


Why do I engage?

Gratifications of Online Brand Communities on Facebook

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ABSTRACT

With technology evolving, interactive marketing is evolving too, as we see a rise in online forums and platforms designed to facilitate consumer-brand interactions and translate these into sustainable consumer-brand relationships. Such communities are referred to as *online brand communities*. To date, research has shown that engagement within these communities can yield favourable benefits for the brands represented, yet the majority of studies on online brand community engagement are yet to reach a consensus on the antecedents; and if engagement has in fact progressed within the changing business landscape. This research study therefore aims to address this gap by determining the drivers of online brand community engagement. Pleasurable fulfilment and self-esteem were explored as possible gratifications (i.e., drivers) of online brand community engagement in this study. The sample consisted of 166 respondents who are 18 years and older, and who are currently members of an online brand community, specifically on Facebook. An online questionnaire was used to collect data through non-probability convenience sampling. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that pleasurable fulfilment and online brand community self-esteem are statistically significant drivers of online brand community engagement. This study contributes to the existing brand community literature by enhancing the understanding of online brand community engagement drivers. It is therefore suggested that marketers focus their efforts on creating and encouraging online communities for their brands, specifically on Facebook, that promote pleasurable fulfilment and advocate self-esteem.

Keywords: Online brand community engagement, Facebook, Online brand communities, Pleasurable fulfilment, Self-esteem, Facebook users

1. INTRODUCTION

As of the end of 2022 over 4.59 billion people globally were using social media. In 2027, this figure is estimated to grow to 5.85 billion (Statista, 2023). With a growing user base, marketers are consistently becoming faced with the challenge of not only designing effective social media marketing campaigns but also the integration thereof with their firms' overall marketing strategies. The use of traditional media is becoming less prevalent, as brands turn to social media in efforts to create a more direct relationship with their consumers through what has become known as *online brand communities* (OBCs) (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman & Pihlström, 2012; Paruthi & Kaur, 2017). In fact, this notion of a brand community's role in enabling brand relationships, is not all that new to academic literature (e.g. Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005; Kumar & Nayak, 2018).

OBCs are often established by brands, to build long-term consumer-brand relationships (Gummerus et al., 2012, van Heerden, Wiese & van Heerden, 2020), and capture consumers' continuous attention, via their engagement (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011). Fostering effective OBCs is essentially an effort by brands to better engage with their consumers (Li, Larimo & Leonidou, 2021). Through OBCs, consumers are encouraged to be active contributors to the community, by creating and sharing brand-related content, along with connecting and communicating with other members and with the brand (Simon, Brexendorf & Fassnacht, 2016). Considering this, understanding engagement within OBCs is therefore an extremely relevant concept when it comes to exploring social network sites (SNSs) (van Heerden & Wiese, 2021). Research on consumer engagement and OBCs, and its role in developing and strengthening customer relationships has been of significant academic interest in the last decade (Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Islam & Rahman, 2017), and continues to gain significant consideration. Previous literature has identified that consumer engagement is usually conceptualised and defined in terms of three themes: (1) the psychological state of consumer engagement; (2) the psychological process of consumer engagement; and (3) consumer engagement behaviours (Zheng, Cheung, Lee & Liang, 2015). For this study, it is important to note that a behavioural perspective will be used to explore the behaviours that consumers display, indicating their engagement with a brand.

Consumers, as active contributors within OBCs, are a valuable source of innovation and are highly beneficial for the brands being represented (Habibi, Laroche & Richard, 2014). Consequently, researchers are continually striving to determine the drivers motivating consumers to engage with brands in an online context, specifically within OBCs (e.g., Baldus, Voorhees & Calantone, 2015; Kumar & Kumar, 2020). However, the empirical validation and exploration concerning this domain is an ever-changing landscape (Islam & Rahman, 2017). The Marketing Science Institute, and scholars are therefore continuously emphasising the need for the identification of factors influencing brand community engagement (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Researchers have yet to explore and identify these factors of engagement within brand communities, especially within an online context. As a result, the focus of this study is to explore factors that may influence online brand community engagement (OBCE). By drawing on the relevant characteristics of the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) in prior research, pleasurable fulfilment and increased self-esteem were identified as possible motivations for individuals wanting to not only belong, but also engage within social groups such as brand communities (van Heerden & Wiese, 2021; Zhang, Tang & Leung, 2011; Davis Mersey, Malthouse & Calder, 2010). The research question that will therefore underpin this study is to explore whether pleasurable fulfilment (PF) and self-esteem (SE) can be considered gratifications (i.e., drivers) of online brand community engagement (OBCE).

Meta Platforms (previously known as Facebook Company) owns four of the biggest social media platforms globally, these include Facebook, Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp (Meta, 2021). According to Zaglia, (2013), the majority of top global brands have created OBCs on Facebook, and as of 2023, the platform boasts 2.96 billion active monthly users (Facebook, 2023). Facebook has therefore been considered the ideal context in which to explore engagement within OBCs. The primary aim of this study is therefore to explore pleasurable fulfilment (PF) and self-esteem as motivations for engagement within OBCs on Facebook.

From a theoretical perspective, research investigating 'engagement' has primarily been conducted in the context of developed countries (Rahman, Islam & Hollebeek, 2018), therefore this study aims to contribute to engagement and brand community literature, by exploring factors influencing OBCE within a context of a developing country. This study will aid brand managers in initiating and increasing meaningful engagement within their OBCs, especially on Facebook.

In the following section, the theory underpinning the study is explained. By drawing on the relevant characteristics of the uses and gratifications theory (UGT), an OBCE framework is proposed. This is followed by the development of hypotheses, research methodology, and results. Last, the discussion as well as limitations and recommendations for future research are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In recent years, with the technological development of the Internet and social media, research using the UGT has experienced a revival (van Heerden & Wiese, 2021). UGT research was bolstered in the 1970s by Katz and colleagues, who reported that UGT seeks to understand how and why consumers use media to satisfy their needs. In the last ten years, many scholars have examined different social media platforms using UGT, including Facebook (Malik, Dhir & Nieminen, 2016; Krause, North & Heritage, 2014; Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017), Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), YouTube (Khan, 2017) and Twitter (Chen, 2011). Researchers have also explored UGT, specifically to support the motivations for engaging in OBCs (Ko, Chang-Hoan & Roberts, 2005).

On social media platforms, OBCs achieve three assumptions of UGT. First, consumers using social media are active media users, rather than passive recipients of media (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016). Second, according to the media users' goal-driven behaviour, they will select specific media. Third, users are consciously aware of their motivations for choosing certain media (Ha, Kim, Libaque-Saenz, Chang & Park, 2015; Kamboj, 2019). In line with UGT, several studies' findings confirm that gratifications obtained in brand communities are important drivers that can significantly improve consumer engagement and participation (Kamboj, 2019; Dolan *et al.*, 2016, Kujur & Singh, 2020; Fujita, Harrigan & Soutar, 2018).

Considering the above, UGT can be deemed a suitable theoretical framework to underpin the drivers of BCE in OBCs on Facebook, within this study. Based on the premise of UGT, users of media will often seek media sources that results in the satisfaction, or pleasurable fulfilment (Oliver, 1997; 1999) of their social and psychological needs (Katz, Haas and Gurevitch, 1973). Therefore, consumers may seek membership within OBCs as it may result in the pleasurable fulfilment (PF) of their need(s), suggesting that PF may be one of the many gratifications of belonging to an OBC. Similarly, based on the social identity theory, individuals often desire positive self-esteem (SE) which can in part be derived from social group membership (Wirtz *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, consumers may also seek membership within social groups such as OBCs, to derive a more positive SE, suggesting that SE may also be one of the many gratifications of belonging to an OBC.

Figure 1 therefore provides a visual representation of how these two OBC gratifications, as a result of being a member of an OBC, could affect OBC-related outcomes, such as OBCE.

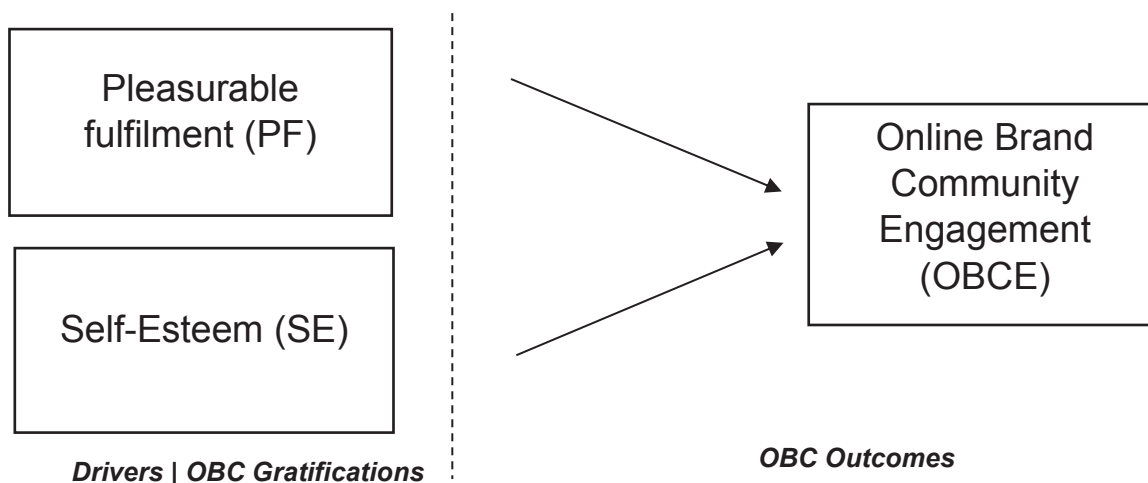


FIGURE 1: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING OBCE WITHIN OBCS ON FACEBOOK

2.2 FACEBOOK BRAND COMMUNITIES

Social media sites are capable of hosting multiple branded communities simultaneously (Hook *et al.*, 2018), and offer platforms which marketers can use to directly interact with consumers (Labrecque, 2014). Such platforms are referred to as *online brand communities* (OBCs) which are formally defined as “a specialised, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001:412). This definition is widely recognised and applied in the extant brand community literature (Hook, Baxter & Kulczynski, 2018). It is important to delimit that for purposes of this study, the focus is on *brand communities* (i.e., focused on the brand itself) (Martínez-López *et al.*, 2021) found online, as opposed to consumption communities (i.e., focused on consumption activities).

Facebook encourages and helps firms to create their own free, customised OBCs. Some of the brand benefits of these communities include easy access to their target consumers, a platform to create dialogue and engagement with/between community members (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019), an opportunity to increase brand awareness, and ultimately facilitate long-term relationships with members (Gummerus *et al.*, 2012). As a result of Facebook’s massive user base (Facebook, 2023), the platform is increasingly becoming an ideal environment for global brands to create OBCs (Zaglia, 2013). This provides further confirmation as to why Facebook was deemed a suitable social media platform for the purposes of this study.

2.3 BRAND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Brand community engagement, as a relationship variable in consumer settings, is most often explored in literature with reference to Algesheimer *et al.*’s (2005) pioneering article on brand community (in Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Kumar & Nayak, 2018.). Algesheimer *et al.* (2005) conceptualised community engagement as unidimensional and defined brand community engagement as the ‘intrinsic’ motivation felt by individual members of the community which drives interaction and cooperation within the community. The majority of scholars define and measure consumer engagement as multidimensional, but some scholars have investigated this construct as unidimensional (Algesheimer *et al.*, 2005; Simon *et al.*, 2016; Kumar & Kumar, 2020). In the current study consumer engagement within OBCs will be explored as unidimensional as the focus is on investigating the behavioural dimension of engagement. OBCE in this study therefore refers to the voluntary act whereby community members actively participate and interact with the community activities, other members, or the brand/firm. Members exchange experiences or information by participating in ongoing conversations or activities by liking, commenting, tagging, sharing, and expressing their feelings toward their

favourite brands within an OBC on social media platforms, such as Facebook. Considering consumers' increased recognition and acceptance of OBCs on Facebook, scholars have indicated a significant interest in not only exploring engagement within these communities on Facebook but also identifying the factors influencing engagement within these OBCs (Islam & Rahman, 2017).

2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE BRAND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.4.1 Pleasurable fulfilment

In marketing literature, satisfaction is considered a key variable to understanding consumers' behaviours (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017) as it refers to "pleasurable fulfilment" derived from the feeling that consumption fulfils a want, wish, or goal (Oliver, 1999). Within the context of OBC, satisfaction or rather, pleasurable fulfilment can be attained from one's experience with the brand/firm/community and/or its members (Nyadzayo, Leckie & Johnson, 2020). According to Loureiro, Gorgus and Kaufmann (2017) having one's goals or wants fulfilled is considered to be a precursor to the engagement process and has in fact been proven to positively affect consumer brand engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Van Doorn et al., 2010). It can therefore be argued that when consumers attain a feeling of pleasurable fulfilment, they are more likely to engage with brands, by demonstrating certain engagement behaviours such as attempting to gain knowledge from the active conversations taking place or by advocating the brand. For purposes of this study, members of OBCs on Facebook may therefore be prompted to engage more within OBCs, if they feel a sense of fulfilment as a result of being able to connect with brand information, trends, topics, news and/or other brand discussions being had within these communities (Shi, Lee, Cheung & Chen, 2010.). It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H₁: Pleasurable fulfilment (PF) positively influences online brand community engagement (OBCE) on Facebook.

2.4.2 Self-esteem within OBCs

According to Kunda (1999) and based on social identity theory individuals constantly strive for self-affirmation which increases their self-esteem, which is amplified by social group memberships (Wirtz *et al.*, 2013). Self-esteem encapsulates an individual's self-evaluation (Maslow, 1982). In marketing literature, self-esteem has been identified as an important self-transformational component and is described as individual's need to feel good about self (i.e. self-image), self-affirmation and self-worth (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Consumers have high self-esteem if they value and accept themselves; contrarily, consumers have low self-esteem if they have negative perceptions about themselves (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). These perceptions consumers have of themselves (i.e., their self-esteem) can subsequently influence their behaviours, and may even motivate citizenship (membership) behaviours (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000).

One's social identity comprises cognitive, affective, and evaluative traits which can be stimulated in different social situations (Fujita *et al.*, 2018), and it is the evaluative aspect of self-esteem that could determine the positive or negative assessment of community membership (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Sierra, Badrinarayanan and Taute (2016) reported that the relationships consumers form with brands motivate them to identify and interact with OBCs that are constituted of members who share the same interest in and affinity for the brand as they do. Subsequently, membership of these brand communities has been found to strengthen their self-esteem, thus, encouraging brand community-centric behaviours. More recently, Kumar and Kumar (2020) reported that self-esteem benefits in OBCs positively influence consumers' engagement within these communities. For purposes of this study, the self-esteem as a result of being a member of OBCs on Facebook could motivate certain behaviours within these community, such as OBCE. It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H₂: Self-esteem (SE) positively influences online brand community engagement (OBCE) on Facebook.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 SAMPLING DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1.1 Target population and units of analysis

The target population were adult consumers (i.e. 18 years and older) residing in South Africa, who are active on Facebook and belong to an OBC on Facebook. The age range included Generation Y and Generation Z (i.e. 'Digital natives') as they are defined to be more susceptible to the development of digital technology, (Zheng, Li & Liu, 2023), and since these two groups are some of the most active users of social media (Vacas de Carvalho, Azar & Machado, 2020:1132). Respondents older than 40 were also included, because in South Africa, Facebook has been found to have an 85% penetration rate amongst users aged 18-64 (Statista, 2022).

3.1.2 Sampling method

This study used a non-probability convenience sampling technique. A convenience sample relies on data collection from population members conveniently available to participate. This method was particularly chosen since the characteristics of this method allow data to be collected on a large scale considering time and financial constraints. The study obtained a sample of 166 respondents, surpassing the minimum of 66 respondents as per the equation recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2014: 159-160) and Pallant (2010:150). As this study involves only two independent variables, a minimum of 66 respondents was needed to conduct a multiple regression. Additionally, previous studies testing similar constructs made use of sample sizes between 150 and 200 respondents (Kumar & Nayak, 2018, Nyadzayo *et al.*, 2020). This study used a combination of self-selection where respondents voluntarily agree to participate in the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), as well as snowball sampling in which research respondents recruit other respondents for a study.

3.1.3 Data collection process

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria's research grants and ethics department, and a pilot test was conducted before distributing an online questionnaire created on Qualtrics. A pilot test was conducted to determine any weaknesses in the instrumentation of the questionnaire (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). A hyperlink to the questionnaire hosted by Qualtrics was published on the researcher's social media sites. The respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire. Once respondents had completed the questionnaire they were asked to 'share' the link to their social media sites, encouraging others to do the same (snowball sampling).

3.2 MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

The drivers of BCE in Facebook brand community pages, including PF and SE were measured using a quantitative approach, whereby the data collected from an online questionnaire was used to test the conceptual model (Figure 1). A screening question was asked to determine whether respondents belonged to an OBC. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to keep their favourite OBC on Facebook, on which they are active members, in mind when responding to the questionnaire. The constructs under investigation were measured using scale items from previous studies, however, minor adjustments were made to fit the Facebook brand community's social media context of the research. The first section of the questionnaire screened respondents. The second section measured the frequency of consumers' engagement with OBCs on Facebook. The third section contains 15 Likert-type response format questions ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The scale self-esteem (six items) adapted from Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) was used to measure self-esteem. Five items measured consumers' OBCE adopted from Simon *et al.* (2016) scale. Lastly, four items measured PF and were modified from Nyadzayo *et al.*'s (2020) scale. Demographics of the consumer were also considered to create a consumer profile. To reduce common method bias, the questions were randomised per respondent.

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was received from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences with protocol number EMS087/21. Informed consent was obtained from respondents before they completed the questionnaire. Respondents remained anonymous and their information was treated with strict confidentiality. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire informing respondents about the research and academic purposes of the study. Respondents had an option to 'opt-in' when asked if they wanted to participate in the study and they could stop completing the questionnaire at any point should they wish to do so.

4. RESULTS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS AND FACEBOOK USAGE BEHAVIOUR

In total, 166 respondents participated in this study, with most being between the ages of 18-24 years ($n = 103$; 62%). Most of the respondents spent less than one hour ($n = 67$; 40.4%), while 24.7% ($n = 41$) spent approximately one hour per day on Facebook.

4.2 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), using Principal Axis Factoring (Allen & Bennett, 2010:203) with Varimax rotation (Yong & Pearce, 2013:84) in SPSS 27.0, was performed for scale refinement and to establish the underlying structure of the data. The EFA resulted in a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity value ($p < 0.05$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value for the overall measure being 0.82 which is above the suggested threshold value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2010:187). On the basis of eigenvalues (>1) (Field, 2013:706), the results indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis. Three factors were extracted, and all 15 scale items loaded onto their respective factors. The three factors were labelled brand community engagement, pleasurable fulfilment and online brand community self-esteem. Together these three factors explained 51.24% of the total variance.

4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Validity is "the degree to which a measure accurately represents what it is supposed to" (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014:8). Pallant (2010:7) states that construct validity should be evaluated by examining the underlying constructs' relationship with other constructs, in terms of both convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed with the aid of the EFA. To assess convergent validity, DeVellis (2003:100) recommends that there should be high factor loading of the items of the same factor with a threshold of 0.4. As demonstrated in Table 1, all items loaded greater than 0.4 on their respective factors, thus providing evidence of convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed by inspecting the cross-loadings in the factor analysis. No items cross-loaded, thus providing evidence of discriminant validity. As seen in Table 1, the average variance extracted (AVE) ranges from 0.35 to 0.80. This is a limitation of the study as the AVE values of two of the factors did not meet the recommended threshold value of 0.5, which demonstrates low internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). However, since composite reliability is higher than 0.6 for all constructs, convergent validity of the constructs is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and it was decided to proceed with the analyses.

Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency among multiple measurements of a variable (Hair *et al.*, 2014:31). The internal consistency reliability of the constructs was established by assessing Cronbach's alpha values. According to Pallant (2010:97), an acceptable internal consistency reliability is when Cronbach's alpha values are 0.7 and above. All the scales used in this study had Cronbach's alpha (α) values above 0.7. As depicted in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha values for BCE, PF and SE scales were 0.76, 0.95, and 0.77, respectively. To assess the measurement reliability, the composite reliability (CR) measure was examined. The recommended CR values of the constructs should be 0.7 or greater (Hair, Celsi, Oritinau & Bush, 2013:458). Table 1 shows that all three constructs exceeded this threshold, with CR values ranging from 0.76 to 0.94.

TABLE 1: ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX ANALYSIS

Constructs and items	λ	α	CR	AVE	TVE (%)
<i>Brand community engagement</i>		0.76	0.77	0.40	14.48
I cooperate with the other members of this brand community.	0.48				
I actively engage with the brand community's activities.	0.76				
I spend a lot of time engaging in the brand community's activities.	0.73				
I share brand-related experiences with the other members of this brand community (e.g. in form of postings, photos, or videos).	0.61				
I respond to questions or comments of the other members of this brand community (in form of comments or "likes").	0.55				
<i>Pleasurable fulfilment</i>		0.95	0.94	0.80	21.52
I am satisfied with my decision to join this Facebook brand community.	0.86				
My choice to join this Facebook brand community was a wise one.	0.91				
I feel good about my decision concerning this Facebook brand community.	0.91				
I think I did the right thing when I decided to join this Facebook brand community.	0.88				
<i>Online brand community self esteem</i>		0.77	0.76	0.35	15.25
As a member of this Facebook brand community ...					
I feel confident about my abilities.	0.53				
I feel that others respect and admire me.	0.62				
I feel as smart as others.	0.59				
I feel good about myself.	0.60				
I feel confident that I understand things.	0.69				
I feel aware of or conscious of myself	0.50				

Factor loadings (λ), α =Cronbach's alpha; CR =Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted; TVE=Total variance explained

5. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

5.1 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ASSUMPTIONS

Prior to performing the multiple regression, it is essential to ensure that specific assumptions are met. These assumptions include the sample size, multicollinearity, singularity, normality, linearity, outliers and homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2010:150). The results of the assumptions include the following:

With reference to the equation recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2014: 159-160) and Pallant (2010:150), the study involves two independent variables and thus a minimum of 66 respondents was needed to conduct a multiple regression. The study obtained a sample of 166 respondents, surpassing the minimum of 66 respondents.

Multicollinearity and singularity do not exist in the data. This can be deduced since none of the independent variable's correlations are above 0.9 (Pallant, 2010:151). Furthermore, the independent variables do not indicate tolerance values lower than 0.10 and variance inflation factors values greater than 10 (Pallant, 2010:158). Lastly the independent variables are not a combination of other independent variables (Pallant, 2010:151).

The assumptions of normality of distribution, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals were met. The normal probability plot of the regression standardised residual illustrates that the points cluster reasonably tightly along a straight diagonal line (Allen & Bennett, 2010:202). The scatterplot of the standardised residuals is "roughly rectangularly distributed with most scores concentrated in the centre" (Pallant, 2010:159).

Mahalanobis distance was examined to check for outliers. According to Pallant (2010:159), two independent variables should have a critical value of 13.82. Any cases which surpass this threshold are considered outliers. Upon examining Mahalanobis distance, only two outliers were identified. Secondly, looking at casewise diagnostics no cases had standardised residual values above 3.0 or below -3.0. Thus, no outliers were identified using this method. Since only a few outliers were found the decision was made not to delete the outliers (Pallant, 2010:160).

From the above results it could be concluded that all the required assumptions for conducting a multiple regression were met.

5.2 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The model summary presented in Table 2 reveals that the outcome of the multiple regression has an overall coefficient of determination R square of 0.216. This indicates that the independent variables explain 21.6% of the variance in brand community engagement (BCE).

TABLE 2: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error of the estimate
1	0.465	0.216	0.206	1.114

An ANOVA test was performed to assess the statistical significance of the regression model with the overall data (Field, 2013). Table 3 exhibits a significant p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that the regression model is significant.

TABLE 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1					
Regression	55.64	2	27.82	22.43	.000
Residual	202.17	163	1.24		
Total	257.82	165			

Table 4 depicts the standardised regression coefficients of each driver in the regression model. Table 4 denotes that the two independent variables of PF and SE are statistically significant drivers of BCE with a p-value less than 0.05. PF is the strongest driver of BCE (Beta = 0.34; p-value = 0.00), followed by SE (Beta = 0.23; p-value = 0.00).

TABLE 4: STANDARD MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS

Model	Coefficients		
	Standardised coefficients Beta-value	t-value	p-value
(Constant)		0.37	0.71
Pleasurable fulfilment	0.34	4.52	0.00
Online brand community self-esteem	0.23	3.06	0.00

Based on the findings of the multiple regression analysis, the following can be concluded: 1) PF positively influences BCE in OBCs on Facebook, and 2) SE positively influences BCE within OBCs on Facebook. Therefore, both H1 and H2 are supported.

6. DISCUSSION

This research study aimed to address whether PF and SE drive BCE in Facebook brand communities. This was achieved by investigating whether pleasurable fulfilment positively influences BCE and whether community members' self-esteem positively influences BCE.

The first finding of this study demonstrates that consumers which derive good feelings from their OBC experience have high levels of pleasurable fulfilment which drives them to engage with the OBC. The positive influence of PF on engagement is consistent with the claims by Thakur (2018), Nyadzayo *et al.* (2020) as well as Pansari and Kumar (2017). However, in contrast to these authors' studies, this research investigates pleasurable fulfilment's effect on BCE as a unidimensional construct. Furthermore, this research contributes to the existing literature on engagement since most of the literature investigates the influence of engagement on PF (Sadek & El Mehelmi, 2020; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). This research rather investigates the influence of PF on engagement, as prior research has shown that PF can be a precursor to the engagement process (Loureiro, Gorgus & Kaufmann, 2017). The second finding of the study revealed that SE positively influences BCE. This finding supports previous findings whereby self-esteem was found to be a driver of engagement (Kumar & Kumar, 2020; Lee, Hansen & Lee, 2020; Simon *et al.*, 2016). This is congruent with the notion that self-esteem-based benefits of Facebook brand community members can motivate behaviours such as BCE (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Furthermore, this provides justification for the research question that was posed for this study.

6.1 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study can assist brand marketers to focus on both PF and SE as they have been found to influence OBCE, with PF emerging as having the strongest influence. Hence, brand managers responsible for encouraging consumer engagement within OBCs, especially on Facebook should focus their efforts on creating a community platform that promotes pleasurable fulfilment and advocates self-esteem for its members.

This study found that the more consumers had a feeling of pleasurable fulfilment of being a member of an OBC, the more motivated they were to engage within that OBC on Facebook. It is therefore important for brand managers to devise strategies that can help increase members' levels of fulfilment or satisfaction of being an OBC member. Such strategies include: 1) collecting members' feedback; 2) turning feedback into action; 3) improving the brand image; and 4) keep members up to date on the latest brand developments. Collecting consumer feedback on OBCs can be obtained by publishing surveys or polls on the OBC. This will allow brand marketers to understand the OBCs members' needs and wants better as well as discovering what improvements the members are requesting. Brand managers should turn the members' feedback into action. This will give members a sense that their voices are being heard and the brand is taking their opinions seriously. Brand managers could also make an effort to respond to the community members' comments and take note of their ideas and/or suggestions. From the members' feedback brand marketers can improve the brand image and update the members on the progress on what the brand is doing to address their requests. By continuously also keeping members up to date on latest brand developments can help to make members feel important and give them a sense of exclusivity (i.e. being the first to know in the market). According to Mustafa and Zhang (2023) designers of online communities should incorporate individual differences and take into account the different needs of users of the community. This will provide a safe space where community members can grow and have their needs met. In addition, it is also imperative that these brand managers identify dissatisfied members and institute steps to rectify their dissatisfaction concerns. By considering some of these recommendations, brand managers may be able to improve satisfaction and pleasurable fulfilment among their OBC members.

Considering the second finding of the study, brand managers are advised also to implement strategies designed to positively stimulate members' self-esteem. When a member of an OBC is recognised and appraised by others in the community they may experience positive self-esteem (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Thus, brand marketers must frequently congratulate, review, encourage, recognise, and individually reward the contributions made by the members within the brand community. This can be achieved practically by giving badges to members who like other members' posts or comments. Furthermore, brand managers can implement a 'member of the month achievement' to a member who has greatly contributed to the OBC through active participation and interaction with the community activities/members/

brand or firm the most. To prevent negative self-esteem in the OBC, brand marketers could instigate mechanisms to limit negative behaviours such as unwanted criticism. One such mechanism is agreeing to the rules of the brand community before becoming a member. This rule regarding self-esteem must specifically be agreed to and should clearly state that a member will be removed from the brand community if they display any form of hate speech, bullying or similar dysfunctional behaviours which cause low self-esteem.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The first limitation of this study pertains to the use of a non-probability sampling approach to source respondents. This limitation does not allow the findings of this study to be generalised to a larger population. The second limitation is that the context of the study was strictly OBCs on Facebook. The implications of only focusing on communities on Facebook is that the findings of this study cannot be generalised into other forms of OBCs on other SNSs such as X, Instagram and LinkedIn. The different platforms have different target audiences or different uses, for example, LinkedIn is a business-related platform whereas Instagram focusses on images and videos for social connections. The third limitation is that this study requested respondents to state their favourite brand community and refer to it throughout the questionnaire. This approach is a common method used to lessen the cognitive burden for respondents when answering the questionnaire and is in line with previous research (Simon *et al.*, 2016; Nyadzayo *et al.*, 2020). Subsequently, the resulting sample consists of a range of differing brands from unrelated industries. Thus, future studies may have different results when replicating this study for a more defined group of brands or industries. Furthermore, this method may be subject to a positive bias (Nyadzayo *et al.*, 2020). According to Chen *et al.*, (2023) the importance of social connections in terms of close friends and family members were not taken into account. This can have a significant impact on the adoption of social media applications and needs to be considered in future research. The last limitation is that the AVE values of two of the factors did not meet the recommended threshold value of 0.5, which demonstrates low internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Traditional brand community literature applies Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) three brand community markers: consciousness of kind, shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. However, when considering the characteristics of a OBCs on Facebook (e.g. placeless and timeless, the accessible and effortless act of joining, advanced communication tools and innovative features), the traditional brand community markers might not be equally important or may have changed. A suggestion for future research is to examine whether traditional brand community markers are still relevant to the characteristics of online brand communities on SNSs. As this study consists of positive-valenced constructs, future research into how negative-valenced constructs such as brand scandals or brand hate affects BCE on Facebook brand communities is needed. Another recommendation for future research is to investigate whether constructs similar to self-esteem and pleasurable fulfilment (e.g., self-image enhancement value, eSatisfaction, social satisfaction, economic satisfaction and non-economic satisfaction) are also key factors that may influence OBCE on Facebook. A final recommendation is to investigate the implementation of an immersive branding strategy (Wongkitrungrueng & Suprawan, 2023) where consumers can create avatars and engage with a brand in the metaverse to determine what influence this has on the consumer's self-esteem.

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