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Faculty of Business Economics

Master of Management

Master's thesis

How can companies use social marketing techniques on Facebook to successfully influence consumers' purchase intentions?

Minke Gommans

Thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management, specialization International Marketing Strategy

SUPERVISOR :

Prof. dr. Allard VAN RIEL



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2019
2020



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Disclaimer

This master thesis was written during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. This global health crisis might have had an impact on the (writing) process, the research activities and the research results that are at the basis of this thesis.

Acknowledgement

These are one of the last sentences, I will (hopefully) write in my career as a student, which started 6 years ago at University of Antwerp, where I started my bachelor in Veterinary Science. I would have never imagined writing my Master Dissertation in Master of Management, well plot twist, it happened anyway and I am really glad I finally reached this moment.

I wanted to make sure I was researching something I would really enjoy, so I started brain storming and some topics immediately popped into my head. For example, cosmetics, which is a true hobby of mine, additionally my interest in animals and like majority of students I spend quite some time on social media every day. Combining these three topics, I came to the conclusion I would like to research how social marketing on social media could contribute to for example, the decrease of consumption in cosmetics tested on animals. These interests resulted in this Master Dissertation, which I hope you will enjoy reading and learn something from.

Before you dive into this research, I would like to thank Professor Allard van Riel, for his support, ideas, remarks and countless amount of e-mails which were of inestimable value, especially in this time of Corona crisis, where we are not able to meet in person. Thank you!

I also would like to thank my sister, Freya Gommans, for sharing her incredible knowledge on scientific research and SPSS with me, even when she was busy writing her own thesis. Thank you!

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Executive summary

In this master dissertation an answer is given to the question: How can companies use social marketing techniques on Facebook to successfully influence consumers' purchase intentions? Social marketing is a technique that aims at influencing consumer behavior to tackle societal problems. The focus of the majority of social marketing campaigns is on changing behavior to increase the well-being of individuals and/or society, such as the anti-consumption of cigarettes or the increased use of recycled products. In this research, Facebook is used as a medium because it is especially efficient in promoting discussions and dialogues, these dialogues facilitate information transferring, mutual understanding, and improves collaborations between firms and its stakeholders (Huang et al, 2019). This research aims to create more knowledge on how to conduct an effective social marketing campaign on social media.

Prior research of Ardiansyah (2013), that is closely related with this study, suggested that credibility of the message and the source of a social marketing campaign has a positive effect on purchase intentions. Credibility is "a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (Ohanian, 1990, p.41). However, there exists a gap in research on how this type of marketing performs on Facebook and social media in general. The first hypothesis (H1) expected that credibility of the social marketing message and source on social media has a positive effect on purchase intentions. Results supported this hypothesis, showing a significant positive effect of credibility on purchase intentions in a social marketing campaign on Facebook. Thus, social marketing Facebook advertisements with a high degree of message and source credibility were shown to lead to higher purchase intentions than a less credible Facebook post. About half of respondents were asked an additional question about their perceived credibility of the Facebook posts, which in turn makes respondents think more intensively about their purchase intentions in regard to the credibility of the advertisement. Results show that perceived credibility of the social marketing advertisement on Facebook has a significant effect on purchase intentions. This effect of perceived credibility is slightly stronger than the effect of the un-reflected credibility.

Lots of research has been conducted on the effects of interactivity. Interactivity is "the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronized" (Liu and Shrum, 2002, p. 54). It has been suggested that higher levels of interactivity on social networking sites can be favorable in influencing attitudes toward the content, product, and company presented (Dou, 2013; Sicilia, Ruiz, & Munuera, 2005). Additionally, interactivity on websites in general was researched by Chen, Hsu, & Lin, (2010). They argue that interactivity has also a role in shaping online purchase intentions. Combining the findings of several studies in this field rises the second hypothesis (H2), arguing that interactivity on social media positively influence purchase intentions of the case presented in social marketing campaigns. The hypothesis can be partly accepted since the interactivity in this research showed no direct significant effect on purchase intentions. Additionally, the perceived interactivity was tested on approximately 50% of participating respondents, by asking explicitly about the degree of trustworthiness of the Facebook advertisement. This brings the degree of interactivity on top of mind and resulted in a significant effect of the

perceived interactivity on purchase intentions. The acceptance of the hypothesis of interactivity is in line with previous research. Moreover, this research contributes towards the understanding of the effects of interactivity on Facebook.

To conclude, credibility of a social marketing advertisement on Facebook has a positive significant effect on purchase intentions, in contrast to un-reflected interactivity. Interactivity of a social marketing advertisement on Facebook only has a positive significant effect on purchase intentions, when respondents were explicitly asked to express their opinion on the degree of interactivity.

For businesses, it is important to create a credible message, as mentioned before, in some cases message credibility is extra important. For example, when the social marketing campaign deals with an issue not everyone is familiar with, or in a commercial environment where the benefit of purchasing a certain product is not clear to the majority. A straightforward explanation of the problem or benefits is crucial, in order to generate a shift in attitude towards the issue or products advertised.

When a business launches a social marketing campaign, it could be helpful when the business is closely related to the topic of the campaign. This can generate credibility, because the business is estimated to have sufficient knowledge on the topic the social marketing campaign deals about. The consumer will be able to see the fit between the business and its campaign. This results in consumers perceiving their message as credible, this also is positively related to high source credibility. Although, for smaller companies this could be a common pitfall and thus important to devote attention to. As a small company, it is harder to create highly perceived credible messages, because the degree of familiarity of consumers with these types of business will be smaller in general. Resulting in less consumers developing purchase intentions for products of this brand. This relates to the source credibility too. For both small and large companies, it could be helpful to integrate a credible source into the message. Such as facts and numbers that are supported by scientific research, this will reinforce message credibility.

For all kinds of companies, small and large, known and unknown, interactivity is a crucial part in the development of purchase intentions. Results from this experiment show that when there is explicitly asked to take into account the interactivity of the Facebook post, interactivity has a positive link towards purchase intentions. For managers, this is information is of great interest, because drawing attention towards the degree of interactivity on a social marketing Facebook campaign can increase purchase intentions. In a social marketing campaign, a call for interactivity could be useful, such as a simple sentence like "let us know your opinion in the comments". Taking this a step further, interactivity could be encouraged by attaching an incentive on a comment, for instance the chance of winning a prize or getting a coupon.

With the information gained from this study, it can be concluded that there are multiple options for successfully conducting social marketing campaigns on Facebook. Specific for this experiment is that managers must give attention to message and source credibility and interactivity as tools for creating a successful social marketing campaign.

Introduction

Never have there been so many social media users as today; in 2021, the estimated count is on 2,65 billion users (Statista, 2019). Social Media has evolved into a powerful tool for both consumers and organizations. On the one hand, consumers can write and read reviews about a company, communicate with other consumers from all over the world and share their opinions about certain brands and products. On the other hand, it has become easier and cheaper for businesses to target their consumers by social media advertising. Businesses invest more money than ever in Social Media advertising. The Social Media Advertising market is the second biggest market within Digital Advertising. The worldwide revenue of US\$76.2 billion in 2018 is expected to grow to US\$125.5 billion in 2023 (Statista, 2019).

There has been a lot of debate about how businesses can effectively influence consumer buying behavior through social media communication. To examine how behavior can be influenced, it is essential to know what specific factors drive people to behave in a particular way. Behavior is determined by norms, beliefs, attitudes and intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). Thus, when businesses manage to influence the perceptions of their customers towards their product, they might influence customers' attitudes towards the product and, subsequently, a desired customer behavior might be created, such as turning them into brand ambassadors. The main question is now how to influence these aspects and, especially, consumers' attitudes and behavior through social media.

From a marketing point of view, social marketing has been demonstrated to be a highly effective and sustainable technique to influence customer perceptions towards a view that is compatible with society in order to create socially desirable behavior. Some examples are; the need to reduce obesity, tobacco consumption, increase recycling, etc. Even the government has turned to social marketing to deal with these kinds of problems (Pileliené, 2010). As social marketing has the ability to change habits and could be applied to change consumer behavior (Andreasen, 2002), it might thus be an effective method to influence buying behavior, for instance to increase the sales of a particular product or service.

Quite some research has been done on social marketing and it is considered as a successful tool in social behavioral challenges. However, whether this type of marketing can be effectively used on social media is still questioned. This is of great importance because of the major increase in social media use and because most advertisers are shifting to social media marketing as well. In this research, it will be examined if businesses can create consumers' purchase intentions by using social marketing advertising on social media. The last question left aside is what traits of a social marketing advertisements have the biggest effect on purchase intentions. Based on Moore & Rodgers (2005), message and source credibility in different media have a positive effect on purchase intentions. Additionally, interactivity is the process of two people or things working together and influencing each other, on social media it is often a written conversation between multiple consumers or between consumers and the firm. Interactivity is a factor that can increase purchase intentions because it creates customer engagement (Freeman and Chapman, 2012).

Therefore, this research will focus on the effect of message and source credibility of the social marketing campaign on purchase intentions, as well as the influence of interactivity of consumers on purchase intentions. The aim is to create knowledge about determinants of success of a social marketing advertisement on social media to help businesses that focus on making consumer behavior more sustainable develop effective social marketing advertisements in the future.

Business economic motivation

Initially, social marketing is used to create change in habits and tackle societal problems without a profitable intent, although social marketing nowadays is also used in a commercial environment to increase profit, however the profit is generated from products or services that encourage sustainability and make the world a better place. Campaigns can involve the de-marketing of a particular type of product or behavior or the promotion of an alternative type of product or behavior (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S., 2009), such as the use of animal-friendly products. The ability of social marketing to change customers behavior and thus their purchase intentions creates great opportunities for business to use this type of marketing for commercial reasons.

Intentions can quite accurately predict behavior. Intentions are produced from perceived norms and the beliefs of a person, which are the foundation for attitudes and intentions and, subsequently, translate into behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2009). For businesses, it is of interest to try to change consumers' intentions in order to persuade them to pursue certain actions that benefit the business, for example to increase purchases with the result of increasing profit.

Since social media is expanding, great opportunities for businesses to get in touch with consumers are created. Market leader Facebook has 2.5 billion monthly active users as of the fourth quarter of 2019, and a lot of businesses spend enormous marketing budgets on social media advertising to reach these users (Statista, 2020). But what are the benefits for businesses to spend time and money on social media advertising?

One of the main reasons includes the fact that the use of social media websites facilitates businesses to communicate and interact more effectively with their customers. Customers are engaging with brands on social media, which strengthens their experience with the brand and thus supports brand building. To increase the effectiveness of social media use for businesses, conversations between the company and the consumers are needed which can be facilitated by social media (Edosomwan, et al., 2011). A company needs to make time and put effort into responding to their consumers. Another benefit for businesses of social media is that it is a cost-effective method for marketing activities. (Edosomwan et al., 2011).

Academic motivation

The role of social marketing on social media and its effect on consumers' purchase intentions has not yet been investigated extensively. A gap in knowledge exists on how social marketing performs on social media. Social media marketing is not about advertisements interrupting users nor hard selling techniques and it is crucial not to control user generated content (UGC) (Carmichael & Cleave, 2012).

As social marketing is not a hard-selling technique, it could be effective to use social media as a channel.

Problem statement

Social marketing use has been increasing in the past years by all kinds of businesses and governments all over the world. An example includes the well-known anti-smoking and energy-saving campaigns carried out by governments. The use, development and effect of social marketing has been researched extensively by many, but some great opportunities for social marketing advertising to increase its use are left aside in research. General advertising techniques on social media of products and its effects on purchase intentions are researched thoroughly and hence used in reality. Considering social marketing as an advertising strategy that can effectively influence consumer behavior, more attention should be given to the implementation of this type of advertising. Not only for governmental reasons to tackle societal problems but also for businesses to increase their profit by influencing purchase behavior with a beneficial outcome for society in general. This research aims to find out what the impact can be on social marketing advertising on social media on purchase intentions. To create more knowledge on how to conduct an effective social marketing campaign on social media, multiple variables need to be researched. In this research, the focus will be on the impact of the credibility of social marketing advertising. Additionally, interactivity will be researched because this is a very specific trait of social media. The ability of interactivity makes social media a promising platform for this type of marketing.

Research question

How can companies use social marketing techniques on Facebook to successfully influence consumer purchase intentions?

The aim of this research is to find out how companies can use social marketing (a technique to change consumer behavior) on Facebook, to influence the decisions people make in terms of which product of service to buy.

Sub questions

In this research, the social marketing technique used is an experimental advertisement on Facebook, which is a reflection of a real advertisement. There are multiple ways businesses use advertising on Facebook, the main factors of an advertising are the message and the source. It is of utmost importance for advertisers to create credible messages because the attitude of the consumer can be affected by this factor. It is crucial to have a credible message in order to convince consumers to buy the product and thus to increase their purchase intentions (Wu & Wang, 2011). Additionally, the source credibility amplifies to the total perceived credibility. Source credibility refers to how much the message receiver believes in the sender. It is assumed that if the source emits expertise in the field the advertising is dealing about, the consumer will trust the brand. Thus, message and source credibility are important factors in effective persuasion (Wu & Wang, 2011).

RQ1: Does the credibility of the social marketing message and source on Facebook have a positive

effect on purchase intentions?

In an environment, such as Facebook, where people can easily share their opinions about the advertised product on the one hand and interact with each other and the brand on the other hand is an important factor to develop or nullify purchase intentions. These opinions and flow of comments and responses, called interactivity and are expected to have a positive influence on purchase intentions (Ariel & Avidar, 2015).

RQ2: Does interactivity on a social marketing campaign on Facebook have a positive influence on purchase intentions?

Approach

This study aims to investigate the effect of credibility and interactivity in social marketing advertising on purchase intentions. This will be done by means of an experiment including four social media advertisements dealing about non-animal tested cosmetic products, such as shower gel, shampoo, body lotion, etc. These four social media posts all have a different combination of high and low message and source credibility and interactivity. The specifications of these post will be elaborated on in the method section of this research. With data generated from the experiment including the posts, the effect of the variables will be measured. Resulting in an increase of knowledge on how to develop effective social marketing advertising on social media.

Literature review

Reasoned action approach

The basis of this master dissertation is the reasoned action approach defined by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975). There will be further elaborated on this theory to explain how customer behavior can be influenced with the use of social marketing, and more in particular how it can be used on social media. The reasoned action approach starts from behavior and its immediate antecedents. The first antecedent is intentions, consisting of attitudes toward the behavior and beliefs in general. To predict and understand human social behavior, it is important to first define behavior and how to measure it. In contrary to beliefs, attitudes, and intentions, behaviors are observable events. Behavior is composed of four elements; the action performed, the target at which the action is directed, the context in which it is performed, and the time at which it is performed. When there occurs a change in any one of these elements, a change in behavior should be considered (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975).

Behavioral intentions are the most significant direct antecedents of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2009). The intention is examined first and will be a good predictor of the behavior. Intentions are generally used in doing research, because it is too difficult and costly to observe all participants' actual behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2009). While we accept that attitudes are among the most significant determinants of intentions and behaviors, a basic belief of the Ajzen and Fishbein theory requires that the measure of attitude conforms to the principle of compatibility. In order to have predictive validity, the source of the attitude must be composed of the same target, action, context and time elements as the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2009). For example, pregnant women were asked about their attitudes toward breast feeding (action) opposed to bottle feeding (context) their babies (target) for six weeks (time). Six weeks after delivery their actual feeding practices were measured, resulting in the finding that attitudes toward the breast feeding had a high positive correlation with the employed feeding method (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Behavioral beliefs provide the basis for attitudes. These attitudes in turn, lead to intentions and actions. The social environment has a strong influence on people's intentions and thus on their actual behavior. This social influence is called the social norm, a term often used by sociologists. Social norms are behaviors that are generally accepted in a group or society. Starting from this perspective, norms are the basis of behavior, these norms affect the interest of the individual and also the larger social system (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975).

For businesses, it is of interest to try to change consumers' behavioral intentions in order to persuade them to make certain actions that can benefit the business, for example to increase purchases. From a marketing point of view, social marketing is one of the most effective and sustainable techniques to influence customer perceptions. Taking into account that social marketing is a beneficial strategy in influencing consumer behavior in societal issues, it could be a promising tool in influencing consumer behavior in a commercial environment. This would translate into influencing consumers' purchase intentions. Bearing in mind that these purchases still have to positively contribute to society as a whole. When tackled right, business could increase profits by using social marketing.

The concept of social marketing

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) defined social marketing as: “the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research”. Social marketing can be applied in a situation in which a socially critical individual behavior needs to be addressed in a target audience (Andreasen, 2002). The focus of the majority of social marketing campaigns is on changing behavior to increase the well-being of individuals and/or society, such as the anti-consumption of cigarettes, the increased use of recycled products. A wide range of social issues can be tackled by this type of marketing. As mentioned in the introduction, social marketing initiates behavior change to tackle societal problems, or to guide towards (anti-) use of certain products and thus influence purchase intentions.

A social marketing approach can provide several benefits considering obstacles a customer may face regarding societal problems and can change their point of view. Additionally, social marketing seeks to go beyond raising awareness; it aims at changing behaviors in the long term. Flexibility is another benefit of social marketing, as it can be applied to different target groups or individuals. People with different awareness and responsiveness levels can also be targeted by this approach (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S., 2009). It is hard to assess the contributions of social marketing to a particular change in behavior but it is widely believed that social marketing has played an important role in, for example, reducing national smoking rates (Andreasen, 2002).

Social marketing is based on voluntary behavior change; thus, it is not the aim to force people into changing their behavior, it is about trying to influence their beliefs on which decisions are based on. For example, smoking rates among adults have been on a downward trajectory for decades without banning the consumption of cigarettes, people are made aware of the health risks, anti-smoking campaigns played a big role in this (American Heart Association News, 2018). Social marketers are aware of the fact that consumers will more easily change their behavior if there is a clear benefit to obtain by changing their behavior (Stead, Gordon, Angus & McDermott, 2006). The challenge that social marketers are facing while generating behavior change is not different from a commercial marketer (Andreasen, 2002). However, Bloom and Novelli (1981) argue that there is a difference in the challenges social marketers face in that they are significantly more daunting. Overall, their communications options are somewhat limited and they need to share large amounts of information in their messages (Bloom & Novelli, 1981). Therefore, marketing techniques such as consumer oriented market research, segmentation and targeting and the social marketing mix should be used. Targeting and the marketing mix will be discussed in this research. Finally, the end goal to improve the business conducting the social marketing as well as the welfare of society and the individual. This distinguishes social marketing from other forms of marketing (Stead, Gordon, Angus & McDermott, 2006).

Social Marketing Mix

Marketers in general view the marketing problem as developing the right product accompanied by the right promotion, for the right price at the right place. These key variables in the marketing mix

have been named the four P's by McCarthy (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). Just like commercial marketing, social marketing also has the goal to understand the target market, the competition and the marketing context (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S., 2009). Knowledge about these elements is needed to be able to create a custom-made marketing mix to achieve a certain goal. Based on the commonly known marketing mix, the 4 P's (price, place, promotion, product), several specifications need to be revisited. This mix is developed to compete against current behavior which the social marketer is seeking to change (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S., 2009).

Proposition instead of products

Although social marketing can focus on the promotion of a particular product, it mainly emphasizes changing behavior or purchasing behavior. Therefore, it can be assumed that social marketing promotes a particular proposition. The social marketing campaign often includes a social case in a manner in which their target audience finds desirable and is willing to purchase (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). For example, when a cosmetics company tries to sell shower gel, the focus is not on the product itself, but on the fact the product is not tested on animals. This proposition could be: "don't purchase animal-tested products" or "purchase ethically". Those propositions represent a specific behavior or set of behaviors that social marketers wish to see adopted and maintained within society. An example of consumption reduction effectively implemented by social marketing campaigns, is the "cycling"-campaign which was introduced in Australia, Denmark and Canada, stimulating people to move by bike instead of using their car (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009). In general, the social marketer remains aware of the core product and tries to create various tangible products and services around the social objective (Kotler & Roberto, 1989).

Accessibility instead of place

In order to create a successful social marketing campaign in the context of the 4 P's, a clear response channel is crucial. Place in this context means making information or products and services easily accessible. The social marketing campaign needs to be attainable to convince people to adopt new motivations and form new intentions to come to the desired social action (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). For example, concerning the cycling-campaign: offer access to appropriate cycling routes and route information, etc. to motivate and maintain cycling behavior (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009).

Psychological cost instead of price

In most social marketing interventions, the costs of changing behavior are not financial. While referring to costs, this term mainly represents a cost in terms of effort and time, overcoming physical barriers, or even physical addiction (e.g., smoking). Especially in the case of anti-consumption or consumption reduction, the price is unlikely to be economic, since it creates savings rather than expenses (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009). The cost of involving in social marketing refers to the psychological cost to not keep up with the fashion, tradition or habits (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009).

Social communication instead of promotion

Social marketing tries to create an evolution in customer behavior by making efforts to change previous intentions and, in such a way, achieve a social change. Communication is an important

factor in convincing people to change their perceptions and therefore their actions. More specific it is the communication persuasion strategy and tactics that will make an idea familiar, acceptable, and even desirable to the audience (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009). The same is used in the well-known and highly convincing commercial marketing. The ultimate goal of both marketing types is to encourage the trial, adoption and identification of the product, but social marketing also encourages the acceptance, adoption and maintenance of a particular social proposition or behavior (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009).

The benefits of this social marketing mix lie in the degree to which they are more oriented towards the consumer, rather than the conventional marketing mix which is centered around the product, its price, its place of distribution and how it is promoted. The altered social marketing mix focusses on the costs of involvement to the consumer, accessibility for the consumer, and communication with the consumer instead (Peattie, K. & Peattie, S. 2009).

However, in social marketing additional components in the development of a campaign are important. A wide range of issues that social marketing tries to tackle requires encountering of providers of healthcare and policy makers. To create and successfully emit social marketing campaigns, partnerships must be established, in order to gather sufficient funding. Partners can involve key stakeholders, government agencies, advocacy groups, and health foundations (Suarez-Almazor, 2011).

Target audience

Research has shown that the impact of social marketing is more effective if a specific group is targeted, so that the strategies to change behavior can be customized (Geller, 1989). In a research about littering campaigns, it was seen that people who were already concerned about the environment had a bigger impact. Furthermore, particular target behaviors should be matched with specific audiences and situations before developing a social marketing program (Geller, 1989).

It is believed by social strategists that there are three societal levels in which interventions can bring a major social change. The first case is that social marketing can focus on individual change. This is often practiced by a psychologist, social workers, and social marketers (Farguar et al, 1985). Second, some marketers state that the focus must be on whole communities (Farquhar et al., 1985). They are convinced that social norms and local leadership are powerful determinants of how consumers behave. According to Gray-Felder and Deane (1999), communities play a major role in the design, implementation and evaluation of the social marketing program. Moreover, the motivation for change comes from the community and is therefore perceived credible and thus easier to adopt. The third approach states that change is constrained by social structures, for example, social laws, institutions and public policies. The following example will make clear how social structures will be translated into real life situations. For example, poorly designed roads and cars, or an excessive speed limit are reasons why people die in highway crashes. Wearing a seat belt or slowing down your car only has a small impact; the only solution is to change the speed limit which is in control of government. The focus in this approach is on changing the media, policies and laws (Wallack, 1990).

The following critical aspect of social marketing should be considered; Research has shown that education towards behavior change is more effective in a small group than it is in large groups and should include interactive demonstrations (Geller, 1989). This technique of social marketing is very time-consuming. Unfortunately, in practice this is not very convenient, social marketers often focus on larger groups because of financial situations and time restrictions of businesses carrying out the social marketing campaigns don't allow this small group approach. In order to make people aware of social problems all over the world, the use of written messages will be a necessity. Therefore, social media is estimated an effective tool for sharing written messages easily and globally.

It is of great interest for businesses to find an efficient channel to launch social marketing campaigns. As mentioned before, it is too costly and time-consuming to conduct social marketing in small groups and face-to-face; therefore, a solution should be found to effectively bring a written social marketing message across. As Geller (1989) argued it is best to involve the target audience and interact with them in the process of social marketing, which requires a fitting channel. Unfortunately, there is little knowledge on how to translate these campaigns onto new interactive and online environments. Social networking sites such as Facebook could be an effective channel for social marketing (Freeman & Chapman, 2012).

Social media

At the time, one of the most active and popular online communication channels are social media. These are primarily designed for networking, which is "a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social networks know a wide variety of technological applications which results in hundreds of different platforms with a wide range of interests. Most of them are used to maintain social relationships, with existing contacts. Although even strangers can connect with each other on social media, often they share interests, needs, political views, etc. (Huang Clarke, Heldsinger & Tian, 2019).

This research will particularly focus on the performance of social marketing on one of the biggest social media websites, Facebook. A high performance social marketing campaign will result in an increase in consumers' purchase intentions. Facebook is defined as "a social utility that helps people share information and communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers" (facebook.com). Facebook was launched in 2004 and expanded quickly, including high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and eventually everyone who has access to the online world. The social medium is a great educational tool because of its beneficial qualities, for example peer feedback is given and received easily which also stimulates interaction (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Social media is of interest for businesses because it is especially efficient in promoting discussions and dialogues, these dialogues facilitate information transferring, mutual understanding, and improves collaborations between firms and its stakeholders (Huang et al, 2019).

Social media in marketing

In marketing, place is defined by geographic location. However, as mentioned before, in social marketing, place is not necessarily where the business conducting the marketing is located or where the product is sold. Rather, it is where consumers get in touch with the advertising, with the goal of changing their attitude towards the subject in case and thus also change their behavioral intentions. Social media creates the opportunity for social marketers to personalize place and reach target consumers at critical behavioral decision points. This also enhances the ability of social marketers to engage with consumers in comfortable places such as home, work, or schools, precisely at the time that decisions are made. Put differently, new media can change the traditional "place" from public places such as grocery stores, to people's natural settings and easily reach them via the Internet, which is almost anytime and anywhere accessible (Bernhardt, Mays & Hall, 2012).

For marketers, it has always been a challenge to come up with plans and designs in advertising to create an effective and attractive relationship with customers. Worldwide businesses have been thinking about how to implement social media platforms in their communication strategies to attract customers and to build profitable marketing relationships with those customers. Social media is a great tool for firms to create interactive communication with customers (Alalwan, 2018). These social media technologies make it possible to improve the educational learning environment because of its high accessibility, consumer- friendliness, interactivity, and networking capabilities, which makes it a promising channel for social marketing (Huang et al, 2019).

Compared to traditional mass media, ads on social media are much more informative and therefore

stimulate the interactive (two-way) communication between the firm and its customers (Alalwan, 2018). This interactive communication is crucial for a successful social marketing campaign (Geller, 1989). Tuten and Solomon (2017) state that social media is a successful tool for promotion and communication because it helps to shape the consumer's decision-making process. This is of great importance for social marketing, which aims at influencing consumers' purchase intentions.

Credibility on social media

The question for social marketers is what channel they can best use for their social marketing campaign. In the first place, the channel needs to be credible to make a change in the attitude of the recipient (Ohanian, 1990). Social media is overall perceived as a credible source of information for "products and services than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotional mix" (Bernhardt, Mays & Hall, 2012, p 131.). Therefore, social media is expected to be an appropriate channel to launch a social marketing campaign on. In this research, the focus is on Facebook and thus will be the channel of use in the experiment.

Second, the message shared needs to be credible as well, to influence consumer purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1990). MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) define ad content credibility as "the extent to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the ad to be truthful and believable" (p. 51).

In social marketing advertising, the credibility of the message seems to be of lesser importance in general. Because the message shared exists out of facts that are overall well-known by the society (Ishaverma, 2014), such as, 'smoking is bad for your health' and 'wearing a seatbelt in a car is increasing your safety'. However, in this research, it is contended that message credibility is important because of the topic of animal testing in cosmetics, it is estimated that not everyone is aware of this issue.

Third, source credibility is defined "a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (Ohanian, 1990, p.41). Two dimensions of source credibility could be identified. Namely expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise is the ability to provide accurate information coming from the knowledge, experience, training or skills a source possesses (Erdogan, 1999). Trustworthiness has been shown to be part of source credibility. This refers to the consumer's confidence or belief in the communicator for carrying messages in an unbiased and honest manner (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Ohanian, 1990). This is of great importance in social marketing. The provider of the information or the company that launches the social marketing campaign has an impact on the degree of credibility. For example, it is more credible when a public health company or a doctor shares information on social media about the effect of smoking on health than someone who has no expertise in this field.

There is a lack of research in the field of message and source credibility on social media especially in regard to social marketing advertising. Therefore, it is important to conduct research in this field. Confirmed by a study of Ardiansyah (2013) when the source credibility is low, it is difficult for social marketers to change the target audiences' attitude, but when the credibility of the source is high, it might be easier for marketers to form the desired attitude. In this study both message and source

credibility will be implied in the experiment. It is of great interest to research the effect of a message and source credibility of a social marketing advertisement on social media. Based on previous research it is estimated that credibility can have a positive effect on the by social marketers' desired customer attitude and thus on purchase intention. It is for businesses of great interest to gain knowledge about this topic to conduct successful and efficient social marketing campaigns on social media.

RQ1: Does the credibility of the social marketing message and source on Facebook have a positive effect on purchase intentions?

H1: Credibility of the social marketing message and source on Facebook has a positive effect on purchase intentions.

Interactivity on social media

Interactivity is agreed to be an important element in the process of communication (Ariel & Avidar, 2015). Nevertheless, no clear agreement has been found yet about the definition of interactivity. However, the existence of three types of messages in the communication process is clear: one-way message, two-way messages where the messages focus only on the requested information and not beyond it and a flow of two-way messages (Ariel & Avidar, 2015). In this research, we will focus on a two-way flow of messages, which creates interactive communication between a sender and a receiver and vice versa. As such, not only the last messages are taken into account in the response, but the conversation as a whole, which leads to the continuation of interaction (Ariel & Avidar, 2015).

Over the past years, interactivity on social media got lots of attention from researchers, often referred to as eWOM (Saffer, Sommerfeldt, Taylor, 2013; Chu & Kim, 2011; Mossberger, Wu, Crawford, 2013), because it is a critical and crucial aspect of social online platforms. Individuals can enlarge their horizons and perceptions by effectively using this technology feature. There are different ways of interpreting the concept of interactivity, one group of researchers defines it as the interaction and communication process between people, other focus on the interaction of people and technical devices, thus focused on the technological aspect. A definition that fits both views is that interactivity is "the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronized" (Liu and Shrum, 2002, p. 54).

Research into interactivity as a medium characteristic has mainly been conducted in the context of new media (Sundar, Xu, 2010; Kiouis, 2002; Smith, 2010). Nevertheless, interactivity exists in both new and traditional media. The level of interactivity is different for each exchange of information and determined by the communication process. It is often thought that new media such as social media are more interactive than traditional media, which could be considered untrue. However, new media enable interactivity and help to break down the traditional differentiation between mass and interpersonal communication (Ariel & Avidar, 2015). This is an important perspective to consider when doing research in this field.

Research by Dou (2013) and Sicilia, Ruiz, & Munuera (2005) has suggested that higher levels of interactivity on social networking sites can work in favor of attitudes toward the content, product, and the company itself. For example, the effects of organizational Twitter interactivity are hypothesized that higher levels of interactivity on the part of a message sender (organization) may lead to a better-quality relationship with a message recipient (Saffer, Sommerfeldt & Taylor, 2013). With the help of the high engagement of customers on social media, companies in the commercial sector have created highly successful advertising campaigns. Therefore, it could be assumed that the level of engagement created by interactivity can also help to create successful social marketing campaigns quickly and inexpensively (Freeman & Chapman, 2012). However, these studies are mainly dealing about the effect of interactivity on relationships and attitudes, this study is conducted to research the effect of interactivity on purchase intentions.

Several previous studies supported that interactivity has a crucial role in the formation of the customer's purchase intention (Ott, Vafeiadi, Kumble & Waddell, 2016; Jiang, Chan, Tan & Chua, 2010; Lee, 2005). More specific examples are given by Lee (2005), who reports that the intentions to use mobile commerce are influenced by interactivity. Additionally, interactivity has also a role in shaping online purchase intentions, consumers are less secure about their online purchase made when the website is less interactive (Chen, Hsu, & Lin, 2010). In line with this research, assumptions are made that the customers' purchase intentions could be shaped by products presented in social media ads with a high degree of interactivity (Ishaverma, 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis proposes that:

RQ2: Does interactivity on a social marketing campaign on Facebook have a positive influence on purchase intentions?

H2: Interactivity of a social marketing campaign on Facebook has a positive effect on purchase intentions.

Method

Materials

A fictional social marketing advertisement on Facebook will be created. As Facebook is often used for businesses to promote products, this is an appropriate channel for this experiment. Not all people are positively related to the same social marketing subjects, thus the challenge is to find a subject most people have the same opinion about. Therefore, animal testing is used as the subject for the campaign, since it is assumed that almost everybody is against animal testing in cosmetics. To ensure that the social marketing campaign refers to both men and women, the case includes cosmetics products everybody uses, such as shampoo, shower gel, etc. In this way, four Facebook posts will be created. All four posts use the same advertising picture, consisting of a slogan "Forever against animal testing" and the cosmetic products itself, these posts are based on a real-life post of The Body Shop (The Body Shop, 2018). The posts differ in credibility of the message (written in English) and the source and interactivity. The first post has a low message and source credibility and low interactivity, the second is exactly the same, but with a high interactivity. The source sharing the Facebook post is a fictional business selling soap called "The Soap Shop". The message is a self-written message with a low credibility but is still realistic. The other 2 Facebook posts consist of high message and source credibility. The message is based on a real-life social media message from the brand "The Body Shop" which is a brand that explicitly is against animal testing (The Body Shop, 2019). So, the third Facebook post consists out of one with a high message and source credibility and a low interactivity. The fourth is the same, but again the low interactivity is switch to a high interactivity. The source or these posts with high credibility is the organization "PETA" which stands for People for Ethical Treatment of Animals and is the largest animal rights organization in the world, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters (PETA, 2020) and thus it assumed as a highly credible source.

Given at the start of the experiment is an explanation and example of social marketing, to make sure that the respondents know what social marketing is. Then questions are asked about their attitude towards social marketing advertising on Facebook in general. It is important to examine the respondents' attitude because attitude is a determinant of behavioral intentions, which is the goal of gaining knowledge about this research. In the experiment, a between-subjects design is used, the respondents will be exposed to either one of the Facebook posts. After observing this post, they are asked several questions about their purchase intentions for the displayed products.

Design

To investigate the effect on purchase intentions of source and message credibility and interactivity of social marketing advertising on Facebook, an experimental study will be conducted. More specifically a 2x2 experimental between-subjects factorial design is the basis of this research.

Instruments

First, the respondents will be tested to examine their attitude towards social marketing advertising on Facebook. Attitude is a valid predictor of purchase intentions; therefore, these data are of interest

to examine whether respondents are positively or negatively related to the concept of social marketing and if it has an effect on their purchase intentions. Based on the research of Boateng & Okoe (2015) the attitude of the respondents is measured, for example by asking, "I consider social marketing advertising on Facebook a good thing." and "I consider social marketing advertising on Facebook very essential.". Measuring is done using 7-point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Additional questions could have been asked about attitude towards animal testing in cosmetics, this is a control variable for purchase intentions. This could be of interest in future research.

Purchase intentions are measured after seeing one of the four Facebook posts. The Facebook posts range in two states of credibility and interactivity, low and high, and are thus dichotomous variables. Questions are based on the study of Alalwan (2018), measured on a 7-point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A range of the questions are: "I will buy products that are advertised on Facebook." and "I plan to purchase products that are promoted on Facebook."

One part of respondents is explicitly asked about their opinion of the credibility and interactivity of the Facebook posts. This means that these respondents actively answered questions about the manipulated variables. This creates priming and has an effect on the answers on the following questions about purchase intentions. By creating awareness on the manipulated variables, answers will probably be more extreme. This was confirmed by the answers of the non-primed respondents, who's answers differed from the primed respondents. This will be elaborated on in the results. The question posed to measure perceived credibility is: "I would consider this Facebook post as trustworthy if I would see this on Facebook". To measure the perceived degree of interactivity respondents are asked: "I would consider the comments between the client and the business as an interactive conversation". Both questions are measured using a 7-point Likert scale, answer options ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Sampling

Define target population

There are no restrictions for filling in this survey. Even people who don't use Facebook can be used as respondents, because they will have a certain attitude towards social marketing and be able to create buying intentions by seeing an advertisement.

Select sampling procedure

The questionnaire is sent out via social media (Facebook and Instagram and WhatsApp), a link got posted where respondents can anonymously participate in the research. Convenience sampling is thus used for the most part. Surveys were collected in the period between 8 and 11 April 2020. The questionnaire is shared by a decent amount of people, to apply the Snowball method.

Determine sample size

The sample size is determined per number of Facebook posts. For each Facebook post a minimal count of 20 respondents is needed to create a representative sample. Assuming that the population is completely homogenous: this is a rule of thumb, more inspired by feasibility than representativeness. In fact, approximately 50 respondents per Facebook post were collected. Resulting in a total sample size of 192 respondents.

Results

A total of 192 respondents filled in and completed the questionnaire. These respondents all answered questions about their attitude towards social marketing, afterwards they were shown alternately one of four Facebook posts dealing about animal testing in cosmetic products. All four Facebook posts had different combinations of high or low credibility and interactivity. Taking into account the Facebook advertisement the respondents saw, they were asked about their purchase intentions for the advertised non-animal tested cosmetic products. To approximately half of the sample two additional questions about perceived credibility and interactivity were posed explicitly.

Control variables

Of all people who completed the survey, 68.2% was female and 31.8% was male. The biggest group of respondents, 55.7% was between the age of 18 and 24. Followed by 24% of people between 25 and 34. The group of people between 35 and 44 represented 5.7%. The remaining part consists out of 3.6% which is between 45 and 54 years old, only 1% indicated to be older than 65.

The main group, namely 51.0 % have obtained a bachelor degree, followed by 29.2% with a master degree. 19.8% people finished secondary school.

Reliability analysis

For both attitude and purchase intentions the Cronbach's alfa was determined. All dimensions have a Cronbach's alfa over 0.9, taking into account that Cronbach's alpha is an indicator of reliability of the measurement instrument (0.7=cutoff value). It can be stated that all questions about attitude as well as purchase intentions measured the predetermined construct.

Manipulation check

A manipulation check was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the experiment. This check needed to make clear whether there was a significant effect between credibility and interactivity as independent variables and purchase intentions as the dependent variable. 42 respondents were asked to fill in the survey, the four different Facebook posts alternated, resulting in a sample size of approximately 10 respondents per Facebook post. This data was necessary to decide whether the experiment could be carried out to the whole sample, or adjustments needed to be made.

From the manipulation check the following data were retrieved: An independent samples t-test was conducted with the mean perceived credibility of all posts. Levene's test $p=.041 < .05$, equal variances are not assumed. There is a significant difference in the credibility perceptions of respondents who were showed a high or low credible Facebook post ($t(38,077)=3.678, p=.001$). Taking into account the 7-point Likert scale, ranges from 1 = strongly agree (high), to 7 = strongly disagree (low). The low credible posts, more specific with a low message and low source credibility ($M=4.45, SD=2.04$) were found to have indeed a lower perceived credibility than the high credible Facebook posts ($M=2.45, SD=1.47$) these were perceived having a higher credibility by the respondents. This suggests that the manipulation check for credibility was successful.

To test interactivity of the Facebook posts, a one samples t-test was used. This test was used because the perceived interactivity only got tested for posts showing in fact a high interactivity. The test value was set at 3.5, this corresponds with the answers "somewhat agree and neither agree nor disagree" pointing to a positive answer towards the interactivity, the mean answer about interactivity thus should be under the value of 3.5. Respondents who saw a highly interactive Facebook post reported that their mean perception of the interaction ($M=2.00$, $SD=1.10$) compared to the factual degree interactivity of the Facebook posts ($t(20)=6.28$, $p<.001$). There is a significant effect in the interaction perception of respondents who were showed a high interactive Facebook post. The manipulation check testing interactivity was successful. The same Facebook posts in regard to credibility and interactivity can be used to research a large set of respondents.

Manipulation check verification

The independent samples t-test and one sample t-test was re-conducted with the entire sample of 142 respondents. Levene's test now shows that equal variances are assumed $p=0.068 > 0.05$. The test still reports a significant difference perceived credibility of the low and high credible Facebook posts ($t(129)=3.50$, $p=.001$). Post with low credibility ($M=4.28$, $SD= 1.88$) were found to have a lower perceived credibility than posts developed specially to emit a high credibility ($M=3.17$, $SD=1.72$) respondents did indeed perceive these posts as credible.

To re-measure the interactivity level on the bigger sample, the one sample t-test was used, again with a similar test-value of 3.5. Still a significant effect between the factual interactivity and the perceived interactivity of the Facebook posts ($t(65)=4.02$, $p<.001$). The mean answer of the respondents was that they "somewhat agree" with the fact that there is a high interactivity ($M=2.74$, $SD=1.53$).

Effect of credibility and interactivity on purchase intentions

A two-way analysis of variance with Facebook post credibility and interactivity as factors showed a significant effect of credibility on purchase intentions ($F(1,188)=12.06$, $p=.001$). Interactivity was not found to have a significant effect on purchase intentions ($F(1,188)=1.80$, $p=.170$). However, interactivity is leaning towards a significant effect regarding the limited sample size; there could be a significant effect when the sample size would be scaled up. The interaction effect between credibility and interactivity is not statistically significant ($F(1,19)=0.17$, $p=.684$), thus in the experiment of Facebook posts interactivity and credibility don't reinforce each other in their effect on purchase intentions.

Facebook posts with a high degree of message and source credibility ($M=3.59$, $SD=1.61$) were shown to have a greater effect on purchase intentions than a low credible Facebook post ($M=4.41$, $SD=1.65$).

Effect of reflected credibility and reflected interactivity on purchase intentions

A two-way analysis of variance with perceived credibility of the Facebook posts and the perceived interactivity of the Facebook posts as factors showed a significant effect of both credibility and

interactivity on purchase intentions. Credibility had a slightly stronger effect on purchase intentions ($F(1,96)=68.16$, $p<.001$) than interactivity ($F(5,403)$, $p=.022$). So, when respondents were explicitly asked to think about the degree of credibility and interactivity in the Facebook posts, they become more aware of these variables which reflects in their purchase intentions. Resulting in a statistically significant effect of interactivity on purchase intentions, in contrary to previous test, where interactivity was not significant.

Facebook posts where message and source credibility were estimated high by respondents ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.77$) were shown to have a greater effect on purchase intentions than a Facebook post with low credible perceptions ($M=4.50$, $SD=1.68$). Regarding to Facebook posts with an interactivity perceived high by respondents ($M=3.76$, $SD=1.67$) were shown to have a stronger effect on purchase intentions than the Facebook posts where interactivity was estimated low by respondents ($M=4.62$, $SD=1.85$).

The interaction effect between perceived credibility and perceived interactivity is not statistically significant ($F(1,96)=0.30$, $p=.589$), thus in the experiment of Facebook posts interactivity and credibility don't reinforce each other in the effect on purchase intentions.

Effect of reflected credibility, reflected interactivity and attitude on purchase intentions

A multiple regression analysis showed that three variables entered, attitude towards social marketing, perceived credibility of the message and source of the Facebook posts and interactivity on the Facebook posts, explained 65,1% of the variance in purchase intentions of the advertised product ($F(3,98)=63.93$, $p<.001$). Attitude, credibility and interactivity are significant predictors for purchase intentions.

Attitude towards social marketing was shown to be a significant predictor for purchase intentions of products in a social marketing advertisement ($B=0.35$, $p<.001$), as well as perceived credibility ($B=0.57$, $p<.001$) and perceived interactivity ($B=0.14$, $p=.047$). Purchase intentions increase with 0.345 SD for each increase of 1 SD in attitude, given that all other variables are kept constant. When purchase intentions go up with 0.57 SD, perceived credibility will increase with 1 SD, given that all other variables are kept constant. Purchase intentions will rise with 0.14 SD if perceived interactivity increases with 1 SD, given that all other variables are kept constant.

Effect of gender, age and education on purchase intentions

A one-way analysis of variance showed a non-significant effect of gender ($F(1,190)=2.28$, $p=.133$), age ($F(5,186) <1$, $p=.884$) and education ($F(2,189)=2.33$, $p=.100$) on purchase intentions.

Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine the effects of credibility and interactivity of a social marketing campaign launched on Facebook on purchase intentions. Prior research of Ardiansyah (2013), that is closely related with this study, suggested that credibility of the message and the source of a social marketing campaign has a positive effect on purchase intentions. However, there exists a gap in research on how this type of marketing performs on Facebook and social media in general. This is of great importance for businesses and even the government, because Facebook and other social media are cost-efficient platforms to advertise on (Freeman & Chapman, 2012).

The first hypothesis (H1) expected that credibility of the social marketing message and source on social media has a positive effect on purchase intentions. Results supported this hypothesis, showing a significant positive effect of credibility on purchase intentions in a social marketing campaign on Facebook. Thus, social marketing Facebook advertisements with a high degree of message and source credibility were shown to lead to higher purchase intentions than a less credible Facebook post. These results are in line with previous research about credibility. The additional value of this study are the insights into the effect of credibility on Facebook, something that was not researched before. About half of the respondents were asked an additional question about their perceived credibility of the Facebook posts, which in turn makes respondents think more intensively about their purchase intentions in regard to the credibility of the advertisement. Results show that perceived credibility of the social marketing advertisement on Facebook has a significant effect on purchase intentions. This effect of perceived credibility is slightly stronger than the effect of the un-reflected credibility.

Lots of research has been conducted on the effects of interactivity. However, unfortunately, no studies were found that discuss the effect of interactivity on the effectiveness of social marketing advertisement on Facebook on purchase intentions. One of the effects researched extensively is the effect of interactivity on attitude towards an object, which is an antecedent of behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975), however the direct effect on purchase intentions has not yet been investigated. It has been suggested that higher levels of interactivity on social networking sites can be favorable in influencing attitudes toward the content, product, and company presented (Dou, 2013; Sicilia, Ruiz, & Munuera, 2005). Additionally, interactivity on websites in general was researched by Chen, Hsu, & Lin, (2010). They argue that interactivity has also a role in shaping online purchase intentions, consumers are less secure about their online purchase made when the website is less interactive.

Combining the findings of several studies in this field rises the second hypothesis (H2), arguing that interactivity on social media positively influence purchase intentions of the case presented in social marketing campaigns. Results for interactivity were obtained in the same way as for credibility. The hypothesis can be partly accepted since the interactivity in this research showed no direct significant effect on purchase intentions. However, the results are leaning towards a significant effect, taking into account the small sample size, this hypothesis could possibly be accepted when sample size would be bigger. Additionally, the perceived interactivity was tested on approximately 50% of

participating respondents, by asking explicitly about the degree of trustworthiness of the Facebook advertisement. This brings the degree of interactivity on top of mind and resulted in a significant effect of the perceived interactivity on purchase intentions. The acceptance of the hypothesis of interactivity is in line with previous research. Moreover, this research contributes towards the understanding of the effects of interactivity on Facebook. Additionally, only the effect of interactivity on attitude was studied before, although attitude is a predictor for purchase intentions, this effect was neglected in prior research. Although both perceived credibility and perceived interactivity have a significant effect on purchase intentions, the interaction effect of these variables don't reinforce the effect on purchase intentions. This could be due to the fact that the interaction is partial. It is unable to calculate this with SPSS, this would refer to a technical reason. However, it could also be that there really is no interaction effect. In that case, credibility and interactivity are thus independent variables. Both hypotheses can be accepted, taking into account that interactivity only has an effect on purchase intentions when there is explicitly asked to focus on the interactivity in the Facebook post.

Because attitude is an important determinant in the formation of purchase intentions, this variable was taken into account in this study as well. It shows that attitude towards social marketing is a significant predictor of purchase intentions influenced by a social marketing advertisement on Facebook. So, when respondents have an overall positive attitude towards the technique of social marketing, purchase intentions for the products advertised in a social marketing advertisement on Facebook will be higher. When attitude, credibility and interactivity are combined, these are significant predictors of purchase intentions.

To conclude, credibility of a social marketing advertisement on Facebook has a positive significant effect on purchase intentions, in contrast to un-reflected interactivity. Interactivity of a social marketing advertisement on Facebook only has a positive significant effect on purchase intentions, when there is explicitly asked to take a look at the degree of interactivity. A reason for this could be, as mentioned before, the relatively small sample size.

In future research, the effect of interactivity on purchase intentions could be researched more extensively, for example by testing this on a bigger sample. Moreover, different elements of interactivity could be investigated, for instance whether an interactive conversation between consumers only or consumers interacting with the company conducting the social marketing campaign have an effect on purchase intentions. In this study, source and message credibility were merged together, and thus overall credibility was researched. Future researchers could investigate the effect of message credibility and source credibility of social marketing Facebook advertising as separate variables. Additionally, attitude towards the concept of social marketing was measured in this study, as a predictor for purchase intentions. However, the attitude towards animal testing in the cosmetic industry is of great interest as well, because this is a control variable for purchase intentions. Questions regarding attitude towards animal testing were not included in this experiment. Although, the effect between attitude and behavioral intentions are extensively researched by Ajzen and Fishbein, information about this has a controlling factor and it could have provided additional insights in the role of attitude in the formation of purchase intentions.

However, like any research, this one had some limitations too. First, the product picture used for creating the Facebook post, for both "The Soap Shop" and "PETA" are originally from the brand "The Body Shop", although the picture does not show the brand name explicitly, respondents could recognize the branding, packaging, etc. and could be biased by this.

Managerial implications

To give proper advice to managers creating social marketing campaigns, taking into account the conclusions of this study can be helpful in making effective decisions. Starting with the findings that credibility of the social marketing message and source on Facebook positively influences the formation of purchase intentions. For businesses, it is important to create a credible message, as mentioned before, in some cases message credibility is extra important. For example, when the social marketing campaign deals with an issue not everyone is familiar with, or in a commercial environment where the benefit of purchasing a certain product is not clear to the majority. A straightforward explanation of the problem or benefits is crucial, in order to generate a shift in attitude towards the issue or products advertised.

When a business launches a social marketing campaign, it could be helpful when the business is closely related to the topic of the campaign. This can generate credibility, because the business is estimated to have sufficient knowledge on the topic the social marketing campaign deals about. The consumer will be able to see the fit between the business and its campaign. For example, the connection between PETA and their anti-animal testing campaigns is logic, it is assumed that a major company like PETA has gained knowledge and expertise in this field. This results in consumers perceiving their message as credible, this is also positively related to high source credibility. Although, for smaller companies this could be a common pitfall and thus important to devote attention to. As a small company, it is harder to create highly perceived credible messages, because the degree of familiarity of consumers with these types of business will be smaller in general. For example, the hypothetical company used in this experiment: The Soap Shop is unknown and thus consumers cannot know whether the company has sufficient insights in the industry and thus are able to distribute credible information. Resulting in less consumers developing purchase intentions for products of this brand. Overall, perceived credibility of The Soap Shop was lower than perceived credibility of PETA. Again, this relates to the source credibility too. For both small and large companies, it could be helpful to integrate a credible source into the message. Such as facts and numbers that are supported by scientific research, this will reinforce message credibility.

For all kinds of companies, small and large, known and unknown, interactivity is a crucial part in the development of purchase intentions. Results from this experiment show that when there is explicitly asked to take into account the interactivity of the Facebook post, interactivity has a positive link towards purchase intentions. For managers, this is information is of great interest, because drawing attention towards the degree of interactivity on a social marketing Facebook campaign can increase purchase intentions. In the campaign, a call for interactivity could be useful, such as a simple sentence like "let us know your opinion in the comments". Taking this a step further, interactivity could be encouraged by attaching an incentive on a comment, for instance the chance of winning a prize or getting a coupon. Future research could look into whether it has an increasing effect on purchase intentions when the business itself participates in this interaction.

With the information gained from this study, it can be concluded that there are multiple options for successfully conducting social marketing campaigns on Facebook. Specific for this experiment is that

managers must give attention to message and source credibility and interactivity as tools for creating a successful social marketing campaign.

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Appendix

Facebook post

The Soap Shop (low credibility)

FOREVER AGAINST ANIMAL TESTING

The Soap Shop Note: The Soap Shop, is an online shop. They sell all kinds of soaps, but sometimes they are not completely honest. Some of these soaps are tested on animals.

Forever against animal testing!
A lot of cosmetic products are tested on animals.
We don't test our products on animals.
Buy these products and help to fight animal testing!

Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

Schrijf een opmerking...

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We don't test our products on animals.
Buy these products and help to fight animal testing!

Monique That's why I always use cruelty free shampoos and shower gels, like in the picture, these are the best. #STOPANIMALTESTING
Leuk · Beantwoorden · 17 w

Auteurs The Soap Shop Thank you for your support!
Leuk · Beantwoorden · 17 w · Bewerkt

Katrien All animals deserve a healthy life, you're the best !
Leuk · Beantwoorden · 17 w

Auteurs The Soap Shop Thank you for your comment, we totally agree. #foreveragainstanimaltesting
Leuk · Beantwoorden · 17 w

PETA (high credibility)

FOREVER AGAINST ANIMAL TESTING

PETA UK Note: PETA is the largest animal rights organization in the world, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters.

PETA UK is an animal rights organization that sells cruelty free shampoos and shower gels. According to CrueltyFreeIntl over 500.000 animals are used in cosmetic animal testing worldwide, every single year. Research has shown that non-animal tests are more effective, reliable and faster. Thus, animal cruelty can be considered as unnecessary. To help ban animal testing, you can buy our products. #ForeverAgainstAnimalTesting

Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

Schrijf een opmerking...

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Katrien All animals deserve a healthy life, you're the best !
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Auteurs PETA UK Thank you for your comment, we totally agree. #foreveragainstanimaltesting
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Questionnaire

Purchase intentions of social marketing advertising on Facebook

Dear respondent,

In this survey, I will ask you some questions about social marketing on Facebook. It will only take a few minutes. The data collected will be used in my thesis and is 100% anonymous. Before you fill in this questionnaire, it is important to attentively read the following explanation about social marketing.

Social marketing has the ability to change people's habits and could be applied to change consumer behavior. This type of marketing consists of changing human behavior towards one that is compatible with the needs of society as a whole. For example, anti-smoking campaigns as showed below.



1. Do you use Facebook?

- Yes (1)
- No (2) (If "No" skip to question 3)

2. How often do you use Facebook?

- Several times per day (1)
- Once per day (2)
- Several times per week (3)
- Once per week (4)
- Several times per month (5)
- Once per month (6)
- Less than once per month (7)

Start of Block: Attitude questions

If you don't know what social marketing is, return to the first page and read the description.

3. I consider social marketing advertising on Facebook a good thing

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

4. Overall, I like social marketing advertising on Facebook

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

5. I consider social marketing advertising on Facebook very essential

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

6. I would describe my overall attitude towards social marketing advertising on Facebook as very favorable

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Start of Block: Purchase intentions Soap Shop, low message credibility, low interactivity

Animal testing is a trending topic. The Soap Shop is an online shop. They claim to only sell products that are not tested on animals. But this claim appears to not always be true, they sometimes do sell products that are tested on animals. Imagine you need new shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, body lotion,... and you see this Facebook post.

Now it is crucial that you read this Facebook post very carefully, it contains important information. Only fill in the questions after you read the Facebook post.



7. Have you read the Facebook post?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

8. Statement: I would consider this Facebook post as trustworthy if I would see this on Facebook.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

9. Statement: I would consider the comments between the client and the business as an interactive conversation.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

10. Statement: I would buy the products that are advertised in this Facebook post, If I would be looking for the advertised product.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)

- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

11. Statement: I desire to buy the products that are advertised in this post on Facebook

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

12. Statement: I am likely to buy the products that are promoted in this Facebook post, If I would be looking for the advertised product.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

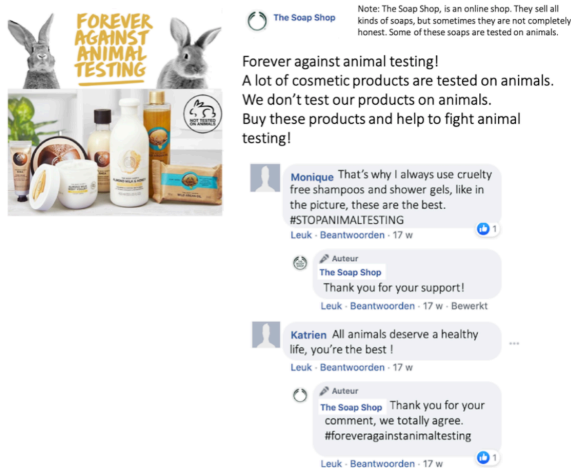
13. Statement: I plan to purchase the products that are promoted in this Facebook post, If I would be looking for the advertised product.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
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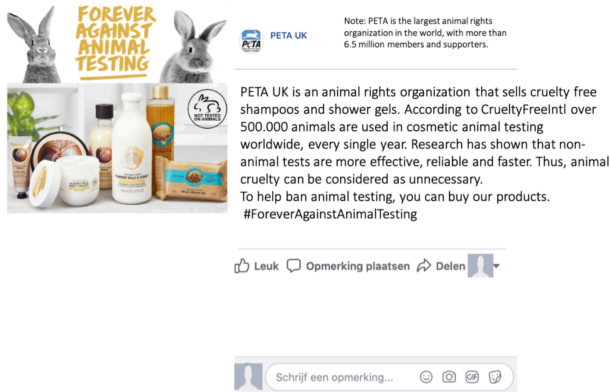
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Start of Block: Purchase intentions PETA, high message credibility, low interactivity

PETA is the largest animal rights organization in the world, with more than 6,5 million members and supporters. This is a very professional business. Imagine you need new shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, body lotion,.. and you see this Facebook post. Now it is crucial that you read this Facebook post very carefully, it contains important information. Only fill in the questions after you read the Facebook post.



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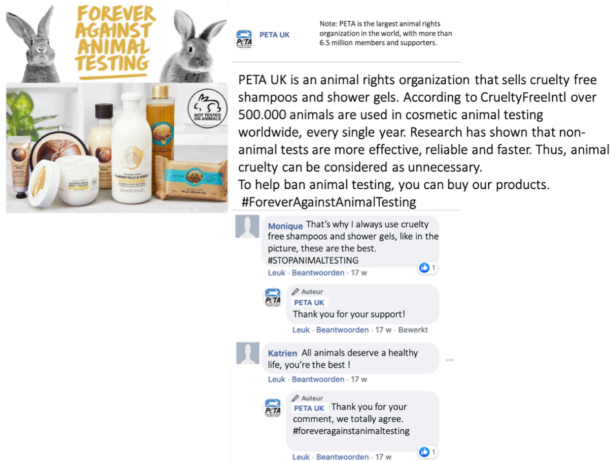
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Start of Block: Demographics

14. Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

15. Age

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 - 54 (5)
- 55 - 64 (6)
- Above 65 (7)

16. Highest level of education completed (if you are a student, fill in what you are studying now)

- Primary school (1)
- Secondary school (2)
- Bachelor (3)
- Master (4)