

## **Digital Marketing and Online Communities**

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- 1. We Are Joining Online Communities: Motivations and Influences**
  - 2. The Role of Authenticity on Commercial Online Content**
  - 3. Transmission of Social Causes Through Social Media: Information Adoption and Virality**
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**We Are Joining Online Communities: Motivations and Influences**

In the era of human centric marketing, customers are strongly integrated into the marketplace through human connectivity. Online communities are playing a pivotal role in our lives and many of us are members of online communities. The members of the communities are exchanging opinions and ideas and offer inspiration to one another about products and services. This master thesis aims to investigate the motivational drivers for using online communities: Is it the information search or the social needs that attract their members? To which extent are the members influenced by others and why? Following a comprehensive literature review, the relationships shall be examined in a consumer survey. Building on the results, theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for marketing theory and practice shall be derived.

**Type:** Literature review, Survey

**Advisor:** [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

**Literature:**

Habibi, Mohammad R., Michel Laroche, and Marie-Odile Richard (2014), "The roles of brand community and community engagement in building brand trust on social media," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, 152–61, DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.016.

Krishen, Anjala S., Orie Berezan, and Carola Raab (2019), "Feelings and functionality in social networking communities: A regulatory focus perspective," *Psychology & Marketing*, 36 (7), 675–86, DOI: 10.1002/mar.21204.

Wu, Jyh-Jeng, Ying-Hueih Chen, and Yu-Shuo Chung (2010), "Trust factors influencing virtual community members: A study of transaction communities," *Journal of Business Research*, 63 (9-10), 1025–32, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.03.022.

**The Role of Authenticity on Commercial Online Content**

Millions of pieces of online content are generated each day. With the mass production of online content and its widespread use by companies, internet users have started becoming suspicious about the authenticity of the generated content, especially when it involves product placement. Some of the commercial posts become successful and turn viral while others receive criticism and negative word-of-mouth. Studies indicate that higher perceived authenticity yields positive outcomes, but it remains unclear how a brand can generate authentic online content? Do the outlet, the post creator, or type of content play a role? What are potential brand benefits? It is the aim of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature in the field of commercial online content authenticity and to identify potential factors that influence authenticity. The insights from the literature analysis shall be empirically validated and advanced via consumer experiments before deriving implications for research and practice.

**Type:** Literature review, Experiment

**Advisor:** [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

**Literature:**

Zhang, Zhe and Vanessa M. Patrick (2021), "Mickey D's Has More Street Cred Than McDonald's: Consumer Brand Nickname Use Signals Information Authenticity," *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (5), 58–73.

Audrezet, Alice, Gwarlann de Kerviler, and Julie Guidry Moulard (2020), "Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation," *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–69.

Nunes, Joseph C., Andrea Ordanini, and Gaia Giambastiani (2021), "The Concept of Authenticity: What It Means to Consumers," *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (4), 1–20.

**Transmission of Social Causes Through Social Media: Information Adoption and Virality**

More and more brands are engaging in social cause related activities and market their activities through social media. These activities often produce benefits for both the society and the brand. Experts argue that social marketing, if authentic, can positively influence brand attitude and brand trust, two key aspects benefitting the brand image. Social marketing also offers the possibility to the brand to differentiate itself from competitors, motivating brands to engage in activism. Social media enhance the information flow between recipients and exposure to social causes and therefore, it is often the preferred medium to promote the social activities of the brand. Drawing from literature on social marketing and digital marketing, the thesis should provide a comprehensive overview of the literature about corporate social marketing on social media and to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of these campaigns on social media. The insights from the literature analysis shall be empirically validated before deriving implications for research and practice.

**Type:** Literature review, Survey or Experiment

**Advisor:** [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

**Literature:**

Inoue, Y., & Kent, A. (2014), "A conceptual framework for understanding the effects of corporate social marketing on consumer behavior," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 121(4), 621-633.

Mano, R. S. (2014), "Social media, social causes, giving behavior and money contributions," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 287-293.

Robinson, S. R., Irmak, C., & Jayachandran, S. (2012), "Choice of Cause in Cause-Related Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, 76(4), 126-139.