Measuring Brand-Related Content in Social Media: A Socialization Theory Perspective

Abstract

Purpose- Building on consumer socialization theory, this study examined antecedents and consequences of generating and sharing brand-related content on social media in a restaurant context.

Design/methodology/approach- A scale development process was undertaken to develop the scale for brand-related user-generated content. Then we tested the antecedents and consequences of brand-related user-generated content using 375 responses obtained through a mall-intercept survey. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling with AMOS.

Findings- Study findings revealed that age, time on Facebook, number of Facebook friends, Facebook usage intensity, and need for self-enhancement were key antecedents of both the generation and sharing of brand-related user-generated content. The results also indicated that gender, race, and need for self-affirmation were not significantly related to generating and sharing brand-related user-generated content. Both generating and sharing brand-related user-generated content were positively associated with attitude and intentions toward the restaurants.

Originality/value- This study is the first to develop a brand-related user-generated content scale through a rigorous scale development process. It thus contributes to consumer socialization theory literature in considering social media as a socialization agent. The findings provide valuable insights for both academicians and social media managers and aid in enhancing brand-related user-generated content.

Key Words: Online community; Brand-related user-generated content; Socialization agent; Facebook use intensity; Self enhancement; Self affirmation

1. Introduction

A significant portion of the global population is connected via social media, where users exchange consumption experiences (Lund et al., 2017). As such, in 2019 over 2.8 billion people use social networking sites in their daily life (eMarketer, 2019). Of the social media platforms, Facebook is the largest social networking site with more than two billion people using it every month and has become one of the dominant tools for today's businesses (Valaei & Baroto, 2017; Stueber & Wurth, 2017).

Consumers generate and share brand-related content with others on social networking sites. For example, consumers may share brand experiences, pin the store (brand) location on the map, or share their location in the store (brand); tag posts concerning the brand; participate in contests launched by the brand; or forward online ads or "like ads" to network members. This form of brand content, generated or shared, is referred to as "brand-related user-generated content" (BRUGC) (Kim & Lee, 2017; Bagić Babac & Podobnik, 2018). BRUGC is considered a form of consumer engagement which happens when consumers actively recommend a specific brand to network members on social media (Liu, Burns, & Hou, 2017).

Proliferation of BRUGC on social media platforms has a strong impact on the choice and purchase decision of network members (Sabermajidi et al., 2015; Kim & Song, 2018). Furthermore, BRUGC has become an essential source of brand-related information, where users interact with other peers and share their brand experiences (Yang et al., 2017). Previous research has found that BRUGC has a direct effect on brand image, brand performance, and purchase intentions (Jin & Phua, 2014). Unlike marketer-generated content, which is passive and biased, consumer-generated content is perceived as more credible, unbiased, and trustworthy (Ertimur & Gilly, 2012; Athwal et al., 2019).

Although prior studies have revealed that user-generated content influences the consumer decision-making process, little is known about the factors that drive consumers to

engage in BRUGC on social networking sites. Furthermore, there exists a significant difference in the generating of BRUGC (e.g., writing brand-related experiences, responding to advice or queries on the brand) and sharing of BRUGC (e.g., tagging brand-related posts, articles, and ads; sharing location or pin brand or brand store location in a map). Although both generating and sharing BRUGC involves creation or production of brand-related content by users, activities in which they engage are distinct. For instance, generating BRUGC requires increased consumer engagement with the brand and is more effortful; sharing BRUGC, on the other hand, entails reduced effort. Although factors that drive generation and sharing of BRUGC can be different, scant attention has been given to this issue in extant literature.

To address the above gaps, the present study examined antecedents and consequences of BRUGC in a hospitality context. More specifically, it explored the role of demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), behavioral variables (Facebook usage, network strength), and individual motivations (self-enhancement and self-affirmation) on generating and sharing BRUGC on Facebook. Furthermore, it investigated the role of BRUGC on consumer attitude, involvement, and repurchase intentions in a restaurant setting in Malaysia, an emerging market.

We chose the restaurant sector and Malaysia as the study context for two major reasons. First, as reported by Bank Negara in Malaysia, the hotel sector, including the restaurant business, is one of the main contributors to GDP in the service domain with a 5.9 percent growth rate (Negara, 2017). Second, dining in a restaurant has become a passion for Malaysians, owing to the wide range of cuisines and affordable food options (Kueh & Ho Voon, 2007). In other words, eating in a restaurant has become intertwined with Malaysians' lifestyles, as they seek enhanced relaxation, time-savings, and convenience.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, proliferation of social media has led it to become a prominent socialization agent (Mishra et al., 2017). BRUGC

allows consumers to engage or interact with network members, thereby influencing their decision-making process. The present investigation thus contributes to extant knowledge on consumer socialization by examining the role that BRUGC plays in consumer decision making. Second, the current effort extends prior empiricism on user-generated content by considering *both* the generation and sharing of BRUGC (Yang & Wang, 2015). Third, previous studies have found that individual motivations influence brand-related activities on social media (de Vries et al., 2017; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019); to augment understanding of consumer motivations to engage in BRUGC on social media, the present undertaking extends that work by considering demographic and behavioral factors, along with individual motivations. Finally, the present examination expands on prior studies of brand-related activities (Muntinga et al., 2011; Schivinski et al., 2016) by considering the influence of BRUGC on such outcomes as consumer attitudes, involvement, and repurchase intentions. By utilizing an integrated model of BRUGC, this study will help managers in developing effective social media strategies.

The rest of the article's organization is noted below. We initially briefly describe the user-generated content and consumer socialization theory. Then, the proposed hypotheses are presented. The methods used for developing the BRUGC scale and hypothesis testing are subsequently offered. The findings and discussion of the results follow, along with a conclusion.

2. Literature review

2.1. User-Generated Content

The advent of social media platforms (i.e., online communities, social networking sites, and blogs) have revolutionized the customer information search system into "a source of community and understanding" (Kozinets, 1999, p. 254). Prior studies have shown that peer communication on social media predicts consumer attitudes and behaviors towards brands and products (e.g., Barber, 2013).

People use different social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp) to interact with others and share their consumption experiences (Halliday, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). User-generated content is the engagement of consumers on social media platforms. It may take different forms, such as videos on YouTube, status updates on Instagram and Facebook, Twitter tweets, and reviews and ratings (Mishra et al., 2017). BRUGC is a form of user-generated content pertaining to a specific brand. BRUGC is much broader than electronic word-of-mouth: it includes all resources in the form of reviews, media, location, status, or metadata (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012).

The nature of BRUGC varies across different social networking sites (Smith et al., 2012). For example, a Facebook wall post is different from a YouTube video. A comprehensive interpretation of this difference would be significant for digital marketers undertaking digital marketing activities of their brands on various social media platforms. Moreover, the differences in social media platforms determine the type of BRUGC in which a consumer engages.

This study considered both generation and sharing of BRUGC on social networking sites. Generating BRUGC entails the creation and delivering of BRUGC, thus inferring that actual customers develop content (opinions, pictures, videos) about their brand experiences on social media. Sharing BRUGC refers to sharing content—such as links, status, and moods—on social media about users' brand experiences. Relative to content generation, content sharing is less effortful; however, it excludes sharing content created by others. In this case, for instance, actual customers (owners of the content) share their status, location, moods, or links related to the brand on their Facebook timeline with their friends and the network members in general.

2.2. Consumer Socialization Theory

The term socialization refers to the "whole process by which an individual develops, through transaction with other people, his specific patterns of socially relevant behavior and experience" (Zigler & Child, 1969, p. 474). This notion of socialization can be transferred to the specific area of consumer socialization, which is the procedure of developing consumer-related expertise, information, and attitudes (Ward, 1974). Consumer socialization is defined as "the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p. 599). In other words, consumers learn about the consumption environment by accumulating knowledge they receive from the environment, advertisement observation, and interaction with adults or peers. This knowledge then shapes their purchasing behavior as well as their consumer experiences.

Consumer socialization involves three elements: antecedents, socialization processes, and behavioral consequences (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Antecedents include those characteristics of the individual that potentially affect their interaction with others, as well as directly affect consumption behavior. Socialization agents include parents, peers, mass media, SNSs, and the Internet. In the socialization process, such agents shape a person's knowledge, skills, and attitude, who will likely later make purchasing/repurchasing decisions. Finally, the behavioral outcomes are observed by the change in attitudes an individual has towards a promotional plan, a product/service, or a brand. The modification in attitude then shapes consumption behavior of that individual or may even affect his/her purchasing decisions (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012).

There are several reasons for choosing socialization theory for the present study. First, the social learning approach "emphasises on the sources of influence known as socialization agents which transmit norms, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors to the learner" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p. 600). Thus, in our work, BRUGC on social media platforms acts as a

socialization agent that creates a source of influence on others. Second, because socialization theory focuses on interaction between environment and intraindividual processes (Aladwani, 2018), we argue that, as consumers interact with social media platforms, they are exposed to BRUGC from other network members who might affect their brand attitudes and behaviors. Finally, socialization theory states that individuals learn from observing others' participation. Thus, we expect BRUGC to impact network members' attitude towards BRUGC.

2.3. Research gaps

The present study draws from consumer socialization theory as its theoretical framework in examining antecedents and consequences of BRUGC in a restaurant context. Various research gaps were identified that motivated the current study. For example, Muntinga et al. (2011) examined the motivations for engaging in online brand-related activities in an instant messaging setting. They proposed a continuum of brand-related activities, such as consuming (e.g., viewing brand-related videos, reading product reviews), contributing (rating brands, commenting on brand-related pictures), and creating (writing brand reviews and related articles, uploading brand-related videos and images) on social media. Schivinski *et al.* (2016) adopted the Muntinga et al. (2011) brand-related activities in developing a scale for consumer engagement with brand-related content. Although these studies offer a typology of brand-related activities, scant attention has been directed at factors that determine consumer engagement in brand-related activities. Furthermore, because new activities pertinent to brand-related activities have emerged in recent years, there is a need for further research to enhance understanding about what constitutes BRUGC. Furthermore, prior research was conducted solely in developed countries and considered social media platforms in general. These factors likely affect generalizability of the findings from those erstwhile investigations.

Drawing on the theory of close relationships, Simon and Tossan (2018) examined brand-consumer interactions on social media and introduced the concept of brand-consumer

social sharing value. Using a student sample of brands' Facebook page users, they identified four dimensions of brand-consumer social sharing: brand individual recognition, brand community belonging, brand influence, and brand intimacy. The findings of their study showed that brand-consumer social sharing is positively related to media satisfaction and gratification. One of the limitations of their research, similar to prior research, though, was that they utilized different types of brands and retailers from various sectors in a single study.

Grounded in self-determination theory, de Vries *et al.* (2017) identified self-expression and socializing as motivations for engaging in different brand-related activities on social media. However, a shortcoming of that study was that consumer socialization theory posits that an individual's socio-demographic factors strongly influence his/her behaviors. Thus, there is a need to include both socio-demographic and motivations when examining determinants of consumers' BRUGC on social media.

Using social response theory, Perez-Vega *et al.* (2018) found that the impact of brand fan pages with human-like attributes positively affects user engagement of tourism brands. Gómez *et al.* (2019) proposed that user-generated content is a precursor to social media brand communication, which leads to airline brand engagement. Similarly, Kim and Lee (2017) discerned that recommendations from a close friend generate more product-related information-sharing attributions than recommendations from a celebrity. Though these studies indicate that BRUGC has a significant influence on consumer engagement, there is a need to distinguish between generation and sharing of BRUGC in understanding consumer engagement on social media platforms.

Combining source credibility theory with the technology acceptance model, Ayeh (2015) proposed a framework of consumer-generated media acceptance for travel planning through TripAdvisor. His findings indicated that combining technology acceptance factors

with information adoption enhances understanding of consumer-generated media usage in a vacation-planning context.

Based on uses and gratification theory, Rossmann *et al.* (2016) showed that senders' prior experiences with a product or service are positively related to user engagement with eWOM. Also, Tsai and Men (2013) found that para-social interaction and community identification induce students' engagement on Facebook brand pages. Additionally, they ascertained that consumers were not meaningfully engaged with branded Facebook pages as there as a one-way communication for consuming the brand-related content of the pages. Given these findings and recent advances in social media marketing, there is a need for further research for examining consumer engagement with BRUGC.

Verhagen *et al.* (2015) examined the drivers of customer engagement in virtual environments. They found that cognitive, social integrative, and hedonic benefits are the main factors stimulating customer engagement intentions. Their research was conducted in the context of Dutch telecommunications on company-hosted platforms (firm-owned media). Thus, the current investigation in the context of earned media (i.e., Facebook) will complement Verhagen et al.'s (2015) findings.

Hollebeek and Macky (2019) also used uses and gratification theory to develop a conceptual framework of antecedents of consumer-based digital content marketing. They identified hedonic-, functional-, and authenticity-based motives as driving factors of digital content marketing interactions that are conducive to emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagements. Hollebeek and Macky (2019, p. 35, 36) called for "alternative theories other than uses and gratification theory to understand digital content marketing" and indicated that to fill this critical knowledge gap, future research needs to focus on "how are digital content marketing communications created, executed, and disseminated for optimal consumer and firm-based outcomes?"

In addressing the limitations of previous research, the present study examined antecedents (socio-demographic factors, such as age, gender, and ethnicity; behavioral factors, such as social media usage; and individual motivations of self-affirmation and self-enhancement) and consequences (attitude, involvement, and repurchase intentions) of BRUGC (generating and sharing) in a restaurant context. Shown in Figure 1 is the conceptual framework.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

2.4. Hypothesis development

In consumer socialization theory, demographic factors, such as age and gender, are referred to as "social structural variables and they are useful variables in socialization research" (Moschis and Churchill, 1978, p. 600). Consequently, the present study examined the role of key demographic variables of age, gender, and race in generating and sharing BRUGC on social media. Prior work has observed that young adults and females are the main users of social media: they are more curious, information savvy, and interested in socializing with others through social media platforms (Filieri and McLeay, 2014). Similarly, middle-aged adults are more actively engaged in social media and its content compared to others (Ukpabi and Karjaluoto, 2018). Akman and Mishra (2010) determined that age has a positive impact on average daily use of the Internet and a negative effect on utilization of the Internet for entertainment. Likewise, scholars have suggested that social media usage, as well as social identities, differ across dissimilar ethnic groups or races (Perrin, 2015). Accordingly, we argue that significant differences exist in generating and sharing BRUGC on social media. We propose the following hypotheses:

H_1: There is a significant difference between females and males in (**H_{1a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{1b}**) sharing BRUGC.

H_2: There is a significant difference between different age groups of individuals in (**H_{2a}**)

generating BRUGC and (**H_{2b}**) sharing BRUGC on Facebook.

H_3: There is a significant difference between individuals of different races in **(H_{3a})** generating BRUGC and (**H_{3b}**) sharing BRUGC on Facebook.

Social communities provide an environment in which users can generate content, as well as share various types of content with their friends and followers and the public. Moreover, the quality of such social community, as well as the quantitative measures (such as number of friends and active hours spent on SNSs), has been shown to be related to generating, sharing, and perceiving BRUGC (Barber, 2013; de Gregorio and Sung, 2010; Iyengar et al., 2009). Social support theory also elucidates the importance of social connections in social communities (Coulson et al., 2007). Thus, this study sheds light on the differences between generating and sharing BRUGC among different groups of individuals having a dissimilar number of Facebook friends. More recently, Lee, Baring, Maria, and Reysen (2017) found that having a greater number of friends on Facebook leads to increased self-esteem and life satisfaction, which influence their social media usage. Similarly, Pham, Shancer, and Nelson (2019) observed that millennials having greater levels of social media usage and time expenditure on Facebook are more like to be influenced by content on Facebook. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H_4: The number of Facebook friends (network strength) is positively related to (**H_{4a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{4b}**) sharing BRUGC.

H_5: The amount of time on Facebook is positively related to (**H_{5a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{5b}**) sharing BRUGC on Facebook.

Currently, people are taking advantage of SNSs (particularly Facebook) to express their feelings and experiences about their daily life (Seidman, 2014). In fact, Facebook has become such a critical part of individuals' daily lives that some users are addicted to checking news feeds and actively generating new content (Valaei & Baroto, 2017). According to Zajonc

(1980), when an individual uses a medium frequently, his/her likes and attitudes are likely to change. This exposure effect can be conductive to excessive usage of social media platforms. For instance, Zhu and Zhang (2010) demonstrated that Internet utilization is positively associated with online opinion seeking and opinion leadership. They discerned that a high degree of Internet usage augmented the passion and intention to share service/product-related information. Furthermore, Cha et al. (2009) ascertained that perceived user experience with SNSs and purchase behavior are positively related. As a result, SNSs use intensity is a predictor of eWOM (Balaji et al., 2016). Social support theory espouses that the structure and size of an SNS lead to one's propensity to search for social support or give support in the online user community (Balaji et al., 2016). Examining Facebook users in Spain, Rodríguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola (2018) determined that a more intense Facebook flow experience results in a higher degree of engagement. The number of minutes spent on Facebook represents the *overall usage* of a social media platform; *Facebook intensity* refers to a more active engagement with Facebook--it represents the perceived role of Facebook in an individual's lifestyle and daily routine. Based on the above discussion, intensity of usage of Facebook will engage consumers more actively in generating and sharing BRUGC. Accordingly, we hypothesize that the following:

H_6: Facebook use intensity is positively associated with (**H_{6a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{6b}**) sharing BRUGC.

There are two perspectives "self" in modern empirical psychology: (1) as a set of cognitive appraisals and schemata and (2) as a mirror of social evaluations (Deci and Ryan, 1991). However, social needs have virtually no meaning without personal needs, also, the fundamental nature of the self reflects the merits of socialization (Ostrom, 2014). As such, the assessment of self-related merits is derived before creating and sharing content. Yoo and Gretzel (2011) argued that self-enhancement influences travel-related consumer-generated

media creation. Furthermore, Alexandrov et al. (2013) examined self and social motives as stimuli to WOM and proposed that the transmitter is expected to get social and personal benefits from sharing her/his brand-related viewpoints in terms of expected self-needs and social-needs satisfaction (self-enhancement and self-affirmation). Self-enhancement and self-affirmation refer to intrinsic motivation of social media users. According to Deci and Ryan (1980, p. 41), intrinsic motivation has "its roots in self-determination theories"; and events that augment self-determination (instances that conduce to internal perceived locus of causality) will increase intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2001). Those individuals participating in content generation in Wikipedia, for example, are stimulated by self-enhancement opportunities (Muntinga et al., 2011). Therefore, the current study argues that self-enhancement and self-determination motivations determine generating and sharing of BRUGC on Facebook. Accordingly, we hypothesise that the following:

H_7: The need for self-enhancement is positively associated with (**H_{7a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{7b}**) sharing BRUGC.

H_8: The need for self-affirmation is positively associated with (**H_{8a}**) generating BRUGC and (**H_{8b}**) sharing BRUGC.

Consumer socialization theory refers to how socialization agents affect mental and behavioral characteristics of the learner; they do so by providing knowledge and information or building values and norms to follow (Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Ward, 1974). Internet and social media have been suggested as having similar roles as conventional social agents; such processes have not been captured, though, owing to its contemporariness (Wohn et al., 2013). BRUGC, as a novel social agent in today's Internet era, has yet to be adequately investigated in this line of thought (Christodoulides, 2010; Halliday, 2016). Abzari, Ghassemi, and Vosta (2014) suggested that there is an impact of UGC on social media, repurchase intention, and brand attitude. In a recent study, Kim and Song (2018) ascertained that, when the experience-

centric content is organic, chances are that it motivates favorable outcomes, such as attitude towards brand (Kim & Song, 2018). More recently, Wang, Cao, and Park (2019) found that engaging in community-based activities can cultivate positive attitudes towards the brand, as well as increase purchase intentions. Similarly, Martín-Consuegra, Díaz, Gómez, and Molina (2019) determined that consumers engaged in brand-related activities on social media influence their own behavioral intentions towards the brand. Therefore, we hypothesise that the following:

H_9: Generating; and **H_{10}:** Sharing BRUGC is positively associated with attitude towards the restaurant.

Lavine, Borgida, and Sullivan (2000) found that attitude and involvement are positively associated with information-gathering strategies. Similarly, Sharma and Singh (2017) showed that brand attitude and product involvement are positively related. We argue that, when consumers have a positive brand attitude, they are more likely to develop a feeling of interest, enthusiasm, and excitement towards the brand. This occurs because brand attitude creates an evaluative judgment of personal relevance towards the brand (Das, Agarwal, Malhotra, & Varshneya, 2019). The relationship between brand attitude and repurchase intentions is well established in the literature. For example, Yeo, Goh, Rezaei (2017) and Hernández-Ortega (2019) observed that attitude has a positive influence on behavioral intentions. Accordingly, we propose that the following:

Attitude is positively associated with (**H_{11a}**) involvement and (**H_{11b}**) repurchase intention.

Chen and Hung (2011) found a strong positive relationship between product involvement and customer purchase intention. Similarly, Yen and Teng (2015) determined that involvement is positively related to behavioral intentions towards the brand in the context of celebrity advertisements. These findings infer that, when customers are highly involved in the

brand, they are more likely to engage in repurchase intentions— doing so is congruent with their enthusiasm and excitement towards the brand. Thus, we propose the following:

H_{12}: Involvement is positively associated with repurchase intention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

Measurement items were mainly adapted from extant research; slight modifications were made to ensure relevance to and adequacy for the context and purpose of the study. Generating and sharing BRUGC were developed specifically for the investigation using a scale development process consisting of two phases. In phase one, eight in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with active Facebook users. We applied a general inductive coding approach (Thomas, 2006). Following the coding process, 25 items were listed that described how customers shared and posted their product/service experiences and opinions on Facebook. This was followed by a two-stage sorting procedure (unstructured and structured sorting), which was used to verify the construct validity of the items. This resulted a 12-item scale for measuring BRUGC.

The 12-item BRUGC scale was pretested with a sample of 183 respondents; positive restaurant experiences (90 responses) and negative restaurant experiences (93 responses) were used as stimuli. Researchers in social sciences and human behavior, particularly in a service context, have found that a scenario-based survey is a useful tool to elicit people's experiences (e.g., Rosson & Carroll, 2009). The respondents were informed to imagine visiting a restaurant and experiencing a positive or negative experience.

Before conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA), calculation of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (value of 0.896) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($P<0.05$) revealed that the sample was adequate, and that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Initial EFA results

showed that six items had low factor loadings (<0.04) or had high cross loadings and thus were dropped from further analysis. The remaining six items extracted two factors, as expected.

3.2. Procedure

For the main study, a purposive sampling intercept method was used. Target respondents were individuals who had had their meals (lunch or dinner) at internationally-branded restaurants in 10 selected shopping malls in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Trained assistants systematically intercepted every fifth potential respondent as s/he exited the restaurant and requested participation in the study. A total of 413 completed paper-based questionnaires were collected from 500 respondents, from which 10 cases were removed owing to a missing value rate of 50% (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, outliers were checked; based on the results, 28 cases were further excluded from the data set. Hence, a total of 375 questionnaires were accepted for data analysis. The sample size was tested using inverse square root and gamma exponential methods (Ned & Pierre, 2018). It was found to have a high-power level of 90%, which is satisfactory (required sample size = 335 using the inverse square root, and 319 using the gamma-exponential method). Shown in Table 1 are sample characteristics.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

To ensure no systematic bias, both statistical and procedural approaches, per Podsakoff et al. (2003), were applied to check for common method bias. The results of Harman's single-factor test showed that the first factor explained 27.62% of the total variance, which is less than the threshold level of 50%. As such, common method bias was not a serious concern in the present study.

4. Findings

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The result of CFA indicates a good model fit to the data with $\chi 2 = 593.741$, df = 307, $\chi 2/df = 1.934$, GFI = 0.900, CFI = 0.935, IFI = 0.935, TLI = 0.925, RMSEA = 0.050. Portrayed in

Table 2 are the measurement items used for the main data collection. The results of the measurement model showed that all indicators and their corresponding standardized regression weights (λ) met the threshold values. Composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE values of all constructs were acceptable and met the requisite thresholds.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Discriminant validity was established, as the square root of AVEs for the constructs are greater than the correlations the construct shares with others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Reported in Table 3 are the results for discriminant validity.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

4.2. Hypothesis testing and structural model

To examine H_{1a} and H_{1b}, a t-test was performed. The results, presented in Table 4, indicate that gender does not have an impact on generating or sharing BRUGC. Therefore, these hypotheses are rejected.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test H_2, H_3, H_4, and H_5. The results, presented in Table 5, reveal a significant difference across age groups in generating and sharing BRUGC (thus supporting H_{2a} and H_{2b}). Specifically, we find that consumers between 35 to 53 years old are more likely to engage in generating BRUGC ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.68$). Alternatively, consumers under 17 years of age are more likely to engage in sharing BRUGC. When testing H_3, it receives no empirical support: no significant difference was observed in generating and sharing BRUGC across different ethnic groups.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

The results also suggest that number of Facebook friends significantly influence sharing of BRUGC but not generating BRUGC. This supports H_{4b}, but not H_{4a}. Because amount of time using Facebook was found to be significantly related to generating and sharing BRUGC,

H_{5a} and H_{5b} are supported. Specifically, we observed that consumers spending between 10 minutes and 3 hours are more likely to engage in generating BRUGC. However, consumers spending less time on Facebook are more likely to engage in sharing BRUGC.

The structural model results showed that Facebook usage intensity has a positive and significant impact on sharing BRUGC ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H_{6b}. However, no support was provided for H_{6a}. Self-enhancement was found to be positively related to both generating BRUGC ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$) and sharing BRUGC ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). This provides support for H_{7a} and H_{7b}. We did not find support, however, for H_{8a} or H_{8b} regarding the role of self-enhancement's influence on BRUGC. H_9 and H_{10} were supported generating BRUGC ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$) and sharing BRUGC ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) have a significant impact on attitude towards the restaurant. Similarly, H11 was accepted as attitude was found to have a significant impact on brand involvement ($\beta = 0.071$, $p < 0.01$) and repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$). However, H_{12} was not supported as brand involvement does not support repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = 0.41$).

[Insert Table 6 about here]

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study presents an integrated model of antecedents and consequences of BRUGC on Facebook in the restaurant context in the emerging market of Malaysia. Following the scale development of BRUGC, the role of demographic, behavioral, and individual motivations in determining generation and sharing of BRUGC was examined. Findings showed that consumer socialization through generating and sharing BRUGC is driven by demographic, behavioral, and individual motivations, which, in turn, influence consumers' attitudes and intentions towards the brand. In other words, consumers' characteristics determine their engagement in consumer socialization process through generating and sharing brand-related user-generated content, which influences their decision-making process.

The findings showed that there were no differences between males and females in their generating and sharing BRUGC. This finding is in contrast with Barber's (2013) findings which revealed that women are more likely to socialize on social networking sites and thus are more apt to engage in BRUGC. A likely explanation for the contrasting finding is that Facebook has become extremely so popular, that there appears be no differences in its usage between genders.

We found that age is a significant predictor of generating and sharing BRUGC. Our findings showed that customers below 17 years of age and between 17 and 35 years old are more likely to share their dining experience at branded restaurants by tagging people on their statuses, pictures, and videos on their Facebook timeline. Older customers, between 35 and 53 years old, are more active in generating their dining experiences by writing their opinions on their Facebook timeline and sharing it with the public or putting a comment on a restaurant website and making it public on their Facebook timeline.

Contrary to our predictions, there were no significant differences across ethnicities in their generating and sharing BRUGC. These results are in contrast to Taylor et al.'s (2011), which revealed a significant influence of race on social interactions and the socialization process. A plausible reason could be the study context of Malaysia, which has one of Facebook's highest usage rates in the world.

In addition, number of Facebook friends has a significant impact on sharing, but not on generating, BRUGC. As such, consumers with a greater number of Facebook friends (more than 300) are more likely to share their dining experiences via tagging people in their statuses, pictures, and videos and even by making them public on their Facebook timeline. However, number of Facebook friends does not lead to significant differences in generating BRUGC through providing opinions and comments about the experience. A possible explanation for this finding is that consumers may be more likely to engage in generating BRUGC when they

have strong ties with network members. When the number of friends rises, conceivably the connection strength may be weak with many members; this might impact their engagement in less effortful forms of brand-related activities (generating content in this study). This supposition is consistent with Chu and Choi (2011) who found that number of friends and strength of the bond between network members determines socialization in online communities.

The results also suggest that amount of time on Facebook has significantly different effects on both generating and sharing BRUGC. Consumers with a greater degree of Facebook time (between 2-3 hours a day and more than 3 hours a day) are more likely to generate and share their dining experiences with their peers, friends, and the public on their Facebook timeline. This finding is compatible with that of Iyengar et al. (2009), which revealed that amount of time on social media influences one's online social behavior.

The results of the structural model demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between Facebook use intensity and generating and sharing BRUGC. This finding implies that individuals who intend to express their feelings, opinion, and experiences by creating content (e.g., opinions, comments) and sharing content (e.g., status, picture, videos) about their brand experiences using online communication tend to be active users of Facebook. Our results are congruent with extant work that has discerned increased exposure to an SNS community and online daily routine activities correspond to augmented community interaction that bridges social capital (Ellison et al., 2007).

The findings also show that both generating and sharing BRUGC are affected by self-enhancement, which indicates that individuals who create and transmit content are motivated by their intention to boost their self-image. From a self-enhancement perspective, writing opinions on a consumption experience and making it public on Facebook; offering comments on a restaurant's website about the experience and sharing it on Facebook timeline; or tagging

friends/others in status/pictures/videos while sharing that experience, are ways of improving one's image among network members. This is consentient with previous research which has found that self-enhancement is a motive for positive WOM (Alexandrov et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the results show that there is no positive relationship between need for self-affirmation and generating or sharing BRUGC. A possible reason could be that one's need for self-affirmation may act as a form of protection when the self is intimidated, which may occur after one has a negative experience with a brand (Koole et al., 1999). The findings reveal a positive relationship between generating and sharing BRUGC and brand attitude. This infers that attitude has a direct and significant impact on both involvement and repurchase intention. Collectively, the relationships between attitude, involvement, and repurchase intention lend support to the consumer socialization process with BRUGC influencing attitude and future intentions.

6. Theoretical implications

The present study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, prior work on consumer socialization theory have mostly emphasised the impact of various consumer socialization agents--such as parents (Nelson and McLeod, 2005), peers, school, mass media, TV, and the Internet (Bush et al., 1999; Moschis & Churchill Jr., 1978; Wang et al., 2012)—and social interactions, social ties, and attitudes of others (Luczak and Younkin, 2012). The current investigation adds to the literature by examining BRUGC on social media as a consumer socialization agent. Generating and sharing BRUGC on social networking sites, such as Facebook, may significantly influence attitudes towards the product/service and repurchase intention.

Second, understanding the effects of age and social structure variables, such as gender and race, provides insight into how consumer characteristics associate differently with generating and sharing BRUGC. This study, hence, bridges the gap between the impact of

BRUGC and the process of consumer socialization as an e-socialization agent, besides determining one's behavior (including attitude, involvement, and repurchase intention) towards a product/service. The results contribute to previous research on the importance of online communications and especially eWOM in a service context.

Third, restaurant services are intangible and are considered as moderate to high involvement in nature. Previous research has chiefly focused on tangible products and on developed countries (Dellarocas and Narayan, 2006; Duan et al., 2008). This study contributes to the stream of literature by examining antecedents and consequences of BRUGC in a restaurant service context in a developing nation.

Fourth, previous research on consumer socialization on social media have not focused on a specific industry (e.g., Simon and Tossan, 2018; Schivinski *et al.*, 2016). Rather, they have used various brands and product types collectively, thus impeding generalizability of study findings. We address this by contributing to the understanding of the generation and sharing of BRUGC in the restaurant context.

Finally, prior studies have relied on uses and gratification theory (Rossmann et al., 2016, Hollebeek and Macky, 2019), self-determination theory (de Vries et al., 2017), attribution theory (Kim and Lee, 2017), and theory of community engagement (Wu et al., 2018) in understanding consumer online social behavior. The present work addresses the need for "alternative theories" (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019, p. 35) in examining generation and sharing of BRUGC using consumer socialization theory.

7. Managerial implications

This research will help managers understand the importance of BRUGC as a socialization agent on social networking sites. Specifically, study findings can assist restaurant managers in developing effective strategies for engaging customers in socialization behavior on social networking sites, such as Facebook, through generating and sharing of BRUGC. Results

indicate that brand managers can leverage determinants of generating BRUGC, including the need for self-enhancement and users' time on Facebook. while targeting different age groups. A campaign directed at actively encouraging generating BRUGC could carry this slogan: "Tell people how awesome you are with the fantastic choice you made, be more in touch with them on your Facebook timeline, and see what they think." Indeed, the implementation of such online strategies conceivably should improve consumer engagement with the restaurant brand.

To motivate customers to share BRUGC, brand managers could take note of the factors (such as need for self-enhancement, age, amount of time on Facebook, number of Facebook friends) that affect the sharing of BRUGC. A promotional theme aiming at such behavior might be: "Be more impressive by making more friends and tagging them in your unique pictures and videos of your experiences with the brilliant choice you made." For instance, branded restaurants such as Nando's has implemented promotional strategies in Malaysia referred to as "So you think you can pose?" Nando's offers a postcard for a discount to encourage individuals to post a picture with their Nando's meals during their holidays and use the tag "for @NandosMy" (Nandos in Malaysia) and hashtag "for #CutiCutiAyam" (a type of customized chicken meal), as well as tag friends and make the information public on their Instagram profile. Another example of using a social networking site in the food and beverage industry in Malaysia is derived from McDonald's Happy Meal Box design. It is decorated in a style that influences parents to hashtag their opinions about it and to tag their peers to share the experience with them. In other words, the products tell the consumers to share their views. Hence, the elements on a product/service design can encourage positive behavior towards content generation based on what is especially appropriate for the respective groups of customers.

8. Limitations and future research directions

The present study is not without its limitations that offer avenues for future research. First, the research developed a scale for generating and sharing BRUGC in a restaurant context in an emerging marketing. Future work could replicate the current undertaking by utilizing the BRUGC scale in different services and in other emerging, as well as developed, countries to examine generalizability of this investigation's findings. Second, the present effort explored the role of demographic, behavioral, and individual motivations as antecedents of BRUGC. Because social motivations, such as desire for social reciprocation and maintenance of relationships, can influence online social behaviors (Yang, Zhang, & Gallagher, 2016), subsequent empiricism should consider social motives in understanding the generation and sharing of BRUGC. Third, tie (bond or relationship) strength with network members influences online content contribution behaviors (Rishika & Ramaprasad, 2019). Thus, further endeavors should reconnoiter the moderating role of tie strength in determining BRUGC on social media. Although the present study utilized cross-sectional data, scholars might conduct longitudinal studies to determine the causal relationship between antecedents and BRUGC.

Despite the shortcomings the present study offers some interesting insights into the factors that determine consumers from engaging in generation and sharing of brand-related user generated content on social networking site such as Facebook. More specifically, we find that age, number of friends on Facebook, time spent on social media, Facebook usage intensity, and self-enhancement are significant predictors of generating and sharing of BRUGC on Facebook. Furthermore, we found that BRUGC acts as a socialization agent by which it influences attitude, involvement, and repurchase intentions towards the brand

9. References

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Figure 1: Research model

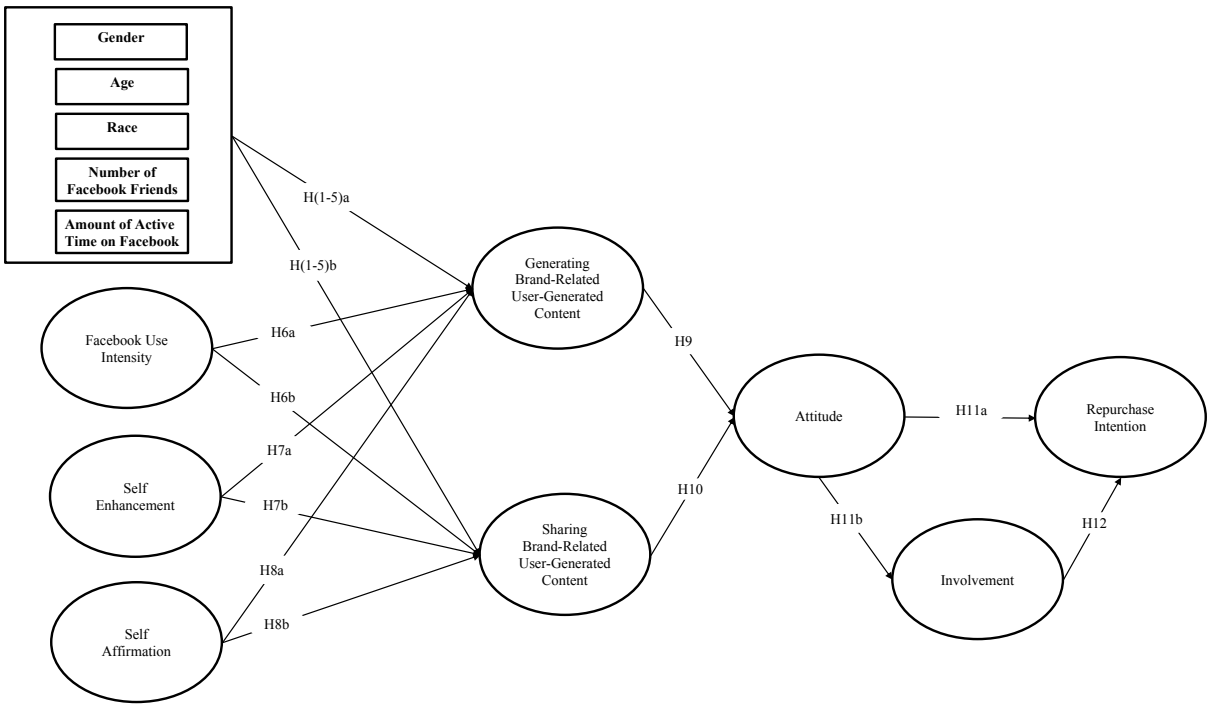

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	164	43.7
	Female	211	56.3
Age	Under 17 years old	56	14.9
	Between 17 to 35 years old	222	59.2
	Between 35 to 53 years old	82	21.9
	More than 53 years old	15	4.0
Race	Malay	165	44.0
	Chinese	151	40.3
	Indian	54	14.4
	Other	5	1.3
Number of total Facebook Friends	10 or less	1	0.3
	11-100	15	4.0
	101-300	51	13.6
	301-400	107	28.5
	More than 400	201	53.6
Minutes per day spent on Facebook	Less than 10 minutes	8	2.1
	10-60 minutes	60	16.0
	1-2 hours	89	23.7
	2-3 hours	120	32.0
	Above 3 hours	98	26.1
Active on Facebook	Yes	375	100
How often to go to restaurant?	Very often	165	44.0
	Less often	73	19.5
	Once in a while	72	19.2
	Seldom	65	17.3
Share previous restaurant experience on Facebook.	Yes	375	100
	No	0	0
Rate current restaurant experience.	Very positive	96	25.6
	Positive	203	54.1
	Neutral	57	15.2
	Negative	18	4.8
	Very Negative	1	.3
With whom gone to restaurant	Alone	20	5.3
	With my family	126	33.6
	With my friend/s	207	55.2
	Other	22	5.8

How to share experience on Facebook	Sharing picture/s about it, write comment/s on the restaurant's website and share it on social media	157	41.8
	Sharing picture/s about it	92	24.5
	Sharing picture/s about it, tagging friends/others in Facebook status/pictures/videos and share it	73	19.4
	Sharing picture/s about it, sharing video/s about it, Write comment/s on the restaurant's website an	47	12.5
	Others (sending email to the restaurant contact email)	6	1.6

Table 2: Reliability and validity results

Constructs and Indicators	λ	α	ρ	AVE
Facebook Use Intensity(FU) (Adopted from Ellison et al., 2007)		0.82	0.81	0.52
FU1: Facebook is part of my everyday activity*.	0.59			
FU3: Facebook has become part of my daily routine.	0.62			
FU4: I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	0.88			
FU5: I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	0.76			
Self-Enhancement (SE) (Adopted from Seokhwa et al., 2007)		0.73	0.75	0.50
If I share my opinion about the restaurant in Facebook:				
SE1: It will create the impression that I am a "good" person.	0.70			
SE2: I will receive positive feedback from others about my gesture.	0.73			
SE3: I will create a positive impression on others.	0.68			
Self-Affirmation (SA) (Adopted from Napper et al., 2009)		0.83	0.84	0.56
If I share my opinion about the restaurant in Facebook:				
SA2: It will reveal what I stand for.	0.73			
SA3: It will make the other person aware of what I value about myself.	0.76			
SA4: It will make the other person understand what is important to me.	0.78			
SA5: It will make me think about positive aspect of myself.	0.73			
Generating BRUGC(GBRUGC) (Self-developed)		0.81	0.81	0.60
GBRUGC 1: I would write my opinion about the experience with the restaurant on my Facebook timeline.	0.84			
GBRUGC 2: I would write my opinion about the experience with the restaurant and make it public for all Facebook users to see it.	0.78			
GBRUGC 5: I would comment on the restaurant's website about my experience and share it on my Facebook timeline.	0.68			
Sharing BRUGC (SBRUGC) (Self-developed)		0.84	0.86	0.68
SBRUGC 1: I would tag friends/others in my Facebook status about my experience with the restaurant.	0.78			
SBRUGC 2: I would tag friends/others in my Facebook picture regarding my experience with the restaurant.	0.83			
SBRUGC 3: I would tag friends/others in my Facebook video regarding my experience with the restaurant.	0.86			
Attitude (ATT) (Adopted from Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977)		0.71	0.74	0.50
Based on my recent restaurant experience, my overall attitude towards this restaurant is:				
ATT2: Unpleasant/Pleasant**	0.65			
ATT3: Bad/Good	0.77			

ATT4: Worthless/Valuable	0.68			
Involvement(INV) (Adopted from Zaichkowsky, 1985) Based on the restaurant experienced described, I feel …… with the restaurant:		0.78	0.80	0.51
INV1: Uninterested/Interested	0.77			
INV2: Not involved/Highly involved	0.69			
INV4: Unimportant/Important	0.68			
INV5: Irrelevant/Relevant	0.71			
Repurchase Intention (RE) (Adopted from Bian & Forsythe, 2012)		0.80	0.84	0.64
RE1: I will revisit the same restaurant next time	0.76			
RE3: If I were to visit a restaurant the probability that it would be this restaurant again is high.	0.83			
RE4: The likelihood that I would consider visiting this restaurant again is high.	0.80			

Measurement model fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 593.741$, df = 307, $\chi^2/df = 1.934$, GFI = 0.900, CFI = 0.935, IFI = 0.935, TLI = 0.925, RMSEA = 0.050.

Notes: *Five-point Likert scale, **Semantic differential scale, Composite reliability (ρ), Cronbach's alpha (α), average variance extract (AVE), standardised regression weights (λ)

Table 3: Discriminant validity of the constructs

Constructs	FU	SE	SA	GBRUGC	SBRUGC	ATT	INV	RE
FU	**0.72**							
SE	0.26	**0.71**						
SA	0.23	0.67	**0.75**					
GBRUGC	0.17	0.31	0.32	**0.77**				
SBRUGC	0.23	0.43	0.30	0.34	**0.82**			
ATT	0.16	0.41	0.41	0.30	0.39	**0.71**		
INV	0.11	0.36	0.33	0.38	0.36	0.40	**0.71**	
RE	0.15	0.32	0.31	0.18	0.32	0.56	0.39	**0.80**
Mean	3.90	3.73	3.73	3.71	3.77	4.1	4.0	4.1
SD	0.71	0.75	0.79	0.80	0.95	0.63	0.63	0.69

Notes: Diagonal values represent square-root of average variance extracted scores of constructs.

*$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. FU: Facebook Use Intensity; SE: Self-Enhancement; SA: Self-Affirmation; GBRUGC: Generating Brand-related User-generated Content; SBRUGC: Sharing Brand-related User-generated Content; ATT: Attitude; INV: Involvement; RE: Repurchase Intention

Table 4: Results of t-test for examining H_1

Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	F-value	*p*-value
Examining H_{1a}					
Female	211	3.80	0.80	0.09	0.15
Male	164	3.65	0.80		
Examining H_{1b}					
Female	211	3.80	0.91	3.02	0.70
Male	164	3.76	1.00		

Table 5: Results of ANOVA test for examining H2, H3, H4, and H5

Examining H_{2a}					
Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**F-statistic**	**p-value**
<17 years	56	3.80	0.83	3.37	< 0.01
17-35	222	3.62	0.82		
35-53	82	3.93	0.68		
> 53 years old	15	3.62	0.73		
Total	375	3.71	0.80		
Examining H_{2b}					
<17 years	56	4.07	0.61	5.50	< 0.01
17-35	222	3.80	1.00		
35-53	82	3.70	1.00		
> 53 years old	15	3.00	1.05		
Total	375	3.77	0.95		
Examining H_{3a}					
Malay	165	3.75	0.79	1.49	0.21
Chinese	151	3.62	0.83		
Indian	54	3.85	0.67		
Other	5	3.53	1.16		
Total	375	3.71	0.80		
Examining H_{3b}					
Malay	165	3.81	0.94	1.92	0.13
Chinese	151	3.69	1.01		
Indian	54	3.98	0.78		
Other	5	3.20	0.90		
Total	375	3.78	0.95		
Examining H_{4a}					
10 or less	1	4.33	0.00	1.55	0.18
11-100	15	3.51	0.77		
101-300	51	3.62	0.77		
301-400	107	3.85	0.74		
More than 400	201	3.67	0.83		
Total	375	3.71	0.80		
Examining H_{4b}					
10 or less	1	5.00	0.00	4.44	< 0.01
11-100	15	3.28	1.00		
101-300	51	3.42	1.05		
301-400	107	3.75	1.00		
More than 400	201	3.91	0.88		
Total	375	3.80	0.95		
Examining H_{5a}					
Less than 10 min	8	3.75	0.53	3.67	< 0.01
10-60 minutes	60	3.36	0.82		
1-2 hour	89	3.73	0.76		

2-3 hour	120	3.80	0.82		
Above 3 hours	98	3.81	0.77		
Total	375	3.71	0.80		
Examining H_{5b}					
Less than 10 min	8	3.75	1.29	5.19	< 0.01
10-60 minutes	60	3.37	0.97		
1-2 hour	89	3.70	1.02		
2-3 hour	120	3.90	0.86		
Above 3 hours	98	4.00	0.88		
Total	375	3.77	0.95		

Table 6: Results of structural model

Hypothesis	Hypothesised paths			Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H_{6a}	FU	→	GBRUGC	0.19	1.70	< 0.10	Supported
H_{6b}	FU	→	SBRUGC	0.27	2.50	< 0.01	Supported
H_{7a}	SE	→	GBRUGC	0.69	2.93	< 0.01	Supported
H_{7b}	SE	→	SBRUGC	0.62	4.32	< 0.01	Supported
H_{8a}	SA	→	GBRUGC	0.06	0.32	0.74	Not Supported
H_{8b}	SA	→	SBRUGC	-0.30	-1.60	0.10	Not Supported
H_{9}	GBRUGC	→	ATT	0.16	4.53	< 0.01	Supported
H_{10}	SBRUGC	→	ATT	0.26	6.56	< 0.01	Supported
H_{11a}	ATT	→	INV	0.71	7.45	< 0.01	Supported
H_{11b}	ATT	→	RE	0.85	7.05	< 0.01	Supported
H_{12}	INV	→	RE	0.06	0.82	0.41	Not Supported

Notes: FU: Facebook Use Intensity; SE: Self-Enhancement; SA: Self-Affirmation; GBRUGC: Generating Brand-Related User-Generated Content; SBRUGC: Sharing Brand-Related User-Generated Content; ATT: Attitude; INV: Involvement; RE: Repurchase Intention