How do customers engage in social media-based brand communities: The moderator role of the brand's country of origin?

Yu Huang [a], Xu Zhang [b,c,*], Hong Zhu [b]

[a] *Business Administration School, Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, No. 140 Wucheng Road, Taiyuan, 030006, China*
[b] *Business School, Nanjing University. No. 22, Hankou Road, Nanjing, 210093, China*
[c] *King's College, University of Aberdeen, UK*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Across the globe, companies increasingly use social media-based brand communities (SMBBC) to facilitate customer engagement (CE). This study clarifies the relationship between brand trust and CE in SMBBC, which is often inconsistent in previous literature. Drawing on the uses and gratifications theory, we examine the motivations that drive customers' active and passive engagement behaviors. Additionally, this study employs multigroup analysis to compare the differences in the customer engagement process concerning the brand's country of origin. The empirical results demonstrate that brand trust is an antecedent to customer engagement in a longterm relationship. Brand affiliation, entertainment, and investigation prompt customers' active and passive engagement behaviors; the opportunity-seeking only encourages the passive engagement, but the motivation of conversation prompts neither active nor passive behaviors of the customers. Notably, there is no significant difference in Chinese customer engagement between domestic and foreign brands on Sina Weibo. The research enriches the understanding of customer engagement in SMBBC and provides valuable insights for international brands keen on the Chinese market.

1. Introduction

Customers have spent more time interacting with brands via social media over the past two decades (Gao and Huang, 2021). Social media-based brand communities (SMBBC) have become an ideal tool for developing customer engagement (Fernandes and Castro, 2020). Firms tend to use social media to significantly reduce the operating costs of brand marketing (Yasin et al., 2020b) because it has a larger audience than traditional media, removes a hierarchical structure, and has more diverse membership features (Lim and Kumar, 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising that the research on social media-based brand communities (SMBBC) has been attractive to both the Marketing and Information System fields (Khan, 2022).

Marketing practitioners and scholars consider customer engagement (CE) an important marketing outcome (Carlson et al., 2019). However, the knowledge of dynamics and nature characterizing customer engagement in SMBBC is currently under-researched (Fernandes and Castro, 2020). Specifically, the relationship between brand trust and customer engagement remains unclear (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020), and different types of customer engagement behavior are overlooked

(Barari et al., 2020). Active CE behavior has received increasing attention in the existing literature, such as posting photos (Chuah et al., 2021), communicating with the brand or other users (Kawaf and Istanbulluoglu, 2019), and sharing information (Lin and Chu, 2021). Similarly, managers are more concerned with active CE behaviors (Li and Han, 2021). Nevertheless, while some users might interact with the brand actively, others tend to passively browse brand-related information as a lurker (Fernandes and Castro, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022). In short, only 1% of users will create content indefinitely, 9% of users will make contributions from time to time, and about 90% of users will maintain silence on social media, known as the 90-9-1 rule (Simon et al., 2016). Furthermore, according to research conducted by one of Wikipedia's founders, only 0.7% of users completed more than half of all edits (Sun et al., 2014). Another previous research revealed that every member of an online community, whether active or passive users, read more than they wrote (Fernandes and Castro, 2020). Therefore, various CE motivations are expected to result in various CE behaviors (Dolan et al., 2019), even for the same user. Although some academics have recently emphasized the importance of passive engagement, they mainly focused on customers' mental states (Gao and Huang, 2021; Vohra and

---

Bhardwaj, 2019). To this end, the current research aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the motivations that drive active and passive CE behaviors and exploring the relationship between brand trust and CE.

There are several platforms for the consumer to engage with brands, which include Facebook (Kawaf and Istanbulluoglu, 2019), Twitter (Grover and Kar, 2020), and Instagram (Mazzarolo et al., 2021). However, these platforms are banned in China, despite the remarkable enthusiasm among Chinese customers on social media. The monthly active users on Sina Weibo, a Chinese social media platform similar to a combination of Facebook and Twitter, exceeded 550 million in March 2021, which increased by around 85 million compared to the previous year (Sina Weibo, 2021). Besides, the number of brand pages (including Chinese domestic and foreign brands) on this platform had surpassed 1.5 million, with the brand page fans growing to 157 million by late 2021 (Sina Weibo, 2021). As one of the preferred platforms for SMBBC in China, it allows users to view, press the "like" button, as well as comment on or share content (Carlson et al., 2019; Sina Weibo, 2021). Although China has become the world's second-largest economy (Bruton et al., 2021) with a considerable customer market (Afzal et al., 2019), research on SMBBC within the context of Sina Weibo is still insufficient. Thus, there is a strong need for research on Chinese customer engagement, particularly on Sina Weibo.

Sina Weibo is a preferred SMBBC platform for both Chinese domestic and international brands, which allows customers to be exposed to the marketing content created by firms (Carlson et al., 2019). Previous studies have proved that customers from emerging markets like China generally favor foreign brands, especially brands from developed countries (Hoang et al., 2022; Wang and Yang, 2008). These customers believe that foreign brands provide superior quality and high symbolic value compared to domestic brands (Guo, 2013), which mind-set may influence customer engagement (CE) processes. In recent years, some Chinese brands such as Huawei, Haier, and Li-Ning have sought to elicit patriotism tendencies on Sina Weibo to engagement from Chinese customers (Sun et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to explore the influence of the brand's country of origin (COO) on Chinese consumer engagement.

The current research aims to understand the relationship between various CE motivations and different CE behaviors in the Chinese SMBBC platform (i.e., Sina Weibo) and investigate the influence of the brand's COO, involving both Chinese domestic and international brands. Based on the theories of uses and gratifications (U&G) (Katz et al., 1973) and brand trust (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005), data were gathered from 297 Sina Weibo users, and a comprehensive model of the antecedent (i.e., brand trust) of CE motivations and the outcomes (i.e., CE behaviors) was developed. In addition, we further conducted a multi-group analysis (MGA) to compare the differences in the customer engagement process concerning the brand's COO. Following recent studies in customer engagement (Flecha-Ortíz et al., 2021; Lin and Chu, 2021; Mazzarolo et al., 2021), partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed. This study seeks to extend the understanding of the CE literature and provide valuable guidance on SMBBC strategies for international brands keen on the Chinese market.

2. Literature review and theoretical background

2.1. Social media-based brand communities

Relationship marketing gives the company a competitive advantage and strategic resource because it focuses on creating and maintaining long-term customer relationships (Wongsansukcharoen et al., 2015). On the other hand, brand communities are considered the ideal approach by firms to conduct relationship marketing by providing a platform for businesses to reach current and potential customers (Yasin et al., 2020a). Using social media has facilitated the growth of brand communities, and many brands have adopted marketing strategies for social media-based brand communities (Sharma et al., 2022). Brands can

directly interact with their customers by providing varied information through their brand community page on social media (Zhao and Chen, 2022), making it a cost-effective and efficient marketing tool for engaging with customers (Yasin et al., 2020b).

For customers, the emergence of SMBBC has changed the traditional relationship between customers and brands, from being passive customers to actively engaging with the brands (Hollebeek et al., 2022; Yasin et al., 2020a). Despite the increasing interest, SMBBC is still understudied (Khan, 2022), as evidenced by the gaps in the existing literature: (1) ignoring passive CE behaviors and the impact of various CE motivations on different CE behaviors (Barari et al., 2020); (2) divergence in opinions about which is the antecedent—brand trust or customer engagement? (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020; Wongsansukcharoen, 2022); (3) ignoring the role of the brand's country of origin in the customer engagement process.

2.2. Trust and brand trust

Trust has attracted a wide range of attention in many fields, including sociology (Lewis and Weigert, 2012), economics (Rotenberg, 2018), and management (Boadi et al., 2022). From the marketing point of view, trust is an essential factor in promoting exchange relationships and building buyer-seller relationships (Wong and Lee, 2022). For example, trust is the main factor that drives customer behaviors amidst the inherent uncertainty in the electronic business (Wong and Lee, 2022). On the other hand, social media-based brand communities (SMBBC) provide customer-brand relationships with a social structure that reduces information asymmetry, consequently influencing the level of customers' trust (Carlson et al., 2019).

In the context of SMBBC, scholars have mainly examined the role of trust from two perspectives: interpersonal and system levels. Studies of interpersonal trust focus on the individual's features, i.e., users' experience (knowledge and skills) in using SMBBC (Wong and Lee, 2022), and focus on the authenticity of the information from online customer reviews (Carlson et al., 2019). However, these studies have concentrated only on the trust in other users' comments rather than the trust in products (services) or brands. In addition, there are concerns about system-level trustworthiness, such as website quality (Molinillo et al., 2021), information quality (McClure and Seock, 2020; Yasin et al., 2020a), and privacy protection (Martínez-López et al., 2017). As the development of social media system matured, the level of customer trust in social media has plateaued (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). However, these conclusions are limited to the online context. Thus, the current study considers brand trust to gain a comprehensive perspective on its influence in the context both online and offline (Husain et al., 2022).

Brand trust is defined as "the confident expectations of the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the customer" (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005). It is clear from the definition that the role of brand trust is to assure customers of the brand's quality by reducing uncertainty (Konuk, 2021). Scholars have agreed that a single dimension of brand trust is insufficient to elucidate this factor as it exists in two dimensions: reliability and intentionality (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Husain et al., 2022). Reliability refers to the customers' perception regarding the brand's capability to meet the needs of customers, i.e., the individual's trust that the brand delivers its value (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Intentionality refers to the customers' confidence that the brand will be responsible for future problems, notwithstanding the complexities of situations and circumstances associated with the product consumption (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Husain et al., 2022). Currently, there are two limitations associated with brand trust in SMBBC. First, the findings regarding the role of customer engagement (CE) as a consequence or antecedent of brand trust are often contradictory (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). The contradiction could be attributed to the tendency of academics to disregard the fact that brand

trust is a dynamic process that evolves as the relationship grows (Islam et al., 2018). Its antecedents vary depending on the level of difficulty in customers' decision-making process (Augusto and Torres, 2018). Second, no study has compared the role of a brand's COO in brand trust and engagement to the best of our knowledge. More details will be illustrated in the following subsections.

2.3. Customer engagement

In marketing and information systems research, customer engagement (CE) is a well-known concept (Li and Han, 2021). According to academic research and business practice, CE is an essential long-term success factor because engaged customers are more profitable for a business than other categories of customers (Kumar et al., 2010). Due to its capability to generate, sustain, and expand customer satisfaction and corporate profitability, CE has been identified as the 21st-century marketing imperative (Lim et al., 2022).

Although CE as an independent concept is relatively new, it is a well-developed concept in the marketing literature (Wong and Lee, 2022). Customer engagement has been defined in the literature from two perspectives: psychological and behavioral aspects. The psychological aspect of CE involves a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive and emotional dimensions, which encompasses the psychological result of customers' interactive experience with a brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Vohra and Bhardwaj, 2019). The behavioral aspect of CE suggests that customers' behavior toward a brand extends beyond purchases (Wong and Lee, 2022). The current study believes that CE, as an intrinsic motivation or an individual's emotional state, does not directly increase corporate performance and that simply accepting CE as a result of customer behavior reflects the lack of understanding about CE processes. Therefore, in this study, we adopted the definition of CE from Hollebeek et al. (2019) and examined it from both psychological and behavioral perspectives. According to the definition, CE is defined as "the level of customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions".

In terms of content, the existing literature on CE can be divided into six categories (Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan, 2021): modeling customer engagement (Kumar et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010); CE theory and empirical validation (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012); CE and service-dominant (S-D) logic (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2017); CE and social media (Carlson et al., 2019; Dijkmans et al., 2015); CE and brand platforms (Gao and Huang, 2021; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016); CE in other contexts (Lee et al., 2018; Mollen and Wilson, 2010). However, only several of these topics have been well-investigated, while the rest are still poorly researched. For example, "customer engagement and social media", particularly concerning social media-based brand communities, is a relatively new and growing area (Barari et al., 2020). Existing publications have elaborated on how SMBBC's presence and interventions influence customer engagement. However, most of these publications have been concentrating on the frequency of social media usage (Dijkmans et al., 2015) and reporting only on positive CE (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016). Furthermore, academics have frequently regarded CE as a higher-order dimension for empirical analysis (Wongsansukcharoen, 2022; Yasin et al., 2020a, 2020b). Although this operation can simplify the model and improve the goodness of fit of the model (Henseler et al., 2015), it will lose the dynamic understanding of CE (i.e., the impact of various CE motivations on different CE behaviors).

Scholars have recently used the bibliometric approach to analyze the existing literature on CE and make several research recommendations: research can be attempted on (1) the antecedents of CE in SMBBC context (Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan, 2021); (2) the way customers interact with social media and the respective motivations (Barari et al., 2020); (3) the factor that drives the passive or active engagement behaviors of SMBBC members (Hollebeek et al., 2022); and (4) specific brand engagement research, such as engagement on other social media

websites (Lim et al., 2022). This paper follows these suggestions and intends to comprehensively understand customer engagement.

2.4. Uses and gratification

As a counterpoint to the customers' passive reception of information, the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) has emerged (Kaur et al., 2020). The theory, originating in communication science, posits that people choose and use the media to seek satisfaction with some needs (Katz et al., 1973). This distinction is critical because people have difficulty being influenced by media if they do not find a use for it (Ball et al., 2021). Furthermore, people use the same media for varied motivations, which consequently may meet the different needs of various customers (Lim and Kumar, 2019).

Although UGT was formed in the pre-digital era, it has been applied in Internet-related research as one of the most prominent and prolific media theories (Carlson et al., 2019). UGT advances alongside communication technology, allowing it to adapt to new uses and needs in an ever-changing environment (Ball et al., 2021). In particular, the traditional pattern (i.e., sender-receiver) has been succeeded by an interactional type that works with various transmitters and receivers (Jung and Sundar, 2018). This shows that the user in the digital era could be an active communicator rather than a passive recipient of media content. For nearly a decade, this active-user paradigm has attracted immense attention in social media and customer engagement research (Table 1). However, there are some limitations to these prior studies. First, these studies have only focused on a specific category, such as clothing brands (Pujadas-Hostench et al., 2019), virtual products (Kaur et al., 2020), and luxury (Zollo et al., 2020). Second, the studies have been conducted separately on a specific demographic such as young people (Confente and Kucharska, 2021), millennials (Nelson et al., 2019), older people (Jung and Sundar, 2018), and university students (Lin and Chu, 2021). Besides, researchers have focused solely on passive customer engagement (Pornsakulvanich and Dumrongsiri, 2013; Song et al., 2019) or active customer engagement (Chuah et al., 2021; Flecha-Ortíz et al., 2021; Kawaf and Istanbulluoglu, 2019). Furthermore, most researched social media platforms in existing publications are banned in China (Mazzarolo et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Ardura

Table 1
Social media research adopting UGT in recent years.

Articles	Context	Sample	CE Behavior
Rodríguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola (2020)	Facebook	Facebook users	No distinction
Mazzarolo et al. (2021)	Instagram	Instagram users	Passive
Pujadas-Hostench et al. (2019)	SNS	Spanish customers	No distinction
Confente and Kucharska (2021)	Facebook	Young users	No distinction
Song et al. (2019)	Instagram	Instagram users	passive
Lien and Cao (2014)	WeChat	Monthly active users	Active
Nelson et al. (2019)	SNS	Millennial participants	Passive
Pang (2021)	WeChat	WeChat users	Active
Pornsakulvanich and Dumrongsiri (2013)	SNS	Internet users	Passive
Kawaf and Istanbulluoglu (2019)	Facebook	Facebook users	Active
Flecha-Ortíz et al. (2021)	Snapchat	Millennial Snapchat users	Active
Lin and Chu (2021)	Facebook	University student	Active
Jung and Sundar (2018)	Facebook	Older Facebook users	Active
Chuah et al. (2021)	Facebook	Facebook users	Active
Zollo et al. (2020)	Facebook	Facebook users	No distinction
Kaur et al. (2020)	MIM apps	MIM users	No distinction

and Meseguer-Artola, 2020). Although studies have been conducted on Chinese social media platforms (Lien and Cao, 2014; Pang, 2021), most of them do not provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of the brand's COO in customer engagement.

Based on the reviewed literature (Table 1), this paper presents Sina Weibo as the research subject. As a preferred SMBBC platform for both Chinese domestic and international brands, brand pages on Sina Weibo provide brands with an alternative to corporate websites for communicating with customers. The current study considers including passive and active CE behaviors and their respective psychological motivations and compares the impact of brand's COO on the CE process. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of CE and the strategies for international brands focusing on the China market.

3. Hypotheses

3.1. Brand trust and customer engagement

Although most literature acknowledges that brand trust is crucial in customer engagement, the occurrence of contradictions has been reported (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Particularly, the existing literature has yet to reach a consensus about the antecedent—whether it is brand trust or CE. This paper proposes that there are three probable explanations for this discrepancy.

First, previous studies have not distinguished the way customer engagement is functioning. The pathway of customer engagement can be divided into two types: organic and promoted (Palmatier et al., 2017). The organic pathway is developed based on the value co-creation approach, encouraging existing customers to provide feedback to businesses to improve products or services, thereby maintaining a long-term stable relationship with customers (Hollebeek et al., 2019); in this circumstance, brand trust is an antecedent to the customer engagement. In the promoted pathway, the firms employ various techniques and methods like the monetary incentive to influence customer engagement, build connections and increase opportunities for communication to gain customer trust; in this case, brand trust is a consequence of customer engagement (Wirtz et al., 2019).

Second, scholars have not distinguished the types of users in SMBBC. According to the customer lifetime value theory (CLV), customers who can bring profits to companies can be divided into three categories: new customers, current customers, and potential churning customers (Chiang et al., 2018). Current customers are frequently engaged in the organic pathway, reflecting that brand trust is the antecedent to customer engagement (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). The promoted pathway aims to attract new customers, establish new connections, and retain potential churning customers. This pathway also allows for the re-establishment of connections and shapes customers' trust in the brand through continuous interaction (Islam et al., 2018), demonstrating that brand trust is a consequence of customer engagement.

Third, previous research has not distinguished the industries with which customers had engaged. Different industries have different customer purchasing decision-making processes, influenced by three factors: the tangibility of products, the perceived risk, and the complexity of products (Augusto and Torres, 2018). According to a recent Meta-analysis, brand trust is a predictor of customer engagement in most industries, but there are some exceptions (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). In the commercial banking sector, for example, financial services are highly intangible to customers, customers perceive higher risks than other services, and potential knowledge gaps make financial services appear complicated (Augusto and Torres, 2018). In this sector, brands tend to carry out community relationship management to increase interaction, explain knowledge, and build brand trust (Wongsansukcharoen, 2022), indicating that brand trust is a consequence of customer engagement. It is necessary to distinguish the two-way direction in the relationship between brand trust and customer engagement because the empirical results may contradict the hypothesis if the author

does not recognize them in advance (Laroche et al., 2012; Mishra, 2021).

According to literature, customers who experience brand trust are more likely to cooperate and engage with their exchange partners (Wong and Lee, 2022). The current study investigates the experienced brand users (excluding banking brands) and the organic pathway of CE. For long-term relationships, brand trust can be a driver of customer engagement because it prompts cooperation and interactions (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Additionally, brand trust is an antecedent for experienced brand users but not for newer participants in SMBBC (Bowden, 2009). Based on the above analysis, we develop a set of testable hypotheses:

H1. Brand trust has a positive impact on (a) brand affiliation motivation, (b) opportunity-seeking motivation, (c) conversation motivation, (d) entertainment motivation, and (e) investigation motivation.

3.2. Customer engagement motivations and behaviors

The uses and gratification theory has been widely used to explore motivations for using traditional media such as television and music (Ray et al., 2019). The mechanism of gratifications acquired from SMBBC should be similar to those obtained from traditional mass media (Arghashi and Yuksel, 2022). One of the primary goals of brand fan pages is to engage customers by providing valuable content and gratifications (Dolan et al., 2019). However, accomplishing this goal may be difficult because motivations to engage SMBBC are diverse (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). The existing literature suggests five motivations to influence users to engage in brand communities. Brand affiliation is a motivation characterized by the customers' desire to identify with brands and meet their social demands by joining brand communities (Laroche et al., 2012). Another motivation is opportunity-seeking, described by customers' intention to find discounts and new offerings in SMBBC (Enginkaya and Yılmaz, 2014). A conversation is a form of motivation that facilitates interpersonal interactions, companionship, and user-brand interactions (Fernandes and Castro, 2020). Entertainment motivates customers by urging people to obtain intrinsic pleasure (Li et al., 2015). The investigation motivates customers to discover, elaborate, and construct new knowledge (Khan et al., 2019).

In practice, customer engagement behavior is diverse in SMBBC (Lim and Kumar, 2019). Scholars have applied qualitative research to analyze the association between different motivations and customers' online brand-related activities (COBRA). They classified COBRA into three levels: consumption, contribution, and creation (Muntinga et al., 2011). Consumption is mainly motivated by information (investigation), entertainment and opportunity-seeking, whereas contribution and creation are mainly driven by entertainment, affiliation, and social (conversation) motivations (Wang and Lee, 2020). These three COBRA levels are essentially passive and active CE behavior (Fernandes and Castro, 2020). Therefore, we predict the following:

H2. (a) Brand affiliation, (b) opportunity-seeking, (c) conversation, (d) entertainment, and (e) investigation motivations have a positive impact on passive customer engagement behavior;

H3. (a) Brand affiliation, (b) opportunity-seeking, (c) conversation, (d) entertainment, and (e) investigation motivations have a positive impact on active customer engagement behavior.

3.3. The moderating role of the brand's country-of-origin

Accompanying the expansion of globalization, the brand's country of origin has been a growing concern because it can influence customer behavior (Hoang et al., 2022). Country of origin (COO) refers to the customers' perception of products or brands based on their assumption about the production quality in the producing country (Wang and Yang, 2008). Prior research suggested that customers from developed countries prefer domestic brands because of customer ethnocentrism (Guo,

2013). Apart from the existing markets, the purchasing prowess of customers in emerging markets has also gained considerable attention from companies looking for new opportunities (Zhang, 2015). Unlike customers in developed countries, some researchers have suggested that customers in the emerging market prefer brands from developed countries over domestic brands to exhibit wealth and social status (Guo, 2013; Hoang et al., 2022). In the age of social media marketing, it can be expected that individuals may behave differently on brand pages due to the different COO of brands.

As an emerging market, Chinese customers also prefer foreign brands due to the perceived superior quality of brands produced in developed countries (Guo, 2013). Furthermore, these customers believe that foreign brands have a better symbolic value than domestic, allowing customers to achieve a higher social status (Wang and Yang, 2008). This is the reason that has driven some local brands from China to resort to disguising the COO of their products, pretending to be foreign-sourced, e.g., "Metersbonwe" (a clothing brand based in South China) and "Walch" (a Chinese brand of the cleaning supplies). However, in recent years, Chinese brands such as Huawei, Haier, and Li-Ning have sought to elicit ethnocentric tendencies to encourage engagement among Chinese customers (Sun et al., 2021). These companies initiate brand pages on Sina Weibo and claim that they were established by domestic enterprises with unique ethnic characteristics and dubbed the title "ethnic brand" and "national brand" (Li et al., 2020). Given these conflicting facts, we hypothesize the following:

H4. Depending on COO (domestic or foreign), there are significant differences in (a) the impact of brand trust and CE motivations and (b) the impact of CE motivations and CE behavior.

4. Research model and methodology

4.1. Research model

Based on the literature review and hypotheses, we designed a conceptual model revealed in Fig. 1. The model consists of the antecedent of customer engagement—brand trust (reliability and intentionality), the motivations of CE behavior (brand affiliation, opportunity-seeking, conversation, entertainment, and investigation), and CE behavior (passive and active). This study further investigated the impact of COO
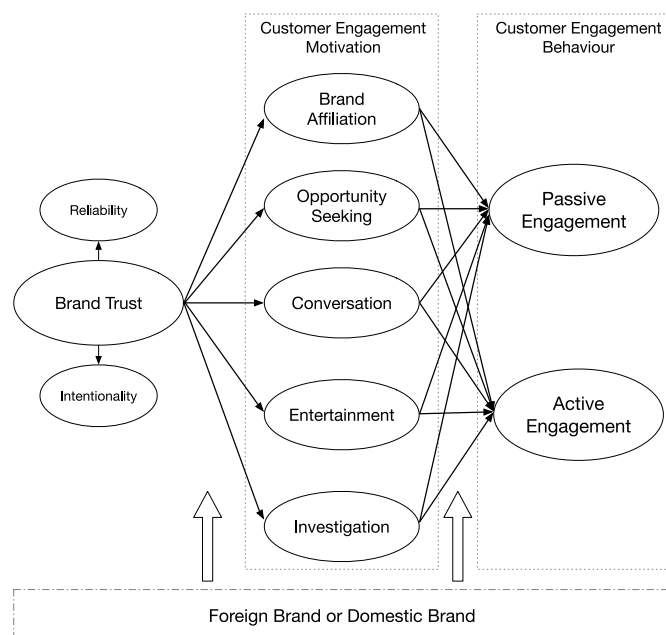
(domestic and foreign brands) on the research model.

4.2. Measures

To verify hypotheses, an online questionnaire was developed with three segments. In the first part, we designed three questions as the threshold of the whole questionnaire: Have you followed the brand page on Sina Weibo? Which brand are you following? Do you think this brand is domestic or foreign? Weibo users who did not follow brand pages were excluded following the research theme. As mentioned earlier, users who could not accurately distinguish between foreign and domestic brands were also excluded from this study.

The second part includes nine constructs. The brand trust scale (second-order) was modified from the research of Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005). Customer engagement motivations were divided into five elements: brand affiliation, opportunity-seeking, conversation, entertainment, and investigation (Enginkaya and Yılmaz, 2014). The measurement of customer engagement behavior, i.e., passive and active behaviors, was adopted from the study of Tsai and Men (2013). Before distribution, the above items had been translated into Chinese using the translation-back methodology to ensure that the meaning of the translated operational definition was consistent with the original language. In this part, the items were measured by the seven-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 7".

The third part comprised the respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, working conditions, and education. To control the common method variance (CMV), we carried out a series of operations in advance. The subjects were first informed that their responses would be kept confidential, and there were no correct answers to all questions. Then, the items' order of brand trust, CE motivation, and CE behavior were counterbalanced (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Next, a theoretically unrelated marker variable (about fitness habits) was placed in the questionnaire randomly (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Finally, there was no evidence of CMV in a series of partial correlations.

4.3. Sample

Mainland Chinese customers cannot access international social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram due to the Great Firewall (Yang and Liu, 2014). Sina Weibo, similar to a combination of Facebook and Twitter, is the most popular social media platform in China. As a result, it has emerged as the preferred platform for foreign brands seeking to reach Chinese customers. By late 2021, the number of brand pages (Chinese domestic and foreign brands) had surpassed 1.5 million, with 157 million fans (Sina Weibo, 2021). The questionnaire was distributed on Sina Weibo from January 14th to January 30th, 2022. Respondents were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous and that there would be no financial compensation involved. This step ensured high-quality data, willingness, and honest responses from subjects (Kosinski et al., 2015). A total of 297 useable questionnaires were yielded after discarding the cases that did not pass the threshold questions and missing cases. The formula $n \geq 50r^2 - 450r + 1100$ was applied, where r is the ratio of indicators to latent variables, n is the sample size (Hair et al., 2013). In the present study, the sample size should be more than 143, while we collected 297 eligible samples far exceeding the proposed value. The sample data covers 27 provinces or cities of China. Among 297 respondents, females account for 50.08%, sharing an almost equal proportion with males. The percentage of domestic brands (57.20%) is slightly large than that of foreign (42.80%). Most respondents are young and reached a relatively advanced education. The summary of demographic statistics is listed in Table 2.

Fig. 1. Research model.

Table 2
Demographic profile of respondents.

		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	146	49.20%
	Female	151	50.08%
Age	18–25	201	67.70%
	26–30	61	20.50%
	31–40	24	8.10%
	> 41	11	3.70%
Working Condition	Yes	149	50.20%
	No	148	49.80%
Flowed Brand type	Foreign	127	42.80%
	Domestic	170	57.20%
Education	High school	13	4.40%
	College/Associate's degree	21	7.10%
	University/Bachelor's degree	235	79.10%
	Graduate school/Master's degree	28	9.40%

5. Data analysis and result

Structural equation modeling is the method of choice for analyzing complex relationships between latent variables (Hair et al., 2013). Like covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), variance-based partial least squares-SEM has become increasingly prevalent in marketing research (Sarstedt et al., 2022). While both CB-SEM and PLS-SEM offer advantages, PLS-SEM is more suited for the current study for the following reasons: (1) the nature of the research is exploratory; (2) predictive modeling is the main focus of the study; (3) this study involves the application of a highly complex model; (4) the model consists of nine latent variables, which is more than the CB-SEM average of 4.4 latent variables; and (5) the latent variable, brand trust, is a second-order construct (Hair et al., 2013). The proposed hypothesis and research model were tested using SPSS Statistics 25 and SmartPLS version 3.0 software.

5.1. Measurement model

Although PLS-SEM can analyze non-normally distributed data (Henseler et al., 2015), the samples in this study were subjected to a normal distribution (the *Skewness* from −0.081 to −0.813 and the *Kurtosis* from −0.743 to 1.527). Furthermore, because this study was about reflective constructs rather than formative, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is required before further analysis (Hair et al., 2013). The Kaiser Meyer Olkin and Bartlett's tests were performed using SPSS version 25.0, where KMO = 0.964 and sig.<0.0001, indicating that the scale was appropriate for EFA. Varimax rotation yielded nine orthogonal factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and explained 76.008% of the total variance.

The quality of measurement model impacts the conclusions of structural model, including the existence, direction, and path coefficients (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to ensure the quality of construct measurement. For assessing the reliability of research measurement, the value of Cronbach's Alpha, average-variance-extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (C.R.) were calculated. As shown in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha of all constructs exceeded the recommended 0.7 level (Henseler et al., 2015); the composite reliability (C.R.) was slightly higher than the Alpha coefficient from 0.879 to 0.939, with all values above 0.6; the values for average variance extracted (AVE) were between 0.645 and 0.885, which were higher than the suggested 0.5 (Hair et al., 2013). Consequently, results show satisfying reliability.

In reflective measurement models, discriminant validity is arguably the most critical aspect of validity assessment (Henseler et al., 2015). As depicted in Table 3, the square root (in bold) of the AVE value for each construct is higher than their Pearson correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and all cross-loading is greater than the factor loading (Table 4). These results indicate that each construct is empirically unique and reveals sufficient discriminant validity (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Additionally, we calculated the item-level variance inflation factor (VIF) for each construct, yielding values lower than 3.3 (ranging from 1.532 to 3.026), indicating no multicollinearity in the study (Hair et al., 2013).

5.2. Structure model

After evaluating the measurement model, SmartPLS 3.0 was employed to assess the structural model and its explanatory power. The study performed a bootstrapping calculation with 5000 re-samples to estimate the path coefficient and significance of the hypothesis. Brand trust has a significant, positive effect on brand affiliation motivation (β = 0.685, $p < 0.001$), opportunity-seeking motivation (β = 0.716, $p < 0.001$), conversation motivation (β = 0.709, $p < 0.001$), entertainment motivation (β = 0.689, $p < 0.001$), and investigation motivation (β = 0.714, $p < 0.001$), respectively, which support hypothesis H1a-H1e. The empirical results reveal that brand affiliation motivation (β = 0.273, $p < 0.001$), opportunity-seeking motivation (β = 0.120, $p < 0.05$), entertainment motivation (β = 0.321, $p < 0.001$), and investigation motivation (β = 0.277, $p < 0.001$) significantly impact the passive customer engagement behavior, which supports hypothesis H2a, H2b, H2d, and H2e, but not H2c. Regarding the relationship between customer engagement motivations and active customer engagement behavior, H3a, H3d, and H3e are supported by analysis results, while H3b and H3c are unsupported. Brand affiliation motivation (β = 0.192, $p < 0.05$), entertainment motivation (β = 0.413, $p < 0.001$), and investigation motivation (β = 0.293, $p < 0.001$) significantly influence active customer engagement behavior. More detailed results are revealed in Table 5.

PLS multi-group analysis was performed to verify H4a and H4b. Before multi-group analysis, it is necessary to assess the model fit and the explanatory power (Hair et al., 2013). Although the global goodness of fit (GoF) for PLS should not be used as an overall measure of model fit, it is applicable for particular model setups, such as in PLS multi-group analyses (Henseler et al., 2015). According to the formula and standard proposed by (Wetzels et al., 2009), a GoF = 0.596 in this study

Table 3
Results of validity, reliability of measures and correlation matrix.

Construct	Alpha	C.R.	AVE	ACT	AFF	CON	ENT	INV	INT	OPP	PAS	REL
ACT	0.915	0.937	0.747	**0.85**								
AFF	0.808	0.886	0.722	0.547	**0.836**							
CON	0.871	0.920	0.794	0.561	0.684	**0.891**						
ENT	0.809	0.887	0.724	0.665	0.65	0.699	**0.835**					
INV	0.816	0.916	0.844	0.621	0.61	0.749	0.677	**0.911**				
INT	0.854	0.901	0.695	0.594	0.637	0.682	0.677	0.703	**0.834**			
OPP	0.815	0.890	0.730	0.509	0.716	0.745	0.658	0.652	0.65	**0.868**		
PAS	0.824	0.884	0.655	0.731	0.748	0.724	0.777	0.751	0.715	0.72	**0.821**	
REL	0.816	0.879	0.645	0.607	0.675	0.687	0.676	0.695	0.78	0.715	0.757	**0.817**

*Notes: ACT = Active engagement behavior; AFF = Brand Affiliation; CON=Conversation; ENT = Entertainment; INV=Investigation; INT=Intentionality; OPP=Opportunity seeking; PAS=Passive engagement behavior; REA = Reliability.

Table 4
Factor loading and cross-loading.

	ACT	AFF	CON	ENT	REL	INV	INT	OPP	PAS
ACT1	**0.846**	0.392	0.420	0.444	0.439	0.459	0.442	0.379	0.547
ACT2	**0.882**	0.472	0.485	0.453	0.437	0.476	0.466	0.435	0.590
ACT3	**0.870**	0.412	0.381	0.404	0.418	0.422	0.405	0.357	0.499
ACT4	**0.837**	0.489	0.469	0.498	0.448	0.481	0.476	0.407	0.612
ACT5	**0.887**	0.468	0.473	0.501	0.478	0.492	0.446	0.387	0.651
AFF1	0.469	**0.850**	0.605	0.594	0.563	0.569	0.511	0.655	0.626
AFF2	0.432	**0.825**	0.606	0.610	0.501	0.548	0.497	0.617	0.604
AFF3	0.424	**0.875**	0.548	0.597	0.523	0.517	0.498	0.631	0.670
CON1	0.508	0.661	**0.903**	0.623	0.593	0.682	0.631	0.721	0.675
CON2	0.448	0.598	**0.888**	0.609	0.575	0.640	0.529	0.679	0.621
CON3	0.426	0.580	**0.882**	0.576	0.537	0.588	0.554	0.612	0.599
ENT1	0.434	0.634	0.555	**0.881**	0.538	0.591	0.494	0.582	0.644
ENT2	0.488	0.616	0.578	**0.840**	0.515	0.576	0.584	0.586	0.676
ENT3	0.441	0.550	0.592	**0.831**	0.578	0.621	0.529	0.563	0.628
REL1	0.410	0.535	0.527	0.549	**0.830**	0.521	0.565	0.563	0.603
REL2	0.459	0.582	0.578	0.578	**0.834**	0.593	0.662	0.586	0.618
REL3	0.336	0.511	0.539	0.496	**0.779**	0.478	0.607	0.559	0.604
REL4	0.446	0.371	0.406	0.426	**0.768**	0.449	0.638	0.508	0.507
INV1	0.513	0.648	0.662	0.666	0.622	**0.927**	0.624	0.600	0.689
INV2	0.480	0.523	0.655	0.620	0.546	**0.911**	0.558	0.567	0.623
INT1	0.450	0.483	0.521	0.514	0.705	0.546	**0.852**	0.531	0.568
INT2	0.381	0.551	0.556	0.571	0.674	0.577	**0.836**	0.540	0.616
INT3	0.481	0.537	0.583	0.584	0.633	0.569	**0.839**	0.524	0.625
INT4	0.418	0.392	0.483	0.428	0.552	0.454	**0.808**	0.451	0.495
OPP1	0.391	0.599	0.568	0.556	0.570	0.519	0.537	**0.819**	0.567
OPP2	0.433	0.669	0.698	0.587	0.628	0.587	0.557	**0.873**	0.628
OPP3	0.340	0.643	0.665	0.597	0.567	0.518	0.478	**0.871**	0.596
PAS1	0.504	0.685	0.565	0.684	0.647	0.609	0.589	0.611	**0.831**
PAS2	0.525	0.572	0.620	0.632	0.573	0.604	0.547	0.555	**0.821**
PAS3	0.659	0.540	0.537	0.564	0.548	0.574	0.558	0.496	**0.781**
PAS4	0.511	0.608	0.578	0.584	0.577	0.527	0.545	0.596	**0.803**

*Notes: ACT = Active engagement behavior; AFF = Brand Affiliation; CON=Conversation; ENT = Entertainment; INV=Investigation; INT=Intentionality; OPP=Opportunity seeking; PAS=Passive engagement behavior; REA = Reliability.

Table 5
PLS estimation results.

	Paths	Beta	STDEV	T-value	P-Value	Decision
H1a	BT → AFF	0.685	0.035	19.519	0.000	Supported
H1b	BT → OPP	0.716	0.039	18.258	0.000	Supported
H1c	BT → CON	0.709	0.035	20.280	0.000	Supported
H1d	BT → ENT	0.689	0.034	20.106	0.000	Supported
H1e	BT → INV	0.714	0.030	23.677	0.000	Supported
H2a	AFF → PAS	0.273	0.044	6.227	0.000	Supported
H2b	OPP → PAS	0.120	0.059	2.038	0.042	Supported
H2c	CON → PAS	0.016	0.066	0.236	0.813	Rejected
H2d	ENT → PAS	0.321	0.051	6.318	0.000	Supported
H2e	INV → PAS	0.277	0.057	4.868	0.000	Supported
H3a	AFF → ACT	0.192	0.097	1.980	0.045	Supported
H3b	OPP → ACT	−0.050	0.076	0.661	0.509	Rejected
H3c	CON → ACT	−0.004	0.089	0.047	0.962	Rejected
H3d	ENT → ACT	0.413	0.072	5.700	0.000	Supported
H3e	INV → ACT	0.293	0.081	3.635	0.000	Supported

*Notes: ACT = Active engagement behavior; AFF = Brand Affiliation; CON=Conversation; ENT = Entertainment; INV=Investigation; OPP=Opportunity seeking; PAS=Passive engagement behavior; BT=Brand trust.

Table 6
Explanatory and predictive quality.

	R^2	Q^2	f^2	
			Passive engagement	Active engagement
Active engagement behavior	0.508	0.338	–	–
Entertainment	0.475	0.311	0.177	0.143
Conversation	0.503	0.375	–	–
Brand affiliation	0.470	0.309	0.127	0.017
Opportunity seeking	0.512	0.362	0.021	–
Passive engagement behavior	0.760	0.476	–	–
Investigation	0.510	0.404	0.123	0.067

the proposed research model is appropriate for multi-group analysis.

First, the sample was categorized into domestic brands (Group 1) and foreign brands (Group 2). Next, to compare the paths between groups, a multi-group analysis was performed by a non-parametric approach. Using bootstrapping, separated models were valued for each group and assessed whether the group-specific path coefficients differed significantly (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Finally, according to the approach proposed by (Henseler et al., 2015), the study calculated T-values and p-values to assess the significance of the group effect. The results reveal significant differences between Groups 1 and 2 in the impact of brand affiliation motivation on passive customer engagement behavior and the impact of investigation motivation on passive customer engagement behavior. As listed in Table 7, the results partially support H4b and reject H4a.

demonstrates a good model fit. As revealed in Table 6, the proposed research model explains 76.0% of the variance in passive customer engagement behavior and 50.0% in active customer engagement behavior. Meanwhile, brand trust explains 47.0% of the variance of brand affiliation motivation, 51.2% of the variance of opportunity-seeking motivation, 50.3% of the variance of conversation motivation, 47.5% of the variance of entertainment motivation, and 51.0% of the variance of investigation motivation. Besides, R^2 values for the endogenous latent variables, all Stone-Geisser Q^2 values greater than zero calculated by a blindfolding algorithm (*omission distance* = 7) verify the cross-validated predictive relevance of the structural model (Hair et al., 2013). This good model fit and explanatory power indicate that

Table 7
Multi-group analysis.

Paths	Beta (Domestic)	Beta (Foreign)	Diff(|Domestic-Foreign|)	P
BT → AFF	0.689	0.698	0.009	0.555
BT → OPP	0.703	0.766	0.062	0.821
BT → CON	0.756	0.653	0.103	0.064
BT → ENT	0.684	0.723	0.039	0.736
BT → INV	0.737	0.684	0.053	0.198
AFF → PAS	0.344	0.163	0.181	0.032
OPP → PAS	0.040	0.270	0.230	0.975
ENT → PAS	0.243	0.381	0.243	0.381
INV → PAS	0.387	0.145	0.242	0.015
AFF → ACT	0.152	0.131	0.021	0.454
ENT → ACT	0.321	0.522	0.201	0.917
INV→ ACT	0.377	0.172	0.206	0.095

*Notes: ACT = Active engagement behavior; AFF = Brand Affiliation; ENT = Entertainment; INV=Investigation; OPP=Opportunity seeking; PAS=Passive engagement behavior; BT=Brand trust.

6. Discussion and implications

6.1. Results discussion

Drawing on the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) and brand trust theory, this study investigated the association between brand trust and customer engagement, focusing on how diverse customer engagement motivations influence various engagement behaviors. Additionally, we explored the impact of a brand's country of origin (COO) on customer engagement processes. Although some findings are consistent with previous studies, there are some inconsistencies.

The empirical results first validate the positive impact of brand trust on customer engagement motivations. In this study, H1a to H1e are supported, indicating that brand trust is an antecedent for customers to generate engagement motivations. Specifically, when customers have high levels of trust in a brand, they are more likely to consider themselves affiliated with it (H1a, $\beta = 0.685$, $p < 0.001$). Customers with high brand trust will pay more attention to discount information or new product information released by the brand (H1b, $\beta = 0.716$, $p < 0.001$). Brand trust stimulates customer motivation to communicate with brands (H1c, $\beta = 0.709$, $p < 0.001$). Customers are more interested in entertaining content published by brands when they have a high level of brand trust (H1d, $\beta = 0.689$, $p < 0.001$). Brand trust is also a predictor of customers seeking information about the brand (H1d, $\beta = 0.714$, $p < 0.001$). Equally important, brand trust alone explains at least 47% of the variance in various engagement motivations, which shows that brand trust has moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2013). The result is inconsistent with some previous studies, which reported brand trust as the customer engagement consequence, probably because this study examined experienced brand users rather than new customers or window shoppers (Wirtz et al., 2019). Due to the prespecified types of customers selected in this study, the results obtained do not contradict the hypotheses (Laroche et al., 2012; Mishra, 2021). Overall, brand trust is a crucial driver that motivates Chinese customers to engage in Sina Weibo brand pages.

The objective of H2 and H3 is to determine which selected motivations could explain customer engagement behaviors (passive and active). Brand affiliation motivation was identified as the predictor for both passive (H2a, $\beta = 0.273$, $p < 0.001$) and active (H3a, $\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.05$) engagement behavior. The results indicate that Chinese customers engage with Weibo brand pages because the brands can meet their needs for self-identity. When customers find certain brands on social media that coincide with their lifestyle, they are more possibly to read, like, and forward the content posted on the brand page (Carlson et al., 2019). This study also identified opportunity-seeking motivation as a predictor for passive engagement behavior (H2b, $\beta = 0.120$, $p <$

0.05), although no significant effect on active behavior (H3b, $\beta = -0.050$, $p > 0.05$) was recorded. Despite Chinese customers using Weibo to learn about brand discounts and new products, e-commerce platforms such as Taobao and Pinduoduo are preferred when these customers need to engage with brands actively (Ampadu et al., 2022; Gulfraz et al., 2022). Conversation motivation is not a predictor of engagement of Chinese customers with brands on Weibo, whether it is passive (H2c, $\beta = 0.016$, $p > 0.05$) or active (H3c, $\beta = -0.004$, $p > 0.05$), as found in this study. Chinese customers find that posting or commenting on Weibo is not the best option to communicate with brands, especially when it concerns complaints. The reason could be that the Sina Weibo brand page is mainly used for information sharing rather than as a platform for providing services (Tang and Chen, 2020). Consistent with previous studies, entertainment motivation was found to produce a significant positive effect on two engagement behaviors investigated in this study (Li et al., 2015) and was identified as the strongest predictor for engagement of Chinese customers on Sina Weibo (H2d, $\beta = 0.321$, $p < 0.001$; H3d, $\beta = 0.413$, $p < 0.001$). Chinese Weibo users might get intrinsic pleasure or enjoyment by watching, viewing, reading, and posting entertaining brand-related content, which has been proven to be the primary driver of individuals following Sina Weibo brand pages (Carlson et al., 2019). Consistent with previous studies (Khan et al., 2019), investigation motivation was also an important driver for customer engagement. Individuals can satisfy their curiosity by discovering, elaborating, and building new knowledge about brands by reading, watching, and posting questions on the brand pages (H2e, $\beta = 0.277$, $p < 0.001$; H3e, $\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$).

Interestingly, the empirical results fail to confirm the H4, inconsistent with other previous studies. Previous research has proven that Chinese customers prefer to engage with foreign brands because of the perceived superior symbolic value and social status (Guo, 2013; Hoang et al., 2022; Wang and Yang, 2008; Zhang, 2015). However, no significant differences were found in customer engagement pathways investigated in this study. The only significant difference was observed in the association between brand affiliation motivation and passive engagement behavior ($\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.05$) and investigation motivation and passive engagement behavior ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.05$). Also, the path coefficients of domestic brands are higher than that of foreign brands. The results may reflect the impact of the increasing use of "ethnic brands" and "national brands" labels by Chinese domestic brands in recent years (Li et al., 2020). The findings demonstrate that these brands appeal to Chinese customers by promoting patriotism or ethnocentrism, and Sina Weibo is their preferred promotion platform (Sun et al., 2021). It can be deduced that the labels "ethnic brands" and "national brands" strengthen the identification of Chinese customers with the brand. Additionally, the massive publicity campaign will prompt customers to read, view, and watch brand content, leading to higher customer engagement.

6.2. Theoretical contributions

The main objective of this study was to develop a comprehensive model to illustrate the Chinese customer engagement in social media-based brand communities on Sina Weibo. The empirical results show that brand trust is an important antecedent of customer engagement for fans of brand pages on Sina Weibo. Furthermore, this study has proven that different motivations can drive different engagement behaviors: brand affiliation, entertainment, and investigation motivate customers' active and passive engagements; opportunity-seeking only motivates passive engagement while conversation prompts neither active nor passive engagements. In addition, the empirical results indicate no significant difference in customer engagement between domestic and foreign brands, with domestic brands potentially gaining better engagement on Sina Weibo.

This study has made several theoretical contributions. First, the study resolves some disagreements in previous literature regarding the

association between customer engagement and brand trust by addressing the absence of unanimity in the existing literature about which one is the antecedent: brand trust or customer engagement. Although Hollebeek (2011) mentioned that the relationship between brand trust and customer engagement would vary depending on the research background, no further elaboration was presented in the study. Later research has revealed that researchers could obtain results that support their research hypotheses in the fields or industries they are familiar with, notwithstanding whether the brand trust was an antecedent (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020; Wong and Lee, 2022) or a consequence (Wongsansukcharoen, 2022). However, obtaining results that fit the hypotheses may be difficult when the theories are applied in unfamiliar fields or industries or when the preconditions of the relationship between brand trust and CE are neglected (Laroche et al., 2012; Mishra, 2021). When research focuses on the organic pathway of CE (Hollebeek et al., 2019), current customers (Kaur et al., 2020), and industries that involve easy customer decision-making processes (Pujadas-Hostench et al., 2019), brand trust is an antecedent to customer engagement. When research focuses on the promoted pathway of CE (Wirtz et al., 2019), new customers or potentially lost customers (Islam et al., 2018), and industries that involve a complex customer decision-making process (Wongsansukcharoen, 2022), brand trust is a consequence of customer engagement.

Second, brand research on customer engagement through social media-based communities is still evolving (Li and Han, 2021). For example, while previous studies have investigated customer engagement only from behavioral (Wong and Lee, 2022) or psychological (Gao and Huang, 2021; Vohra and Bhardwaj, 2019) perspectives, this study considers both perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, previous research has generally focused on active engagement behavior rather than passive behavior (Flecha-Ortíz et al., 2021; Yasin et al., 2020a), whereas this study investigated both behaviors and their respective motivations. In addition, previous studies have inclined to the idea that CE is a high-order construct, which simplifies the model but eliminates the dynamic understanding of CE (Henseler et al., 2015). To ensure the validity of the research model, this paper adopts the PLS approach to investigate CE process in detail (i.e., from motivation to behavior). By providing a comprehensive understanding about customer engagement, this study contributes new knowledge to the existing body of literature.

Third, in terms of the brand's country of origin, previous research reported that Chinese customers prefer to interact with foreign brands (Wang and Yang, 2008), which was contradicted by more recent literature that demonstrated an increasing prevalence of patriotic propaganda by Chinese domestic brands (Li et al., 2020). This paper reports the outcome of the investigation using PLS-MGA on the role of brands' COO in customer engagement, which has been neglected in SMBBC research. Based on the findings from this study, there is no significant difference in customer engagement between domestic and foreign businesses, with domestic brands potentially gaining better engagement on Sina Weibo. Thus, these findings also contribute crucial knowledge to the literature about the association between customer engagement and a brand's country of origin.

6.3. Practical implications

Currently, businesses are inclined to adopt social media-based brand marketing strategies to connect with customers. China has attracted many foreign enterprises due to its large customer market (Afzal et al., 2019). However, popular social media platforms used by international businesses, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, are banned in China. Also, using patriotic propaganda in promoting Chinese domestic brands has become a common practice on Sina Weibo in recent years (Li et al., 2020), creating emerging barriers for foreign brands developing SMBBC strategy in China. Therefore, this paper reports the implications of this study that can benefit the brands in formulating SMBBC strategy

in China.

The results obtained from this study support the positive influence of brand trust on customer engagement. This finding concludes that foreign brands must establish a brand trust to maintain a stable long-term relationship with Chinese customers, e.g., establishing transparency in business practices (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). The empirical findings also demonstrate that brand trust can promote diverse customer engagement motivations such as investigation, opportunity-seeking, brand affiliation, conversation, and entertainment. However, the brands should be aware that not all CE motivations will result in CE behavioral outcomes, particularly concerning Sina Weibo's brand page. In the context of Sina Weibo, this study has proven that different engagement motivations can result in different engagement behaviors (active or passive). The findings suggest that brands should meet customers' brand affiliation, entertainment, and investigation motivations to gain customers' active engagement in brand-related activities. The activities include posting resonating, hedonically, and informative brand content on Sina Weibo brand pages. The findings also demonstrate that by catering to customers' opportunity-seeking needs, the brands could gain passive engagement from customers looking for discounts and new offerings. Also, catering to the entertainment needs of customers may result in both active and passive customer engagements in brand activities. However, attempting to inspire conversational motivation on Sina Weibo may be an ineffective strategy to encourage Chinese customer engagement, as found in this study.

One of the key contributions of this study is providing social media-based marketing guidelines for foreign brands keen on China's market. Previous research claimed that the ethnocentrism effect on attitudes toward foreign products of Chinese customers is insignificant (Wang and Yang, 2008). However, the emergence of "ethnic brands" and "national brands" in China has challenged the perception that Chinese customers prefer to engage with foreign brands. To overcome the challenge, foreign brands may adopt the "glocalization" strategy. The strategy refers to the brand's interpenetration of the global and local market, resulting in distinct outcomes in various geographical areas (Guo, 2013). Furthermore, foreign brands should respect Chinese culture and customers and avoid hostile moves when promoting brand content on Sina Weibo (Sun et al., 2021). Besides, foreign firms should aim to provide high-quality products for the Chinese market. Although patriotism may enhance customers' intent to purchase local items, previous research demonstrated the inclination of Chinese customers to choose products based on their quality (Li et al., 2020). Finally, acquiring local brands can also be an approach to reaching Chinese customers (Heinberg et al., 2016).

6.4. Limitations and future research directions

This study is a preliminary attempt to bridge the gaps in the existing literature. Thus, the limitations encountered in this study present opportunities for future investigation. First, although our proposed research model offers strong theoretical explanatory power, i.e., explaining 76.0% of the variance in passive CE behavior and 50.8% of the variance in active CE behavior, future research can improve the existing model by considering other elements excluded from this study. For example, this study has found that conversation is not a valid engagement motivation on Sina Weibo, indicating the need for future studies to verify other factors such as economic benefits (Sharma et al., 2022; Yasin et al., 2020b). Second, this study focuses only on Sina Weibo, the most popular brand page platform in China, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other platforms. There are several other social media platforms in China, such as Zhihu (a social question-and-answer website that resembles Quora) and Bilibili (an online video sharing and social media platform resembling Youtube). Future research may explore the invariance across these social media platforms. Finally, the use of a cross-sectional online survey to collect data in this study has limitations in inferring causality between research

constructs, despite its wide use in SMBBC studies. Consequently, it is suggested that an alternative design (e.g., experiments) be used in a future study to further understand the reason of the insignificance of the brand's country of origin in most customer engagement paths.

References

Afzal, Farman, Yunfei, S., Sajid, M., Afzal, Fahim, 2019. Market sustainability: a globalization and consumer culture perspective in the Chinese retail market. Sustain. Times 11, 575. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11030575.

Ampadu, S., Jiang, Y., Debrah, E., Antwi, C.O., Amankwa, E., Gyamfi, S.A., Amoako, R., 2022. Online personalized recommended product quality and e-impulse buying: a conditional mediation analysis. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 64, 102789 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102789.

Arghashi, V., Yuksel, C.A., 2022. Interactivity, inspiration, and perceived usefulness! How retailers' AR-apps improve consumer engagement through flow. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 64, 102756 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102756.

Augusto, M., Torres, P., 2018. Effects of brand attitude and eWOM on consumers' willingness to pay in the banking industry: mediating role of consumer-brand identification and brand equity. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 42, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.01.005.

Ball, C., Huang, K.T., Francis, J., 2021. Virtual reality adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic: a uses and gratifications perspective. Telematics Inf. 65, 101728 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101728.

Barari, M., Ross, M., Thaichon, S., Surachartkumtonkun, J., 2020. A meta-analysis of customer engagement behaviour. Int. J. Consum. Stud. 45, 457–477. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12609.

Boadi, E.A., He, Z., Antwi, C.O., Md Altab, H., Bosompem, J., Hinson, R.E., Atuobuah Boadi, V., 2022. Value co-creation and employee service behaviours: the moderating role of trust in employee - hotel relationship. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 66, 102898 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102898.

Bowden, J., 2009. The process of customer engagement: a conceptual framework. J. Market. Theor. Pract. 17, 63–74. https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679170105.

Bruton, G.D., Ahlstrom, D., Chen, J., 2021. China has emerged as an aspirant economy. Asia Pac. J. Manag. 38, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-018-9638-0.

Carlson, J., Rahman, M.M., Taylor, A., Voola, R., 2019. Feel the VIBE: examining value-in-the-brand-page-experience and its impact on satisfaction and customer engagement behaviours in mobile social media. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 46, 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.10.002.

Chiang, L.L., Luke, Yang, C.S., 2018. Does country-of-origin brand personality generate retail customer lifetime value? A Big Data analytics approach. Technol. Forecast. Soc. Change 130, 177–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.06.034.

Chuah, S.H.W., Aw, E.C.X., Tseng, M.L., 2021. The missing link in the promotion of customer engagement: the roles of brand fan page attractiveness and agility. Internet Res. 31, 587–612. https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-01-2020-0025.

Confente, I., Kucharska, W., 2021. Company versus consumer performance: does brand community identification foster brand loyalty and the consumer's personal brand? J. Brand Manag. 28, 8–31. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-020-00208-4.

de Oliveira Santini, F., Ladeira, W.J., Pinto, D.C., Herter, M.M., Sampaio, C.H., Babin, B. J., 2020. Customer engagement in social media: a framework and meta-analysis. J. Acad. Market. Sci. 48, 1211–1228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00731-5.

Delgado-Ballester, E., Munuera-Alemán, J.L., 2005. Does brand trust matter to brand equity? J. Prod. Brand Manag. 14, 187–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420510601058.

Dijkmans, C., Kerkhof, P., Beukeboom, C.J., 2015. A stage to engage: social media use and corporate reputation. Tourism Manag. 47, 58–67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.005.

Dolan, R., Conduit, J., Frethey-Bentham, C., Fahy, J., Goodman, S., 2019. Social media engagement behavior: a framework for engaging customers through social media content. Eur. J. Market. 53, 2213–2243. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2017-0182.

Enginkaya, E., Yılmaz, H., 2014. What drives consumers to interact with brands through social media? A motivation scale development study. Procedia - Soc. Behav. Sci. 148, 219–226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.037.

Fernandes, T., Castro, A., 2020. Understanding drivers and outcomes of lurking vs. posting behaviours in social media-based brand communities. J. Market. Manag. 36, 660–681. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1724179.

Flecha-Ortíz, J., Santos-Corrada, M., Dones-González, V., López-González, E., Vega, A., 2021. Millennials & Snapchat: self-expression through its use and its influence on purchase motivation. J. Bus. Res. 125, 798–805. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.03.005.

Fornell, C., Larcker, D.F., 1981. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. J. Mark. Res. 18, 39. https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312.

Gao, M., Huang, L., 2021. Quality of channel integration and customer loyalty in omnichannel retailing: the mediating role of customer engagement and relationship program receptiveness. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 63, 102688 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102688.

Grover, P., Kar, A.K., 2020. User engagement for mobile payment service providers – introducing the social media engagement model. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 53, 101718 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.12.002.

Gulfraz, M.B., Sufyan, M., Mustak, M., Salminen, J., Srivastava, D.K., 2022. Understanding the impact of online customers' shopping experience on online

impulsive buying: a study on two leading e-commerce platforms. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 68, 103000 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103000.

Guo, X., 2013. Living in a global world: influence of consumer global orientation on attitudes toward global brands from developed versus emerging countries. J. Int. Mark. 21, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1509/jim.12.0065.

Hair, J.F., Ringle, C.M., Sarstedt, M., 2013. Partial least squares structural equation modeling: rigorous applications, better results and higher acceptance. Long. Range Plan. 46, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2013.01.001.

Heinberg, M., Ozkaya, H.E., Taube, M., 2016. A brand built on sand: is acquiring a local brand in an emerging market an ill-advised strategy for foreign companies? J. Acad. Market. Sci. 44, 586–607. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-015-0452-7.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M., Sarstedt, M., 2015. A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. J. Acad. Market. Sci. 43, 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8.

Hoang, H.T., Bich Ho, K.N., Tran, T.P., Le, T.Q., 2022. The extension of animosity model of foreign product purchase: does country of origin matter? J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 64, 102758 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102758.

Hollebeek, L.D., 2011. Demystifying customer brand engagement: exploring the loyalty nexus. J. Market. Manag. 27, 785–807. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2010.500132.

Hollebeek, L.D., Srivastava, R.K., Chen, T., 2019. S-D logic–informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM. J. Acad. Market. Sci. 47, 161–185. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0494-5.

Hollebeek, L.D., Sharma, T.G., Pandey, R., Sanyal, P., Clark, M.K., 2022. Fifteen years of customer engagement research: a bibliometric and network analysis. J. Prod. Brand Manag. 31, 293–309. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-01-2021-3301.

Husain, R., Paul, J., Koles, B., 2022. The role of brand experience, brand resonance and brand trust in luxury consumption. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 66, 102895 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102895.

Islam, J.U., Rahman, Z., Hollebeek, L.D., 2018. Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a solicitation of congruity theory. Internet Res. 28, 23–45. https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-09-2016-0279.

Jung, E.H., Sundar, S.S., 2018. Status Update: Gratifications Derived from Facebook Affordances by Older Adults, vol. 20. New Media Soc, pp. 4135–4154. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818768090.

Katz, E., Haas, H., Gurevitch, M., 1973. On the use of the mass media for important things. Am. Socio. Rev. 38, 164. https://doi.org/10.2307/2094393.

Kaur, P., Dhir, A., Chen, S., Malibari, A., Almotairi, M., 2020. Why do people purchase virtual goods? A uses and gratification (U&G) theory perspective. Telematics Inf. 53, 101376 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101376.

Kawaf, F., Istanbulluoglu, D., 2019. Online fashion shopping paradox: the role of customer reviews and facebook marketing. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 48, 144–153. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.02.017.

Khan, I., 2022. Do brands' social media marketing activities matter? A moderation analysis. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 64, 102794 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102794.

Khan, Z., Sisi, Z., Siqun, Y., 2019. Environmental regulations an option: asymmetry effect of environmental regulations on carbon emissions using non-linear ARDL. Energy Sources, Part A Recover. Util. Environ. Eff. 41, 137–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/15567036.2018.1504145.

Konuk, F.A., 2021. The moderating impact of taste award on the interplay between perceived taste, perceived quality and brand trust. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 63, 102698 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102698.

Kosinski, M., Matz, S.C., Gosling, S.D., Popov, V., Stillwell, D., 2015. Facebook as a research tool for the social sciences: opportunities, challenges, ethical considerations, and practical guidelines. Am. Psychol. 70, 543–556. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039210.

Kumar, V., Aksoy, L., Donkers, B., Venkatesan, R., Wiesel, T., Tillmanns, S., 2010. Undervalued or overvalued customers: capturing total customer engagement value. J. Serv. Res. 13, 297–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670510375602.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M.R., Richard, M.O., Sankaranarayanan, R., 2012. The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. Comput. Hum. Behav. 28, 1755–1767. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.016.

Lee, D., Hosanagar, K., Nair, H.S., 2018. Advertising content and consumer engagement on social media: evidence from Facebook. Manag. Sci. 64, 5105–5131. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2017.2902.

Lewis, D.J., Weigert, A.J., 2012. The social dynamics of trust: theoretical and empirical research, 1985-2012. Soc. Forces 91, 25–31. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sos116.

Li, D., Han, X., 2021. Assessing the influence of goal pursuit and emotional attachment on customer engagement behaviors. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 59, 102355 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102355.

Li, H., Liu, Y., Xu, X., Heikkilä, J., Van Der Heijden, H., 2015. Modeling hedonic is continuance through the uses and gratifications theory: an empirical study in online games. Comput. Hum. Behav. 48, 261–272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.053.

Li, Y., Teng, W., Liao, T.T., Lin, T.M.Y.Y., 2020. Exploration of patriotic brand image: its antecedents and impacts on purchase intentions. Asia Pac. J. Market. Logist. 33, 1455–1481. https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-11-2019-0660.

Lien, C.H., Cao, Y., 2014. Examining WeChat users' motivations, trust, attitudes, and positive word-of-mouth: evidence from China. Comput. Hum. Behav. 41, 104–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.08.013.

Lim, H., Kumar, A., 2019. Variations in consumers' use of brand online social networking: a uses and gratifications approach. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 51, 450–457. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.10.015.

Lim, W.M., Rasul, T., Kumar, S., Ala, M., 2022. Past, present, and future of customer engagement. J. Bus. Res. 140, 439–458. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.11.014.

Lin, Y.H., Chu, M.G., 2021. Online communication self-disclosure and intimacy development on Facebook: the perspective of uses and gratifications theory. Online Inf. Rev. 45, 1167–1187. https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-08-2020-0329.

Lindell, M.K., Whitney, D.J., 2001. Accounting for common method variance in cross-sectional research designs. J. Appl. Psychol. 86, 114–121. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.1.114.

Martínez-López, F.J., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Molinillo, S., Aguilar-Illescas, R., Esteban-Millat, I., 2017. Consumer engagement in an online brand community. Electron. Commer. Res. Appl. 23, 24–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2017.04.002.

Mazzarolo, A.H., Mainardes, E.W., Innocencio, F.A., 2021. Antecedents and consequences of user satisfaction on Instagram. Market. Intell. Plann. 39, 687–701. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-08-2020-0370.

McClure, C., Seock, Y.K., 2020. The role of involvement: investigating the effect of brand's social media pages on consumer purchase intention. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 53, 101975 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101975.

Mishra, A.S., 2021. Exploring COBRAs, its antecedents and consequences in the context of banking brands. Int. J. Bank Market. 39, 900–921. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-11-2020-0553.

Molinillo, S., Aguilar-Illescas, R., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Liébana-Cabanillas, F., 2021. Social commerce website design, perceived value and loyalty behavior intentions: the moderating roles of gender, age and frequency of use. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 63, 102404 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102404.

Mollen, A., Wilson, H., 2010. Engagement, telepresence and interactivity in online consumer experience: reconciling scholastic and managerial perspectives. J. Bus. Res. 63, 919–925. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.05.014.

Muntinga, D.G., Moorman, M., Smit, E.G., 2011. Introducing COBRAs: exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. Int. J. Advert. 30, 13–46.

Nelson, D.W., Moore, M.M., Swanson, K.K., 2019. Fashion and social networking: a motivations framework. J. Fash. Mark. Manag. 23, 608–627. https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-03-2018-0037.

Palmatier, R.W., Kumar, V., Harmeling, C.M., 2017. Customer Engagement Marketing, Customer Engagement Marketing. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61985-9.

Pang, H., 2021. Identifying associations between mobile social media users' perceived values, attitude, satisfaction, and eWOM engagement: the moderating role of affective factors. Telematics Inf. 59, 101561 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101561.

Pansari, A., Kumar, V., 2017. Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences. J. Acad. Market. Sci. 45, 294–311. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0485-6.

Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.Y., Podsakoff, N.P., 2003. Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. J. Appl. Psychol. 88, 879–903. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879.

Pornsakulvanich, V., Dumrongsiri, N., 2013. Internal and external influences on social networking site usage in Thailand. Comput. Hum. Behav. 29, 2788–2795. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.016.

Pujadas-Hostench, J., Palau-Saumell, R., Forgas-Coll, S., Sánchez-García, J., 2019. Clothing brand purchase intention through SNS. Online Inf. Rev. 43, 867–892. https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-02-2017-0042.

Ramaswamy, V., Ozcan, K., 2016. Brand value co-creation in a digitalized world: an integrative framework and research implications. Int. J. Res. Market. 33, 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2015.07.001.

Ray, A., Dhir, A., Bala, P.K., Kaur, P., 2019. Why do people use food delivery apps (FDA)? A uses and gratification theory perspective. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 51, 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.05.025.

Rodríguez-Ardura, I., Meseguer-Artola, A., 2020. A PLS-Neural network analysis of motivational orientations leading to Facebook engagement and the moderating roles of flow and age. Front. Psychol. 11, 1869. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01869.

Rotenberg, K.J., 2018. The psychology of trust. Psychol. Trust 3, 1003–1017. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315558912.

Sarstedt, M., Hair, J.F., Pick, M., Liengaard, B.D., Radomir, L., Ringle, C.M., 2022. Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. Psychol. Market. 39, 1035–1064. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21640.

Sharma, P., Sadh, A., Billore, A., Motiani, M., 2022. Investigating brand community engagement and evangelistic tendencies on social media. J. Prod. Brand Manag. 31, 16–28. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-01-2020-2705.

Simon, C., Brexendorf, T.O., Fassnacht, M., 2016. The impact of external social and internal personal forces on consumers' brand community engagement on Facebook. J. Prod. Brand Manag. 25, 409–423. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2015-0843.

Song, Y.A., Lee, S.Y., Kim, Y., 2019. Does mindset matter for using social networking sites: understanding motivations for and uses of Instagram with growth versus fixed mindset. Int. J. Advert. 38, 886–904. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1637614.

Srivastava, M., Sivaramakrishnan, S., 2021. Mapping the themes and intellectual structure of customer engagement: a bibliometric analysis. Market. Intell. Plann. 39, 702–727. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-11-2020-0483.

Sun, N., Rau, P.P.L., Ma, L., 2014. Understanding lurkers in online communities: a literature review. Comput. Hum. Behav. 38, 110–117. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.05.022.

Sun, Y., Gonzalez-Jimenez, H., Wang, S., 2021. Examining the relationships between e-WOM, consumer ethnocentrism and brand equity. J. Bus. Res. 130, 564–573. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.040.

Tang, Z., Chen, L., 2020. An empirical study of brand microblog users' unfollowing motivations: the perspective of push-pull-mooring model. Int. J. Inf. Manag. 52, 102066 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102066.

Tsai, W.-H.S., Men, L.R., 2013. Motivations and antecedents of consumer engagement with brand pages on social networking sites. J. Interact. Advert. 13, 76–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2013.826549.

van Doorn, J., Lemon, K.N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P., Verhoef, P.C., 2010. Customer engagement behavior: theoretical foundations and research directions. J. Serv. Res. 13, 253–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670510375599.

Vivek, S.D., Beatty, S.E., Morgan, R.M., 2012. Customer engagement: exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. J. Market. Theor. Pract. 20, 122–146. https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679200201.

Vohra, A., Bhardwaj, N., 2019. Customer engagement in an e-commerce brand community: an empirical comparison of alternate models. J. Res. Interact. Mark. 13, 2–25. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-01-2018-0003.

Wang, T., Lee, F.Y., 2020. Examining customer engagement and brand intimacy in social media context. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 54, 102035 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102035.

Wang, X., Yang, Z., 2008. Does country-of-origin matter in the relationship between brand personality and purchase intention in emerging economies? Evidence from China's auto industry. Int. Market. Rev. 25, 458–474. https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330810887495.

Weibo, Sina, 2021. Sina Weibo Financial Report for the First Quarter of 2021.

Wetzels, M., Odekerken-Schröder, G., Van Oppen, C., 2009. Using PLS path modeling for assessing hierarchical construct models: guidelines and empirical illustration. MIS Q. Manag. Inf. Syst. 33, 177–196. https://doi.org/10.2307/20650284.

Wirtz, J., Orsingher, C., Cho, H., 2019. Engaging customers through online and offline referral reward programs. Eur. J. Market. 53, 1962–1987. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-10-2017-0756.

Wong, A., Lee, M., 2022. Building engagement in online brand communities: the effects of socially beneficial initiatives on collective social capital. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 65, 102866 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102866.

Wongsansukcharoen, J., 2022. Effect of community relationship management, relationship marketing orientation, customer engagement, and brand trust on brand loyalty: the case of a commercial bank in Thailand. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 64, 102826 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102826.

Wongsansukcharoen, J., Trimetsoontorn, J., Fongsuwan, W., 2015. Social CRM, RMO and business strategies affecting banking performance effectiveness in B2B context. J. Bus. Ind. Market. 30, 742–760. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-02-2013-0039.

Yang, Q., Liu, Y., 2014. What's on the other side of the great firewall? Chinese Web users' motivations for bypassing the Internet censorship. Comput. Hum. Behav. 37, 249–257. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.054.

Yasin, M., Liébana-Cabanillas, F., Porcu, L., Kayed, R.N., 2020a. The role of customer online brand experience in customers' intention to forward online company-generated content: the case of the Islamic online banking sector in Palestine. J. Retailing Consum. Serv. 52, 101902.

Yasin, M., Porcu, L., Abusharbeh, M.T., Liébana-Cabanillas, F., 2020b. The impact of customer personality and online brand community engagement on intention to forward company and users generated content: palestinian banking industry a case. Econ. Res. Istraz. 33, 1985–2006. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2020.1752277.

Zhang, K., 2015. Breaking free of a stereotype: should a domestic brand pretend to be a foreign one? Mark. Sci. 34, 539–554. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2014.0895.

Zhao, X., Chen, Y.R.R., 2022. How brand-stakeholder dialogue drives brand-hosted community engagement on social media: a mixed-methods approach. Comput. Hum. Behav. 131, 107208 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107208.

Zollo, L., Filieri, R., Rialti, R., Yoon, S., 2020. Unpacking the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity: the mediating role of consumers' benefits and experience. J. Bus. Res. 117, 256–267. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.001.