



## Promoting Brand Involvement through User Generated Content: Structured Abstract

---

Nomita Gupta and Hemendra Gupta

EasyChair preprints are intended for rapid dissemination of research results and are integrated with the rest of EasyChair.

April 25, 2021

## **Promoting Brand Involvement through User Generated Content: Structured Abstract**

Nomita Gupta, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia,  
[nomita.gupta@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:nomita.gupta@latrobe.edu.au)

Hemendra Gupta, Jaipuria institute of management, Lucknow, India  
[hemendra.gupta@jaipuria.ac.in](mailto:hemendra.gupta@jaipuria.ac.in)

### **INTRODUCTION**

The cut throat competition posed by increasing social networking websites' (SNSs) presence, recognises brand involvement as a key strategic value factor, both for brand marketing and customer brand interaction (Ferreira & Coelho, 2015). Online brand involvement (Kwon, Ha, & Kowal, 2017) being a key to value co-creation, generating loyalty, online self-customisation (OSC) of services (Franke, Keinz, & Schreier, 2008) enhances firm reputation, market share, and customers' willingness to pay higher prices (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brand involvement not only helps improve service quality (Brown & Reingen, 1987) it also acts as a powerful weapon in brand marketing activities (Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, & Carlson, 2017). Customers like to invest in those firms which allow them to voice their thoughts, hence, making it imperative for researchers to investigate the drivers of brand involvement.

Online user-generated-content – UGC, is one such form of consumer-technology interaction. UGC are considered third-party endorsements which are more trustworthy than firm generated content – FGC, as end users create these online brand content out of their own free will, based on their first hand brand experiences, free of charge and without any professional motive (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008). UGC indirectly advertises brands and services for firms free of cost (Wang & Li, 2016). The growth of internet platform makes UGC more important for industries as customers seek reviews and recommendation from past customers of brands before making their purchase decisions in various industries, where tourism and hospitality being most common (Chen, Xiang, & Gao, 2014).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Many researchers have investigated drivers of brand involvement as being sign value, importance and pleasure derived from a brand (Bauer, Sauer, & Becker, 2006), imporisk (importance and risk) and interest (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985) but none of the researches have considered customers participation in online brand content as a driving factor for brand involvement. Creating online brand content to answer other customers' queries or advise them, they scrutinise and search brand information online hence enhancing overall brand involvement. Moreover, few studies have discussed motivational factors for customer participation in UGC as expression of personal identity, entertainment (Daugherty et al., 2008); Muntinga et al. 2011), hedonic motivation and habit (Herrero, Martín, & Salmones, 2017), defensive motivation and accuracy (Hong & Beaudoin, 2016), belongingness and reciprocity (Cheung & Lee, 2012), personal information (Halliday, 2016). Many consumers produce UGC without any financial benefit (short term - extrinsic motivations); but for long lasting intrinsic altruistic motivations (Hsu & Lin, 2008) which have been less researched in past literature. Hence, to fill this gap, the study, underpinned by the theory of self-determination - SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), investigates the influence of intrinsic motivational factors on customer participation in brand UGC and ultimately brand involvement, using creativity a control

variable because previous research has substantiated the relationship between creativity and brand involvement (Merz, Zarantonello, & Grappi, 2018). This study is an updated extension of previously published research in IEEE 2019 conference proceedings (Gupta & Gupta, 2019) with an intention to take this research one step forward. An upgraded model involving a new outcome – brand involvement and creativity as a control variable has been conceptualised for this research.

Theory of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000) has been employed to understand the relationship between outcome - brand involvement and UGC participation. SDT asserts that there are three basic intrinsic psychological needs, namely, autonomy, competence and relatedness, which, when fulfilled, encourage consumers to act in a particular manner. Firstly, customers are intrinsically motivated to complete an optimally challenging activity and achieve the anticipated outcomes in order to fulfill the need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For e.g., customers create interesting, informative brand UGC, by compiling and critically systematically analysing brand information for others' appreciation. (Wang, Khan, Hoffman, & Misztur, 2014). Likewise, customers feel the joy and freedom to initiate UGC in their own way, willingly control it and claim ownership for their UGC (de Charms, 1968), they prove their autonomy on the platform (Hsieh & Chang, 2016). With their UGCs, they also maintain connection with social groups and gain respect and care for their UGC in the form of likes and shares, their need for relatedness is satisfied (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); Wang and Li 2016). Hence, it is hypothesized that people's basic intrinsic needs are positively related to UGC participation.

Moreover, service-dominant-logic - SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016) explains the active participation of beneficiary in value co-creation (Grönroos & Voima, 2013) via integration of operant and operand customer-owned resources. SDL has enabled a massive transition from firm-generated-content - FGC to user-generated-content – UGC (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Many firms have even recognised UGC as being one weapon to enhance brand involvement in online media in service development platforms, like, health care (Engström & Elg, 2015), education, tourism and fashion industry (Chen et al., 2014; Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Kim & Ko, 2010; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), leaving scope for less researched social networking websites (SNSs) platform, which is exponentially developed for UGC creation. SNSs provide customer services, such as, advertising, advising, counselling and self-customisation of brands, hence, allowing deep understanding of brand involvement factors.

Harmeling et al. (2017) argues resources owned by consumers, namely, online social interaction and brand knowledge, which can improve to brands marketing. Frequency of online engagement with present and future consumers of a particular brand depends upon the diversity, structure, interpersonal ties and number of contacts present in an individual's online friends' list (Harmeling et al., 2017; Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009; Tsai, Huang, & Chiu, 2012). Online interaction occurs through writing and posting comments on others consumers' posts, answering their brand-related questions, counselling and advising (Daugherty et al., 2008). Secondly, increased engagement depends upon consumers' brand knowledge to develop, disseminate brand narratives, improve quality and relevance of content shared (Harmeling et al. 2017; Merz et al. 2018). This firsthand brand experience (Feick & Price, 1987) enables consumers to respond to online queries, reviews and blogs (Payne et al. 2009) thereby, advertising brands (Nambisan, 2002). Hence, this research additionally explores the impact of consumers' online social engagement and brand knowledge on UGC participation.

Customer participation is voluntary engagement which indirectly assists a firm to deliver better products or services (Eisingerich, Auh, & Merlo, 2014) by providing constructive feedback and suggestions. UGC participation in the form of self-designing or customising a product or providing brand advice to solve other customers' queries or by way of suggestions can affect their overall brand involvement. Brand involvement is the extent to which customers give importance to a brand or service (Zaichkowsky, 1985). When there is high level of participation in brand UGC, the customers feel more connected to the brand beyond mere consumption. This is because they get involved in extensive research online and scrutiny of the available information of the brand (Park & Keil, 2017). Hence, it is proposed that consumers' UGC participation is positively related to their brand involvement.

## **METHODOLOGY, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A reputable data base panel company was employed to collect data from 265 consumers, at least 18 years of age, residing in Australia and who participate in brand UGC on SNSs via online survey, using a seven-point Likert scale. Item measures were adapted from past publications and modified for this study. On average, 56.2% of the participants were females with 29.8% being aged between 25-34 years old. On average, 33.6% were from Victoria, 22.6% from Queensland and 21.9 from New south Wales. According to the PLS rule of thumb, the size of the sample should be ten times the largest structural equation (Joseph F. Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2012), which was seven in the current model. Hence, employing a sample size of 265, which is more than the minimum of 70 (Hair et al. 2012) make it appropriate for the study.

Structural equation modelling employing SmartPLS, version 25 (Latan, Ringle, & Jabbour, 2016) was used to evaluate convergent validity - the items loading on their respective variable was significant ( $>0.70$ ), construct reliability was above 0.70 (Joseph F. Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2014) and AVE was above 0.70, proving good internal consistency. Rho\_A value was above the limit of 0.70, and their square roots were more than the inter-construct correlations proving recommended requirements of discriminant validity.  $R^2$  measures and path co-efficients.  $R^2$  of participation in UGC was 52.4% showing all the predictor variables explain 52.4% variance in UGC participation. The  $R^2$  of brand involvement is 29.7%, demonstrating participation in UGC explains a variance of 29.7% in brand involvement. The path co-efficients demonstrate significant relationship between the variables. SRMR producing the goodness of fit value was equal to 0.05, which is between 0 to 0.08 (recommended range). The NFI is equal to 0.80, (equal to the limit set of 0.80) demonstrating a good model fit (Hair et al. 2014).

The conceptual model is supported by the results. Consumers' relatedness needs ( $\beta= 0.198$ , t-value = 0.2.353 and  $p<0.05$ ), online social engagement ( $\beta= 0.215$ , t-value = 2.124 and  $p<0.05$ ) and brand knowledge ( $\beta= 0.537$ , t-value = 8.825 and  $p<0.001$ ) positively affect consumers' UGC participation (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006; Wang & Li, 2014). These results prove that if consumers have a huge list of online acquaintances, firsthand brand knowledge and online freedom to produce UGC, they get inspired increase participate in UGC. Surprisingly, competence needs ( $\beta= 0.024$ , t-value = 0.239 and  $p>0.10$ ) and autonomy needs ( $\beta= -0.051$ , t-value = 0.326 and  $p>0.1$ ) had no impact on UGC participation, however, inconsistent with the research of Wang and Li (2016). The differences in results are anticipated because of the difference in location from which sample was collected, (mainly China), which is considered to be a collectivist society (Lalwani, Shavitt, & Johnson, 2006). Alternatively, Australia was the location for data collection for the present study. Australia follows an individualistic cultural background, where people live

independent lives and care for themselves (Hofstede 1985). UGC participation ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $t$ -value 1.991 and  $p < 0.05$ ) and creativity ( $\beta = 0.379$ ,  $t = 3.399$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) affected brand involvement positively showing that when customers participate in brand UGC, their brand involvement increased.

## **THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The current study has conceptualised an integrated model which combines both intrinsic motivators (SDT) and a combination of consumer resources (SDL) to explore consumers' brand involvement. This study contributes to the literature of motivational theories - SDT and service dominated theories – SDL, by confirming that relatedness needs and both the consumer-resources are imperative for UGC participate. Secondly, it was found that customers participation is required to alleviate them to the next level of brand attachment, that is brand involvement. This current study contributes to the ever-growing consumer-brand engagement literature.

Managerial implications are offered for developers of social networking sites. They need to support consumers' basic psychological wants for relatedness on SNSs in order to encourage them to produce increased brand UGC. This can be possible by providing designing toolkits, friendly user-design interface (Dellaert & Dabholkar, 2009) and system factors using interaction effects with brands (Miceli et al., 2013). The study also assists in branding and marketing promotions in a trustworthy, cost free manner. Brand managers can leverage customers' resources like social contacts and their brand knowledge for improving their offerings and co-create value (Merz et al., 2018). Many companies like Microsoft, Dell, Adidas, Nike and Levi have promoted customers to contribute content in online communities for this purpose. Brand UGC, in the form of recommendations, reviews, feedback and a chance to customise products to suit consumers' needs, can help brands to co-create prototypes and hence, refine their services (Randhawa and Scerri 2015).

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The first limitation concerns unutilised motivational constructs that could possibly have an influence on the study's outcome. The unutilised extrinsic motivational variables for e.g., financial benefits, discount coupons, and consumer resources like persuasion capital could also be explored as factor affecting online UGC participation. Moreover, the results are in relation to general SNSs websites. This makes the results ungeneralisable to other types of consumer-brand engagement, for e.g., WOM or e WOM. In addition, the present study elaborates on consumer to consumer (C2C) engagement, leaving unexplored avenues for business to business (B2B) and business to consumers (B2C) engagement areas for future researchers. Examination of motivational factors pertaining to UGC participation on a single SNS website (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) can be researched in future too. Avenues for comparison between two or more SNSs could be conducted. Moreover, investigation could be undertaken in countries that practise collectivistic cultural norms, like, India, Malaysia, Indonesia. These are countries with huge consumption pattern and rank high in SNS usage. Moreover, the current research has generally focused on service systems as a whole. This encourages future researchers to pay attention to specific service industries, like, tourism, hospitality, education or fashion industries making use of few particular SNSs.

## References

- Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U. M., & Herrmann, A. (2005). The social influence of brand community: Evidence from European car clubs. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(3), 19-34.
- Bauer, H. H., Sauer, N. E., & Becker, C. (2006). Investigating the relationship between product involvement and consumer decision-making styles. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 5(4), 342-354. doi:10.1002/cb.185
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497
- Brown, J. J., & Reingen, P. H. (1987). Social ties and word-of-mouth referral behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3), 350-362. doi:10.1086/209118
- Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65(2), 81-93. doi:10.1509/jmkg.65.2.81.18255
- Chen, S., Xiang, P., & Gao, Z. (2014). Relationships Between Students' Perceived Relatedness and Motivational Outcomes in Physical Education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 85(S1), A39.
- Cheong, H. J., & Morrison, M. A. (2008). Consumers' reliance on product information and recommendations found in ugc. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), 38-49. doi:10.1080/15252019.2008.10722141
- Cheung, C. M. K., & Lee, M. K. O. (2012). What drives consumers to spread electronic word of mouth in online consumer-opinion platforms. *Decision Support Systems*, 53(1), 218-225. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2012.01.015
- Chiu, C.-M., Hsu, M.-H., & Wang, E. T. G. (2006). Understanding knowledge sharing in virtual communities: An integration of social capital and social cognitive theories. *Decision Support Systems*, 42(3), 1872-1888. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2006.04.001
- Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., & Bright, L. (2008). Exploring consumer motivations for creating user-generated content. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), 16-25. doi:10.1080/15252019.2008.10722139
- de Charms, R. (1968). *Personal causation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 11(4), 227-268. doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\_01
- Dellaert, B. G. C., & Dabholkar, P. A. (2009). Increasing the Attractiveness of Mass Customization: The Role of Complementary On-line Services and Range of Options. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 13(3), 43-70. doi:10.2753/JEC1086-4415130302
- Eisingerich, A. B., Auh, S., & Merlo, O. (2014). Acta Non Verba? The Role of Customer Participation and Word of Mouth in the Relationship Between Service Firms' Customer Satisfaction and Sales Performance. *Journal of Service Research*, 17(1), 40-53. doi:10.1177/1094670513490836
- Engström, J., & Elg, M. (2015). A self-determination theory perspective on customer participation in service development. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 29(6/7), 511-521. doi:10.1108/JSM-01-2015-0053
- Feick, L. F., & Price, L. L. (1987). The market maven: a diffuser of marketplace information. (persons who share market information with other consumers). *Journal of Marketing*, 51(1), 83. doi:10.2307/1251146

- Ferreira, A. G., & Coelho, F. J. (2015). Product involvement, price perceptions, and brand loyalty. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(4), 349-364. doi:10.1108/JPBM-06-2014-0623
- Franke, N., Keinz, P., & Schreier, M. (2008). Complementing Mass Customization Toolkits with User Communities: How Peer Input Improves Customer Self-Design\*. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 25(6), 546-559. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5885.2008.00321.x
- Grönroos, C., & Voima, P. (2013). Critical service logic: making sense of value creation and co-creation. *Official Publication of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(2), 133-150. doi:10.1007/s11747-012-0308-3
- Gupta, N., & Gupta, H. (2019, 18-20 Dec. 2019). Promoting E-commerce Through User-generated Content. Paper presented at the 2019 11th International Conference on Advanced Computing (ICoAC).
- Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Babin, B. J., & Black, W. C. (2014). *Multivariate data analysis (Pearson new international edition; Seventh ed.)*: Harlow, Essex : Pearson.
- Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2012). Partial Least Squares: The Better Approach to Structural Equation Modeling? *Long Range Planning*, 45(5-6), 312-319. doi:10.1016/j.lrp.2012.09.011
- Halliday, S. V. (2016). User-generated content about brands: Understanding its creators and consumers. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), 137-144. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.027
- Harmeling, C., Moffett, J., Arnold, M., & Carlson, B. (2017). Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(3), 312-335. doi:10.1007/s11747-016-0509-2
- Hays, S., Page, S. J., & Buhalis, D. (2013). Social media as a destination marketing tool: its use by national tourism organisations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 16(3), 211-239. doi:10.1080/13683500.2012.662215
- Herrero, Á., Martín, H. S., & Salmones, M. d. M. G.-D. I. (2017). Explaining the adoption of social networks sites for sharing user-generated content: A revision of the UTAUT2. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 71, 209-217. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.007
- Hong, T., & Beaudoin, C. E. (2016). A behavioral function approach in predicting contribution of user-generated content. *Communication Research*, 1-19. doi:10.1177/0093650216644019
- Hsieh, S. H., & Chang, A. (2016). The psychological mechanism of brand co-creation engagement. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 33, 13-26. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2015.10.001
- Hsu, C.-L., & Lin, J. C.-C. (2008). Acceptance of blog usage: The roles of technology acceptance, social influence and knowledge sharing motivation. *Information & Management*, 45(1), 65-74. doi:10.1016/j.im.2007.11.001
- Kapferer, J.-N., & Laurent, G. (1985). Consumer involvement profiles: a new and practical approach to consumer involvement. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 25(6), 48.
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. J. (2010). Impacts of luxury fashion brand's social media marketing on customer relationship and purchase intention. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 1(3), 164.
- Kwon, S., Ha, S., & Kowal, C. (2017). How online self-customization creates identification: Antecedents and consequences of consumer-customized product identification and the role of product involvement. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 1-13. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.04.051

- Lalwani, A. K., Shavitt, S., & Johnson, T. (2006). What Is the Relation Between Cultural Orientation and Socially Desirable Responding? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(1), 165-178. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.90.1.165
- Latan, H., Ringle, C. M., & Jabbour, C. J. C. (2016). Whistleblowing Intentions Among Public Accountants in Indonesia: Testing for the Moderation Effects. *Journal of Business Ethics*. doi:10.1007/s10551-016-3318-0
- Merz, M. A., Zarantonello, L., & Grappi, S. (2018). How valuable are your customers in the brand value co-creation process? The development of a customer co-creation value (CCCV) scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 82, 79-89. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.08.018
- Munar, A. M., & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2014). Motivations for sharing tourism experiences through social media. *Tourism Management*, 43, 46-54. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.01.012
- Nambisan, S. (2002). Designing virtual customer environments for new product development: Toward a theory. *The Academy of Management Review*, 27(3), 392-413. doi:10.5465/AMR.2002.7389914
- Park, S. C., & Keil, M. (2017). The moderating effects of product involvement on escalation behavior. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 1-15. doi:10.1080/08874417.2017.1328648
- Payne, A., Storbacka, K., Frow, P., & Knox, S. (2009). Co-creating brands: Diagnosing and designing the relationship experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(3), 379-389. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.05.013
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68
- Tsai, H.-T., Huang, H.-C., & Chiu, Y.-L. (2012). Brand community participation in Taiwan: Examining the roles of individual-, group-, and relationship-level antecedents. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(5), 676-684. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.03.011
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68, 1-17.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2008). Service- dominant logic: continuing the evolution. *Official Publication of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 1-10. doi:10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2016). Institutions and axioms: an extension and update of service-dominant logic. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44(1), 5. doi:10.1007/s11747-015-0456-3
- Wang, X., Khan, G. F., Hoffman, M. C., & Misztur, T. (2014). How do people participate in social network sites after crises? A self-determination perspective. *Social Science Computer Review*, 32(5), 662-677. doi:10.1177/0894439314525116
- Wang, X., & Li, Y. (2014). Trust, psychological need, and motivation to produce user-generated content: A self-determination perspective. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 15(3), 241-253.
- Wang, X., & Li, Y. (2016). How trust and need satisfaction motivate producing user-generated content. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 57(1), 49-57. doi:10.1080/08874417.2016.1181493
- Zaichkowsky, J. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12(3), 341. doi:10.1086/208520