

Utilising Social Commerce Information Sharing in the Persuasion Knowledge Process and Brand Co-creation: A Probabilistic Analysis Approach

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Social commerce (SC) is a type of e-commerce that leverages the interactive features of its platform to engage consumers and drive purchases (Hajli & Sims, 2015; Tajvidi et al., 2020). However, the processes that lead to positive brand outcomes have not yet been fully established. Social commerce information sharing (SCIS) is a crucial aspect of SC, carried out through forums, communities, ratings and reviews, and referrals and recommendations (Tajvidi et al., 2020). Research has explored SCIS drivers and established its direct and indirect effects on brand co-creation (Kamboj et al., 2018; Shirazi et al., 2022), consumer intention to continue using the SC, and intention to buy (Cutshall et al., 2022; Shirazi et al., 2022). However, SCIS is characterized by an overt commercial persuasion intent, which, according to persuasion knowledge (PK) theory, can result in either negative or positive brand outcomes depending on the specific situational and individual characteristics in which PK emerges (Boerman et al., 2021; Eisen & Tarrahi, 2022). This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining the impact of persuasion knowledge and brand community attachment (BCA) on the links between SCIS and brand co-creation, brand advocacy, and consumer resistance to switching brands. Additionally, this study examines the moderating role of content richness and trustworthiness on the effect of PK, which lacks thorough investigation in previous literature.

Primary data from social media sales platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and websites were collected and utilised, to examine the influence of SCIS content on persuasion knowledge. These platforms offer discussion forums and threads focused on shared brand or product interest. Many companies use social media to expand customer base, promote products, organize events, and communicate directly with customers. We used Partial-Least Square Regression to analyse the data and improved the model robustness by applying probabilistic analysis techniques.

Findings show that SCIS is a strong predictor of PK and, also, drives consumers attachment to the brand community (BCA) directly and via PK. The activated PK then strongly and positively influences brand co-creation and switching resistance, and has a significant positive effect on BCA and consumer brand advocacy. In contrast to traditional marketing communications that associate PK with consumer scepticism (Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022), empirical support to recent findings in PK theory is provided showing that the SC's unique context moderates the effect.

Moreover, consistent with existing SCIS research (Doha et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2011; Shirazi et al., 2022; Tajvidi et al., 2020), the resultant emotional attachment (BCA) positively influences the consumers intention to brand co-create, advocate for the brand and be resilient to switching persuasion. Probabilistic analysis yielded interesting results that will be further discussed in the complete manuscript.

SC is a popular e-commerce choice, but it requires significant investment and persuasion techniques. Our research indicates that despite the possible consumers' initial hesitation due to the commercial nature of SC, they willingly participate and engage with the platform. In fact, their pre-existing brand loyalty is strengthened, leading to more positive brand attitudes and behaviours.

Keywords: Persuasion Knowledge, Social Commerce Information Sharing. Probabilistic Analysis

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