

Social Media as Effective Tool for Understanding Customer Experience: A Systematized Review

Adisu Fanta Bate – Ayman Balawi

University of Pécs

THE AIMS OF THE PAPER

Social media play an indispensable role in utilizing, building, and promoting companies' brands and communicating customer's experience in the current digital age. However, literature has not sufficiently addressed how social media could be utilized to understand customer experience. This paper, hence, aims to describe the roles and importance of social media in knowing about customers experience and offers tips for companies on how to select, target, and deliver the right content for the social media platforms at all touch points along their purchasing journey.

METHODOLOGY

The systematized review (SR) method was followed to trace out & analyze the data. The EBSCO discovery of science was utilized to search for articles. Among the databases in it, emphasis was given to academic search complete, business source premium & science direct. Out of the total (289) search query results, over forty-five articles were synthesized after imposing limiters, removing duplicates, and imposing none-business settings.

MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

Social media is a multi-purpose tool that offers services ranging from brand awareness creation, advertisement, product sales information, to soliciting post-purchase customers' experience and then catalyzes two-way communication between marketers and users. Its effectiveness depends not only on selecting social media and posting at the right time but also on designing the right content based on the nature of a product: hedonic or functional. The social media content of hedonic products, consumed for enjoyment and luxury purposes, has more customer reactions than functional products consumed as common goods. Besides, as customers rely more on other customers' reviews, user-generated content is more valuable than firm-generated content, especially for hedonic products. Thus, the content-product-media match must find its proper place. Additionally, the authors elaborated on the relationship between 4 touching points (brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned, social/independent, based on (Verhoef and Lemon 2016) and 3 stages of the purchase process (pre-purchase, during purchase, post-purchase).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Customer experience analysis should include all affective, physical, cognitive, sensorial, emotional, and social responses of customers towards brands. A company also needs to identify and, thoroughly, keep tracing customers' reactions at all touchpoints in all purchase journey phases using tools like 'SentiStrength' and 'Weka software'. It should be a top priority for management. They should place a responsible person or team to utilize social media and collect data on customer's experience in a separate IT-supported office.

Keywords: social media, customer experience, customer touchpoints, customer journey, systematized review (SR)

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INTRODUCTION

Following the technological revolution of the 21st century, every arena of people's lives has been under the influence of change. In particular, the means of transportation, communication, and organization can be mentioned as the main areas where the waves of change hit for the better. As we are in the age of information, the way people communicate, learn, and share information shows an unprecedented fast pace (Jacobson *et al.* 2020). Especially, since the early 2000s, people have been experiencing new modes of communication, which is called social media, that can connect individuals/organizations around the world in a fraction of seconds or microseconds (Abdelmoety & Gounaris 2015, Ali *et al.* 2018). Today, about 45.5% of the world population, which is 3.6 billion users log in, peruse, or make conversation with others on social media (Statista 2021). Also, about 62% of adults get news from social media, and the size of users' size has been hiking at an increasing rate (Gottfried & Shearer 2016). Facebook is the most widely used, with approximately 68% of adults in the United States alone using it (Li *et al.* 2020). The effect is not only on individuals but also on companies that tend to switch more of their marketing budget from traditional marketing to digital advertising and social media as most of their customers spend time on it (Kő *et al.* 2019, eMarketer 2020).

Perhaps, the term "Social Media" has become a widespread phenomenon in our daily lives as if we cannot live without it. Social media is defined as online communication platforms that include, but are not limited to, websites and web applications used for social interaction, photo and video sharing, and blogging (He *et al.* 2016). It can also be referred to as services that offer an opportunity to connect with friends and share messages, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Noordhuis *et al.* 2010, Eger *et al.* 2020). Comparing these social media to traditional media enables individuals and companies to quickly build online communities and promote a two-way, participatory conversation with customers, which is hardly done with the conventional one-way broadcasting (He *et al.* 2016, Ali *et al.* 2018, Silvia 2019). Besides, two fundamental differences are well observed between the two media. First, social media is highly exposed to anonymity, in which anyone can create either real or fake news and get spread soon. Second, users or audiences have no control or option to choose the source of the stories—a mix of news from both known and unknown sources that can be malicious

just appears on the front page of social media (Kim & Dennis 2019).

Traditionally, to garner information about their customers and competitors as well as to disseminate it, companies mainly engage in trade journals, marketing reports, newspapers, articles, TVs, Radio, brochures, and websites, which are known as traditional media (He *et al.* 2016, Silvia 2019). However, there has been no study so far that proved to void the usefulness of traditional media. When we talk about the utilization of social media and its benefits, in fact, we are not undermining the importance of traditional media. On the contrary, the study shows that utilizing online social media advertisements and television results in higher customer attention and favorable feelings about the product brands (Kumar *et al.* 2017). In their empirical analysis conducted on large U.S. ice-cream brand sales, Kumar *et al.* (2017) found that using both media at a time could increase customers' purchase intention, loyalty, and product awareness. Going more online on social media, for instance, more impressions on Facebook can increase television advertisements' effectiveness as it reminds passive TV viewers to be more attentive (Kumar *et al.* 2017). Moreover, regarding companies in the European region, Hungarian SMEs operate on social media platforms more than Czech and Slovakian SMEs in both categories: small and medium-sized companies (Civelek *et al.* 2020). Gáti and Bauer (2019) offer a better knowledge of key elements impacting the comprehension of marketing activities of Hungarian SMEs, their results show some vital features, such as SME leader's decisive role, a solid customer centricity, market adaptability, and entrepreneurial traits.

In contrast to traditional media, social media platforms enable customers to immediately and directly reach out & react to their service renderers by removing the distances of space and time. Today's companies seem to realize and rely on customers' experience to make an appropriate business decision. They show a keen interest in analyzing all the ratings, opinions, comments, feedbacks, dislikes, and likes from social media to know or assess their worthiness among their consumers (Abdelmoety & Gounaris 2015, Silvia 2019). On the other side, it is also noted by Kumar *et al.* (2017) that if the clients are exposed to negative comments of social media users that significantly vary from the message that the firm intends to say in its television advertisements. Higher exposure of the brand on social media can also hurt the effectiveness of traditional television advertising.

Therefore, a company's big task is to utilize social media and understand customer's experience during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phase of the customer journey (Verhoef & Lemon 2016, Belch & Belch 2018). Verhoef and Lemon (2016) define customer experience as a multi-dimensional construct focusing on customers' emotional, sensorial, behavioral, cognitive, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the entire customer's purchase journey. Despite its importance, there is a significant variation in the extent of companies' understanding of customer experience (Schwager & Meyer 2007). In fact, some companies even do not know why they need to worry about it. In contrast, others collect data and quantify it but do not circulate it, while the remaining ones distribute and disseminate the data but don't assign anyone as a responsible person to make the best use of social media concerning customers experience (Schwager & Meyer 2007, Crab 2019). In this paper, data were collected mainly from EBSCO databases, and the detail is in the methodology section below. The data analysis addresses the following questions: What are the scopes and roles of social media? How do we define and describe the customers' experience? How can we understand customers' experiences through social media?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Systematized review (SR) methodology is pursued to trace out data from databases and to make a synthesis. The main database utilized to search articles is EBSCO's discovery of science. Among the databases in it, the emphasis was given to more business-related databases: academic search complete, business source premium & science direct. The search topics used for searching include social media utilization, understanding customer's experience, and social media's influence on customer experience. The total records or search results observed from databases were narrowed down using the limiters such as years from 2000-2021, since social media are a recent phenomenon. Also, the course or discipline option includes only Marketing, Management, business, entrepreneurship, economics, and operation management. The 'relevance of the topic and the time of publication 'latest' are applied in the selection process. Out of the total search queries result, which is 289, after imposing adequate limiters, removing duplicates, and none -business settings, over forty-five articles were synthesized.

SOCIAL MEDIA: A GLOBAL TREND IN MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Since the advent of the 2000s, the explosion of various social media has remarkably influenced the way people think, communicate, learn, and live together (Jacobson et al. 2019). The study shows that 90% of medium and large-sized companies in the U.S. are now engaged in social media for official marketing purposes (eMarketer 2020). In the most recent study conducted by Grewal et al. (2019), about 80% of marketers testify that making consumer engagement through social media tends to increase customer retention and revenue. Surprisingly, according to the Global Web Index (2019), more than 7 out of 10 customers buy products online each month. The average size of each user's social media accounts increased from 3 in 2012 to 8 in 2019. According to the urban dictionary, Millennials born in the range of 1980-2001 kill 2 hours and 38 minutes on social media every day. The same report found that 46% of 16-24-year-old use social media to search for fashion products (Global Web Index 2019).

A Review on Social Media Types and Applications

Even though companies nowadays realize the significance of social media for promotion, brand awareness, and customer engagement, managing and selecting appropriate social media remains a challenge to address the target audience. Studies show that various social media types and the area of application are somewhat different from each one (He et al. 2016, Mark 2018, Ali et al. 2018). Mark (2018) divides social media into six major categories, and this classification has also been reflected by Ali et al. (2018). Whereas He et al. (2016) categorize social media into six but with different terminologies, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of social media

Mark 2018, Ali et al. 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Networks (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn) 2. News (e.g., Reddit), 3. Microblogging (e.g., Twitter), 4. Media sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), 5. Bookmarking websites (e.g., StumbleUpon) 6. Forums and Blogs.
He et al. 2016, Chen & Lin 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), 2. Blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), 3. Content communities (e.g., YouTube), 4. Social networking (e.g., Facebook), 5. Virtual game worlds 6. Virtual social worlds

Source: own review based on Mark 2018, Ali et al. 2018, He et al. 2016, Chen & Lin 2019

CONCEPTS AND ORIGIN OF CUSTOMERS: A NEW PARADIGM FOR CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

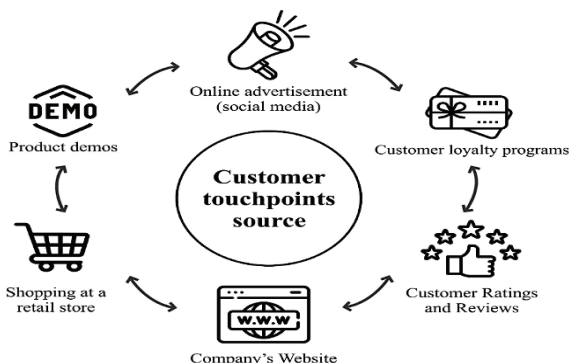
Nowadays, we can observe that there is a paradigm shift from what was previously called the customer decision-making process to "customer decision journey" or "customer purchase journey" (Verhoef & Lemon 2016). In the 2000s, marketing research focused on customer-centric marketing that strives to understand and deliver value to individual customers rather than mass or target markets (Sheth et al. 2000). After that, customer-centricity has got much attention from both researchers and marketing practitioners. By then, there was; product-centricity, lack of data, broad targeting, and subjective decision, whereas by now, it seems opposite: consumer-centricity, data overload, hyper-targeting, and data-driven decisions (World Web Index 2019). Customer centricity comprises three pillars: customer experience, customers' value, and customers' journey. Customers purchase journey encompasses all purchase phases in customers' journey: pre-purchase (need recognition, brand identification, and all other searches), purchase (choice, ordering, and payment), and post-purchase (usage and consumption, returns, post-purchase engagement, and service requests) (Verhoef & Lemon 2016).

Customer's experience emanates from a series of touchpoints or intersections with the company,

which is also called the customer corridor (Schwager & Meyer 2007). Verhoef and Lemon (2016) argue that keeping track of customer response at each touchpoint in each customer journey phase helps nurture a holistic understanding of customer experience on a brand. A company needs to correctly identify the customer touchpoints to capture customer experience in each stage of the journey and at each touchpoint. The possible touchpoints have been identified by the rigorous research of Verhoef and Lemon (2016), as follows:

1. Brand-owned touchpoint (i.e., include all company-paid media, e.g., advertising, websites, loyalty programs, and other attributes under a firm's control),
2. Partner-owned (i.e., jointly designed, managed, or controlled by the firm and one or more of its partners)
3. Customer-owned touchpoint (i.e., customer actions that influence the experience that is not under firms or partner's control),
4. Social/ independent touchpoints (i.e., customers are surrounded by external touchpoints (e.g., other customers, peer influences, independent information sources, and environments) (Verhoef & Lemon 2016). Figure 1 illustrates customers' touchpoints.

Figure 1. Examples of Customer touchpoints



Source: Authors' construction

Definition and Types of Customers' Experience

As an emerging trend in the marketing field of study, scholars so far have made a significant attempt to define the term "customers experience". In Table 2 are listed some of the definitions given by researchers in the field.

Table 2. Definition of types of customers' experience

<p><i>Schwager & Meyer (2007):</i> defined customer's experience as the internal and subjective response that customers provide to any direct or indirect contact with an organization. Direct contact occurs when a customer involves in a transaction with a company, whereas indirect contact through others and advertisement.</p>
<p><i>Verhoef & Lemon (2016):</i> it is a multi-dimensional construct that emphasizes a customer's cognitive, behavioral, emotional, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey.</p> <p><i>Schwager & Meyer (2007, 2.):</i> "Customers' experience encompasses every aspect of the company offering – the quality of customer care, but also advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use and reliability."</p>

Sources: Schwager & Meyer (2007), Verhoef & Lemon (2016)

For Schwager and Meyer (2007), customer satisfaction is the culmination of series of customer experiences. It occurs when the gap between customer expectation and actual experiences is narrowed. Whereas, for Verhoef and Lemon (2016), customer satisfaction could be one of the constitutes of customer experience, addresses the cognitive part of customers' experience. For them, customer experience seems broader than customer satisfaction (Belch & Belch 2018), which appears to be true. Anyhow, we simply see from this that

customer experience is not an alternative name for customer satisfaction. Tracing on the above definitions, we can also define customers' experience as an all-rounded customer reaction that encompasses cognitive, physical, emotional, affective, and social-related responses to any direct or indirect contact with the brand.

Moreover, Schmitt (1999) views customer's experience from multiple dimensions and identifies five types of experiences: I., sensory (sense), II. affective (feel), III., cognitive (think), IV., physical

(act), and V., social-identity (relate) experiences. Likewise, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) attempt to define customer experience, especially in the context of retailing, as a holistic and multi-dimensional construct that involves the customer's emotional, cognitive, affective, physical, and social feedback to the retailer during the whole purchase journey. Thus, when we say customers' experience, it is not only about what customers say or write but also it includes what is tacit inside their hearts and minds (Verhoef & Lemon 2016).

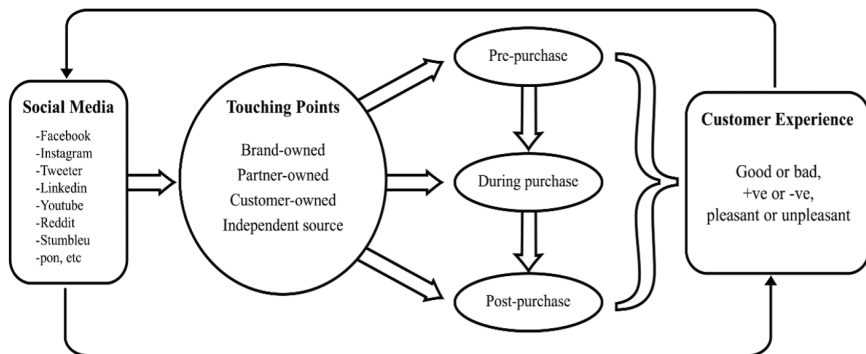
Enhancing Customer Experience: The Role of Touchpoints in Customer's Journey

As measuring customers' experience is tough, enhancing a good customer experience is not an easy task and needs a coordinated course of action. First, it is unthinkable to realize customer's experience until it is given top priority in the company's work processes, systems, and structure as well. Schwager and Meyer (2007) argue that every function in an organization has a role in reacting to customers' experience. Everyone in an organization, including marketing, operation, finance, and customer service delivery, needs to be concerned about customers' experience.

Second, the firm needs to recognize all the touchpoints in all customers' journey (Rosenbaum *et al.* 2017, Cambra *et al.* 2021). Touchpoints are where customers see and hear about or buy and use the company's product. So, any of the customers' unpleasant encounters in these points would have an adverse effect on the brands and experience. Finally, a company must place a responsible person or team to collect data on customer's experience in a separate IT-supported office. By doing this, a company will get at least three benefits: it saves time, avoids repetitive solicitation from and duplication of data, and eases customers' comparison based on varying factors (Homburg *et al.* 2017).

Effective use of social media does not only help to get customer's experience but also to promote all customer engagement values such as customer influencer behavior, customer purchasing behavior, customer referral behavior, and customer knowledge behavior (Kumar *et al.* 2010). After all, our understanding of customer's experience through social media depends on customers' self-disclosure amount and depth, polarity more of being positive or negative, accuracy, and the very intent (Jacobson *et al.* 2020, Salvietti *et al.* 2021). Figure 2. illustrates the implicit interaction of social media and customer experience along with possible touching points and purchase journey.

Figure 2. Social media effect on customer experience at different touching points in the purchase journey



Source: authors' construction

ADOPTION AND UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR A COMPANY

In connection to a hot debate on social media's positive and negative dimensions, most organizations seem to get confused about its adoption or utilization mechanism (Tajudeen *et al.* 2018). To reap fruits from the social media harvest, a company needs to work on reducing its backlashes. To do this, social media utilization in a given company can be influenced by technological, organizational, and environmental factors (TOE); social media strategies need to consider these factors (Tajudeen *et al.* 2018). Zilber *et al.* (2019) argue the perceived nature of the social media itself and the characteristics of adopters as the main factors hindering the adoption. Social media not only creates interaction between the company and its customers but also makes customer-to-customer interactions, which is another huge challenge to control (Leefflang *et al.* 2014, citing in Verhoef & Lemon 2016). By its nature, the customer's experience is more social and can easily be influenced by peers (Wibowo *et al.* 2020), mainly by those who can easily communicate on social media. If the negative opinions are diffused among them, it will pose both financial and reputational threats that could destroy the company's public image and expected sales volume (Coombs 2007).

Mainly, it needs critical attention from a company when its customers forward adverse reactions to the products through social media. Competitors introduce a new promotional technique that can divert customers. To this end, engaging in social media provides competitors information and helps to make a direct comparison of customers' behaviors towards competing organizations (Dey *et al.* 2011). Therefore, businesses cannot afford to ignore social media data as the competition in the marketplace is getting intense and complex (Jansen *et al.* 2009, He *et al.* 2016). Using it can create a problem, in the same way not using it also makes a problem. When it comes to using, businesses often run with different perspectives on the use of social media tools. Some companies engage in social media to dispatch sales information, and others tend to boost relationships with customers through social media (He *et al.* 2016, Faulds & Mangold 2014).

Managing Risk in Social Media: An Effective Strategy for Brands and Competitive Intelligence

The proper use of social media will improve the organization's performance in various areas: - cost reduction in marketing and customer services improves relationships with customers, increasing loyalty, and enhancing information accessibility about customers and competitors (Tajudeen *et al.* 2018). Identifying users' explicit and implicit needs and wants has become the main concern for new product development (Ilsun & Myung 2018). Surprisingly, customers react and compare features and prices products from the same domain (He *et al.* 2016) and post it on the online platforms that can be even used in competitors' analysis or competitive intelligence analysis (Ali *et al.* 2018). The customers' cross-sectional and wide range of views on products would significantly affect other customers interconnected in social media. Therefore, it needs to be vigilant and have an eagle's eye to capture the information and make appropriate risk management policy and strategic business decisions accordingly (Ali *et al.* 2018). They advise companies to closely monitor social media sites with brand-touch points as today's customers are more online. Moreover, business firms can develop sound business intelligence by rigorously monitoring and analyzing the messages written by customers of their competitors. This knowledge can also be used to identify relative strengths and detect problems in comparing their products and services with those of competitors (He *et al.* 2016).

Sentiment Analysis in Social Media: An Application for Customer's Experience

The success of using social media to understand customer's experience is, by and large, determined by the company's ability to measure the response of customers on the media. The measurement effectiveness used to track customer attitudes and perceptions plays a crucial role in understanding and managing customers' experience (Wibowo *et al.* 2020). Some of the most common tools used to measure or analyze competitors' data and user-generated content are text mining, sentiment analysis, and quantitative analysis (Ali *et al.* 2018, He *et al.* 2016) and used for competitive intelligence analysis. Sentiment Analysis is also a mechanism that helps to get information about a brand's reputation among the customers and competitors (Ali *et al.*

2018). It is simply the study of opinions, emotions, and sentiments in each text. The tool named "Senti-Strength" focuses on measuring sentiments, opinions, and views of customers about a given brand and it also shows the strength of negative, positive, and neutral sentiments in each comment from social media users (Ali *et al.* 2018, He *et al.* 2016). Ali *et al.* (2018) applied sentiment analysis to gauge customer's sentiments and opinions towards the three products: Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Fanta, and found a higher positive sentiment record for Coca-Cola than others.

Moreover, He *et al.* (2016) used the SentiStrength tool to scale customers' sentiments in three big drugstores in the USA, and it helped to identify the one with the favorable sentiment. Additionally, Ilsun and Myung (2018) used a common method of text mining and sentiment analysis on the social media data, especially from Twitter, to understand the customers experience on smartphones in terms of the 5 attributes that include autonomy, reactivity, adaptability, multi-functionality, and ability to cooperate. They found many satisfactory experiences for all attributes, but unsatisfactory experiences were observed on multi-functionality and connectivity of the phone. Then, correctly measuring users' experience helps companies make a new design or modify the existing one accordingly to improve the experience and loyalty (Rhiu & Yun 2018).

Besides, the intensity and types of people's reactions on social media are not the same for all kinds of products. The hedonic goods consumed for luxury purposes- to feel pleasure, fun, and enjoyment- are with more user-generated content indicating positive or negative feelings than functional products (Micu *et al.* 2019, Alam & Khan 2019). And even social media platforms are not equally convenient for all types of products. For instance, in Micu *et al.* (2019) research Facebook seems to render more opportunity to circulate client's sentiments than Twitter, whereas YouTube is mainly for video content. The result proves that managers knowing how to identify the right content and social media for a given product do more likely make a visible impact on customers in the selected platforms and wisely allocate resources (Micu *et al.* 2019). Moreover, it needs to be noted that as customers rely more on other customers' reviews, user-generated content is more valuable than firm-generated content for hedonic products (Alam & Khan 2019).

Additionally, proper attention is required while posting identity-relevant products that communicate something about the consumer's identity to self and other audiences. It can decrease customers' subsequent purchase of the same products (Grewal

et al. 2019). On the other side, the study also shows that getting customers to post about the product on social media can help a company to elicit WOM-related benefits that come by social influence, but it is done at the cost of sales from clients making WOM as it undermines the desire to purchase and it must be taken into while encouraging customer engagement on social media (Grewal *et al.* 2019).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

It has come to be clear that the sustainability of business firms relies on how they manage their customers' experience. As shown in Figure 2, the connection among social media, touching points, the purchase journey, and customer experience seems implicit and profound. Whether individual persons or companies, an attempt to escape any touch from social media is inconceivable at all stages of the purchase journey as long as they live in this digitalized world. Moreover, the paramount significance of social media platforms cannot be undermined at all, and they are acting as both opinion-shapers and opinion-providers at the same time. From a marketing perspective, we can define social media as an online platform that catalyzes two-way communication between marketers and users and helps disseminate information in the form of texts, photos, & videos and instantly react to it in the diverse digital community.

The holistic approach that extends from the pre-purchase stage, where social media can be used for brand awareness creation, advertisement, and product sales information, to post-purchase journey, where to solicit customers' experience, is where the next competitive advantage lies. However, it needs a skilled workforce to work on it in favor of a company. The challenge starts with selecting the right message or content for a particular social media platform to communicate with the target market. As every social media platform is unique, no one-size-fits-for all- content can be posted in all. Hence, the content-media match should be checked before posting. A study showed that managers who know how to identify the correct content and social media for a given product have a more likely visible impact on customers on the selected platforms and wisely allocate resources (Micu *et al.* 2019, Wibowo *et al.* 2020). The effectiveness of using social media depends on choosing social media, posting at the right time, and designing the right content based on the nature of a particular product: hedonic or functional. The social media content of

hedonic products, consumed for enjoyment and luxury, has more customer reactions than functional products consumed as common goods. Moreover, it needs to be noted that as customers rely more on other customers' reviews, user-generated content is more valuable than firm-generated content, especially for hedonic products (Alam & Khan 2019). Thus, the content-product-media match should be cross-checked.

As we have been transforming from product centrality to customer centrality, customers' experience in companies' brands have become a key player in the marketing realm. We can define "customers' experience" as an all-rounded customer reaction that encompasses cognitive, physical, emotional, affective, and social-related responses to any direct or indirect contact with the brand. An analysis of the customer's experience is recommended to inculcate all the affective, physical, cognitive, sensorial, or emotional, and social responses of customers towards brands. Also, the touching point at firm-customer interaction (brand-owned) is insufficient to adequately assess the customer's experience; hence, tracking the customer reactions must address all possible touching points, including partner-owned, customer-owned, and social/independent touching points.

To develop a proper understanding of customers' experience, a company also needs to identify and, thoroughly, keep tracing customers' responses in all touchpoints in all purchase journey phases, including pre-purchase (need recognition, brand identification, and all other searches), purchase (choice, ordering, and payment), and post-purchase behavior (usage and consumption, returns, post-purchase engagement, and service requests). Moreover, it needs to be the top priority of top management and all functions in the organization. A company also has to place a responsible person or

team, precisely, to manage customer experience on social media in a separate IT-supported office. Also, the appropriateness of a tool used to collect and analyze data determines companies' level of knowledge about their customer experience. To measure the customers' experience, companies can use text mining (i.e., applies Weka software) that enables the data extraction of both unstructured and structured data; ii, sentiment analysis (i.e., relying on sentiment strength software) that helps to identify the types and intensity of customers sentiments, opinions, views, and perceptions about a particular brand. Moreover, the importance of utilizing social media is not only limited to customer experience analysis, but also useful for competitive intelligence analysis because customers do not only compare features and prices of the same domain product, but also go online to post their experience and expectations of other competitors as well.

Even if this study offers a broad and deep understanding of how to utilize social media to understand customer's experiences, its finding has limitations that can be overcome through further research. Research can be done, by taking specific companies on how customer experience changes throughout the customer's purchase journey (pre-purchase, during purchase, and post-purchase) and how to manage it in each purchasing journey using social media. What are the social media-related factors that change customer experience from negative to positive, or vice versa? Which touching point is the most significant (brand-owned, customer-owned, independent source, or partner-owned), for which kind of product, and how to independently manage it on social media.

Adisu Fanta Bate, PhD candidate.
adisufanta@gmail.com

Ayman Balawi, PhD candidate
aymanalb2004@gmail.com

University of Pécs Faculty of Business and Economics

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