

## Emerging areas in social media marketing

As mentioned in the Guest editorial of the first issue of this special issue on social media marketing, which was published in early 2019, the accepted papers were divided into two issues. While the articles in the first issue focused on social media and brands, the articles in the second issue focus on a vast array of engaging topics in the area of social media marketing.

The internet in general and social media platforms in particular have significantly impacted marketing strategies in recent years. Consumers now generate and rapidly disseminate both positive and negative content via these Web 2.0 channels. Often, this user-generated content is targeting brands and firms. Therefore, firms have been forced to adapt their previous traditional marketing techniques to this new environment. Consumers are rapidly adopting and using social media platforms. Academic research in this area, though accelerating, is lagging and fragmented. Therefore, the research presented in this special issue is both timely and necessary. We believe it will be useful to scholars and practitioners, as we all endeavor to stay current and effective in the rapidly exploding field of social media marketing.

The first article, “Tackling Social Media Data Analysis: Comparing and Contrasting QSR NVIVO and Leximancer” by Wilk, Soutar and Harrigan assesses the strengths and weakness of two computer-aided qualitative discourse analysis software (CAQDAS) programs when analyzing large text-based data sets from social media. The authors conduct an exploratory study on online brand advocacy and then, analyze the data using QSR NVivo and Leximancer separately to assess the functionality of each software program. The findings indicate that both of the two software programs have many benefits such as Leximancer efficiently provided automated, impartial analysis of key themes and connectivity, while QSR NVivo enabled the researcher to identify concepts and themes of interest to the researcher. Surprisingly, the authors did not find that one software program was better than the other, but that QSR NVivo and Leximancer complement each other by providing different visual and evidence-based perspectives to the data analysis. The authors conclude that there are benefits to using both software programs and suggest that researchers should consider using more than one CAQDAS program when analyzing text-based data sets. This article provides great insight about how qualitative text-based analysis programs can be used to analyze big data from social media platforms.

In the second article, Diffley and McCole investigate the role of social media from a firm’s perspective within the hotel industry. In their paper titled “The Value of Social Networking Sites in Hotels”, the authors apply the S-D logic to explore the implications of social media activities of firms. The authors conduct an exploratory study of key informants who are users of social networking sites for hotel marketing efforts to determine the value of social media sites on marketing activities. The findings suggest three themes:

- (1) reactive approach toward SNSs;
- (2) deeper customer connections; and
- (3) value co-creation.



The guest editors would like to thank the authors for submitting their papers to this special issue on social media marketing. They also want to thank their skilled reviewers who provided excellent comments and suggestions during the review process. Last, the guest editors would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief, Andrew Lindridge, and Claudia Knight of Emerald for their guidance and patience with this Special Issue on Social Media Marketing.

---

The paper finds that some managers of SNSs are using them to collect valuable customer information, and then apply it to improve the service offering, while other managers use them to provide other often unrelated information. A key finding in this study is that the usage of SNSs depends predominantly on the individual who is responsible for implementing the SNS strategy. The stark contrast between managers' different uses and attitudes toward SNSs is intriguing, especially as customer usage of SNSs is exploding. The authors provide new and useful insights concerning the relationship between a firm's marketing efforts and their use of SNSs as a part of those efforts. They also provide greater understanding about the theory and practice of social media marketing in the hotel industry.

In the third article, "Praise or Revenge: Why Do Consumers Post about Organizations on Social Media", Whiting, Williams and Hair explore consumer motives for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media sites. Using the qualitative technique of critical incidents, they develop a typology of 12 motives for posting eWOM on social media. Their study finds six motives for posting positive eWOM:

- (1) help company;
- (2) altruism;
- (3) express positive feelings;
- (4) help employees;
- (5) product involvement; and
- (6) self-enhancement.

And, six motives for posting negative eWOM:

- (1) altruism;
- (2) resolution-seeking;
- (3) express negative feelings;
- (4) vengeance;
- (5) want to be heard by organization; and
- (6) help company make changes.

Their study re-confirms eight established motives and identifies four new motives. The authors also provide subcategories for each of the 12 motives, thus leading to a more comprehensive and exhaustive listing. Their research demonstrates the importance of monitoring social media posts and offers suggestions for how organizations can better understand how to amplify positive eWOM and perhaps, muffle negative eWOM. The authors discuss many practical implications for organizations, and then conclude by providing several new and stimulating ideas for future research.

In the fourth article, Wu, Xu, Tajdini, Zhang and Song provide a compelling look at earned media in the digital age. In their paper titled "Unlocking Value Through an Extended Social Media Analytics Framework: Insights for New Product Adoption", the authors formulate a new social media analytics framework from which to examine digital earned media by integrating insights from Merton (1949), Campbell (1965), as well as Fan and Gordon (2014). The authors test the proposed framework in three areas:

- (1) social media;
- (2) new product adoption; and
- (3) social media analytics techniques.

Their research demonstrates the value that text mining and sentiment analysis can add to more traditional qualitative research methods. Additionally, as practitioner's digital marketing budgets increase, this research will be integral in assisting marketers and brand managers to create, deploy and monitor social media campaigns, as well as new product development. By using their framework to identify the underlying stages of the social media analytics process, the authors suggest several promising opportunities for scholars to extend this work in this rapidly expanding area of marketing research.

The fifth article uses semi-structured interviews with male users of the popular female-dominated Pinterest platform to explore masculinity and the use of a female-centric SNS. "Challenges to Masculinity in a Feminized Digital Space: Men as Autonomous Online Agents on Pinterest" by Williams, Nielsen, Morrison and Morrison uses a grounded theory-like approach to explore how male "pinners" describe their activities and practices on the female-dominated online consumption space. The study subjects reported that they were hyper-aware of the feminine connotations of Pinterest's gendered usage. However, the platform's usefulness and functionality generally outweighed any masculinity concerns that may have been attached to their usage. This utilitarian justification was common across the study subjects. This research identified four identities that the male pinners used to combat any perceived threats to their masculinity by being Pinterest users. These were:

- the rebel;
- the savvy techie;
- the artisan; and
- the foodie.

This exploratory study showed that, while the male study subjects were not immune to the potential threats to their masculinity, they had developed mechanisms to deal with these issues. This research provides a thought-provoking entry point into the study of digital gender identity.

The sixth article in this Special Issue is an exploratory study of the phenomenon of social media addiction among student millennials. In their paper titled "Exploring Social Media Addiction among Student Millennials", Grau, Kleiser and Bright take the study of internet addiction to a more granular level and concern themselves with the growing social media component of the internet. Rather than using a binary categorization of addiction (non-addiction), the authors provide a new framework with four stages ranging from non-use to addiction. The study involved 129 college students who, among other things, were asked to abstain from all social media. Using a qualitative research approach and thematic analysis, the researchers explored how these student millennials interpreted their social reality. The research revealed that, currently, though some respondents were in the near-addiction phase, most of the study participants were able to exhibit self-control with respect to their social media usage. This study provides a solid platform for further study (both qualitatively and quantitatively) of social media addiction that may ultimately result in a more robust definition and conceptualization of this emerging reality.

The last article, titled "Firm-Level Perspectives on Social Media Engagement: An Exploratory Study" by Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden explores how firms define and consider customer engagement on social networks. The authors argue that, while it is generally agreed that social media is revolutionizing marketing, few companies know how to use it effectively to improve customer engagement. This qualitative study involved interviews with experts currently working at social networking sites, a for-profit company and a not-for-profit organization. These experts represented different functional areas within their organizations. The primary goals of this research were to:

- discern how firms view and utilize social media for engagement; and
- discover what engagement metrics were being utilized by the firms and organizations.

The study results indicated that ambiguity and inconsistency exist with respect to measuring engagement. Metrics like the number of users, number of subscribers and page views were consistently being used by the respondents in the sample, but it was unclear that these metrics truly represented engagement. It appeared that, across interviews, there was a perception that the firms and organizations were not effectively measuring their customer engagement via social media. The authors put forward several compelling propositions based on their research. Additionally, they provide some suggestions to guide future study of social media engagement, how to better measure it and how companies and organizations might use it to achieve a competitive advantage.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles on emerging areas in social media marketing. We hope these articles will inspire you to develop future research papers on numerous areas in social media marketing.

**Anita Whiting**

*College of Business, Clayton State University, Morrow, Georgia, USA*

**David L. Williams**

*Department of Marketing, Dalton State College, Dalton, Georgia, USA, and*

**Joe Hair**

*Marketing and Quantitative Methods, Mobile, Alabama, USA*

### **About the Guest Editors**

Anita Whiting is a Professor of Marketing at Clayton State University. She has recently published in the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* and *Journal of Services Marketing*. Her primary research interests are services marketing, call centers, service employees and social media. Anita Whiting is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: [AWhiting@clayton.edu](mailto:AWhiting@clayton.edu)

David L. Williams is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Dalton State College. He has recently published in the *Journal of Public Affairs*, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* and *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. His primary research interests are social media marketing, social media usage and uncontrolled marketing communications.

Joe Hair is a Distinguished Professor of Marketing and DBA Director, Mitchell College of Business, University of South Alabama. He has authored books, including *MKTG*, CENGAGE Learning, Eleventh edition 2017; *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, Seventh edition, 2010; *Essentials of Business Research Methods*, Third edition, Routledge, 2016; *Essentials of Marketing Research*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, Fourth edition 2017; *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling*, Sage, 2017, Second edition; and *Advanced Issues in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling*, Sage, 2018. He also has published numerous articles in scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Long Range Planning*, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *European Business Review*, *Journal of Advertising* and *Industrial Marketing Management*.