join a Facebook brand page community. However, the need for socialization did not have the same enduring motivational effect on involvement and posting. Moreover, M. L. Cheung, Pires,
Rosenberger (2020) found that the interaction aspect of socialization was found to have positive influence on consumer brand engagement.

**Need for social influence.** A need for social influence differs from the need for socialization in that the former relates to “the approval and disapproval of others when consumers decide to adopt and use products” (Curran & Lennon, 2011, p. 24). A need for social influence represents a key intrinsic motivation among consumers who engage with brands via social media (Azar et al., 2016) or through social influencers (Hughes et al., 2019). Given the need for social approval, individuals with a high need for social influence are likely to engage with brands that have positive WOM from opinion leaders, organic or social influencers, or UGC from strong-tie connections. Brands with high levels of positive consumer-to-consumer interaction are thus most likely to benefit from a consumer’s need for social influence.

**Extrinsic motivation.** Prior literature has explored three extrinsic motivational factors and their influence on consumer engagement, including entertainment, money, and rewards.

**Entertainment.** Many people use social media for enjoyment and relaxation (Rohm, Kaltcheva, & Milne, 2013; Shu & Chuang, 2011); this is one manner in which consumers exhibit escapism (Azar et al., 2016). Consumers frequently engage online with brands as a source of entertainment by seeking out videos and other entertaining brand content (Rohm et al., 2013). Shao and Ross's (2015) study indicated that entertainment is a key reason why consumers stay engaged with a brand’s Facebook page after initially following. Likewise, Azar et al. (2016) identified delivering entertaining content that is easy to share as critical to driving brand engagement. Furthermore, Grover and Kar (2020) found that consumer engagement increases with brand messages providing a mix of informational, social, and entertainment value. Brands
thus need to consider developing entertaining content and brand experiences to facilitate ongoing consumer engagement.

**Money.** Money can serve as an extrinsic motivator for consumers to engage online. Shi and Wojnicki (2014) found that consumer engagement increases when consumers are extrinsically motivated by monetary benefits, particularly when an individual is considered an opinion leader. Likewise, social influencers often create brand-related UGC for remuneration (Audrezet et al., 2018). However, the optimal level of compensation is unclear, and non-monetary incentives may be just as effective, especially given consumers’ growing concerns with influencer authenticity.

**Rewards.** Non-monetary rewards may include participating in contests or games, saving time, receiving free products, or other special offers (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). Baldus et al. (2015) delineated rewards along two dimensions, namely a utilitarian dimension including deals or incentives, merchandise, and prizes and a hedonic dimension characterized by fun, enjoyment, and friendship. Azar et al. (2016) also found that higher rewards as extrinsic motivation produced higher online brand engagement.

**Cultural dimension.** Prior research has identified four cultural dimensions as potentially important to consumer engagement, including individualism, collectivism, idiocentrism, and allocentrism. Cultural dimensions of a society have been explored in the marketing literature using Hofstede's (1980) model and the GLOBE model (House, 2004). Hollebeek (2018) recommended research investigating the relationships between idiocentrism and allocentrism and engagement in particular. Idiocentrism reflects the likelihood of using individual goals to determine behavior regardless of cultural setting. Consumers who score high on this dimension emphasize the values of a comfortable life, competition, pleasure, and social recognition.
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(Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985) and thus may be more likely to exhibit higher levels of consumer engagement. Allocentrism describes an individual’s attempt to make relationships more intimate regardless of cultural setting (Triandis, 2001). Consumers who are high on this dimension value cooperation, equality, and honesty (Triandis et al., 1985).

The cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism may also influence consumer engagement. High levels of individualism exist in societies where people are independent of their in-group goals and use their attitude and not group norms to dictate behavior (Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011). In contrast, a collectivist society involves highly interdependent people within their in-groups that give priority to in-group goals and norms and behave in a communal way (M. S. Clark & Mills, 1979). How these dimensions affect online consumer engagement merits further investigation to help brands better manage increasingly global digital marketing strategies (Hollebeek, 2018) and cultural brand engagement (Vredeveld & Coulter, 2019).

The marketing literature has investigated the influence of these outlined consumer factors (also shown in Figure 1) on consumer engagement to varying degrees. In particular, this review suggests there is a lack of comprehensive studies that integrate the various consumer factors to understand their joint effects. Moreover, a more comprehensive understanding of each factor will enhance the consumer engagement literature. Aligning consumer factors with appropriate measures of affective, cognitive, and behavioral consumer engagement can more clearly quantify the influence of each. Firms would also benefit from knowing the consequential branding factors of consumer engagement. The next section elaborates on brand outcome findings to date, with a focus on areas meriting further investigation.
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Brand Relational Outcomes of Consumer Engagement

Six categories of branding outcomes are evident in the literature regarding possible consequences of online consumer engagement. Each of the six categories from Figure 1 is discussed in the next section, including brand status, brand disposition, brand attribute, brand connection, brand affirmation, and brand aversion.

**Brand status.** Prior studies examining consumer–brand relational outcomes have suggested six brand status designations as consequences of consumer engagement. Specifically, brand awareness; brand acceptance; brand commitment, brand loyalty or brand tribalism; brand preference; brand salience; and brand usage intent.

**Brand awareness.** Brand awareness is a consumer’s recognition and recall of a brand (D. A. Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness also refers to the strength of the brand presence in memory such that a consumer can identify the brand under different conditions (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Seo and Park (2018) examined consumer engagement in the airline industry, finding that social media consumer engagement has positive effects on brand awareness.

**Brand acceptance.** Brand acceptance is a consumer’s interest in trying new products under the brand name and a willingness to accept wrongdoing by the brand (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007). Brand acceptance differs from brand advocacy in that acceptance is a passive stance, whereas advocacy assumes an active role. Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony (2014) demonstrated that online consumer engagement leads to brand acceptance, particularly when the brand is congruent with a consumer’s self-identity.

**Brand commitment, loyalty, or tribalism.** Brand commitment differs from brand loyalty in that loyalty reflects behavior, whereas commitment is an attitude (Warrington & Shim, 2000). Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) defined brand tribalism as “a network of societal micro-groups
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in which individuals share strong emotional links, a common subculture and a vision of life” (p. 316). Raïes, Mühlbacher, and Gavard-Perret (2015) suggested that with brand commitment, there is an emotional attachment, a fear of loss, and a social obligation to remain with the brand. Consumers with higher brand commitment have more information, greater engagement, and are less likely to act on outside inducements to switch brands (B. Choi & Ahluwalia, 2013). Some online brand communities are sponsored by firms using social media, whereas others are initiated and maintained by consumers without firm management.

Brand tribes are more loosely constructed than brand communities and may not be built around a brand, and therefore can more readily dissolve (Cova & Cova, 2002). Research has indicated that engaging in a company-affiliated online brand community creates greater satisfaction with the brand (M. Clark, Black, & Judson, 2017) as well as enhanced connection and commitment (Brodie et al., 2013). Brand loyalty involves a commitment beyond repurchase intention (Beerli, Martín, & Quintana, 2004). Firms can engage consumers in online interactions that generate positive consumer emotions, create an emotional bond with the brand, and result in brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998; Veloutsou, 2015). For example, N. J. De Vries and Carlson (2014) demonstrated an association between online consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Other studies using social media have found similar results (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019; Kaur, Paruthi, Islam, & Hollebeek, 2020; Rather, 2019).

**Brand preference.** Brand preference represent the extent to which a customer favors one brand versus a competing brand (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003) established via relationship building (X. Jin & Weber, 2013) or based on actual or anticipated life changes or events (Mathur, Moschis, & Lee, 2003). Therefore, brand preference can be compromised if the experience is negative or stressful, thus making the brand an unpleasant reminder of the life
situation. Online consumer engagement may mitigate this phenomenon by providing emotional support and a sense of community.

**Brand salience.** Vieceli and Shaw (2010) defined brand salience as “the probability that a brand will be recalled early in a consumer’s consideration set, under a variety of situations and via a variety of stimuli, to the exclusion of competing brands” (p. 1220). Sometimes used synonymously with brand awareness and brand attitude, brand salience is conceptually unique because it incorporates consumer memory longevity as well as a positive influence on the actual brand selection (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2004). Although the concept of brand salience has been further developed through recall accuracy (Abdellah-Kilani & Zorai, 2019), the association with online consumer engagement remains relatively unexamined.

**Brand usage intent.** Dwivedi (2015) asserted that repeat buying while resisting brand switching is characteristic of consumer intention to use a particular brand. The link from consumer engagement to brand usage intent is more explored than the other brand status factors. Hollebeek et al. (2014) demonstrated brand usage intent is a branding outcome of consumer brand engagement in a LinkedIn user context. Fang (2017) found that consumer engagement is positively related to brand repurchase intention in the context of branded apps. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly (2018) also demonstrated a link between consumer brand engagement and brand usage intent using social exchange theory.

**Brand disposition.** Five outcomes related to brand disposition have been investigated in relation to consumer engagement, including brand attitude, brand authenticity, brand personality, brand trust, and brand warmth.

**Brand attitude.** Zeithaml (1988) described brand attitude as a consumer’s overall evaluation of a brand. Research has shown mixed results of the effect online consumer
engagement has on brand attitude. For example, consumer engagement had a positive influence on brand attitude in the context of advergames (Tuten & Ashley, 2016), suggesting that consumers who participate in branded entertainment online transfer the positive experience to the brand. However, Z. Li and Li (2014) found that increases in consumer engagement are not reflected in increases in brand attitude evaluation in computer-mediated communication environments. The mixed results require further investigation to clarify the relationship between consumer engagement and brand attitude.

**Brand authenticity.** Napoli et al. (2014) defined brand authenticity as “a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by consumers” (p. 1091). Authentic brands are perceived as being honest, real, and sincere (Alexander, 2009) beyond mere impression management (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). Grounded in self-determination theory and attribution theory, the research by Moulard et al. (2016) suggests that consumers perceive brands as having authenticity when there is a true passion for the brand’s business, and the purpose does not simply fulfill consumers’ needs and wants. The study by Guèvremont and Grohmann (2016) also found that in a social exclusion context, engaged consumers form a stronger emotional connection with an authentic brand. Moreover, Rosado-Pinto, Loureiro, and Bilro (2020) found that consumers are more likely to spread positive WOM based on brand authenticity than brand love.

**Brand personality.** Brand personality theory asserts that consumers construct a set of trait inferences based on repeated observations of the brand (Fournier, 1998), resulting in associating a set of human characteristics with a brand (J. L. Aaker, 1997). The way consumers perceive a brand’s personality is highly influenced by their own self-concept (Christodouides, Jevons, & Bonhomme, 2012). The interpretation of brand meaning is heightened online because social
connections with anthropomorphized agents can be very powerful when human connection is lacking (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). Although brand personality fosters brand engagement (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2012), consumer engagement may also resonate with brand personality.

**Brand trust.** Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined brand trust as “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (p. 82). Jakic, Wagner, and Meyer (2017) demonstrated that online consumer engagement leads to brand trust when the language used by the brand reflects perceived interaction effort, benevolence, and interaction quality. However, mixed results between consumer engagement and brand trust have been shown in the context of an online brand community. Although Laroche, Habibi, Richard, and Sankaranarayanan (2012) did not find support for an association between consumer engagement and brand trust in online brand communities, Liu, Lee, Liu, and Chen (2018) found that consumer engagement is positively associated with brand trust.

**Brand warmth.** Brand warmth includes notions of helpfulness, sincerity, friendliness, and trustworthiness (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012). The brand warmth dimension is positioned against brand competence which reflects efficiency, intelligence, conscientiousness, and skill. Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, and Sen (2012) found an association between brand warmth and consumer–brand identification. Brands can encourage online consumer endorsement of the brand via brand warmth (Bernritter, Verlegh, & Smit, 2016), and consumer engagement is associated with brand warmth (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015; Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012).
**Brand attribute.** Four outcomes representing brand attributes have been considered in the literature regarding the effect of consumer engagement, including brand association, brand equity, brand image, and brand satisfaction.

**Brand association.** Brand associations represent any ideas linked in memory to a brand (D. A. Aaker, 1991) that help create positive attitudes and a unique brand position (Low & Lamb, 2000). Moreover, consumers may use brand associations as a link to a consumer’s mental representation of self (Kemp, Childers, & Williams, 2012). Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel (2013) indicated consumer engagement including frequency and intensity is positively related with brand association.

**Brand equity.** Brand equity is “the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand” (Keller, 2003, p. 60). Brand equity combines brand awareness and brand image attitudes to form a unique value proposition in consumers’ memories (Seo & Park, 2018). Hollebeek et al. (2014) suggested that brand equity, customer retention, and brand loyalty are all consequences of consumer brand engagement.

**Brand image.** Brand image is the general perception of a brand situated in a consumer’s memory (Keller, 1993). Research regarding the association between brand image and consumer engagement has shown a potential circular relationship. For example Islam and Rahman (2016) found that brand image influences consumer engagement, while Seo and Park (2018) found social media consumer engagement has positive effects on brand image.

**Brand satisfaction.** Oliver (1993) described brand satisfaction as the relationship between consumers’ expectations and product performance. Brand satisfaction is related to, but distinct from brand experience, brand loyalty, and brand trust (de Oliveira Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio, & Pinto, 2018). Research has indicated brand satisfaction is a consequence of brand
community engagement (M. Clark et al., 2017), consumer engagement (Loureiro et al., 2017), and consumer-brand engagement (Kujur & Singh, 2020).

**Brand connection.** In this section five brand connection outcomes outlined in prior studies are examined as they relate to consumer engagement. The brand connections include brand attachment, brand experience, brand intimacy, brand involvement, and self-brand connection.

**Brand attachment.** Brand attachment involves the bond uniting consumers and their feelings categorized as affection, passion, and connection, toward a specific brand (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Consumers with strong brand attachment are more likely to sacrifice personal resources such as time, money, energy, and reputation to maintain the brand relationship (C. W. Park, Macinnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). Hudson et al. (2015) demonstrated that online consumer engagement with the brand has a positive influence on emotional attachment with the brand. Based on self-extension theory, Rabbanee et al. (2020) also showed brand attachment is positively associated with consumer engagement behaviors.

**Brand experience.** Brand experience includes “specific sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses triggered by specific brand-related stimuli” (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009, p. 53). Online brand experience includes emotional as well as functional elements, with the former contributing to developing an online brand relationship (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). Online brand experience is positive when the value of good consumer engagement is greater than the value of negative consumer engagement (Christodoulides, De Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu, & Abimbola, 2006). Although research on the consequences of brand experience is notable, antecedent elements including consumer engagement are not as readily understood (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2018).
Brand intimacy. Brand intimacy reflects the situation where a consumer has detailed knowledge and finds special meaning in a brand (Fournier, 1998). Simon and Tossan (2018) introduced the concept of brand–consumer social sharing value, where brand intimacy is a contributing component. Turri, Smith, and Kemp (2013) suggested that engaging with consumers online by being responsive and soliciting feedback builds brand intimacy. Moreover, Read, Robertson, McQuilken, and Ferdous (2019) found an association between consumer engagement and brand intimacy on Twitter.

Brand involvement. Brand involvement represents a consumer’s perceived relevance of the brand based on inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). While Gómez et al. (2019) suggested brand involvement acts as an antecedent that positively influences online consumer engagement, others have explored brand involvement as an outcome of consumer engagement. Vivek et al. (2012) showed a link from consumer involvement to consumer engagement that results in brand involvement. Likewise, Hollebeek et al. (2014) showed that consumer engagement leads to brand involvement.

Self-brand connection. Escalas and Bettman (2003) defined self–brand connections as “the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept” (p. 340). Consumers with a higher self–brand connection have higher memory links, pay more attention to incidental brand exposure, and display higher preference for products featuring the brand logo (Sprott, Czellar, & Spangenberg, 2009). Consumer engagement has a positive effect on self-brand connection (Hollebeek et al., 2014), and self–brand connection is reinforced as consumers actively engage online (Harrigan et al., 2018). Moreover, J. Kumar and Kumar (2020) found that brand community engagement is positively associated with brand community commitment and further with brand loyalty.
**Brand affirmation.** Three categories investigated in the literature are developed as brand affirmation consequences resulting from consumer engagement, including brand advocacy, brand fidelity, and brand love.

**Brand advocacy.** Consumers who are passionate about the brand and actively recommend it to others are considered brand advocates (Awad & Abdel Fatah, 2015). Consumers actively engaged online with a brand are more likely to see the brand as a reflection of who they are as individuals and thus make a personal association that leads to brand advocacy (Kemp et al., 2012). Brand advocates tend to exclusively repurchase a brand and outwardly demonstrate commitment to the brand that may influence others to have positive brand perceptions (Roy, Eshghi, & Quazi, 2014). Brands that delight loyal consumers foster engagement and advocacy (Sashi, Brynildsen, & Bilgihan, 2019).

**Brand fidelity.** Brand fidelity considers the consumer’s faithfulness to a brand partner demonstrated by an aggregate of behaviors and cognitions that maintain relationship stability and durability (Grace, Ross, & King, 2018). Differing from brand loyalty that is based on activity and brand love that is emotional in nature, brand fidelity is characterized by interdependence, exclusivity, and sustainability. Consiglio, Kupor, Gino, and Norton (2018) suggested that although consumers are excited when competing brands provide novel features, social influence, or promotional offers, consumers tend to maintain brand fidelity to the preferred brand.

**Brand love.** Brand love is defined as “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). The consequences of brand love have practical importance for firms, including positive WOM, resistance to negative information, and willingness to pay a price premium (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Loureiro et al. (2017) used interdependence theory and self-congruency theory
to demonstrate that online brand engagement is positively associated with brand love. Similarly, Wallace et al. (2014) found that consumer engagement is associated with brand love, particularly for consumers where the brand resonates with their personal identity.

**Brand aversion.** Brand aversion represents the final brand relational outcome category identified as possible negative and unintended consequences of consumer engagement. The brand aversion factors include brand avoidance or brand switching, brand opposition or brand hate, and brand retaliation or brand sabotage.

**Brand avoidance or switching.** Brand avoidance is defined as “the incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand” (M. S. W. Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009, p. 170). Brand switching is the manifestation of feeling disengaged or disgusted with a brand to the point where another brand is favored (C. W. Park, Eisingerich, & Park, 2013). Fetscherin (2019) contended that brand switching differs from brand avoidance in that brand switching assumes the consumer made a purchase and then became a non-consumer of the brand, whereas brand avoidance characterizes a consumer who never made a purchase. M. S. W. Lee et al. (2009) identified brand avoidance as a multi-dimensional construct, including experiential, identity, moral, and deficit-value brand avoidance. Brand avoidance increases over time when consumer engagement goes unattended by the firm, particularly with brand loyal customers (Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009). Similarly, Jayasimha, Chaudhary, and Chauhan (2017) demonstrated that brand avoidance follows from ineffective online consumer engagement. Brands must therefore also practice consumer online engagement to prevent brand avoidance.

**Brand opposition or hate.** Brand hate is defined as “a psychological state whereby a consumer forms intense negative emotions and detachment towards brands that perform poorly and give consumers bad and painful experiences on both individual and social levels” (Kucuk,
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

2019, p. 20). Brand hate occurs when negative experiences of a brand are highlighted (Hegner, Fetscherin, & van Delzen, 2017), which can occur via UGC or other consumer–brand online interactions. For example, brands can create brand hate via ineffective handling of product or service failure complaints or by taking a stand on moral or social issues inconsistent with consumer sentiment (Kucuk, 2018). Similarly, brand opposition is based on brand disidentification, characterized by negative WOM, and involves consumers publicly demonstrating how the brand and its symbolic aspects have been rejected (Wolter, Brach, Cronin, & Bonn, 2016). Cova and White (2010) found that when consumers feel exploited or taken advantage of in a consumer engagement context, it can lead to brands being criticized or boycotted as a means for consumers to demonstrate their opposition.

Brand retaliation or sabotage. Brand retaliation is a punishment behavior towards the brand (Funches, Markley, & Davis, 2009). The stronger the consumer–brand relationship, the harsher the criticism or retaliation towards the brand (A. R. Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2011). Silva, Broilo, Espartel, and Basso (2017) used game theory and altruistic punishment to examine consumer engagement and brand retaliation. Their results showed that consumers are more likely to retaliate to a service failure when they sense a perceived injustice, especially when the cost to do so is low. However research by Fetscherin (2019) found that when consumers become sufficiently angry, they are willing to make a financial sacrifice to hurt the brand. Although similar, brand sabotage differs from retaliation in that the dominant consumer motivation in sabotage is to harm the brand as opposed to restoring the brand relationship (Kähr, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, & Hoyer, 2016). Thomson, Whelan, and Johnson (2012) noted that fearful consumers are more likely to act out against the brand after the brand relationship ends because they have
made a greater investment in the brand relationship. Thus, consumers with higher brand engagement also have a greater potential to engage in brand sabotage.

**Measuring Consumer Engagement**

Researchers have operationalized consumer engagement in many ways. Studies have focused on customer engagement, specifying that there is an interaction between the customer and the brand involving a psychological process (Bowden, 2009; Kaltcheva, Patino, Laric, Pitta, & Imparato, 2014; Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Research has extended the terminology investigating consumer engagement, which considers interacting with consumers more broadly and on an individual level (Roberts & Alpert, 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010).

While some studies have focused solely on consumer engagement, others have examined the notion of using a brand–consumer relationship. Brand engagement has been defined as the level of a consumer’s “cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions” (Hollebeek, 2011a, p. 555). Brand engagement can be positive or negative (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014) and has been examined as emotional arousal transitioning from functional, to hedonic, to symbolic (Franzak, Makarem, & Jae, 2014). Extending this line of inquiry, Hollebeek et al. (2014) measured engagement with specific brands, identifying the construct as consumer–brand engagement. Their research grew out of prior studies focused on brand engagement, yet not with specific consumer and specific brand identities under investigation (Hollebeek, 2011a; Sprott et al., 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010).

Consumer engagement in the context of online brand communities has been defined as “a context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes” (Brodie et al., 2013, p. 107). Follow-up studies examined social media platforms (M. Clark et al., 2017), specific brand communities (Habibi,
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Laroche, & Richard, 2014), first-order and second-order associations (John et al., 2017), and consumer motivation (Baldus et al., 2015). Moreover, many firms have developed strategies to foster online consumer engagement to influence consumer behavior.

Consumer engagement in the future may also be influenced by social platform operations. For example, in several countries Instagram has tested removing the like feature on content posted by others, although users can still see the number of likes on their own posts. This move was in reaction to the suggestion that many users suffer from social media addiction where they need to see likes to maintain self-worth and online popularity (Leskin, 2019). YouTube has also decided to stop showing precise subscriber counts, and Facebook is experimenting with hiding like counts, similar to Instagram (I. A. Hamilton, 2019).

Studies in online consumer engagement may also see changes in the future with differing approaches in research design and engagement measurement. As noted by Dessart et al. (2016), there have been a number of studies that have examined consumer engagement using either qualitative methods or have conducted research from an exploratory perspective. They provided a table highlighting the studies on consumer engagement with a brand, firm, or organization to date. However, only a few studies operationalize the construct, providing a scale to measure online consumer engagement.

Some measures are concise, such as the one in the study by N. J. De Vries and Carlson (2014) where they measured consumer engagement with a brand’s Facebook page with five items, adapting three items from Jahn and Kunz (2012). Sprott et al. (2009) developed an 8-item Brand Engagement in Self-Concept (BESC) scale to measure brand engagement as high or low. Simon and Tossan (2018) developed an 8-item scale adapted from Muntinga et al. (2011) that reflects consuming, contributing, and creating content as a measure of consumer engagement.
Others scale measures for consumer engagement are more comprehensive. For example, Dessart et al. (2016) developed a 22-item scale with three dimensions, including affective, cognitive, and behavioral components with sub-dimensions of enjoyment, attention, absorption, sharing, learning, and endorsing to measure consumer and brand engagement in the context of an online brand community. They emphasized that consumer engagement is a multi-dimensional construct.

Various other measures of consumer engagement have been documented in the literature. For example, consumer engagement is measured with a 17-item Brand-Related Social Media Content (CEBSC) scale developed by Schivinski et al. (2016) that accounts for consumer consumption, contribution, and creation of online content. Although the Online Brand Community Engagement (OBCE) scale developed by Baldus et al. (2015) includes 11 dimensions to measure consumer motivations for interacting with an online brand community, it does not measure the level of online consumer engagement.

Using Apple as the focal brand, Vivek et al. (2014) developed a 10-item scale representing three dimensions of consumer engagement, including conscious attention, enthused participation, and social connection. Hollebeek et al. (2014) developed a 10-item scale capturing three consumer brand engagement dimensions, namely, cognitive processing, affection, and activation. These dimensions represent thought processing and elaboration, positive brand-related affect, as well as energy, effort, and time spent on a consumer and brand interaction.

Calder, Malthouse, and Maslowska (2016) propose that consumer engagement should be measured from data captured from online behavior including sentiment analysis and longitudinal examination. Rosado-Pinto et al. (2020) used sentiment analysis to establish that positive sentimental attachment is highly valued as an information source. Meire et al. (2019) also
examined consumer message sentiment in response to branded posts. Barger et al. (2016) recommended that online consumer engagement can be measured by reacting to content, commenting on content, sharing content with others, and posting UGC. It is also possible that a recency, frequency, monetary model could be applied to online consumer engagement with the Barger et al. (2016) suggestion in mind.

Table 1

*Measures of Online Consumer Engagement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollebeek et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Cognitive Processing</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td></td>
<td>Using x makes me think about x. Using x stimulates my interest to learn more about x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>.928</td>
<td></td>
<td>I feel very positive when I use x. Using x makes me happy. I feel good when I use x. I’m proud to use x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activation</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td></td>
<td>I spend a lot of time using x compared to other professional social networking sites. Whenever I’m using professional social networking sites, I usually use x. X is one of the brands I usually use when I use professional social networking sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivek et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Conscious Attention</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anything related to x grabs my attention. I like to learn more about x. I pay a lot of attention to anything about x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enthused Participation</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>I spend a lot of my discretionary time x. I am heavily into x. I am passionate about x. My days would not be the same without x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Connection</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td>I love x with my friends. I enjoy x more when I am with others. X is more fun when other people around me do it too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>α</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Items</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessart et al.</td>
<td>Affective: Enthusiasm</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>I feel enthusiastic about x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2016)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I am interested in anything about x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I find x interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective: Enjoyment</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>When interacting with x, I feel happy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I get pleasure from interacting with x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interacting with x is like a treat for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive: Attention</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>I spend a lot of time thinking about x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I make time to think about x.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive: Absorption</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>When interacting with x, I forget everything else around me.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time flies when I am interacting with x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When I am interacting with x, I get carried away.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When interacting with x, it is difficult to detach myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral: Sharing</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>I share my ideas with x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I share interesting content with x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I help x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral: Learning</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>I ask x questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I seek ideas or information from x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I seek help from x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral: Endorsing</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>I promote x.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I try to get others interested in x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I actively defend x from its critics.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I say positive things about x to other people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schivinski et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>I read posts related to Brand x on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I read fanpage(s) related to Brand x on social network sites.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I watch pictures/graphics related to Brand x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I follow blogs related to Brand x.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I follow Brand x on social network sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>I comment on videos related to Brand x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I comment on posts related to Brand x.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I comment on pictures related to Brand x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I share Brand x related posts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I “Like” pictures/graphics related to Brand x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I “Like” posts related to Brand x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>I initiate posts related to Brand x.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I initiate posts related to Brand x on social network sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I post pictures/graphics related to Brand x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I write reviews related to Brand x.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I write posts related to Brand x on forums.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I post videos that show Brand x.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CR = construct reliability.

Hollebeek et al. (2014): x = social networking site (i.e., LinkedIn), anchored Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Vivek et al. (2014): x = focus of engagement (i.e., using my Apple product), Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Dessart et al. (2016): x = brand engagement focus (e.g., Apple, Porsche), anchored Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree).

Schivinski et al. (2016): x = respondent selected brand followed on social media, anchored Likert scale from 1 (not very often) to 7 (very often).
Future Directions

Consumer engagement has become one of the most important measures of brand strength, especially in the digital era (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019). Once seen as a uni-dimensional construct, one in which information flows existed through at-arms-length communications, businesses are now ceding control to consumers regarding how brand engagement is created, nurtured, and shared (Dahl, Milne, et al., 2019).

Research Conclusions

Responding to calls in the academic community, this essay offers a detailed conceptual framework that focuses on varied consumer factors that serve as antecedents to consumer engagement and outcomes of this engagement (Barger et al., 2016; Kucharska, 2019; Manser Payne et al., 2017; Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). Although each section in Figure 1 identified potential areas of additional academic inquiry, below is a summary of broad-based future research needs.

This essay presents some of the key measures used to assess consumer engagement (see Table 1). Although the measurement of consumer engagement has strong traditional theoretical roots, the majority of extant literature on engagement is limited in terms of application to digital buyer–seller relationships (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Research that operationalizes consumer engagement in light of antecedent consumer factors and consequential brand factors of consumer engagement in the digital space is needed (Schivinski et al., 2016).

Extending Barger et al. (2016), this essay focused on a number of consumer factors, including consumer status, consumer disposition, personality trait, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and cultural dimension. Each of these categories explored specific sub-item constructs and potential areas of research interest. Given that there has been relatively little
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literature in the context of how digital firm content and UGC impact engagement, the need to expand on these dimensions, including greater focus on the granular level, is needed (Manser Payne et al., 2017). Although all areas have been understudied, virtually silent in the literature is how cultural and country-level differences exist regarding which consumer factors impact engagement and brand outcomes.

This essay identified and explored the relationship that consumer factors have on creating consumer engagement, including affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, each of which has individual sub-dimensions. Given that the study of consumer engagement in digital relationships is in its infancy, research investigating any of these dimensions would be fruitful. Especially needed would be integrative frameworks positing sequential relationships, including mediators and moderators of consumer factors on consumer engagement. Particularly interesting would be whether consumer factors differentially impact the level of affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagement.

The framework also outlined how consumer factors and engagement impact brand outcomes. Specific attention was given to six brand constructs, including status, disposition, attribute, connection, affection, and aversion, each again with additional sub-dimensions. Because the vast majority of the literature on brand outcomes has been outside the context of digital buyer–seller relationships, research investigating how these brand outcomes are manifested in a digital world is warranted. Especially needed are comprehensive and more granular empirical studies that examine interactive and sequential relationships and potential meditators and modifiers of these relationships (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019).
Opportunities to Explore

The opportunities to extend our understanding of consumer engagement, particularly noting measures of consumer engagement, are abundant. Future research can focus on the consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement as well as the branding outcome consequences. A few examples include appreciative listening (Pina et al., 2019), storytelling (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), social currency (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019), and cultural brand engagement (Vredeveld & Coulter, 2019). Implications for marketers include having a greater appreciation for the relational nature of consumer engagement to make more informed marketing decisions regarding corporate social presence, targeted promotional messaging, and online branding strategies (Kucharska, 2019). Because the majority of research has focused on for-profit firms, research investigating how consumer factors affect engagement and brand outcomes for not-for-profits and social causes have value for enhancing consumer welfare (Dahl, Barber, et al., 2019).

It is argued that future research consider a more encompassing definition and operationalization of consumer engagement that considers psychological components (affective and cognitive), as well as the more commonly investigated active and passive behavioral aspects such as consumption, contribution, and creation. Based on the review in this essay, more research in particular is necessary on the affective and cognitive elements. Research that identifies and operationalizes other affective and cognitive dimensions beyond the limited number uncovered will help marketers understand the psychological processes associated with online consumer engagement. For example, the psychology and marketing disciplines have started to consider elements and unintended consequences of online consumer engagement; negative emotional and cognition states and the consequences might warrant further
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

consideration (Fetscherin, 2019; Saef et al., 2018). Lastly, because there is a vast array of potentially useful theories within and outside of marketing that may offer guidance, researchers are encouraged to explore those that have the potential to move the field forward.
Essay 2: Online Consumer Engagement: Social Media Dispositions, Social Media Goals, and Brand Engagement

This section of the dissertation provides an overview of the research topic relying on uses and gratifications theory, the results of prior research, and relevant information from industry reports. The importance of the study and its contribution to theory and practice are also discussed. The section concludes with a description of how the remainder of Essay 2 is organized.

Overview

Social media usage has become commonplace with over three billion users worldwide (von Abrams, 2019). As of the first quarter of 2020, 2.6 billion people were active monthly users of Facebook (Facebook, 2020), 1 billion people were active users of Instagram, 398 million people were active users of Snapchat, 386 million people were active users of Twitter, and 366 million people were active users of Pinterest (DataReportal, 2020). Much of the growth is outside of the United States, making the user base more diverse and global. The level of business investment has grown over time as well, with over $1.57 billion in advertising revenue for Twitter in 2019 (McClelland, 2020) and over 2 million monthly advertisers on Instagram branding 7 out of 10 hashtags (Etherington, 2017).

A more informed approach will help marketers who are shifting their advertising dollars away from traditional media to social media to increase their return on investment (Rasool et al., 2020). In fact, spending on digital marketing represented on average 54% of marketing budgets in 2019 with projected growth to 67% by 2023 (Enberg, 2019). Digital marketing outlay in the United States is projected to grow to $172 billion by 2021 with an emphasis on social
advertising, highlighting the need for quality connections over quantity of communication (Enberg, 2019).

Social media providers are happy to cash in on the increased spending. Total Facebook advertising revenue for 2019 surpassed $69.7 billion (Facebook, 2020). In the first quarter of 2020 alone, Facebook netted over $17 billion in advertising revenue (Facebook, 2020). Instagram’s advertising revenue in 2019 was over $9 billion and is expected to double to over $18 billion in 2021 (Manners, 2020), while Twitter’s advertising revenue in the United States grew to $920 million in 2019 (McClelland, 2020). Social media is getting more competitive and therefore more expensive to reach consumers in a meaningful way.

One way that firms can gain insight is from feedback posted online. Firms can also collaborate with consumers for mutual benefits. For example, Instagram is popular with social influencers, with 78% preferring Instagram for brand collaboration and some celebrity Instagram influencers charging up to $200,000 for a sponsored event (Influencer Marketing, 2020). Thus, some consumers have a vested interest in online engagement with brands because they can profit from the relationship. Moreover, in 2019 Instagram paid $100 per post for social influencers with less than 10,000 followers, and approximately $1,000 per 100,000 followers (T. Johnson, 2020). Snapchat had a pricing structure for social influencers starting at $500 for 1,000 to 5,000 views topping out at $10,000 to $30,000 for 50,000 to 100,000 views. YouTube payments to social influencers are approximately $2,000 per 100,000 followers per video (T. Johnson, 2020).

Prior research has demonstrated that consumers are willing to interact with brands online (Laroche et al., 2012; VanMeter et al., 2015). For example, a study by Wagner (2014) showed that although 45% of college students said they would not open a Snapchat from a brand they did not know, 73% said they would open one from a brand they did know. Moreover, 93% of
Pinterest users say they use the social media platform to plan for purchases, and 78% say it is useful to see content from brands on Pinterest (J. Chen, 2018). However, little is known about the characteristics of consumers who choose to engage with brands via social media.

Consumers who participate online may experience emotional, social, or psychological benefits that encourage continued engagement (Hollebeek, 2011b). Barger et al. (2016) defined social media engagement as “a mutually beneficial process through which firms and consumer co-create brand-related content and social experiences on social media” (p. 279). This description supports the idea that consumers can experience brand engagement when they work with brands in ways that offer value to both parties. However, little is known about the branding consequences that result from online engagement. Research in this area can help firms provide appropriate experience features or incentives in their online branding as part of an overall marketing strategy (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Meire et al., 2019; Pancer, Chandler, Poole, & Noseworthy, 2019).

Consumer engagement was defined by Weiger, Hammerschmidt, and Wetzel (2018) as “an individual’s behavior toward a brand in social media beyond purchases and resulting from psychological drivers” (p. 366). A prior definition by Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, and Ilić (2011) considered consumer engagement as “a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand)” (p. 260). Although consumer engagement fits within the greater domain of consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), the concept can be specifically applied to the social media microculture setting (Grover & Kar, 2020; Malthouse & Hofacker, 2010; C. J. Thompson & Troester, 2002).

Hollebeek (2011b) defined brand engagement as a consumer’s “cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions” (p. 555). Brand engagement that addresses
consumer motivations for continued affiliation is important in online consumer engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010). First, a firm’s brand must be a natural extension of its presence in the physical world to be considered authentic online (Briggs, 2010). Next, there should be seamless integration between the physical and online brand identity (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Finally, a brand should engage with consumers in terms that consumers define as effective and appreciated (Bolton, 2011). Fostering brand engagement is a priority as marketing efforts move online, particularly when using social media.

In the context of this study, the brand is not necessarily the name of a company, rather it can be a representation of the company, a brand name, or sub-brand name. For example, Procter & Gamble has a limited social media presence, however its many sub-brands (e.g., Pampers, Old Spice, Gillette, Tide) each maintain a unique online space intended to engage with consumers for that particular Procter & Gamble sub-brand. Choosing one’s favorite brand as a consumer highlights how a brand can be a representation of a company or its subparts because consumers think of the product name, not necessarily the parent company manufacturer.

Beyond brands, various factors have been examined in the literature in light of consumer engagement, ranging from product type and promotional message to content elements and social media platform. Consumer factors have also been studied with a focus on personal characteristics and consumer behaviors (John et al., 2017; VanMeter et al., 2018). Extending the consumer engagement research, M. K. Clark, Lages, and Hollebeek (2020) proposed a values-based typology incorporating other consumers and brands alike. Consumer factors, namely social media disposition and social media goals, are noteworthy for further examination. In this study, social media disposition includes social media information sharing and social media trust,
whereas social media goals include social media information seeking and social media experience.

Consumer personality and motivation have also received significant attention in the literature regarding antecedents to online consumer engagement. Measuring the level of consumer conscientiousness, escapism, social support, and extroversion, to name a few, highlight how the traits of individuals may influence their propensity to engage with brands online (Abrantes et al., 2013; Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Molinillo et al., 2020). Motivation, differentiated from consumer internal factors as externally driven, has also been examined in prior research where motivation stems from rewards, entertainment, or personal needs such as closure or socialization (Azar et al., 2016; Baldus et al., 2015; Shao & Ross, 2015). Stated as social media goals in this study, social media information seeking and social media experience address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Barger et al. (2016) called for research to investigate the relationship between the antecedents of consumer engagement and consumer engagement activities. Furthermore, research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the connection between consumer engagement and brand engagement (Manser Payne et al., 2017). Knowing how to optimize consumer engagement with branding decisions is beneficial to marketers (Hollebeek et al., 2019). To determine the level of consumer engagement, in their call for future research Barger et al. (2016) suggested examining the degree to which consumers react to content posted by a firm, comment on content posted by a firm, share content with others posted by a firm, and post their own UGC. This study incorporates these four activities as a measure of consumer engagement not previously examined in the literature.
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Scope and Importance of the Study

This study considered a model for examining online consumer engagement. Data were collected with surveys administered to undergraduate students at a Midwestern public university. The model considered the relationship between consumer engagement and branding outcomes. It also examined the relationship between social media dispositions and social media goals as consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement. AMOS 26 was used to conduct structural equation models (SEM) path analysis for the model.

Problem statements. The first problem is that the consumer factors that lead to consumer engagement are not readily understood (Gligor et al., 2019). Firms routinely direct marketing activities online; however, the significance on the return on investment is not clear (Hudson et al., 2016; Rasool et al., 2020). An informed approach to building a social media presence includes knowing the consumer factors that characterize those who are more likely to engage with the firm (Liu, Liu, Lee, & Chen, 2019).

The second problem is that clarification is needed regarding the connection between consumer engagement and brand engagement. The relationship is important to investigate because understanding the results of interacting with consumers provides insight for strategic brand communications and applications in the future (Grover & Kar, 2020; Labrecque, 2014; R. J.-H. Wang, 2020). Ultimately, firms want to use social media to form a connection with consumers that leads to a progression from brand involvement for repeat purchases to brand advocacy to recommend the brand to other consumers (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Research objectives. The first objective of this research is to contribute to the literature by extending the understanding of consumer factors that lead to online consumer engagement.
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Consumer factors are considered as social media dispositions and social media goals. The former includes social media information sharing and social media trust whereas the latter addresses social media information seeking and social media experience. The second objective of this research was to determine the nature of the relationship between online consumer engagement and brand engagement including brand involvement and brand advocacy.

Research questions. The current study seeks to answer three research questions. Brand engagement has been studied in the literature as a consequential outcome of consumer engagement (Chahal et al., 2019; Khan, Hollebeek, Fatma, Islam, & Rahman, 2019). However, how various brand engagement elements influence through to brand advocacy has yet to be examined. The first research question is, what effect does online consumer engagement have on brand engagement? The progression of brand engagement in this study includes brand involvement and brand advocacy.

Numerous consumer characteristics have been investigated in relation to engaging with brands online (Dessart, 2017; Leckie et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Loureiro, Bilro, & Japutra, 2019). New or adapted constructs can capture the propensity for consumers to be active with social media. With that in mind, the second research question is, what is the effect of certain consumer factors or social media dispositions on consumer engagement using social media? In this study, the specific social media dispositions under investigation include social media information sharing and social media trust.

Prior research has also established that consumer factors develop from various motivations to engage with brands using social media (Azar et al., 2016; Kaur et al., 2020; Shao & Ross, 2015). This leads to the third research question which is, how do particular social media goals influence consumer engagement using social media? The social media goals under
investigation in this study include social media information seeking and social media experience. These goals may also mediate the relationship between social media dispositions and consumer engagement and therefore will be investigated in a mediating role.

**Contribution to Theory and Practice**

Prior research regarding consumer engagement has focused on particular elements of consumer characteristics, motivation, and firm activities, including augmented reality as an example (Jessen et al., 2020). Studies in consumer engagement have described the construct as dynamic and multidimensional (Brodie et al., 2013; Carlson et al., 2019; Eigenraam, Eelen, van Lin, & Verlegh, 2018; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Further examination of particular aspects can enhance our understanding of consumer engagement and its relationship with brand engagement (M. L. Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020; Hughes et al., 2019; Y. Li & Xie, 2020). This study answers the call from Barger et al. (2016), Florenthal (2019), Labrecque et al. (2020), as well as Manser Payne et al. (2017) regarding the need for more comprehensive investigation regarding consumer engagement using social media and brand engagement thus making a valuable contribution to uses and gratifications theory.

Firms heavily invest in social media marketing with increases planned for the future (Enberg, 2019). Knowing which consumers to target makes sense for an effective return on investment. This study examines consumer factors that lead to online consumer engagement with the firm and potential brand engagement leading to brand advocacy. Previous research has considered each element (Rather, 2019; Singh & Pathak, 2020), however, examining the connections as designed in the following theoretical framework contributes to our understanding of online consumer engagement and therefore provides a more definitive approach for online social media marketing, thus making a valuable contribution to practice.
Organization of Essay 2

Essay 2 follows a sequence of sections addressing each area in turn. The next section provides a review of the relevant literature regarding consumer engagement, brand engagement, social media dispositions, and social media goals. The section also elaborates on the relationships in the model and the proposed hypotheses. Then, the essay focuses on the methods used in the study. This is followed by data analysis and findings. Finally, there is a discussion of the findings and an outline of the implications for theory and practice as well as limitations and directions for future research.
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

**Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

This section provides an overview of relevant theoretical and empirical studies in the literature related to consumer engagement antecedents and branding outcomes. Uses and gratifications theory, consumer engagement, measures of consumer engagement, and brand engagement are addressed first. A literature review of studies regarding social media goals and social media dispositions follows.

**Uses and Gratifications Theory**

Uses and gratifications theory is based on the premise that consumers seek to meet targeted needs by engaging with specific media sources (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). Motivation for selecting specific media is of interest as consumers gain gratification from the experience (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Social media has afforded consumers the heightened opportunity to meet their needs and become interactive participants (Ruggiero, 2000). As a result, consumers are motivated to purposely seek out, connect with, and utilize media to meet their specific needs (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013). As such, uses and gratifications theory posits that consumers are active participants in media and not just passive recipients of media exposure (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016).

Uses and gratifications theory has been used in prior research involving consumer engagement (Kujur & Singh, 2020; C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012; Leiner, Kobilke, Rueß, & Brosius, 2018; Whiting & Williams, 2013). In their study on social media use, N. Park et al. (2009) found that consumers satisfy self-status seeking and information seeking needs. Self-status seeking needs as manifested in the social media experience are met as part of engaging online (Y. Jin, Lin, Gilbreath, & Lee, 2017). Information seeking needs are also met by social media use (Athwal, Istanbulluoglu, & McCormack, 2019; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). It is proposed in this
study that consumer engagement satisfies social media goals, namely information seeking and social media experience, to address utilitarian as well as hedonic and social motivations in addition to social media dispositions (i.e., internal consumer factors).

Social media dispositions can also be examined through the lens of uses and gratifications theory. Consumer activity is driven in part by particular dispositions where consumers evaluate whether the activity is fulfilling and then decide whether to continue with that activity based on the results (Blumler, 1979). Social media trust has been shown to be one of the dispositions (Azar et al., 2016). Information sharing has also been considered in the literature as a social media disposition motivated by the need for social ties, to create content, and to be recognized (Audrezet et al., 2018; X. Lin, Sarker, & Featherman, 2019). However, trust in social media and social media information sharing in particular are not as readily understood from the uses and gratifications theory perspective.

**Consumer Engagement**

Definitions for engagement have used the terms customer, consumer, and consumer–brand interchangeably. They are distinguished from each other based on the subject, such as individual consumer (Florenthal, 2019) or community (M. Clark et al., 2017), as well as context of engagement such as online (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019), e-commerce (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019), or social media (Hinson et al., 2019). The terms have also been distinguished based on user-generated (Roma & Aloini, 2019) or brand-generated (Beckers, van Doorn, & Verhoef, 2018). Digital consumer engagement (Gavilanes, Flatten, & Brettel, 2018), digital visual engagement (Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli, & Pizzetti, 2018), actor engagement (Brodie, Fehrer, Jaakkola, & Conduit, 2019), and user engagement (Grover & Kar, 2020) have also been used in prior studies. Common among the definitions is the idea that the construct represents
dimensions beyond mere transactions between brands and consumers. Table 2 provides a selection of construct definitions for consumer engagement.

Table 2

**Consumer Engagement Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Construct Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollebeek et al. (2014, p. 154)</td>
<td>Consumer–Brand Engagement</td>
<td>“A consumer’s positively valanced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obilo et al. (2020, p. 2)</td>
<td>Consumer–Brand Engagement</td>
<td>“Consumers’ positive and negative behavioral interactions with a brand and all its constituent elements (brand content, other consumers, etc.) beyond simple transactions, that result from their interest in and commitment to the brand.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivek et al. (2014, p. 406)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>“The level of the customer’s interactions and connections with the brand or firm’s offerings or activities, often involving others in the social network created around the brand/offering/activity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiger et al. (2018, p. 366)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>“An individual’s behavior toward a brand in social media beyond purchases and resulting from psychological drivers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 253)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>“Behaviors that go beyond simple transactions and may be specifically defined as a customer’s manifestations that have a brand focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessart et al. (2016, p. 409)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>“Consumer engagement is expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioral manifestations that go beyond exchange situations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brodie et al. (2013, p. 107)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement in Online Brand Community</td>
<td>“A consumer’s psychological state occurs in specific interactive experience with the brand, which is context-dependent, dynamic and fluctuating.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu et al. (2018, p. 2)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement in Social Media Brand Community</td>
<td>“A consumer’s psychological state consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions with respect to their interaction experiences with other consumers, marketing representatives, and other related parties that occur within the social media brand community.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some definitions have highlighted a particular dimension such as behavioral (van Doorn et al., 2010) or cognitive (Brodie et al., 2013). Schmitt (2012) expanded on the levels of consumer engagement as self-centered (affective), object-centered (utilitarian), and social. Hollebeek et al. (2014) noted cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions which have become the standard dimensions for many research studies. However, Obilo et al. (2020) demonstrate in their research that only the behavioral dimension has relevance for brands, in that consumer activity generates revenue, and the behavioral dimension adequately represents the consumer engagement construct. Drawing on the work by Barger et al. (2016), van Doorn et al. (2010), and Hollebeek et al. (2014), consumer engagement in social media in this study is defined as a consumer’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral social media connection displayed by contributing and creating digital content.

Studies investigating the consequences of consumer engagement consider consumer as well as branding outcomes. Relational branding consequences are of interest to marketers because they lead to purchase, repurchase, or recommendation to others (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019; Veloutsou, 2015). Moreover, the ideal outcome aspired by firms engaging with consumers using social media is brand advocacy (Bilro, Loureiro, & Ali, 2018). However, at a minimum, branding is also beneficial for consumers in simplifying the information search process regarding familiar products and services (Abrantes et al., 2013). Therefore, investigating the branding outcomes that lead to brand advocacy offers value to firms and consumers alike.

Antecedents to consumer engagement are also of interest to brands for good reason. The majority of online consumers (two-thirds) rely on third-party reviews, and 83% rely on product reviews posted by acquaintances (Nielsen Company, 2015). Therefore, consumers engage online with each other with or without the influence of firms or their brand presence. A question then is,
what type of consumer is most likely to engage online with firms and then influence others? Thus, there could be a particular consumer profile that more strongly resonates with co-creating online content that adds value to consumers and firms. This question is at the heart of studies examining antecedents to consumer engagement that are focused on consumer internal characteristics represented as social media dispositions and consumer external motivations manifested as social media goals.

**Measuring Consumer Engagement**

Scales measuring consumer engagement have developed along three lines of research inquiry. The first approach considered the consumer engagement concept as multi-dimensional using various elements from attention and connection or participation (So, King, & Sparks, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014) to vigor and dedication (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Dimensions have also been classified as direct (e.g., purchases) and indirect (e.g., customer referrals) in prior research (V. Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Although comprehensive in scope, these kinds of scales do not offer consistency in content and therefore lack generalizability.

The second approach to measuring consumer engagement is based on the seminal work of Hollebeek et al. (2014) where the three primary dimensions were identified as affective, cognitive, and behavioral. This scale has been used extensively in other research regarding consumer engagement (Dessart et al., 2016), extending to customer–brand engagement (Solem & Pedersen, 2016) as well as community–brand engagement (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). However, the premise of this approach has been called into question in the study by Obilo et al. (2020), suggesting that there is a lack of consensus on how consumer engagement is described, and that only behaviors are necessary to define the consumer engagement construct.
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The third approach highlights the behavioral dimension of consumer engagement. Marketers appreciate the value of behaviors over thoughts or feelings in that firms highlight the importance of tangible activities that are related to revenue (Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2018). Marketers can also more readily influence and respond to consumer engagement behaviors with customer engagement marketing strategies (Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, & Carlson, 2017), even though this approach may be more risky with possible backfires when consumer engagement is initiated by the brand (Beckers et al., 2018). Table 3 provides a representative sample of scales measuring consumer engagement using the three approaches.

To determine the level of consumer engagement, in their call for future research Barger et al. (2016) suggested examining the degree to which consumers react to content posted by a firm, comment on content posted by a firm, share content with others posted by a firm, and post their own UCG. Based on the consumer engagement activities noted by Muntinga et al. (2011) and in line with the behavior-focused dimension approach measuring consuming, contributing, and creating behaviors (Schivinski et al., 2016; Simon & Tossan, 2018; Vale & Fernandes, 2018), this study incorporated these four activities as a measure of consumer engagement not previously examined in the literature with a focus on active (content creation) engagement.
Table 3

Measuring Consumer Engagement Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vivek et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>Conscious Attention, Enthused Participation, Social Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>Attention, Enthusiasm, Identification, Absorption, Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Kumar &amp; Pansari (2016)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>Direct (Customer Purchases), Indirect (Customer Referrals, Customer Influence, Customer Knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carvalho &amp; Fernandes (2018)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement</td>
<td>Vigor, Dedication, Absorption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollebeek et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Consumer–Brand Engagement</td>
<td>Affection, Cognitive Processing, Activation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessart et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>Affective, Cognitive, Behavioral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vohra &amp; Bhardwaj (2019)</td>
<td>Customer Engagement with the Community</td>
<td>Affective, Cognitive, Behavioral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muntinga et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Consumer Online Brand-Related Activities</td>
<td>Consuming, Contributing, Creating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schivinski et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Consumers’ Engagement with Brand-Related Social Media Content</td>
<td>Consumption, Contribution, Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale &amp; Fernandes (2018)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement Behaviors on Social Media</td>
<td>Consuming, Contributing, Creating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon &amp; Tossan (2018)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>Consuming, Contributing, Creating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obilo et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>Content Engagement, Consumer Co-Creation, Consumer Advocacy, Negative Engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement has been used as a mediator in a variety of social media studies. For example, Obilo et al. (2020) found that consumer–brand engagement served in a mediating role between consumer involvement and self-brand connection. Using mobile apps, Fang (2017) showed that interactivity and repurchase intention is mediated by consumer brand engagement. In other studies, the positive relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty or eWOM was found to be mediated by online consumer brand engagement (Dwivedi, 2015; Loureiro et al., 2017). The study by Gómez et al. (2019) found that social media brand engagement positively mediates the association between brand involvement and brand relationship quality. Moreover, Kaur et al. (2020) found that consumer brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand community identification and brand loyalty.

Researchers have examined social media goals, as consumer motivation factors such as social media information seeking or social media experience as antecedents to consumer engagement. The study by Brodie et al. (2013) showed that a consumer’s need for information initiates consumer engagement, which is then associated with branding outcomes including brand loyalty. Similar results were found in the study by Leckie, Nyadzayo, and Johnson (2018) in that collecting brand information as a goal influences brand engagement through consumer engagement. Nery et al. (2020) also found the positive relationship between obtaining information purchase intention is mediated by consumer brand engagement. Kujur and Singh (2020) found similar results where consumer engagement mediated the relationship between informative content and brand trust and satisfaction.

Using a qualitative approach, Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2015) showed that online brand community engagement mediates the relationship between community values
such as entertainment and monetary incentives and brand loyalty. Bilro et al. (2018) further showed that in the context of online tourism, consumer engagement mediates the relationship between social media experience and brand advocacy. Social media engagement mediates the association between consumer-based factors such as entertainment and brand equity (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Chahal et al. (2019) also found that the influence of user-based factors on brand equity, including social media goals such as social media experience, is mediated by social media brand engagement.

Consumer engagement is a common construct in studies examining consumer internal factors or social media dispositions as antecedents to interacting with brands online. For example, in the context of Facebook interaction, Kabadayi and Price (2014) found that extroversion and social media behavior is mediated by consumer engagement. Consumer engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between other consumer internal factors, including extroversion and purchase intention (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2017). Although Liu et al. (2018) found that consumer engagement in social media brand communities mediated the relationship between consumer trust and trust with the brand, no other studies have considered the disposition of social media trust with consumer engagement as a mediator.

Mediation is also evident in studies focused on brand engagement making connections from pre-conditions to branding outcomes. For example, the relationship between product involvement and brand commitment is mediated by community engagement and brand engagement (Dessart, 2017). The influence of brand commitment on brand loyalty demonstrated in the same study is similar to the hypothesized model in the present study where there is a progression in a brand engagement from brand involvement to brand advocacy. The movement is
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predicated on the flow from cognitive to emotional to behavioral consumer engagement (Moro & Rita, 2018).

A number of previously outlined studies have demonstrated that consumer engagement can assume a mediating role. However, the mediating role of consumer engagement with social media goals and brand engagement, as hypothesized in this study (see Figure 2), has not been investigated in the literature. The association between social media dispositions and brand engagement manifested as brand involvement and brand advocacy with consumer engagement as a mediator also merits investigation. This study seeks to fill the gap in the marketing literature in this regard.

**Brand Engagement**

Definitions involving variations of brand engagement have been suggested in the marketing literature. The construct has been examined in light of self-concept (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020; Sprott et al., 2009), online communities (Baldus et al., 2015; Shen, Li, Sun, & Zhou, 2018), as well as social media (M. L. Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020; Gómez et al., 2019). Table 4 provides a representative sample of brand engagement definitions.
### Table 4

*Brand Engagement and Social Media Engagement Definitions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Construct Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algesheimer et al. (2005, p. 21)</td>
<td>Brand Community Engagement</td>
<td>“The positive influences of identifying with the brand community, which are defined as the consumer’s intrinsic motivations to interact and cooperate with community members.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldus et al. (2015, p. 979)</td>
<td>Online Brand Community Engagement</td>
<td>“The compelling, intrinsic motivations to continue interacting with an online brand community.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprott et al. (2009, p. 92)</td>
<td>Brand Engagement in Self-Concept</td>
<td>“An individual difference representing consumer’s propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollebeek (2011b, p. 555)</td>
<td>Brand Engagement</td>
<td>“Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calder et al. (2016, p. 40)</td>
<td>Brand Engagement</td>
<td>“The psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focus agent/object, under a specific set of context dependent conditions, and exists as a dynamic, iterative process in which other relational concepts are antecedents and/or consequences.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barger et al. (2016, p. 279)</td>
<td>Social Media Engagement</td>
<td>“A mutually beneficial process through which firms and consumer co-create brand-related content and social experiences on social media.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessart (2017, p. 377)</td>
<td>Social Media Engagement in Online Brand Community</td>
<td>“The state that reflects consumers’ positive individual dispositions towards the community and the focal brand as expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive and behavioral manifestations that go beyond exchange situations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gómez et al. (2019, p. 198)</td>
<td>Social Media Brand Engagement</td>
<td>“A proactive and interactive relationship between the consumer and the brand’s social media platform, passion, and immersion in the brand’s social media platform.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the most comprehensive definitions for brand engagement as defined by Calder et al. (2016) is, the psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focus agent/object, under a specific set of context dependent conditions, and exists as a dynamic, iterative process in which other relational concepts are antecedents and/or consequences. (p. 40)

As reflected in the aforementioned definition, consumers align with brands to fulfill psychological or social needs to belong in a way that is an extension of their own identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Consumers who engage with brands online develop an emotional connection and speak more positively about the brand to others, compared to those who do not follow the brand online (Dholakia & Durham, 2010). Brand engagement embodies these emotional connections where consumers are motivated to interact with, and act on behalf of the brand, leading to brand advocacy. Therefore, based on the work by Calder et al. (2016) and Gómez et al. (2019), brand engagement in social media in this study is defined as a consumer’s intentional and mutually beneficial value co-creation with a brand’s social media platform manifested as brand involvement and brand advocacy.

The level of interactions with consumers can be influenced by the nature of the brand-originated message. Consumers respond more positively to more interactive brand posts such as a question (L. de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012), as well as communications with higher readability (Pancer et al., 2019), or an extended emotional message (Davis, Horváth, Gretry, & Belei, 2019). Further, whether consumers participate online with corporate brands is dependent on their desire or motivation to do so.
Firms should be careful to not monopolize social media engagement with calls to action or a heavy advertising tone as these tactics can reduce consumer engagement with the brand, particularly with those who are weakly connected (Weiger et al., 2018). Developing a more organic approach to brand engagement where authentic communication naturally occurs can foster the kind of emotional connection that is needed for brand advocacy. The same is true for social media brand communities in that establishing trust is a key element in fostering consumer engagement (Liu et al., 2018).

As an extension of brand engagement, Barger et al. (2016) provided a description supports the idea that consumers can be involved in brand engagement when they work with brands in ways that offer value to both parties. Consumer engagement has been classified as a form of brand engagement (Roberts & Alpert, 2010) and the terms have been used interchangeably. However, consumer engagement is composed of activities that may simply express consumer personality or desire to connect with others.

Similar to consumer engagement, brand engagement has been defined with cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in mind (Hollebeek, 2011b) including the social media setting (Dessart, 2017). Loureiro et al. (2017) also suggested using a sequential flow regarding brand engagement noting brand involvement, brand love, and positive WOM. Following the same logic, brand involvement and brand advocacy sequentially align with the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of brand engagement although not yet empirically tested to date. This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature regarding the progression from brand involvement to brand advocacy as part of brand engagement using social media.

**Brand involvement.** Grounded in social psychology, brand relevance informs a consumer’s brand involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Brand involvement is the state of mind
allowing for intellectual resources to be allocated to the brand (Mittal & Lee, 1989). It is also considered as a consumer’s degree of interest or arousal for a given brand (Bian & Haque, 2020) and therefore suggests that engaging consumers in a relevant way, particularly using social media, will increase their propensity to be involved with the brand (Gómez et al., 2019). Brand involvement has not embodied the affective dimension of emotional brand attachment or self-brand connection (Gligor et al., 2019; Thomson et al., 2005), although in this study, it is defined as a consumer’s cognitive and emotional perception of brand relevance based on how it addresses personal needs, values, and interests.

Brand involvement has been shown to have a moderating effect on complaints and negative WOM when it comes to consumer intention to repurchase, in that brand involvement increases repurchase intention even when consumers are dissatisfied with the brand (Shiue & Li, 2013). Through social media, marketers can move consumers beyond brand involvement to develop an emotional consumer–brand relationship (Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018), for example, by using plot and characters in branded stories (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), and fostering engagement through brand community commitment (Shen et al., 2018). As suggested by Loureiro et al. (2017), there is a sequential progression from the cognitive to the emotional when defining brand involvement with an affective element.

There is no clear direction on the aforementioned progression in the context of social media. Further, whether consumer engagement positively influences brand involvement is also not clear. This study will address the gap in the literature by investigating the influence of brand involvement on brand advocacy as well as the association between consumer engagement and brand involvement in social media.
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**Brand advocacy.** Research establishing that consumer engagement influences brand loyalty is common in the marketing literature (Dwivedi, 2015; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019; France, Merrilees, & Miller, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Leckie et al., 2016). Brand loyalty reflects a mutually beneficial situation between consumers and firms (Rather, 2019), although some brand loyalty may develop from a lack of attractive alternatives. Thus, a consumer may be brand loyal, but only because the relationship exit barriers (i.e., financial, logistical, convenience) are too high (Sashi, 2012). Therefore, brand advocacy is more highly valued as a consumer engagement outcome because it reflects authentic admiration, retention, and WOM promotion (Chakravarty, Liu, & Mazumdar, 2010; Sashi et al., 2019). In this study, brand advocacy is defined as a consumer’s active and uncompensated brand promotion behavior.

Brand advocates have a relationship with the brand that can be described as a friendship or as having a strong bond that inspires them to broadcast positively about the brand without solicitation. Brand advocates will also try new products of the brand and are resistant to negative information or other detrimental issues (Pai, Lai, Chiu, & Yang, 2015). They use social media for WOM and UGC to communicate their affinity for the brand and to encourage others to purchase (Christodoulides et al., 2012). Awad and Abdel Fatah (2015) noted that fostering brand advocacy is of interest to firms in that feedback from other consumers influences brand evaluation. Moreover, recommendations from others have a positive effect on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions of the brand in question (Z. Wang & Kim, 2017).

Whether the influence of brand involvement is positively associated with brand advocacy in the context of consumer engagement using social media is under investigation in this research. Another critical element of this study addresses whether the degree to which consumers engage with firms using social media influences brand advocacy. This research fills the gap in the
literature by examining the association between brand involvement and brand advocacy as well as consumer engagement and brand advocacy.

**Social Media Goals**

Prior research has demonstrated that consumers have a number of motivations, separate from inherent dispositions, to engage online, including entertainment (Azar et al., 2016), money (Shi & Wojnicki, 2014), other rewards such as incentives and promotions (Rohm et al., 2013), fun (Baldus et al., 2015), as well as need for closure (Sharifi, 2019), cognition (Guo, Zhang, & Wang, 2016), socialization (Shao & Ross, 2015), social influence (Curran & Lennon, 2011), and information (Florenthal, 2015). Eigenraam et al. (2018) identified a number of activities that serve as motivations in their taxonomy of customer engagement, including signing up for updates, playing a game, and interacting with other consumers to name a few.

Consumers can offer a superficial endorsement such as liking a brand (John et al., 2017), however, identifying factors that are more likely to lead to meaningful activities such as posting a review, making a purchase, or recommending the brand to others is important for seeing a profitable return on social media marketing investment. Although these kinds of activities are well documented in the literature (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Jahn & Kunz, 2012; Hall-Phillips, Park, Chung, Anaza, & Rathod, 2016), Eigenraam et al. (2018) recommended that determining the consumer social media goals for engaging online merits further investigation.

Social media goals research is grounded in uses and gratifications theory (Blumler, 1979). Consumers set expectations based on their needs and then engage using social media to meet those needs deciding whether to continue with the activity based on the consequences (Ruggiero, 2000). Social media participation is initiated by a set of needs, motivations, or goals. A number of motivations are apparent in social media consumer engagement as described
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previously. Dimensions range from four motives (Hunt, Atkin, & Krishnan, 2012) to nine motivations (Vale & Fernandes, 2018) or nine goals (Leiner et al., 2018). As noted by Florenthal (2019), the common motivators relate to information seeking and socialization.

Social media information seeking addresses the utilitarian or functional motivation to engage online whereas social media experience as defined in this study captures hedonic and social motivations (Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009; Franzak et al., 2014; Nery et al., 2020). Including both social media goals in this study overcomes the limitations of other more focused studies that have restricted antecedents of consumer engagement to only functional (El-Haddadeh, Weerakkody, & Peng, 2012; Kujur & Singh, 2020), hedonic (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012), or social goals (Enginkaya & Yimaz, 2014; Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020).

**Social media information seeking.** Extant research suggests that many consumers (74%) utilize social media to find information about products and brands (Barker, 2017). Online consumers interact with firms and other consumers for entertainment, to gather information regarding products and services, to make connections with others, or to provide direction to others regarding their potential future purchases. However, information seeking stands out as a functional social media goal (Foster, 2010; Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

Although considered a passive form of engagement, the need for information influences online consumer engagement, as posited by the uses and gratifications theory (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). A consumer’s information seeking tendency, including browsing and gathering information, as well as receiving information, such as regular updates, also positively influences social media consumer engagement (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Consumers will more likely seek out information if they perceive that a usable system is in place to facilitate access (Peltier, Dahl, &
Swan, 2020). Moreover, Athwal et al. (2019) found that consumers meet cognitive needs by using social media to acquire and process information. Therefore, in this study, social media information seeking is defined as a consumer’s tendency to look for product/brand content, services, events, or social opportunities.

The study by Y. Jin et al. (2017) found that differences in social media users were detected based on platform, in that consumers using Facebook and Pinterest were more highly motivated by information seeking as a goal than those who use Facebook and Instagram. Chahal et al. (2019) showed that the need for product and price information was antecedent to consumer engagement for social media users in India. When provided access, consumers also tend to seek out information they perceive as relevant (Dahl, Peltier, & Milne, 2018). Although user demographics can assist brands in posting appropriate content, further research is needed regarding social media information seeking to better understand the association with consumer engagement. This study fills the gap in the literature.

**Social media experience.** Grounded in uses and gratifications and consumption values theories (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011) social media experience as a goal is dependent on the anticipated value of the activity. Florenthal (2019) provided an overview of motivations for using social media, noting the need to further investigate the associated emotions. Positive emotions stem from social media activities providing entertainment (M. Hamilton, Kaltcheva, & Rohm, 2016), escapism (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016), relaxation, fun (Whiting & Williams, 2013), and socialization (Abrantes et al., 2013). Therefore, in this study, social media experience is defined as a consumer’s tendency to engage in pleasant and self-enriching encounters using social media.
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The study by Azar et al. (2016) highlighted that consumers may be influenced in their online social behaviors by their need for socialization, which can be manifested as popularity. Social influence is established in active communication online, typical of extraverted consumers, who gain online social capital with other consumers from interacting via social media (Weiqin, Campbell, Kimpton, Wozencroft, & Orel, 2016). Social currency also plays a role in social media in that social currency has a positive effect on consumer engagement (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019). Status seeking and socializing were found to be goals for consumers who were more likely to share news stories using social media (C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012). The study by J. Choi (2016) also found that consumers with socialization as a motivational goal more readily engaged in social media news content.

Although popularity can be seen as being socially dominant (Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998), in the context of social media, popularity can be manifested in centrality on the number or kinds of connections (Valkenburg, Schouten, & Peter, 2005). Thus, consumers have a vested interest in maintaining or enhancing their status by what, and how often they contribute as part of their social media experience (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). This is particularly the case for consumers who are aware of their popularity and thus are intentional about the online communities or fan pages they choose to join, as those affiliations are seen as a reflection of their personal and social expressions (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005).

Whether the level of social media experience that captures hedonic and social dimensions is related to consumer engagement with brands has yet to be investigated.

Social Media Dispositions

Extant literature has demonstrated that a number of social media dispositions (i.e., consumer internal factors related to social media), act as antecedents to consumer engagement
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based on research with the uses and gratifications theory as an underpinning (Azar et al., 2016; Florenthal, 2015; Zolkepli, Kamarulzaman, & Kitchen, 2018). Researchers have studied consumer dispositions such as self-esteem (Zywica & Danowski, 2008), trust (Azar et al., 2016), altruism (Do et al., 2019), involvement (Leckie et al., 2016), attachment to social media (VanMeter et al., 2015), consumer–brand affinity (Singh & Pathak, 2020), and self-brand congruence (Loureiro et al., 2017). The association between personality traits and consumer engagement has also received much attention as researchers have considered conscientiousness (Ross et al., 2009), escapism (Abrantes et al., 2013), sensation seeking (S. S. J. Lin & Tsai, 2002), extroverted personality (Kabadayi & Price, 2014), openness (Saef et al., 2018), and online interaction propensity (Blazevic et al., 2014), to name a few. Consumer status is a growing field of inquiry where prior studies have shown that antecedents to consumer engagement include opinion leader status (Aleahmad et al., 2016), organic influencer (Litterio et al., 2017), social influencer (Audrezet et al., 2018), and popularity (Zywica & Danowski, 2008).

Each area has been examined for its relevance as an antecedent to consumer engagement. For example, VanMeter et al. (2018) examined whether attachment to social media or attitude plays a role in token behaviors, such as liking a brand, or meaningful behaviors, which include making a purchase, donating money, or posting a recommendation. The results of their study showed that attitude toward social media can predict token online behaviors whereas attachment to social media is a better predictor of meaningful behaviors. Brand-generated antecedents have also been considered in the literature. For example, the study by Labrecque et al. (2020) investigated whether consumer engagement varied based on pronoun use in brand communications. They found that there is a significant negative effect when using first-person singular pronouns with utilitarian services brands. Tellis et al. (2019) also found that emotional
ads are shared more on general social media platforms compared to information ads. Moreover, Davis et al. (2019) found that message readability influences consumer engagement.

Extroversion has also been examined as an antecedent to consumer engagement. Extroverts tend to gain energy from socializing with others and enjoy events where they have the opportunity to interact with a large number of people (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). A study involving 269 participants by Kabadayi and Price (2014) concluded that consumers with an extraverted personality are more likely to make posts online for the attention they receive from the broadcasting behavior. As a result, they utilize social media for the utilitarian dimension of finding information to share with others and for the hedonic and social experience of gaining popularity. Moreover, the online behavior of such consumers can positively or negatively influence the attitudes of others towards the brand (Azer & Alexander, 2020).

Consumer status is of particular interest in this study as the elements researched in prior studies have not been examined comprehensively as a singular dimension, namely social media information sharing. Separately, opinion leader status, organic influencer, and social influencer behavior address online behavior without connecting the collective consumer benefits inherent in information sharing such as affirmation and feeling part of community (Azar et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2019; Risselada et al., 2016). Social media trust, as a consumer disposition leading to consumer engagement is also under investigation in this study, because concerns regarding security and privacy protection require consumers to feel assured and comfortable with social media for them to engage online (Pavlou & Fygeson, 2006), and consumers are more likely to use digital information sources they trust (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019; Xiao, Sharman, Rao, & Upadhyaya, 2014).
Prior research has shown that certain consumer characteristics influence online consumer activities. However, there has been little research examining particular consumer factors as suggested by Barger et al. (2016) that lead to brand engagement mediated by consumer engagement, namely social media information sharing and social media trust. Moreover, investigating how those two social media dispositions influence consumer engagement as well as social media goals merits further consideration. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

**Social media information sharing.** The stimulus, organism, response framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and uses and gratification theory (Katz & Foulkes, 1962) provide theoretical underpinnings for consumer information sharing using social media. As consumers are exposed to items of value, they share the information with others. Internet technology provides the mechanism and thus evokes the desire to share knowledge (Kaiser & Müller-Seitz, 2008). Consumers share brand knowledge in social networks to increase value for themselves and for others (Hollebeek et al., 2019). Further, they find self-enhancement by providing useful information (Y. Li & Xie, 2020). Therefore, in this study, social media information sharing is defined as a consumer’s tendency to be recognized for general shopping knowledge and to provide details about products and brands.

Six studies conducted by Barasch and Berger (2014) found that when communicating with multiple people or broadcasting, consumers are less likely to share information that makes them look bad. Rather, when sharing content in groups, consumers tend to share content that is novel or unique to give others the impression that they are well informed (Berger & Schwartz, 2011). In this way, there is a social as well as an affirmation element to information sharing. The level and degree of engaging with others online may result from how consumers are viewed by others as an opinion leader and how they view themselves as an extrovert or their motivation to
share with others for the attention and affirmation from such communication. Moreover, consumers respond more positively by posts from other consumers rather than from brands, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle of sharing and consuming (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020).

New customer acquisition is often facilitated by WOM marketing generated by influencers or opinion leaders (de Matos & Rossi, 2008). Opinion leaders emerge naturally within online networks and have the inherent ability to increase firm profitability by speaking positively about the firm with their online social networks (Litterio et al., 2017). Online opinion leaders spend more time using social media and their influence shapes online social communities (Audrezet et al., 2018). Their credibility is established by their connections and contributions based on information sharing. Further, the study by Carlson et al. (2019) found that the connections and engagement fosters information sharing.

Consumers who do not have access to the influence of others make decisions using a set of criteria limited to their knowledge of the product or service. As a result, consumers often seek out the opinion of others, particularly when the consumer has little experience with the proposed purchase (Lang & Hyde, 2013). Influencers help to fill the knowledge void with sponsored blogs or WOM campaigns (Hughes et al., 2019). Social influencers post brand-related content in social media for pay, while organic influencers are not compensated for their endorsements (Audrezet et al., 2018). A study by Forbes and Vespoli (2013) investigated the characteristics of products that are purchased and recommended by consumers using social media. They determined that recommendations from others influenced purchase decision regardless of whether those others were considered opinion leaders or influencers. This present study investigated the influence of social media information sharing on social media goals and consumer engagement to fill the gap in the literature regarding antecedent social media dispositions.
Social media trust. In the context of relationship marketing and grounded in commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), brands aspire to build relationships by developing commitment and trust with customers. Uses and gratifications theory also provides context for consumer trust in using social media (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Effectively extending consumer trust to social media provides an opportunity for brands to increase engagement and profitability. Social media trust in this study is defined as a consumer’s tendency to feel comfortable and secure using social media. Dolan et al. (2016) called for further investigation of antecedents to social media engagement behaviors, including trust, to ascertain the interaction with brand content and other brand-related social media experiences.

Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang (2007) considered three dimensions of trust in a virtual community setting, namely, economy-based, information-based, and identification-based. In developing social media trust, consumers move from obtainable economic benefit and fear of punishment to familiarity and reduced risk to emotional bonds where individuals can understand and appreciate the wants of others in the community. Y. A. Kim and Phalak (2012) examined expertise-based (i.e., reputation) and preference-trust (i.e., affinity) in the context of experience sharing communities. They developed a framework for predicting degree of trust between users noting that virtual trust is difficult to measure given the introversion of less trusting users.

Shareef, Kapoor, Mukerji, Dwivedi, and Dwivedi (2020) provided a model for social media trust to predict initial consumer behavior based on fulfilled expectation, predictability, familiarity, monitor, and norms. However, in the context of social media, personal relevance (Baird & Nowak, 2014) as well as past experience increase familiarity and also reduce uncertainty, thus increasing trust and consumer engagement (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Rossmann, Ranjan, & Sugathan, 2016).
Trust has been used as a predictor in prior research in the adoption of technology concluding that higher levels of trust lead to increasing use of e-commerce (Pavlou & Fygeson, 2006), particularly when the information is deemed to be relevant, credible (Kareklas, Muehling, & Weber, 2015), and civil (Antoci, Bonelli, Paglieri, Reggiani, & Sabatini, 2019). Trust is also enhanced when the credibility of the source is established by including both positive and negative reviews (Azer & Alexander, 2020). In their meta-analysis review, de Matos and Rossi (2008) found that trust is positively associated with WOM activity. Shu and Chuang (2011) also showed that trust in websites and trust in other members is positively associated with social media member engagement.

Consumers who have confidence that brands will keep their information private and secure are more likely to seek out information, brands, and engage online (Azar et al., 2016). The research by Jacobson, Gruzd, and Hernández-Garcia (2020) found that consumers experience marketing comfort when brands use their information to develop targeted messages. Brands have a vested interest, in that establishing consumer trust regarding data and privacy can be used as a competitive advantage (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019). The association between social media trust and social media goals as well as consumer engagement has yet to be investigated in the arrangement outlined in the conceptual model.

**Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development**

The following section describes the conceptual model for this research study. Hypotheses associated with the conceptual model are also presented. The conceptual model for the antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement is presented in Figure 2.
Brand engagement: Brand involvement and brand advocacy. In this study, brand involvement is defined as a consumer’s cognitive and emotional perception of brand relevance based on how it addresses personal needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Brand involvement is unique from brand awareness which embodies recognition and identification (Seo & Park, 2018) as well as brand associations such as consumption situations or functional qualities that represent the brand in the minds of consumers (Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013). Brand involvement represents mental processing of personal relevance for the consumer and as such, aligns with the cognitive and emotional dimensions of brand engagement (N. J. De Vries & Carlson, 2014; Gómez et al., 2019).

The definition of brand advocacy used in this study was adopted from Roy et al. (2014) as a consumer’s active and uncompensated brand promotion behavior. Brand advocacy is unique from brand loyalty associated with repeat buying behavior (Leckie et al., 2018), brand fidelity based on relationship stability (Grace, Ross, & King, 2020), and brand intimacy which centers on
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brand knowledge (Read et al., 2019). The association between brand advocacy and the behavioral dimension of brand engagement is grounded in the actions of brand advocates who are passionate about the brand and actively recruit others to purchase (Awad & Abdel Fatah, 2015; Chakravarty et al., 2010).

Brand involvement is positively associated with brand advocacy. Although the study by Loureiro et al. (2017) found that brand involvement and self-brand congruency work together in brand engagement, they further suggested there is a sequential flow from involvement to advocacy. The transition from cognitive and emotional to behavioral makes sense in that consumers are drawn to brands that are consistent with how they view themselves (J. Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Moreover, moving from the emotional to the behavioral dimension of brand engagement is evident in that brand involvement is displayed in brand advocacy and is reinforced by consumer engagement activities (Harrigan et al., 2018). Further, delighting loyal customers who have affective commitment fosters co-creation and brand advocacy (Sashi et al., 2019). Therefore, it is proposed that:

\[ H_1: \text{Brand involvement is positively associated with brand advocacy.} \]

**Consumer engagement and brand engagement.** Consumer engagement is defined in this study as a consumer’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral social media connection displayed by contributing and creating digital content. Consumer engagement is distinct from customer engagement marketing in that the former is a customer outcome and the latter focuses on brand-initiated strategies to develop customer engagement (Harmeling et al., 2017). Consumer engagement is a multi-dimensional construct with common associations with cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. Measurement focused on the behavioral dimension can capture the essence of consumer engagement construct (Obilo et al., 2020).
Consumer engagement is positively associated with brand advocacy. Consumers exclusively repurchase and outwardly demonstrate commitment to the brand in this type of relationship (Roy et al., 2014). As brand advocates, current consumers recommend the brand to potential consumers who see the advocates as having higher credibility because they are perceived as a less biased source (C. K. Kim, Han, & Park, 2001). As a result, brand advocacy behavior is a form of social currency for consumers (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019). Stated as behavioral intention of loyalty, the study by So et al. (2014) found that consumer engagement activities foster continued exchanges with the brand, thus enhancing the strength of brand advocacy over time. Moreover, consumer engagement has also been found to positively influence brand advocacy in the tourism industry (Bilro et al., 2018) and brand loyalty in the hospitality industry (Rather, 2019). Consumers have even greater access to advocate for brands using social media. Therefore, it is proposed that:

\( H_2: \) Consumer engagement is positively associated with brand advocacy.

Consumer engagement is positively associated with brand involvement. Prior research has shown mixed results in this regard. For example, Loureiro et al. (2017) found that brand involvement is an antecedent to consumer engagement. Similar results were found in the study by Hollebeek et al. (2014) as well as by Gligor et al. (2019) where involvement was linked to consumer engagement as an antecedent. However, research by Vivek et al. (2012) as well as Brodie et al. (2013) showed the opposite where brand involvement was found to be an outcome of consumer engagement. In the context of social media, brands engage with consumers online to promote a positive cognitive response. Therefore, it is proposed that:

\( H_3: \) Consumer engagement is positively associated with brand involvement.
**Social media goals: Social media information seeking.** Information seeking is one of a number of goals in interpersonal communication (Berger, 2014), involving various industries such as healthcare (Peltier et al., 2020), as well as value co-creation (Yi & Gong, 2013). Need for information is defined as the motivation to find content related to products and services, events, or social opportunities (N. Park et al., 2009). Research by Azar et al. (2016) supported the notion that one of the five consumer goals that are met by engaging with brands online is informational. One in three consumers utilize social media to get information or advice about products they intend to purchase (Trudeau & Shobeiri, 2016). Based on uses and gratifications theory (Blumler, 1979), information seeking includes searching for product details, the opinion of others, as well as new developments in a particular brand category. Consumers are willing to receive communication from brands, particularly ones they already know (Wagner, 2014).

Social media information seeking is positively associated with consumer engagement. Shao and Ross (2015) conducted a study on Facebook brand pages with 358 survey respondents. The results of their research showed that consumers initially engage with a brand to seek information and socialize. Similar results were found in the study by Brodie et al. (2013) in that information seeking led to consumer engagement. After some time, consumers develop a need for entertainment to remain engaged with the brand. It is only their information seeking goal that changes behavior (Dahl, Peltier, et al., 2018) and keeps them engaged with the brand beyond online entertainment activities. Moreover, consumers are motivated by timeliness of information and service responses as well as product information (Rohm et al., 2013) to aid in decision-making (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H₄:* Social media information seeking is positively associated with consumer engagement.
Social media goals: Social media experience. In this study, social media experience is defined as a consumer’s tendency to engage in pleasant and self-enriching encounters using social media. This description is grounded in uses and gratifications theory (Blumler, 1979) and is based on prior studies showing that positive emotions are related to entertainment, fun, relaxation, escapism, and socialization using social media (Abrantes et al., 2013; Hall-Phillips et al., 2016; M. Hamilton et al., 2016; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Recognition and popularity has also been established in the literature as a social media goal that leads to consumer engagement (Liu et al., 2019). Social media information seeking aligns with the utilitarian dimension of social media goals whereas social media experience captures the hedonic and social dimensions.

Social media experience is positively associated with consumer engagement. Consumers create and share stories about brands as part of relating to other social media users (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013). In this way, the brand provides the content, the user relates the experience, and the social media platform allows for mass distribution. In their mixed method study using both a qualitative and quantitative approach, M. Hamilton et al. (2016) found that entertainment and fun were among the social media goals for brand–consumer interactions. Using sports fans and football clubs on Facebook, Vale and Fernandes (2018) showed that integration and social interaction are dominant social media goals leading to consumer engagement behavior, namely contribution and creation of brand-related content. Therefore, it is proposed that:

\[ H_5: \] Social media experience is positively associated with consumer engagement.

Social media dispositions: Social media information sharing. In this study, social media information sharing is defined as a consumer’s tendency to be recognized for general shopping knowledge and to provide details about products and brands. This definition is based
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on prior research on consumer personality traits and consumer dispositions showing that consumers with a propensity to share information using social media exhibit opinion leader status, self-efficacy, and influencer behavior (Abrantes et al., 2013; X. Lin et al., 2019; Risselada et al., 2016).

Opinion leader and influencer consumers tend to have extroverted personalities (Kabadayi & Price, 2014). Butt and Phillips (2008) described extroversion as a person’s tendency to be sociable and to experience positive emotions. In line with social media information sharing, extroverts have a greater number of online connections (Zywica & Danowski, 2008), tend to post more comments and photos (E. Lee, Ahn, & Kim, 2014; Tsai, Chang, Chang, & Chang, 2017), update their social activities (Marshall, Lefringhausen, & Ferenczi, 2015), disseminate information (Saef et al., 2018), and gain social capital or social currency with others more often (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019; Weiqin et al., 2016). The study by Ross et al. (2009) showed that extroversion leads to passive online consumer engagement; however, research by Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) found that extroversion does not necessarily positively influence consumer engagement. Therefore, extroversion alone does not capture the social media disposition associated with consumer engagement.

V. Kumar et al. (2010) proposed a framework for capturing total customer engagement value. Two dimensions of the framework are customer influencer value and customer knowledge value. Direct benefits for firms include increases in customer acquisition, retention and share of wallet, as well as gaining a better understanding of customer preferences. Moreover, V. Kumar and Pansari, (2016) showed that having brand knowledge and sharing that knowledge with others assists firms by increasing communication, receiving feedback, as well as positively influencing
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consumer engagement. Information sharing as a social media disposition captures these two dimensions by incorporating opinion leader status.

Social media information sharing is positively associated with consumer engagement, social media information seeking, and social media experience. In their study on Facebook likes, Baek, Holton, Harp, and Yaschur (2011) found that information sharing was positively associated with consumer engagement. Further, social media information sharing reached beyond providing content to others in that expressing oneself freely as an influencer and getting feedback were benefits also noted by survey respondents. Holton, Baek, Coddington, and Yaschur (2014) found similar results using Twitter, where information sharing as well as interpersonal utility were linked to consumer engagement. Self-expression in this way provides a hedonic benefit through affirmation as an opinion leader or influencer fostering virtual consumer engagement (Verhagen, Swen, Feldberg, & Merikivi, 2015). Moreover, Y. Li and Xie (2020) found that the urge to provide information as well as the tendency to self-enhance motivated information sharing behavior. Therefore, it is posited that:

\( H_6: \) Social media information sharing is positively associated with consumer engagement.

\( H_7: \) Social media information sharing is positively associated with social media information seeking.

\( H_8: \) Social media information sharing is positively associated with social media experience.

**Social media dispositions: Social media trust.** In this study, social media trust is defined as a consumer’s tendency to feel comfortable and secure using social media. This definition was adapted for social networks from Moorman, Deshpande, and Zalttman (1993) who defined consumer trust as being “willing to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has
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confidence” (p. 82). Trust is associated with satisfaction in that higher levels of satisfaction with a firm lead to higher levels of trust (Kau & Loh, 2006). Furthermore, satisfaction reduces uncertainty and anxiety while allowing for vulnerability and therefore increasing trust (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremler, 2002). Trust is also enhanced with other consumers as engagement is increased by communications generated by other users compared to branded sources (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020), meeting consumers’ need to be connected and authentic based on uses and gratifications theory (Phua et al., 2017).

Social media trust is positively associated with consumer engagement, social media information seeking, and social media experience. Consumers who feel connected to and trust the social media community in general are more likely to engage with brands online (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Moreover, the degree to which consumers trust other consumers and marketers in an online brand community also influences consumer engagement (Liu et al., 2018; Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019). By extension, consumers who feel secure and protected while online will engage in more information seeking behavior using social media. Chahal et al. (2019) also found in their study of 433 participants that prior social media experience enhances social media trust and thus fosters continued social media experience. Therefore, it is posited that:

$H_9$: Social media trust is positively associated with consumer engagement.

$H_{10}$: Social media trust is positively associated with social media information seeking.

$H_{11}$: Social media trust is positively associated with social media experience.
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Method

Sample

The population under investigation for this study were people defined as part of Generation Z, which includes those between the age of 18 to 23 (Dimock, 2019). The age demarcation reflects social media use where 88% of U.S. adults aged 18 to 29 use at least one social media site and 78% of U.S. adults aged 30 to 49 use at least one social media site (Pew Research Center, 2018). Social media use beyond age 50 drops to 64% and beyond age 65 to 37% (Pew Research Center, 2018). Therefore, it made sense to consider consumers who are more likely to engage online with social media.

A convenience sample of college students enrolled at a Midwestern public university was used for this study. This approach was in line with recent social media research that has used college students as an approximate representation of the social media population (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; M. Clark et al., 2017; M. Hamilton et al., 2016; VanMeter et al., 2018).

Data Collection

A cross-sectional research design considering participants at the individual level was utilized in this study. Cross-sectional research is appropriate because this research investigates variation over many cases in a single point in time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Data were collected from research participants using a survey. Surveys provide insights and perceptions from the target population in an effective and efficient manner (Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007). Surveys are appropriate for this study because they capture demographic and behavioral data from a large group of participants that can be analyzed for associations and patterns. Demographic data can establish differences based on human characteristics. The survey also included measures for the
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independent variables and dependents variables to the stated hypotheses that were then analyzed using SEM.

The number of completed surveys was 440 students out of 586 for a response rate of 75%. With an undefined or very large population size, 386 completed surveys is representative of the population using the industry standard 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error (Riley Research Associates, n.d.). The online survey was administered over a two-week period to students in various sections of marketing courses with a reminder sent after the first week.

After completing the survey, students were provided a link to an extra credit form to provide their name and instructor so the extra credit could be awarded for completing the survey. The main reasons that students choose to not participate in survey research include lack of motivation and lack of time (Elicker, McConnell, & Hall, 2010). Awarding extra credit and completing the survey on their own time addresses both concerns. Students also had the option to complete an alternative assignment instead of completing the survey to earn the 1% extra credit to reduce the sense of feeling obligated or coerced into participating in the survey administration (Singer & Couper, 2008). The alternative assignment was to watch a ten-minute YouTube video on survey research methods and to write a paragraph summary of the content which was then emailed to the instructor to receive the 1% extra credit. No students chose this option.

The survey was reviewed by a panel of doctoral business students to assess clarity and readability. The survey was administered to three sections of students as part of a pilot study to assess for internal consistency, using a minimum Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.7 to establish content validity (Nunnally, 1978). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then used to assess construct validity of the measures (Hinkin, 1998). In the next step, the survey was administered to additional sections of students to reach the desired target completed sample size. Then, SEM
was used to test for statistical significance in the path relationships. Table 5 provides the respondent profile.

Table 5

Respondent Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Sample Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year in College</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Course Enrollment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Marketing</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Digital Marketing</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Digital Marketing</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 440*

**Measures**

A comprehensive review of the social media marketing, consumer engagement, and branding literature informed the development of constructs to investigate in this study (Vander Schee, Peltier, & Dahl, 2020). Table 6 provides an overview of the constructs that were investigated in this study. The items used for measures of consumer factors mirror those established in previous research. Branding engagement constructs were also measured with scales adopted or adapted from prior studies. The level of consumer engagement follows from the contribution and creation measures suggested by Barger et al. (2016). Table 7 shows the items that were used as measures for each construct. A confirmatory analysis was also used to validate the scales. A copy of the survey is provided in the Appendix.
Table 6

*Construct Definitions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Dispositions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Information Sharing</td>
<td>Four items: A consumer’s tendency to be recognized for general shopping knowledge and to provide details about products and brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Trust</td>
<td>Five items: A consumer’s tendency to feel comfortable and secure using social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Information Seeking</td>
<td>Six items: A consumer’s tendency to look for product and brand content, services, events, or social opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Experience</td>
<td>Four Items: A consumer’s tendency to engage in pleasant and self-enriching encounters using social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing/Creating</td>
<td>Eight items: A consumer’s active participation in promoting or developing brand social media content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>Six items: A consumer’s cognitive and emotional perception of brand relevance based on how it addresses personal needs, values, and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Advocacy</td>
<td>Four items: A consumer’s active and uncompensated brand promotion behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Gender (Male, Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Experience</td>
<td>Year in College (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Education Experience</td>
<td>Marketing Course Enrollment (Principles of Marketing, Intro Digital Marketing, Advanced Digital Marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Usage</td>
<td>Usage Frequency (10+ times per day, 5–9 times per day, 2–4 times per day, about once per day, 2–3 times per week, about once per week, less than once per week)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Measurement Items

#### Social Media Dispositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Information Sharing (1 = <em>Strongly Disagree</em> to 5 = <em>Strongly Agree</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When seeking information about a product/brand, others turn to me for advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When making a final product/brand purchase decision, others turn to me for advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Others consider me to be knowledgeable about products/brands that are important to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Others consider me to an educated consumer regarding products/brands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Social Media Trust (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*)

| 1. I trust the information published by other consumers on social media. |
| 2. Social media information is just as credible as other sources. |
| 3. I believe information published by other consumers on social media is accurate. |
| 4. Social media information is as reliable as other sources. |
| 5. Social media information is as trustworthy as other sources. |

#### Social Media Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Information Seeking (1 = <em>Strongly Disagree</em> to 5 = <em>Strongly Agree</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I like to browse social media to get product/brand information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I follow product/brand updates on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I gather relevant product/brand information from the social media community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am interested in receiving a firm’s product/brand communications via social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I use social media to learn new things about product/brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I use social media to get useful information about the products/brands I like.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Social Media Experience (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*)

| 1. Compared to other social media users, I have more followers/fans. |
| 2. On social media, other people want to connect with me. |
| 3. Having a lot of followers/fans on social media is important to me. |
| 4. I gain social media followers/fans almost every day. |

(continued)
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(continued)

**Consumer Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Contributing/Creating, past 14 days, shared, created, or posted for favorite brand</th>
<th>Created or Posted Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1 = Very Infrequently to 5 = Very Frequently)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brand-related videos</td>
<td>1. Brand-related videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Brand-related comments</td>
<td>2. Brand-related comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Brand-related reviews</td>
<td>3. Brand-related reviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brand Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Involvement, favorite brand in mind (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This brand’s social media means a lot to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This brand’s social media is significant to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am involved with this brand’s social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel close to this brand on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This brand’s social media represents who I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I consider this brand’s social media site to be a reflection of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Advocacy, favorite brand in mind (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If asked, I would be quick to point out how superior this brand is to its competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I recommend the brand to someone who seeks my advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I encourage friends and relatives to use the brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I say positive things about the brand to other people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social media information sharing.** This construct measures a consumer’s tendency to be recognized for general shopping knowledge and to provide details about products and brands. Having category details and a propensity to influence others is characteristic of those who provide information using social media (Litterio et al., 2017). The survey items were adapted from an opinion leader status scale (Risselada et al., 2016) (four items; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

**Social media trust.** Consumers vary in their assessment of online privacy as well as content credibility that leads to trustworthiness (Azar et al., 2016). In this study, social media trust is a consumer’s tendency to feel comfortable and secure using social media. Survey items were adapted from scales measuring trust and social recommendations (Dahl, Milne, et al., 2019;
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Turcotte, York, Irving, Scholl, & Pingree, 2015) (six items; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Social media information seeking.** A consumer’s need for information can motivate information seeking behavior and is positioned here as a consumer’s tendency to look for product and brand content, including services, events, and social opportunities (N. Park et al., 2009). The items measuring the social media information seeking construct were adapted from a scale on information interest by Chahal and Rani (2017) as well as a scale on information seeking by Shao and Ross (2015) (six items; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Social media experience.** The experience value of using social media includes entertainment, relaxation, escapism, and self-improvement to name a few (Azar et al., 2016; Rohm et al., 2013). Social media experience in this study is considered a consumer goal to engage in pleasant and self-enriching encounters. Social media experience was measured with survey items adapted from a popularity scale (Zywica & Danowski, 2008) (four items; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Consumer engagement.** The following delineation tracks the multi-dimensional nature of the consumer engagement construct established in prior studies (Brodie et al., 2013; Carlson et al., 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014) with an emphasis on the behavioral component (Loureiro et al., 2017). In this study, content contribution and creation is defined as a consumer’s active participation in promoting or developing brand social media content. Consistent with prior studies, participants were asked to respond with their favorite brand in mind (Grace et al., 2020; Loureiro et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2014). The measures for consumer engagement in this survey were adapted from Muntinga et al. (2011) and recommended by Barger et al. (2016) (eight items; 1 = *very infrequently*, 5 = *very frequently*).
**Brand involvement.** This construct represents a consumer’s cognitive and emotional perception of brand relevance based on how it addresses personal needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Brand involvement was measured with survey items adapted from the scale developed by Gómez et al. (2019) as well as one item each from the related brand love and self-brand connection scales developed by Simon and Tossan (2018) and Harrigan et al. (2018) (six items; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Brand advocacy.** Consumers can develop a brand engagement relationship where they enjoy promoting the brand to others without compensation. Actively recommending the brand to others is the defining characteristic of brand advocates (Awad & Abdel Fatah, 2015). Items for the brand advocacy construct were adapted from scales representing brand fidelity (Grace et al., 2020) and brand advocacy (Roy et al., 2014) (four items; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

**Control Variables**

Prior research on consumer engagement has shown that consumers with higher frequency and greater time spent on social media influence attitudes toward technology and thus may also influence consumer attitudes and therefore possibly participation in online brand engagement (Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, Cheever, & Rokkum, 2013). General experience with academic engagement along with course material in particular that includes social media instruction may predispose students to have a greater propensity to participate in social media, trust social media communication, and engage with brands. Therefore, the current study controlled for gender, social media use, academic experience, and marketing education experience.
Data Analysis

The following section details the procedures for data analysis along with scale development and model hypothesis testing used in this study.

Procedures. Descriptive statistics provided a profile of survey participants. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the inclusion of survey items given their correlations with each other for particular dimensions. Scale reliability was assessed using Cronbach alpha analysis. A CFA was used to assess that the dimensions are a good fit for the proposed model. Finally, hypothesis testing for the model was assessed using SEM. See Table 8 for a summary of the procedures.

Table 8

Data Analysis Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Data Analysis Methods</th>
<th>Key Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension Development</td>
<td>Exploratory Factor Analysis</td>
<td>Factor Loadings &gt; .4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Model &amp; Scale</td>
<td>Confirmatory Factor Analysis</td>
<td>GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI &gt; .9; RMSEA &lt; .08;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scale Reliability</td>
<td>Standardized Regression Weights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convergent Validity</td>
<td>Cronbach α &gt; .7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discriminant Validity</td>
<td>AVE &gt; .5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>MSV &lt; AVE and ASV &lt; AVE for each construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Standard deviation, means, and correlations for constructs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>Structural Equation Models (SEM) in AMOS</td>
<td>Measurement Fit: GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI &gt; .9; RMSEA &lt; .08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized Regression Weights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. GFI = goodness of fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance; ASV = average shared variance.

Measurement model and scale development. The survey was administered to three sections of students at a Midwestern public university as part of a pilot study. Five marketing doctoral students also reviewed the survey to assess clarity, readability, and face validity. An EFA with varimax rotation was used to assess content validity and affirm the inclusion of items
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for each dimension using a 0.4 cutoff score for factor loadings (Churchill, 1979). Then to assess for internal consistency, particularly for the consumer engagement variable, a minimum Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.7 was used to establish content validity and thus continued inclusion of items in the dimensions (Nunnally, 1978).

The survey was then revised to reflect that all measures have adequate reliability and validity evidence, repeating the previously outlined steps. CFA was then used to assess construct validity of the measures (Hinkin, 1998). The measurement demonstrated good model fit and exceeded the goodness of fit index (GFI) and the adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) suggested .9 cutoff (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Additionally, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was less than the suggested .08 cutoff (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). All factor loadings were significant at the $p < .001$ level (Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004). To establish convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was > .5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Finally, it was verified that the maximum shared variance (MSV) $<$ AVE and average shared variance (ASV) $<$ AVE established discriminant validity.

**Model hypothesis testing.** After completing the CFA in AMOS 26, a SEM path analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses associated with the model. Researchers use SEM to test models with mediating variables, as is the case in this model. The SEM analysis assumes the researchers have established well thought-out theoretical relationships developed from prior studies documented in the research literature. This path analysis has the advantage of using maximum likelihood estimation where the best fit and least difference between the sample and population covariance matrices is estimated (Hoyle, 2012). It also has the advantage of testing structural models with multiple latent factors (Ho, 2013).
Non-response and common method bias. Non-response bias was not a concern in this research because the sample used was representative of the target population. Common method variance can occur when “variance is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 879). Although triangulation was beyond the scope of this study, common method bias was reduced by assuring respondent anonymity, using specific and concise language in the survey items, and deriving the scales to measure the constructs from various sources (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Common method bias was also addressed post-hoc by using Harman’s single factor method and the common latent factor (CLF) method (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). The standardized regression weights were compared when running the analysis with and without the CLF. They were determined to not be significant, therefore the CLF was not retained in the structured model (Yüksel, 2017).
Results

This section provides statistical analysis of the cross-sectional survey, including an EFA, CFA, common method bias checks, and SEM. This section opens with the results of the EFA using SPSS 27 to produce initial measurement scales, which were then tested for reliability. Based on discussions after data collection, it was decided in the interest of model parsimony (G. W. Cheung & Rensvold, 2001) that two models would be most appropriate for continued data analysis. Furthermore, a path was added from social media information seeking to social media experience. Model 1 tested for the relationships between consumer engagement and brand engagement. Model 2 tested for the relationship between consumer factors (i.e., social media dispositions and social media goals) and consumer engagement.

Following are the results for the CFA for each of the two models where AMOS 26 was used to test the fit of the measurement models. The results of post hoc tests used to test for common method bias are noted. Finally, the results of hypotheses testing and path analyses using SEM are presented.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

An EFA was utilized to identify an initial set of dimensions using varimax rotation based on eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Seven dimensions, explaining 70.31% of the variance emerged. Cronbach alpha scores for all dimensions exceeded .80, meeting the benchmark of .70 (Nunnally, 1978) and establishing internal validity. Reported Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values of .924 confirmed sampling adequacy. Also, Bartlett’s test for sphericity with a significance level .000 verified the homogeneity of the variances (Hair et al., 2010). Table 9 provides the results of the rotated component matrix for the seven dimensions along with corresponding coefficient alpha scores.
### Table 9

**Exploratory Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement Items</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement $(\alpha = .95)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related reviews .864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related promotions .845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related comments .845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related videos .842</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related comments .829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related reviews .809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related videos .791</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related promotions .774</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to browse social media to get product/brand information .821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to learn new things about products/brands .818</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to get useful information about the products/brands I like .809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gather relevant product/brand information from the social media community .794</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow product/brand updates on social media .704</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in receiving a firm’s product/brand communication via social media .676</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as trustworthy as other sources .858</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as reliable as other sources .855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as credible as other sources .848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe information published by others on social media is accurate .777</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the information published by others on social media .747</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media represents who I am .724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider this brand’s social media site to be a reflection of me .717</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media is significant to me .701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel close to this brand on social media .699</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media means a lot to me .696</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved with this brand’s social media .638</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I say positive things about the brand to other people .844</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recommend the brand to someone who seeks my advice .826</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage friends and relatives to use the brand .794</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If asked, I would be quick to point out how superior this brand is to its competitors .716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be knowledgeable about products/brands that are important to them .796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When making a final product/brand purchase, others turn to me for advice .789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be an educated consumer regarding brands .766</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When seeking information about a product/brand, others turn to me for advice .765</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other social media users, I have more followers/fans .781</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain social followers/fans almost every day .738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a lot of followers/fans on social media is important to me .667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On social media, other people want to connect with me .666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measurement Model 1

Model fit. Figure 3 shows the final presentation for Measurement Model 1. The chi-square minimum discrepancy (CMIN) divided by its degrees of freedom (df) or CMIN / df is less than the suggested 3.0 value and the overall chi square statistic for the measurement model was significant ($\chi^2 = 210.060$, $df = 122$, CMIN / df = 1.722, $p < .001$). Although the p-value was significant, other measures of goodness of fit suggest a satisfactory model. The GFI (.950), AGFI (.930), CFI (.985), and NFI (.965) were all above the .90 cutoff suggested by Bentler and Bonett (1980). In addition, the RMSEA (.041) and its confidence interval (CI) of .031 to .050 were less than the .08 cutoff suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Finally, the CFI of .985 exceeded the suggested .95 cutoff (Hu & Bentler, 2009).

The process outlined by Mathwick and Rigdon (2004) was followed, with all individual items loading at a significant level ($p < .001$), with the completely standardized solution for all items ranging from .620 to .884 as shown in Table 10. The minimum .5 guideline suggested by Cortina (1993) was met by all 18 standardized loadings, with 13 meeting the .7 preferred guideline. The AVE value was .603, and each construct had an AVE > .572, meeting the convergent validity .5 criterion set by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Table 11 shows the assessment for discriminant validity, where construct values for MSV, ASV, and AVE were compared to verify MSV < AVE and ASV < AVE for each of the constructs. Discriminant validity was also established by having the square root of the AVE exceeding all paired correlations shown in the diagonal of the correlation matrix in Table 12. Table 12 also shows the descriptive statistics, correlations, and significance levels for the three constructs utilized in the measurement model.
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Figure 3. Confirmatory factor analysis Measurement Model 1.

Table 10

Standardized Factor Loadings of Measurement Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct and Measurement Item</th>
<th>Standardized Loadings</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related comments</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related videos</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related comments</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related videos</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media means a lot to me</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media is significant to me</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved with this brand’s social media</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel close to this brand on social media</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media represents who I am</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider this brand’s social media site to be a reflection of me</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If asked, I would be quick to point out how superior this brand is to its competitors</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage friends and relatives to use the brand</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I say positive things about the brand to other people</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone says something bad about this brand on social media, I am quick to defend</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

Scale Reliability and Validity Statistics for Measurement for Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>MSV</th>
<th>ASV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.936</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Advocacy</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $\chi^2 = 210.060; df = 172; GFI = .950; AGFI = .930; CFI = .985; NFI = .965; RMSEA = .041$. AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance; ASV = average shared variance.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics and Variable Correlations for Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Consumer Engagement</th>
<th>Brand Involvement</th>
<th>Brand Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>.805*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>.510*</td>
<td>.756*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Advocacy</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.369*</td>
<td>.768*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .01$.

**Common method bias.** In addition to the precautions used in survey development and administration to minimize common method bias noted previously, the CLF method was used to test for common method variance for Model 1, as recommended by Gaskin (2012). A CLF was created in the CFA. Each individual item was allowed to load on its latent construct and the CLF. First, each path was constrained, and the square of the common variance was calculated as $.27^2$, or .0729. Second, the deltas of the standardized regression weights were calculated by subtracting the betas from the CFA model without the CLF from the betas obtained from the CFA model with the CLF as shown in Table 13. No deltas were greater than the .2 cutoff suggested by Gaskin (2012). Absolute values of the deltas ranged from .025 to .058.

Based on the results of the two common method variance post-hoc tests, common method bias does not appear to be a concern.
Table 13

Comparison of Confirmatory Factor Analysis with and without Common Latent Factor Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct and Measurement Item</th>
<th>Standard Estimates No CLF</th>
<th>Standard Estimates with CLF</th>
<th>Delta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.731</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related comments</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related videos</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>.631</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related comments</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related videos</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media means a lot to me</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media is significant to me</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved with this brand’s social media</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel close to this brand on social media</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brand’s social media represents who I am</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider this brand’s social media site to be a reflection of me</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If asked, I would be quick to point out how superior this brand is to its competitors</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage friends and relatives to use the brand</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I say positive things about the brand to other people</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone says something bad about this brand on social media, I am quick to defend</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CLF = common latent factor.

Structural Equation Model Path Results for Model 1

Model 1 examined the antecedents of brand advocacy (i.e., consumer engagement, brand involvement). Model 1 included two direct paths and one indirect relationship leading to brand advocacy. Full SEM path analysis using AMOS 26 was conducted. Although the chi square was significant, the CMIN divided by its degrees of freedom was less than the recommended 3.0 value ($\chi^2 = 339.225, df = 124, \text{CMIN} / df = 2.736, p < .001$). Therefore, other model fit measures were used to ensure the structural path model provided a satisfactory fit to test the hypothesized relationships. The GFI (.929), AGFI (.902), CFI (.963), NFI (.943), and RSMEA (.063) all met the threshold requirements and indicated the model acceptably fit the data (Hu & Bentler, 2009). Alternative models were also tested one at a time and in combination by varying the order of...
latent constructs, reversing directional paths, and adding or eliminating paths. None of the models performed as well as the original model.

Two of the three hypothesized relationships were significant and in the hypothesized positive direction. The third relationship was significant but counter to expectations. Table 1 provides the structural model parameter estimates and corresponding t-values, while Figure 4 shows the reduced model with significant pathways.

**Direct effects for Model 1.** One of the two direct effects on brand engagement was positive and significant as hypothesized. Brand involvement \( (H_1; \beta = .339, p < .001) \) had a positive, direct relationship with brand advocacy. Unexpectedly, consumer engagement \( (H_2; \beta = -.158, p = .008) \) had a negative, direct relationship with brand advocacy.

**Indirect effects for Model 1.** The one indirect pathway on brand advocacy was positive and significant as hypothesized. Consumer engagement had a positive path to brand involvement \( (H_3; \beta = .536; p < .001) \). These results show that the influence of consumer engagement on brand advocacy is partially mediated by brand involvement. Furthermore, although the path from consumer engagement to brand advocacy was negative, showing competitive mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010), the standardized total effect \( (-.150 + .182 = .022) \) shows that the net influence of consumer engagement on brand advocacy is positive through brand involvement.

**Moderating influences for Model 1.** Gender, social media usage, year in school, and course enrolled were added to the full structural path model to test for meaningful differences in social media brand engagement. The critical ratio values did not differ significantly between the original model and the model with moderating influences. Therefore, although introducing these variables made slight changes in the regression weights, they did not change the outcome regarding whether to accept or reject the hypotheses associated with the direct and indirect paths.
Table 14

Tests of the Structural Equation Modeling Path Hypotheses for Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses and Paths</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Paths to Brand Advocacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_1$ Brand Involvement $\rightarrow$ Brand Advocacy</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>6.248</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_2$ Consumer Engagement $\rightarrow$ Brand Advocacy</td>
<td>-.158</td>
<td>-2.636</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Paths to Brand Advocacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_3$ Consumer Engagement $\rightarrow$ Brand Involvement</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>9.501</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $\chi^2 = 339.225; df = 124; GFI = .929; AGFI = .902; CFI = .963; NFI = .943; RMSEA = .063.*

---

**Figure 4.** Reduced model showing significant pathways for Model 1.
Measurement Model 2

Model fit. Figure 5 shows the final presentation for Measurement Model 2. The CMIN divided by its degrees of freedom (CMIN / df) was less than the suggested 3.0 value, so the overall chi square statistic for the measurement model was significant ($\chi^2 = 389.827, df = 302, CMIN / df = 1.291, p < .001$). Although the $p$-value was significant, other measures of goodness of fit suggest a satisfactory model. The GFI (.939), AGFI (.924), CFI (.989), and NFI (.954) were all above the .90 cutoff suggested by Bentler and Bonett (1980). In addition, the RMSEA (.026) and its CI of .018 to .033 were less than the .08 cutoff suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Finally, the CFI of .989 exceeded the suggested .95 cutoff (Hu & Bentler, 2009).

The process outlined by Mathwick and Rigdon (2004) was followed, with all individual items loading at a significant level ($p < .001$), with the completely standardized solution for all items ranging from .590 to .885 as shown in Table 15. The minimum .5 guideline suggested by Cortina (1993) was met by all 27 standardized loadings with 22 meeting the .7 preferred guideline. The AVE value was .603, and each construct had an AVE > .512, meeting the convergent validity .5 criterion set by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Table 16 shows the assessment for discriminant validity, where construct values for MSV, ASV, and AVE were compared to verify MSV < AVE and ASV < AVE for each of the constructs. Discriminant validity was also established by having the square root of the AVE exceeding all paired correlations shown in the diagonal of the correlation matrix in Table 17. Table 17 also shows the descriptive statistics, correlations, and significance levels for the five constructs utilized in the measurement model.
Figure 5. Confirmatory factor analysis measurement Model 2.
Table 15

*Standardized Factor Loadings of Measurement Model 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct and Measurement Item</th>
<th>Standardized Loadings</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Information Sharing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When seeking information about a product/brand, others turn to me for advice</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When making a final product/brand purchase, others turn to me for advice</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be knowledgeable about products/brands that are important to them</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be an educated consumer regarding brands</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the information published by others on social media</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is just as credible as other sources</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe information published by others on social media is accurate</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as reliable as other sources</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as trustworthy as other sources</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other social media users, I have more followers/fans</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On social media, other people want to connect with me</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a lot of followers/fans on social media is important to me</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain social followers/fans almost every day</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Information Seeking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to browse social media to get product/brand information</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow product/brand updates on social media</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gather relevant product/brand information from the social media community</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in receiving a firm’s product/brand communications via social media</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to learn new things about products/brands</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to get useful information about the products/brands I like</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related comments</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related videos</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related comments</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related videos</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

Scale Reliability and Validity Statistics for Measurement Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>MSV</th>
<th>ASV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Information Sharing</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Trust</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Experience</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Information Seeking</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.936</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\chi^2 = 389.827; df = 302; GFI = .939; AGFI = .924; CFI = .989; NFI = .954; RMSEA = .026$. AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance; ASV = average shared variance.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics and Variable Correlations for Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SM Info Seeking</th>
<th>SM Trust</th>
<th>SM Info Sharing</th>
<th>SM Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Info Seeking</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>.795*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Trust</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td>.358*</td>
<td>.801*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Info Sharing</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.910</td>
<td>.409*</td>
<td>.264*</td>
<td>.763*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Experience</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>.365*</td>
<td>.290*</td>
<td>.567*</td>
<td>7.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>.279*</td>
<td>.295*</td>
<td>.308*</td>
<td>.439*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .01. SM = social media; Info = information.

Common method bias. Proactive measures were taken in the design of this research to minimize common method bias. Along with conducting a pilot study, other procedural measures included keeping the survey anonymous, separating the constructs, and using a 5-point Likert scale consistently throughout the survey. It is not possible to eliminate all sources of common method bias, thus two post-hoc statistical techniques were used to check for common method variance as outlined by Podsakoff et al. (2003).

First, Harman’s single-factor test was conducted using an EFA with no rotation and constraining the number of factors to one. The total variance explained was 31.0%, which is below the 50% level, suggesting common method variance was not an issue. Second, the CLF method was used to test for common method variance, as recommended by Gaskin (2012). Again, a CLF was created in the CFA. Each individual item was allowed to load on its latent
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construct and the CLF. First, each path was constrained, and the square of the common variance was calculated as \(0.37^2\), or .1369. Second, the deltas of the standardized regression weights were calculated by subtracting the betas from the CFA model without the CLF from the betas obtained from the CFA model with the CLF as shown in Table 18. No deltas were greater than the .2 cutoff suggested by Gaskin (2012). Absolute values of the deltas ranged from .035 to .095.

Similar to the results of the common method bias test for Model 1 and the results of the two common method variance post-hoc tests for Model 2, common method bias does not appear to be a concern.
Table 1

Comparison of Confirmatory Factor Analysis with and without Common Latent Factor Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct and Measurement Item</th>
<th>Standard Estimates No CLF</th>
<th>Standard Estimates with CLF</th>
<th>Delta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Information Sharing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When seeking information about a product/brand, others turn to me for advice</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>.764</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When making a final product/brand purchase, others turn to me for advice</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be knowledgeable about products/brands that are important to them</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others consider me to be an educated consumer regarding brands</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the information published by others on social media</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is just as credible as other sources</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe information published by others on social media is accurate</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as reliable as other sources</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media information is as trustworthy as other sources</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other social media users, I have more followers/fans</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On social media, other people want to connect with me</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a lot of followers/fans on social media is important to me</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gain social followers/fans almost every day</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Information Seeking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to browse social media to get product/brand information</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow product/brand updates on social media</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gather relevant product/brand information from the social media community</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in receiving a firm’s product/brand communications via social media</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to learn new things about products/brands</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to get useful information about the products/brands I like</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>.816</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related comments</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created or posted brand-related videos</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related promotions</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.605</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related reviews</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related comments</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared brand-related videos</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CLF = common latent factor.

Structural Equation Model Path Results for Model 2

Model 2 examined the antecedents of social media dispositions (i.e., information sharing, social media trust) and social media goals (i.e., information seeking, social media experience). Model 2 included four direct paths and four indirect relationships leading to consumer engagement. Full SEM path analysis using AMOS 26 was conducted. Although the chi square
was significant, the CMIN divided by its degrees of freedom was less than the recommended 3.0 value ($\chi^2 = 528.567$, $df = 308$, $\text{CMIN} / df = 1.716$, $p < .001$). Therefore, other model fit measures were used to ensure the structural path model provided a satisfactory fit to test the hypothesized relationships. The GFI (.924), AGFI (.906), CFI (.973), NFI (.938), and RSMEA (.040) all met the threshold requirements and indicated the model acceptably fit the data (Hu & Bentler, 2009).

Alternative models were also tested one at a time and in combination by varying the order of latent constructs, reversing directional paths, and adding or eliminating paths. None of the models performed as well as the original model.

Six of the eight hypothesized relationships were significant and in the hypothesized positive direction. Table 19 provides the structural model parameter estimates and corresponding $t$-values, while Figure 6 shows the reduced model with significant pathways.

**Direct effects for Model 2.** Two of the four direct effects on consumer engagement were positive and significant as hypothesized. Social media experience ($H_5$: $\beta = .286$, $p < .001$) and social media trust ($H_9$: $\beta = .188$, $p < .001$), each had positive, direct relationships with consumer engagement. The direct paths from social media information seeking ($H_4$: $\beta = .042$, $p > .050$) and social media information sharing ($H_6$: $\beta = .075$, $p > .050$) to consumer engagement were not supported.

**Indirect effects for Model 2.** All four of the indirect pathways on consumer engagement were positive and significant as hypothesized. First, both of the indirect paths from social media information sharing were supported. Social media information sharing had a positive path to social media information seeking ($H_7$: $\beta = .357$, $p < .001$) and to social media experience ($H_8$: $\beta = .488$, $p < .001$). Second, both of the indirect paths from social media trust were supported. Social media trust had a positive path to social media information seeking ($H_{10}$: $\beta = .331$, $p <$
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and to social media experience ($H_{11}$: $\beta = .167; p = .004$). Finally, the indirect path from social media information seeking to social media experience was supported. Social media information seeking had a positive direct path to social media experience ($\beta = .121; p = .031$).

These results show that the influence of social media trust on consumer engagement is partially mediated by social media information seeking and social media experience. These results also show that the influence of social media information sharing on consumer engagement is fully mediated by social media information sharing and social media experience.

Table 19

Tests of the SEM Path Hypotheses for Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses and Paths</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Paths to Consumer Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_4$ Social Media Info Seeking $\rightarrow$ Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>0.794</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_5$ Social Media Experience $\rightarrow$ Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>5.069</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_6$ Social Media Info Sharing $\rightarrow$ Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>1.150</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_9$ Social Media Trust $\rightarrow$ Consumer Engagement</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>3.350</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Paths to Consumer Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_7$ Social Media Info Sharing $\rightarrow$ Social Media Info Seeking</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>6.474</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_8$ Social Media Info Sharing $\rightarrow$ Social Media Experience</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>7.783</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{10}$ Social Media Trust $\rightarrow$ Social Media Info Seeking</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>6.230</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{11}$ Social Media Trust $\rightarrow$ Social Media Experience</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>2.859</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Info Seeking $\rightarrow$ Social Media Experience</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>2.152</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\chi^2 = 528.567; df = 308; GFI = .924; AGFI = .906; CFI = .973; NFI = .938; RMSEA = .040$. n.s. = not significant.

Moderating influences for Model 2. Gender, social media usage, year in school, and course enrolled were added to the full structural path model to test for meaningful differences in how consumers engage in social media. The critical ratio values did not differ significantly between the original model and the model with moderating influences. Therefore, although introducing these variables into the model made slight changes in the regression weights, they
did not change the outcome regarding whether to accept or reject the hypotheses associated with the direct and indirect paths.

Figure 6. Reduced model showing significant pathways for Model 2.
Discussion, Limitations, and Future Research

This section reviews the purpose of the study and its major findings. It includes a discussion of the findings of the consumer–brand relational engagement framework, as well as Models 1 and 2, with an emphasis on contributions to the literature. Next is a section outlining the practical implications for industry. The section concludes with limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Discussion

The results of this study make valuable theoretical contributions to the marketing discipline and provide important practical implications for businesses using social media marketing. Social media use is common among consumers and businesses, with growth projected in the future (von Abrams, 2019). Firms also continue to increase spending on social media marketing compared to traditional media outlets (Enberg, 2019). Further increases are planned as brands reach out to consumers where they congregate online. Therefore, insights that assist companies in developing an effective social media marketing strategy offer a competitive advantage and a stronger return on digital marketing investment (Rasool et al., 2020).

Social media is based on networks among consumers and has extended to connections between consumers and brands. Therefore, research regarding social media marketing has focused on consumer engagement (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019) and brand engagement (Gligor et al., 2019). This study investigated the influence of consumer factors on consumer engagement as well as the influence of consumer engagement on brand engagement. The relationships between consumer engagement and its antecedents as well as between consumer engagement and its consequences were viewed through the lens of uses and gratifications theory (Kujur & Singh, 2020). This study adds to the literature by establishing hedonic and social motivations as goals.
for online consumer engagement as well as highlighting the importance of hedonic and social dimensions in brand engagement.

A consumer–brand relational engagement framework was developed in Essay 1 based on prior studies to enhance the understanding of consumer engagement in social media. The essay highlighted how consumer antecedents to consumer engagement have been studied in past research while organizing the factors into categories, namely, consumer status, consumer disposition, personality trait, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and cultural dimension. Measures for consumer engagement were categorized based on affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Branding outcomes of consumer engagement were also classified into groups a brand status, brand disposition, brand attribute, brand connection, brand affirmation, and brand aversion.

Essay 1 responds to the call by Barger et al. (2016) and Manser Payne et al. (2017) and contributes to the marketing literature by providing a comprehensive conceptual framework on consumer factor antecedents, measures, and branding outcomes of consumer engagement. The essay fills the need to expand the consumer engagement construct beyond digital transactions using social media (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). The categorization and sub-item listing of antecedents and outcomes provide a basis for future studies. For example, measuring consumer engagement using the behavioral dimension is worthy of further examination (Schivinski et al., 2016). Moreover, antecedent factors with mediators from disposition to motivation in the context of social media require further consideration. The relationships in branding outcomes as progression or interaction should also be investigated (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). The findings from Essay 1 set the contextual background for further research investigated in Essay 2.
Two models were then developed in Essay 2 to further the understanding of consequences and antecedents of consumer engagement. Model 1 tested the relationship between consumer engagement and brand engagement. Model 2 examined the influence of consumer factors on consumer engagement. The results of Model 1 show that consumer engagement influences brand engagement, although the connections are interrelated and multi-faceted. The results of Model 2 also show significant findings regarding the relationship between consumer factors and consumer engagement.

More specifically, the results of Essay 2 add insights regarding the progressive nature of brand engagement from brand involvement to brand advocacy not previously researched in the literature (Dessart, 2017). The progression developed in this study provides a greater understanding of the transition from the cognitive and emotional dimensions to the behavioral dimension of brand engagement (Moro & Rita, 2018). The importance of this finding is highlighted by brand advocacy being the desired outcome for many marketers as brand advocates speak positively about a brand without compensation (Sashi et al., 2019). Brand advocacy also provides benefits for consumers as it simplifies the search process (Abrantes et al., 2013) and encourages new product trials (Bilro et al., 2018). Therefore, brands have a vested interest in gaining insights regarding how brand advocacy is fostered on social media.

Second, this study makes a valuable contribution regarding the influence of consumer engagement on brand involvement and brand advocacy that has been missing in the social media marketing literature (Obilo et al., 2020). The results from Model 1 demonstrate that consumer engagement positively influences brand involvement and has a net positive influence on brand advocacy through brand involvement. However, the latter relationship is complicated by the negative direct path from consumer engagement to brand advocacy.
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Third, this study examined social media goals as motivation for consumer engagement in social media as suggested by Barger et al. (2016) and Florenthal (2019). The results from Model 1 show that social media experience has a positive direct influence on consumer engagement. There is full mediation in the relationship between social media information sharing and consumer engagement through social media information seeking and social media experience. Social media information seeking and social media experience also partially mediate the relationship between social media trust and consumer engagement. Moreover, social media information seeking does not have a significant influence on consumer engagement as a direct path. These findings highlight the importance of the hedonic and social dimensions of consumer motivation regarding consumer engagement using social media (Calder et al., 2009; Nery et al., 2020). They also connect uses and gratifications theory to consumer engagement in that social media experience, as a common path, bridges consumer factors to desired outcomes as a fulfilling, reinforcing activity (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Fourth, responding to the call for research on consumer factors an antecedents (Labrecque et al., 2020; Vander Schee et al., 2020), this study explored both the direct and indirect effects of social media dispositions, namely, social media information seeking and social media trust, on consumer engagement. The significance of social media trust is noted in the results from Model 2, with a positive direct relationship with consumer engagement as well with social media information seeking, and social media experience. The model also shows that social media information sharing has a positive direct influence on social media information seeking and social media experience as social media goals. The relationships regarding social media dispositions suggest that antecedent factors align with the emotional and social dimensions of consumer engagement (Vivek et al., 2014).
Discussion of results for Model 1. Model 1 addresses the calls for research for examining the influence of consumer engagement on brand engagement by Manser Payne et al. (2017) and how brand engagement is manifested in social media by Dessart (2017). Previous studies have shown a progression from the cognitive and emotional dimensions of brand engagement to the behavioral dimension (Loureiro et al., 2017). Moreover, the results of the study affirm that finding, and offer a unique perspective in brand engagement with a progression from brand involvement to brand advocacy. From a uses and gratifications theory perspective (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000), the positive direct path shows that consumers may connect with a brand on a cognitive level and, with continued satisfaction with the brand experience (Dolan et al., 2016), develop an emotional and behavioral relationship, transitioning from brand involvement to brand advocacy.

The relationship between consumer engagement and brand advocacy is partially mediated by brand involvement. This suggests that consumer engagement connections are not purely behavioral in nature (Franzak et al., 2014). The cognitive and affective dimensions may be necessary to move consumers through the brand engagement progression from brand involvement to brand advocacy. Therefore, social media marketing strategies should incorporate thinking and feeling elements to foster behavioral connections (Harmeling et al., 2017). For example, consumer engagement focused on providing information with an emotional appeal should be coupled with mechanisms to share, post, or create brand-related content.

Consumer engagement and brand engagement share common elements regarding social media activities involving cognition, emotion, and behavior (Liu et al., 2018; Moro & Rita, 2018). Unexpectedly, and counter to the hypothesis, the results of Model 1 showed a significant yet negative direct path from consumer engagement to brand advocacy. Although when viewed
from the uses and gratifications perspective, as well as the behavioral dimension measured in the consumer engagement construct, perhaps the apparent contradiction should not be surprising. Nevertheless, there appears to be a circular, self-fulfilling relationship between consumer engagement, brand involvement, and brand advocacy in that the relationship from consumer engagement to brand advocacy is negative. This suggests that consumer engagement leads to brand involvement which leads to brand advocacy, which leads back to consumer engagement. However, the net standardized total effect of .022 shows that the influence of consumer engagement on brand advocacy through brand involvement is positive. Taken together, the results indicate that further research is needed to clarify whether the competitive mediation progression from consumer engagement to brand engagement is sequential, circular, or interrelated (Dwivedi, 2015; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019; Gómez et al., 2019).

It is worth noting that only the behavioral dimension of consumer engagement common in other studies (Schivinski et al., 2016; Simon & Tossan, 2018; Vale & Fernandes, 2018) was measured in this study. Thus, simply the actions associated with social media may foster thoughts and feelings about a particular brand, manifested as brand involvement (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). The progression continues from cognition and affection back to the behavioral display of brand advocacy. Brand advocates may then manifest their advocacy behaviors as further engagement in social media by contributing or creating brand-related content as a natural extension of their online presence. The relationships are connected and complex with an overall effect of fostering brand advocacy, which is a branding aspirational goal (So et al., 2014), as well as a possible consumer achievement (Kesgin & Murthy, 2019). The mutually beneficial scenario builds equity for the brand (Seo & Park, 2018) and social currency for the brand advocates (Wei Qin et al., 2016).
Discussion of results for Model 2. Model 2 responds to the call for research on consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement by Barger et al. (2016), namely social media dispositions and social media goals. Previous studies have examined social media goals as consumer motivation to engage online (Audrezet et al., 2018; Sharifi, 2019; Shi & Wojnicki, 2014). This study focused on social media information seeking and social media experience as social media goals. Contrary to other studies (Chahal & Rani, 2017; Nery et al., 2020), the results showed that the direct path from social media information seeking to consumer engagement was not significant. Although this finding is surprising, information seeking behavior may be more closely aligned with passive consumer engagement manifested as content consumption (Shao & Ross, 2015) as opposed to active consumer engagement examined in this study as content contribution and creation.

The results empirically demonstrate that social media experience positively influences consumer engagement. The social media experience goal addresses hedonic as well as social motivations where consumers look for fulfillment for self-status (Y. Jin et al., 2017), popularity (Azar et al., 2016), fun (Whiting & Williams, 2013), and socialization (Abrantes et al., 2013). Therefore, consumers may have a goal to engage online for enjoyment, but they also may aspire to enhance their standing in the social media community. This dual motivation to connect with others online is reflected in the social media experience construct. This finding adds to the literature on uses and gratifications theory in that consumers are motivated by social media goals, and continue through to consumer engagement as a result of the social media experience (Liu et al., 2019).

The results of this study also show that social media experience mediates the relationships between social media dispositions and consumer engagement. More specifically,
the relationship between social media information sharing and consumer engagement is fully mediated by social media information seeking and social media experience. Moreover, the direct path from social media information sharing to consumer engagement is not significant. Social media information sharing leading to social media information seeking is grounded in uses and gratifications theory (Q. Chen, Clifford, & Wells, 2002) and self-enhancement (X. Lin et al., 2019). The disposition to share information is partially driven by the motivation to obtain useful information to share with others (Y. Li & Xie, 2020). The more a consumer finds information to be useful and receives satisfaction from sharing it with others, the more the consumer will seek for useful information using social media.

This finding also builds on prior research in that consumers may have a disposition to share information to be recognized for general shopping knowledge and to provide details about brands (Risselada et al., 2016). However, the propensity to share information alone may not positively influence consumer engagement (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). Therefore, the connection to consumer engagement may reside in the recognition that comes from the hedonic and social dimensions of social media experience rather than just consumer engagement activities as defined in this study. This is an important finding in that opportunities to share information, coupled with pleasurable and recognition-based incentives, can maximize consumer engagement (Rietveld, van Dolen, Mazloom, & Worring, 2020).

The results from Model 2 clearly demonstrate the importance of social media experience on consumer engagement. The relationship between social media trust and consumer engagement is partially mediated by social media information seeking and social media experience. This finding builds on prior studies where consumers who feel safe and comfortable online will engage in more social media information seeking behavior (Liu et al., 2018). It is also
not surprising that social media experience connects social media trust and consumer engagement. Moreover, this finding builds on prior research establishing that trust is enhanced by experiences with other consumers (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020), fostering continued social media experience (Chahal et al., 2019). Moreover, the social media community builds credibility and reliability from information posted online (Liu et al., 2018). The results in Model 2 also show a positive direct path from social media trust to consumer engagement. This finding adds to the uses and gratifications theory in that consumers with trust for social media will connect with social media experiences, which continues to build their trust in social media (Phua et al., 2017).

**Practical implications.** The results of this study provide important implications for marketers, brand managers, and social media strategists. First, the importance of brand involvement is evident in that consumer engagement leads to brand advocacy through brand involvement. Therefore, it makes sense for marketers to develop mechanisms that foster consumer engagement leading to brand advocacy. More specifically, brands should encourage consumers to create digital content that stimulates cognitive and emotional elements along with incentives for posting and sharing to address the behavioral dimension. Examples for content include comments, reviews, and videos. The context can be set as a new product or product modification forum, a special event, game, or a competition keeping in mind that consumers value transparency and authenticity in the process (Eigenraam et al., 2018; Moulard et al., 2016).

Second, consistent with Obilo et al. (2020), the results show that brands can focus on the behavioral element of consumer engagement, even though prior research has addressed consumer engagement as a multi-dimensional (V. Kumar & Pansari, 2016) or tri-dimensional construct (Hollebeek et al., 2014). As such, social media marketers should feel comfortable with implementing interactive social media strategies and measuring effectiveness based on online
consumer activity. Brands should develop the means for consumers to actively participate in social media with a focus on interactivity. This approach will result in higher engagement than simply posting branded content for consumers to passively view or read (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Higher consumer engagement with the brand in social media will transition to brand involvement and brand advocacy as previously discussed.

Third, the results show that social media goals play an important role in fostering consumer engagement. Although the direct relationship between social media information seeking to consumer engagement was not found to be significant, social media experience had a positive direct path to consumer engagement. It also fully mediated the relationship from social media information sharing through social media information seeking to consumer engagement. Social media goals may change over time (Dahl, Peltier, et al., 2018), going beyond the cognitive need for information to the more hedonic and social dimensions of interacting with others through social media experience. Brands can highlight interactivity while addressing the self-status aspect of the social media experience by adding badging or standing as a mechanism for consumers to display their level of connectivity to others. Moreover, as a consumer’s online social profile is a reflection of the consumer’s personal brand, marketers should promote individuality by providing mechanism modifications for consumers to build a unique social media personality identity (Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

Fourth, social media experience partially mediated the relationship between social media trust and consumer engagement through social media information seeking. As such, the positive direct path from social media trust to consumer engagement was also significant. Social media dispositions may be more difficult for brands to cultivate as they are considered inherent consumer factors (Zolkepli et al., 2018). However, they are manifested in social media goals,
such as social media information seeking, and thus can be activated for particular online behaviors, including consumer engagement (Azar et al., 2016). Social media information seeking can be encouraged by providing timely, relevant content that is readily available to consumers (Rohm et al., 2013).

Finally, with the goal of making consumers feel comfortable and secure using social media, brands can focus on establishing credibility through positive and negative reviews (Azer & Alexander, 2020), highlighting authenticity using brand-related stories from non-celebrities (Shareef et al., 2020), and fostering security by communicating data privacy protocols (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019). Social media trust develops over time through familiarity and consistency (Rossmann et al., 2016), therefore, brand strategies designed to be transparent and reliable, such as regular, interactive, and informative content posts, should be considered. Enhancing social media trust through social media experience leads back to a heightened level of social media trust (Antoci et al., 2019). This approach also aligns with social media experience in that consumers transition from cognitive to emotional and social antecedent dimensions leading to consumer engagement.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As with all research, this study has limitations. Gen Z was the intended target audience; therefore, the survey was only administered to college students. Findings may differ with other age cohorts. All survey respondents were enrolled in a marketing course when they completed the survey and thus were likely to be a marketing or business-related major. Not having representation from majors in other disciplines could bias the results if there is unaccounted variation based on college major. Finally, all survey respondents were enrolled in a Midwestern
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public university. Experiences with social media may vary based on residency within the United States.

Essay 1 highlights the need for future research regarding consumer factor antecedents to consumer engagement. Essay 2 focused on social media dispositions and social media goals; however, future studies could illuminate relationships among other consumer antecedents (Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia, & Nordfält, 2017). For example, the connection between personality and culture and its influence on consumer engagement has yet to be explored (Vredeveld & Coulter, 2019). Studies that use passive engagement may also be fruitful to gain a better understanding of how brand-related content consumption is related to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of consumer engagement (Pagani & Malacarne, 2017). The associations among consumer engagement branding consequences could also provide valuable insights regarding other potential outcomes for social media marketers. Specifically, it would be instrumental to better appreciate the nuances in the progression from brand aversion to brand hate (Fetscherin, 2019) to better prevent and mitigate the negative sequence and the associated consequences (Odoom, Kosiba, Djamgbah, & Narh, 2019).

Essay 2 suggests that future research is needed on shows the interrelated nature of the connections between consumer engagement and brand engagement. An unanticipated finding in this research was the negative path from brand advocacy to consumer engagement. Causation is made more complex given the positive partial mediation of brand involvement resulting in competitive mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). Future studies should examine whether engaged consumers develop brand involvement resulting in brand advocacy for a particular brand, or whether consumers engage in social media for a particular brand because they are brand
advocates. Research could also examine possible moderators or mediators in the relationships to shed light on the unexpected finding in this study.

Bridging the results of this study with insights from brand engagement studies involving other branding outcomes may provide further clarification in this regard. Possible moderators or mediators in the relationship between consumer engagement and brand engagement include brand authenticity (Rosado-Pinto et al., 2020), brand trust (Liu et al., 2018), and brand warmth (Bernritter et al., 2016) to consider the hedonic and affective dimensions that were limited to brand involvement in Model 1. Moreover, as suggested by Loureiro et al. (2019), future studies could also examine the brand engagement progression from cognitive and emotional dimensions to the behavioral dimension, considering other brand-related constructs such as brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009), self–brand connection (Escalas & Bettman, 2003), and brand fidelity (Grace et al., 2018).

Future research should also explore the influence of branding strategies as antecedents to consumer engagement. Rather than responding to consumer factors and goals, brands can take a more active and intentional role in fostering consumer engagement with positive branding consequences (M. L. Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020). For example, the connection between social media dispositions can be further explored with branding strategies such as social media post characteristics (Devereux, Grimmer, & Grimmer, 2020), advertising characteristics (Tellis et al., 2019), storytelling features (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), and word choice (Pezzuti, Leonhardt, & Warren, 2021) to name a few.

The social media trust construct merits further investigation in that, as the results of this study demonstrate, social media trust has a positive influence on consumer engagement. Exploring the context and depth of social media trust could help firms develop strategies to
influence this consumer factor (Cao, Meadows, Wong, & Xie, 2020). The results of this study also show that the influence of social media trust on consumer engagement is partially mediated by social media experience, highlighting the hedonic and social nature of the relationship. Future research could examine the affective dimension of social media trust to ascertain whether brands can foster consumer trust in social media and the brand on an emotional level.

The results of this study show that social media experience fully mediates the relationship between social media information sharing, social media information seeking, and consumer engagement. The indirect paths involving social media information seeking, which is a heavily cognitive endeavor, were significant. Thus, it appears that having social media experience as a goal also addresses the social media hedonic and social dimensions of social media information sharing (X. Lin et al., 2019). Future studies should investigate social media dispositions with specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions in mind, to determine if, in fact, brands should emphasize emotions and socialization in consumer social media dispositions.

The results of this study were based on scales measuring consumer engagement from an active behavioral perspective (M. L. Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger, Leung, & Ting, 2020). Although data were collected for brand-related content consumption, the results were not found to be significant in relation to consumer engagement with antecedent consumer factors or with consequential branding outcomes. Future research should examine passive consumer engagement elements, including social media content exposure (Y. Li & Xie, 2020), attention (Naylor et al., 2012), and consumption (Berthon, Pitt, & Campbell, 2008).

Content contribution and content creation were measured as separate constructs in the original design of the study. However, the results of the factor analysis positioned the two variables as one construct representing consumer engagement. Future research should investigate
the measures for consumer engagement with particular attention paid to construct definition and refining survey items (Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra, 2020; Obilo et al., 2020). Other scales adapted for this study should be validated with empirical research involving other consumer segments (i.e., beyond Gen Z), other brand options (i.e., not necessarily favorite brand in mind), and all digital platforms (i.e., beyond social media) (Eigenraam et al., 2018).

Consumer engagement was investigated in this study through the lens of the uses and gratifications theory. Future research should build on social media consumer engagement from other theoretical perspectives. For example, prior research has considered attachment theory (Hinson et al., 2019), attribution theory (Moulard et al., 2016), congruity theory (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2018), service-dominant logic (Brodie et al., 2019), social capital theory (X. Lin et al., 2019), social exchange theory (Harrigan et al., 2018), social identity theory (Grewal et al., 2017), and the theory of close relationships (Simon & Tossan, 2018), to name a few. Continued studies from a variety of theoretical approaches will broaden and deepen the understanding of consumer engagement using social media, making a valuable theoretical contribution and providing further implications for marketing practice.
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APPENDIX

Social Media Survey

Consumer Internal Factors and Social Media Goals

Social Media Information Sharing
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Compared to other social media users, I have more followers/fans.
On social media, other people want to connect with me.
Having a lot of followers/fans on social media is important to me.
I gain social followers/fans almost every day.
When seeking information about a product/brand, others turn to me for advice.
When making a final product/brand purchase, others turn to me for advice.
Others consider me to be knowledgeable about products/brands that are important to them.
Others consider me to be an educated consumer regarding brands.
I like to provide people with information about products/brands using social media.
By interacting with brands on social media, I feel I am part of a community.
I interact with brands on social media to state my interests and preferences to my friends.

Social Media Trust
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

I trust the information published by others on social media.
Social media information is just as credible as other sources.
I believe information published by others on social media is accurate.
Social media information is as reliable as other sources.
I believe information published by others on social media is unbiased.
Social media information is as trustworthy as other sources.

Social Media Information Seeking
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

I like to browse social media to get product/brand information.
I follow product/brand updates on social media.
I gather relevant product/brand information from the social media community.
I am interested in receiving a firm’s product/brand communications via social media.
I use social media to learn new things about products/brands.
I use social media to get useful information about the products/brands I like.
Social Media Experience
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

I use social media…
  as a way to relax.
  to stimulate my mind.
  for entertainment.
  to escape from routine activities.
  when there is no one else to talk to or be with.
  to forget about work, school or other things.
  because it helps me to learn things about myself.
  to experience new things.
  to do something that I have never done before.

Social Media Usage
How often do you access social media platforms?

10+ times per day
5-9 times per day
2-4 times per day
About once per day
2-3 times per week
About once per week
Less than once per week

Consumer Engagement

Consumption
Answer this question with your favorite brand in mind. 1 = very infrequently, 2 = infrequently, 3 = neither frequently nor infrequently, 4 = frequently, 5 = very frequently

In the past 14 days, how frequently have you Viewed or Read each of the following on social media related to your favorite brand?

Brand-related photos
Brand-related videos
Brand-related comments
Brand-related reviews
Brand-related promotions
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Contribution
In the past 14 days, how frequently have you Shared each of the following on social media related to your favorite brand?

Brand-related photos
Brand-related videos
Brand-related comments
Brand-related reviews
Brand-related promotions

Creation
In the past 14 days, how frequently have you Created or Posted each of the following on social media related to your favorite brand?

Brand-related photos
Brand-related videos
Brand-related comments
Brand-related reviews
Brand-related promotions

Brand Engagement
Answer this question with your favorite brand in mind. Indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements regarding your favorite brand.

Brand Involvement
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

This brand’s social media means a lot to me.
This brand’s social media is significant to me.
This brand’s social media is important to me.
I am interested in this brand’s social media.
I am involved with this brand’s social media.
I feel close to this brand on social media.

Self-Brand Connection
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

This brand’s social media represents who I am.
I can identify with this brand’s social media.
I feel a personal connection to this brand’s social media.
I use this brand’s social media to communicate who I am to other people.
I think this brand’s social media could help me become the type of person I want to be.
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I consider this brand’s social media site to be a reflection of me.

**Brand Advocacy**
Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

I feel offended when someone says something bad about this brand.
If asked, I would be quick to point out how superior this brand is to its competitors.
I will follow this brand on social media for a long time.
I recommend the brand to someone who seeks my advice.
I encourage friends and relatives to use the brand.
I say positive things about the brand to other people.
If someone says something bad about this brand on social media, I am quick to defend.

**Demographics**

What is your gender?
Male
Female

What is your age?
18 to 23
24 to 39
40 to 55
56 to 74
75 +

What is your year in college?
Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Graduate Student
Not in College

In which course are you currently enrolled?
MKT311 Principles of Marketing
MKT351 Introduction to Digital Marketing
MKT353 Advanced Digital Marketing
MKT360 Entrepreneurial Marketing
VITA

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