

How Does Customer Online Behavior Influence Community Satisfaction?

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of user participation in brand communities on social networking sites. First, the concept of customer value cocreation behavior is introduced to observe user participation. Through the lens of customer value cocreation behavior, the study proposes two types of user participation, customer citizenship behavior (CCB) and customer participation behavior (CPB), which are operationalized as two second-order constructs in the study. In addition, two antecedents of CCB and CPB, namely, community identification and narcissism, are included in the research model with the purpose of encouraging customer value cocreation behavior. The results, based on data collected from 324 customers who are followers of a smartphone brand's Facebook page, indicate that community identification is likely to significantly affect both CCB and CPB, which in turn foster community satisfaction. Surprisingly, while narcissism is found to have a direct effect on CCB, the relationship between narcissism and CPB is not supported.

Keywords: customer online behavior, community satisfaction

1. Introduction

Social networking services have become some of the most popular online activities. In the United States alone, the number of social network users is expected to exceed 323 million users in 2026 (Statista, 2022). Social media make the sharing of experiences easier than ever and have become an online extension of brand experiences (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Kamboj, 2020). The broadcasting power of social media is so effective that organizations take action to interact with customers through social networking (Luo et al., 2019). By posting appropriate content, social media can help brand advocates shape others' attitudes toward their brands. Thus, brand communities on social networking sites help retain loyal consumers and gain advocates by strengthening the relationship between firms and their customers (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). It is reasonable to expect the growth of brand communities on social networking sites in the future.

A successful online community relies on customers' active and voluntary participation (Liao et al., 2017; Trivedi et al., 2020). Hence, organizations need to build emotional bonds and connections with members as they foster community identification by facilitating interactions

among users and brands (Brodie et al., 2013). Currently, an evolving challenge for companies is to exploit customers' potential in the cocreation of values by managing their participation in online brand communities (Matute et al., 2019). In practice, user participation in brand communities can be observed by the concept of customer value cocreation behavior, which includes customer citizenship behavior (CCB) and customer participation behavior (CPB) dimensions (Yi & Gong, 2013). CCB refers to voluntary behavior that provides extraordinary value to a brand, whereas customer participation behavior (CPB) is essential behavior necessary for successful value cocreation (Groth, 2005; Yi et al., 2011). As feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance are CCB, information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction belong to CPB. Community members' satisfaction is significantly influenced by their community interaction (Jang et al., 2008), such as CCB and CPB.

User participation in online brand communities has been widely observed based on a variety of factors. Baldus et al. (2015) identified a diverse set of motivations. For instance, some affective motivations, such as connecting and like-minded discussion, are similar to community identification. Some cognitive motivations, including personal influence and self-expression, the latter of which is defined as receiving affirmation from other members of the importance of one's opinions, ideas, and interests, reflect the degree of narcissism. Evaluation of the relationship between customer value cocreation behavior and community satisfaction is incomplete without considering the antecedents of CCB and CPB. Even customers who perceive high levels of community identification may still improve their community satisfaction through greater user participation. Consequently, this study investigates the effects of community identification and narcissism on users' online behavior, adding to the versatility of future management practices.

For the past two decades, theoretical and practical knowledge of brand management has evolved rapidly because of the development of information technology (Veloutsou & Ruiz-Mafé, 2020). Social networking sites enable customers to keep in touch with their favorite brands and like-minded customers more easily (Tafesse, 2016). As customers interact with brands and others mutually (Veloutsou & Guzman, 2017), brands need to actively investigate customers' online behaviors to enrich their interactions and passion for the brands (Halaszovich & Nel, 2017; Fernandes & Mariana, 2019). However, there has been no pragmatic organization of knowledge on customers' behaviors in online brand communities, forming a noticeable gap in the literature (Veloutsou & Ruiz-Mafé, 2020). This study fills this research gap by examining the effects of customers' online behaviors by summarizing the types of customer behaviors occurring in smartphone brand communities on social networking sites (SNSs).

When customers look for a feature-rich smartphone, they tend to browse information online and consider a wide range of smartphones. Customers' favorite brand communities will be the best choice. They not only contribute personal information related to their interests but also participate in specialized groups on SNSs. Hence, this study investigates the antecedents of community satisfaction for brand communities on SNSs in the context of smartphone brands in Taiwan. Nine smartphone brand communities were chosen as target communities, including Apple, SONY, Samsung, ASUS, OPPO, HTC, Mi Taiwan, LG, and Sharp. Each has its own

Facebook fan page. An investigation was conducted over two months. The study participants were members of smartphone brand communities in Taiwan. They were customers of brand communities on SNS websites. In addition to gaining a greater understanding of how to increase customers' community satisfaction by promoting their various online behaviors, the study objectively assesses the factors that affect customer value cocreation behavior, including CCB and CPB. Hence, the causal links between community identification, narcissism, customer behaviors, and satisfaction are examined. The study aims to answer the following questions: How does customer value cocreation behavior in brand communities on SNSs, namely, CCB and CPB, affect their community satisfaction? Does customer community identification affect CCB? Does customer community identification lead to CPB? Does customer narcissism affect CCB? Does customer narcissism lead to CPB? The results of this study significantly advance our understanding of the factors influencing customers' satisfaction with specific brands.

2. Literature Review

Brand Communities. A review of the sociology literature suggests that every community has three key components (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). The first is a shared sense of belonging, defined as the intrinsic connection that members feel toward one another. The second is the presence of shared rituals and traditions, also termed "group norms" (Sicilia & Palazón, 2008). The third is a sense of moral responsibility or duty to the community. With the advent of mass media and the internet, communities are no longer restricted by geographic boundaries, and their capacities can often exceed those of physical places. Virtual communities provide geographically dispersed members with spaces in which to share their interests and develop dynamic networks of relationships in the absence of physical contact (Sicilia & Palazón, 2008). Although virtual communities have evolved from physical communities, both types of communities now exist simultaneously, and each has its own distinct functions.

Customer Value Cocreation Behavior. The concept of customer value cocreation behavior consists of two second-order constructs, each of which has four dimensions (Yi & Gong, 2013). The first construct is customer citizenship behavior (CCB), which is defined as "voluntary and discretionary behaviors that are not required for the successful production and delivery of the service but that, on the whole, help the service organization overall," including customer-to-customer recommendation behavior, mutual assistance behavior, and customer-to-company feedback behavior (Groth, 2005). Thus, CCB refers to voluntary behavior that provides extraordinary value to a brand but is not necessarily required for value cocreation. The second construct is customer participation behavior (CPB), which is essential behavior necessary for successful value cocreation (Groth, 2005; Yi et al., 2011). Furthermore, Yi and Gong (2013) developed a customer value cocreation behavior scale to detect weaknesses and strengths of customer behavior across industries. The scale is useful in practice for marketers to assess, plan, and track the goals of customers. The elements of CCB include feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance, whereas the aspects of CPB include information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction.

As brand communities have become the preferred platforms for customers to receive product information and obtain product solutions, stimulating the occurrence of CCB can save brands approximately \$2.9 million per year in after-sales support costs. Establishing brand communities is an excellent strategy from a digital marketing perspective. Interpersonal influence between customers within the brand community effectively promotes CCB (Yi et al., 2013). Facebook fan pages have proven highly useful for strengthening the relationships between organizations and their customers (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Hence, determining how to promote customer value cocreation behavior, including CCB and CPB, has become a critical issue for brands if a higher level of effective marketing and operation is desired.

Community Satisfaction. As brands have organized marketing activities on social media, they have built their own brand communities to engage existing customers with them as well as potential customers (Okazaki et al., 2015). Members of such brand communities can experience various interactions and benefits that are entirely different from those available to customers in face-to-face settings (Choi et al., 2019). Brand communities are specifically designed to create positive word-of-mouth and to boost customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2014). Once brand communities are more likely to encourage community members to browse or share their experiences, users will perceive greater satisfaction. As such, the use of effective brand community strategies can promote community satisfaction (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). Social media interaction, which is measured by the quantities of various social media used, has been shown to positively affect satisfaction (Hudson et al., 2015). Furthermore, brand communities often enhance consumer loyalty by strengthening consumer engagement (Coelho et al., 2019). This implies that customers' relative satisfaction with a brand community on a social networking site is associated with their online behaviors.

Most social media users are passive consumers rather than actively engaged. Hence, brands should seek to increase user participation, which amplifies the strength of relationships between consumers and brand communities (Habibi et al., 2014) and increases community satisfaction. This study's goals focused not only on customers' satisfaction with specific brands but also on their various types of online behaviors in specific brand communities. Some researchers have demonstrated that following a brand's Facebook updates can lead to positive brand evaluations (Beukeboom et al., 2015). For example, the degree of interaction in virtual communities was proven to influence users' commitment to a community (Chan & Li, 2010). Peer communication and socialization via social media not only influence community members' product attitudes directly but also their purchase intentions indirectly. What social media users see on SNSs directly affects their impression of a given brand and their community satisfaction. CCB and CPB have been proven to have negative effects on turnover intention, owing to dissatisfaction (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). Higher levels of brand-related consumer online behaviors commonly lead to more positive effects (Habibi et al., 2014) and successful outcomes for social media activities, such as community satisfaction. Based on the foregoing reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 1: As (a) customer citizenship behavior and (b) customer participation behavior increase, the degree of satisfaction increases.

Community Identification. User identification with a brand community is also an important determinant of users' willingness to become active in that community (Füller et al., 2008). Community identification has been given similar labels, such as "social identity" or "user identification." For instance, members with a stronger affective social identity (identification with their friendship group in the virtual community) have been shown to feel greater levels of attachment and belongingness (Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014). Social identification has been seen as motivating members to participate in online brand community interactions (Lee et al., 2011). Social bonding, which indicates community identification, has been proven to influence consumer-to-consumer interaction in virtual communities (Chan & Li, 2010). Brands need to build connections with members to foster a sense of belonging through interactions online and to enhance consumers' need to belong to groups of like-minded individuals (Black & Veloutsou, 2017).

Engaging with a brand via social media often leads to a feeling of connectedness. This emotion is similar to community identification and is a critical determinant of a user's willingness to become active in a brand community (Füller et al., 2008). Users with higher levels of community identification tend to engage in online behaviors more actively. For instance, brand communities often enhance customers' participation by promoting their consumer-brand identification (Wilk et al., 2021). As community identification is the process through which a customer cognitively accepts the perspective of a community personality, it can help identify how brand community can increase customer behaviors in brand communities on social media. We expect that when customers perceive a high degree of community identification, they should be more likely to increase their participation by engaging in various types of online behaviors, such as CCB and CPB. This observation leads us to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: As community identification increases, (a) customer citizenship behavior (b) and customer participation behavior also increase.

Narcissism. While social media nonusers and frequent users differ on several personality characteristics, narcissism is the most remarkable one, unquestionably. Narcissists think that they are special and unique. Social media provides narcissists with a perfect platform to express themselves and encourages them to enrich their online behaviors. For instance, as it is common for people to use social media to share their selfies via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, different levels of narcissism can be observed.

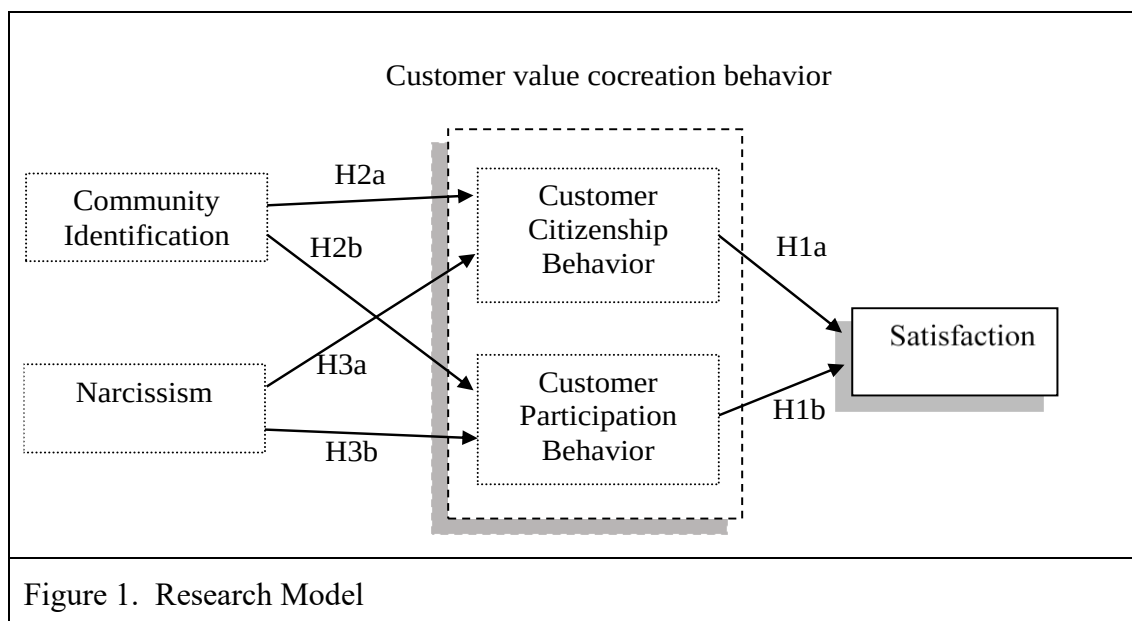
Narcissistic traits include having a strong sense of self-importance, exaggerating personal abilities and experiences, and craving admiration and acknowledgment. In the field of psychology, narcissistic behavior can be further described as overt narcissism or covert narcissism (Wink & Gough, 1990). Overt narcissistic behaviors are those that can be easily observed by others, whereas covert narcissistic behaviors are less obvious to others.

While the relationship between overt narcissism and social media use is not significant (Gentile et al., 2012), an effect of covert narcissism has been proven. For example, narcissists prefer online communities consisting of shallow relationships, as such communities afford them complete control over their self-presentation (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Facebook nonusers had more covert narcissistic traits, whereas frequent Facebook users demonstrate higher levels of

overt narcissism (Ljepava et al., 2013). Narcissistic traits affect an individual's levels of activity on Facebook (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008). People with higher narcissism scores engage in more self-promotional activities on Facebook and spend more time on social networking sites (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Furthermore, narcissists are more likely to post personal photographs that emphasize their attractiveness on Facebook (Kapidzic, 2013) and to comment on friends' photos on Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). These findings reveal a positive relationship between customers' narcissistic traits and their various behaviors in brand communities, including CCB and CPB. Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: The higher the degree of narcissism is, the more frequent (a) customer citizenship behavior and (b) customer participation behavior become.

The study assessed the indirect effects of community identification and narcissism on satisfaction via CCB and CPB. The research model is summarized and illustrated in Figure 1.



3. Research Method

Online brand communities offer a convenient way for customers to keep in touch with brands. Customers can stay up to date online by following current information, searching for ideas, contributing to relevant posts, and leaving comments. However, successful social media marketing practices for brands should transform user participation into satisfaction. To identify such causal relationships, it is necessary to test the proposed research model in advance.

Approximately 340 current followers of smartphone brands' Facebook pages completed an online questionnaire. These subjects were members of the smartphone brands' communities, and they had experience with activities such as browsing posts, answering members' questions, and posting comments or related news to specific smartphone brands' Facebook pages. To

investigate the effects of customer value cocreation behavior on brand communities, an online questionnaire was created for brand community users who were members of a specific smartphone brand's Facebook page. The subjects were informed that they were involved in a research project but were blinded to the research hypotheses.

This survey assessed the participants' narcissism, community identification, satisfaction, customer citizenship behavior (CCB), and customer participation behavior (CPB) in relation to a specific smartphone brand's Facebook page. Although the subjects may have followed several brand communities, they were asked to choose one community on a target brand's Facebook page when filling out the online questionnaire. The research model shown in Figure 1 was tested using the collected survey data. The dependent variable of this study is the customers' level of community satisfaction. The independent variables are narcissism, community identification, customer citizenship behavior (CCB), and customer participation behavior (CPB). The variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The measurement of each construct is further described as follows.

Satisfaction. To measure members' perceived satisfaction with the specific brand community involved, five items were adapted from a customer satisfaction scale developed by Dagger and O'Brien (2010) based on previous measurements (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Cronbach's α for this measure was .930.

Community identification. Community identification was defined as members' social identification with the specific brand community and measured by referencing related scales (Lee et al., 2011). Cronbach's α for community identification (six items) was .923.

Narcissism. Hendin and Cheek (1997) developed the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS) to measure the degree of participants' covert narcissism. High scores on the HSNS show the presence of covert narcissistic traits. Due to its high level of reliability and validity (Hendin & Cheek, 1997; Ljepava et al., 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), we adopted this scale in the current study. The Cronbach's α value for this ten-item measure was .758.

CCB. Yi and Gong (2013) developed the customer value cocreation behavior scale, which includes customer citizenship behavior (CCB) as a dimension. The CCB dimension includes four aspects, namely, feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance, and it has been confirmed as a valid, reliable, and stable measurement instrument (Yi & Gong, 2013; Yi et al., 2011; Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). The Cronbach's α values for feedback (three items), advocacy (three items), helping (four items), and tolerance (three items) were .883, .886, .919, and .744, respectively.

CPB. Yi and Gong (2013) developed the customer value cocreation behavior scale, which includes customer participation behavior (CPB) as a dimension. The CPB dimension includes four elements, namely, information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviors, and personal interaction, and it has been confirmed as a valid, reliable, and stable measurement instrument (Yi & Gong, 2013; Yi et al., 2011; Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). The Cronbach's α values for information seeking (three items), information sharing (four items), responsible behaviors (four items), and personal interaction (five items) were .830, .876, .837, and .845,

respectively.

4. Finding and Discussion

Of the 340 followers of a smartphone brand's Facebook page, 324 completed the online questionnaire without missing data, giving a response rate of 95.29%. The correlations between the variables were tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient. As shown in Table 1, all of the variables were positively interrelated. In addition, customer citizenship behavior (CCB) and customer participation behavior (CPB) were treated as second-order constructs in the research model, and each construct had its own first-order dimensions. Four dimensions of customer citizenship behavior, namely, feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance, were highly correlated ($r > .6$). Information seeking was highly related to information sharing ($r = .69$), responsible behavior ($r = .66$), and personal interaction ($r > .63$), while the construct of customer participation behavior consisted of these four dimensions. As we expected, both customer citizenship behavior and customer participation behavior showed high levels of composite reliability and internal consistency. However, correlation does not indicate causation. The causal relationships between variables were further examined by means of structural equation modeling. Using the 333 records, the proposed model was assessed through maximum likelihood estimation using AMOS. All of the calculations were based on the covariance matrix of the variables. Five common model-fit measures were used to assess the proposed model's overall goodness of fit, ratio of χ^2 to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Table 1. Pearson correlations

Construct	Construct										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Community identification	1										
2. Narcissism	.20	1									
3. Feedback	.61	.19	1								
4. Advocacy	.71	.32	.63	1							
5. Helping	.60	.27	.72	.74	1						
6. Tolerance	.54	.33	.54	.65	.62	1					
7. Information seeking	.56	.24	.56	.68	.64	.53	1				
8. Information sharing	.68	.24	.74	.70	.76	.55	.69	1			
9. Responsible behavior	.47	.21	.55	.63	.64	.57	.66	.61	1		
10. Personal interaction	.44	.21	.57	.61	.65	.54	.63	.57	.78	1	
11. Satisfaction	.78	.25	.56	.76	.62	.56	.66	.63	.55	.52	1

The results indicate that the proposed model (CMIN/DF=2.697; GFI=.822, CFI=.906, IFI=.907, RMSEA=.072) shows a good fit because all of the criteria were found to be better than the

recommended values ($\text{CMIN/DF} < 3$; $\text{GFI} > .80$, $\text{CFI} > .90$, $\text{IFI} > .90$, $\text{RMSEA} < .06$). Thus, we used the model to examine our hypotheses.

As shown in Figure 2, the standardized path coefficients from both CCB and CPB to satisfaction are statistically significant; thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b are supported. Furthermore, the standardized path coefficients from community identification to CCB and CPB are significant, confirming Hypotheses 2a and 2b. In addition, as the path from narcissism to CCB is significant, Hypothesis 3a is supported. Unexpectedly, however, the standardized path coefficient from narcissism to CPB is not significant; thus, Hypothesis 3b is not supported. Two second-order constructs were operationalized in the structural model. Feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance were treated as reflective factors to create the second-order construct “CCB,” while the other second-order construct “CPB” comprised information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction as reflective indicators.

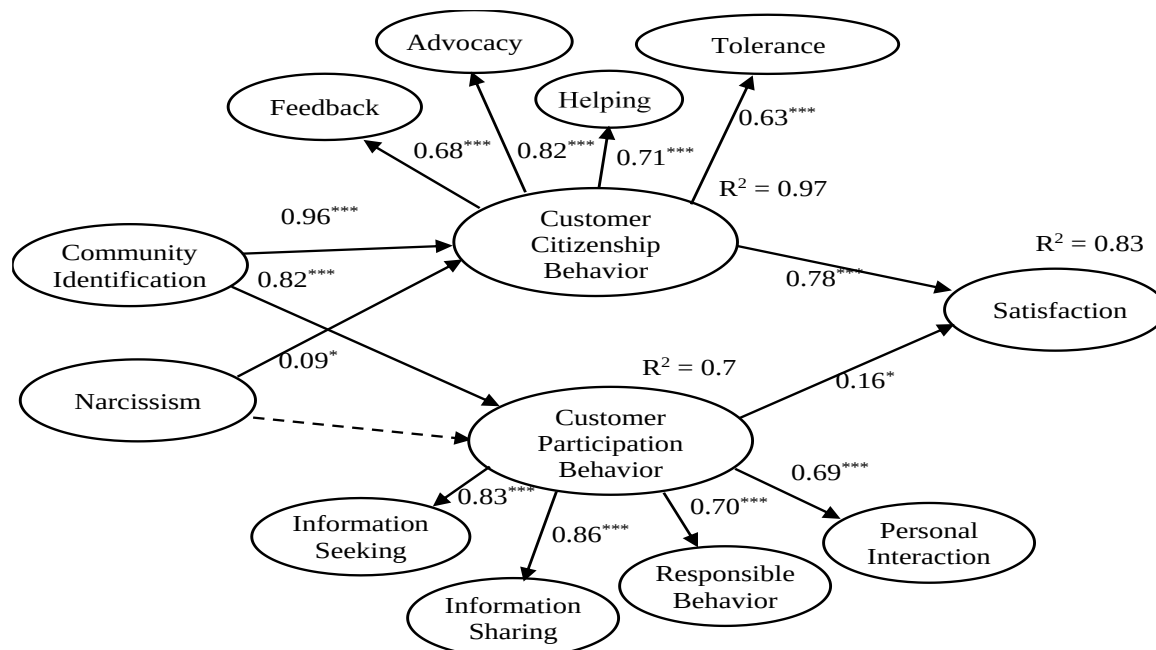


Figure 2: Standardized Path Coefficients of the Proposed Model

(Note: * $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .01$. The dotted line indicates an absence of statistical significance.)

The R^2 value indicates that 83% of the variance in satisfaction is explained by these variables, including CCB, CPB, community identification, and narcissism, while 97% of the variance in CCB and 70% of the variance in CPB are explained by community identification and narcissism. These results show that both CCB and CPB had direct effects on satisfaction. Narcissism had no direct effect on satisfaction but an indirect effect through its direct effect on CCB. Similarly, community identification influenced satisfaction indirectly through direct effects on CCB and CPB.

5. Conclusion

This study used the Facebook pages of smartphone brands to measure user participation to assess their effects on community satisfaction. The concept of customer value cocreation behavior was introduced, and the investigation included an empirical examination of the effects of CCB and CPB on community satisfaction. Overall, CCB and CPB showed positive effects on community satisfaction, and community identification had positive effects on both CCB and CPB, which in turn affected community satisfaction directly. Based on these findings, we can confirm that smartphone brands can increase customers' satisfaction not only by encouraging their CCB and CPB but also by promoting greater community identification for customers in the context of virtual communities on SNSs when greater community satisfaction is desired. When people become engaged with brand communities, they eagerly interact with posts, news, and comments and conduct more CCB and CPB. If their high engagement with the brand community brings great satisfaction, they become potential consumers. Additionally, by providing feedback, advocacy, help, tolerance, information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction in brand communities, smartphone brands are able to increase satisfaction among customers. Thus, smartphone brands can increase user participation on their Facebook pages as an effective way to increase community satisfaction among customers by promoting CCB and CPB. Narcissism was found to have a direct effect on CCB, but surprisingly, it did not have a significant effect on CPB. For narcissists in the context of brand communities on SNSs, the difference in CCB and CPB was so clear that the consequences of engaging in these behaviors were obviously different. The results show that the relationship between narcissism and CPB is not supported with evidence. That is, customer narcissism did not necessarily lead to CPB. A plausible explanation for this is that narcissists are not eager to conduct information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction in brand communities on SNSs because these tacit behaviors do not bring narcissists a sense of self-importance or exaggerated personal abilities or experiences. Such individuals may not want to demonstrate more CPB. Hence, there is no significant difference in the occurrence of CPB between narcissists and other customers, which may lead to the irrelevant relationship between narcissism and CPB.

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