

UNDERSTANDING COSMOPOLITAN CONSUMERS' REPEAT PURCHASING IN THE eMARKETPLACE: CONTRIBUTION FROM A BRAND ORIENTATION THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Brands, branding, brand management, brand orientation and their related terms have received substantial attention from marketing scholars and practitioners (Peng, Chen, & Wen, 2014). This could probably be due to their strategic importance to organizations (Urde, Baumgarth, & Merrilees, 2013). Consumers on the other hand have also come to embrace the concept, as it helps them in their purchasing decisions by offering them signals for improved efficiency in information processing and for selecting products (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2007; Shi & Chow, 2015; Zablah, Brown, & Donthu, 2010). As a result, organizations and consumers alike tend to become brand oriented (Keller, 2009). Urde (1999) defined brand orientation as a process by which a firm develops, builds and protects a brand and its identity as it interacts with actual and potential customers with the intention of obtaining sustainable competitive advantage(s). This means that brand orientation is meant to achieve a strategic purpose and the central aim of this is to earn a good reputation in the marketplace and, importantly, do so by building good relationships with consumers via communication platforms (Xin, Ramayah, Soto-Acosta, Popa, & Ping, 2014; Soto-Acosta, Popa, & Palacios-Marqués, 2016). Given the role of social media sites in our contemporary society, it makes a lot of sense for businesses, and in particular online retailers, to build a 'two-way' symbiotic relationship with their consumers through some of these popular social media platforms (Curras-Perez, Ruiz-

Mafe, & Sanz-Blas, 2014; Soto-Acosta, Molina-Castillo, Lopez-Nicolas, & Colomo-Palacios, 2014). Again, it can be inferred that engaging customers on a social media site is critical for brand orientation as social media promotes customer-firm (brand) interaction (Boateng, 2014). However, this is yet to be proven empirically and this study seeks to address these gaps. It also seeks to ascertain if consistent engagement with vendors' social media site by consumers will lead to an electronic word-of-mouth – (e)WoM effect. Again, since brand orientation is a resource (Urde et al., 2013), this study aims to find if there is a correlation between brand orientation and reputation of the enterprise (e.g. online retail vendor), which is of great importance to marketing practitioners (Capozzi, 2005).

Some studies (Fombrun, Gardberg, & Barnett, 2000; Sung & Yang, 2008) have pointed to the several marketing outcomes of the reputation of the business enterprise, including monetary and non-monetary outcomes. However, it is not clear if these benefits are attainable in an online context. Bartikowski and Walsh (2011) noted that while corporate reputation has attracted considerable attention in marketing discipline and practice, there is a dearth of literature on the effects of corporate reputation on most actions of consumers. For example, can a vendor's reputation lead to (e)WoM effect and draw customers to its social media sites? Does a vendor's reputation influence consumers' repurchase intentions in an online environment? These questions