

Continuous Engagement in Social Media Contest Does Experience Matter?

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effect of past experience to increase the intention to re-participate in social media contest and emphasize the important role in designing sales promotion strategy in social media. A cross-sectional survey was conducted online in Indonesia, reaching a sample of 309 individuals who have participated in at least one social media contest held by brand in the last six months. PLS SEM was employed to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed that customer's past experience plays most importantly in customer's re-participation. This study also gives theoretical evidence of the role of past experience to the intention to re-participate in social media contest and improve social media engagement. Online customers value the good and fun experience by participating in social media contest, even when they have not won any contest before. This study contributes to increasing our knowledge on online non-monetary sales promotion method, namely social media contest.

Keywords: social media, social media contest, customer engagement, theory of planned behavior, past experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has made competition to gain customers engagement more challenging as connections between companies and customers happened almost instantly [1]. In the dynamic environment, customer engagement play a key role in in viral marketing activities such as referral, word of mouth, and customer interactions [2]. It is also one of the top tier research priorities by Marketing Science Institute in 2016-2018 [3]. In order to sustain and grow, companies must adapt to digital changes by incorporating digital marketing strategy into companies overall strategy [4]. Social media has emerged to be one of the most effective digital marketing tools widely used by marketers to engage customers online [5] and influence brand reputation [6] as well as loyalty [7]. Using social media as an interactive platform to communicate with customers, marketers can facilitate effective customer engagement. Social media has become part of people's daily life to interact with each other [8]. Therefore, it has become imperative to have social media engagement as one of the company goals for marketers as well as research focus for scholars[9].

Online contest is one of non-monetary sales promotion that is widely used to increase customer

engagement due to its ability to attract large masses of customers by giving them the opportunity of winning some prizes based on effort [10]. The advantages of online contests are the ability to increase sales and also interact with potential customers [11]. By using Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) that has been widely used as a rigorous tool to understand behavioral intention [12], this study expects to learn more about online contest participation in social media.

It would be logical to assume there were past experiences that contributes to the intention to re-engage in the social media contest besides the three antecedent variables contained in TPB. Good customer experience has proven to have positive significant relationship to customer engagement in social media [13]. This gradual interaction will further make customers engage, and in the long run will increase their loyalty to the brand [14]. Given the importance of experience in customer engagement in social media, the study of experience to increase customer engagement has remain under researched [15]. Hence, more research is needed to understand more on the impact of experience to customer engagement in social media using online contest method. Marketers could also gain insight about how to interact with their potential customers if the antecedents for intention to engage in social media contest is known [10].

The aim of this study is twofold. First, it examines the antecedents of intention to re-participate in social media contest using theory of planned behavior. Second, this study give insight about the effect of experience to the intention to re-participate in social media contest.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is ‘the level of a customer’s motivational, related to brand, dependent in terms of context, characterized by levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions’[16]. Engagement has evolved from activities related to commodity buying to digital customer engagement such as likes, comments, shares and other online activities, especially in social media [17]. Through the development of technologies, social media emerged as a new marketing channel that allow interaction and engagement, hence the term social media marketing [18]. It has been one of the key measurement of digital marketing communication strategy [19] and proven to increase customer loyalty [20]. One of the methods to increase customer engagement is to hold contests. Online contest is defined as time-limited competition using web 2.0 functionalities, targeting general public or specific target group to make use of their skills, expertise, or creativity to complete a task defined by the organizer for certain objectives in exchange of reward opportunities [21], [22]. The advantages of contest are that it does not decrease the value of the product, but instead it has positive effects on traffic, engagement, and brand image [23]. The emergence of online platforms has also provides a new way to hold contests at a lower price while giving fruitful insights of how customers and companies interact [3]. Social media platforms establish an interactive channel of communication that has been recognized as innovative because they enable users to connect, chare, and interact with other users instantly [24].

2.2. Theory of Planned Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) extends the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by adding one variable, namely perceived behavioral control (PBC). According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), an individual’s behavioral intention can be explained by

his PBC and determined by attitude and subjective norms [12]. TPB has been widely used to explain online customer engagement intention, such as writing reviews [25] and link sharing in social media [26]. Attitude is an individual’s overall evaluation of performing the behavior and is proven to influence behavioral intention [27]. Online activities such as knowledge sharing is associated positively with intention to use social media [28]. Subjective norm is an individual’s perceived social pressure from his or her environment and have been proven to influence behavioral intention such as writing online reviews [25]. PBC is an individual perception of the difficulty of performing the behavior of interest. Sharing information online has been proven to positively influenced by PBC [28]. It would be logical to state that intention to re-participate in social media contest are influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and PBC. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Attitude toward social media contest participation has a positive relationship with intention to participate in social media contest

H2: Subjective norm has a positive relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest

H3: PBC has a positive relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest

2.3. Past experience

Past experience focusing on entertainment has long become the antecedent of customer continuance engagement in social media [13]. It can improve long term loyalty and relationship with the brand when it is well-managed [29]. Continuance engagement in form of re-participation to social media contest is also expected, and experience as well as knowledge plays an important role, especially when they have winning possibility based on previous experience [30]. Therefore, we propose:

H4: Experience has a positive relationship with PBC

H5: Experience has a positive relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest

H6: Winning online contest moderates the positive impact of experience on intention to re-participate in social media contest

The hypotheses developed through the conceptual discussion are summarized in Figure 1. Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control (from TPB) and past experience act as predecessors to intention re-participate in online contest. Past experience also serves as antecedent of PBC. Winning experience moderates between past experience and behavioral intention.

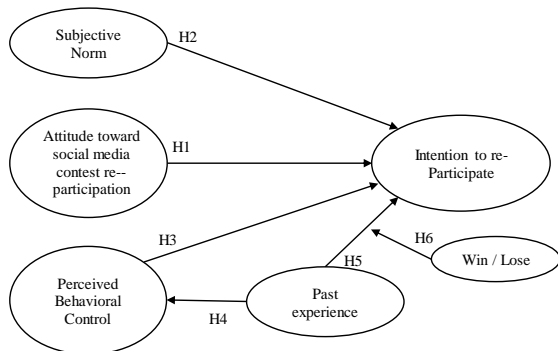


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The total respondents of both studies are 309 respondents, collected from online survey through social media in Indonesia. The respondents must have participated in at least one social media contest in last 6 months to ensure participants still recall and remember the experience. The survey was held for two months, from May to June 2020.

3.2. Measurement

There were six variables in the study, namely, subjective norm, attitude, PBC, intention to re-participate, past experience, and winning experience. All the questions were measured using multiple items on six-point Likert scales anchored by strongly agree (6) to strongly disagree (1). We developed the measurement items for each construct based on previous literature. All scales were derived from Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) TPB measures and adapted from Y.C.Huang (2011), Yang (2017), and Triantafilidou (2018) study. To ascertain content validity, we modified items from prior research to suit the context of social media contest. To increase respondents' understandings, the survey was translated into Indonesian language and tested to 20 respondents

for wording, length, and format of the scales instrument.

Table 1. Variable Operationalization

Constructs	# of questions	Sources
Subjective norm	3 items	Y.C.Huang (2011)
Attitude	4 items	Y.C.Huang (2011)
PBC	3 items	Y.C.Huang (2011)
Intention	3 items	Y.C.Huang (2011), Yang (2017)
Past experience	3 items	Y.C.Huang (2011), Triantafilidou (2018)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This study used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 3.0 software. It is a technique widely used as an alternative to covariance-based SEM, because it is able to achieve high degree of statistical power [31] and does not require data distribution normality [32]. Moreover, the sample size (n=309) fulfilled the minimum required sample size of ten times of the construct. In view of the above reasons, we opted to use PLS-SEM to analyze the hypotheses. This study uses two-step data analysis, first we analyze hypotheses based on constructs adapted from previous literature. Second, after the relationship between experience and intention is known, we input the variable of winning experience to moderate overall experience and influence intention to re-participate.

From 309 respondents in this study, 84,8 percent of the respondents were female. The age of respondents mostly was between 26 and 30 years old (47,2 percent). They were mostly student (39,5 percent). In terms of education, most of the respondents have bachelor's degree (49.8 percent). Most respondents have participated in social media contest one to three times (51.5 percent) in the last six months. The majority of respondents' socioeconomic class was around middle (28.8 percent) to lower class (28.2 percent).

4.1. Measurement model

To test the validity and reliability of the constructs' measures, we analyze the measurement model. All factor loadings were above 0,5, ranging from 0,818 to 0,952. Therefore, the convergent validity was met. Total variance explained for one common factor must

be less than 50% to indicate that there was no issue. Harman’s single factor analysis using SPSS result showed 41,8%. It showed there was no problematic issue in the common variance.

To test the validity and reliability of the constructs we use SPSS to measure Cronbach’s alpha, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance extracted (AVE). The Cronbach’s alpha were ranged between 0,816 and 0,942 higher than 0,6 threshold [33], indicating that all variables have achieved high internal consistency. CR scores were ranged between 0,889 and 0,962 also above 0,6 threshold therefore it indicates good level of reliability [34]. AVE scores were ranged between 0,727 and 0,895 where all of them are above 0,5 threshold, showing that the variable has also achieved level of reliability [34]. Therefore, we conclude that all variables used in this model have achieved convergent validity and reliability.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Subjective Norm	0.816	0.889	0.727
Attitude	0.887	0.922	0.750
PBC	0.860	0.914	0.781
Intention	0.942	0.962	0.895
Past experience	0.882	0.928	0.811

Table 3 shows this study also has discriminant validity because all correlation coefficients are smaller than the individual Cronbach Alpha [34].

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	AT	IN	PBC	EX	SU
AT	0,866				
IN	0,806	0,946			
PBC	0,665	0,662	0,884		
EX	0,784	0,829	0,688	0,901	

SU	0,260	0,168	0,131	0,143	0,853
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Notes: AT (Attitude towards social media contest participation), EX (Past experience), IN (Intention to re-participate in social media contest), PBC (Perceived behavioural control), SU (Subjective norm)

4.2. Study 1

All hypotheses in the first study were supported except for H2. Attitude towards participating in social media contest has significant positive relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest ($\beta = 0.375, t = 6.368, p < 0.001$) thus, supporting H1. However, subjective norm has insignificant effect on the intention to re-participate, therefore H2 is not supported. PBC has significant positive relationship with intention to re-participate ($\beta = 0.086, t = 2.021, p < 0.05$) supporting H3. The effect of past experience to PBC has proven statistically significant ($\beta = 0.688, t = 18.474, p < 0.001$) therefore H4 is supported. The relationship between past experience to intention to re-participate has proven significant and positive ($\beta = 0.469, t = 9.144, p < 0.001$) thus supporting H5.

Table 4. Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	t value	Decision
H1: AT - IN	6.368***	Supported
H2: SU - IN	0.388	Not supported
H3: PBC - IN	2.021**	Supported
H4: EX - PBC	18.47***	Supported
H5: EX - IN	9.14***	Supported

Notes: **Sig. at 0.05, ***Sig. at 0.01

The R² value of this study is 75.4 per cent in intention to re-participate in social media contest, thus it can be described as substantial. However, only 47.4 per cent of variance in PBC construct can be explained by the model, hence it is deemed to be moderate (Hair et al., 2018). From the result, it can be concluded that the variables are well explained.

The effect size of past experience to intention is the highest ($f^2 = 0.272$) continued with attitude to intention ($f^2 = 0.186$). Furthermore, the effect size of past experience ($f^2 = 0.9$) to PBC is remarkably high suggesting it has big influence on the variable.

4.3. Study 2

In study 2, moderating variable winning experience is put into the framework to understand whether it affects intention to re-participate or not. The data is collected in the same period of study 1 and has yes or no answers to the question “Have you win any prize on the social media contest you participated in the last 6 months?”.

Results shown that winning experience has no significant moderating effects between past experience and intention to re-participate in social media contest ($p\text{-value}=0.528$). This indicates that relationship between experience and intention to re-participate does not depend on winning experience. Therefore, $H6$ is not supported.

5. DISCUSSION

This study focuses on understanding the factors influencing intention to re-participate in social media contest to harness continuous customer engagement. Furthermore, the proposed model hypothesized and investigated the role of consumers winning experience on the intention to re-participate in social media contest.

First, among four antecedent variables, only subjective norm showed no statistically significant relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest. Attitude, PBC, and past experience have positive significant relationship with intention to re-participate in social media contest. Social media users with a more favorable attitude and perceived control over the behavior toward participating in online contest are more likely to re-participate in social media contest. It would be costly for marketers to find all new contest participants every time, therefore the engagement with previous contest participants is important. For subjective norm, we theorized that participating in online contest is not to conform to societal norms, and not participating will not make other people disapprove of the behavior. The result is in line with study about customer engagement in the form of online auction participation [35] and microblogs usage [28]. Therefore, marketers should consider having online contest that focus on the mechanism and experience itself rather than only inviting other customers to participate. By doing this, marketers can spend effort and money more effective and gain more customer engagement through online contest.

Second, we analyze using ANOVA but found no significant difference between genders, social classes, and education groups on intention to re-participate in

social media ($p\text{-value}>0.05$). The reason behind this is most likely that in digital world, the behavioral intention has no significant differences among the demographics group. This implies that marketers can target the contest participants regardless of demographics and focus on the potential customers.

Third, through this study we also found that winning experience does not moderate experience and intention to re-participate. Even though some customers have not win any social media contest, they are still willing to re-participate in social media contest. We support the arguments that participants who are already engaged with certain communities will less likely have negative impacts on losing a contest [3].

6. IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the development of a model that attempts to explain customers' continued engagement in social media contest. Although the customers' continuous engagement in social media has attracted many literature [36], [37], but study about contest as a way to increase customer engagement is limited. This study extends the research on customers engagement in social media by adding past experience to TPB. It turns out the past experience has important roles in determining behavioral intention [35], [38]. Past research has associated customer engagement with involvement and interactivity [18], therefore this study highlights the importance of experience for continuous customer engagement.

The results of our study also have implications for marketers and social media managers. By defining and confirming factors influencing intention to re-participate in social media contest, we support the argument that a good social media contest should focus on experience. This study provides practitioners with insights on what key elements of online contests should be focused on to create better engagement with potential customers. From our studies, subjective norms do not have positive relationship with intention, and only attitude, experience and PBC do. Thus, marketers should make contest strategy that is controllable in the eyes of customers, harness customer attitude about the brand, and manage contest participants data to do retargeting should the brand holds another contest in the future. Moreover, due to insignificant relationship between behavioral intention with winning experience, genders, social classes, and age groups, social media marketers can retarget contest for all types of audience target.

7. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study extends TPB to explain factors influencing continuous behavioral intention by adding experience. A limitation of this research is that the mechanism of online contest is not stated specifically, rather in general to include more inputs from respondents. Exploration of different mechanism of social media contest may open new insights about behavioral intention in social media contest.

The antecedent factors that affect attitude towards social media contest participation would be an interesting topic to study. As the topic customers engagement is widely researched, the topic specific to social media contest remains under-researched.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The current research is one of the few attempts to examine the role of experience to customer engagement continuity. Online survey was administered through social media to obtain respondents. The hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM. The findings of this study suggest that attitude, perceived behavioural control, and experience can positively affect intention to re-participate in social media contest. Experience also has strong effect on perceived behavioural control which will further strengthen intention to re-participate in social media contest.

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