

# Looking Beneath the Surface: How Brands led to Consumer Engagement in Social Media

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## Abstract

It is undeniable that the strong growth of social media and content generated in them is presented as a rising tide that came to stay! We are facing a change of structural nature, requiring brands to understand that shift and to adapt their strategies as they start looking at consumers as active partners, developing with them a close relationship, collaborative, deeply relational, reinforcing and strengthening the bond and an emotional connection.

This fact led to an explosion of interest in consumer engagement. The opportunities presented by social media to help build close relationships with consumers seem to have attracted the increasing interest of practitioners in a wide variety of industries worldwide. Academic scholarship consumer engagement, however, has lagged practice and its theoretical foundation is relatively underdeveloped and a better understanding of the concept and their drivers is essential to develop accurate strategies. This paper seeks to address some of these issues.

From the universe of brands, two popular fashion brands (Cubanas and Paez) were selected, based on RankUPT[1], a statistics website aimed at the analysis of Facebook's activity in Portugal that makes a daily measurement of homepages, based on the number of fans.

A qualitative netnographic study was conducted, through a non-interventionist observational technique, added with a collection of qualitative behavioral data which took place between March and December 2015, and also considering the use of secondary data for the descriptive analysis of the brands in question. Metrics used for measuring engagement were the most commonly used in other studies (e.g., likes, sharing, commenting), along with the de Vries, Gensler and Leeflang [2], Cvijiki and Michahelles [3], and Malhotra, Malhotra and See [4], criteria for the drivers of engagement. The results are discussed and the academic and business implications of the study are examined, in particular for branding and relationship marketing.

## Introduction

The assertion that the impact of the technological revolution and the development of social media significantly altered the way businesses and consumers relate, challenging traditional models of management of transactional processes and communication. In the business context, Jensen [5] points marketing as one of the areas most affected by these changes dramatically changing marketing strategies and brand management. Companies are increasingly interested in establishing a social presence on these networks that allow them to create greater engagement with consumers, shaping their experiences so that they feel

emotionally attached to brands and establishing with them a collaborative relationship which should be understood as a source of value creation.

Because Facebook is undoubtedly the most famous and leading Social Networks Sites (SNSs), brand pages on Facebook have become the key platform where consumers interact with brands providing them with a strategic social venue that captures customers and engages with them. The fashion industry is one of the sectors that aim to be present in Facebook turning it into a highly competitive platform for these brands comprising both the famous griffes and the lesser known fashion brands. Consumers have in the context of consumerist society a great power in the dissemination and sharing of fashion brands and not surprisingly social media in general and SNSs in particular reinforces this network effects [6]. With the rapid growth of SNSs, academic research about consumer engagement has been going as a inovative strategic approach to managing consumer-brand relationship. Its advantages and consequences have been widely advocated, however there is still a long way to go, whether is to properly guide the concept, or to understand the driving forces of consumer engagement, emerging the necessity to work in this direction [e.g. 7, 8]. This research comes to address this gap by developing a conceptual framework that, along with the de Vries, Gensler and Leeflang [2], Cvijiki and Michahelis [3], and Malhotra, Malhotra and See [4], includes drivers of consumer engagement and testing it in using two brands that have a facebook social media presence.

## **Literature Review**

### **Social Media and Consumer Engagement**

It is a peaceful assertion that the flowering of Web 2.0 [9], to create interaction environments, opened a new world of opportunities and benefits for companies, brands and people in general, resulting from the ease of communication and distribution speed information. This raises new environments and new features such as social networking sites - Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Hi5, MySpace ... where users, companies and brands interact, share and communicate content, forcing brands and companies to take advantage of this new reality, seeing it as a value-creating source, making it essential to listen to the public and to manage the links so clear, to strengthen trust relationships, meet the expectations and act to take consumers happy and available for, willingly, defend and promote the organization. For Afonso and Borges [10] it's all about listening, talking, supporting and engaging the public through social networks building, for this purpose, online communities developed around the personality of the brand, where - without recourse to major investments, around them meets a large number of users who present themselves as potential fans.

Although it is not a new concept, having been widely debated in the last decade by a variety of disciplines providing specific approaches [11, 12], only recently the concept of engagement has captured the attention and the prominent place on the agendas of marketers and in the relevant specialist literature [e.g. 11, 14, 7, 8,]. The achieved prominence drift beyond of the urgent need to find an indicator that recognizes that the relationship between the companies, brands and their audiences evolve according to the experience and depth dialogue, as the emotional and rational ties established [15].

In essence, it is a promising concept that indicates reveal a high predictive power and explanatory face to a valuable set of results focus of consumer behavior such as loyalty, trust or commitment to a company or brand [16]. This enthusiasm inherits greatly, the emergence of a new dominant logic in Marketing, as is advocated by Vargo and Lush [17] and it tends to move away from a centered perspective only by the producer and the tangible exchanges focusing on the users (increasingly active and participative) and intangibles such as "skills,

information and knowledge towards the interactivity and connectivity and ongoing relations " (pg. 15).

The base is highly relational [18] and interactive because as consumers, brands and companies interact are developing increasingly close, continuous and deep ties increasing affinity levels, intimacy, commitment and mutual trust. For Calder and Malthouse [19] it is about connecting the public and brands to enable and establish a dialogue and interaction continues and imbricated two-way, co-creating value [11]; thinking brands and experiences and providing opportunities for the public to experiment with content, information and amplification.

Observing the literature we can conclude that the investment in academic subject - materialized in a range of theoretical studies, shows some of the main weaknesses [7]. One comes from the paraphernalia of the very concept definitions[8], compromising an appropriate measurement of the construct itself, having raised several warning voices suggesting that the field of study lacks an integrative concept of sustainable empirical basis and a generalizable scale [e.g. 8, 20].

We find in Vivek et al [14] and Hollebeek [12] a summary of the most important engagement definition of proposals, both investigations having stated their main contact points: First, observing the diversity of nomenclatures assigned to the term ranging from consumer engagement [17] customer engagement [11], the engagement of online user [20], community engagement [21] (among others), which itself discloses the immense investigational flow congregated around it and the diversity settings possibilities found for the term.

Secondly, stands out its essentially relational nature, implying contact, experience, interaction, connection between two parties (for example, between a user and a company, institution or brand) [22].

Thirdly, there is a motivation absorption strongly present in this perspective from Brodie et al. [11] who argue that it is "a psychological condition that occurs due to interactive experiences and a co-creation process between the actors of a transactional relationship" (p. 260) or, in the view of Higgins and Scholer [23] when describing a "state of being engaged, busy, or totally absorbed with something" (p.112). Fourth, some definitions place the emphasis on behavioral manifestations that users develop face to a brand, company or institution but it should be noted that these events do not imply that the purchase becomes effective, ie "the engagement is beyond purchase " [14] (p. 403). This means that the user can interact, participate and engage with the brand without its intention to buy or even planning to buy [24]. - A comment, sharing a "like" a pin, make an example. Similarly, it requires a proactive and interactive relationship, i.e., more than merely an instrumental value it's a connexion that establishes through experience.

Finally, we face a construct of multidimensional nature [11, 14] absorbing important cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions that, on the edge, should be contextually determined [20]. That way, based on the review of the literature and the objectives of this research, we consider that the recent definition provided by Hollebeek [12] - completely focused to the context of social networks, is a paradigmatic example that integrates several of the previously discussed elements: "this is the level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment during a focal interaction specifies a brand, organization or community" (p. 6).

Resuming it, the concept of engagement implies involvement, participation, commitment, trust, loyalty, integrity, pride, passion, pleasure and satisfaction. It is the result of interactions with the public and goes beyond the merely instrumental value of the brand, company or institution, when it considers the impact of the experience and implies an emotional connection and involvement of the consumer in the construction of meanings [25].

In the context of online social networks engagement goes beyond attitude and participation behaviour is required [24, 11, 14]) through pertaining activities or participation (14). These activities and participation are classified into active and passive behaviors [e.g. 26; 27]. Active behavior consists of high forms of engagement with actions such as contributing and creating content [27].

Interactive participation or engagement with a Brand Facebook Page (BFP) requires customers to interact with brand posts through “likes”, “shares” and “comments” [2,3], thus making posting activity a strategic tool of customer engagement with facebook pages.

### **Research model and hypothesis**

For the purpose of our study we focus on the drivers of customer engagement with BFP, relying on research on the Uses & Gratifications (U&G) theory Katz [28] and on word of mouth (WoM) and banner effectiveness literature.

Media types represent different level of media richness which is commonly referred to as vividness of online content and defined as the extent to which a brand post stimulates the different senses [29].

One way of enhancing the salience of brand posts is to include vivid brand post characteristics.

Research on effectiveness of Facebook posts [e.g. 2, 3, 4, 30, 31] postulates that vivid characteristics such as dynamic animations, (contrasting) colors, or pictures enhances positive attitude toward posts compelling brand fans to interact with posts.

Furthermore, different media types have different levels of interactivity that is another way of enhancing the salience of a brand post. As with banners a brand post with only text is not at all interactive, while a link to a website is more interactive [32] since brand fans can click on that link. Moreover, a question acts as a highly interactive brand post characteristic because it calls directly to action [4].

Although research shows inconclusive findings on the relationship between interactivity and other outcome variables [e.g. 2, 3], we assume that messages with a high degree of interactivity invite more to participation. Thus, we posit that:

*H1: The higher the level of post vividness, the higher the number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments.*

*H2: The higher the level of post interactivity, the higher the number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments.*

Previous applications of U&G theory over online brand communities [26, 2, 3, 33] found information, entertainment and remuneration important factors for actively participate in brand communities.

According to these authors if a brand post contains utilitarian information about the brand or product, then the brand fans’ motivations to participate or consume the content are met.

The entertainment motivation covers several media gratifications that are related to escaping or being diverted from problems or routine; emotional release or relief; relaxation; cultural or aesthetic enjoyment; passing time; and sexual arousal and leads people to consume, create or contribute to brand-related content online [26]. The same studies found that the entertainment value of a social networking site is also an important factor for using it. Furthermore, they suggest that a post containing a “promise” of a kind of reward/remuneration motivates brand fans to interact with it. Based on these findings, we postulate:

*H3: Posts which contain information content are positively associated to higher number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

*H4: Posts which contain entertainment content are positively associated to higher number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

*H5: Posts which offer remuneration positively associated to higher number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

WoM literature [34, 35] shows that online conversations that express positive feelings about the product / brand can improve attitudes and perceptions or even sales. By making a parallel with the positive comments regarding a post of the brand on Facebook, these might have complementary value to the company's brand post [2] and thus increase the number of reactions to it.

Yet, brand fans can also comment negatively on a brand post and research on negative WoM communication shows that it reduces brand attitudes, cognitive evaluations about the brand, and purchase intentions. For the same reason as before it might be very likely that negative comments to a brand post also decrease the propensity to interact with it [2]. This results in the following hypothesis:

*H6. The share of positive comments on a brand post is positively related to number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

*H7. The share of negative comments on a brand post is negatively related to number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

Previous studies over temporal interaction patterns showed that most of the user activities on Facebook are undertaken during the workdays and reveals that posting on on workdays increases the effectiveness of the posting activity [2, 3, 30]. Based on this results we propose:

*H8: Posts created on workdays result in higher number of a) Likes; b) Shares; c) Comments*

## **Research Design and Data Collection**

The method selected for this research is netnography [31]. For the purpose of our study we selected the Facebook pages of Cubanás and Paez, two fashion brand shoes with high levels of awareness that ranked on the top position on FBRank2015 [1]. Postings and respective data were collect manually from the 1st of March until the 31st of December 2015 that resulted on a total of ten months and of 807 publications. Furthermore manual coding of posts were performed based on an analytical grid which is presented next.

Brand post engagement was measured by the number of likes and the number of comments on a brand post. With regard to engagement predictors except for variable “valence of comments”, all others drives are categorical and categories follows coding strategies already developed by some authors.

Next table presents the operationalization of engagement drives and respective authors.

## **Results**

By analysing the frequency of engagement drivers we conclude: 1) posts with *photos* were the most frequently used (95,4%) and presented almost no interactivity (79,4%), with “questions” (17,3%) representing the primary richness tool; (2) posts are undoubted informative (68,8%) followed by “entertainment” (27,5%) and “remuneration” (4,8%); 3) positive comments represents 88% of the total of dialogues where negative comments are marginal (1%); the majority of posts take place during workdays (78,9%).

By analysing the results for the three dependent variables, they indicate that fans engage by liking far more frequently (96%) compared to sharing (3%) and commenting (1%).

**Table 1 – Operationalization of engagement drivers**

Drivers	Variables	Categories	Authors
Media Type	Vividness	(3) -video	Cvijikj & Michahelles; De Vries et al.; Malhotra et al., [2,3,4]
		(2)- links	
		(1) - picture	
		(0) - status	
		(3) - question	
	Richness	(2)- call to act/contest	
		(1) - link/voting	
		(0) - status & pictures	
	Information (brand)	(3) - brand success	
		(2)- other than trade information	
(1) - trade information			
(0) - not information			
(4) - sharing emotions			
Content Type	Entertainment	(3) - events not associated to brand	
		(2)- entreaining information	
		(1) - humour/joke	
	Remeuneration	(0) - not entertainment	
		(1) - yes (prizes)	
Valence of Comments	Positive	(0) - no	Cvijikj & Michahelles [2]
	Negative	Share of positive comments	De Vries et al.[3]
Posting Time	Workday	Share of negative comments	Cvijikj & Michahelles; De Vries et al., [2,3]
	Weekend	(1) - workday	
		(0) - weekend	

By analysing the results for the three dependent variables, they indicate that fans engage by liking far more frequently (96%) compared to sharing (3%) and commenting (1%).

Dependent variables used in this study, i.e. number of likes, shares and comments, represent count variables with a Poisson distribution. In addition, since the distribution variance and mean were different for all of the dependent variables, we used a Negative Binomial estimation method which overcomes the problem of overdispersed count data [32].

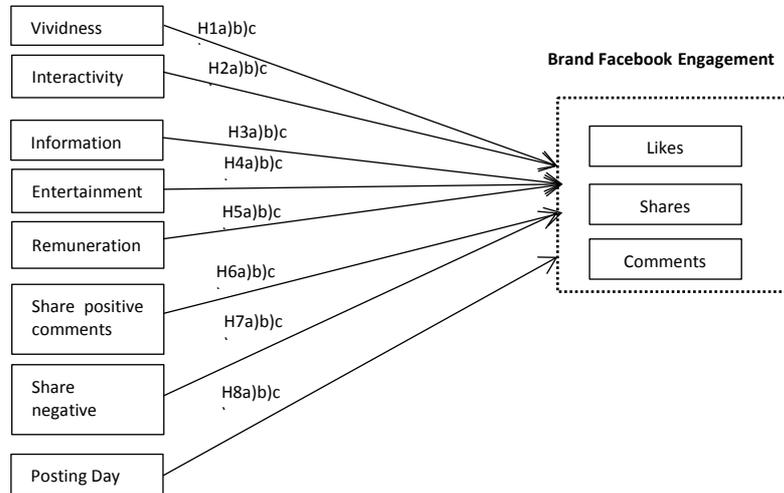
Empirical results obtained from the estimation of the proposed model for engagement over proposed drivers are reported. Parameters are exponentiated efficiencies and bold figures indicate that they are statistically significant. All results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Estimation Results for Brand Post Engagement**

Categories	Likes	Shares	Comments
(3) - video	0,571	1,862	1,026
(2)- links	0,648	0,443	0,625
(1) - picture	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=9,479; df=2; p=0,009 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=6,210; df=2; p=0,045 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=1,145; df=2; p=0,564 > 0,05$
<b>Vividness</b>	statistically significant	statistically significant	not statistically significant
	H1a) partially supported $\alpha=5\%$	H1b) partially supported $\alpha=5\%$	H1c) not supported $\alpha=5\%$
(3) - question	1,298	1,126	1,338
(2)- call to act/contest	1,828	4,212	2,656
(1) - link/voting	1,200	1,174	1,204
(0) - status & pictures	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=13,801; df=3; p=0,003 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=3,988; df=3; p=0,263 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=6,651; df=3; p=0,084 > 0,05$
<b>Interactivity</b>	statistically significant	not statistically significant	not statistically significant
	H2a) partially supported $\alpha=5\%$	H2b) not supported $\alpha=5\%$	H2c) not supported $\alpha=5\%$
(3) - brand success	1,652	0,692	0,057
(2)- other information	1,433	0,650	0,127
(1) - trade information	3,535	1,288	0,243
(0) - not information	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=60,067; df=3; p=0,000 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=12,442; df=3; p=0,006 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=40,977; df=3; p=0,000 < 0,05$
<b>Information</b>	statistically significant	not statistically significant	not statistically significant
	H3a) supported $\alpha=5\%$	H3b) partially supported $\alpha=5\%$	H3c) partially $\alpha=5\%$
(4) - sharing emotions	0,856	0,253	0,034
(3) - events	0,966	0,482	0,039
(2)- entertaining information	1,009	0,272	0,062
(1) - humour/joke	1,038	1,333	0,020
(0) - not entertainment	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=1,581; df=4; p=0,812 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=10,435; df=4; p=0,034 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=36,178; df=4; p=0,000 < 0,05$
<b>Entertainment</b>	not statistically significant	statistically significant	statistically significant
	H4a) not supported $\alpha=5\%$	H4b) partially supported $\alpha=5\%$	H4c) supported $\alpha=5\%$
(1) - yes (prizes)	1,525	1,382	0,689
(0) - no	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=1,081; df=1; p=0,298 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=0,277; df=1; p=0,599 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=0,521; df=1; p=0,470 > 0,05$
<b>Remuneration</b>	not statistically significant	not statistically significant	not statistically significant
	H5a) not supported for $\alpha=5\%$	H5b) not supported for $\alpha=5\%$	H5c) not supported for $\alpha=5\%$
	2,246	3,208	8,927
	$\chi^2=1,081; df=1; p=0,000 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=37,335; df=1; p=0,000 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=201,141; df=1; p=0,000 < 0,05$
<b>% positive comments</b>	statistically significant	statistically significant	statistically significant
	H6a) supported $\alpha=5\%$	H6b) supported $\alpha=5\%$	H6c) supported $\alpha=5\%$
	1,640	0,305	5,636
	$\chi^2=1,052; df=1; p=0,305 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=0,470; df=1; p=0,493 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=4,926; df=1; p=0,026 < 0,05$
<b>% negative comments</b>	not statistically significant	not statistically significant	statistically significant
	H7a) not supported $\alpha=5\%$	H7b) not supported $\alpha=5\%$	H7c) supported $\alpha=5\%$
(1) - workday	1,279	1,258	2,038
(0) - weekend	baseline	baseline	baseline
	$\chi^2=9,363; df=1; p=0,002 < 0,05$	$\chi^2=1,523; df=1; p=0,217 > 0,05$	$\chi^2=32,432; df=1; p=0,000 < 0,05$
<b>Posting Day</b>	statistically significant	not statistically significant	statistically significant
	H8a) supported $\alpha=5\%$	H8b) not supported $\alpha=5\%$	H8c) supported $\alpha=5\%$

The conceptual framework for the determinants of brand page Facebook engagement is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1- Theoretical Model**



## Discussion

The antecedents of consumer engagement remain understudied in the literature [7, 8, 39]. Building on the strategies advocated as drivers of engagement by Malhotra et al. [4], Cvijikj and Michahelles [3] and De Vries et al. [2], this study addresses this gap, by empirically examining the antecedents of consumer engagement on BFP of two brands from the footwear industry, Cubanas and Paez.

As our findings indicate regarding media type, both interactivity and vividness have a significant yet different effect on liking but do not impact the number of comments, and only vividness significantly increases sharing. Thus, Hypothesis 1 and 2 are only partially supported.

Fostering a higher interactivity with the fans, through calls to act and asking questions, has a positive effect on liking, in accordance with the literature on this subject [e.g. 2] Since both sharing and commenting imply an active contribution of the users to page content, as stated in COBRA's typology [26] and are relatively less easy for users to take than likes, these type of actions occur when the consumer is more engaged [39]. The non-significant effect of interactivity on sharing and commenting in our study is, therefore, an outcome of interest, because it reveals that Cubanas and Paez Facebook interactivity leads to a lower-level of fans engagement.

It is also worth of note that the strategies that appeal to less vividness, as using pictures, increase liking but generate less sharing, while the use of videos promotes sharing. Past results are inconclusive, with studies suggesting that a higher vividness [e.g. 2, 30] but also a lower vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes and shares [3, 40]. Our findings may be explained by the demands but also by the hedonic value associated with vividness. Posts planned to generate interaction through liking need to be designed so that they can be processed quickly and easily [40] and posts that contain pictures are less demanding, less time consuming and faster processed than posts with links or videos, thus generating a quicker answer from the fans, through likes. Yet, when the fans are in a more

experiential mood and have the time to watch the video, this video can be funny, interesting or important, relevant factors to generate sharing [46].

From our empirical results, posts that transmit informational value regarding the brands or its products significantly increase the level of engagement of its followers, expressed through an increased number of likes and shares, and comments, supporting our Hypothesis 3. This is congruent with previous literature, that claims that to create engagement in social media, brands should have posts with interesting [41], relevant and unique content [42], and that product or brand related content is perceived as valuable for the fans [3]. Posts presenting new collections or with information about its products fit within the category of relevant and valuable content, being sufficiently interesting to be liked, commented and shared with the community.

The findings also suggest that BFP must deliver interesting and entertaining content, since this has a significant impact on sharing and commenting, in spite of its non-significant effect on liking. Fans are not exclusively information seekers, nor value solely a brand's functional attributes [43]; they also appreciate entertainment [35] and our results suggest that this strategy leads them to engage more with BFP.

The rewards and offers given by the brand seem to have a lessened importance in Facebook communication strategy of this footwear brand, thus not translating to a higher engagement, not supporting our Hypothesis 5. Although Muntinga et al. [26] suggested that the interaction with the Facebook page may be enhanced when posts contain a "promise" of some type of reward or offer, the brands under analysis do not rely on this strategy, as can be seen by the reduced percentage of posts (4.8%) presenting rewards or offers, and the fans seem to act in accordance, not expecting nor being significantly involved or engaged with these type of posts.

Our results reveal that brands' fans are influenced by each other: the share of positive comments to a brand post is associated with an increasing number of likes, shares and comments, in support of Hypothesis 6. This offers initial evidence for the multiplier and contagion effect of the share of positive comments, which emerges as a possible way to spread eWOM about the brands throughout the fans' community in a simple yet effective manner. In contrast, the share of negative comments only has a significant impact on the number of comments, thus partially supporting Hypothesis 7.

The partial support of our eighth Hypothesis suggests that posting on workdays can be a promising tactic, for its impact on consumer engagement with BFP. This is in line with previous literature on temporal interaction patterns on Facebook, which reveals that most of the user activities on FBP are undertaken during workdays, and posting on workdays leads to more commenting [3], although our results reveal a positive effect on liking and commenting, but not on sharing. The brands under analysis focus their posting activity on weekdays (78.9%) and fans react with likes and comments to this communication strategy. The non-significant effect on sharing may be due to the professional and personal activities of the fans during workdays, that may lead them to a more goal-directed activity with a lessened time and availability to share with their network.

The goal of a brand fan-page strategy is to engage, integrate, and immerse users in a vivid and active community [44]. To achieve this, it is fundamental to know the target. Cubanas' and Paez' fans react mainly with likes (96%) instead of sharing (3%) or commenting (1%), which suggests a fan profile more connected with the brand than with the others. They also communicate more on Facebook when new products or collections are launched, and search for objective communication on the product (e.g., price, where to buy). This helps explain their engagement with more informative posts. Yet, besides giving these fans utilitarian reasons to engage in the FBP, our findings suggest that it is also important to

attend to the media type, to entertainment and posting time, the last more fruitful on workdays.

### **Contributions**

This research adds insights to the fast-growing and fragmented online consumer engagement literature by developing a more comprehensive understanding on how different contents and types of posts as well as eWOM and posting time affect consumers' engagement actions toward brands in Facebook. The driving forces of consumer engagement have been an under researched area and with this paper we respond to the appeal of more work to fill this gap [45].

The current study also provides insights for practitioners. A large number of companies use SNS for customers to come together, but still are not sure where or how to target their efforts [18] to get their fans engaged in contributing to the brand-consumer communication in social media. Attending to this, our results provide managerial guidance for the footwear industry to develop marketing strategies on SNS according to the consumer engagement patterns found. So, marketeers can make use of this research to help them decide which type of content to place at the brand Facebook posts, the media type to use or even when to place it. Brand managers can significantly improve the number of likes if they use a low vivid and a highly or medium interactive brand post, such as using a picture along with a call to action or asking a question. Posting on weekdays and making available information about the brand or product are also important strategies for increasing the number of likes. When brand managers aim to enhance the number of shares, they should rely on brand posts with videos, be entertaining and/or provide information on the brand/product. Providing entertainment or information also seems to be an adequate strategy to enhance the number of comments. According to our findings, brand fans are influenced by others activity on the Facebook page, since generating positive comments to a post significantly increases the number of likes, shares and comments of that post.

### **Limitations and future research**

Besides considering the contributions, it is also important that the limitations of the study and possible avenues of research are detailed to ensure clarity and guidance for readers and future researchers. The results presented in this paper were based on data gathered on two brands, on a limited time period and on single social media format (Facebook). Also, the concept of engagement investigated in this paper is limited to consumer engagement on BFP. The analysis was conducted only on the Apparel/Shoes product category, thus limiting the industry domain under examination. This restricts the generalization of the findings to other business areas and social media formats.

Given the afore mentioned considerations, a recommendation for further studies relates to the expansion of the data set to generalize the present findings, eventually considering 1) other brands in the same industry domain, to analyze if or how the use of the drivers of engagement differ within the same business area and its effects in consumer engagement on BFP; 2) brands on other industry domains, to examine similarities and differences on their communication strategy on social media and the impact on engagement. Additionally, further research should aim to examine different social media formats, to expand our understanding on the antecedents of consumer engagement in the social media environment.

Additional indicators of consumer engagement on BFP (e.g., valence of the comments, brand feedback to comments), can also be of use in future studies, to provide a more detailed view on the consumers' actions and reactions to social media marketing.

## Conclusion

In sum, the current study addresses emerging trends and concerns in social media, focusing on the main drivers of consumer engagement on FBP. This study reveals that to deepen consumers' engagement levels, Cubanas' and Paez must rely on engagement strategies that promote, in particular during workdays, the brand and its products, transmit informational value and entertain the fans using a high interactivity medium and generating buzz and positive comments in the fans community. Acknowledging the effects that these media and content type of posts have on users' engagement may trigger the activity of fans and help brand managers to effectively exploit SNS within the marketing communications of the brand.

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