

Online brand community usage: a motivation of consumption approach

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A Thesis

in

John Molson School of Business

Presented in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Science (Administration) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2015

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

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This research explores consumers' hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using an online brand community and relates them to two types of community usage behavior: browsing and participation. The effects on variables closely linked to business performance (purchase intentions, website revisit intention, brand loyalty) are also examined. Analysis of data collected from 358 members of different online brand communities reveals that utilitarian motivations relate more strongly to participation in the online brand community. Whereas community members with high levels of participation do not show purchase intentions or loyalty toward the brand, community members with higher levels of browsing do. For practitioners, the finding that participation in the brand community does not necessarily result in increased purchase intention and loyalty toward the brand is critical.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Bianca Grohmann, for her constant guidance on this project, from the beginning to the end. Having never been involved in a project of such magnitude, I felt lost yet overwhelmed when I first began. Her assistance allowed me to move past this stage, with her patient and kindness style of supervision. Her professional insights provide me the direction to explore my own passion and interest. This has no doubt helped my personal and professional growth, and I am grateful to her for her patience and support.

I would also like to thank my family for the unconditional support during my thesis writing process, both financially and spiritually. Besides, I also appreciate the encouragement from my friends, Shumang Wang, He Yang, and Zhefan Chen, who were on my side when I was writing my thesis.

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1. Introduction

The combination of a knowledge-based and interactive communication, together with the enormous development of information technologies, has led to the growth of online brand communities. Derived from the concept of brand community, many companies put more effort on developing a strong online brand community. Online brand communities provide a platform to build and promote customer-brand relationships. Marketers can use online brand communities as a versatile brand-building tool to identify current customers, distribute new advertising messages for products and services, and review comments and suggestions for future improvement. Consumers who participate in online brand communities, on the other hand, may exchange information between each other, deliver thoughts to the marketers and also develop friendships on the basis of their common interest or passion.

However, despite the undeniable commercial potential and popularity of online brand communities, research that enhances current understanding of what motivates consumers to interact with the brand through online brand communities is only emerging. Consumers' motivations and reasons for belonging and participating in traditional brand communities are fairly well documented (Algesheimer et al. 2005; Ridings and Gefen 2004; Wang and Fesenmaier 2003), but such knowledge is still lacking with regard to online brand communities, which allow consumers to interact with multiple brands with relatively little effort.

The current research regarding online brand community is rooted in a motivation of consumption perspective. It adopts the view that consumption motivation includes both utilitarian and hedonic dimensions. Utilitarian motivation is defined as goal-oriented and rational, concerned with effectiveness and instrumental value, whereas hedonic motivation implies fun seeking, play, enjoyment and experiences (Babin et al. 1994; Batra and Ahtola 1990; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Voss et al. 2003). Both dimensions have been found to explain traditional consumer behavior (Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Babin et al. 1994), as well as, more recently, online consumer behavior (Cotte et al. 2006; Hartman et al. 2006). There is a wide recognition among researchers of the utilitarian value of online communities for consumers (Bateman et al. 2010; Casaló et al. 2010), but their hedonic value has received somewhat less attention (Sanchez-Franco and Rondan-Cataluña 2010).

The aim of the current thesis is to develop a model for consumer behavior in the context of web 2.0. In particular, the relationship between online brand community members' hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using the community and their usage behavior will be examined. The current study attempt to answers the following research question: How do online brand community members' hedonic and utilitarian motivations influence their usage behavior? Online community usage behaviors are classified in two types: browsing and participation (Casaló et al. 2010; Cotte et al. 2006; Novak et al. 2000), which are currently the most prominent usage behaviors online.

To complete the model and to increase our understanding regarding downstream effects of online brand community usage behaviors, the outcomes of the usage behavior in terms of purchase and website revisit intentions as well as brand loyalty are explored. Although these indicators do not necessarily mean that actual purchasing will take place, they do appear to possess predictive power (Jamieson and Bass 1989). There are three reasons to explore the outcomes. Firstly, understanding only motivations and behavior is inadequate for practitioners who are interested in the economic value of their marketing initiatives. Linking behavioral actions to attitudinal outcomes will provide a more in-depth understanding of consumer behavior and insight into the type of behavior that should be encouraged in order to achieve a positive impact on sales. Secondly, research supports the interconnected link between these attitudinal factors and business performance (Luo and Homburg 2007; Zeithaml et al. 1996), and while there are also mixed results and doubt towards using these metrics (Chandon et al. 2005; Morgan and Rego 2006), their combined effect is bound to predict business performance better than only one metric or no metric at all. Thirdly, online brand communities are usually open to everyone, including non-customers. Purchase intentions reflect online brand community users' potential future purchases, thus capturing the future value of community members who might currently be non-buyers.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: We begin with a brief review of the theoretical background, including a discussion of important concepts such as brand community and motivation of consumption. Then, we develop the hypotheses and model, followed by an empirical test of the hypotheses and description of the results. We conclude with a discussion of theoretical and practical implications. Lastly, limitations and avenues for future research are discussed.

2. Theoretical Background

The present literature review explores the research on online brand communities from a brand management perspective. Research into online brand communities is examined with particular emphasis on usage behaviors and their impact on purchase intention, website revisit intention and brand loyalty. This literature review begins with the concept of communities and how this sociological concept applies to a marketing perspective in terms of brand community; then the concept of online brand community is discussed as well as findings regarding its consequences; next the focal consumption behaviors as well as consumption motivations are introduced. The present thesis focuses on utilitarian and hedonic consumption motivations, and these two motivations are distinguished from the timing usage patterns, sensation seeking, and information seeking aspects. A discussion of the research hypotheses tested in this thesis follows.

2.1 Community

The current subsections examine the concept of communities, brand communities, online communities and online brand communities. First, traditional communities are introduced, which emphasize shared geography. Then brand communities are defined, which explain how communities can develop based on shared consumption activities. Next, online communities are introduced as society is becoming more dependent on the internet. Then, online brand community is investigated. The definition of online brand community used in this research is based on Muniz and O'Guinn's work (2001). Lastly, a summary of communities and brand community related concepts are outlined.

2.1.1 What is a community?

Community based research is a fruitful topic in marketing capitalism and consumer behaviour (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Although community is a core construct in the social sciences and embraces the most historical topics, it is also one of the most complicated and contested topics (Kozinets 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The debate over community means there are many contrasting definitions of community (Lawrence 1995). Early definitions of community emphasize on the geographic features of a place binds a community together (Karp, Stone and Yoels 1977; Tonnies 1912, 1967). On the other hand, as the definition of community developed, it shifted to an emphasis on social interaction and shared meanings. McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest communities comprise membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. This definition is similar with Lawrence's (1995) definition, which also acknowledges the importance of social interactions. However, Lawrence (1995) also features the importance of membership rules and standards.

Overall, community can be explained with three criteria according to Hillery (1955): 1) locality, which demonstrates that the community is based on a certain region that differentiates it from other communities; 2) social interaction, which refers to the means of relationship building among community members; 3) bond, which gives the member of a community a feeling of comfort and a sense of belonging.

2.1.2 What is a brand community?

The shift from locality to shared meaning and values in defining community allows us to explore communities without geographical boundaries and through other attributes such as identification based on brands or consumption activities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002).

One of the earliest definitions of brand communities underlines consumption and defines particular communities as "subcultures of consumption" (Schouten and McAlexander 1995, 48). Subcultures of consumption are characterised as having a hierarchical social structure shared beliefs and values, unique jargons, rituals and modes of expressions (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Cova and Pace (2006) also acknowledge that brand communities contain common interest

in a brand and a separate social entity in a definition similar to that of Schouten and McAlexander (1995). However, criticism around the term “subcultures of consumption” (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) suggests that there is ambiguity regarding the term “sub”, which does not indicate if it represents a segment of a larger culture or a subordinate of a dominant culture (Kozinets 2001). Other critics on the other hand, suggest “subculture” implies a unique identity opposed to the majority (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001).

From an alternative approach, McAlexander et al. (2002) extend the traditional customer-brand relationship model and customer-brand-customer Triad model to a customer-centric integration model. McAlexander et al. (2002) reveal that focal customers play a key role to connect the brand, product, other customers, and marketers. As a result, consumers and their experiences are the focal points to form and maintain communities. Customers who actively participate in a brand community serve as missionaries who deliver marketing messages to other community members; they are also less likely to switch brands and more willing to provide feedback about the products they have been using. If proactive actions are applied to these focal customers, the integration of brand community is enhanced and brand loyalty increases. McAlexander et al. (2002) highlight the importance of consumer experience and consider the social context where the experience occurs in their definition of brand community. Stokburger-Sauer (2010), on the other hand, empirically tested a slightly modified customer-centric integration model proposed by McAlexander et al. (2002), including outcomes of the customer-brand relation including satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy. Stokburger-Sauer (2010) reveals that the consequences of the formation of strong ties between consumers and brand, namely consumer-brand identification, has positive effects on satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. The study also indicates that the effect of offline activities, such as event marketing is significantly stronger than that of online tools such as bulletin boards and expert chats in creating brand-customer relationships.

Integrated with consumer behaviour research, Muniz and O’Guinn (2001, 418) bring up the concept of brand communities as “social entities that reflect the situated embeddedness of brands in the day-to-day lives of consumers and the ways in which brands connect the consumer to the brand, and consumer to consumer.” A brand community starts based on its core asset, the brand itself, and grows by building relationships among members interested in the brand. Muniz and Schau (2005) explore how a grassroots brand community operates when the centered

product Apple Newton is abandoned. They reveal that even the product is discontinued; there are still a large number of users who actively participate in the brand's online forum. Among these consumers, transformative experiences between consumers and product show the trace of magic, religions or the supernatural, which also potentially contribute to the nature of brand community (Muniz and Schau 2005).

Devasagayam and Buff (2008) extend the study of brand community to a multidimensional conceptualization and empirically investigate membership and integration in a brand community. Their focal brand is a school basketball team and the study supports a two-dimensional brand community construct comprising a temporal and spatial dimensions. The spatial dimension was conceptualized as a two-dimensional construct based on preference for seeking membership and participating in brand community through physical or virtual interactions with the brand. The temporal dimension was conceptualized as a two-dimensional construct based on preference for seeking membership and participating in brand community through synchronous or asynchronous interactions with the brand. Although the study uses a non-traditional brand (i.e., sports team), it enriches the understanding of how a brand is perceived and consumed.

2.1.3 Online community

The definitions of communities have varied over time, which reflect the different forms of community and indicate that communities are not always geographically bound. Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002) indicated that a conceptualization of community should not be limited to social aspects, but also have focus on spatial aspects. On the other hand, the recent development of electronic communication and the growth of internet uses suggest that social relationships can exist at a distance (Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002, 346) Consequently, the internet has played a significant role in re-shaping traditional communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The transition from traditional to modern communities shifts the focus from unmarked commodities to branded goods, from personal selling to mass media advertising, and from communal citizen to individual consumers (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). These changes also resulted in modifications to the definitions of community.

According to Armstrong and Hagel (1999), there are four types of online communities based on user needs, including transaction, relationship, interest, and fantasy. Communities of transaction are groups of people with a purpose of exchanging products or service online. Communities of relationships, on the other hand, are groups of people who are aware of each other's identities and interact regularly to build up a relationship history. Communities of interest are groups of people who interact with each other based on the limited subjects of mutual interest. Lastly, communities of fantasy are groups of people who are unaware of each other's identities and interact in a fictional environment to create new personalities and stories.

The booming development of the internet has changed the market dynamics and influenced traditional communities in a number of ways. Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002) suggest that the internet weakens private communities by diminishing social contact with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. They also suggest that the internet may affect a sense of public community by reducing public places gatherings, commitment and service to organizations and local community. Notwithstanding these concerns, the popular usage of the internet still brings many opportunities for marketers (Kozinets 2002a).

One of these opportunities is that the internet can be used to *create* communities or transform existing communities. In contrast to Wellman and Haythornthwaite (2002), Hagel and Armstrong (1997) believe that community formation has been central to the internet since its early creation. Anderson (2005) agrees with Hagel and Armstrong (1997) and states that the internet provides infrastructure for enhancing the development of communities from two aspects. First, the internet expands the reach of community by reducing barriers for interaction (Anderson 2005). The internet has been praised for encouraging connections and communications among people regardless of race, religion, gender or geography (Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002). Second, the internet increases the effectiveness of communications as it provides a space for social interactions where people with similar interest will meet (Anderson 2005).

In recent years, the ability of the internet to encourage social cohesion and social interaction has meant online activity has advanced to user-driven technologies such as blogs and social networks (Smith 2009). The creation of online social networks on internet platforms such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter have been integrated into consumers' everyday lives (Smith 2009). The usage of online social networks is growing rapidly. For example, Facebook had a 217% increase of visitors in April 2009 compared to April 2008 (Smith 2009). In 2009,

social network usage exceeded web-based email usage for the first time in history (Wilson 2009). Undoubtedly online communities are a growing opportunity for social interaction.

2.1.4 Online brand community

According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), a brand community is a specialised non-geographically bound community where brand admirers amalgamate. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) also conceptualise brand communities with three core components: shared consciousness of kind, presence of shared rituals and traditions, and a shared sense of moral responsibility. These three components are fundamental to all online brand communities and will elaborate more in details.

The first important element in a community by Muniz and O'Guinn is "consciousness of kind" which is the shared intrinsic connection felt among community members. It is a shared attitudes or perception that reflects a collective sense of similarity from other members in the same community. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) found that members of a community felt a strong connection with one another and they termed it as "they sort of know each other" even if they have never met. This is the central facet of a brand community. Consciousness of kind is driven by legitimacy and oppositional brand loyalty. The former refers to the process of differentiating between the true members of a community and those who are not, and the latter refers to the process through which members of a brand community identify what the brand is not and who the brand community members are not. The second component is shared rituals and traditions, which is a symbolic form of communication; in other words, the fulfilled satisfaction gained from repeated community experience is acted out over time in a systematic fashion. The presence of shared rituals and traditions is reinforced in an online brand community by showing appreciation for the history of the brand as well as sharing brand stories. Online brand community members connect with each other through brand experience by sharing stories. Through their special meaning and their repetitive nature, rituals contribute significantly to the establishment and preservation of a community's collective sense of self, which plays a role in building community identity (Laroche et al. 2012). Rituals stabilize this identity by clarifying expected roles, delineating boundaries within and without community, and defining rules so that members know that "this is the way our community is" (Wolin and Bennett 1984). Finally, the third component is a felt sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole as well as to its

members (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Moral responsibility has two main functions in communities, including supporting community survival through reasoning and recognizing right and wrong in the community, and seeking out help from each other in their consumption behavior by disseminating information (Laroche et al. 2012). In summary, Muniz and O'Guinn's (2001) three-component conceptualization of online brand community is one of the most widely accepted definitions of online brand community.

Online brand community is one type of online community that can be classified based on its host: 1) consumer-initiated communities voluntarily built by their members and 2) company-initiated communities built by the companies that owns the brand in order to establish a relationship with consumers and induce productive feedback from them (Henri and Pudelko, 2003). Generally speaking, brand communities have a commercial focus and are established by marketers to achieve specific marketing goals (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Regardless the host of online brand community, it represents the real and legitimate form of community that embrace the development of the internet and identify with postmodern consumers (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2011)

Much research on brand communities focuses on consumer durable products. Vehicles and motorcycles have received particular interest. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) examine brand communities of Ford Bronco and Saab to explore the characteristics, processes and composition of brand communities. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig (2002) investigate brand communities of Jeep and Harley Davison to provide a broader view of brand communities. Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann's (2005) reveal customer relationships and how these relationships influence member's intentions and behaviours to participate in brand communities based on European car clubs. Besides, Macintosh is also a brand receiving research interest by Belk and Tumbat (2005), who propose that community members have extreme devotion towards certain brands. This brand cult extends the understanding of the virtual cult-like behaviour consumers have towards brands and encompassing role brands play in consumer's lives. Cova and Pace (2006) on the other hand, research into the online brand community of convenience product and identify the community differences from niche luxury products.

From a commercial perspective, online brand communities bring a number of benefits to marketers as the internet provides an effective medium to contact customers and maintain

relationships (Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu 2008). Poynter (2008) suggests that brand managers need to engage with consumers and can communicate with consumers through social networks such as Facebook. The benefits of maintain customer relationships through online brand communities include measuring community effort, tracking successful campaigns, identify potential problems or innovations with the products (Hanson and Kalyanam 2007). Besides, online brand communities also affect branding consequences such as brand loyalty (Anderson 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), having a brand as the core of the community will directly influence all four brand equity components: sharing information, enhancing the brand's culture and history, and providing assistance and contact with consumers. On the other hand, although there is less research into the benefits of online brand communities to consumers, online communities provide platforms to consumers to express their personal thoughts, reactions and opinions more easily (Dellarocas 2003). Infrastructures present in online brand communities such as message boards, chat rooms, and online forums provided the contacts with not only acquaintances but also strangers whenever they want (Hanson and Kalyanam 2007). Therefore, social interaction is not limited by geographic region and time frame, and reinforced by common interest.

Although the above research contributes to the understanding of online brand communities, there are a few gaps. First, few studies have focused on brand communities that primarily exist online. Most studies use ethnographic techniques such as face-to-face interviews as the core methodology to investigate online brand communities. For example, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) combine the findings from local neighbourhoods brand communities with online brand communities. This approach does not provide an understanding of the underlying process of online brand community participation. Second, the primarily research focuses on durable products. There is a clear gap for soft goods such as cosmetics or beauty products. Third, most of the studies were conducted in the U.S, whereas studies outside the U.S market are lacking.

2.1.5 Summary of the literature on community

This review of literature reveals the shift of the definitions of community from traditional perspectives to modern days. The rise of the internet plays an important role in shaping the definitions of brand community. Research on online brand community is a relatively recent topic because of the novelty of the internet. Especially the presence of social networks only goes back to the past ten years.

Current literature into online brand communities does not pertain to any specific brands or product, which indicate that the potential differences between differently positioned brands. This presents opportunities to extend the research of online brand communities by considering differently positioned brands or products. Investigating utilitarian brands and hedonic brand online brand communities may be beneficial and possibly further understanding of online brand communities.

2.2 Online brand community engagement

The above sections have discussed the definition, development, and outcomes related research into online brand communities. However, online brand community usage behavior is an important construct, which should not be ignored.

Participation is the key for building a strong brand community, which can increase customer loyalty, reduce marketing costs, and generate fresh ideas for growing the business (Fournier and Lee 2009). Consumer engagement is seen both as a strategic imperative for establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage, and as a valuable predictor of future business performance (Sedley 2008). Specifically, Neff (2007) views consumer engagement as a primary driver of sales growth, while Voyles (2007) suggests consumer engagement enhances profitability. The Marketing Science Institute's 2010–2012 Research Priorities (MSI — Marketing Science Institute 2010) emphasize the need for further research addressing the consumer/customer engagement concept. Within the broader priority area of “Understanding Customer Experience and Behavior,” the MSI identifies “customer engagement” as a key research area contributing to enhanced academic insight into consumer behavior in complex, interactive and/or co-creative environments. Further, the 2010 Journal of Service Research

Special Issue, which includes a number of papers addressing “customer engagement,” directly responds to this MSI Research Priority.

Within online brand communities, members’ interactions can be observed in the form of engagement behaviors, defined as voluntary behavioral manifestations that have a community or brand-focus. A few examples of engagement behaviors include participating in online events, sharing brand-related information, creating new brand-related knowledge, and suggesting product innovation (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998).

Marketers' attempts to facilitate engagement behaviors by providing consumers with convenient platforms such as message boards, real-time live chats, and on/offline events have produced mixed results. In some online brand communities, such as for the Honda CR-V and also for Ford's Mustang, consumers actively share ideas, expertise, and relevant files. However, it is not difficult to find online brand communities where postings get very few views and zero responses. When engagement ceases, the fabric of relationships separates, and the online brand community ceases to be a community. Given the essential role of engagement behavior to the functioning of online brand community as a communication channel and to the very sustainability of online brand communities, the identification and application of theoretic frameworks is important for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand mechanisms driving engagement.

2.3 Hedonic and utilitarian consumption

Researchers tend to define consumer behaviour from many different perspectives (Best and Coney 2000; De Mooij 2004; Hawkins, Kotler 1997; Kotler 2011; Solomon, Marshall and Stuart 2011; Solomon and Rabolt 2004). They realise that consumer behaviour happens not only at the moment of purchase. It is an on-going process. It occurs before, during, and after the actual buying experience (Ling, Chai, and Piew 2010; Solomon, Marshall, and Stuart 2011; Solomon and Rabolt 2004). Consumers’ individual needs, motivations, and desires make consumer behaviour difficult to study and measure. The present thesis investigates consumer behaviour from a motivation of consumption perspective with a particular focus on hedonic and utilitarian consumption. The subsection includes a discussion of hedonic and utilitarian consumption theory,

the critiques on the conceptualizations of hedonic and utilitarian consumption, an introduction of hedonic and utilitarian web consumption, and a summary of hedonic and utilitarian consumption.

2.3.1 Hedonic and utilitarian consumption theory

According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products. Based on Hirschman and Holbrook's definition (1982), multisensory refers to the experience through multiple sensory modalities including tastes, sounds, scents, tactile impressions, and visual images. In order to respond to multisensory impressions, consumers compare their internal images with external stimuli. For example, smelling a perfume may cause the consumer not only to perceive and encode its scent but also to generate internal imagery containing sights, sounds and tactile sensations, all of which are also "experienced". There are two types of internal multisensory images. One is historic imagery, which involves recalling an event that actually did occur. The other is fantasy imagery, which occurs when the consumer responds by producing a multisensory image not drawn directly from prior experience (Singer 1966). On the other hand, there is another type of response related to hedonic consumption involves emotional arousal. Emotions represent motivational phenomena with characteristic neurophysiological, expressive and experiential components (Izard and Beuchler 1980). They include feelings such as joy, jealousy, fear, rage and rapture (Freud 1955). Emotive response is both psychological and physiological in nature, generating altered states in both the mind and body (Orstein 1977; Schacter and Singer 1962).

On the other hand, utilitarian consumption, which is also viewed as traditional consumption, has been described as task related, and rational (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Engel et al. 1993; Sherry 1990b). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) compare the differences between the utilitarian and hedonic consumptions from four aspects: mental constructs, product classes, product usage, and individual differences. From a marketing perspective, there are three distinct components in mental constructs, which include belief, affect and intention (Holbrook 1978). The traditional or utilitarian approach focuses on the verbal information due to the traditional economic view of products as objective, and consumers desire to maximize utility. As a result, tangible qualities and utilitarian performance are the primary determinants for the consumers. The hedonic

approach, however, focuses on the emotional wants, namely the intangible aspects. Product classes are also differentiated along the lines of utilitarian and hedonic consumption. Traditional consumer research has tended to focus on packaged goods (e.g., toothpaste, cigarettes, cereal, detergent, beer) and major durables (e.g., appliances, automobiles) as objects of study (Holbrook 1980). In contrast, hedonic consumer research investigates the performing arts (e.g., opera, ballet, modern dance, legitimate theater), the plastic arts (e.g., painting, photography, sculpture, crafts) and popular culture (e.g., movies, rock concerts, fashion apparel). The product usage differences between traditional and hedonic consumption is that the former emphasises on the prediction and explanation of brand choice, and the latter one focuses on usage experience. Consequently, product and consumer interaction is very different and the levels of mental energy requirement such as emotional and imaginable responses level are diverse. The individual differences between utilitarian and hedonic consumption, according to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), are their strategic orientations. Utilitarian consumption is measured through behaviours such as brand loyalty, high usage rate, or low satisfaction. Hedonic consumption, on the other hand, realises the individual differences such as ethnic groups, social class and gender that affect consumers' emotional responses.

In short, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, 98) describe consumers as either “problem solvers” or in terms of consumers seeking “fun, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment.” This dichotomy reveals different motivations of consumption behaviors. From a utilitarian motivation perspective, consumers are goal-oriented and concern with time and efficiency, whereas hedonic motivation is embedded in potential entertainment and enjoyment, which arises from consumers' experiences (Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson 2001).

In summary, ample evidence suggests that hedonic and utilitarian motivations affect consumption behavior (Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Babin et al. 1994; Batra and Ahtola 1990; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). It is further suggested that utilitarian motivations relate to goal-oriented and rational behaviors, whereas hedonic motivations are concerned with fun, playfulness and enjoyment (Babin et al. 1994; Batra and Ahtola 1991). Batra and Ahtola (1990) subsequently found that consumers derived value from consumption bi-dimensionally, enjoying both instrumental (utilitarian) and experiential (hedonic) benefits.

2.3.2 Critiques of the conceptualization of hedonic consumption

The conceptualization of hedonic consumption made by Hirschman and Holbrook's (1982) makes a powerful contribution to the consumption behaviour literature. Hedonic consumption is tied theoretically to several behavioural sciences as well as motivation research and product symbolism in marketing theory. The conceptualization of hedonic consumption acknowledges the differences in the physical and emotional involvement in consumption behaviour and provides groundwork for extending consumer behaviour research. The scale development and validation are accomplished by Batra and Ahtola (1990), and refined by Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann (2003), which make it possible to measure the dimensions of consumption. However, there are a few potential gaps that need additional investigation.

First, this conceptual work calls for further empirical study, particular in a cyber-environment, as the internet has become essential in modern society. Consumption behaviour has extended to the online environment as almost everything can be achieved online. Companies are also eager to bring their product and services online to fulfill consumer's needs. To study the online consumption behaviour will help companies to identify, develop and adjust their business strategies. Second, services as a product also requires more attention. As the discussion earlier, services have the potential to arouse emotional response, which fulfills hedonic consumption motivations. When services are provided online, it provides the opportunity to extend the current knowledge of consumption behaviour. Lastly, more industries need to be included in research, as previous studies focus mainly on durable products (e.g., automobiles, laptops) or services such as financial services and entertainment (Klaus and Maklan, 2007).

2.3.3 Hedonic and utilitarian web consumption

A recent research stream has focused on the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of web consumption, which was divided into two aspects: value creation through different usage activities and different information system types (Cotte et al. 2006; Hartman et al. 2006; Kim et al. 2012; López and Ruiz 2011). According to the first view, web consumption incorporates a multitude of behaviors (browsing, searching, chatting, shopping, etc.) that can be seen as inherently practical, objective and goal-directed, or subjective and experiential (Cotte et al. 2006;

Hartman et al. 2006). According to the second view, web environments (news sites, discussion forums, video services, etc.) in themselves, or in their features (security, accessibility, quickness, etc.), may be hedonic or utilitarian, or a mixture of both (Bernardo et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2012; van der Heijden 2004). However, regardless of varieties of online activities or different information systems and their features, the hedonic or utilitarian values of web consumptions are determined by the degree of utility or enjoyment provided for the user. Thus, both the nature of the context as well as the motivation to use a website will determine the kind of usage behavior in which the user engages (Cotte et al. 2006; van der Heijden 2004).

2.3.4 Summary of hedonic and utilitarian consumption

This section discusses the definitions of hedonic and utilitarian consumption, as well as the comparison between these two; it also provides notions of different consumption motivations, and critiques for further research. This section provides the theoretical background and draws the boundaries for the current thesis.

2.4 Research model and hypotheses

The proposed research model is based on the theoretical background discussed above. The model explores the relationships between hedonic and utilitarian motivations and online brand community usage behaviors, as well as purchase intention, website revisit intention, and brand loyalty.

2.4.1. Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for using brand community

Previous research findings indicate the presence of both hedonic and utilitarian dimensions in web usage behavior in general; however, very few attempts have been made to model both types of motivation for using online brand communities. Online brand community behavior and technology acceptance models (Casaló et al. 2010; Davis 1989) include the dimension of perceived usefulness, which by definition indicates an underlying utilitarian dimension. Therefore, it is closely related to utilitarian motivations for engaging in online

participation (Childers et al. 2002). In addition, the perceived usefulness of a technological application or an online brand community has been found to have a positive effect on their use (Casaló et al. 2010; Davis 1989). However, the more experiential dimension and the enjoyment value of online communities have received relatively less attention.

The motivations for using online brand community can be classified as hedonic and utilitarian. As discussed earlier, utilitarian motivations involve achieving a certain goal through the community, such as finding useful information before making a purchase decision (Babin et al. 1994; Childers et al. 2002; Cotte et al. 2006; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Hedonic motivations, on the other hand, refer to the search for fun and entertainment from the community experience itself. Further, utilitarian motivations for using a community is expected to be related to obtaining useful information on the object of interest, for example, and making consumption-related decisions in a more efficient manner. Hedonic motivations, on the other hand, are likely to be related to finding a good way to spend time, wanting to be entertained and having fun while visiting the online brand community (Poyry, Parvinen and Malmivaara 2013).

Notice that motivational dimensions are not mutually exclusive or fixed, and may co-exist and change depending on the user's situation and needs (Babin et al. 1994; Cotte et al. 2006). A consumer may visit one community to complete a task at a given time but he/she might visit the same community in order to pass time and to be entertained. However, previous research findings indicate that consumers usually have a tendency to lean more towards one end of the hedonic versus utilitarian motivation spectrum than the other, depending on their inherent time-planning style (Cotte et al. 2006).

2.4.2. Online brand community usage behavior

Usage behaviors on the internet can be categorized as information search, exploratory browsing, entertainment, and shopping (Cotte et al. 2006). However, online communities usually show a more limited set of behaviors, depending on the technical and functional platform. There are two main types of members' behaviors identified in the online community literature. The term quiet member usually refers to someone who reads posts by others but rarely posts anything themselves, whereas the term communicative members refers to those who take a more active approach by interacting with the community (Hammond 2000). Similarly, Burnett (2000)

categorizes online community behaviors as interactive and non-interactive.

As online communities exist exclusively online, they are only able to function through the production and consumption of content by members. Many word-of-mouth (WOM) studies show that information provided by consumers is influential in the consumer decision-making process (Brown and Reingen 1987; Engel et al. 1969). Research results on WOM in the online context (eWOM) suggest that a similar effect is evident in online environments and communities (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh 2004; Jepsen 2006), further highlighting the importance of content.

Consuming content created by others is how members of online communities both access and transfer informational and social value (Bateman et al. 2010; Welser et al. 2007). Content is consumed through reading posts or viewing videos and images added by other community members (Bateman 2010), thus representing non-interactive community behavior (Burnett 2000). The term browsing has multiple meanings depending on the context, but it is generally defined as a type of search behavior characterized by the user actively scanning an environment when moving through it. It can be goal-directed or non-goal-directed, planned or unplanned (Chang and Rice 1993).

Producing content for a community means participating in the community, and it represents an interactive, contributive community usage behavior (Burnett 2000; Casaló et al. 2010). Wiertz and de Ruyter (2007) describe participation as the foundation of building shared knowledge within company-hosted online communities. Users of community pages participate in the brand community by generating content, such as posting comments on other users' posts, posting questions related to the services or the community picture in general, as well as posting product reviews and experiences.

2.4.3 Hypotheses

The proposed research model derives from the literature on the usage behavior in online communities. According to Cotte et al. (2006), users' hedonic/utilitarian motivations determine their usage behaviors. The motivations are based on the values or benefits that consumers seek from consumption (Babin et al. 1994). Therefore, consumers' behavior reflects their values and ideals.

For the purpose of the present study, motivation is defined as a cause to an action (Eccles and Wigfield 2002). The utilitarian and hedonic motivations represent different causes; therefore, the actions should be different (Ryan and Deci 2000; Schiefele 1999). Linking usage behaviors to performance and brand outcomes provides further understanding of marketing effectiveness in the real world.

Van der Heijden (2004) extends the traditional technology acceptance model by suggesting that perceived enjoyment might influence users' intentions to use hedonic information systems, such as online communities. This idea relates to findings that pleasure-oriented consumers may engage in interaction with a web environment just for the sake of the interaction (Childers et al. 2001; Kozinets 1999). Besides, Dholakia et al. (2004) discovered that the enjoyment value of an online brand community has a positive effect on participation behavior in the form of engaging in conversations with other group members. In addition, Cotte et al. (2006) find that web users seeking hedonic benefits from their usage are less concerned with their time spending than users seeking utilitarian benefits, and are more likely to exhibit recreational usage behaviors. Online browsing, on the other hand, been found associated with sensory simulation seeking and web use experiences (Cotte et al. 2006; Moe 2003; Novak et al. 2003; Pace 2004).

In online environments, browsing can be curiosity-based; variety seeking and risk-taking, and those consumers explore new sites and click on unfamiliar links to find something new and interesting regardless of time and effort (Cotte et al. 2006; Novak et al. 2000). All of the characteristics of exploratory browsing relate to the features of hedonic motivations as hedonic motivations include seeking of play, fantasy and experiences (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Voss et al. 2003). Additionally, there is evidence that obtaining information about something consumers are interested in is not necessary for current purchase-related needs (Bloch et al. 1989), and they just enjoy the process (Mathwick and Rigdon 2004). Users browsing a brand community page are exposed to sensory stimulation through multimedia content, and the hypothesis proposed as following:

Hypothesis 1: Hedonic motivations are positively related to participation behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Hedonic motivations are positively related to browsing behavior.

Utilitarian motivations for engaging in a particular type of behavior usually concern completing a task in an efficient, timely manner (Babin et al. 1994; Cotte et al. 2006). Therefore, utilitarian consumers who are motivated to use an online community are not likely to want to engage in time-consuming activities such as writing posts or comments, and are more concerned with finding content that suits their purposes (Dholakia et al. 2004; Kozinets 1999). In the general web usage context, Cotte et al. (2006) find that utilitarian motivations have a strong positive relationship with search behavior. Bateman et al. (2010), on the other hand, discovered that the cost/benefit ratio of engaging in a behavior positively affected thread-related reading behavior in online communities, but had no effect on posting. According to Bateman et al. (2010), users seeking instrumental value from the community only engage in behaviors of the most direct value to them. However, users may also browse to build up their knowledge for future use (Bloch et al. 1986). Browsing the community page could therefore reflect utilitarian motivations even if the user is not currently looking for a specific piece of information (Moe 2003). Therefore, the following purposed:

Hypothesis 3: Utilitarian motivations are negatively related to participation behavior.

Hypothesis 4: Utilitarian motivations are positively related to browsing behavior.

Jang et al. (2008) discover the positive effect of online brand community commitment on brand loyalty. Commitment to a community is often reflected in the behavior of its members, and active participation in community activities is considered a strong indicator of such commitment (Casaló et al. 2010; Jang et al. 2008). Thus, the following purposed:

Hypothesis 5: Participating behavior in an online brand community is positively related to brand loyalty.

McAlexander et al. (2002) demonstrate that when participating in brand community activities, consumers are more likely to participate on a regular basis. When McAlexander et al. (2002) did ethnographic research at brand fest, they found many participants went to the events every year and many of the participants brought their family members such as children with them. Participation in activities influenced consumers' purchase behavior, as many families

bought all their products from the same brand. In an online environment, website revisit intention closely relates to revisiting behavior. Thus, the following purposed:

Hypothesis 6: Participation behavior in an online brand community is positively related to (a) purchase intentions and (b) revisit intentions.

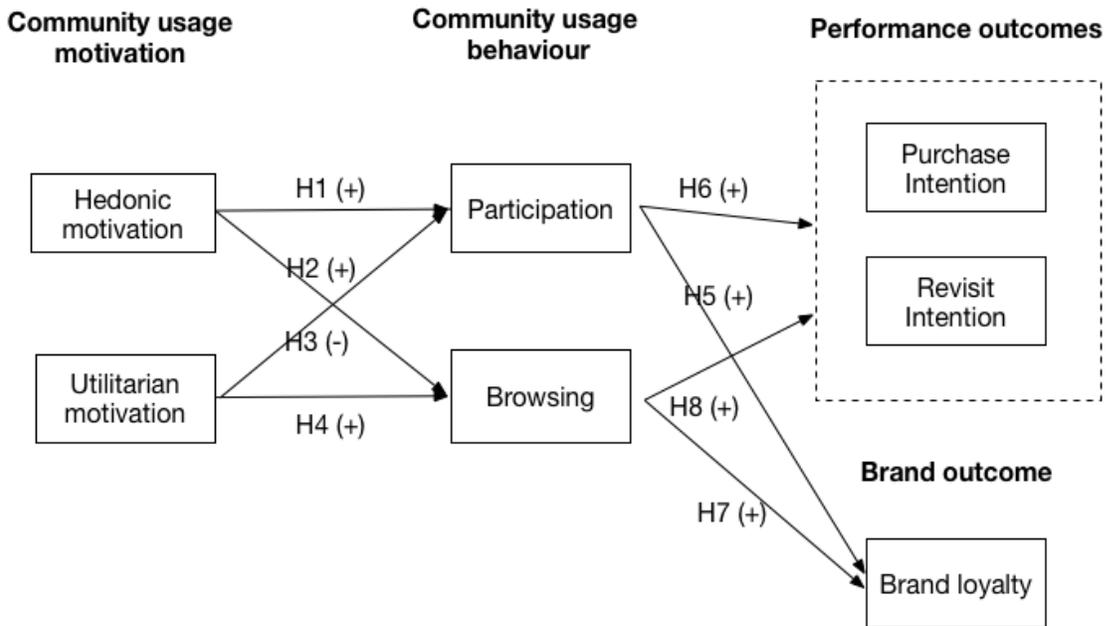
Although there is no direct evidence of the effect of browsing behavior on brand loyalty, Ribbink et al. (2004) demonstrate that browsing on a website with ease and convenience will enhance brand trust, which positively influences brand loyalty. Besides, Jang et al. (2008) also find the quality of information in online brand community has a positive influence on brand loyalty. Therefore, the following purposed:

Hypothesis 7: Browsing behavior in an online brand community is positively related to brand loyalty.

Park et al. (2007) find online consumer reviews positively affected purchase intentions by both the quantity and quality of the reviews consumers read, reflecting the importance of information on consumer decisions. When consumers are browsing within an online brand community context, they tend to encounter substantial amounts of information. Kim et al. (2004) report the fulfillment of the information needs has a positive effect on purchase intentions. Useful information on the other hand, can be forwarded to other consumers, as consumers are motivated to help others (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) and enhance their word-of-mouth behavior (Hennig-Thirai and Walsh 2004). This reflects the idea of online communities as information environments in which users can situate themselves for information related to their areas of interest and to communicate the information to other consumers (Burnett 2000). Thus, the following purposed:

Hypothesis 8: Browsing behavior in an online brand community is positively related to a) purchase intentions and b) revisit intentions.

Figure1 Model of community usage motivation on business performances



3. Methodology

3.1 Subjects and procedure

Since the present thesis investigates the impact of online brand community usage behavior, the target population consisted of members who signed up or subscribed to a brand community online, operationalized as consumers who “like” or follow a brand on social media or sign up with the official brand website. The screening condition was that respondents had to be members of such brand communities. Participants required answering the questions about a brand they were involved with the most, because brand communities are essentially for fans (Poyry et al. 2013). A list of brands is included in the Appendix 3. The study was conducted online with members of an online consumer panel who were brand community members. Participants were asked to name one brand that they were associated in the online environment. They were also required to associate the brand with a product category. These product categories include automobile, electronics, food and beverage, personal and household goods, finance and

business, health care related and other.

There were two data collecting stages. First, a pretest of the survey with 39 participants was launched to ensure its functionality and minor changes were made to the wording. The main questionnaire was distributed through Qualtrics.com, and after deleting invalid responses, the final sample size was 358. Invalid responses included participants with the following conditions: 1) participant did not consent to participate; 2) participant age was not at least 18 years old; 3) participant finished the questionnaire within two and half minutes (i.e., much less than the expected target time of 10 minutes); 4) participant did not answer the filter question correctly; and 5) participant did not provide a valid brand. There were 28% male participants and 72% female participants. The age of the participants varied between 18 to 82 years old with the mean of 36 years old. All of the participants were recruited from North America (the United States and Canada).

Participants were also asked about their previous purchasing history with the brand they chose. A clear majority (80%) had made one purchase or more within the previous three years, but interestingly, 20% of the respondents reported that they had not bought anything from the brand they were affiliated during that time. However, this is reasonable for participants who chose a brand community that was not associated with commercialization. The largest cohort (37% of the respondents) comprised customers who had made purchases between one to five occasions within the time period and the distribution of gender was similar (Male=38.8%, Female= 36.1%). Table 1 reports the number of purchases by gender of the respondents.

Table 1

Number of purchase in the past 3 years and Gender					
			Gender		Total
			M	F	
Number of purchase in the past 3 year	None	Count	13	58	71
			12.6%	22.7%	19.8%
	1-5	Count	40	92	132
			38.8%	36.1%	36.9%
	6-10	Count	19	45	64
			18.4%	17.6%	17.9%
	10+	Count	31	60	91
			30.1%	23.5%	25.4%
	Total	Count	103	255	358
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

3.2 Operationalization of constructs

Hedonic motivation refers to emotional experiences that are delivered to consumers, such as the enjoyment of sharing the brand story or experience with other members (Apaolaza-Ibáñez et al. 2011). Such motivation involves feelings of fun, excitement, playfulness, arousal, spontaneity, and increased involvement derived from consumption (Hirschman 1983). *Utilitarian motivation* refers to practical orientation toward purposeful, rational and task-related consequences (Babin et al. 1994) such as problem-solving, goal-directed activities with careful judgment (Hartman et al. 2006). *Participating behavior* refers to active contributions to an online brand community, including generating questions, posting comments, and rating products. *Browsing* in the current context refers to exploratory search behaviors, including reviewing other members' comments, product introductions and online newsletters. *Purchase intention* referred to the subjective judgment by the consumers that is reflected after general evaluation to buy products or services (Hsu 1987; Dodds et al. 1991; Blackwell et al. 2001; Shao et al. 2004). This comprises (1) consumer willingness to consider buying, (2) buying intention in the future, and (3) decision to repurchase. Other than that, purchase intentions refer to the degree of perceptual conviction of a customer to purchase a particular product (or service). *Revisit intention* refers to enter the website after one time out, as a visit or revisit is defined as "a sequence of requests made by one user in one sit to a site and once a visitor stops making requests from a site for a given period of time, called a time out, the next hit by this visitor is considered a new visit" (Turban et al. 2000, 120). Aaker (1991, 39) defines *brand loyalty* as "the attachment that a customer has to a brand." Grembler and Brown (1996) describe different levels of loyalty. Behavioural loyalty is linked to consumer behaviour in the marketplace that can be indicated by number of repeated purchases (Keller 1998) or commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver 1997, 1999). Cognitive loyalty which means that a brand comes up first in a consumers' mind, when the need to make a purchase decision arises, that is the consumers' first choice.

3.3 Measurement

The measurement model is based on literature review, and chooses the items from measurement scales validated in previous research on hedonic and utilitarian web consumption and online community usage behavior. Specially, the typical manner of using the online brand community was measured, with provided typical attitudinal and behavioral pattern to attend the online brand community. All of the items were formulated to fit a Likert-type (1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree) scale.

A pretest was conducted to validate the constructs (N=39). The pretest was analyzed with SPSS. Each measure was checked by factor analysis, and the number of factor extracted and the total variance explained by the factor were reported. Internal consistency reliability of each measure was checked based on Cronbach's Alpha.

Hedonic motivation: A four items scale was adopted from Hartman et al. (2006) and Babin et al. (1994) to measure this construct. Some minor modifications were made to suit the present context. There was one factor extracted with 62.4% of variance explained and the Cronbach's alpha was .857.

Utilitarian motivation: A three items scale was adopted from Hartman et al. (2006) to test the present construct. There was one factor extracted with a 51.75% of variance explained and Cronbach's alpha was .635.

Browsing: The two items scale was derived from the exploratory browsing items developed by Novak et al. (2000). There was one factor extracted with a 90.6% of variance explained and Cronbach's alpha was .875.

Participation: The three items scale was derived from Casaló et al. (2010). There was one factor extracted with 80.6% of variance explained and Cronbach's alpha was .895.

Purchase intention: The three items scale was based on two sources, Casaló et al. (2010) on the intention to use community products, and Park et al. (2007) for purchase intentions. There was one factor extracted with 76.3% of variance explained; Cronbach's alpha was .818.

Intention to revisit: Intention to revisit was measured by a single item, which was adapted from Supphellen and Nysveen's (2001).

Brand loyalty: Brand loyalty is based on Chudhuri et al. (2001), and Zeithaml et al. (1996). There was one factor extracted with 60.6% of variance explained and Cronbach's alpha

was .689.

Generally, the cutoff for Cronbach's alpha is .7. However, according to Lance, Butts and Michles (2006), the satisfactory level of reliability is not necessarily fixed at .7, depending on the stage of the research. Because the present study is exploratory in nature, the marginal cutoffs were accepted.

4. Results

Structural equation modeling with the AMOS graphical software program was used to test the model and hypotheses shown in Figure 3.

Unidimensionality. The evaluation of unidimensionality of the proposed scales was assessed by performing exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Factors were extracted based on eigenvalues greater than 1 and they were required to have a high total variance explained component. Based on the result, one factor was extracted for hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation, browsing, participation, purchase intention and brand loyalty.

In the EFA, we found that the items "I like to get in and out the community with no time wasted" (Q7), "I am committed to this brand" (Q17), did not have high enough loadings on their respective factors. However, we kept them for further analysis as these items were suggested in the previous literature.

Internal consistency. Two measures were used to evaluate the internal consistency of the constructs. Reliability is identified by Cronbach's alpha with a minimum of .70 (Cronbach, 1970) and the average variance extracted (AVE) which estimates the amount of variance captured by a construct's measure relative to random measurement error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). An AVE greater than .50 is considered to support internal consistency (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Table 2 shows the AVE between the constructs. Table 3 also shows descriptive statistics for the constructs and their reliability measures.

Table 2 Internal consistencies between constructs

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	BL	U	H	B	P	PI
BL	.816	.545	.514	.206	.738					
U	.527	.301	.552	.347	.615	.549				
H	.908	.713	.378	.237	.176	.553	.844			
B	.759	.613	.396	.283	.270	.576	.615	.783		
P	.904	.758	.396	.215	.185	.407	.614	.629	.870	
PI	.848	.653	.552	.300	.717	.743	.308	.484	.322	.808

Notes: All coefficients are significant at $p < .01$

BL=brand loyalty, U=utilitarian consumption, H=hedonic consumption, B=browsing, P=participation, PI=purchase intention

Table 3 - Means, standard deviations, reliability statistics for construct measures

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Hedonic	4	21.17	4.612	.905
Utilitarian	3	15.59	3.066	.531
Participation	3	13.78	4.832	.904
Browsing	2	11.58	2.232	.757
Purchase Intention	3	15.88	3.952	.830
Brand Loyalty	4	21.87	4.227	.798

Table 2 suggests that internal consistency for utilitarian consumption did not meet the cut off; however, it was suggested in the previous literature (Poyry et al. 2013), so we kept the construct. A more elaborated discussion will follow regarding this issue.

Discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is achieved when the correlations between the constructs differ significantly from 1 or when Chi-square difference tests indicate that two constructs are not perfectly correlated. As a test of discriminant validity, the correlations among the latent variables were checked to determine if they are significantly different from 1. Table 2 shows the result for the discriminant validity test, confirming the validity of the existing constructs.

Demographic variables were controlled for; this included age, gender, income and professions. Internet users under 50 are very likely to use at least one kind of social networking, and amongst their numbers the 18–29 subgroup is the most likely to do so (83%) followed by the age group of 30–49 (Rainie et al. 2013)

4.1 Structural model estimation

With respect to the fit statistics for the full model: $\chi^2(160)=755.389, p=.000$, the chi-square was significant ($p<.001$). The comparative fit index (CFI) was .858; the tucker-Lewis index (TLI) was .832. Finally, and the normed fit index (NFI) was .828. The model fit indicators showed the possibility of model improvement (Lance et al. 2006). In the early section, the construct for utilitarian motivation of consumption had a relatively low internal consistency, which may have affected the overall model fit. Based on the previous literature, the utilitarian motivation of consumption is an important construct, so we decide to keep it in current model. In the later section, this issue is further discussed.

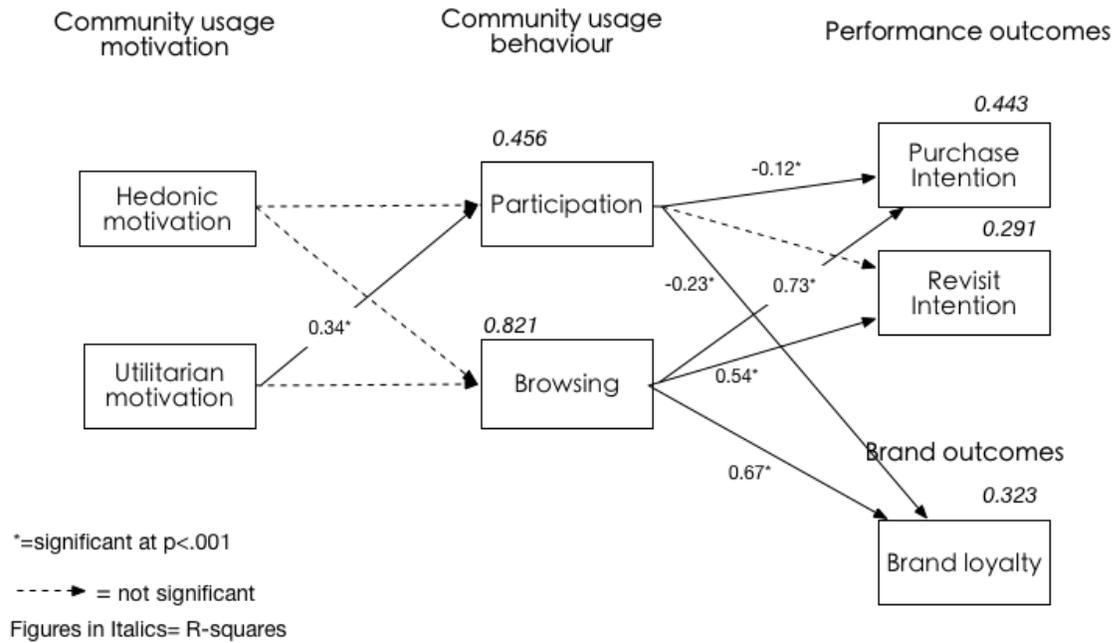
When controlling for age and gender, the demographic variables did not have a significant effect on the endogenous variables of the model (participation, browsing, purchase intention, revisit intention, and brand loyalty). In addition, the controlling the product category did not explain the variance in the results.

Having assessed the measurement model, we constructed a structural equation model (SEM) in order to test the hypotheses. Maximum likelihood method was used to evaluate the structural model: six out of ten hypotheses turned out to be significant. Figure 2 presents the

model with structural coefficients. The results of the structural model indicate that there were no significant relationship between hedonic motivation and community usage behavior (participation and browsing), therefore, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were not supported. On the other hand, utilitarian motivation has an impact on participation behavior in an online brand community, which showed a moderate positive relationship (.34, $p < .001$). However, it was not in line with the Utilitarian Motivations and Participation Hypothesis (Hypothesis 3), which was not supported. There was no significant relationship between utilitarian motivations and browsing behavior, therefore the Utilitarian Motivations and Browsing Hypothesis (Hypothesis 4) was not supported. Participation and brand loyalty (H5) also showed a weak negative relationship (-.23, $p < .001$), which means participation in the community does not increase brand loyalty. Therefore, H5 was not supported. The Participation Effects Hypotheses (H6a, H6b) did not receive support. Although participation and purchase intention showed a significant relationship (H6a), it was not in the hypothesized direction. The study result showed a weak negative relationship (-.12, $p < .001$) between participation and purchase intention, which means participation in the community does not increase the purchase intention; Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Browsing behavior on the other hand, is positively related to purchase intention (.73, $p < .001$), revisit intention (.54, $p < .001$) and brand loyalty (.67, $p < .001$). Therefore H7, H8a, and H8b were supported. R-squares of the endogenous constructs show that hedonic and utilitarian motivations explain 82% of the variance in browsing behavior; for participation, 45.6% of variance is explained by the motivations. The behaviors, on the other hand, explain 44.3% of the variance in purchase intentions, 29.1% in revisit intentions and 32.3% in brand loyalty. The results of the structural model are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Structural model with estimated coefficients



5. Discussion and Contributions

5.1 General discussion

The current research looked at the fast growing phenomenon of online brand communities. The results of the present study offered several interesting insights into consumer behaviour in online brand communities. Using SEM, we found support for part of the model and some of the hypotheses.

First, we found the support for the positive effect of utilitarian motivation of consumption on participation behaviour in the online brand community environment. This finding validates the claim that online brand communities have instrumental value to users (Babin et al. 1994; Childers et al. 2001; Cotte et al. 2006; Hartman et al. 2006).

Second, the results showed that participation behavior had a weak negative relationship with purchase intention and brand loyalty. These were against our expectations as most

marketing literature celebrates the positive effect that online community participation has on business performance. For instance, Casaló et al. (2010) found that active participation was a strong indicator of the intention to use community host's products in the setting of an online travel community. It has also been shown that active participation in an online community reflects a stronger commitment to it, and eventually, stronger brand loyalty (Jang et al. 2008), further indicating the importance of participation behavior in online brand communities.

Although the findings are contradictory to the hypothesis, this may be explained by the following reasons. First, being affiliated with one brand community involves very little effort and web users can sign up with as many brands as they wish to. As a result, a person may have less commitment towards one particular brand. Especially on social media platform, "liking" a brand indicates brand community membership without further investment or involvement. It is possible to "like" as many brands as a person wants and it takes no effort to maintain the membership in the brand community. As a result, participation with one brand community may not necessarily lead to desirable outcomes such as purchase intention and brand loyalty. Another possible reason may be due to the product category. The present study, in which participants selected a brand, resulted in the inclusion of very diverse brands and product categories; the primary function of some brands may not have been related to (future) purchases. This may cause the weak negative relationship between participation behavior and purchase intention. The present study shows that the business performance effect of participation is dubious in the online brand community environment, which means companies will need extra caution when encouraging members to participate in their online brand community.

Third, browsing behavior showed a positive relationship to brand loyalty; this research provided direct evidence for this link for the first time. However, the result should be used with caution, because the present study did not specify any brand and product category.

Fourth, the present study did not show any relationship between hedonic motivation and community usage behavior. However, the motivation-related findings provide support for the theoretical notion that online consumption behavior is shaped by utilitarian and hedonic motivations (Babin et al. 1994; Childers et al. 2001; Cotte et al. 2006; Hartman et al. 2006). One possible explanation for the non-significant result may relate to the product category. Hedonic motivation of consumption are often defined by the experiential view, which argues that consumers seek fun, amusement, and sensory stimulation in return for expending resources such

as time and money; this view considers consumption in terms of the experience itself rather than the object of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). However, in the current study, about 60% of participants chose the instrumental brands, such as Wal-Mart, Amazon and E-bay, which means that interaction with these brands may involve less enjoyment seeking motivation. Another possible reason is that both types of motivation may be sought in a given situation, although at times the presence of one may inhibit the other (Babin et al. 1994; Griffin, Babin, and Modianos 2000).

5.2 Theoretical contribution

This thesis contributes to existing brand community knowledge in several ways and has theoretical implications. First, the concept of brand community is extended to the online environment with more diversification, including the company owned brand websites and social media embedded brands. Earlier studies explored durable products such as Saab and Macintosh online brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), and convenience product such as Coca-cola, and Nutella (Cordelier and Turcin 2005; Cova 2006) in the online brand community platform. More recently, social media embedded online brand community has received attention by researchers (Hu and Kettinger 2008; Laroch et al. 2012). The current study also provides insights for brands that exist online independently and embedded in social media. Besides, the product categories in the current study did not limit to the brands that have physical stores and online stores, and they also include some brands that primarily operate online.

Second, the attempt to develop a model based on the motivation of consumption provides a base for further exploration. We attempt to investigate if the different motivations of consumption will lead to any business performance outcome. Particular for the browsing behaviour, which has a positive relationship with brand loyalty was able to demonstrated directly for the first time. The nomological network shows how motivation of consumptions affects the online usage behaviour, and how the different usage behaviour will affect purchase intention, website revisit intention and brand loyalty. Previous researchers showed qualitatively the existence of such effects in brand communities (Babin et al. 1994; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; McAlexander et al. 2002). The current study modeled these effects in online environments, and tested the model quantitatively. The findings explicitly show how practices could affect brand

loyalty as well as their relative weights. For example, we show that brand communities affect loyalty through brand use practices. However, interpreting the results should be cautious because of the apprenticeship effects of such practices.

5.3 Practical contribution

The present study also has important practical implications for managers. The vast reach, popularity and convenience of World Wide Web are prompting all brand managers to take advantage of such characteristics, so that they all want to be online almost blindly, however, improving the business performance with an online environment is different than in the physical store. Our findings help them have more insights into this process. First, the motivation will affect the online usage. The current study records more brands with instrumental value (60%), which leads to a more utilitarian motivation of consumption. It implies that brand managers need to position their brand and possibly weight differently on the features of brand (entertainment or utilitarian) to present the brand nature. This practice will involve impressions management where the external impressions and images of the brand need to be evaluated (Schau et al. 2009).

Second, it should be noticed that increasing usage behaviours are not necessarily improving the business outcomes. Companies try to increase the interactions with their customers and indeed, they adopt different techniques to do so, such as the online instant chatting, the space to leave comment and instant share of contents on multiple websites. However, when the trash talk, negative comments and scandal happen to one brand, the consequences would be detrimental. The current study shows the negative relationship between participation and purchase intention as well as brand loyalty, which may remind the brand managers that blindly encouraging participation in the online brand community will not improve any business performances, and it may even bring the inverted effect. The result also shows the power of web 2.0 and social media (Wesson 2010) where customers have access of the vast amount of information that allow them to constantly seek the best offers, the most engaging sites and the most entertaining content.

On the other hand, online browsing behaviors that sometimes are described as silent behavior, should not be ignored by the brand managers. The present study shows that positive relationship between online browsing and business performance, including purchase intention,

website revisit intention and brand loyalty. The implication here is that tracking the numbers of clicking of the website is necessary and it should be done on a regular basis.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Despite these contributions, the present study inevitably has many limitations and accordingly new avenues for research are proposed.

First, the retrospective way of studying motivations, behaviors and intentions presents a challenge. Participants might respond based on recall rather than direct experience, which creates a response bias. Human beings have only limited abilities to identify and report their true motivations and values as they might be reflected only in their actions – not explicitly beforehand or afterwards. One solution for this problem would be to study consumers' actions online while they browse and participate in online brand communities. This could be done by tracking consumers' online activities and linking them back to their purchases.

The second limitation of the current study is the potential sample bias. The sample was collected from an online panel and sample composition is somewhat random. Earlier research focused on active members of a target online brand communities, where participants were more involved in the brand examined in the research (McAlexander and Schouten 2002; Muniz and O'guinn 2001; Muniz and Schau 2005; Cove et al 2006). However, participants in the current study may have been less engaged in the research. According to the frequency check of the survey answers, a large portion of the participants tended to answer all questions using scale points 5 and 6 (5=somewhat agree, 6=agree). This invariant response pattern (perhaps induced by lack of involvement) may have led to the insignificant relationships in the proposed model. Future study should have more screening conditions when selecting participants. If it is possible, collaborating with a specific brand community might provide a better sample.

The third limitation resulted from social desirability bias. The participants in the current study may have provided answers that are socially acceptable instead of providing more accurate and truthful answers. This could also be the reason for a large portion of the participants who answer all the questions on the scale of 5 and 6 (5=somewhat agree, 6=agree). On the other hand, respondents might understand a question differently than intended by the researcher.

The fourth limitation in the current study relates to the measures. The area of research is

in online environment, and the existing scales are all adopted from the previous literature that focused on an offline context. As a result, the nature of the scales may have affected the results. Future research should involve validated scales specifically designed for an online environment.

The fifth limitation lies in the huge diversity of the brands participants referred to when answering the questions. Although we attempted to classify these brands into seven product categories, the variations of the product categories seems very high in the present study. Even though previous literature suggested to explore more brands when conducting research (Poyry et al. 2013), for future study it is suggested to limit the number of product category in order to observe a more obvious relationships between the constructs.

The last limitation is that there was no classification of the different types of online brand community. The current study provides a general picture of consumption behaviors in online brand communities. However, if a more nuanced understanding is needed, different types of brand community should be considered. Previous studies demonstrated the different consumption behavior would lead to the business performance on a Facebook page (Poyry et al. 2013), as well as on the company owned website (Cova et. al 2006). Future research is encouraged to compare the different orientations of the online brand community and their impact on the business performance.

One interesting avenue for research is to investigate the dynamics of the online brand communities. For example, Schau et al. (2009) explored the effects of value creation practices over time; however, how these effects act over time and how they develop remains unclear. So the longitudinal studies are suggested for the future researcher to follow the changes in the community and compare the results at different times.

7. Conclusion

The findings reported in this thesis provide an understanding of consumer behavior in an online environment. We investigated hedonic and utilitarian motivations for online brand community usage behavior, and the effects of different usage behavior patterns on purchase intention, website revisit intention, and brand loyalty. We measured usage behavior with two constructs: browsing and participation. Despite its limitations, the study offers valuable theoretical and managerial insights. We believe that due to the importance, uniqueness, and rapid growth of the online brand communities, marketers and researchers should pay special attention to this phenomenon and examine well-established notions and theories in the online environment. To sum up briefly, our findings seem appropriate to echo the brand community researchers such as McAlexander et al. (2002), Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) and Algesheimer et al. (2005). It demonstrates that brand communities offer brand owners the ability to enhance brand loyalty, purchase intention, and website revisit intention. Marketers can take advantage of the opportunities brand communities offer.

Appendix 1 Measures

Construct	Item	Based on
Hedonic motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I enjoy passing the time in the community 2. Using the community is truly a joy 3. Compared to the other things I could have done, being in the community is truly enjoyable 4. I enjoy using the community for its own sake, not just for the cosmetic information I find 	<p>Babin et al. (1994)</p> <p>Hartman et al. (2006)</p>
Utilitarian motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Success in the community is finding what I'm looking for 2. The community helps me with purchase planning 3. I like to get in and out the community with no time wasted 	Hartman et al. (2006)
Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I participate actively in the community activities (for example by posting to the page or commenting other's posts) 2. I use to contribute to the community usually provide useful cosmetically information to other community members 3. I post messages and responses in the community with great excitement and frequency 	Casaló et al. (2010)
Browsing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I like to browse the community to see what's new 2. I like to browse the community for ideas 	Novak et al. (2000)
Purchase intention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I intend to search for beauty products available in this community in the near future 2. It is likely that I buy make up from the community host 3. I intend to buy products offered in this community in the near future 	Park et al. (2007)
Revisit intention	It is very likely that I will visit this website again	Supphellen and Nysveen's (2001).
Brand loyalty	<p>Attitudinal :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am committed to this brand. 2. I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands. <p>Behavioral:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. I will buy this brand next time I buy. 4. I intend to keep purchasing this brand. 	Chaudhuri et. al (2001),

Appendix 2 Sample Survey

Consent To Participate In A Research Study

Study Title: Online brand community engagement-a motivation of consumption approach

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to explore online brand community engagement behaviours and how these behaviours will affect consumer purchase intention, website revisit intention, and brand loyalty. The two behaviours we are interested in are browsing and active participation. We investigate the engagement based on utilitarian and hedonic motivations of consumption. Utilitarian motivation of consumption refers to goal-oriented consumption. Hedonic motivation of consumption refers to fun seeking, and enjoyment.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey that consists of a series of questions. The survey requires participants to carefully read and answer questions based on their own experience. We will also ask a few demographic questions, but these will not include any identifying information.

In total, participation in this study will take 10 minutes.

As a research participant, your responsibilities would be to answer the questions according to your experiences.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no risks associated with participating in this research. You might not personally benefit from participating in this research.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: demographic information (age, gender and occupation, income range) and responses to brand-related questions.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research, and except as described in this form. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be anonymous. That means that it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide.

We will protect the information by a password-protected file on the researcher's hard drive

We intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You may receive compensation for participating in this survey from your panel provider. There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

I agree to participate in this study.

I do not agree to participate in this study.

Instructions

Please read the following questions carefully and choose the answer that best reflects your opinion or typical behaviour.

Introduction

This survey is about your brands and the communities of consumers that develop around them.

What is a brand community?

When you subscribe or sign up for a brand, you become a member of the brand community. On social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, when you follow or “like” a brand, you become a member of brand community. You and other people have the common interest on the same brand, which builds up the brand community.

Think of a brand that you involve online and begin to answer the question on the next page

Please name the brand that came to your mind and that you are going to answer the following questions about?

***The brand you involved the most online

Which product category does this brand fall?

- Automobile
- Electronics
- Food and beverage
- Personal and household Goods
- Finance and business
- Health care related
- Other _____

Questions

Please answer the questions regard the brand _____

PART 1

[1=Strongly disagree, and 7= Strongly agree]

1. I enjoy passing the time in the community

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Using the community is truly a joy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Compared to the other things I could have done, being in the community is truly enjoyable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I enjoy using the community for its own sake, not just for the cosmetic information I find

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Success in the community is finding what I'm looking for

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. The community helps me with purchase planning

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I like to get in and out the community with no time wasted

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I participate actively in the community activities (for example by posting to the page or commenting other's posts)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I use to contribute to the community and usually provide useful information to other community members

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I post messages and responses in the community with great excitement and frequency

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I like to browse the community to see what's new

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I like to browse the community for ideas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I intend to search for products available in this community in the near future

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. It is likely that I buy product/or products from the community host

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I intend to buy products offered in this community in the near future

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. It is very likely that I will visit this website again

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I am committed to this brand

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. I will buy from this brand next time I buy

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. I intend to keep purchasing from brand

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART2

Please answer the following questions about yourself

1) What is your age?

- _____

2) What is your gender?

- Male
Female

3) What is your educational level?

- High school or below
University/college
Graduate school or above

4) What is your present employment status?

- Not employed
Retired

- Part-Time
 - Full-Time
 - Student
- 5) Which income range you belong?
- 0-\$15,000
 - \$15,000-\$30,000
 - \$30,000-\$50,000
 - \$50,000+
- 6) Which describe the numbers of online purchase during the past 3-year of this brand?
- None
 - 1-5
 - 6 -10
 - 10+
- 7) What is your average community usage time per week?
- Less than 1hr
 - 1-3hr
 - 4-6hr
 - 7hr or more
- 8) What is the number of post per month in this community?
- Less than 5
 - 6-12
 - 13-20
 - 21 or more
- 9) Which one describes the experience in using this community?
- Less than 1 month
 - 1 month-3 month
 - 4month -1year
 - 1 year and more
- 10) Do/Did you own at least one product from this brand?
- Yes
 - No

Do you have comments? Your opinion matters to us!
Thank you

Appendix 3 List of brands

Adidas	Goya	Purina
Alloy	Halestorm	Ray Ban
Amazon	Heinz	Razor Apple
Amazon Books	Home Depot Products	Reddit
Amazon.Com	HTC	Register For New Surveys
American Eagle	Huggies	Resolve
Android	Ifunny	Rickis
Apple	Indesign	Ritter Chocolate
Arizona	Indigo	Rooster Teeth
Asics	Instagram	Samsung
Ball Park	Ipsy	Scott
Bath & Body Works	Jamie Oliver	Sears
Bayer	Jeep	Sephora
Beachbody	Joe Fresh	Shiseido
Bench	Johnson And Johnson	Weber
Best Buy	Kawaii	Shoppers
Big T Nyc	Kelloggs	Sigg
BJ	Kenmore	Silk
BLACKPLANET	Kotex	Simply Aroma
Blogto	Kraft	Snap-On
Bumgenius	Kraft Tastemakers	Sonic Care
Burger King	Krazy Coupon Lady	Sony
Burnbrae Farms	Kroger	Sony Music
Cactus Club	Land's End	Spark People
Care2	League Of Legends	Splenda
Carters	Lego	Starbucks
Catholic News Agency	LG	Stella And Dot
Cineplex	Linkedin	T-Mobile
Clean&Clear	Lootcrate	Taco Bell
Clinique	Rosegal	Target
CND	Loreal Paris	Taste Of Home
Coca-Cola	Lululemon	Telltale Games
Comics	Mac	The Limited
Compte	Magic The Gathering	The Noodle Company
Costco	Manic Panic	The Young Turks
Cottage Market	Mazda	Tide
Coupons	Michael Kors	Timex
Crest	Microsoft	Torrid
Cricket Wireless	Mini Cooper	Toyota

Dell	Modcloth	Tumblr
Disney	My Freedom Smokes	Twitter
Dole	NASCAR	Uberbrew
Dove	Neostrata Beauty Products	Urban Decay
Dr. Pepper	Nestle	Urban Outfitters
Dungeon Fighter Online	Nike	US Bank
EA Sports	Nikon	Vancouver Whitecaps
Ebay	Nintendo	Vans
Espn	Olay	Vegan Free Thinkers
Expedia Cruise Ship Centers	P&G	Venus
Facebook	PC Plus	Verizon Wireless
Febreeze	Pepsi	Video Games
Folgers	Perk	Visa
Ford	Pilot	Wagjag, Amazon
Forever 21	Pink	Wal-mart
Fresh Step	Pintrest	WGES
Fusion Cash	Political	Word Press
Gerber	Preschool Education	WWE
Gia Russa	President's Choice	Yamaha
Gillette	Proctor And Gamble	YouTube
Google	Purex	

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