Effective Factors on Brand Commitment in Social Networks, Emphasizing on the Role of Brand Page (A Review Study)

Arash GHASEMI1, Shahrzad CHITSAZ2, Hamid SAEEDI3

1 MBA Student Department of Management, college of Management and Accounting, Yadegar-e-Imam Khomeini (RAH) Shahre Rey Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2 Assistant Professor, Department of Management, college of Management and Accounting, Yadegar-e-Imam Khomeini (RAH) Shahre Rey Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
3 Assistant Professor, Department of Management, college of Management and Accounting, Yadegar-e-Imam Khomeini (RAH) Shahre Rey Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Abstract: By the advent of social networks based on internet, an individual can communicate with hundreds of people about a product and its production company; different social networks enable the products to be proposed to the active communities and interested people. Hence, the aim of the current study is reviewing the literature of effective factors on brand commitment in social networks, emphasizing on the role of brand page to be adequately familiar with the aspects of marketing such as advertisements and branding in social networks and clarify the path for the companies to use new created space in social networks for more and better interaction with its consumers. In terms of goal, the current study is applied, in terms of nature, it is descriptive and methodologically, it is library of theoretical type. The investigations showed that brand page is a relatively new environment and consumers’ beliefs towards brand pages in social media can be assumed to be formed based on their previous experiences of created content through brands in social media such as the ads of these media. Therefore, appropriate space (links, image and web browser) is recommended to be created to communicate about brand and the product in order to increase interest towards brand in social networks.

Keywords: Brand; Social networks; Brand page; Commitment; Friendship.


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1. Introduction

Social networks turn to one of constructive components in daily life of millions of internet users in the world, however, there are little expertise studies in the field of social networks and most of them these studies include the papers, newspaper and magazines, the information of Wikipedia and blogs, involving limited subjects in the field of social networks (Kim, Jeong & Lee, 2010).

The expansion of using social networks by internet users causes these media to be used in different fields with various goals. Marketing is one of these fields and marketing theory through social network has become gradually common while evaluating it. In this regard, the studies also show that the companies consider marketing through social media important (Akar & Topcu, 2011).

“Marketers are beginning to understand the use of social media as a component in their marketing strategies and campaigns to reach out to customers” (Akar & Topcu, 2011, p. 36).

Different social media enable the products to be proposed to the active communities and interested people (Khodayari, et al., 2017). Through different tools, social networks let people send, label and etc. The created content through social networks is a kind of new source for online information, created, expanded and used by the consumers, tending to inform each other of products, marks, services and problems (Fakoor et al., 2015). The consumers receive related information to the products and services from frequent informational resources especially by consulting other consumers through online comments in social networks (Fakoor et al., 2016). They follow others’ comments while buying a product or service. Akar and Topcu (2011) “According to a study by Nielsen BuzzMetrics, more than 60 percent of consumers believe what they read in the posts of other consumers. According to Ducoffe (1997), regarding products and services, 78 percent of global consumers believe and trust the suggestions of other people over any other data. These online consumers are important for marketers because they are active and effective. They are talkative, and active consumers who try new products first do not hesitate to share their own experiences with other consumers and to spread their opinions” (Akar and Topcu, 2011, p. 42). According to the consumers, the ideas of other consumers are realer than advertising messages of companies.
Selling and marketing through social media means using the channels of social media to promote a factory and its productions. This type of marketing can be considered as a subset of online marketing activities, completing the strategies of web-based traditional advertisement such as e-mail newsletter (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010).

The studies about new social networks marketing are few. As Zuniga, Hinsley and Correa stated in 2010, most of studies in case of using social networks have only concentrated on social network websites. These sites have users’ profile and almost 90% of users in such sites visit it aiming to communicate with other people they know and half of them has also two or several online profiles (Correa, Hinsley and Zuniga, 2010).

The predications, in which it is emphasized that marketing programs can lead to effective marketing through social media are a lot (Miller and Lammas, 2010). Akar and Topcu (2011) “According to a recent study, 70 percent of consumers have visited social media Web sites to get information. Moreover, 49 percent of these customers made a purchase decision on the basis of the information they gathered.” (Akar and Topcu, 2011, p. 43).

Hence; the aim of current study is getting enough knowledge about the aspects of marketing such as advertisement and branding in social networks and drawing the path map and clarifying the path for organizations and governmental institutions as well as Iranian private companies to use the new created space in social networks for more and better interaction with their consumers.

2. Methodology

In terms of goal, the current study is applied, in terms of nature, it is descriptive and methodologically, it is library of theoretical type. The information was collected using related papers and books to the research topic. To this end, note taking tool was used.

Branding is important component of the new dimension of the postmodern society. In this paper we investigated the effects of brands and its cultural and economical effects on postmodenisim. In postmodernity, there was a confusion or even a reversal of production and its destructive role of vested by economic theory. The consumer is, henceforth, considered as an actor and producer of meaning. Thanks to marketing system, consumption has become the process by which people define themselves, their statutes or images in contemporary society.
This research is concerned with meaning construction in society, with particular focus on the postmodern world view. Hence, the logical choice for the scientific method of this thesis is social constructivism. They argue that, seen from a social constructivist view, “Knowledge is sustained by social processes”. Therefore what we consider reality is not a result of objective facts but merely a subjective opinion constructed through social processes. The paper is communication based and directly analyses communication material to discuss it in a societal connection. Both communication material and the society in which it operates can be subjectively interpreted by any receiver. Thus, the overall aim of our research is to induce a form of reality from a subjective standpoint and therefore it moves within the field of social constructivism. By using an inductive approach, we depart from our empirical material, the discourse and multimodal analysis, and attempt to legitimise our findings theoretically. A deductive approach on the other hand would start with theory, which subsequently is tested in reality

3. Theoretical Literature of Study

Brand has a distinctive identity, proposing related distinctive believable, continues and related promises about the value of product, service or organization. The companies, proposing a distinctive brand, can create superiority in the market, increase the value of their products and services and provide some advantages for themselves through leading the price (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), (Da Silveira, Lages & Simoes, 2013).

Any language similarity as word, phrase and writing style between customers and brands is known as language similarity (Su, John & Reynolds, 2015). Family similarity is an important determining factor in friendship. The theory of family similarity states that people seriously tend for romantic and friendly communication with similar people (Tuskej, Golob & Podnar, 2013). Similarity has a pivotal role in friendship because it reduces the conflicts and misunderstandings in the interactions. Meanwhile, similar friends are likely to be more reliable and accept or confirm the personal beliefs of a person (Rivera, Soderstrom & Uzzi, 2010). (Su et al, 2015). (Sirgy et al, 1997) (Aaker & Fournier, 1995)

Congruity theory is developed form of traditional self-knowledge theory, stating that people are trying to make compatibility between their beliefs and behaviors because incompatibility makes people feel uncomfortable (Malar et al, 2011). Moreover, based on self-flourishing theory, the nature of human is so that it links others (for example brands) to
individual self-concept (Whan Park et al, 2010). Because customer’s tendency for connecting a brand with self-concept of an individual extremely dependent on his knowledge compatibility, it is predicted that in high levels of congruity between a mental image of a brand and customer’s self-concept, a high emotional relationship will exist and because emotional link is an important trait in friendship, the existence of relationship between brand congruity and friendship is likely (Price & Arnould, 1999).

The studies on consumer’s behavior show that attitudes are the set of negative or positive evaluation of people towards a thing or action. The attitudes help people’s cognitive thinking, affect people’s effective feeling as well as people’s behavior (Hoyer & MacInnis, 1997). Given the theory of rational action, there are two important factors, affecting on person to show a behavior: personal factor (attitude) and mental norms (the effect of society) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

The beliefs include the person’s knowledge about the universe and person’s behavior is formed based on this science, the attitudes and mental principles of performance are beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Personal factor means the attitude towards the advertisement of social media, it reflects positive or negative evaluations of person by behavior of being a fan of brand page. Therefore, the attitudes create the rules, contributing leading behaviors. Social facto-mental principles refer to the effect of society (friends) on the person to make decision about joining and following a brand page (Muk, Chung & Kim, 2014).

Generally, the consumers often remember available or clear information and so use them for decision making which is known as the rate of accessing to the mentalities for decision making (Hoyer & MacInis, 1997). When there isn’t precise information such as direct experience with the aim of collision, the consumers usually rely on general information or their mental accessibilities to judge. Brand page is a relatively new environment and it can be assumed that consumers’ beliefs towards brand pages in social media have been initially formed based on their previous experiences of created content through brands in social media such as the advertisement of this media (Ko, Cho & Robert, 2005).

The consumers of social media also tend to network, interact and communicate with other consumers, having similar tastes in brands (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013). Brands can consider these tendencies as capital through creating the community of like-minded people, being able to share their tastes and values with others. The studies on social media and
brand community show that the need for social relationships is a necessary motive for the consumers to join a community (Gangadharbatla, 2008).

To be socially accepted, people need to interact with others a lot and establish a long, sustainable and positive relationship with them (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social networks site supplies the initial needs of users for familiarizing and communicating with the peers (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009). They do it through proposing a social space to the users for making relationship and interaction with other people, having similar tastes. The companies can create brand pages in social media through considering the need of consumers for familiarizing as a capital to make a relationship with constant customers and nurture their familiarity sense through self-interaction (Yan, 2011). (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999) (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974) (Karson, McCloy and Bonner, 2006)

Web advertisement recreation value helps the consumers to have a joyful experience of exchanging the advertisements (Ducoffe, 1995) which is other important value of advertisement, involving the consumers in advertising messages (Muk, Chung & Kim, 2014) (Price & Arnould, 1999).

To form friendship, structural, situational and pair factors are required (Price & Arnould, 1999). Structural factors include geographical distance so that two people have mutual demands (Rivera et al, 2010). If an environment provides structural opportunity for interaction, then people judge about their tendency to expand their friendship with each other based on personal factors such as appearance, personality, norm and lifestyle (Price & Arnould, 1999). According to hemophilia theory, similarity in personal similarity between two persons is an important motive for friendship and romantic relationship (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). The initial roles of structural factors (the similarity of language and interest), situational (self-disclosure and repeating the interactions) are investigated in this study in terms of affecting the formation of friendship between customers and brands (Price & Arnould, 1999) (Carlson, 2005).

In the framework of BRQ (brand relationship quality), intimacy contributes the quality of customer-brand relationship and other interrelated sections such as self-relationship, trust, eagerness and commitment. Therefore, improving the intimacy between customers and brands may also improve other related sections to the customer-brand relationship such as trust, self-relationship and emotional relations, considered as the important predictors of brand commitment (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005).

4. Investigating the Research Models, Related to Brand and Virtual Networks

In a study subjected to “Investigating the suitable effects of individual’s self-disclosure on social network site” Huang (2016) states that individual’s self-disclosure in social networks site is considered as a common phenomenon nowadays. He proposes model 1 for evaluating the suitable effects of people’s self-disclosure in social networks sites. Self-expression is considered as a second degree and compound structure, consisting 5 elements: the rate, intensity, honesty, target and capacity. Social support is also used as a second degree and reflective structure, consisting two factors: informational and emotional support. The findings showed that individual’s satisfaction of his online social life is the strongest motive for tending to continue relationship with social networks. Self-disclosure is suitable for people in social networks because they can be emotionally supported by others through these networks and increase their happiness and satisfaction of their online social life (Huang, 2016).

Su et al (2015) conducted a study subjected to “Friendship in social networks: improving the relationship between hotel brands and consumers”. The hypotheses have been investigated using collected data from Amazon site and the respondents, following fan page of a hotel brand in social network site such as Facebook and Twitter. Based on the findings, all hypotheses are supported so that brand self-disclosure and the frequency of interaction has a positive relationship with friendship. The findings also confirm the positive

![Chart 1](chart1.png)

**Chart 1** - (Huang, 2016)
relationship between brand language similarity and brand interest similarity with friendship (Su, John Mariadoss & Reynolds, 2015).

![Diagram showing the relationship between brand language similarity, interest similarity, self-disclosure, and interaction frequency, leading to friendship and commitment.](image)

**Chart 2** – (Su, John Mariadoss & Reynolds, 2015)

Etemad Sajadi and Ghachem (2015) investigated the impact of hedonic and utilitarian value of online avatars on e-service quality. The respondents were asked to see a photo and then answer the questionnaire. This process was applied for 8 different websites of service companies, completed by an avatar. The value of avatar utilitarian affects 9 criteria out of 10 criteria of e-services quality and this effect for hedonic rate is 5 out of 10. Since it is identified that avatar utilitarian can affect almost all web-qual criteria, so the results of this study are more related to the scientific section. These results can be fast and directly conceptualized for the companies, tending to improve a particular part of their website using an avatar. This study will be also suitable for the online centers providers, willing to adapt their avatar information with customers and users’ needs (Etemad-Sajadi & Chachem, 2015).

In a study Pin Luarn et al (2015) investigate the effectiveness of different characteristics of brand posts on online participation in Facebook brand pages. The used data in this study have been extracted from 10 official and well-known pages of brand. Totally 1030 posts were collected within March 1st to May 1st of 2014 and processed manually in September, 2014. To specify the products in created posts by the page managers, following the strategy of expanding coding, they have been coded manually. The results show that the type of media and content posts has a significant effect on user’s online participation. This study has used liking, commenting and
sharing behavior as the scale of measuring user’s online participation to show a new phenomenon (Pin Luarn, Yu-Fan Lin & Yu-Ping Chiu, 2015).

Kim and Han (2014) state that 35% of American adults and more than 73% of South Korean population have had smartphones in the first three months of 2013. The number of people, using smartphones, has been basically increased. Such phones users always connect with others fast. Since cellphone advertising market has been seriously expanded, the advertisers and companies should note effective advertisement of smartphone more. They investigate the reason of smartphone attraction for customer: a model of advertising in web, procedure and personalization. To this end, they propose a comprehensive advertising model, combining web-advertising model, personalization and procedure theory to be informed of purchase target history and effective processes in the field of cellphone advertisement. The results show that personalization has a direct relationship with being suitable, credit and recreation of advertising message while it will have negative relationship with motivation and creating excitement (Kim & Han, 2014).

![Chart 3](Kim & Han, 2014)
In a study, Zhang et al (2014) investigated the effect of content and subject factors on the popularity of microblog posts in the framework based on mental and principled model for information processing and used posts popularity because the numbers of retweets and related comments to the posts are the output of users’ behavior after information processing. Data are randomly selected from 10000 posts of Sina Weibo, one of the most well-known microblog sites in China. It is perceived that content factors lead to lack of subject factors application in calculating the difference between posts popularity, that is using a principles solution in comparison with mental solution during information processing is more by a user. The findings also show that retweeting and commenting are separated microblog behaviors. The aim of retweeting is publishing the information, in which reference credibility (such as user credibility) and utilitarian of posts are of an important role while commenting emphasizes social dialogue and communication and user’s experience as well as post subject are important in it (Zhang et al, 2014).

Chart 4 - (Zhang, 2014)
Phua and Ahn (2014) have investigated the effect of likes and friends’ likes on the consumers’ awareness of a brand page and related results to a brand. To achieve such an aim, a superficial profile has been used. To choose the study brand, a pilot study has been conducted among bachelor students of a big university in America southeast. A list of 20 Facebook brand pages, through Socialbakers Site, having the most number of likes and fast updating of social media pages, was given to all 88 participants and they were asked to rank their like of each brand within 1-20. The participants have been asked to specify numbers according to the total likes, people; they talk about and friends’ like in Facebook brand page and then the low or high number of likes. All participants have specified related numbers to each like and their low or high value correctly, indicating that manual investigation has been successful. All 54 participants, were determined to the status of high total of likes, have answered correctly (100%) “high”, based on low or high value of total likes. The same situation has been occurred for determined participants for the low number of likes. Also, all 55 participants, determined for the status of friends high likes, have answered correctly (100%) “high” and the same result has been also confirmed for the status of friends lower likes (Phua and Ahn, 2014).

In a study, Ducoffe (1997) evaluate a method for expanding the websites, using two features of media, its interaction and richness, to increase physical activity of university students. Four types of websites have been created and investigated in a 2×2 experiment between the subjects (high richness versus low richness with high interaction versus low interaction). Generally, media’s richness has the major effect on students’ tendency to refer to correct center while media interaction affects the possibility of offering that center. Although media richness doesn’t have important and significant effect on the offer, a significant interactional effect had been seen, in which the rich media will also lead to offer even when the interaction level is low. Moreover, knowledge, the type of reaction, attitude and reliability of service center are considered as the effects of media interaction and richness on behavioral tendencies. these findings support the utilitarian of using these media features for designing web-based health measures to promote physical activity of university students (Lu et al, 2014).
Sabate et al (2014) try to develop the knowledge of features, introducing the content of brand, through defining how publishing solvency and time framework of content affect customers’ interaction. The concentration in this study has been on Spanish travel agents, having a fan page in Facebook. In case of richness variable, the results proved that the images help increasing the number of related comments to a post but there is no evidence based on the effect of films on the number of comments and unexpectedly, the links, compared to the comments, have negatively affected post popularity (Sabate et al, 2014).

Lee and Jeong (2014) state that proposing a precise brand experience for distinguishing each hotel from others is important due to intangible characteristics in hoteling industry. Based on congruity theory, this study evaluates that how three cases of being equal (that is brand avatar congruity, brand online-offline avatar congruity and its cost congruity) affect
customers’ online experiences and brand trusting. A self-regulatory online evaluation was conducted and using convenient sampling, has been set in the Qualtrics Group. The results indicate that both avatar congruity and online-offline avatar of brand significantly affect customers’ online experiences and trust towards hotel brand (Lee and Jeong, 2014). During consumption, the image belonging to a product or brand reflects an advantage for consumer. Product meaning is determined by the consumer, because the meaning is generated and interpreted by consumers themselves. So, during consumption, personal identity is created and recreated on the basis of use, rather than, on the basis of production or purchase. Consumption becomes more important. Many people identify themselves and communicate itself by their consumption activities, sports, recreation and musical preferences, rather than, their jobs.

![Chart 7](Lee & Jeong, 2014)

Investigating the Korean consumer’s attitude towards social media advertisement and the willingness to join trademark pages, Muk et al (2014) showed that consumers’ willingness for joining brand pages has a direct relationship with social effect, applied on them through social important references and beneficiary values of using media. The social effects can be defined through its positive relationship with creating linkage. This effect may be arising from inviting social media friends for joining brand page.

The results also show that social effect is stronger predictor for willingness to join brand pages, compared to beneficiary values of social media advertisement (Muk, Chung & Kim, 2014).
Investigating the economic value of social networks in increasing the consumers’ experience through Facebook pages, Chen et al (2014) show that the users are affected by technical features of brand Facebook page such as convenience and utilitarian, the aim of which may be reducing buyer’s difficulty while accessing the Facebook pages (Chen et al, 2014).

Cvijikj and Micchahelles (2013) investigated the factors of online participation in Facebook brand pages. To choose the best shows principally, using webpage of fans page list (the list of fan pages 2012), the pages were selected, ranking Facebook pages according to some criteria. The number of fans has been selected as a successful criterion in this study. Based on the shared content, the posts of recreating content have had the most use by page managers (2948 cases, 58% of total). After that, respectively brand-related information posts 698 cases (14%) and payment posts 387 cases (8%) were used. In terms of media type, the posts, containing images, were mostly used (2032 cases, 40% of total) and after that
status posts (1842, 37%), links (688, 14%) and films (473, 9%) respectively were mostly used. Most of managers’ posts are created on the weekends (4047, 80%) within peak times (3224, 64%) (Cvijikj and Micchahelles, 2013).

Kuo and Feng (2013) found out in a study that brand community interactional features lead to high benefits for the members through “brand community participation” and so be more noted. The advantages such as enjoying, socializing and learning are the major factors of society commitments formation. When the members are committed to the community, they won’t feel loyal towards other rival brands (Kuo and Feng, 2013).

**Chart 10** - (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013)
De Vries et al. (2012) stated that selling markets and social media provide very good tools for establishing the relationship with buyers. One of particular methods of developing these relationships is making fan pages in social network sites, in which the companies can put related posts to brand such as film, message, questions, information and other cases. The buyers will be able to like brand post or comment on it by joining brand fans pages. In a research, they have evaluated the data of 11 international brands, actively sent in brand fans pages in social networks site. The results show that posting brand on the top of fans page increases the brand popularity, meanwhile, various stimuli affect the number of likes and ideas. For example, clear and interactional features of brand post increase the number of likes and sharing positive comments about a post brand has a direct relationship with the number of likes. The number of likes can be increased through an interactional characteristic such as a question and their number has a direct relationship with sharing positive or negative comments (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012).
Investigating brand loyalty and the role of its hedonic rate, Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) collected a big sample including 808 functional answers through an online questionnaire, sent in a Facebook page of a confectionary company, and designed a model of four histories (brand satisfaction, brand capital, brand credit, brand confidence) with two aspects of brand honesty (behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty). The results show that brand satisfaction is the most important factor in brand loyalty in chocolate market and after that brand value and brand special value are respectively the next ones. According to the obtained results, brand confidence is the least important factor of brand loyalty because it has only a marginal relationship with brand attitudinal loyalty and hasn’t had an effect on behavioral loyalty. The mediating effect of hedonic rate shows that the effect of brand satisfaction on attitudinal loyalty is significant among the components with higher joy than lower. No other appropriate effect was found (Kuikka and Laukkanen, 2012).
5. Conclusion

Reviewing the history of conducted studies, related to the subject of current study, key variables of each research can be observed in the following table.

**Table 1**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zhang, L. et al., 2014.</td>
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<td>Kim, Y.J. &amp; Han, J., 2014.</td>
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|---------------|-----------------------------------|
              | Sabate, F. et al., 2014.  
              | Zhang, L. et al., 2014.  
| Time Period   | Zhang, L. et al., 2014.  
              | Sabate, F. et al., 2014.  
              | Lu, Y. et al., 2014.  
              | Sabate, F. et al., 2014. |
| Number Of Followers | Zhang, L. et al., 2014.  
                         | Sabate, F. et al., 2014. |

The main problem of this review study includes: effective factors on brand commitment in social networks, emphasizing on the role of brand page. Due to this, experimental models of study were investigated.

Huang (2016) found that person’s satisfaction of their online social life is the strongest motive for tending to continue relationship with social networks (Huang, 2016)

Also, based on the findings of Su et al (2015), brand disclosure and the frequency of interaction have positive relationship with friendship. The findings also confirm the positive relationship between brand language similarity and brand interest similarity with friendship (Su, John Mariadoss & Reynolds, 2015).

Lee and Jeong (2014) state that both avatar congruity and online-offline avatar of brand significantly affect customers’ online experiences and trust towards hotel brand (Lee and Jeong, 2014).

Muk et al (2014) founded out that social effect can be defined through its positive relationship with creating a link. This effect may be arising from inviting social media friends for joining brand pages. The results of their study also showed that social effect is stronger predictor for
willingness to join brand pages, compared to beneficiary values of social media advertisement (Muk, Chung & Kim, 2014).

Kim & Han (2014) state that personalization has a direct relationship with being suitable, credit and recreation of advertising message while it will have negative relationship with motivation and creating excitement (Kim & Han, 2014).

Pin Luarn et al (2015) showed that the type of media and content posts has a significant effect on user's online participation. This study has used liking, commenting and sharing behavior as the scale of measuring user's online participation to show a new phenomenon (Pin, Yu-Fan & Yu-Ping, 2015).

The results of Sabate et al (2014) research proved that the images help increasing the number of related comments to a post but there is no evidence based on the effect of films on the number of comments and unexpectedly, the links, compared to the comments, have negatively affected post popularity (Sabate et al, 2014).

Lu et al (2014) founded out Generally, media’s richness has the major effect on students’ tendency to refer to correct center while media interaction affects the possibility of offering that center (Yu et al, 2014).

The findings of Zhang et al (2014) show that retweeting and commenting are separated microblog behaviors. The aim of retweeting is publishing the information, in which reference credibility (such as user credibility) and utilitarian of posts are of an important role while commenting emphasizes social dialogue and communication and user’s experience as well as post subject are important in it (Zhang et al, 2014).

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Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) showed that brand satisfaction is the most important factor in brand loyalty in chocolate market and after that brand value and brand special value are respectively the next ones (Kuikka and Laukkanen, 2012).

As the result of conducted study, following conceptual model was proposed for future studies.

It is worth noting that in a study in 2017, the researcher investigated this subject, the results of which will be published soon.

**Chart 14** - (Su, John Mariadoss & Reynolds, 2015 ; Muk, Chung & Kim, 2014 ; Sabate et al., 2014)
References


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