The influence of YouTubers on followers' use intention

Stela Cristina Hott Corrêa, João Luiz Soares, Juliana Maria Magalhães Christino, Marlusa de Sevilha Gosling and Carlos Alberto Gonçalves

Postgraduate Program in Business Administration, Department of Administration, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Received 27 September 2019
Revised 22 February 2020
Accepted 19 March 2020

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the relationship between the follower's engagement with YouTubers and his/her intention of using a brand they advertise or use. Self-connection, brand love and trust are mediating variables concerning the YouTuber–follower relationship and involvement is the antecedent variable of the engagement.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was carried out and 272 YouTubers' followers responded. The structural model was tested by covariance-based structural equation modeling using the software R, v3.6.0.

Findings – The present study reveals that the follower's engagement with YouTubers presents itself within cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects; it rises from the involvement the followers have with their favourite YouTuber. Engagement, enhanced by self-connection, love and trust in the YouTuber, impacts the intention of use of a brand he/she indicates or uses.

Practical implications – YouTube is a relevant channel for advertising and promoting a brand. Hence, the company should bear in mind the fact that the YouTuber appointed to represent its image must be connected to the feelings and interests of their followers as well as those of the brands to be publicised.

Originality/value – The present research proposes a novel conceptual connection to engagement, established no longer by the brand of a product or service, but by YouTubers. It aims at rendering contribution to this subject as it investigates the correlation of use intention of a brand, subject to the engagement with a human brand, herein represented by YouTubers.

Keywords Mobile marketing, Online marketing, Social media marketing, Internet advertising, Online advertising, Online consumer behaviour, Marketing communication, Interactivity, Computer-mediated communication, YouTube, Virtual marketing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As the social media develops, the digital influencers derive better opportunities to interact with their fans (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016), thus establishing interaction points where a cocreation of values between consumers, influencers and brands occurs (Hinson *et al.*, 2019). Online social media provide cybrid spaces allowing the consumer to establish new forms of integration with other actors, thus expressing their engagement (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). In this environment, which had its user's ground expanded with the advent of the mobile platforms, the consumer can recommend a product, vent dissatisfaction, give opinions, persuade and clear up doubts with the help of other users in online brand communities organised in

Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing
Vol. 14 No. 2, 2020
pp. 173-194

2040-7122
DOI 10.1108/JRIM-09-2019-0154

networks, or he may even simply click a like on the Facebook page (Yusuf *et al.*, 2018).

In 2019, YouTube reached the level of the second most visited website in the world (after Google), with 23 min of average duration of users' visits (SimilarWeb, 2020). In the intersection of social media with social networks, YouTube provides space where discussion about brands and products can be held (Burgess and Green, 2018). In this space, YouTubers produce and share contents which influence internet communities actively, thereby leading to the establishment of solid relationships with their peers, as well as with the companies that refer to their videos in the implementation of new market strategies (Sabich and Steinberg, 2017). As YouTubers have a considerable capacity to generate content viewed by millions of people (SocialBlade, 2020), this work focuses on investigating YouTubers' ability to generate engagement and intention to use brands on their followers.

Engagement represents the intensity of manifestation of a consumer's behaviour towards a brand or company which occurs in a context that extrapolates the purchase situation (Calder *et al.*, 2009). An engaged consumer stands for and recommends the company and its brands, makes positive statements about the use of a product or service, shares his experiences with the brand, organises himself in brand communities, contributes to the development of new products and services and participates in the various activities sponsored by the company, such as a sports competition amongst other activities (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). This behaviour, to a certain extent, produces transforming effects on the consumer himself (Harmeling *et al.*, 2017). It also translates into positive results for the company, such as an improvement in its financial performance (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). In this perspective, researchers have been dedicating considerable attention to the development and testing of models that relate engagement with loyalty and with brand use intention (So *et al.*, 2016).

Within this context, it is quite expected that consumers engaged to YouTubers respond positively to their indications and examples, therefore developing or enhancing the use intention of the brand advertised or consumed by them. The study of this phenomenon provides the opportunity to make discoveries in the field of consumer's behaviour. However, literature addressing the influence of YouTubers on the consumption of brands is still narrow, thus exposing a research gap as far as consumers behaviour is concerned. Amongst the few works published in this area, it is well worth mentioning Lee and Watkins (2016). They developed a study in this sense, aiming at assessing the influence of YouTubers on the consumer's perceptions and intentions regarding luxury brands.

With a view to render contribution to the filling of this gap, the present study aims at elucidating the relationship between the engagement of the customer to YouTubers and the use intention of the brands they advertise or use. This relationship will be assessed empirically in a direct way (Nadeem *et al.*, 2015), and also indirectly by considering as mediators the trust (So *et al.*, 2016), the self-connection (Escalas, 2004) and the brand love (Wallace *et al.*, 2014). Involvement and engagement are distinct constructs, however, involvement is related to engagement as its antecedent (Dwivedi, 2015).

Apart from what has been said before, this study proposes a new conceptual connection for the constructs studied, established no longer by the brand of a good or service, but by YouTubers. Moreover, it renders new contribution to this theme as it seeks to fill the existing gap in the literature concerning the correlation between brand use/purchase intention and engagement with a human brand, hereby represented by YouTubers. A human brand refers to any well-known or emerging prosperous person who is the subject of interpersonal or inter-organisational marketing communication efforts (Thomson, 2006). So far, researchers have investigated this relationship considering the same brand, both for use intention as for engagement.

Moreover, this study has attained practical results revealing the extent to which consumers, trust, love and identify themselves with their favourite YouTuber. This comprehension, signals to multiple possibilities of marketing communication concerning brands, they stretch from their choice of the YouTuber who is more suitable to communicate with the public, goes through decision about the message to be sent by the YouTuber, its contents and style, besides strategies of public relations which make the connection of the public to their favourite YouTuber possible.

Literature review

Engagement

Consumer's engagement is a theory that has been consolidating, mainly after the late 1900s and early 2000s, as a promising theoretical construct useful in the explanation of why some behaviours of identification with a brand go beyond a simply repurchase (Calder *et al.*, 2009). Such managerial concern is founded on the possibility that a brand should be an important element in the achievement of sustainable competitive advantages (Kumar and Pansari, 2013).

The origin of the study of the consumer engagement can be traced back to the fundaments of the marketing theory, when the directional change occurs from transactional marketing to a relational marketing perspective, in theory, and practice alike. This process results in greater interaction between a company and its clients, made possible by the use of new technology and the advent of the social media networks, leading to the so-called client empowerment. This recent market orientation adopted by the companies is based upon the market relationship philosophy (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Therefore, the theoretical fundaments of the client engagement lie on the marketing relationship theory and on the service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008), which are theories centred on the importance of the relations and long-lasting and cocreative interactions amongst the stakeholders (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2019).

As the aforementioned theories are also novel, it is proper to mention some basis of the social theory which supports the concept of engagement as the tendency a person has to include significant brands to the way he sees himself. Amongst the basis of the social theory, self-schemata (Markus, 1977) and attachment (Dwayne Ball and Tasaki, 1992) theories are well worth mentioning when it comes to assessing how and why the consumer self-concept relates to the brand.

Self-schemata are cognitive self-generalisations deriving from past experiences that organise and orient the processing of information emerging from a person's own social environment (Markus, 1977). Self-schemata reflects a person's comprehension of invariances in his behaviour, which derives from special events and situations, categorisations and repetitive assessments of his actions over time (Sheeran and Orbell, 2000). Self-schemata provides the individual's self-related experiences with structure and coherence, therefore making for a basis for future judgement, inferences and decisions about himself.

On the other hand, attachment is defined within a consumer behaviour context, as an attempt to spell out to which extent an object that an individual owns, or might own someday, may be used to maintain his self-concept (Dwayne Ball and Tasaki, 1992). This construct derives from the self-schemata theory when there is clear evidence that the internal consistency of self-schemata depends on possession (planned, current or past) of an object. This result meets the human willingness to exercise homophily – a behaviour that establishes that people with similar attitudes or characteristics are more likely to relate with their peers rather than with groups which diverge from them. There is evidence that homophily can lead people to connect themselves to celebrities through social media

interactions, and also by the adoption of brands indicated by them as means of social identification (Jin, 2018), which may result in an engagement with the brands indicated.

YouTubers. YouTube allows users to create and upload videos, which are seen and shared by hundreds of millions of viewers. Such a platform has been important since its launching in 2005, as it is a space for discussions about brands and products (Freeman and Chapman, 2007). Amongst the various forms of contents publicised by YouTube, video blogging (vlogging) is uppermost which is presented in a blog format, developed by means of videos created by the so-called vloggers. The vloggers who share their vlogs on the YouTube platform are called YouTubers. They are producers of a variety of materials, which exert an active influence on the internet communities, establishing solid relationships with their peers, as well as with companies which use their videos to develop new marketing strategies (Sabich and Steinberg, 2017).

A large number of YouTubers post videos to teach their viewers how to use certain products, from makeup cosmetics to food, even toys are addressed. Others only seek to entertain and amuse their followers. However, in a number of cases, they end up publicising some brands either directly or indirectly, this often occurs with YouTuber players who make footages of their performances in the electronic games. Therefore, in the YouTubers' channels, consumers may learn about products and brands, observe how they are used, what the benefits are and what the channel's target public is. In this space, the viewer can interact with YouTubers and try to sort doubts about a brand advertised or simply propose new experiments. Moreover, it is also possible to communicate with other consumers and exchange ideas and information about products. Verhellen *et al.* (2013) verified that there is a strong positive effect on the recognition of and intention to purchase of brands used in YouTube videos in both, subtle or intentional ways.

In this sense, YouTubers have reached a large number of followers with their videos. They are becoming celebrities in the virtual media, up to the point of having a strong influence on the general public (Bi *et al.*, 2019). In a similar way celebrity's brands, YouTubers can also be considered human brands, which is a term that according to Thomson (2006), refers to any person, who may represent an object of marketing communication, interpersonal or inter-organisational. The authenticity perceived in the human brand, influenced by its rarity and stability (Moulard *et al.*, 2015), probably influences the attachment the followers have to their favourite YouTubers. In this context, YouTubers, in a similar way to bloggers, may raise the capital of their human brands and harvest benefits (Delisle and Parmentier, 2016). As they become professionals, human brands are usually managed by agents who plan and coordinate strategies with a view to signal the quality of the human brand effectively (Zamudio *et al.*, 2014).

Engaged consumers identify themselves with the object of their engagement and trust it (Hinson *et al.*, 2019). The consumers engaged with YouTubers assimilate utilitarian and hedonic values from the YouTubers and other users of the channel (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Thus, they are expected to respond positively to indications and examples set by them, hence developing and reinforcing the use intention of brands used or advertised by them.

Amongst the few works addressing YouTubers, Lee and Watkins (2016) investigated this subject to assess the influence of YouTubers on the consumer's perception and intention in relation to luxury brands by means of parasocial interaction and the social comparison theory. Hence, the perspective of the relation between the consumer's engagement to the brand and his intention of use and loyalty, encompasses various dimensions, which have not yet been dealt with, and of late has attracted the attention of researchers of other disciplines (Lim *et al.*, 2015).

Development of hypothesis

Engagement and involvement

In their study into the engagement concept, Hollebeek *et al.* (2014) concluded that engagement represents a motivational variable, dependent on the individual and of the context which emerges from bidirectional interactions between the subject and the object. Therefore, engagement assumes a phenomenological character where utilitarian values, as well as hedonic and social aspects, which are associated with the consumption experience and may lie outside a shopping context. Most literature proposes this assumption, however, some authors dispute this proposition and understand that in an engaged behaviour, including non-commercial interactions, direct interactions with the company might exist and might start when a consumer makes a purchase (Pansari and Kumar, 2017), in accordance with each social media platform (Voorveld *et al.*, 2018).

There are three ways to define consumer's engagement (Abdul-Ghani *et al.*, 2012). In the first one, engagement is a psychological state, often seen as cognitive, affective and motivational fully absorbing, in a way that it enhances the value of the object of engagement (Calder *et al.*, 2009). Another way of viewing engagement is through the behavioural trend. Here, the interaction between customer and company, company and potential customer, the interaction amongst consumers, or even interaction involving other players such as suppliers and employees around the company and its brands are concerned (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). The third trend, as adopted in the present work, perceives engagement as being hybrid, a blend of the psychological and the behavioural dimension. By following this trend, Hollebeek *et al.* (2014) devised a scale to measure the engagement to a social network (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). The final scale encompasses ten items, distributed amongst cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (activation).

Brands are one of the main objects of engagement. Others objects are products (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014) and services (So *et al.*, 2016) alike, apart from brand communities (Wirtz *et al.*, 2013), organisations (Kumar and Pansari, 2016), social networks (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014), games (Harwood and Garry, 2015) as well as websites (Abdul-Ghani *et al.*, 2011). As far as social networks are concerned, YouTubers may function as an integral part of the mix of integrated marketing communication of the brands, for they have a marked impact on the consumer's purchase decision (Niyazi, 2018).

Involvement is the relevance perceived by a person in relation to an object, based on his needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1994). The greater the involvement with an object, the greater the engagement to it (Vivek *et al.*, 2012). A consumer's involvement with a product category has an impact on his engagement to the brands available in such category (Dwivedi, 2015). YouTubers are relevant influencers, given the consumer's clear perception of the credibility of the information they provide (Xiao *et al.*, 2018). However, one might suppose that:

H1a. The involvement of the public with the YouTuber of his preference impacts the cognitive dimension of the engagement positively.

H1b. The involvement of the public with the YouTuber of his preference impacts the affective dimension of the engagement positively.

H1c. The involvement of the public with the YouTuber of his preference impacts the behavioural dimension of the engagement positively.

Self-connection, trust and brand love. Brands are signs or names that identify products and companies, consumers value the symbolic and psychological benefits of the brands because these benefits help them build their self-identity and improve the way they appear to others. The degree to which a consumer includes a brand in his own mental representation forms his self-connection (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). Self-connection is a consequence of the engagement which develops through interactive experiences of the consumer with the brand (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). Identity, values, culture and interests of YouTubers connect themselves with the identity of their followers. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be suggested:

H2a. The cognitive dimension of the public's engagement with the YouTuber of his preference creates his self-connexion with the YouTuber.

H2b. The affective dimension of the public's engagement with the YouTuber of his preference creates his self-connection with the YouTuber.

H2c. The behavioural dimension of the public's engagement with the YouTuber of his preference creates his self-connection with the YouTuber.

Consumer trust is defined as being the expectation he has that the provider of services is reliable and delivers on what he promises (Sirdeshmukh *et al.*, 2002). It is noticeable that engaged consumers perceive safety and reliability in their interactions with the brands they consume, they also believe that the companies cater to their own interests (Nadeem *et al.*, 2015).

In the social media environment, YouTubers are seen by their admirers as being honest and trustworthy (Rasmussen, 2018). However, some authors dispute this proposition and establish a consumer's trust as an antecedent of his engagement (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010), this paper suggests that the public's engagement to the YouTuber of his preference is the agent which generates trust. This proposal is in line with surveys that suggest that engaged consumers perceive security and reliability in their interactions with the brands they consume (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019), thus believing that the companies that sell such brands cater for the costumer's interest (Vivek *et al.*, 2012). Hence the following hypothesis:

H3a. The cognitive dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in trust in the YouTuber.

H3b. The affective dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in trust in the YouTuber.

H3c. The behavioural dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in trust in the YouTuber.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined brand love as being the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for the brand. Brand love includes passion, positive assessment and declaration of love to the brand, even though the consumers do not define this sentiment as being "love" (Batra *et al.*, 2012). In the formation of brand love with consumers; functional, tangible, as well as emotional or symbolic and abstract elements must be considered (Bairrada *et al.*, 2018).

When a brand offers the consumers a social context which encourages interaction and participation, the consumers may develop more intense emotional links to the brand through mechanisms of social identification (Vernuccio *et al.*, 2015). Hence the following hypothesis:

H4a. The cognitive dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in YouTuber brand love.

H4b. The affective dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in YouTuber brand love.

H4c. The behavioural dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference results in brand love for the YouTuber.

Use intention

In social commerce websites, where commercial activities happen through social interactions, loyalty reflects the willingness to cocreate, the amount of time a customer spends on a website, the positive electronic word-of-mouth and the repurchase intention (Molinillo *et al.*, 2019). An engaged consumer develops loyalty through purchase intention, and a desire to use and rebuy a brand in the future (O'Brien *et al.*, 2015). Customer engagement creates connections between consumer and brand beyond the purchase. The YouTuber is a human brand that advertises other brands through using or indicating them. So a consumer reveals his engagement to a Youtuber through the purchase or use intention of the brands indicated or used by the YouTuber. In this study, the proposition is that the engagement with the YouTuber triggers the intention to use the brands indicated or used by him. This fact leads to the formulation of these hypotheses:

H5a. The cognitive dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference has a positive influence on use intention of the brands indicated or used by him.

H5b. The affective dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference has a positive influence on use intention of the brands indicated or used by him.

H5c. The behavioural dimension of the engagement of the public with the YouTuber of its preference has a positive influence on use intention of the brands indicated or used by him.

A brand represents the self-image the consumer desires. When a consumer identifies himself with a certain brand, it indicates that he notices certain congruence of values between him and the brand. He will feel like using the brand, for it will represent him symbolically to his social group by saying who he is (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). This proposal supports the following hypothesis:

H6. Self-connection of the public to the YouTuber of his preference determines its use intention of the brands indicated or used by the YouTuber.

In accordance with the social exchange theory, relationships based on trust favour the perpetuation of the exchange between the parties (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, the relationship proposed between consumer trust and loyalty, supported by the reciprocity law (So *et al.*, 2016) could also be proposed, given the fact that trust enhances future use intention of a certain brand. This relation is expressed by:

H7. The public's trust in the YouTuber if its preference determines its use intention of the brands indicated or used by YouTubers.

To sum up, people who reach the state of being brand lovers are more prone to develop loyalty to the brand (Alnawas and Altarifi, 2016), what can also occur with the intention of use of a brand. In this direction, *H8* was formulated:

H8. Brand love of the public to the YouTuber of its preference determines its use intention of brands indicated or used by the YouTuber.

Therefore, in the face of this compilation of constructs, this investigation has developed a theoretical model based on the nomological network proposed by Hollebeek *et al.* (2014), also encompassing the constructs trust and brand love.

Methodology

This study is based upon and conducted by quantitative approach. To assess the relations between the constructs, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used, in accordance with the covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) approach (Kline, 2016). SEM splits into two aspects – the measurement model and structural model analysis. The measurement model represents the theory which shows how the variables measured group together to represent the constructs, on the other hand, the structural model depicts the way the constructs are associated amongst themselves, usually with multiple dependence relations. CB-SEM is used mainly to confirm or refute theories – a set of systematic relations amongst multiple variables which can be tested empirically. The software used in the analysis was R (version 3.6.0).

To verify the validity of the constructs, dimensionality, reliability, discriminant and convergent validity were used. Dimensionality was verified through the parallel line (Hoyle and Duvall, 2004). For reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were applied (Chin, 1998), they must present values greater than 0.70 if the reliability of a construct is to be confirmed (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005), in cases of exploratory research 0.6 is acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2009b). To achieve discriminant validity, the factor loading of the item must be greater than all the cross-loading factors (Barclay *et al.*, 1995). In the verification of the convergent validity, the criterium proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was used. It indicates the existence of convergent validation when average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 50% (Henseler *et al.*, 2009), or 40% in the cases of exploratory research (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

R^2 was used in the assessment of the adjustment qualities. It represents the extent to which the independent constructs explain the dependents – in a scale from 0% to 100% – given that, generally values smaller than 25% represent weak explanatory capability, and figures between 25% and 50% indicate moderate explanatory capability whereas values greater than 50% evidence substantial explanatory capability (Hair *et al.*, 2009a). Besides R^2, model quality parameters: χ^2/excuse-me, comparative fit index, Tucker Lewis Index and root mean square error of approximation were used. If a good adjustment is to occur, χ^2/G.L. is expected to be smaller than 3, CFI must be greater than 0.90, TLI near 1 and RMSEA must be smaller than 0.10 (Hair *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b).

A survey on the platform Google Forms was carried out. Initially, a pre-test involving 30 post-graduation students was done. Based on the observations provided by the participants of the pre-test, the instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire were rewritten. In the measurement of the variables present in the questionnaires, the seven-point Likert-type interval scale was chosen, ranging from "fully disagree" to "fully agree", the exception was the construct involvement, which was measured through a seven-point semantic differential scale. The items of the scale were based upon scales by the literature consulted (Appendix).

The data were collected by means of sending a link to potential respondents, who followed at least one YouTuber. The sample obtained was the non-probabilistic by convenience type. Most of the respondents were females (64.1%), between 14 and 24 years of age (67.2%), high school graduates (25.5%) or college dropouts (23.6%). All of the respondents lived in Brazil. As the collection was done by means of electronic forms, all the questions had to be answered; therefore, there were no cases of missing data.

The univariate outliers were diagnosed by means of standard scores smaller than −3.29 or greater than 3.29 (Hair *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b), 57 atypical observations were found (0.48%). The multivariate outliners were diagnosed based upon the Mahalanobis D^2 measurement (Hair *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b) in which four atypical individuals were found (1.47%). Considering that the observations are valid cases of the population and if they were to be discarded, the generality of the multivariate analysis could be limited. Although the results could show an improvement (Hair *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b), the option was for not excluding any cases.

By definition, the set of data presents neither univariate normal distribution nor multivariate, once the data are limited to a discrete and finite scale. Even when the traditional method (CB-SEM) is used, there are various robust estimators against deviations from normality. Therefore, the absence of normality in the data is no longer a drawback when working with structural equations.

Through the Spearman correlation matrix (Hollander and Wolfe, 1999) it was observed that all the relations were significant to the level of 5%. Apart from that, the Bartlett test (Mingoti, 2005) was performed to verify the linearity of each construct, in all of them the *p*-values were smaller than 0.05, indicating significant evidence of linearity.

In Table 1, the descriptive analysis of the items of the eight constructs investigated is shown. Also presented are the mean and standard deviation of the responses and the bootstrap confidence intervals for the means. The bootstrap method is used extensively when drawing inferences when the probability distribution of the variable of interest is not acknowledged (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Results

Measurement model

In the analysis of the measurement model via CB-SEM, the discriminant and convergent validity, reliability and dimensionality of the constructs were assessed. The convergent assessment criterium evaluates the extent to every two measurements of the same concept are correlated, whereas the discriminant assessment presents the degree to which a construct differs to the remaining ones; reliability reveals the consistency in the measurements when defining the concept they mean to assess; dimensionality establishes whether a construct is or is not unidimensional.

Table 2 presents the measurements of the validity and quality of the constructs of the model. It is noticed that none of the items of the constructs presented factor loadings smaller than 0.50, i.e. all of them render relevant contribution to the formation of the latent variable. Moreover, the weight of all the items was significant, (p-values < 0.050). According to the parallel line criterium, all the constructs analysed were unidimensional, they presented Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability greater than 0.70, i.e. all of them presented required levels of reliability and the AVEs were greater than 0.50, suggesting convergent validation.

Table 3 presents a comparison between factorial loadings and the maximum cross-loadings for each item. Therefore, it is observed that all the constructs reached discriminant validity, once the factorial loadings of the items of each construct were outstripped the respective

Construct	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Confidence Interval 95%
Involvement	INV1_IPT	5.91	1.19	[5.77;6.05]
	INV2_CHTINT	6.14	1.28	[5.99;6.29]
	INV3_RLV	5.86	1.33	[5.69;6.03]
	INV4_APTEMC	5.78	1.33	[5.63;5.93]
	INV5_SIGNF	5.32	1.56	[5.13;5.5]
	INV6_AGRD	6.37	1.02	[6.24;6.48]
	INV7_FSC	5.73	1.31	[5.58;5.88]
	INV8_VLR	5.57	1.42	[5.4;5.75]
	INV9_ENVL	6.17	1.13	[6.03;6.29]
	INV10_NCSS	5.50	1.53	[5.31;5.67]
Cognitive processing	CP1	5.14	1.66	[4.93;5.33]
	CP2	5.13	1.75	[4.92;5.34]
	CP3	5.18	1.76	[4.96;5.38]
Affection	AF1	5.69	1.39	[5.52;5.86]
	AF2	5.87	1.34	[5.71;6.01]
	AF3	5.99	1.18	[5.85;6.12]
	AF4	5.28	1.76	[5.07;5.47]
Activation	AC1	4.93	1.95	[4.69;5.16]
	AC2	5.01	1.98	[4.77;5.22]
	AC3	5.32	1.76	[5.09;5.5]
Self-connection	SBC1	4.63	1.96	[4.39;4.86]
	SBC2	5.17	1.64	[4.97;5.36]
	SBC3	4.53	2.01	[4.29;4.78]
	SBC4	4.00	2.24	[3.74;4.26]
	SBC5	4.77	2.11	[4.52;5.03]
	SBC6	4.39	2.13	[4.13;4.65]
	SBC7	5.52	1.65	[5.31;5.71]
Brand love	BL1	5.10	1.82	[4.89;5.31]
	BL2	5.54	1.56	[5.35;5.71]
	BL3	6.17	1.12	[6.04;6.29]
	BL4	4.89	1.97	[4.65;5.11]
	BL5	4.39	2.26	[4.12;4.67]
	BL6	5.54	1.60	[5.34;5.73]
	BL7	5.77	1.43	[5.58;5.94]
	BL8	3.94	2.37	[3.66;4.22]
Trust	BT1	4.97	1.86	[4.74;5.18]
	BT2	4.16	2.27	[3.89;4.43]
	BT3	5.42	1.55	[5.24;5.6]
	BT4	5.65	1.49	[5.47;5.82]
Use intention	BUI1	4.82	2.12	[4.55;5.06]
	BUI2	4.41	2.25	[4.16;4.69]
	BUI3	4.29	2.25	[4.03;4.55]
	BUI4	4.39	2.31	[4.13;4.65]

Table 1.
Descriptive analysis

Source: Elaborated by the authors

cross-loadings. It is worth pointing out that the BL8 result was an exception, but does not prevent validation.

Structural model

The adjustment of the structural model is presented by R^2 and the significance tests of the regression coefficients (β) at 5%. After running the model, it was observed that initially, the

Construct	Item	AVE[a]	C.A.[b]	C.R.[c]	Dim.[d]
Involvement	10	0.55	0.91	0.89	1
Cognitive processing	3	0.79	0.87	0.87	1
Affection	4	0.69	0.83	0.84	1
Activation	3	0.77	0.85	0.85	1
Self-connection	7	0.70	0.93	0.91	1
Brand love	8	0.57	0.88	0.87	1
Trust	4	0.72	0.86	0.86	1
Use intention	4	0.87	0.95	0.94	1

Notes: [a]Average cariance extracted [b]Cronbach's alpha [c]Composite reliability [d]Dimensionality
Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table 2.
Validity of the constructs

values of R^2 were favourable to the defence quality of the model; however, multi-linearity might have occurred. It occurs when there are highly correlated independent variables, leading to high standard errors and consequently inaccurate estimated coefficients. According to Draper and Smith (2014), variance inflation factor (VIF) values greater than ten indicate serious problems when estimating the regression coefficients. Higher VIF occurred in the cognitive processing (35.09).

Based on the multicollinearity results, a structural model was again developed, with a view to eliminating the problem affecting the highly correlated independent variables. Therefore, after removing cognitive processing from the formation of use intention, for it presented the highest VIF, the model presented in Table 4 was obtained. It is well worth mentioning that multicollinearity issues did not occur in any construct.

It is observed that involvement had a significant (p-value < 0.001) and positive influence on cognitive processing ($\beta = 0.99$), affection ($\beta = 0.88$) and activation ($\beta = 0.98$). Thus, the greater the involvement score, the higher the cognitive processing, affection, and activation. Involvement was capable of explaining 59.10% of the cognitive processing variability, 41.90% of affection variability and 30.40% of activation variability. The structural coefficients demonstrate that the involvement of the public with the YouTuber is a determinant of engagement.

There was a significant (p-value < 0.001) and positive influence of cognitive processing ($\beta = 1.14$) as well as activation ($\beta = 0.33$) on self-connection; therefore, the higher the cognitive processing and activation score, the higher the self-connection tends to be. The influence of affection on self-connection was not significant. The exogenous constructs explained 69.60% of the self-connection variability. Brand love was influenced significantly and positively by cognitive processing, affection and activation. Hence, the higher the score of the three constructs, the higher brand love is likely to be. The exogenous constructs managed to explain 78.00% of brand love variability. There was a significant (p-value $<$ 0.001) and positive ($\beta = 1.39$) influence of cognitive processing on trust; therefore, the higher the cognitive processing score, the higher trust tends to be. The Trust variability (83.40%) was explained by the exogenous constructs.

Use intention was influenced significantly and negatively by affection ($\beta = -0.37$), hence, the higher the score of this construct, the smaller use intention tends to be. Strangely enough, affection reaches a point where it has a negative effect on the use intention. The explication for this outcome might lie in the characteristics of the interviewees, who widely belong to the centennials or young millennials generation, as there is a difference in the behaviour of different generations towards engagement via social networks (Bento *et al.*,

Construct	Item	Factorial loadings	Max. Cross-loadings
Involvement	INV1_IPT	0.67	0.50
	INV2_CHTINT	0.55	0.34
	INV3_RLV	0.66	0.44
	INV4_APTEMC	0.63	0.38
	INV5_SIGNF	0.80	0.59
	INV6_AGRD	0.58	0.40
	INV7_FSC	0.79	0.48
	INV8_VLR	0.79	0.50
	INV9_ENVL	0.70	0.45
	INV10_NCSS	0.72	0.45
Cognitive processing	CP1	0.62	0.51
	CP2	0.74	0.57
	CP3	0.73	0.54
Affection	AF1	0.78	0.56
	AF2	0.84	0.59
	AF3	0.81	0.60
	AF4	0.63	0.52
Activation	AC1	0.73	0.51
	AC2	0.85	0.49
	AC3	0.84	0.50
Self-connection	SBC1	0.87	0.57
	SBC2	0.78	0.54
	SBC3	0.83	0.64
	SBC4	0.82	0.62
	SBC5	0.74	0.56
	SBC6	0.90	0.56
	SBC7	0.67	0.58
Brand love	BL1	0.76	0.57
	BL2	0.82	0.60
	BL3	0.70	0.55
	BL4	0.50	0.43
	BL5	0.76	0.63
	BL6	0.68	0.51
	BL7	0.66	0.59
	BL8	0.63	0.66
Trust	BT1	0.84	0.58
	BT2	0.86	0.66
	BT3	0.72	0.53
	BT4	0.65	0.59
Use intention	BUI1	0.85	0.63
	BUI2	0.92	0.61
	BUI3	0.95	0.66
	BUI4	0.93	0.66

Table 3.
Cross-loadings

Source: Elaborated by the authors

2018). This generation grew up in an atmosphere of financial woes, as a result, living frugally (Ross *et al.*, 2017). Perhaps that is why they may differentiate between purchase intention and engagement. Therefore, the fact that they feel comfortable in regard to the YouTubers, think about them and respect them, is not by itself a determinant of their purchase decision.

Endogenous	Exogenous	β	p-Value	R^2 (%)	Max VIF
Cognitive processing	Involvement	0.99	<0.001	59.10%	–
Affection	Involvement	0.88	<0.001	41.70%	–
Activation	Involvement	0.98	<0.001	30.40%	–
Self-connection	Cognitive processing	1.14	<0.001	69.60%	2.29
	Affection	−0.07	0.443		
	Activation	0.33	<0.001		
Brand love	Cognitive processing	0.79	<0.001	78.00%	2.29
	Affection	0.41	<0.001		
	Activation	0.12	0.027		
Trust	Cognitive processing	1.39	<0.001	83.40%	2.29
	Affection	−0.07	0.500		
	Activation	0.05	0.472		
Use intention	Self-connection	0.18	0.078	60.50%	6.94
	Brand love	0.25	0.065		
	Trust	0.62	<0.001		
	Affection	−0.37	0.002		
	Activation	0.09	0.247		

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table 4.
Structural model adjustment

The influence of trust on use intention was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.62$); therefore, the higher the trust score logo, the higher the use intention tends to be. The exogenous constructs were accountable for the explanation of 60.50% of the use intention variability. It can also be noticed that brand love and self-connection were significant to the level of significance of 8%. So, except affection, the constructs that form engagement are not closely related to use intention of brands indicated or used by YouTubers. This means that the fact that a follower is engaged to a YouTuber does not necessarily lead to use intention of the brand indicated by the YouTuber followed. This influence would have occurred in an indirect way, mediated by other variables, that could be self-connection, brand love and trust, thus corroborating the understanding that engagement is not necessarily related to a commercial activity (Calder *et al.*, 2009), herein represented by the intention of use of a brand indicated or used by the YouTuber.

The parameters of quality adjustment of the models to the data are χ^2/G.L. = 2.54, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90 and RMSEA = 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model presented satisfactory results for quality adjustment. In this sense, in order that a follower develops an intention to use a brand indicated or used by his favourite YouTuber, it takes more than the knowledge, sentiments and attitudes towards him. Besides being engaged, a follower must experience self-connection, love and trust towards the YouTuber. Figure 1 depicts the structural model of the present study.

Discussion and conclusions

Consumer engagement happens by means of opinions, recommendation, defence, testimonies and direct and indirect experiences with a certain object. In the current study, the object of engagement analysed was the YouTubers. They act intensively informing and entertaining their followers by using a wide range of information. Fed by this material, the followers present their engagement to YouTubers, by writing comments on the YouTubers pages, sharing videos, histories and giving recommendations. In this context, this study

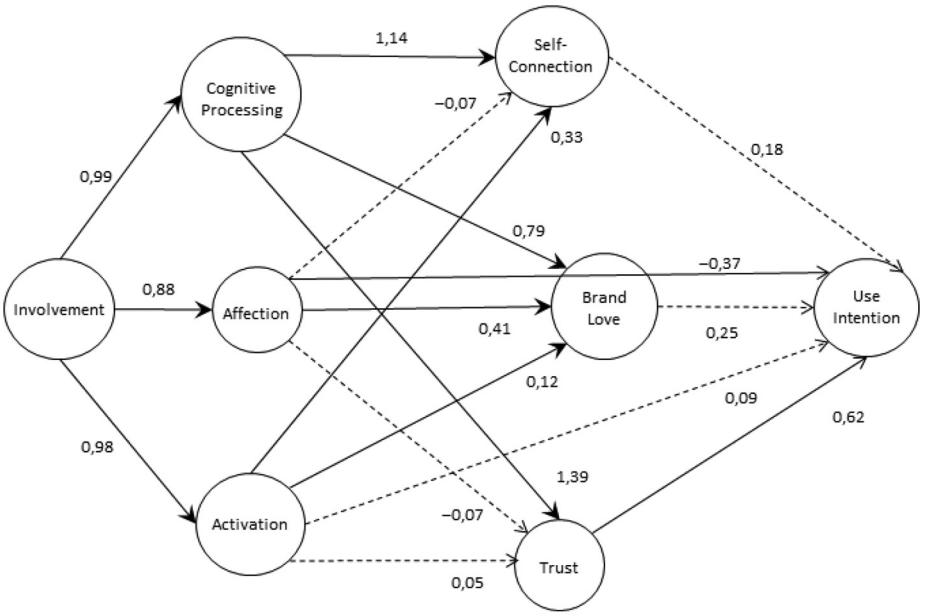

Figure 1.
Structural model

Notes: - - - - - Non-significant effect ($p > 0.05$); _____ Significant effect ($p < 0.05$)
Source: Elaborated by the authors

investigated the relationship between the consumer's engagement to the YouTuber and his intention of use of the brands by him used or indicated.

The results of the present study indicate that the involvement the followers have with their favourite YouTuber explain their engagement with him in relation to cognitive (R^2 = 59.10%), affective (R^2 = 41.70%) and behavioural (activation – R^2 = 30.40%) aspects.The more involved, the more engaged they are, i.e. the more they wish to learn about their favourite YouTuber and the contents presented by him. Thus, when the viewer watches a video made by his favourite YouTuber, cognitive processing with regard to the YouTuber is triggered, thereby, he becomes more prone to make use of the brands exposed or widely divulged in the video.

Although the YouTuber followers usually get involved in various activities that demonstrate engagement to him, the present study points to the fact that intention of use of brands indicated by YouTubers does not rise directly from engagement, i.e. from the cognitive processing (removed from the model), affection ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.002$) and activation ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.247$). On the other hand, the current research demonstrates that the intention of using a brand indicated by YouTubers is more intense when the followers associate the aspects of engaged behaviour, self-connection, love and trust ($R^2 = 60.50\%$).

With a view to shedding light on the results achieved, it must be pointed out that the theory of attachment establishes that in the cognitive elaboration of his self-concept (self-schemata), an individual gets attached to object by means of which he identifies himself (Dwayne Ball and Tasaki, 1992). Hence, the YouTuber represents his follower's object of attachment and self- connection, love and trust reveal his attachment to the YouTuber, based upon social links, trust and identity (Hinson *et al.*, 2019). Given that, the sole

engagement to a YouTuber does not necessarily mean that a follower will buy the brands indicated by him, a closer identification is necessary to this means. The process calls an identification that reveals itself, for instance, in the messages left in the YouTuber channel. They express intimacy, as though both parties were members of the same family. At this moment, homophilia is established between the YouTuber and his followers (Jin, 2018) and from the start of this connection on, the engaged individual develops an intention of using the brands displayed by the Youtubers.

On the other hand, contrary to what is expected, even if the viewers develop good sentiments (affective) towards their favourite YouTubers, these good feelings are not strong enough to trigger use intention of goods and services used or indicated by them ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.002$). Instead, they put their viewers off using brands used or indicated by their favourite YouTubers. These good sentiments will contribute to use intention only when they add to the connection, love and trust of the follower towards the YouTuber. For this reason, if a YouTuber issues positive emotional appeals towards his audience, which can include happiness and love, he contributes favourably to his follower's engagement (Kujur and Singh, 2018).

Another point to be considered in regard to this contradictory result is the fact that the consumer is more likely to get engaged to a brand community, actively giving and sharing advices, when the community is a consumer-initiated brand community, rather than a brand community initiated by a company (Ananda *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is understood that the YouTuber audience, even having affinity to him, may produce a negative response when it comes to the use of a brand disclosed by him, especially because he acknowledges that the YouTuber is trying to sell a product of that brand.

Moreover, the follower feels more comfortable to display his affectiveness to the YouTubers via affective actions that do not require much effort, the response to a video he has just seen may be a simple "like". He is less likely to respond with cognitive actions that will demand a higher reflexive and operational effort, like share a video and evaluate the material (Ananda *et al.*, 2019). However, as the intention to use a brand indicated by the YouTuber is associated to a higher cognitive effort, the follower might not have the intention to use the brands indicated even when he has an affinity to the YouTuber.

Theoretical and managerial implications

The present study proposes a novel conceptual bond for engagement, given no longer by a brand but by YouTubers as a form of human brand. Moreover, it renders new contribution to this theme as it aims at investigating the gap present in literature with regard to the correlation of use intention and purchase intention of a brand, conditioned to the engagement with a human brand, herein presented by the YouTubers.

Therefore, the current investigation adopts the view of the spectator/customer, for it considers individual variables that may interfere with the engagement process, all the way up to the intention to use the brand sponsored by the YouTuber. Thus, there is room to dispute the extent to which other variables related more specifically to the YouTuber may interfere with this engagement process, such as credibility, initial capital (Gvili and Levy, 2018), authenticity (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016) and stability (Moulard *et al.*, 2015).

Apart from that, the present study presents practical results depicting the YouTuber as a relevant channel for advertising and promoting a brand, as an instrument of marketing communication which influences the shopping process. Understanding the extent to which the consumers trust, love and identify themselves with their favourite YouTubers signals an array of possibilities for marketing communication for the brands, which range between the choice of the most suitable YouTuber to converse with the public, going through decisions

regarding the message to be delivered by the human brand, namely, content and style, even public relations activities that approach the public to their favourite YouTuber. Hence, the company should bear in mind the fact that the YouTuber appointed to represent its image must be connected to the feelings, interests and behaviours of their followers as well as to the brands to be publicised. The identification of the YouTuber with the clients is necessary because the individuals tend to build their self-concepts by means of the object he identifies himself with (Dwayne Ball and Tasaki, 1992). As YouTubers act as brands that promote other marks, to achieve this identification it is necessary to develop actions that promote trust, the social and affective bonds between one another (Hinson *et al.*, 2019).

Limitations and suggestions for further research

A limitation to the present research is the possibility that it might be biased, owing to the fact that the questionnaire was distributed in social networks the researchers follow. To carry out further research it is advisable that, firstly, a longitudinal study aiming at verifying the extent to which the influence of the YouTubers on their followers remains along the years should be done. Secondly, Replication of the study by using age as a moderator variable for the relations hereby investigated should be considered. Thirdly, whether the communication of the YouTubers in other social networks such as Facebook or Instagram also influence the consumer's behaviour should also be assessed. Fourthly, the study should be replicated in specific sectors of the economy, to expand the understanding of the degree of influence the YouTubers, as a form of human brand, exert on their followers' purchase decisions.

References

Abdul-Ghani, E., Hyde, K.F. and Marshall, R. (2011), "Emic and etic interpretations of engagement with a consumer-to-consumer online auction site auction site", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 64 No. 10, pp. 1060-1066, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2010.10.009

Abdul-Ghani, E., Hyde, K.F. and Marshall, R. (2012), "Consumer engagement or customer engagement? Two competing views on a phenomenon", *Asia-Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 10, pp. 121-128, available at: www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1011120/volumes/ap11/AP-10

Alnawas, I. and Altarifi, S. (2016), "Exploring the role of brand identification and brand love in generating higher levels of brand loyalty", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 111-128, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766715604663

Ananda, A.S., Hernández-García, Á., Acquila-Natale, E. and Lamberti, L. (2019), "What makes fashion consumers "click"? Generation of eWoM engagement in social media", *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 398-418, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-03-2018-0115

Bairrada, C.M., Coelho, F. and Coelho, A. (2018), "Antecedents and outcomes of brand love: utilitarian and symbolic brand qualities", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 52 No. 3/4, pp. 656-682, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2016-0081

Barclay, D. Higgins, C. and Thompson, R. (1995), "The partial least squares (PLS) approach to causal modeling: personal computer adoption and use as an illustration (v2 ed.)", Technology studies.

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2012), "Brand love", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 76 No. 2, pp. 1-16, available at: https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.09.0339

Bento, M., Martinez, L.M. and Martinez, L.F. (2018), "Brand engagement and search for brands on social media: comparing generations X and Y in Portugal", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 43, pp. 234-241, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.04.003

Bi, N.C., Zhang, R. and Ha, L. (2019), "Does valence of product review matter?", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 79-95, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-04-2018-0049

Burgess, J. and Green, J. (2018), *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 2nd ed., Polity Press, Cambridge.

Calder, B.J., Malthouse, E.C. and Schaedel, U. (2009), "An experimental study of the relationship between online engagement and advertising effectiveness", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 321-331, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2009.07.002

Carroll, B.A. and Ahuvia, A.C. (2006), "Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love", *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 79-89, available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-006-4219-2

Chaudhuri, A. and Holbrook, M.B. (2001), "The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 65 No. 2, pp. 81-93, available at: www.jstor.org/stable/3203382

Chin, W.W. (1998), "The partial least squares approach for structural equation modeling", *Methodology for Business and Management. Modern Methods for Business Research*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, Mahwah, NJ, pp. 295-336.

Cropanzano, R. and Mitchell, M.S. (2005), "Social exchange theory: an interdisciplinary review", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 874-900, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602

Delisle, M.-P. and Parmentier, M.-A. (2016), "Navigating person-branding in the fashion blogosphere", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 211-224, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2016.1167619

Draper, N.R. and Smith, H. (2014), *Applied Regression Analysis*, in Smith, H. (Ed.), 3rd ed., John Wiley and Sons.

Dwayne Ball, A. and Tasaki, L.H. (1992), "The role and measurement of attachment in consumer behavior", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 155-172, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408(08)80055-1

Dwivedi, A. (2015), "A higher-order model of consumer brand engagement and its impact on loyalty intentions", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 24, pp. 100-109, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2015.02.007

Escalas, J.E. (2004), "Narrative processing: building consumer connections to brands", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 14 Nos 1/2, pp. 168-179, available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=993164

Escalas, J.E. and Bettman, J.R. (2005), "Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 378-389, available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/497549

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312

Freeman, B. and Chapman, S. (2007), "Is "YouTube" telling or selling you something? Tobacco content on the YouTube video-sharing website", *Tobacco Control*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 207-210, available at: https://doi.org/10.1136/tc.2007.020024

Gvili, Y. and Levy, S. (2018), "Consumer engagement with eWOM on social media: the role of social Capital", *Online Information Review*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 482-505, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-05-2017-0158

Hair, J.F.J., William, B., Babin, B. and Anderson, R.E. (2009a), *Análise Multivariada de Dados*, 6th ed., Bookman, Porto Alegre.

Hair, J.F. Black, W.C. Babin, B.J. Anderson, R.E. and Tatham, R.L. (2009b), "Análise multivariada de dados", available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpharm.2011.02.019

Hair, J.F., Jr, Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2017), *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS)*, 2nd ed., Sage Publications, London.

Harmeling, C.M., Moffett, J.W., Arnold, M.J. and Carlson, B.D. (2017), "Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 312-335, available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0509-2

Harwood, T. and Garry, T. (2015), "An investigation into gamification as a customer engagement experience environment", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 29 Nos 6/7, pp. 533-546, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2015-0045

Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M. and Sinkovics, R.R. (2009), "The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing", *Advances in International Marketing*, Vol. 20, pp. 277-319, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/S1474-7979(2009)0000020014

Hinson, R., Boateng, H., Renner, A. and Kosiba, J.P.B. (2019), "Antecedents and consequences of customer engagement on Facebook: an attachment theory perspective", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 204-226, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-04-2018-0059

Hollander, M. and Wolfe, D.A. (1999), *Nonparametric Statistical Methods*, 2nd ed., John Wiley and Sons, New York, NY.

Hollebeek, L. and Chen, T. (2014), "Exploring positively- versus negatively-valenced Brand engagement: a conceptual model", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 62-74, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2013-0332

Hollebeek, L.D. and Macky, K. (2019), "Digital content marketing's role in fostering consumer engagement, trust, and value: framework, fundamental propositions, and implications", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 45, pp. 27-41, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.07.003

Hollebeek, L.D., Glynn, M.S. and Brodie, R.J. (2014), "Consumer brand engagement in social media: conceptualization, scale development and validation", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 149-165, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.002

Hollebeek, L.D., Srivastava, R.K. and Chen, T. (2019), "S-D logic–informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 161-185, available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0494-5

Hoyle, R.H. and Duvall, J.L. (2004), "Determining the number of factors in exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis", in Kaplan, D. (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Quantitative Methodology for the Social Sciences*, Sage, Oaks.

Jin, S.V. (2018), "Celebrity 2.0 and beyond!" effects of Facebook profile sources on social networking advertising", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 79, pp. 154-168, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.033

Kline, R.B. (2016), *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling*, 4th ed., Guilford, New York, NY.

Kowalczyk, C.M. and Pounders, K.R. (2016), "Transforming celebrities through social media: the role of authenticity and emotional attachment", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 345-356, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2015-0969

Kujur, F. and Singh, S. (2018), "Emotions as predictor for consumer engagement in YouTube advertisement", *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 184-197, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-05-2017-0065

Kumar, V. and Pansari, A. (2016), "Competitive advantage through engagement", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 497-514, available at: https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.15.0044

Lee, J.E. and Watkins, B. (2016), "YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 12, pp. 5753-5760, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171

Lim, J.S., Hwang, Y., Kim, S. and Biocca, F.A. (2015), "How social media engagement leads to sports channel loyalty: mediating roles of social presence and channel commitment", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 46, pp. 158-167, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.013

Mangold, W.G. and Faulds, D.J. (2009), "Social media: the new hybrid element of the promotion mix", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 357-365, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002

Markus, H. (1977), "Self-schemata and processing information about the self", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 63-78, available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.35.2.63

Mingoti, S. (2005), *Análise de Dados Através de Métodos de Estatística Multivariada*, UFMG, Belo Horizonte.

Molinillo, S., Anaya-Sánchez, R. and Liébana-Cabanillas, F. (2019), "Analyzing the effect of social support and community factors on customer engagement and its impact on loyalty behaviors toward social commerce websites", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 108, pp. 105980available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.04.004

Morgan, R.M. and Hunt, S.D. (1994), "The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 20-38.

Moulard, J.G., Garrity, C.P. and Rice, D.H. (2015), "What makes a human brand authentic? Identifying the antecedents of celebrity authenticity", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 173-186, available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20771

Nadeem, W., Andreini, D., Salo, J. and Laukkanen, T. (2015), "Engaging consumers online through websites and social media: a gender study of Italian generation Y clothing consumers", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 432-442, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.04.008

Niyazi, G. (2018), "Consumers' perceptions of YouTubers: the case of Turkey", *AJIT-e: Online Academic Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 9 No. 32, pp. 23-37, available at: https://doi.org/10.5824/1309-1581.2018.2.002.x

Nunnally, J. and Bernstein, I. (1994), *Psychometric Theory*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

O'Brien, I.M., Jarvis, W. and Soutar, G.N. (2015), "Integrating social issues and customer engagement to drive loyalty in a service organisation", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 29 Nos 6/7, pp. 547-559, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-02-2015-0085

Pansari, A. and Kumar, V. (2017), "Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 294-311, available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0485-6

Rasmussen, L. (2018), "Parasocial interaction in the digital age: an examination of relationship building and the effectiveness of YouTube celebrities", *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 280-294, available at: http://thejsms.org/tsmri/index.php/TSMRI/article/view/364

Ross, D.B., Eleno-Orama, M. and Salah, E.V. (2017), "The aging and technological society: learning our way through the decades", *Handbook of Research on Human Development in the Digital Age*, 1st ed., pp. 205-234, available at: https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-2838-8.ch010

Sabich, M.A. and Steinberg, L. (2017), "Discursividad YouTuber: afecto, narrativas y estrategias de socialización en comunidades de internet", *Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 171-188, available at: https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM2017.8.2.12

Sheeran, P. and Orbell, S. (2000), "Self-schemas and the theory of planned behaviour", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 533-550, available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-0992(200007/08)30:4<533::AID-EJSP6>3.0.CO;2-F

SimilarWeb (2020), "2020 Digital trends", available at: www.similarweb.com/corp/reports/2020-digital-trends-report/ (accessed 21 February 2020).

Sirdeshmukh, D. Singh, J. and Sabol, B. (2002), "Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges", *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1), 15-37, available at: https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.66.1.15.18449

So, K.K.F., King, C., Sparks, B.A. and Wang, Y. (2016), "The role of customer engagement in building consumer loyalty to tourism brands", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 64-78, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514541008

SocialBlade (2020), "Top 100 subscribed YouTube channels (sorted by subscriber count)", available at: https://socialblade.com/youtube/top/100/mostsubscribed (accessed 21 February 2020).

Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V.E., Chatelin, Y.-M. and Lauro, C. (2005), "PLS path modeling", *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 159-205, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2004.03.005

Thomson, M. (2006), "Human brands: investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 104-119, available at: https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.3.104

van Doorn, J., Lemon, K.N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P. and Verhoef, P.C. (2010), "Customer engagement behavior: theoretical foundations and research directions", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 253-266, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670510375599

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008), "Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6

Verhellen, Y., Dens, N. and De Pelsmacker, P. (2013), "Consumer responses to brands placed in Youtube movies: the effect of prominence and endorser expertise", *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 287-303, available at: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1468675243?accountid=10755%5Cnhttp://sfx.bib-bvb.de/sfx_uben?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=unknown&sid=ProQ:ProQ:abiglobal&atitle=CONSUMER+RESPONSES+TO+BRANDS+PLACED+IN+YOUTUBE+MOVIES

Vernuccio, M., Pagani, M., Barbarossa, C. and Pastore, A. (2015), "Antecedents of brand love in online network-based communities", "A social identity perspective", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 24 No. 7, pp. 706-719, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/09574090910954864

Vivek, S.D., Beatty, S.E. and Morgan, R.M. (2012), "Customer engagement: exploring customer relationships beyond purchase", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 122-146, available at: https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679200201

Voorveld, H.A.M., van Noort, G., Muntinga, D.G. and Bronner, F. (2018), "Engagement with social media and social media advertising: the differentiating role of platform type", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 38-54, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754

Wallace, E., Buil, I. and de Chernatony, L. (2014), "Consumer engagement with self-expressive brands: brand love and WOM outcomes", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 33-42, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2013-0326

Wirtz, J., den Ambtman, A., Bloemer, J., Horváth, C., Ramaseshan, B., van de Klundert, J., … Kandampully, J. (2013), "Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 223-244, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/09564231311326978

Xiao, M., Wang, R. and Chan-Olmsted, S. (2018), "Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model", *Journal of Media Business Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 1-26, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2018.1501146

Yoo, B. and Donthu, N. (2001), "Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 1-14, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00098-3

Yusuf, A.S., Che Hussin, A.R. and Busalim, A.H. (2018), "Influence of e-WOM engagement on consumer purchase intention in social commerce", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 493-504, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2017-0031

Zaichkowsky, J.L. (1994), "The personal involvement inventory: reduction, revision, and application to advertising", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 59-70, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1943.10673459

Zamudio, C., Moulard, J.G. and Close, A.G. (2014), "The company they keep: how human brand managers and their social networks shape job market outcomes", *SSRN Electronic Journal*, available at: https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2417720

Further reading

Brodie, R.J., Hollebeek, L.D., Jurić, B. and Ilić, A. (2011), "Customer engagement", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 252-271, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411703

Hollebeek, L. (2011), "Exploring customer brand engagement: definition and themes", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 7, pp. 555-573, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2011.599493

Ibrahim, M. and Al Falasi, S. (2014), "Employee loyalty and engagement in UAE public sector", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 562-582, available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-07-2013-0098

Islam, J.U. and Rahman, Z. (2016), "Linking customer engagement to trust and word-of-mouth on Facebook brand communities: an empirical study", *Journal of Internet Commerce*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 40-58, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2015.1124008

Zaichkowsky, J.L. (1985), "Measuring the involvement construct", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 341, available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/208520

Appendix

Scale used for the study

(1) Involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1994)
- INV1_IPT: unimportant-important
- INV3_RLV: irrelevant-relevant
- INV5_SIGNF: means nothing- means a lot to me
- INV7_FSC: mundane-fascinating
- INV8_VLR: worthless-valuable
- INV9_ENVL: uninvolving-involving
- INV10_NCSS: not needed-needed

(2) Cognitive processing (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014)
- CP1: The more I watch the YouTuber of my preference, the more I think about him (her)
- CP2: I think a lot about the YouTuber of my preference as I keep watching him (her)
- CP3: Watching the YouTuber of my preference stimulates my interest to learn more about him (her)

(3) Affection (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014)
- AF1: I feel very positive when I watch the YouTuber of my preference
- AF2: Watching the YouTuber of my preference makes me happy
- AF3: I feel good when I watch the YouTuber of my preference
- AF4: I'm proud to watch the YouTuber of my preference

(4) Activation (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014)
- AC1: The more I watch the YouTuber of my preference, the more I think about him (her)
- AC2: I think a lot about the YouTuber of my preference when I watch him (her)

- AC3: Watching the YouTuber of my preference stimulates my interest in learning more about him (her)

(5) Self-connection (Escalas, 2004)
- SBC1: The YouTuber of my preference reflects on who I am
- SBC2: I identify myself with the YouTuber of my preference
- SBC3: I feel a personal connection to the YouTuber of my preference
- SBC4: I watch the YouTuber of my preference to communicate to other people who I am
- SBC5: I consider that the YouTuber of my preference helps me (or could help me) to be the person I wish to be
- SBC6: The YouTuber of my preference reflects on who I am
- SBC7: The YouTuber of my preference meets my needs

(6) Brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006)
- BL5: I love the YouTuber of my preference
- BL6: I have feelings towards the YouTuber of my preference
- BL8: (I am in love with the YouTuber of my preference

(7) Trust (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001)
- BT1: I rely on the YouTuber of my preference
- BT2: I lean on the YouTuber of my preference
- BT3: The YouTuber of my preference is an honest person
- BT4: The YouTuber of my preference makes me feel secure

(8) Use intention (Yoo and Donthu, 2001)
- BUI1: It makes more sense to use brands indicated or used by the YouTuber of my preference than other ones, even if they are similar)
- BUI2: Even if other brands have the same characteristics, as those indicated or used by the YouTuber of my preference, I still prefer the brands he (she) uses or indicates
- BUI3: Even when there are brands as good as the ones indicated or used by the YouTuber of my preference, I still prefer to use the brands he (she) uses or indicates
- BUI4: Even if other brands are no different in any way to the ones indicated or used the YouTuber of my preference, I still find it wiser to wear the brands indicated or used by him (her)

Corresponding author
Stela Cristina Hott Corrêa can be contacted at: stelachc@gmail.com