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Social Media Marketing:
Psychological Insights, Managerial Importance, and Future Research Directions

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Introduction

Since the early 2000s, new Internet technologies have significantly influenced multiple aspects of human societies worldwide. Social media technologies are one of the most recent examples of the continuing interactions between people and technologies that are changing societies. Li and Bernoff (2012) use the term “groundswell” to describe a social trend, in which people use social media technologies to get the information they want from other social media users, instead of the typical professional or public sources. This new communication behavior – mostly driven by new digital technologies, new business models, and consumer needs – is associated with a wide variety of implications for marketing communication management.

In this chapter, we address the question of how social media can contribute to the achievement of corporate goals from a marketing perspective. We first provide a brief overview of social media platforms and discuss the most important unique characteristics of these marketing venues relative to other online modalities. Then, we present social media users as audiences who seek and utilize social media platforms to obtain a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral gratifications. Following that, we illustrate social media users as consumers by explaining their consumption behavior via a set of relevant theories, which reflects a typology of social, hedonic and utilitarian perspective.

Social Media Platforms

We use the term social media to describe web-based platforms that allow users to – 1) consume and publish content, 2) to engage in dialogues with other users, and/or 3) to interact with brands and companies – in real time or sequentially, independent from the users’ physical location (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). The most important forms of social media platforms are social networks, blogs, opinion platforms, and content sharing platforms. To access these social media platforms, desktop computers, laptops, smartphones and tablets are currently the typical interface technologies. Emerging interface technologies such as Smart Watches are focusing on wearable technologies. Augmented reality technologies, such as *Google Glass* and Microsoft’s *Hololens*, are aimed at integrating, melting, and “bending” physical and digital information into a simulated reality experience (Rauschnabel, Brem & Ivens, 2015). All of these technologies can be utilized to achieve various marketing objectives, including branding, customer service, product testing, relationship marketing and the like.

Rauschnabel et al (2013) argue that social media platforms can be utilized by marketers in a proactive and reactive way. The proactive use of social media describes how companies use social media platforms to achieve corporate goals such as brand building, customer relationship management, sales, employer branding, or public relations. A core topic of proactive social media marketing is enabling consumers as disseminators of the company's marketing message via electronic word of mouth (eWOM) or 'word-of-mouse' (Sun et al 2006). By utilizing social media marketing in a reactive way, organizations can institute social media monitoring, which reflects the collection, analysis, aggregation, interpretation, and storage of brand-related user-generated content. User-generated content can include what users post, share or publish on the Internet, including texts, data, memes, images, photos, videos, and audio files. Social media monitoring offers organizations quick access to valuable information about users' consumer profiles, brand awareness/interest/ liking/preference and user ability to understand the brand. Figure 1 below summarizes the functions and activities of major social media platforms.

Figure 1 Major Consumer-Driven Social Media Platforms

Platform	Platform type	Usage context	Main activities	Marketing Opportunities (proactive)	Marketing Opportunities (reactive)
LinkedIn	Social Network	Professional	Socializing	Networking, Socializing, Recruiting	Applicant Screening
Facebook	Social Network	Private	Socializing, Sharing personal Content	Branding, Customer Relationship Management, Applicant screening	Monitoring, Applicant Screening
WordPress, Tumblr, Twitter	Blog	Private or professional	Content Sharing	Creating corporate blogs	Monitoring of (private) blogs
Glassdoor	Opinion Platform	Professional	Information sharing	Employer branding	Employer brand monitoring
Instagram	Content Sharing Platform	Private	Content Sharing	Storage of brand related pictures	Monitoring
YouTube	Content Sharing Platform	Private	Content Sharing	Storage of brand related videos, branding	Monitoring
Pinterest	Content Sharing Platform	Private	Content Sharing	Storage of brand related pictures	Monitoring
Wikipedia	Content Sharing Platform	Private	Content Sharing	Public Relations	Monitoring
Yelp	Opinion Platform	Private	Content Sharing	Consumer complaint management	Monitoring

Social Media Audience Behavior

Researchers have measured the degree to which individuals engage in passive (e. g., reading other users' content) and active (posting one's own content) behaviors when using social media (Hinsch, 2011; Pagani, Hofacker, & Goldsmith, 2011). For instance, Muntinga and colleagues (2011) found three user-behavior dimensions: consuming, contributing, and creating. Consuming refers to the most passive behaviors, such as reading texts, viewing photos, watching videos, or listening of audio podcasts via a social media platform. Creating, in contrast, covers the most active behaviors, including the creation of postings, videos, or audio files in social media. Contributing describes a moderate level of interactivity in social media, such as commenting on other users' postings, following brands, or "liking" the content supplied by other peoples or brands (Rauschnabel 2014). A similar approach to that of Muntinga et al (2011) was adopted by Heinonen (2011), who developed a 3x3 Matrix consisting of consumption, participation, production; the y-axis motivations, in particular, included entertainment, social connection, and information.

Uses and gratifications (U&G) theory provides a theoretical framework to explain why people use social media. The theoretical thesis of uses and gratifications (U&G) contends that individuals' media content choices depend on the social or psychological needs that they wish to satisfy (Katz & Blumler, 1974). Even though U& G theory is not without its critics (Ruggiero, 2000), it remains one of the most widely applied theories in human communication research (Rubin, 2002). As pointed out by Lin (1996), U&G theory enables researchers to study "mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context" (p. 574); user gratifications also motivate repeat and continued media use. Although media-use needs may vary across audiences with different personal characteristics, they can be classified into the following five categories (Katz et al., 1973, pp. 166-167): 1) cognitive needs – information gathering, surveillance and understanding; 2) affective needs – aesthetics and emotional experiences; 3) personal integrative needs – confidence building and credibility; 4) social integrative needs – relationships with friends and family; and 5) tension-release needs – escapism and diversion.

A large number of studies refer to Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) to explain the drivers and barriers of using social media. For instance, Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) identified the following user motives for Facebook use – expressive information sharing, habitual passing of time, entertainment, companionship, professional advancement, social interaction, and forming new

friendships – as relevant to fostering social capital. Hunt, Lin and Atkin (2014) found that individuals who engaged in greater photo-messaging activity within their online social communication networks demonstrated stronger motives for personal relationship formation and relationship maintenance. Sejrup (2009) reported three dimensions of gratifications associated with Facebook use: diversion, personal motives (i.e., self-presentation and impression management), and informational motives.

Baumgarner (2007) emphasized the importance of satisfying an individual's social needs as major drivers of Facebook use. Coursaris, Yun and Sung (2010) found that perceived diversion, relaxation and mobile accessibility could explain whether the users will continue or discontinue their use of the Twitter service. Johnson and Yang (2009) reported that information gathering is an important gratification derived from Twitter usage. These findings were generally in line with the psychological gratification dimensions for social media use conceptualized by Joinson (2008), which include social network surfing, social investigation, social connection, shared identities, and content and status updating.

Social Media Consumer Behavior

If we treat social media space as a holistic marketing management environment, it is important to recognize that the virtual space occupied by a social media platform is unlike any other traditional advertising media spaces for displaying marketing messages. Specifically, even though they don't have any real ownership to the "space" that they occupy on a social media platform, consumers could or will treat that virtual space as if it is their own. Take *Pinterest* users, for example, they claim a virtual space to pin their projects. When *Pinterest* users share their "projects" with others on the same social media platform, they also invite their followers to "watch" them work on the project – or participate in working on the projects together – by soliciting comments, recommendations and the like. Through this virtual exchange process, both the project sharers and followers may obtain social, hedonic and utilitarian gratifications.

From a marketer's perspective, *Pinterest* projects typically feature a set or multiple sets of brands/products; consumer experiences with those brands/products as well as comments and recommendations about them are also made to share. The *Pinterest* example illustrated here suggests a close parallel between a consumer's social-media use as well as product preference, purchase and use behavior. Specifically, consumers may make purchase decisions and share product-use experience by deriving and sharing the social, hedonic and/or utilitarian values of this consumption behavior with

others. The following discussion will endeavor to theorize this social media use phenomenon to explain how social media users may behave as socially connected consumers.

Social Consumption Motivations

In the era of social media, it is essential to consider consumer behavior in the context of social influence. The awareness of other people in consumption settings has been investigated in various areas of marketing, such as shopping (Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008) or brand communities. Specifically, when consumers are simply passively reading a marketing message, they may still feel as if there is a 'sense of community' (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) or group identity (Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008). This phenomenon can be explained by Social Identity Theory.

The concept of social identity (Tajfel, 1978) asserts that when individuals develop their self-concept, they tend to seek and identify themselves with a social group. Through this process of self-concept development, individuals also develop a social identity. An individual's social identity could motivate social comparison to help reinforce his/her intra-group identity and between-group differences, which is a phenomenon that often exists between different social groups (Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003).

Individuals who embody a stronger social identity with a social group are more likely to conform to the perceived group norms associated with the group, through the process of social comparison with other individuals who are considered to belong to the same group. As such, those individuals who feel more strongly about positioning themselves favorably in comparison to the perceived group norms may also be more likely to model the behavior of their peers in the group through social learning. Perceived group norms usually encompass two dimensions: descriptive vs. subjective norms. While descriptive norms are typically conceptualized as the perceptions one has about others' behaviors, subjective (or injunctive) norms are often operationalized as the perception one has about what important others think how one should behave (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). According to Smith-McLallen and Fishbein (2008), perceived descriptive norms and injunctive norms could interfere with each other and the impact of subjective norms could be mediated by descriptive norms. Meta-analyses have suggested that subjective norms, when studied in conjunction with theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior, is a weak predictor of behavior intention compared to descriptive norms (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Hagger, Chatzisarantis, & Biddle, 2002). By implication, an individual's perception of social-group norms would have a stronger influence on one's behavior than the opinion of one's close friends and family.

Empirical research has yet to explore the influence of social identity on the outcomes of social media marketing in the context of social influence via descriptive and/or subjective norms. Relevant preliminary research has shown that peer influence is a significant predictor of attitude toward social media and gender is a strong moderator for male as opposed to female social network users (Taylor, Lewin, Strutton, 2011). Another study, likewise, indicates that social influence (from friends, family, acquaintances or others with similar interest) is a strong predictor of an individual's blog advertising use (Yang, 2011). A recent study on smart glasses, for example, has shown that people who expect that their peers will also be using smart glasses in the near future are more willing to be early adopters of Google Glass (Rauschnabel, Brem, and Ivens 2015).

Existing research on eWOM, which is "social" by nature, has primarily studied the effects of message-related factors – such as message valence or persuasiveness – on consumer product attitude (Podnar & Javernik, 2012), willingness to recommend products to friends (Lee & Youn, 2009) and/or product purchase intent (Sen & Lerman, 2007). Research is still needed to examine how eWOM, a social influence factor that may be seen as an exhibition of descriptive norm online, could sway consumer attitudes and/or behaviors within a social network context. Strutton, Taylor and Thompson (2011), for instance, found LinkedIn, Facebook and personal emails to be the most commonly used venue for passing eWOM advertising messages within the social networks for those who belong to Gen X and/or Gen Y. They also reported that killing time was discovered as the strongest motivation for forwarding eWOM advertising messages; this motivation was stronger for Gen Y than Gen X. As killing time is an activity that is related to consumer affect or mood management, the discussion below will examine how consumer affect and emotion play a role in their social media consumption behavior and the implications for social media marketing.

Hedonic Consumption Behavior

The literature on hedonic consumption behavior has shown that consumer motivations can include a range of emotion- and affect-related factors. For instance, gaining instant gratification by purchasing something on an impulse is not uncommon for many. At other times, products are purchased to divert one's attention or serve as an emotional escape. Furthermore, many consumers purchase products in order to fulfill the need to lift or change their mood. In addition, consumers also make purchases because the experience of shopping can be stimulating and fun, which is a break from the doldrums of the daily grind. Whatever the motivations might be, hedonic motivations have been linked to hedonic consumption behavior in the literature (Arnold & Reynolds, 2012). These hedonic

motivations are said to be associated with consumer affect and emotions that facilitates the cognitive appraisal process and influences consumer purchase decision-making.

Research has shown that emotion plays a role in consumer decision-making in several different ways. Scholars have considered emotions by focusing on positive or negative post-purchase assessment (Taylor, 2009) and the impact of such emotions on future purchase decision-making (Khan, 2010; Morris & Luce, 2007). Other theories maintain a more categorical approach and describe a discrete set of context-specific emotions such as fear, anger, shame, guilt, joy, etc. (Izard, 1977; 2009). Lazarus (2001) considers emotions a cognitive appraisal process that can involve such elements as goal relevance/congruence, self-esteem/social esteem, moral values, ego-ideals, life goals as well as blame, coping capability and future expectations. The thesis of appraisal theory also reflects emotional experiences as sequential cognitive processing, which changes with each stimulus appraisal (Scherer, 1984). This appraisal sequence typically begins with an encounter of an attention-captivating novelty or change in the environment as well as an individual's readiness to respond to such stimulus (Ellsworth, 1994; Kagan, 1991), which is followed by a reaction of pleasantness/unpleasantness (Zajonc, 1980) and continuous cognitive appraisals and affective responses to subsequent encounters with additional stimuli.

An alternative way to explain hedonic motives and emotions is to examine the conceptual dimensions proposed by the uses and gratifications theory. The uses and gratifications theory is a paradigm that has been widely applied to study the process of audience/user cognitions, motivations and affects when encountering choices of message channels, message content and product preferences. Similar to the conceptualization of hedonic vs. utilitarian motives, the U&G theory includes a parallel set of ritualistic vs. instrumental gratification dimensions (Rubin, 1984). Applying these U&G dimensions to social media use, those motivated by more ritualistic gratifications may tend to seek entertainment, diversion, escape, relaxation, passing time and the like when they choose to spend time with social media platforms as well as process and utilized the content on those platforms. For these social media users, the marketing content associated with the products that can appeal to their gratification motivations may also facilitate more positive affects and emotional responses toward those product as well as greater purchase intentions. Instrumental gratification motivations, on the other hand, drive social media users to take a more functionally oriented approach to select and process the content for exposure and its subsequent uses. These uses, for instance, can include seeking advice from friends (e.g., product recommendations), sharing advice/tips for product purchases or building social capital (e.g., bonding capital for friends with strong ties and bridging capital for friends with weak ties).

To wit, social media users are intrinsically motivated by hedonism when they log on to access their social media accounts. Consumer hedonic motivations can hence be linked to hedonic emotions and gratifications, especially when they encounter word-of-mouth mention of products or services (e.g., user-generated product reviews on Yelp), promotional messages embedded in story lines (e.g., on a Facebook page), eye-catching display ads (e.g., a viral YouTube video), and the like. Past research has found that affective reactions to ad messages will influence product judgments that are driven by hedonic feelings but not utilitarian-based evaluations (Adaval, 2001). Hence, it is logical to assume that tailored social-media marketing messages can provide consumers plenty of opportunities to drive their hedonic motives and derive ritualistic gratifications, if these marketing messages are presented in such a way that will stimulate hedonism in the context of social media use and interactions.

In sum, when consumers encounter a brand image or message in a social media environment, they will experience a spontaneous appraisal of the brand that could be either negative or positive. This cognitive appraisal will elicit an affective reaction, which will influence consumer evaluation of the brand (e.g., negative or positive brand attribute associations) even before they learn about any detail associated with the brand itself. By implication, any negative appraisal of product images or messages that are incongruent with the positive hedonic motives, gratifications or emotions will then have a negative impact on consumer attitude and purchase decision-making toward the product. As purchase-decision making typically would also involve a cognitive processing dimension in consumer behavior, the following discussion will address the role of utilitarian cognition in influencing such behavior.

Utilitarian Consumption Behavior

Consumer evaluation of their shopping experiences in general contains both hedonic- and utilitarian-value dimensions that are conceptually distinct from but complementary to each other (Senecal, Gharbi., & Nantel, 2002). While hedonic motives for consumption are linked to emotional and affective responses, utilitarian motives for consumption are associated with task- and utility-oriented outcomes (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002). Past research indicates that cognitive shopping orientation is related to a consumer's context-specific motivation and process goals (Van Osselaer et al, 2005). Specifically, consumers driven by utilitarian shopping motives are influenced by their task-oriented focus to maximize their shopping efficiency experience; consumers oriented with hedonic shopping value are more influenced by a more stimulating and entertaining shopping environment (Büttner, Florack, & Göritz, 2013). Hence, stronger utilitarian shopping motivations may prompt consumers to focus on the task at hand – and be more instrumental in their exposure to and appraisal of marketing

messages and products – in order to make a consumption decision with greater efficiency. By contrast, stronger hedonic shopping motivations may attract consumers to browse and be exposed to a potentially larger variety of marketing messages and products for a more ritualized set of gratification fulfillment (e.g., escape, diversion, passing time, mood management, etc.).

Research has shown that task-oriented (or utilitarian) shoppers derive more gratifications from a low-arousal environment, which allows them to focus on achieving their shopping goals and greater instrumentally oriented gratifications then positively influence their purchase intentions (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006). By comparison, experiential (or hedonic) shoppers derived more affective gratifications in a shopping environment that elicits great cognitive arousal through different types of environmental cues such as bright colors at a retail outlet (van Rompay, Tanja-Dijkstra, Verhoeven, & van Es, 2012). Furthermore, researchers have also found that advertising messages promoting a more efficient shopping environment are more favored by utilitarian shoppers; those messages that highlight a more arousing and stimulating shopping environment appear to be more attractive to experiential shoppers (Büttner et al., 2014).

Social media platforms thus offer consumers the opportunity to reward their instrumental gratification motivations by enabling them to achieve such goals as connecting with new friends, enhancing existing social bonds, establishing social standing, expressing their views/themselves, keeping up with news/information, dispensing advice to others (including products and brands), organizing events and sharing user-generated content (e. g., Rauschnabel 2014; Muntinga et al., 2011). Considering utilitarian consumption motivations in a social media marketing environment, consumers who prefer the task-oriented aspect of online shopping may come to appreciate the more targeted and tailored marketing messages embedded in social media platforms that enable them to conveniently seek and evaluate product information before arriving at an efficient purchase decision.

Previous research has shown that utilitarian value was more strongly related to consumer preference toward online retailing channels and purchase intentions than hedonic values (Overby & Lee, 2006). Likewise, as online shopping was said to be unrelated to hedonic cognitive flow, utilitarian cognitive flow was considered to have a positive influence on online shopping behavior (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008). For example, Yelp.com is a platform that provides consumers the opportunity to share their brand experiences with others online; other consumers who read these brand reviews can then utilize these reviews to aid in their consumption decision-making. This phenomenon is evidenced by Luca (2011) study, which found that a one-star increase on Yelp could lead to a 5 to 9 percent increase in a restaurant's revenue. Additional research also suggested that time, convenience and user

control factors can affect utilitarian value perception, which in turn can influence purchase intentions toward mobile-phone based marketing channels (Kleijnen, de Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2007; Lin, 2012).

Considering that 69% of Facebook's fourth-quarter advertising revenue (Laffe, 2015) and 81% of Twitter's third-quarter revenue (Stambor, 2014) in 2014 were generated by their respective mobile phone venues, the role of mobile media in contributing to social media marketing success seems undeniable. Similar to social media uses and gratifications, mobile media use has also been found to provide affordances of hedonic and utilitarian values (Kolsaker & Drakatos, 2009) as well as cognitive and affective gratifications to consumers (Wei, 2008). Hence, embedding social media content on mobile platform may prove to be a productive social-meets-personal cross-pollination opportunity for marketers to offer consumers shopping value via experiential stimulation and task-oriented efficiency. This combination then presents two digital media venues in one to offer consumers both hedonic and utilitarian values by enabling marketers to further tailor their messages to target social mobile media users.

Social-Media Consumer Culture and Behavior

The first generation of consumers that grew up with the "original" social communication network *Facebook* are now twenty-something young adults. As an online social communication network, *Facebook* is a virtual gathering place for people who wish to join a community of acquaintances, friends and/or families to stay connected. Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012) showed that individuals tend to present themselves on Facebook by liking particular brands for the purposes of presenting their 1) actual self, as motivated by self-maintenance, 2) ideal self, as motivated by self-enhancement, or 3) ideal self-presentation based on others perception, as motivated by self-protection. Social network communication is thus uniquely different from other online forums (e.g., discussion groups, newsgroups or support groups) that are established for achieving a specific utilitarian function and the members of those forums are often socially unconnected individuals. For example, Twitter and YouTube are two platforms that consumers utilize to generate and share content with other unconnected social media users.

Amidst this non-apologetic self-presentation fervor and at times narcissistic self-absorbed culture among many and especially younger social network users in the social media environment, how do consumers react to social media advertising that is clearly tailored for and targets them individually? Preliminary research has shown conflicting results on the topic of consumer privacy in the social media

environment. For example, some researchers found that tailored social media ads are seen as a privacy concern (Young & Quan-Haase, 2013). Other researchers discovered that if tailored online ads are perceived as high in utilitarian value, then consumer privacy concern decreases and positive attitude increases toward the ads (Schumann, von Wangenheim, & Groene, 2014).

A privacy-related topic on social media advertising is consumer perception of advertising message intrusiveness. Past research has evidenced that when customized online advertising increases, it could increase consumer perception of intrusiveness (van Doorn & Hoekstra, 2013). Increased perceived intrusiveness is said to increase negative attitude toward the website (McCoy, Everard, Polak, & Galletta, 2008) and decrease advertising effectiveness (Saxena & Khanna, 2013). Intrusiveness concern notwithstanding, the ability of mobile ads to generate significant revenues for social media giants such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* is an indication that consumers might have gotten used to these types of intrusions in the virtual environment. This could be especially true, if consumers are getting the free content that they want online or if the customized ads are seen with utilitarian value.

Managerial and Research Implications

As the social media culture and relevant research is evolving, the conceptual framework explored herein – which summarizes and synthesizes relevant theory and research – forwards an integrated theorizing effort to explicate this complex phenomenon. Specifically, this conceptual framework proposes that we examine social media marketing from the perspective of social, hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors.

In terms of social consumption behavior, Pahnla and Warsta'a (2010) study on the habit and value of online shopping suggested that social factors or normative beliefs have a strong impact on shaping a consumer's online shopping habit; this is especially true, if such habit is not yet firmly established and the habit in turn has a significant influence on attitude. Even though the role of normative beliefs in consumer behavior has not been fully explored, preliminary research has shown that perceived descriptive norms of technology adoption (e.g. smart glasses) and content use (e.g., podcasting) in one's online social network has a strong and significant effect on consumer attitude and intention toward adoption (Mou & Lin, in press; Rauschnabel et al., 2015).

With regard to hedonic and utilitarian consumption behavior, Pahnla and Warsta'a (2010) findings also confirmed that both hedonic and utilitarian values play an important role in consumer

affect and behavior in an online shopping environment. As the uses and gratifications of social media use have been validated by a large body of preliminary literature (e.g., Joinson, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), it is logical to assume that positive consumer affect elicited by social media use could be transferred to generate positive consumer emotion and heuristic toward those customized advertising message. In other words, affective responses toward social media use could enhance both hedonic and utilitarian values of the brand attributes appearing in social media advertising, which in turn, could enhance positive consumer attitude and purchase intentions toward the brands.

Based on the theoretical explications provide above, we have proposed a set of managerial implications to be integrated into this theoretical framework to help guide managerial practice in the social media age. In Figure 2, we provide an overview of managerial strategies for companies on how to satisfy social, hedonic, and utilitarian motivations of social media consumers in three important organizational objectives: 1) Branding and Publication Relations, 2) Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) and Sales, and 3) Market Research. Figure 2 below presents an integrated typology to illustrate the marketing synergy that can be generated by cross-fertilize social media consumer motivations and managerial strategies.

Figure 2 Social Media Consumer Motivations and Managerial Strategies

	Branding	CRM and Sales	Market Research
Social	Fostering user-to-user interactions	Generating dialogues with consumers and between consumers	Understanding social needs and wants of consumers
Hedonic	Strengthening symbolic brand attributes	Strengthening consumer-brand relationships	Identifying perceived actual and ideal symbolic brand attributes
Utilitarian	Strengthening functional brand attributes	Providing customer service via Social Media	Ascertaining actual and ideal functional brand attributes

In considering the concept of branding, it is useful to conceptualize a brand image as the mental associations consumers have with a particular brand (Keller, 1993); this image can be operationalized as functional brand attributes (e.g., perceived product quality, price level), symbolic attributes (e.g., fun, emotions, brand personality), or the image of particular users and/or user groups (e.g., Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008). Active brand communities in Social Media can provide an entry for companies

who wish to establish and increase a sense of community among consumers who share a social group identity via social, hedonic and/or utilitarian brand associations. From a branding perspective, by offering entertainment- (e.g., free music or games) or utility-oriented content (e.g., product demonstrations) via the affordances of social media, brands can mentally link consumer with social, hedonic or utilitarian brand attributes. CRM and Sales focus on strengthening customer-firm relationships and increasing sales. As such, a company can establish a presence on social-media based service platforms, where the company, brand communities and/or other user-generated services can answer queries, help solve problems or respond to service requests from consumers. Aside from satisfying social motivations through interactions between consumers themselves or between consumers and the company, this strategy also helps strengthen consumer-brand relationship and cost-efficient customer service utility. In terms of market research, companies can build knowledge about consumers' social needs/wants as well as the playful and functional values of their brands.

Social media have opened up a window for marketers into observing cognitions, attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles of consumers first hand. With the continuing introduction of new digital technologies such as smart watches to the consumer market, we also witness a rapid increase in company ability to collect user-generated demographic, psychographic, geodemographic, physiological and other personal information about consumers. Even though this scenario sounds like an ideal marketing intelligence bonanza, the potential risks associated with information security breach and the "big brother" fear are a weighty issue for all to ponder. Future research that studies social media marketing should carefully consider corporate social responsibility in terms of its social, ethical and legal implications on consumer welfare and public interest.

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