

Preface

Rapid development and fast adoption of digital devices into everyday life has changed perspectives. When I grew up, I used to call friends from a landline telephone and we would agree on a fixed time and place where we would meet. Today, such a routine seems almost impossible without communication via smartphones and immediate response from friends. When we went on holidays, we studied a map and planned the route before the trip started. I do not know how we ever found any place without satellite navigation and google maps. Going to a different country meant being disconnected because there was no wireless LAN, no skype, facetime, facebook or what's app. I might sound like a dinosaur but I actually just turned 33.

Digital technology entered our lives and changed the way we communicate, travel, research, work and manage our everyday lives. It also altered the way we manage brands. The rise of social media fostered the transformation from one-way mass communication to a dialogue between users and brands and between users about brands. Being fascinated from these phenomena, the aim of my doctoral thesis is to contribute to closing one of the many knowledge gaps about brand management in digital media.

The focus of this work is to research the role of connection in social media. Though many studies have been published about social media by now, the discussion about measuring engagement and the effects of branding is still evolving. Quantitative measures as likes, shares and comments are challenged to be the right diagnostics. Hence, the intent of this thesis is to consider the emotional connection to brand pages and correspondingly investigate the antecedents and consequences. For this purpose the conceptual framework was developed by a thorough investigation of state of the art research. The concept of brand attachment could be identified as most suitable for the measurement of emotional connection and was therefore transferred to the context of brand pages. Consequently, the construct of brand *page* attachment was developed.

Through a comprehensive quantitative study, the impact of brand page attachment on consumer behaviour in social networks could be validated. Furthermore, insights on antecedents and determinants for impacting and controlling brand page attachment could be generated and hence implications for practitioners were deducted.

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Barbara Kleine-Kalmer

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