

Quantitative Research on the Effects of Following Brands on Twitter on Consumer Brand Attitude

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Abstract : Twitter uses a variety of narrative methods (e.g., messages, featured videos, music, and actual events) to strengthen its cultivation effect. Consumers are receiving mass-produced brand stores or images made by brand managers according to strict market specifications. Drawing on the cultivation theory, this quantitative research investigates how following a brand on Twitter for 12 weeks can cultivate their attitude toward the brand and influence their purchase intentions. We conducted three field experiments on Twitter to test the cultivation effects of following a brand for 12 weeks on consumer attitude toward the followed brand. The cultivation effects were measured by comparing the changes in consumer attitudes before and after they have followed a brand over time. The findings of our experiments suggest that when consumers are exposed to a brand's stable, pervasive, and recurrent tweets on Twitter for 12 weeks, their attitude toward a brand can be significantly changed, which confirms the cultivating effects on consumer attitude. Also, the results indicate that branding activities on Twitter, when properly implemented, can be very effective in changing consumer attitudes toward a brand, increasing the purchase intentions, and increasing their willingness to spread the word-of-mouth for the brand on social media. The cultivation effects are moderated by brand type and consumer age. The research provides three major marketing implications. First, Twitter marketers should create unique content to engage their brand followers to change their brand attitude through steady, cumulative exposure to the branding activities on Twitter. Second, there is a significant moderating effect of brand type on the cultivation effects, so Twitter marketers should align their branding content with the brand type to better meet the needs and wants of consumers for different types of brands. Finally, Twitter marketers should adapt their tweeting strategies according to the media consumption preferences of different age groups of their target markets. This empirical research proves that content is king.

Keywords : tweeting, cultivation theory, consumer brand attitude, purchase intentions, word-of-mouth

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