Enhancing Customer Engagement on Business Facebook Pages in the Fuel Retail Sector

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Abstract: Social networks change the way how companies conduct their marketing activities. Potential customers become part of companies' marketing activities instead of just being passive participants. The ability to actively involve customers thus becomes a critical factor in the success of marketing activities. The study aims to determine how the posts' different content on the companies' Facebook pages affects the engagement of the message recipients. A retrospective, longitudinal study approach was used. Five hundred fifty-three posts from the four Slovak largest fuel retail sellers' Facebook pages were analyzed. The results revealed the significant difference in the medians of the passive engagement ($\chi 2$ (3, N = 533) = 85.685, p-value = < 0.0001) and active engagement ($\chi 2$ (3, N = 533) = 85.685, p-value = < 0.0001) according to different content types. The paired rank differences suggest that while entertainment messages (EM) significantly encourage both types of engagement (passive and active), informational messages (IM) and social messages (SM) encourage mainly passive engagement. The study extends the research on active and passive customer engagement, and thus, it contributes directly to understanding engagement and customer experience with social media and expands the knowledge about the Facebook content strategy. Finally, it offers recommendations for future research in the examined area.

Keywords: Content, Engagement, Fuel, Retail, Facebook

1. Introduction

Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter affect how today companies deliver their services (Zilber et al., 2019), and conduct their marketing communication activities (Dušek & Sagapova, 2022). The developments in information communication technologies (Obeng, 2021), and the usage of those innovative networks have also accelerated the digitalization of companies (Shu-Hua, 2022) and have increased their e-commerce activities (Hassan & Lee, 2021) and probabilities to survive (Ključnikov et al., 2022). Moreover, the usage of those networks by companies has not only increased their innovativeness but also their competitiveness (Civelek et al., 2020) to weaken their rivals‘ competitive power (Civelek et al., 2021). Those innovative actions have also increased the peroformance of companies (Ključnikov et al., 2021).

Since many people have mobile phones that enable people to access those networks, there is an increasing interest in marketing activities via those networks (Stefko et al., 2022). In particular, marketing activities are increasingly being transferred to social networks because they easily allow reaching right customers, include them to participate in marketing activities (Rehman et al., 2020), and make them more aware about the benefits of companies' products (Dincă et al., 2019; Stefko et al., 2020a). The ability to actively involve customers in marketing activities becomes a critical factor of companies' success (Rozsa et al., 2020; Godany & Mura, 2021), and profitability (Štefko et al., 2020b), mainly because their resources for traditional forms of marketing are limited (Kotaskova et al., 2020). Social media have a positive impact on the entrepreneurship intention of a student to start doing business (Ojewumi, Fagbenro, 2019) and also for raising of the entrepreneurship in many lines of business (e.g. in services (Ferencakova et al., 2020), tourism (Srovnalíková et al., 2020) or transportation (Bertan, 2020).

Facebook, as the most popular social network in the Slovak Republic (Hootsuite, 2019), allows customers to engage with organizational messages through different tools (Like (in various forms), Share, and Comment) (Cho et al., 2014). However, not all tools indicate the same customer engagement. For instance, sharing and commenting requires more appreciable support from customers, and thus it can be considered as a more engaging behavior (Bitiktas et al., 2020; Cooper et al., 2019; Kent et al., 2020; Ngai et al., 2020; Rakoczy et al., 2019; Rajnoha et al., 2016; Mura et al., 2021; Popp et al., 2018) than liking. Consequently, companies should achieve higher levels of the customers' engagement because it positively impacts outcomes such us sales, competitive advantage, profit, and brand evaluation (Gruss et al., 2020; Harrigan et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020; Rather, 2020; So et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2016, Zámečník et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the link between the

content and customer engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares is still under-researched (Ngai et al., 2020).

Because of the above reasons, the study aims to determine how the different content of the posts on the companies' Facebook pages affects customer engagement to address the mentioned research gap. However, unlike already published studies, which in most cases deals with the influence of post type (f. e. link, status, picture, video, (Siyam et al., 2020; Thongmak, 2015; Villamediana-Pedrosa et al., 2019; Wijonarko et al., 2019)), media richness (Banerjee et al., 2019; Moran et al., 2019) or posts' frequency or timing (Fähnrich et al., 2020; Mariani et al., 2018) on customer engagement, this study focuses on posts' text analysis, specifically in terms of used message type (informational, entertainment, remuneration, social).

The paper contains four sections, besides this introduction. Firstly, it presents a brief theoretical background on customer engagement and social media message categorization. Secondly, the methodology section explains the research context, methods of data collection, and analysis. After that, the results are discussed. Afterward, suggestions for further research and the study's limitation are presented in the conclusion.

2. Literature review

Customer engagement marketing is defined as a company's "deliberate effort to motivate, empower, and measure customer contributions to marketing functions"(Harmeling et al., 2016), beyond purchasing (Kim et al., 2020). Customer engagement (CE) in the online environment refers to the motivational state that occurs through the interactive experience with brand content on social networks and is expressed in the form of relevant cognitive, emotional, and behavioral practices such us sharing company's messages, writing reviews, recommending company's products and other similar activities (Abuljadail et al., 2019; Avnet et al., 2018; Brodie, 2011; Dolan et al., 2019; Eigenraam et al., 2018; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Therefore, this study operationalizes CE as customers' liking, commenting, and sharing behaviors on a company's activities on the Facebook Page (Gruss et al., 2020).

Several authors divide individual customer responses on Facebook (or social media in general) into those that require less or more customer involvement (Cooper et al., 2019; Dolan et al., 2019; Malthouse et al., 2013; van Asperen et al., 2018). Van Asperen et al. (2018) recognize two forms of social media engagement. Passive (engagement) which is based primarily on consuming social media content, and active (engagement) which occurs when customers contribute to social media. Similarly, Cooper et al. (2019) consider liking as a static measure that is not good for engagement measurements because of customers' limited interaction. On the other hand, they indicate that commenting is the highest form of engagement, requiring the customers to write and post their thoughts or tag friends and thus provides them with the opportunity to engage in dialogue with brands and their own social networks simultaneously (Cooper et al., 2019). A highly engaged customer might even choose to distribute an independent review of the company's product or reveal promotional offers that the company might prefer not to expose to a wide audience (Malthouse et al., 2013). In accordance with the above-mentioned research works, the study operationalizes passive engagement customer behaviors which manifests itself as liking (i.e. Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sorry, Anger) of the company content and active engagement as the commenting of the company content. Sharing company content is also considered an active form of engagement, despite the fact that this contradicts with the above findings, mainly due to the fact that by sharing company content, the customers actively identify with the company among their friends. Customer reviews are not classified because they are not the subject of this study.

Based on the Uses and gratifications theory (UGT), which explain how media consumers' social and psychological needs are satisfied by actively choosing media channels and information (Li et al., 2019), social media content can be categorized into four main groups as follows (Dolan et al., 2016): Informational, Entertaining, Remunerative, Relational (social interaction) content. Informational messages contain resourceful and helpful information about the company brand or its products and services. Entertainment messages are a type of messages which contain fun and entertaining information and do not directly encourage the customer to consume the company's products or services such as questions, quiz memes, funny videos. Remuneration company messages include specific monetary and rewards information such as special promotions, trials or other offers. Social messages contain information that usually occurs in personal interaction and may include information such as shared personal experience, sociable events (e.g. Birthdays) or small talk (Dolan et al., 2019; Kujur et al., 2020; Vaičiukynaitė et al., 2018; Seilerová, 2019). In line with the UGT, these four specific types of content result in different expressions of active and passive engagement (Dolan et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

The study aims to determine how the different content of the posts on the companies' Facebook pages affects the engagement of the message recipients. The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- H1: Diverse post content does not lead to different degrees of passive engagement on the companies' Facebook pages.
- H2: Diverse post content does not lead to different degrees of active engagement on the companies' Facebook pages.

A retrospective, longitudinal study approach was used. The four largest companies engaged in the retail sale of fuels in the Slovak republic were selected as participants in the study. Data (posts) from participants' company Facebook pages were extracted using the Fanpage Karma web application (https://www.fanpagekarma.com/) for 12 months period (from 1st August 2019 to 31st July 2020). A total of 556 posts were collected. Thirty-six of them were excluded because they did not contain text; therefore, 553 posts were used for further analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1: The study participants

Participant	Facebook page ID	Number of Posts	% of Total
Benzinol	1089162457824646	109	20.45%
OMV Filling Stations (SK)	342218085894136	148	27.77%
Shell	304290527049134	128	24.02%
Slovnaft	52904571954	148	27.77%
All		**533**	**100.00%**

Source: own calculations

Deductive coding was used to analyze posts' content (independent variable). Firstly, the flat coding frame was set with codes as follows: informational message (IM), entertainment message (EM), remuneration message (RM), social message (SM). Secondly, three doctoral students were hired to assign codes to posts manually. To eliminate cognitive biases, coders checked one another's coding, and the founded differences were resolved by mutual agreement. Table 2 presents the posts coding final results.

Table 2: Posts coding final results

Participant	EM Count Total % Col% Row%	IM Count Total % Col% Row	RM Count Total % Col% Row	SM Count Total % Col% Row	Total Count Total % Col% Row
Benzinol	27	41	24	17	109
	5.07	7.69	4.5	3.19	20.45
	32.14	22.04	22.43	10.9	
	24.77	37.61	22.02	15.6	
OMV Filling Stations (SK)	26	44	30	48	148
	4.88	8.26	5.63	9.01	27.77
	30.95	23.66	28.04	30.77	
	17.57	29.73	20.27	32.43	
Shell	14	50	30	34	128
	2.63	9.38	5.63	6.38	24.02
	16.67	26.88	28.04	21.79	

Participant	EM Count Total % Col% Row%	IM Count Total % Col% Row	RM Count Total % Col% Row	SM Count Total % Col% Row	Total Count Total % Col% Row
	10.94	39.06	23.44	26.56	
Slovnaft	17	51	23	57	148
	3.19	9.57	4.32	10.69	27.77
	20.24	27.42	21.5	36.54	
	11.49	34.46	15.54	38.51	
Total	**84**	**186**	**107**	**156**	**533**
	15.76	**34.9**	**20.08**	**29.27**	

Source: own calculations

The dependent variables were calculated as follows. The passive engagement was calculated as the sum of all forms post's Likes (i.e., Love, Haha, Wow, Sorry, Anger). The active engagement was calculated as the sum of the post's comments and shares. The above procedure corresponds with studies of Cooper et al., 2019; Dolan et al., 2019; Malthouse et al., 2013; van Asperen et al., 2018.

Before data analysis, ANOVA assumptions were checked. The normal quantile plot and the Anderson–Darling test showed that both Passive (p-value < 0.0001) and Active (p-value < 0.0001) engagement data are from a non-normal distribution. Bartlett test of homogeneity of variances showed that data were not from populations with equal variances (Passive engagement data p-value < 0.0001, Active engagement data p-value < 0.0001). Because the ANOVA's assumptions were severely violated Kruskal-Wallis Test instead of an ANOVA was used. SAS JMP 15 was used for all calculations.

4. Results and discussion

The results of the passive engagement data analysis indicate that there is a significant difference in the medians, $\chi 2$ (3, N = 533) = 46.1106, p-value = < 0.0001 (see Tab. 3), and thus H1 can be rejected. Because the overall test is significant, pairwise comparisons among the four groups should be completed.

Table 3: Kruskal-Wallis Tests (Rank Sums) for passive engagement

Level	Count	Score Sum	Expected Score	Score Mean	(Mean-Mean0)/Std0
EM	84	30014.5	22428	357.315	5.856
IM	186	50263.5	49662	270.234	0.355
RM	107	22137.5	28569	206.893	-4.516
SM	156	39895.5	41652	255.74	-1.086
Total	533				

Source: own calculations

The p-values indicates that we should reject the null hypothesis that the paired rank differences in passive engagement are symmetric around zero between SM and RM (p-value = 0.0222), RM and IM (p-value = 0.0002), SM and EM (p-value < 0.0001), IM and EM (p-value < 0.0001), and RM and EM (p-value < 0.0001).

Table 4: Comparisons for each pair using Wilcoxon Method (Passive engagement)

Level	- Level	Score Mean Difference	StdErr Dif	Z	p-Value
SM	RM	21.83	9.54597	2.28683	0.0222

Level	- Level	Score Mean Difference	StdErr Dif	Z	p-Value
SM	IM	-10.1542	10.7329	-0.94608	0.3441
RM	IM	-37.9831	10.27869	-3.69533	0.0002
SM	EM	-41.7582	9.39493	-4.44477	<0.0001
IM	EM	-49,0870	10,26449	-4,78221	<0,0001
RM	EM	-52,3720	8,05785	-6,49950	<0,0001

Source: own calculations

Table 4 also presents the pairwise differences in passive engagement, which can be interpreted as follows: Difference scores above zero mean that the engagement of the message type in the first-row exceeds engagement of the message type in the second-row. Analogically, difference scores below zero mean that the engagement of the message type in the second-row exceeds engagement of the message type in the first-row. Practically speaking, we conclude with 95% certainty that performance (passive engagement) of the social messages (SM) exceeds the performance of the remuneration messages (RM, the median of the difference in performance fall between 1 and 18); that performance of the informational messages (IM) exceeds the performance of the remuneration messages (RM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -22 and -5). Also, we can conclude that the entertainment messages (EM) exceed the performance of the social messages (SM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -77 and -28), informational messages (IM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -76 and -30), and remuneration messages (RM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -99 and -52).

The results of the active engagement data analysis indicate that there is a significant difference in the medians, $\chi 2$ (3, N = 533) = 85.685, p-value = < 0.0001 (see Tab. 5), and thus H2 can be rejected. Because the overall test is significant, pairwise comparisons among the four groups should be completed.

Table 5: Kruskal-Wallis Tests (Rank Sums) for Active engagement

Level	Count	Score Sum	Expected Score	Score Mean	(Mean-Mean0)/Std0
EM	84	34147.5	22428	406.518	9.051
IM	186	47911	49662	257.586	-1.033
RM	107	24300	28569	227.103	-2.999
SM	156	35952.5	41652	230.465	-3.525
Total	533				

Source: own calculations

The p-values indicate that we should reject the null hypothesis that the paired rank differences in active engagement are symmetric around zero between RM and EM (p-value < 0.0001), SM and EM (p-value < 0.0001), and IM and EM (p-value < 0.0001).

Table 6: Comparisons for each pair using Wilcoxon Method (Active engagement)

Level	- Level	Score Mean Difference	StdErr Dif	Z	p-Value
SM	RM	-0.1103	9.53748	-0.01156	0.9908
SM	IM	-18.5580	10.72753	-1.72994	0.0836
RM	IM	-19.6688	10.27209	-1.91478	0.0555
RM	EM	-62.4660	8.05336	-7.75652	<0.0001
SM	EM	-75.3938	9.39155	-8.02783	<0.0001
IM	EM	-80.5645	10.26211	-7.85068	<0.0001

Source: own calculations

Table 6 also presents the pairwise differences in active engagement, which can be interpreted as follows: Difference scores below zero mean that the engagement of the message type in the second-row exceeds engagement of the message type in the first-row. Practically speaking, we conclude with 95% certainty that performance (active engagement) of entertainment messages (EM) exceeds the performance of the informational messages (IM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -165 and -69), social messages (SM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -164 and -63), and remuneration messages (RM, the median of the difference in performance fall between -174 and -65).

The previous results also suggest that while entertainment messages (EM) significantly encourage both types of engagement (passive and active), informational messages (IM) and social messages (SM) encourage mainly passive engagement.

The results of this research in line with Dolan et al. (2019) or Svec & Mura (2020) demonstrate that the effectiveness of different types of social media content have varying effects on social media engagement behavior. Contrary to Vaičiukynaitė & Gatautis (2018) and Mura et al. (2018) they show that in the fuel's retail sector social messages do not support active engagement.

5. Conclusions

As part of their social media marketing efforts, many company brands seek to communicate with the customers online. They create Facebook Fan Pages, submitting posts, and try to involve customers in their marketing activities through liking, sharing, and commenting published content. The importance of content is frequently highlighted (Eggers et al., 2017). Especially in the service sector, where the use of social media platforms is the most significant (Bejtkovsky et al., 2018). However, few studies consider the effort and resources the content creation process takes, or what alternative tactics can be employed (Kraus et al., 2019; Mészáros et al., 2019) to create compelling content. Firms in manufacturing industry can be example for this fact since they implement technological developments into their operations more than other firms from various industries (Civelek, & Krajčík, 2022).

The study aimed to determine how the different content of the posts on the companies' Facebook pages affects the engagement of the customers. The results revealed that different content types (Informational, Entertaining, Remunerative, Social) affect differently passive and active engagement. Specifically, entertainment messages (EM) significantly encourage both types of engagement (passive and active), informational messages (IM), and social messages (SM) encourage mainly passive engagement.

These findings show that social media marketers should better select content based on their marketing goals, as well as provide a potential explanation for the success of campaigns, gingerly. For instance, they should be careful with using entertainment messages even if they cause a high degree of engagement, because their significance for achieving other marketing outputs may be questionable.

Although the study extends the research on passive and active customer engagement in relation to the content type, the results should be generalized with consideration of the following limitations. Firstly, the study focused exclusively on one social network channel (Facebook). Secondly, posts on the Facebook pages in the fuel's retail sector were analyzed.

In the future research, it would be useful to address the limitations of this research and other content strategy elements, such as another network channel, and passive and active customer engagement, according to the types of appeals.

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