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Anupama Vohra, Neha Bhardwaj,

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Customer engagement in an e-commerce brand community
An empirical comparison of alternate models

Anupama Vohra
Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India, and

Neha Bhardwaj
Sharda University School of Business Studies, Greater Noida, India

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to outline a conceptual framework for customer engagement in the context of social media for emerging markets. Three competing models of customer engagement were identified and tested to arrive at the best suited model for the given contexts. The alternative conceptual frameworks involve the constructs of active participation, community trust and community commitment in relation to customer engagement.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected using questionnaires sent via e-mail to respondents. Structural equation modelling was then used to arrive at the best suited model, while also empirically testing for the relationships among the constructs.

Findings – The study, by way of an empirical comparison of alternative conceptual frameworks, presents a customer engagement framework best suiting the social media context for emerging markets. The study also outlines active participation, community trust and community commitment to be acting as antecedents to customer engagement. Further active participation is identified as a necessary antecedent to customer engagement based on the comparative assessment of the frameworks.

Research limitations/implications – While there is not much consensus on the nature of customer engagement, the study offers insights to marketers in terms of managing customer engagement with their brand communities. The study identifies the role and importance of inducing active participation in a brand community context. Further, it also identifies community trust and community commitment to be occurring as antecedents to customer engagement, with commitment implying for a more pronounced role in the framework.

Originality/value – There is no consensus among researchers regarding the nomological network surrounding customer engagement. Further, very few of these studies have focussed on this construct in the context of emerging markets. This study thus attempts to close the above gap, by testing for alternative conceptual frameworks involving customer engagement, in the context of social media for emerging markets.

Keywords Social networks, E-commerce, Consumer behaviour internet, Virtual communities, Millennial marketing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Customer engagement is one of the biggest marketing buzzword of the twenty-first century among both academicians and practitioners alike. The term was recognized in marketing literature around 2006 (Brodie *et al.*, 2011), and since then the research focus around the construct has grown formidably. Dessart *et al.* (2016) presented customer engagement while contrasting it to the older established concepts, such as, brand involvement or relationship quality, in that engagement "offers a modified view of relationships" which are highly

interactive and social. On a similar note, Henning-Thurau *et al.* (2010) too identified that the modern-day customer relationships are the result of social, interactive and empowering situational elements. These engagement features enhance the empirical treatment of modern customer relationships (Dessart *et al.*, 2016).

With social and interactive features being an inherent part of both modern-day customer relationships and the computer-mediated marketing environment, the amalgamation of both presents a potential research area towards the empirical development of the construct. To this end, research (Habibi *et al.*, 2014; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014; Schultz and Peltier, 2013) has also indicated the importance of generating customer engagement via the social media channels. In The Social Media Marketing India Trends Study 2016 by Ernst and Young (Economic Times, 2016), 72 per cent marketers identified "customer engagement" as their primary objective for being present on social media. However a majority, 92 per cent, identified "increasing engagement" as the biggest challenge on social media. This brings customer engagement to the forefront of any social media marketing discussion.

Social media, an offshoot of internet 2.0, has brought with it the biggest transformation, catapulting information and communication flow while also redefining the manner in which users socialize and enter into relationships. The earlier passive consumer is now an active agent to the firm, guiding and collaborating through the various stages of its marketing efforts. While the developed world is a frontrunner in terms of internet and social media adoption, the emerging markets too are fast drawing close. Owing to growth in internet penetration coupled with rising mobile accessibility, social media is fast catching up as the primary tool of communication in emerging markets as well. However, both the developed and emerging markets differ in terms of their internet and social media adoption and usage. The distinct cultural diversity of each of these markets could be one of the factors impacting adoption and use of internet in these markets (Park and Jun, 2003). Anecdotal evidence even indicates that creativity in terms of use of social media tools for marketing is more striking for emerging markets as compared to the developed world.

In the above light, Sheth (2011) observed that existing marketing perspectives have largely been developed in the context of industrialized nations and need to be redeveloped as emerging markets develop (p. 166). A similar observation was also shared by Steenkamp (2001), who identified a country's culture as one of the key environmental characteristic accounting for systematic differences in behaviour (p. 30). The author also observed for most marketing theories to be developed and validated in the western country context. While talking of customer relationships, London and Hart (2004) observed that emerging markets differ from the industrialized nations, in that the relationships are based on both formal and informal contracts. Most marketers feel that emerging market consumers are becoming more like their developed market counterparts; however, the rate of this change is slow (Dawar and Chattopadhyay, 2002). While there are evidences that different cultures are converging, owing to the advances in travel and communication technologies, the behaviours that appear to be common or uniform carry distinct meaning for individuals or groups belonging to different cultures (Park and Jun, 2003). Also, in their cross-national comparison of social media interactions, Hudson *et al.* (2015) observed a unique characteristic of emerging markets being that these are highly local. They thus contend that many fundamental marketing beliefs are at odds when brought to the emerging market context. It may thus be stated that consumers in emerging markets are unlikely to respond to marketing programs designed for the developed markets.

With this as the backdrop, the current study presents a conceptual framework for customer engagement, in the context of social media in emerging markets.

Purpose of study

With both internet and social media increasingly becoming marketer's favourite tools and the discussions largely revolving around customer engagement, the major aim of present study is to arrive at a conceptual framework for customer engagement. The study empirically presents the construct of customer engagement, bounded by two contextual dimensions: first, the study considers the construct in the online/social media domain, and second, it draws empirically from the emerging market perspective. The study thus tries to present an empirically verified model of customer engagement more suited to the emerging markets as against the current theories advanced based on the developed nations.

Both academicians and practitioners have for long debated the nomological network surrounding customer engagement, with no consensus being arrived at so far. The Marketing Science Institute (MSI) in its research priorities has continually identified customer engagement as a focus area demanding incremental research (MSI, 2016-18, 2014-16). Dessart et al. (2016) also observed for lack of quantitative studies focussing on the construct of customer engagement (p. 402). To add to this, there is a need for studies to focus on the antecedents and consequences of the construct so as to get an in-depth clarity around it. Brodie et al. (2011) called for future research to focus on which constructs could act as possible consequences or antecedents to customer engagement in different contexts (p. 263). They called for research to focus on different engagement expressions in distinct settings (apart from offline) to generate more insights on the concept. Also, Dessart et al. (2016) and Braun et al. (2016), observed that given the nascent development of the concept of customer engagement till date, research is required to provide more clarity to enable generalizability of results. Thus, while customer engagement studies continue to receive attention, it is the contextual representation of the construct which demands more focus in the current times.

Adding further, the authors of current study found very few empirical studies to be focussing on social media as a contextual periphery for studies on customer engagement. The MSI, too, under their Research Priority "Delivering integrated, real-time, relevant experiences in context" called for digital context to be the focus of customer engagement studies, (MSI, 2016-18). Previous literature (Dolan et al., 2015; Baldus et al., 2015) also observes for lack of studies focussing on customer engagement in the context of social media or online brand communities. Dolan et al. (2015) also added that studies focussing on customer engagement within the social media context were in their nascent stage (p. 2), and thus called for theoretical development of the construct within this context. Further, Cheung et al. (2011) noted for a lack of consensus regarding dimensionality and operationalization of customer engagement in the context of social media. Barger et al. (2016), too, called for more research to focus on theoretical development of the construct while also focussing on micro-level studies. Further, while previous studies have presented conceptual frameworks for customer engagement in the brand community context, empirical support and validation of the same is lacking (Islam and Rahman, 2016a, p. 52).

Based on synthesis of literature, three alternate frameworks are identified to be representing the conceptual framework of customer engagement. An empirical comparative assessment of these alternate frameworks is undertaken in the study, within the defined contextual dimensions, so as to identify the best suited framework. Further, the study also aims to uncover the empirical relationships among the various constructs of the framework, within social media context; with Hollebeek et al. (2014) calling for empirical studies to offer insights on dynamics surrounding customer engagement. The current study, thus, empirically identifies the association that each of these constructs makes with customer engagement, for social media virtual communities particularly.

The rest of the study is organized as follows: The next section presents literature synthesis for each of the variables of the study. This is followed by identification of relationships among the variables so as to arrive at the conceptual framework for customer engagement. The subsequent section details the methods of study followed by presentation of results. This is followed by a discussion on results along with listing down avenues of future research.

Review of literature

This section briefly presents the theoretical background of each of the constructs of this study based on review of existing literature on the subject.

Social media and Brand communities

Social media has captured the marketer's imagination, offering deep customer insights beneficial for strategic decision-making. Marketers find tremendous benefits in social media system, as it offers insights on customers, brand perceptions, feedback, new product ideas, etc. (Henning-Thurau *et al.*, 2010); while for the customers it exists as a medium to get information, to know their brands better or to interact with fellow customers. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as "a group of internet based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and it allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 77), with this definition finding acceptance from various scholars (Laroche *et al.*, 2013; Lim *et al.*, 2013; Gummerus *et al.*, 2012). There is no brand and no customer decision today that goes untouched by this medium. Park and Kim (2014) have rightly stated that the presence of a brand on social media is an indication of its inclination towards relationship efforts (p. 466).

One of the most distinct features of social media channels are its virtual communities. The roots of virtual communities lie in anthropology and sociology. Dholakia *et al.* (2004) describe virtual communities as abstract social categories, being vaguely defined and composed of a dynamic, ever-changing assembly of participants (p. 247). Kozinets (1999) identified virtual communities of interest (VCI) as "affiliative groups whose online interactions are based upon shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a specific activity or a group of activities". Marketers are increasingly utilizing these communities to reach out to current and prospective customers. Laroche *et al.* (2013) in their study on influence of social media communities on elements of the customer-centric model note that social media brand communities by way of improving customer relationships with the brand, the product, the company and other customers, help in enhancing brand trust and brand loyalty. Literature refers to virtual communities using various terminologies across various contexts, such as, brand community, online community, online brand community, fan page, online opinion platform etc. For simplicity, any community on a social media channel which is associated with a brand is referred to as 'brand community' in this paper.

Customer engagement with the community

While there is not much consensus on the nature of engagement, practitioners relate it to programs that involve individuals and connect them to the brand and thus help in building relationships (Vivek *et al.*, 2012, p. 128). To this end, Skute (2014) highlights that marketers have moved from one-to-many engagement to many-to-many engagement, with the help of social media, while building a network of relationships, having little or no control over the communications taking place. Dessart *et al.* (2016) observed that the "object of engagement" finds mention in the literature using various terminologies, such as, brand engagement, online engagement, brand community engagement etc. The authors attribute this to the

different foci of engagement considered in each of these researches. The current study however, refers to the construct as 'customer engagement', while its focus lies on virtual communities embedded in social media.

Customer engagement manifests in it the dynamics of networked customers, organizations and stakeholders who co-create value interactively (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). The scope of the construct can be easily described by the number of ways in which it can be classified: with activities and events coming from profit-making businesses or not-for-profit organizations, in the presence or absence of other customers, in online vs. the real world, at the organization premises or other than the organization premises, engaging directly or through third parties (Vivek *et al.*, 2012, p. 133). In the context of brand communities on social media, the construct of customer engagement may thus include both customer-to-firm and customer-to-customer interactions, focussed on the brand. It may also include online discussions, commenting, information search and opinion polls as a form of customer engagement behaviours for a brand community (Gummerus *et al.*, 2012, p. 858). Tsai and Men (2013) described customer engagement, in the context of social media brand pages, to be occurring at three levels – the behaviour of consuming content, contributing to other content or creating content. However, Hsu *et al.* (2012) propounded community engagement to extend beyond mere participation in community (p. 77), as opposed to other scholars (Algesheimer *et al.*, 2005) who based engagement on the interactions that take place in a community. Engagement would thus entail voluntary contribution of time, effort and knowledge made by members towards the community. The voluntary and motivational nature of the construct of customer engagement also finds support from other studies (Bowden *et al.*, 2017).

Similar to the various terminologies representing engagement, literature also defines the construct in numerous ways. Vivek *et al.* (2012) describe customer engagement as the "intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates". However, with the introduction of new forms of media, new forms of engagement emerged. In this sense, customer engagement is described as the numerous ways in which customers can interact with a firm through the various new media channels, with the behaviour displayed being both purchase and non-purchase. In the context of social media and virtual communities, Porter *et al.* (2011) described engagement as members' participation and co-operation within the brand community, while also making extra efforts to create value both for the firm and for themselves (p. 101). Similarly, Kim *et al.* (2013) defined engagement as the "state of being involved, occupied, retained and intrinsically interested in something" (p. 363).

The present study adopts the engagement definition given by Hollebeek *et al.* (2014), defining engagement as "a consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions". Dessart *et al.* (2016) observed that most empirical studies fail to consider the multidimensionality of engagement even though proposed in most conceptual and qualitative literature (p. 405). The current study tries to cover this gap by presenting the construct to be multidimensional in nature. The above definition presents engagement to be composed of cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions, which also finds support in previous literature (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Cheung *et al.*, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). For the purpose of this study, cognitive dimension is described as the level of thought processing (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014) or level of immersion in the community (Cheung *et al.*, 2011). Affective dimension reflects positive affect towards the brand community, which could be a result of a sense of belonging to the community (Brodie *et al.*, 2013). The behavioural dimension is described to

be manifested by way of activities that users undertake in a community, and reflects the energy and time devoted towards the community (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014).

While the construct of customer engagement has received incremental focus from both practitioners and academicians, the concept still calls for more in-depth studies. As also highlighted in the earlier sections of this study, there has been a consistent call for studies to focus on empirical (Dessart *et al.*, 2016) and theoretical (Barger *et al.*, 2016) development of the construct of customer engagement, in the context of social media (Dolan *et al.*, 2015; Baldus *et al.*, 2015). The present study addresses these issues by presenting the construct of customer engagement empirically in the context of social media brand communities.

The subsequent sub-sections detail the other variables that make up the conceptual framework of the study.

Community trust
The construct of trust is identified as central to any relationship building efforts (Hess and Story, 2005, p. 314). It is manifested in an individual's beliefs about reliability, safety and honesty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). While trust has often been described as a key indicator of human interactions (Cheng *et al.*, 2017), its importance in maintaining online relationships too has received much focus in the recent times (Kim and Peterson, 2017; Chahal and Rani, 2017; Ridings *et al.*, 2002). In this context, Cheng *et al.* (2017) noted that trust prevents geographical distance, a characteristic of virtual interactions, from becoming psychological distance for the interacting parties. Also, Hashim and Tan (2015) observed that trust had a key role to play in shaping reliable behaviour in situations where acceptable workable rules were lacking, as is the case with online communities (p. 146). Ridings *et al.* (2002) noted that like traditional communities where people work better with whom they trust, while avoiding contact with those whom they do not; similar effects could be observed in the virtual communities as well. However, the scholars stated that trust in the online community context is at a generalized, collective level with conversations happening not just between one or two individuals but with an individual posting to a general audience (p. 275).

It has been observed in literature (Hashim and Tan, 2015; Ridings *et al.*, 2002) that conceptualization of trust varies across the contexts in which it is being studied. Agag and El-Masry (2016) described trust as the belief that an online service provider shall fulfil its transactional obligations as understood by the consumer (p. 99). Chu and Kim (2011), in the context of social networking sites, presented trust as crucial aspect towards evaluating the source and value of information (p. 66). With trust being integral to decision-making in uncertain environments, Bruhn *et al.* (2014) differentiated between brand trust and brand community trust. In their study of restaurant Facebook pages, Kang *et al.* (2014) described trust as a consumer's belief in a brand that it shall perform as expected (p. 148). Bruhn *et al.* (2014) described brand community trust as safety and security experienced by user, which is the result of belief in honesty and reliability of the community as a whole (p. 169). Hsu *et al.* (2012) also defined online community trust as "community members' psychological states of confidence that the online community and other members have the ability to deliver what has been promised and put their interests first" (p. 77).

While trust has often been recognized as central to online interactions and relationships, there are still gaps that need to be covered to explore the construct better. In this sense, Cheng *et al.* (2017) noted that while most empirical studies on trust investigate the construct from either a team or organizational perspective, trust in social media is an outcome of social ties and relationships and thus needs to be studied separately (p. 26). Islam and Rahman (2016a) observed for lack of studies focussing on trust in relationship to other constructs in

the marketing literature. This is important also because the antecedents and trust factors vary depending on the types of communication being considered (Cheng *et al.*, 2017, p. 26). Further, Islam and Rahman (2016a) also identified that not many research were focussed on identifying antecedents of trust in the literature (p. 44). Connolly and Bannister (2007) called for more studies to focus on trust in online context, especially in the context of online shopping platforms.

Community commitment

Commitment is an important construct in the relationship marketing context as consumers or individuals commit to only connections that they trust (Li and Chang, 2016, p. 925). Hess and Story (2005) defined commitment as "consumers' ultimate relationship disposition, encompassing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours toward the brand and their relationship with that brand" (p. 314). The importance of commitment stems from the fact that committed customers are less likely to display conversion behaviours. This could be attributed to the fact that committed consumers are more willing to stay in an exchange relationship and put more efforts towards maintaining the same (Turri *et al.*, 2013, p. 203). In the online context, Chen *et al.* (2013) observed that commitment captures a broader view of forces that drive an individual's online behaviour. Kang *et al.* (2014) further stated that in the context of online communities, commitment could be described as the "member's willingness to continue relationship with the brand through participation in online communities" (p. 148). Wirtz *et al.* (2013), identified commitment to a brand community as an important aspect so as to prevent members from switching to other communities by just a few clicks (p. 234). Also, in the context of social networking sites, commitment binds a user to content creation behaviours, such as posting updates, posting photos or changing status (Chen *et al.*, 2013, p. 2529).

The organization commitment theory describes commitment based on three dimensions: normative, affective and continuous (Chen *et al.*, 2013, p. 2529). The present study refers to its affective component as also referred to by other researchers (Hashim and Tan, 2015; Turri *et al.*, 2013) in their respective studies. Dholakia *et al.* (2004) described commitment as the "affective aspect of social identity" in the context of virtual communities (p. 245). Affective commitment largely refers to the emotional aspect of commitment. Also, Hashim and Tan (2015) observed for affective commitment to be having a significant influence on maintaining positive behaviour among the community members (p. 147). Strong commitment in the community reduces member turnover while also aiding in establishing stable relationships. Zhou and Amin (2014) described commitment as "an enduring desire to maintain a desired relationship, which is based on positive emotional bonds and is characterized as affective social identity" (p. 28). The scholars described the construct as a 'sustainable relationship factor' between members of an online community and their engagement within the communities.

While commitment is described as an indispensable part of the relationship marketing, Turri *et al.* (2013) noted that while firms and brands benefit by establishing emotion-based relationships with their customers, limited research has tried to explore these affect-based relationships in the context of internet (p. 202). The present study offers to explore the role of these affect-based relationships in the context of online communities and in terms of their influence in impacting customer engagement.

Active participation

Kang *et al.* (2014) and Tonteri *et al.* (2011) referred to two types of participation by users in the context of a brand community: active and passive. While passive users gain community

benefits by simply browsing through the community and making no contributions; active users participate in the community activities enthusiastically, creating messages and disseminating information. The present study focuses on the active participants of a brand community and thus refers to it as "active participation". Active participation occurs when users contribute their reviews and feedback in the community (Henning-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). These reviews further lead to more dialog and interactions among the community members. Participation in online communities not only guarantees high levels of consumer involvement, but also enables stronger group cohesion while generating feelings that bind one member to the other (Casalo *et al.*, 2010). Bruhn *et al.* (2014), in their study on online B2B communities, described interactions as the key to well-being of any community (p. 167). Further, active participation is also an influential tool in enhancing brand knowledge, and in helping solve problems of other members. Turri *et al.* (2013) observed in their study that content creators or active participants of a community add more value to a community (p. 206).

The construct finds applicability in the present study's conceptual framework as active participation has been described as key to a community's survival and success by several scholars in the past (Agag and El-Masry, 2016; Casalo *et al.*, 2007). It is thus imperative that any framework focussing on virtual communities must consider this construct as an indispensable outcome or source of any community-related outcomes. Further, Agag and El-Masry (2016) observed that in the context of online travel communities, not much attention has been paid towards the antecedents and consequences of intention of customers to participate in the community (p. 97). The present study thus also shall capture the same in its essence.

Conceptual framework of customer engagement

Brodie *et al.* (2011), in their paper observed that the construct of customer engagement finds mention in marketing literature relatively recently. Further, the conceptual framework (NN) surrounding customer engagement, too, is thus not well defined. This section arrives at alternative conceptual frameworks defining customer engagement based on the literature. The hypotheses relating to each of the frameworks identified are presented along with. These alternative frameworks are then tested so as to arrive at the best suited framework for customer engagement in the given contexts.

Conceptual framework and Hypotheses development

In their three-step framework towards fostering engagement in a community, Porter *et al.* (2011) identified community participation as an indispensable part of the engagement process. Also, many other researchers too have referred to engagement and participation in the same tone. For instance, Cheng *et al.* (2017) referred to behavioural engagement to be manifested through sharing, commenting and creation behaviours of users. However, based on inputs from marketing practitioners and an exhaustive literature review, Vivek *et al.* (2012) presented participation as an antecedent to engagement (p. 134). Also, Brodie *et al.* (2011) identified participation as a "required" antecedent to engagement, while other concepts such as flow and rapport were identified as "potential" antecedents to engagement (p. 260). Further, more recently, Gutierrez-Cillan *et al.* (2017) observed in their study that customer engagement was a result of first-hand customer experiences. The authors in their study hypothesized for participation to be influencing active engagement (manifested through display of reciprocating behaviours), in the context of Facebook brand pages. While various scholars contend for participation as an antecedent to customer engagement, there also have been studies that presented the relationship otherwise. In one such study,

Wirtz *et al.* (2013) indicated towards customer engagement to be acting as an antecedent to participation. However, most of the studies (presenting participation either as an antecedent or as a consequence) do not differentiate between active and passive participation. To this end, while Bowden (2009) tried to offer the new customer-old customer analogy, none has been empirically validated. The current study, by considering only active participation in its framework, adds to the existing literature on participation – engagement relationship. Based on the above theories, active participation is tested for as a consequence to customer engagement, in the first conceptual framework (Nomological Network 1 – NN1). Further, Nomological Network 2 (NN2) and Nomological Network 3 (NN3) both propose for active participation as an antecedent to customer engagement – with NN2 presenting mediators in the relationship hypothesized.

As members begin to participate in a community, they develop a sense of dependence on the community for a variety of needs. This dependence then culminates into trust in the community. Porter *et al.* (2011) in their qualitative study highlighted trust as an important aspect of member co-operation in the community (p. 97). Further researchers (Kang, 2011; Kang *et al.*, 2014), in their empirical studies have identified a positive influence of participation on trust. This is attributable to the fact that participation enhances member's reliability of information, generating trust in the community and the brand as well. The conceptual frameworks, NN1 and NN2, thus present community trust as a consequence to active participation in the community.

Next, the frequent interactions that consumers engage in, on the community, lead to the development of positive attitudes, and thus commitment. Chan and Li (2010) and Dholakia *et al.* (2009), too, have described consumer reciprocity to be influencing consumer's commitment in the brand community. In return for the social and functional benefits gained from community participation, members reciprocate with their affective commitment towards the community (Jin *et al.*, 2010). Casalo *et al.* (2008) presented affective commitment as a consequence to active participation, in the context of online communities. Also, Turri *et al.* (2013) presented content co-creation as a factor to be moderating commitment in the context of social media. The authors contended that if members do not participate in a social media community, the site shall cease to offer fresh content and thus ultimately users may stop visiting the site (p. 206).

Thus, based on the above, the various competing models of this study present community trust and community commitment to be occurring as a result of user's active participation. While NN1 and NN2, present community trust and community commitment to be directly influenced by active participation, NN3 presents customer engagement to be mediating the relationship between active participation and the dual constructs of community trust and community commitment.

The rationale for this differential treatment to the relationship is attributable to the literature, where there is yet no consensus regarding trust and commitment to be either acting as antecedents or consequences to the construct of customer engagement. While community trust and community commitment act as consequences to active participation, researchers differ in their understanding of the role that each plays in the nomological network surrounding customer engagement. Brodie *et al.* (2011) in their conceptual paper identified trust as a possible relational consequence to customer engagement (p. 260). Yet the authors while describing engagement as an iterative process, state that relational consequences may act as antecedents in the subsequent processes. Islam and Rahman (2016a), in their empirical study, identified trust as an outcome of customer engagement, in the context of online communities. Further, while Vivek *et al.* (2012) and Brodie *et al.* (2013), posit trust as a consequence to engagement; Hsu *et al.* (2012), in their empirical study,

confirm the positive influence of community trust on community engagement (p. 82). Chahal and Rani (2017), observed in their study that lack of trust in the context of online transactions, was a deterrent restricting customer's engagement with the concerned brands as well. Trust was found to be playing a moderating role in terms of its influence on customer engagement. To test for the above two analogies, while NN2 presents trust as an antecedent to customer engagement, NN3 identifies trust as a consequence to customer engagement.

Similar to their trust-engagement theory, Brodie *et al.* (2011) in their conceptual paper also identified commitment as a possible relational consequence to customer engagement (p. 260). However the authors while describing engagement as an iterative process, stated that relational consequences may act as antecedents in the subsequent processes. On a similar note, Hollebeek (2011) while operationalizing the construct of customer-brand engagement observed for commitment as potential customer-brand engagement consequence for both new and existing customers, while proposing a possible existence as an antecedent primarily for existing customers (p. 795). Kang *et al.* (2014) noted from literature review that committed consumers refrain from considering brand alternatives while generating positive attitudes towards the brand (p. 148). Sashi (2012) also described commitment as a pre-requisite to customer engagement (p. 259). Also, Vohra and Bhardwaj (2017) proposed for commitment as a precursor to customer engagement in the context of online brand communities. On the other hand, Vivek *et al.* (2012) and Brodie *et al.* (2013), posit affective commitment as a consequence to engagement. This paper, thus tests for commitment as an antecedent to customer engagement through conceptual framework NN2 and as a consequence through NN3.

Based on the alternative conceptual frameworks identified, Table I lists the hypotheses corresponding to each of these frameworks for the current study.

Methods
This section discusses in detail the methods of this study.

Background of the study
Of the approximately 40 per cent of world population having access to the internet, majority belong to the developing world[1]. According to a report by Pew Research, 54 per cent of the

Hypothesis		NN1	NN2	NN3
H1a:	Customer Engagement with the community is positively related to Active Participation	✓		
H1b:	Active Participation is positively related to Customer Engagement with the Community			✓
H2:	Active Participation is positively related to Community Trust	✓	✓	
H3:	Active Participation is positively related to Community Commitment	✓	✓	
H4a:	Community Trust is positively related to Customer Engagement with the Community		✓	
H4b:	Customer Engagement with the community is positively related to Community Trust			✓
H5a:	Community Commitment is positively related to Customer Engagement with the Community		✓	
H5b:	Customer Engagement with the community is positively related to Community Commitment			✓

Table I.
Hypotheses corresponding to each conceptual framework

population in developing world had access to internet in 2015, as compared to 87 per cent in the developed world (Aljazeera, 2016). While the digital divide still stands tall, the numbers have witnessed tremendous growth. Internet penetration in India stands at 35 per cent currently (Kemp, 2017). According to a report by IAMAI-Kantar IMRB, internet users in India are expected to reach 500 million by the mid of 2018 (Economic Times, 2018). By 2030, it is expected that 1 billion of the Indian population will be online. Coupled with internet growth is the rise of social media channels. According to a We Are Social Report, while global social media penetration stands at 37 per cent currently, penetration for India is estimated to be 14 per cent with an expected growth rate of 40 per cent (Kemp, 2017). Further, the We Are Social Report statistics also indicate that 1.6 billion people (22 per cent penetration) purchase via e-commerce globally (Kemp, 2017). E-commerce penetration in India which is reported at 28 per cent currently is expected to grow by 28 per cent y-o-y.

With this as the backdrop, the present study offers marketing insights, focussing on customer engagement with social media, for e-commerce marketers in the context of emerging markets.

Research setting
The respondents of the study were selected based on three qualifiers:

(1) They must be Facebook users.
(2) They must be members of any e-commerce brand community on Facebook.
(3) They must belong to the age bracket of 18-35 years.

Facebook comprises largest number of users (1,712 million active users)[2] across all social media channels globally. Of all the Facebook users, approximately two-thirds of these users are from outside the developed world[3]. Further a leading digital research agency, eMarketer, ranked India, Indonesia, Mexico and Philippines as the top growth countries for Facebook in terms of its user base. India has the second largest number of active Facebook (10 per cent of global Facebook users) users globally (Kemp, 2017). With Facebook offering an effective medium of promotion to marketers, with little or no costs involved, it was chosen as the representative social media channel for the purpose of this study.

Next, socialbakers.com, a leading online social media research portal, lists e-commerce as the top industry on Facebook in India, in terms of its total number of fans[4]. A $14.5bn[5] industry presently, the e-commerce industry in India is expected to grow by 28 per cent y-o-y, overtaking USA to become the second largest e-commerce market by 2020[6]. Based on the above facts, Facebook e-commerce brand community membership was defined as a qualifying characteristic for respondents of this study.

The age bracket of 18-35 years ascribes to the millennial population. Millennial comprise 65 per cent[7] of the total population in India. The millennial population differs from its predecessors in terms of their buying habits, brand preferences, personality etc., and is composed of those born between 1980 and 2000. Making the largest cohort of both the total population and workers in many organizations, it is imperative to understand and identify their choices and preferences as consumers. Thus the study restricts for respondents to be belonging to age group 18-35years.

Questionnaire development
Scales for all constructs were adapted from previous studies with items modified to suit the present context. The survey instrument also included a small description of the term 'brand

community' in the context of Facebook, so as to make the user familiar with the term before they provide their responses.

The questionnaire comprised four major constructs: active participation, community trust, community commitment and engagement with the community. The construct of engagement was based on three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioural.

Active participation was measured on a four-item scale adapted from Casalo *et al.* (2011). The scale for community trust was composed of six-items adapted from Casalo *et al.* (2011) and Horppu *et al.* (2008). The scale for community commitment was a five-item scale adapted from Casalo *et al.* (2011) and Chen *et al.* (2013). Finally, an eighteen-item scale was used to measure customer engagement and its three dimensions. A five-item scale measured the behavioural dimension of customer engagement, which was adapted from Cheung *et al.* (2011) and Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014). The affective dimension was measured on a seven-item scale adapted from Cheung, Lee and Jin (2011) and Hollebeek *et al.* (2014). A six-item scale was used to measure the cognitive dimension of customer engagement adapted from Cheung *et al.* (2011). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table II lists down scale items with respect to each construct of the study.

Data collection

Data were collected from university students in India, based on the convenience sampling technique. Online surveys were sent by e-mail to probable respondents, and they were free to participate at a convenient time. The e-mail consisted of a link to the survey, clicking upon which redirected the respondent to survey webpage. This webpage also provided detailed instructions for filling up the survey along with details of any terminologies used therein. Participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary. A total of 230 responses were obtained, of which 209 were found to be useful. Of all the valid responses obtained, 80 per cent were males and 20 per cent were females. Table III briefly lists down other sample characteristics.

Validity and reliability

Reliability measures are presented in Table III. Cronbach's alpha was used to test for scale reliability, while item-to-total correlations measure reliability of each individual scale item. A Cronbach Alpha value and composite reliability measures greater than 0.7 for the model were considered to be satisfactory (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Further, all constructs return a Cronbach alpha value greater than 0.7 and average variance extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.5.

Table IV presents results of validity testing for the model. In all cases, construct correlations were lower than square root of AVE for the relevant constructs, thus establishing validity for the model (Kim *et al.*, 2013) (Table IV). Convergent validity was established, based on following criteria: all factor loading greater than 0.5, CR > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5 (Chow and Shi, 2015). A square root of AVE value being larger than the correlation values of the construct with other factors, assesses discriminant validity (Kim *et al.*, 2013; Chow and Shi, 2015). Thus both forms (convergent and divergent) of validity were established.

Tools and techniques used

Data were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM), using SPSS-AMOS. The hypotheses were tested on the final sample of 209 respondents, the results for which are presented in the next section. This technique is helpful in ascertaining validity of specified model based on assessing relationships between latent variables.

Construct	Item	Item-to-total correlation
Active Participation	I participate actively in the fan page activities	0.714
Cronbach's Alpha – 0.870	I contribute messages, responses and other information to the fan page	0.754
AVE^a – 0.632	I provide useful information to other members of the fan page	0.799
	I post messages and responses in the community with excitement and on a regular basis	0.642
Community Trust[*]	I think that the information offered in fan page is sincere and honest	0.574
Cronbach's Alpha – 0.796	The fan page does not make any false statements	0.648
AVE^a – 0.521	I think that the advice and recommendations given on the fan page are made in the interest of mutual benefit	0.598
	I don't think that the fan page will intentionally post or support anything that would harm my or other user's interests	0.581
	I think I have confidence in contributions made by other members to the fan page	0.538
	In general, most of the fan page members do not make false statements	0.387
Community Commitment	The relationship I have with the fan page deserves my effort in maintaining it	0.513
Cronbach's Alpha – 0.884	The relationship I have with the fan page means a lot to me	0.751
AVE^a – 0.632	I feel emotionally attached to this fan page	0.771
	This fan page has a great deal of personal meaning for me	0.840
	I feel a strong sense of association with this fan page	0.741
Customer Engagement with the Community	Cronbach's Alpha^a – 0.948	
	AVE^b – 0.732	
Behavioural	I feel strong and active when visiting this fan page	0.666
	I feel very strong, mentally, as far as this fan page is concerned	0.688
	I devote a lot of energy to this fan page	0.588
	I try hard to perform well on this fan page	0.616
	I spend a lot of time on this fan page, compared to other fan pages of which I am a member	0.604
Affective	I am enthusiastic about this fan page	0.764
	This fan page inspires me	0.690
	I find this fan page to be meaningful and purposeful	0.635
	I am excited when visiting this fan page	0.852
	I am interested in this fan page	0.592
	I feel very positive when visiting this fan page	0.797
	I am proud to be a member of this fan page	0.772
Cognitive	Time flies when I am visiting this fan page	0.613
	I forget about everything else when reading information and posts on the fan page	0.691
	I get rarely distracted when visiting this fan page	0.606
	I am immersed in this fan page	0.799
	My mind is focussed when visiting this fan page	0.679
	I pay a lot of attention to this fan page	0.786

Notes: [*]Items deleted to improve validity; [a]the average variance extracted greater than 0.5 (Kim *et al.*, 2013) is accepted

Table II.
Scale items and
reliability measures

Results of the study

Data were run using SPSS-AMOS for the three nomological frameworks specified above. The results obtained are tabulated in Table V.

Hu and Bentler (1999) proposed the following criteria to measure model fit: CFI > 0.95; RMSEA < 0.06. Based on the above criteria, it is clear from the RMSEA values returned for the three competing models that NN1 (RMSEA > 0.06) does not find a good model fit with the data. As NN1 proposed active participation as a consequence to customer engagement, it

may be stated that the study supports for active participation to be occurring as an antecedent to customer engagement. Further, the chi-square results indicate a good model fit ($p > 0.05$) for both NN2 and NN3 on the given data. However, Hooper *et al.* (2008) stated that a RMSEA value closer to 0 signifies a well fitting model (p. 54). Thus, based on a comparison of RMSEA values for NN2 and NN3, the results of this study indicate that the data is a better fit for NN2 as compared to NN3. Further, Lei and Wu (2007) also recommended that multiple indices be considered to judge the best overall fit of a model. The other fit statistics too indicate for NN2 (GFI = 0.998; NFI = 0.998) to be fitting the data better as compared to NN3 (GFI = 0.984; NFI = 0.987). Further, the study results also indicate that while model NN2 explains 74 per cent ($R^2 = 0.74$) variation in customer engagement, model NN3 accounted for 42.3 per cent ($R^2 = 0.423$) of the variation. Based on the above indices, the study thus identifies NN2 as a better suited model for the data.

As NN2 was found to be a better fitting model, SEM was run using this model and results obtained (Table VI). The data offered support for a positive influence of active participation on community trust ($\beta = 0.426$) and community commitment ($\beta = 0.741$). Also

	(%)
Medium used	
Laptop/Desktop	32.1
Mobile Device	67.9
Average time daily on Facebook	
15 min-0.5 h daily	54.9
0.5-1 h daily	30.5
1-2 h daily	11.0
2-4 h daily	3.7

Table III.
Sample characteristics

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Participation	CE	Commitment	Trust
Participation	0.872	0.632	0.479	0.891	*0.795*			
CE	0.891	0.732	0.630	0.945	0.586	*0.855*		
Commitment	0.892	0.632	0.630	0.968	0.692	0.794	*0.795*	
Trust	0.812	0.521	0.287	0.972	0.376	0.536	0.536	*0.722*

Table IV.
Correlations among each constructs

Notes: Italic diagonal elements should exceed the off-diagonal inter-construct correlations for adequate discriminant validity

Model	Chi Sq	df	Probability	CMIN/df	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
NN1	2.404	1	0.121	2.404	0.986	0.988	0.993	0.132
NN2	0.318	1	0.573	0.318	0.998	0.998	1.000	0.000
NN3	2.661	2	0.264	1.331	0.984	0.987	0.997	0.064

Table V.
Model fit statistics

community trust was found to be significantly influencing customer engagement (β = 0.158), as also commitment with community was positively associated with customer engagement (β = 0.758).

Discussion and managerial implications
The construct of customer engagement has received much impetus from among both academicians and marketers in the recent times. Some scholars (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015) also described 'brand-related' customer engagement as the major determinant to successful social media activity. However, there has yet been no consensus in terms of the factors that impact the construct and towards clearly defining its outcomes. While the nomological network of customer engagement presents various constructs in its network, empirical validity of the same is lacking. Thus, based on an empirical evaluation, in the context of social media for emerging markets, the present study offers a comparison of three alternative customer engagement frameworks to arrive at a best fit model. The study offers insights in terms of the role played by various constructs in the nomological framework of customer engagement, while describing their role as antecedents or consequences in the framework. Further, while there has been a widespread call for customer engagement studies to focus on social media, the geographical context too demands research attention. Islam and Rahman (2016b), based on a systematic literature analysis, identified that of the various studies focussing on "Customer Engagement" from 2005 onwards, the emerging markets found a representation in only five[8] studies. The current study, thus aims to address these gaps by presenting customer engagement in the social media context for emerging markets. Also, by way of comparison of alternate conceptual frameworks, the study aims to provide more clarity on the suitability of antecedents and consequences for customer engagement within the given contexts.

This section presents a discussion on the results, while also offering managerial implications of the study.

Active participation leads to customer engagement
The results of the study confirm for active participation to be acting as an antecedent to customer engagement, in the context of Facebook brand communities of e-commerce portals. From a comparison of three frameworks, it is identified that active participation necessarily exists as an antecedent to customer engagement and not as consequence. The result also finds support in previous literature (Brodie *et al.*, 2011), where participation is described as a required antecedent to customer engagement. In this sense, it might be stated that brand communities are not just a means to promote products/services, but have far-fetched implications in terms of contributing positively towards performance. Active participation of users in a brand community entails an increasing level of involvement in the community activities and with its members. As users get involved in the regular community affairs, they begin to devote more time and effort towards

Relationship	β value	Supported	
Active participation → community Trust	0.426	$p < 0.001$; supported	
Active participation → community Commitment	0.741	$p < 0.001$; supported	
Community trust → customer Engagement	0.158	$p < 0.05$; supported	**Table VI.**
Community commitment → customer Engagement	0.758	$p < 0.001$; supported	SEM Results for NN2

JRIM

creating content for the community, resulting in increased levels of engagement towards the community.

Based on the study results, it may thus be suggested that marketing managers of e-commerce portals must direct their efforts towards inducing active participation among members of their brand communities. This begins with community managers identifying factors that influence member's active participation in the community. Relevant and interesting content is one of the major tools that can be used towards realization of this goal. As a first step, managers need to identify the kind of content sought by users of the community. Various scholars in the past have identified both through qualitative and empirical studies, benefits that community members seek from an online community. One of the most commonly identified social media benefits across studies (Kang *et al.*, 2014; Wirtz *et al.*, 2013; Dholakia *et al.*, 2009) have been: informational, economic, social and hedonic benefits. Also many of these studies (Bhardwaj and Vohra, 2015; Hsu *et al.*, 2012) focussed on brand communities of e-commerce channels. It is thus recommended that content creation on social media brand communities be aimed towards the realization of above identified benefits.

Further, conducting contests is an effective way of not only inducing participation but also towards keeping the users involved and, thus, engaged in the community. Content that tells a story and connects consumers to human aspects of a brand forms the basis for engagement, intimacy and identification (Turri *et al.*, 2013). Community users must be motivated to share stories around their purchases from the respective e-commerce channel. In this context, many e-commerce brand communities encourage users to maintain 'look-books' – a compilation of the looks they create out of the e-commerce platform's catalogue. The users are then encouraged to share these 'look-books' with their connections and also within the e-commerce brand community, generating more content for the community in the process. The users in turn receive feedback from their connections, in the form of likes, shares or comments. This not only results in content creation (informative benefit) for the brand community, but shall also instil a sense of belongingness (social benefit) while also offering entertainment (hedonic benefits) to the community members. This is also in sync with other authors (Li *et al.*, 2006), who observed that incorporating features that allow one-to-one communication with business representatives is important as it shows the seriousness of the hosting companies in knowing what their members think of the product or services.

Community trust and community commitment as outcomes to active participation

The study results also empirically validate the positive influence of active participation on community trust and community commitment. Thus active participation is found to be not only helpful in terms of creating engaged customers but is also significant in terms of creating an environment of trust and commitment within the community. This again brings back the focus of community managers towards creating active members in the community. The study results indicate that interactions increase the trust generated towards the community. The interactions that community members undertake within the community boundaries are a source of community identification (Hsu *et al.*, 2012), which is found to be a significant predictor of trust. Further, Vohra and Bhardwaj (2017) observed that participation, characterized by mutual exchange of information, generates positive feelings which offer a sense of confidence to the user enhancing their trust in the community. Also, the positive role played by active participation in terms of influencing community commitment finds support from Zhou and Amin (2014) who identified interactivity to be closely related to commitment. This

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is attributable to the fact that active participation in the community activities tends to develop emotional attachment with the community and its members, and thus leads to emotional dedication.

Conceptual framework of customer engagement
Next, the study results indicate that NN2 is a better suited nomological network towards describing the conceptual dimensions surrounding customer engagement. While participation is taken as the starting point to building engagement for both NN2 and NN3, community trust and community commitment are tested for as antecedents to customer engagement in NN2, while as consequences in NN3. The study supports for community trust and community commitment to be acting as antecedents to customer engagement. This is in sync with previous studies (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011), that describe the above constructs to be occurring as antecedents to engagement. Thus, social media managers must not only focus on increasing active participation among users, but must also aim at creating an environment of trust and commitment within their respective brand communities. This shall create engaged users on the channel, further resulting in increased WOM and loyalty along with other brand-level outcomes.

Role of Trust-Commitment in customer engagement framework
Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory identifies trust and commitment as important factors to be ensuring successful relationships. The present study offers more support to the same by identifying both the constructs to be significant in predicting customer engagement in social media brand communities.

Trust in online communities is a function of reliability and dependability of both the brand community and its members. Community managers may thus, on their part, induce trust by providing timely and accurate content such that users visit the brand community enthusiastically and repeatedly. Members displaying community trust display more engagement towards the community and its activities, especially when they need support and advice from other community members (Hsu *et al.*, 2012). In the context of e-commerce brand communities, community managers could identify 'influencers' from their respective industries to create content for them. Also efforts should be directed towards creation of content relevant to users, such that it results in creating dependence on the community. For instance, various e-commerce brand communities share regular updates on recent trends, celebrity styles to follow etc. which are desired for and of relevance to e-commerce brand community users.

Next, the first step towards creating committed users is offering content that satisfies and meets their each requirements, such that users return again to the community. In this regard it is important to understand user needs in the context of specific brand communities and their respective industries. Affective commitment can be established by facilitating more interactions (firm-to-customer or customer-to-customer) in the community. This acts as an indicator of seriousness of community managers towards both the community and its users. Also, commitment can be induced by staying consistent on what is being promised and communicated to users. This shall create a community culture wherein all members stand by what they communicate. Emotion-based customer relationships often result in strong and long-lasting connections. To this end, Turri *et al.* (2013) suggested that for e-commerce brand communities, contests could be conducted and winners featured on a monthly basis so as to give them special form of recognition, forming affect-based relationships.

The importance of community commitment

As NN2 was found to having a better fit, data were analyzed for this framework using SEM. The results indicate that active participation influences customer engagement by way of inducing community trust and community commitment. However the effect is more pronounced in case of community commitment ($\beta = 0.741$) as compared to community trust ($\beta = 0.426$). These results indicate that increased active participation by users in the e-commerce brand communities infuses trust and commitment towards the community, which then further influence customer engagement with the community.

The study results also indicate a more pronounced effect of community commitment on customer engagement as compared to community trust. Commitment entails dedication towards the community, such that whenever a user thinks of an e-commerce brand community, given community is the first choice. The study results are in sync with Hashim and Tan (2015), too, who suggested for a more pronounced role of affective commitment as compared to that of trust, based on the premise that in the context of online communities, commitment helps in maintaining positive attitudes. With online communities being characterized by features of sharing and belongingness, a strong sense of cohesiveness is imperative so as to make users stay with the community. Also, with the present study focussing on existing social media users, Brodie *et al.* (2013) observed for affective commitment to be of more relevance for repeat customers. However it may also be noted that while commitment is identified to be having a larger role, the importance of trust in the framework cannot be sidelined. As identified by various scholars, it is trust in a community and its members that plays a major role in uncertain environments, such as those of online communities. This is in sync with Hashim and Tan (2015) who also observed that users who trust other members of the community shall also display better levels of commitment within the community.

To sum up, it may be stated that active participation is influential towards inducing customer engagement. However, at the same time, it is also important to understand the importance and role played by community trust and community commitment in the relationship. By devising strategies that impact these community-level constructs, managers can create successful communities while also realizing their brand goals.

Conclusion

The present study advances the customer engagement literature by comparing alternative frameworks that best describe the antecedents and consequences to customer engagement. The study provides empirical evidence in terms of identifying both trust and commitment as antecedents to the construct of customer engagement, in the context of social media for emerging markets. It is also one of the few studies offering a distinction between the two dimensions of social media participation – active and passive; while presenting active participation as an antecedent to customer engagement. Customer engagement within the social media context is gaining precedence among the academic fraternity, with various researchers (Bowden *et al.*, 2017) identifying for a spill over effect it exerts in terms of influencing consumer's engagement with the brand (p. 891). This research is an answer to call for studies focussing on customer engagement in various contexts. While research in this area is witnessing an upward trend, there are many contextual dimensions that are still unexplored. With emerging markets playing an increasing role in the world brand map, this study offers insights on managing customer engagement on social media for emerging markets. The study by way of an empirical comparison arrives at a nomological network for customer engagement, in the context of e-commerce brand communities on social media.

Future research
While this study offers many insights towards inducing customer engagement, there still are avenues which need to be explored further. While the study identifies and measures customer engagement in terms of its three dimensions, the construct is presented as a single factor in the framework. Future studies may want to assess each of these individual dimensions in terms of their influence and outcomes. Also, the study talks of customer engagement in the context of e-commerce brand communities only. Future studies may extend this further to include other industries, while also offering a comparative assessment. The nomological network described in this study may also be tested for its generalizability across other industries. Also, while the study focuses only on community-level factors, future studies may also explore how brand-level factors can be integrated within this framework. In terms of other constructs within the framework, while trust is measured as a single construct, only the affective component of commitment is taken into consideration. Future studies might as well address the multi-dimensionality of both these constructs while identifying their differential impact on the various levels of engagement. Another area of future exploration includes studies focussing on both active and passive participation, along with a focus on both
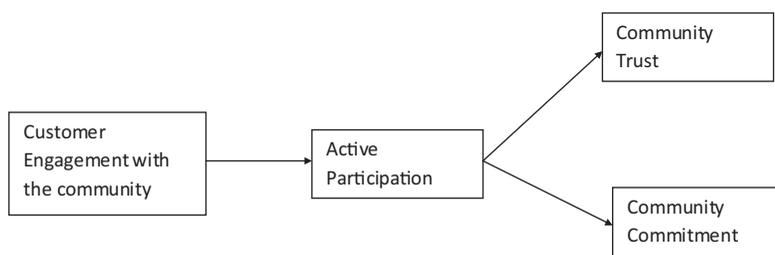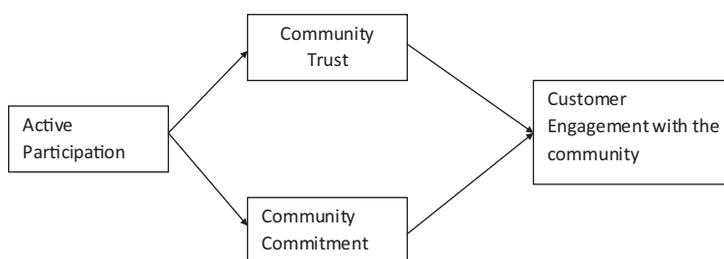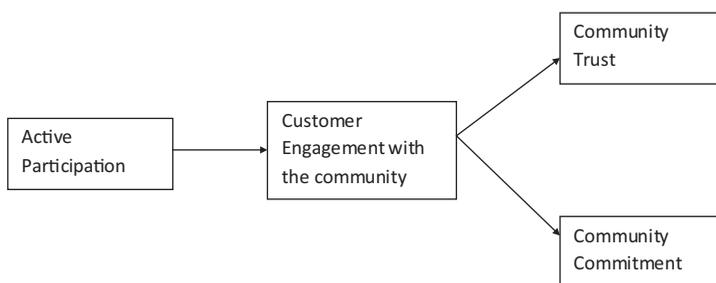

Figure 1.
NN1

Figure 2.
NN 2

Figure 3.
NN3

old and new customers in the context of social media channels. In this regard, future researches could also address the actual behaviour of knowledge sharing rather than the participation construct to assess its effects on other brand outcomes.

Notes

1. www.usfunds.com/slideshows/stats-on-internet-and-emerging-markets/#.WP8Qy4iGPIU

2. Source: www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

3. www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-09/facebook-becomes-emerging-markets-play-as-user-base-shifts

4. www.socialbakers.com/resources/reports/india/2017/march/

5. http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/policy-trends/why-indias-ecommerce-industry-grew-a-paltry-12-in-2016/articleshow/56871572.cms

6. http://indianexpress.com/article/business/market/india-to-overtake-us-as-worlds-largest-e-commerce-market-study-4412223/

7. www.huffingtonpost.in/prabha-chandran/indias-millennials-are-smarter-more-altruistic-than-their-pare/

8. Of the 66 articles considered by the authors, the score for emerging markets was: 2 for China and 3 for India; making it a total of 5 articles.

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About the authors

Dr Anupama Vohra is an Associate Professor in Marketing at the Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi. She received PhD in Business Management from University of Delhi. Her work has appeared in *Journal of Medical Marketing*, *International Journal of Management and Business Research*, etc. Her current research interests include digital marketing, health-care marketing and marketing strategy.

Neha Bhardwaj is an Assistant Professor at the School of Business Studies, Sharda University. She is also a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi. She is currently working in the area of digital media-enabled marketing. Her work has appeared in journals of repute, such as the *Journal of Marketing Communications*. Her areas of interest include online communities, marketing impact of social media and online consumer behaviour. Neha Bhardwaj is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: neha.neha.bh@gmail.com