

Brand Evangelism: Model of Antecedents and Consequences

ToniAnn Cestare

Doctoral Student in Marketing at Pace University

Vishal Lala

Associate Professor of Marketing at Pace University

It has widely been acknowledged there has been a shift from a brand influencing a consumer to consumers influencing consumers. Consumers share their experiences in-person through face-to-face interactions with friends or through technology-mediated channels such as review websites, mobile apps, and social media. With the growth in social media and review websites, the number of people using mobile apps and social media, and the average time individuals spend on them, sharing of experiences on technology-mediated channels known as User Generated Content (UGC), has become the focus of marketers. While most consumers engage in some level of UGC by posting reviews and liking brands on Facebook, there is tremendous variation across consumers in both the amount of UGC and the number of brands they share opinions about. Brand evangelists share a large amount of UGC but limit their reviews to only one or a few brands. Such consumers are of particular interest to marketers because of their ability to influence others.

In this paper we attempt to conceptualize brand evangelism and test a set of antecedents and consequences. We test the role of two brand-related variables, loyalty and sentiment, one psychological variable in gratification, and two demographic variables, age and gender. Brand loyalty defined as probability of repurchasing the brand is a logical ingredient to brand evangelism. Sentiment, defined here as a general positivity (or negativity) toward the brand is expected to empower (or weaken) brand evangelism because we expect consumers would rather reinforce the tide than go against it. Gratification, defined as the value derived from being a part of a community and related benefits of social acceptance and approval, is expected to bolster a desire for brand evangelism. Consistent with data on social media participation we expect age to be negatively related to brand evangelism and women to be more likely than men to be brand evangelists. Specifically, we expect younger consumers such as millennials to be more likely to

participate in sharing due to their need to feel connected and ability to be tech-savvy. We contend women possess the natural desire to share experiences, feel connected with others, and forge common bonds.

While a brand evangelist drumming up support for a brand is good, a company is just as interested, if not more, in seeing the impact it has on behavior of other consumers. We explore the impact of brand evangelism on the intention of others to purchase. We speculate that others will be selective users of the information shared by brand evangelists, only acting on the information shared by brand evangelists when they trust the brand evangelist and when the information is credible. Thus, we expect the effect of brand evangelism on intention of others to purchase will be moderated by trust and credibility. This study will involve development and refinement of a scale for brand evangelism and a test of the model of antecedents and consequences of brand evangelism on a sample of 300 adults residing in the US using a web-based questionnaire.