Facebook Group: Ideal platform for nurturing sustainable online communities

Shyam Sundar Kapri[1], Dr. Ajay Sharma[2], Amar Prakash Dabral[3]

[1]Assistant Professor, School of Management Graphic Era Hill University,
Dehradun,Uttarakhand, India
[2]Professor School of Management Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttrakhand India
[3]Department of Hotel Management, Graphic Era Deemed to be University, Dehradun

ABSTRACT

Brands and businesses fostering online brand communities for customer engagement, value co-creation, seeking customer suggestions and feedback. With the advent of web 2.0 and social media; numerous platforms, forums and websites are available for online brand community building with diverse technological structure. The intent of this paper is to investigate the instrument which provides complete technological structure for nurturing a sustainable consumer lead community with fulfilling basic markers of the communities as shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility among community members. Consequently the technological structure should be such that it provides great user experience to community members with identification, member stages, level of membership and sense of community. Employing netnographic research this study reveals that Facebook group facilitates complete technological structure for sustainable member lead community building with ease of use and greater user experience.

Keywords: Sustainable online community building, brand communities, social media, customer engagement, Facebook group, brand and businesses, value co-creation, sense of community, social media platforms, netnographic research.

INTRODUCTION

Brand and businesses have online presence and most of them are fostering online communities in one then other form. Our research enlightens about basic constituents of online communities and technological system and structure suited for online community building. Organizations are hosting online communities for making relationship with customers, building brand and getting feedback **(Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007)**.

A brand community is a specific, geographically unrestricted, and founded on a planned set of social associations among brand loyal **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).** Like other communities, it is marked by a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility among community members **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).** Brand community is customer-centric, existence

and meaningfulness of the community lies in customer experience rather than in the brand around which that experience revolves **(McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig; 2002).** Brand community like Mac Users' Group (MUG) began face-to-face but later transformed itself into an online brand community **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).** Most of the community interaction is online now. Community members only physically get together once in a month to have lunch. This is not the case of Mac Users' Group (MUG) only all of the brand communities started face-to-face had online presence and most of the interactions among community members happens online. In recent times opposite is also true; members are forming interest based groups or brand communities online; initiating discussions, sharing their experiences and views; and then scheduling physical meetings and get together still most of the interactions are online.

An online community contains four essential elements **(Preece, 2000,)** (a) People interacting socially to accomplish their individual needs (b) Common objective like a need or concern to collaborate (c) Norms, rituals and traditions that guide group member's behaviour (d) A system on the internet that fulfils social interaction. If someone is loyal to a brand and has feelings for the brand; possibility of joining a brand community is high. Consequently they are associated with the brand; this association further strengthens by community participation **(Algesheimer et al. 2005).**

Brand communities are social aggregation of brand users and their association with the brand, product they are using and marketer of the brand. Being the members of the community; marketers also participates in the course of community building by creating the environment in which members communication takes place **(McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig; 2002). Schau, Muniz and Arnould (2009)** proposes three promising standpoint in marketing (a) Group performance practices makes the value apparent, which supports investments in community building instead of fostering brand-consumer dyads; (b) Customer lead community building increases engagement and builds brand equity **(Cova, Pace, and Park 2007);** (c) Companies can gain extra brand value by innovatively utilizing enthusiastic customer participation **(Vargo and Lusch 2004).** Brand culture can be created via member activities and communal member communications both with the brand and other members **(Schembri and Latimer; 2016).**

Technological structure needed for community building should be such that it provides features required to foster a brand community. Varied technological options are available for building online communities. Online communities can be divided in two categories mainly communities embedded on social media platforms and non-social media platform based communities. Facebook and LinkedIn provide multiple options for community building. Facebook page and Facebook group fosters two different types of communities. The technological system structure should satisfies the condition of ease of use with greater user experience; and also capable of cultivating essential online community building constituents and theories. The objective of this research is to study diverse online community building platforms and recommend the one which fulfils conditions as stated above.

Theory
2.1 Constituents of Online Community

The first element of a community is "consciousness of kind"; the feelings of belongingness among community members with each other and collective sense of difference with others not in community. The second constituent of the community is shared traditions and rituals. These are visible markers and propagate community's culture, history, and social customs. The third indicator of the community is sense of moral responsibility; which is felt sense of commitment towards the community and its each member **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).** Concept of community is bigger than a geographical location. It is as **Bender (1978, p. 145)** define it: "a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds. The platform or technological structure for online community building should be such that any member can show his feelings of like, and comment on other members content and also can participate and organise events and initiate discussions. Each member can share content and can initiate discussion for helping others or informing fellow members. Brand communities are generally open social organizations in that they do not deny membership, but like most communities they do have status hierarchies **(Muniz and O'Guinn 2001)**. Legitimacy is a practice in which tenured and committed members of the community differentiate themselves with new and passive members **(Muniz and O'Guinn 2001)**.

Kim (2000) proposed five different stages and levels of membership in an online community (1) Visitors (community guest; not participating in community building); (2) Novices (new joiners of the community; understanding fellow members and norms of the community); (3) Regulars (tenured community members who are regularly giving life to the community via participation); (4) Leaders (community members who mostly initiate discussion and summarise also and maintains let the community go on); (5) Elders (long-tenured community members sharing community history and culture also propagates rituals and traditions in the community). **Kollock (1999)** Members in an online community can only be cooperative with each other if individuals (1) Can identify one another that they belongs to an online community and they are not functioning anonymously within the community (2) Have right to observe one another's communication history; posts and comments (3) have common assumption related to future potential encounter within the online community.

Customers reported more positive relationships with their own product, brand, manufacturing company and with other owners of the product after participation in the brand community **(McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig; 2002)**. In search of engaging with current and prospective customers, most of the brands have gone online to develop communities. Engagement dimensions Brand influence, Brand passion, connectedness with other members, helping others, like-minded discussions, rewards (hedonic and utilitarian), Seeking assistance in community, member self-expression, up-to-date information and validations can measure consumer motivations for interaction in an online brand community **(Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone; 2014)**. Indicators of a brand community positively influence members' expectations and their knowledge sharing behaviour while personal expectations negatively influence knowledge sharing behaviour among members **(Sukoco and Liu; 2016)**.

Karau and William's (1993) in their research of theory of social loafing suggested that member participation rate in communities can be improved by member identification, recognition and task

attractiveness. A sense of community is belongingness and trust in one another and to the group; and it has four dimensions feelings of membership, feelings of influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connection **(McMillian and Chavis; 1986).** Counter-brand and alter-brand community's phenomenon arises with web 2.0 and can cause a challenge in online brand community building **(Cova and Tim; 2010).** Maintaining long term and strong brand-follower associations is more demanding for brands than increasing the number of followers or visit frequency in social media; online brand community engagements can assist in achieving this brand objective **(Yılmaz and Enginkaya; 2015).** Online brand community members are willing to co-create value by providing inputs from their brand experiences, product understanding and incremental innovative ideas with producers. They present contribution in the form of information, data, proposition or feedback **(Constantinides, Brünink and Lorenzo-Romero; 2015)**. The community building technological structure should be such that community member can initiate discussion on the community pertaining to value creation by posting relevant information.

2.2 Technological Structure of Online Communities
Online communities first appeared with the invention of ARPAnet; the network solely used and restricted for military supported organizations and predecessor of the Internet **(Kindsmüller, Melzer and Mentler; 2009)**. Several such online groups founded on Computerized Bulletin Boards Systems (CBBS) were first initiated by **Christensen and Suess (1978).** One of the recognised Bulletin Board System of 1980s (BBS) was FidoNet **(Rheingold, 2000).** The first MUDs (Multi-User Dungeon) are text based role playing games implemented by computers in which multiple gamers can play with virtual identities in a community.

Discussion lists using Listserv's server software; commonly known as Discussion List (DL) and e-mail based online communities were in the trend. Later came in the existence were news groups, web based forums and MSN network communities. Many brands loyal had developed web pages of their brand and also community websites for interaction. Website based communities with forums and discussion threads related to a particular brand, interest and hobby; and on different social issues were prevailed on the internet in the first decade of the twenty first century. Member's participation was also very high in such web based communities. The most recent technological structure in online community development is social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn or MySpace. Facebook page, and group; LinkedIn company profile and group are able to host media rich communication among community members.

Web2.0 provides robust and varied technological structures for online community building; ranging from social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn to customer forums on company owned websites. Online communities are lead and fostered by brand loyal, volunteers, hobbyists or social activists. Consequently marketers only can provide technological structure, brand related content, brand history and information for fostering brand communities.

Research Methodology
Netnographic research method was used to investigate the research problem due to its unobtrusive

and naturalistic feature **(Kozinets, 2002).** Netnography is a "new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications" **(Kozinets, 2002a, p. 62)**. Online access to observe and participate in various types of communities in diverse types of platforms is straightforward and natural for netnographic research. The data available for analysis is lively and textured **(Puri, 2007)** and makes netnographic approach suitable for analysis of online communities fostered on different social media platforms, community websites, forums and other places. Earlier researches have also found netnography appropriate means to inquire online communities **(Cova and Pace, 2006).**

3.1 Sampling

Online communities after web 2.0 technology are being fostered on social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and company owned websites, forums etc. Author categorised online communities basically in two categories first category is social media based embedded communities and in second category community building on other then social media platforms like communities on company owned websites, independent brand communities owned by brand loyal, forum based communities. Since in social media based community; participation and lurking do not require switching and signing on a different application. If someone glancing over a social media timeline posts; same time he or she can participate in an embedded social media group discussion or can comment on a social media page post. Even social media group of an organization and social media page are two different types of communities. Smartphone became the primary device to connect with the world using internet. Google and social media applications installed in it are our primary Internet touch points except Gmail, Outlook and few seldom used specific services applications. Google is primarily used for searching information. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter are still the most widely used social media platform in India which connects us with our friends and family members. Due to ease of participation and lurking in social media based communities author has opted for community building on social media platforms for his study.

Facebook and LinkedIn are social media platforms commonly used by brand loyal, professionals, companies, brands, hobbyist, and social activists for online community building. LinkedIn is social networking platform mostly occupied by corporate professionals and companies. Most of the talks on LinkedIn are formal and business, product, services, job, innovation and process oriented and not entertainment, society, friends and family oriented. Apart from this Facebook subscriber makes a heterogeneous population which belongs to a diverse strata of the society. Consequently numerous types of online communities are there on the Facebook ranging from online brand communities of global top brands to travel, fashion, social, environment, software, hobby and interest based communities. Facebook provides technological structure for two types of community building; Facebook fan page and Facebook group. Presence of key community markers consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility among community members are more on Facebook groups then Facebook pages **(Zaglia, 2013).** Consequently, Facebook pages are marketer-generated and Facebook groups are consumer-generated brand communities **(Sung et al., 2010).** Also a Facebook fan page community member cannot initiate a discussion or upload a new post on the fan page. Previous researches indicate that online community building will be more promising and inclusive on Facebook group. Subsequently, author has decided to study Facebook group based community building technological structure for his study.

Different types of 85 Facebook group has been scanned such as international top brands Facebook groups on the basis of "International Best Global Brands Ratings 2019"; Facebook groups related to travel, tourism, social issues and other various interest based Facebook groups. A private Facebook group "Backpackers & Travellers India" created by the travellers for the travellers having 146,126 members selected for the study by the author. It is a user driven community all the posts are from users only; group members are active and supportive. High activity in the community and large membership base making data detailed and descriptively rich are the reasons to select the group for the study. These features of the community "Backpackers & Travellers India" satisfies **Kozinets (2002)** recommendations pertaining to suitability of the online community for netnographic research.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Kozinets (2010) Proposed approach was followed by author for netnographic research data collection. Author is a community member; participation was initially as a lurker and keen observer of the community postings, recommendations and conversations. Author is also fond of travelling and had travelled most part of the India. This helped understanding the community conversation and value of the conversations and information members are sharing on someone's request or experiences. Data was collected on the basis of observations of community posts and members conversations. The findings and results are also on the basis of the observation of posts and conversations; and interaction with community members. The main objective of the study is either the Facebook group platform is technically sound and having adequate facilities for nurturing online community or not.

Results and Findings

3.3 Member Posting Feature and Markers of Community

Facebook group supports full participation from individual members; member can post new content, can share, comment, and like other members post. New content posting by members is not possible in case of Facebook fan page. By posting new content a member can initiate discussion on any issue, can share his or her brand related consumption experience in text, image or video format, and can answer any other member's questions by new post. Individual members posting facility takes Facebook group ahead of Facebook fan page in community building. Thus a member can post for initiating a discussion, asking for recommendations or help, sharing brand or product related information, healthy entertainment message, answering another members question with text, image, and video this ultimately supports and strengthens "consciousness of kind"; an important and necessary element of a community **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001)**. Long tenured members of a community propagate community history, traditions, ritualsand culture; the second important element of a community **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001)**. This second constituent of community building can be achieved in Facebook group based communities as long tenured members can post content and initiate dialogue pertaining to community history, culture, traditions and rituals. Third marker of the community is "sense of moral responsibility" **(Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001)**; a felt sense of responsibility to help community members. Help pertaining to product uses, brand information, any other mostly limited to and around objectives of a community. In online communities this can be achieved by sharing product and brand uses information and personal experience; content posting feature of the Facebook group also helps to attain third marker of the community as well.   Members of the community studied by author are using content posting facility for sharing valuable information, replying to recommendations asked by members, propagating community culture, history, traditions

and rituals. Facebook group's content posting facility to each member makes possible to foster a strong consumer or member lead community of a brand, passion, social or environmental issue, interest or hobby. A customer lead community increases engagement and builds brand equity (**Cova, Pace, and Park 2007**).

3.4 Member Posting Feature and Alter/Counter Brand Communities

Consumer association in online communities are able to form relatively dangerous opposition and competitive offerings; such online groups produce alter brands and counter brands communities which subsequently pose threats for existing brand and companies (**Cova and Tim; 2010**). Member posting feature can create alter or counter brand communities sine members can post any type of content on Facebook group. But this is true only in case of open Facebook groups. Online brand, social or interest community should be building and nurtured with Facebook private group in which any member post will be published only by admin approval. Admin can also appoint moderator to long tenured members for post approval which can save admin time and energy; and also speeds up post approval process. Post approval process limits alter-brands and counter brands community formation through restricting anti brand and anti community messaging in the group. Most of the successful brand, social and interest based communities fostered with Facebook group are using private or closed group feature to smoothly nurture communities. The Facebook group used for netnographic research by the author is also a private group in which admin has appointed multiple moderators for fast post approval since the group is large. Member posts which follow community guidelines and are in line to community objectives are approved for posting in the group. Consequently Facebook group platform has feature and facility to limit alter-brand and counter brand community formation. This is a major risk in online brand community building and the impact of Web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches (**Cova and Tim; 2010**) to which Facebook private group feature confines**.** Different group types can be created from a general group with standard set of group features to social learning groups. In case of private group only group members can see who is in the group and what they are posting. Private group can be a perfect option for building a brand community. Pre-approve of posts from trusted senior members feature gives a sense of seniority to long tenured members.

3.5 Stages & Levels of Membership in Facebook Groups

Kim (2000) proposed five different stages and levels of membership in an online community; these are visitors, novices, regulars, leaders, and elders. Badges feature of Facebook group differentiates membership and participation level and will show up next to member's name on posts and comments. "Admin" is for members who manage the membership, group settings, and posts approval this match up to proposed elder level of **Kim (2000)**. "Moderators" are nominated by admin for new membership and post approval corresponds to Kim (2000) leader level. "New member" is for new members and shows for two weeks and matches to visitor level. "Rising Star" is for engaging posts of a new member and corresponds to Kim (2000) novice level. "Visual Storyteller" for members posting engaging images and videos content, and "Conversation Starter" is for engaging post creator these two levels corresponds to Kim (2000) regular level. Facebook group provides technological structure for membership stages and levels; this also makes Facebook group ideal choice for brand community building. Minority of community members basically leaders account for majority of influence in community, active members in community follow leaders and information propagation is from leaders to members. Facebook group provides adequate infrastructure for brand and product related

information dissemination **(Gangadharbatla and Valafar; 2017).**

3.6 Sense of Community & Member Identification

A sense of community is affinity and faith in each other among community member and to the community. It has four dimensions feelings of membership, feelings of influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connection **(McMillian and Chavis; 1986).** In Facebook groups member asking for help or recommendation shares a new post about what exactly he or she is looking for. Community members answer by commenting on the post. Number of comments in such a post depends on the community size, group type, question or recommendation type, activity level of the member seeking recommendations and overall group activity level. Member receives help from the community and fulfils his/her need and feels integrated and associated with the community. Member who replies or helps fellow community member feels influenced and shares emotional connection. Facebook group also provides technological infrastructure to satisfy **Kollock (1999)** three conditions of members cooperativeness in a community (1) Facebook profile picture and name of the member helps to identify one another that they belongs to a common online community 2) Members in a Facebook group can observe one another's communication history; posts and comments on their respective timeline post (3) members have perception that they will meet and help one another in the community in the future. **Karau and William's (1993**) in their research of theory of social loafing recommended that community members can be motivated for participation through recognition, identification and making the task attractive. In Facebook group based brand communities a member creating and posting brand culture, history and traditions related image and video content is called "Visual Storyteller". The tag of "Visual Storyteller" is provided by system itself based on the content posted. Similarly a member posting for initiating some discussion on any relevant issue is called "Conversation Starter". Technological infrastructure for member identification and recognition is also there in Facebook groups. Identification and recognition is necessary to motivate the member for participation in community activities. Consumer lead communities can be fostered only by member active participation.

3.7 Engagement in Facebook Groups

Members of Facebook group based communities can observe all groups' activities on their time line without logging in any other place; this property significantly increases member participation and engagement in Facebook group based communities. Large number of Facebook user worldwide daily visit their profile hence available on the platform on daily basis mostly multiple times in a day to view and participate in any activity in their group. Organic reach of Facebook group posts are higher than Facebook page post according to a research. Marketers and brand managers are fostering online communities and investing a lot for content creation to engage and to motivate customers. Mutual interaction and communication among members within online communities lead to increased trust and purchase intention **(Botzenhardt, Heinrich and Campbell; 2013).** Facebook continuously adding engagement tools to make Facebook Group a comprehensive online community building tool. One of such technique is hosting watch party on Facebook group. Watch party feature is watching a public video together like watching a live broadcast. Marketer can organise watch parties to share brand message, new product launch or introduction of new product feature. Typical common service related problem can also be addressed by using watch party feature. Brands are also organising watch parties to share educational and training related content.

Commenting, posting new content, sharing a slideshow, sharing post, hosting watch party and like on a postal are techniques Facebook group provides for increasing engagement among members the in community. Welcoming a new member in the group using customized image or video message will make the member comfortable and included; and encourages for future participation. Up to 15 days of joining a member is considered new member. One way to start conversation is by asking new members for introduction this will make new member comfortable in the community; and will also feel valued. A simple one click on member profile provides all the detail about a new member; member can be contacted by sending personalized messages to engage and motivate in the community. Visual story telling using images, infographics and videos can be a great way for engaging members and creating brand related discussions in a brand community and any member new or tenured can initiate it. According to a research content delivering education and entertainment is best suited for Facebook group posting and driving conversation. The group insights facility available with Facebook groups provides a great means for knowing level of engagement among community members. Facility also speaks about how community members like to engage, identifies the most engaging post of the community with the most active members of the community. With the help of above insights marketer can find out what is working? And can manipulate and strategies future post planning accordingly. Events facility on Facebook group can be used for disseminating brand information, new product launch or organising other get together like brand related events, and rituals. Any member can create event in well advance with all event details live; and can invite other fellow members for joining the event. Mentorship facility of the Facebook group can be used by senior group members, marketers and experts for community tradition and culture communication, guiding product uses and providing specific training to members.

Discussions and implications

With the advent of web 2.0 various platforms with diverse technological structure are available for online community building. Brands and businesses are fostering online communities for engaging customers and co-creating value. Face-to-face brand communities like Harley Owners Group (HOG) and others have online presence and most of the interactions among members are online. Companies are investing huge capital to create brand related content for online brand community they are fostering. Marketers can play important role in nurturing online groups by organising online events, watch parties to engage members. Marketers and social media managers are also working as social listener too; to sustain and improve brand image. Social media platforms are playing important role in online brand building, customer persuasion and engagement.

Facebook group provides adequate technological structure and facilities to build and grow brand community. Successful brand communities are building and leaded by consumers. Marketers only provides brand related new information, new product information, shares brand history, rituals and culture. Members posting feature gives opportunity to member to ask help or question, raise issue, provide support or initiate discussion on any topic. Member can provide suggestion, ideas and feedback   to co-create value. Strong self driven online communities pertaining to brand, hobby, interest or social issues can be created with the Facebook group. One added advantage is if member is Facebook user he or she do not need to login to any other platform or website to participate in community discussions. Social media managers can use Facebook group to build and nurture brand

community; their main role as an admin will be facilitator and moderator. They can provide and create brand related content in image, infographics and video formats. They can work as moderator to take the discussion in a useful direction. Members can be engaged, motivated and persuaded for purchase and product uses.

Conclusions and future research areas

Smartphone became the primary device to connect with the world using internet. With the invent of web 2.0 and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter users are mostly busy on these applications. Users on these social media platforms are increasing continuously in India and across the globe. Brand and businesses have their presence on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter to interact and engage with customers. Facebook is the most widely used social media platform in India which connects with friends and family members. Almost all of the companies and businesses are using Facebook Page for social media marketing and online brand building but only a few are using Facebook group for building online brand community. The benefits of online brand community building are numerous and varied to a company. Each customer in the group works as a brand advocate, taking the marketing communication into other groupings. "Facebook group" is an additional feature of the platform for interest and brand based online community building. Communities based on a brand, passion, profession, travel, health, social etc can be found with few members to millions of members. If you are a member of any Facebook group you can see all groups' activities on your time line without logging in on any other place. This property makes Facebook group most favourable online community building platform. One may have joined several Facebook groups but would engage and makes relationships in only those which are providing value. Value may be in terms of entertainment, information or socializing. Since Facebook group platform facilitates complete technological structure for sustainable online community building, businesses can develop online brand communities using Facebook Group to interact and engage with customers and brand loyal for value co-creation and feedback.

Apart from Facebook other social media platforms are also providing technological structure for online brand community building like LinkedIn. Author focused community building on social media platforms because users do not have to login in separate platform for community participation. Social media platform itself boosts information dissemination and propagation hence will help a community leader to spread brand related information among large users of the product. Scope of studying community building on LinkedIn and other social media platforms and web based forums is always there. Appropriateness of brand community building on social media may vary with business to business. In the era of digital transformation and fast changing internet technology; scope of exploring new opportunities for community building is always there.

References

1. Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U.M. and Herrmann, A. (2005), "The social influence of brand community: evidence from European car clubs", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 69, July, pp. 19-34.
2. Bender, Thomas (1978), *Community and Social Change in America*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

3. Botzenhardt, A.,Heinrich, D. and Campbell, C. (2013) 'Just small talk? The impact of interpersonal interaction in virtual web communities on new-product adoption',Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp.86–101.

4. Brian J. Baldus, Clay Voorhees, Roger Calantone (2014). Online brand community engagement: Scale development and validation. Journal of Business Research

5. Christensen, W., & Suess, R. (1978). Hobbyist computerized bulletin board. *Byte Magazine, 3*(11), 150-158.

6. Constantinides, E.,Brünink, L.A. and Lorenzo-Romero, C. (2015) 'Customer motives and benefits for participating in online co-creation activities', Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp.21–48.

7. Cova, Bernard and White, Tim(2010) 'Counter-brand and alter-brand communities: the impact of Web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches', Journal of Marketing Management, 26: 3, 256 — 270

8. Cova, Bernard, & Pace, Stefano (2006). Brand community of convenience products:New forms of customer empowerment—The case "my Nutella The Community".European Journal of Marketing, 40(9/10), 1087–1105

9. Cova, Stefano Pace, and David J. Park (2007), "Global Brand Communities Across Borders: The Warhammer Case," International Marketing Review, 24 (3), 313-29.

10. Gangadharbatla, H.and Valafar, M. (2017) 'Propagation of user-generated content online', Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp.218–232.

11. Karau, S. J., & William, K. D. (1993). Social loafing: A meta-analytic review and theoretical integration. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 65(2), 681-707.

12. Kim, A. J. (2000). Community building on the Web: Secret strategies for successful online communities. Berkeley, CA:Peachpit Press.

13. Kollock (Eds.), Communities in cyberspace (pp. 220-242).London: Routledge.

14. Kozinets, Robert V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. Journal of Marketing Research, 39(1)

15. Kozinets, R.V. (2002a) The field behind the screen: using netnography for marketing research in online communities. Journal of Marketing, 39, 61–72.

16. Martin C. Kindsmüller, André Melzer and Tilo Mentler (2009). Online Communities and Online Community Building. Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Second Edition

17. McAlexander, J.H., Schouten, J.W. and Koenig, H.F. (2002), "Building brand community", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 38-54.

18. McMillian, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). "Sense of community: A definition and theory", Journal of Community Psychology, vol. 14, pp. 6-23.

19. Muniz, A.M. and O'guinn, T.C. (2001), "Brand community", Journal of Consumer Research,Vol. 27, pp. 412-32.

20. Preece, J. (2000). Online communities: Designing usability and supporting sociability. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

21. Puri, Anjali (2007). The web of insights: The art and practice of webnography. International Journal of Market Research, 49(3), 387–408

22. Rheingold, H. (2000). The virtual community: Homesteading on the electronic frontier (rev. ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

23. Schau, H.J., Muniz, A.M. and Arnould, E.J. (2009), "How brand community practices create value", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 73, September, pp. 30-51.
24. Sukoco, B.M., Wu, W-Y. and Liu, H-H. (2016) 'Co-consumption and co-production inside a brand community: a socio-cognitive perspective', Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, Vol. 10. Nos. 1/2, pp.113–126.
25. Sung, Yongjun, Kim, Yoojung, Kwon, Ohyoon, & Moon, Jangho (2010). An explorative study of Korean consumer participation in virtual brand communities in social network sites. Journal of Global Marketing, 23(5), 430–445.
26. Vargo, Stephen L. and Robert F. Lusch (2004), "Evolving Toward New Dominant Logic for Marketing," Journal of Marketing, 68 (January), 1-17.
27. Wiertz, C. and de Ruyter, K. (2007), "Beyond the call of duty: why customers contribute to firm-hosted commercial online communities", Organization Studies, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 347-76.
28. Yılmaz, Hakan and Enginkaya, Ebru (2015) 'Brand followers: motivations and attitudes of consumers to follow brands in social media', Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2015
29. Zaglia Melanie E.(2013) "Brand communities embedded in social networks"; Journal of Business Research 66 216–223