The Power of ‘Like’ – Interpreting Usage Behaviors in Company-Hosted Facebook Pages

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Abstract
Company-hosted Facebook pages have emerged as a commonly used marketing tool, but consumers’ underlying motivations for using these pages and their effect on members’ intentions to purchase the host company’s products are currently unclear. The present study examines consumers’ hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using company-hosted Facebook pages in relation to the community’s usage behavior (browsing vs. contribution), and the relationship between usage behavior and purchase intentions. Analysis of data collected from 1,161 members of a travel agency’s Facebook page reveals that hedonic motivations indicate a higher propensity to contribute to the community whereas utilitarian motivations relate more strongly to merely browsing the community page. With regards to purchase intentions, browsing relates more strongly to it than contributing. The findings offer insight into consumers’ behavior in brand communities and online brand community content management.

1. Introduction

The internet abounds with social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The power of such online networks lies in the fact that they, unlike the topically organized web in general, are organized around their users, thus making it possible to utilize user interconnectedness in order to reach large audiences at a relatively low cost. These sites also offer a potential landscape for the formation of influential brand communities. This potential has aroused a great deal of interest in social media, and especially in Facebook as a marketing tool: in 2011 76 percent of companies reported that they planned to strengthen their presence on Facebook [47]. Although there is no denying the popularity of many other social networking sites, Facebook is currently the most widely used one, with over 900 million active users globally [46].

However, despite companies’ wide use of social networking sites, no sound theories exist that would enhance understanding of what motivates consumers to interact with companies in those environments. Their motivations for participating in traditional brand communities is fairly well documented [4, 13], but social networking sites represent a different kind of environment in which the consumer can choose to interact with multiple companies within one site, with relatively little effort. Thus, a consumer interacting with a company on a social networking site might not be as committed to it as a consumer who joins a brand community discussion forum located on a separate site, for example.

Facebook offers companies and organizations the tools with which to create community-like environments within the site. Facebook pages are similar to individual user profiles, but are meant for organizations and other bodies, and they are public. They also offer more flexibility in terms of the differentiation and use of different applications. Further, users can interact with pages on Facebook by ‘liking’ them. Pages possess attributes of online communities, as members share a common interest [33, 38] and are able to participate in the community through posting, commenting and sharing content. An increasing number of companies have adopted Facebook pages as a marketing tool, but many Facebook marketers still struggle to understand how they can best create business value through the medium.

Current research widely adopts the view that consumption behavior includes both utilitarian and hedonic dimensions. Utilitarian behavior is defined as goal-oriented and rational, concerned with effectiveness and instrumental value, whereas hedonic behavior implies seeking fun, play, enjoyment and experiences [3, 8, 18]. Both
dimensions have been found to explain traditional consumer behavior [2, 3] as well as, more recently, online consumer behavior [16, 25]. In the context of consumption behavior on the web, online communities established by companies represent a fertile research landscape given their potential positive effect on loyalty to the host company or brand [29]. There is wide recognition among researchers of the utilitarian value of online communities for consumers [e.g. 7, 13, 44], but their hedonic value has received somewhat less attention [c.f. 44].

The aim in the current study is to develop a model for consumer behavior on company-hosted Facebook community pages. In particular, we examine the relationship between the members’ hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using the community and their actual usage behavior. We differentiate between two types of behavior, browsing and contribution. Further, in order to complete the model we also explore the outcomes of the usage behavior in terms of purchase intentions. More precisely, therefore, we explore the relationship between different usage behaviors and intentions to purchase the host company’s products. Although purchase intentions do not necessarily mean that actual purchasing will take place, they do appear to possess predictive power [28].

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Hedonic and utilitarian web consumption

There is ample evidence that hedonic and utilitarian motivations affect consumption behavior [2, 3, 8, 18, 27]. It is further suggested that utilitarian motivations relate to goal-oriented and rational behavior, whereas hedonic motivations are concerned with fun, playfulness and enjoyment [3, 8]. Holbrook and Hirschman [27] explicitly refer to hedonic and utilitarian consumption motivations, claiming that the traditional view of consumption as an objective act, focused on gaining maximum utility value, is likely to be inadequate in terms of capturing the wide spectrum of consumption motives. Batra and Ahtola [8] subsequently found that consumers derived value from consumption bi-dimensionally, enjoying both instrumental (utilitarian) and experiential (hedonic) benefits. Recent research has focused on the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of web consumption [e.g. 15, 16, 25]. Web consumption incorporates a multitude of behaviors, such as browsing, searching, shopping, and seeking entertainment [41], which are inherently practical, objective and goal-directed, or subjective and experiential [3, 16, 25, 27]. Moreover, web environments in themselves may be hedonic or utilitarian, or a mixture of both [48]. According to van der Heijden [48], the hedonic or utilitarian value of an information system - such as a web environment - can be determined by the degree of utility or enjoyment it provides for the user. Thus, its nature as well as the hedonic and utilitarian benefits sought from its use will determine the kind of usage behavior in which the user engages [16, 48].

2.2. Online brand communities

Internet technology allows for easy information sharing and communication beyond geographical and time limits. The absence of such limits sets online communities apart from traditional geographically bounded communities [4, 35], as they exist entirely within a computer-mediated environment located in cyberspace [23, 33]. Online communities usually depend on voluntary actions on the part of their members, and are built around shared interests [4]. Shared interests are the defining feature of a voluntary community and a prerequisite for its existence [33]. Equally important for the survival of an online community is interaction among the members [23], by means of which they share information and pursue common interests [23]. Online communities vary, communities of consumption being a distinct type [34]. Kozinets [34] defines communities of consumption as ‘affiliative groups whose online interactions are based upon shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a specific consumption activity or related group of activities’. Brand communities are similar and are also related to consumption, but instead of focusing on the consumption activity they are based on a shared interest in and admiration for a specific brand [38]. Online brand communities fall into two distinct types. Reflecting the member-initiated and organization-sponsored types of virtual community Porter [43] identified, Jang et al. [29] categorize online brand communities as consumer-initiated and company-initiated. The former are unofficial communities that are built voluntarily by consumers, whereas the latter are created by companies, usually in order to initiate a conversation with customers and to create a channel for accessing feedback and disseminating marketing messages. Brand communities in themselves can affect the behavior of their members in many ways [c.f. 38, 35]. Indeed, it has been suggested that the way a brand community is hosted (consumers vs. companies) moderates the effects on its members’ behavior [38] and brand loyalty [29].
Facebook pages have certain features that categorize them as online communities, but also features that set them apart from traditional online communities. Companies use their Facebook pages in order to communicate to and with consumers, thus their representatives create a large proportion of the content. As a result, these pages bear some resemblance to blogs, or even traditional company web sites. Unlike blogs and web sites, however, Facebook pages also allow member-initiated communication, thereby giving members the opportunity to create content on the page. Furthermore, what makes companies’ Facebook pages recognizable as communities is that the members share a common interest, which is why they ‘liked’ the page in the first place. Therefore, despite certain differences from traditional online communities, it would seem appropriate for the purposes of this study to define such pages as company-initiated online communities. We acknowledge the existence of consumer-initiated brand community pages on Facebook, but such communities fall beyond the scope of the current study.

3. Research framework and hypotheses

The research model proposed below is based on the theoretical background discussed above. The model explores the relationships between hedonic and utilitarian motivations in the use of company-hosted Facebook pages, community usage behaviors, and intentions to buy from the host company.

3.1. Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using company-hosted Facebook community pages

Although previous research findings clearly indicate the presence of both hedonic and utilitarian dimensions in web usage behavior in general, very few attempts have been made to model both types of motivation for using online brand communities. Many models of online brand community behavior [e.g. 13] and technology acceptance [17] include the dimension of perceived usefulness, which by definition indicates an underlying utilitarian dimension and is therefore closely related to utilitarian motivations for engaging in online shopping, for example [15]. The perceived usefulness of a technological application or an online brand community has been found to have a positive effect on their use [13, 17]. However, the more experiential dimension and the enjoyment value of online communities have received little attention so far.

In line with definitions put forward in previous research [3, 15, 16, 27], we suggest that users with utilitarian motivations at a given time seek to achieve a certain goal through the community, such as finding useful information before making a purchase decision. Hedonic motivations, on the other hand, refer to the search for fun and entertainment from the community experience itself. Further, we would expect utilitarian motivations for using a community to be related to obtaining useful information on the object of interest, for example, and making consumption-related decisions in a more efficient manner. Hedonic motivations, on the other hand, are likely to be related to finding a good way to spend time, wanting to be entertained and having fun while visiting the community.

It should be kept in mind that these motivational dimensions are not mutually exclusive or fixed, and may co-exist and change depending on the user’s situation and needs [3, 16]. A consumer aiming to complete a task at a given time visits a certain community with this need in mind, but in another situation he/she might visit the same community in order to pass the time and to be entertained. However, previous research findings indicate that consumers usually have a tendency to lean more towards one end of the hedonic vs. utilitarian motivation spectrum than the other depending on their inherent general time-planning style [16].

3.2. Community usage behavior

The internet allows for relatively varied usage behaviors, which can roughly be categorized as information search, exploratory browsing, entertainment and shopping [16]. Online communities usually show a more limited set of behaviors, however, depending on the technical and functional platform. The literature on online communities identifies two main types of community membership based on the members’ behavior. ‘Quiet membership’ usually refers to members who read posts by others but rarely post anything themselves, whereas ‘communicative membership’ refers to those who take a more active approach by interacting with the community [24]. Similarly, Burnett [12] categorizes online community behaviors as interactive and non-interactive.

As online communities exist exclusively online, they are only able to function through the production and consumption of content by the members. They have been found to be valuable sources of information for consumers [9], particularly of word-of-mouth (WOM) information [26]. Information has a core role in classic consumer decision-making theories [e.g. 21], and
information obtained through WOM is acknowledged as being especially influential on decision-making [11, 20]. Research results on WOM in the online context (eWOM) suggest that a similar effect is evident in online environments and communities [14, 26], further highlighting the importance of content.

Consuming content created by others is the way the members of online communities both access and transfer informational and social value [7, 49]. Content is consumed through reading posts or viewing videos and images added by other community participants [7], thus representing non-interactive community behavior [12]. The user interface on a Facebook page does not support any directed search activities, thus the user browses the page in order to access content and information. The term *browsing* has multiple meanings depending on the context, but is generally defined as a type of search behavior characterized by the user actively scanning an environment when moving through it.

Producing content for a community means *contributing* to it, and it represents interactive community usage behavior [12]. Wiertz and de Ruyter [51] describe contribution as the foundation of building shared knowledge within company-hosted online communities. Such user-generated content, in turn, is an important feature of social media as a phenomenon [30]. Users on Facebook community pages contribute to the community by generating content, such as posting comments on other peoples’ posts, posting questions related to the host company’s services or the community topic in general, as well as posting product reviews and experiences.

### 3.3. Hypotheses

The proposed research model derives from the literature on usage behavior in online communities. Building on the theory of web usage proposed by Cotte et al. [16] in particular, we suggest that users’ hedonic/utilitarian motivations determine their usage behaviors. Further, the strength of a community member’s intention to purchase the host-company’s products could be termed as the outcome of such behavior.

Casaló et al. [13] suggest that enjoyment might influence users’ intentions to contribute to an online travel community. This idea relates closely to findings indicating that pleasure-oriented consumers may engage in interaction with a web environment just for the sake of the interaction [15, 34]. Indeed, as Dholakia et al. [19] discovered, the enjoyment value of an online brand community has a positive effect on participation behavior in the form of engaging in conversations with other group members. In addition, Cotte et al. [16] found that web users seeking hedonic benefits from their usage were less concerned with the time they spent than users seeking utilitarian benefits, and were thus more likely to exhibit recreational usage behaviors. Thus, some members may consider contributing to the community - such as by engaging in meaningful conversations with other members - a good way to pass their time.

Online browsing behavior has often been associated with seeking sensory stimulation and experiences from web use [16, 39, 40]. In the context of shopping, Arnold and Reynolds [2] suggest that consumers may seek hedonic shopping experiences through sensory stimulation and the ideas they have while shopping. This resembles the concept of the recreational shopper - an individual who derives enjoyment from the experience of going shopping regardless of whether or not a purchase is made [2]. Hedonic shopping behavior in this sense is reminiscent of browsing as stimulation-seeking and experiential behavior, thus implying a positive relationship between browsing and hedonic motivations for using a Facebook community page. The findings reported by Cotte et al. [16] suggesting that the search for hedonic web-usage benefits is positively related to exploratory browsing support this notion. In the light of these arguments, we propose the following:

**H1:** Hedonic motivations are positively related to contribution behavior.

**H2:** Hedonic motivations are positively related to browsing behavior.

Utilitarian motivations for engaging in a particular type of behavior usually concern completing a task in an efficient, timely manner [3, 16]. Accordingly, consumers thus motivated to use an online community are not likely to want to engage in time-consuming activities - such writing posts or comments - if it is not necessary, and are rather more concerned with finding content that suits their purposes [19, 34]. In the context of general web usage, Cotte et al. [16] found that utilitarian motivations had a strong positive relationship with search behavior. Bateman et al. [7], on the other hand, discovered that the level of a member’s continuance commitment positively affected thread-related reading behavior in online communities but had no effect on posting. Continuance commitment refers to the user’s perception of the cost/benefit ratio of engaging in such behavior. According to Bateman et al. [7], users seeking instrumental value from the community will only engage in behaviors of the most direct value to them. However, users may also
browse in order to build up their knowledge of a subject of interest for future use [10]. Browsing the community page could therefore reflect utilitarian motivations even if the user is not currently looking for a specific piece of information [37]. We therefore posit the following:

H3: Utilitarian motivations are negatively related to contribution behavior.

H4: Utilitarian motivations are positively related to browsing behavior.

Jang et al. [29] studied the effects of online brand community commitment on brand loyalty, and discovered a positive effect. Brand loyalty, in turn, has been found to have a positive effect on intentions to purchase the brand in question [6]. Commitment to a community is often reflected in the behavior of its members, and active participation in community activities is considered a strong indicator of such commitment [13, 29]. Thus, it appears that contributing to a company-hosted Facebook brand community may be an indication of the member’s affective commitment and loyalty to the brand. Indeed, there is evidence that these types of emotional ties have a positive effect on intentions to purchase and use the host-company’s products [e.g. 1, 5]. Casaló et al. [13], for example, found in their study on participation in online travel communities that contributing was a strong predictor of the intention to use the host company’s products.

In the context of online consumer reviews, purchase intentions are positively affected by both the quantity and quality of the reviews consumers read, reflecting the importance of information on consumer decisions [42]. Similarly, previous research [35, 45] has shown that information obtained in an online social network affects the consumer’s decision-making process. Consumers browsing a community online tend to encounter substantial amounts of information, and as Kim et al. [31] report, fulfillment of the information needs of community members may have a positive effect on brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Visitors of company-hosted Facebook community pages encounter, in addition to posts by other members, a variety of marketing messages and other information from the host company. Thus, obtaining information through browsing a Facebook community page enables the members to fulfill their information needs related to a purchase decision. In other words, the more the user browses a particular community page, the more likely he/she is to be exposed to information and marketing messages that may be useful. In the light of the above arguments, we posit following:

H5: Contribution behavior is positively related to purchase intentions

H6: Browsing behavior is positively related to purchase intentions

Figure 1 sets the hypotheses within the research framework.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Data collection

Data was collected from members of a Facebook community of a large European travel agency with a widely known brand in its home country and an extensive customer base. The agency was one of the first companies in the travel industry of its home country to utilize Facebook in its marketing. The case page was chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, it is an example of how companies use Facebook pages: it is a pure brand page rather than an interest-group page. The content is created both by the host company and the page members. The host company’s posts are usually travel tips and promotional offers, whereas members post questions, offer reviews and comment on the host company’s and other members’ posts. Secondly, the host company represents a mainstream and popular brand in its home country. The page has over 81,000 fans (by February 2012), which is a high number given the size of the country’s travel industry.

We collected the data by means of a web survey carried out during August 2011. The survey was first pretested on 21 university students in order to ensure its functionality, after which some minor changes were made to the wording. The final survey went out as a public web link that was posted on the Facebook page twice, the second posting a week after the original one. The survey attracted 1,183 responses all together, and 1,161 individual responses were accepted for analysis.

Of the respondents, 85% were women, and only 15% were men, a ratio that corresponds to the
demographics of the population (members of the company’s Facebook community page). The age distribution also corresponded well with the population demographics: the average age was 41 years, and 34% of all respondents were in the 36-45 age category whereas 24% were aged between 46 and 55, representing the two largest age cohorts, respectively. Community members were also asked about their previous purchasing history with the host company. A clear majority (80%) had made a purchase within the previous five years, but interestingly, 20% of the respondents reported that they had not bought anything from the company during that time.

4.2. Measurement

We based the measurement model on a careful literature review, but given the lack of similar studies in the context of Facebook community pages, we had to adapt the measurement items to fit the context. All items were formulated to fit a Likert-type (1–7) scale. The final items are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Measurement scales</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Construct</strong></td>
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<td>Hedonic motivations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilitarian motivations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Browsing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase intentions</td>
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Amos 19 software was used in conducting a confirmatory factor analysis to test measurement validity. The first step was to evaluate convergent validity by inspecting the individual item loadings: all the items loaded well over .60 for the construct they were intended to represent, thereby exceeding the suggested threshold value [22]. Next, we evaluated the internal consistency of the individual constructs by means of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE): the values of both for all items were above the thresholds -.70 and .50 respectively, indicating good internal consistency.

To prove discriminant validity of the model, we used the Fornell and Larcker procedure [22] and compared the square root of AVE for a given construct (presented on the diagonal on bold in Table 2) to the absolute value of the standardized correlation of the given construct with any other construct in the analysis. All of the square roots of AVE exceed the respective correlation, which proves good discriminant validity. Summary statistics for the measurement model are presented in Table 2.

We evaluated several fit indicators in order to assess how well the model fitted the data. The comparative fit index (CFI) was .983, indicating a satisfactory fit. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) was also satisfactory (.975). Finally, the normed fit index (NFI) showed a good fit with a value of .978 [32].

Having assessed the measurement model we constructed a structural equation model in order to test the hypotheses. We used the maximum likelihood method to evaluate the structural model: five out of the six hypotheses turned out to be statistically significant. Figure 2 presents the
structural coefficients. The model fit was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 401.9$, $p = .000$, $df = 83$, $CMIN/DF = 4.843$, $CFI = .980$).

Table 2. Measurement information and correlation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hedonic motivations</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Utilitarian motivations</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Browsing</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Purchase intentions</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.796</td>
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Square-roots of AVE on the diagonal on bold; Correlations off-diagonal

The results of the structural model indicate that both hedonic and utilitarian motivations play a part in determining the behavior of members of a company-hosted Facebook page. We found a strong positive relationship (.50, $p < .01$) between hedonic motivations and contribution, as well as between utilitarian motivations and browsing (.61, $p < .01$), therefore confirming hypotheses H1 and H2. There was also a positive relationship between hedonic motivations and browsing (.21, $p < .01$), as hypothesized. However, there was no significant relationship between utilitarian motivations and contribution, and therefore H4 had to be rejected. The results also supported hypothesis H5, browsing being positively (.29, $p < .01$) related to the intention to purchase. There was also a positive relationship between contribution and the intention to purchase, albeit on a much weaker level (.11, $p < .01$). Hypothesis H6 is still acceptable, however.

The results of the structural model are presented in Figure 2.

5. Discussion

The results of this study offer several interesting insights into consumer behavior on company-hosted Facebook community pages. Two notable findings arise in particular. First, there appears to be a clear distinction between behaviors related to utilitarian and hedonic motivations for using the community page. Hedonic motivations turned out to have a strong and significant relationship with contribution behavior, and a much weaker relationship with browsing behavior, whereas utilitarian motivations had no significant relationship with contributing but were very strongly related to browsing behavior. These findings offer validation to the claim that online communities have strong instrumental value to their users [7, 44] but also to the notion of communities as a source of enjoyment [34].

The second major finding is the weaker relationship between contribution and purchase intentions than between browsing and purchase intentions, which was somewhat contrary to expectations. Casaló et al. [13], for example, found that active participation was a strong indicator of the intention to use community products in the setting of an online travel community. It has also been shown that active participation in an online community reflects a stronger commitment to it and, eventually, stronger brand loyalty [29]. However, our findings reflect those of Sanchez-Franco and Rondan-Cataluña [44] in demonstrating that a travel community’s users with higher purchase-involvement were more concerned with its instrumental value than users with low purchase involvement who derived more satisfaction from its hedonic aspects. By definition, hedonic web usage implies that feelings of enjoyment derive from the experience itself, as opposed to deriving value from accomplishing pre-set goals [3, 16, 25, 27]. Indeed, as suggested in previous research, mere interaction with a community or web environment may be a source of enjoyment for a consumer without further goals to accomplish [15, 34]. From these premises, it would seem logical that contribution had a weaker effect on purchase intentions given that hedonic motivations exhibited a significant connection to contribution behavior whereas utilitarian motivations did not. Those with utilitarian motivations may be more likely to seek value from what they achieve through their use of the community, such as meeting information needs through browsing [31]. On the other hand, community users leaning more towards hedonic motivations may find the enjoyment of contribution a rewarding end state in itself, and consider the value of their contributions to their purchase-related decisions secondary. However, it may be
that contribution affects purchase intentions in a less direct manner given suggestions that contributing to brand communities is positively related to brand loyalty [1, 5].

Another possible explanation for the weak relationship between contribution and purchase intentions is that Facebook users may have generally lower levels of commitment to the community pages than members of more traditional online brand communities. Low commitment could result from the relative easiness of being a member of multiple community pages simultaneously. It is no longer necessary to visit a community on its own separate website because updates from communities are easily retrievable on a single screen view.

6. Managerial implications and limitations

While offering valuable theoretical insights into consumer behavior within the study context, the findings also reveal some managerial challenges. In particular, the weak connection between contribution and purchase intentions is problematic in implying that focusing on contributing members appears not to be the best strategy in terms of a possible direct sales impact. This could be considered an alien notion, given that the possibility of actively including customers in the marketing process has been widely celebrated as representing the revolutionary power of web 2.0 and social media [50]. Our results rather imply that focusing on providing useful and relevant information on a Facebook page might actually be a more effective strategy for companies in enhancing purchase intentions. Indeed, it may be that consumers use Facebook pages in much the same way as they use company websites - as sources of relevant information on an area of interest. They may ‘berry pick’ through the different Facebook pages they ‘like’, constantly seeking the best offers, the most engaging sites and the most entertaining content.

However, the relevance of browsing and information may be more pronounced in the context of experience services [36] such as travel, compared to other products and services that may easier to evaluate before making a purchase. Furthermore, users contributing to the community are valuable to companies in terms of generating content through which other users seeking information can then browse. High-quality user-generated content will promote the development of a more multifaceted and interesting company-hosted social media environment, which in turn is likely to contribute to a more positive company image.

We acknowledge the limitations of the current study, which relate to both the research method as well as the context. The concept of company-hosted Facebook pages is fairly new, and no validated scales exist for measuring consumer behavior in this context. Thus, we derived the survey questionnaire from measurement scales representing consumer behavior in more traditional online brand communities, and online in general. Perhaps, then, current measurements are not entirely sufficient for capturing the behavioral patterns that are unique to and inherent in the context of company-hosted Facebook community pages. Future research could address this issue through the development of operational measures of consumer behavior in such environments. We also acknowledge the potential limiting effect of the self-completed survey on external validity.

The study was conducted using data gathered from a single Facebook community page representing the travel industry, thus limiting its generalizability. Nevertheless, given that the page in question represents a fairly common type of company-hosted Facebook community page, and the brand itself is well known and popular within the target market, the findings are likely to represent the travel sector fairly well. Further, the strong pioneering position of the travel sector within e-commerce implies that the model may also possess value for other service sectors with a strong e-commerce orientation. Further investigations are needed in order to determine the applicability of the model to other contexts.

7. Conclusions

The findings reported in this research give a preliminary understanding of consumer behavior in company-hosted social media environments. We investigated hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using company-hosted Facebook community pages in relation to page usage behavior, and the effects of different usage behaviors on intentions to purchase the host-company’s products. We measured consumer behavior on two constructs: browsing and contribution. Despite its limitations, the study offers valuable theoretical and managerial insights. Firstly, it shows the relevance of both hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using company-hosted Facebook pages. Secondly, it successfully examined the links between the behavioral patterns of browsing and contribution, and users’ intentions to purchase the host-company’s products. Browsing turned out to have a stronger positive effect on purchase intentions than contribution, indicating that marketers should ensure that high-quality information is to be found on the page. Hence, the quality and amount of user-
8. References


