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This is OUTRAGEOUS!: Understanding Consumer Anger and Brand Reputation on Social Media

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Introduction

Consumer Digital Activism

- ❖ Consumer easily use digital technology to create and/or distribute content for the purpose of influencing corporate, social or political change.



❖ Righteous Anger

Arises suddenly and spreads quickly on social media platforms.

❖ Organization Reputation

Leaders at 300 major global companies rated “reputation” as the highest impact risk area for their company “...due in large measure to the rise of social media, which enables instantaneous global communications that make it harder for companies to control how they are perceived in the marketplace.” (Deloitte, 2015, p. 4).

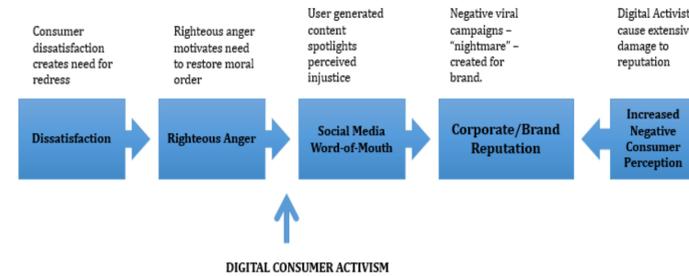
❖ Contributions

- Contribute to the growing body of literature focusing on righteous or moral anger from consumers.
- Propose a typology to define differing degrees of consumer engagement for policy makers and regulators to use in predicting which brands and/or industries are possibly running into consumer protection issues.
- Serve as an updated response matrix for organizations.

Research Questions

- (1) What are the underlying motives for consumers, when they perceive an injustice to themselves or others, utilize digital technology to create and/or distribute content for the purpose of influencing corporate, social or political change?
- (2) How do consumers express their anger on social media and what is the frequency?
- (3) What is the impact of these motives and behavior on brand reputation?

Digital Consumer Activism



- ❖ Identify digital consumer activists using Freeman’s (2010) stakeholder theory:

Stakeholder definition: “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (p. 46).

- ❖ Stakeholder importance (p. 854):

- (1) the stakeholder's *power* to influence the firm
- (2) the *legitimacy* of the stakeholder's relationship with the firm
- (3) the *urgency* of the stakeholder's claim on the firm

Past Research

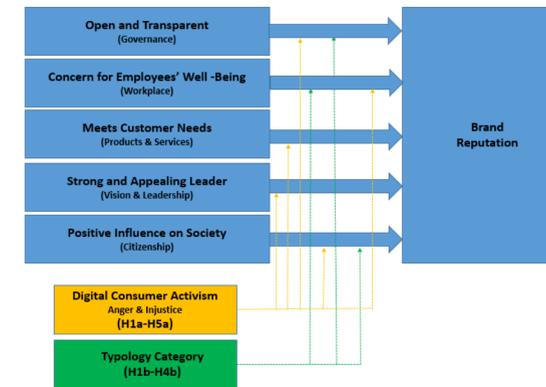
Righteous anger and its role in workplace revenge (Tripp and Bies, 2010)

Customer revenge (Grégoire, Laufer and Tripp, 2009)

Stakeholders’ reactions to cases of brand social irresponsibility (Romani, Grappi and Bagozzi, 2013; Lindenmeier, Schleer, and Pricl, 2012; Antonetti and Maklan, 2014)

Extant research has not clearly defined this type of behavior nor studied the underlying motives for consumers.

Framework

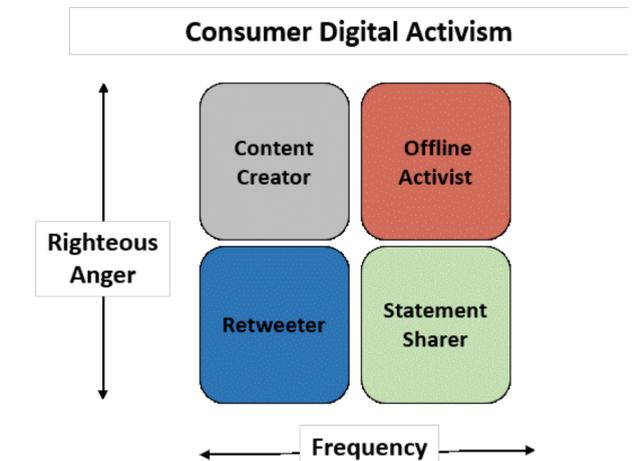


- ❖ H1a Social media users rating high on digital consumer activism (DCA) , will regard leadership negatively after viewing content of an activism event (H1b – H4b).
- ❖ H2a Social media users rating high on in digital consumer activism (DCA) , will regard governance negatively after viewing content of an activism event (H1b – H4b).
- ❖ H3a Social media users rating high on in digital consumer activism (DCA) , will regard citizenship negatively after viewing content of an activism event (H1b – H4b).
- ❖ H4a Social media users rating high on in digital consumer activism (DCA) , will regard workplace negatively after viewing content of an activism event (H1b – H4b).
- ❖ H5a Digital consumer activism (DCA) will have no impact on innovation perception.
- ❖ H6a Digital consumer activism (DCA) will have no impact on performance perception.
- ❖ H7a Digital consumer activism (DCA) will have no impact on product perception.

Methods

- ❖ 1000 participants selected from MTurk; randomly assigned to one of 4 groups based upon typology type.
- ❖ Eliminated digital bias by screening for participants who self-identify as using Twitter at least once per week.
- ❖ The order in which the content types were presented was randomized.
- ❖ Error-detecting questions to screen out cheaters.
- ❖ Dependent Variable - Corporate Reputation
- ❖ Independent Variables
 - Activism content type
 - Righteous anger
 - Injustice

Typology



- ❖ Used a qualitative content analysis approach developed and tested by researchers for social media content (Makarem & Jae, 2015; Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012; Hoffman, 2011)
- ❖ Nine (9) activism events with distinct beginning and end dates.
 - Large global financial institution (2008-2009)
 - CBG company promotion to female Israeli soldiers (2014)
 - Small locally owned business in Northern California (2014)
 - Movie release based upon provocative book (2015)
 - Large state university in the Midwest (2015)
 - Start-up app for people reviews (2015)
 - \$800M healthcare company in upstate New York (2015)
 - 140+ year zoo located in the Midwest (2016)
 - Prestigious university in Northern California (2016)
- ❖ 141, 800 tweets scraped using TAGS (Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet) and manual search.
- ❖ Research triangulated with news coverage and company statements.

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