

A Socialisation Theory Perspective to Brand-Related Contents in Social Media

Keywords: Online community; Brand-related user-generated content; Socialization agents

Purpose- A big portion of the global population is attached via social media where users exchange experiences and influence on their purchase decisions (Lund et al., 2017). The rate of growth for online social media has been quite phenomenal. Indisputably, about 29% of the global population consisting of more than 2 billion people use social networking sites in their daily life (Balaji, Khong, & Chong, 2016). As of today, with more than two billion active users, Facebook is the largest social media platform (Facebook, 2017) and it has become one of the dominant tools for today's businesses (Hausman, Kabadayi, & Price, 2014).

Advancements in online communication characterized by UGC and social networking sites (SNSs) have huge ramifications on users' consumption and the study of customer socialisation (Kim and Song, 2018). Furthermore, SNSs is getting to be an important source of product related information where users will interact with other peers referring their service/product experience (Yang et al., 2017). Previous findings indicate that UGC has direct effect on brand images, sales, and purchase intentions (Jin and Phua, 2014). In place of passively used marketer generated content and their brand-relevant messages, users now can easily and smoothly generate and share their own contents (Ertimur and Gilly, 2012). Among the vast diversity of activities, specific behaviours such as commenting, liking, and the combination of both on brands' social media pages have become highly demanded among users, and are currently implemented as consumer engagement measurement in social media environment (Gummerus et al., 2012).

In addition, literature emphasises the importance of adolescents as consumers and previous studies endeavour to understand their marketplace and consumption behaviour applying consumer socialisation model (Youn, 2008). Moreover, technology advancements particularly Internet introduced new stream of research on changes in consumer socialisation. Early research studied the common socialisation agents (mass media, peers, and parents) and their impacts on attitude and behaviour (Mangleburg & Bristol, 1998). New socialisation agents (social media and Internet)

introduced a new platform of research (Mishra et al., 2017) and studies were conducted to comprehend the implications of new socialisation agents (Yang & Wang, 2015). However, a few empirical studies exist on the application of consumer socialisation theory (CST) in identifying BRUGC as a socialisation agent and the association of this agent with the consumption behaviours of users who generate and share it, particularly in their revisit/repurchase intention towards product/service. Consequently, to bridge the gap, this research addresses the impact of BRUGC as the new socialisation agent on Facebook as a social media platform and the association of these contents with users' consumption behaviour through the lens of consumer socialisation theory.

Demographic and social structure variables are posited to be good antecedents of the socialisation process (Barber, 2013). When studying the generation of UGCs, demographic variables such as age, race, and gender may have significant effects on the socialization process (Leung, 2009). Based on CST, in this hypothetical model (see Figure 1), such variables are predicted to influence peer communication through the generation and sharing of BRUGC. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

There is a significant difference in **H1a**: Generating BRUGC; and **H1b**: Sharing BRUGC among females and males.

There is a significant difference in **H2a**: Generating BRUGC; and **H2b**: Sharing BRUGC among different age groups of individuals.

There is a significant difference in **H3a**: Generating BRUGC; and **H3b**: Sharing BRUGC among different race groups of individuals.

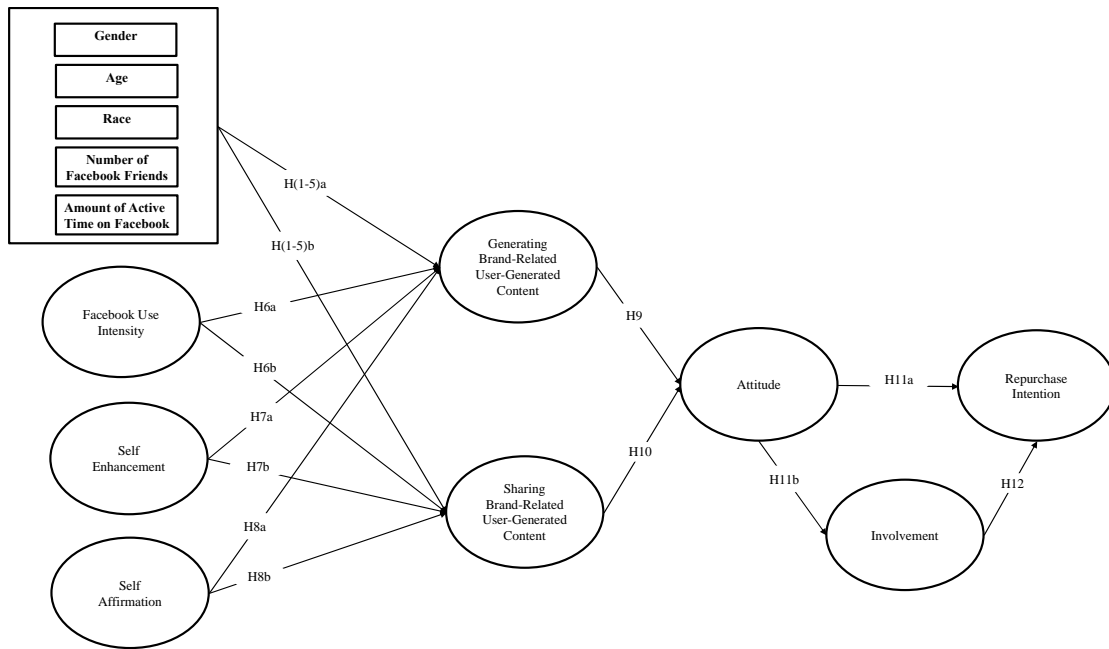


Figure 1: Research model

Social communities provide an environment in which users can generate contents, as well as regenerate, and share different types of contents with their friends, the public, and their followers. Moreover, the quality of such social community, as well as the quantitative measures, such as the number of friends and active hours spent on SNSs, has been shown to be related to generating, sharing, and perceiving BRUGC (Barber, 2013). The social support theory also elucidated the importance of social connections in social communities (Chung and Buhalis, 2008). Thus, this study sheds light on the differences between generating BRUGC versus sharing BRUGC among different groups of individuals with different number of Facebook friends. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H4a: Generating BRUGC; and **H4b:** Sharing BRUGC is positively correlated with different groups of individuals with different number of Facebook friends.

H5a: Generating BRUGC; and **H5b:** Sharing BRUGC is positively correlated with different groups of individuals with different amount of active time on Facebook.

The social support theory foresaw that the structure and size of a SNS shows the propensity to search for social support or give support in the online user

community (Balaji et al., 2016). In the context of this study, as part of human routines in online social environment, restaurant-goers would like to generate and share their immediate dining experiences on Facebook.

Facebook use intensity is positively associated with **H6a: Generating BRUGC**; and **H6b: Sharing BRUGC**.

Furthermore, social needs have no meaning without personal needs (Ostrom, 2014) and the fundamental nature of the “self” reflects the merits of socialization. It implies that the assessment of self-related merits comes before creating and sharing contents. Yoo and Gretzel (2011) argued that self-enhancement influenced travel-related consumer-generated media creation, while 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 viewpoint in terms of expected self-needs and social-needs satisfaction (self-enhancement and self-affirmation). Those individuals who participate in content generation in Wikipedia, for example, are stimulated by self-enhancement opportunities (Muntinga et al., 2011). Accordingly, it is hypothesised that:

The need for self-enhancement is positively associated with **H7a: Generating BRUGC**; and **H7b: Sharing BRUGC**.

The need for self-affirmation is positively associated with **H8a: Generating BRUGC**; and **H8b: Sharing BRUGC**.

BRUGC, as a novel social agent in today’s online social interactions, has yet to be profoundly investigated in this area (Halliday, 2016). In the study by Abzari, Ghassemi, and Vosta (2014), they posited the impact of UGC on social media, repurchase intention, and brand attitude. In a recent experimental study, it was shown that when the experience-centric content is organic, chances are that it motivates favourable outcomes such as attitude towards brand (Kim & Song, 2017). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H9: Generating; and **H10: Sharing BRUGC** is positively associated with attitude.

Hartwick and Barki (1994) conducted a study on information system discipline and found that participation was indeed a prerequisite to involvement. In addition, they included involvement as a mediating construct between user participation and system use. They hypothesized the relationship between attitude towards the system and user involvement. Moreover, the attitude of consumers that is shaped during their interaction with peers through different socialisation agents directly affects their intention to purchase a product or service. Such relationship has been theoretically suggested by different consumption-related theories, such as the “theory of reasoned action” (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), “theory of planned behaviour” (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), as well as CST (Moschis & Churchill Jr., 1978). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

Attitude is positively associated with **H11a**: Involvement; and **H11b**: Repurchase intention.

When Facebook users experience a service or product, it is more likely that such social involvement would lead to frequent purchase decisions. For instance, Ling-Yee (1997) conducted a research on social basis of ecological behaviour. The study showed that respondents with high product involvement in were involved in green-product-related information search and repurchase intention. In this study, the construct of involvement is mainly associated with the degree to which the content generated by the user actively or passively contributes to his/her repurchase intention. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H12: Involvement is positively associated with repurchase intention.

Methodology/approach- Two phases are applied for scale development. In qualitative phase, in-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted and in quantitative phase, a two-stage sorting procedure is used. Pre-test (N=7) and pilot test (N=183) were applied for exploratory factor analysis and to conduct confirmatory factor analysis, a total of 375 respondents with international restaurant’s service experience were identified applying mall-intercept survey method.

Findings- Using the t-test, ANOVA, and SEM, it was found that age, the amount of active time on Facebook, the numbers of Facebook friends, Facebook usage intensity, and the need for self-enhancement are key antecedents of both generation and sharing of BRUGC. The results also indicate that gender, race, and the need for self-affirmation do not have any significant relationship to generating and sharing BRUGC. Both generating and sharing of BRUGC are positively associated with attitude towards the restaurants.

Theoretical contributions- By studying the impact of generating and sharing BRUGC on buying behaviour through the lens of CST, this research adds to the body of knowledge in several ways. Initially, it gives a broad and profound perspective towards youngsters' intention of BRUGC building on consumer socialisation model, containing specific motivational variables (the need for self-enhancement and self-affirmation), age, and social structural variables (e.g. race and gender) for the newly identified socialisation agent (BRUGC). Secondly, this research investigates the impact of BRUGC (generating BRUGC vs. sharing BRUGC) as socialisation agents, and gives practical proof on the significance of the aforementioned agents in association with behavioural outcomes. Thirdly, the study enriches the literature on consumer socialisation and social media by introducing a rigorous interaction among newly introduced socialisation agents (BRUGC) in Facebook.

Practical contributions- This research would help managers to understand that BRUGC is a real type of online social interaction. Albeit the exchanged content is brand related, the action of having the intention to generate and share BRUGC serves as different motives such as self-needs (self-enhancement) and social structural variables. The findings of this study provide restaurant retailers and marketers with more guidance in creating loyal customers. Hence, marketers can develop innovative strategies particularly tailored to different gender and age groups.

Originality/value- This study is the first to measure BRUGC through a rigorous scale development, contributing to consumer socialisation theory. The findings provide valuable insights for both academicians and social media marketing managers, and would help in enhancing users' interactions via BRUGC to maximize the influence of communication on social media for the highest revenue generation.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Sample characteristics

Variables	Characteristics	Frequenc y	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

Appendix B: 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)		0.78	0.80	0.51
Based on the restaurant experienced described, I feel				
..... with the restaurant:				
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)

Appendix C: 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

Appendix D: Results of t-test for examining H₁

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		

Appendix E: Results of ANOVA test for examining H2, H3, H4, and H5

Examining H2a					
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 H2b					
<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 H3a					
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 H3b					
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 H4a					
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 H4b					
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 H5a					
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		

Appendix F: 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