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University
of Glasgow

**Consumer Engagement in
Online Brand Communities**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy

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May 2015

Abstract

This thesis advances the concept of consumer engagement as a valid approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of Online Brand Community (OBC) participation. Against the background of rapid technological advances affecting the way consumers interact online, this thesis posits that past representations of OBC participation fail to adequately capture OBC participation. It further argues that consumer engagement offers a new analytical lens, which is more responsive to the interactive, social and multidimensional nature of OBCs.

The thesis conceptualises consumer engagement in OBC as an affective, cognitive and behavioural phenomenon whereby a consumer is engaged both with the other members of the OBC and with the focal brand. It then identifies antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC. The measurement and conceptual model are tested using data from 721 OBC participants. In particular, two original scales of consumer engagement are developed, reflecting 7 sub-dimensions: enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, learning, sharing and endorsing. The scales are built using interview data from 25 consumers and social media experts, then calibrated and validated using quantitative data collected from 448 English-speaking members of official Facebook pages spanning different brand categories.

The conceptual model is tested using structural equation modelling techniques, and the results largely support the research hypotheses. The results show that online interaction propensity, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement positively relate to OBC engagement, and that online brand engagement is positively related to product involvement and OBC engagement. Online brand engagement shows positive correlations with brand trust, commitment and loyalty. Group invariance is largely achieved using data from another linguistic context – a sample of 273 French-speaking Facebook page members, which contribute to validating the English sample results.

Overall, the thesis conceptually and empirically contributes to the burgeoning literature on consumer engagement in OBC and enhances our understanding of OBC participation. The study provides an improved, more online-relevant conceptualisation and measurement of consumer engagement and identifies its key individual drivers and relational outcomes. These findings also provide strategic implications for the community of OBC practitioners.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'L' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laurence Dessart

Acknowledgement

If I can call myself the brand manager of this thesis, I must also give credit to the community of people that has surrounded me along the way and contributed to this end product.

First of all, I want to thank my supervisors, Cleopatra Veloutsou and Anna Morgan-Thomas who have been the best pair of mentors I could have wished for. Thank you Cleopatra for your constant support and generosity. Thank you Anna for your immense drive and optimism. Thank you Cleopatra for your attention to detail, and Anna for your holistic view. Thank you both for teaching me so much along these four years and for always believing in me.

Thank you to all the colleagues I have met and had the chance to work with. Thank you David for being a great office mate and partner in crime. Thank you to Thomas Anker, John Finch, Deirdre Shaw, Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou, Luiz Moutinho and everyone from the marketing cluster for your friendly fires. Your friendship and insight have helped me grow. Thank you to all my students for their energy and hard work.

Thank you Joachin Aldas-Manzano for your precious help analysing my data. Thank you to all my respondents and interviewees for providing said data.

Last but not least, I want to thank my parents for always believing in me, for carrying me and letting me fly. Thank you David for embarking with me on this journey and being there unconditionally. Thank you to all my family and friends. Your constant marks of support have been my anchor and my fuel.

Related publications

The list below includes all material issued from this study's conceptual and empirical developments, which has been published and presented at conferences.

Journal articles

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A. 2015. Consumer engagement in online brand communities: A social media perspective. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 24(1), pp. 28-42.

Book chapters

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A. 2014. Brand communities and anti-brand communities: Similarities, differences and implications for practitioners, In Grigoriou, N. and Veloutsou, C. (eds) *Theoretical and Empirical Reflections in Marketing*, Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER), Athens, pp. 63-78. ISBN: 9786185065584.

Conferences papers

Dessart, L. 2015. Consumer engagement in online brand communities. In: Scottish Doctoral Colloquium, 9-10 April, King's College Aberdeen, UK.

Dessart, L., Morgan-Thomas, A. and Veloutsou, C. 2014. Materiality of online brand community. In: 17th AMS World Marketing Congress, 5-8 Aug 2014, Lima, Peru.

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas A. 2014. Customer engagement in online brand-related communities: The perspective of social media users. In: 9th Global Brand Conference, AM SIG, 9-11 Apr 2014, Hertfordshire, UK.

Dessart, L. 2014. Developing a scale of online customer engagement. In: Scottish Doctoral Colloquium, 28-29 April, Stirling, UK.

Dessart, L. 2013. Customer engagement in online brand-related communities: The perspective of social media users. In: Reflecting on the Past, Celebrating the Present and Shaping the Future in Marketing Research, 19-20 Sept, Edinburgh, UK.

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Abbreviations

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
C2C	Consumer-to-Consumer
CCT	Consumer Culture Theory
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EM	Expectation Minimisation
EN	English-speaking
FR	French-speaking
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MCAR	Missing Completely At Random
MAR	Missing At Random
NMAR	Not Missing At Random
OBC	Online Brand Community
OIP	Online Interaction Propensity
ROI	Return On Investment
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximate
R ²	Squared Multiple Correlation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SIT	Social Identification Theory
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UGC	User Generated Content
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Focus of the study

The aim of this thesis is to advance the concept of consumer engagement as a valid approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of online brand community participation (hereafter OBC). An OBC is defined in this study as '*specialised, non-geographically bound community, based upon social relationships among admirers of a brand in cyberspace*' (Jang et al. 2008, p.57). The study therefore focuses on two key concepts and the related streams of marketing literature: online brand community and consumer engagement.

OBCs have recently been identified as one of the most topical and relevant area of study in the field of consumer-brand relationships in the last ten years (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2015). Two reasons explain why OBCs have gained such traction as a key research area in marketing. Firstly, the interest was spurred by a strong stream of studies on brand communities (e.g. Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001), from which OBCs derive directly. Due to technological developments, brand community research was faced with the increasing need to consider the virtual environment as a game changer in the field of consumer-brand relationships (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Yadav and Pavlou, 2014) and consumer behaviour (Mathwick, 2002). This literature provides a foundation for existing studies in OBCs, driven by the same broad theoretical and managerial impetus leading this study's agenda.

Secondly, for the last two decades, OBCs have increasingly been recognised by marketers and scholars alike as powerful strategies for consumer-brand relationships. Academic studies have focused on different product categories including travel services (Casaló et al., 2010), technology software (Faraj and Johnson, 2011), luxury goods (Kim and Ko, 2012) or automotive products (Ewing, et al., 2013), among others. OBCs have sprouted all over Internet platforms, and can now be found on social media, like Facebook or LinkedIn (Ewing et al., 2013), on dedicated websites (Healy and McDonagh, 2013) or on discussion

forums (Fielder and Sarstedt, 2014). Scholarship also evidences the advantages of OBCs for both multinationals (e.g. Kim et al., 2008) and SMEs (e.g. O'Sullivan et al., 2011). Clearly, OBCs are relevant to a large number of industries and company types, and can be found on an array of different virtual platforms.

Ample evidence of OBC relevance can be found in practice. Far from being a fad associated with transient technology enthusiasm, OBCs are still expected to be in the forefront of the consumer relationship efforts of brands in 2015, as reported by Forrester Research (Forrester Research, 2014). OBCs are estimated to become marketers' preferred approach to social media marketing because of the enormous benefits they bring in terms of stickiness, consumer reach and loyalty, and relationship building (Forrester Research, 2014). Facebook alone registers over 40 million active small business pages in 2015 (Facebook, 2015a). Furthermore, community-based consumer interactions are considered to be the ultimate level of conceptualisation of individuals in social contexts for any attempt to understand online social phenomena (Murphy et al., 2014).

This study focuses on members' participation in OBC, positing that existing approaches and measures of this phenomenon are subject to limitations and that the concept of consumer engagement can provide effective remedies to these limitations. In the context of growing OBC presence, active member participation is the key to sustaining community growth and survival. Put simply, an OBC where members do not participate is a ghost town. Examples of OBC that died due to a lack of participation include butter brand Lurpak's 'BakeClub' (launched in 2011 in the UK) or Dell's 'Digital Nomads' (launched in 2008). When exhibiting active participations, however, OBCs are powerful consumer-brand relationship tools in electronic environments (Kozinets, 2002). Understanding member participation has been one of the core concerns of OBC scholars (e.g. Casaló et al., 2008; Brodie et al., 2013).

However, information technologies bring about challenges in terms of OBC management and managers are now faced with technology-driven consumer empowerment, user-generated content and social consumer-to-consumer interactions (Christodoulides et al., 2011). These new technology-embedded trends and market dynamics make OBC participation particularly challenging to create and maintain. Determining the adequate approach to fostering OBC participation has proven to be a complex task (Brodie et al., 2013).

Advantages of OBC participation for brands have been of particular interest for scholars. From brand perspective, when the community is participative, brands can reap immense benefits (Algesheimer et al., 2005). These benefits range from brand commitment (Lin, 2010), brand trust (Laroche et al., 2012), brand identification (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006) and brand loyalty (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Scholars also show that high participation in OBCs is a source of innovation ideas for companies (Füller et al., 2008), and that it increases the probability of products being purchased from the focal brand as well as the rejection of products from competing brands (Thompson and Sinha, 2008). The benefits of maintaining active OBC participation are thus non-negligible for brands.

Additionally, participating in OBCs brings valuable benefits to consumers. These range from social benefits like community inclusion and social identification (Dholakia et al., 2004), getting informational value through branded content (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), building identity (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001) and getting financial rewards (Garnefeld et al., 2012). In other words, when managed adequately, OBCs have the ability to foster high levels of participation and enthusiasm, which results in members' benefits and in turn, increased participation and brand benefits.

Despite significant advancements, existing research on OBC participation suffers from several shortcomings. Firstly, by relying heavily on approaches used to study offline brand communities, the studies do not fully acknowledge the interactive nature of online contexts (Quinton, 2013). For example, prior studies in OBC have tended to replicate models from the offline brand community literature in the online contexts (e.g. Jang et al., 2008). This transposition of theories can work to a certain extent; however OBCs inherently bear characteristics due to their virtual nature that are not accommodated in offline studies (Quinton, 2013). Most notably, there is a lack of focus on the interactive nature of OBC participation, which inevitably involves two parties, and is a key foundation of virtual community participation (Colliander et al., 2015).

Secondly, the current approaches to participation show fragmentation whereby each study focuses on selective aspect of participation from a unidimensional perspective, failing to capture the complexity of the phenomenon (Brodie et al., 2013). For example, consumer participation in OBCs has been theorised, explored and modelled using a number of fragmented, unidimensional approaches. In an extensive literature review, this study shows that OBC participation has been represented in an number of ways, including but not

limited to a set of participative behaviours (e.g. Jang et al., 2008), attitudinal commitment and affect (e.g. Kim et al., 2008) or co-creative practices (e.g. Schau et al., 2009).

Thirdly, the social and interactive aspects of consumer relationships tend to be seen as a backdrop element contributing to participation, rather than one of their inherent and undissociable characteristics (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Research on OBC participation is characterised by a lack of inclusion of the social aspects of OBC participation as inherent to it, which leads to an individual, one-way, rather than conversational approach to participation. This evidences that one-way relationship marketing concepts are simply transposed to online environments, without taking into account the interactive specificities of the online medium, as suggested by Colliander, et al. (2015).

Although past approaches to capturing participation have clear benefits and all exhibit strong conceptual foundations, they collectively present a scattered, non-comprehensive and unclear view of OBC participation. Each perspective is anchored in a different worldview, using specific sets of theories, methods and designs, which diverge fundamentally. Some studies have attempted to mix and match different theories (see Casaló et al., 2010) and combine constructs from different theories in the same model (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), but there are no real attempts to provide a holistic view of OBC participation. The very multiplicity of approaches to date is a clear indication that OBC participation is an extremely rich phenomenon and that it should be considered as a multidimensional rather than one-faceted occurrence (Brodie et al., 2013).

To summarise, the OBC literature focusing on OBC participation seems to suffer from three key shortcomings, being (1) an inadequate representation of consumer behaviour in light of the interactive nature of online environments, (2) a multiplicity of separate, scattered and largely unidimensional treatments of OBC participation and (3) an over-reliance on one-way models of relationship marketing, overlooking the essential social nature of OBC settings.

In an attempt to address these issues, this study focuses on advancing scholarly understanding of consumer engagement, proposing it as the most adequate approach to OBC participation and investigating its antecedents and outcome. The study argues that consumer engagement offers a more potent and relevant framework for the understanding of OBC participation (Brodie et al., 2013). By incorporating current developments in

online and relationship marketing (Vivek et al., 2012), the approach adopted here facilitates bringing OBC participation studies back to the forefront of research.

Building on key studies on consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie et al., 2013), the present study defines consumer engagement in OBC as *the state that reflects consumers' individual dispositions toward engagement partners. In an OBC context, these partners are the OBC, representing the other consumers in the OBC, and the focal brand. It is expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioural manifestations that go beyond exchange situations.* Consumer engagement is defined as a psychological and motivational concept, which manifests itself for a specific engagement subject, here the consumer. Furthermore, consumer engagement is expressed through three types of occurrences, which are defined as being of affective, cognitive and behavioural nature. These constitute what is referred to as the 'dimensions' of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011). Additionally, consumer engagement is understood as a context-specific concept, which is therefore malleable and offers a broad range of contextual adaptations, including OBCs (Brodie et al., 2013). One of the ways in which consumer engagement can be adapted to specific consumption-related contexts is by adapting the engagement 'partner'. Relevant partners of consumer engagement in the context of OBC are the brand (Brodie et al., 2013) and the community itself (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

Several arguments support the superiority of consumer engagement over other approaches to capturing OBC participation. Firstly, consumer engagement takes into account the specificities of the online environment (Christodoulides et al., 2011) that drive new forms of consumer behaviour. Indeed, consumer engagement seems extremely suited to online contexts for a number of reasons. For example, it is social and interactive by nature and can only happen in the presence of the engagement subject (the consumer) and its engagement partner (the brand or community) (Breidbach et al., 2014). This renders consumer engagement particularly dynamic and interactive (Brodie et al., 2011), which is a founding principle of Internet-mediated communication. Consumer engagement has the potential to foster an improved understanding of focal consumer-brand and consumer-to-consumer interactions within ICT-mediated environments (Sawhney et al., 2005; Breidbach et al., 2014). Mollen and Wilson (2010, p.1) go as far as saying that engagement should be understood as the 'definite umbrella term' for online interactions. Breidbach et al. (2014) further support this stance by explaining how consumer engagement is the most

adapted approach to understand consumer-to-consumer and consumer-firm interactions in the context of ICT-mediated engagement platforms.

Secondly, although different schools of thought exist (Hollebeek, 2011a), consumer engagement is largely conceptualised as a multi-dimensional concept, including emotional, cognitive and behavioural facets (Brodie et al., 2011). In this sense, consumer engagement as a concept resolves a number of the limitations inherent to existing approaches to OBC participation, which tended to take a selective approach to participation. Consumer engagement offers a way to address the need for a more refined and multi-dimensional measure of brand-related behaviour, which is needed to strengthen the relationship between group and brand-related behaviour (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

Thirdly, consumer engagement acknowledges the combined role of individual and social consumer behaviour in brand-related contexts. Consumer engagement is positioned in the extended realm of brand relationships and builds on existing relationship marketing literature (Vivek et al., 2012). Virtual environments and related research have swiftly evolved toward interactive, participatory and consumer-empowering modes of action and investigation, forcing the relationship marketing paradigm to reinvent itself. Far from allowing only one-on-one consumer-brand relationships to evolve, OBCs embed different types of consumer-centred relationships (McAlexander et al., 2002), allowing social consumer interactions to thrive (Christodoulides et al., 2011) and making brands themselves increasingly social.

It is important to acknowledge that in spite of its obvious advantages, the concept of consumer engagement in OBC is in itself underdeveloped, requiring further refinement. For example, although Brodie et al. (2013) recognise the convergence of consumer engagement and OBC research and call for further studies at the convergence of these two domains, the application of consumer engagement in ICT-driven contexts ‘remains ill-defined, and empirical contributions in this area are limited to date’ (Breibach et al., 2014, p. 594). The concept of consumer engagement seems to be still in its infancy, compared to other conceptual frames of analysis of OBC participation, such as social identification (Dholakia et al., 2004). Although consumer engagement is strongly rooted into the relationship marketing paradigm and offers an expanded view of it (Vivek et al., 2012), robust conceptualisations are only beginning to emerge and current empirical operationalisations are divergent, fragmented and still lacking depth (Hollebeek et al., 2014). As a result, empirical research of consumer engagement in online contexts is still

scarce, thus restricting scholars' understanding of this phenomenon (Hollebeek et al., 2014). One of the key limitations of the existing research is the extremely narrow set of options to measure consumer engagement at all, let alone in an online or OBC context. Only two studies have attempted this exercise so far (see Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014).

Moreover, if consumer engagement is to be used as a frame of reference to understand and measure OBC participation, it is important to understand what drives it and results from it (Brodie et al., 2013). Although it is conceptually clear that customer engagement is distinct from other relational constructs (Hollebeek, 2011), the relationships and their directions lack empirical testing and there is strong scholarly urge for further validation (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Particularly in the field of OBC participation, a number of potential drivers and outcomes have been identified in extant research, which would need to be tested against the consumer engagement approach, and combined with conceptualisations of the drivers and outcomes of engagement.

1.2. Research aim and objectives

Addressing the gaps in OBC participation and consumer engagement literature, the aim of this research is to **advance the concept of consumer engagement as valid approach to conceptualising and measuring online brand community participation**. Extending the treatment of consumer relationships and engagement into the domain of OBC participation, this study develops and refines the consumer engagement as a new concept to conceptualise and measure OBC participation. Consumer engagement is an online-relevant, multifaceted, holistic and interactive concept, which is well suited to OBC research. Given the relative newness of the concept, the study offers insight into the role that consumer engagement plays in bridging motives for participation and their outcomes (Brodie et al., 2013).

More specifically, the study attempt to address the following research objectives:

- (1) To clarify the conceptualisation and propose a measure of consumer engagement as an approach to online brand community participation**

(2) To understand the role of consumer engagement as contributing to a cause and effect network of relationships in the context of online brand communities.

The first objective is a prerequisite to the achievement of the second one. It aims to bring clarity to the definition of consumer engagement, based on which a measure of consumer engagement adequate to OBC contexts will be created. This step is necessary to enable the application and measurement of consumer engagement in an OBC context.

The second research objective relates to the role of consumer engagement as a new approach to OBC participation. Given the novelty of the approach adopted here, it is necessary to understand under which conditions consumer engagement occurs in OBCs and which effects it generates. To date, research in this area is fragmented and largely conceptual, with only a minimal number of studies contributing to empirical evidence (Brodie et al., 2013; Dessart et al., 2015). This first objective will therefore focus on the antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC and aim to identify the most relevant ones to study in light of the current state of the literature.

1.3. Expected contributions

Based on the research aim and objectives developed above, this study expects to contribute to the OBC and consumer engagement literature in four major ways.

Firstly, this study aims to advance the conceptualisation of consumer engagement and positions it as a holistic, multidimensional and integrated approach to capturing and conceptualising OBC participation. By reconceptualising consumer engagement in OBC, this study will clarify the relevance and applicability of consumer engagement as a way to study consumer-to-consumer and consumer-brand interactions in OBCs (Brodie et al., 2013). Based on a deeper understanding of its dimensions, this study intends to propose a novel conceptualisation of consumer engagement, one acknowledging concept dimensionality and different focuses. The present research contributes mainly to the literature on OBC participation (Casaló et al., 2008; Dholakia et al., 2004, Stockbürger-Sauer, 2010) but the concept should be to be adapted seamlessly to other consumption-related context.

Secondly, this research seeks to quantitatively capture consumer engagement through the creation of a scale. Due to the paucity of existing scales of consumer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014), this constitutes a major step forward to allow further empirical research requiring a measure of consumer engagement. By providing quantitative evidence of the existence of consumer engagement in an OBC context, the study will strengthen consumer engagement research moving the field beyond the exploratory stage, answering Brodie et al.'s (2013) call. In this sense, the study will contribute to empirically validating consumer engagement as a new lens through which to study OBC participation thanks to the creation of a valid and reliable scale, an endeavour that thus far lacks empirical support (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Thirdly, this study aims to contribute to the OBC and consumer engagement literature by advancing and testing antecedents of consumer engagement in OBCs. By doing so, it partakes in the discussion surrounding the identification of the drivers of OBC participation, which is rich in different theories and approaches (e.g. Dholakia et al., 2004; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Fuller et al., 2008; Matzler et al., 2011). Attention will be given to antecedents so far under-researched in order to advance the understanding of OBC participation from a consumer engagement perspective.

Lastly, the present research also seeks to consolidate knowledge regarding some of the most relevant outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC through empirical testing of these relationships (Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Since consumer engagement is proposed as a novel approach to OBC participation, it is important to identify key positive consequences of this engagement (Brodie et al., 2013). The research will focus on benefits most relevant to brand managers and scholars, as identified in the OBC and consumer engagement studies.

In addition to addressing conceptual concerns, it is also the aim of this study to provide valuable insight for OBC practitioners. Consumer engagement is highly topical for marketing and social media managers, and this study seeks to provide them with guidance on how to best manage their OBC and reap relevant benefits from it. The study should give insight to how to best capture and generate consumer engagement and offer an alternative to current practitioner approaches. In particular the study paints engagement as a more complex concept than what leading social media consultancies make it out to be, yet that it can also, on the other hand be captured in a simple and comprehensive fashion. By finding out which elements contribute to higher engagement, this study will also clarify ways to

efficiently increase and sustain it for OBC managers. Lastly, the importance of high levels of engagement will be evidenced through an investigation of its key consequences. Focus will be placed on relevant OBC efficiency indicators that will help justify long-term investment in them. This study will then contribute to creating successful OBCs rich in consumer engagement and helping brands achieve their long-term consumer relationship goals.

1.4. Context of the study

Social media, and Facebook pages in particular, are chosen as the context of investigation for this study. This choice was given careful consideration because the contexts in which ideas occur are of general importance (McCracken, 1988), and consumer engagement is a context-specific concept largely influenced by engagement platforms (Breidbach et al., 2014).

Based on the premise that OBCs can develop on social media (Casaló et al., 2008; Healy and McDonagh, 2010; Casaló et al., 2010; Cova and White, 2010; Garnefield et al., 2012; Zaglia, 2013), several facts support their particular adequacy as OBC environments. Social media foster the development of consumer relationships with and about a brand (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). This is done through fanpages, social media advertising or sponsored posts (Girona and Korgaonkar, 2014). More specifically, the social nature of these platforms, as well as their large scope give consumers more opportunities to directly interact with brands, and with other consumers (Trusov et al., 2009; Casaló et al., 2010). This trend is well recognised by brands, and more and more of them are flocking to social media to engage with consumer, investing increasing amount of money into social marketing (Forrester Research, 2014).

Moreover, consumers are more empowered by social media than other types of communication channels: social media are collaborative and participative tools where consumers can generate content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), which is the translation of their desire to engage (Christodoulides et al., 2011). Eager for empowerment and interactivity, an increasing number of users still join OBCs on social media (Forrester Research, 2014).

Facebook is then chosen as the most adequate social medium for this study, focusing on its 'page' function as ideal manifestations of OBCs. Facebook pages are official accounts, which are managed by and related to a specific brand (Janh and Kunz, 2012), exhibit key OBC characteristics (Zaglia, 2013) and support relationships with other consumers and the brand (Gummerus et al., 2012; Chang et al., 2013). Facebook is chosen over other forms of social media, such as Twitter, because it is the most popular social network in existence (Pew Research Centre, 2015). With over 1 billion active members and over 40 million active pages for SMEs only (Facebook, 2015a), Facebook pages represent the most adequate context for the investigation of consumer engagement in OBCs.

1.5. Structure and content

To achieve its intended contributions, this study addresses the above-mentioned aim and objectives following a series of steps delineated in the six following chapters.

Chapter 2 of this thesis constitutes the literature review, which draws on the OBC and consumer engagement streams of literature. The chapter first details current conceptualisations and characteristics of OBCs. It then identifies and critically evaluates different approaches to OBC participation. Next, the chapter focuses on consumer engagement and its development in the marketing literature to date. It then provides a critical analysis of the current studies integrating consumer engagement in OBC scholarship. A review of the antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation and consumer engagement is presented next. Based on this review, the chapter closes with a summary of the research gaps and proposes three related research questions to address them.

Chapter 3 advances a conceptual model of consumer engagement in OBCs, which serves as a basis for this study's methodology design. A theoretical framework of consumer engagement in OBC is presented first. The aim of this framework is to delimitate the theoretical boundaries of the research, determine the key aspects of consumer engagement in OBC, and provide a basis for its measurement, in support for the first objective of the study. The second objective of the study is then conceptually addressed: a causal model of the antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBCs is presented, and a series of related research hypotheses developed. Based on the current state of OBC and consumer

engagement research, a validation procedure is also stipulated to strengthen this study's findings.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the methodology and process used to address the research questions. Starting with its philosophical stance, it then explains the different steps taken to collect data detailing the instrument design, data collection, and sampling procedures. Features of the research sample are presented here, followed by the sample treatment and an overview of its characteristics. The data analysis approach is lastly addressed in support of the chosen analytical techniques.

Chapter 5 presents the measurement of this study's constructs. Original measurement is addressed first, detailing the steps followed to create one mirrored scale of consumer engagement, in line with the first objective of the study. On this basis, items are developed to measure online brand community and online brand engagement, and administered with the survey procedure detailed in Chapter 4. Lastly, these items are subjected to a series of psychometric tests resulting in two valid and reliable scales of consumer engagement in OBC. The chapter concludes by presenting the existing scales chosen to measure the other variables of the causal model.

Chapter 6 focuses on testing the hypotheses presented in chapter 3, using recognised structural equation modelling techniques, including confirmatory factor analyses and causal path estimation.

Chapter 7 presents a detailed discussion of the study's findings, elaborating on the results of Chapter 5 and 6. The results are presented in light of the existing OBC and consumer engagement literature. Their congruence with, or departure from the findings of existing studies are put forth and interpreted.

This thesis concludes in Chapter 8, with an account of its key contributions to the fields of OBC and consumer engagement. Theoretical contributions are first presented, followed by methodological ones, and the recommendations for managers of OBCs that this research implies. The limitations of the present study are also discussed and suggestions to generate further research on the compelling topic of consumer engagement in OBCs are detailed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

The concepts of OBC and consumer engagement are the core elements of this study's conceptual development. This chapter presents an extensive literature review of these two concepts, starting with OBCs. It is structured in four main sections.

The first section focuses on describing the concept of OBC and presenting how it has been conceptualised so far. Since an OBC is a specific form of brand community (Jang et al., 2008), which is itself a particular manifestation of community (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001), this section builds on the brand community literature and also defines the terms of community and brand. The communalities between brand communities and OBCs are presented and detailed, followed by an explanation of the online specificities that make OBCs unique and provide an essential basis to this research's objectives and contribution.

Secondly, as this study aims to advance research into OBC participation, core studies into OBC participation are reviewed and their approaches synthesised according to a number of criteria, including the theories, designs and approaches used. Different views of OBC participation are presented, based on the treatment they received in the literature.

In the third part of this chapter, the concept of consumer engagement is presented as a novel way to conceptualise OBC participation. This section details the concept of consumer engagement and its congruence to the understanding of OBC participation. It does so by first presenting the concept as treated in the social sciences and marketing literature, followed by a critical evaluation of the current models of consumer engagement in the OBC literature.

In the fourth and last section, the literature addressing the antecedents and outcomes of consumer participation in OBC is reviewed, followed by the same exercise in the consumer engagement literature. The aim is to map out the most relevant antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement to investigate in an OBC context in light of the two streams of literature.

The overall research gaps deriving from the extant OBC and consumer engagement literature review are then presented, highlighting the problems inherent to previous views of OBC participation and matching them with the strengths offered by the consumer engagement view. This leads to the articulation of detailed research questions that drive the empirical part of this research.

2.2. Online Brand Community

This first section of the literature review focuses on defining OBCs and all related terms, including brand community, community and brand. It details key characteristics of these terms and shows their relationships with one another, subsequently focusing on the particular characteristics of the online environment.

2.2.1. Definition of OBC

The study defines an OBC as a *'specialised, non-geographically bound community, based upon social relationships among admirers of a brand in cyberspace'* (Jang et al., 2008, p. 57). This definition builds from a well-accepted brand community definition (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001) and refines it adding the online element, showing that OBCs represent virtual manifestations of brand communities. It further suggests that OBCs share a number of characteristics with offline brand communities, but also exhibit specific characteristics pertaining to their virtual nature. Considering commonalities with offline brand communities, OBCs exhibit all three community markers identified by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), which are shared rituals and traditions, shared consciousness of kind and a sense of moral responsibility. OBCs, like their offline counterparts are also centred on a specific brand.

The elements that differentiate OBCs from brand communities concern the elimination of space and time boundaries (Andersen, 2005), an increase of the level of social interactivity (Quinton, 2013), a broader reach and improved accessibility (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Trusov et al., 2010), as well as more consumer power (Labrecque et al., 2013). These represent challenges for OBC scholarship and essential considerations driving this thesis.

2.2.2. Similarities between OBC and brand community

Brand community research is a growing field of interest in marketing since Muñiz and O'Guinn's seminal article in 2001. They introduced brand community as a '*specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand*' (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). Brand communities are forms of communities specific to the marketplace that exhibit the characteristics of traditional communities, with their own market logic and expressions (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001).

The notion of brand community plays an important role in contemporary marketing theory because it adds social dynamics into consumer behaviour and brand relationships, two fields traditionally concerned with individual consumer activity (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; Kates, 2003). Furthermore, brand communities reveal instances of social solidarity, value co-creation and symbolic consumption (Arnould and Thompson, 2007). Generally, brand community research is focused on the understanding of the bonds consumers form around brand use and affiliation (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al., 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). This section presents the characteristics and internal mechanisms of brand communities.

In order to understand what a brand community is, it is first necessary to distinguish the concept of communities from other forms of groups such as tribes or sub-cultures. Indeed, marketing scholars have so far investigated numerous types of consumer groups and the literature on this topic is made of different terminologies (Thomas et al., 2011). The concepts of sub-cultures and tribes coexist with the concept of community, yet their meaning appears to be different. This section endeavours to clarify the difference between communities, tribes and subcultures of consumption.

The concept of community is rooted in the sociology literature. A community refers to a grouping of individuals based on feelings of togetherness and mutual bonds, which aim to be maintained by its members (Tönnies, 1887). In his seminal work, Tönnies (1887) puts the community (*Gemeinschaft*) in opposition with the modern society (*Gesellschaft*). The *Gemeinschaft* is a traditional, geographically local and familiaristic concept, whereas the *Gesellschaft* represents a new social order characterised by competitiveness, self-interest and formal relationships. The *Gemeinschaft* vs *Gesellschaft* dichotomy led sociological community thinking for decades on.

However, influenced by multiculturalism, globalisation, urbanisation, and new technologies, conceptualisations of communities have since then reconciled with modernity (Delanty, 2003; Bruhn, 2005). For instance, in the current technological and social context, a common geographical location is no longer a requirement for a community to exist. Highly personalised, networked and remote social communications now enact communities. Communities have evolved past a stage of geographic embeddedness to become freed from geographic constraints (Castells, 1996).

Despite these contextual, societal and philosophical shifts, the core attributes of communities seem constant, as evidenced by their repetitive appearance in sociology work. Social relationships, communicative power and need to belong lie at the centre of modern (and postmodern) community conceptualisations (Calhoun, 1983; Castells, 1997; Delanty, 2003). Communities are characterised by conscious and voluntary relationships among a group of people with similarities that overcome their differences (Bruhn, 2005). This voluntarism is enacted through mutual goals and values (Sarason, 1974) that generate common commitment and responsibility toward the community. Community members share a purpose, an identity and a belief that the community unites them (Loewy, 1993).

A subculture of consumption on the other hand is a *'distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand or consumption activity'* (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995, p. 43). Harley Davidson motorcycle riders, for instance, show that interactions with each other help members derive understanding of the brand, and that the brand itself helps members substantiate their position in society (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). However, the riders' connections to each other go further than the brand: they are representative of a real ethos and way-of-life that one could even refer to as religion or ideology.

Tribes are yet another way for consumers to associate. They emerge in the marketing literature under a postmodern light as *'micro-groups in which individuals share strong emotional links, a common subculture and a vision of life'* (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009, p. 316). Tribes come together mainly on the basis of passions, shared irrational emotions, lifestyles and consumption activities (Cova, 1997). In tribes, brands can act as a support to the tribal link but not substitute for it. Cova and Cova (2002) highlight the socialising role of tribes and the importance of brands in this context. Although brands do not act as the central power in the tribe, the linking value they offer is important in sustaining tribal relationships. Even though tribe members exhibit very strong emotional

bonds that enable them to create meaning through shared experience and rituals, tribes are inherently dynamic, unstable and small (Maffesoli, 1996).

Although subcultures and tribes have been conceptualised similarly to communities in marketing, they differ from them in three major aspects. Firstly, tribes and subcultures have a wider scope and range of activities than those directly linked to the brand. They enact a way of life, an ethos (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Despite being an important aspect of the connection among members, the brand does not necessarily act as the essential focus of subcultures or tribes. A brand community, on the contrary, is based on the pre-existence of the focal brand and it does not exist without it (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). The case of the Apple Newton brand community shows that the brand community can be as strong as to keep on existing even when the product has been withdrawn from the market (Muñiz and Schau, 2005). Secondly, both tribes and subculture carry a certain aspect of marginality from the mainstream culture, a concept that does not apply to brand communities. In brand communities, even though the brand serves as a mean of differentiation, it generally does not support the identification to a society 'outlaw' or 'outsider' status (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). Thirdly, there is a strong element of fuzziness and instability, particularly in tribes in contrast to brand communities which are more stable, formal and committed than tribes (Cova, 1997).

This study focuses on brand communities and adopts the stance that they are distinct from tribes and subcultures due to their higher stability and endurance, mainstream aspect and brand-only focus (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). More specifically it explores brand-centric communities, that is to say communities that are dedicated from the onset to one specific brand (hereafter 'brand communities') (Wirtz et al., 2013). The orientation of the community toward a consumption object is referred to as the 'community purpose' (Porter, 2004), or 'focus' (Thomas et al., 2013). 'Brand orientation' in particular is defined as the centrality of the brand as the focus of the community (Wirtz et al., 2013). This study investigates online forms of brand-centric brand communities.

Following this assertion and because of the central role of the brand in this type of communities, it is important to define what is meant by 'a brand' in the context of this study. Innumerable conceptualisations of the brand exist in the marketing literature (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). The most basic understanding of a brand conceptualises it as product, or set of functional attributes. In this line of thoughts, the American Marketing Association defines the brand as a *'name, term, design, symbol or*

any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers' (American Marketing Association, 2012). This rather narrow definition focuses primarily on its 'physical' traits and features. It views the brand from the company's perspective as a product offering and aims to communicate the brand identity to the public. Brand identity defines the way in which the brand is developed and perceived within the organisation. It is an internal view that aims to be communicated to the target audiences (de Chernatony, 1999).

Contending that this vision of the brand is limited, de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) provide a spectrum of the brand interpretation with 14 characteristics ranging from the brand as a logo, to the brand as a risk reducer or a vision. Fournier (1998) advanced brands as a relationship instrument for the creation of consumer—brand relationships.

Bringing these different approaches together, scholarship is increasingly recognising that a brand needs to be managed through the full consumption experience, including the physical features of the product, its emotional character (Egan, 2007), the relationship between the consumers and the brand (Fournier and Lee, 2009), and the relationship between the consumer and other consumer (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). Moreover, brand consumption moves beyond mere usage of the product or service, and expands through active consumer participation in socially constructed environments, such as brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001).

In this context, this study adopts a vision of the brand following the community paradigm to brand management proposed by Quinton (2013). This paradigm acknowledges the central role that the digital environment and brand communities now plays in consumers' lives, and proposes that the way brands are understood should reflect this centrality. It also refutes the traditional consumer-brand relationship model that views relationships as linear, relational, exchange-based partnerships (Louro and Cunha, 2001), which is in line with the position of this study.

The community paradigm views brands as semi-independent entities (Quinton, 2013), which are influenced by both the environment and marketing managers (Jevons et al., 2005). The influence from the environment includes increasing levels of consumer input via brand communities, which are facilitated in online settings. Recognising the fundamentally changing dynamics of brand management driven by digital technologies is acknowledged as a stringent issue. For this reason, ways to appraise brand management

and performance have moved toward more digital-oriented methods and approaches (e.g. Christodoulides, 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

In the community paradigm, brands are defined as being *'semi-independent entities demonstrating 'connectivity' to consumers, heavily involved in providing 'brand experiences' and developing 'engagement' with varied audiences'* (Quinton, 2013, p. 922). Brands are considered as the 'glue' that hold together groups of consumers in digital environments. They have a facilitating and connecting role in a set of non-linear communications taking place between individuals, groups and/or companies (Kozinets, 2001).

Now that the general concept of brand community is clarified through an understanding of the notions of community and brand, the following paragraphs focus on describing the characteristics of brand communities, which are shared by OBCs. Building on sociological work and empirical qualitative evidence, Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) identified three core brand community markers, which have been considered to be essential to the formation of both brand communities and OBCs (Zaglia, 2013).

The first criterion is a shared consciousness of kind, which pertains to the feelings members have for one another, and for the brand (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). This feeling of 'we-ness' has been integrated in several studies as a form of identification with the group (see Carlson et al., 2008). It is an important community mechanism, as the self-categorisation of a person as a member of a particular community is a form of social identification (Algesheimer et al., 2005). This sense of belonging to an in-group transcends geographic boundaries (McAlexander et al., 2002) and determines membership legitimacy as well as oppositional brand loyalty (Thompson and Sinha, 2008).

The second criterion concern shared rituals and tradition, which represent accepted and reproduced social processes surrounding the brand (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). They permit the production and transmission of the meaning of the brand within and outside the community and are largely based on the shared consumption experiences with the brand. Storytelling is an example of ritual and tradition in the Jeep brand community (McAlexander et al., 2002).

The third marker denotes a sense of moral responsibility to the community and its members, responsibility which is limited to the community boundaries and induces collective action. Two communal duties exist: integrating and retaining members, as well

as assisting members in the proper use of the brand (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). These have been reinforced as key community aspects by Schau et al. (2009), who refer to them as practices of 'social networking' and 'brand use'.

There is a consensus in the OBC and brand community literature that these three core determinants of brand communities need to be present if a group of consumers is to be called a brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Zaglia, 2013). Although there is a lack of measurement to capture these three aspects of brand community quantitatively (Madupu and Krishnan 2008; Madupu and Cooley, 2010), number of studies has found evidence of the presence of these characteristics in brand communities in both offline and online settings (e.g. Madupu and Krishnan, 2008; Zaglia, 2013). These findings support the initial idea that OBCs are similar to traditional brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001).

However, beyond these unifying elements, brand communities can vary with respect to other characteristics and considerable efforts concern the classification of communities based on these characteristics. Extant studies have attempted to classify brand communities according to different criteria, producing different typologies (e.g. Kozinets, 1999; Stanoevska-Slabeva and Schmidt, 2001; Dholakia et al., 2004; Porter, 2004; Cova and Pace, 2006; Fournier and Lee, 2009). These studies focus on various classifying elements such as social structure (Kozinets, 1999), governance and relationship orientation (Porter, 2004), or geographic dispersion and size (Dholakia et al., 2004). None of these typologies is however widely accepted in the brand community literature. This can be attributed to fundamental issues of typology building, such as a lack of mutual exclusiveness or collective exhaustiveness across criteria, or a lack of relevance (see Hunt, 1991).

Due to the difficulty to pinpoint 'one' accepted typology of brand communities, this study rather presents the most prominent criteria that have been used in existing typologies and explains how brand communities vary on their basis. The most cited classification criteria are: (1) Governance, (2) Marketplace orientation, (3) Size, (4) Duration, (5) Relationship structure and (6) Space. These six classification criteria of (online) brand community are important to understand because they strongly affect community functioning and any attempt to empirically explore it (Fournier and Lee, 2009). The table below summarises the meaning of these classification criteria.

Table 1: Brand community classification criteria

Criterion	Definition
Governance	The entity responsible for the creation, funding, management and control of the community
Marketplace orientation	The degree to which the marketplace plays a collaborative role in communities.
Size	The number of brand community members
Duration	The amount of time elapsed since the brand community has existed in its current form.
Relationship types	The strength and structure of the brand community relationships, and partners involved in it.
Space	The geographic concentration and level of virtuality of the brand community.

Governance refers to the creation, funding, management and control of the community. In brand communities, these roles can be assumed by the company (or its representatives), by a single consumer or by a group of consumers. Two main types of brand communities can be delineated based on the principle of governance: either the community is ‘official’, i.e. governed by the company, or initiated and run by consumers (Breitsohl et al., 2015).

Governance has important implications with respect to members’ selection, purpose and scope of activities, expressive freedom, customer motivations and presence of community markers, as detailed by Dholakia and Vianello (2009). Dholakia and Vianello (2009) argue that company-lead communities fail to properly enact the three fundamental markers of communities and that customer-lead communities are more participative, open and beneficial for their members. McWilliam (2000) on the other hand contends that corporations perform a number of important facilitating functions such as encouraging dialogue, fostering relationships and active participation. In this sense, they can shape communities according to their goals and objectives.

In light of this debate, a moderate point of view is taken by Jang et al. (2008). They evidence that both consumer- and company-initiated communities have an impact on community commitment and brand loyalty, however through different workings. Consumer-lead communities should place an increased focus in creating quality content, whilst companies should make sure to reward participation. This suggests that people join consumer-governed and company-governed communities to satisfy different needs. Their purpose and utility are different.

Consumer communities can work with the purpose to support, or counter marketplace dynamics, and consumers can decide to support or reject a brand, or company. The concept of **marketplace orientation** captures these differences. Thomas et al. (2013, p. 1015) define marketplace orientation as *'the degree to which the marketplace plays a collaborative role in communities'*. A collaborative community therefore works along with the marketplace, a neutral community has little interactions or rapport with the marketplace, and an oppositional community opposes the marketplace directions (Thomas et al., 2013). Although centred on a specific brand, anti-brand communities exist as well, and have the purpose to oppose the focal brand, its ethical system or market dominance (see Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2010). This is in contrast to brand communities which aim is to show support and allegiance to the focal brand.

Brand communities exist independently of their size (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). There is however contention as per the optimal community size to generate full benefits for its members and the brand. The **size** of the community has been linked with feelings of social connectedness, members' participation, identification and community value (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). Some studies propose higher levels of social influence in larger communities (Algesheimer et al. 2005) and higher appeal in joining and sustaining relationships (Thomas et al., 2013). Larger networks with weaker ties would also be more conducive of innovation behaviours and product trials (Scott, 1991). Network theory suggests that a community needs a critical mass of users who generate content and canvass new members in order to be successful (Preece and Maloney-Krichmar, 2005). On the other hand, a smaller community would perform better in terms of collective identity, identification with the focal object and member equality (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

Departing from Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) initial claim that communities are stable and enduring, other researchers contend that the temporality of brand communities is dynamic (McAlexander et al., 2002) and that it is to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Community **duration**, thus, becomes an important feature. This dynamic and contextual dimension of temporality is further accentuated in the OBC literature, since online media allows instant creation and obsolescence of communities. Despite evidence against longevity, it is still appreciated that communities surpass other forms of consumer groupings in terms of stability, and this is a differentiating factor with tribes and subcultures of consumption (Goulding et al., 2013). Factors such as heterogeneity of

actors, collaboration and resource sharing are elements that help sustain brand communities in the long term (Thomas et al., 2013).

Members' relationships in (online) brand communities can vary according to a number of aspects and **relationship types** are an important facet of community. These elements encompass the relationships strength, structure, and the partners involved. The strength or richness of relationship has been considered in a series of studies, and there is a general consensus on its variability (McAlexander et al., 2002; Porter, 2004; Dholakia et al., 2004; Fowler and Krush, 2008; Heere et al., 2011). More specifically, different elements are put forth as impacting the strength of the relationship between members, such as their level of identification to each other (Heere et al., 2011) or the size of the community being small or based on a large network of ties (Dholakia et al., 2004). Brand communities might also be made up of several tightly knit subgroups linked together by weaker ties (Fowler and Krush, 2008).

Another aspect of the relationships in brand communities is their structure. Fournier and Lee (2009) provide a typology of relationship structures, classifying them as hubs, pools and webs. Webs are composed of people who have strong one-to-one relationships with others who have similar needs. Pools, on the other hand, gather people who have strong association with a shared activity, goal or values but loose associations with one another. Lastly, in hubs, people have strong connections to a central figure and weaker associations with one another. These types of community formations impact the way that information is stored, dispersed and received in relational dynamics (Thomas et al., 2013), as well as the quantity and quality of information exchanged (McAlexander et al., 2002). Depending on how the relationship structure is set up, it might be easier or harder for new members to join.

Although these classifications of the type of relationship might have their shortcomings, they provide an idea of the different ways customer can gather around a brand, and build on the premises that relationship and relationship quality exists between consumers and corporations, or brands (Fournier, 1998). Different entities or relationship partners are part of OBC, as proposed by McAlexander et al (2002): the customer, the product, the brand and the company. The way relationships between these partners have been conceptualised is addressed further in this chapter.

The final feature of community concerns **space**. The spatial or geographical aspect of brand communities is a recurring theme in the literature. There is an agreement that different types of communities exist based on their spatial constraints. Brand communities can be fully offline and relying only of face-to-face member interactions, they can be fully online, where members never see each other, or a combination of both (e.g. Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al., 2002; Thomas et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2013). For instance, McAlexander et al. (2002) explain that brand communities are dynamic when it comes to their geographic concentration and online or offline presence. Brand communities can be geographically concentrated, such as local Harley-Davidson Owner groups (Algesheimer et al., 2005), or scattered, such as Warhammer communities, which communicate across borders (Cova et al., 2007).

Information technologies play a crucial role in facilitating the geographic dispersion of brand communities (Lin, 2007), and a large number of initially offline communities are now complemented by an online presence. Similarly, the OBC literature equally evidences that online interactions can, and are often, supplemented by offline relationships (Wirtz et al., 2013). It is increasingly accepted that community ties can exist between individuals that never see each other, and that they can share a psychological sense of community which is as strong as in real-life environments (Carlson et al., 2008). Overall, brand communities often exhibit a mix of online and offline interactions, allowing them to be placed on a spectrum ranging from being fully online to being fully offline (Stockburger-Sauer, 2010).

To summarise, this section has shown that (online) brand communities share a number of core characteristics, largely rooted in the fact that they are both forms of brand-focused consumer communities. Offline and online brand communities can however vary according to a number of factors, including their size, duration, marketplace orientation, relationship structure and space attributes. The following section focuses on the role played by information technologies and how they set aside OBCs form offline brand communities in a number of ways.

2.2.3. Online specificities of OBCs

Communities have evolved past a stage of geographic embeddedness to become freed from geographic constraints (Castells, 1996). The modern context characterised by mobility, technology and multiculturalism affects the way communities are positioned in space and time. Although they have long been considered as relying mainly on a common location and physical proximity (Tönnies, 1887) the rise of globalisation and information technologies has introduced a new global and transnational dimension to communities (Delanty, 2003). Communities are now freed from geographic boundaries, spatial structure and time constraints (Castells, 1996; Urban, 1996). Communities based on physical proximity still exist, as the extant literature on offline brand community strongly evidences, but physical proximity is no longer seen as a requirement for brand community development, and OBCs are now in the forefront of community research in marketing (Faraj and Johnson, 2011).

Online communities are aggregations of individuals in the cyberspace, where social relationships are mediated by highly personalised technology (Rheingold, 1993; Castells, 1996; Mathwick et al., 2008; Fournier and Avery, 2011). Sproull (2003, p. 733) defines an online community as a *'large, voluntary collectivity whose primary goal is member or social welfare, whose members share a common interest, experience or conviction, and who interact with each other primarily over the Net'*.

The *raison d'être* of these virtual groups of individuals—what brings them together—is, like in brand communities, a shared interest, purpose, experience or goal (Williams and Cothrel, 2000; Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001; Faraj and Johnson, 2011), which makes members take part in the community voluntarily. This link among individuals is the starting point for the community and the glue that holds online community members together. The fundamental premises of offline communities therefore seem to hold in online settings. This application of the offline definition to an online context is appropriate to some extent, as the same characteristics of brand communities identified by Muñoz and O'Guinn (2001) work to produce a brand community in the online context (Szmigin et al., 2005; Madupu and Krishnan, 2008; Mathwick et al., 2008).

Despite the clear correspondence between offline and online brand communities, the online aspect is a game-changer for the study of brand communities. Online communities depart from their offline counterparts in several ways.

Elimination of space and time boundaries represents a key distinguishing feature. Internet mediation allows OBC to overcome same-place, same-time limitations inherent in face-to-face settings (Andersen, 2005; Faraj and Johnson, 2011). In OBCs, brand fans from across the globe can meet in one single virtual location with the sole requirement of having Internet access, and sometimes, access to a specific platform as well.

OBCs have significantly increased the speed, convenience, reach and transparency of communication by creating another complementary form of reality (Rheingold, 1993; Katz and Rice, 2002) all of which lead to **increased social interactivity**. OBCs are recognised as appropriate media for building consumer-brand relationships through new means of communication and increased interactivity (Thorbjørnsen et al., 2002, Quinton, 2013). Indeed, consumers are increasingly active participants in interactive online processes involving multiple feedback loops, and almost synchronous communication (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Online tools are said to *'enable and facilitate new and extended forms of interactive consumer experiences, which may contribute to the development of customer and/or consumer engagement with specific brands'* (Brodie et al., 2013).

Taking the opposite stance, some argue that online environments fail to convey rich situational and interaction cues (e.g. facial expressions) due to their asynchronous characteristic and are therefore inadequate for tasks associated with complex meaning and reciprocal feedback (Faraj and Johnson, 2011). However, this thinking was based on the idea that online communities are only using text-based communication and that no feedback loop exists. Far from assuming that online communication is flawless, more recent research shows that the variety of content type that can now be exchanged online, as well as the possibility for users to share interests and bond in ever more complex ways evidence the opposite trend (Fournier and Avery, 2011). Although social interactivity on online communication technologies can be challenging, it is evident that it sustains interactive environments where human social behaviour has ample opportunities to develop (Murphy et al., 2014).

Technology allows sustaining bigger groups of individuals from dispersed locations (Katz and Rice, 2002), and facilitates the broadcasting of information, which is then easily stored and retrievable leading to **broader reach**. Marketers and consumers alike are empowered by the Internet's levels of reach and transparency (Kozinets et al., 2010). Online social interactions are growing in size and relevance and consumers' influential power is growing exponentially (Trusov et al., 2010).

Improved accessibility represents another distinguishing feature. OBCs are found on a plethora of computer-mediated platforms and virtual spaces (Hagel and Armstrong, 1997; Mathwick et al., 2008; Wang and Chen, 2012). Researchers have identified different online tools or services that enable virtual communities, such as chat rooms, mailing lists (Kim et al., 2008), blogs, forums (Shen et al., 2010), social networking sites (Porter et al., 2011) or other forms of social media. Overall, the technological advances of the Web 2.0. (O'Reilly, 2007) are characterised by social media, which represent all web-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated-content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

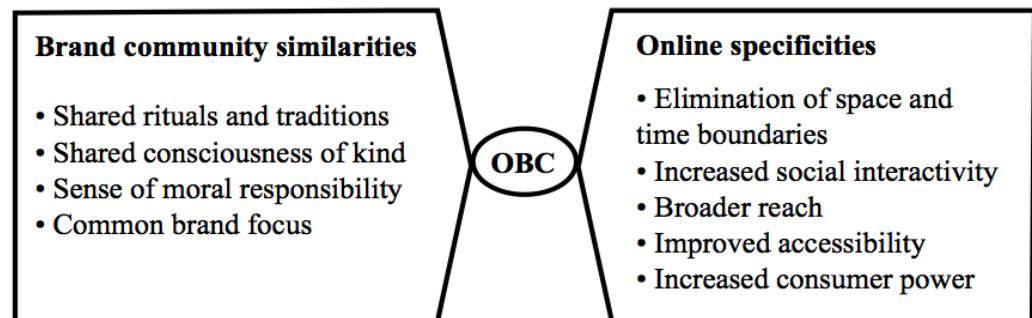
The presence of OBCs on so many different virtual platforms and outlets makes their usage easier and more empowering to some extent for both marketers and consumers (Kozinets et al., 2010), as technology is adaptable and transformable by users in order to meet their personal needs. This is reflected in the use of a technological platform, which has specific functioning, rules and interface. However, online platforms also bring with them specific affordances, modes of functioning and interaction, which can be challenging to use and apprehend (Dholakia and Reyes, 2013).

Online technologies and social media in particular have spurred both collective and individual forms of consumer power resulting in **increased consumer power** (Labrecque et al., 2013). This is a direct consequence of the above-mentioned factors: better access to information across space and time, enhanced social interactivity and broader reach work together to fuel consumer empowerment in the digital age (ibid, 2013). The voice of the consumer becomes more forceful, as evidenced by user-generated content (Christodoulides et al., 2011) and there is an obvious power shift from the marketers to the consumer (Mathwick, 2002; Fournier and Avery, 2011). Understanding and accepting this shift in power balance seems to be the key to successful brand management in the future, as social media support consumer interactions that are often outside of the control of brand managers (Quinton, 2013).

These various characteristics inherent to the online nature of OBC show that Internet mediation brings unique features that are not found, at least with such intensity, in offline brand communities. As Kozinets (1999) argues, *'online interactions are becoming an important supplement to social and consumption behaviour'*. This tendency has only grown stronger in the last two decades and has vast implications in terms of consumer behaviour (Mathwick, 2002). OBCs thus require a specific treatment in comparison to offline communities (Hagel and Armstrong, 1997).

To summarise, OBCs hold clear parallelisms with brand communities when it comes to their core characteristics, but their online nature strongly impacts their functioning, making them unique and requiring a dedicated treatment. OBC participation is impacted by a combination of elements which stem, on the one hand, from OBCs' similarities with their offline counterparts, and on the other hand, from their unique online characteristics. Figure 1 summarises these similarities and differences.

Figure 1: OBC similarities with brand communities and online specificities



2.2.4. Classification of OBCs

The multiple advantages that virtual settings offer have fostered the emergence of a vast amount of online consumption and brand communities (Kozinets, 1999). Examples of online communities centred on consumption activities include wristwatch enthusiasts (Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001), health and beauty conscious consumers (Kim, et al., 2008), or coffee lovers (Kozinets, 2002). OBC research, on the other hand, has investigated brands such as Timezone.com (Rothaermeal and Sugiyama, 2001), Ford and Mustang cars (Dholakia et al., 2004) or Coca-Cola (Sicilia and Palazón, 2008).

Similarly to brand communities, OBCs have been categorised in typologies by a handful of authors, putting forth their virtual nature. Dholakia et al. (2004), for instance, identify two kinds of online communities based on their size, geographic dispersion and strength of relationships: (1) **Network-based virtual community**, which are specialized, geographically dispersed community, based on a structured, relatively sparse, and dynamic network of participants and (2) **Small-group-based virtual community**, constituted by individuals with a dense web of relationships, interacting together as an online group, in order to achieve a wider range of joint goals, and to maintain existing relationships

Stanoevska-Slabeva and Schmidt (2001) take another approach by putting forward the aim of the community and type of transaction. Four types of online communities exist under

this typology: (1) **Discussion communities:** dedicated to exchange of information with reference to a defined topic; (2) **Task- and goal-oriented communities:** striving to achieve a common goal by way of cooperation; (3) **Virtual worlds:** providing a virtual setting of complex world; (4) **Hybrid:** containing several types of communities.

Similarly, Kozinets (1999) emphasises the focus of the community as well as its social structure. He claims that the group focus can be either information exchange or social interaction. The social structure on the other hand can be loose or tight. This approach results in four different categories of virtual communities of consumption: boards, rooms, rings and lists, and dungeons.

Recently, Breitsohl et al. (2015) proposed a taxonomy of online consumption communities, differentiating them on the basis of two criteria: (1) The community's **content focus**, or orientation (brand versus consumption activity) and (2) The community's **type of host**, or governance (the brand versus consumers). Their results show that consumers' posting behaviour is driven by different motives in different community types: for instance, brand communities rely on consumers' need to help others with brand-related content. Overall, they report that there needs to be strong congruency between the content posted on the community and the community purpose (Breitsohl et al., 2015).

To summarise the concept and characteristics of OBCs, research shows that OBCs hold clear correspondence with offline brand communities regarding the core characteristics of communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). Their online nature however endows them with specific characteristics that set them apart from offline contexts. Moreover, due to the rapidly changing nature of the technological environment, it is hard to rely on one single typology for the understanding of OBCs, or rely on it at all, due to the rapidly changing nature and variety of criteria to include.

Research into OBCs therefore constantly needs to be in tune with the latest technological advances and requirements, as well as have a strong understanding of the brand community literature on which the foundations of OBC research lie.

2.3. Consumer participation in Online Brand Community

This section addresses OBC participation. As the above definition and characterisation of OBC evidenced the relevance of both offline and online characteristics, the brand community and OBC-specific literature are reviewed conjointly.

2.3.1. Defining OBC participation

Consumer participation in OBC is a clear necessity for community survival (Koh and Kim, 2004; Casaló et al., 2007; Koh et al., 2007), and therefore been the focus of much research in the past 15 years. Member participation sustains the development of members' consciousness of kind (Casaló et al., 2010) and their relationship with the brand (Andersen 2005, Casaló et al., 2008). Participation is a reflection of communities' success and member satisfaction (Yoo et al., 2002; Casaló et al., 2008), and it fosters and enriches members' experiences (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). In addition, studies suggest that participation can have an impact beyond the community boundaries (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; Andersen 2005). For these reasons, the study of OBC participation has been high on the agenda of OBC researchers as a way to sustain, add value and vitalise the community.

Despite this intense interest in OBC participation, there is little emphasis on reaching a common understanding of what OBC participation constitutes. To date, this field of enquiry is composed of a plethora of theories, methods, research designs and worldviews, providing an extremely intricate account of what OBC participation really represents.

The following section provides a critique of studies that concentrate on understanding, characterising and modelling OBC participation. The aim of this section is to provide an overarching view of the literature and highlight gaps. An overview of the key studies addressing this issue is presented in Table 2. The selection of these studies rests on six inclusion criteria: (1) A focus on online or offline brand communities; (2) A timeframe starting from the first seminal study on brand community in 2001 until 2015; (3) Emanating from journals strictly in the area of marketing which are (4) Ranked 3 or 4 stars in the 2010 ABS list; (5) Dealing exclusively with brand-centric communities of consumer and (6) Adopting a supportive rather than oppositional stance toward the brand and marketplace. Supporting studies not referenced in this list are also used as secondary sources.

Table 2: Overview of selected OBC studies

Paper	Community space	Focus of the study	Paradigmatic stance	Approach	Design/ Methods	Core theories/ frameworks	Research objectives
Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001	Off and online	Participation	Post-modernism/ Interpretivism	Qualitative	Interviews Netnography	Sociology Relationship marketing	Reveal the idea of brand community
McAlexander et al., 2002	Offline	Participation Outcomes	Pragmatism	Mixed	Ethnography Survey	Relationship marketing	Develop and integrated framework of brand community relationships (IBC)
Dholakia et al., 2004	Online	Antecedents Participation	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	SIT UGT	Evaluate the role of group norms and social identity and consider their motivational antecedents and mediators
Muñiz and Schau, 2005	Online	Participation	Interpretivism	Qualitative	Netnography (observation, interviews)	CCT	Examine how a grassroots brand community responds to the loss of the brand upon which it is centred
Algesheimer et al., 2005	Offline	Antecedents Participation outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	SIT Relationship marketing	Model how different aspects of customer's relationships with the brand community influence their intentions and behaviours
Cova and Pace, 2006	Off and online	Participation Outcomes	Post-modernism	Qualitative	Case study (Interviews, netnography, documents)	Collective consumer empowerment theory	Analyse the power that a virtual brand community exerts over a brand of a mass-marketed convenience product
Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006	Off and online	Antecedents Participation Outcomes	Positivist	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	TPB Social intentions SIT	Investigate the social and psychological antecedents of group- and brand-related behaviours of small group consumer communities
Thompson and Sinha, 2008	Online	Participation Outcomes	Positivist	Quantitative	Longitudinal (survey)	SIT Product diffusion theory Relationship marketing	Evaluate the effect of BC participation and membership duration on the adoption of new products from the preferred and opposing brands
Kim et al. 2008	Online	Antecedents Participation Outcomes	Positivist	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	SIT Reciprocal action theory	Explore the process of how a firm's online community enhances consumers' brand commitment

Paper	Community space	Focus of the study	Paradigmatic stance	Approach	Design/ Methods	Core theories/ frameworks	Research objectives
Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008	Offline	Antecedents Participation	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Relationship marketing UGT	Determine if a community population can be meaningfully segmented based on different motivations to join
Füller et al., 2008	Offline	Antecedents Participation Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Creativity theory Relationship marketing Personality traits	Determine the effect of brand-related and individual-specific traits in driving members' willingness and ability to engage in new product development
Carlson et al., 2008	Offline	Participation Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Relationship marketing SIT	Determine the role of psychological sense of brand community on brand commitment
Schau et al., 2009	Off and online	Participation	Social constructivism	Qualitative	Case study (Interviews, netnography)	Social practice theory	Reveal common processes of value creation among networked firm-facing actors in brand-centred communities
Adjei et al., 2010	Online	Participation Outcomes	Pragmatism	Mixed	Netnography, Survey and Experiment	Relationship marketing Interpersonal communication	Determine how C2C communications influence firms and how are firm goals reached
Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010	Off and online	Antecedents Participation	Positivism	Quantitative	Experiments Survey	Relationship marketing SIT Theory of social capital	How can marketing management tools strengthen brand communities by facilitating shared customer experiences and multi-way interactions
Matzler et al., 2011	Offline	Antecedents Participation Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	SIT Personality trait framework Relationship marketing	The effect of individual factors on brand community identification and product attachment in generating brand trust and loyalty, in a BC context
O'Sullivan et al., 2011	Off and online	Antecedents	Social constructivism	Qualitative	Case study (observation, interviews, netnography)	Consumer culture theory	Explore the processes contributing to the genesis of a brand community

Paper	Community space	Focus of the study	Paradigmatic stance	Approach	Design/ Methods	Core theories/ frameworks	Research objectives
Hung et al., 2011	Online	Antecedents Participation	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Source credibility framework	Understand the role of interpersonal trust and platform credibility on consumer search and consumption behaviours in online communities
Heere et al., 2011	Offline	Antecedents , Participation Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Relationship marketing SIT	Examine the ways in which existing community identities affect identification with a brand community
Marzocchi et al., 2013	Offline	Participation Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Relationship marketing SIT	Investigate the relative impact of community identification vs company identification in generating loyalty, through brand affect and brand trust, in an BC context
Zhou et al., 2013	Online	Antecedents Participation	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	Social cognition theory UGT	Investigate the transformation mechanisms that convert visitors into members
Gruner et al., 2014	Online	Outcomes	Positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey)	New product development	Understand how OBC types are likely to be associated with the success of new products in terms of sales volume and market shares
Homburg et al., 2015	Online	Participation Outcomes	Post-positivism	Quantitative	Cross-sectional (survey) and qualitative	Relationship marketing	Examine how consumers react to firms' active participation in consumer-to-consumer conversations in an online community setting

As evidenced in the previous section, the study by Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) represents the foundation of OBC and brand community literature and serves as a reference point for many scholars. With the aim to reveal the idea of brand community, they refer to community participation as a social construction largely resting on imagined social relationships amongst members as well as three fundamental principles (see section 2.2.2. above). These characteristics are evidenced through interviews and netnography of offline and online manifestations of the same three communities in North America. From a conceptual standpoint, this study relates largely to the sociology literature and communal consumption studies. References are made to brand relationships literature too, making a powerful case for the potential relational benefits of brand communities and signalling the need for further investigation (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). By revealing instances of social relationships about a brand, this study constitutes a first departure point from the traditional model of consumer-brand relationships, where one-to-one company-consumer ties are the norm (Fournier, 1998).

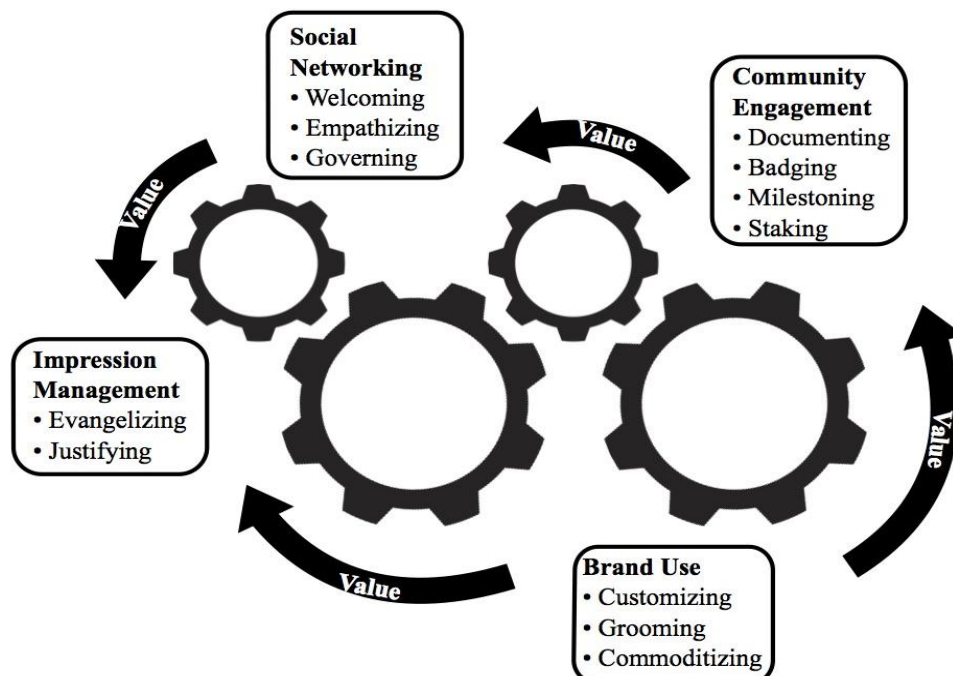
This study has led to a number of related studies using similar approaches. Muñiz and Schau (2005) also use a qualitative approach and adopt comparable methods (netnography, observations, participant observation, interviews) to investigate OBC participation, although focusing on a single case study. They examine how a grassroots brand community responds to the loss of the brand upon which it is centred, namely the Apple Newton personal digital assistant. They interpret community participation as transformative experiences akin to religious involvement and evidence the existence of Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) three community markers. Their study is more closely anchored in consumer culture theory (CCT), and it rests on a narrative analysis of consumers' tales.

Taking a similar case study approach and using interviews, netnography and document analysis, Cova and Pace (2006) investigate OBC participation for the Nutella brand in Italy. Their worldview is however different from Muñiz and colleagues, as they are clearly anchoring their study in the postmodern marketing paradigm. They look at both offline and online manifestations of the Nutella community participation. Taking a theoretical perspective resting on the 'collective consumer empowerment theory' (Cova and Pace, 2006), they find that OBC participation shows a new form of sociality and consumer empowerment resting on personal self-exhibition rather than social interactions. They

however converge with Muñiz and O’Guinn (2001) in evidencing the role of rituals and traditions engrained in OBC participation.

The theory of social constructivism in OBC participation is explored further by Schau et al., (2009) who also relate it to the social practice theory. They offer a list of twelve practices through which a community is enacted and which create value for the community and the brand. These practices are evident in both online and offline settings, and deriving from interviews, netnographic and participant observation data. The practices are: welcoming, empathising, governing, evangelising, justifying, documenting, badging, milestone staking, customising, grooming and commoditising. These practices are grouped in four categories, which are: social networking, impression management, community engagement and brand use (Schau et al., 2009). Through such practices, Schau et al. (2009) show that OBC members co-create their individual and social OBC experience and re-negotiate the brand value (see also Cova and Pace, 2006). Figure 2 below details the iterative process through which these four groups of twelve practices co-exist to create value in the community.

Figure 2: Schau et al. (2009) framework of brand community practices



This view of OBC participation as social constructed through practices is lastly taken on by O'Sullivan et al. (2011), using the same conceptual and methodological approaches. They focus on the Beamish beer brand in Ireland and, reflecting Muñiz and Schau (2005) and Schau et al.'s (2009) studies, find out that OBC participation is made up of transcendent sacralised experiences maintained through rituals and social practices.

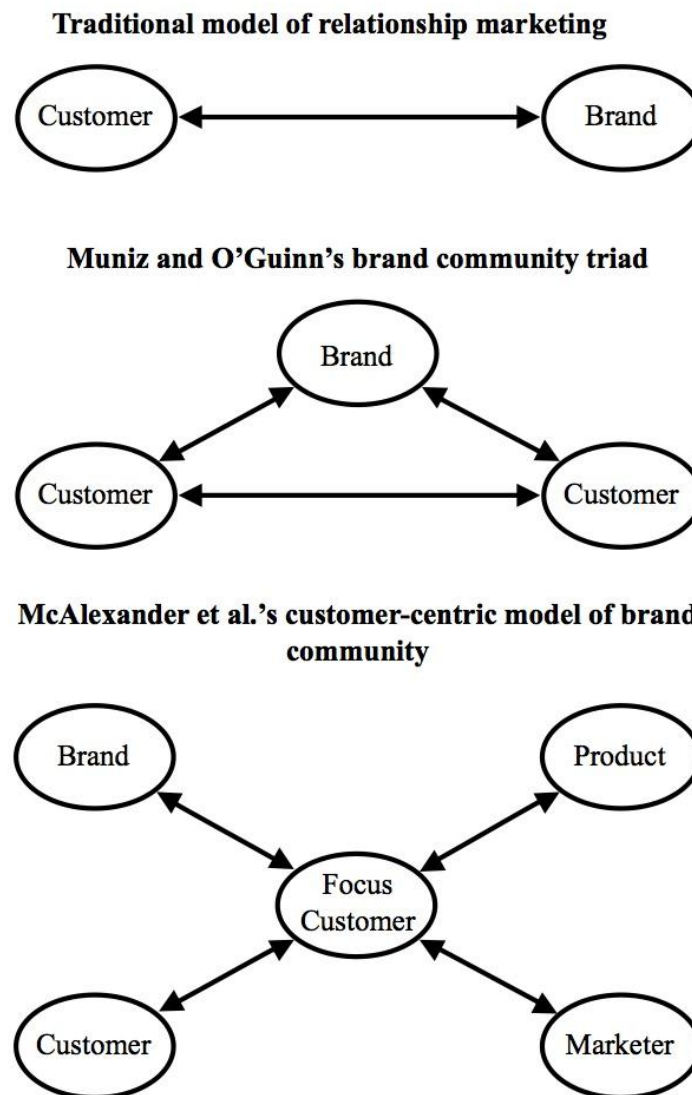
In conclusion, several common features distinguish the qualitative studies of community participation. In conceptual terms, the studies build largely on social constructivism and consumer culture theories. Community participation is viewed as an ever-evolving, experiential and iterative process whereby members make sense of the community and the brand, which resonates with the ontological considerations made by social constructivism. Members co-create value through rituals (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001) and negotiate the meaning of the brand and group itself (Muñiz and Schau, 2005).

Congruent to this conceptual approach, these studies are based on inductive and iterative approaches and rely strongly on qualitative methodologies involving case studies and making use of netnographic, observational and interview data (e.g. Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; Kozinets, 2002; Muñiz and Schau, 2005). Netnography is considered to be suited to the investigation of meaning and practices in online environments (Kozinets, 2002). Through interviews and observational data, these studies also rely on OBC members' narratives to understand brand meaning co-production in offline and online brand communities (Muñiz and Schau, 2005; see also Kozinets et al., 2010). Considering the amount of papers included in table 2, these studies however represent a small portion of the total (5 out of 23).

Scholarship on brand communities seems dominated by deductive and quantitative approaches anchored in the **relationship marketing paradigm** and the seminal work of McAlexander et al. (2002). McAlexander et al. (2002) expand the triadic view of brand relationship in brand communities proposed by Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) and introduce the concept of integration into a brand community (IBC) as a consumer-centric view of brand relationship, which enacts OBC participation. For them, brand community supports more complex webs of relationships and go beyond consumer-brands relationships. They include links established between the consumers and other consumer, between the consumer and the brand, but also between the consumer, product and firm.

Figure 3 shows the evolution of customer-brand relationships in the brand community literature as presented by McAlexander et al. (2002). The study shows that the more points of attachment and experience with brand-related attributes such as the firm or the product, the more the consumer feels integrated in the community and the stronger his/her emotional and behavioural attachment to that brand is (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Figure 3: Model of relationships in brand communities by McAlexander et al. (2002)



In contrast to Muñiz, O'Guinn and their colleagues, McAlexander et al. (2002) use mixed data in the form of an ethnography and a large-scale survey, evidencing a more pragmatic worldview. Their data are collected in North America at brandfests focused on the Jeep and Harley-Davidson brands.

A number of studies follow this relational view of OBC participation, in both offline and online spaces. For instance, more recent research has verified that brand communities foster these multi-way relationships with brands, consumers, products and the company (Ouwensloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008; Stokurger-Sauer, 2010). After McAlexander et al. (2002) most studies focusing on relationships in OBC use exclusively quantitative data, mainly in the form of cross-sectional consumer surveys, assuming a largely positivist take on the subject. They expand on the understanding of what a relationship in OBC is and how it characterises participation. Algesheimer et al. (2005, p. 23), for instance, defined brand-relationship quality in a brand community context as the *'degree to which the consumer views the brand as a satisfactory partner in an ongoing relationship'*, which represents an overall assessment of the strength of the relationship with the brand. Using a web-based survey sent to German members of brand communities in the automotive industry, they evidence the central role of consumer relationship with the brand and the community in driving their intentions and behaviours.

Several authors have attempted to refine the meaning of relationships in OBCs from a **commitment** perspective. In this stream of literature, community participation takes an emotional bend and focuses on members' attachment and affect toward the community (Kim et al., 2008 - see also Mathwick et al., 2007; Lin, 2010; Wang and Chen, 2012). OBC commitment refers to a member's attitude toward the community, reflected by a high degree of positive feelings (Jang et al., 2008). Commitment has been captured by various emotional and psychological expressions such as a sense of belonging (Carlson et al., 2008), a degree of emotional attachment and trust toward the community, and a need to participate (Jang et al., 2008). Similar to Jang et al. (2008), Lin (2010) defines community commitment as an affective manifestation of attachment to the community and distinguishes it from community loyalty. Community commitment is reflective of the 'stickiness' of the community (Wang and Chen, 2012).

This stream of literature depicts OBC participation using a relational approach showing how deeply anchored OBCs are within the relationship marketing paradigm. Building on McAlexander et al. (2002), brand community studies have helped expand the realm of brand relationships from one-to-one consumer-company interactions to a social, multi-actor context (Szmigin et al., 2005; Veloutsou, 2007). This stream of literature views OBC as social structures for the development of relationship between consumers, marketers and

brands, as well as an opportunity to widen the traditional two-way consumer-brand relationship to the social realm (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Another strand of literature in OBC participation has focused on **social identification theory (SIT)**. Dholakia et al. (2004) lead this stream of thought by centring their research on social identity and group norms as two group-level characteristics of virtual community participation. They adopt a positivist approach and use cross-sectional survey data collected from North-American members of OBCs on different platforms to understand the mechanisms that lead to OBC participation as understood from a social identity perspective. A similar approach has been used by Algesheimer et al. (2005), although targeting a German sample of automobile fans, and they define brand community identification as a process whereby a person '*construes himself or herself to be a member – that is “belonging” to the brand community*' (p. 20). Later on, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) show further validation of social identification as a form of community participation, by surveying members of Harley Davidson and other non-Harley riders groups in North America. More recently, Heere et al. (2011) evidence the existence of social community identification among members of university football teams in North America as well, using the same data collection methods.

The social identity approach to OBC participation is anchored in social psychology theories and uses quantitative confirmatory methods to evidence its existence, antecedents and outcomes. These methods are sometimes complemented by a behavioural approach to participation, which emerged with it and grew in usage later on.

A purely **behavioural approach** to OBC participation is the last form of participation that features in the literature. This view embraces the idea that participation percolates through members' actions, active states and activities within and with the community. It emphasises measurement of participation based on members' measurable actions. Driven by a number of action-based principles, the behavioural approach is a widely accepted view of OBC participation.

There is some debate whether participation represents a collective or individual endeavour or whether participation is active or passive. For some, participation is best understood as collective, or group action (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), stemming from the social psychology perspective. Others prefer measuring participation on an individual basis (Kim et al., 2008). Concurrently, participation can also be active or passive (Koh et al., 2007).

When active, it takes the form of community interactions, communication and part-taking in activities (Kim et al., 2008). Posting and creating content (User Generated Content) is probably one of the most active kinds of behavioural participation (see Koh and Kim, 2004; Cooke and Buckley, 2008; Fournier and Avery, 2011), as well as taking part in group activities (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010). Other studies argue that members can be passive and only engage in lurking behaviour. Lurking is the passive behaviour of reading others' posts without contributing to the community (Nonnecke et al., 2006).

In more recent studies focusing on online settings, participation has sometimes been approached from a purely quantitative, metrics-based approach, stressing the amount of time spent on the community and number of views (Trusov et al., 2010), the membership length (Mathwick et al., 2008), the number of 'likes', comments or visits on a Facebook page (Gummerus et al., 2012; Chauhan and Pillai, 2013). An even more condensed approach to OBC participation refers to the mere fact of being affiliated to the community, and it is used in a number of studies as well (Füller et al., 2008; Thompson and Sinha, 2008; Zhou et al., 2013). All these metrics are easily gathered from the consumers themselves, but can also easily be collected from website data.

Studies from the strictly behavioural approach to participation, whether they view it as passive or active, collective or individual, and online or offline, all agree that these can be quantitatively measured either through consumer self-reported data, experiments or website metrics. It is important to note that studies looking at social constructivism as a form of OBC participation also consider practices and behaviours as part of participation. They however view OBC participation as a dynamic and continuous process (composed partly of actions), rather than actions measurable at a point in time, which represents an important ontological difference with the strictly behavioural approach.

Overall, the review of the different approaches to OBC participation reveals, in many respects, a fragmented and complex stream of literature. Numerous approaches seem to exist –the boundaries of which are however unclear– and they exhibit differences in terms of paradigms, approaches, design and methods, and theories used. For example, major ontological and epistemological differences exist across different approaches. Although the epistemological stance of the studies is rarely explicitly mentioned, a review of the papers highlighted paradigmatic preferences ranging from social constructivism (e.g. Muñoz and O'Guinn, 2001; O'Sullivan et al., 2011) to postmodernism (Cova and Pace, 2006), pragmatism (McAlexander et al., 2002) and positivism (Heere et al., 2011; Hung et al.,

2011; Mazorchi et al., 2013). These varying worldviews are crucial to determining the conduct of the studies and therefore shape the literature as an intricate mix of methods and approaches.

The literature evidences a plethora of theories used. Preece and Maloney-Krichmar (2005) summarised the state of the literature rather adequately by saying '*no particular theory or set of theories currently dominates research on online communities. Rather, we see an application of different theories (...)*' (p.00), an assertion which characterises the OBC literature of the past 15 years. The theories most frequently used range from social constructivism and consumer culture theory (e.g. Schau et al., 2009), to relationship marketing theories and frameworks (Carlson et al., 2008), also making copious use of the social identification theory (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). Other theories also inform OBC participation, such as the UGT (Dholakia et al., 2004), product diffusion theory (e.g. Thompson and Sinha, 2008), TPB (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), or social cognition theory (Zhou et al., 2013). These last few theories however pertain more to the drivers and outcomes of participation rather than capturing participation itself, and are thus addressed later in this chapter.

Notwithstanding the relatively small number of contributions, it seems that the methodological approach taken by most studies published in top journals is mainly quantitative (e.g. Dholakia et al., 2004; Algesheimer et al., 2005), less often qualitative (e.g. Muñiz and Schau, 2005), and on more scarce occasions, based on a mixed approach (e.g. McAlexander et al., 2002; Adjei et al., 2010). The underlying assumptions signal preference for deductive and confirmatory procedures, while induction, although strongly defended in certain studies (Schau et al., 2009) seems to have gained less traction. The overall picture is yet that of a disputed view on the appropriate approach to capture OBC participation.

Accordingly, the type of data collected varies. Authors focusing on the purely behavioural aspect of OBC participation have focused on survey data (e.g. Matzler et al., 2011; Mazorchi et al., 2013), similarly to those investigating social identification (e.g. Dholakia et al., 2004) and participation behaviours. Studies taking a relationship stance toward participation have also relied largely on survey data, also using ethnographic data at times (e.g. McAlexander et al., 2002), and experiments on occasions (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010). Quantitative data analyses procedures vary, although they mostly rely on a form of multivariate data analysis technique. When adopting a qualitative approach, single or

multiple case studies were often preferred, mixing a series of data types ranging from (n)ethnography, (participant) observations and interviews (e.g. Schau et al., 2009). These are often analysed through interpretation or narrative structures. Data choices are driven by the aim of the studies, their philosophical stances, as well as the conceptual frame and theories that they rely on.

2.3.2. Key issues in the OBC participation literature

Overall, the literature attempting to capture OBC participation is characterised by a clear lack of consensus on the appropriate way to approach this phenomenon. The review of the literature suggests that there is an extremely fragmented treatment of this question. This overall fragmentation is due to a plethora of co-existing, yet non-communicating paradigms, theories, approaches, methods of data collection and analyses used. Although the fragmented state of OBC research is recognised (Preece and Maloney-Krishmar, 2005), it constitutes one of the major challenges in moving this agenda forward. For example, it is unclear from the review whether OBC participation is a matter of sociological identification (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), behavioural manifestations (Gummerus et al., 2012), emotional commitment (Kim et al., 2008) or something else. It is also unclear whether OBC participation can be condensed to one single type of manifestation, like identification alone, or whether several manifestations need to be combined (Casaló et al., 2008). Capturing OBC participation therefore seems to be an exercise so far composed of a multiplicity of uni-faceted and unidimensional views that fail to communicate or be integrated.

Additionally, the literature remains undecided on whether a social or individual treatment of OBC participation may be most appropriate. Despite an almost complete agreement that sociality sits at the core of OBC participation across worldviews (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al., 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Schau et al., 2009), ways of capturing participation constantly shift from a social to an individual approach. The social identification perspective naturally adopts a social perspective, as well as studies led by a social constructivist view. However, these perspectives are challenged by research that measures OBC participation as individual actions or emotions (e.g. Cova and Pace, 2006; Füller et al., 2008), leaving the social to be a backdrop element of lesser importance. Given the inherent and necessary social nature of OBC contexts, it is therefore surprising that OBC participation would not be systematically approached as well as measured taking into account this social perspective.

Moreover, although most studies recognise the need to include and implement a social aspect to OBC participation, attempts to capture OBC participation are often irresponsible of the interactive and conversational nature of online contexts. A core distinctive characteristic of online versus offline brand communities remains largely unaddressed in this research. Conversations have only begun to emerge as an important aspect of OBC participation and its measurement very recently Hombourg et al. (2015). Prior to this, only the social constructivist approach to OBC participation viewed it as a socially interactive concept (e.g. Schau et al., 2009). On the other hand, most positivists captured OBC participation as individual actions, behaviours or sentiments (e.g. Carlson et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2008; Thompson and Sinha, 2008). Even when acknowledging the social referent of individual identification processes (with brand community identification or brand identification in Dholakia et al., 2004, for instance) this social referent is not granted an active role. This is evident in the way that Dholakia et al. (2004) express social identity: as a psychological state, of an emotional and evaluative significance. Therefore, even in the most social way to measure OBC participation to date, there seems no interactive aspect to it, suggesting that the social referent of social identity in OBC (i.e. the community, or the brand) does not need to be an active relationship partner for identification to occur.

To summarise, OBC participation is treated in a fragmented and incomplete manner, leaving no indication as to its actual dimensions and manifestations. Moreover, it suffers a lack of social referent in the way it is measured and, when social referents exist, there is a lack of interactivity in the way it is approached. These issues not only weaken the understanding of OBC participation, but they also show how much it is highly irresponsible of the specificities of online contexts that make OBCs different from brand communities.

The overall OBC literature seems to strongly rely on seminal studies, theories and approaches that were developed in offline contexts, such as McAlexander et al. (2002), Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) or Dholakia et al. (2004). Offline studies and frameworks, methods and measures that work in offline contexts are often straightforwardly reproduced in online contexts (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), as evidenced by the lack of interactivity of OBC participation measures denoted above. Furthermore, when attempting to measure OBC participation in an online context, and in an online specific manner, OBC studies often fall into the trap of using website metrics (e.g. Gummerus et al., 2012) which evidence a highly unidimensional, behaviour-only measure of participation which are organisation- rather than consumer-based.

These problems demonstrate the need to account for OBC participation in a way that is not only still in line with the core characteristics of offline brand communities, but also, and most urgently, responsive of the highly interactive, social and rich online media. The next section reviews the concept of consumer engagement and proposes it as a solution to the current flaws of the literature on OBC participation.

2.4. Consumer engagement as an approach to OBC participation

The aim of this section is to present consumer engagement as an alternative approach to OBC participation, its strength residing in its clear potential to tackle the current shortcomings of the OBC literature identified above. Given the relative novelty of the concept, a somewhat divergent conceptual approach underlies the treatment of engagement in OBC and in marketing studies at large, which this section aims to untangle. To do so, a review of the broader marketing literature on engagement is presented first, also building on other fields of the social sciences, as it paves the way to the specific treatment of consumer engagement as an approach to OBC participation.

2.4.1. Defining consumer engagement

The concept of engagement has a long history. Marketing research on engagement has only emerged in the last decade, whereas seminal research on this topic had started as early as the early nineties (e.g. Kahn, 1990) in other fields of social sciences. Recognising this theoretical and empirical precedence, as well as a high degree of transferability across domains, marketing researchers (such as Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012) have thus tended to rely on expertise in other fields to ground their understanding of the concept.

Over the last two decades, the term ‘engagement’ has been the subject of academic enquiry in the fields of psychology (Achterberg et al., 2003), sociology (Jennings and Stocker, 2004), information systems (Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007), political sciences (Resnick, 2001), educational psychology (Bryson and Hand, 2007) and organisational behaviour (Kahn, 1990). Although its interpretations are not always consistent across and within

disciplines, a review of various conceptualisations in the social sciences is deemed essential to assert the grounds of this study's understanding of consumer engagement. An overview of key studies in social sciences is thus proposed in this section, as well as key takes from these studies that bring light on how to approach engagement in marketing.

Each of the social sciences discipline that has embraced the concept of engagement has naturally done it with respect to discipline-relevant subjects and objects. Psychology has examined the concepts of 'social engagement' and its group-oriented dimension (e.g. Achterberg et al., 2003) along with 'occupational engagement' (e.g. Bejerholm and Eklund, 2007). 'Civic engagement' has been the subject of investigation in sociology (Jennings and Stocker, 2004), while 'student engagement' has attracted the attention of scholars in the field of education (Bryson and Hand, 2007; London et al., 2007). Student engagement literature interestingly suggests the existence of a continuum for the levels of engagement and, hence, potential for student disengagement. In organisational behaviour, the construct of 'employee engagement' has been reported as a state of connection to one's work and others (Kahn, 1990) which is linked to increased job satisfaction, low absenteeism and high commitment (Salanova et al., 2005). Organisational behaviour, on the other hand, is concerned with the concept of 'stakeholder engagement', as a context-specific democratic process of involving all stakeholders of a company (Grudens-Schuck, 2000). Furthermore, the term 'state engagement' is specific to the political sciences where a notion of interdependence with the engagement object exists (Resnick, 2001). Finally and more closely linked to the subject of this thesis, the notion of 'customer engagement' is addressed in the information systems literature. It represents a behavioural manifestation of knowledge exchange between customers, companies and other customers (Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007).

Table 3 below presents an overview of the engagement literature in the social sciences, evidencing the rich pedigree of the concept in other areas than marketing. The overview builds on existing reviews of the literature in marketing papers (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012).

Table 3: Definitions and dimensionality of engagement in the social science disciplines

Discipline	Concept	Authors	Definition /Findings	Dimensions
Psychology	Social engagement	Achterberg et al., 2003	A high sense of initiative, involvement and adequate response to social stimuli, participating in social activities, interacting with others.	Behavioural
		Huo et al., 2009	Represented by group identification and group-oriented behaviour.	Emotional Behavioural
	Occupational engagement	Bejerholm and Eklund, 2007	A lifestyle characteristic that describes the extent to which a person has a balanced rhythm of activity and rest, a variety and range of meaningful occupations/routines and the ability to move around society and interact socially.	Cognitive behavioural
Sociology	Civic engagement	Jennings and Stoker, 2004	Involvement in voluntary organisations and the performance of volunteer work, facilitating the development of social networks.	Cognitive Emotional Behavioural
Political sciences	Stakeholder engagement	Grudens-Schuck, 2000	A democratic, context specific process that expresses aspirations of people and organisations that stakeholders are legitimised as important meaning-makers.	Behavioural
	State engagement	Resnick, 2001	Iterative process aiming to influence political behaviour of a target state through maintained contacts with that state across multiple issue areas and focused on generating a relationship of increasing interdependence	Behavioural
Information systems	Customer engagement	Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007	The intensity of customer participation with both representatives of the organisation and with other customers in a collaborative knowledge exchange process.	Behavioural
Educational psychology	Student engagement	Bryson and Hand, 2007	On a disengaged-engaged continuum, a student may exhibit differing engagement levels to a particular task/assignment, module, course of study and Higher Education	Cognitive Emotional Behavioural
		London et al., 2007	Student's academic investment, motivation and commitment to their institution; perceived psychological connection, comfort, and sense of belonging toward their institution	Cognitive Emotional Behavioural

Discipline	Concept	Authors	Definition /Findings	Dimensions
Organisational behaviour	Employee engagement	Catteeuw et al., 2007	The degree to which employees are satisfied with their jobs, feel valued and experience collaboration and trust.	Cognitive Emotional
		Frank et al., 2004	Employee's desire/willingness to give discretionary effort in their jobs, in the form of extra time, brainpower/energy (includes cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects).	Cognitive Emotional Behavioural
		Kahn, 1990	The simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others personal presence and active, full performances.	Cognitive Emotional Physical
		Saks, 2006	Employee engagement is the amount of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance through attitudes, intentions and behaviours.	Cognitive Emotional Behavioural
		Schaufeli et al., 2002	A pervasive affective-cognitive state that acts to enhance organisational productivity. Positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption.	Cognitive Emotional
		Salanova et al., 2005	Engagement acts to increase group morale, cohesion and rapport via positive psychological contagion processes. It results in job satisfaction, low absenteeism, organisational commitment and performance.	Emotional

Studies in the social sciences highlight several core characteristics of engagement that are also evident in the marketing literature. Firstly, engagement involves **different actors**, or parties. Engagement acts upon a specific subject (employee, student, stakeholder), with respect to a specific engagement object, or focus (state, function, studies), denoting the context-specific nature of engagement (Achterberg et al., 2003). In this sense, engagement is inherently **social** and relational, since engagement cannot occur without the presence of both parties (the student and his studies, the employee and his job, the citizen and the state). Engagement relies on interactive connections (Kahn, 1990) and stimulus by another party (Catteuw et al., 2007).

Secondly, engagement is a **context-specific** concept. Engagement has been shown to emerge in a variety of different disciplines, as exemplified in the vast social science literature. Additionally, engagement can manifest itself in a variety of social contexts within the same discipline (e.g. Saks, 2006; London et al., 2007, Bakker et al., 2011). This suggests that context-specific factors need to be taken into account when studying engagement, relating directly to the engagement actors: as the context of engagement changes, the actors involved change as well. For instance, in an organisational context, employees are the subjects of engagement, whereas their engagement focus is their job or task.

Thirdly, engagement is composed of a set of specific **dimensions**. As Saks (2006) explains, employee engagement is the amount of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance through attitudes, intentions and behaviours. The cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of engagement are often acknowledged (e.g. Jennings and Stoker, 2004), although there seems to be no consensus on which dimension(s) to consider, denoting the dimensional blur in which the concept stands across and within disciplines.

Fourthly, engagement has different **levels of intensity**, and a **valence**. Engagement can be high or low. People can exhibit strong or weak engagement on a permanent basis, but engagement level can also vary for the same individual through time (e.g. Catteuw et al., 2007; Bryson and Hand, 2007). Engagement can reflect a positive (Schaufeli et al., 2002) or negative condition.

Although the engagement concept has received substantial attention across various different academic fields, it is still in its development stage in the marketing literature

(Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek et al., 2014). The paucity of studies to date, and particularly empirical studies, incurs a lack of consensus on the nature and scope of engagement in the field. Given the conceptual fog surrounding the concept, it is not surprising that several calls for a clearer definition of engagement have been made in the last few years (e.g. Hollebeek, 2011b; Vivek et al., 2012).

Consensus concerning certain features of engagement is accompanied by disagreements. For example, whether engagement constitutes a state or process is a first point of dissent among marketing scholars. Bowden (2009, p.65) defines engagement as: *‘The psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.’* Implicitly, this perspective models engagement as an overarching process comprised of the relationships between customer commitment, trust and involvement, as impacting their loyalty levels.

No other evidence of considering engagement as a process was found in the marketing literature, other than in Brodie et al.’s (2011) work, which however seems to hesitate in classifying customer engagement (CE) as a state or process, using both terms in the same definition (p. 260):

*‘CE is a psychological **state** that occurs by virtue of interactive, cocreative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context-dependent conditions generating differing CE levels and exists as dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that cocreate value. CE plays an essential role in a nomological network governing service relationships in which other relational concepts (involvement, loyalty...) are antecedents and/or consequences in iterative CE **processes**. It is a multidimensional concept subject to a context and/or stakeholder- specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral dimensions’.*

Process-oriented studies imply that there is an iterative and cyclical nature to engagement. Bowden (2009) in particular sees engagement as a higher-order phenomenon overarching a series of engagement-building steps. In contrast to the limited support for the process view, the notion of ‘engagement as a state’ seems to be widely accepted in the literature. Supporters of the state view operationalise engagement as existing at certain intensity, at a specific point in time (Patterson et al., 2006). Under this premise, engagement can

therefore be operationalised and measured as a stand-alone construct, rather than composed of a sequence and combination of others.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. For example, it can be argued that the state approach fails to encompass the dynamic and iterative nature of engagement, and its variance for different segments of customers (Bowden, 2009). As a state, however, engagement has antecedents, outcomes, a specific level, or intensity, and thus the potential to be quantitatively operationalised, and measured as such (see Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014). It also opens avenues for treating engagement as part of a nomological network of relationships between relationship marketing constructs, discussed further in this chapter.

2.4.2. The subject of engagement

As previously clarified, engagement involves both a subject (the engaged entity) and a partner (the focus or object of engagement). There is a broad agreement that the unit of analysis in marketing should be the individual customer (e.g. Bowden, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2012), or consumer (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013; Calder et al., 2013; Wallace et al., 2014). Although the initiator of engagement can be the company, through specific offerings or activities, the person whose engagement matters to marketing researchers and practitioners alike is, understandably, the individual customer or consumer, terms that are used interchangeably in the literature (Vivek et al., 2012). For the sake of clarity, this review uses the word ‘consumer’ to refer to the subject of engagement, a semantic choice explained in the next chapter.

2.4.3. The partners of engagement

Consumer engagement is interactive by nature; hence engagement can only happen if there is a relationship partner to interact with, and use as an engagement referent. Although studies sometimes refer to engagement ‘objects’ or ‘focuses’, this study adopts the term ‘partner’, as reflective of the interactive role of this engagement referent in OBCs. Different positions exist regarding the relevant engagement partners to consider in marketing, and this issue seems to be largely bound by the context in which engagement occurs. The company or organisation is a recurring engagement partner (e.g. Patterson et al., 2006; Verhoef et al., 2010), as well as the service offering or product (Vivek et al., 2012). Extending beyond the product as engagement partner, Van doorn et al. (2010) contend that the partner can be either the firm or the brand, so long as the relationship goes

beyond the transaction. In fact, the prevalence of the brand as engagement partner is quite clear. Out of 33 marketing articles in table 4, 19 of them include the brand as an engagement partner. In fact, Gambetti and Graffigna (2010, p. 819) state that *'customer-brand engagement is the only really significant concept when considering engagement from the marketing perspective'*. Other engagement partners for consumer or customers include types of media (Calder et al., 2009), or piece of advertising/content (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010).

Another engagement partner identified in the marketing literature, even before scholar started paying much attention to engagement with a brand, is the brand community. Posing the brand community as an engagement partner goes back to acknowledging the social dimension of engagement and it is bound by community contexts (Vivek et al., 2014).

Brand community engagement was first put forward by Algesheimer et al. (2005, p. 21) as *'the positive influences of identifying with the brand community through the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact/co-operate with community members'*. The group and social aspect of engagement has thereafter been recognised by engagement scholars as an important venue for increased levels of engagement (e.g. Achterberg et al., 2003; Sawhney et al., 2005; Gummerus et al., 2012), warranting a certain, yet limited attention to brand community engagement.

Lastly, it is worth pointing out that most studies concentrate on one partner of engagement, and there are very few studies that acknowledge multiple partner of engagement, at least simultaneously. Gambetti and Graffigna (2010), provides a review of engagement and recognise different engagement partners, supporting the idea that engagement can go in different directions. Brodie et al. (2011) and Vivek et al., (2012) both support this premise and evidence it with qualitative data. The former study focuses on engagement with a brand and with other community members, while the latter includes all organisational offerings or activities as potential engagement partners. This last proposition is verified quantitatively in a study by Vivek et al. (2014).

Table 4 below provides an overview of the current studies in marketing that have focused on consumer engagement. It details the type of paper and construct of interest as coined by the authors and supports the assertion that consumers, or customers, are the preferred engagement subject in marketing, whereas a wide array of engagement partners have been considered, and mostly one at a time.

Table 4: Key consumer engagement studies in marketing

	Authors	Paper type	Construct	Subject	Partner	Dimensions
Engagement with a brand/firm/organisation	Patterson et al., 2006	Conceptual	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Service organisation	Absorption, dedication, interaction, vigour
	Bowden, 2009	Conceptual	Consumer engagement process	Consumer	Service brand	N/A
	Sprott et al., 2009	Quantitative	Brand engagement in self concept	Consumer	Brand	Emotional
	Mollen and Wilson, 2010	Conceptual	Engagement	Consumer	Brand	Affective, cognitive
	van Doorn et al., 2010	Conceptual	Consumer engagement behaviours	Consumer	Brand or firm	Behavioural
	Verhoef et al., 2010	Conceptual	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Brand or firm	Behavioural
	Kumar et al., 2010	Conceptual	Customer engagement value	Customer	Brand	Behavioural, emotional
	Brodie et al., 2011	Conceptual	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Service brand/organisation	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Hollebeek, 2011a	Conceptual	Consumer-brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Hollebeek, 2011b	Qualitative	Consumer-brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	So et al., 2013	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Gambetti et al., 2012	Qualitative	Consumer-brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Experiential, social
	Kaltcheva et al., 2014	Conceptual	Customer engagement	Customer	Service firm	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Franzak et al., 2014	Conceptual	Brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Hollebeek and Chen, 2014	Qualitative	Brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Hollebeek et al., 2014	Quantitative	Consumer brand engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014	Qualitative	Consumer engagement behaviour	Consumer	Service brand	Behavioural
Sarkar and Sreejesh 2014	Quantitative	Active customer engagement	Customer	Brand	Behavioural and cognitive	
Wallace et al., 2014	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Brand	Behavioural	

Engagement with a brand community	Wirtz et al., 2013	Conceptual	Online brand community engagement	Customer	Online brand community members	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Algesheimer et al., 2005	Quantitative	Brand community engagement	Customer	Brand community	Motivational
	Gummerus et al., 2012	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Community	Behavioural
	Kuo and Feng, 2013	Quantitative	Brand community engagement	Customer	Brand community	Interactive
Engagement with another type of entity	Habibi et al., 2014	Qualitative	Brand community engagement	Customer	Brand community	Practices
	Higgins and Scholer, 2009	Conceptual	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Task	Sustained attention
	Calder et al., 2009	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Media (website)	Experiential, social
	Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010	Qualitative	Engagement	Consumer	Advertising	Behavioural, affective, immersive, transporting, identification
	Scott and Craig-Lees, 2010	Quantitative	Audience engagement	Audience	Entertainment piece	Emotional
	Calder et al., 2013	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Product or service	Civic, identity, intrinsic enjoyment, social, utilitarian
Engagement with multiple partners	Gambetti and Graffigna, 2010	Review	Engagement	Consumer	Multiple entities	N/A
	Brodie et al., 2011	Qualitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Brand and/or community members	Behavioural, cognitive, affective
	Vivek et al., 2012	Qualitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Organisational offering or activities	Behavioural, cognitive, affective, social
	Vivek et al., 2014	Quantitative	Consumer engagement	Consumer	Organisational object, consumption activity or event	Behavioural, cognitive, affective, social

2.4.4. The dimensions of engagement

Both unidimensional and multidimensional definitions of consumer engagement exist in the marketing literature. For example, Bowden (2009) contrasts engagement for new and repeat customers as being respectively more cognitive or affective. Following a similar line of thoughts, Gambetti and Graffigna (2010) put the relational (i.e. soft, affective) dimension of engagement at the opposing end of a continuum with behavioural (i.e. pragmatic, managerial) engagement. Other authors favour a unidimensional representation of engagement, by emphasising its behavioural (van Doorn et al. 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Gummerus et al., 2012) or emotional aspects (Sprott et al., 2009).

Despite the existence of a few unidimensional views of engagement, the majority of customer engagement definitions in the marketing literature adopt a multidimensional perspective, with combinations of two- or three-dimensional, as evidenced in table 4. This approach is consistent with Saks' (2006) multidimensional vision of employee engagement. Hollebeek (2011a, p. 790), for instance, defines customer-brand engagement as *'characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions'*. Extant research also identifies dimensions related to identity, vigour, civism or absorption (Patterson et al., 2006; Calder et al., 2013). Going further into this multidimensional perspective, Vivek et al. (2012) complement the cognitive-emotional-behavioural triad by adding a social dimension to the equation. This fourth dimension of engagement is supported by their qualitative empirical research involving executives in various fields, and theoretically grounded within the service dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

This varied treatment of the dimensions of consumer engagement is not surprising given the emerging nature of the concept itself, and it provides a fertile ground for further exploration. Although various dimensions have been suggested, a significant proportion of the published work emanates from, or relates to Brodie and Hollebeek's work (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014). They conceptualise engagement as multi-dimensional construct with a cognitive, an affective and a behavioural dimension, a view embraced by number of other engagement studies (e.g. Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Wirtz et al., 2013). This view is also the one adopted in this thesis.

2.4.5. The valence of engagement

Much research in marketing and the social sciences focuses on engagement as a positive construct (e.g. Schaufeli et al., 2002; Hollebeek et al., 2014). However, faced with increasingly critical and demanding consumers, marketing scholars also acknowledge the existence of negative forms of engagement (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014), as well as disengagement (Bowden et al., 2014). The difference between negative engagement and disengagement is that negatively engaged consumers maintain a relationship with the brand, whereas disengagement leads to the termination of the relationship (Bowden et al., 2014). van Doorn et al. (2010) consider that the valence of engagement is one of its primary properties, and that engagement has an equal potential to be positive or negative.

Both positive and negative aspects of engagement matter because they can have dramatically diverging consequences for the brand, particularly in the context of OBCs (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). As suggested by Kumar et al. (2010), negative forms of engagement such as negative Word of Mouth (WOM) can be detrimental for companies. They recommend to track and address complaints behaviours in order to minimize the effects of negative engagement (Kumar et al. 2010). Hollebeek and Chen (2014) support these assertions with exploratory data, explaining that the valence of engagement affects the outcome valence of brand attitude and WOM. In support to this, conceptual research also shows that any form of customer behaviours (e.g. blogging, reviewing, recommending) and emotions can take a negative valence in the instance of a poor fit between the consumer and the brand, and as a result impact negatively the latter (van Doorn et al., 2010). Scholars are encouraging further research to investigate both positive and negative valences of engagement and how consumers behave toward their favourite but also least favourite brands (Spratt et al., 2009; Gummerus et al., 2012; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

2.4.6. Engagement in the online brand community literature

The origins of the consumer engagement view in the OBC literature can be traced back to the other approaches to participation. More specifically, the ‘practices and co-creation’ view detailed above, along with other key studies in the brand community literature (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Brodie et al., 2011; Wirtz et al., 2013), show the emergence of the engagement concept in OBC contexts.

In their article on community practices, Schau et al. (2009) use the term ‘engagement’ 77 times, refraining from using ‘involvement’ or ‘participation’ altogether. According to

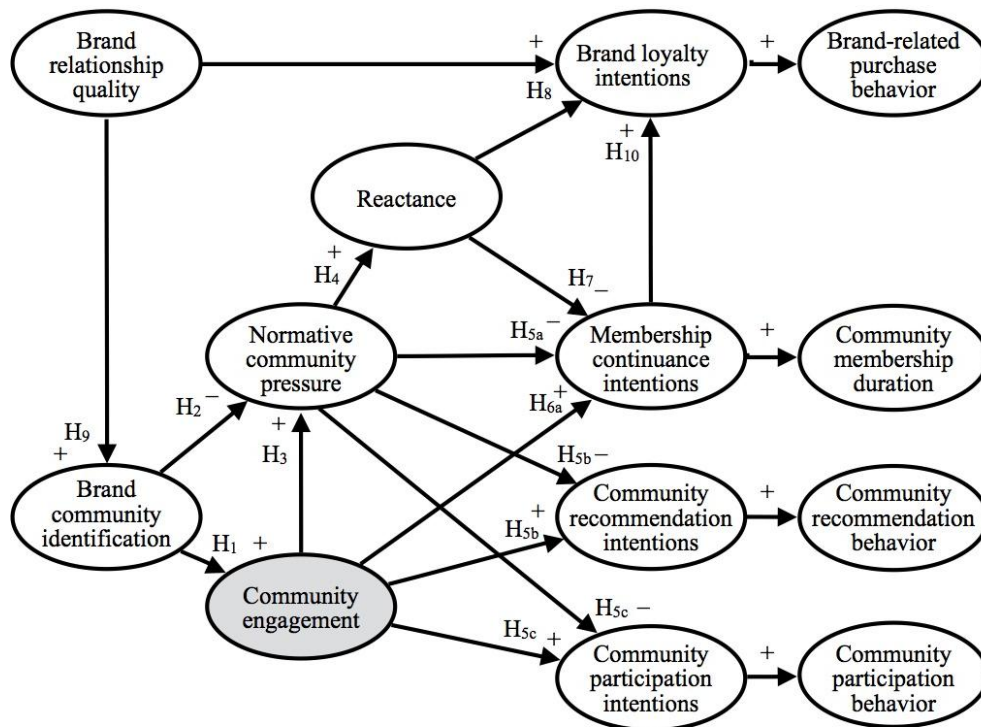
them, **community engagement** practices are those *'that reinforce members' escalating engagement with the brand community'* (ibid., p 34), in the form of documenting, badging, milestoneing and staking brand use (see Figure 2). They also explain that each individual practice has an anatomy, composed of understandings, or the knowledge and tacit cultural template; procedures, or explicit performance rules and **engagement**, or emotional projects and purposes (Schau et al., 2009). Interestingly, this anatomy of practices parallels the three dimensions of consumer engagement, as the first one reflects cognition, the second behaviours and the third is reflective of affect.

Schau et al., (2009) go further to explaining that, as practices evolve and are integrated over time, they reinforce consumer engagement, which leads to further enactment of the practices and value creation, both for the brand and the community. This account of community practices gives indications as to the importance of engagement for community sustenance and value. It suggests that community engagement is a form of social practice related to experiential and shared brand use (Schau et al., 2009), but also that engaging with a practice constitutes the emotional and motivational aspect of it.

Earlier on in the brand community literature, Algesheimer et al. (2005) had already introduced the concept of community engagement, in a similar light, focusing on the motivational aspect of the concept as well, but as a measureable variable part of a nomological network of causal relationships. They defined community engagement as *'the intrinsic motivations to interact and cooperate with community members'* (p.21).

In this study, community engagement is an outcome of brand community identification. It leads to increased levels of normative community pressure, as well as a number of behavioural intentions: membership continuance, community recommendation and community participation. The research indicated the potential key role of engagement in creating consumer behaviour in the OBC context, as shown in Figure 4 below.

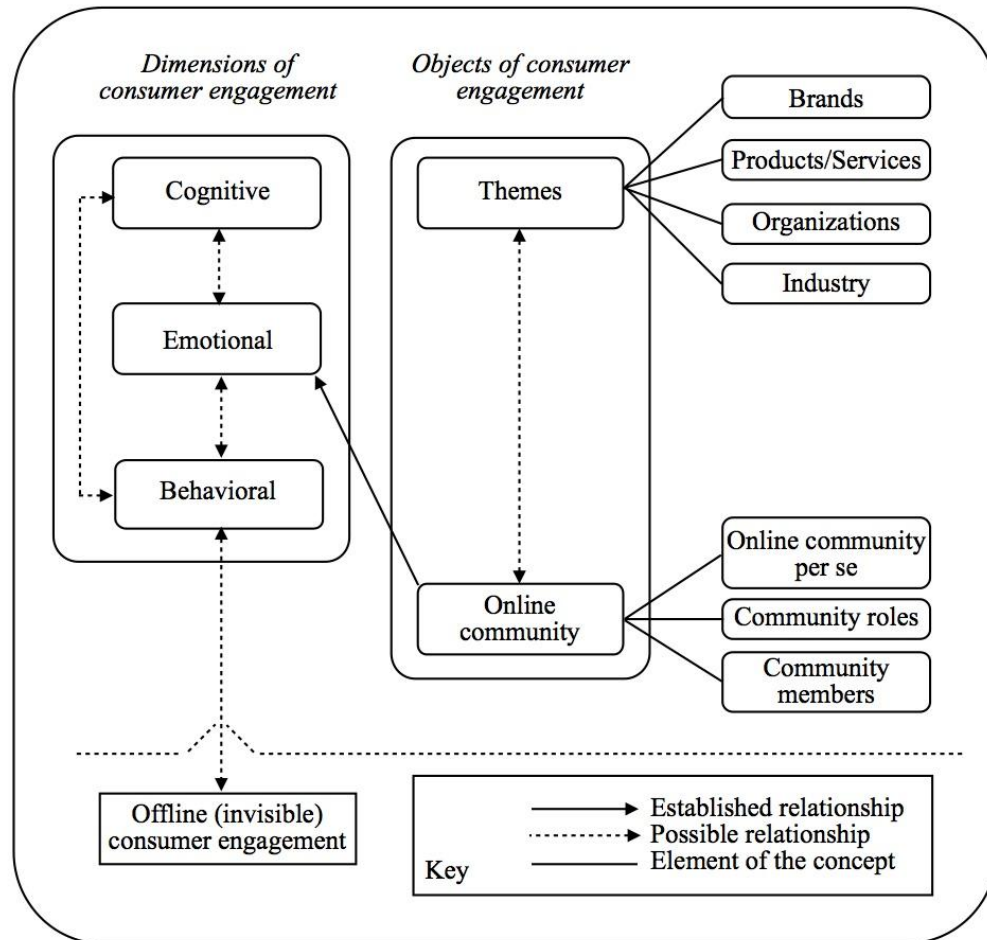
Figure 4: Brand community model in Algesheimer et al. (2005)



The authors however acknowledge the limitations of their conceptualisation of engagement and call for a better understanding of community engagement in brand community settings (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

More recently, Brodie et al. (2013) made the relevance of the consumer engagement construct in the OBC context much more explicit. They propose a framework of engagement, its dimensions and objects within an OBC context depicted in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Framework of consumer engagement in virtual brand communities by Brodie et al. (2013)



They also provide a working definition of consumer engagement in an OBC context (p. 3):

*'Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community involves specific **interactive experiences** between consumers and the brand and/or other members of the community. Consumer engagement is a **context-dependent**, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within a dynamic, iterative engagement process. Consumer engagement is a **multidimensional** concept comprising cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral dimensions, and plays a central role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the brand community'.*

This definition points out the unique characteristics of engagement as a way to capture **cognitive, behavioural and emotional aspects of interactive community participation**. Interestingly, these conceptualisations have been adopted in recent studies on Facebook pages for instance, which characterise consumer engagement in these settings as a form of interactive community participation (Janh and Kunz, 2012; Blazevic et al., 2014). To illustrate, Brodie et al.'s (2013) study also recognises the existence of engagement in a network of relationships with other relational variables, which have been the subject of much debate in understanding the drivers and outcomes of OBC participation and are detailed in the following section. Although possibly the most advanced study of consumer engagement in OBC, the study suffers from several shortcomings. It relies on exploratory approach, which is congruent with the stage of engagement research at the time, but limits the applicability of the findings. The empirical data concern only one community (a vibration training brand) and the data set consists of netnographic evidence and a limited number of end-user depth-interviews (six in total). Consequently, it seems clear that further research into engagement in OBC is warranted and that the concept bears high potential into explaining OBC participation mechanisms beyond existing approaches (van Doorn et al., 2010; Porter et al., 2011; Brodie et al., 2013).

In summary, this section has evidenced that consumer engagement offers evident strengths in comparison to previous approaches to OBC participation, particularly through its social, interactive and multi-dimensional aspects. Before elaborating further on this, a review of the antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation, including the OBC and consumer engagement literature is warranted to address the state of the literature related to this study's second research objective.

2.5. Antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation/ consumer engagement

This section aims to critically assess the current state of research in determining what motivates and results from OBC participation. As evidenced in the section on OBC participation, studies use different paradigms or worldviews, approaches, methods, data types, theoretical frameworks and analysis tools, making up for an extremely rich stream

of literature. For the sake of clarity, the antecedents of OBC and brand community participation are reviewed first, followed by the outcomes. The review pays specific attention to existing empirical models of participation.

Since the concept of consumer engagement is put forth as a way to advance OBC participation, the models of antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement are also reviewed and evaluated. The literature on consumer engagement being less developed and still more conceptual/exploratory than the OBC literature, the second part of this section largely includes conceptual research or studies using qualitative data, and it presents antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement concurrently.

2.5.1. Antecedents of participation in the OBC literature

In terms of the antecedents of OBC participation, the **relationship marketing** and brand relationship literature in particular can again serve as guiding frame (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Research showed that existing consumer-brand relationships in brand communities are an important vector of individual and collective identity construction and consumer-brand relationship is viewed as an antecedent to brand community identification. For Algesheimer et al. (2005), **brand relationship quality** leads to stronger identification to the community (according to some, a form of OBC participation, as discussed earlier) and subsequently community engagement. Accordingly, people are able to identify with the community through the prior social relationships that they have with the brand (Kozinets, 1999). Interactions within the community realm help individuals build their individual and collective self, a concept based on the social identification theory by Tajfel and Turner (2004). In the same line of thought, Füller et al. (2008) show the impact of **brand trust and brand passion** in consumer's willingness to involve in brand community-based innovation processes. Similar to Algesheimer et al. (2005), data were gathered in Germany from a brand community in the automotive industry. These studies evidenced the central impact that consumer-brand relationship plays on OBC functioning and sustenance, and therefore on OBC participation.

Brand identification is a frequent antecedent of participation. This concept is often used in brand-relationship literature (e.g. Tildesley and Coote, 2009) and deriving from the social identification theory. Brand identification is also often cited as an antecedent of OBC participation where members identify with the brand and with other community members (Algesheimer, et al., 2005; see also Reto, 2012), and against out-groups.

Existing conceptualisations of brand identification in the brand community literature tend to take a psychological view to the concept, defining it as *'the extent to which the consumer sees his or her own image as overlapping with the brand's image'* (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006, p.49). Brand identification can also have social impacts, based on the brand's ability to act as a communication instrument, allowing the consumer to associate or dissociate himself from a reference group (De Rio et al., 2001). The brand therefore acts as a social marker of identity, which can be referred to as the brand signalling capacity (Tildesley and Coote, 2009). This social aspect of brand identity is particularly suited to research contexts where consumers are part of a group, such as OBCs (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Brand identification is also an important part of the construction of the self (Belk, 1988), building on the symbolic meaning of brands as ways to enhance one's identity. Based on Lasswell's identification theory through a symbol (Lasswell, 1965), brand identification can be seen as the perception of sameness between the brand and the consumer, where the brand is an object with symbolic meaning that the consumer perceives as his own (Tuškej et al., 2013). This approach however fits better within research contexts where the individual is not part of a social group (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), where the perception of the group is psychological only (Carlson et al., 2008), or where the consumer is not working collectively toward group goals, or interacting with a group at all (Kuenzel and Halliday, 2010).

The relationship between identification and engagement is not clear. Consumer-brand identification has been found to be antecedent of community participation in some studies (McAlexander et al., 2002), while other advocate for a moderating role of brand identification between participation and its antecedents (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Others simply state that there is a correlation between the two phenomena, without arguing for a directional causal relationship (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). A slightly different view is taken by Heere et al. (2011) who show that identification of the brand community members with a city or state also works to produce stronger community affiliation. In the context of university sports teams, the city or state can be considered as a brand. It is interesting to note that all these studies emanate from North American research settings, focusing on brand categories typically high in involvement (automotive and sports clubs).

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) also provides a rich source of antecedents to OBC participation. The UGT originated from the communication and media literature as a way

to understand people's motivations for using specific media (McQuail, 1987). It rests on the principle that people seek value in media usage and that this perceived value drives them in their media interactions (ibid, 1987). McQuail (1983), who proposes five reasons that drive media usage: (1) Information; (2) Personal identity; (3) Integration; (4) Social interaction and (5) Entertainment. This media theory has been adapted to brand community and OBC research in multiple instances, starting with Dholakia et al. (2004) (see also Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Pak et al., 2009; Calder et al., 2013). The basic premise here is that members engage in OBC on the basis of perceived benefits, or value, that they get from this participation (e.g. Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007). Perceived value in the context of OBC can therefore be defined as a community member's overall assessment of the utility of the OBC he is a part of, based on perceptions of benefits received from community membership (Zeithalm, 1988).

For example, Dholakia et al. (2004) proposed a rather comprehensive model of the reasons why people join and participate in virtual brand communities, based on the following types of value they perceive: (1) Purposive; (2) Self-discovery; (3) Maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity; (4) Social enhancement and (5) Entertainment. Purposive value is composed of informational and instrumental value. Information value refers to getting and sharing information, and knowing what others think (Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008), whereas instrumental value means accomplishing specific tasks such as solving a problem, generating an idea, influencing others or validating a decision. Self-discovery value is the understanding of salient aspects of one's self through social interactions. Self-discovery pertains to goal attainment and elaboration of one's values. Maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity means establishing and maintaining contact with other people such as social support, friendship and intimacy. It is different from social enhancement, which relates to gaining acceptance and approval from other members and enhancing one's social status on account of one's contribution to it. Lastly, entertainment value is the acquisition of fun and relaxing time through playing or otherwise interacting with others.

The UGT has been used in multiple studies on OBC in recent years. For instance, Gummerus et al. (2012) focus on Facebook brand community membership and refer to social, entertainment, economic, practical and social enhancement value. Entertainment and social enhancement values are defined similarly to Dholakia et al., (2004), and practical value refers to their purposive value. Social value is similar to their maintenance

of interpersonal connectivity although it goes further by including the brand as a relationship partner. The authors also add another element, which is economic value and pertains to gaining discounts, saving time, taking parts in raffles or competitions. These material rewards are explicit incentives given by OBC managers to fuel member participation (Garnefeld et al., 2012). Linking the UGT with social cognition and observation learning theories, Zhou et al. (2013) show in a Chinese context that informational and social value perceived from content posted on the OBC increase members' participation intentions.

To sum up, various perceived gratifications and benefits exist for members of OBC and these are largely validated as key drivers of member participation. Benefits can be derived from informational or cognitive value, social value, and personal status or hedonic/entertainment value. These elements result in increased interaction and participation in the OBC (Nambisan and Baron, 2007).

Yet another theory used to identify OBC participation antecedents is the **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**, which is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) with the intention to explain human behaviour. According to this theory, behaviour is dependent on intentions to act, which are themselves a function of attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms (ibid., 1975). Attitudes are evaluative reactions to an action and reflect predispositions to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Subjective norms reflect the impact of expectations from other people and are based on a need for approval (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). TPB (Ajzen, 1991) builds on the TRA by adding an additional variable to predict intentions to act: the perceived behavioural control the individual feels he/she has over the action. The TPB explains that behaviours are directly influenced by one's intention to act which itself depends on three different factors: attitudes toward the act, subjective normative pressure to act and perceived behavioural control (ibid, 1991).

The TPB has been applied in the context of OBC in order to explain OBC participation (i.e. group behaviour). Critiquing its individual-oriented approach and the lack of emotional variables, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) proposed a slightly revised version of the TPB to apply to the context of OBC. They showed that group behaviour in an OBC is influenced by social intentions (a socially revised version of individual intentions), which itself depends on desires to act. The desire to act is driven by the attitude toward the act,

positive and negative anticipated emotions (added to the initial TPB model) and subjective norms. Similarly, Zhou (2011) combined elements of the TPB with social identity theory and showed that subjective norms influence intentions to act and subsequent participative behaviours in OBC.

The **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** is another adapted version of the TRA, which is particularly relevant to virtual environments. The theory ignores the role of subjective norm but argues that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two main factors affecting user acceptance of an information technology (Davis, 1989). With a focus on information technologies, it has proven particularly suitable to the study of OBC behaviour. In a Spanish context, Casaló et al. (2010) combine the TAM, TPB and social identity theories to predict OBC participation in the tourism industry. They show that attitude toward participation, perceived behavioural control, perceived usefulness and identification with the online community all work toward consumer's intentions to participate.

Other studies in OBC contexts suggest that the way people participate in OBC is reliant not only on social, relational, or technology-related attributes, but can also emanate from members' own traits and inner selves, therefore focusing on **individual traits and predispositions** (e.g. De Valck et al., 2009). A first study placing important focus on individual consumer traits and characteristics is Füller et al. (2008). In the context of an offline German automotive brand community, they evidence that community members' inherent creativity traits such as task motivation, skills, innovativeness and task involvement determine their willingness to engage in open innovation projects through the community.

Using the personality trait framework, Matzler et al. (2011) provide further evidence that individual traits impact OBC participation. Using a similar context to Füller et al. (2008) (German, offline, automotive industry), they evidence that consumers' extraversion influences identification with the community which in turns impacts brand loyalty. Personality congruity influences product attachment, which in turn impacts brand loyalty and brand trust. Matzler et al.'s (2011) study also shows that individual traits can be mixed with brand relationship antecedents (brand trust and passion) in models predicting OBC participation. This study is echoed by other research showing that inherent traits such as demographics, personal preferences, traits or attributes do impact OBC participation (Fournier et al., 2009, Chang et al., 2013). Similarly, Wiertz and de Ruyter (2007) advance

online interaction propensity as an important individual trait, which can be seen as a proxy for extraversion, and impacts OBC participation.

The literature suggests that several membership types exist, based on individual profiles and characteristics, which determine the way people participate in OBC. Fournier and Lee (2009), for instance, argue that brand communities can only be robust if they understand people's lives and that each of them has a role in the community. They identify 18 different roles (from mentor to learner and from celebrity to greeter), explaining that the role one assumes can depend on age, gender, lifestyle, life cycle and occupation.

Following the same reasoning, De Valck et al. (2009) create a typology of six types of OBC members: (1) Core members; (2) Conversationalists; (3) Informationalists; (4) Hobbyhists; (5) Functionalists and (6) Opportunists. This classification is based on a number of elements constituting the membership profile of individuals. Among other criteria, De Valck et al. (2009) give a lot of importance to individual consumer characteristics and traits in their classification. They include various demographic and socioeconomic variables, as well as consumer's Internet usage profile, their orientation towards others, and their opinion leadership and expertise with respect to the community's topic of interest. Consumer's sociability and influenceability are also considered.

More recently, Chang et al. (2013) identifies an extensive set of individual traits that influence the OBC members' propensity to receive and send information. They classify these driving traits under three headings: elementary (such as extraversion and neuroticism), compound (such as need for information) and situational (such as innovativeness and value consciousness). The study involved members of different branded Facebook pages (Starbucks, 7-Eleven, Eslite Bookstore, and Books Online bookstore). Their results show that information sharing is largely driven by a compound, three-level series of antecedents made of different personality traits.

Looking closely into other types of antecedents of OBC participation, one notices that individual perceptions tend to be integrated in other views as well. For instance, the UGT shows that perceived benefits or value motivate people to act. The way these benefits or values are perceived happens at an individual level. Similarly, social capital theory refers to perceived social value, at an individual level (Mathwick et al., 2008; Faraj and Johnson, 2011). TRA, TAM and TPB also rely on the individual assessment of element such as the site's usefulness, or subjective norms (see Casaló et al., 2010). In this sense, they all refer

to the individual member's personal interpretations and motivations. Therefore, these theories are based on individuals' assessment of benefits and value that lead a person to participate in an OBC. Inherent personality traits and characteristics are not accounted for in these theories, except for the inclusion of consumers' attitude toward a certain referent, for instance the community, as shown in Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006).

Lastly, other studies take a more practical approach to the drivers of OBC participation by focusing on the **OBC management style of the brand** that can trigger consumer responses in the form of enhanced OBC participation. This line of enquiry seems to be more relevant to online context and it emerged with Stokb urger-Sauer's (2010) study. He evidenced that OBC members of a health-related brand tend to be more receptive to offline than online activities initiated by the brand, indicating that OBC participation is reliant on offline participation as well.

Analysing over 115,000 posts on ten different OBCs, Homburg et al. (2015) focus on consumers' reaction to active brand participation in C2C conversations. Results indicate that, for conversations that address the consumers' functional needs and product support, consumers show diminishing returns to active firm engagement which, at very high levels, can undermine consumer sentiment. Considering the drivers of commitment, Kim et al. (2008) found out that online community commitment is a function of support for member communication, community value, recognition for participation and freedom of expression. Using mixed methods and quantitative data gathered from marketing professionals rather than consumers, (Gruner et al., 2014) report that OBC that are managed by brands in a very or moderately open way (Open OBC and Discerning OBC) tend to lead to higher success of innovative products.

The following section focuses on the outcomes of OBC participation.

2.5.2. Outcomes of participation in the OBC literature

The task of identifying the outcomes of OBC participation literature is less challenging than the review of antecedents. When OBC participation is captured as social identification with the community, its impact on community participation and engagement is well documented. For example, Dholakia et al., (2004) build on traditional models of social identity and influence (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000) to show the impact of OBC identification on group behaviours. Through the mediating effect of desires and group

intentions, social identification works toward increased participation behaviours in an OBC (Dholakia et al., 2004).

Furthermore, social identity is argued to be the basis of collective self-esteem and evaluation of self-worth in online brand community settings (Dholakia et al., 2004), which works toward increased groups behaviours. Algesheimer et al. (2005) go further into explaining how identification with the brand community leads to positive consequences, such as greater community engagement, or motivation to act, and ultimately greater participation intentions and behaviours toward the community and the brand. Algesheimer et al. (2005) however also pointed out a negative consequence of community identification in the form of normative community pressure, which they define as the pressure to interact and cooperate with the community. This first set of outcomes of OBC participation assumes that participation is identity based, and as such views community behaviours as an outcome. This view focuses largely on **social behavioural outcomes** of OBC participation, also evidencing benefits for individuals such as self-esteem.

A much larger stream of literature has paid attention to the benefits of OBC participation for the brand. The discussion started with McAlexander et al. (2002) and is largely measured through constructs pertaining to the **brand relationship** paradigm. McAlexander et al. (2002) pointed out that consumer-centric relationships with different entities within brand communities have the potential to lead to, and potentially form, a single construct akin to customer loyalty, through increased attachment to the product and the brand.

OBC contexts also show the various advantages of OBC participation in eliciting favourable consumer intentions and behaviours with respect to the focal brand. Research has demonstrated the strong impact of OBC participation (in the form of commitment, identification or behaviours) on intentional and behavioural brand loyalty (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Jang et al., 2008; Lin, 2010 – see also Fournier and Lee, 2009 and Muñiz and O’Guinn, 2001 for theoretical discussions). Similarly, Stokbürger-Sauer (2010) evidences how social interactions in OBC lead to higher levels of brand identification, which itself has a positive effect on **brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, and brand advocacy** (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010). The mediating effect of brand identification on the relationship between OBC participation and brand-related behaviour was also supported by Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) and Carlson et al. (2008).

Overall, much emphasis seems to be placed on the (repeat) **purchase or adoption** of products by consumers. Thompson and Sinha (2008) approached the issue from a product adoption perspective supporting that membership in a brand community increases the likelihood of adopting new products from the preferred brand but also decreases likelihood of adopting new products from opposing brands (oppositional loyalty). Similarly focusing on the adoption of new products, Gruner et al. (2014) show that more open communities foster higher sales volumes and market share of new products. In this context, OBC participation is also recognised as a driver of members' participation in open innovativeness, to generate new product ideas (Füller et al., 2008).

A significant number of OBC studies focus on the concept of **brand loyalty** to capture the relational and sales benefits that companies can reap out of OBC participation. Brand loyalty appears to be the end goal of many OBC studies, whether they are strictly taking a relational perspective to OBC participation (McAlexander et al., 2002), deriving OBC participation mainly from social identification (Algesheimer et al., 2005), or using a mix of social, individual and relationship-based theories (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010; Matzler et al., 2011; Marzocchi et al., 2013). Specifically in online contexts, Casaló et al. (2010) show that participation in an online travel-oriented community impacts attitudinal loyalty toward the focal brand. Laroche et al. (2012) comment on this view and indicate that behavioural loyalty is also an outcome of OBC practices in social media environments. Moreover, the impact of OBC participation on brand loyalty is fully mediated by brand trust in this study (ibid., 2012). Studies also seem to agree on the mediating effect of other brand-relationship construct in linking OBC participation to brand loyalty, such as brand commitment (Carlson et al., 2008), trust and affect (Matzler et al., 2011; Laroche et al., 2012; Marzocchi et al., 2013) or identification (Stockburger-Sauer, 2010).

To sum up, the importance of generating brand loyalty among OBC members is high on the agenda of OBC managers, as it appears to be an indicator of the return on investment of the OBC. As such, it constitutes the ultimate goal of more than one brand managing an OBC. This assertion was made from the early days of brand community research (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001) and is still valid to date in online contexts (Gruner et al., 2014). It is also a natural outcome of OBC participation: as members engage in group action, they are more likely to gain brand-related value, develop a positive attitude toward the brand and engage in repeat purchase (Jang et al., 2008).

2.5.3. Antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement

Understanding the role of consumer engagement in a network of nomological relationships with other constructs has been a stringent issue on the engagement agenda, as posited by Brodie and colleagues (2011). A few engagement researchers have attempted to tackle this issue (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011) by identifying potential antecedents, outcomes, or components of consumer engagement; some of which focus on OBC contexts. Variations in their approach are nonetheless apparent and dominated by a strong lack of empirical investigation and verification. This section presents and critically evaluates studies which concurrently focus on the antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement, both in OBC and non OBC-specific contexts, aiming to see how it can complement, or contradict existing research on the antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation presented above.

Several antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement have been proposed so far. Table 5 gives a summary of the key potential antecedents, outcomes and components of consumer engagement as conceptualised and empirically tested so far.

Four major conclusions can be drawn from this table. Firstly, it can be noted that consumer engagement clearly holds links with other concepts deriving from the relationship marketing paradigm. However, it is unclear whether some of them are antecedents, outcomes or components of engagement (e.g. satisfaction, trust or commitment). Furthermore, empirical validation of these relationships is lacking, particularly through quantitative studies. Lastly, there is very limited treatment of the individual traits potentially driving consumer engagement, as most of the focus is placed on other relational and social constructs.

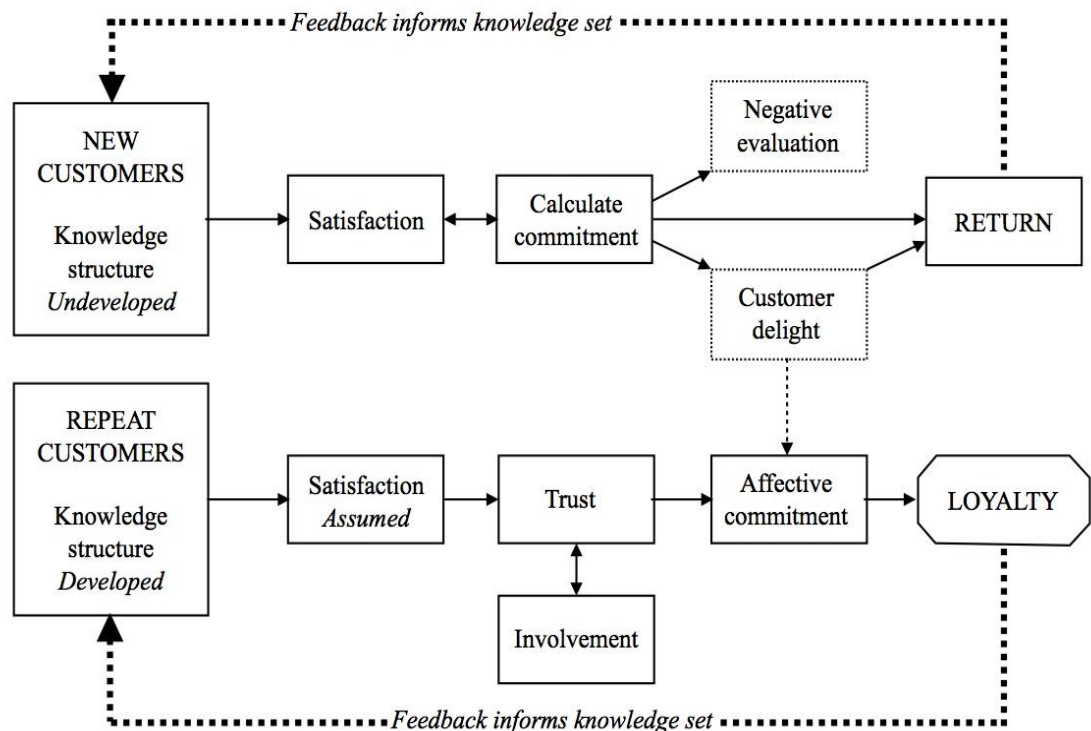
Table 5: Link between engagement and other variables

Constructs	References
Antecedents	
Trust	Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a
Commitment	Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a
Satisfaction	Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a
Involvement	Sprott et al., 2009; Hollebeek, 2011a; Vivek et al., 2012; Hollebeek et al., 2014*
Participation	Vivek et al., 2012
Interactivity	Hollebeek, 2011a
Flow	Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Hollebeek, 2011b
Rapport	Hollebeek, 2011a
Identity	Van Doorn et al., 2010
Consumption goals	Van Doorn et al., 2010
Resources	Van Doorn et al., 2010
Perceived costs/benefits	Van Doorn et al., 2010
Outcomes	
Self-brand connection	Hollebeek et al., 2014*
Brand usage intent	Hollebeek et al., 2014*
Loyalty	Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011a
Consumption intentions/ behaviours	Calder et al., 2013
Satisfaction	Hollebeek, 2011a; Calder et al. 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014
Experience	Hollebeek, 2011a
Co-created value	Hollebeek, 2011a
Trust	Hollebeek, 2011a
Commitment	Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2014*
Self-brand memory links	Sprott et al., 2009
Brand recall	Sprott et al., 2009
Brand attention	Sprott et al., 2009
Product preference	Sprott et al., 2009
WOM/ advocacy	Vivek et al., 2012; Wallace et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014*
Brand love	Wallace et al., 2014
Value perceptions	Vivek et al., 2014*
Benevolence perceptions	Vivek et al., 2014*
Components	
Commitment	Bowden, 2009
Trust	Bowden, 2009
Involvement	Bowden, 2009
Experiences	Calder et al., 2013*
* Asterisks indicate that the relationship has been quantitatively verified.	

In order to shed light into the underlying conceptualisations of these relationships, five central models from the engagement literature are critically reviewed, namely Bowden's (2009), van Doorn et al.'s (2010), Hollebeek's (2011a), Brodie et al.'s (2013) and Wirtz et al.'s (2013).

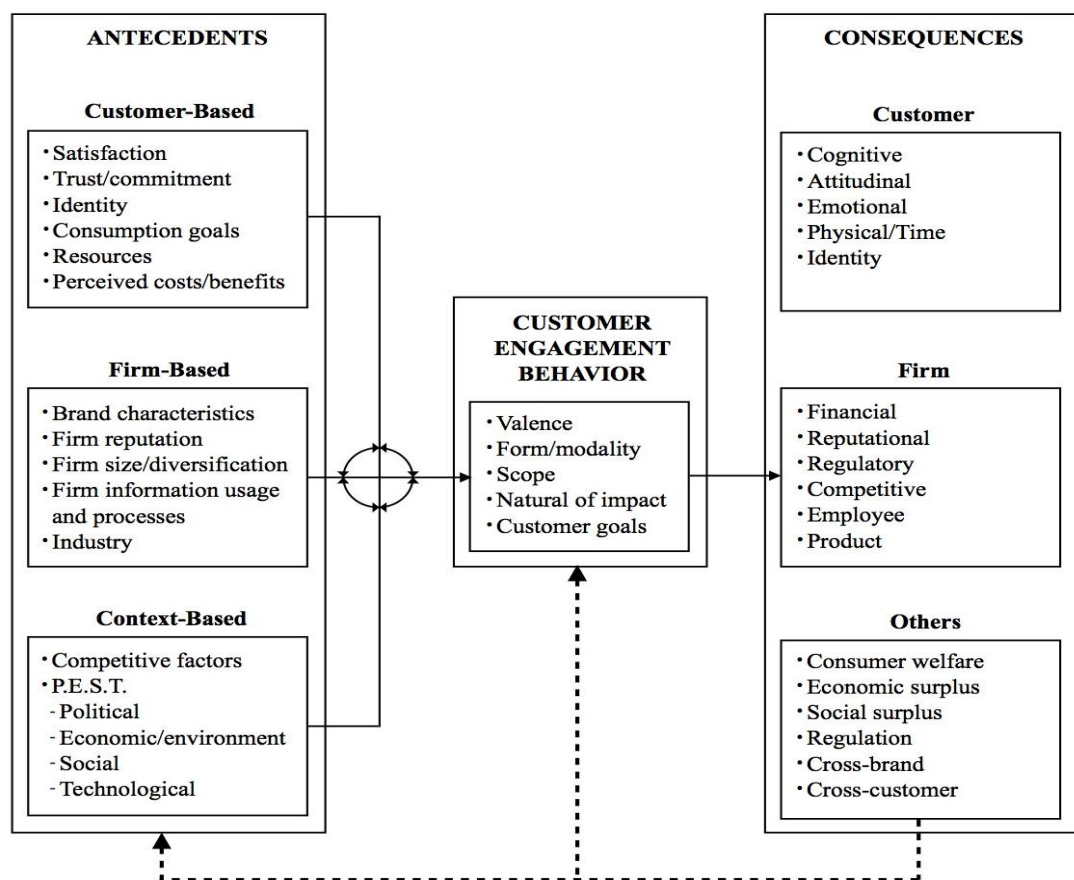
The first study, Bowden (2009), develops one of the first conceptual models of the process of engagement, which she conceptualises 'as a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand' (p65). This view considers engagement as a process rather than a state, and aims to differentiate new and existing customers in their progress toward repeat behaviour and loyalty, as shown in Figure 6 below. Under this premise, engagement is considered to be varying for existing and new customers. An interesting take from Bowden's study is the realisation that new customers rely strongly on calculative commitment and functional evaluations in this process, whereas returning customers' choice to repurchase is dominated by affective considerations.

Figure 6: Process of engagement in Bowden (2009)



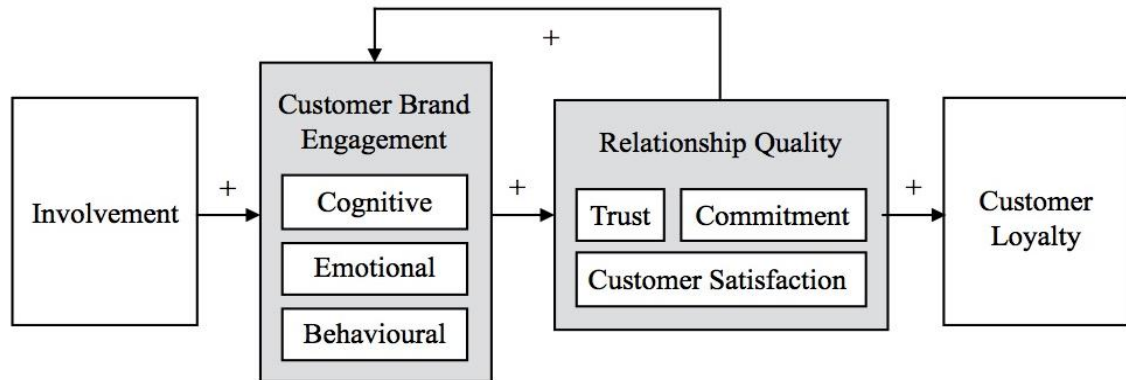
Shortly after Bowden, van Doorn and colleagues (2010) attempt to position customer engagement behaviour in a causal model, however still conceptual. This model differs from Bowden's in three important ways. Firstly, it focuses on engagement behaviours only, bypassing any attitudinal dimensions of the concept. Secondly, engagement is viewed as a variable in the model, rather than a process. Thirdly, it is much broader in scope, as it encompasses customer, firm and context-relevant antecedents and outcomes. Focusing on the customer dimension, little clarity is given considering the outcomes. The antecedents, on the other hand, are more precise and include satisfaction, trust/commitment, identity, consumption goals, resources and perceived costs/benefits. In terms of the firm-based antecedents, elements such as the brand characteristics, industry or reputation are proposed. Firm outcomes on the other hand relate to the financial, reputational or product aspects, among others. Overall, these considerations complement Bowden's approach, while however remaining quite broad and conceptual.

Figure 7: Process of engagement in Van Doorn et al. (2010)



In line with these findings, and supporting the predictive power of engagement on loyalty, Hollebeek (2011a) positions customer engagement in a network of nomological relationships whereby she proposes that engagement impacts loyalty through the mediating effects of relationship quality, which is composed of trust, commitment and satisfaction. These relationships remain however at the conceptual level, and it is acknowledged that commitment, trust and satisfaction might just as well be antecedents of engagement.

Figure 8: Conceptual model of engagement in Hollebeek (2011a)



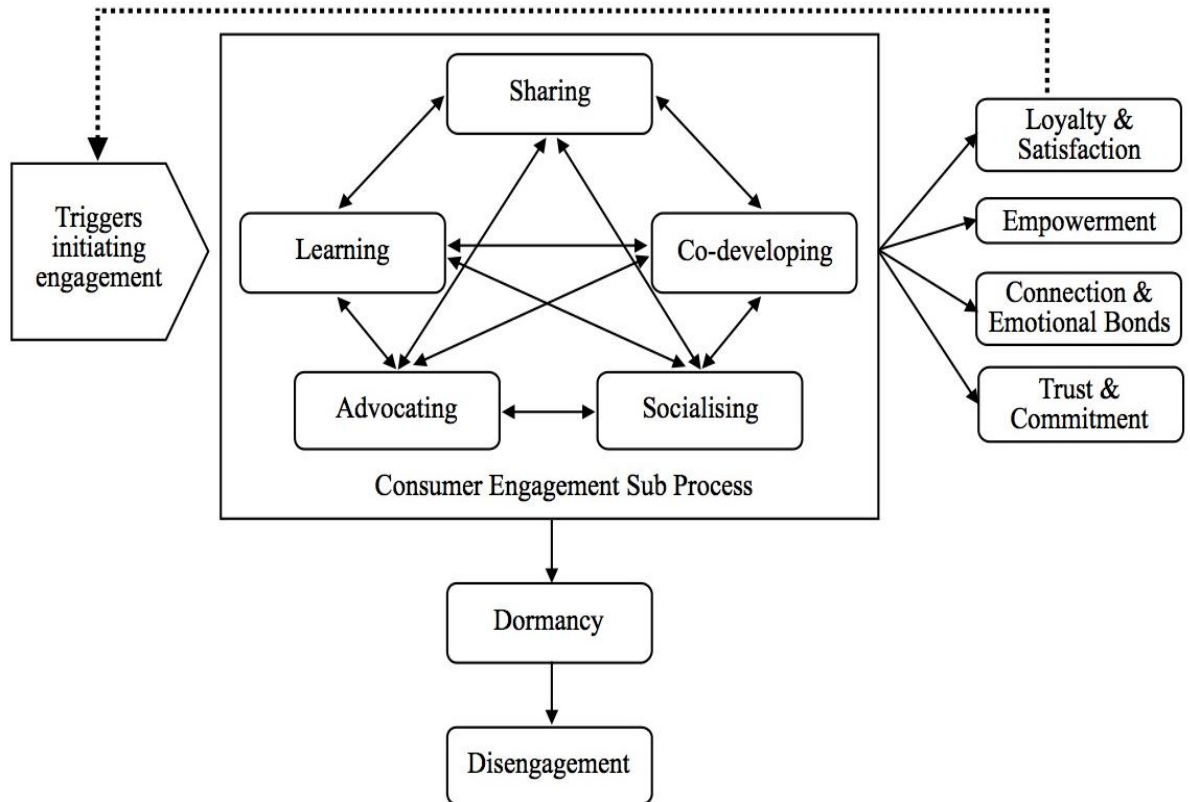
These three models, however different, show that consumer engagement is linked with several consumer-, firm- and context-related factors. Some of the most recurring relationships that have been explored are those linking engagement with **trust, commitment, involvement and loyalty**. It remains however unclear whether trust, commitment and involvement are antecedents (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a), outcomes (Hollebeek, 2011a; Calder et al. 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014) or components (Bowden, 2009) of engagement.

More recent studies focus on consumer engagement in OBC contexts, and thus provide increased precision into the interplay between consumer engagement and other constructs in this context. Adopting a slightly different positioning, Brodie et al. (2011) start by relating customer engagement to Vargo and Lush's (2004) service dominant (SD) logic. Customer engagement is reflective of co-creative experiences in networked service relationships, replacing other relational terms like participation or involvement. In this perspective, engagement sits within an iterative service relationship process, where its consequences may act as antecedents in subsequent sub-processes or cycles.

Brodie et al. (2013) follow-up on this 2011 study by reporting qualitative case study findings from an online 'Vibration Training' community, allowing them to settle on the direction of the relationships between consumer engagement and other constructs, at least

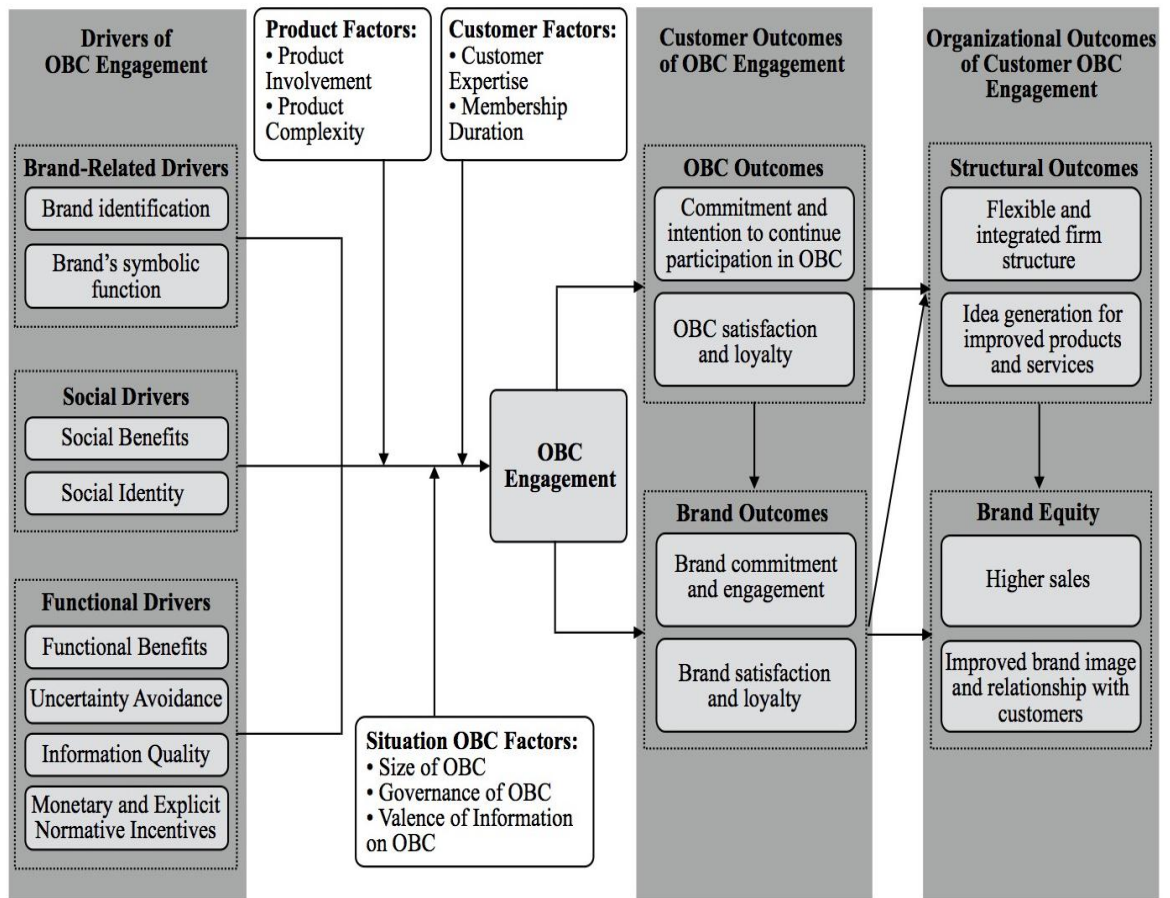
within the context of OBC. Their exploratory findings determine that engagement is conducive of loyalty, satisfaction, empowerment, emotional bonds, trust and commitment (Brodie et al., 2013). Triggers of consumer engagement are not as clearly expressed, although they are said to derive mainly from information search.

Figure 9: Process of engagement in Brodie et al. (2013)



Lastly, Wirtz et al. (2013)'s model of the antecedents and outcomes of consumer OBC engagement proposes a holistic approach to the issue. It includes brand-related, social and functional drivers, moderating factors as well as outcomes of OBC engagement. This model is the most comprehensive conceptualisation of the mediating role of consumer engagement in an OBC context.

Figure 10: Conceptual model of engagement in Wirtz et al. (2013)



2.6. Gaps and research questions

The issue inherent to the extant literature on OBC participation is threefold. Firstly, there is an extremely fragmented theoretical approach to the treatment of OBC participation (Preece and Maloney-Krishmar, 2005). This fragmentation leaves the reader to wonder which approach is best, and if a single one can cater for the apparent complexity of the phenomenon. This silo approach, with several views of OBC participation ranging from affective to social and behavioural perspectives (e.g. Dholakia et al., 2004; Casaló et al., 2008; Stockbürger-Sauer, 2010) indicates that more than one dimension of participation might be needed to capture the full scope of OBC participation. In other words, this suggests the need for a multi-dimensional approach to OBC participation, which could encompass emotional, evaluative and behavioural elements (Brodie et al., 2013).

Secondly, there is an oversight of social referents in the way OBC participation is conceptualised and measured. The sociality of OBC participation transpires through some of its perspectives, such as the social identification theory (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005), whereby the individual construes his/her identity to be congruent with that of the brand community. However, adopting a social referent to OBC participation is not systematic (e.g. Kim et al., 2008), despite the clear social underpinnings permeating the whole OBC participation literature from its inception (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). These underpinnings are also inherent to the online context (Yadav and Pavlou, 2014).

Thirdly, when a social referent exists, a lack of interactivity is still denoted in the way OBC participation is captured. Even when participation is envisaged with respect to the rest of the group, the active engagement of the group in sustaining OBC participation does not seem like a pre-requisite. The only approach truly acknowledging the interactive nature of participation is social constructivism (e.g. Schau et al., 2009); yet is it bound by a worldview that makes it inherently impossible to capture quantitatively.

To summarise, in addition to creating a confused account of OBC participation, studies collectively denote a lack of integration of the very essence of online consumer behaviour (Mathwick, 2002). Online consumers interact in rich, complex, social and highly interactive ways, which are fostered by online platforms (Labrecque et al., 2013). There is therefore an urgent need to address these three gaps in the treatment of OBC participation, using an approach much more responsive of the uniqueness of online community environments (Quinton, 2013).

In this respect, the recent introduction of consumer engagement as a form of OBC participation offers clear benefits in comparison to other frames of analysis. Multidimensionality is the first added value of consumer engagement, as it is largely viewed in the marketing and social sciences as a multidimensional concept. Consumer engagement encompasses an affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension. This multidimensionality is even more evident and strongly acknowledged in OBC studies (Brodie et al., 2013).

Additionally, consumer engagement is inherently social, extending the realm of relationship marketing to the OBC context. Consumer engagement is always approached as involving a subject (in marketing, often the consumer) and a partner (the brand, the

community, a piece of media). In this sense, engagement can never happen, and can never be measured without reference to both a subject and a locus of engagement.

Another asset of consumer engagement is that it is inherently interactive (Vivek et al., 2012), which is congruent with online contexts. Consumer engagement is characterised by an active two-way relationship between a subject, and an engagement partner (Brodie et al., 2011). In this way, consumer engagement is more sensitive to the interactive nature of online contexts, which shape consumer behaviour broadening the speed, reach and amount of information shared (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Consumer engagement as a concept clearly offers strong advantages compared to existing approaches to OBC participation. It shows potential to address all three key shortcomings of the literature.

The strength of consumer engagement lies thus in its holistic, social and interactive perspective to the treatment of OBC participation. Consumer engagement seems to cover under the same umbrella term all critical dimensions of OBC participation (Mollen and Wilson, 2010): it involves behavioural manifestations and active participation in community activities and interactions (see Dholakia et al., 2004; Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007; Garnefeld et al., 2012), it has an affective dimension which has previously been accounted through community commitment or attachment (see Jang et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2008), and it also denotes a cognitive component in line with previous studies focusing on attention and cognitive involvement in the OBC context. The iterative and experience-laden nature of brand community practices is also accounted for (Schau et al., 2009), as well as the social aspect of in-group actions (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

Moreover, consumer engagement appears to be highly congruent with online settings and virtual engagement platforms (Bredibach et al., 2014), and brand experiences (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The adequacy of consumer engagement to the OBC context is further discussed in chapter 3 of this study.

Current research into consumer engagement in OBC settings is however still lacking, particularly on the empirical front. Consumer engagement is a new concept, and most studies addressing it are still conceptual or exploratory (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013). In this context, little is known about the true applicability of the concept of consumer engagement as a way to approach OBC participation. What is the exact nature of consumer engagement? What does its multidimensionality really mean? More specifically, how can we measure consumer engagement in a way to capture all the facets of OBC participation

accurately? All these questions remain largely unanswered to date in the marketing and OBC literature (Brodie et al., 2013) and calls for further operationalisation of the concept of consumer engagement in online social environments have been made (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Schivinski et al., forthcoming).

On the basis of this lack of conceptual clarity and empirical validation of a measure of consumer engagement in OBC, the first research question of this thesis is:

RQ 1: How to measure consumer engagement in OBC?

In addition to measuring engagement, it seems important to identify its antecedents and outcomes (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The review of the literature on the antecedents of OBC participation revealed is a lack of consensus about the major drivers of consumer participation in firm-hosted OBC (Casaló et al., 2010). In this endeavour, it has not been uncommon for researchers to mix different theoretical frameworks and concepts. Casaló et al. (2010), for instance, use elements of the TAM and social identity theory. Similarly, Algesheimer et al. (2005) combine constructs from relationship marketing and social identity theory, while Jang et al. (2008) add information technology elements to the mix. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) on the other hand, combine the social identification theory with the TPB to predict OBC participation. Studies investigating OBC participation, its antecedents and outcomes clearly tend to mix and match theories and approaches based on their specific OBC contexts and research agenda.

The literature review showed that social and motivational drivers for participation have received an extended treatment (Campbell et al., 2014). Social identification (with the community or with the brand) is understood as a clear driver of OBC participation, as well as other social norms and attitudes (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). The UGT also gave ground to a broad stream of research on member's motivation to participate based on expected benefits and value, whether of an informational, social or personal nature (Dholakia et al., 2004). The relationship marketing literature has also been adopted in multiple instances, evidencing the role of elements such as brand relationship quality (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), brand trust, brand passion (Füller et al., 2008), or brand identification (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010) in the mix to reach higher OBC participation.

Individual traits and characteristics of consumers seem to have received a weaker and more incomplete treatment than any other types of antecedents. A fragmented stream of research however recognises the crucial importance of individual factors in influencing OBC

participation, and their ability to be used as members' segmentation or classification criteria (see De Valck et al., 2009). Fournier and Lee (2009) provide a purely conceptual approach to these individual traits, De Valck and colleagues (2009) base their findings on qualitative data, and Chang et al. (2013) are the only ones using quantitative data in this endeavour. Focusing on individual traits and specificities therefore seems to be a particularly promising research direction, which has been rather overlooked (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007) and bears high potential for managerial and theoretical contribution. Indeed, recent studies call for further investigation of these types of participation drivers (Chang et al., 2013).

Additionally, investigating individual traits and characteristics is relevant to the understanding of consumer engagement (Wirtz et al., 2013). Firstly, because individual traits such as personality tend to show a greater consistency through time than other motivational or social factors, they should therefore be strongly related to repeat and long-term engagement manifestations (Lastovicka and Joachimsthaler, 1988). Secondly, conceptual studies in consumer engagement have recently introduced the need to study the role of consumer-specific factors on their engagement (e.g. Wirtz et al., 2013), however without giving clear indications on what these indicators might be.

Based on the current state of both OBC and consumer engagement literature, it therefore appears to be a priority to further explicate the role of consumer-specific traits in driving consumer engagement in OBC. The second research question of this thesis is thus formulated:

RQ2: What are the individual traits and predispositions that drive consumer engagement in OBCs?

The treatment of the outcomes of OBC participation seems less problematic and highly centred upon the brand benefits of OBC participation. Brand relationship building seems to be one of the most frequently researched outcomes of OBC participation (e.g. Matzler et al., 2011; Marzocchi et al., 2013). This particular interest in understanding the brand-relationship outcome of OBC participation makes sense both from a theory and practical point of view. Theoretically, OBC research is anchored in the brand relationship paradigm, whereby consumers and companies create and develop bonds (McAlexander et al., 2002). The literature shows strong focus of OBC scholars in understanding relational antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005; Casaló et al., 2010).

Although there is a disagreement among scholars as to whether consumer-brand relationships should precede (Algesheimer et al., 2005), derive from (Jang et al., 2008) or be an iterative circle with OBC participation, a significant number of studies have shown that OBC participation leads to increased brand trust (Laroche et al., 2012) commitment (Kim et al., 2008) and, most importantly, loyalty (Casaló et al., 2010; Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010; Matzler et al., 2011; Marzocchi et al., 2013). Studies also seem to agree on the mediating effect of other brand-relationship construct in linking OBC participation to brand loyalty, such as brand commitment (Carlson et al., 2008), trust and affect (Matzler et al., 2011; Laroche et al., 2012; Marzocchi et al., 2013) or identification (Stockbürger-Sauer, 2010).

These important consequences of OBC participation are yet to be confirmed with reference to the concept of consumer engagement. Indeed, the literature incorporating consumer engagement in OBC studies still largely focuses on the conceptual relationships between consumer engagement and its relational outcomes in an OBC context (Brodie et al., 2011). Brand relationship benefits from consumer engagement in OBC are likely to exist (Hollebeek, 2011); however the link between consumer engagement in OBC and brand-relationship outcomes such as trust, commitment and loyalty has been largely overlooked.

Confirming the explanatory potential of the consumer engagement on consumer-brand relationships in the context of OBC is thus an urgent requirement, which leads to the formulation of the third research question driving this thesis:

RQ3: How does consumer engagement in OBC contribute to brand relationship building?

2.7. Summary

This chapter reviews the literature on OBC participation and consumer engagement. The aim is to uncover some of the most stringent gaps existing in the OBC literature, under the guidance of the research aims and objectives presented in chapter 1. The chapter identifies several key issues pertaining to the way OBC participation has been approached so far, which make it largely irresponsible of the online environment in which they operate. The review shows that OBC participation would benefit from a more social, interactive and

multidimensional approach and measurement. On this ground, the chapter identifies engagement as a valid route for conceptualising OBC participation. Engagement is a promising concept because it is inherently social, interactive and multidimensional. Research on engagement however remains conceptual and at best exploratory. A major gap is identified with the need to provide a better conceptualisation of consumer engagement in OBC, and develop a measure to capture this construct.

This chapter also identifies the need to focus on the individual traits and characteristics of consumer in an effort to explain the formation of consumer engagement in OBC. Factors such as consumers' attitude toward participation, OIP and product involvement are potential antecedents of consumer engagement. Lastly, a need for empirical validation of the impact of consumer engagement on brand relationships in the context of OBCs is identified.

Chapter 3: Conceptual approach

3.1. Introduction

The introduction of this thesis determined two objectives of the present research: one focusing on the capture and measurement of consumer engagement as an approach to OBC participation, the second addressing the role of consumer engagement in a nomological network of relationships with other constructs in the OBC context. **The aim of this chapter is thus to adapt the concept of consumer engagement to an OBC context, and to build a conceptual model explaining the drivers and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC.**

The literature review has highlighted three main gaps in the current understanding of OBC participation and proposed consumer engagement as a way to advance this understanding. The innovative concept of consumer engagement emerged as a sound holistic construct to consolidate the currently fragmented state of research in OBC participation (Brodie et al., 2013). From here on, consumer engagement is adopted as the denomination of the phenomenon under study, in the place of participation. Using consumer engagement as a way to conceptualise OBC participation is an effort to bring clarity and exhaustiveness to the field of OBC participation.

This study is however sympathetic to the tradition of OBC studies, which combine different theoretical strands (Preece and Malhoney-Krishmar, 2005). In identifying the gaps regarding the antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC, one notes that there is no dominant theoretical approach: a variety of factors may affect and result from engagement. Rather than settling on one theory, since there isn't a preferred one, the study integrates multiple theoretical strands in order to extend the current approach to engagement in OBC. The study focuses on antecedents of consumer engagement that have not been confirmed in empirical quantitative studies on engagement but transpired as conceptually relevant: individual traits and characteristics (Wirtz et al., 2013). More specifically, the OBC literature directs the choice of OIP (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), attitude toward OBC participation (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006) and product involvement

(Sprott et al., 2009; Hollebeek et al., 2014) as promising concepts. Regarding the outcomes of engagement, OBC studies have granted much focus on brand relationship concepts such as trust, commitment and loyalty, and it seems relevant to test this assumption under a consumer engagement approach (Hollebeek, 2011b). This broad integrative view allows the confirmation of results from OBC studies, and the empirical validation of a lot of exploratory and conceptual work in the field of engagement. In this sense, the study seeks confirmation of existing work, but does not preclude discovery.

In this chapter, a framework of consumer engagement in OBC is proposed. This framework builds on the existing consumer engagement literature and conceptual frameworks, also reaching out to other streams of literature in the social sciences. This framework presents the conceptual premises against which consumer engagement is expected to operate, or be captured, in an OBC context. Secondly, a conceptual model is proposed, placing consumer engagement, as conceptualised in the above-mentioned framework, at the centre stage of OBC functioning. The individual factors driving online consumer engagement are identified, as well as its resulting relational variables. The OBC literature and theories are used to build this model, more particularly focusing on the brand relationship paradigm, coupled with individual traits, preferences and attitudes. Thirdly, the overall conceptual model is translated and operationalised into a set of hypotheses.

The last section of this chapter focuses on proposing a validation of the study across two linguistic samples. The current state of OBC and consumer engagement research is scrutinised and evidence of little contextual validation procedures is highlighted, particularly when it comes to different languages.

3.2. Consumer engagement framework

It is clear from the literature review that consumer engagement is a context-specific concept adaptable to a lot of different consumption-related marketing environments. Depending on the context in which it appears, engagement has different referents (Brodie et al., 2011). This section aims to define and characterise consumer engagement in the OBC context.

3.2.1. Defining consumer engagement in OBC

The literature review provided an account of the existing conceptualisations and definitions of consumer engagement, highlighting the different approaches that exist. This study focuses on consumer engagement in OBC and defines it as:

'The state that reflects consumer's positive individual dispositions toward engagement partners. In an OBC context, these partners are the OBC, representing the other consumers in the OBC, and the focal brand. It is expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioural manifestations that go beyond exchange situations'.

This definition closely follows Brodie et al. (2011), Brodie et al. (2013) as well as Hollebeek's (2011, 2014) conceptualisations of consumer engagement. It views consumer engagement as a psychological concept expressed through multi-dimensional manifestations, in line with most studies in marketing and broader social sciences literature. Additionally, engagement involves a subject and a partner. In the OBC context, the subject of engagement is the individual consumer, and its engagement partners are the brand on the one hand, as personified by the OBC manager(s) and the OBC, as personified by the other consumers in the OBC.

This definition also implies the enduring aspect of engagement. Consumer engagement goes beyond one-off (or repeat) purchase situations. It is associated with an extended vision of consumer-brand relationships that is not only concerned with exchange situations but deep, on-going relationships (Vivek et al., 2012). This has important implications on the way it needs to be conceptualised and measured, and echoes the need to recognise the long-term nature of connections with brands online (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2013).

Additionally, this definition focuses on engagement as a positively-valenced concept. The study acknowledges the existence of positive and negative forms of engagement in OBC (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). However, most research on engagement in OBC has thus far initiated conceptual and exploratory work on the positive side of the phenomenon, calling for further research on positive engagement (Brodie et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2013). Although work is needed on both sides of the engagement coin, this study first attempts to

bring further research on positive engagement, which also allows focusing on positive outcomes (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

Moreover, in line with the first stated objective of this research, it adopts a definition of engagement as a state, which allows it to have varying levels, or intensity, and thus the potential to be operationalised, and measured (see Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014). It also opens avenues for treating engagement as part of a nomological network of relationships between constructs, which is the second objective of this study.

The meaning of the different elements of this definition is further clarified below, showing how this definition is relevant and suited to the OBC context, how it advances the meaning of OBC participation. Since consumer engagement is a context-specific concept, and that this study chooses to focus on the context of OBC, it is important to delineate the contextual boundaries that this focus implies. More specifically, the choice of engagement subject and partners is explained in line with the OBC context. Subsequently, the dimensionality and sub-dimensionality of engagement are conceptually clarified – these are however considered to be static and not to vary according to the context of investigation, since they derive from different literature streams and thus contexts. These clarifications allow reaching a conceptual framework of consumer engagement in OBC.

3.2.2. The subject of engagement in OBC

The notion of the subject of engagement represents a key aspect of conceptualisation. As clarified previously, engagement involves both a subject (the engaged entity) and a partner (the active focus of engagement). Clearly determining and defining the subject of engagement is an important boundary assumption of this study, as it is understood from the literature review that it varies according to the context of investigation. There is a broad agreement that the unit of analysis in marketing should be the individual customer (e.g. Bowden, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011), or consumer (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013; Calder et al., 2013; Wallace et al., 2014), regardless of the context of investigation. Although the initiator of engagement can be the company, through specific offerings or activities, the person whose engagement matters to marketing researchers and practitioners alike is, understandably, the individual customer or consumer (Vivek et al., 2012). It seems however that ‘customer’ and ‘consumer’ are used interchangeably in the literature, as evidenced in Table 4 in the literature review. Clarification of the engagement subject is therefore needed. Since this study focuses on a specific consumption-related environment,

the OBC, a clear understanding of what it meant by ‘consumer’, or ‘customer’ is a prerequisite.

This study focuses on consumers as the subject of engagement and level of analysis as it appears to be the best terms to qualify members of an OBC. Consumers are considered here in their capacity of OBC members, or users, and can be defined as the persons who consume the community content, contribute to it and participate to the community to some extent (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Traditionally, a consumer is defined as *‘the user of a product, service or other form of offering’*, whereas a customer is *‘the person who purchases and pays for a product, service, or other form of offering from a company or organisation’* (Baines et al., 2011, pp. 729-30). In OBC embedded on social media however, being either a consumer or customer of the brand is not a prerequisite to OBC membership or participation (Ruiz-Mafé and Blas, 2006).

This study therefore views brand usage in a broader sense than pure product or service consumption and rather sees it as going beyond purchase situations (Vivek et al., 2012). Being member of an OBC focused on a brand is therefore akin to consuming the product, in a non-purchase sense. This is what is intended in the definition of consumer engagement when referring to situations ‘beyond purchase’ (ibid., 2012). On this basis, this thesis refers to consumers as the subject of engagement and level of analysis, adopting a view of consumers as any existing member of an OBC, irrespective of past, previous or current brand ownership.

This conceptualisation is congruent with both the OBC and consumer engagement literature. Individual community members can be the subject of engagement (Algesheimer et al., 2005) and can feel engaged toward any particular organisational activity or event (Vivek et al., 2014). Moreover, both existing purchasing consumers and non-existing purchasing consumers of a brand are capable of engagement (Bowden, 2009). Indeed, one may or may not have brand ownership in order to visit and partake in an OBC (Zhou et al., 2013), and ‘administrative’ association with a brand is not considered as a prerequisite for OBC participation (Owersloot and Oderkerken-Schröder, 2008).

Based on this understanding of what being a consumer in an OBC context means, this study refers to ‘consumer’ engagement throughout, rather than ‘customer’ engagement.

3.2.3. The partners of engagement in Online Brand Community

Consumer engagement is interactive by nature (Vivek et al., 2012). Hence, engagement can only happen if there is a relationship partner to interact with, and use as an object of engagement. Similarly to specifying the subject of engagement, boundary assumptions of this study need to be determined in terms of the engagement partners.

The literature review showed that in the context of OBCs, the relevant and key engagement partners to consider are the brand and the community itself (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Wirtz et al., 2013). In line with its context of investigation, this research is centred on consumer engagement with two engagement partners: the OBC, as personified with other OBC members on the one hand, and the brand itself on the other hand. Consumer-to-consumer relationships as well as consumer-brand relationships are core constituents of the OBC functioning, as evidenced through the strong stream of literature in OBC focused on relationship marketing (McAlexander et al., 2002).

The reasons for focusing on OBC and brand engagement as engagement partners in an OBC context stem from both the consumer engagement and OBC literature. In the OBC literature, it clearly transpired that consumer develop relationships with the focal brand, which are indicative of their participation in the community (e.g. Kim et al., 2008). The relationships that they form with other members of the community are equally indicative of their commitment to the community, and researchers have thus coined 'brand community engagement' as a construct of interest when tapping into OBC participation (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

This duality is also apparent in the consumer engagement literature. Although most of the consumer engagement studies focus on one engagement partner at a time, studies focusing on engagement in an OBC context have clearly acknowledged the need to consider multiple engagement partners: the community of other members, and the brand (Brodie et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2013). It is even argued that the former can impact the latter (Wirtz et al., 2013), an assertion which will be developed later on in this chapter.

The remainder of this study therefore refers to **consumer engagement** in an OBC context as an overarching concept, which always has the individual consumer as a subject, but can have two different engagement partners, the OBC and the brand. This thesis refers to '**online brand community (OBC) engagement**' and '**online brand engagement**' to differentiate when consumer engagement is directed at the OBC or at the brand.

Depending on the scope of analysis, this study either refers to of the concept consumer engagement as whole, or focus on one or two of its partner-specific constructs.

3.2.4. The dimensions and sub-dimensions of consumer engagement

This study aligns with the multi-dimensional, cognitive-affective-behavioural, view of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). Not only is it the most accepted view in the extant literature on consumer engagement (Brodie et al. 2011), but it is also one of the factors that distinguish engagement from other unidimensional approaches to OBC participation, therefore evidencing its strength. A clarification of the exact meaning of these dimensions in an OBC context is however required, as existing marketing literature has been providing a rather confused account of the existence and meaning of different engagement dimensions.

The development of the dimensions of engagement proposed hereafter builds on relevant literature in 1/consumer engagement 2/ (online) brand community and 3/ other fields of the social sciences such as employee engagement. Each dimension is first approached and defined conceptually, followed by its sub-dimensions.

Affective engagement

Affect represents the first dimension of engagement. Marketing research is rich in references to the concept of affect, as well as emotions and feeling, and the role of these constructs in consumer behaviour is well referenced (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Among established affective processes, emotions, feelings and moods can and need to be distinguished. Emotions and feelings are both responses to specific stimuli, however emotions are usually intense and enduring, whereas feelings are more transient (Agarwal and Malhotra, 2005). An emotion is a valenced mental state of readiness, having a specific referent and strong intensity, and it may result in specific actions. Moods on the other hand are lower in intensity, and usually not associated with a stimulus object (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Based on these considerations, affect is defined in the context of this study as *'the summative and enduring level of positive emotions experienced by a consumer with respect to his/her engagement partner'*. Affect is composed of different and complementary emotional stimuli, relevant to the subject, object and context of the affective occurrence.

Engagement is generally perceived as a diffuse, long-lasting state rather than a trait (Schaufeli et al., 2006), hence, it would be inaccurate to dimensionalise it in terms of transient phenomena. Rather than time-bound emotions, affect refers to a summative

mechanism of emotion processing (Sojka and Giese, 1997), and it therefore reflects the enduring aspect of engagement. When considering affective dimensions of engagement, it is therefore important to encompass different relevant emotions that reflect positive engagement and consider these emotions from a long-lasting and summative perspective.

The first aspect of the affective dimension is **enthusiasm**. Enthusiasm represents an individual's strong level of excitement and interest regarding the engagement partner (Vivek et al., 2014), and several researchers have found enthusiasm to represent a positive affective engagement state in both employee and consumer engagement literature. In an organisational context, engagement refers to the employee's sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride (Schaufeli and Baker, 2004), which indicates that he/she feels enthusiastic and passionate about his/her job. This is consistent with the dimensions of vigour (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Patterson et al., 2006) and activation (Hollebeek et al., 2014), which are representative of the motivational nature of engagement (Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Pham and Avnet, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011).

Enthusiasm also differentiates engagement from other similar marketing constructs, such as satisfaction (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Despite the fact that satisfaction also constitutes a summative affective response, it is an evaluative process based on past consumption experiences and the performance of the offering (Johnson and Fornell, 1991). Enthusiasm is characterised by a strong feeling of excitement (Bloch, 1986), which is an enduring and active state, and does not encompass performance evaluations.

Enjoyment is the second aspect of the affective dimension of engagement. It refers to an individuals' intrinsic and effortless pleasure in being in touch with the focus of his/her engagement. In the employee engagement literature, researchers refer to employee's absorption as the fact of being carried away, immersed and happy when engaged with a task (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engagement is therefore associated with a pleasurable state (Mollen and Wilson, 2010). Calder et al. (2013) define intrinsic enjoyment as *'the experience of having a break and forgetting about everything else, of being transported into a better mood or state of mind'* (p.12) and consider it an integral part of consumer engagement, based on a series of qualitative interviews with newspapers readers. Engagement is thereby associated with a form of hedonic pleasurable state, with underlies the motivation to remain engaged.

Enjoyment and pleasure are well-documented affective outcomes of brand use and consumption, as demonstrated in the brand affect concept and scale (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Brands are thus recognised to have the potential to generate pleasurable states for consumers, and this can be expected from other engagement objects as well. The construct of brand affect as defined by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) is however not applicable to engagement as such, and the scale cannot be adopted because there is a clear conceptual and operational boundary to brand affect which limits it to consumptive situations, and it is a fundamental characteristic of engagement to be going beyond purchase situations.

The following table summarises this study's conceptualisation of the affective dimension of consumer engagement, and its two sub-dimensions: enjoyment and enthusiasm. All definitions are applicable to both engagement partners this study investigates: the OBC and the brand. Definitions can therefore be duplicated by simply substituting the engagement partners with the appropriate referent.

Table 6: Affective dimension and sub-dimensions

Affective dimension of consumer engagement		
Definition		References
The summative and enduring level of positive emotions experienced by a consumer with respect to his/her engagement partner.		Sojka and Giese, 1997; Bagozzi, et al., 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek, 2011b.
Sub-dimension	Definition	References
Enthusiasm	A consumer's intrinsic level of excitement and interest regarding the engagement partner.	Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli and Baker, 2004; Patterson et al., 2006; Vivek, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011a.
Enjoyment	A consumer's pleasure and happiness derived from interaction with the engagement partner.	Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Calder et al., 2013.

Cognitive engagement

Cognition is a well-recognised dimension of engagement in different streams of literature, and it is often combined with the emotional dimension of engagement. To illustrate, in organisational behaviour, Saks (2006, p. 600) defines employee engagement as "*the amount of cognitive, emotional and physical resources an individual is prepared to devote in the performance of one's work roles.*" Consistent with this emphasis on the

psychological elements, engagement is *'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind'* (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74), suggesting that employee engagement is a persistent and pervasive affective–cognitive state (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). More specifically, organisational behaviour research has emphasised absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and attention (Rothbard, 2001) as cognitive aspects of employee engagement.

In the consumer engagement literature, several researchers refer to the cognitive aspect of the concept (e.g. Patterson et al., 2006; Mollen and Wilson, 2009; Sprott et al., 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek, 2011b; So et al., 2013; Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2013). Specific examples illustrating the cognitive dimension of customer engagement are active, sustained and even complex cognitive processing (Mollen and Wilson, 2010); immersion (Hollebeek, 2011), attention (Higgins and Scholer, 2009) and absorption (Patterson et al., 2006). Hollebeek (2011b) further exemplifies occurrence of cognitive engagement through individual's level of concentration and/or engrossment with a brand, which, again, is happening beyond and irrespective of any exchange (Vivek et al., 2012). Based on these grounds, this study defines cognitive engagement as *'a set of enduring and active mental states that a customer experiences with respect to his/her engagement partner'*, and includes attention and absorption as sub-dimensions.

Attention is the first aspect of the cognitive dimension of engagement. In the context of work, attention has been found to be an important dimension of employee engagement whereby the employee focuses and is mentally preoccupied with work (Rothbard, 2001). Attention represents an immaterial limited resource that individuals can allocate in a number of ways. Higgins and Scholer (2009) exemplify this point in the consumer engagement realm in the following way: the more a spectator is engaged in a movie, the less likely he is to pay attention to noises in the audience, and the more likely he will be to follow the central point of the plot. Engagement is about sustained attention, which is a limited resource. A consumer who is engaged with an object will also be more attracted by information about it (So et al., 2013), and therefore more prone to further engagement behaviours and knowledge co-creation, such as active information search and sharing (Brodie et al., 2013). Attention is therefore considered an important aspect of cognitive engagement and it is defined as the *'cognitive availability and amount of time spent actively thinking about and being attentive to the focus of engagement'*.

Absorption represents the second sub-dimension of cognitive engagement. In organisational behaviour, absorption is recognised as an indicator of employee engagement

(Rothbard, 2001). Absorption with one's work is characterised by being fully concentrated and engrossed, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Absorption refers to a distortion of time, loss of self-consciousness and effortless concentration with respect to the object of engagement. In contrast to attention, which represents the amount of cognitive availability of an individual, absorption means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's cognitive focus on a role.

Patterson et al. (2006), draw on this organisational behaviour research by Schaufeli and colleagues to define customer engagement in terms of the cognitive 'absorption,' emotional 'dedication' and behavioural 'vigor' and 'interaction' dimensions. Absorption, in particular, is viewed as the level of customer concentration on and engrossment with a focal engagement object, such as a brand/organisation. This is congruent with Hollebeek's (2011) aspect of immersion with, and concentration on a brand. In line with these definitions, this study views absorption as *'the level of customer concentration and immersion with an engagement partner'*.

Table 7: Cognitive dimension and sub-dimensions

Cognitive dimension of consumer engagement		
Definition		References
A set of enduring and active mental states that a consumer experiences with respect to his/her engagement partner.		Rothbard 2001 ; Schaufeli et al. 2002 ; Patterson et al., 2006; Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Mollen and Wilson, 2009; Sprott et al., 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a and 2011b; Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2013.
Sub-dimension	Definition	References
Attention	The cognitive availability and amount of time spent actively thinking about and being attentive to the engagement partner.	Rothbard, 2001; Higgins and Scholer, 2009; So et al., 2013.
Absorption	The level of consumer's concentration and immersion with an engagement partner.	Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011.

Behavioural engagement

Extant studies differentiate behavioural aspects of engagement from the affective and cognitive aspects. Indeed, behavioural consumer engagement has been the only dimension

of engagement in focus in many studies (e.g. Sawhney et al., 2005; Libai et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Gummerus et al., 2012). This impetus for research on behavioural engagement might be in part linked to the call of the Marketing Science Institute identifying customer engagement as a research priority, and defining it as *'customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers [...]* (MSI, 2010, p.4).

Despite this call for a better understanding of engagement behaviours, marketing research is still hesitant when it comes to delineating what represents consumer engagement behaviours, or how to encapsulate them in a framework. Examples such as complaining, participating in events or giving suggestions to other customers or staff members can be found as manifestations of customer engagement behaviours (van Doorn et al., 2010). In online settings, actions like blogging, giving ratings or spreading word-of-mouth have also been identified (Verhoef et al., 2010). Online engagement behaviours can be narrowed further down to social networking sites by looking at metrics such as the number of 'likes', comments, posts, group visits or number of interactions with an in-group application (Gummerus et al., 2012).

Engagement being a context-dependent and motivational construct, engagement behaviours depend greatly on the context and the ways they can be enacted in a particular setting (van Doorn et al., 2010). As this research focuses on OBC settings, relevant frameworks pertaining to OBC participation are used to approach behavioural engagement. The ways individuals behave in an OBC has been approached in multiple instances and several categorisations have been proposed to understand customer participation and engagement. These categorisations reveal the motivational aspect of engagement (Hollebeek, 2011), as they reflect the benefits, value, or goals the consumers seek to attain through their actions (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010).

Based on netnographic qualitative data Brodie et al (2013) identify 5 sub-processes of consumer engagement in virtual brand communities, namely: sharing, co-developing, socializing, advocating and learning. Similarly, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) report eight specific factors of online community contribution (i.e. engagement): venting negative feelings, concern for other consumers, self-enhancement, advice-seeking, social benefits, economic benefits, platform assistance and helping the company. In their seminal study on brand communities (not specifically online), Schau, et al. (2009), using the term 'engagement' or a derivative 77 times, propose a framework of community practices,

which can be combined into four categories: social networking, community engagement, brand use and impression management. This behavioural aspect of engagement is also found in the idea of interaction, involving the sharing and exchanging of ideas, thoughts and feelings about experiences with the brand (So et al., 2013).

The combined analysis of these different frameworks gives ground to the development of what constitutes behavioural engagement and what are its sub-dimensions. In line with the MSI (2010) and other customer engagement behaviour researchers (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010), we define the behavioural dimensions of consumer engagement as *'the behavioural manifestations toward an engagement partner, beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers'*.

An interesting framework to understand customer engagement behaviour is that of van Doorn et al (2010), who propose that engagement behaviours are characterised by their (1) valence; (2) form or modality; (3) scope; (4) nature of its impact and (5) customer goals. Although each of these dimensions is expanded upon hereunder, the key categorisation criterion used here is the customer's goal. Although the three sub-dimensions of behavioural engagement hereunder all materialise through interactive actions and thus have a social dimension, their fundamental differentiating characteristic is what motivates them, i.e. the customer goals (van Doorn et al., 2010). In this respect, their purposes are clearly different. The underlying purpose of sharing is the exchange of resources; the aim of endorsing is to sanction, exhibit approval, give weight to the engagement focus, whereas the purpose of learning is to seek help or information. These three sub-dimensions are detailed hereunder.

Sharing resources is a key determinant of engagement behaviours. Sharing can be driven by individuals seeking to provide resources. Providing resources can take the form of exchanging experiences, helping other customers (Hennig-Thurrau et al., 2004; Mathwick et al., 2008), providing recommendations and ideas to the company (Sawhney et al., 2005; Brodie et al., 2011), or making suggestions to improve the brand experience and use (Schau et al., 2009). Customer engagement therefore relies heavily on the exchange of experiences (Vivek et al., 2012), as research on co-creation indicates (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). The act of sharing is defined in this study as a collaborative and interactive exchange, driven by the motivation to provide resources. Social media environments and online brand communities are both contexts particularly prone to the development of sharing behaviours, as they are based on usage, which is in large part driven by content,

and people feel a need to engage in altruistic behaviour (Breitshol et al., 2015). In social media contexts, sharing can manifest itself through shares, comments, posts, tweets, replies, or even direct messages.

Learning is an important aspect of behavioural engagement, which pertains to consumers seeking help, advice or ideas from their engagement object. In this sense, it constitutes the counterpart of sharing, which is seen here as an act of giving. The search of resources represents the other side of the coin, whereby consumers seek help, ideas, resources and information from the company or other customers (Hennig-Thurrau, 2004). Learning is an important part of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2013), as shown by the increased focus on content strategies. Through brand use practices (Schau et al., 2009), consumers can learn how to improve their experience with the brand. Learning can also refer to seeking help when one faces an issue, or is dissatisfied in their brand use. By searching to improve their experience, learn more, or fix issues, consumers show engagement, as a disengaged customer would in contrast defect from brand use (Lee et al., 2009). In social media contexts, like sharing, learning can manifest itself through comments, posts, tweets, replies, or even direct messages.

Endorsing is another aspect of positive consumer engagement, which has been found in both conceptual and empirical work on the topic. Endorsing can have a smaller or larger scope, and it refers to the act of showing support to the focus of engagement by sanctioning their actions or ideas. The scope of endorsement can be small or large, whether the aim of the endorser is to show approval only to their engagement focus or to act as a referent of the engagement focus toward the outside (Van Doorn et al., 2010). In an OBC setting, for instance, members can sanction group activity, content or ideas through the Facebook ‘like’ mechanism, as exemplified by Gummerus et al. (2012). Depending on the group settings, this endorsement is visible to non-group members, or not. Recommending, or engaging in word-of-mouth that reaches beyond a specific setting, is also a form of endorsement, except that it has an external focus. Schau et al. (2009) refer to it as ‘impression management’ in the context of a brand community. It includes all practices that have an external focus on creating a favourable impression of the brand. This idea of ‘impression management’, also referred to as ‘influence impression’ or ‘word-of-mouth’ is recurrent in the social media literature and considered as a particularly potent form of earned media (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Again, in the context of a virtual brand community, Brodie et al. (2013) propose that a behavioural sub-dimension of engagement

is ‘advocating’, which occurs ‘*when consumers actively recommend specific brands, products/services, organisations and/or ways of using products or brands*’(p7).

It is worth mentioning that all three behavioural sub-dimensions share a common social aspect. Social benefits are recognised to act as important motivational factors of engagement, (Calder et al., 2013) and a social dimension has been identified in the consumer engagement literature (e.g. Patterson et al., 2006). Patterson et al. (2006) define engagement interactions as the various interactions and connections ‘*between the customer and the front line service employees, between the customer and the organization, between the customer and the brand, and among the customers themselves*’ (p. 3). It can therefore be said that a social aspect underlies all engagement behaviours, because they entail interactions and creation of bonds between the engagement subject and partners. The following table summarises the behavioural dimension and sub-dimensions of consumer engagement.

Table 8: Behavioural dimension and sub-dimensions

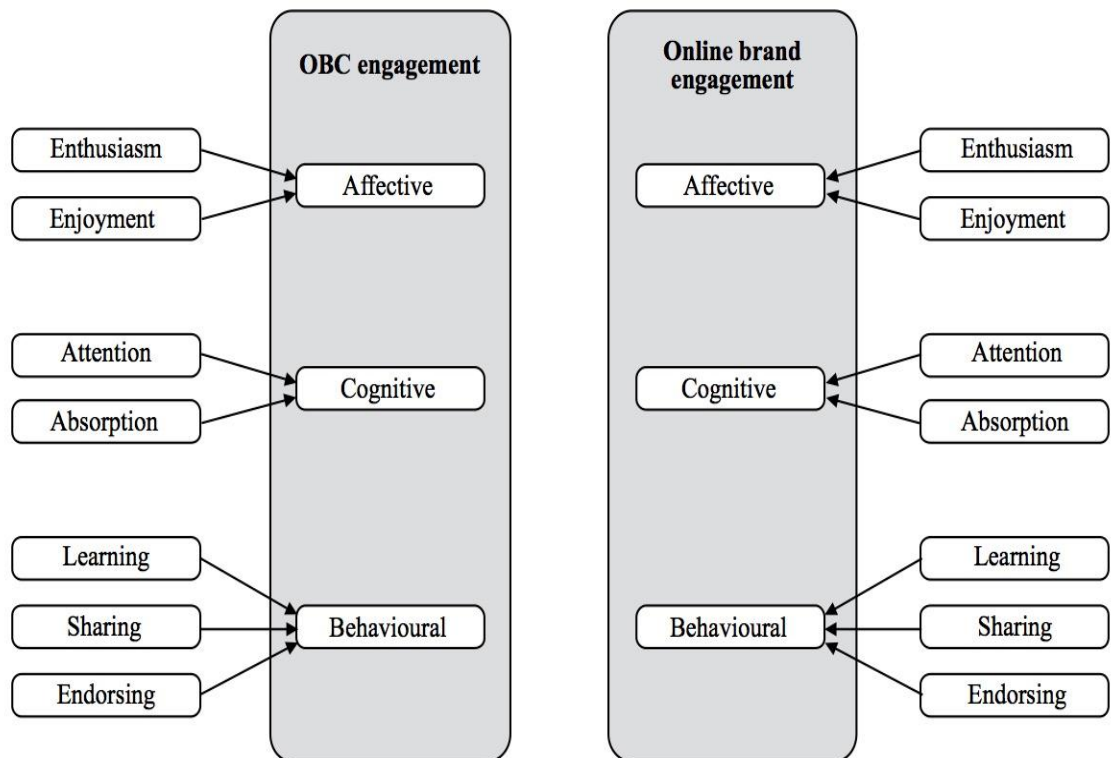
Behavioural dimension of consumer engagement		
Definition		References
The behavioural manifestations toward an engagement partner, beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers.		Sawhney et al., 2005; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Gummerus et al., 2012; Hollebeek, 2011a, 2011b.
Sub-dimension	Definition	References
Sharing	The act of providing content, information, experience, ideas or other resources to the engagement partner.	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Sawhney et al., 2005; Mathwick et al., 2008; Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2013.
Learning	The act of seeking content, information, experience, ideas or other resources from the engagement partner.	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Schau et al., 2009; Brodie et al., 2013.
Endorsing	The act of sanctioning, showing support, referring. In a community context, endorsement can have an internal or external focus.	Schau et al., 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Gummerus et al 2012 ; Brodie et al. 2013.

To sum up, the above conceptualisation of the dimensions of consumer engagement show the deep meaning associated with each of each dimensions and sub-dimensions. The

conceptualisation developed here draws on research in the fields of education, organisational behaviour and other social sciences, as well as conceptual studies in marketing research, and some exploratory work. The outcome provides a rich and multifaceted conceptualisation the concept of engagement, one that seems highly applicable to the context of OBC.

The following figure represents the concept of consumer engagement, focusing on two different engagement partners in an OBC context, namely the OBC and the brand. It depicts the dimensions (affective, cognitive and behavioural) and sub-dimensions of the two constructs. This conceptualisation of consumer engagement in an OBC context is used throughout the remaining of the study.

Figure 11: Consumer engagement in an Online Brand Community



3.3. Proposed model of consumer engagement in OBC

The review of the literature has identified gaps in the treatment of both antecedents and outcomes of OBC participation when approached from a consumer engagement

perspective. This section develops a model of consumer engagement in OBC, integrating its key drivers and outcomes. The general logic concerning the identification of antecedents and outcomes is presented first, also conceptualising a relationship between consumer engagement with the OBC and with the brand. Based on this general view, the specific research hypotheses are developed and a causal model proposed, based on three main types of relationships.

3.3.1. Drivers of engagement

Consumer engagement can have varying intensities (e.g. Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek, 2011). This assertion is in line with the OBC literature, where OBC members can vary depending on their level of activity in the group. For instance, research differentiates lurkers from contributors (Kozinets, 1999; Preece et al., 2004). Despite this acceptance that varying levels of consumer engagement can occur, there is still very little understanding as to which factors, in particular individual ones, influence engagement levels in an OBC context.

Studying the individual factors that may affect levels of engagement is of particular importance, in line with the gap identified in the literature review on OBC. Firstly, because the individual consumer is the subject of engagement, it is important to gain understanding into which individual characteristics that play a role in the formation of engagement and why this is likely to occur. Such insight should allow a better understanding of the emergence, and sustenance and variations of engagement levels for consumers. Secondly, consumer engagement being a psychological concept (Brodie et al., 2011), it is fair to assume that it would be influenced by internal individual pre-dispositions, attitudes and preferences (Campbell et al., 2014). Thirdly, from a managerial perspective, the individual drivers of engagement have the potential to help OBC managers better manage their consumer based through more effective segmentation (Campbell et al., 2014). Although current research in consumer engagement acknowledges the driving potential of individual factors over consumer engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wirtz et al., 2013), research in this direction is scant, largely conceptual and lacking detail.

Given the current state of research in consumer engagement and OBC alike, this study adopts a focus on individual traits and predispositions as drivers of consumer engagement in OBC. More specifically, OIP (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), attitude toward OBC

participation (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006) and product involvement (Hollebeek et al., 2014) are studied. These three elements are chosen because they all have an enduring, long-term and stable aspect congruent with the nature of consumer engagement, which is further detailed and explained in the hypothesis development section.

3.3.2. Relationship between consumer engagements with different partners

As explained above, consumer engagement can be directed at different engagement partners, and this study focuses on OBC engagement and online brand engagement.

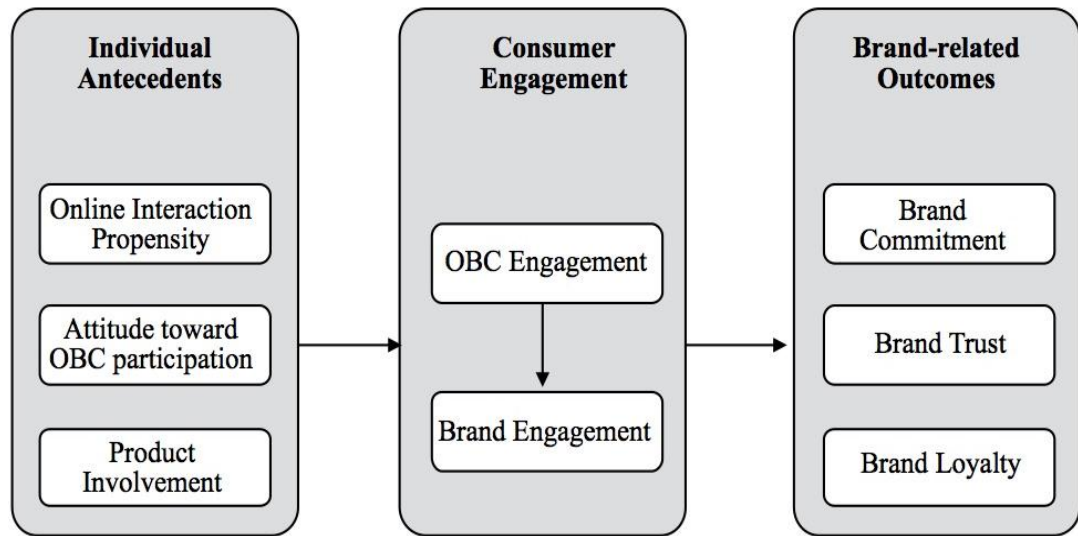
Little research has so far investigated the interplay between OBC engagement and online brand engagement, and most studies have approached them separately. However, the specific nature of OBC allows relationship formation between consumers and different OBC actors, such as the other consumers, and the brand (McAlexander et al., 2002) within the same settings. On this ground, Wirtz et al. (2013) identify that OBC engagement conceptually leads to increased levels of brand engagement, a relationship which this study aims to test.

3.3.3. Outcomes of engagement

The conceptual model integrates several outcomes of engagement. Existing frameworks converge in showing that brand benefits derive from consumer engagement, whether from a conceptual (van Doorn et al., 2010) or empirical standpoint (Brodie et al., 2013). More specifically, this study aims to show the impact of consumer engagement on brand trust, commitment and loyalty. In contrast to other studies on consumer engagement and its brand-related outcomes, brand satisfaction is not taken into account since members of the online community are not supposed to be existing paying customers of the brand, and have therefore not necessarily formed brand satisfaction.

Based on these arguments, this study's conceptual framework is proposed in Figure 12 and related hypotheses subsequently developed.

Figure 12: Conceptual framework of consumer engagement in an Online Brand Community



3.4. Hypothesis development

3.4.1. Drivers of consumer engagement

Given that individual traits and preferences have the potential to impact social actions (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), this section proposes three antecedents to consumer engagement in an OBC: Online Interaction Propensity (OIP), attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement. Although membership in an OBC presupposes some level of interest in group membership and engagement, research has shown that OBC members can greatly vary in terms of their level and type of participation, ranging from passive lurkers to active contributors (Nonnecke et al., 2006). Hammond (2000) contends that there are two types of memberships in online groups: communicative and quiet. Communicative membership displays frequent interactions, ask questions and answer to them, whereas quiet membership is translated mainly in the simple reading of messages. These different types and levels of engagement in an OBC have strong implications in terms of community vitality and management. The synthesis of existing literature shows that three individual characteristics could impact consumer engagement in OBC: OIP, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement.

Online Interaction Propensity

Online Interaction Propensity (OIP) is a potential indicator of the type of membership that one has in an OBC. The concept is based on the assumption that people exhibit different preferences when it comes to interacting with others online. OIP is defined as a trait-based individual difference in the predisposition to participate in online interactions (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007). OIP is a behavioural predisposition, which is rooted in personality and individual characteristics. In communication and psychology disciplines, it is referred to as the willingness to communicate with others and people can exhibit different levels of propensities to interact (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007).

Online settings such as OBC advance the study of interaction propensities in three ways (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Firstly, communication can be synchronous or asynchronous in OBC. Secondly, OBC interactions usually occur between relative strangers, in other words people that one has never met in real life and that might be located anywhere in the world (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007). Often, the only common denominator is their passion for the brand. Thirdly, online interactions in OBC might be less rich than offline ones, but typically have a broader reach (Blazevic et al., 2014).

OIP is a fairly under-researched individual trait when it comes to understanding drivers of OBC participation. Research has so far focused on the role of participation intention in driving OBC participation (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Casaló et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2013). OIP however differs from participation intention in an OBC. Participation intention is a narrower concept focused on intended membership in a specific OBC. OIP, on the other hand, is an enduring characteristic engrained in people's personality, rather than a transient intention to do something at a point in time (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007).

Therefore, OIP is potentially a particularly potent driver of consumer engagement in OBC. Although they define engagement as a sum of experiences, Calder et al. (2009) provide a first basis to support this assertion, as they show that the need for social interactions is a driver of consumer engagement. Recently, Blazevic et al. (2014) also determined that General Online Social Interaction Propensity (GOSIP) is an explanatory factor for consumer engagement and online interaction behaviours. They work on the basic premise that the core *modus operandi* of social media platform is interaction, underpinning levels of engagement. They report that GOSIP has the ability to explain why one person will engage in online interactions and another will not, under identical circumstances. Despite

these advances, research into OIP remains scarce (Blazevic et al., 2014) and requires further attention, particularly given the ever-changing nature of OBC settings. Moreover, it is so far limited to explaining participation behaviours only rather than the full multidimensional spectrum of consumer engagement.

Based on previous findings, we hypothesise that OIP has a positive impact on consumer engagement, both with the OBC and the brand. This leads to the articulation of hypotheses 1a and 1b:

H_{1a}: OIP is positively related to OBC engagement.

H_{1b}: OIP is positively related to online brand engagement.

Attitude toward OBC participation

Following Wu and Chen (2005), the attitude toward OBC participation reflects in this study the favourable or unfavourable assessment a consumer makes of participating in the OBC. Particularly developed in the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), attitude is a psychological concept, which aims to explain individual decision making. The attitude toward an act is one of the key determinants of the intention to act, leading ultimately to actual action. Attitude is a valenced evaluative (cognitive) reaction to an action. It is based on the belief that a certain action, behaviour or state is going to lead to favourable or unfavourable consequences (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). An attitude therefore ranges on a spectrum from negative to positive. In this sense, it departs from OIP, which is not valenced, or evaluative.

Attitudes are created through long-term learning and acquired over time. They are relatively stable, learned predispositions that are retrieved or activated to influence decisions or behaviours (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). In this sense, they are, like engagement, going beyond purchase or consumption situations and built in the long run, through an accumulation of experiences. They are not contingent on the occurrence of a specific event, but are retrieved when needed. Since attitudes and engagement are both relying on enduring mechanisms, attitudes toward OBC participation can be considered as an adequate driver of consumer engagement.

Attitude's impact on intentions and behaviour has been examined in online settings, using the TPB as an overarching framework (e.g. Hsu et al., 2006; Pavlou and Fygenson, 2006). More specifically, social media and OBC literature report the necessity to consider it as a driver of the intention to act and actual actions in group settings. In an extended version of

the TPB, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), find that attitude toward brand community participation is a driver of the desire, intention and behaviour of community participation. Similarly, Casaló et al. (2010), show that members' attitude toward participation in a firm-hosted online travel community is a potent driver of the actual intention to participate. These findings find further conceptual validation in Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) who assert that consumers with high positive attitudes toward new media are more likely to exhibit high levels of new media brand engagement. New media brand engagement can be enacted through active types of engagement such as creating content, or watching a branded video. This leads to the development of the following two hypotheses regarding consumer engagement in OBC:

H_{2a}: Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to OBC engagement.

H_{2b}: Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to online brand engagement.

Product involvement

Product involvement is defined in this study as an on-going concern or interest for a product class, regardless of situational influences (Richins and Bloch, 1991). The concept has an emotional and a cognitive dimension, and stems from a holistic experience with products (Chaudhuri, 2000). In line with this definition and within the broad context of consumer engagement in OBC, this study focuses on enduring involvement, in contrast to situational involvement. Unlike situational involvement, which tends to be highly related to purchase situations and choices, enduring engagement goes beyond purchase and has a long-term scope (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985), which renders it more relevant than situational engagement as a potential predictor of ongoing consumer states such as engagement.

The general relevance of the concept of involvement for marketing scholars lies in its central mediating role in the prediction of consumer behaviour (Mittal and Lee, 1989). Involvement is also a useful segmentation criterion, as consumers can experience different levels of involvement (e.g. Traylor and Joseph, 1984; Beatty et al., 1988; Warrington and Shim, 2000). More specifically, the relevance of product involvement in determining consumer engagement can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, numerous studies recognise the mediating role of involvement in predicting consumer behaviour, attitudes or intentions akin to consumer engagement. These can broadly be related to the extensiveness of the purchase decision process, enacted with constructs such as information search, interest in and consumption of advertising (Mittal and Lee, 1989; Flynn and Goldsmith, 1993), shopping enjoyment (Mittal and Lee, 1989), shopping effort, brand comparison or selectivity (Traylor and Joseph, 1984). Frequency of purchase and amount spent, product usage and loyalty are other facets of involvement response (Mittal and Lee, 1989, Flynn and Goldsmith, 1993). Word-of-mouth (Richins et al., 1992) and satisfaction (Richins and Bloch, 1991) are also influenced by involvement levels. Finally, the strong link that product involvement and brand commitment exhibit has been the subject of much research, making brand commitment a well-acknowledged outcome of high involvement (Traylor and Joseph, 1984; Mittal and Lee, 1989; Pritchard et al., 1999).

Secondly, there is an understanding that consumer engagement might be related to the type of product under consideration. It seems however unclear how product type can impact

engagement and most of the research in this domain remains conceptual. So far, engagement scholars in marketing have placed much emphasis on service brands (e.g. Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011) and some authors propose that a change in the type of engagement product can lead to different levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement (Brodie et al., 2011). Whether the focal brand is hedonic or utilitarian and whether involvement with this kind of products is high or low could impact consumer engagement (Hollebeek, 2011). Other scholars propose that consumers are more quickly disengaged with utilitarian services than with co-creative services (Bowden et al., 2014). Based on the idea that different types of products or services can elicit different levels of consumer involvement and that engagement might be related to it, the study of product involvement as an antecedent to consumer engagement allows shedding light on the relationship between consumer engagement and the type of products a brand sells.

Thirdly, although different from it, consumer engagement is closely related to the concept of involvement. Involvement differs from engagement in major ways. For instance, one might be highly involved in selecting a new computer, but this does not necessarily entail the kind of interactive experiences that Calder et al. (2013) perceive as engagement. Taking a similar perspective, Vivek et al. (2012) explain that whereas involvement is a form of interest and implies high levels of information processing, it is different from engagement because it does not entail a behavioural aspect, when engagement does.

Recent studies document the link between the two concepts and involvement is conceptualised as an antecedent of consumer engagement (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010). To date, this relationship has been empirically confirmed once, in a study developing a scale of customer engagement. In this study, Hollebeek et al. (2014) prove the empirical distinctiveness of engagement and involvement, further validating the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between involvement and self-brand connection. Although empirical evidence is scant, there are strong conceptual foundations to support the assertion that product involvement precedes consumer engagement in OBCs. This leads to the development of the following set of hypotheses:

H_{3a}: Product involvement is positively related to OBC engagement.

H_{3b}: Product involvement is positively related to online brand engagement.

3.4.1. Relationship between online brand engagement and OBC engagement

Existing literature on OBC identifies clear causal effects between the relationships members form with other members of the community, and the ones they have with the focal brand (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). Understanding the dynamics of consumer interactions and relationships in an OBC is crucial because these interactions are what contribute to the OBC creation, sustenance and vitality (Casaló et al., 2008) and ultimately impact customer relationships and brand management strategies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

On the one hand, community participation, behaviours, commitment and attitudes have been approached as drivers of subsequent brand-related relationship building. For instance, OBC participation is known to lead to stronger product relationships (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010), intentions to recommend the host firm (Casaló et al., 2010), and dedication to the brand's success (McAlexander et al., 2002). Feelings elicited from interactions with other community members shape consumer's attitudes about the host brand and future interactions with it within the community: for instance, consumers engage in product support by giving feedback to the brand through the community interface (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). Similarly, community commitment leads to higher levels of brand commitment (Kim et al., 2008). Schau et al. (2009) also find that community practices foster engagement with the focal brand. One can thus assume that individuals who are more committed to an OBC are more likely to develop positive attitudes and behaviours toward the brand. These identified relationships are not directly related to the concept of engagement as defined in this study; however each of them taps into certain aspects of engagement, such as enthusiasm for the brand, OBC engagement behaviours or brand endorsement. In this sense, these relationships propose a baseline to support the hypothesis that OBC engagement is conducive of brand engagement.

Further evidence of this link can be found in research dealing directly with consumer engagement applied to OBC settings. Although limited to a conceptual framework, Wirtz et al. (2013) state that OBC engagement has a positive influence over brand engagement. Their conceptualisation of engagement is close to the stance taken in this study, as it encompasses attitudinal and behavioural aspects, of engagement, views it as a motivational, interactive and experiential constructs, and refers to specific instances of engagement, which resonate with our sub-dimensions. Going further into this direction, Jahn and Kunz (2012) empirically prove the impact of fanpage engagement on Facebook –

the integrative and interactive participation in the community – on a number of brand-relationship concepts, including brand WOM, loyalty, purchase and commitment. Although these relational outcomes place little focus on intra-community engagement with the brand, they are an indication of the potential of OBC engagement to foster brand engagement. These studies clearly show support for the precedence of OBC engagement on brand engagement both in the OBC and consumer engagement literature.

Nevertheless, it is important to also note that the reverse relationship has been validated. Studies show that consumer relationships with the brand precede brand community memberships. More specifically, brand relationships impacts brand identification, which in turn leads to community engagement (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Despite the validation of this causal link, the authors however also show that community engagement leads to further brand-related behaviours such as repeat purchase, showing support to the positive impact of community participation over brand outcomes.

Hypothesising the positive impact of OBC engagement over brand engagement is congruent with the scope and focus of this study, for several reasons. One of the boundary assumptions of this study is its focus on the engagement of existing consumers of the OBC. Understanding how prior relationship with the brand leads the individual to become a member of the community therefore does not fall within the scope of the research. Instead, how being a member of the community can foster one's relationship with the brand is of interest. Moreover, studies have shown that the relative importance of brand tribalism (i.e. a neighbour concept to brand community participation) over brand reputation is stronger when it comes to creating brand relationships (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). This suggests that studying the impact of OBC engagement over brand engagement is of particular interest and relevance. For these reasons, the following hypothesis is presented:

H₄: OBC engagement is positively related to online brand engagement.

3.4.2. Outcomes of engagement

This study focuses on two potential direct outcomes of online brand engagement, brand trust and brand commitment, and subsequently proposes that online brand engagement drives brand loyalty through the mediating effect of these two constructs. Because trust and commitment have often been paired, from foundational brand relationship research (e.g. Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002) to recent brand engagement advances (Hollebeek, 2011), they are approached together as two facets of brand-related outcomes.

Brand commitment and brand trust

In this study, brand trust is defined in line with Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001, 2002) conceptualisation, which builds on Moorman et al. (1992). Brand trust is the willingness of the consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function. In this situation, the brand is a relationship partner in which the customer has confidence. The brand shows integrity and honesty, and because any relationship might entail risk, it is seen as a safe relationship partner (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Brand commitment, on the other hand, is the enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship with a brand in the long term (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It is based on the emotional or psychological attachment to and preference for a brand within a product category (Lastovicka and Gardner, 1977). Brand commitment is considered as a unidimensional, attitudinal construct in this study and it has an important long term, enduring aspect (Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Both commitment and trust have been conceptualised as elements of relationship quality (Rafiq et al., 2013) and the mediating role of trust and commitment in marketing relationship exchanges is well understood (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

There are several reasons why brand engagement leads to brand trust and brand commitment. Firstly, the very nature of brand engagement is based on reciprocity, which is a necessity to build trust. Brand engagement is a two way-relationship in which customers invest time, energy and effort (Vivek et al., 2012). As a counterpart of the consumer's efforts, the level of investment and dedication to the relationship from the part of the brand will also influence consumer trust (Rafiq et al., 2013). This can be translated in the amount of formal and informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between the brand and the consumer, which leads to higher levels of trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In contrast to this, a brand exhibiting opportunistic behaviour, i.e. self-interest seeking with guile, leads to lower levels of trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In general, consumers with a high relational orientation place higher importance on trust than low-relational customers (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999).

Secondly, brand engagement lowers the risk associated with a brand and increases preference for it, because it creates familiarity and closeness. We know that identification with the brand or the brand community to which the customer belongs impacts trust (Marzocchi et al., 2013). Moreover, shared values between the consumer and the brand foster trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). By engaging with the brand, the consumer creates a

strong bond with it, on an emotional, cognitive and behavioural level. This close connection, built over repeat interactions, is likely to lead to increased trust and commitment (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002).

The link between brand engagement and brand trust and commitment is also prominent in the consumer engagement literature, although the direction of causality seems unclear. Most of the conceptual research so far takes a careful stance by proposing that brand trust and commitment can either be outcomes or antecedents of brand engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie et al., 2011). More specifically, some advance that there is a feedback loop between brand engagement and brand commitment and trust, which continuously evolves as consumers keep engaging with brands and reinforcing their relationship with them (van Doorn et al., 2010). Whether engagement precedes trust and commitment or derives from them could also be attributed to whether the individual is an existing customer of the brand or not (Hollebeek, 2011). Existing customers would have developed trust and commitment prior to engaging with the brand, whereas new customers would only develop trust and commitment after being engaged with the brand. Despite this conceptual blurriness, according to Gambetti and Graffigna (2010) engagement, in the relational sense of the term, is a way to build trust and commitment with the brand, rather than the other way around.

To conclude, a clear link between brand engagement and brand trust and commitment emerges from the brand relationship literature, feeding through OBC and consumer engagement research. The boundary conditions in which this study operates allow clarifying the hypothesised direction in which this relationship is likely to operate. Consumers of interest in this research are the members of the community, and can be either existing or non-existing paying customers of the brand. A prior strong relationship with the brand can therefore not be assumed, as the OBC might be the first touch point the consumer has with the brand. Based on this understanding, this study is therefore interested in the relational outcomes built from online brand engagement in the OBC settings, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₅: Online brand engagement is positively related to brand trust.

H₆: Online brand engagement is positively related to brand commitment.

Brand loyalty

Loyalty is a complex construct, which has been conceptualised as both attitudinal and behavioural (Jacoby and Chesnut, 1978). This study focuses solely on behavioural manifestations of brand loyalty, and repeat purchase behaviour is used as its measure. In agreement with Odin et al. (2001), this study proposes that the most direct way to measure loyalty is to focus on the repeat purchasing behaviour of the same brand, as declared by consumers. It is acknowledged that repeat purchasing behaviour does not represent the full picture of loyalty, and that if it is a function of inertia, it is less valuable. However, considering the context of engagement, one can assume that the level of customer inertia toward a brand is relatively low, therefore rendering repeat purchase behaviour a satisfactory indicator of brand loyalty. Moreover, this study takes the stance that brand commitment is the manifestation of attitudinal loyalty and is thus distinct from behavioural brand loyalty (Jacoby and Chesnut, 1978).

Behavioural loyalty has been the focus of much research in the brand community and OBC literature, and has come through as one of the key outcomes of OBC participation (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Jang et al., 2008; Thompson and Sinha, 2008; Casaló et al., 2010). The more community members become integrated into a community through frequent and repeat interactions with other members and the brand, the more brand loyalty they are likely to display (McAlexander et al., 2002). From the perspective of the TPB, intention and desires can trigger group behaviour, which ultimately leads to increased brand loyalty (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). More specifically, antecedents of behavioural brand loyalty in OBC contexts include brand community identification (Heere et al., 2011), brand identification (Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010), emotional support and encouragement from the brand (Fournier and Lee, 2009), uncertainty reduction through C2C communication (Adjei et al., 2010). These studies all support the notion that OBC participation can strongly trigger brand loyalty among its members.

Whether loyalty outcomes are the same when approaching OBC participation from a consumer engagement perspective is less obvious. Looking at the consumer engagement literature and its take on brand loyalty allows crossing this bridge. In an extensive literature review, Hollebeek (2011a) highlights the complex relationship between loyalty and engagement. It appears, from a conceptual standpoint, that brand loyalty is the ultimate stage of any consumer engagement process (Bowden, 2009; Calder et al., 2013), and that

the causal link between consumer engagement and loyalty is mediated by other relational constructs, including trust and commitment (Hollebeek, 2011a).

The mediating role of trust and commitment in driving loyalty from engagement seems generally supported (Hollebeek, 2011a). The relationships between brand commitment and brand trust with brand loyalty are verified in a number of relationship marketing studies (e.g. Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Gruen et al., 2000). In a brand community context, Marzocchi et al. (2013) also support this assertion, showing that attitudinal loyalty (a synonym for brand commitment) and brand trust lead to increased levels of behavioural loyalty. Aligning early relationship marketing studies with OBC and consumer engagement research allows positing that, with the precedence of consumer engagement over brand trust and commitment, the following hypotheses hold in an OBC context:

H₇: Brand trust is positively related to brand loyalty.

H₈: Brand commitment is positively related to brand loyalty.

3.5. Summary of the hypotheses

The proposed relationships between the independent, mediating and dependent constructs of this study are visually represented in presented in Figure 13 below and summarised in Table 9.

Figure 13: The causal model

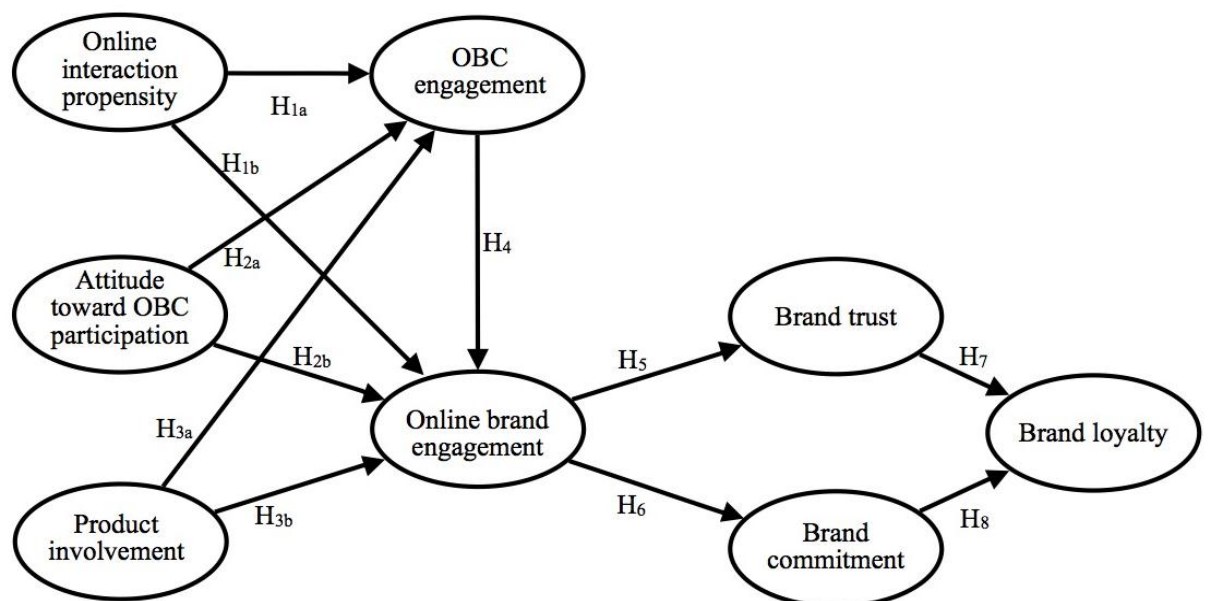


Table 9: The research hypotheses

Antecedents of OBC engagement	
H _{1a}	OIP is positively related to OBC engagement.
H _{2a}	Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to OBC engagement.
H _{3a}	Product involvement is positively related to OBC engagement.
Antecedents of online brand engagement	
H _{1b}	OIP is positively related to online brand engagement.
H _{2b}	Attitude toward community participation is positively related to online brand engagement.
H _{3b}	Product involvement is positively related to online brand engagement.
H ₄	OBC engagement is positively related to online brand engagement.
Outcomes of online brand engagement	
H ₅	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand trust.
H ₆	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand commitment.
H ₇	Brand trust is positively related to brand loyalty.
H ₈	Brand commitment is positively related to brand loyalty.

3.6. Validation of the study

Validating measures and models across contexts is an important endeavour in quantitative studies, which aims at proving their generalisability. Consumer engagement studies in particular have called for assessment of the concept across contexts (Gambetti and Grafignia, 2010; Brodie et al., 2011) and recent scaling literature has started addressing this gap (Vivek et al., 2014). This section proposes a way to validate the expected results of this study. More specifically, a cross-contextual validation of the study will be performed, focusing on different languages.

OBC and engagement studies can seek cross-contextual validation in different ways: it can for instance be done using data collected for different brands (e.g. Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010), product categories (e.g. Wallace et al., 2014) or in different languages (Ouwensloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008). This section explains why validating the study's results in another language is particularly relevant given the context of investigation and the state of

the literature. It also explains why two specific languages were chosen, namely English and French.

This study will attempt to validate the conceptual model with its measurement and structural components across different languages, for several reasons. The key reason concerns the relative paucity of cross-cultural studies in OBC research. A review of the current cultural contexts of investigation in both OBC and consumer engagement literature show the lack of cross-cultural or linguistic validation existing so far, as well as a strong bias toward English cultures. Table 10 details the context of investigation of the key OBC and consumer engagement studies using empirical data in terms of the brands, product categories and cultural contexts. The table reveals that out of 39 selected papers, 24 of them collected data in English, 13 of which were situated in the United States. A few studies were realised in German, Italian, Chinese or Hindu, and a small amount of them did not specify the country or language of investigation. Out of this pool of studies, only one collected data in two different languages (French and Dutch, in Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008). However, this was done in the aim of pooling the two samples together rather than for validation purposes.

Even though it seems that validation has been sought in OBC and consumer engagement studies by including several brands or product categories in the data collected (see Table 10, e.g. Vivek et al., 2014), a complete lack of validation using different languages is also evident. Although it might be understood for studies operating on a local, real-life basis (e.g. Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014) it is surprising that no study investigating communities or engagement in online settings has to date sought such validation, given the lack of geographic boundaries inherent to online environments.

Yet, a basic premise of OBCs operating on social media including Facebook is that they are global by nature, bound only by the language in which they are set up. In 2014, Facebook supported 70-plus languages (Facebook, 2014). Social media allow communication and interactions regardless of geographic and cultural boundaries and this global nature of social media brings challenges for brand page management, if a brand is to ensure consistent brand positioning at a global level. Gensler et al. (2013) pinpoint the importance for brand managers to be able to ensure consistent brand stories on a social media site when this site is used around the globe by consumers who might have completely different interpretations of brand meaning. The global nature of social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) therefore brings about a key cultural consideration: should

consumers from different linguistic backgrounds be engaged with differently on social media?

Two opposing stances are taken when considering the global and cross-cultural aspect of social media and Facebook in particular. Some authors are proponents of the view that consumers around the world behave differently and that social media marketing need to be adapted on this basis (Jackson and Wang, 2013). Particularly, highly collectivist cultures such as China seems to greatly differ from highly individualistic cultures like the US (Jackson and Wang, 2013) when it comes to social media behaviour. Others argue that there is a convergence in the way people from different cultural backgrounds behave (Douglas and Craig, 2006). Since geographic boundaries are eliminated on social media, people from all cultural background and languages are able to use the same platforms in the same ways. They are able to interact with like-minded people located worldwide, using the same protocols or interaction (Zaglia, 2013). Although cultures might be different, they access the same services and use the same platforms.

Moreover, social media and Facebook page management need to be in line with the company's global marketing approach. Depending on whether the brand has a unified global or differentiated local strategy, it should be able to use Facebook in a way that reflects their global strategy. Recognising this need, Facebook has made its pages highly customisable and companies have since 2012 the ability to embed local pages under their global page, thus allowing them to communicate in the consumer's language and have different local content, but communicated and structured in a coherent manner (Facebook, 2012). Despite these functionalities, it is still unclear whether Facebook page managers should manage their pages globally or locally to foster increased levels of engagement.

Based on these practical and theoretical considerations, this study aims to validate its results in another language than the initial language of investigation, namely English. French is chosen as an appropriate language for the purpose of cross-language validation because these two languages and the cultures they represent exhibit enough variance on specific cultural dimensions to be considered different, while at the same time remaining comparable in a number of ways. The GLOBE framework (House et al., 2004), Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2010), as well as existing cross-cultural marketing research are used to compare the two cultures.

Firstly, according to the GLOBE study and societal clusters (House et al., 2004), any English-speaking sample belongs to the 'Anglo' cultures cluster, which are competitive, result-oriented and have low levels of in-group collectivism, whereas a French-speaking sample belongs to the 'Latin European' cluster, which tend to highly value individual autonomy and have average levels of in-group collectivism.

Considering Hofstede's cultural dimensions, differences appear between French and English-speaking countries in terms of power distance, uncertainty avoidance and pragmatism. French-speaking countries tend to have a much higher power distance, meaning that they are more equalitarian. They also rank higher in terms of uncertainty avoidance, preferring clear structures and rules than English-speaking societies. Lastly, they have higher pragmatism, showing a better ability to adapt to changing situations and contexts (Hofstede, 2014).

Focusing on the uncertainty avoidance, this particular cultural trait also bears impact on the level of technology penetration and innovation levels. With higher levels of uncertainty avoidance, countries like France or Belgium tend to exhibit lower levels of technology penetration, lower amount of innovators in the population (de Moij, 2011), as well as lower levels of consumer co-creation through online channels and more reluctance to sharing personal information on the Internet for French-speaking cultures (Garnier and McDonald, 2009). A mapping of cultural differences in Internet usage reveals that France and Belgium are clear laggards, whereas the UK, USA, and Ireland are on the innovators side (Hofstede et al., 2010)

Some similarities however exist between the two cultures. Belgium, France and the UK are all characterised as having a 'middle' context in terms of communication style (Hall 1976), meaning that they are neither extremely explicit nor extremely implicit cultures. This implies that the explicitness of their communication on social media should be about the same. Moreover, French-speaking countries and English speaking countries have similar levels of individualism according to Hofstede (2014), both being quite high. This is an important factor to consider when studying social media interactions and it suggests that both cultural samples will behave similarly in terms of social interactions, which might be different with highly collectivist cultures such as China (Jackson and Wang, 2013).

Table 10: Research contexts in key OBC and consumer engagement studies

Paper	Language (Country)	Brand	Product category
Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001	English (US)	Ford Bronco, Macintosh, and Saab	Automotive and Technology
McAlexander et al., 2002	English (US)	Jeep and Harley Davidson	Automotive
Dholakia et al., 2004	English (US)	Unknown	Unknown
Muñiz and Schau, 2005	English (US)	Apple Newton	Technology (hardware)
Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006	English (US)	Harley Davidson	Automotive
Carlson et al., 2008	English (US)	US theme park	Entertainment
Schau et al., 2009	English (US)	Multiple brands	Technology, Food and Beverage, Culture, Automotive, Cosmetics
Adjei et al., 2010	English (US)	Unknown	Machinery and telecoms
Heere et al., 2011	English (US)	University football teams	Entertainment
Calder et al., 2009	English (US)	Several newspapers and magazines	Media
Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010	English (US)	Multiple brands including Pantene, Michael Kors, Dolce & Gabbana, etc.	Fashion and beauty
Calder et al., 2013	English (US)	Several newspapers and magazines	Media
Vivek et al., 2014	English (US)	Multiple brands including Costco, Apple, Xbox.	Multiple categories including retail, entertainment and technology
Gruner et al., 2014	English	Unknown	Durable goods
Habibi et al., 2014	English	Jeep and Harley Davidson	Automotive
Hollebeek and Chen, 2014	English (New-Zealand)	Apple and Samsung Mobile	Telecom
Hollebeek et al., 2014	English (New-Zealand)	Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter	Social media
Scott and Craig-Lees, 2010	English (Australia)	Unknown	Entertainment
So et al., 2013	English (Australia)	Unknown	Tourism
O'Sullivan et al., 2011	English (Ireland)	Beamish Beer	Food and Beverage

Paper	Language (Country)	Brand	Product category
Wallace et al., 2014	English (Ireland)	Multiple brands	Multiple categories including beverages, fashion, retail, music, etc.
Brodie et al., 2013	English (New-Zealand)	Vibra-Train	Health and Fitness
Hollebeek, 2013	English (New-Zealand)	Multiple brands including Nivea, Mercedes-Benz or Disney	Multiple categories including cosmetics, automotive, entertainment etc.
Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014	English (Scotland)	Scotrail	Transportation services
Matzler et al., 2011	German	Volkswagen	Automotive
Füller et al., 2008	German (Austria)	Volkswagen	Automotive
Algesheimer et al., 2005	German (Germany)	Volkswagen, Mercedes, BMW, and other car brands	Automotive
Hung et al., 2011	Chinese (China)	Multiple brands	Multiple categories
Zhou et al., 2013	Chinese (China)	Unknown	Unknown
Cova and Pace, 2006	Italian (Italy)	Nutella	Food and Beverage
Marzocchi et al., 2013	Italian (Italy)	Ducati	Automotive
Ouwensloot and Odekerken-Schröder, 2008	Dutch and French (The Netherlands and Belgium)	Settlers of Catan and Swatch	Entertainment and Fashion
Sarkar and Sreejesh 2014	Hindi (India)	Unknown	Automotive
Thompson and Sinha, 2008	Unknown	Intel, AMD, ATI and NVIDIA microprocessors and video cards	Technology (hardware)
Kim et al., 2008	Unknown	Herbal product brand	Cosmetics
Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010	Unknown	Unknown	Online service
Homburg et al., 2015	Unknown	10 different brands	Unknown
Gambetti et al., 2012	Unknown	Multiple brands, including Citroen, Coca-Cola, Dove, etc.	Multiple categories including beverages, automotive, personal care etc.
Gummerus et al, 2012	Unknown	Unknown	Gaming

3.7. Summary

This chapter has presented the development of the conceptual framework of the study. Firstly, the concept of consumer engagement has been defined in terms of the OBC context. By doing so, three boundary conditions of this study have been determined: (1) The subject of engagement is identified as the consumer, who is defined as the individual member of the OBC; (2) The partners of engagement are on the one hand the OBC, representing the community of other OBC members, and on the other hand the brand, enacted by the page manager(s) and (3) The three dimensions and seven sub-dimensions of consumer engagement are defined and detailed. On this basis, Figure 9 depicts the partners, dimensions and sub-dimensions of consumer engagement in an OBC.

Based on this understanding, the conceptual model of consumer engagement in OBC has been proposed, offering a range of antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement, as well as the relationship between consumer engagement with the OBC and with the brand. Specifically, the antecedents include OIP, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement. The outcomes encompass brand trust, commitment and behavioural loyalty.

The chapter closed with a discussion concerning the validation of the study's hypotheses. Validating the original English survey results in another language has been deemed necessary and French is proposed as a validation language. The benefits and rationale for this choice have been explained in detail.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the key methodological choices and the rationale driving the empirical design of the study. A series of decisions regarding methodology are made (Bryman, 2008) and presented in this chapter. The process of research and different steps implemented in order to seek out knowledge in the context of this study are detailed (Schwandt, 2007). Care is given to each aspect of the methodology, ensuring that they are consistent with one another and with the research question articulated in this study.

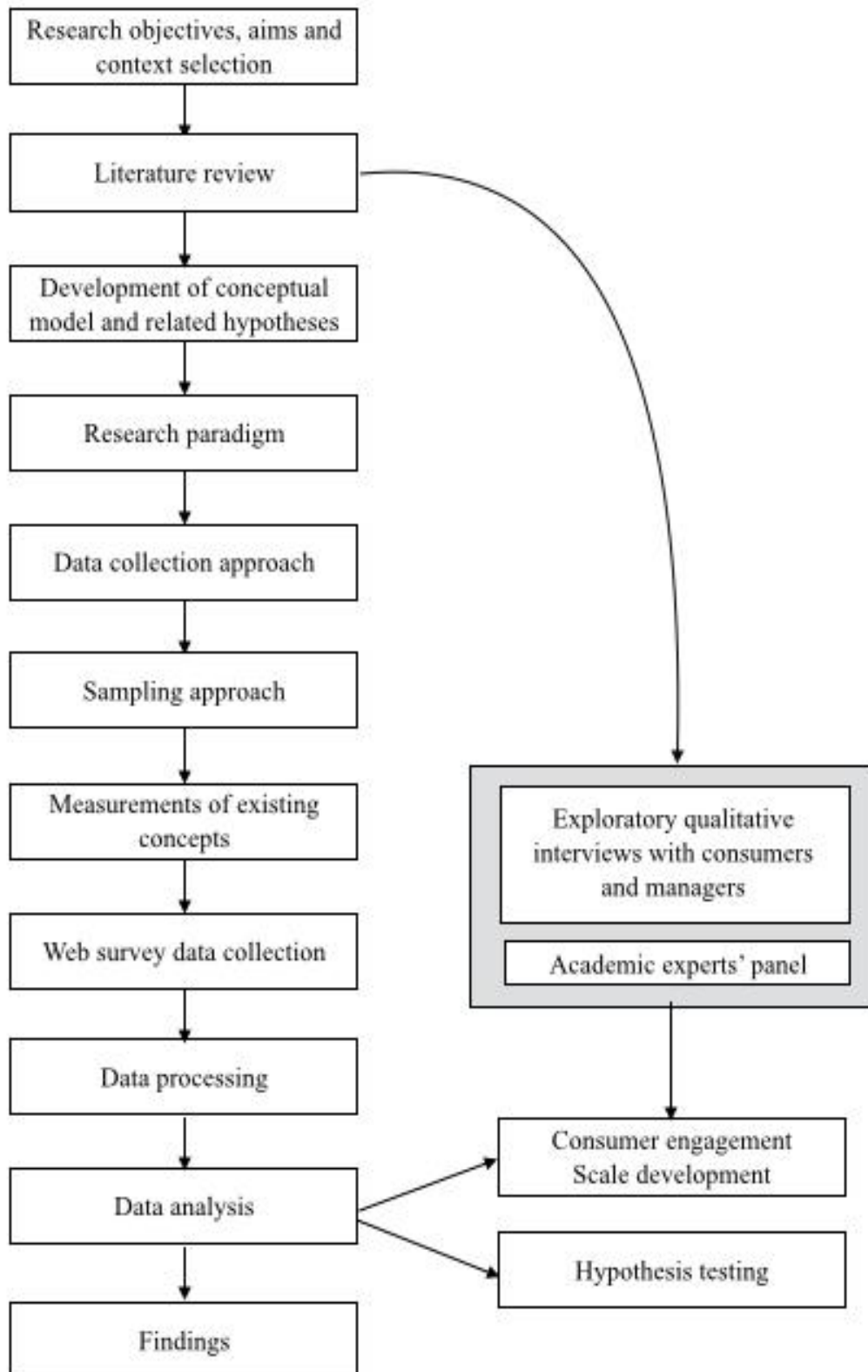
To establish a framework guiding the methodological choices of the study, a thorough literature review allowed clarifying the concepts under investigation and their relationships. This leads to the development of a conceptual framework of consumer engagement in OBC and a series of hypotheses, making up the causal model of this study. These were presented in Chapter 3 along with the specification of the domain of interest and boundary assumptions of the study.

This chapter details each of the methodological choices made in order to achieve the study's objective and provides a rationale for these choices, at strategic and tactical levels. The detailed research process is presented in Figure 14 below. Firstly, in line with the study aims and objectives, a paradigmatic stance is chosen and argued for in detail. The context in which the study is set is then outlined. Data collection methods are then presented, focusing on the research instrument creation, administration, pretest and pilot. The sampling issues are then addressed, presenting this study's approach to sampling and response bias, as well as the sample characteristics. A presentation of the chosen data analysis techniques concludes the chapter¹.

Moreover, the chapter addresses elements of method equivalence and bias related to validation of the study with a French-speaking sample. These permeate every aspect of the methodology (instrument design, administration and sampling) (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004) and are thus detailed throughout the chapter.

¹ Although measurement of existing scales and the consumer engagement scale development are part of the research process, these aspects of the research are presented in a dedicated chapter. Since they represent a substantial part of this thesis, focusing a full chapter to these issues was deemed appropriate.

Figure 14: The research process



4.2. The research paradigm

A paradigm, worldview or ‘weltanschauung’ is a set of linked assumptions about the world, which is shared by a community of scientists investigating that world (Kuhn, 1962). Paradigms are fundamental because they serve as guides, or frameworks for any given issue under investigation. They allow researchers to find out which problems are worthy of exploration and provide organising principles and the criteria to choose the appropriate research tools (Filstead, 1979). To each worldview corresponds a set of philosophical assumptions. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) refer to these assumptions as basic beliefs, and include ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology answers the question ‘what is the nature of reality?’ while epistemology addresses the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, 2007).

Different philosophical assumptions regarding epistemology and ontology lead to different paradigms, and these are closely related to the stated aims and objectives of a piece of research. The main research paradigms are summarised by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) under five overarching philosophical stances: positivism, post-positivism, critical realism, constructivism and participatory.

In line with the research questions and study objective, the paradigmatic stance driving this research is **post-positivism**. This study adopts an objective ontology and a modified objective epistemology. Following an objective ontology, this study is based on the belief that there is an objective reality in the world, independent of what we think about it, and the purpose of this study is thus to reach an accurate representation of this reality. However, in line with Johnson and Duberley (2000), the contingent, negotiated and dynamic nature of social structures is acknowledged, as well the active role of individuals in creating what they apprehend. For this reason, this study adopts a modified objectivist epistemology in the sense that objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, which is however difficult to maintain (Healy and Perry, 2000). On these ontological and epistemological grounds, the study aims to apprehend reality as closely as possible but admit that this cannot be done perfectly due to the fallibility of observations.

This reasoning is further supported by the nature of the research questions. RQ 2 and RQ 3 are primarily concerned with causal relationships and seeking to identify clear, objective relationships between consumer engagement, its drivers and outcomes. These questions are

thus rather guided by a positivist agenda, which can be defined as seeking truth in causality.

Positivism *'traces its origins back to the great social theorists of the nineteenth century and especially to Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. The positivist seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals'* (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, p. 2). For positivists, there is a single truth that can be measured and studied with total objectivity, with no interaction between the researcher and the researched (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Because positivism assumes that social reality is made up of objective facts, it entails that value-free researchers can precisely measure and use statistics to test causal theories. Methods used are grounded in the conventional natural sciences and quantitative methods are often, but not exclusively used. Positivism often uses a deductive approach of inquiry to test general law (Bryman, 2008), in which the replication and falsification principles play an important role. In this sense, RQ2 and RQ3 seem clearly in line with a positivist perspective. However, the central role of consumer engagement in this exercise shifts the adequate paradigm toward a post-positivist approach.

Indeed, RQ1, upon which RQ2 and RQ3 are dependent, requires a slightly different treatment. There is an exploratory and subjective aspect associated with the exercise of creating a measure of consumer engagement. Prior to reaching an adequate measurement of the concept, it is important to engage in qualitative research in order to inform the quantitative phase and create adequate items to measure the concept. This research question therefore requires a modified approach to the positivistic epistemology inherent to RQ2 and RQ3.

As a critical offspring of positivism, post-positivism bears similarities and differences with it. Like logical positivism, post-positivism is often associated with quantitative research and favours deductivism and hypothesis testing for theory verification (Creswell and Clark, 2008). In this sense, post-positivists pursue objectivity. However, they also acknowledge that we can only approximate nature. While positivists believe that the researcher and the researched person are independent of each other, post-positivists accept that theories, background, knowledge and values of the individuals can influence what is observed (Robson, 2011) and that nature can never be fully understood. Scientific method and hypothetical deduction are still favoured, but structured qualitative approaches and questions are more prominent than in positivism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Merriam et al.,

2007). Overall, post-positivists consider one reality, but several perceptions of that reality must be combined to obtain a better picture of it (Healy and Perry, 2000).

Consistent with post-positivism, the study follows a series of logical steps where methods are predominantly quantitative, but purposive qualitative data are used, and essential to informing and fine-tuning quantitative phases (Creswell, 2007). As Bryman (2008) holds, deductivism carries elements of inductiveness as well, and this research therefore carries some elements of qualitative enquiry to support a predominantly quantitative focus (Ritchie et al., 2013).

A cross-sectional design is used, with an embedded sequential approach for the purpose of the consumer engagement scale development: the core quantitative phase is complemented in this study by a supporting qualitative phase (Ritchie et al., 2013) for the main purpose of item generation and domain specification (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative phase of this study thus has an input role and is mostly instrumental to addressing RQ1, whereas the quantitative phase has an output role and informs the empirical findings.

4.3. Study settings

4.3.1. Social media

This study is set in the context of social media, focusing more specifically on Facebook as an ideal social media platform for the study of OBC. Social media are firstly chosen as an appropriate context adapted to the investigation of consumer engagement in OBC.

‘Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content’ (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

The extant OBC literature shows that social media represent adequate environments for the investigation of OBC dynamics. More specifically, studies have investigated the functioning and benefits of OBCs in environments such as proprietary brand websites and forums (Casaló et al., 2008; Casaló et al., 2010; Cova and White, 2010; Healy and McDonagh, 2010; Garnefield et al., 2012), bulletin boards (Dholakia et al., 2004; Faraj and

Johnson, 2011), online chat systems and multiplayer virtual games (Dholakia et al., 2004) and social networking sites (hereafter SNS) such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube or Twitter (De Vries et al., 2012; Chang et al., 2013; Chauhan and Pillai, 2013; Ewing et al., 2013; Fielder and Sarstedt, 2014).

There are two key reasons why social media are particularly suited to the investigation of OBC participation. Firstly, social media foster relationships between individuals and between individuals and brands (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). They allow users to connect with friends and like-minded individuals and engage in asynchronous and synchronous communication. Relationship building is also achieved through fanpages, social media advertising and sponsored posts (Girona and Korgaonkar, 2014). Unlike traditional media, social media offer abundant scope for users to communicate back with the brand (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013; Colliander et al., 2015) and embed brand-interactions in a social network of relationships with other users (Trusov et al., 2009). As a result, social media are increasingly considered as adequate tools to build consumer relationships with and about a brand (Casaló et al., 2010).

Secondly, social media's fundamental premise is User-Generated Content (UGC), whereby content is produced and developed by different participants in a continuous and collaborative manner (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). UGC, which achieved broad popularity in 2005, is an umbrella term that contains various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users from text to video and audio materials (ibid, 2010). UGC satisfies information and expressive needs, which are core to OBC participation (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). By fostering UGC, social media give ground to rich OBCs by satisfying consumers' need to give and get information. Lastly, Christodoulides et al. (2011) point out that UGC is the most recent manifestation of consumers' desire to engage.

For these two reasons, and with the support of existing OBC research in this context, social media are considered an appropriate environment for the investigation of consumer engagement in OBC (Brodie et al., 2013; Chauhan and Pillai, 2013).

4.3.2. Facebook pages

Considering the range of social media platforms and environments, Facebook Pages are chosen as the specific context of investigation of this study for several reasons. Firstly, they qualify to the basic defining criteria of OBC: they are focused on a specific brand

(Janh and Kunz, 2012), exhibit instances of consciousness of kind, moral responsibility and shared values, and support relationships with other consumers and the brand (Gummerus et al., 2012; Chang et al., 2013; Zaglia, 2013). Secondly, Facebook Pages are chosen over other forms of social media branded account (such as branded Twitter profiles, for instance) because they share closer similarities with the definition of OBC. Facebook Pages have more clear-cut boundaries. Being a member of the Page requires a voluntary choice of affiliation (Zaglia, 2013), which is a stronger commitment than ‘following’ a branded profile on Twitter, for instance.

Facebook is a Social Networking Site² (SNS), which functions as a network of interconnected individual profiles. It allows the creation of individual profiles and gives the possibility to post content in the form of text, video or pictures (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The business model of Facebook is based on certain levels of information disclosure, which allows monetisation of the site. On Facebook, individuals connect with friends or colleagues, but other forms of relationship affiliation also exist (Trusov et al., 2009). In particular, individuals can connect with brands through the so-called ‘Pages’. Indeed, brands, like any other member of Facebook, have the ability to create a profile, called a ‘Page’. According to Facebook, ‘pages allow real organisations, businesses, celebrities and brands to communicate broadly with people who like them. Pages may only be created and managed by official representatives’ (Facebook, 2015a). Facebook Pages are different from Facebook ‘Groups’, which can be created by anyone. In 2014, Facebook has more than 30 million pages on which people interact. This makes it the biggest hub for companies to create an official OBC (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013).

Research shows that Facebook pages are reflective and supportive of the consumer’s relationship with a brand (de Vries et al., 2012; Malhotra et al., 2012). Pages allow brand fans to share their enthusiasm about the brand and be united by their common interest in the brand, and conversely provide a source of information and social benefits to the members (Dholakia et al., 2004). On these brand fan pages, companies can create brand posts containing anecdotes, photos, videos, or other material; brand fans can then interact with these brand posts by liking or commenting on them (de Vries et al., 2012).

² A Social Networking Site (SNS) is a type of social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) which has experienced extreme success and growth in the last ten years (Blazevic et al., 2014).

Twitter was also considered, as it is the second most popular SNS (Smith et al., 2012). However, it was rejected on several grounds. Firstly, Facebook is more popular than Twitter, therefore granting a bigger scope to this research. In 2015, Facebook is, with over 1 billion active users (Facebook, 2015b), the most popular SNS in existence and it still dominates the market over competitors, such as Twitter, who has just over 284 million active users (Statista, 2014). Moreover, according to the PEW research centre, 71 percent of adult Internet users use Facebook while 23 percent of Internet users are on Twitter in 2014. Although Facebook's overall growth has slowed and other sites continue to see increases in usership, Facebook remains the most popular social media site (Pew Research Centre, 2015).

4.4. Data collection

This section is concerned with the different stages involved in collecting data to answer the research questions and test the related hypotheses. The design of the research instrument is addressed first, followed by the method of administration and the pre-test and pilot phases.

4.4.1. Instrument design

The survey was designed using a rigorous process, involving a number of decisions regarding the question content (measurement, wording and type of questions used) and their sequence, as well as the physical form of the questionnaire (Churchill, 1999). These steps were then re-examined in order to ensure coherence and consistency of the final instrument.

The **content of the questions** is largely addressed in the measurement sections detailed further on. That section deals with sources of the existing scales that are used and explains the development of the consumer engagement scales. Both in the adaptation of existing scales and development of the new ones, care was given to having purposeful, precise and complete questions (Czaja and Blair, 2005). Churchill (1999) and Bryman (2008) provide a checklist of question utility criteria which guided the researcher's assessment of each item content. Following these guidelines, it was ensured that each question measured some

aspect of the research questions, which all required information was gathered and that wording was clear enough for all respondents to understand the questions in the same way.

In terms of the **response strategy**, multiple-choice, closed questions were used in the survey. This type of response strategy is considered the most appropriate for self-administered surveys (Czaja and Blair, 2005). They ensure ease of information recoding, save analysis time, and ensure response format homogeneity (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). More specifically, seven-point Likert scales were used to tap into the strength and direction of respondent's attitudes and behaviours. Strictly speaking, Likert scales are ordinal scales. There is however a widespread tendency to use Likert scale for interval based techniques such as factor analyses or structural equation modelling (DeVellis, 2012), based on the premise that the psychological distance on a Likert scale, if not equal, are extremely close (Kennedy et al., 1996). This treatment of the Likert scale as an interval scale is common (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004) and is considered best for self-administered and online surveys (Hair et al., 2006).

Seven-point scales were used for several reasons. Firstly, this amount of points is required in order to perform a successful factor analysis (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). Secondly, scales with an uneven number and thus providing a neutral option in the middle are preferable. Respondents might not feel strongly about an issue (Czaja and Blair, 2005) and might otherwise feel that they are forced to take a stance (Cox, 1980). Finally, seven points seem the appropriate number, as scales with a larger amount of point do not tend to improve reliability or validity (Dawes, 2008).

An 'agree' scale was used following Dillman (2000), anchoring it with 1 equals 'completely disagree' and 7 equals 'completely agree'. Only end-points were labelled to elicit a finer variance of responses (Czaja and Blair, 2005).

In addition to a majority of Likert scales, a semantic differential scale is used as well to tap into the construct of attitude toward OBC participation, as detailed in the measurement section. Providing a different type of response strategy on some answers is also a way to ensure continued attention of the respondent and avoid automated responses that a single response strategy can elicit.

The next aspect of instrument regards the **questions wording**. In line with leading research on survey design (Churchill, 1999; Buckingham and Saunders, 2004; Czaja and Blair,

2005; Bryman, 2008), great care was taken to avoid the general pitfalls of question wording: double-barrelled or ambiguous questions, use of jargon, long items, leading or too general questions. In a limited amount of instances, existing scales exhibited tangential wording, which could be ambiguous or double-barrelled (e.g. 'In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with others online'). Due to reliance on existing scales, the risk of such problems was minimised. Throughout the questionnaire, simple words were used, bearing in mind that the smallest common denominator in terms of respondent profile was an 18 year old person. The researcher also avoided theoretical jargon (e.g. 'brand community') to use context- and user-relevant wording (e.g. 'page'). These considerations were further taken care of in the pre-test and pilot phases.

Reverse-coding items were avoided as much as possible. Their advantage is to allow the avoidance of response sets, which is a common issue with Likert scales (Bryman, 2008). However, experience shows that negatively-worded questions confuse the respondent (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004), who then do not tend to answer in line with their overall attitude. Overall, it is considered that the disadvantages of items worded in an opposite directions outweigh any benefits (DeVellis, 2012).

Another major element of the question wording was the **translation** of the English questionnaire in French to allow validation of the study. In this process, translation equivalence had to be ensured to control as much as possible for this form of instrument and item bias (Douglas and Craig, 2006). Translation equivalence means that the translated questions convey the same meaning across cultures. In order to achieve translation equivalence, the questionnaire was translated using iterative team-based translation principles in line with existing guidelines (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004; Douglas and Craig, 2006). The questionnaire was first translated from English to French by the lead researcher of this study, who is bilingual. This version was then submitted to a bilingual management researcher (French living in the UK for 15 years), a bilingual marketing professional (Belgian working in English), a linguist (Belgian English teacher with 25 years' experience), a bilingual student (Irish student fluent in French) and a bilingual Scottish journalist. Each individual reviewed the translation and fed back to the lead researcher with comments and modifications to the translation, who then made changes and fed them back to the team. An iterative procedure was used whereby the lead researcher and the translation team collaborated until all parties agreed upon a satisfactory version (Craig and Douglas, 2006).

Using this procedure, item translation, ambiguity in the original item wording, appropriateness and familiarity of item wording or connotations associated with item wording could be accounted for, in line with van de Vijver and Tanzer's (2004) most common sources of item bias. For instance, it was noted by one of the translators that 'interagir' was a poor French translation of 'interact' that would likely confuse the respondent. It was replaced by 'participer activement', which reflect active participation. Another translator commented on the meaning in French of terms such as 'transported', 'punishing' and 'to detach oneself'. Although these terms make sense in English, their literal French translation is seldom used, calling for a more common way to phrase them, which was then decided based on the translator's suggestions. On the other hand, other elements of the questionnaire, such as the reference to a Facebook 'fan' or 'page' were kept in English in the French version of the questionnaire despite their linguistic inaccuracy, because this is the wording used on Facebook in both languages. Translating these words literally in the French questionnaire would have made no sense, and instead confuse the respondent. Based on these considerations, the final version of the French questionnaire was agreed upon by all members of the translating team.

The **sequence of the questions** was also subject to careful consideration. The survey started with a screening question ensuring that the respondents were all above 18 years of age, to comply with the University of Glasgow's ethics requirements. An introductory statement then explained the purpose and content of the survey (Bryman, 2008), as well as a link to the Plain Language Statement. The sequence of the survey then followed general rules of survey structure, making sure that earlier items were simple (Baker, 2003), immediately associated with the subject matter (Dillman, 2000) and going from general to specific, and simple to more complex. The survey was broken down into 5 main parts, ensuring that transition between each section was clearly explained and logical; to facilitate the respondent's mental processing. The instrument opened with simple questions about Facebook overall participation. After asking the respondent to communicate which brand page they were answering about, all brand-related items were introduced, including brand engagement, followed by all category-related items. All community-related questions constituted the next part, covering brand-community engagement. The survey concluded with demographic questions. Placing ego-involving questions as the end is a common practice to avoid the participant feeling threatened (Breugelmans, 2008).

As **response rate** is a major concern for online surveys, particular care was taken to make the survey experience as positive as possible. Previous researchers (e.g. Oppenheim, 2000) have suggested a number of techniques to increase response rate, some of which are used in this research. The physical aspect of the questionnaire plays an important role in motivating respondents to participate and finish the survey (Churchill, 1999). Bearing this in mind, the survey was designed to be limited to eight full pages, however with breaks between sections, numbered pages, and arrows for skip instructions, as recommended by Dillman (2000). A progress bar was also visible on each page, in order to reduce the drop-out rate (Couper et al., 2001). An enticing and clear introductory paragraph was written, which detailed the purpose of the study, content of the questionnaire, reason for selection of the respondent, and confidentiality approach. Instructions throughout the questionnaire were as clear as possible (e.g. 'Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statement') (Bryman, 2008; Das et al., 2011). The visual aspect of response options was also taken care of. Likert scales were presented in an item by scale point table, with radio buttons. Numeric scales with a large amount of possible responses (e.g. year of birth, country of residence, daily amount of time spent online) used a drop-down menu. Those with a small amount of possible responses (five and below) were presented with horizontal radio buttons. Overall, the layout of the questionnaire was conservative, in the shades of blue and time new roman font, because it is considered more professional (Oppenheim, 2000).

An incentive was also given to participants, in the form of three £100 Amazon vouchers, to be won through a lucky draw at the end of the data collection. The researcher felt it was necessary to give a big incentive given the length of the questionnaire (up to 20 minutes if done properly), and incentives are known to improve response rates (Churchill, 1999).

Contacting page administrators was achieved with a clean, professional and interesting cover letter, as shown in Appendix 1. Affiliation with the University was stressed, and a condensed version of the results was offered upon request. Follow-up was done within one week of non-response; however it did not prove to successfully enhance the response rate of page administrators. This was mostly due to the fact that most of them could not post third-party information on the page as a rule, and no amount of convincing could change their internal policy.

Lastly, an **iterative approach** was taken to creating the survey instrument, as the first draft of a questionnaire seldom leads straight to the final instrument (Churchill, 1999). Numerous rounds of revisions occurred, based on re-examination by the researcher, comments from supervisors, and reviews from colleagues. These rounds of review allowed identifying major problems in the sequence, wording and usefulness of questions. The major steps subsequently taken to evaluate the quality of the drafted instrument are detailed in the pre-test and pilot section.

4.4.2. Administration

A **self-completion online survey** was used to collect data. More specifically, a web-based and communication-based method was used (Bryman, 2008). ‘Web-based’ signifies that the data were collected through the Internet with the use of an online questionnaire created on and supported by the surveymonkey.com application. Communication-based approach means that an online communication medium was used as the place where the questionnaire could be accessed. In this case, the questionnaire was accessible through the sampled Facebook pages (see sampling section below). Data collection was thus asynchronous, as the respondents had the freedom to answer the self-completion questionnaire whenever they chose to.

The choice of an online self-administered survey was motivated by several reasons. Firstly, survey is considered the most appropriate tool to obtain data to test hypotheses (Baker, 2001). Matching the method to the research problem, and not vice versa, was the rationale (Creswell, 2003). Surveys are particularly appropriate to the investigation of concepts, theory testing, and analysing relationships (Klassen and Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, key advantages of surveys, and online surveys in particular, are their ability to accommodate large sample size at relatively low cost, whilst tapping into factors that are more rapid, and allow increased design options (Das et al. 2011). Online surveys have no geographic boundaries (Dillman and Bowker, 2001), which makes them particularly suited to the investigation of such large-scale phenomena as consumer engagement on OBC. Additionally, although self-administered surveys involve the researcher losing control over the process, and potential lack of truthfulness of the respondent, it also implies lowering confidentiality issues for them as they have the control, and therefore balance the truthfulness issue.

The biggest issue related to self-administered online surveys is the high, and highly variable non-response rate, with a mean of 32 percent and a standard deviation of 19 percent (Cook et al., 2000), which are respectively much lower, and more variable than other methods. Coverage can also be an issue when the population of interest does not have Internet access (Couper, 2000), however this issue is eliminated from this study given the inherent online profile of the population. Response errors can also appear due to misunderstanding of the questions (Churchill, 1999). In general, survey methodologies are associated with a number of sampling and non-sampling errors (Hair et al., 2006), and sample bias is particularly common for online samples (Hewson et al., 2003). These issues are tackled in the sampling section below.

The online survey was generated using the application 'SurveyMonkey'. SurveyMonkey was chosen because it provides high flexibility in questionnaire design (scale types, format and layout, skip logics, filter questions, etc.), administration (custom administration link) and data retrieval formats (Das et al., 2011).

In line with the sampling procedure detailed further, the link to the survey was communicated to the administrators of the Facebook pages, who were in charge of posting it on the platforms, with a word of explanation. A standard post was suggested, but freedom was left to the page manager to post what they thought was best suited to their community. Subsequently, the post appeared on the Timeline of the Facebook page, allowing its members to view it whenever they clicked on the page. Moreover, the newsfeed feature allows posts by followed page to appear on the user's homepage whenever they connect onto their Facebook account. Facebook uses an algorithm to show relevant posts on the newsfeed, rendering it impossible to have control over the audience of the post. Once the page members clicked on the survey link, they were redirected to the survey and assumed answering it.

This way of contacting the respondents ensured that only people with prior brand page experience were approached. Recent brand page experience was a pre-requisite to have the required level of knowledge and memory to answer the questionnaire (Churchill, 1999; Bryman, 2008). These criteria were ensured, thanks to the specific format of survey administration method adopted.

Lastly, **administration bias** was also accounted for when collecting data on the French-speaking sample. Methodological issues can arise in this process if there are differences in

the ways participants are recruited, in the environmental administration conditions or any ambiguity in the instructions given by the researcher (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004). A careful replication of the administration procedures from the English to the French-speaking survey ensured that such problems could not arise. The same piece of online data-collection software was used, it was posted in the same way on the Facebook pages by the administrators, and the same detailed instructions and incentive were given to the French-speaking participants. Following the translation equivalence procedure detailed above, all communication with the French-speaking page administrator was also carefully monitored for equivalence. Lastly, temporal equivalence was also ensured as the two samples were collected simultaneously, which is particularly relevant when dealing with consumer phenomena subject to evolutionary change (Garnier and McDonald, 2009).

4.4.3. Pre-test and pilot

Even after careful crafting of the instrument, the researcher can still miss important issues, which pre-test and pilot studies can help detect (Czaja and Blair, 2005). From a scale development perspective, psychometricians advocate that once an item pool has been judged, modified and or trimmed by experts, pilot testing on a larger sample ($n = 100-200$) from a relevant population is in order (Haynes et al., 1995).

Pre-testing was first carried out on a small sample of friends and colleagues in order to judge how long it took and identify obvious problems in wording, instructions or question sequence (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). The respondents were selected due to their expertise in either marketing, linguistics, survey design, or a combination of the three, as it is suggested that 'expert' should be used as pre-test respondents (Diamantopoulos et al., 1994). One marketing student, one marketing manager, one journalist and four researchers in total read the questionnaire, answered it, and provided written and verbal feedback to the researcher. They helped identify complex wording and language issues in the questions and instructions and reorganise the order of the sections into a more logic way. For instance, the survey was initially asking questions about the community right after the respondent had identified the brand, which they were answering about. It was pointed out that it made more sense to keep the brand-related questions right after eliciting the brand name, as the brand was then prominent in the respondent's mind. The brand-related section was thus moved forward, keeping the community-related questions at the end. Advice on how to word a motivating foreword was also given. It is also important to point out that the whole questionnaire was pretested, not just the newly developed items, as borrowed items

also require review (Czaja and Blair, 2005). The pre-test questionnaire was administered using the final data collection application, surveymonkey, so the participants could also experience the real survey conditions.

The pre-test was followed by a pilot study on a larger number of respondents. The aim of a pilot study is, not only to detect problems in the questionnaire wording or sequencing, but also to ensure that the questionnaire is generating a range of answers, indicating variance for the final stage (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). Secondly, pilot studies allow making an initial assessment of internal consistency, means, variances, inter-item correlations and factor structure (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

There is no set answer to the appropriate number of pilot respondents: it can vary from half a dozen to a hundred, or above (Tull and Hawkins, 1987). DeVellis (2012) as many as 300 responses depending on the number of items, while Clark and Watson (1995) suggest that $n=100$ to 200 is reasonable. Within the scope of this survey, a total of 101 pilot responses were considered sufficient given the number of items.

A second consideration is the sample composition. Authors contend that the pilot population needs to be similar to the respondents in the actual study (Churchill, 1999), and that convenience sample of students are acceptable (Netemeyer et al., 2003). In this study, a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate university students was used, which qualifies to the basic requirements of pilot sampling. Moreover, given that half of the Facebook population is between 18 and 34 years of age (Statista, 2015a), the researcher felt that students in this age range was an appropriate sample for the pilot and broadly representative of the final population.

Regarding administration of the questionnaire, it is appreciated that the pilot study should mimic the survey conditions as much as possible, i.e. use the same instrument and administration method (Czaja and Blair, 2005). In order to do so, the survey was promoted online, using the same surveymonkey tool as the final questionnaire. It was however not posted on a Facebook page. Given the nature of the pilot population, the best way to reach them was by posting the survey on the university's online learning platform, with a short text inviting them to take part in the study, on a completely voluntary basis, yet entirely unrelated to their university assessment or performance.

As a result, the pre-test and pilot highlighted a number of modifications to be made to the questionnaire prior to its large-scale dissemination. Firstly, it provided indications as per the sampling of Facebook pages. Liberty was given to the respondent to choose the brand and type of Facebook group they wanted to refer to (official pages or consumer groups). Firstly, it became apparent that Fashion and beauty was to be included in the list of brand categories to target. Moreover, it appeared that large-size pages were top-of-mind for the respondents, highlighting the need to represent them in the pages targeted. Moreover, confirmation of the theoretical focus on company-managed pages was given because respondents selected them in majority over consumer-governed groups.

Secondly, the pilot and pre-test gave insight into the wording of the items, particularly for the newly-developed consumer engagement items. Redundancies were pointed out as well as unclear meaning of some words. It also appeared that if the OBC engagement and online brand engagement were placed back to back, the respondents could not differentiate them; they were therefore separated in the final questionnaire.

Lastly, a simple statistical analysis of the composition of answers revealed that all items and constructs exhibited good internal consistency scores and, overall, normality. Purification of the consumer engagement item also appeared as necessary in future stages, as some items exhibited skew or high construct-level Cronbach's Alpha, which can be understood as an indication of item redundancy. These are dealt with in the scale development section.

Following both the pre-test and pilot phases, the instrument for the large-scale survey was finalised. It can be found in Appendix 2 in English and in Appendix 3 in French.

4.5. Sample design

4.5.1. Sampling approach

A number of sampling issues are inherent to OBC research and the application of traditional data collection methods like surveys to OBC settings represent certain challenges. This is particularly true for forms of OBC like official Facebook pages. For example, these OBC members fall into the category of 'unique populations' which are only

accessible through dedicated channels – the OBC, and in certain ways (Wright, 2005). In a sense, OBC members are akin to what is defined as a ‘hidden population’ because these individuals are hard to reach through traditional means (Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004). Although members’ identity is revealed to the page administrators, there is no publicly disclosed list of the members of an official Facebook page, primarily for privacy concerns.

Additionally, determining the actual sample size when sampling OBC members can be difficult. As Preece and Maloney-Krichmar (2005) explain, online community populations have unclear boundaries, often due to content visibility settings, making sampling tricky and prone to errors. Although official Facebook pages exhibit the number of ‘Likes’ that they have, allowing knowing the number of registered members on the page, this does not imply that all members are active on the page and that they will see page posts. Active participation to the community can be extremely sporadic (Preece et al., 2004), to the point that members never see content posted by the brand. This can be the case when a page member never voluntarily visits the page and has unsubscribed from page updates.

In view of these sampling issues intrinsic to OBC research, a two-stage, non-probabilistic sampling design is used (Churchill, 1999). The primary sampling unit is not the unit of population to be studied but groupings of those units. In this study, the cluster is the official Facebook page in its capacity of OBC. The sampling approach used for this layer is purposive (Bryman, 2008). The second sampling unit, which constitutes the unit of analysis of this study, is the individual page member, or consumer. Due to the challenges posed by the nature of OBC, sampling for this layer is a convenience, self-selected sample, in line with existing research in this field (Casaló et al., 2010; Breitshold et al., 2015). This section details this two-stage sample design.

4.5.2. Stage 1: Sampling of the Facebook pages

The first stage of the sampling approach consists in focusing on the Facebook pages as a sample unit. The selection of the sampling frame is purposive to the study (Kozinets, 1999) and follows a number of inclusion and exclusion criteria. In line with the defining characteristics of OBCs highlighted in Chapter 2, this study focuses on official Facebook pages managed by the brand, of diverse sizes and duration, and exhibiting specific forms of relationship structure on the online environment, as detailed in Table 12.

Table 11: Facebook pages characteristics

Criterion	Characteristics
Governance	In official Facebook pages, governance is always assumed by the brand itself, or its representative (if for instance, social media accounts are managed externally by an agency). Facebook groups, in contrast, can be managed by consumers (Zaglia, 2013). Having a brand-governed OBC as a context of investigation was important to ensure that brands were present as relationship partners because, in consumer-lead OBCs, brand might be entirely absent of the community.
Marketplace orientation	This study focuses on brand communities supporting the marketplace. Since Facebook pages are created and managed by the brand, they aim to support rather than counter market dynamics. Although consumers might be able to express their more negative views on Facebook pages, these are often actively managed and dealt with by the brand.
Size	Facebook supports pages of any size, from one fan at their inception to over 5 million fans like the 'Facebook for every phone' page (Statista, 2015b) and this study does not discriminate pages based on their size.
Duration	With the existence of their pages feature since 2007, Facebook allows these communities to exist on a relatively stable basis. This study does not consider OBC longevity as a selection criterion.
Relationship types	On Facebook pages, relationships are akin to those of pools or hubs (Fournier and Lee, 2009) according to a study evidencing the differences between Facebook pages and Facebook groups (Zaglia, 2013). Members of pages feel more connected to the community as a whole rather than to individual others and the common focus of the page is core to this relationship (ibid., 2013).
Space	Facebook pages are by nature online forms of OBCs. However, they often promote real-life activities organised or sponsored by the brand, therefore bridging offline and online participation.

Product category was also a selection criterion for the sampling of Facebook pages; not as a way to restrict the type of pages included, but as a way to ensure that all relevant categories were covered. At the time of the data collection (March-June 2014) Facebook hosted around 30 million pages (Facebook, 2014), which constitutes the population of interest of this first sampling stage. When creating a Facebook page, the page creator has the choice to identify it as matching one of six different page types:

1. Local business or place
2. Company, organisation or institution
3. Brand or product
4. Artist, band or public figure
5. Entertainment
6. Cause or community

When deciding to create a 'Brand or Product' page, a further classification based on 33 different types of products or brands is possible. Sub-categories are also available for the other five categories of pages. Although these categories tap into a wide range of possible brands and businesses, they are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a video game brand, for instance, could equally belong to the 'Entertainment' or the 'Brand or product' categories.

Other classifications of Facebook pages exist, such as the one provided by Social Bakers, a leading social media insight company. They divide Facebook brand types into 22 industry categories, ranging from beauty to gambling or retail. Social Bakers (2014) identifies top performing brands on Facebook in 2014 as largely belonging to the food and beverage industry (#1 Coca-Cola, #2 McDonalds, #3 RedBull, #7 Oreo). The fashion industry is also well represented in top performers with Converse (#4) and fastest growing pages like Billabong. The entertainment sector also performs well (#6 Playstation, #8 Nike Football). Based on this analysis, a first criterion to determine the sampling frame of the Facebook pages is proposed in the form of relevant brand categories to investigate.

The following categories are selected in this study:

1. Food and beverage
2. Technology (software, telecom, computer products...)
3. Services (bank, insurance, education...)
4. Travel (airline, railways, travel agents...)
5. Fashion and beauty
6. Durable goods (automobile, electronics, home appliances)
7. Retail (stores, supermarket, e-shops)
8. Entertainment (sports, films, series, books, games...)

This categorisation is deemed representative of the variety of the Facebook pages types and relevant to the context of investigation (Kozinets, 1999). In order to be included in the sample frame, a brand therefore had to fit into one of these categories. Brand categories such as celebrities or public figures were left out of the sample due to the ambiguity of defining them as brands and the difficulty to tag them as a product that you can purchase, which could have caused confusion for the respondents.

The reason for seeking variety in terms of brand categories rather than focusing on a limited number of categories or brands is driven by the existing nature of OBC on the one hand, and consumer engagement research on the other hand. So far, OBC research has

tended to focus mainly on a limited amount of brand types, often researching high involvement goods such as cars and motorbikes (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Füller et al., 2008; Ewing et al., 2013), technology products (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007; Ganley and Lampe, 2009; Faraj and Johnson, 2011), luxury good (Kim and Ko, 2011) or services (Carlson et al., 2008). This was evidenced in Table 10 at the end of Chapter 3.

The treatment of low involvement goods has been much more limited, although repeatedly called for (Cova and Pace, 2006; Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). So far, only one study has incorporated a wide range of Facebook Pages representing different product categories with a large-scale sample. Janh and Kunz (2012) collected data from 532 respondents spanning over 40 different pages of goods, service, organisation, or celebrity brands. They call for further research across Facebook brand categories.

The consumer engagement literature on the other hand, has placed much focus on the study of services such as sport centres or public transportation services (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013; Jakkola and Alexander, 2014). Consumer engagement scholars however acknowledge that it is at this stage highly unclear which type of products or services are more likely to be generative of high levels of engagement (Vivek et al., 2014). Furthermore, sampling a variety of brand categories also ensures variance in terms of product involvement, which is hypothesised as a key driver of consumer engagement. For all these reasons, and similarly to Schau et al. (2009), this study is hence inclusive of a wide array of different brand categories.

Another criterion for considering a page adequate is its commercial nature. As this study aims to investigate brand loyalty in the form of purchase behaviours as the outcome of consumer engagement, it was a requirement for the brands to be commercial rather than non-profit oriented. Cause and communities were therefore excluded of the sampling frame as well.

Industry ranking were also used for the inclusion of pages in the sample frame, focusing on top Facebook pages in terms of engagement rate, as defined by the industry. Rankings such as Social Baker's (2014) top 12 pages for engagement rate were used.

Based on this list of criteria, a total of 326 Facebook pages were listed and contacted between February and June 2014, using the data collection procedure detailed earlier in this chapter. These pages represent a total of over 181,000,000 members. After sampling

the Facebook pages, their administrators were contacted, asking them to post the link to the survey on their page to allow their members to take part in it.

The full list of pages that participated in the survey can be consulted in Appendix 4, as well as some screenshots of some of these participating pages in Appendix 5. This leads to the consideration of the second level of sampling of this study: the sampling of individual page members.

4.5.3. Stage 2: Sampling of the consumers

Theoretically, the **population** of interest, or consumers, as defined in this study, is constituted by the totality of the page members. In March 2014, Facebook counted about 1 billion active monthly users (Facebook, 2014), 40 percent of which did not follow any pages (Smith, 2014), which suggested a total number for page members of 600 million. Based on the first sampling stage of the study, the population of interest is however restricted to the total population of the pages that accepted to post the link to the survey on their page, which amounts to 181,000,000 individuals at the time of the survey.

The application of random sampling relies on the existence of a sampling frame and determining a **sampling frame** seems impossible due to the nature of the Facebook pages (Bryman, 2008). As Wright (2005) points out, attempting to establish a sample frame by counting the number of participants in an OBC, or the published number of members tends to be highly inaccurate due to the ebb and flow of communication in OBC. Participation in an OBC can be sporadic at best, depending on the characteristics of the groups and its members. Some people are ‘regulars,’ who may make daily contributions to discussions, while others only participate intermittently. Furthermore, ‘lurkers,’ or individuals who read posts but do not post content, may complete an online survey even though they are not visible to the rest of the community (Preece et al., 2004). Moreover, due Facebook visibility algorithms and individual setup preferences, once the survey was out in the open (i.e. posted by the page manager on the page), it was hard to control who came across it and how, leading to a self-selected, voluntary sampling design (Bryman, 2008). Facebook (2015) estimates that the average organic reach of a post on a brand page is of 16 percent, meaning that 16 percent of the page population will see a post. Furthermore, the average click-through-rate of a Facebook post is known to be 2 percent (of the people who see it), according to Salesforce.com (2013). On this basis, an expected rate of persons who started the questionnaire of 0.3 percent can be expected. However, this concerns content that the

brand would normally post as part of their content strategy, not third-party consumer surveys. With a number of 1690 started questionnaires, it can be assumed that 0.5 percent of the people who saw the questionnaire started replying to it.

Given the lack of sampling frame, an adequate sample size could not be determined on this basis. However, the rule of thumb to have at a participant to item ratio of 5:1 served as a basis to determine the required amount of responses (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1967). The total survey, before psychometric analyses begin, measures 84 items, excluding demographics and other non-construct items, therefore a validation sample of 420 questionnaires was required. As for the calibration sample, based on a pool of 35 items of OBC engagement, mirrored with a pool of 35 items of online brand engagement, a calibration sample of 350 (35x2x5) responses is required. However, Nunnally and Bernstein (1967) suggest that a sample of 300 is an adequate number for scale calibrations. Additionally, the set of 70 items is technically based on a replication of an initial set of 35 items, suggesting that a sample of 175 respondents would be adequate. The calibration sample amounted to 224 respondents and the validation sample 497 (224 English and 273 French). The procedure to reach this final amount of answers, as well as the issue of non-response bias are addressed in the next section.

4.6. Sample treatment and characteristics

Prior to analysing the sample characteristics and following-up with data analysis in the next chapter, missing data and non-response need to be dealt with (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000). By the closing date of the survey, 1690 responses had been received, including 989 in English and 701 in French. A large amount of missing data was detected in these replies, which called for a missing data analysis and treatment.

4.6.1. Missing data analysis

Understanding the nature and patterns of missing data is the first step in dealing with them. Data can be MCAR (missing completely at random), MAR (missing at random) and NMAR (not missing at random). Using SPSS, univariate statistics, separate variance t-tests and patterns of missing data are computed according to Tabachnik and Fidell (2000). Little's test is also performed in order to assess the type of missing data at hand, providing

a p-value of 0. This low p-value indicates an ability to reject the null hypothesis, meaning that the data are NMAR; in other words, there is a pattern in the missing data. Analysing the frequency of missing data and tabulated cases showed that most of the missing data is grouped toward the end of the questionnaire but no other pattern of missingness is detected. The frequency of missing data for each item is presented in Appendix 6. As evidenced by the amount of missing cases on the last few items of the table (which represents the questionnaire question order), missing data went up to 58 percent of the responses for some items situated at the end.

Several factors can explain the structure and high levels of data missingness in the sample. For example, it is well accepted that self-administered online surveys tend to provide higher dropout rates than face-to-face surveys, as the researcher cannot ensure the survey completion (Cook et al., 2000). Moreover, the length of the questionnaire is likely to induce high levels of respondent fatigue, increasing the dropout rate. Lastly, the sensitive nature of the last set of demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire has probably led some respondents to avoid answering them altogether.

On the basis of this structure of missingness, dealing with missing data is done in a two-step basis. Listwise deletion is first applied to the data. A cut-off percentage of allowed missing data per case is fixed at 15 percent, which is higher than the 10 percent advocated by Hair et al. (1998), but driven by the fact that a large amount of data is missing on demographic variables, which are not involved in hypothesis testing or scale development.

Deletion of these cases resulted in a remaining 721 cases (448 English and 273 French). These remaining cases are further dealt with through the EM (Expectation Maximisation) method performed through the SPSS Missing Value Analysis function. Although imputation can be complex with NMAR data, this method is appropriate because: 1) it permits specification of distributions other than normal (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2000), which is potentially an issue with some of the variables; 2) it is the method that produces the less bias on NMAR data (Little and Rubin, 1989) and 3) it performs better than methods like series mean or regression imputation which tend to reduce the variance of the data (Byrne, 2010). Lastly, some of the sensitive data that could not be imputed due to their nominal nature (e.g. nationality and country of residence) are marked as N/A.

The final sample of 721 valid responses after missing data analysis evidences an overall dropout rate of 58 percent. This figure is 55 percent for the English sample and 61 percent

for the French sample. Although these values are high, they are not surprising given the online context of survey administration (see above in the data administration section) the self-selected, voluntary nature of the sample, and the length of the questionnaire.

4.6.2. Non response bias

Dealing with non-response bias is particularly important in a context where the sample frame could not be determined and evidencing the lack of bias adds robustness to the sampling procedure. There are different ways to deal with non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). The first one is the extrapolation procedure, which assumes that late respondents are similar to theoretical non-respondents. To compare early and late respondents, a cut-off date of May 1st 2014 was selected to separate the respondents in early and late responses. This was chosen because most of the data were collected before May, when a second wave of sampling started (580 answers before May, 141 in May and June). T-tests and chi-square tests were used to compare early and late respondents on their characteristics and no significant differences were found between the two groups on the sample characteristics measures. Caution in the interpretation of these results is however required: given the method of delivery, a gap could occur between the moment when the survey was posted and when respondents answered it.

4.6.3. Common method bias

The study used a single informant (i.e. the consumer) to measure both independent and dependent variables and therefore controlled for common method variance bias using a range of procedures (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). First, the items were formulated as clearly, concisely, and specifically as possible. They were either based on previously validated scales or the output of a strict scale development procedure. Second, a computer-administered questionnaire was developed, with the aim to reduce social desirability biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, the questionnaire introduction indicated that the questionnaire was specifically about the consumer's own experience on OBC, suggesting that there was no right or wrong answers. Third, the design of the web-based survey instrument made it impossible for respondents to retrieve their answers to earlier questions. Therefore, it was more difficult for them to maintain artificial consistency between answers or search for patterns in the questions, which helped control both for the consistency motif and social desirability biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, although Likert scales were majorly used, a semantic differential scale was also present as

well as some multiple choice-question, to reduce common scale format issues. Lastly, we tested for common method bias using Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986) with unrotated factor solution to determine the amount of factor necessary to account for the variance in the variables. A principal component factor analysis of the dependent and independent variables yielded six factors with Eigenvalues higher than 1.0, and the first factor explained 42% of the total variance. The test showed the absence of one major factor (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986); thus common method bias is not a serious problem in our data.

4.6.4. Sample characteristics

As stated above, the total usable sample is composed of 721 responses, which represent 273 French-speaking respondents and 448 English-speaking respondents.

French (FR) and English (EN) survey respondents' ages range between 18 to 82 years old, with a mode of 27 years old and a median of 29 years old, based on the reported birth years. This is congruent with the age split of Facebook users in 2014, with 19 percent of users reported to be between 25 and 34 years old, and 9 percent of them above 65 years old (Statista, 2014). The overall gender split is 49 percent of male and 51 percent of female. The sample is skewed in favour of male respondents compared to the actual Facebook population, which reports slightly more female users (Business Insider, 2014).

The sample is overall highly educated, with about half of all respondents across languages having a postgraduate degree. These results are in line with the educational level of the Facebook population as reported by the Pew Research Center (2015), which shows that a majority of the Internet users who are on Facebook have a college degree or above.

Respondents of the survey span a total of 75 countries across French and English samples. It is also important to specify that the difference between the two cultures lies in the language, rather than the countries of origin of the respondents, although there is a link between the two. English-speaking respondents are largely residing in the UK (28 percent), US (9 percent) and Ireland (8 percent), whereas respondents of the French survey reside primarily in Belgium (89 percent) and some of them in France (3 percent). However, for both languages, other countries or residence are represented as well, since a French-speaker might very well live in Spain, for instance. This feature is inherent to the nature of

the targeted Facebook pages, which are set up in a specific language, but do not restrict member access to specific countries.

Overall, the results in Appendix 7 show that sampling equivalence exists between the French and English-speaking samples, which evidences their compatibility. Indeed, although it is impossible to fully eliminate them, 'nuisance factors' need to be controlled for; hence a required similarity across samples in terms of their characteristics, other than the target constructs (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004).

A wide range of brand categories are represented in the study, with Food and Beverage achieving the highest overall score (33 percent across English and French studies), followed by Travel (21 percent), Fashion and Beauty (14 percent) and Entertainment (12 percent). These brand categories match Facebook's current best performing categories. Between 85 percent (EN) and 82 percent (FR) of the respondents are purchasing clients of the brand they follow at the time of the study, evidencing that online brand usage and membership does not imply prior buying behaviour (Ruiz-Mafé and Blas, 2006). This is in line with the theoretical stance taken in this study regarding the definition of consumers.

Facebook activity is assessed using three metrics: membership duration, number of platform visits per day and time spent on the platform per day. These metrics are replicated at the brand page level, focusing on page membership duration, number of active visits of the page per week and average time spent on the page per week. Most of the respondents joined Facebook between 2007 (EN: 20 percent; FR: 19 percent), 2008 (EN: 23 percent; FR: 48 percent) and 2009 (EN: 17 percent; FR: 12 percent). They are highly connected to Facebook, as on average, 35 percent of them (EN: 34; FR: 36) receive notification from Facebook on their phone in real time, while others log on from one to above 6 times a day, leaving only 4 percent of the sample to connect less than once a day. In terms of time spent on Facebook, while a small seven percent reports spending less than 10 minutes on Facebook per day (EN: 8; FR: 5); the split between people spending 10 to 30 minutes, 31 to 60 minutes or over 60 minutes on Facebook per day is relatively equal.

Page membership duration is reported to be 1 to 5 years for over half of the respondents (Total: 56 percent, EN: 63, FR: 46). Only 3 percent of the respondents across samples have been following their brand page for more than 5 years, which is congruent with the fact that most respondents joined Facebook around 2008. The frequency of active page visits exhibits a high spread among respondents, with relatively similar frequencies levels for

‘never’ to ‘more than once a week’. This indicates that respondent’s need to actively click on the page is highly variable. Despite the spread in visit frequencies, time spent on the page is clearly short for most respondents, with half of the respondents across samples spending less than 2 minutes per week, and only 5 percent of them spending more than 15 minutes on the page per week. Regarding the perceived page size, results vary vastly but remain consistent across languages. For both French and English surveys, although medium-sized (38 percent) and fairly big pages (29 percent) are more represented, other sizes are present as well.

4.7. Data analysis

The main data analysis method of this study is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). SEM was deemed the most appropriate method, given the type of the research questions, and the nature of the data. SEM is suited to the testing of causal relationships for multivariate data sets, which pertain to research questions 2 and 3. As Hair et al. (1998) explain, SEM is the appropriate analysis technique when multiple relationships of dependent and independent variables are investigated. In addition, it allows the development and validation of the consumer engagement scale deriving from research question 1. Indeed, SEM allows not only testing at the structural level, but also at the measurement level, thus encompassing confirmatory factor analyses techniques, which are suited for tests of interdependence between factors (Hair et al., 1998). Due to its ability to produce models with complex interdependencies and its separate consideration of measurement and structural models, SEM is an attractive option for post-positivist studies (Healy and Perry, 2000).

The measurement models are first assessed using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). This approach is used first for the consumer engagement scale development, as well as to assess the whole measurement model prior to hypothesis testing. CFA is a method that aims to test goodness of fit of a model and ensure unidimensionality of each hypothesised factor, following Gerbing and Anderson’s (1988) guidelines. CFA is concerned with the structure of data, and confirms how well the items and factors are related to one another. Its strength lies in the ability to formally test unidimensionality of a scale initially developed theoretically (Anderson and Gerbing, 1982), which particularly suits this study’s approach.

An analysis of the correlation matrix between factors is then conducted as a way to detect singularity or multicollinearity between factors. Goodness of fit then is assessed using the chi-square statistic, in combination with the CFI, TLI and RMSEA indices. These indices are widely used to evaluate factor structures in online community, branding and cross-cultural research. Moreover, they are less sensitive to sample size than the chi-square (Bagozzi et al., 1991) and allow model complexity. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is considered the index of choice. It compares the hypothesised model with a null (or independence) model and takes into account sample size. The Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) is also considered a choice index to report (Tucker and Lewis, 1973). Both these indexes range from 0.00 to 1.00. Values above 0.90 are indicative of good fit (Bentler, 1992) and any value above 0.95 is even more desirable (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is reported as it is considered the most informative criteria in covariance structure modelling (Byrne, 2010). Values below 0.08 represent good fit (Hair et al., 2006). Lastly, parameters estimates and standard errors are reported. This procedure is adopted for the calibration of the consumer engagement scale, for its validation, as well as for the testing of the measurement model including all the study's constructs.

A SEM with Maximum Likelihood estimation technique is then applied to test the hypothesis. The same goodness of fit indicators and adequate values are used than for the CFA. The TLI, CFI, RMSEA and chi-square are reported. In line with Bagozzi (1994), for each hypothesis, the standardised path estimate, path estimate, critical ratio (CR) and significance level are reported. The squared multiple correlations for (R²) is given for each dependent factor, indicating how well a given variable can be predicted using a linear function of a set of other variables.

Lastly, a multigroup analysis is used to test the invariance of model fit between the French and the English-speaking samples, whereby the CFI delta between two models acts as the indicator, needing to assume a value below 0.01 to verify invariance. All these analyses are computed using the computer software AMOS (Byrne, 2010).

Prior to presenting the data analysis related to hypothesis testing, the first section of the data analysis chapter is dedicated to the development of the consumer engagement scales, which required a particular methodological and analytical approach, in line with the

measurement literature. For clarity purposes, this section embeds both methodological considerations along with actual data analysis.

4.8. Summary

Based on a post-positivist paradigmatic stance, this chapter has presented this study's methodology. Using the context of Facebook pages, data was collected using an online instrument, which was designed and administered following strict guidelines, pre-tested and piloted. The two-phase sampling procedure of Facebook pages and page members has then been explained, followed by the sample characteristics, which is composed of a total of 721 French and English-speaking page members. The chapter then presented the sample treatment and characteristics and concluded with the techniques which have been chosen to analyse the data (SEM and CFA), and the guidelines according to which they have been conducted. Throughout the chapter, elements of method equivalence and bias related to validation of the study with a French-speaking sample have been addressed.

Chapter 5: Measurement

5.1. Introduction

This chapter develops and validates the scales used to measure the constructs of interest of the study. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part outlines the development of two new measurement scales for the study's focal construct, consumer engagement. To this end, the scale development process is presented, starting with the collection and analysis of qualitative data to clarify the dimensionality and content validity of consumer engagement. The section details how items were generated and purified.

The quantitative data are then analysed. A calibration sample ($n = 224$) is first used to test for item reliability, purify these items and thereafter check item unidimensionality. The validation sample ($n = 224$) is then used to verify these psychometric measures and ensure reliability and validity of the data. Since consumer engagement is composed of dimensions and sub-dimensions, two levels of confirmatory factor analyses are used, prior to creating an aggregate measure of the different dimensions to simplify the scale. Lastly, it must be noted that, in line with the conceptualisation of consumer engagement in OBC, two mirrored scales are created, reflecting the two engagement partners present in this context.

The second part of this chapter presents the scales chosen from past studies to measure the other variables of interest of the study. These choices are supported by evidence of conceptual and contextual fit as well as strong psychometric properties of the scales.

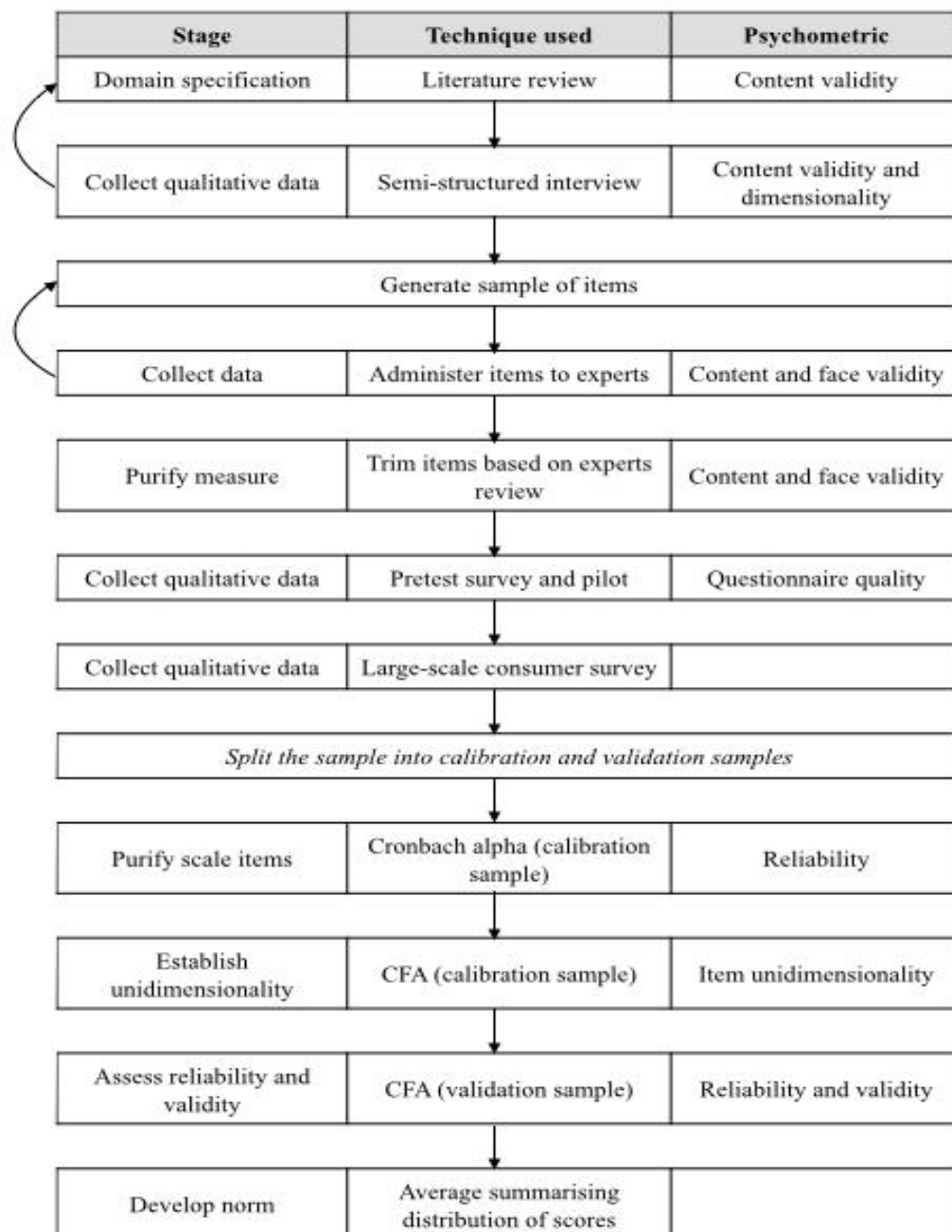
5.2. Measurement of consumer engagement

Unlike other constructs, the focal concept of consumer engagement necessitated the creation of a dedicated scale. At the inception of this study, no conceptually adequate and valid scale of consumer engagement had been published, which could have been used or adapted. The following section details the whole scale development process applied to generate a valid and reliable scale of consumer engagement.

5.2.1. Scale development process

To develop and validate the scale of consumer engagement, a relevant scale development paradigm was used, starting with Churchill's (1979) seminal work, and enriched with the views of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), and Gerbing and Anderson (1988) to include factor analysis. Figure 15 presents the stages involved in building the scales. It details the methods used as well as psychometric properties tested at each point.

Figure 15: The scale development process



Sources: Churchill, 1979; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; DeVellis, 2012; Netemeyer et al., 2003, Nunally and Bernstein, 1994.

The reason for following this approach is twofold. Firstly, this paradigm is widely used in the marketing literature, leading to the production of a vast amount of scales still in usage, whether in the areas of relationship marketing, branding, or services marketing (e.g. Parasuraman et al., 1988; Aaker, 1997; Christodoulides et al., 2006; Brakus et al., 2009). Secondly, Churchill's (1979) approach is endorsed in the scaling and psychometrics literature outside of marketing (Nunally and Bernstein, 1967; Netemeyer et al., 2003; DeVellis, 2012).

5.2.2. Domain specification and item generation

The first step of Churchill's (1979) paradigm requires the specification of the domain of the construct. This deductive approach to scale development is found in a large majority of management studies, sometimes in combination or complemented by an inductive approach (Hinkin, 1995), which adds to the iterative nature of scale development. In this stage, *'the researcher must be exacting in delineating what is included in the definition and what is excluded'* (Churchill, 1979, p. 67).

As detailed in Chapter 3, this study adopts a definition of consumer engagement positioned in the extended domain of relationship marketing, and it clarifies its dimensions as being affective, behavioural and cognitive (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a and 2011b). The literature review allowed building a solid theoretical definition of the construct and provided dimensionality guidance (Netemeyer et al., 2003; DeVellis, 2012). Seven sub-dimensions were further identified: attention, absorption, enthusiasm, enjoyment, sharing, learning and endorsing. The duality of engagement partners in the context of OBC was also evidenced; leading to the realisation that consumer engagement in OBC should be measured using two mirrored scales rather than one, to reflect online consumer engagement with both the OBC and the brand.

After specifying the domain of reference of consumer engagement in OBC, the next step is to develop a pool of items to measure each of the sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are what the literature refers to as latent variables, which are abstractions that cannot be directly observed or measured (Netemeyer et al., 2003; DeVellis, 2012). In order to operationalise these latent variables, items are required to tap into the domain of the construct (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

The approach taken in item generation is that of multi-item scales, as no single item is likely to be enough to measure a construct (Churchill, 1979; Clark and Watson, 1995; Netemeyer et al., 2003; DeVellis, 2012). In general, it is difficult to assess the psychometric properties of single item measures. Multi-item scale enhances scale reliability in particular, as measurement errors cancel each other out (Peter, 1979).

Items are thus generated for the purpose of this study, following the sub-dimensions definitions and related key words. An iterative procedure was used at first, going back and forth between the literature on consumer engagement and the qualitative interviews presented below. Relevant items from the literature were researched, and they served, when possible, as a basis for the development of an initial pool of measurement items. However, given the paucity of engagement measurement in organisational sciences, few items could be culled directly from existing scales and the qualitative phase proved particularly helpful.

The following sections expand on the role of each scale development phase in item generation and trimming. Since the conceptual premises are already presented in chapter 3, this section starts by detailing the next steps involved in the item generation process, i.e. the qualitative interviews with consumers and industry experts.

5.2.2. Qualitative data: Interviews of consumers and industry experts

Qualitative data are often used as part of a scale development process, and it is not rare to include elements of inductivity in scaling processes, particularly when there is little specialist theory on a construct (Hinkin, 1995). Procedures using a combination of literature review and interviews typically produce scales with higher reliability than any single-method approach (Churchill and Peter, 1984). This practice is also vastly used in the past scale development literature (Lytle et al., 1998; Christodoulides et al., 2006; Walsh and Beaty, 2007; Brakus et al., 2009; Freling et al., 2010, Sharma and Chan, 2011).

The reason behind using qualitative data to develop a scale is twofold. Firstly, it allows validation of the conceptual dimensionality and domain specification (Churchill, 1979; Hinkin, 1995) of consumer engagement. Secondly, and subsequently, it works toward the generation of a more relevant pool of initial items. As Churchill (1979) points out, a carefully selected sample of experienced consumers can offer precise insight into the phenomenon, thereby allowing the researcher to tap into each of the identified dimensions

with slightly different shades of meaning. Moreover, a number of previous studies in the branding literature have used in-depth semi-structured interviews for the purpose of item generation (e.g. Seiders et al., 2007; Brakus et al., 2009; Freling et al., 2010).

The use of qualitative phases for scale development purposes has been subject to criticism, and not all scale development approaches adopt it (e.g. Netemeyer et al., 2003). However, skipping this stage is best applicable in contexts where a vast amount of scales already exist for the construct and ‘culling’³ is possible. Given the embryonic nature of the scale literature on customer engagement, exploratory qualitative efforts were required to determine the domain of observables (Hair et al., 2006).

Participants’ selection and profile

A set of 20 consumers and 5 managers, experts in social media, was interviewed. Convenience sampling and snowballing techniques were used to recruit respondents (Bryman, 2008). A number of respondents was known to the researcher, and the remainder was acquired through recommendations of said respondents. As proposed by Churchill (1979), experienced consumers can provide detailed insight into a construct’s domain and dimensionality. The inclusion of industry experts can provide complementary insight to consumers’, and it is not uncommon in the scaling literature (Vivek et al., 2014). Respondents were recruited until saturation was reached in the analysis, as advocated by Creswell (2007), who recommends 20 to 30 interviews until this point is attained.

Consumer informants were recruited based on two main criteria: their social media involvement, and their socio-demographic profile. Given the nature of the research, it was important to recruit experienced social media users, who exhibited levels of social media activity, which can be qualified of ‘highly engaged’ thus ensuring high exposure and participation in OBC. Selection of highly engaged individuals is a common practice in brand community research (e.g. Muñiz and Schau, 2005; Cova et al., 2007). Participants’ level of engagement was assessed through a four week-long observation of their behaviour on relevant platforms prior to their recruitment. In line with previous research in OBC (e.g. Healy and McDonagh, 2013), this was done within the researcher’s extended network to speed-up access. The observation included an assessment of the frequency and volume of community interactions and duration of OBC membership (Kozinets, 2002). A high

³ Adaptation of items from existing scales

frequency of posts, likes and comments was indicative of high levels of engagement (Gummerus et al., 2012).

Secondly, diversity was sought in terms of the interviewee's gender, occupation, nationality and location, which seemed necessary to tap into the complexity of online consumer engagement from different perspectives. Appendix 8 presents the profiles of consumer respondents whereas Appendix 9 presents the industry experts' features. Industry experts were recruited based on their practical and strategic experience in social media management, covering different function, including social media consultant, marketing manager and community manager. Expert informants resided in Europe, India and North America.

Interview modalities

Participants were contacted through private message on social media or via email. Interviews lasted between 35 and 140 minutes and were conducted in English or in French. All respondents were given the choice of the language, the researcher being bilingual and richness in data being the goal. Translation equivalence was sought when translating the interview guide (see below). The interviews were conducted face-to-face for respondents based in the UK, and using Skype calls for non-UK residents.

The interview guide and interview process

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were used in accordance with Kvale's (1996) approach, advocating the use of a series of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions, but leaving room for unexpected topics. An open-ended elicitation procedure (Netemeyer et al., 2003) was used to ensure that the author-generated construct definition was consistent with the views of consumer engagement by typical consumers, and managers, similarly to Walsh and Beatty(2007).The interview guide, which can be found in Appendix 10, included broad question areas, each of which started with a grand tour question followed by planned prompts (e.g. 'Can you recall an instance in which you engaged with this brand on social media?') and floating prompts (e.g. 'What do you mean by...') McCracken (1988). Participants were asked to first talk about their general online behaviour, then their social media behaviour. They were subsequently asked to focus on their participation in one, or several, OBC of their choice, with which they felt particularly engaged. No predetermined social media or brand categories were suggested. Questions then tapped into the emotional, behavioural and cognitive aspects of online consumer

engagement, and concerned the relationship with the community on the one hand, and the brand on the other hand. Interviewees were also asked to articulate their own definition of consumer engagement. Overall, the guide was designed to go from the general to the particular and make sure that all areas of interest were covered while remaining open to unplanned information (Kvale, 1996). It concluded with profile questions.

Recoding and transcription

The entire set of interviews was recorded in order to ensure that the data was traceable, and to create a consistent source format for the qualitative data. Interviews were then transcribed for analysis, resulting in 192 single-space A4 pages of text. The researcher and interviewer performed a full transcription of the interviews. This allowed maintaining the full richness of the data and a first immersion in the interview content prior to analysis.

Interview data analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data issued from interviews with 20 consumer and 5 industry experts serves several purposes and is in line with conceptual developments in chapter 3, and the study's first research question.

- 1) Confirm the existence of the three key dimensions of consumer engagement;
- 2) Clarify and deepen the meaning of these three broad dimensions, seeking evidence of the 7 conceptual sub-dimensions;
- 3) Generate measurement items based on the dimensions and sub-dimensions.

To achieve these goals, the interview data were coded and analysed manually, the aim of the coding being to bring together all extracts of data (sentences, words, expressions, paragraphs) pertinent to a particular theoretical theme, or topic. A line-by-line content analysis was performed (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Expressions or phrases that offered insight into consumer engagement in OBC were sought to generate a pool of measurement items. Coding was done using a directed data analysis approach (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005): codes were first created based on theoretical themes (the expected theoretical subdimensions) and keywords were identified based on the data. A constant iteration between data and theory also underpinned the analysis, as codes were progressively integrated and adapted based on the data, and in line with the customer engagement literature.

This section details the existence and nature of each of the three dimensions and seven sub-dimensions identified in the literature. It provides a deeper meaning to these aspects of consumer engagement with the support of interview quotes and analysis. In order to respect the anonymity of all respondents, fictitious names are used throughout the analysis. The theoretical codes and keywords are presented in Appendix 12. For each of these, a summary of three representative quotes from the data is provided.

Theme 1: Dimensions of engagement

Based on an iterative procedure of data analysis and theoretical framing, the results of the interviews with social media users are not only aligned with the literature on the dimensionality of engagement, but they also complement it and deepen the understanding of these dimensions. The three main aspects of consumer engagement in OBC have theoretically been categorised as: affective cognitive and behavioural, in line with most conceptualisations of the concept. However the conceptual fog surrounding these dimensions prompts empirical support.

Analysis of the data allows breaking down the three dimensions into seven sub-dimensions, as per the conceptual framework: (1) Enthusiasm, (2) Enjoyment, (3) Attention, (4) Absorption, (5) Sharing, (6) Learning and (7) Endorsing.

Affective engagement

The existence of an affective aspect of engagement in the data first became apparent through the repeat usage of keywords such as ‘bond’, ‘care’, ‘emotions’, ‘love’, ‘hate’ or ‘like’ by respondents. This semantic particularity was further explored, and revealed a strong affective element to respondents’ experiences in OBC.

The questionnaire started by asking interviewees about their general experience on OBC embedded on social media, leaving them free to explore the topic as they felt. A lot of them expressed that they were part of an OBC on Facebook for emotional reasons, such as simply liking the brand, or finding that the content they post is ‘nice’, ‘entertaining’ or ‘fun’. Others explicitly stated that they felt they had a bond with the brand, that they shared something, or had the same values. This represents a strong form of emotional bonding close to what is expressed by the construct of relationship quality (Hollebeek, 2011) Others acknowledged that seeing the branded content online brought them happiness and made them feel good, through the aesthetic of a picture, on the content of a text.

When prompted to define what engagement represented, respondents used expression such as *'it is being excited about something, at least a little bit'* (Derek), or *'it is enjoying doing something'* (Claire). Brand engagement in particular was associated with ideas of 'liking' the brand or 'caring' about it. Depth was brought into the discussion by some interviewees who went as far as recognising that engagement, although relying on affect, did not necessarily have to be positive, and could be linked to elements of complaint, loss of trust, or negative emotions in general (Hollebeek et al., 2014). *'Even if you hate it, like anti-Walmart or any organisation, it's still engagement I would say'* (Nigel). Aubin, an expert informant from the company Agentia, even nuanced the positive/negative affect dimensions by explaining that too much emotional engagement can also be detrimental in the sense that it disturbs consumers' ability to make sound consumption decisions.

Overall, the affective dimension of engagement captures the summative and enduring level of emotions experienced by a consumer with respect to his/her engagement focus (Calder et al., 2013). These emotions can be of different sorts and transpires through long-lasting and recurrent feelings. In expressing their feelings about the OBC they are members of, and the brands they represent, respondents allow restricting the affective dimension to two sub-dimensions: enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Enthusiasm reflects a consumer's intrinsic level of excitement and interest regarding the OBC or brand. Enthusiasm is explicit when people show genuine and active interest in the brand or community activities, or derive such enthusiasm from their own repeat participation and interactions. Anthony and Maria show that being enthusiastic about a brand can go as far as putting oneself at risk for it, or liking it so much that you want to work for the company.

'Being engaged with (...) is to tell oneself that you are so interested in it, that you spend time and effort on it, and that to some extent, you even put yourself at risk for it.' Anthony.

'I was really thinking of applying for a job there, because I like this company because of Facebook! I don't know, they have a nice face, they are very kind, and helpful and enthusiastic about their products and I relate to that, you know' Maria.

Liam on the other hand, expresses true enthusiasm for community participation and relates these feeling to repeat interactions with other community members.

'If I like a brand post, or comment on a brand status, my friends in turn are likely to comment on it as well. And in these cases, I am so excited that I am quite happy to keep the conversation going and talk more' Liam.

Enjoyment is indicative of the consumer's pleasure and happiness derived from discoveries and interactions triggered by the brand or OBC. As expressed by Sam about his participation on the Pakistani National Cricket team Facebook page: *'Exchanging ideas about it makes me happy'*. In contrast to enthusiasm, enjoyment is a more contemplative form of affect. It is less active and motivational, but taps into deep and repeated feelings of joy and pleasure. Anthony hereunder expresses the satisfaction he receives from getting comments on his posts, despite his clarification that it is not the number one goal.

'It's not necessarily important to have comments on what you posted, but it's a pleasure, it's a nice added value' Anthony.

Sabrina, on the other hand, shows that one can derive pleasure simply from the content posted by the brand.

'They always have something fun to tell on their page, something that is really 'Nutella', something that is really about gourmandise, fun...so I really like this page because it represents me and it represents what I enjoy in life' Sabrina.

The affective dimension of engagement relates to various forms of content and interactions. Respondents express pleasure in seeing comments on their own posts and sustaining the conversation by replying to these. They enjoy seeing and replying to the brand or community members posts. At other times, they simply enjoy reading fun and relevant posts by the brand.

Consumer's views on the affective dimensionality of engagement are complemented by the views of the industry experts. Although they do not go as far as pinpointing the sub-dimensions of affective engagement, they all recognise that consumers need to be engaged by companies at an affective level, reflecting the depth of the relationship they have. Considering the interactive nature of engagement, they explain that consumer are more likely to be emotionally engaged if they see that the brand cares for them as well.

The interview data are therefore in accordance with the literature, which indicated, mainly on theoretical grounds, that affect is one of the core three dimensions of consumer

engagement and that it can be broken down into enthusiasm (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) and enjoyment (Calder et al., 2013).

Cognitive engagement

The cognitive aspect of consumer engagement was prominent in the data. In an engagement context, cognition has been defined as a set of enduring and active mental states that a consumer experiences with respect to the focal object of his/her engagement (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a). This means that, when engaged, consumers must be actively mentally involved. When discussing their activity on OBC, informants often point out that they spend a vast amount of time on social media, a part of which is dedicated to reading, interacting with, or searching brand-related content. When talking about a community she engages with, Flora expresses that she consciously makes time to think about it.

'It [engagement] just depends on how much time you are willing to sacrifice for the group...how much time you spend thinking about it' Flora.

Further exploration of the cognitive aspect of informants' OBC experience reveals that this dimension can be broken down into two complementary sub-dimensions: attention and absorption.

Attention is the cognitive availability voluntarily dedicated to interacting with the OBC, as Flora's quote signalled. Sophia furthers this comment by vividly expressing her view of online communities participation: *'It is an engagement of the mind!'* Interviewees clearly exhibit consciousness that time spent on OBC requires some mind space, which keeps them from performing other tasks. Despite the fact that attention span is relatively short on social media, if brands provide enough interesting content at a relatively high frequency, users' attention can be grabbed and sustained, as Derek explains. This consumer view is complemented by industry experts, as both George from Ironvalley and the consultant team from SmartForest agree that in order to gain consumer's attention on social media, brands must post interesting and relevant content.

Absorption is indicative of the inability to detach oneself when interacting with the OBC (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), and therefore goes a step further than dedicating attention to something. This aspect is particularly well described by Judith and her seemingly extreme relationship to Facebook and Pinterest participation.

'So when I go on Facebook I essentially read the newsfeed, but I really read every single thing, even if it takes me hours. It's really stupid and every time I get mad at myself because I am wasting time and I don't really see the point, but I always end up finding something interesting so I tell myself that I do get something out of the two hours I just spent on it. As for Pinterest, I try not to go too often, but when I do go, it takes a lot of time. It's like Facebook but it is even worse...Facebook I am more able to turn it off when I really want to. Pinterest it's impossible!' Judith.

Although this might seem like an extreme level of absorption, number of interviewees exhibits a considerable difficulty to detach themselves from their favourite social media. They reflect that this absorption is largely due to the interesting and entertaining content posted by brands on such platforms (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013).

High levels of absorption can also be related to engagement in a specific brand-related event, as the case of Sabrina portrays. She explains taking part in a photo-posting contest launched by one of her favourite Facebook pages. She recalls that she spent *'three whole days'* on the page to promote her participation in the contest and try and win. She states that she was *'really engaged with the page at the time of the contest'*, which indicates a complete dedication and absorption (Patterson et al., 2006). This absorption was triggered by the brand campaign, and sustained by collaboration and help from other community members, showing the importance of all OBC actors in the mental activation process.

Behavioural engagement

When prompted to define consumer engagement, a number of respondents immediately pointed out the behavioural aspect of the construct, in line with studies that put behaviours at the centre of engagement practice (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). In particular, Nigel speaks of being *'proactively and physically involved in an activity'*, Sandra of *'going out of a passive situation and entering an active situation'*, Sophia of *'constantly interacting with a thing'*. Put simply, being engaged signifies doing something. A deeper exploration of informants' OBC participation allowed the classification of engagement behaviour in three interrelated, yet distinct performative acts.

Sharing is a highly recurring theme in the participants' stories. Indeed, social media environments and brand communities lend themselves particularly well to the development of sharing behaviours, as they are based on usage and content. On Facebook, sharing manifests itself through 'shares', 'comments', 'posts', 'likes' or 'replies'. When asked

about what they do on OBC and what they used them for, Maria and James, among others, speak of sharing with the community, either on a one-off or regular basis.

'[I use the Facebook group] ...to exchange experiences about visits. If there is a place where we have been, we can inform other people who are interested in visiting!' Maria.

'Well yes, for instance, if somebody asks a question about a football game (i.e. 'Did you see what just happened?') I would very quickly answer.' James.

These quotes demonstrate that the act of sharing is a collaborative and interactive exchange, driven by the motivation to provide resources. In line with Brodie et al.'s (2013) findings, sharing is strongly present on social media and a way for OBC members to exchange experience, ideas or just interesting content. In accordance with seminal research on co-creation (Vargo and Lush, 2004) OBC engagement relies heavily on the exchange of experiences (Vivek et al., 2012), content and information.

In contrast with the sub-dimension of endorsement detailed further in this section, sharing is not necessarily based on positive, supporting intentions. While some respondents express the need to share their views on OBC, whether good or bad, such as Sam, others like Helen go one step further by saying that this openness and authenticity is exactly what they seek on OBC.

'I would give my views, my very hard views even. When I don't like something I say it, I don't mind, I have to raise my voice sometimes, which is something that people don't often do.' Sam.

'You know, I love these pages on Facebook more than the company websites, because it's more objective, you can get different opinions! Ok, if you want to buy something you can go to the website, but this kind of things (the varied consumer views), you cannot find it easily.' Helen.

Learning. As much as respondents expressed an urge to share resources online, they also use OBC to seek help, ideas, resources and information from the company or other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Learning thus represents the other side of the coin. Like sharing, learning is an active conduct and an important facet of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2013), as shown by the increased focus on content strategies.

'If you post something on Twitter people will help you and give you suggestions, which I think is quite nice because it helps. Like, I got a pen burst out in one of my favourite bags and I tweeted about it and asked if anybody had any 'at-home' remedies for what to do, and I got loads back' Claire.

'I follow them just to make sure I know which products they are launching, what is in their new summer collection. I want to know what is new at the moment ' Sophia.

Enhancement of brand usage, problem solving or information updates are a key aspect of OBC participation (Dholakia et al., 2004; Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007) and social media are particularly suited to this goal. They allow users to post their questions freely and receive feedback from other knowledgeable members, or the brand itself (Zaglia, 2013).

Learning represents a complex sub-dimension of engagement, as it could be considered to be a passive rather than an active endeavour. Despite the fact that the information-processing aspect of learning intuitively lends itself to a cognitive categorisation, excerpts from the interview suggest its underlying behavioural nature, as they stress the active and committed act of looking for information. Sandra makes this active/passive distinction particularly clear:

'Yes, Facebook helps me connect with the brand, because I can see maybe a campaign on TV or hear something on the radio, or see a banner, but on Facebook, when you become a fan of the page, you always see information about the brand. Maybe you are not going to comment or like every time, but you will see what they are talking about, so unconsciously, you will be updated about what the brand is doing, whereas watching a TV campaign is really...you just sit down and watch and don't do anything, it's passive. On Facebook, you are active, so it drives engagement.' Sandra.

Consumers show engagement by searching to improve their experience, learn more, or fix issues. Passively receiving information, like watching a TV ad, is not indicative of information search and is rather found in a disengaged consumer (Lee et al., 2009). Participants suggest that learning behaviour is done for instance by using the community as a source for the latest news and trends or by seeking help for a specific consumption-related issue.

According to the industry experts, allowing consumer to learn is key to a good social media content and engagement strategy. By educating consumers with information that

they are actively or unconsciously searching for, experts Aubin and George explain that higher levels of engagement can be fostered.

Endorsing is a third behavioural manifestation that came through interview analysis. It is considered to be different from the act of sharing, as it carries stronger elements of purpose, and is exclusively positive in valence. Endorsing is done on social media in a variety of ways (Gummerus et al., 2012), which our respondents seem to exploit fully, or wish to do more than they can afford.

'I'm liking things a lot, I'm the kind of person that sees something and then, hop, I like it'
Judith.

'I took part in the vote (launched by a design brand) and then promoted it on Facebook. It's not only because I want people to buy their product, but because they are really nice and really good.' Laura.

'If days were twice as long, I would love to spend much more time on social media and write product reviews for the artists I like (...) I know that I have a form of power when I say things. When I give conferences, or when I post something, people forward or report it.' Anthony.

Interestingly, this motivation to share can go as far as developing a conscious self-positioning as an expert, or at least recognising one's influencing potential.

In addition to this, endorsement can also go beyond the community boundaries rather than being limited to close community settings, when people want to get others to discover something they like (van Doorn et al., 2010). Schau et al. (2009) refer to external endorsement as 'impression management'. This is supported by Brodie et al.'s (2013) sub-dimension of 'advocating'. This occurs 'when consumers actively recommend specific brands, products/services, organisations and/or ways of using products or brands'

'I suggested my friends to follow them on Facebook, and see more designs. I didn't just say that I bought my shoes from a store and gave them the address; I told them 'No, you have to go on the page and see more design and ask them more questions, they are very kind.'
Mary.

The endorsement sub-dimension is also expressed as key to engagement by industry experts with Benjamin from SmartForest stating that consumer engagement results in

publicly showing the connection that one has with a brand. Exhibiting this positive connection and promoting the brand in place of the brand is here again understood as expressive of consumer engagement. As Daniel explains, spreading word-of-mouth is a key component of engagement.

As this analysis shows, the three theoretical dimensions and seven sub-dimensions of consumer engagement are reflected in the data. Participants' experiences not only corroborate existing conceptualisations but, most importantly, deepen and clarify them through rich social media user insight.

An interesting take from experts' interview which support the multidimensionality of engagement is that all of them agree that consumer engagement on social media cannot be measured only with site metrics such as 'likes' and 'comments' and that consumer sentiment and original content need to be taken into account. According to SmartForest, the traditional measure of consumer engagement on Facebook measured by $(\text{likes} + \text{shares} + \text{comments}) / \text{number of persons who see the post}$, is not reflective of the full picture. This comment is clearly aligned with the multidimensional stance of consumer engagement taken in this thesis.

Based on the consumer interviews and the consumer engagement domain specification performed based on the literature, a set of items was created. The first iteration resulted in 64x2 items, subsequently revised and narrowed-down to 47x2 items, which were then submitted to a panel of academic experts to ensure content validity.

Panel of academic experts

Following the analysis of the interviews with the consumers and industry experts, and having generated a preliminary pool of items resulting from these interviews and the literature, a panel of academic experts was approached. Exposing experts to the list of preliminary items is a common method in marketing scale development (e.g. Veloutsou et al., 2013).

The goal in seeking experts' opinion is to ensure content validity. Content validity is defined as *'the degree to which elements of an assessment are relevant and representative of the targeted construct for a particular assessment purpose'* (Haynes et al., 1995, p.238). Experts' panels are particularly helpful in confirming or invalidating the definition of the

construct and rating the relevance of each item with respect to what it is supposed to measure. They also help ensure item's clarity and conciseness and can point out any missing items (DeVellis, 2012).

Experts were selected based on their experience and publication record in customer engagement and branding. A number of them also had extensive experience in scale development methods. They came from institutions in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, the United-States and Oceania. In total, 12 academics were approached, and 9 of them completed the questionnaire, some of them even following up with further considerations by email. These 9 answers were gathered over the course of 3 weeks. The number of respondents is in line with Haynes et al.'s (1995) guidelines, who commend the use of over 5 judges.

Experts' point of view was gathered following thoroughly Netemeyers et al. (2003) and DeVellis' (2012) recommendations. They were contacted by email using an introductory text, which was presenting the context and purpose of the study. This can be found in 11. They were then redirected to an online questionnaire, which contained all 47 initial items. The questionnaire was designed as follows: the concept of consumer engagement was first defined. Then, each category (affective, cognitive and behavioural) was addressed. For each of them, a definition was provided, and the sub-dimensions identified and defined as well. The items were then presented and experts were asked to rate the representativeness of each item to its dimension on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely agree; 5 = completely disagree) in accordance with Haynes et al. (1995). This was done for OBC engagement on the one hand, and brand engagement on the other hand. For each sub-dimension, the experts were encouraged to leave comments regarding the clarity and conciseness of items, or provide any other relevant comment. More general comments could be left at the end of the questionnaire. This approach was chosen as it is deemed that a combination of quantitative and qualitative insight is preferred to identify elements of the items that need to be changed, refined or deleted (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

It is recommended to analyse data from the experts' panel carefully, taking into account their own field and methodological biases. As no statistical analyses can be significantly computed on such a small sample, the answers for item representativeness were analysed one by one. Items with particularly low representativeness scores from most experts were considered for deletion. Advice on the redundancy or semantic similarity of certain

dimensions and words was also taken on board. A constant re-framing of the comments in line with the literature was made, making sure to cover all dimensions of customer engagement, whilst also taking into account experts’ ideas that were initially unthought-of. As a result from the experts’ panel advice, 8 of the 47 items were deleted due to redundancy or failure to appropriately tap into the latent dimensions. 14 items were also edited to improve wording clarity and conciseness, and avoid redundancy in meaning.

Final pool of items

To summarise, the first stage of item generation relied on three successive iterations, balancing views between the data and literature (Clark and Watson, 1995), with the aim of coming up with a large pool of items (64 x 2 for the initial iteration), which were subsequently narrowed down in two more iterations at the end of the interview analysis.

Following these first iterations, 47 x 2 items were presented to a group of academic experts, which resulted in further trimming, leading to 2 x 39 items. The final item trimming was produced after the pre-test and pilot phases. The final pool resulted in a total of 35 x 2 items to measure OBC engagement and brand engagement with mirrored items to be included in the online survey. Figure 16 shows the item evolution from its early iterations to the pool used in the large-scale consumer survey, with a dimension breakdown.

Figure 16: Evolution of the number of items

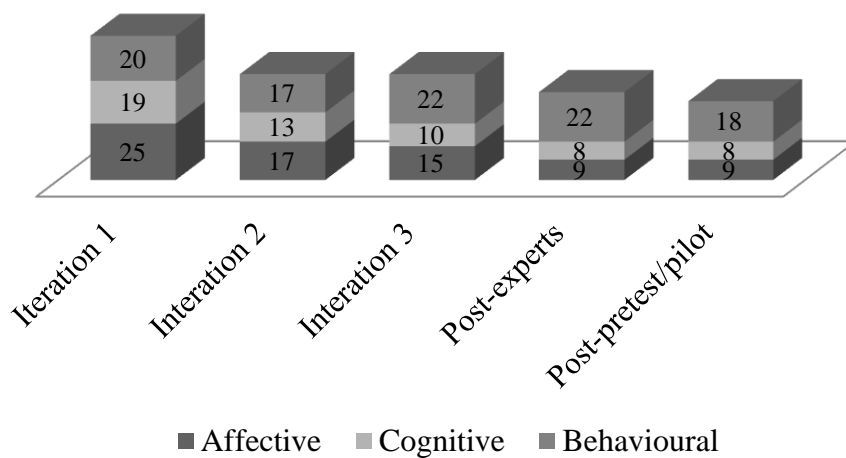


Table 12 presents the 47x2 items generated after the third iteration resulting from the data analysis and literature review. The main source of item generation is also presented. A reference indicates that the item is issued from the literature, and the word ‘interviews’ indicates that the item came through mainly in the consumers and industry experts’ interviews. This pool of item was first reviewed by academic experts and was subsequently the subject of pretest and pilot studies. The last column of the table shows which items were removed or edited after the academic expert’s feedback and pretest/pilot phases.

Table 12: Consumer engagement items evolution

Dimensions	OBC/online brand engagement	Source	Reason for deletion or edit
Affective	Enthusiasm		
	I feel excited about the group/brand	Vivek, 2009	DELETED - Experts
	I feel excited about what the group/brand does	Vivek, 2009	DELETED - Experts
	The group/brand generates in me a feeling of excitement	Vivek, 2009	DELETED - Experts
	I feel enthusiastic about the group/brand	Interviews	
	The group/brand makes me enthusiastic	Interviews	
	I am heavily into this group/brand	Vivek, 2009	
	I am interested in anything about this group/brand	Interviews	
	I find this group/brand interesting	Interviews	
	This group/brand drives my interest	Interviews	DELETED – Pretest
	Enjoyment		
	I enjoy being part of the group/a fan of the brand	Interviews	DELETE - Experts
	I enjoy interacting with the group members/brand	Interviews	
	When interacting with the group/brand, I feel happy	Schaufeli et al., 2002	
	The group/brand makes me feel good	Interviews	DELETE - Experts
	I get pleasure from group participation/interacting with the brand	Interviews	
Participating in the group/interacting with the brand is like a treat for me	Calder et al., 2013		
Cognitive	Attention		
	I pay a lot of attention to the group/brand	Rothbard , 2001	EDIT - Experts
	Things related to this group/brand grab my attention	Vivek, 2009	EDIT - Experts
	I spend a lot of time thinking about the group/brand	Rothbard , 2001	
	I make time to think about the group/brand	Interviews	
	Absorption		
	I concentrate a lot on this group/brand	Rothbard , 2001	DELETE - Experts
	When I interact with this group/brand, I forget everything else around me	Schaufeli et al., 2002	
	Time flies when I am interacting with this group/brand	Schaufeli et al., 2002	
	When I am interacting with this group/brand, I get carried away	Schaufeli et al., 2002	
	When interacting with the group/brand, it is difficult to detach myself	Schaufeli et al., 2002	
In my interaction with the group/brand, I am fully concentrated	Schaufeli et al., 2002	DELETE - Experts	

Dimensions	OBC/online brand engagement	Source	Reason for deletion or edit
Behavioural	Sharing		
	I reply to the questions of other group members/of the brand managers (through commenting, sharing, posting, replying, etc.)	Gummerus et al., 2012	EDIT - Experts
	I share my opinion with the members of the group/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I express my opinion to the group/brand managers	Interviews	DELETE - Pretest
	I share my experiences with the group/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I share ideas with the members of the group/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I provide ideas to make the group/brand better	Interviews	DELETE - Pretest
	I share interesting content with the other group members/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I provide help to other group members/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	Learning		
	I ask questions to the other group members/brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I seek ideas, or information from other members of the group/the brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I seek help from group members/the brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I seek information from other members of the group/the brand managers	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I learn from the content provided by other group members/the brand managers	Gummerus et al., 2012	EDIT - Experts
	Endorsing		
	I show support to what the members of the group/the brand say/s or do/es (by liking, sharing, commenting)	Interviews	
	I approve the group members'/brand's behaviour	Interviews	DELETE - Experts
	I approve the group members'/brand's ideas	Interviews	EDIT - Experts
	I endorse the group/brand	Interviews	DELETE - Pretest
	I share content from the group/brand to my wider network	Interviews	
	I promote the group/brand	Interviews	
	I try to get others interested in the group/brand	Interviews	
I actively defend the group/brand from critics	Interviews		
I say positive things about the group/brand to other people	Lee et al., 2011		

Based on the final pool of items derived from the exploratory phase, the large-scale survey as described in the methodology chapter was completed, allowing the use of this data to build two reliable and valid scales of consumer engagement based on psychometric testing described below. The following section explains the statistical development of the OBC engagement and online brand engagement scales. The two constructs are analysed and modelled separately throughout the analysis, yet always in a mirrored fashion to ensure perfect replication of the content and structure of the scales.

5.2.3. Data screening

Data screening is an essential step in the preparation of the data for analysis for the researcher to become familiar with it and detect potential issues. Graphical and numeric data outputs are explored in this process, which involves normality checks and sample treatment. As all survey data collected for the purpose of this study need to exhibit the same standards of cleanliness, data screening is performed on the aggregate French and English sample (n=721). Descriptive statistics for all measures (mean, median, range, SD) can be found in Appendix 6.

Normality

Prior to conducting the engagement scales development and hypotheses testing, an important step of data screening regards the assumption of normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are performed, and all variables display significance levels of $p < .05$, which is indicative of non-normality. However, Field (2009) and Tabachnik and Fidell (2000) warn researchers that these tests are usually irrelevant for large samples. Skewness and Kurtosis indices are thus computed, measuring respectively the symmetry and peakedness of the distribution.

Any value above |1| signals a departure from normality. The analysis revealed a number of issues, as highlighted in Appendix 6. Items measuring absorption with the OBC items display a slight positive skew and the first brand trust item has a slight negative skew. Most abnormal values however reflect Kurtosis issues: the fourth item of OBC absorption also displays positive Kurtosis, while a number of items exhibit slight negative Kurtosis, and are largely centred mainly on some of the consumer engagement constructs.

Despite these slightly above average values, no manipulation of the data is judged necessary, for the following reasons. Firstly, although the modified solution might be a bit

better (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2000), normality is not an essential criterion to proceed with analysis, and it is not required to process with SEM and CFA. Secondly, bar a few exceptions, departure from normality is marginal, as most values remain below $|1.1|$, and significant skewness and Kurtosis values can arise even from small deviations from normality (Field, 2009). Moreover, typically, data from 7-point scales are not normally distributed (Malthouse, 2001). Lastly, after transformation, a different construct than the initial one is measured, and consequences of applying the wrong transformation might hurt the data (Field, 2009). The assumption of normality is further checked by examining the frequency histograms and their distribution curves, which are all mound shaped, implying that deviations of normality are not so severe as to be worrisome.

Lastly, the consideration of possible outliers that might affect normality is considered. Common causes for outliers (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2000) are not applicable to this study in line with the strict data collection and screening procedures use: incorrect data entry, failure to specify missing value code or respondent outside the population are all controlled for and should result in outlier-free data. To verify this assumption, an univariate outlier detection method is applied as proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2000) and z-scores computed for all items. Values consistently comprised between -3.00 and 3.00 indicate an absence of univariate outliers.

Sample split

At this stage in the data treatment, the full sample is split. Firstly, French and English samples are used separately: the consumer engagement scale validation requires testing in one cultural context first, prior to being applied to other cultures. Secondly, one cannot assume group invariance between two languages without testing it. As the survey is initially crafted for the English sample, this sample is used for the scales development and hypotheses testing, leaving late-stage group invariance testing to account for the equivalence between the two languages. This procedure is in line with previous studies developing scales using cross-cultural samples, such as Cadogan et al. (1999).

Thereafter, the English sample is kept and further split into a calibration and a validation sample for the purpose of the consumer engagement scales development, rather than collecting new data for measure validation (Churchill and Peter, 1984). The split sample technique is common in the marketing literature on scale development (e.g. Christodoulides et al., 2006). This approach is chosen due to its practical time-saving

aspect, as well as methodological advantages. Some methods of measure development, such as confirmatory factor analysis, tend to become too sensitive with samples exceeding 400 cases. Goodness of fit measures also tend to indicate poor fit with larger samples (Hair et al., 1998). To avoid this problem, it is recommended to use samples of about 200-300 cases (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000). In this instance, the English sample has been randomly split into two groups, using the SPSS random sample function, and producing two samples of 224 cases each. The first half (calibration sample, $n_1=224$) has been used to develop the scale, whilst the second half (validation sample, $n_2=224$) has been used to validate the results of the scale and subsequently test the research hypotheses with structural equation modelling (Churchill, 1979; Flynn and Percy, 2001).

5.2.4. Item purification

The first step in statistically purifying the instrument is to compute the coefficient alpha and inter-item correlations to delete ‘garbage items’ (Churchill, 1979). Cronbach’s Alpha assesses unidimensionality and internal reliability (Churchill, 1979). The seven theoretical dimensions are used to pre-group items, to accommodate the factor analysis requirement that variables that are related should be separated prior to running factor analysis (Sharma, 1996). No Cronbach’s Alpha achieves a value below the advocated cut-off point of 0.70 (Nunnally and Berstein, 1967), and all values are above 0.84, exhibiting excellent reliability, as shown in table 13.

Table 13: Cronbach's Alpha

Online brand engagement		OBC engagement	
Factor	Cronbach’s Alpha	Factor	Cronbach’s Alpha
Enjoyment	0.95	Enjoyment	0.93
Enthusiasm	0.94	Enthusiasm	0.95
Attention	0.88	Attention	0.84
Absorption	0.95	Absorption	0.96
Sharing	0.94	Sharing	0.96
Learning	0.89	Learning	0.93
Endorsing	0.92	Endorsing	0.95

Inter-item correlations within the theoretical dimensions are then checked to detect signs of singularity (item does not correlate with others) or multicollinearity (item correlates too much with others), as well as verify the item to total correlations. Again, theoretical dimensions are kept for item grouping. An analysis of the item-to-total matrixes indicates

that the removal of the fourth ‘learning’ item (‘I learn from the content they provide’) in both scales significantly increases the respective Cronbach’s Alphas to 0.89 and 0.93. A poorer correlation between the fourth and fifth learning items is a further indication of the need to remove this item in both scales. Lastly, the second ‘attention’ item also exhibits low correlation with the other items of the same factor, in both scales. Because the deletion of this item has no significant impact on the Cronbach’s Alpha, it has been decided not to remove it at this stage. No other multicollinearity or singularity issue transpires from the inter-item correlations.

5.2.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A CFA has been used to test the dimensionality of the engagement scale. CFA is preferred to EFA when measurement models have a strong and well-developed underlying theory for hypothesised patterns of loadings and a detailed model has been specified prior to data collection (Hurley et al., 1997). CFA estimates the regression coefficients between the items and the latent constructs (Bagozzi, 1994). To achieve convergent validity, the regression coefficients must be statistically significant and the model must show good fit values.

A measurement model has thus been specified separately for OBC engagement and online brand engagement, retaining for each of them the factors and items specified by the theory and content validation stage. The procedure has been performed separately for online brand engagement and OBC engagement items, although in parallel to maintain similarity across scales. Given that they measure the same concept for two different objects, the two scales should be mirrored in terms of dimensions, although they must be modelled separately given their different engagement object.

A five-step approach has been used to perform the CFA:

- 1) Specification of the measurement model;
- 2) Model identification;
- 3) Model estimation;
- 4) Goodness-of-fit evaluation;
- 5) Check of the parameter estimates.

Model identification is the first step whereby parameter values are either left to be estimated or constrained to 1. All independent variable variances are constrained to one,

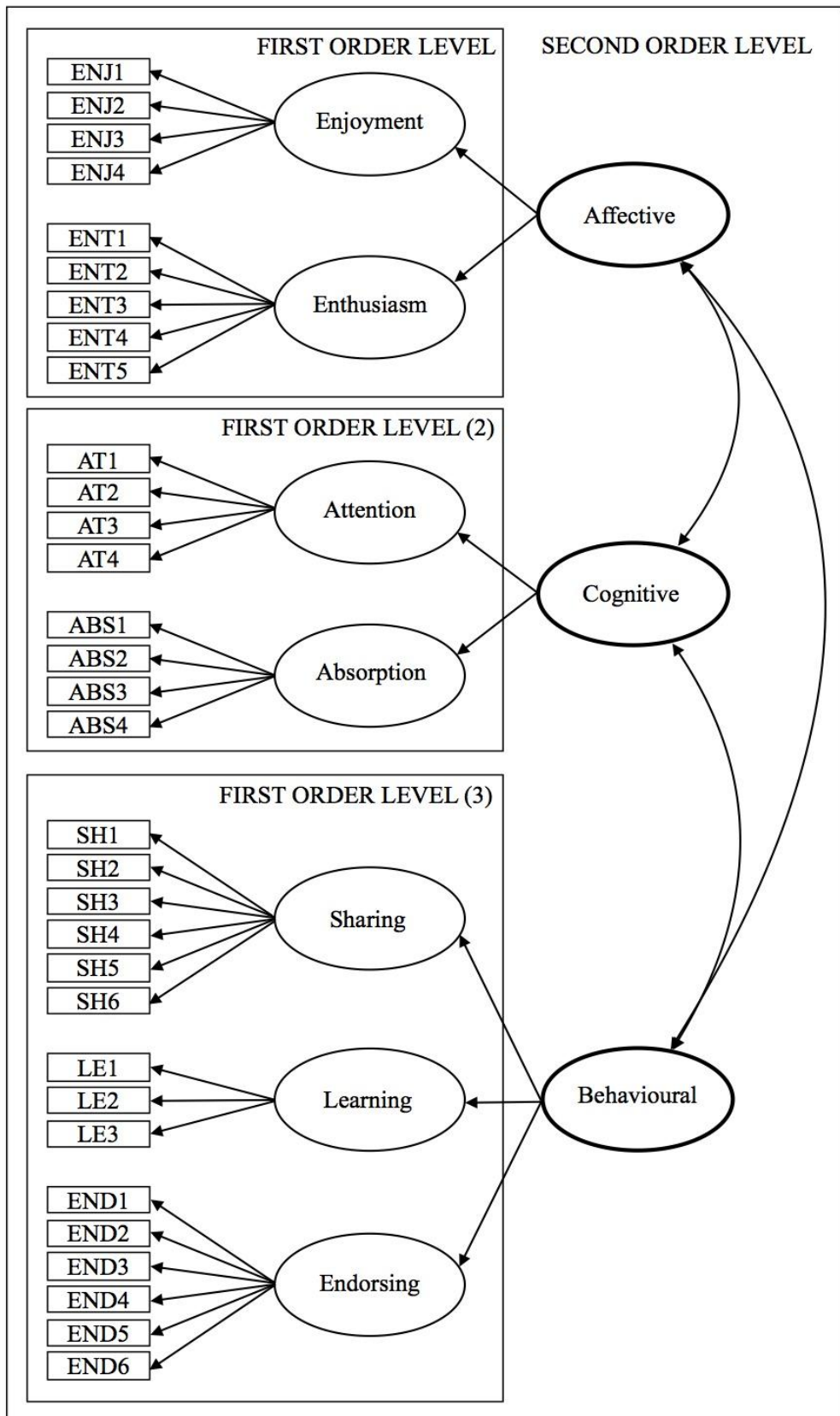
including factor and error terms' variances in the aim to create an over-identified model. Maximum Likelihood estimation is used as a mode of estimation, as it constitutes a widely used and robust method that can also account for normality discrepancies (Byrne, 2010).

An analysis of the correlation matrix between factors has then been then conducted as a way to detect singularity or multicollinearity between factors. Goodness of fit then has then been assessed using the chi-square statistic, in combination with the CFI, TLI and RMSEA indices. These indices are widely used to evaluate factor structures in online community, branding and cross-cultural research. Moreover, they are less sensitive to sample size than the chi-square (Bagozzi et al., 1991) and allow model complexity. The Comparative Fir Index (CFI) has been considered the index of choice. It compares the hypothesised model with a null (or independence) model and takes into account sample size. The Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) has also been considered a choice index to report (Tucker and Lewis, 1973). Both these indexes range from 0.00 to 1.00. Values above 0.90 are indicative of good fit (Bentler, 1992) and any value above 0.95 is even more desirable (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Lastly, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is reported as it has been considered the most informative criteria in covariance structure modelling (Byrne, 2010). Values below 0.08 represent good fit (Hair et al., 2006). Lastly, parameters estimates and standard errors are reported. The procedure is then repeated in the following section with the validation sample and an invariance test computed across the French and English sample to cross-validate the scales.

Given the hypothesised dimensions and sub-dimensions of consumer engagement a 2-step procedure has been applied. CFAs are first computed at the sub-dimension level. The sub-dimensions of the same dimension are grouped together and correlated, and thus three first-order CFAs are performed for each scale. Subsequently, second-order CFAs with the three engagement dimensions (affective, cognitive and behavioural) are performed for each scale. Each item is prescribed to load on only one factor, or sub-dimension, as theoretically hypothesised. Each of the two levels of CFA is performed using the English calibration sample and the statistical software AMOS. The two CFA levels can be visualised on Figure 17 below.

Figure 17: The two-level CFA



CFAs on calibration sample

The sub-dimensions belonging to the same dimension are grouped for the first-order CFA. Specifically, enjoyment and enthusiasm are correlated for the affective dimension, absorption and attention for the cognitive dimensions, and learning, sharing and endorsing are grouped to represent the behavioural dimension (see Figure 17). Some of the models initially exhibiting poor fit, model respecifications are performed based on the modification indices. The use of modification indices to re-specify a model is a common practice and considered to be an exploratory adaptation of the normally confirmatory CFA. However, Gerbing and Hamilton (1996, p71) contend that *'most uses of confirmatory factor analyses are, in actuality, partly exploratory and partly confirmatory in that the resultant model is derived in part from theory and in part from a respecification based on the analysis of model fit'*. The modification indices have been used here to delete redundant or irrelevant items. Out of the initial 33 items, 11 of them have been deleted. After these respecifications, all first-order models exhibited good fit, as detailed Table 14.

Table 14: First order CFA results – Calibration sample

Online Brand Engagement				OBC engagement		
Prior to respecifications						
	Affective	Cognitive	Behav.	Affective	Cognitive	Behav.
Chi-square	152.57	127.58	340.38	127.84	210.57	331.00
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
df	27.00	14.00	876.00	27.00	19.00	87.00
CFI	0.94	0.93	0.91	0.95	0.90	0.94
TLI	0.93	0.84	0.90	0.93	0.85	0.93
RSMEA	1.20	1.19	1.14	1.33	2.13	1.11
After respecifications						
Chi-square	18.94	11.85	56.57	10.37	6.92	71.28
p-value	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.25	0.32	0.00
df	7.00	6.00	31.00	8.00	6.00	32.00
CFI	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.98
TLI	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.98
RSMEA	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.07

For the second-order CFA with the calibration sample, modifications based on the first-order models are kept; however the dimensions (affective, cognitive and behavioural) have been added as second-order factors and correlated with each other. No further

modifications have been made to these models, which had exhibited good fit from the onset. The online brand engagement second-order model shows adequate fit with a $\chi^2 = 473.17$ ($p = 0.00$) and 195 degrees of freedom. The RMSEA is 0.08, which denotes satisfactory fit, the CFI equals 0.95 and TLI 0.94, which are indications of good fit. The OBC engagement model does not perform as well in terms of fit, with a $\chi^2 = 744.65$ ($p = 0.00$) and 204 degrees of freedom. The RMSEA is 0.10, which is at the limit of the advocated guidelines, and the CFI and TLI respectively reaching 0.91 and 0.90, which indicate only acceptable fit. Furthermore, the AMOS results indicate that there is an issue of high collinearity between the affective dimension and the two other dimensions. In order to maintain the equivalence between the two consumer engagement scales, a decision is made not to modify the OBC scale. Rather, further tests to assess the validity and reliability of the scale are performed on the validation sample to decide whether this performance of the scale is worrisome.

CFAs on validation sample

A second set of CFAs has been performed on the validation sample ($n_2 = 224$) to provide further support for the models developed with the CFA on the calibration sample. Following the approach in the previous section, the first-order sub-dimensions are first assessed in terms of reliability and validity. Once these criteria are secured at the first-order level, a second-order analysis is performed. The online brand engagement model's χ^2 is 326.10 ($p = 0.00$) with 184 degrees of freedom. RMSEA is 0.06, which shows adequate fit, CFI is 0.97 and TLI is 0.96, again displaying good fit of the model. The OBC engagement model's χ^2 is 438.04 ($p = 0.00$) with 186 degrees of freedom. RMSEA is 0.07; CFI 0.96 and TLI 0.95, which denotes good fit and temper the issue associated with the calibration sample's borderline values. The item loadings to their constructs on the validation sample range from 0.80 to 0.99, as shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15: First order CFA results – Validation sample

Latent factors and items	Online brand engagement		OBC engagement	
	St Loading	t-value	St Loading	t-value
Enthusiasm	Alpha= 0.94, AVE= 0.79, CR= 0.92		Alpha= 0.93, AVE= 0.83, CR= 0.94	
I feel enthusiastic about the brand	0.88	17.78	0.93	19.85
The brand makes me enthusiastic	0.89	18.15	0.93	20.98
I am heavily into this brand	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I am interested in anything about this brand	0.90	17.08	0.87	21.78
I find this brand interesting	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
Enjoyment	Alpha= 0.95, AVE= 0.88, CR= 0.96		Alpha= 0.94, AVE= 0.85, CR= 0.94	
I enjoy interacting with the brand	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
When interacting with the brand, I feel happy	0.97	22.6	0.91	24.04
I get pleasure from interacting with the brand	0.99	23.69	0.92	24.8
Interacting with the brand is like a treat for me	0.86	23.04	0.93	24.52
Attention	Alpha= 0.93, AVE= 0.87, CR= 0.93		Alpha= 0.97, AVE= 0.94, CR= 0.97	
I pay a lot of attention to the brand	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
Things related to the brand grab my attention	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I spend a lot of time thinking about the brand	0.92	23.01	0.97	35.54
I make time to think about the brand	0.94	24.85	0.97	32.64
Absorption	Alpha= 0.96, AVE= 0.87, CR= 0.96		Alpha= 0.98, AVE= 0.88, CR= 0.96	
When interacting with this brand, I forget everything else around me	0.94	23.86	0.94	29.9
Time flies when I am interacting with this brand	0.96	25.01	0.96	33.08
When I am interacting with this brand, I get carried away	0.92	27.14	0.94	42.46
When interacting with this brand, it is difficult to detach myself	0.90	25.16	0.95	37.18
Sharing	Alpha= 0.94, AVE= 0.83, CR= 0.94		Alpha= 0.95, AVE= 0.88, CR= 0.96	
I reply to the questions of the brand page managers	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I share my opinion with them	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I share my experiences with them	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I share my ideas with them	0.90	20.44	0.92	23.97
I share interesting content with them	0.93	22.95	0.97	28.02
I help them	0.90	19.56	0.92	29.56

Latent factors and items	Online brand engagement		OBC engagement	
	St Loading	t-value	St Loading	t-value
Learning	Alpha= 0.90, AVE= 0.72, CR= 0.88		Alpha= 0.90, AVE= 0.76, CR= 0.90	
I ask them questions	0.89	13.83	0.85	16.36
I seek ideas, or information from them	0.84	16.02	0.90	18.09
I seek help from them	0.81	18.52	0.87	17.52
I learn from the content they provide	<i>Deleted Item Purification</i>			
Endorsing	Alpha= 0.92, AVE= 0.74, CR= 0.92		Alpha= 0.95, AVE= 0.82, CR= 0.95	
I show support to what they say or do	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I share their content to my wider network	<i>Deleted CFA</i>			
I promote the brand	0.88	15.59	0.93	22.16
I try to get other interested in the brand	0.89	15.74	0.93	22.75
I actively defend the brand from its critics	0.86	15.15	0.87	19.11
I say positive things about the brand to other people	0.80	16.2	0.89	21.05

Construct reliability has first been assessed Cronbach's Alpha, similarly to the procedure applied to the calibration sample. Similar to Cronbach's Alpha and using the same benchmark of 0.70, the composite reliability (CR) measures the constructs' internal consistency (Fornell and Larcker 1981), and is computed using the following formula:

$$CR = \frac{(\text{Sum of standardised loadings})^2}{(\text{Sum of standardised loadings})^2 + \text{Sum of indicators measurement error}}$$

The online brand engagement scale exhibits composite reliability values of 0.92, 0.96, 0.93, 0.96, 0.94, 0.88 and 0.92 respectively for the enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, sharing, learning and endorsing sub-dimensions, or first-order factors. The OBC model shows equality good composite reliability with 0.94, 0.94, 0.97, 0.97, 0.96, 0.90 and 0.95 for the enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, sharing, learning and endorsing sub-dimensions. Coefficient alphas and composite reliability indexes are all reported in Table 16. Reliability being a necessary but not sufficient condition, the validity of the scale is also assessed, focusing on all types of validity.

Construct validity is defined as the extent to which an operationalisation measures the concept it is supposed to measure (Cook and Campbell, 1979). It identifies whether the variable is the underlying cause of item covariation (DeVellis, 2012) and is one of the

main indicators of the overall quality of a study. Construct validity can be broken down into four sub-categories: (1) Content validity, (2) Criterion-related validity, (3) Construct validity and (4) Nomological validity.

Content validity is ensured with a strong theoretical foundation, certifying that the items reflect the content encompassed by the target construct. In addition to a precise conceptualisation (see chapter 3), following Netemeyer et al. (2003), content validity is further supported by the experts' panel review, pre-test and pilot phases detailed in this chapter. The scale is therefore considered content valid as the items are representative of the construct's domain and reflective of its difference facets.

Criterion-related validity concerns convergent and discriminant validity. **Convergent validity** has been assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) and computed for each dimension and sub-dimension of the scale. AVE measures the percentage of total variance of the data accounted for by each dimension or in other words, the average variance that the latent variable can explain of all its indicators. Fornell and Larcker (1981) advocate the AVE not to be lower than 0.50. The formula used to compute the AVE is:

$$AVE = \frac{\text{Sum of squared standardised loadings}}{\text{Sum of squared standardised loadings} + \text{Sum of indicator measurement error}}$$

The online brand engagement scale shows AVE values for the sub-dimensions of 0.79 (enthusiasm), 0.88 (enjoyment), 0.87 (attention), 0.87 (absorption), 0.82 (sharing), 0.72 (learning) and 0.74 (endorsing), which are well above 0.50. The OBC engagement scale also exhibits excellent AVE for all its sub-dimensions. They are performing well with AVEs of 0.83 (enthusiasm), 0.85 (enjoyment), 0.94 (attention), 0.90 (absorption), 0.88 (sharing), 0.76 (learning) and 0.82 (endorsing). AVEs are reported in Table 16.

Evidence of **discriminant validity** among the dimensions, and sub-dimensions of the online consumer engagement scales has been provided by three separate tests. Using three different methods is deemed necessary due to the length and dimensional complexity of the scales, which renders them more prone to discriminant validity issues.

The first method used to test for discriminant validity is the correlation test. By examining correlations between all pairs of factors, one can identify if two factors are independent, if their pairwise correlation is smaller than one (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), which is the case for all pairs of factors at the sub-dimension level, as per Table 16.

The second method compares the AVE of each factor with each squared pairwise correlation including that factor. For discriminant validity to exist, the AVE of each factor must be larger than each squared pairwise correlation involving this factor (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). This test is first done at the first-order level to verify discriminant validity across the 7 sub-dimensions. As displayed in Table 16, AVEs are overall greater than any of the two squared pairwise correlations associated with them.

Table 16: Validity- Validation sample

Online brand engagement							
Sub-dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Enthusiasm	0.79	0.67	0.50	0.35	0.19	0.12	0.59
2. Enjoyment	0.82	0.88	0.52	0.44	0.28	0.17	0.48
3. Attention	0.71	0.72	0.87	0.69	0.34	0.15	0.44
4. Absorption	0.59	0.66	0.83	0.87	0.32	0.18	0.42
5. Sharing	0.44	0.53	0.58	0.57	0.82	0.69	0.36
6. Learning	0.34	0.41	0.39	0.42	0.83	0.72	0.25
7. Endorsing	0.77	0.69	0.66	0.65	0.60	0.50	0.74
OBC engagement							
Sub-dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Enthusiasm	0.83	0.56	0.45	0.25	0.29	0.19	0.59
2. Enjoyment	0.75	0.85	0.61	0.67	0.49	0.32	0.48
3. Attention	0.67	0.78	0.94	0.69	0.38	0.24	0.40
4. Absorption	0.50	0.82	0.83	0.90	0.46	0.29	0.31
5. Sharing	0.54	0.70	0.62	0.68	0.88	0.58	0.45
6. Learning	0.44	0.57	0.49	0.54	0.76	0.76	0.36
7. Endorsing	0.77	0.69	0.63	0.56	0.67	0.60	0.82
<i>NB: Bottom half = correlations; Top half = Squared correlations; Diagonal = AVE. For the sub-dimensions, the only correlations to consider are those with sub-dimensions from the same dimension, which are shaded.</i>							

A chi-square difference test is a third way to account for discriminant validity. Following this method, models with fewer dimensions are compared against models with more dimensions (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Model A represents the default baseline model with all sub-dimensions. Models B, C, D, E, F and G, are created, with respectively 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 dimensions to compare with model A, in which all 7 dimensions of engagement are kept. Dimension reduction is achieved by setting the correlation between two dimensions to 1. For instance, in model B, the covariance between Enthusiasm and Enjoyment is set to 1. If the chi-square for model A is significantly lower than all chi-squares for models with fewer dimensions, discriminant validity is achieved (Bagozzi and

Phillips, 1982). In the AMOS output, CMIN represents the chi-square. Since all p-values are below .05, this indicates that the chi-square of model A is significantly lower than all other nested models chi-squares, therefore indicating discriminant validity between sub-dimensions. The results of this test are detailed in Table 17.

Table 17: Chi-Square test sub-dimensions – Validation sample

Online brand engagement: Assuming model A to be correct					
Model	df	CMIN	P-value	NFI	IFI
Model B: corr BENT and BENJ=1	1	479.45	0.00	0.03	0.03
Model C: corr BENT- BENJ=1; corr BAT –BABS =1	2	611.10	0.00	0.04	0.04
Model D: corr BENT- BENJ=1; corr BAT –BABS =1; corr BSH-BLE=1	3	744.75	0.00	0.05	0.05
Model E: corr BENT- BENJ=1; corr BAT –BABS =1; corr BSH-BLE-BEND=1	5	1699.66	0.00	0.10	0.11
Model F: corr BENT-BENJ-BAT –BABS =1; corr BSH-BLE-BEND=1	9	2661.17	0.00	0.16	0.17
Model G: corr BENT-BENJ-BAT –BABS-BSH-BLE-BEND=1	21	4591.88	0.00	0.28	0.29
OBC engagement: Assuming model A to be correct					
Model	df	CMIN	P-value	NFI	IFI
Model B: corr OENT and OENJ=1	1	25.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Model C: corr OENT- OENJ=1; corr OAT –OABS =1	2	69.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
Model D: corr OENT- OENJ=1; corr OAT–OABS=1; corr OSH-BLE=1	3	112.47	0.00	0.01	0.01
Model E: corr OENT- OENJ=1; corr OAT–OABS =1; corr OSH-OLE-OEND=1	5	115.44	0.00	0.01	0.01
Model F: corr OENT-OENJ-OAT–OABS =1; corr OSH-OLE-OEND=1	9	279.23	0.00	0.01	0.01
Model G: corr OENT-OENJ-OAT–OABS-OSH-OLE-OEND=1	21	561.80	0.00	0.03	0.03

In order to proceed to the second-order scale validation procedures, a manipulation of the first-order scale is necessary. In order to manage the dimensional complexity of the scale and its large number of items, sub-dimensions are computed as summated or aggregate scores following Yoo and Donthu's (2001) approach. Summating the raw score of the 22 items is deemed incorrect since the items do not load equally on each sub-dimensions. Observed items' causal paths standardised regression weights are therefore used as weights to create an aggregate score for each sub-dimensions (e.g. all enthusiasm items are used to

create an enthusiasm aggregate score). The weight of an item is calculated as the fraction of the path estimate of that dimension over the sum of the other relevant path estimates. For example, the weight of the first enthusiasm item on the overall enthusiasm aggregate value for online brand engagement is 0.332, which derives from $0.88/(0.88+0.89+0.88)$. Subsequently, the summated enthusiasm scale is computed as:

$$\text{Aggregate value of enthusiasm items} = 0.332 * BENT1 + 0.336 * BENT2 + 0.332 * BENT4$$

CFAs have been calculated at the dimension level where the sub-dimensions have become items, and the dimensions of which they are reflective, first-order factors. The online brand engagement CFA performs adequately with a χ^2 of 26.78 ($p = 0.003$) with 10 degrees of freedom. RMSEA is 0.08, the CFI is 0.99 and TLI is 0.98. The OBC engagement model exhibits a χ^2 of 15.03 ($p = 0.053$) with 8 degrees of freedom, and RMSEA of 0.06, a CFI equal 0.99 and a TLI of 0.98. The item loadings to their constructs on the validation sample ranged from 0.71 to 1.00, as shown in Table 18 and they all are significant.

Table 18: CFA second order – Validation sample

Latent factors/ items (aggregate scores)	Online brand engagement		OBC engagement	
	St Loading	t-value	St Loading	t-value
AFFECTIVE	Alpha= 0.86, AVE= 0.76, CR= 0.86		Alpha= 0.83, AVE= 0.76, CR= 0.84	
Enthusiasm	0.94	14.60	0.74	13.74
Enjoyment	0.80	15.20	0.96	15.89
COGNITIVE	Alpha= 0.88, AVE= 0.78, CR= 0.87		Alpha= 0.90, AVE= 0.82, CR= 0.90	
Attention	0.89	16.49	0.88	19.97
Absorption	0.87	15.28	0.93	21.54
BEHAVIOURAL	Alpha= 0.93, AVE= 0.76, CR= 0.91		Alpha= 0.93, AVE= 0.82, CR= 0.93	
Sharing	0.89	24.93	0.95	40.63
Learning	0.71	14.77	0.74	16.39
Endorsing	1.00	18.52	1.00	17.20

Scale reliability is achieved at the dimensions level, with Cronbach's Alpha all largely above the cut-off value of 0.70, and coefficients of reliability (CR) also ranging from 0.76 to 0.93. Convergent validity is ensured thanks to AVE values above 0.50 for all three dimensions of each scale. Specifically, for the online brand engagement scale, the AVE is 0.76 for the affective dimension, 0.78 for the cognitive dimension, and 0.76 for the

behavioural dimension. These values for the OBC engagement scale are namely 0.76, 0.82 and 0.82.

In terms of discriminant validity, evaluating the paired correlations for the dimensions proved to be adequate for all bar one dimension, the affective dimension of the OBC engagement scale, which exhibits a value of 1, and therefore a squared correlation of 1, which is above the cut-off value advocated by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Accordingly, the second test for discriminant validity also yields the same results. Comparing the AVE with the squared pairwise correlations shows that the AVEs for each factor are greater than all the squared pairwise correlations involving this factor, except for the affective dimension of the OBC engagement scale. Specifically, the affective dimension's AVE equals 0.76, which is below its squared pairwise correlation with the cognitive dimension (1.00) and with the behavioural dimension (0.88).

Table 19: CFA second order validity – Validation sample

Online brand engagement			
Dimensions	1	2	3
1. Affective	0.76	0.67	0.38
2. Cognitive	0.82	0.78	0.45
3. Behavioural	0.62	0.67	0.76
OBC engagement			
Dimensions	1	2	3
1. Affective	0.76	1.00	0.88
2. Cognitive	1.00	0.82	0.72
3. Behavioural	0.94	0.85	0.82

In order to evaluate whether this violation of discriminant validity is worrisome, a further test of discriminant validity is performed: the chi-square difference test. Because the existence of high correlations indicates that the offending factor (the affective dimension) should either be deleted or merged with another factor, a comparison of the baseline model with models with fewer dimensions is performed through the chi-square difference test whereby models with fewer dimensions are compared against models with more dimensions (Bagozzi and Phillips, 1982; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

Models B, C, D and E have been created, with respectively 2, 2, 2, and 1 dimensions to compare with model A, in which all 3 dimensions of engagement are kept and their

covariances left unconstrained. Dimension reduction has been achieved by setting the correlation between two dimensions to 1. In model B, the covariance between the affective dimension and the cognitive dimension is set to 1, in model C, this is done between cognitive and behavioural, in model D between affective and behavioural, and in model E all covariances are constrained to 1. If the chi-square for model A is significantly lower than all chi-squares for models with fewer dimensions, discriminant validity is achieved (Bagozzi and Phillips, 1982). In the AMOS output, CMIN represents the chi-square. Since all p-values are below 0.05, this indicates that the chi-square of model A is significantly lower than all other nested models chi-squares, therefore indicating discriminant validity between sub-dimensions and ensuring that all dimensions are rightfully needed to represent the concept.

Table 20: Chi Square test – Validation sample

Online brand engagement: Assuming model A to be correct							
Model	df	CMIN	p-value	NFI	IFI	RFI	TLI
Model B: Corr Aff-Cog =1	1	40.09	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05
Model C: Corr Cog-Behav =1	1	15.40	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Model D: Corr Aff-Behav=1	1	16.42	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Model E: Corr Aff-Behav-Cog = 1	3	40.36	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04
OBC engagement: Assuming model A to be correct							
Model	df	CMIN	p-value	NFI	IFI	RFI	TLI
Model B: Corr Aff-Cog =1	1	48.17	0	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.04
Model C: Corr Cog-Behav =1	1	22.14	0	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Model D: Corr Aff-Behav=1	1	37.93	0	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.04
Model E: Corr Aff-Behav-Cog = 1	3	53.88	0	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04

Another form of validity, which needs to be verified, is construct validity. Since the study develops two mirrored scales of engagement, assessing the correlations between the two scales provides an indication whether they are both tapping into the same underlying engagement concept. A correlation of 0.97 between the online brand engagement and the OBC engagement scales is supportive of construct validity. In other words, a high correlation between the scales indicates that they both measure the same construct, albeit

for a different object. A last measure of validity of a scale concerns its relationship with other constructs, and is called nomological validity (Netemeyer et al., 2003). This aspect of the scale validity will be addressed thanks to the hypothesis testing section, in which the two consumer engagement constructs are causally linked with other theoretically related constructs.

5.2.6. Norm

The last stage of the scale development process advocated by Churchill (1979) is the development of norms. The aim of this procedure is to allow the assessment of the position of a relevant unit of investigation in terms of the score it achieves on the scale items. This is particularly useful to know if the level of engagement generated by brand alpha is higher, lower or similar to the average of all other brands. In this case, it is relevant to categorise values according to the product categories. Indeed, Table 10 showed that few OBC studies compared brands belonging to different product categories, and a large amount of them focused on durable goods, especially automotive goods. Consequently, means are computed for each item of the mirrored scales. Similarly to Lytle et al. (1998), these means are broken down by product category, in the aim to compare the performance of each product category with respect to the others. Table 21 offers the detail of these figures.

The highlighted values represent the highest item means across product categories, whereas the values in bold represent the lowest scores. The results show that, overall, services and durable goods achieve the highest cross-category means, whereas retail brands have the lowest levels of engagement across items. More specifically, service brands exhibit the highest levels of sharing and learning, both with the brand and with the OBC. Services also have the highest values for attention and absorption with the community. Durable goods, on the other hand, rank the highest on all the affective and cognitive brand engagement items, as well as most of the OBC affective items. Durables also perform particularly well on both brand and OBC engagement “endorsing” items. Aside from a few items, the product category encompassing all the lowest engagement means is the retail category, both for brand and OBC engagement. On average, brand engagement scores higher values than OBC engagement. Additionally, the sub-dimensions achieving the highest means are enthusiasm and endorsing whereas cognitive dimensions are on the low end.

Table 21: Item means by product category

Product categories		Food and Beverage		Technology		Services		Travel		Fashion and Beauty		Durable Goods		Retail		Entertainment		Others		Total	
Sub dimension	Items	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC	Brand	OBC
Enthusiasm	1	5.49	4.27	5.00	3.63	4.60	4.28	4.73	3.89	5.22	4.18	6.11	4.90	4.08	2.67	5.31	4.52	5.41	4.12	5.25	4.22
	2	5.22	3.77	4.38	2.94	4.50	4.02	4.48	3.50	4.94	3.66	6.02	4.49	3.92	2.67	5.09	4.29	4.82	4.00	5.00	3.81
	3	4.69	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.22	4.08	4.50	3.73	4.34	3.43	5.86	4.32	3.50	2.42	4.39	3.91	4.88	4.03	4.62	3.84
Enjoyment	1	3.95	2.62	3.06	2.31	3.70	3.48	3.95	2.79	3.42	2.29	5.08	3.37	2.83	1.92	4.09	3.04	4.06	2.41	3.95	2.75
	2	4.01	2.82	3.13	2.06	3.75	3.52	3.94	3.03	3.47	2.55	5.00	3.74	3.17	1.92	4.13	3.17	4.06	2.53	3.98	2.95
	3	3.39	2.36	2.35	2.09	3.45	3.02	3.58	2.79	3.01	2.23	4.65	3.30	2.58	1.83	3.22	2.61	3.18	2.35	3.43	2.57
Attention	1	3.33	2.56	3.00	2.37	3.70	3.30	3.30	2.68	2.88	2.15	4.52	3.00	2.75	1.83	3.20	2.58	2.82	2.65	3.35	2.60
	2	3.16	2.49	2.81	2.31	3.33	3.08	3.17	2.56	2.72	2.04	4.06	2.86	2.33	2.00	2.92	2.53	2.59	2.53	3.13	2.50
Absorbtion	1	2.55	2.03	2.31	1.81	3.13	2.93	2.66	2.31	1.97	1.86	3.38	2.06	2.17	1.75	2.46	2.12	2.18	1.89	2.57	2.11
	2	2.94	2.16	2.44	1.94	3.20	2.97	2.90	2.33	2.47	1.93	3.88	2.47	2.25	2.00	3.25	2.33	2.71	2.08	2.98	2.25
	3	2.80	2.01	2.44	1.94	3.22	2.78	2.86	2.29	2.46	1.89	3.85	2.17	2.50	1.58	3.00	2.20	2.47	2.00	2.89	2.12
	4	2.42	1.92	2.12	1.75	3.17	2.66	2.63	2.17	2.22	1.73	3.29	2.13	1.83	1.75	2.62	2.03	2.06	1.82	2.56	2.01
Sharing	1	3.37	2.95	2.75	1.95	3.80	3.92	3.39	3.08	2.72	2.55	3.39	3.28	1.75	1.75	3.34	3.00	2.76	2.38	3.25	2.96
	2	3.15	2.73	2.25	2.03	3.97	3.90	3.17	2.92	2.53	2.53	3.20	3.20	2.17	1.92	3.27	2.90	2.41	2.06	3.08	2.83
	3	2.84	2.57	2.63	2.11	3.66	3.63	2.76	2.73	2.44	2.33	3.23	3.39	1.75	1.67	3.13	2.90	2.29	2.12	2.85	2.70
Learning	1	3.02	2.76	3.25	2.57	3.85	3.38	3.36	3.02	2.98	2.82	3.23	3.22	2.08	2.00	3.47	3.15	2.00	1.97	3.17	2.91
	2	3.25	3.00	3.50	2.54	4.40	4.20	3.73	3.31	3.42	3.18	3.74	3.45	2.83	2.33	3.94	3.53	2.88	2.75	3.55	3.23
	3	2.68	2.44	3.44	2.63	4.08	3.73	3.57	3.15	2.69	2.62	2.91	2.70	1.58	2.25	3.36	2.94	2.35	2.33	3.03	2.76
Endorsing	1	4.53	3.86	3.97	2.45	4.40	3.70	3.48	2.89	3.69	3.18	4.88	4.12	3.33	2.17	3.80	3.43	3.82	3.58	4.09	3.46
	2	4.68	3.79	4.25	2.70	4.35	3.60	3.39	2.87	3.48	3.08	4.39	3.80	2.58	1.92	3.89	3.36	4.00	3.38	4.05	3.38
	3	3.94	3.30	3.63	2.63	3.70	3.55	3.20	2.77	2.81	2.62	4.55	3.50	2.25	2.17	3.34	3.12	2.82	2.94	3.54	3.07
	4	5.19	4.05	4.38	2.93	4.02	3.87	4.23	3.30	4.49	3.35	5.73	4.54	4.25	2.83	4.72	3.93	4.35	3.71	4.77	3.77

5.3. Scales for existing constructs

This section deals with the scales chosen for existing constructs, which were adapted from past studies. It provides a rationale for the specific scales chosen for each construct based on conceptual fit, reliability, validity and evidenced generalisability of the scales. The choice of scales for the concepts of OIP, attitude toward community participation, product involvement, brand trust, brand commitment and brand loyalty is presented below.

5.3.1. Online interaction propensity

The OIP scale is derived from Wiertz and de Ruyter's (2007) work on firm-hosted commercial online communities. The scale was developed following Churchill's (1979) paradigm, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection phases, in total 5 studies performed on online and offline samples, which establish the strong psychometric properties of the scale (composite reliability of 0.96; average variance extracted of 0.85). The resulting scale is a 4-item instrument, measured with a seven-point Likert type response format, with 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' as anchors.

5.3.2. Attitude toward OBC participation

Attitude toward OBC participation is measured based on Bagozzi and Dholakia's (2006) semantic differential scale which asks respondents to anchor their attitudes on the following four 7-point scales: (1) foolish/wise; (2) harmful/beneficial; (3) bad/good) and (4) punishing/rewarding. The scales achieved a reliability of 0.94 and 0.88 respectively for the two type of brand communities involved in the project. Its wording is adapted in this study to be understood by the Facebook brand page members.

5.3.3. Product involvement

Given the complexity and amount of attributes of the involvement concept, a large number of ways to measure it exist, taking different conceptual angles. This section reviews the most prominent ones. Lastovicka and Gardner (1979) developed the first scale dedicated to this measure, focusing on normative importance (how important a product class is to an individual's values) commitment (the binding of an individual to his/her brand choice), and familiarity. The 22-items scale uses a 7-point Likert scale and has the advantage of having been developed on a sample of 14 different product categories. However, in addition to its

length, a major reason for deeming it inappropriate to this study is its inclusion of commitment, which we defined as conceptually distinct from involvement. This same concept/measurement issue is found in Traylor and Joseph's (1984) scale. Although it achieves high reliability and validity, its items are strongly reminiscent of social identification, or congruity, rather than involvement (e.g. 'when other people see me using this product, they form an opinion of me').

Bloch (1981) later devised a scale intended to measure four dimensions of product involvement, which are mainly cognitive, namely (1) knowledge, (2) opinion leadership, (3) interest and (4) information search. This scale suffers from a strong contextual bend, as it has been developed and later used mainly in the context of automobile (Richins and Bloch, 1991; Richins et al., 1992). This industry specificity is also strongly reflected in the wording of items, which creates a concern for the need of an important adaptation of the scale to fit the purpose of this study.

One of the most widely used scale of involvement is Zaichowski's (1994) Personal Involvement Inventory, which is adaptable to product, advertisement and purchase situations. The 20-item scale uses a 7-point semantic differential scale with bipolar adjectives as anchors and was vastly used by researchers (e.g. Flynn and Goldsmith, 1993; Warrington and Shim, 2000) due to its wider range of applicability, and high reliability and validity. It was however later criticised for being too lengthy, and having a problem with discriminant and construct validity (McQuarrie and Munson, 1992).

The scale adopted in this study is Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) Consumer Involvement Profile scale. It measures 5 dimensions of involvement: (1) the perceived importance of the product, (2) the pleasure or hedonic value derived from the product, (3) the sign, or symbolic value attributed to the product, (4) the risk probability associated with a potential mispurchase, and (5) the risk importance associated with a mispurchase. The reason for using this scale is threefold. Firstly, it has been developed using a sample of 14 different product categories, ensuring a better generalisability than other scales, as shown by its broad usage (e.g. Mittal and Lee, 1989; Havitz and Howard, 1995). Secondly, its dimensions are inclusive of both enduring and situational involvement, which is in line with the scope of this research. Thirdly, its conciseness and clarity work favourably toward its inclusion in a web survey of Facebook page members. With Cronbach Alphas ranging from 0.72 and 0.90 on its different dimensions, this scale also proved to be highly reliable.

5.3.4. Brand trust

It is apparent from the literature on brand trust that research is scarce in the measurement of this concept, and it has been qualified as hard to conceptualise and measure (Matzler, et al., 2008). Organisational research has produced a number of measurements of trust in various contexts and focused on various trust objects. Probably one of the best known study on trust is Morgan and Hunt's (1994), which uses an 8-item Likert scale. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) later measure organisational trust with the intent to see how important it is for consumers, based on their relational orientation. Trust has also been studied in online contexts in the form of e-trust, or trust with a website, loosely building from Garbarino and Johnson's (1999) scale.

In the branding literature, trust has been measured by Hess (1995), focusing on 3 dimensions of trust, namely: (1) Altruism; (2) Honesty and (3) Reliability, with an 11-item Likert scale. This scale is however not used in this study, in favour of Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) scale of brand trust, using a more parsimonious 4-item, 7-point Likert scale with anchor 1= very strongly disagree, and 7= very strongly agree. This scale achieved a reliability index of 0.81. A subsequent 3-item scale was adapted from this version by the same authors (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002); however, it achieves a lower reliability index; probably because of the deletion of a determinant item. The 4-item scale is considered as best suited to this study firstly because of its successful adaptations in other branding studies (e.g. Mazler et al., 2008; Marzocchi et al., 2013). Its wide usage is complemented by its focus on trust with a brand, rather than another organisational focus, its conciseness, and high psychometric values.

5.3.5. Brand commitment

The measurement of commitment in organisational sciences is a problematic issue, guided by the lack of consensus on its dimensionality. A large stream of the literature concerned with the measurement of commitment treats it as a unidimensional behavioural variable, or bi-dimensional, consisting of attitudes and behaviours (e.g. Warrington and Shim, 2000; Eisingerich and Rubera, 2010; De Wulf et al., 2013). A further problem with the uni-versus multidimensionality of commitment is that, some scales' dimensionality seems inconsistent with their conceptualisation, rendering their use subject to question. For instance, Beatty and Khale (1988) define commitment as an attitudinal concept, yet their 3-

item scale is reflective of behavioural intentions rather than attitudes (e.g. ‘When another brand is on sale, I will generally purchase it rather than my usual brand’).

Semantic differential scales have also been used to measure commitment. Taking this particular approach to the measurement of commitment, Ahluwalia et al. (2013) propose a semantic differential scale with 4 items: (1) Good/bad; (2) Beneficial/Harmful; (3) Desirable/Undesirable and (4) Nice/Awful. This scale allows expressing a value judgment of a brand, however not to measure a preference for said brand.

Another line of measures of commitment embraces the idea that commitment is attitudinal only (often relating it to attitudinal loyalty). One study taking such a perspective is Pritchard et al.’s (1999). They conceptualise and measure commitment as resistance to change, based on a past preference. It is indicative of attitudinal preference, but also indicates cognitive aspects of this preference in its potential re-evaluation. In line with the attitudinal uni-dimensionality, Jacoby and Chesnut (1978), measure commitment using a 4-item Likert scale, which achieved a high reliability score. It has however been criticised as encompassing measures of intentional behaviour rather than attitudinal preference. Other validated commitment scales such as Allen and Meyer’s (1990) were also discarded despite their popularity, based on the grounds that they display a strong overlap with other relational constructs used in this study, including dimensions of consumer engagement.

After a thorough review of the commitment scaling literature, this study takes the stance advocated by El-Manstrly and Harrison (2013), which views brand commitment as an attitudinal dimension of loyalty. After reviewing the literature on loyalty, they developed a loyalty scale with data from Scottish consumers of a company in the service sector. Commitment is equalled to attitudinal loyalty and, using a 5-item, 7-point Likert scale it achieves high reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.88) and convergent validity (Variance Extracted = 0.65). The 5-item scale is reviewed for the purpose of this research, and 3 items out of the initial five are kept. The two items ‘Compared with other service providers, I am happy with the services x provides’ and ‘I am usually pleased with my purchase decisions from x’ were not used, as they were deemed to tap into brand satisfaction rather than commitment. The remaining three items are consistent with the affective and attitudinal view of brand commitment as defined in chapter 3.

5.3.6. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty has been the subject of many measurement exercises, all of which are rooted in the way the construct is defined. This study takes a behavioural approach to loyalty, and views it as ‘repeat purchase behaviours’, considering it to be conceptually distinct from any attitudinal dimension. Keeping in line with this conceptualisation, this study focuses on measurement that encapsulates this behavioural dimension. Since attitudinal loyalty (brand commitment) and behavioural loyalty (repeat purchase) are two distinct conceptual constructs within the scope of this study, this study also considers them to be operationally distinct.

Behavioural loyalty can be measured as retention, lifetime duration, usage, share of wallet and cross buying. More specifically, usage can be measured as the number of repurchase visits, amount of spending or number of transactions (Kumar et al., 2013). Scales of brand loyalty often encompass attitudinal and behavioural aspects of loyalty under the same scale. This is the case with Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) who, based on Jacoby and Chesnut (1978) measure purchase loyalty with two items along with attitudinal loyalty with two items. This scale was also used by Marzocchi et al. (2013) in the context of brand communities. Similarly, Pritchard et al. (1999) use a composite measure with four attitudinal items and two behavioural items, which are intended to specifically quantify the amount of purchase occurrences within a specific timeframe. These scales however suffer from being framed in a multidimensional approach to loyalty, and as such, only grant limited importance to the behavioural items.

For this reason, it is deemed essential to use an existing scale that is entirely dedicated to the measurement of repeat purchasing behaviour, such as the one developed by Odin et al. (2001). This scale is composed of 4 items capturing past and future purchasing behaviour of one specific brand within a product category, and is therefore the one most adapted to our context of investigation and conceptual approach of brand loyalty. This scale also evidenced high reliability with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.96.

5.4. Summary

The first section of the chapter focused on the development of a reliable and valid scale of consumer engagement in the context of OBC in order to answer the first research question.

Through a series of steps following strict psychometric processes and tests, two mirrored scales of consumer engagement were created: one with the OBC as a partner, the other one with the brand. The duality of engagement partners as well as the dimensions and sub-dimensions of consumer engagement were proposed in the conceptual framework, and further evidenced in the 25 interviews. A series of iterative item generation steps ensued, and the content validity of these items was ensured with the help of academic experts. Using a final pool of 2x35 items, data were collected on a sample of Facebook page members. The items were first purified and then submitted to a two-level CFA analysis. This analysis was first successfully computed on the calibration sample, and on the validation sample next, exhibiting adequate goodness of fit indices at both stages and for both first-order and second-order levels, accounting for the sub-dimensions of the scales. The two consumer engagement scales also exhibited good measures of convergent, discriminant and construct validity. Lastly, measurement and structural invariance for the consumer engagement scales were tested across the English and the French samples, evidencing complete invariance between the two linguistic contexts.

The chapter also presented the scales that were chosen to tap into all other variables included in the causal model of this study. The next chapter focuses on the testing of the hypotheses related to this model, using the scales chosen and developed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Hypothesis testing

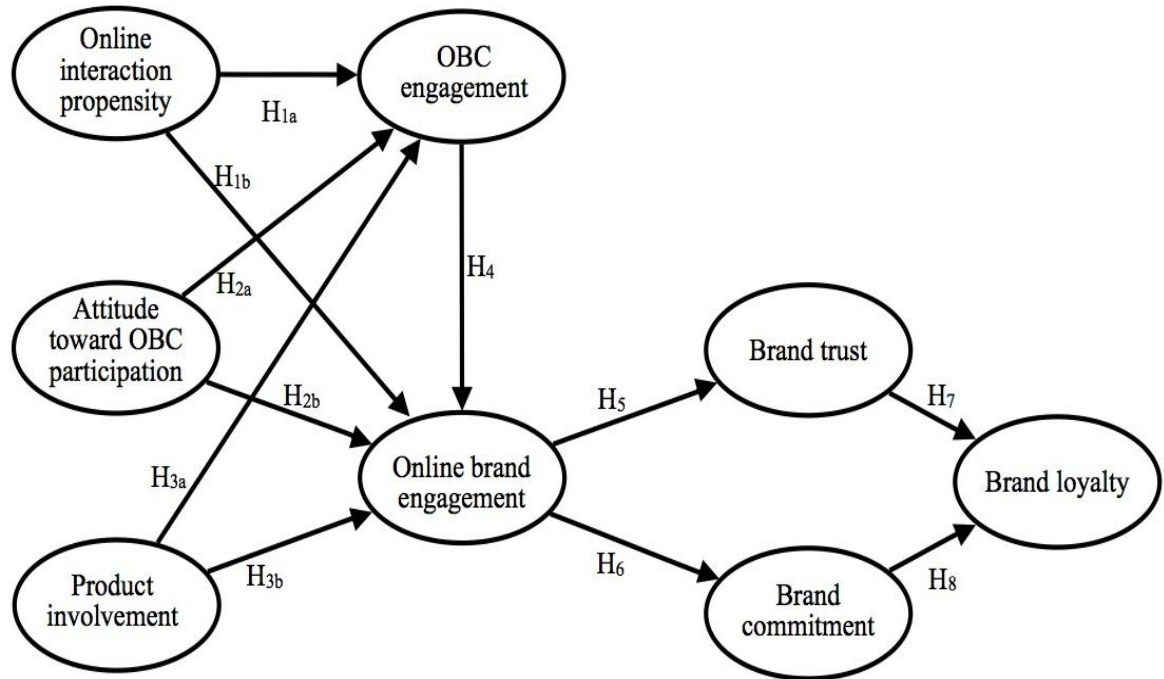
6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on addressing research questions 2 and 3. Using the developed measures of consumer engagement, the relationships with their antecedents and outcomes is tested in this chapter using SEM procedures. A CFA is computed first to assess the measurement model's reliability and validity, followed by statistics regarding the structural model. The results show that the hypotheses are partially supported.

In order to validate the research questions across different linguistic contexts, all tests include analyses of the French and English samples in parallel, and further tests of group invariance are computed at each stage of the process to assess the equivalence of the model.

6.2. Approach to hypothesis testing

The aim of the SEM detailed in this section is to test the set of hypotheses developed in the conceptual stages of this research. Figure 18 below offers a reminder of the visual representation of the hypotheses.

Figure 18: The causal model (2)

This section adopts a two-phase SEM analysis, focusing first on the measurement model to assess the factor structure, and then the structural model to test the hypothesised links between the variables and assess the fit of the full structural model with the data (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

For the measurement model, the same logical series of steps as detailed in the scale development CFAs are applied: model identification, model estimation, goodness-of-fit evaluation and check of the parameter estimates. Reliability and validity of the models are subsequently reported for the CFAs and a measurement invariance test proving that the French and English samples exhibit measurement invariance. The samples used to test the hypotheses are the English validation sample (n=224) previously used in the consumer engagement scale development, and the French sample (n=273).

Then, the SEM results are presented and verification or rejection of the hypotheses examined. Results are presented for the French and English samples concurrently, and a test performed to account for structural invariance between the samples.

6.2.1. The measurement model

Model fit

A first CFA is run as suggested by Andersson-Cederholm and Gyimothy (2010), including in the measurement model all hypothesised antecedents and outcomes of online brand and brand community engagement, as well as the two engagement constructs, using the developed engagement scales.

The measurement model exhibited for the English model a chi-square of 1741.34 ($p = 0.00$) with 535 degrees of freedom, CFI = 0.84, TLI = 0.83, which are slightly below the advocated guidelines, and an RMSEA = 0.06, which is deemed a good representation of fit. For the French sample, these values are: chi-square of 1973.24 ($p = 0.00$) with 535 degrees of freedom, CFI = 0.84, TLI = 0.82, which are slightly below the advocated guidelines, and an RMSEA = 0.06. All standardised loadings are above or close to 0.50 and t-values are all significant ($p < 0.01$) both for the English and the French sample. The reasons for CFI and TLI measures below the advocated guidelines are largely due to the nature of the engagement scales included in the model, as lengthy and complex scales are more difficult to use in models with many variables and may result in redundancy between closely related items (Ruvio et al., 2008). An overview of the modification indices indeed indicates high modification values for the covariances of the two engagement scales, which directly affect the model fit. These values are however natural since the items measure the same concept for different objects. However, the constructs perform perfectly at their higher-order levels, showing no evidence of multicollinearity (see Table 21 below).

Configural and metric invariance of the measurement model

Assessing the applicability of framework developed in one context into another context is important to establish its generalisability. Following recognised multigroup invariance tests which use increasingly constraining levels of invariance (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998), this section aims to first show the configural and metric (or measurement) invariance of the hypothesis model across the English and French sample. The AMOS multigroup analysis procedure is used, following (Byrne, 2010)⁴. The configural invariance determines the similar structure of the measurement instrument re

⁴ The approach proposed by Byrne (2010) differs slightly from the omnibus test traditionally run with Lisrel (which assesses configural, metric, scalar and factor invariance simultaneously, see Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998), as it decomposes the levels of invariance into different models, allowing the researcher to first ensure less constrained levels of invariance (configural, measurement) before moving to more restrictive models (with structural invariance). It is therefore a method based on *a priori* progression rather than *a posteriori* relaxing of constraints.

checks for the similarity of the patterns of factor loadings (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). Since the model fit of the two samples has been assessed separately in the above paragraph, this section aims to assess the goodness-of-fit of the multigroup sample (that is, where the French and English sample have been combined). The measurement model exhibited a chi-square of 3112.304 ($p = 0.00$) with 1033 degrees of freedom and a chi-square/df ratio of 3.00 (within the 2.00-3.00 bracket deemed acceptable), CFI = 0.87, TLI = 0.85, which are slightly below the advocated guidelines, and an RMSEA = 0.06, which is deemed a good representation of fit. In this multigroup sample, similarly to the French and English samples separately, the goodness of fit is adequate, no salient factor loadings are significantly different from zero and the correlations between factors are below the unity (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). Since the model fit is achieved for the multigroup sample, although this model has no constraints, this sets baseline values against which more restrictive invariance models will be assessed.

Having established the configural invariance, the metric, or measurement invariance aims to check the similarity of the loadings across samples. In order to test for metrics invariance, the factor loadings are thus constrained to be the same across countries, using the automated models function of AMOS (Byrne, 2010) and using the CFI difference value to test the significance of the invariance (a more recent and practical approach than the chi-square difference test, according to Cheung and Rensvold, 2002⁵), with a cut-off criterion of $\Delta\text{CFI} \leq 0.01$ applied to verify measurement invariance. The online brand engagement scale exhibits a $\Delta\text{CFI}=0.001$ between the configural and constrained model, whereas the OBC engagement model has a $\Delta\text{CFI}=0.01$, which both indicate measurement invariance for the French and English sample. A further check of the modification indices does not suggest the need to modify the factorial structure, further validating the measurement invariance. Having established the configural and measurement invariance of the French and English samples, this study can proceed to the test of the hypotheses, which is complemented by further tests of invariance.

⁵ Note that the chi-square difference test is more strict than the CFI difference test, however hard to apply to this study's model given the complexity of the model yielding high degrees of freedom which do not feature on chi-square distribution tables.

Table 22: SEM measurement model – Standard loadings and t-values

Latent factors and items	EN Sample		FR Sample	
	St loading	t-value	St loading	t-value
Product Involvement				
This type of product is very important to me	0.97	15.26	0.92	19.54
This type of product matters to me	0.92	16.85	0.99	20.37
Attitude toward OBC participation				
Participating in the online community is ...Foolish/Wise	0.76	13.97	0.74	13.54
...Harmful/Beneficial	0.90	18.95	0.95	18.88
...Bad/Good	0.91	19.22	0.93	18.37
...Punishing/Rewarding	0.88	18.52	0.80	17.53
Online Interaction Propensity				
In general, I like to get involved in online discussions	0.81	10.85	0.81	10.65
I am someone who enjoys interacting with like-minded people online	0.87	19.22	0.86	15.34
I am someone who likes actively participating in online discussions	0.85	11.31	0.86	11.55
In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with others online	0.98	15.43	0.90	16.02
Online Brand Engagement				
Affective dimension				
Enjoyment*	0.93	13.54	0.97	15.63
Enthusiasm*	0.88	14.53	0.85	16.32
Enthusiasm*	0.86	16.87	0.69	12.72
Cognitive dimension				
Attention*	0.90	13.63	0.89	15.04
Absorption*	0.89	17.05	0.88	18.19
Absorption*	0.88	18.22	0.87	16.53
Behavioural dimension				
Sharing*	0.94	13.92	0.95	12.32
Sharing*	0.85	10.52	0.78	11.91
Learning*	0.56	8.24	0.70	10.72
Endorsing*	0.67	9.52	0.71	14.52

Latent factors and items	EN Sample		FR Sample	
	St loading	t-value	St loading	t-value
OBC Engagement				
Affective dimension	1.00	16.52	1.00	16.33
Enjoyment*	0.89	14.27	0.86	163.21
Enthusiasm*	0.82	16.43	0.67	12.89
Cognitive dimension	0.92	17.78	0.94	18.78
Attention*	0.89	20.10	0.90	20.70
Absorption*	0.93	22.46	0.89	15.02
Behavioural dimension	0.84	12.00	0.83	11.67
Sharing*	0.90	14.15	0.91	13.48
Learning*	0.76	11.97	0.84	12.83
Endorsing*	0.79	13.27	0.70	12.64
Brand Trust				
I trust this brand	0.94	20.58	0.90	15.95
I rely on this brand	0.76	13.11	0.80	14.15
This is an honest brand	0.87	22.60	0.80	18.12
This brand is safe	0.88	15.21	0.80	15.27
Brand Commitment				
I have grown to like this brand more than others offering the same product/service	0.82	16.33	0.87	16.32
I like the product/services offered by this brand	0.90	16.95	0.94	21.67
To me, this brand is the one whose products/services I enjoy using most	0.87	15.74	0.80	16.91
Brand Loyalty				
I am loyal to only one brand (the one I follow), when I buy this type of product	0.78	10.80	0.87	16.32
For my next purchase, I will buy this brand again	0.91	11.95	0.92	17.33
I always buy this brand	0.77	14.01	0.73	15.67
I usually buy this brand	0.71	15.49	0.80	14.26
* Asterisks indicate that the summated scale of the sub-dimensions is used				

Model reliability and validity

The constructs are internally consistent with Cronbach's Alpha values consistently above 0.86, which is well above the value advocated cut-off point of 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). The convergent validity indicators are also satisfactory, with AVE values all above 0.61, supporting the measurement model's convergent validity. The CR indicators are equal or above 0.83 for all constructs, which further indicate reliability, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Correlations among latent variables are all significant ($CR \geq 1.96$). As all AVEs are superior to the square of their related pairwise correlations, this also indicates that the measurement models achieve discriminant validity.

Table 23: Measurement model – Reliability and validity

English Sample								
Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Online brand engagement	0.84	0.79	0.32	0.47	0.43	0.25	0.33	0.15
2. OBC engagement	0.89	0.86	0.21	0.24	0.20	0.13	0.29	0.22
3. Brand loyalty	0.56	0.46	0.61	0.30	0.43	0.17	0.17	0.05
4. Brand trust	0.69	0.49	0.55	0.74	0.67	0.16	0.28	0.11
5. Brand commitment	0.66	0.44	0.66	0.82	0.75	0.12	0.16	0.07
6. Product involvement	0.50	0.36	0.42	0.40	0.34	0.89	0.22	0.02
7. Attitude	0.58	0.54	0.41	0.53	0.40	0.46	0.74	0.05
8. OIP	0.39	0.47	0.22	0.33	0.26	0.14	0.23	0.78
CR	0.94	0.95	0.86	0.86	0.90	0.94	0.92	0.93
Alpha	0.90	0.93	0.86	0.91	0.90	0.94	0.91	0.93
French sample								
Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Online brand engagement	0.87	0.81	0.35	0.34	0.22	0.15	0.23	0.18
2. OBC engagement	0.90	0.86	0.17	0.08	0.04	0.07	0.21	0.15
3. Brand loyalty	0.59	0.41	0.69	0.34	0.43	0.20	0.09	0.02
4. Brand trust	0.58	0.29	0.58	0.69	0.54	0.15	0.15	0.04
5. Brand commitment	0.46	0.19	0.66	0.74	0.76	0.17	0.07	0.01
6. Product involvement	0.38	0.26	0.45	0.39	0.41	0.92	0.09	0.08
7. Attitude	0.48	0.46	0.30	0.39	0.27	0.30	0.75	0.07
8. OIP	0.43	0.38	0.14	0.19	0.07	0.28	0.27	0.73
CR	0.95	0.95	0.90	0.83	0.90	0.96	0.92	0.92
Alpha	0.90	0.91	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.96	0.91	0.92

Note: The diagonal represents the AVEs of each construct; below the diagonal are the pairwise correlations between constructs and above the squared pairwise correlations.

6.2.2. The structural model

SEM with Maximum Likelihood estimation is used to test the hypotheses. In the causal path model, the statistics only partly support that the data fit the model at adequate levels with a chi-square= 3441.881 ($p=0.00$) with 1066 degrees of freedom. The CFI is 0.86, TLI is 0.84, and RMSEA equals 0.06. This partial support for model fit is discussed prior in the SEM measurement model results.

Table 24: Structural model – Results

Constructs	Standardised path estimate (β)		Path estimate		CR		Significance	
	EN	FR	EN	FR	EN	FR	EN	FR
Online Brand Engagement ($R^2 = 0.73/0.73$)								
OIP	-0.20	0.04	-0.19	0.04	-0.39	1.01	0.69	0.31
Attitude toward online participation	0.09	0.06	0.12	0.08	1.78	1.33	0.07	0.18
Product involvement	0.20	0.19	0.20	0.16	4.19	4.30	0.00	0.00
OBC Engagement	0.75	0.77	0.74	0.83	9.75	12.05	0.00	0.00
OBC Engagement ($R^2 = 0.40/0.26$)								
OIP	0.39	0.26	0.37	0.23	6.41	4.42	0.00	0.00
Attitude toward online participation	0.47	0.41	0.58	0.54	7.49	6.87	0.00	0.00
Product involvement	0.18	0.12	0.18	0.09	3.03	2.14	0.03	0.03
Brand Trust ($R^2 = 0.52/0.34$)								
Online Brand Engagement	0.72	0.58	0.70	0.46	10.50	8.38	0.00	0.00
Brand Commitment ($R^2 = 0.52/0.34$)								
Online Brand Engagement	0.69	0.48	0.69	0.50	9.39	7.44	0.00	0.00
Brand Loyalty ($R^2 = 0.42/0.41$)								
Brand Trust	0.09	0.26	0.09	0.35	1.28	4.29	0.19	0.00
Brand Commitment	0.60	0.52	0.58	0.54	6.80	8.14	0.00	0.00
<i>Note: R^2 are given for the English, then the French sample</i>								

Most of the hypothesised relationships are verified through the path analysis, with different, yet largely consistent estimates for each sample. More specifically, H1b and H2b are rejected both in the English and French sample, failing to account for the impact of OIP and attitude toward OBC engagement on online brand engagement. Additionally, the English sample also fails to support H7, evidencing rejection of the impact of brand trust on brand loyalty in the English context. This hypothesis is however supported for the French sample.

Table 25: Hypotheses results

Hypotheses		English	French
Antecedents of OBC engagement			
H _{1a}	OIP is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
H _{2a}	Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
H _{3a}	Product involvement is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
Antecedents of online brand engagement			
H _{1b}	OIP is positively related to online brand engagement.	Rejected	Rejected
H _{2b}	Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to online brand engagement.	Rejected	Rejected
H _{3b}	Product involvement is positively related to online brand engagement.	Supported	Supported
H ₄	OBC engagement is positively related to online brand engagement.	Supported	Supported
Outcomes of online brand engagement			
H ₅	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand trust.	Supported	Supported
H ₆	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand commitment.	Supported	Supported
H ₇	Brand trust is positively related to brand loyalty.	Rejected	Supported
H ₈	Brand commitment is positively related to brand loyalty.	Supported	Supported

H₁ to H₄

All the hypotheses related to the drivers of OBC engagement exhibit significant values in both samples. Support is therefore granted to H_{1a} ($\beta = 0.39$ English/0.26 French, sig = 0.00), H_{2a} ($\beta = 0.47$ English/0.41 French, sig = 0.00) and H_{3a} ($\beta = 0.18$ English/0.12 French, sig = 0.00). In other words, this means that OBC engagement is significantly and positively influenced by consumer's OIP, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement. Data show that the strongest influence of OBC engagement derives from consumer's general attitude toward online participation ($\beta = 0.47$ English/0.41 French), directly followed by OIP ($\beta = 0.39$ English/0.26 French) in both samples.

The significance of the model's path coefficient shows that online brand engagement is positively influenced by product involvement ($\beta = 0.20$ English/0.19 French, sig = 0.00) and OBC engagement ($\beta = 0.75$ English/0.77 French, sig = 0.00), showing support for H_{3b} and H₄. No support is however granted to H_{1b} ($\beta = -0.20$ English/-0.19 French, sig = 0.69 English/0.31 French) and H_{2b} ($\beta = 0.09$ English/0.06 French, sig = 0.07 English/0.18 French), who exhibit in both samples levels of significance above the cut-off value of 0.05. OIP and attitude toward OBC participation have therefore no effect on online brand engagement. The results also show that the most powerful predictor of online brand engagement is by far OBC engagement ($\beta = 0.75$ English/0.77 French).

H₅ to H₈

Brand commitment is positively influenced by online brand engagement, in support for H₅ (Model 1: $\beta = 0.72$ English/0.58 French, sig=0.00). The influence of online brand engagement on brand commitment is expressed in hypothesis 6. This hypothesis is validated, as evidenced by the significant beta values ($\beta = 0.69$ English/0.48 French, sig=0.00). Online brand engagement therefore impacts both brand trust and brand commitment, with a stronger influence on brand trust. Lastly, the impact of brand trust and brand commitment on brand loyalty is hypothesised respectively with H₇ and H₈. Where the French sample succeeds in accepting H₇ ($\beta = 0.26$ sig=0.00), the English sample evidences rejection of it ($\beta = 0.09$, sig=0.19). The impact of brand commitment on brand loyalty is supported in both samples, denoting a full acceptance of H₈ ($\beta = 0.60$ English/0.52 French, sig=0.00).

Structural invariance

To verify structural invariance, the same procedure of constrain has been applied to the structural weights, covariances and residuals following in AMOS (Byrne, 2010). The multigroup sample (French+English) exhibits clear invariance between the less and more constrained models, with a $\Delta CFI=0.01$ between the model with only the measurement weights constrained and the fully constrained model (structural weights, structural covariances and structural residuals constrained). It can thus be concluded from these findings that there is structural invariance in the SEM model as developed and validated in this section. A further examination of the French and English values separately, as previously summarised in Table 25, shows that the structural paths between brand trust and brand loyalty behave differently across samples: the relationship is significant for the French but not for the English sample. Indeed, although the ΔCFI indicates invariance between the models, the analysis of the significance levels of the Brand Trust \rightarrow Brand Loyalty relationship on the English sample shows that, as the model becomes constrained at the structural level, the relationship becomes significant, whereas it is not for the unconstrained model. This relationship is the only one for which the significance level changes across models, suggesting that there is no other variation in the structural paths across models. Based on this analysis, the interpretation of the structural invariance of this study's model across cultures must thus be careful and it can be concluded that partial structural invariance is achieved across linguistic samples.

6.2.3. Testing of alternative model

Testing a structural model against another theoretical model is important in order to validate the consistency of a given model specifications (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996). This validation method has been used repeatedly in the online community literature to verify the strength of models (e.g: Kim et al., 2008). One of the theoretical questioning concerning the relationship between consumer engagement and other relational variables is whether engagement comes first or after brand commitment and trust (Brodie et al., 2013). Although loyalty is often understood as an outcome of engagement (Hollebeek, 2011a), the precedence of engagement over trust and commitment is often left open (Hollebeek, 2011a). An alternative model whereby brand commitment and brand trust are hypothesised to be antecedents of consumer engagement rather than outcomes is thus run, following the same statistical techniques as previously detailed. Additionally, in this model, brand trust and brand commitment being antecedents of engagement, they do no longer mediate the

relationship between consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty. Figure 19 depicts this model.

Figure 19: Alternative model

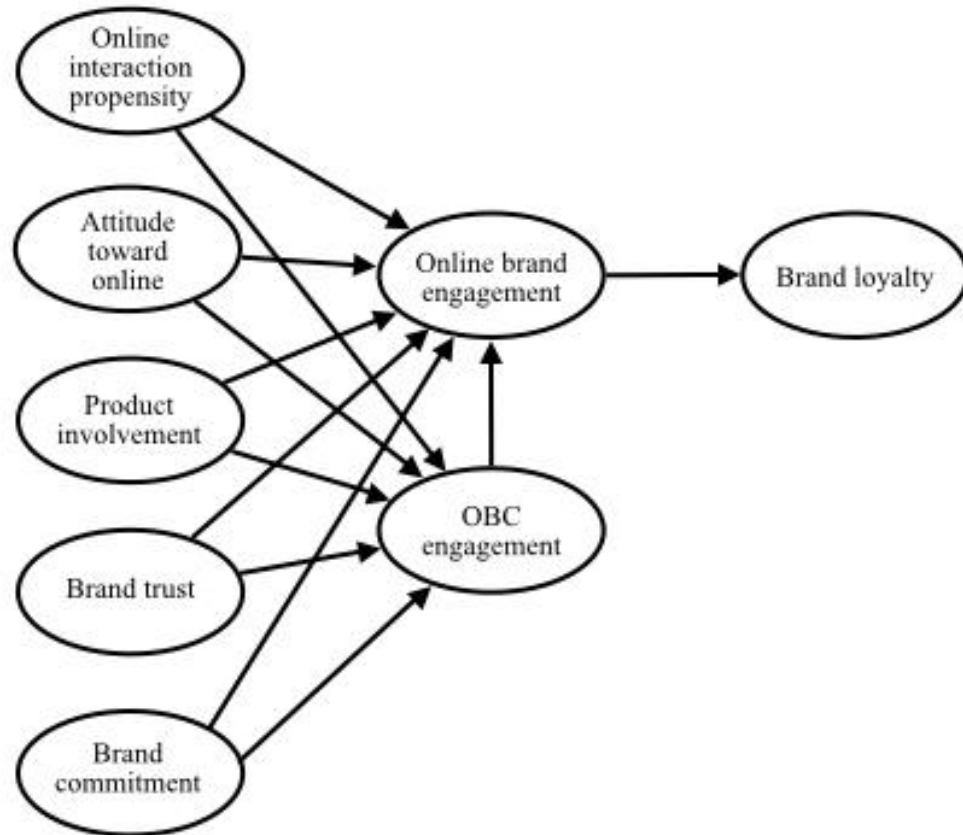


Table 26 shows that OBC engagement is not significantly impacted by brand trust and brand commitment (β are all below 0.14 and significance levels above 0.05). This holds for both French and English samples. Brand relational variables can therefore not be modelled as antecedents of OBC engagement. When it comes to the precedence of brand commitment and brand trust over online brand engagement though, significance levels tend to be strong (between 0.00 and 0.07), although β are relatively low (between 0.21 and 0.14). This suggests that although weaker than in the proposed model of this study, the precedence of brand trust and commitment over online brand engagement might be considered. This potentially is however highly debatable, given the goodness of fit values of the alternative model. Indeed, the fit of the alternative model is clearly not as strong as the fit of the hypothesised model. The goodness-of-fit values are, for the English sample: chi-square= 2705.92 ($p=0.00$) with 685 degrees of freedom. The CFI is 0.74, TLI is 0.76, and RMSEA equals 0.11. For the French sample, chi-square= 2641.28 ($p=0.00$) with 685

degrees of freedom. The CFI is 0.79, TLI is 0.77, and RMSEA equals 0.10. Overall, the testing of the alternative model broadly supports the same set of relationships as this study's model. It also shows that brand trust and commitment should definitely not be modelled as antecedents of OBC engagement, and that trust and commitment are also better modelled as outcomes of online brand engagement. In other words, the testing of the alternative model further validates the adequacy of this study's model.

Table 26: Alternative model SEM results

Constructs	Standardised path estimate (β)		Path estimate		CR		Significance	
	EN	FR	EN	FR	EN	FR	EN	FR
Online Brand Engagement ($R^2 = 0.87/0.92$)								
OIP	-0.04	0.06	-0.04	0.05	-0.98	1.90	0.32	0.05
Attitude toward online participation	-0.01	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	-1.18	-1.57	0.25	0.11
Product involvement	0.15	0.03	0.17	0.03	3.46	1.07	0.00	0.28
OBC Engagement	0.75	0.81	0.69	0.64	10.40	10.48	0.00	0.00
Brand commitment	0.17	0.14	0.20	0.12	2.71	2.98	0.02	0.01
Brand trust	0.15	0.21	0.13	0.16	2.27	4.14	0.07	0.00
OBC Engagement ($R^2 = 0.42/0.28$)								
OIP	0.34	0.22	0.43	0.25	5.35	3.63	0.00	0.00
Attitude toward online participation	0.37	0.34	0.46	0.39	4.97	5.25	0.00	0.00
Product involvement	0.58	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.86	0.81	0.38	0.41
Brand commitment	0.14	0.06	0.17	0.01	1.36	0.07	0.17	0.94
Brand trust	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.13	0.33	1.50	0.74	0.13
Brand Loyalty ($R^2 = 0.28/0.32$)								
Online brand engagement	0.53	0.57	0.64	0.95	7.02	8.16	0.00	0.00
<i>Note: R^2 are given for the English, then the French sample</i>								

6.3. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide answers to research questions 2 and 3. Following the development of the consumer engagement scales, testing of the study hypotheses was completed, addressing the second and third research questions. The factor structure was first assessed using CFA procedures on the measurement model, followed by the evaluation of the structural model properties to test the causal hypotheses. The measurement model exhibited adequate fit with excellent standard loadings for each item as well as excellent values of reliability and validity. The structural model also exhibited adequate fit, and the significance of the path estimate indicated the support of 17 hypotheses of the 22 hypotheses tested across the English and French samples. This partial support of the hypothesised relationships is further discussed in the next chapter, along with the meaning of the scale development results. Despite one of the hypotheses performing differently on the French and English sample, a group invariance test on the causal model also indicated that the two samples have are overall equivalent.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the implications of the results presented in the previous chapter and it is structured as follows. Firstly, the consumer engagement measurement is addressed and the discussion shows how the new scales of consumer engagement developed in this study significantly deepen the meaning of existing conceptualisations of consumer engagement and advance its measurement. The discussion also demonstrates how they differ from two scales of consumer engagement – published after this study’s data were collected – particularly by being better suited to highly interactive and social OBC environments.

Secondly, the findings related to the research hypotheses are discussed, focusing on the relationships between the different constructs in the causal model. This section opens with

a reminder of the different research hypotheses and their result, which is followed by a detailed discussion of the implication of each of these results in light of the existing literature. After the discussion of these core findings, other findings are discussed, including the discussion of the study validation in another linguistic context.

7.2. Consumer engagement concept and measurement

7.2.1. Dimensionalisation of engagement

This study advances the notion of consumer engagement as a new approach to consumer participation in OBC. This is achieved by refining the conceptual meaning of consumer engagement and proposing a way to measure it. In this way, the study offers conceptual and methodological advancement to current literature.

Conceptually, two views of consumer engagement dimensionality dominate the marketing literature: the unidimensional and the multidimensional view. While the unidimensional view tends to focus on consumer engagement being a behavioural concept (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010) the multidimensional view is usually composed of a cognitive, an affective and a behavioural dimension and it currently prevails in the literature (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie et al., 2013). This three-dimensional perspective was deemed the most appropriate in light of the OBC context in which this study operates, which calls for a rich, multi-faceted measure of members' participation (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Mollen and Wilson, 2010). In this sense, the scales differ from other recent measure development of consumer engagement in social media that take a unidimensional, action-based view of engagement, whether they are based on platform-extracted metrics (Gummerus et al., 2012) or consumers' self-reported metrics (Schivinski et al., forthcoming).

Conceptually, the scale development and validation procedure undertaken in this study resonates with the multidimensional view of consumer engagement. The study validates the existence of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of consumer engagement, which were validated through thorough scale development procedures. In doing so, the study supports the widespread understanding that consumer engagement manifests itself in these three ways (Hollebeek, 2011a).

Since a clear meaning of each of these dimensions was until recently lacking in the literature (Brodie et al., 2013), this study worked to enhance this understanding and provide precise definitions of each of these dimensions. This was achieved through a review of the engagement literature in marketing and other fields of the social sciences, as well as qualitative interviews, and validated in first-order CFA development. Although the three-dimensional view and definitions adopted in this study broadly mirror the dimensions recently developed in other consumer/customer engagement conceptualisations, they explicitly depart from them. In contrast to Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Vivek et al., (2014), this study offers a dimensionality of consumer engagement, which bears a clear long-term orientation, makes a sharp distinction between the three dimensions and holds an underlying social element to each of these three dimensions. All these three elements are core to the conceptualisation of consumer engagement in an OBC, as expressed in Chapter 3.

A careful analysis of the definitions of the three dimensions in this study, in Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Vivek et al. (2014) reveals their conceptual similarities but also differences, as evidenced in Table 25. Hollebeek et al. (2014) identify cognitive processing, affection and activation as dimensions of customer engagement. Since the conceptualisation of the present research is largely based on, and in agreement with, the work by Hollebeek, Brodie and colleagues (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Brodie et al., 2013), it is natural for the conceptualisation of this research to be reflecting the same broad dimensions. However, in Hollebeek et al. (2014), the affective and cognitive dimensions of engagement do not seem to bear any long-term, enduring characteristic since they are based on specific time-bound interactions. This is a major departure from the core premise of consumer engagement being an enduring rather than transient phenomenon (Schaufelli et al., 2002), which this study aims to reflect. Moreover, Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) 'activation' dimension refers to a level of energy, effort and time spent, in contrast to this study's behavioural dimension, which aims to reflect only clear behavioural manifestations.

Table 27: Comparison of this study's dimensions with two other studies

This study	Hollebeek et al. (2014)	Vivek et al. (2014)
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This study	Hollebeek et al. (2014)	Vivek et al. (2014)
<p>Cognitive engagement</p> <p>A set of enduring and active mental states that a consumer experiences with respect to his/her engagement partner.</p>	<p>Cognitive processing</p> <p>Consumer's level of brand-related thought processing and elaboration in a particular consumer/brand interaction.</p>	<p>Conscious attention</p> <p>The degree of interest the person has or wishes to have in interacting with the focus of their engagement.</p>
<p>Affective engagement</p> <p>The summative and enduring level of emotions experienced by a consumer with respect to his/her engagement partner.</p>	<p>Affection</p> <p>A consumer's degree of positive brand-related affect in a particular consumer/brand interaction.</p>	<p>Enthusied participation</p> <p>The zealous reactions and feelings of a person related to using or interacting with the focus of their engagement.</p>
<p>Behavioural engagement</p> <p>The behavioural manifestations toward an engagement partner, beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers.</p>	<p>Activation</p> <p>A consumer's level of energy, effort and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction.</p>	<p>Social connections</p> <p>Enhancement of the interactions based on the inclusion of others with the focus of engagement, indicating mutual or reciprocal action in the presence of others.</p>

Another customer engagement scale is developed by Vivek et al. (2014), also presented in Table 25, who suggest the following dimensions: conscious attention, which is similar to this study's cognitive dimension, enthused participation, which underlies elements of affect and behaviour, and social connections. The present study somewhat reinforces and validates these findings, although casting them in a different light. Vivek et al. (2014) contend that social connections with friends, or other people, are a core dimension of customer engagement with a brand, using items such as 'I enjoy [brand name] more when I am with others'.

The conceptualisation of this study differs from Vivek et al. (2014) in a significant way, as social connections with other users are not considered to be a dimension of engagement as such. In contrast, this study understands consumer engagement as inherently social and interactive (Hollebeek et al., 2014), since it inevitably involves a relationship with another

partner (the brand, the brand community, or another engagement partner). This aspect of engagement is therefore taken into account by attributing consumer engagement to specific partners. However, this study does not consider engagement with a brand to be necessarily involving others users. The sociality of the consumer engagement concept was particularly important to be considered as underlying all its dimensions rather than being a dimension itself. Being inherently social constitutes one of the key benefits of consumer engagement as a measure of OBC participation. In this study, the social aspect of consumer engagement is captured by focusing on consumer's interactions with an engagement partner, which is viewed as a core constituent of any engagement measure. The conceptual development of the present research shows that consumer can be engaged with a brand and with a group of other consumers (here the OBC). This evidences the inherently social aspect of engagement and is further discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

Furthermore, in contrast to other scale development studies which combine two aspect of engagement into one (e.g. Vivek et al. (2014)'s 'enthused participation' is reflective of both emotions and behaviours), this study proposes that individuals exhibit emotions, cognition and behaviours as part of engagement and these are three separate yet complementary aspects of engagement. Discriminant validity between the three dimensions evidences their distinctiveness, whereas the chi-square difference test supports that they cannot be reduced to less dimensions. It is thus essential to consider engagement as made of cognitive, affective and behavioural manifestations, which are separate and all essential.

To summarise, the conceptual dimensions of this study reaffirm the general understanding of the multidimensionality of consumer engagement, and support its cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics. This study contributes to existing literature by providing clear definitions for each of the dimensions, which complement yet contrast other definitions developed in Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Vivek et al. (2014). More specifically, this study advances the extant literature by clearly delineating the three dimensions, avoiding dimensions overlaps; by including an inherently social aspect to all dimensions (see section on locus of engagement for further insight); and by also attributing a long-term aspect to the three dimensions.

Conceptualisation of the sub-dimensions

A key contribution of this study's findings concerns the refinement and clarification of the

meaning of the dimensions of consumer engagement by proposing seven sub-dimensions: enthusiasm and enjoyment, attention and absorption, and sharing, learning and endorsing. Indeed, the conceptual blur around the meaning of consumer engagement dimensions cannot be addressed solely by defining the dimensions, as presented above: a more refined meaning had to be sought, particularly in order to create measurement items. Based on a thorough literature review and qualitative interview, this study developed the following seven sub-dimensions: enthusiasm and enjoyment for the affective dimension, attention and absorption for the cognitive dimension and sharing, learning and endorsing for the behavioural dimension.

Considering the cognitive dimension, it is conceptualised as composed of attention and absorption, which are precise cognitive processes, in contrast to the more general idea of 'thought-processing' (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This also means that cognitive engagement is necessarily involving both focused attention in the form of active cognitive availability and absorption, reflecting the difficulty to mentally detach oneself from the focus of engagement. This brings depth to the understanding of cognitive engagement, and shows that it goes beyond a mere interest in interacting with something (Vivek et al., 2014) and involves active attention and engrossment with respect to the engagement partner.

The affective dimension of engagement is made of enjoyment and enthusiasm. Here again, this study deepens the meaning of affective engagement beyond a simple understanding of it being related to positive affect or feelings (Hollebeek et al., 2014). It also shows the enduring, intrinsic and motivational aspect of engagement (Vivek et al., 2012). In order to be affectively engaged, a consumer needs to exhibit intrinsic levels of enthusiasm about an engagement object, as well as subsequently gain pleasure in interacting with it. Both enjoyment and enthusiasm support the interactive and long-term nature of engagement, as they can only be sustained through reciprocal and valued engagement from the focal partner.

The behavioural dimension of engagement is composed of sharing, learning and endorsing behaviours. This is somewhat conceptually reflective of Brodie et al.'s (2011) engagement sub-processes, which are sharing, learning, advocating, socialising and co-developing. Whereas sharing, learning and advocating (a synonym of endorsing) are validated sub-dimensions of behavioural engagement in this study, socialising and co-developing are not included in the model. As explained earlier, this study considers the social aspect of engagement to be inherent to each of its dimensions rather than a separate dimension, and

co-developing to be an outcome rather than component of engagement (e.g. Sawhney et al., 2005). If co-development is to be understood from a UGC approach though, it could be viewed as reflective of this study's 'sharing' behavioural sub-dimensions which implies the diffusion of content by consumers, however not necessarily original.

Another parallel can be made with the study by Kumar et al. (2010) which focuses on customer engagement value as a higher-order concept composed of purchasing behaviour (the loyalty outcome in this study), referral behaviour (endorsing sub-dimension), influencer behaviour and knowledge behaviour (sharing). This study expands on their approach by proposing the learning aspect of engagement, in addition to its sharing and endorsing aspects. It also excludes purchasing behaviour as a dimension of engagement and rather proposes it as an outcome of engagement. Indeed, this study adopts the opinion that consumer engagement refers to any interaction going beyond purchase behaviours: anything that is related to purchasing is therefore excluded as a dimension of engagement.

Measurement

Based on a thorough conceptual domain definition and with the help of 25 qualitative interviews, this study was able generate items to empirically develop two valid and reliable scales of consumer engagement in an OBC. The items closely reflect the sub-dimensions and dimensions of consumer engagement, as supported by good first-order and second-order CFA goodness-of-fit indices and indicators, as well as reliability and validity indicators.

This study sought to create definitions of the dimensions and sub-dimensions that are going back to the meaning of engagement in the social sciences and marketing in order to provide a strong ground for the generation of items. Supported by rich consumer data, this study avoided culling items from other previously developed measures of concepts akin to engagement or similar to its dimensions.

The general premise that consumer engagement is best viewed as a multidimensional rather than unidimensional concept was reaffirmed through multiple tests of convergent and discriminant validity, as the scale could not be reduced to less dimensions. The same confirmation has been obtained for the sub-dimensions using second-order CFA procedures. Overall, this study's behavioural, affective and cognitive dimensions and sub-dimensions work toward empirically validating current conceptual understandings of engagement behaviours such as Brodie et al.'s (2011). However, they significantly deepen

the conceptual meaning of consumer engagement dimensions in existence, and depart in several important ways from recently developed scales (e.g. Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2014).

To summarise, this study offers a richer and more specific understanding of the meaning, and thus operationalisation of the construct of consumer engagement. Empirical validation is achieved, evidencing that each of the (sub-) dimensions is unique and necessary. Moreover, the underlying social and enduring aspects of engagement are evidenced.

7.2.2. Locus of engagement

The study explicates an important oversight concerning consumer engagement: its locus. Although engagement has been investigated for a number of engagement objects, or partners, such as the brand (e.g. Mollen and Wilson, 2010), the brand community (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005) or a firm (Kaltcheva et al., 2014), limited attention has been paid to how the locus of engagement matters and how consumer can be engaged with several partners at the same time. This thesis proposes a consumer engagement scale that can be applied to different engagement partners in a given context, using the same set of items, sub-dimensions and dimensions. A key advancement here is thus the explicit recognition that in the context of OBC, consumer can engage concurrently with two engagement partners, i.e. the brand and the brand community (Wirtz et al., 2013).

The validation of this core boundary assumption of the research (consumer engagement in an OBC happens with respect to two different engagement partners, the other members of the OBC and the brand itself) is a powerful contribution to the consumer engagement literature. It shows that consumers can be engaged in the exact same ways with different engagement partners in relation to their consumption experience, in the same virtual context, and at the same time (Dessart et al., 2015). So far, consumer engagement research had mainly focused on consumer-brand engagement (e.g. Hollebeek et al., 2014) and community or OBC engagement had been treated as a distinct phenomenon (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005). Reconciling the conceptual and operational approach of consumer engagement for different partners in a given context is a key take from this study, which advances the OBC and engagement literature.

From the OBC perspective, parallels can be made with the framework proposed by McAlexander et al. (2002), reflecting on the multi-object approach to consumer relationships within OBCs. Although this study focused on two of the relationship partners

identified by McAlexander et al. (2002), there may be room for further application of the consumer engagement construct to a product or firm partner, which this study has not investigated in the context of OBC.

Considering the consumer engagement literature, this study's multi-partner perspective somewhat parallels the approach taken by Vivek et al. (2014) in their scale development procedure, where they emphasised the need to validate their consumer engagement scale across contexts. A change of context implied a change of partner, and they thus validated their scale using a brand partner (Apple) and a retail partner (chosen by the participants). In contrast to Vivek et al.'s (2014) study however, this research shows that several partner can co-exist in the same context and that engagement with one can be related to engagement with another, rather than being a matter of contextual validation.

In terms of measurement, the only difference between the two engagement scales is the adaptation of the engagement partner within the item wording. For instance, when measuring enthusiasm for the OBC partner, one of the items reads: 'I feel enthusiastic about the group', whereas brand engagement was measured with 'I feel enthusiastic about the brand'. The same approach was adapted to all items.

Lastly, the fact that consumer engagement with the OBC positively impacts consumer engagement with the brand (H₄) leads to two key considerations. Firstly, it is another empirical indication of the need to consider and measure engagement with different objects separately. Secondly, it indicates that engagement with one partner might influence engagement with another partner (Wirtz et al., 2013). A notion of precedence can therefore exist when engaging with different partners, depending on the context. For instance, in the context of retail grocery shopping, a consumer might be engaged with the retail brand and with different product brands that the retailer stocks. This study suggests that previous engagement with the product might influence engagement with the retailer, or the other way around.

7.3. Discussion of the hypotheses

The results of the SEM confirmed the existence of several significant antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement. Table 26 summarises the research hypotheses and

their result for the English and French sample respectively. It presents an overview of the confirmed or rejected relationships between the two consumer engagement scales, as well as its antecedents and outcomes.

The antecedents include OIP, product involvement and attitude toward community participation, which are all hypothesised to impact online brand engagement and OBC engagement positively. OBC engagement is then hypothesised to positively influence online brand engagement. The hypothesised direct outcomes of online brand engagement are brand trust and brand commitment, and its indirect outcome, mediated by trust and commitment, brand loyalty. All hypotheses are supported except H_{1b} and H_{2b}, both for the English and French sample, as well as H₇, for the English sample only. The section below offers a discussion of these findings.

Table 28: Summary of the research hypotheses

Hypotheses		English	French
Antecedents of OBC engagement			
H _{1a}	OIP is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
H _{2a}	Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
H _{3a}	Product involvement is positively related to OBC engagement.	Supported	Supported
Antecedents of online brand engagement			
H _{1b}	OIP is positively related to online brand engagement.	Rejected	Rejected
H _{2b}	Attitude toward OBC participation is positively related to online brand engagement.	Rejected	Rejected
H _{3b}	Product involvement is positively related to online brand engagement.	Supported	Supported
H ₄	OBC engagement is positively related to online brand engagement.	Supported	Supported
Outcomes of online brand engagement			
H ₅	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand trust.	Supported	Supported
H ₆	Online brand engagement is positively related to brand commitment.	Supported	Supported
H ₇	Brand trust is positively related to brand loyalty.	Rejected	Supported
H ₈	Brand commitment is positively related to brand loyalty.	Supported	Supported

7.3.1. Antecedents of consumer engagement

The first set of hypotheses concerns the antecedents of consumer engagement. The conceptual model posited that three individual antecedents positively impact OBC and online brand engagement: OIP, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement. The results provide partial support for the hypotheses and the section below discusses their implications for OBC engagement and online brand engagement respectively.

All relationships concerning the antecedents of OBC engagement are supported. In other words, OBC engagement is positively impacted by OIP, attitude toward community participation and product involvement.

Online interaction propensity → OBC engagement

The data support the positive impact of OIP on OBC engagement. This relationship resonates well with the literature on virtual communities, as OIP is known to increase member's contribution to OBC (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007). For example, the current findings provide support for Wiertz and de Ruyter (2007) who identified OIP as a potent moderator of the individual's quantity and quality of knowledge contribution within community settings. Similarly, the study reinforced Chang and Chuang's (2011) study, which proved the positive impact of social interaction on the quality of information shared. These two studies show a clear connection between OIP and behavioural engagement in the form of information sharing.

Findings from this study extend this research by showing that OIP positively influences engagement and by offering a refined notion of engagement. That is, engagement here is composed of emotional and cognitive dimensions, in addition to participation behaviours. This means that individuals who are more prone to online interaction are not only likely to subsequently exhibit behaviour in the community as previous studies show (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), but will also, de facto, be more cognitively engaged and think about the community, as well as feel more positively toward the community.

These findings also support research in the consumer engagement literature. For example, they resonate well with Blazevic et al. (2014) who recently confirmed the positive impact of OIP on engagement on social media based brand communities. Similarly, Calder et al. (2009) had advanced the need for social interactions as a driver of consumer engagement. There again, however, the conceptualisation of engagement is limited to behaviours, limiting the explanatory power of OIP to one dimension of consumer engagement (Calder et al., 2009; Blazevic et al., 2014).

Additionally, this finding reinforces the importance of consumer engagement as an interactive concept. The fact that OBC engagement is reliant on consumers' intrinsic level of interaction propensity corroborates the fact that consumer engagement is an interactive phenomenon (Brodie et al., 2013; Breidbach et al., 2014), which is one of its core strengths in comparison to other of OBC participation approaches. Furthermore, this finding evidences that the lack of research into OIP in OBC settings needs to be addressed (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), particularly when considering manifestations of consumer engagement.

Attitude toward OBC participation → OBC engagement

A second verified driver of OBC engagement is consumer's attitude toward OBC participation. Previous studies argued that attitudes are evaluative (cognitive) reactions to an action and are thought to reflect predispositions to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). The fact that consumer's attitudes toward participation might be a driver of actual behaviour has been the subject of much research, stemming largely from the TAM, TPB and TRA. In this context, online community and social networking sites research has shown that member's participation was driven in part by their attitude toward participating, albeit always with the moderating effect of intentions to participate (Casaló et al., 2010; Girona and Korgaonkar, 2014) as well as desires (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). In the OBC applications of the TAM and TPB, the impact of attitude toward participation over actual participation is always mediated by intentions to participate (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

The findings from this study correspond to and extend this existing understanding of the role of attitudes on OBC participation in a major way. The findings extend current cognitive behaviour models such as the TPB and TRA by showing that attitude are directly related to OBC engagement, without the mediating effect of intentions to act. This parallels the existing critiques of these cognitive behaviour models that report an intention-behaviour gap (e.g. Carrington et al., 2014), giving impetus to the test of direct attitudes-actions relationships.

In addition to supporting and simplifying past understandings through the removal of the intentions construct, the findings show that attitudes are not only antecedents of social interactions in the context of online brand communities, but also of social emotions and cognition. As an individual gets more positively inclined toward the community, his feelings for the community members evolve and the mental focus he places on them as well. If community participation is perceived to be rewarding, beneficial, or wise (components of a positive attitude), one will be likely to pay more attention to the community and its content (Nonnecke et al., 2006) and get more pleasure from participating (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007).

Overall, these findings bring important insights to the understanding of OBC engagement. The attitude that one has toward an action such as OBC participation not only directly

influences the behavioural participation itself, but also the cognition and emotions associated with it, making up for increased levels of OBC engagement.

Product involvement → OBC engagement

The support of the relationship between individual product involvement and OBC engagement highlights several current shortcomings of both OBC and engagement literature. It challenges the usual focus on brand involvement when exploring drivers of consumer engagement (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011). Indeed, the engagement literature had so far only, and mainly conceptually, explored the impact of brand involvement on consumer engagement (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011). This study therefore expands previous research by showing that involvement with a product category will likely drive consumers to be actively engaged with a community of other consumers.

These interesting findings lend support to existing OBC studies. Community studies have shown that consumer's relationship with a product is an integral part of OBC participation (McAlexander et al., 2002; Stokbürger-Sauer, 2010). More specifically, it is understood that initial product involvement can affect different levels of behavioural community participation, from lurking (Shang et al., 2006) to active future community participation (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). This phenomenon can be explained by the very nature of engagement, which implies a higher commitment to searching and finding information about a product, in order to reduce uncertainty and risk (Chaudhuri, 2000; Dholakia, 2001). Learning is an important part of behavioural engagement, which is potentially directly impacted by the cognitive aspect of product involvement. Because OBCs are rich and trusted resources for information search (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), members rely on them extensively when they have high levels of product involvement requiring thorough information search (Sanchez-Franco and Rondan-Cataluña, 2010).

This study's results emulate and extend previous findings, by suggesting that involvement with a product category is a driver of OBC engagement. In other words, this research implies that an individual interested in a particular type of product such as coffee, but not initially in a particular brand like Lavazza, could become actively engaged in a community focusing on Lavazza, out of involvement in coffee consumption. Because this study conceptualises engagement as being affective, cognitive and behavioural, product involvement here is not only conducive of higher levels of behavioural participation and information search, but also of higher levels of affective and cognitive engagement with

the other consumers, which is an aspect of the involvement-engagement relationship that has received little attention so far (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Overall, the fact that all three hypothesised antecedents impact OBC engagement has two key implications. Firstly, it shows that OBC engagement can be largely predicted by individual traits and predispositions. These traits and predispositions have an enduring aspect, similarly to consumer engagement itself (Vivek et al., 2012). They are not situation-dependent but are rather engrained in consumers' self. Secondly, out of these three drivers, attitude toward OBC participation proved to be the most powerful, followed by OIP and product involvement, and this for both French and English samples. This study extends existing research by showing the impact of these three factors on OBC engagement as a multidimensional construct, whereas most OBC research investigating these traits had so far only focused on their behavioural participatory outcomes (e.g. Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007). These findings also imply that OBC engagement can be understood as a function of individual traits and predispositions, a postulate that was so far only conceptual (Wirtz et al., 2013). Lastly, they suggest the need to consider consumer individual profiles and identity traits in OBC engagement strategies (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Campbell et al., 2014).

7.3.2. Antecedents of online brand engagement

The hypotheses relating to the drivers of online brand engagement have proven to be more problematic than those related to OBC engagement. Out of the three hypothesised relationships, the data only supports the positive impact of consumers' product involvement.

Online interaction propensity → online brand engagement

Despite theoretical support for the relationship found in previous studies (Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007), the results failed to confirm the link between OIP and online brand engagement, and this seems true for both French and English samples. There are several potential explanations for this finding. It seems that although an individual might be prone to interact online, there might be some barriers to engaging directly with a brand in these settings. The barriers might be linked to the brand not fostering communication, either by absence of cue to interact, or by absence of ways to interact. Having an official page on social media is not enough to signal that reaching out is welcomed by the brand and that consumers' communications will be reciprocated, the brand needs to be active in signalling

this (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Some companies might altogether lack an engagement of social media strategy, which consumers can easily pick upon when frequenting the page. Consumers might feel hindered in their communications with brands because they do not feel welcome to interact, or because they are afraid to display this engagement publicly (Nonnecke et al., 2006). It seems that these effects have been underplayed in some literature (e.g. Wiertz and de Ruyter, 2007; Blazevic et al., 2014).

Another explanation for this lack of support is that consumers, although highly prone to interact online with other actors, do not want to interact with brands in particular (Fournier and Avery, 2011). Social media were initially platforms for individuals to connect with peers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) and have thus started growing in this direction. Brands hopped on the bandwagon later on and positioned themselves as rightful actors of the social media ecosystem. Research however shows that they are not always welcome to do so (Fournier and Avery, 2011; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). For this reason, individuals might be less used to, and more reluctant to communicate with brands on social media, even if they normally have a high OIP. Additionally, OBC users might feel that engaging with the brand in public setting is inadequate, preferring to keep direct brand interactions in the private sphere. This might be due to self-presentation motives (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012); for fear of what others might think of you if you interact too closely with brands (Patterson, 2012); or for privacy concerns (Murphy et al., 2014). The finding thus may add credence to the literature that views brands as agents of consumers' social and private identity formation efforts (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012).

It is also possible that other factors, unaccounted for in this study, are indeed reflected in those findings. For example, the size of the community might act as a moderator of the relationship between OIP and online brand engagement (Wirtz et al., 2013). Indeed, research shows that the bigger the OBC becomes, the less it feels like a community in which people feel free to share their feelings and opinions (Dholakia et al., 2004). In contrast to this proposition, a smaller community might also make its individual members and their actions more visible, which might deter self-conscious members from participating. The fact that the community size could moderate member's inherent OIP impact on online brand engagement is a thesis worth further exploration. The current state of research however suggests that both large and small community settings could keep inherently social members from participating for different reasons (Dholakia et al., 2004).

Attitude toward OBC participation → online brand engagement

The findings failed to confirm that attitude toward OBC participation is a driver of online brand engagement. This finding is surprising, especially. To illustrate, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) linked attitude toward online participation to brand behaviours in an online community setting. In their study, attitude is far removed from behaviours, as their interplay is mediated by desires and social intentions first, followed by group behaviour. The findings indicate that the results of this study may suggest a much more complex relationship between the attitude toward OBC participation and online brand engagement than what has been expected. For instance, there might be several mediators between the attitude toward OBC participation and effective brand-related actions, such as consumers' desires and intentions, as suggested by Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006).

Another explanation for this relationship not receiving support is a potential misunderstanding of the attitude referent in the questionnaire. Although the study used an existing and validated operationalisation of attitude toward OBC participation (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), the respondents might have not clearly understood that the community represented both the other consumers and the brand. Respondents might therefore have understood the question as referring to interactions with the other consumers only, therefore reducing the explanatory power of their attitude toward OBC participation on their online brand engagement. Following this line of thinking it may be questionable whether the typical OBC member is really conscious of the brand being a member of the community on social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Further in-depth qualitative studies in that direction may help to answer this doubt.

Product involvement → online brand engagement

Another interesting finding concerns the impact of product involvement on online brand engagement. Product involvement has repeatedly been shown to increase consumer's affective, cognitive and behavioural responses to brands (e.g. Traylor and Joseph, 1984; Mittal and Lee, 1989; Pritchard et al., 1999), which lead to the hypothesis that it would equally lead to higher online brand engagement. The impact of product involvement is the only hypothesis that was supported in this research when it comes to the individual antecedents of online brand engagement, making its contribution all the more important to understand. These findings strongly support existing consumer engagement research, which posits brand involvement to be a driver of consumer engagement (Brodie et al.,

2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Although an enduring interest in the brand is likely to lead to direct interactions with the brand, interest in a product category has an equal explanatory power over online brand engagement. In other words, this means that when a consumer has an increased interest or concern for a type of product or service, for instance airline companies, he or she will tend to be more engaged with particular brands belonging to this category (Beatty et al., 1988).

If a person wants to know more about a certain type of product, turning to the community for a balanced point of view seems like a frequently used strategy (see discussion of hypothesis H_{3b}), but so is engaging directly with a brand in order to get first-hand experience. In their exercise to segment brand community members, Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schröder (2008) show that strong consumer-product relationships are often combined with strong consumer-brand relationships in most engaged consumer profiles.

To conclude the section on the drivers of consumer engagement, it appears that individuals' existing attitudes, interests and propensities have varying impacts on OBC and online brand engagement. Although product involvement positively impacts engagement with both partners, attitude toward community participation and OIP only drive OBC engagement. The overall picture that emerges from the study's results in terms of the drivers of both types of engagement is therefore that, although OBC engagement is driven by all three individual traits considered relevant, only one of them impacts online brand engagement. This means on the one hand that the drivers of community and brand engagement differ, and on the other hand calls for another angle to understand the sources of online brand engagement, which may lie in social influences rather than individual traits.

OBC engagement → online brand engagement

The fourth research hypothesis has posited that the more a consumer is engaged with the OBC, the more he or she will be engaged online with the host brand (Wirtz et al., 2013). The support of this hypothesis found in both French and English samples represents an important contribution, also because the hypotheses regarding the antecedents of online brand engagement were in part rejected. Importantly, impact of OBC engagement over online brand engagement is much stronger than the impact of product involvement, highlighting the vital explanatory power of community participation over online brand engagement.

These findings expand the notion that interaction with a community of consumers fosters stronger and more frequent brand-related behaviours and attitudes (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005; Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). Looking at each facet of the OBC engagement construct, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, being emotionally engaged with a group of peers seems to positively affect engagement with a brand. This means that positive emotions, such as enjoyment or enthusiasm, derived from interactions with other consumers on a Facebook brand page lead consumers to be more engaged with the host brand itself. This finding complements the contention that positive and negative feelings generated from interactions in a virtual environment can shape consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding the host brand (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). Moreover, cognitive engagement with the community leads to increased brand engagement, and so do more sharing, learning and endorsing behaviour with the focal community.

The reasons for this may stem from a simple observation: while OBC engagement means that a consumer engages with other consumers in various forms and manifestations (affective, cognitive and behavioural), the content of this engagement is often directly, or at least indirectly linked to the focal brand, which is a fundamental premise of the OBC literature (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). Being more exposed to brand-related information and gaining increased brand-related experiences and practice (Calder et al., 2009; Schau et al., 2009) through community engagement, one's level of brand engagement is triggered and enhanced. Engaging in brand-related community interactions is inevitably going to make the consumer think about the brand more and at the very least increase its share of mind.

Interestingly, the precedence of OBC engagement to online brand engagement also allows for drawing parallels with the discussion on the evolving roles of community members and community practices. Research has noted that people assume different roles in OBCs and that these roles are not static over time (Schau et al., 2009; Fournier and Avery, 2011). If the ultimate goal of brand-hosted communities is to increase brand relationships through brand engagement, the community can act as a catalyst to make members assume more and more actively engaged roles (Fournier and Lee, 2009; Schivinski et al., forthcoming). As people engage with the online brand community, new comers can assume roles of learners while more experienced members act as greeters, supporters or guides (ibid., 2009), all the while mingling in a multidimensional engagement process. Consumers holding a particularly central position in the community's relational network are also likely to act as

influencers and stimulate less knowledgeable members (Trusov et al., 2010). Relating back to the individual drivers of engagement, consumers exhibiting high levels of OIP, positive attitude toward the community and high product involvement are most prone to engage. The interactive and social nature of engagement combined with the dynamic of the different community roles indicates that ultimately, all OBC members should be engaged on some level.

Similarly, parallels can be made with the practices developed by Schau et al. (2009), as they are interlinked with repeat consumer-to-consumer engagement. When experienced members ‘welcome’ and ‘empathise’ with new members, they can foster their enthusiasm and enjoyment of community participation, strengthening their affective community engagement. Through competent practices of ‘milestoning’, ‘badging’ and ‘documenting’, sharing, endorsing and learning dimensions of engagement are enacted. Likewise, ‘justifying’ the time spent on the community reinforces the cognitive engagement one might experience. A continuous engagement with the community will not only see practices being reinforced. As community members become more competent and fluent in engaging with the community, they can evolve –almost ‘graduate’, to a higher level of community integration and membership, which will place them in a more comfortable position to engage directly with the brand.

In addition to complementing the OBC literature, this finding advances the current state of the consumer engagement literature, where the role of OBC engagement is still misunderstood (Wirtz et al., 2013). This study’s results empirically supports the conceptual premise that OBC engagement drives online brand engagement in the context of OBC, as proposed by Wirtz et al. (2013). Interestingly, the opposite causal relationship has been put forth in the literature as well, giving precedence to brand engagement over community engagement (Brodie et al., 2013). The relationship might be cyclical and more engagement with an actor might lead to more engagement with another, and vice-versa. The community/brand engagement link might therefore be a circle that feeds itself, and increased brand engagement could lead to further community engagement. However, in the context of this study, the dependent variables of interest are brand related and the focus placed on understanding how consumer engagement contributes to enhance brand relationships. In this context, the impact of community over brand engagement is of particular relevance and the present study supports this hypothesis.

Considering the broad agenda of consumer-centred relationships in OBC, the link between consumer engagements with two different partners is in line with McAlexander et al.'s (2002) concept of brand community integration. This study's findings show that in a highly interactive and social environment like an OBC, consumers are the focal subjects of engagement but that their engagement with one partner is inevitably connected with their engagement with another partner. This evidences the existence of many-to-many interactions (Hoffman and Novak, 1996) and represent the ultimate level of individual's sociality through community-based social interactions (Murphy et al., 2014).

Lastly, these findings shed light on recent advances regarding social media branding strategies, and Facebook pages management in particular. Malhotra et al. (2012) suggest that in order to increase levels of behavioural engagement on Facebook (through Likes, Comments and Shares), brands should not hesitate heavily promoting the brand and its products and directly engage with consumers with calls-to-action. Although these strategies should prove very powerful to create brand engagement, this study brings a nuance to their analysis, by suggesting that there should be a sequence, or progression from community engaging content to more brand-focused content. In this spirit, the suggestion to post topical content that is not related to the brand should therefore also be considered and even higher the agenda during the early stages of community building.

To conclude, engagement with one partner (here, the OBC as personified by its members) might impact engagement with another partner (the brand) and thus occur in a sequential manner. Being invested in an OBC (e.g. exhibiting positive emotions toward it, investing time in it, and choosing to actively share with it, learn from it and endorse it) is a driving force of online brand engagement. The role of OBC engagement over online brand engagement is particularly interesting, as two of the three individual traits do not directly impact online brand engagement. This suggests that OBC participation with other members derives from individual predispositions whereas direct brand interactions in OBC are supported by prior engagement with the rest of the community of members.

This finding has broad implication in terms of brand management and meets the growing recognition of the social nature of brands (Thought Economics, 2009). By showing the vital role of OBC engagement in sustaining brand engagement, it supports Keller (2013) who pointed out that exhibiting and acting upon a sense of community is a necessary and ultimate stage into developing brand engagement.

7.3.3. Outcomes of online brand engagement

Two direct and one indirect brand relationship outcomes of online brand engagement have been advanced in the research hypotheses. Brand engagement has been conceptualised to be a direct driver of brand trust and brand commitment, ultimately leading to brand loyalty (Hollebeek, 2011a).

Online brand engagement → brand trust

As expected, the results show that trust and engagement are positively correlated. Brand trust first is defined as consumer's willingness to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, 2002) and it is not surprising that higher levels of online brand engagement contribute to reinforcing it. In the engagement literature, brand trust is one of the aspects of brand relationship quality and brand engagement is conceptualised as one of its antecedent both for existing and new customers (Hollebeek, 2011a).

Trust is likely to be increased by engagement because, in the interactive process of engagement, consumers give brands the opportunity to assure them of their quality as a relationship partner (Hollebeek, 2011a). Like trust, engagement is built over the long term and repeat occurrences, and if a brand behaves in a way to allow consumers to satisfactorily engage with them, trust is likely to occur. Echoing the recent brand community and social media literature, if the brands provide compelling content to share and learn from, if they entertain and keep consumer's attention through their actions on social media (Malhotra et al., 2012), allowing consumers to be engaged with them, and if they do so consistently over time, consumers are more likely to trust them (Mazorcchi et al., 2013).

Online brand engagement → brand commitment

The research hypothesis concerning the link between the implications of online brand engagement for commitment has also been confirmed. Brand commitment represents consumer's enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship with a brand in the long term (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) and it is a recurring theme in the OBC literature (e.g. Kim et al., 2008). The findings of this study prove that online brand engagement positively influences brand commitment. From a contextual point of view, this supports the idea that being engaged in OBC settings leads to increased brand commitment (Casaló et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2008; Jahn and Kunz, 2012). As community members become more engaged with the

brand in the OBC settings, brand commitment is sustained. This means that through competent engagement strategies, brand can foster higher levels of consumer intentions to remain committed to their relationship with them. Brand commitment being an enduring, long term predisposition to maintain a relationship, the long term orientation of consumer engagement is further substantiated through the support of this hypothesis.

The findings of this study suggest that brand engagement is conducive of brand trust and brand commitment, which are two core aspects of brand relationship quality. So far, these relationships had only been conceptualised (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek 2011a) and still required empirical validation, which this study seems to provide. The ability of online brand engagement to secure higher levels of brand relationship quality through brand trust and brand commitment settles the vital contribution of the consumer engagement construct as an integral part of relationship building in a social context (Brodie et al., 2013).

These findings also expand Bowden's (2009) conceptualisation of the brand engagement process whereby trust and commitment are two important components of engagement. Although this study does not abide by the principle that engagement is an overarching process (Bowden, 2009), in line with seminal studies, it also considers brand loyalty to be the ultimate goal of brand relationship building (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), an issue that is discussed in detail in the next section.

Brand trust → brand loyalty

The last set of hypotheses refers to the impact of brand trust and brand commitment on brand loyalty. Brand loyalty in this study is approached from its behavioural perspective and refers to consumers' repeat purchase behaviour (Jacoby and Chesnut, 1978). The impact of trust and commitment on loyalty has been the subject to much empirical research in the wider brand relationship literature (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2002), but has so far lacked empirical validation in consumer engagement perspective (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011a).

Considering the brand trust-loyalty relationship first, the study grants support to the effect of brand trust on brand loyalty in the French sample. An interesting contrast between the English and the French sample is detected, as the relationship is not supported for the former. Differences between linguistic contexts is discussed in detail in section 7.4 of the chapter.

Overall, the findings resonate well with the widespread agreement that trust is positively related with loyalty, which derive from general brand relationship studies (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Trust is a particularly salient antecedent of loyalty for high-relational consumers (ibid., 1999), which often qualifies OBC members. By actively displaying high levels of reliability, integrity, and quality in the (online) brand community, brands are able to sustain stronger levels of behavioural loyalty (Marzocchi et al., 2013).

Brand commitment → brand loyalty

Commitment represents the second hypothesised driver of loyalty and outcome of brand engagement. In this instance, the hypothesis has been verified in both samples and no cultural differences have been found. The commitment-loyalty link is well established in the general relationship marketing literature (e.g. Morgan and Hunt, 1994), and this relationship had also been conceptualised in the consumer engagement literature (van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a). In the OBC literature as well, commitment to the community and/or to the brand is generally viewed as a mechanism through which positive behavioural outcomes are achieved (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2008).

Two words of caution however need to be mentioned when analysing the relationship between consumer engagement and its relational outcomes, in particular loyalty. Firstly, this study defined consumers as any member of a Facebook page, irrespective of prior purchase of the brand. Sample characteristics evidence that on average 84 percent of the respondents are purchasing customers of the brand they like on Facebook (see Appendix 7). All respondents were however able to answer the questions related to brand loyalty, thanks to the Likert scale type allowing negative answers. Any form of loyalty measurement however needs for this reason to be taken with a pinch of salt, since OBC membership does not necessarily entail brand custom, and even less so loyalty. Despite its widespread adoption, assuming behavioural loyalty to be the number one indicator of OBC success has clear shortcomings.

Furthermore, a discussion on the precedence of OBC participation over brand relationship exists, and is referred to as the ‘advocacy paradox’ (Baird and Parnasis, 2011). This paradox relates to the fact that companies tend to believe that engaging consumers on social media will necessarily have positive loyalty and advocacy effects, whereas many consumers say they need to be passionate before they’ll engage, and that this online engagement with the brand is not systematically conducive of loyalty (ibid., 2011). This

discussion relates to the debate in the consumer engagement literature whereby scholars hesitate to conceptualise engagement as preceding or resulting from existing brand-relationships (see Hollebeek, 2011). Rather than settle or provide a definite answer on this matter, this study contributes to this discussion by evidencing the importance of engaging with different partners to achieve relationship outcomes, since online brand engagement is a function of OBC engagement. This echoes Baird and Parnasis (2011) findings that OBC members rely on the community's endorsements behaviour on social media to influence their purchase behaviour. If behavioural brand loyalty needs to be considered carefully in OBC contexts, the strength of engaging through endorsement behaviour is key as well as the importance to engagement with the OBC and not just the brand.

Overall, and being cautious about their meaning, the findings regarding the drivers of loyalty bring depth into the understanding of loyalty development as deriving from consumer engagement. Loyalty is driven by brand commitment, and partly by brand trust depending on the culture, both of them directly stemming from online brand engagement. These results are interesting because they evidence that online brand engagement alone cannot cater for loyalty, but works toward increasing fundamental brand relationship elements such as trust and commitment, which ultimately lead to augmented instances of purchase behaviours (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011). In the OBC literature, several studies had already highlighted the reinforcing potential of community participation over adoption of new products by the brand (Thompson and Sinha, 2008) and general impact of consumers' lurking or posting behaviours on brand loyalty (Shang et al., 2006), albeit without the mediating impact of brand trust and commitment, and without the integrative approach to participation that consumer engagement affords.

Considering the consumer engagement literature, the engagement-loyalty nexus is a complex one, and it has so far mainly been approached conceptually (van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a). The present findings highlight the recent advances of Hollebeek et al. (2014) who verified the direct impact of brand engagement on brand usage intent, which can be assimilated to loyalty intent. In the present study however, brand trust and commitment are mediators of the relationship, and direct reporting measures of purchase behaviour are used rather than intentions to use, an approach that deepens past findings.

Overall, this study shows that through the mediating impact of brand trust and brand commitment, consumer engagement drives consumer brand loyalty. This has major

implications and shows the need for brands to sustain high levels of intra-community engagement to ensure appropriate levels of brand relationship quality and subsequent purchase behaviour. Furthermore, it advances the relevance of a multidimensional view of community participation in brand relationship building. Consumer engagement is an affective, cognitive and behavioural concept (Brodie et al., 2011), and it is the combination of these three constituents that plays a role in driving trust, commitment and loyalty. Only by ensuring appropriate levels of affect, cognitive processing and interactive behaviours with a brand in the OBC context can managers reap the full benefits of their OBC.

7.4. Other findings: validation procedure

This section discusses the results concerning the group invariance tests computed with AMOS to verify equality between the English and the French samples. As per the recommended procedure (Byrne, 2010), configural, measurement and structural invariance between the two samples has been tested. This method has first been applied to the consumer engagement scales, and then to the whole structural model.

The initial assumption of invariance across samples has been verified thanks to a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis, showing support to the applicability of the scales and structural relationships to the two different languages: French and English. A concurrent treatment of the two samples in hypothesis testing however highlighted a difference in data behaviour between the two samples, as the brand trust-loyalty relationship was supported for the French sample but not for the English one. The contextual invariance results are first discussed with respect to the consumer engagement scales and then regarding the whole structural model.

In the context of OBC embedded on social media—Facebook in this case, online consumer engagement with a brand and with a brand community is adequately measured using the same translated instrument, irrespective of whether the consumer is using the French or English version of the platform. Since Facebook supports 91 languages (Facebook, 2014), the linguistic replicability of any instrument related to Facebook activity is crucial, especially as a growing amount of official Facebook pages have decided to create local versions of their page and that these tend to perform better than their global counterparts

(Social Bakers, 2012).

From a methodological point of view, overall, scales that are developed using different linguistic samples have better cross-cultural applicability afterwards (e.g. Cadogan et al., 1999). However, research instruments are often developed in a single linguistic setting and then directly applied to another setting without considering theoretical fit, which can lead to serious issues of construct bias (Douglas and Craig, 2006). The fact that the consumer engagement scales exhibit group invariance between the two different languages is an indication that the scale is conceptually and empirically applicable to different linguistic contexts and possibly cultures, in the future.

Moreover, cross-context invariance support the inclusion of the consumer engagement scales in a nomological network. Equal variability of the consumer engagement scales across two languages suggests that correlation coefficients between this scale and other related constructs should be comparable (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). This was validated with the multi-group confirmatory factor analysis performed on the structural model.

Linguistic group invariance was also found for the structural model. More specifically, configural, measurement and structural invariance have been demonstrated. This finding first implies that all construct measures included in the model are applicable across languages, as well as their interrelationships. From a measurement standpoint, this is not surprising. Apart from the consumer engagement scales, which were shown to be invariant, all measurement scales used in the study have been adopted or adapted from existing studies, and most of them had already been validated in various cultural settings.

From a structural standpoint, this implies that all hypothesis tests lead to the same results. Although this was not proven to be entirely the case when performing the SEM tests on the two samples separately, 10 out of 11 hypotheses (or 91 percent of the results) are the same across samples. The results of this study therefore denote strong cultural similarities in terms of what drives and results from consumer engagement in OBC embedded on social media.

The only difference between the two samples has been found in the hypothesis linking brand trust to brand loyalty. This difference in results can be explained by a series of cultural and contextual factors differentiating the two languages. Firstly, English-speaking and French-speaking cultures differ in terms of uncertainty avoidance, a major cultural

dimension put forth in Hofstede's cultural framework. French-speaking individuals are known to exhibit higher degrees of uncertainty avoidance than English-speaking individuals, according to Hofstede's cultural framework and assessment tools (Hofstede, 2014). Uncertainty avoidance is related to risk, and has also been shown to be closely related to the construct of trust (Doney et al., 1998). Following this logic, French-speaking respondents are likely to ascribe increased levels of importance to brand trust. On this basis, if and once brand trust is gained for the French speakers, is it probably more likely to be more meaningful and have potent implications, such as loyalty, leading to the support of H₇ for the French sample.

On the other hand, English-speaking countries such as the UK or the US tend to score much lower on the uncertainty avoidance dimension (Hofstede, 2014), meaning that trust is not as important for them as it is for the French-speaking respondents. If trust is a less potent cultural dimension in English-speaking countries, this can give an indication of why brand trust fails to positively impact loyalty in this sample. The variation in loyalty for countries with different levels of uncertainty avoidance has already been shown in cross-cultural marketing research (El-Manstrly, 2014). Even if brand trust is gained, its explanatory power over behavioural brand loyalty is likely to be weaker for the English-speaking sample than it is for the French, leading to the different results for the two samples.

Another potential explanation for this difference is that English-speaking countries tend to be more advanced and innovative in terms of marketing techniques and brand management (Garnier and McDonald, 2009). English-speaking consumers are therefore more exposed to marketing content and have developed more understanding, as well as resistance to it. Indeed, levels of marketing literacy in English-speaking countries tend to be higher (Garnier and McDonald, 2009). This might be a reason why, even if a company is reliable and worth their trust, English-speaking consumers will not necessarily keep buying from them.

In addition to this, English is often the language in which international Facebook pages are set up, meaning that, by definition, a brand operating under its English Facebook page is likely to have many more global and local competitors than a local French or Spanish page. For this reason, competition tends to be fiercer for OBCs in English and this might contribute to offsetting the impact of brand trust built on social media on behavioural loyalty.

Moreover, if we consider that trust in this instance moderates the relationship between brand engagement and brand loyalty, Hollebeek's (2011) framework capturing the brand engagement/loyalty nexus can prove useful. According to this framework, too much engagement can lead to less loyalty. Indeed, when a consumer is too highly involved, he can at some point feel drained and experience fatigue, which will decrease his/her loyalty to the brand. Adding the mediating effect of brand trust, it might still be the case, particularly in Anglo-Saxon cultures, that increased engagement eventually leads to less loyalty, evidencing the complexity of the engagement/loyalty relationship.

Despite the difference between languages on the trust-loyalty relationship, this study's results seem to support the linguistic contextual validation it set out to achieve. As explained in Chapter 4, the importance to determine contextual invariance of measures and model is becoming a stringent need inherent to globalised environments such as social media, where geographic boundaries are virtually inexistent (Andersen, 2005; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Faraj and Johnson, 2011). This study proposes a first step in addressing this requirement by showing that: (1) consumer engagement, both with the OBC and brand partners exists in the same way for English and French-speaking respondents; (2) consumer engagement is triggered in the same way by individual and social factors for English and French-speaking respondents; (3) consumer engagement equally leads to brand trust and brand commitment in for English and French-speaking respondent and (4) consumer engagement ultimately affects brand loyalty in a positive way across linguistic groups, although trust cannot be relied on as effectively in Anglo-Saxon settings.

These findings have potent implications for the management of OBC on social media and suggest that similar consumer engagement strategies can be replicated across local Facebook pages in different languages. This cross-linguistic validation brings an important contribution to social media studies in particular, which have so far been rather timid in testing their results in various national or linguistic contexts (Okazaki and Taylor, 2013). In a context of disputed cultural convergence, finding out whether results related to online consumer behaviour and brand management are geographically transposable is urgently needed (*ibid.*, 2013). These results are a first step in this direction and their implications for theory and practice are discussed in the concluding chapter.

7.5. Summary

The objective of this chapter was to interpret the results of the data analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6. In order to do so, the findings were discussed in light of the framework and model presented in Chapter 3 and its related research hypotheses. The results were interpreted and their implications discussed mindful of recent research in the OBC and consumer engagement literature.

The concept of consumer engagement in an OBC context has been conceptualised in a way that extends and deepens existing dimensionalizations of consumer engagement. Engagement is composed of three dimensions, reflected in seven sub-dimensions. By adequately measuring engagement in an OBC context, the scale development is particularly innovative in using two engagement partners concurrently: the brand and the OBC.

Regarding the hypotheses, this study shows support for most of them and evidences the central role of consumer engagement in the OBC context. Consumer engagement is driven by some individual traits and pre-dispositions, which signals that differences of engagement levels can be attributed to enduring personal characteristics, an innovative empirical finding of this study. The recognition of these characteristics and the clustering of OBC members on this basis is therefore an important endeavour to sustain consumer engagement and adequately manage consumers based on their individual differences.

The results also show that although individual traits largely explain OBC engagement, online brand engagement tends to rely less on individual characteristics (only one out of three) and more on OBC engagement. This implies that the vitality of direct brand behaviours, affect and cognition depends on the consumer's level of engagement with other consumers. C2C interactions are thus critical to triggering and sustaining online brand engagement and an essential step in the formation of sustained brand relationships, as the consequence of online brand engagement show.

Lastly, brand relationship outcomes are evidenced in the form of brand trust, brand commitment and brand loyalty as expressed by repeat purchase. Consumer engagement as an interactive, social and multi-dimension construct therefore finds its place in relationship marketing models and proves to be a strong predictor of relationship quality and ensuing

brand sales. These findings are largely consistent across two cultural contexts, as supported by the group invariance results between the French- and English-speaking samples.

These findings contribute to the extant OBC and consumer engagement literature and have several implications for the practice of OBC and brand relationship management, which are discussed in the following concluding chapter.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This study set out to advance the concept of consumer engagement as a valid approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of online brand community participation and examine some of its antecedents and outcomes. The thesis starts by demonstrating the importance of this endeavour, pointing out the relevance of studying OBC participation and how consumer engagement constitutes a better approach to OBC participation than other existing views. The key argument advanced here is that the current approaches to measuring participation in the context of online brand communities fail to account fully for a multi-faceted notion of participation, one that is suited for the interactive nature of the online contexts. A critical analysis of the OBC literature highlights the shortcomings of current research in understanding OBC participation and consumer engagement appears as a potent new concept to address the identified gaps. Put simply, consumer engagement provides an approach to OBC participation that is more holistic, social and interactive.

Building on literature from multiple strands, the thesis then advances the concept of consumer engagement as valid alternative to measure online participation. Based on the extant literature on consumer engagement in marketing, and building from studies in other fields of the social sciences, the study has proposed a framework of consumer engagement in OBC, as well as a conceptual model of its hypothetical antecedents and outcomes. The model presents consumer engagement in OBC as having one subject (the consumer) and two partners (the brand and the OBC). The concept is composed of three dimensions, which are further broken down into seven sub-dimensions. Consumer engagement in OBC is hypothesised to derive from three individual traits and predispositions and result in three brand-relationship outcomes. Engagement with the OBC is also hypothesised to precede and impact online engagement with the brand. The integration of multiple theoretical strands results in a conceptual model encompassing 11 hypotheses.

To test these hypotheses, the study has adopted a post-positivist methodological approach. The main findings are derived from the analysis of quantitative data collected over four

months from a total of 721 members of French- and English-speaking Facebook pages. The communities examined cover a broad range of categories, which seem to adequately capture the diversity of OBCs. The study data have been analysed using validated confirmatory factor analyses and structural equation modelling techniques. Prior to testing the eleven hypotheses, the study has offered a measure of consumer engagement, following strict scale development procedures involving qualitative data, a panel of academic experts and iterative item generation. Psychometric properties of the scales are further evidenced through tests on a calibration (n=224) and validation sample (n=224).

Hypotheses were then tested using the English validation sample (n=224) and the French sample (n=273) in parallel. Results provide support for the majority of the hypotheses (8 out of 11 for the English sample, and 9 out of 11 for the French sample). Data reveal that OBC engagement is strongly dependent on individual traits and predispositions, and that it strongly contributes to increased levels of online brand engagement, along with product involvement. Online brand engagement has a powerful impact on brand loyalty through the mediating impact of brand trust and commitment. These results are almost identical across the two linguistic settings under investigation, as confirmed by multi-group analyses.

8.1. Theoretical contributions

The findings from this study significantly contribute to both OBC literature and consumer engagement research in several aspects. **The first contribution concerns the comprehensive advancement and reconceptualisation of OBC participation through consumer engagement.** Member participation, affect and cognition in OBCs so far benefited from a scattered and incomplete treatment, resulting in a plethora of overlapping and intertwined concepts, theories and methodological approaches (Preece and Malhoney-Krishmar, 2005). This study enhances the current theoretical and practical understanding of OBC participation by proposing and empirically validating a framework of consumer engagement in OBC that is more cognisant of online contexts. Advancing the notion of consumer engagement as a valid conceptualisation of OBC participation, the multidimensional, interactive and social nature of OBC participation is recognised and integrated under a single construct. By doing so, a significant advance is granted to the state of OBC participation (Dholakia et al., 2004; Stockburger, 2010) research and by

extension, to online consumer behaviour in relation to brands (Mathwick, 2002; Labrecque et al., 2013). The study also proposes that two engagement partners exist in OBCs and that both need to be taken into account if one is to measure consumer engagement in an OBC context. The findings show that their interrelationship seems to be a crucial element. Through this exercise, precise insight is gained in terms of what engagement means and how it can be operationalised. Although the framework is adapted to an OBC context by focusing on engagement with a brand and with a community, this study aims to provide a generic multidimensional conceptualisation of consumer engagement that is replicable in any consumption-related context beyond OBCs, and with any engagement partner. In this sense, the conceptual framework contributes to the wider consumer engagement literature as well.

Indeed, the second contribution regards the conceptualisation of consumer engagement. The proposed conceptual framework deepens the dimensionality of consumer engagement at a level of detail so far unprecedented in the marketing literature. Building on engagement research in marketing and incorporating insight from other fields of the social sciences, dimensions of engagement are clarified and broken down into sub-dimensions. These include enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, learning, sharing and endorsing. Further contribution lies in this study's explicit recognition of two different loci of engagement in the context of OBC participation. By showing that OBC engagement and online brand engagement are two interrelated facets of consumer engagement, this study also shows the need to break away from traditional one-on-one approaches to brand relationships. This relates to an urge for more social orientation toward brand relationship management, where C2C interactions are rightfully acknowledged and tapped into (Thought Economics, 2009; Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Ashley and Tuten, 2015), particularly in online settings.

A third significant theoretical contribution concerns the identification and validation of antecedents and outcomes of engagement. The study develops and tests a causal model explaining the role of individual traits and predispositions driving engagement and its impact on consumer-brand relationships. This answers the call for empirical research into the drivers and outcomes of consumer engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010), while strengthening the position of consumer engagement as the appropriate approach to OBC participation. Indeed, one of the key conclusions from the review of the consumer engagement literature was that it cruelly lacked empirical validation of its conceptual

propositions in terms of engagement antecedents and consequences, leaving engagement to be a very attractive, yet extremely abstract marketing concept (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

A first understanding of the driving factors of increased levels of consumer engagement in the OBC context is provided. Although some hypotheses are not supported, the findings show that online brand community and brand engagement are to some extent influenced by individual traits and predispositions (OIP, attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement). This contributes to the consumer engagement research, which had so far had difficulties pinpointing clear triggers to consumer engagement and, in particular, drivers related to the individual consumer (Wirtz et al., 2013). Although van Doorn et al. (2010) and Gambetti and Graffigna (2010) do acknowledge that individual traits and predispositions may affect the likelihood of consumer engagement and impact cognitive and behavioural processes, this proposition had remained conceptual to date.

This study brings clarity into the individual traits and predispositions that trigger consumer engagement in OBC. This also brings OBC research further, as extant literature exploring the drivers of OBC participation had so far mainly focused on perceived value and benefits, as well as social motivations, as identified in the literature review. OBC members therefore differ not only in terms of their individual or social motivations and behaviours, but also in terms of their inherent and enduring individual traits and characteristics.

The role of consumer engagement in enhancing consumer-brand relationships is verified. This is achieved through a series of hypotheses linking consumer engagement to brand trust, commitment and loyalty. These findings also significantly enrich the existing OBC and consumer engagement literature. Both streams of literature had indeed identified brand relationship building, including brand loyalty, as one of the top benefit sought after as a result of consumer engagement. Research in this area was emerging in the OBC literature, and remained conceptual in the area of consumer engagement. By proving that engaged consumers show significantly higher levels of brand trust, commitment and subsequently loyalty, this study timely addresses this issue and enriches the existing literature.

8.3. Methodological contributions

The first methodological contribution concerns the operationalisation of consumer engagement with several achievements. Firstly, the study advances an innovative measure of consumer engagement in OBC. Integrating theory to arrive at a novel conceptualisation, the conceptual framework provided the basis to the development of two mirrored scales of consumer engagement, namely OBC engagement and online brand engagement. The robust scale development procedure culminated in the creation of two identical scales of consumer engagement. The procedure involved both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as a panel of academic experts, and the scales both show high degrees of reliability and validity. This endeavour provides a major contribution to the existing literature on consumer engagement measurement, which is to date extremely limited, particularly in the OBC context. This way, the study answers the call by Brodie et al. (2011) and Mollen and Wilson (2010) to create a consumer engagement scale in an online context. The scale development contributes significantly to empirically validating the so far hesitant understanding of consumer engagement dimensionality. It reveals that consumer engagement is best conceptualised and measured as a multi-dimensional construct, and that each of its dimensions can be further broken down into sub-dimensions. This provides a potent explanation of the exact meaning and applications of consumer engagement.

Secondly, the generalisability of the study's result has been evidenced thanks to a validation procedure in different linguistic contexts. The findings show measurement and structural invariance on the data, which, bar for one hypothesis, evidence complete similarity of results in different contexts. In addition to strengthening the conceptual and empirical validity of the study, this paves the way for more cross-context studies in social media and OBC studies, which are currently very limited in scope and application. However, the inconsistency surrounding one of the hypotheses highlights potential effects of culture and more studies are needed to further explore these effects.

8.4. Managerial implications

The results of this study provide valuable insight for online marketers on how to use OBC embedded on social media as a channel to successfully enhance consumer-brand relationships. Understanding what drives consumer engagement, how the community and brand engagement should interplay and the relational benefits for brands is crucial for managers. By addressing these issues, this study bears direct implications on brands' content posting and online CRM strategies. The managerial implications of this thesis are thus numerous and address key issues of OBC management (Gensler et al., 2013). In other words, the study give pointers on how brands can be successful engagement partners in the OBC they have created.

The first set of valuable guidelines for managers concern the key individual traits and predispositions that motivate an active OBC participation (Chang et al., 2013). On this ground, several ways to effectively build consumer engagement can be envisaged, as it is the task of the marketer to identify who are their interactive consumer segments in OBCs and recognise their individual specificities. For instance, segmentation of OBC users based on their individual traits and characteristics should be done to drive community engagement. Since consumers differ in terms of their OIP, and their attitude toward OBC participation and product involvement, consumers can be segmented according to these criteria and engaged with in a dedicated way.

More specifically, this pertains directly to the communication and content strategy of OBC managers. For instance, while targeting community members with higher levels of product involvement, OBC managers should seek to create engagement around general product category information that will initiate category-level thinking and interest. This way, they can try to best address their needs by means of interactive brand engagement and fostering OBC engagement. For instance, Made&More, an online fashion retailer selling exclusively goods manufactured in Europe in sustainable conditions, successfully engage their members by regularly posting content about slow fashion. This type of informational content foster in-group interaction and the fact that the company takes a stance on this issue also fosters direct brand engagement. Given the link between product involvement and engagement and the fact that information-based content strategies work well with high-involvement consumers (Warrington and Shim, 2000), this suggests that information-

rich content needs to be included by brands on their OBC. Overall, OBC managers should aim to post content that is brand-related (directly about the brand or related topics), but always remain on-topic, as congruency between the OBC purpose and content is known to drive higher engagement behaviours (Breitshol et al., 2015).

Recognising that OIP and attitude toward the community are driving OBC engagement, this study also suggests that brands should seek to activate their most interaction-prone members to engage with other members. In terms of the content posted, this can be achieved, for instance through educational posts. A number of studies show that highly informational content that allows improving brand use can bear high C2C interaction potential (Schau et al., 2009; Malhotra et al., 2012). If companies manage to engage members with positive attitudes and interaction propensity, their OBC engagement will naturally have a ripple effect and involve other less active OBC members, thus activating the community as a whole.

Secondly, the findings of this study highlight the preceding role of OBC engagement over brand engagement, a relationship that has major repercussions in terms of OBC management (Fournier and Lee, 2009). Practically, this means that OBC managers should strive to create engagement among consumers prior to directly with the brand. As Colliander et al. (2015, p.11) point out, *'effectiveness of OBCs is contingent on companies realizing that 'social' is the operative word in social media'*. As a result, brands need to foster C2C interactions and provide an OBC environment conducive of community interactions and freedom of expression. Brands should be eager to create a community of users first, of which they are the catalyst and common denominator, but sit back initially to allow for the community to form and get strong (Fournier and Lee, 2009).

Understanding that they need to build the community first prior to pushing promotional brand content is crucial as a lot of companies still use social media and OBC simply for broadcasting their own message (Colliander et al., 2015). Brand should not be self-centred and push their own content; rather, they should foster OBC engagement as a priority (Fournier and Lee, 2009). Brands should aim to be part of the conversation rather than monopolise it and make it all about themselves (Malhotra et al., 2012). In Facebook settings in particular, leaving the brand in the background to focus on broader issues is likely to increase engagement (ibid., 2012). The results of the present study show that once strong OBC engagement is asserted, consumers are more likely to engage with the focal brand, rather than the other way around. As such, online brand engagement can be seen as

an organic derivative from OBC engagement, which comes at later stages of the community life cycle.

Building online brand engagement is, however, crucial if one wants to achieve brand-relationship building. Therefore, after fostering OBC engagement among members, brands need to activate their members in interactive participation with them. Simply moderating the OBC is not enough, and one should not forget that the OBC should also revolve around brand-related topics (Malhotra et al., 2012). Therefore, brands need to generate meaningful direct interactions and conversations with their members. To achieve this aim, brands need to adopt an open and positive approach to discussing with their consumers. Interactive engagement with consumers is an indication that the company cares enough to discuss, rather than just push their content, and this is likely to result in higher degrees of purchase intentions (Colliander et al., 2015) and brand-relationship quality (Hollebeek, 2011a), as evidenced in this study. A practical way to generate direct brand engagement and show that the brand cares about their consumers is to ask them questions or invite them to take action. Inviting consumers to share their views and answer a question, or incentivising content sharing, are two ways to initiate direct online brand engagement.

Another managerial implication from the study concerns the multidimensionality and long-term perspective of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011). Managers need to adopt a long-term, enduring and multi-dimensional perspective to their OBC management. Put differently, brands need to move away from short term, behaviour-only and metrics-based measures of OBC effectiveness. As much as the benefits and value of OBC activities need to be measured, neither consumer engagement nor relationship building are likely to happen overnight. This is indicated on the one hand by the very nature of all relevant constructs tested in this study's model: from the drivers to the outcomes of engagement, all aspects of OBC participation have an enduring, long term nature.

Secondly, although managers have tended to measure OBC participation based on metrics (such as number of likes, comments, time spent online, or number of members), the findings of this study show that engagement is a multidimensional construct which goes much further than considering members' actions and activities (e.g. Gummerus et al., 2012). Consumer engagement is not about big data. Rather, it encompasses emotions and cognitive processing that require time and effort to develop. In this sense, basing one's understanding of consumer engagement in OBC solely on equations involving site metric is a delusional, short-sighted approach unlikely to result in strong brand relationships.

By showing the necessary multidimensionality of consumer engagement, this study offers managers empirical evidence that their OBC strategy need to activate all three aspects. For instance, emotions call emotions: research has shown that high social media engagement is driven by emotional appeals (Ashely and Tuten, 2015). Therefore, content that humanises the brand or gamifies it (brand entertainment) will go a long way into fostering consumers', enjoyment and excitement about the brand. On the other hand, behavioural engagement is likely to increase with topical, informative and visual content, as well as direct calls-to-action (Malhotra et al., 2012). Overall, this study shows that brands should use a wide variety of appeals, content forms and types to foster deep, long-lasting and multi-dimensional engagement, as recently suggested by Ashley and Tuten (2015).

Lastly, the results of this study are broadly indicative of the ability for OBC managers to replicate social media strategies across OBCs in different languages, especially when the similar results in terms of brand relationship building are expected. In the twenty-first century, the role of cross-cultural marketing research has become increasingly important in driving managerial decisions (Slater and Yani-de-Soriano, 2010). The results suggest that there is no significant difference for most of the hypothesised paths across cultures, allowing brand page managers to use a standardised marketing strategy for their OBCs and Facebook pages across cultures. However, no single study can resolve the debate of the standardised versus localised marketing strategy and further investigation into the cross-cultural applicability of the results is warranted.

8.5. Limitations and directions for future research

Despite the valuable contributions that this study brings to the OBC and consumer engagement literatures, the current examination is not without limitations, and further research is warranted to explore the fascinating realm of consumer engagement in OBC. Limitations concern the type of data collected, sampling and generalisability of results, as well as the limitations inherent to the conceptual scope of the study. Several suggestions are made in order to advance research in this emerging domain.

Firstly, this study has limitations pertaining to the type of data collected. Using predominantly quantitative data focused on consumer engagement in OBC, the research

design inherently aims to capture complex phenomena through numbers. As such, and despite a supportive qualitative phase, it necessarily adopts a reductionist approach, one that might not capture the full depth of the phenomena under investigation. A way to gain depth into consumer engagement in OBC would be to complement this study's data with qualitative approaches and follow-up with more in-depth interviews, like a number of OBC and consumer engagement studies have done to date (e.g. Schau et al., 2009; Brodie et al., 2013).

Additionally, all the hypotheses are tested based on a cross-sectional design. Such data is being collected at one point in time, and therefore it is impossible to have an indication of the sequence of events. The results therefore only indicate a relationship between the variables but do not confirm causality but only covariance. In order to tackle causality more explicitly, follow-up studies could be carried out and longitudinal data collected in order to fully understand the causal relationships between consumer engagement, its antecedents and outcomes.

Moreover, this study is based on consumer self-reported survey data. Despite the clear advantages of such methods and type of data, further research should seek to gain access into 'organic data' (Murphy et al., 2014). Organic data, in contrast to 'designed data' like the one used in this survey, emerge out of communication technologies and are available either for a fee or for free (ibid., 2014). An example of organic data that has flourished in online community and social media studies is netnographic data (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets, 2010), which would allow capturing actual manifestations of engagement rather than personal reflections of these manifestations. Sentiment or content analysis of social media content could also be used and integrated with the analysis of netnographic data (Murphy et al., 2014).

The study sampling approach and the resulting sample represent a second shortcoming of this study. The nature of the population and study context did not allow obtaining a probabilistic random sample, which is an issue inherent to OBC research (Preece and Maloney-Krichmar, 2005), where case studies of single communities still prevail (e.g. Maztler et al., 2011). Although the large sample size offsets the risk of bias, the non-probabilistic research sample has implications for the generalisability of the results. The inability to estimate a response rate might also have lead to bias. Effort was made to alleviate this issue as much as possible by adopting a thorough two-level sample design. However, due to this approach, once the survey was posted on the page, no further control

could be exerted to ensure that the respondents of the survey were indeed members of the community. Further studies may try to avoid these sampling issues through methodological advances or by using even larger sample sizes.

Beyond sampling, generalisability of the study could be enhanced in a number of ways. The study focused on OBCs situated in one social network, Facebook. One way to extend this study's findings and enhance its generalisability would be to consider other OBC platforms than social media, or Facebook pages. This study is based on a conscious choice to focus on one type of social media platform and consumer grouping to represent OBCs, however OBCs can thrive in other formats and environments such as blogs or wikis (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), or other social media like Twitter or Youtube. Different platforms afford different interactive functionalities, which could impact the way consumer engagement is enacted (Hollebeek et al., 2014). As online platforms keep growing in size, evolving in form and expanding in terms of marketing applications, it is expected that the number of online consumer engagement options will grow exponentially.

This study is also limited in its ability to more effectively control for the effects of different brands, or brand categories. The selection of communities included in the sample was based on a series of criteria and aimed to represent all categories of Facebook pages fitting the study requirements. Collecting data on a number of different product categories was desirable since OBC research to date has largely collected data from one product category at a time. However, time and access constraints forced the researcher to target a very broad range of pages to secure access to enough data. As a result, sample spread across product categories is not even. Further research is encouraged to draw from larger samples of specific brand types in order to be able to statistically verify if there are differences of engagement levels or relationships for different types of brand. This research aimed to include as many types of brands as possible but did not allow to directly compare brands or brand categories, due to a lack of consistency of the representation of each brand category.

This study also paved the way in exploring consumer engagement in OBCs across cultures, focusing on French and English-speaking communities. However, the comparison of two languages only does not allow drawing strong conclusions on the cross-cultural validity of a test (Cadogan, 2010). In order to further the cross-cultural applicability of the model, scholars need to collect data from more than two cultures. More specifically, the comparison between very individualistic and very collectivistic cultures would be of

interest, as previous studies suggested that engagement in online communities is higher in collectivist cultures (Park and Jun, 2003) and driven by more social motives (Madupu and Cooley, 2010). Focusing on two Western cultures is a first step in showing the cross-cultural validity of the study, but further confirmation is needed concerning other, more culturally diverse nations.

A final possibility to extend this work further is to reconsider the conceptual frame.

The conceptual model presented here builds on key studies in OBC literature to generate a conceptual framework. Necessarily, the number of antecedents is small and finite and other antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement in OBC may need to be explored in future research. Conceptual research in consumer engagement has highlighted a plethora of possible connections between consumer engagement and other relational and social constructs (e.g. Hollebeek, 2011a). As empirical research aiming to validate these relationships is only slowly emerging, engagement and OBC scholars should seek to further validate the relationships that link consumer engagement to other constructs. More specifically, studies could look at the impact of perceived costs and benefits over engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010), or the impact it bears on brand recall and attention (Sprrott et al., 2009) or brand experiences (Hollebeek, 2011).

Other consumer engagement partners should also be considered. The developed measure of consumer engagement has only been applied to two engagement partners in this study. Since the consumer engagement scale is applicable to consumer-to-consumer relationships and consumer-to-brand relationships, building on the framework of brand community relationships by McAlexander et al. (2002)'s, it would be worthwhile to test the generalisability of the scale to other relevant engagement objects such as the company, or the product, within and outside the OBC contexts. Similarly, consumer engagement research has suggested that consumers can be engaged with objects ranging from an event to a piece of media. These constitute further engagement partners to which the developed scale could be applied. This could also work to provide further validation of the consumer engagement scale in different consumption-related contexts other than OBCs.

Eventually, further research could elaborate on the dynamics, interplay and specificities of consumer engagement dimensions. Recent studies suggest that behavioural engagement can follow a hierarchical sequence (Schivinski et al., forthcoming). Following this logic, affective, cognitive and behavioural forms of engagement could also occur in sequence. It might also be the case that some individuals exhibit extremely high levels of emotions

toward a brand or brand community, but fail to exhibit high engagement behaviours, as suggested by recent studies on consumer engagement (de Villiers, 2015). For instance, an individual sharing extensively with a brand or community might be engaged in this behaviour rather mindlessly and performing rather low on the cognitive dimension. Similarly, a community member might be extremely highly emotionally engaged with a brand but be reluctant to share on online social platforms, hence not enacting the behavioural aspect of engagement to its full potential. Idiosyncratic consumer behaviour might appear online at an individual or group level and these differences might also be linked to engagement antecedents, outcomes and partners variations.

8.6. Summary

Notwithstanding some limitations, the study makes several significant contributions to the fields of OBC and consumer engagement in terms of theoretical advances, methodology and practice. This thesis proposed the notion of consumer engagement as a valid approach to OBC participation. The findings indicate that consumer engagement in OBC is dependent on three individual consumer traits and that it significantly contributes to enhancing consumer-brand relationships. Two scales to capture consumer engagement with the OBC and the brand were proposed, following strict scale development procedures.

The findings of the thesis reveal the need for a multidimensional, interactive and social approach of OBC participation. The importance of considering a variety of engagement partners relevant to given engagement contexts is also of particular interest, despite being so far under researched. Empirical support is granted to the testing of relationships between consumer engagement and other individual and relational factors, renewing the call for further empirical work in this direction. The findings of this study advance the growing and important research areas of consumer engagement and OBC participation.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Cover letter to Facebook page administrators

Dear administrator of [Facebook page name],

My name is Laurence Dessart, and I am the lead researcher for the **Global Social Media Survey** launched by **The University of Glasgow**, Scotland. The goal of this study is to understand **consumer engagement** on Facebook, and in particular:

- 1° what brand page engagement and brand engagement consist of;
- 2° what generates them;
- 3° which benefits they bring to brands.

In order to do so, we need access to members of Facebook pages. Your page has been selected as extremely representative for this study, based on its high engagement profile.

We understand that page participation relies on mutual trust and relevant content. To avoid spamming your page, we wish to have your help in posting a link to the survey, in exchange of its results.

Results will be available upon request, and pages providing over 100 responses will receive detailed analysis for their own brand.

We suggest sharing the link to the survey with a post of the type: *'Help us create a better page for you. Answer this survey about your experience on our page <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SocialMediaGlasgow>'*. The survey is incentivised with 3 x £100 Amazon vouchers, which you can also mention in your post.

If you want to know more about the survey before promoting it, feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time and help.

Best regards,

Laurence Dessart

l.dessart.1@research.gla.ac.uk. PhD Researcher, University of Glasgow.

Appendix 2: The online consumer survey (English version)

Page 1: Screening

1. Are you 18 years old or above?

Yes → Logic: go to page 2

No → Logic: go to page 3

Page 2: Disqualification

We are sorry, but if you are younger than 18 years old, you do not qualify to answer this survey. We thank you for your time anyway.

Page 3: Welcome

Thank you for taking part in this Global Social Media Survey by the University of Glasgow.

You will be asked to answer questions about your interactions with the Facebook page that posted the link to this survey.

The study is anonymous and follows the University of Glasgow ethics. For more details, copy/paste this link in your browser:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5UWs_j5SRuzYWN5SXRZOXhIcDg/edit?usp=sharing

The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to answer, and there are three £100 Amazon vouchers to be won and this only for fully answered questionnaires.

Page 4: Online Activity

The following questions are about your general online activity.

2. On average, how many hours per day do you spend online? [dropdown]

0-1 2-3 4-5 6-8 8+

3. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, I like to get involved in online discussions							
I am someone who enjoys interacting with like-minded people online							
I am someone who likes actively participating in online							

discussions							
In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with others online							

Page 5: Facebook Activity

The following questions are about your Facebook activity

4. When did you join Facebook? [dropdown]

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014

5. How many times per day do you log on to Facebook? [dropdown]

- I don't log on every day
- 1 to 3
- 4 to 6
- 6 +
- All the time: I get notifications on my phone

6. In a typical day, roughly how much time do you spend on Facebook? [dropdown]

- Less than 10 minutes
- 10 to 30 min
- 31 to 60 min
- 60 min +

Page 6: Identification of the brand page

7. The link to this survey was posted by a page that you like, which has been carefully selected. It is important that you answer this survey keeping in mind this particular page, and the brand that it represents. Please tell us which brand this page is about:...
8. Are you a customer of this brand?
- Yes
- No, I like the page but I have never bought the brand

Page 7: Brand-related variables

The following questions are about the brand that you have just identified.

9. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have grown to like this brand more than others offering the same product/service							
I like the product/services offered by this brand							
To me, this brand is the one whose product/services I enjoy using most							
I trust this brand							
I rely on this brand							
This is an honest brand							
This brand is safe							

Page 8: Affective brand engagement

10. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel enthusiastic about the brand							
The brand makes me enthusiastic							
I am heavily into this brand							
I am interested in anything about this brand							
I find this brand interesting							
I enjoy interacting with the brand							
When interacting with the brand, I feel happy							
I get pleasure from interacting with the brand							
Interacting with the brand is like a treat for me							

Page 9: Cognitive brand engagement

11. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I pay a lot of attention to the brand							
Things related to the brand grab my attention							
I spend a lot of time thinking about the brand							
I make time to think about the brand							
When interacting with this brand, I forget everything else around me							
Time flies when I am interacting with this brand							
When I am interacting with this brand, I get carried away							
When interacting with this brand, it is difficult to detach myself							

Page 10: Behavioural brand engagement

The following questions are about your interactions with the administrators of the page, which are usually the brand managers. Think about all the interactions below as done through ‘comments’, ‘likes’, ‘shares’, etc.

12. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I reply to the questions of the brand page managers							
I share my opinion with them							
I share my experiences with them							
I share my ideas with them							
I share interesting content with them							
I help them							
I ask them questions							
I seek ideas, or information from them							
I seek help from them							
I learn from the content they provide							
I show support to what they say or do							
I share their content to my wider network							
I promote the brand							
I try to get other interested in the brand							
I actively defend the brand from its critics							
I say positive things about the brand to other people							

Page 11: Product Category

The following questions are about the type of product the brand belongs to.

13. Which type of products does the brand belong to?

- Food and beverage
- Technology (software, telecom, computer products...)
- Services (bank, insurance, education...)
- Travel (airline, railways, travel agents...)
- Fashion and beauty
- Durable goods (automobile, electronics, home appliances)
- Retail (stores, supermarket, e-shops)
- Entertainment (sports, films, series, books, games, ...)
- Other, please specify:

14. Considering this type of product, indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This type of product is very important to me							
This type of product matters to me							
When you buy this type of product, it's a big deal if you make a mistake							
When you buy this type of product, it's hard to make a bad choice							
I particularly like this type of product							
You can really tell a lot about a person by the type of product he/she picks out							

15. Consider your overall purchases of this type of product. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am loyal to only one brand (the one I follow), when I buy this type of product							
For my next purchase, I will buy this brand again							
I always buy this brand							
I usually buy this brand							

Page 12: Community-related variables

Now consider the page to answer the following set of questions.

16. For approximately how long have you liked the page?

- Less than a year
- 1 – 5 years
- 5 – 10 years

17. How often do you actively click on the page?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- About once a month
- About once a week
- More than once a week

18. How much time do you spend on the page per week?

- 0 – 2 min 3 – 5 min 6 -10 min 11 – 15 min 15 min +

19. How big would you say the page is, in term of number of members?

- Very small Fairly small Medium Fairly big Very big

20. On the following scales, please express your attitude toward participating on the page sometime during the next month

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 = Foolish; 7 = Wise							
1 = Harmful; 7 = Beneficial							
1 = Bad; 7 = Good							
1 = Punishing; 7 = Rewarding							

Page 13: Affective OBC engagement

21. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel enthusiastic about the page							
The page makes me enthusiastic							
I am heavily into this page							
I am interested in anything about this page							
I find this page interesting							
I enjoy interacting with the page members							
When interacting with the page members, I feel happy							
I get pleasure from page participation							
Participating on the page is like a treat for me							

Page 14: Cognitive OBC engagement

22. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I pay a lot of attention to the page							
Things related to the page grab my attention							
I spend a lot of time thinking about the page							
I make time to think about the page							
When interacting with page members, I forget everything else around me							
Time flies when I am interacting with the page members							
When I am interacting with the page members, I get carried away							
When interacting with the page members, it is difficult to detach myself							

Page 15: Behavioural OBC engagement

The following questions are about your interactions with the other page members. All these interactions can be done by commenting, sharing, posting, liking, etc.

23. Indicate on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree) to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I reply to their questions							
I share my opinion with them							
I share my experiences with them							
I share my ideas with them							
I share interesting content with them							
I help them							
I ask them questions							
I seek ideas, or information from them							
I seek help from them							
I learn from the content they provide							
I show support to what they say or do							
I share the content they posted to my wider network							
I promote the page							
I try to get other interested in the page							
I actively defend the page from its critics							
I say positive things about the page to other people							

Page 16: Demographics

24. What is your gender?

Male Female

25. What year were you born in? [dropdown 1996 – 1930]

26. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary School Secondary School Undergraduate degree Postgraduate degree

27. What is your nationality? [dropdown with all countries]

28. What is your country of residence? [dropdown with all countries]

Page 17: Thank you

Your answers have been recorded. Thank you very much for completing this survey!

If you wish to take part in the Amazon voucher draw, please input your email address here

Appendix 3: The online consumer survey (French version)

Page 1: Question filtre

1. Etes-vous âgé de 18 ans ou plus?

- Oui → Logique: aller à la 2
 Non → Logique: aller à la 3

Page 2: Disqualification

Malheureusement, l'étude n'est pas accessible aux moins de 18 ans. Nous vous remercions néanmoins pour votre temps.

Page 3: Bienvenue

Merci pour votre participation à cette Etude Internationale sur les Réseaux Sociaux. Nous allons vous demander de répondre à quelques questions concernant votre participation sur la page Facebook qui a posté le lien vers cette étude.

Cette étude est anonyme et régie par les règles éthiques de l'Université de Glasgow, RoyaumeUni.

Pour plus de détails, veuillez copier/coller ce lien:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5UWs_j5SRuzUE1qZmc0TElmVkk/edit?usp=sharing.

Répondre au questionnaire prendra environ 15 minutes. Vous aurez l'option de participer au tirage au sort permettant de gagner un des trois coupons Amazon de €100 mis en jeu, et ce uniquement en cas de questionnaire entièrement complété.

Page 4: Activité en ligne

Les questions suivantes concernent votre activité en ligne, de façon générale.

2. En moyenne, combine d'heures par jour passez-vous en ligne? [dropdown]

- 0-1 2-3 4-5 6-8 8+

3. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord avec les énoncés suivants.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
En général, j'aime être impliqué dans des discussions en ligne							
Je suis quelqu'un qui aime communiquer en ligne avec d'autres personnes							
Je suis quelqu'un qui aime participer activement à des							

discussions en ligne							
En général, j'aime beaucoup échanger des idées en ligne							

Page 5: Activité sur Facebook

Les questions suivantes concernent votre activité sur Facebook.

4. En quelle année avez-vous créé votre compte Facebook? [dropdown]

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014

5. Par jour, combien de fois vous connectez-vous sur Facebook? [dropdown]

- Je ne me connecte pas tous les jours
 de 1 à 3
 de 4 à 6
 plus de 6
 En continu: je reçois les notifications sur mon portable

6. En moyenne, combien de minutes passez-vous sur Facebook chaque jour? [dropdown]

- Moins de 10 minutes de 31 à 60 min
 de 10 à 30 min plus de 60 min

Page 6: Identification de la page

Le lien vers cette étude a été posté par une page dont vous êtes fan, qui a été minutieusement sélectionnée pour cette étude. Il est important que vous répondiez à cette étude en rapport avec cette page en particulier, et la marque qu'elle représente.

Veuillez préciser à quelle marque est dédiée la page qui a posté le lien vers cette étude:....

7. Etes-vous client de cette marque (si applicable)

- Oui
 Non, je suis fan sur Facebook mais je n'ai jamais acheté cette marque

Page 7: Questions sur la marque

Les questions suivantes sont à propos de la marque que vous venez de mentionner.

8. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je préfère les produits/services offerts par cette marque par rapport à d'autres							
J'aime les produits/services offerts par cette marque							
Ce sont les produits/services de cette marque que j'ai le plus de plaisir à utiliser							
J'ai confiance en cette marque							
Je me fie à cette marque							

Cette marque est honnête							
Cette marque est une valeur sûre							

Page 8: Engagement affectif avec la marque

9. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je suis enthousiaste par rapport à cette marque							
Cette marque me rend enthousiaste							
Je suis vraiment fan de cette marque							
Tout ce qui se rapporte à cette marque m'intéresse							
Je trouve cette marque intéressante							
J'aime interagir avec cette marque							
Je suis heureux/-se quand j'interagis avec cette marque							
Je prends du plaisir à interagir avec cette marque							
Interagir avec cette marque est une récompense pour moi							

Page 9: Engagement cognitive avec la marque

10. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je fais très attention à cette marque							
Ce qui se rapporte à cette marque attire mon attention							
Je pense beaucoup à cette marque							
Je prends le temps de penser à cette marque							
Quand j'interagis avec cette marque, j'oublie tout le reste							
Le temps passe vite quand j'interagis avec cette marque							
Quand j'interagis avec cette marque, je suis transporté							
J'ai du mal à revenir sur terre quand j'interagis avec cette marque							

Page 10: Engagement comportemental avec la marque

Les questions suivantes sont a propos de vos interactions avec les administrateurs de la page Facebook, qui sont généralement les gestionnaires de la marque. Pensez aux interactions ci-dessous en termes d'utilisation des boutons "j'aime", "commenter", "partager", etc.

11. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je réponds aux questions des gestionnaires de la marque							
Je partage mon opinion avec eux							
Je partage mon expérience avec eux							
Je partage mes idées avec eux							
Je partage du contenu intéressant avec eux							
Je les aide							
Je leur pose des questions							
Je cherche des idées et informations auprès d'eux							
Je recherche leur aide							
J'apprends grâce au contenu qu'ils partagent							
Je montre mon accord par rapport à ce qu'ils peuvent dire ou faire							
Je partage leur contenu avec mon réseau							
Je promeus la marque							
J'essaye d'intéresser d'autres personnes à la marque							
Je défends activement la marque de ses critiques							
Je dis des choses positives aux autres à propos de la marque							

Page 11: Product Category

Les questions suivantes ont rapport à la catégorie de produits à laquelle la marque appartient.

12. A quelle catégorie de produits appartient cette marque?

- Alimentation
- Technologies (applications, telecoms, sites internet, ordinateurs...)
- Services (banques, assurances, éducation...)
- Tourisme/Voyages (agencies, companies aériennes...)
- Mode et beauté
- Biens durables (voitures, électroménagers)
- Vente au détail (supermarchés, magasins, commerce en ligne...)
- Divertissement (sports, films, séries, livres, jeux, ...)
- Autre:

13. Considérant la catégorie de produits que vous venez de sélectionner, et si applicable, indiquez sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord) votre avis par rapport aux phrases suivantes :

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ce type de produits est très important pour moi							
J'accorde de l'importance à ce type de produits							
Quand on achète ce type de produits, il est grave de se tromper							
Quand on achète ce type de produits, il est difficile de se							

tromper							
J'aime particulièrement ce type de produits							
Le type de produits qu'une personne achète en dit beaucoup sur elle							

14. Si applicable, considérez vos achats dans cette catégorie de produits et indiquez dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord avec les énoncés suivants (1= pas du tout d'accord ; 7 = tout à fait d'accord)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je suis fidèle à la marque dont je suis fan quand j'achète ce type de produits							
Pour mon prochain achat, j'achèterai à nouveau cette marque							
J'achète toujours cette marque							
J'achète en général cette marque							

Page 12: Community-related variables

Pensez maintenant à la page dont vous faites part pour répondre aux questions suivantes.

15. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous membre de la page?

Moins d'un an 1 – 5 ans 5 – 10 ans

16. Avec quelle fréquence cliquez-vous activement sur la page?

Jamais Moins d'une fois par mois Environ une fois par mois Environ une fois par semaine Plus d'une fois par semaine

17. Combien de temps passez-vous sur la page par semaine?

0 – 2 min 3 – 5 min 6 -10 min 11 – 15 min 15 min +

18. Comment qualifieriez-vous la taille de la page, en termes de nombre de fans?

Très petite Petite Moyenne Grande Très grande

19. Sur les échelles suivantes, veuillez décrire votre attitude quant au fait d'interagir sur la page au cours du mois prochain:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 = Idiot; 7 = Sage							
1 = Nocif; 7 = Bénéfique							
1 = Mauvais; 7 = Bon							
1 = Pénalisant; 7 = Gratifiant							

Page 13: Engagement affective avec la communauté

20. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre

avis sur les énoncés suivants.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je suis enthousiaste par rapport à cette page							
Cette page me rend enthousiaste							
Je suis vraiment fan de cette page							
Tout ce qui se rapporte à cette page m'intéresse							
Je trouve cette page intéressante							
J'aime interagir avec cette page							
Je suis heureux/-se quand j'interagis avec les membres de cette page							
Je prends du plaisir à interagir au sein de cette page							
Interagir avec cette page est une récompense pour moi							

Page 14: Engagement cognitive avec la communauté

21. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je fais très attention à la page							
Ce qui se rapporte à la page attire mon attention							
Je pense beaucoup à la page							
Je prends le temps de penser à la page							
Quand j'interagis avec les membres de cette page, j'oublie tout le reste							
Le temps passe vite quand j'interagis avec les membres de cette page							
Quand j'interagis avec les membres de cette page, je m'évade							
J'ai du mal à retomber sur terre quand j'interagis avec les membres de cette page							

Page 15: Engagement comportemental avec la communauté

Les questions suivantes concernent vos interactions avec les autres membres de la page. Pensez aux interactions ci-dessous en termes d'utilisation des boutons "j'aime", "commenter", "partager", etc.

22. Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), indiquez votre avis sur les énoncés suivants.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je réponds à leurs questions							
Je leur fais part de mon opinion							
Je partage mon expérience avec eux							
Je partage mes idées avec eux							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Je partage du contenu intéressant avec eux							
Je les aide							
Je leur pose des questions							
Je cherche des idées et informations auprès d'eux							
Je recherche leur aide							
J'apprends grâce au contenu qu'ils partagent							
Je montre mon accord par rapport à ce qu'ils peuvent dire ou faire							
Je partage leur contenu avec mon réseau							
Je fais la promotion de la page							
J'essaie d'intéresser d'autres personnes à la page							
Je défends activement la page de ses critiques							
Je communiqué des choses positives aux autres à propos de la page							

Page 16: Demographiques

23. Quel est votre sexe?

- Homme Femme

24. En quelle année êtes-vous né(e)? [dropdown 1996 – 1930]

25. Quel est le plus haut niveau d'études que vous ayez atteint?

- Ecole primaire Ecole Secondaire Supérieur de type court Supérieur de type long

26. Quelle est votre nationalité? [dropdown avec tous les pays]

27. Dans quel pays résidez-vous? [dropdown avec tous les pays]

Page 17: Thank you

Vos réponses sont maintenant enregistrées. Nous vous remercions vivement pour votre participation à cette étude.

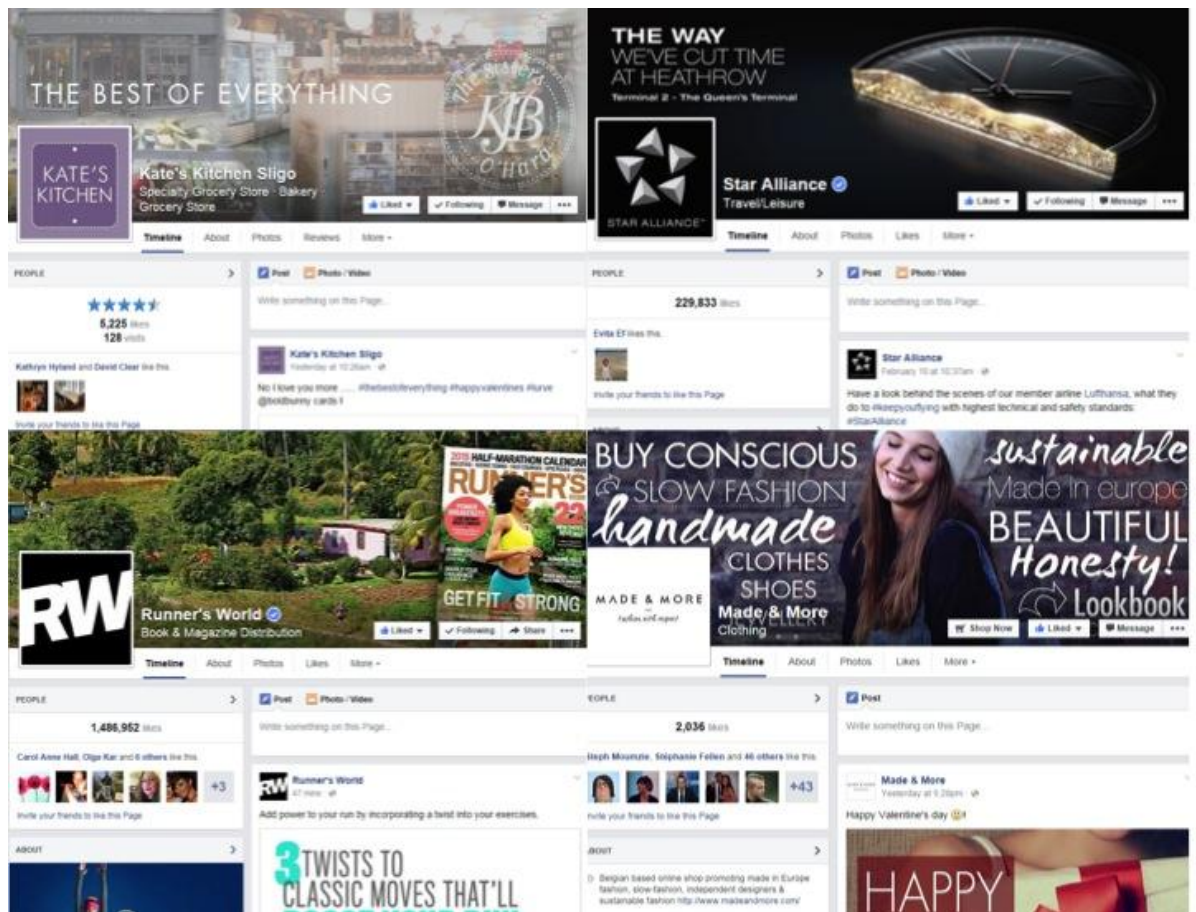
Si vous souhaitez participer au tirage au sort pour gagner un des coupons Amazon de €100, veuillez indiquer votre adresse email ci-dessous.

Appendix 4: Sample of Facebook pages

Product category	Facebook Pages	Member count Feb 2014	Answer count	Answer/ Members
Food and Beverage	The Huggy's Bar	6,000	142	2.36%
	Kate's Kitchen	4,536	38	0.83%
	Agora Greek Delicacies	1,128	20	1.77%
	Jupiler	267,900	15	0.01%
	MaBelle	773	11	1.42%
	Edward & Irwyn	458	5	1.09%
	The Belgian Owl	1,484	4	0.26%
	Red Bull	38,456,000	1	0.01%
	Nutella	218,000	1	0.01%
	Nespresso	300,000	1	0.01%
Travel	Star Alliance	152,000	137	0.09%
	Delta Airlines	130,000	4	0.01%
	Lufthansa	150,000	3	0.01%
	US Airways	128,000	3	0.01%
	United Airlines	685,000	1	0.01%
	Swiss International Air Lines	534,000	1	0.01%
Fashion and Beauty	ASOS	3100000	40	0.01%
	Made&More	817	28	3.42%
	Zara	18,567,000	11	0.01%
	Smalltwongirl	1,456	8	0.54%
	Too Belgista - Le Blog	281	4	1.42%
	Scotts Guard Watches	567	3	0.52%
	J&Joy	36,000	2	0.01%
	Suit Supply	14,567,000	1	0.01%
	Skin Clinics	786	1	0.01%
Entertainment	Fit Body Bootcamp	3,156	26	0.82%
	Runner's World	1,134,000	20	0.01%
	TEDx University of Glasgow	4,123	11	0.26%
	Snooze Pure FM	52,000	11	0.02%
	Borrowed Space	354	7	1.97%
	Playstation	28,345,000	4	0.01%
	ESN	657	3	0.45%
	Citizen Mule	173	2	1.15%
	Scottish Rugby	118,978	1	0.01%
Durable Goods	Porsche	630,000	54	0.01%
	Audi	7,690,545	12	0.01%
Services	Santander UK	187,000	16	0.01%

Product category	Facebook Pages	Member count Feb 2014	Answer count	Answer/ Members
	Creative Wallonia	4,456	14	0.31%
	Betacowork	1,879	8	0.42%
	University of Glasgow	87,000	2	0.01%
Others	Hot Dog Fashion	1,039	8	0.77%
	L'Echo	8,979	6	0.06%
	The Guardian	3,987,000	3	0.01%
Technology	Go Pro	7,678,000	8	0.01%
	Plug&Go	188	7	3.72%
	Samsung Mobile	31,000,000	1	0.01%
Retail	Amazon	22,000,000	11	0.01%
	TESCO	1,300,000	1	0.01%
	Total	181,543,713	721	0.01%

Appendix 5: Examples of Facebook pages



The above screen-shots depict a varied array of Facebook pages included in the sample. From left to right, top to bottom: **Kate's Kitchen** is a local fresh food deli in Sligo, Ireland. **Star Alliance** is an international airline alliance. **Runner's World** is a global, US-based magazine targeting runners, and **Made&More** is a slow-fashion e-retailer based in Belgium.

Appendix 6: Data screening

Item	Valid count	Missing count	Mean	St. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Online Interaction Propensity						
OIP1	1296	393	3.58	1.69	0.21	-0.8
OIP2	1301	388	4.32	1.68	-0.18	-0.87
OIP3	1293	396	3.46	1.71	0.21	-0.96
OIP4	1295	394	3.80	1.75	-0.02	-0.94
Brand Trust						
BTR1	971	718	5.42	1.54	-1.05	0.6
BTR2	973	716	4.85	1.77	-0.65	-0.52
BTR3	970	719	5.23	1.57	-0.79	0.04
BTR4	970	719	5.43	1.50	-1	0.6
Brand Commitment						
BCO1	971	718	4.94	1.78	-0.76	-0.35
BCO2	968	721	5.26	1.60	-0.94	0.31
BCO3	969	720	4.94	1.73	-0.74	-0.3
Online Brand Enthusiasm						
BENT1	926	763	5.20	1.60	-0.83	0.11
BENT2	925	764	4.97	1.68	-0.65	-0.34
BENT3	925	764	4.70	1.75	-0.45	-0.68
BENT4	924	765	4.57	1.80	-0.38	-0.74
BENT5	924	765	5.22	1.52	-0.8	0.2
Online Brand Enjoyment						
BENJ1	924	765	4.13	1.85	-0.14	-0.98
BENJ2	923	766	3.90	1.88	-0.02	-1.04
BENJ3	922	767	3.92	1.89	-0.04	-1.07
BENJ4	921	768	3.40	1.91	0.24	-1.09
Online Brand Attention						
BAT1	879	810	4.44	1.73	-0.34	-0.67
BAT2	877	812	4.90	1.63	-0.63	-0.22
BAT3	876	813	3.36	1.76	0.32	-0.81
BAT4	875	814	3.14	1.77	0.45	-0.73
Online Brand Absorption						
BABS1	876	813	2.61	1.75	0.87	-0.25
BABS2	874	815	3.01	1.86	0.54	-0.84
BABS3	872	817	2.88	1.85	0.64	-0.69
BABS4	878	811	2.57	1.74	0.88	-0.35
Online Brand Sharing						
BSH1	825	864	3.29	1.87	0.32	-1.02
BSH2	827	862	3.29	1.89	0.31	-1.05
BSH3	822	867	3.23	1.88	0.36	-1
BSH4	827	862	3.05	1.84	0.47	-0.92

Item	Valid count	Missing count	Mean	St. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
BSH5	824	865	2.84	1.79	0.65	-0.69
BSH6	827	862	2.87	1.78	0.57	-0.82
Online Brand Learning						
BLE1	825	864	3.15	1.88	0.35	-1.13
BLE2	826	863	3.49	1.97	0.11	-1.28
BLE3	825	864	2.99	1.89	0.51	-0.94
BLE4	825	864	4.21	1.93	-0.3	-1.01
Online Brand Endorsing						
BEND1	823	866	3.77	1.93	-0.04	-1.17
BEND2	822	867	3.72	1.97	-0.01	-1.2
BEND3	826	863	4.05	2.02	-0.21	-1.18
BEND4	827	862	4.02	2.04	-0.18	-1.23
BEND5	825	864	3.53	2.03	0.18	-1.25
BEND6	825	864	4.73	1.95	-0.64	-0.66
Product Involvement						
PI1	805	884	5.08	1.60	-0.59	-0.45
PI2	804	885	5.16	1.55	-0.67	-0.25
PI3	797	892	4.29	1.95	-0.16	-1.1
PI4	797	892	4.01	1.85	-0.02	-1
PI5	801	888	5.45	1.42	-0.91	0.48
PI6	798	891	4.67	1.77	-0.56	-0.58
Brand Loyalty						
BL1	794	895	4.16	1.86	-0.24	-1.02
BL2	793	896	4.66	1.76	-0.53	-0.58
BL3	792	897	3.52	1.99	0.19	-1.18
BL4	785	904	4.35	1.95	-0.32	-1.02
Attitude Toward Online Participation						
ATI1	747	942	4.50	1.49	-0.32	0.06
ATI2	743	946	4.81	1.28	-0.33	0.41
ATI3	743	946	4.97	1.33	-0.43	0.31
ATI4	742	947	4.77	1.26	-0.2	0.44
Online Brand Community Enthusiasm						
OENT1	734	955	4.23	1.75	-0.27	-0.83
OENT2	734	955	3.81	1.82	0.02	-1.01
OENT3	729	960	3.48	1.84	0.22	-1.01
OENT4	732	957	3.84	1.85	0	-1.07
OENT5	732	957	4.60	1.67	-0.52	-0.45
Online Brand Community Enjoyment						
OENJ1	734	955	2.86	1.71	0.61	-0.6
OENJ2	731	958	2.76	1.71	0.6	-0.72
OENJ3	731	958	2.96	1.75	0.47	-0.86
OENJ4	730	959	2.57	1.71	0.84	-0.35
Online Brand Community Attention						
OAT1	718	971	3.65	1.76	0.07	-0.94

Item	Valid count	Missing count	Mean	St. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
OAT2	717	972	4.31	1.71	-0.39	-0.7
OAT3	715	974	2.60	1.64	0.8	-0.29
OAT4	713	976	2.49	1.62	0.89	-0.09
Online Brand Community Absorption						
OABS1	716	973	2.12	1.53	1.33	0.92
OABS2	714	975	2.25	1.55	1.12	0.34
OABS3	715	974	2.14	1.52	1.28	0.74
OABS4	709	980	2.01	1.47	1.45	1.27
Online Brand Community Sharing						
OSH1	710	979	3.00	1.81	0.47	-0.92
OSH2	711	978	3.06	1.80	0.38	-1
OSH3	709	980	2.96	1.80	0.48	-0.92
OSH4	707	982	2.82	1.78	0.54	-0.9
OSH5	710	979	2.71	1.77	0.64	-0.75
OSH6	708	981	2.74	1.71	0.57	-0.8
Online Brand Community Learning						
OLE1	712	977	2.92	1.84	0.54	-0.9
OLE2	711	978	3.24	1.92	0.3	-1.16
OLE3	708	981	2.77	1.80	0.66	-0.71
OLE4	709	980	3.79	1.95	-0.09	-1.18
Online Brand Community Endorsement						
OEND1	711	978	3.30	1.89	0.23	-1.14
OEND2	708	981	3.30	1.97	0.28	-1.24
OEND3	709	980	3.47	2.06	0.15	-1.38
OEND4	711	978	3.38	2.05	0.25	-1.31
OEND5	709	980	3.08	1.98	0.48	-1.1
OEND6	705	984	3.77	2.15	0.01	-1.41

Appendix 7: Sample characteristics

Variables	English		French		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Age						
18-24	80	18	90	33	170	24
25-34	193	43	138	51	331	46
35-44	104	23	33	12	137	19
45-54	52	12	8	3	60	8
55+	19	4	4	1	23	3
Gender						
Male	252	56	103	38	355	49
Female	196	44	170	62	366	51
Education						
Primary school	2	0	1	0	3	0
Secondary school	56	13	41	15	97	13
Undergraduate degree	174	39	93	34	267	37
Postgraduate degree	216	48	138	51	354	49
Nationality						
UK	76	17	0	0	76	11
GR	42	9	0	0	42	6
BE	35	8	238	87	273	38
FR	0	0	14	5	14	2
US	34	8	0	0	34	5
IE	33	7	0	0	33	5
Others	228	51	11	4	239	33
Country of residence						
UK	124	28	0	0	124	17
US	40	9	0	0	40	6
IE	36	8	0	0	36	5
BE	35	8	245	90	280	39
FR	0	0	14	5	14	2
GR	23	5	0	0	23	3
Others	190	42	21	8	211	29
Brand category						
Travel	148	33	1	0	149	21
Food and Beverage	87	19	151	55	238	33
Durable Goods	66	15	0	0	66	9
Entertainment	52	12	33	12	85	12
Fashion and Beauty	50	11	48	18	98	14
Services	23	5	17	6	40	6
Others	11	2	6	2	17	2

Variables	English		French		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Retail	6	1	6	2	12	2
Technology	5	1	11	4	16	2
Existing consumer						
Yes	380	85	225	82	605	84
No	68	15	48	18	116	16
Facebook joining year						
2004	13	3	5	2	18	2
2005	18	4	1	0	19	3
2006	45	10	25	9	70	10
2007	89	20	53	19	142	20
2008	103	23	132	48	235	33
2009	74	17	34	12	108	15
2010	50	11	12	4	62	9
2011	25	6	7	3	32	4
2012	19	4	3	1	22	3
2013	9	2	0	0	9	1
2014	3	1	1	0	4	1
Daily time on Facebook						
Less than 10 minutes	37	8	14	5	51	7
10 to 30 min	129	29	55	20	184	26
31 to 60 min	143	32	81	29	224	31
60 min +	139	31	123	45	262	36
Daily Facebook log-ons						
All the time (notifications)	151	34	99	36	250	35
1 to 3	116	26	57	21	173	24
4 to 6	88	20	48	18	136	19
6 +	70	16	60	22	130	18
I don't log on every day	23	5	9	3	32	4
Page membership duration						
Less than a year	150	33	145	53	295	41
1-5 years	282	63	125	46	407	56
5-10 years	16	4	3	1	19	3
Active page visits						
Never	43	10	34	12	77	11
Less than once a month	123	27	82	30	205	28
About once a month	99	22	83	30	182	25
About once a week	114	25	59	22	173	24
More than once a week	69	15	15	5	84	12
Time spend on page monthly						
0-2 min	188	42	167	61	355	49

Variables	English		French		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
3-5 min	110	25	69	25	179	25
6-10 min	83	19	20	7	103	14
11-15 min	34	8	15	5	49	7
15 + min	33	7	2	1	35	5
Perceived page size						
Very small	12	3	0	0	12	2
Fairly small	59	13	41	15	100	14
Medium	141	31	135	49	276	38
Fairly big	141	31	69	25	210	29
Very big	95	21	28	10	123	17

Appendix 8: Profile of consumer interviewees

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Country of residence	Internet usage (ys)	Social Media usage (ys)	Daily time online (hs)	Language	Medium	Length (min)
Fred	M	40	Belgian	Belgium	14	10	10+	French	Skype	60
Liam	M	25	Chinese	UK	15	8	10+	English	F2F	40
James	M	27	Scottish	UK	13	7	7	English	F2F	61
Sabrina	F	27	Belgian	Belgium	13	6	2	English	Skype	53
Nigel	M	28	Chinese/Canadian	UK	15	7	7	English	F2F	45
Sam	M	29	Pakistani	UK	13	6	4	English	F2F	63
Sandra	F	27	Belgian	Belgium	13	9	3	French	Skype	56
Judith	F	28	Belgian	Belgium	13	7	10	English	Skype	94
Claire	F	28	Scottish	UK	14	7	10	English	F2F	49
Anthony	M	48	Belgian	Belgium	15	8	10+	English	Skype	60
Helen	F	24	Greek	UK	10	7	10+	English	F2F	52
Maria	F	25	Greek	UK	10	6	10+	English	F2F	52
Ray	M	28	Belgian	Belgium	13	6	3	French	Skype	37
Derek	M	33	Chinese/Canadian	China	18	10	8	English	Skype	140
Flora	F	23	Peruvian	Netherlands	10	7	3	English	Skype	56
Matt	M	25	Belgian	Belgium	11	4	6	English	Skype	83
Laura	F	26	German	UK	11	7	5	English	F2F	47
Steven	M	27	Belgian	Belgium	10	6	3	French	Skype	70
Sophia	F	23	Pakistani	UK	12	5	6	English	F2F	36
Akim	M	27	Pakistani	UK	12	6	9	English	F2F	35

Appendix 9: Profile of industry expert interviewees

Name	Company	Country of residence	Marketing experience (years)	Language	Medium	Length (min)
Aubin	Agentia	Belgium	14	French	Skype	60
Keith	GreenSocial	India	6	English	Skype	35
Dan	Freelance	Belgium	13	English	Skype	51
Benjamin	SmartForest	Belgium	9	French	Skype	39
George	IronValley	Canada	6	English	Skype	78

Appendix 10: The interview guide

Developing a measure of consumer engagement in Online Brand Communities

Introduction

- Turn on recording
- Thank participant for taking part
- Remind of the study context, hand out (or send) information sheet and consent forms. Make sure forms are understood and have verbal or written consent.

Part 1: Your online activity in general

Let's first discuss your online activity. Could you tell me a bit about what you usually do online on an everyday basis (for personal, non-work related purposes)?

How about your activity on social media, could you tell me a little more about how you use them⁶.

- Could you tell me which ones you use?
- Could you tell me for which purpose you usually use them?
- How about the benefits you get from using social media

Part 2: Your online activities related to brands

Do you participate, or are you a member of one or several online group(s) focused on a specific brand? (I might be brands you particularly like or particularly dislike – give examples)

Can you tell me more about the kind of groups are you part of? (Understand if they are Facebook page/group member, Twitter follower, blog subscriber or casual follower, forum member, website member...)

Can you tell me about your experience in these groups?

Could you tell me about your interactions with the other members of the group, if you have any?

How about your interactions with the brand that the group is about?

Could you tell me about your level of involvement in these groups?

Part 3: Community engagement

Can you think about one group that you are a part of and that you particularly like? Which brand is it about? Let's talk about it a little bit...

⁶ Explained that social media are all types of platform or channels where users can generate content and interact with others. Examples are social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google +), boards (Pinterest), blogs, forums, wikis, video and photo sharing (Youtube, Instagram, ...) etc.

Could you explain to me what this group mean to you?

Can you tell how you feel about the other members of the group?

What can you say about your role in the group?

Can you recall and explain an instance in which you interacted with an (or several) other member(s) of the group?

Can you think of an occasion when the group was valuable to you?

Can you recall a time when being part of this group helped you interact with the brand it is focused on?

Part 4: Brand engagement

Looking at the brand that the group focuses on...

Could you explain what this brand means to you?

How would you describe the brand?

Can you explain to me how the brand makes you feel?

How do you feel about the brand in question? How do these feelings manifest themselves?

Could you explain what are your thoughts about the brand/how would you evaluate it?

Can you think of an occasion when you have done something to express your thoughts about the brand?

Part 5: The concept of consumer engagement

In your own words, how would you define the term 'engagement'?

In your opinion, what does it mean to be engaged as a consumer?

Can you give me an example of a time when you feel you were engaged as a consumer?

Part 6: Demographics

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Years of Internet usage
- Years of social media usage
- Frequency of Internet usage (hours per day)

Thank participant and turn off recording.

Appendix 11: Qualitative data summary

Theoretical Themes	Keywords	Sample quote 1	Sample quote 2	Sample quote 3
General affect	Emotion, love, feel, heart, passion, like	'Being engagement, it's really just liking the brand.' <i>Derek</i>	'They feel probably as close as a family , the page is like a home for us, we are too involved!' <i>Sam</i>	'When you are really engaged, you might loose the distance necessary to take sound decisions, your emotions guide you.' <i>Steven</i>
Enthusiasm	Excitement, passion, high interest	'Being engaged with (...) is to tell oneself that you are so interested in it, that you spend time and effort on it, and that to some extent, you even put yourself at risk for it.' <i>Anthony</i> .	'I like this company because of Facebook! They have a nice face, they are very kind, and helpful and enthusiastic about their products and I relate to that, you know.' <i>Maria</i> .	'If I like a brand post, or comment on a brand status, my friends are likely to comment on it as well. And in these cases, I am so excited that I am quite happy to keep the conversation going and talk more.' <i>Liam</i> .
Enjoyment	Pleasure, pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, nice, fun	'It's not necessarily important to have comments on what you posted, but it's a pleasure , it's a nice added value.' <i>Anthony</i> .	'They always have something fun to tell on their page, something that is really 'Nutella', something that is really about gourmandise, fun...so I really like this page: it represents me and it represents what I enjoy in life.' <i>Sabrina</i> .	'I like that and I have participated very often, I have not won yet but I don't care, I like it still, it's funny ! I really like participating in that page.' <i>Maria</i>
General cognitive	Think, mental, mind	It just depends on how much time you are willing to sacrifice for the group...how much time you spend thinking about it.' <i>Flora</i> .	It means that you spend time thinking about it.' <i>Laura</i>	It's about the involvement of your mind with something. You are engaging your mind . Your focus is on something that you are focusing on.' <i>Sophia</i>
Attention	Attention, attract, spend time, make time, know, conscious	'It is an engagement of the mind !' <i>Sophia</i> .	I pay attention to follow things that don't make you look very stupid. So I would follow, ask questions and interact with things that would keep me at a certain professional level.' <i>James</i>	So I try not to go too often because it is too much time consuming: from one thing you go to another.' <i>Judith</i>

Theoretical Themes	Keywords	Sample quote 1	Sample quote 2	Sample quote 3
Absorption	Focus, can't stop, immersed, stuck	'So when I go on Facebook I essentially read the newsfeed, but I really read every single thing, even if it takes me hours. Facebook I am more able to turn it off when I really want to. Pinterest it's impossible! ' <i>Judith.</i>	Twitter, well, I think it is the biggest waste of time ever but I like it (laughs).' <i>Flora</i>	There is so much going on, and sometime I interact with so many brands that afterwards I don't even remember which brand it was.' <i>Claire</i>
General behaviour	Motivation, effort, action, active, interaction	' Proactively and physically involved in an activity ', <i>Nigel</i>	'Going out of a passive situation and entering an active situation .' <i>Sandra</i>	Constantly interacting with them.' <i>Sophia</i>
Sharing	Sharing, letting know, telling, exchanging	'[I use the Facebook group]...to exchange experiences about visits. If there is a place where we have been, we can inform other people who are interested in visiting!' <i>Maria</i>	'Well yes, for instance, if somebody asks a question about a football game (i.e. 'Did you see what just happened?') I would very quickly answer .' <i>James</i>	I just want to share , about anything, clothes, a service, a restaurant, that I like. I like to share, but I don't expect that others will consume based on my review.' <i>Liam</i>
Learning	Finding out, information, knowing, news, solving, question, learn	'I got a pen burst out in one of my favourite bags and I tweeted about it and asked if anybody had any 'at-home' remedies for what to do, and I got loads back.' <i>Claire</i>	'I follow them just to make sure I know which products they are launching, what is in their new summer collection. I want to know what is new at the moment.' <i>Sophia</i>	If you see that some comment got a lot of likes, it is as if the group has authenticated the words for you. It gives some sort of seal of approval , or quality seal.' <i>James</i>
Endorsing	Like, comment, approve, support, promote	It's also like being a lawyer for the company, like a spokesperson . In their social circles online, the person is going to let their friends, acquaintances and family know about your company.'	'I'm liking things a lot, I'm the kind of person that sees something and then, hop, I like it.' <i>Judith</i>	'I took part in the vote (launched by a design brand) and then promoted it on Facebook. It's not only because I want people to buy their product, but because they are really nice and really good.' <i>Laura</i>

Appendix 12: Email to academic experts

Dear [title, name]

My name is Laurence Dessart and I am a doctoral researcher at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, working under the supervision of Dr. Cleopatra Veloutsou and Dr. Anna Morgan-Thomas.

I am writing to you in your quality of expert in the field of [specific field], as I hope you could help me in developing an appropriate scale for the core construct of my thesis, consumer engagement.

My PhD focuses on consumer engagement in the context of online brand communities and, as no appropriate scale could be found in the existing literature; I am developing one.

The following link will provide you the definitions of consumer engagement and each of its dimensions and sub-dimensions. For each sub-dimension, a list of items is proposed, and the questionnaire will allow you to assess the representativeness of each of them. It should take a maximum of 25 minutes to complete.

Link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/engagement_experts

I hope you can find the time to fill in the questionnaire, and I thank you in advance for sharing your insight.

Best regards,

Laurence Dessart

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