Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on E-Engagement in Emerging Economies

Manish Gupta, Department of HR, Mahindra University, India

Abhishek Behl, O. P. Jindal Global University, India

INTRODUCTION

Digital communities and excessive exploration of the internet has extended contemporary engagement literature. Engagement no longer remains a concept of marketing or human resources but has transformed into what is called "human-computer interaction". Engagement theories have mostly tested their respective constructs and antecedents to engagement in a context-specific situation or concept centric situation (Shankar et al., 2021; Vakeel & Panigrahi, 2018). The theoretical framework is mostly tested in developed nations and mostly with established brands and processes. Following the guidelines of Sobh and Perry (2006), it is important to understand the idea of replicating this for developing nations which either offer opportunities in terms of its size of the population or in terms of the demand pool. A large part of the population of these economies lies non-inclusive on digital platforms and others who are hooked to such digital platforms lack proper channelization. While geographic divide makes people access restricted resources, digital citizenship has helped firms and companies to break the geographic barrier and expand their business. This has also helped internet providers and digital aggregators to attract and engage customers and potential customers through various digital channels (Peters et al., 2018; Perkmann et al., 2021) . Off late, companies have also started to harness the power of utilizing tools like big data analytics, machine learning, augmented and virtual reality, game mechanics, artificial intelligence, etc. to understand the behaviour of customers better and design techniques and ways to engage them better.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This issue aims at exploring the antecedents and consequences of electronic-engagement in the emerging economies. The articles of this issue are expected to provide insights into the psychological and technological ways through which organizations can engage their stakeholders such as employees, customers, students, among others using the internet. This special issue is intended to benefit employers, marketers, and academics by suggesting the ways through which they can engage their employees, customers, and students respectively. Also, researchers interested in the study of emerging economies would benefit from the insights gained from this issue about online engagement.

CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES

The first study, titled "Effective Online Engagement Strategies Through Gamification: A Systematic Literature Review and a Future Research Agenda," presents a systematic review of literature.

Gamification has gained prominence in recent times with its application in prominent fields like marketing, education, healthcare, finance and information systems. The primary motive of using gamified platforms is to improve engagement and motivation of the players. With processes and systems becoming digital, it is important to understand the broad spectrum of gamification in the context of e-engagement. The study proposes a systematic review of literature to categorize online engagement strategies. The main purpose of this systematic literature review is to find effective online engagement strategies based on gamification. The study follows a PRISMA guidelines to understand and categorize the papers published between 2016 and 2021 in the interface of gamification and e-engagement. The study is first of its type to project a potential future research agenda on effective online engagement strategies through gamification.

The second study, titled "Consumer Engagement Through Conditional Promotions: An Exploratory Study," investigates consumers' response to conditional promotions (CP) offered in an offline retail store. The study used qualitative lens to study the consumer decision-making process by finding the linkages between 'pre-cart' and the 'post-cart' add-on purchases. The study uses personal interviews and focused group discussions to draw four themes – 'Inability to think Out-of-the-box'; 'Loss aversion by consumers'; 'Mode of Payment'; and; 'Criticality of Product Utility'. The study also contributed to the marketing and engagement literature by finding the relationship between products purchased in 'pre-cart', i.e., without the knowledge of CP and 'post-cart'. The study conceptualized 'post cart' as add-on products added to the cart to avail the CP offer while purchasing in an offline retail store. The study further documented that consumers' willingness to avail CP varies with different relative distances from the target purchase cart value (high vs. low) and mode of payments (cash vs. digital).

The third study, titled "Effect of Technostress on Academic Productivity: E-Engagement Through Persuasive Communication," examines technostress among management students between the age group of 22-29 years. While most of the earlier studies have studied technostress related to working professionals, it is also seen that the same phenomenon is observed in students pursuing higher studies as well. The study used a sample of students from management college of India to validate the technostress instrument. The study found the effect of technostress on academic productivity of students. The study further explores the students' expectations from the college to control their technostress, thereby indicating the need of enhancing e-engagement through persuasive communication.

The fourth study, "Paradigm Shift in Education Sector Amidst COVID-19 to Improve Online Engagement: Opportunities and Challenges," aims to identify social, intellectual, and conceptual structures along with key areas, contributors, current dynamics and suggest future research directions in the field of engagement with e-learning systems. The study also performs a systematic review of 358 articles from Web of Science. The study subjectively assesses the research focusing on the integration of management into e-learning domain. It further investigated trends using bibliometric analysis through citations, PageRank analysis, Co-citation network analysis. The results help to explore effective ways of delivering education during a crisis, while also taking a sustainable approach to the promotion of education through online methods. The results can benefit policy makers to develop framework to change and transform the pedagogical learnings and e-engagement of students during and post COVID 19 situations.

The fifth study, "Batting Outside the Field: Examining E-Engagement Behaviors of IPL Fans," examines the relationship between cognitive awareness and perceived knowledge of sports fans' social media engagement behaviors. The study is based on a primary data collected from 236 adults as fans of the Indian Premier League (IPL). The findings of the study suggest that perceived knowledge and cognitive awareness of sports are precursors to social media engagement behaviors of sports fans. Results further validate that there exists a mediating linkage between perceived knowledge and cognitive awareness with social media engagement. The study contributes towards understanding digital engagement of fans especially during COVID 19, when physical engagement takes a backseat.

The sixth study, "Impact of Mobile Banking Application Interactivity on Consumer Engagement: An Experimental-Based Investigation," examines the impact of mobile banking (m-banking) application interactivity on consumer engagement. The study also analyses the moderation effects of perceived security concerns, consumer innovativeness, and consumer involvement. An experiment-based approach is adopted in the study by using a 2 (interactivity: high versus low) $\times$ 2 (perceived security concern: high versus low) $\times$ 2 (consumer innovativeness: high versus low) x 2 (consumer involvement: high versus low) between-subjects of 376 Indian mobile banking users. Results support that the interactivity positively impact consumer engagement in the context of m-banking. Furthermore, it is found that there is a moderating effect of perceived security concern, consumer innovativeness and consumer involvement in the study. Results contribute to the e-engagement literature by examining the impact of interactivity on consumer engagement.

The seventh study, "How Do Value Co-Creation and E-Engagement Enhance E-Commerce Consumers' Repurchase Intention? An Empirical Analysis," explores the area of e-engagement through the lens of co-creation, which is driven by positively-valanced e-engagement, enhances repurchase intention among e-commence consumers. It uses the theoretical lens of Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to understand the moderating role of technology adoption in explaining the relationship between e-engagement and co-creation in the context of e-commerce. Study collects primary data and uses partial least square (PLS) structured equation modelling to test the hypotheses. Results show that value co-creation, driven by positively valanced e-engagement, enhances repurchase intention among e-commerce consumers, while, technology adoption moderates the association between positively-valanced e-engagement and value co-creation. The findings also reveal that consumption values, such as utilitarian and hedonic values, mediate the effects of value co-creation on repurchase intention among e-commerce consumers.

The eighth study, "Developing a Framework for Electronic Engagement at Work: A Phenomenological Study," proposes an engagement framework relevant in the electronic space for employees. The study adopts a qualitative design to analyse interview data from Information Technology working remotely. Their study answers questions on the challenges pertaining to e-engagement and strategies to face such challenges.

The ninth study, "Application of Machine Learning Algorithm in Managing Deviance Consumer Behaviors and Enhance Public Service," administers the consumer behaviour through machine learning models in the case of power sector. The Non-Technical Losses (NTL) affects the operations of power systems through overloading lines and transformers, resulting in voltage imbalances and thus impacting services. This paper argues that despite the limitations of traditional meters, development of ML based algorithms can predict suspected cases of theft with reasonable certainty thereby saving a lot of money for distribution companies, provide consistent and dependable services to honest customers at reasonable costs and thus enhance customer engagement. Key learning from ML perspective is that even if data is noisy as in the case of traditional meters due to manual reading, it is possible to create a Machine Learning Model to detect NTL with 90%+ accuracy.

On a closer examination of each of these studies, a pattern of interrelationships among the different variables used in these studies may be discovered (refer Figure 1).

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the aforementioned discussion that electronic engagement is critical in ensuring academic productivity of students, e-commerce consumer repurchase intention, and enhance public service. As discussed in the articles of this special issue, managers are encouraged to use various ways to enhance engagement of users such as gamification, conditional promotions, persuasive communication, cognitive awareness and perceived knowledge, mobile banking application interactivity (Fu et al., 2021; Behl et al., 2021; Blasco-Arcas et al., 2020). Several physiological and psychological health factors seem to affect e-engagement as comprehended in Figure 1. However,

Figure 1. E-engagement antecedents and consequences

Gamification, conditional promotions, persuasive communication, cognitive awareness and perceived knowledge, mobile banking application interactivity

Physical and psychological health of users → e-engagement → Productivity, repurchase intention, public service
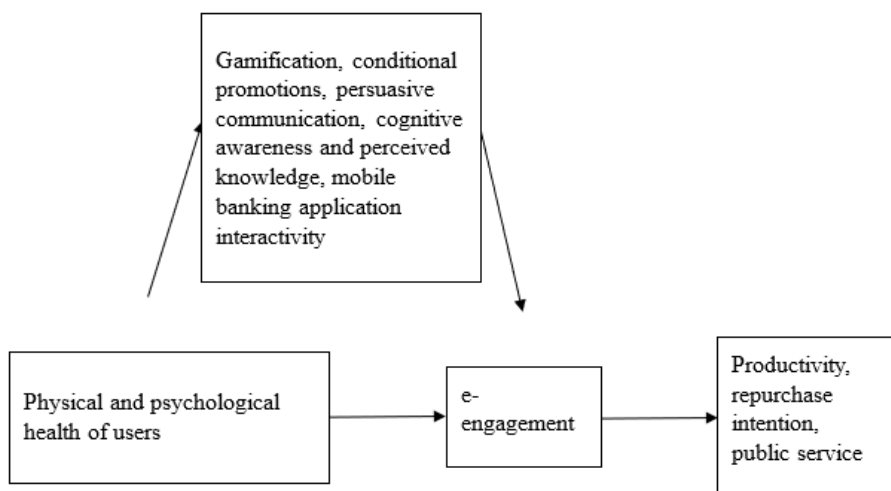
this figure is purely based on the summarization of articles in this special issue and can be criticized for over simplicity. Consequently, it primarily requires testing of this model in a homogenous context using a common theory.

Manish Gupta
Abhishek Behl
Guest Editors
JGIM

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