Bridging the online offline gap: Assessing the impact of brands' social network content quality on brand awareness and purchase intention

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ABSTRACT

Social media is shaping the way companies and brands engage and interact with consumers, particularly Millennials. In light of this growing trend, this study aims to understand the influence of content quality and brand interactivity within social media on consumers' brand awareness and purchase intentions by proposing an empirical model which is tested using structural equation modeling. The study also explores whether the relation between social media stimuli and offline purchase intention is mediated by hedonic motivation, consumer engagement and brand awareness. Results reveal that the quality of content provided by brands on social media and company-users' interactivity are of major importance to Millennials. They increase the hedonic motive derived by these users from social media, strengthen their online engagement and intensify their brand awareness. This heightened online consumer engagement coupled with an increased online consumer brand awareness leads to an increase in the purchase intention of these brands offline. Consequently, companies are encouraged to invest in producing high-quality content on their social media pages, deploy all possible strategies to enhance brand users' interactivity given the important role these variables play in entertaining, engaging users online, building brand awareness and influencing their offline purchase intentions.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the proliferation of social media has changed the way companies and brands engage with and reach out to their customers. This quickly expanding marketing channel, which already reaches over two billion Internet users, provides unparalleled opportunities for building brand awareness (Godey et al., 2016) and eventually influencing purchase decisions. Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have become gradually more central to sharing and spreading information and therefore companies are investing huge amounts of money in order to establish a strong presence on these channels. (Foux, 2006). They have also transformed the way brand content is created, circulated, and consumed, giving consumers infinite opportunities for accessing brand information and using this information to make purchase decisions (Men and Tsai, 2013).

Amongst users of social media, the Millennial generation appears to be particularly interesting for both managers and academics to study. Its members who are commonly called digital natives, rather than digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001) are the first generation to have been born with the Internet and exposed to the digital environment for their entire

lives. Studying Millennials is also considered to be important as researchers believe their behavior to be an indication of how people will act in the future (Bolton et al., 2013).

Using the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O-R) paradigm (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), the article aims to understand the influence social media exerts on consumer brand awareness and purchase intentions, by establishing a link between the characteristics of the social media environment (S) and the customer response (R). Within the social media environment, content quality and brand interactivity are considered to be the stimuli (S). Their impact on customer engagement mediated by hedonic motivation and utilitarian motivation are then examined and considered as the individual's cognitive and affective states (O). The latter in turn affect the consumer and lead to a reaction (R) which is posited to be brand awareness and purchase intention.

Therefore, the integrated model which focuses on the company to consumer relationship, uses hedonic and utilitarian motivation, consumer engagement and brand awareness as mediating constructs in order to explain how content quality and brand interactivity within social media impact offline purchase intention.

The proposed model is then tested using an on-line questionnaire

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administered to a sample of 392 Millennial Facebook users – Facebook being a prototypical type of brand social media (Simon and Tossan, 2018). Collected data is then analyzed based on the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique, using IBM SPSS 20 and IBM Amos 23 statistical packages.

The paper is divided into three major sections. The first section synthesizes the literature on social media, exposes the (S–O-R) model, proposes the model and elucidates its different constructs. The second section presents the adopted methodology and discusses the results obtained through Structural Equation Modeling. In the third part, the findings are analyzed and discussed and their implications for researchers and practitioners are presented.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Defining social media

Social media can be defined as online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content (Richter and Koch, 2008). In the past few years, social media user numbers have increased dramatically, Facebook counted 2.27 billion active users in 2018, while YouTube and Whatsup boasted 1.5 billion users each across the world (Social Media Users Statcounter, statcounter.com). Moreover, with nearly 100% penetration of mobile-cellular phones worldwide, social media channels are increasingly accessed and used at all times and places (Hudson et al., 2016). Likewise, Facebook usage by companies has substantially grown according to UMass Dartmouth's research which reports that in 2018, 445 (89%) of the Fortune 500 companies had active Facebook pages (Top Rank Blog, toprankblog.com).

Given its exponential increase and widespread use, social media, which includes online channels for sharing and participating in a variety of activities, represents an increasingly important way for brands to communicate with attractive audience segments (Murdough, 2009). Social media also plays an active role in influencing consumers' purchase decision. As demonstrated by Kim and Ko (2012) who found that 70% of consumers have visited social media sites to get information and almost half of these customers have made a purchase decision based on the information they accessed through social media sites.

2.2. Millennials and their use of social media

Researchers have expressed fascination towards studying social media usage of Millennials - individuals born between 1981 and 1999 according to Brosdahl and Carpenter's (2011) categorization of generations - as they consider this generation's behavior to be an indicator of how other generations will act in the future (Bolton et al., 2013).

A fundamental characteristic of Millennials is that they were heavily exposed to technology at early stages of their lives, which has advantages and disadvantages in terms of cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012). For instance, technology is considered an essential tool they can rely on to communicate with others and for emotion regulation purposes. Furthermore, technology represents the main source of entertainment for them. In terms of experience, members of this generation have witnessed economic expansion and a rapid development in instant communication technologies, social media, and globalization (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012). These external factors had major consequences which shaped Millennials' attitudes towards the use of social media and changed their consumption behavior (Park and Gursoy, 2012).

For instance, when compared to Generation X, Millennials are more active at integrating technologies into their daily lives for marketing purposes (Moore, 2012). Moreover, they display a significant usage of social media for various reasons: information seeking, entertainment focused, increased utility and deal focused. And as such, Millennials' use of social media is considered as both for utilitarian and entertainment

purposes (Moore, 2012).

2.3. The S–O-R model

Social media has become an indisputable element of consumers' lives around the world and exerts various influences on the way consumers behave. In an attempt to understand how individuals, react to the social media environment, the stimulus-organism-response (S–O-R) paradigm (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) is used as the base for this model. It posits that environmental stimuli (S) generates an emotional or cognitive reaction (O) which, in turn, drives consumers' behavioral response (R). This model, first adopted in the 1970s to explain consumer behavior, has since been used within the social media environment, where numerous studies have explored the various effects of technological environment cues (Zhang et al., 2014).

Hu et al. (2016) applied the S–O-R model to an online shopping environment. In their model, the "stimulus" is considered to be website features and peers' qualities, "organism" refers to experiential shopping values, and the purchase intention of users represents "response". In addition, Fang et al. (2017) made use of the S–O-R model in the context of a mobile travel app and found that various apps' design and performance attributes influence psychological engagement and three types of benefit perception (i.e. hedonic, utilitarian and social), which in turn have an impact on behavioral intentions (Carlson et al., 2018).

2.3.1. Social media characteristics as stimuli (S)

Previous studies identify four main service design characteristics related to social media which play an important role in shaping the consumer perceptions of the social media environment. They are: content quality, brand interactivity, brand page sociability and customer contact quality (Carlson et al., 2018). Within the context of this study, and since the primarily concern is understanding the customer-company relationship, a focus group was conducted to understand whether the four previously mentioned characteristics were all relevant. The results showed that only two of the characteristics were considered to be important, namely: content quality and brand page interactivity. They were posited as the stimuli in the model and are defined as follows:

2.3.1.1. Content quality. Content quality can be defined as consumer's perception of the accuracy, completeness, relevance and timeliness of brand-related information on the brands' social media page (Carlson et al., 2018). Previous research indicates that innovative and attractive content increases consumers' engagement and helps to capture their attention towards brands (Berger and Milkman, 2012). Furthermore, researchers have considered that content quality serves as an environmental cue that is essential to determine online customer behavior (O'cass and Carlson, 2012; Nambisan and Baron, 2009). This was shown by Barreda et al. (2015), who studied the travel industry and found that the quality of content published by companies on social media affects the level of individuals' brand awareness over time and allows these individuals to recognize and recall the brand. Consequently, the following statements are posited:

H1a. Content quality is positively related to brand awareness.

H1b. Content quality will positively influence the hedonic motive to engage more in social media.

H1c. Content quality will positively influence the utilitarian motive to engage more in social media.

2.3.1.2. Brand interactivity. Defined as the assistance offered to customers on social media as well as the space for discussions and the exchange of ideas, social media brand interaction is fundamentally changing communication between brands and customers (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010). With time, social media-based customer dialog has become more active than ever which has pushed brands to be

dynamic, open in discussions, and helpful with practical matters in order to promote interaction (Godey et al., 2016). This increased interaction has led to higher customer engagement as shown by Murdough (2009), who found that encouraging ongoing interaction between the consumer and the brand can deepen consumer–brand relationships, help marketers uncover common themes in consumer feedback, and persuade consumers to engage with online content. Therefore, brand interaction is considered as a key component in the social media environment, and the following can be hypothesized:

H2a. Brand interactivity has a positive influence on brand awareness.

H2b. Brand interactivity will positively influence the hedonic motive to engage more in social media.

H2c. Brand interactivity will positively influence the utilitarian motive to engage more in social media.

2.3.2. Hedonic motivation, convenience and engagement level as organism state (O)

The S–O-R model suggests that the effects of environmental stimuli on consumer behavior are mediated through an organism state such as cognitive and emotional aspects in consumption experiences including feelings and thoughts (Erdoğmuş and Tatar, 2015). Within the context of this study, cognitive and emotional aspects are considered to be hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation and customer engagement.

2.3.2.1. Hedonic motivation.
Hedonic motivation refers to the entertainment factor associated with certain activities, in this case it is the result of the fun and play that emerges from using social media (Agichtein et al., 2008). From a hedonic point of view, social media users are considered as pleasure seekers who are being entertained and amused, while experiencing enjoyment (Manthiou et al., 2013). Previous works identify entertainment as a powerful motive for using social media. For instance, Shao (2009) presents entertainment as a solid motivation for consuming content on social media. Moreover, for Park et al. (2009) entertainment is considered as one of the drivers that pushes people to visit social media sites. Finally, Muntinga et al. (2011) identify enjoyment, relaxation, and pastime as the main factors that increase the social media users' consumption of brand-related content. This leads to the proposal of the following hypotheses:

H4a. Hedonic motive has a positive influence on consumer engagement in social media.

H4b. Hedonic motive mediates the relationship between content quality and consumer engagement.

H4c. Hedonic motive mediates the relationship between brand interactivity and consumer engagement.

2.3.2.2. Utilitarian motivation.
Utilitarian motivation is defined as rational and goal oriented, it relates to effectiveness and instrumental value (Voss et al., 2003). When accessing social media, customers can judge the outcome according to a utilitarian value, just as they might assess shopping or service encounters. Accordingly, utilitarian consumers who are motivated to use social media sites of a specific brand are concerned with finding content that is useful and suits their purpose (Pöyry et al., 2013). Furthermore, some brands on social media play a utilitarian role in the lives of their consumers by providing useful advice, tips and ideas, and thus increase their customers' engagement level (Davis Mersey et al., 2010). The following can therefore be posited:

H5a. Utilitarian motive has a positive influence on consumer engagement in social media.

H5b. Utilitarian motive mediates the relationship between content quality and consumer engagement.

H5c. Utilitarian motive mediates the relationship between brand

interactivity and consumer engagement.

2.3.2.3. Consumer online engagement level.
Consumer online engagement represents the interaction and participation of individuals within the social media environment. This includes reacting to content such as liking, commenting, and sharing (Barger et al., 2016). According to Chaffey 2007, the higher the consumer online engagement the more time or attention an individual or prospect gives to a brand on the web or across multiple channels. Moreover, this engagement, creates deep connections with customers which drive purchase decisions, interaction, and participation over time (Sashi, 2012). It also leads to higher brand awareness as suggested by Bond (2010) who found that brand awareness is an outcome of customer engagement within the social media context. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H6a. Consumer engagement has a positive influence on offline purchase intention.

H6b. Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between hedonic motive and offline purchase intention.

H6c. Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between utilitarian motive and offline purchase intention.

H6d. Consumer engagement has a positive influence on brand awareness.

2.3.3. Brand awareness and purchase intention as reaction (R)

In accordance with the S–O-R model, environmental stimuli mediated by an organism state lead to a certain behavior from customers. Given the context of this study, the reaction is considered to be brand awareness and purchase intention.

2.3.3.1. Brand awareness.
Brand awareness denotes the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand in different situations (Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition, the former represents the ability of customers to recall a brand name, while the latter is the capability of customers to identify a brand in the presence of a brand cue. Brand awareness is the fundamental and foremost limitation in any brand related search and directly affects consumers' purchase decision (Kapferer, 2008). According to Evans (2008), companies using social media platforms can promote their brands and create awareness then turn this awareness into purchase behavior. The following hypotheses can thus be postulated:

H3a. Brand awareness has a positive influence on offline purchase intention.

H3b. Brand awareness mediates the relationship between content quality and offline purchase intention.

H3c. Brand awareness mediates the relationship between brand interactivity and offline purchase intention.

2.3.3.2. Purchase intention.
Purchase intention refers to the combination of consumers' interest in a brand or a product and the likelihood of purchasing these items. It is strongly related to the attitude and preference toward a particular brand or a product (Lloyd and Luk, 2010). Consumer purchase intention is part of the consumer cognitive behavior that reveals the way a consumer is expected to purchase a particular brand (Huang and Su, 2011), hence it is considered as the standard step that reveals the actual purchase behavior (de Magistris and Gracia, 2008). Within the social media context, Martín-Consuegra et al. (2019) stated that when consumers have positive brand interactions on social media, their satisfaction leads to a desire to purchase the brand.

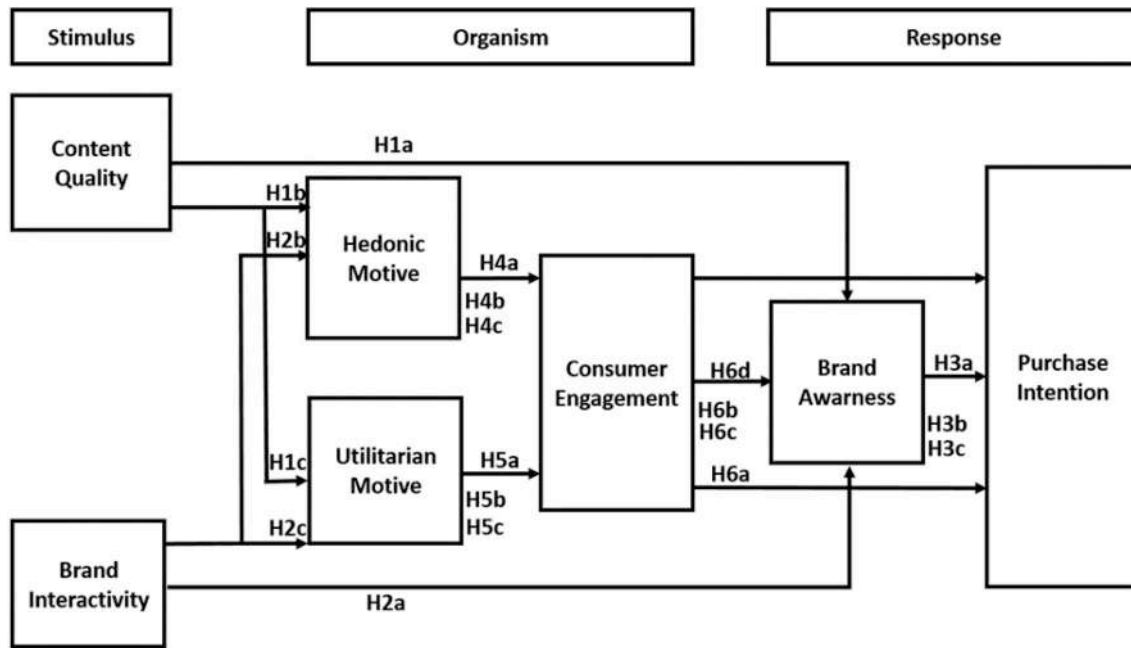Based on the above the following model is proposed in Fig. 1:

Fig. 1. Proposed model.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

In order to validate the proposed theoretical model, a survey questionnaire consisting of 26 items was developed. All items were measured using a five-point Likert-scale varying from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, except for the consumer online engagement construct where a five-point scale was used to indicate frequency. The questions in the survey were adapted from previous research as shown in Appendix A. Scales were slightly modified to fit the current context. Prior to conducting the survey, a focus group was held among Millennials to determine the most popular social media site and the most frequently "Liked" brand category. Participants unanimously stated Facebook as their preferred social media site and most said they "Liked" sportswear brands such as Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Converse … Based on the results of the focus group, survey respondents were hence restricted to Millennials who have an active Facebook account and "Like" a sportswear brand. Within the questionnaire two filter questions were included in order to screen respondents: "Do you have a Facebook account that you have accessed during the last month?" and "Name a sportswear brand you "Like" on Facebook" (Simon and Tossan, 2018). Only respondents who were able to answer both questions were included in the study. The survey was placed online, and a link was sent by email to respondents. Respondents were then requested to answer the survey questions keeping in mind the sportswear brand they had stated. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed, of which 392 were analyzed after excluding respondents who did not have a Facebook account and did not "Like" a sportswear brand, unengaged respondents and incomplete responses. The sample consisted of 60.7% females and 39.3% males.

3.2. Data analysis

The present study adopted the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique to test the model hypotheses. Towards this end, IBM SPSS 20 and IBM Amos 23 statistical packages were used. Using SPSS 20, the research calculates Cronbach's α to test the reliability of the constructs. In addition, IBM Amos 23 was used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis necessary to assess the validity and reliability of each construct. The SEM technique was used to validate the model hypotheses. SEM is known as a very popular second-generation technique that allows simultaneous modeling of relationships among several independent and dependent constructs (Gefen et al., 2000).

Since the proposed model contains multiple mediators, this study tested simultaneously the impact of the mediating effects of hedonic and utilitarian motivations, consumer engagement and brand awareness on the relations between the independent variables of interest, namely content quality and brand interactivity and consumers' purchase intentions. This simultaneous testing technique allows to know if the mediation is independent of the effect of another mediator (Kenny et al., 1998). Additionally, the bootstrapping technique with 5000 iterations and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals was used to test for the multiple mediating effects and quantitatively assess the indirect effects in the proposed model (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Bootstrapping is a nonparametric approach that is considered very powerful when testing indirect effects, particularly since it does not make any assumptions about the shape of the distribution (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

4. Results

4.1. Measurement reliability and validity

The reliability of the constructs is assessed using two criteria, the Cronbach's Alpha and the composite reliability (CR). To ensure internal consistencies Cronbach's Alpha should be above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Moreover, according to McLure, Wasko & Faraj (2005) the CR values should exceed 0.7. The results presented in Table 1 indicate internal consistencies as both Cronbach's Alpha and CR rates are above 0.7 for all constructs.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using all the constructs in the SEM is conducted to test for the convergent validity of the proposed model. The model resulted in an excellent fit to the data using Hu and Bentler (1999) cutoff criteria, $\chi^2 = 486.741$, $df = 231$, $p = 0.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.107$, $CFI = 0.945$, $SRMR = 0.053$, $RMSEA = 0.053$ and $PClose = 0.206$.

Convergent validity is assessed using three criteria: (1) the CR of all dimensions should be greater than 0.7, (2) the average extracted

Table 1
Reliability and convergent validity.

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Content Quality	CQ1	0.661	0.797	0.799	0.572
	CQ2	0.825			
	CQ3	0.774			
Brand Interactivity	BI1	0.664	0.779	0.785	0.551
	BI2	0.800			
	BI3	0.756			
Utilitarian Motive	UM1	0.723	0.770	0.779	0.541
	UM2	0.685			
	UM3	0.794			
Hedonic Motive	HM1	0.871	0.872	0.880	0.651
	HM2	0.833			
	HM3	0.635			
	HM4	0.865			
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.850	0.832	0.839	0.569
	BA2	0.654			
	BA3	0.679			
	BA4	0.816			
Consumer Engagement	CE1	0.720	0.739	0.758	0.513
	CE2	0.801			
	CE3	0.616			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.728	0.845	0.848	0.583
	PI2	0.843			
	PI3	0.708			
	PI4	0.768			

This table reports the results for Factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha Values, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Extracted Variance (AVE).

variance (AVE) should be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), and (3) the factor loadings of all items should be greater than 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). However according to Stevens, 1992;Chaffey 2007, a cut-off value of 0.4 could be used irrespective of the sample size and all retained factors should have at least three items with a loading greater than 0.4 (Streiner, 1994). Results are presented in Table 1. All the 7 constructs used in this study fulfilled the requirements for reliability and convergent validity. The CR were above the minimum of 0.7 and the AVE values were all above 0.5. The loadings of all items exceed 0.6. Hence, it can be assumed that the various constructs are reliable and have convergent validity.

Discriminant validity is verified if the square root of the average extracted variance for a construct is higher than its correlations with all other latent variables (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 2 shows that the square root of the AVE extracted for each latent variable are all above the values for the correlations between the constructs. This ensures that the measurement model has discriminant validity.

4.2. Structural model hypothesis verification results

With the results of the CFA presented in the previous section, the model is assessed by the standardized coefficients, the coefficients of determination R^2 and other fit statistics.

Overall the model presented a very good model fit $\chi^2 = 517.699$, df $= 237$, $p = 0.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.184$, $CFI = 0.94$, $SRMR = 0.055$,

Table 2
Discriminant validity- inter-construct correlation matrix.

	HM	BI	PI	CQ	CE	UM	BA
HM	**0.807**						
BI	0.423	**0.742**					
PI	0.645	0.500	**0.763**				
CQ	0.681	0.451	0.526	**0.756**			
CE	0.508	0.265	0.429	0.470	**0.716**		
UM	0.653	0.584	0.557	0.703	0.365	**0.735**	
BA	0.706	0.510	0.652	0.704	0.403	0.674	**0.755**

This table reports the discriminant validity results. The square root of the AVE extracted for each latent variable are presented on the diagonal. All off diagonal values represent the correlations between the constructs of the model.

$RMSEA = 0.055$ and $PClose = 0.098$ (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hu and Bentler, 1999). The level of R^2 were subsequently tested. Content quality and brand interactivity accounted for 48.6%, 58.9% and 56,7% of the variance in explaining hedonic motive, utilitarian motive and brand awareness respectively. Meanwhile hedonic motive accounted for 28% of the variance in consumer engagement. Finally, brand awareness and consumer online engagement explained 52% of the variance in purchase intention. Hence, the R^2 scores were considered substantial in their explanatory power, since all the R^2 values were above 0.26 (Cohen, 1988).

Since the overall fit of the model was approved, hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. The estimation results presented in Table 3 showed that all the paths were significant except the path from utilitarian motive to consumer engagement (H5a) and the one from consumer engagement to brand awareness (H6d). Therefore, hypotheses H5b and H5c, stating that utilitarian motive mediates the relations between content quality, brand interactivity and consumer engagement are also not supported. Finally, hypothesis H6c stating that consumer engagement mediates the relation between utilitarian motive and offline purchase intention is also rejected.

These results clearly show that Millennials are driven by a hedonic motive rather than a utilitarian one to increase their engagement in

Table 3
Maximum likelihood estimates: Regression weights.

Relationships	Hypothesis	Estimate	SE	P value	Hypothesis Verification
Content Quality (CQ) → Brand Awareness (BA)	H1a	0.599	0.094	***	Supported
Content Quality (CQ) → Hedonic Motive (HM)	H1b	0.621	0.105	***	Supported
Content Quality (CQ) → Utilitarian Motive (UM)	H1c	0.557	0.083	***	Supported
Brand Interactivity (BI) → Brand Awareness (BA)	H2a	0.274	0.072	***	Supported
Brand Interactivity (BI) → Hedonic Motive (HM)	H2b	0.144	0.081	**	Supported
Brand Interactivity (BI) → Utilitarian Motive (UM)	H2c	0.333	0.068	***	Supported
Brand Awareness (BA) → Purchase Intention (PI)	H3a	0.625	0.063	***	Supported
Hedonic Motive (HM)→ Consumer Engagement (CE)	H4a	0.466	0.094	***	Supported
Utilitarian Motive (HM)→ Consumer Engagement (CE)	H5a	0.089	0.123	0.289	Not Supported
Consumer Engagement (CE)→ Purchase Intention (PI)	H6a	0.191	0.047	***	Supported
Consumer Engagement (CE) → Brand Awarness (BA)	H6d	−0.020	0.042	0.713	Not Supported

This table reports the results for the Structural Equation Model (SEM) estimation. The first and second columns present the model hypotheses. The third column shows the standardized estimated coefficients β's. The fourth and fifth column present the standard errors (SE) and the corresponding p-values. *** indicates that the coefficient is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), ** shows that the coefficient is significant at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). The last column reports if the hypotheses are supported or not.

social media. In addition, results highlight the fact that an increase in consumer engagement does not necessarily increase brand awareness.

The remaining regression weights βs were all statistically significant. Content quality and brand interactivity both have a positive and significant impact on brand awareness, however the effect of content quality is stronger (β = 0.599, p < 0.001 versus 0.274, p < 0.001). Content quality and brand interactivity also have a highly positive significant impact on hedonic motive and utilitarian motive with a stronger impact for content quality on both. For content quality, the respective standardized estimated coefficients are β = 0.621, p < 0.001 for hedonic motive and β = 0.557, p < 0.001 for utilitarian motive. As for brand interactivity, the respective coefficients are β = 0.144, p < 0.05 for hedonic motive and β = 0.333, p < 0.001 for utilitarian motive. These results show that content quality and brand interactivity work positively in enhancing customers' brand awareness and increasing both their hedonic and utilitarian motives related to social media use and engagement, hence supporting hypotheses (H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b and H2c).

In addition, hedonic motive plays a significant positive role in increasing consumer engagement in social media with β = 0.466, p < 0.001. Hence H4a is supported and shows that the stronger the level of satisfaction and pleasure derived from social media the higher the consumer engagement. Finally, both brand awareness and consumer engagement in social media have a positive significant impact on the consumer purchase intention with a stronger effect for brand awareness (β = 0.625, p < 0.001 versus 0.191, p < 0.001). Hypotheses H3a and H6a are supported and indicate that purchase intention for brands present on social media will likely improve as a result of a stronger brand awareness and a higher consumer engagement.

The analysis of the above results reveals that overall 5 paths are identified:

1) Content quality has a significant positive impact on brand awareness and indirectly increases the offline purchase intention.

   CQ → BA → PI, Hypothesis H3b will be tested for mediation.

2) Brand interactivity has a significant positive impact on brand awareness and indirectly increases the offline purchase intention.

   BI → BA → PI, Hypothesis H3c will be tested for mediation.

3) Content quality has a significant positive impact on hedonic motive and exerts an indirect positive impact on consumer engagement.

   CQ → HM → CE, Hypothesis H4b will be tested for mediation.

4) Brand interactivity has a significant positive impact on hedonic motive and exerts an indirectly influences consumer engagement

   BI→ HM → CE, Hypothesis H4c will be tested for mediation.

5) Hedonic motive has a significant positive impact on consumer engagement and indirectly increases the offline purchase intention.

   HM→ CE → PI, Hypothesis H6b will be tested for mediation.

4.3. Mediation analysis results

Based on the results obtained in the previous section, the role of brand awareness as a mediator between content quality, brand interactivity and offline purchase intention is tested. This section also assesses whether hedonic motive mediates the relations between content quality, brand interactivity and consumer engagement in social media. Finally, the section tests whether consumer engagement acts as a mediator between hedonic motive and offline purchase intention.

The bootstrapping results for these specific indirect effects are summarized in Table 4. The indirect effect is considered significant if the value of 0 is not included within the bias corrected confidence interval or if the p-value is lower than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis stating that the indirect effect is 0 will be rejected at the 95% confidence level. Table 4 reports the non-standardized regression weights.

As illustrated in Table 4, the impact of content quality and brand interactivity on offline purchase intention is mediated by brand awareness, hypotheses H3b and H3c are supported. Furthermore, the mediating role of hedonic motive is confirmed in the relations between content quality, brand interactivity and consumer engagement, hypotheses H4b and H4c are supported. Finally, consumer engagement mediates the relation between hedonic motive and offline purchase intention, hypothesis H6b is supported.

Finally, the analysis of the results of this study can be summarized as follow:

1. Content quality and brand interactivity have a positive significant impact on brand awareness.
2. Content quality and brand interactivity have a positive significant impact on both the hedonic and utilitarian motives to engage in social media.
3. Hedonic motive has a significant positive impact on consumer engagement in social media.
4. Brand awareness and consumer engagement have a positive significant impact on offline purchase intention.
5. Brand awareness mediates the positive relation between content quality, brand interactivity and offline purchase intention.
6. Hedonic motive mediates the positive relation between content quality, brand interactivity and consumer engagement.
7. Consumer engagement acts a mediator in the relation between hedonic motive and offline purchase intention.

5. Discussion

Results presented in the previous section reveal two main paths:

The first, which partially validates the S–O-R model shown previously, indicates that the high quality of content presented by brands on social media, coupled with a high level of interactivity between the brands and the social media users leads to an increase in the hedonic motive derived by users of social media which in turn results in a higher level of online consumer engagement. These results provide insights into the importance of the hedonic motive as a key driver which encourages users to engage more in social media and indirectly contributes to increase the actual offline purchase intention of brands seen on social media channels. Moreover, they contribute to the existing literature by showing that hedonic motivation and consumer engagement mediate the relation between content offered by brands on social media, brand – consumers' interactivity and the real intention to purchase the brands

Table 4
Bootstrap analysis results for mediation.

Path	Hypothesis	Estimate	Lower Bounds (BC)	Upper Bounds (BC)	P value
CQ→ BA → PI	H3b	0.531	0.397	0.701	0.000***
BI → BA → PI	H3c	0.224	0.124	0.343	0.000***
CQ→ HM→ CE	H4b	0.487	0.330	0.710	0.000***
BI → HM→ CE	H4c	0.104	0.025	0.210	0.037**
HM→ CE → PI	H6b	0.083	0.025	0.166	0.019**

Notes: *** (p < 0.001), **(p < 0.05).

offline.

These findings are in line with Hallock et al. (2016), who found that content is a more significant driver of consumer engagement than building relationships. In addition, Ruggiero (2000) states that interactivity significantly enhances the core concept of active users. Hence, when satisfied and enjoying the content presented on social media, consumers are more likely to be engaged and assume active roles on social media including commenting, liking and sharing brand related content. This high level of engagement ultimately increases consumers' intention to purchase these brands, which confirms that consumer online engagement leads to purchase intentions and decisions as stated by Barger et al. (2016). Similarly, Sashi (2012) argues that engagement can drive purchase intention over time. Moreover, according to Babin et al. (1994), when consumers are driven by hedonic motive, they enjoy the experience which in turn could lead to an actual purchase as a result of this entertaining experience. In addition, findings of Anderson et al. (2014) emphasize the fact that both utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations can play an important role when determining consumers' purchasing habits in online and traditional formats. Furthermore, Mathwick et al. (2001), find that the decision to buy through online or traditional means is influenced by the enjoyment which it provides. Mikalef et al. (2012), state that consumers characterized with a strong hedonic motive look for the enjoyment of the process rather than the utility of the product, which confirm our results that users are mainly driven by hedonic rather than utilitarian motive to engage in social media and later purchase brands seen on this channel. Finally, Muntinga et al. (2011) consider enjoyment as one the main factors that increase social media users' consumption of brand related content which is in line with our result that posit the hedonic motive as the driver of a higher level of users' engagement.

Hedonic motive, therefore, appears as an antecedent to consumer engagement which plays a major role in enhancing the users' enjoyment which is expected to affect the actual offline purchase behavior.

The second path indicates that the quality of the content presented on social media by brands, as well as the high level of interactions between brands and social media users positively impact consumers' brand awareness. This increased brand awareness generated through contact with online brand content and interaction in turn has a positive impact on consumer offline purchase intention. These results confirm the findings of Muntinga et al. (2011) who considered social media platforms to be centers for introducing information about brands and products to customers and creating brand awareness. Moreover, they are in line with Madhavaram et al. (2005), who suggest that virtual interactivity influences brand awareness over time. Findings are also consistent with the results presented by Kapferer (2004) and Keller (2003) who considered brand awareness to be an important factor that determines the purchase intention of brands. Similarly, they are coherent with Evans (2008) which considers that brands using social media can promote their brands, increase brand awareness which leads to actual purchase behavior. Furthermore, the obtained results match Huang and Su (2011) who establish that the more known the brand is and the stronger the brand awareness, the more likely individuals are to actually purchase the product or service. Finally, this study's results contribute to the existing literature by demonstrating the positive effect that brand awareness created online exerts on offline purchase intention and establishes the role of brand awareness as a mediator between content offered by brands, brand interactivity and the actual offline purchase intention.

6. Conclusion

As companies are realizing the important role that social media has

as an effective marketing tool, it becomes crucial to understand and explore the factors that mediate the relation between the online social media platforms environment and the actual offline purchase behavior. This study aims to explore the link between the online-offline environment. Particularly, it sheds the light on the company-consumer relationship and finds that brands should adapt their content and communication strategies on social media platforms to engage more users, create awareness and as result encourage them to buy their products.

Based on the obtained results, the major contribution of this study is to demonstrate that company generated content and company – customers' interactivity indirectly affect the offline purchase intention through two distinct routes. The first route enhances the hedonic motive that drives consumer engagement which in turn has a positive impact on offline purchase intention. The second route illustrates that the increase in brand awareness created will also lead to higher offline purchase intention. The presented research focusing on Millennials, shows that the online activity of brands most notably the quality of content on their social media and brand users' interactivity have both an effect on users' brand awareness and offline purchase intention. These findings contribute to the academic literature. They enrich the literature on social media and Millennials, as using the S–O-R model, the results show the link between a stimuli received online and the resulting increase in brand awareness and purchase intention.

In addition to advancing research through theoretical contributions, this study offers insights for brands and retailers. Companies, particularly sportswear brands which the study focused on, would benefit from understanding that the higher level of engagement and brand awareness that are derived from the quality of content presented on social media and from the interactions between the brand and social media users are essential and lead to an actual purchase behavior in the case of Millennials. Findings highlight the importance of the content quality offered by brands on the social media, brands should prepare well designed marketing messages and only post good quality content on their social media websites. Moreover, brands are advised to deploy various social media marketing tools and solutions to try to increase brand and users' interactivity. Therefore, companies should strive to enhance the quality of content provided by brands on social media as well as to reinforce the level of brand users' interactivity in an attempt to reach a dual target. Firstly, adopting these strategies will increase the hedonic motive derived by social media users which in turn intensifies consumer engagement. This result emphasizes that brands should aim to create suitable hedonic environments on social media platforms since this aspect turns to be fundamental as evidenced by the strong positive mediating effect hedonic motive has on the relation between brands and consumer engagement. Secondly these adopted actions by companies will strengthen brand awareness. As a result of this heightened brand awareness coupled with an increase in the consumer engagement, brands might witness a rise in selling rates for their products.

Finally, this study might suffer from some limitations, firstly in terms of the sample size used in the survey and its composition as data was only collected for Millennials having an active Facebook account and following a sportswear brand, secondly regarding the social media stimuli included in the proposed model and which were narrowed down to two (content quality and brand interactivity), thirdly the use of purchase intention instead of actual purchase due to the difficulty in gauging consumers' actual purchases.

Building on this study's findings, future researchers can test the proposed model for different age groups, different brands and within different countries. Furthermore, social media stimuli can be extended to include additional variables.

Appendix A

Measurement Scales Used

Construct	Items	Source
Content Quality	CQ1: Content shown on the Facebook page of the brand I follow is accurate	Carlson et al. (2018)
	CQ2: Content shown on the Facebook page of the brand I follow is interesting	Carlson et al. (2018)
	CQ3: Content shown on the Facebook page of the brand I follow is valuable	Carlson et al. (2018)
Brand Interactivity	BI1: The Facebook page of the brand I follow allows me to communicate easily with the company	Kim and Ko (2012) Ahmed and Zahid (2014)
	BI2: The Facebook page of the brand I follow allows me to deliver my opinion easily to the company	Kim and Ko (2012) Ahmed and Zahid (2014)
	BI3: I can interact easily with brands through Facebook	Carlson et al. (2018)
Hedonic Motive	HM1: Using the Facebook page of the brand I follow is fun	Kim and Ko (2012) Ahmed and Zahid (2014)
	HM2: Using the Facebook page of the brand I follow is exciting	Carlson et al. (2018)
	HM3: Using the Facebook page of the brand I follow is more fun than using other channels (visiting stores, advertising …)	Adapted for the purpose of the research
	HM4: Using the Facebook page of the brand I follow is entertaining	Carlson et al. (2018)
Utilitarian Motive	UM1: The Facebook page of the brand I follow allows me to stay informed about brands' activities (events, fashion shows, promotions …)	Adapted from Childers et al. (2001)
	UM2: The Facebook page of the brand I follow allows me to search for brand information conveniently	Childers et al. (2001)
	UM3: Searching for brand-related information on the Facebook page of the brand I follow is less time-consuming than using other online media (company websites, shopping websites …)	Childers et al. (2001)
Brand Awareness	BA1: I can quickly recognize brands I have seen on Facebook among other competing brands	Tong and Hawley (2009)
	BA2: I am more familiar with brands I have seen on Facebook than brands I have seen in other contexts (stores, advertisements)	Tong and Hawley (2009)
	BA3: Characteristics of brands I have seen on Facebook come to my mind quickly	Tong and Hawley (2009)
	BA4: It is easy to remember the logo of brands I have seen on Facebook	Adapted for the purpose of the research
Customer Engagement	CE1: I visit pages of brands I follow on Facebook	Gummerus et al. (2012)
	CE2: I read posts of brands I follow on Facebook	Gummerus et al. (2012)
	CE3: I use the "Like" option on posts of brands I follow on Facebook	Gummerus et al. (2012)
Purchase Intention	PI1: Seeing brands on Facebook increases my interest in buying them	Husnain and Toor, 2017
	PI2: I intend to buy brands I have seen on Facebook	Husnain and Toor, 2017
	PI3: I prefer to buy brands I see on Facebook rather than those I see on other channels (visiting stores, advertisements..)	Husnain and Toor, 2017
	P4: I am very likely to buy brands I have seen on Facebook	Adapted for the purpose of the research

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