

# Impact of Psychological Customer Engagement States on Behavioral Customer Engagement - In the Context of Virtual Smartphone Brand Communities

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

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## ABSTRACT

Customer engagement can be explained as dynamic and interactive communication between consumers and different brands through different channels. Multidimensional view defines it as psychological states comprised of cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral factors. This study explores the effect of psychological customer involvement states on behavioral engagement states (participation in social media and word of mouth) in the context of virtual brand communities for smartphones. A study was conducted on a sample of 260 members in branded communities. Results showed that cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and physical engagement have a positive effect on behavioral engagement states in varying degrees.

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## 1. Introduction

Customer Engagement can be explained as dynamic and interactive communication between consumers and various brands through different channels. The core objectives of customer engagement activities are interaction and co-creation. Multidimensional view defines it as psychological states comprising of cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral factors (Hollebeek et.al,2011,Cheung et al., 2011). Psychological customer engagement state and behavioral customer engagement can be distinguished taking Inspiration from Oliver (1999)'s loyalty model which differentiated attitudinal and behavioral loyalty stages (VanDoorn, 2011). Cheung et al. (2011), developed a customer engagement for a virtual platform which makes a differentiates psychological and behavioral engagement. According to this model, behavioral engagement consists of participation and word of mouth, and cognitive, emotional and physical engagement makes psychological customer engagement states This paper aims to study the impact of psychological customer engagement states on behavioral engagement.

## 2. Literature Review

Van Doorn (2010) explore and expands the customer engagement behavior concept, which they define as the customers' behavioral intentions towards a brand or firm, beyond purchase, that follows motivational drivers. These behaviors include a vast array of word of the mouth (WOM), suggestions/recommendations, helping other community members, blogging, reviewing. Customer engagement behaviors are combinations of behavioral concept that records how and why customers behave in certain ways relevant to the firm and its stakeholders, such as its employees, competitors etc. They have developed a conceptual model of the antecedents and implications of customer engagement behaviors. Author explains consumer engagement as a 3 step process-Identification, evaluation and re-action

Vivek et.al (2012) researches the scope and nature of customer engagement (CE) Using qualitative studies involving

various stakeholders. They define customer engagement as the level of individual participation in relation with organizational activities, which is initiated by the customer or one which is initiated by the firm. They state that customer engagement is a composition of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical aspects. They through their study offer a customer engagement model, in which the involvement and participation leads to customer engagement, and customer engagements results in value, trust, commitment, word of mouth, loyalty, and involvement in brand community activities.

Cheung et.al (2011) in their study conceptualize customer engagement theoretically and they have empirically validated a scale to measure the same in virtual social platforms. They developed a conceptual model of customer engagement and suggested an approach in scale development and validation.

Broodie et.al (2011) explores customer engagement through a qualitative study. They after observing activities in brand communities conducted qualitative in-depth personal interviews brand community members. They found out that online brand community context members demonstrate different psychological customer engagement states at fluctuating intensity levels.

Ji Wu et.al (2017) examined the impact of consumer engagement in a firm's brand community on indicators of consumer Word of Mouth, online product reviews and ratings post purchase. They Found that consumer engagement in online brand communities increases Word of mouth and overall social media participation. They also found that the impact of community engagement on online WOM is varying based on consumer tenure in the community.

Harrigan et.al (2017) studies customer engagement in tourism social media brands. They showed that customer engagement in tourism boosted loyalty, confidence and brand assessments. They validated the 25-item scale proposed by So, King & Sparks (2014) in Virtual media context in Customer Engagement with Tourism Brands (CETB) and provided an

alternative 11-item version of the scale. They made a model for predicting the behavioral loyalty intention from engagement. They proposed a customer involvement scale and framework for customer involvement that can be used in both tourism and non-tourism contexts.

**3. Objectives**

- To find the impact of cognitive engagement on social media participation
- To find the impact of emotional engagement on social media participation
- To find the impact of physical engagement on social media participation

**5. Data Analysis**

- To find the impact of cognitive engagement on word of mouth behavior
- To find the impact of emotional engagement on word of mouth behavior
- To find the impact of physical engagement on word of mouth behavior

**4. Research Methodology**

Research was carried out on members of the virtual brand community based in Trivandrum district of Kerala in India. A sample of 260 members was chosen by simple random sampling and data collected through questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using regression in MS Excel.

**Table 1  
Regression Statistics**

Regression Statistics - Effect of Psychological Engagement States on Social Media Participation			
Psychological engagement States	Cognitive engagement	Emotional Engagement	Physical Engagement
Observations	260.000	260.000	260.000
Sum of weights	260.000	260.000	260.000
DF	258.000	258.000	258.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.507	0.627	0.634
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.505	0.625	0.633
MSE	0.529	0.401	0.392
RMSE	0.727	0.633	0.626

Source: Primary Data

**Table 2  
Regression Coefficients and P value (Social Media Participation)**

Source	Value	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0.727	0.136	5.349	< 0.0001	0.459	0.995
Total Cognitive Engagement	0.757	0.046	16.293	< 0.0001	0.666	0.849
Intercept	0.350	0.125	2.801	0.005	0.104	0.596
Total Emotional Engagement	0.817	0.039	20.807	< 0.0001	0.739	0.894
Intercept	0.651	0.109	5.953	< 0.0001	0.436	0.867
Total Physical Engagement	0.804	0.038	21.160	< 0.0001	0.729	0.879

Source: Primary Data

**5.1 Impact of Cognitive engagement on Participation**

Hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant effect of Cognitive engagement on Social Media Participation

H<sub>01</sub>: There is an effect of Cognitive engagement on Social Media Participation

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05(from table 2), Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of Cognitive engagement on participation. R<sup>2</sup>= 0.507(from table1), Which indicates that Cognitive engagement shows 50.7% variance over social media participation

$$\text{Social Media Participation} = 0.727191698114936 + 0.757425572427257 * \text{Total Cognitive Engagement}$$

**5.2 Impact of Emotional Engagement on Social Media Participation**

Hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no effect of Emotional engagement on Social Media Participation

H<sub>01</sub>: There is an effect of Emotional engagement on Social Media Participation

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05 (Table-2), Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of emotional engagement on participation.  $R^2 = 0.627$  (Table-1), Which indicates that Cognitive engagement shows 62.7% variance over participation

$$\text{Social Media Participation} = 0.349811639554831 + 0.816527443728934 * \text{Total Emotional Engagement}$$

**5.3 Impact of Physical engagement on Social Media Participation**

Hypotheses:

$H_0$ : There is no effect of physical engagement on Social Media Participation

$H_{01}$ : There is an effect of physical engagement on Social Media Participation

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05 (Table-2), Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of physical engagement on social media Participation.  $R^2 = 0.634$  (Table-1), Which indicates that Cognitive engagement 63.4% variance over social media participation

$$\text{Social Media Participation} = 0.651497613845269 + 0.803918534428509 * \text{Total Physical Engagement}$$

**Table 3**  
Regression Statistics

Regression Statistics - Effect of Psychological Engagement States on Word of mouth Behavior			
Psychological engagement States	Cognitive engagement	Emotional Engagement	Physical Engagement
Observations	260.000	260.000	260.000
Sum of weights	260.000	260.000	260.000
DF	258.000	258.000	258.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.492	0.566	0.390
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.490	0.564	0.388
MSE	0.845	0.722	1.015
RMSE	0.919	0.850	1.007

Source: Primary Data

**Table 4**  
Regression Coefficients and P value (Word of Mouth Behavior)

Source	Value	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0.944	0.172	5.491	< 0.0001	0.6505	1.282
Total Cognitive Engagement	0.929	0.059	15.806	< 0.0001	0.813	1.045
Intercept	0.587	0.168	3.500	0.001	0.257	0.917
Total Emotional Engagement	0.966	0.053	18.345	< 0.0001	0.863	1.070
Intercept	1.392	0.176	7.910	< 0.0001	1.046	1.739
Total Physical Engagement	0.785	0.061	12.844	< 0.0001	0.664	0.905

Source: Primary data

**5.4 Impact of Cognitive engagement on Word of the Mouth Behavior**

Hypothesis:

$H_0$ : There is no effect of Cognitive engagement on Word of Mouth Behavior (WOM)

$H_{01}$ : There is an effect of Cognitive engagement on Word of Mouth Behavior (WOM)

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05 (Table-4), Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of Cognitive engagement on Word of Mouth.  $R^2 = 0.492$  (Table-3), Which indicates that Cognitive engagement 49.2% variance over word of mouth

$$\text{WOM} = 0.943551214281295 + 0.928792867601064 * \text{Total Cognitive Engagement}$$

**5.5 Impact of Emotional Engagement on Word of Mouth behavior**

Hypothesis:

$H_0$ : There is no effect of Emotional engagement on Word of Mouth Behavior

$H_{01}$ : There is an effect of Emotional Engagement on Word of Mouth Behavior

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05, Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of emotional engagement on word of mouth.  $R^2 = 0.566$ , Which indicates that emotional engagement has 56.6% variance over word of mouth

$WOM = 0.586656580546719 + 0.966224429099749 * \text{Total Emotional Engagement}$

### 5.6. Impact of Physical Engagement on Word of Mouth

Hypothesis:

$H_0$ : There is no effect of Physical Engagement on Word of Mouth behavior

$H_{01}$ : There is an effect of Physical Engagement on Word of Mouth behavior

Inference:

P value obtained is less than 0.05 (Table 4), Hence rejecting the null hypothesis. There is an effect of physical engagement on word of mouth.  $R^2 = 0.390$  (Table 3), Which indicates that Cognitive engagement 39.0% variance over word of mouth

$WOM = 1.39222379717375 + 0.784750892873724 * \text{Total Physical Engagement}$

### 6. Recommendations

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The study found that all psychological engagement states have a positive effect on social media participation and the word of the mouth. Better and consistent customer engagement activities can ensure better social media participation by community members and boost Word of Mouth Behavior. Brands should focus on building a positive brand community through social media or using their own platform.

### 7. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to study the effect of psychological customer engagement states on behavioral engagement states. The study was conducted in the context of virtual communities for smartphones, for which a sample of 260 members were also selected. Data were collected through questionnaires, including questions to test various states of psychological engagement and behavioral engagement states like social media participation and word of mouth. Regression analysis was conducted, and the results showed that psychological engagement states such as cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and physical engagement have a positive effect on behavioral engagement states (i.e. Social Media participation and word of mouth). More studies on the topic must be conducted taking demographics into consideration.