In Search of COBRAs -
Understanding consumers’ brand-related social media use

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Abstract:
In the era of social media, customers are more empowered to affect their own and others’ consumer behavior than ever before. As the power is shifting from companies to customers, brands need to adapt their marketing accordingly. However, brands are struggling with their social media marketing. While consumers go to social media to interact, brands are there to sell. In order for marketing to be effective in social media, brands should better understand their customers and brand-related interactions. The lack of understanding may, at worst, result in decreased brand loyalty. Therefore, this study explores consumers’ brand-related social media use by examining consumers’ online brand-related activities (COBRAs) and motivations.

While general social media use has received a lot of attention among academics, brand-related social media use is still rather unexplored. In fact, currently, consumers’ brand-related activities have been mainly adapted from general social media use. Additionally, the focus has been on a specific type of social medium and on exploring the motivations in that channel, rather than on comprehensively understanding consumer behavior in the social media ecosystem.

Due to the lack of previous research, the study was conducted qualitatively. Data were collected from three focus group interviews during March 2016 with the help of an interview guide. Each group consisted of 5-6 informants. The data were content analyzed according to guidelines for qualitative analysis. As a result, a framework for understanding consumers’ brand-related social media use was developed.

The results show that there are two underlying dimensions that define consumers’ brand-related social media use: the type of interaction (i.e. human-to-human vs. human-to-brand interactions) and the level of privacy (private and public activities). Based on these dimensions, four COBRA categories are proposed. Consumers’ brand-related activities and motivations are categorized within the four proposed categories. Three new types of activity were found, leading to a new COBRA typology. The findings indicate further that not all motivations are equally important. Private activities are primarily driven by utilitarian needs, and public activities by social identity. Lastly, it was discovered that consumers engage in brand-related activities in a social media ecosystem.

Keywords: social media, brand-related social media use, COBRAs, motivations for social media use, social media ecosystem
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1 INTRODUCTION

“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is – it is what consumers tell each other it is.” – Scott Cook (Sayler, 2012)

What was once projected as the golden era of marketing has fallen flat on its promises. Although the social media user base keeps constantly growing, reaching the milestone of 2 billion users in 2016 (Statista, 2016), brands are struggling with their social media marketing. Indeed, despite what was expected, companies’ investments in social media marketing have not generated meaningful consumer interest (Holt, 2016) and instead, social media is decreasing the importance of brands for consumers (Holt, 2016; Zhu & Chen, 2015). For instance, among the Top 500 most subscribed YouTube channels, only three corporate brand channels appear (Holt, 2016). Even more alarming is that the 5.1 billion dollars spent on social media advertising in the US in 2013 reportedly had no influence on the US consumers’ buying decisions and instead, resulted in active avoiding of ads (Zhu & Chen, 2015).

The ineffectiveness of social media marketing does not, however, indicate that social media is an inappropriate marketing channel. Instead, the way in which brands are implementing their social media marketing campaigns is poor, as social media is considered “just another” marketing channel (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010, p. 43). While consumers go to social media to interact with their friends, brands are there only to sell (Zhu & Chen, 2015). As Levine et al. (2011, p.87) claim:

“Conversations are the ‘products’ the new markets are ‘marketing’ to one another constantly online. By comparison, corporate messaging is pathetic. It’s not funny. It’s not interesting. It doesn’t know who we are, or care. It only wants us to buy. If we wanted more of that, we’d turn on the tube. But we don’t and we won’t. We’re too busy. We’re too wrapped up in some fascinating conversation. Engagement in these open free-wheeling marketplace exchanges isn’t optional. It’s a prerequisite to having a future. Silence is fatal.”

Indeed, brands are both struggling to understand their customers, and overlooking the fact that social media is largely controlled by consumers, not marketers (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Instead of being passive receivers of marketing messages, the power is shifting from companies to customers (Christodoulides, 2008; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Social media has become an important source for
decision making (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010), as consumers are increasingly relying on
each other for brand decisions rather than on company initiated messages or ads
(Christodoulides, 2008; Galan, Lawley, & Clements, 2015; Kelly, Kerr, & Drennan,
2010). In fact, it is claimed that consumer generated content has a greater impact on
consumer behavior than traditional marketing communication actions (Hipper-
son, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). Addi-
tionally, consumers no longer need face-to-face settings to share their experiences of goods and
services (Coulter & Roggeveen, 2012) as they now have the possibility to engage
through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, &
Gremler, 2004) in social media. Consumers engage in all kinds of brand-related
activities online, of which companies may be unaware.

Hence, marketers cannot guard and control their brands the same way that they used
to, which has significant consequences for brand management (Muntinga et al., 2011).
One important consequence is that, in social media, consumer communication about
brands happens with or without the brands' permission (Kietzmann et al., 2011), all the
while having the potential to reach more consumers than traditional word-of-mouth
communication. In addition, information about products and services, previously
controlled by companies (Heinonen, 2011), may now, to a larger extent, originate in the
marketplace (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As a result, the importance of consumers’
online brand-related activities (COBRAs) in social media has significantly increased,
becoming something that brands should be more aware of.

To better adapt to the new paradigm of empowerment, companies should focus on
comprehensively understanding their customers (Christodoulides, 2008; Heinonen,
2011), and their brand-related interactions (Muntinga et al., 2011). If brands fail to
recognize their customers’ expectations and motivations, they will end up with
ineffective social media marketing activities (Zhu and Chen, 2015). At worst, the lack of
understanding may result in decreased brand-loyalty (Hipper-
son, 2010). Therefore, brands need to understand their customers and align social media marketing activities
accordingly in order to build strong customer relationships and improve brand loyalty
in social media (Hipperson, 2010; Zhu and Chen, 2015).
1.1. Research problem

Research on consumer behavior in social media has focused on investigating consumer behavior from two perspectives: general social media use and brand-related social media use. These lines of research are illustrated in Figure 1.

![Figure 1 Illustration of existing research and a suggested research gap](image)

The upper block of Figure 1 demonstrates general social media use, on which research on consumer behavior in social media has especially focused on. Motivations for consumers’ social media use have received much attention, especially from the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory perspective. Such studies have explored gratifications of general social media use (e.g. Heinonen, 2011; Whiting & Williams, 2013), social networking site (SNS) use (e.g. Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Park, Kee, & Velenzuela, 2013), and usage in other social media channels, such as in microblogs (e.g. Gan & Wang, 2015). Additionally, social media behavior has been examined in relation to consumers’ social media activities from passive consumption to active contribution (Bolton et al., 2013; Li & Bernoff, 2008; Shao, 2009). However, instead of being separate concepts, it has been argued (e.g. Heinonen, 2011; Shao, 2009) that the motivations and the activities are interdependent, and a framework for describing this relation has been proposed by Heinonen (2011) as illustrated with the bidirectional arrow in Figure 1.
While the aforementioned studies have contributed to the literature of general social media use (e.g. socializing with friends), consumers’ brand-related social media use needs further attention. The bottom block of Figure 1 represents the current stage of literature on brand-related social media use. As illustrated, research on brand-related use is, similarly to general social media use research, centered on two main topics: motivations and activities, i.e. COBRAs.

As illustrated in Figure 1 with the dotted rectangle, thus far, research about brand-related social media use has mainly focused on exploring consumer motivations for specific brand-related activities, such as production of eWOM (e.g. Henning-Thurau et al., 2004), use of a brand’s SNS page (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Men & Tsai, 2013) and brand consumption (Davis, Piven, & Breazeale, 2014). However, brand-related social media use covers all brand-related consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand interactions in social media (Muntinga et al., 2011). In fact, Muntinga et al.’s (2011) study was the first to discover motivations for various brand-related activities. However, due to the fact that their empirical study was conducted in 2009 in the Netherlands, and, as consumer behavior constantly develops (Heinonen, 2011), it can be expected that the results are not applicable as such in today’s social media. It can be, therefore, argued that motivations for brand-related social media use needs further examination.

Even less attention has been paid to what activities consumers perform in relation to brands in social media (the dotted ellipse in the bottom block in Figure 1). The studies about brand-related activities (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) adopt the consumer activity theory from general social media use literature. Based on Davis et al.’s (2014) findings, it can be, however, argued that general consumer activities do not apply as such to brand-related interactions, but that brand-related activities should be explored further.

Brand-related activities can be conceptualized with the idea of COBRAs, i.e. consumers’ online brand-related activities. Although the term ‘COBRA’, proposed by Muntinga et al. (2011), has not been adopted in the academic literature, no other term describing consumers’ brand-related activities has been proposed. As the concept of COBRA covers all possible brand-related activities, including consumer-to-consumer (such as eWOM) and consumer-to-brand interactions (Muntinga et al., 2011), it is applied in this study.
Due to the gap in literature in relation to motivations and activities, their interdependency naturally remains unexplored, as presented with the dotted arrow in Figure 1. Based on Muntinga et al.’s (2011) and Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) findings, it is known, however, that such a relation exists. Yet, no framework for understanding the relation between brand-related activities and their motivations has been proposed, and the link should be further examined.

The need to study consumers’ brand-related activities in social media is further supported by two additional aspects. First, it is argued that in order to gain an in-depth understanding about consumers’ social media use, social media should be understood as an ecosystem (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Subrahmanyama, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008). To date, many have studied brand-related use in a particular social medium, mainly in SNSs (e.g. Dunne et al., 2010; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), instead of understanding social media as an entity. However, as consumer behavior varies in different channels (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), new patterns of use are expected to be found. Second, although newer channels, such as Instagram and Snapchat, are currently the most popular ones among Generation Y (MarMai, 2016) no studies about consumers’ brand-related activities and motivations in those channels exist. These new social media channels presumably have an impact on consumer behavior, and, hence, new patterns of brand-related social media use may have emerged. Therefore, instead of being delimited to specific channels, this study seeks to explore consumer behavior in a social media, as it is understood today.

1.2. Aim of the study

This study explores the relationship between consumers’ online brand-related activities (COBRAs) in social media and their motivations for engaging in these activities. More specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What do consumers do in social media (which media) in relation to brands (goods and services),
2) What are their motivations for these activities, and
3) How are the activities and the motivations related?

This study contributes to research in three ways. Firstly, this study extends the knowledge of COBRAs in social media and helps to identify new trends and patterns of brand-related social media use. Secondly, this study broadens the knowledge of the
motivations for existing brand-related activities and uncovers what motivates consumers to engage in new activities. Finally, this is the first study that explores brand-related use in today’s social media, that is, this study is not delimited to any particular medium. This study therefore has practical implications for companies by providing new knowledge on consumer behavior in social media.

1.3. Delimitations

There are two delimitations in the study. Firstly, social media use is dependent on both environmental (e.g. economic, cultural, technological and political/legal factors) and individual factors (e.g. age, lifecycle stage and socio-economic status) (Bolton et al., 2013). In order to provide an adequate description of social media use, the study is delimited to following individual and environmental factors.

This empirical study is performed as a qualitative study with a convenience sample, and is delimited to consumers living in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The sample is further delimited to Generation Y consumers, the importance of which can be argued based on two reasons. First, young, Generation Y consumers (i.e. consumers born between 1981 and 1999) rely on technology for information, entertainment, and social contacts (Bolton et al., 2013) and are, therefore, claimed to be experienced users of online media (Liljander, Gummerus, & Söderlund, 2015). Second, young consumers actively avoid ads (Kelly et al., 2010), making social media an important source of information for brand-related decisions (Liljander et al., 2015). However, as the usage patterns even within Generation Y vary significantly (MarMai, 2016), the population is further delimited to users between ages 24-30.

Secondly, although the study is not delimited to specific social media channels, the aim is not to explore differences between channels. Instead, this study seeks to explore consumer behavior in the social media ecosystem, and in which channels consumers’ brand-related use occurs, rather than to compare the behavior in different channels.

1.4. Key concepts

There are certain concepts that are repeated throughout the study. As some terms may have different definitions in literature, it is essential to specify how such concepts are used in this study. The following definitions are applied.
**COBRAs.** COBRAs refer to all brand-related consumer-to-consumer or consumer-to-brand interactions in social media. Examples of COBRAs are: watching Absolut Vodka’s videos on YouTube, talking about IKEA on Twitter, and uploading pictures of a pair of new Converse sneakers on Facebook. (Muntinga et al., 2011)

**Brand.** Muntinga et al. (2011) use the COBRA concept without explicitly defining a brand. Here, the definition by the American Marketing Association (2016) is used: “A brand is a name, terms, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” In practice, it covers most services and goods.

**Social media.** In this thesis, social media is understood as an ecosystem of Web 2.0 based applications that center on the customer experience (Hanna et al., 2011). The ecosystem approach is not limited to particular channels, but it encompasses a wide range of online media relevant for the consumer. Although this is not the most typically used definition of social media, the author believed it provides the best description of social media as it is understood today, and, hence, is best suited for the purpose of this study. A more detailed discussion about how this conclusion was reached is presented in Appendix 1.

**Electronic word-of-mouth.** Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is understood as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.” (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39)

**Social networking sites.** Social networking sites (SNSs) are one type of social media. SNSs refer to social media channels, such as Facebook, in which users create personal profiles and connect and interact with other users in the community (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Other types of social media, that are not SNSs, are, for instance, blogs, Wikipedia (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), and instant messaging applications, such as Snapchat (Piwek & Joinson, 2016).
1.5. **Structure of the paper**

First, an overview of existing research in relation to the central concepts on brand-related social media use is presented in chapter 2.

In chapter 3, the research methodology and data analysis are motivated and described. This study was conducted as a qualitative study. Three focus groups were conducted during March 2016 and the sample consisted of 16 Finnish consumers.

Based on the analysis of the data, the results are presented in chapter 4. Finally, in chapter 5, the main findings of the study are discussed. This paper is concluded with the theoretical and managerial implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.
2 BRAND-RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA USE

In this chapter, existing literature about general and brand-related social media use is described. As consumers’ online brand-related activities (COBRAs) are still rather unexplored, the literature about brand-related social media use is largely based on literature on general social media use. Therefore, discussion in relation to both usage types is necessary.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, consumer activities in social media are presented, followed by the typology of COBRAs that is adopted from the former. Second, general social media motivations are described, after which motivations for COBRAs are discussed and a conceptual framework for the empirical part is developed. Finally, the importance of the study is argued by presenting a summary of the research gap.

2.1 Consumer activities in social media

Traditionally, consumer activities in social media have been examined from the online behavior perspective (Heinonen, 2011). A widely adopted classification is the poster-lurker (i.e. contribution-consumption) dichotomy (e.g. Zhu and Chen, 2015) that has been, however, claimed to be a rather simplistic approach for uncovering various social media activities (de Valck, van Bruggen, & Wierenga, 2009; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Therefore, many researchers (e.g. Bolton et al., 2013; Shao, 2009; Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012) have further explored the phenomenon in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of consumer activities and, as a result, developed various typologies.

One of the most referred-to frameworks for exploring consumer activities (used by e.g. Heinonen, 2011 and Muntinga et al., 2011) is Shao’s (2009) typology. He proposes that consumer activities in social media can be divided into three categories: 1) consumption, e.g. reading content; (2) participation through e.g. liking and commenting others’ messages; and (3) production, e.g. posting content. Although users engage in various other ways in social media as well (e.g. de Valck, 2009; Bolton et al., 2013), it can be argued that Shao’s typology offers the best framework for categorizing general social media activities for the following two reasons.
Firstly, Shao's (2009) typology provides the most extensive approach, as it was developed based on the overall activities in which users engage in social media. In contrast, others have taken more narrow perspectives. For instance, de Valck et al. (2009) focused on information related activities while Bolton et al. (2013) explored Generation Y's activities. Therefore, Shao (2009) offers the most extensive framework for explaining various consumer activities in social media. Yet, one might argue that the typology is still a too simplistic illustration of consumer activities, as users engage in various other ways as well (e.g. Bolton et al., 2013; de Valck et al., 2009; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Secondly, as illustrated in Table 1, others' findings on consumer activities and user types can be, however, categorized according to Shao's three main categories. Hence, instead of supplementing Shao's main activity categories, they provide more in-depth information for each of them. For instance, out of six social media activity categories (contributing, sharing, consuming, searching, participating, and playing) identified by Bolton et al. (2013), consumption, contribution and participation are similar to Shao's main categories, whereas the other activities can be considered as sub-categories within them.

In Table 1, all consumer activities in social media are presented. The first column is based on Shao’s (2009) typology, whereas the sub-activities by Bolton et al. (2013), and Hoffman and Fodor (2010) are presented in the second column and are categorized according to the corresponding main activity in the first column. User types identified by Zhu and Chen (2015); Li and Bernoff (2008); and de Valck et al. (2009) are categorized accordingly in the third column. They are organized based on the author’s interpretation of the level of user activity meaning that followers/spectators represent the most passive consumers of content, whereas creators/poster the most active contributors to the content. Example activities are provided in the fourth column. The content of the table is discussed in more detail next.
Table 1  Social media activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Playing Searching</td>
<td>Followers/Spectator Opportunist Functionalists</td>
<td>Read content Retrieve marginal information Retrieve information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Connecting Sharing</td>
<td>Joiner Collector Conversationalist Critics</td>
<td>Connect and unite Save, share, and rate Discuss Comment, and rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Controlling Contribution Creation</td>
<td>Hobbyist Informationalist Core members</td>
<td>Updating personal profiles Supply information Supply information, and discuss Publish, maintain, upload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consumption. Consumption (Bolton et al., 2013; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Shao, 2009) refers to somewhat passive social media use that occurs mainly through reading (Shao, 2009). Consumption also covers sub-categories of playing and searching, assuming that users mainly read content while searching (Bolton et al., 2013). Further, three user types can be classified under this category. Followers (Zhu & Chen, 2015) or spectators (Li & Bernoff, 2008) take the most passive role by reading, opportunists retrieve marginal information, such as recipes (de Valck et al., 2009), and functionalists focus on retrieving information (de Valck et al., 2009).

Participation. Participation refers to more active social media use (Shao, 2009; Bolton et al., 2013) that involves two sub-activities: sharing, and connection (Bolton et al., 2013; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Additionally, four different user types can be included. First, joiners are the least active participants as they mainly connect and unite (Li & Bernoff, 2008). Collectors are somewhat more active as they save, share and rate (Li & Bernoff, 2008), while conversationalists participate in discussions (de Valck et al., 2009). Critics are the most active participants as they comment and rate (Li & Bernoff, 2008).
Production. Production (Shao, 2009), or, creation (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010), relates to the most active social media use. Although Hoffman and Fodor (2010) use the term controlling and Bolton et al. (2013) contributing when referring to this type of activity, they all seem to agree that the most active use involves content creation. Various levels of production exist. Hobbyists only update their personal profiles but do not create other types of content (de Valck et al., 2009). Informationalists are somewhat more active, as they supply information (de Valck et al., 2009). Core members both supply information and actively participate in discussions (de Valck et al., 2009), and can hence be considered the second most active users. Finally, creators (Li & Bernoff, 2008) or posters (Zhu & Chen, 2015), the most active users, publish, maintain, upload, or otherwise produce content.

Neither activities nor user types are mutually exclusive. Users may engage in all of these activities or a combination of them (Shao, 2009; Williams et al., 2012), and, thus, engage in multiple roles (Mathwick, 2002; Shao, 2009; Williams et al., 2012). Even conversationalists consume, core members participate, and over time, functionalists may comment. However, it is argued that users mainly engage in consumption. For instance, Williams et al. (2012), who studied digital natives’ social media use, found that users are most likely spectators, as they mainly engage by reading and are, in fact, least likely to comment or rate.

None of the activities concern, however, specifically brand-related social media use. Hence, consumers’ brand-related activities, which are, to a large extent, based on the aforementioned studies, are discussed next.

2.1.1. COBRA typology

As argued, Shao’s (2009) typology offers the best overview of the general social media activities. A similar conceptualization has been used when exploring brand-related activities in social media (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). Indeed, Muntinga et al. (2011) propose a typology for consumers’ online brand-related activities (COBRAs) (Table 2) that is based on Shao’s (2009) categorization. Three continuous COBRA engagement dimensions - consumption, contribution (corresponds with participation) and creation (corresponds with production), are suggested. Consumption represents the lowest level of activity and production the highest level of activity, as the arrow in Table 2 indicates.
Table 2  COBRA typology (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COBRA type</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Examples of activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Consumption | Consumption of content created by other users or brands | Viewing brand-related video  
Listening to brand-related audio  
Watching brand-related pictures  
Reading product reviews  
Playing branded online games  
Downloading branded widgets |
| Contribution | User-to-content and user-to-user interactions about the brands | Joining brand’s SNS page  
Engaging in branded conversations  
Commenting on brand-related videos, pictures etc. |
| Creation | Produce and publish brand-related content | Publishing brand-related weblog  
Uploading brand-related content  
Writing brand-related articles  
Writing product reviews |

*Consumption of brand-related content.* The lowest level of brand-related activity is consumption of brand-related content. This COBRA type denotes such users who consume content created by other users or brands (e.g. viewing videos/pictures, reading reviews, playing branded games) but who do not contribute to or create content (Muntinga et al., 2011).

*Contribution to brand-related content.* The second level of activity is contribution to brand-related content. This refers to both user-to-content and user-to-user interactions about brands and may occur through, e.g. commenting brand-related content, or liking brands’ pages (Muntinga et al., 2011). Additionally, Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015) propose that users may unfriend a brand that is also considered as contribution.

*Creation of brand related content.* The highest level of brand-related activity is creation of brand-related content. Creation signifies active production and publication of brand-related content (Muntinga et al., 2011). Writing blogs, posting reviews, producing and uploading videos and pictures are examples of such activities.

Similarly to general consumer activities, none of the brand-related activities are mutually exclusive. Consumers do not engage in only one type of COBRA but a combination of them. Yet, generally, it is argued that users engage mainly in
consumption and participation related activities, and creation is claimed to be the least important type of activity (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). For instance, according to Subrahmanyama et al. (2008), who studied college students’ SNS activities, and Tsai and Men (2013), who explored the use of Facebook pages, young consumers mainly read, write and answer to comments. This pattern is characteristic for other users as well. For example, Bolton et al. (2013), Nielsen (2009), and Jones, Ravid, and Rafaeli (2004) claim that users mainly use social media for consumption and participation. Additionally, Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) findings indicate that the level of activity varies among SNSs. How the level of activity varies in social media is not, however, addressed.

Although Shao’s (2009) typology offers a good, general, typology for social media activities, one might question its applicability as such for COBRAs. When describing general social media activities in the previous chapter, it was argued that others’ findings did provide sub-categories for the original typology. Hence, it is expected, and as Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) findings indicate, that users engage in sub-activities as well. More importantly, new main activity categories may have emerged as consumers’ online behavior constantly develops. For instance, one of the recent developments in consumer behavior in social media is collaborative consumption (CC), or sharing economy, defined as “the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services” (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015, p. 1). Indeed, it seems that today brand-related social media use is not limited to consuming, contributing, and creation of content. However, thus far, neither the adoption of Shao’s typology, nor its relevance for brand-related literature has been questioned.

Thus, while Shao’s (2009) typology provides the best overview for exploring general social media use, the author argues that it is insufficient for exploring brand-related social media use. Yet, as currently no alternative COBRA typology has been proposed, Shao’s (2009) typology is used when developing the conceptual framework. This study aims, however, to extend the knowledge of COBRAs.

### 2.2. Motivations for social media use

Consumer activities are driven by different motivations (Heinonen, 2011), and, hence, motivations are discussed next. In order to understand why consumers engage in
brand-related activities, it is necessary to first discuss motivations for general social media use for the following reasons. First, some studies that have explored motivations for brand-related social media use (e.g. Muntinga et al. 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) do not separate the motivations for general and brand-related social media use in their literature review, but base their empirical research on the motivations for both usage types. Indeed, COBRA motivations are to a large extent identical with motivations for general social media use. However, others (e.g. Davis et al., 2014) have found additional incentives that drive uniquely brand-related social media use. Thus, it can be argued that the motivations for the two usage types are not completely identical. Yet, in order to understand the reasons behind brand-related social media use, the motivations for both usage types need to be discussed.

Similarly to the previous chapter, this chapter first presents motivations for general social media use, followed by discussion of COBRA motivations. In the latter chapter, a conceptual framework is presented.

2.2.1. Motivations for general social media use

One of the most, if not the most, used theoretical approach for studying motivations for social media use has been the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory (Heinonen, 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Although the theory was originally developed for examining consumers’ patterns of traditional media usage (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973), recent studies have applied the theory in the context of social media. For instance, Whiting and Williams (2013) studied why people use social media; Gan & Wang (2015) explored the motivations for use of microblogs and an instant messaging application, WeChat; and Dunne et al. (2010) the uses and gratifications of social networking sites, to name a few.

According to Muntinga et al. (2011), McQuail’s U&G categorization from 1983 is still one of the most widely referred and applied frameworks even in social media research. It includes four categories of motivation: (1) entertainment, (2) information, (3) integration and social interaction, and (4) personal identity.

Despite the fact that many have argued for the U&G’s relevance for social media research (Malthouse & Calder, 2010; Shao, 2009), its usage has also raised criticism among academics (Ruggiero, 2000). Kaye (1998), amongst others, argues that the
gratifications of traditional media use do not provide a proper representation of motivations behind consumers’ online behavior. Therefore, LaRose, Mastro, and Eastin (2001) have proposed an addition of social cognitive theory (SCT) to U&G. It is claimed to extend the capabilities of the U&G theory by adding new categories of motivation that more accurately describe the relationship between media uses and gratifications.

Yet, when comparing the U&G motivations (e.g. Shao, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013) with the SCT motivations (e.g. LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), the main difference occurred in terms of sub-motivations while the main categories of motivation were similar. For instance, activity incentive (LaRose & Eastin, 2004) can be categorized as entertainment, and status incentive (LaRose & Eastin, 2004) as integration and social interaction. Therefore, it has been argued, that the key motivators identified by McQuail in 1983 (cited in Muntinga et al., 2011) are still relevant and applicable to social media research (Muntinga et al., 2011; Tsai & Men, 2013).

Evidently, however, consumer behavior develops. As a result, more recent studies have identified additional categories of motivation that extend McQuail’s typology. For instance, Muntinga et al. (2011) found two original motivators, remuneration and empowerment, from social media literature, that were not discussed previously in media research. Additionally, Lin and Lu’s (2011), Whiting and Williams’ (2013) and Gironda and Korgaonkar’s (2014) findings suggest that functional motives drive social media use. Therefore, although the U&G theory is still an appropriate theory to be applied when examining new media (Ruggiero, 2000), in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the motivations behind social media use, other perspectives need to be included as well.

Consequently, when the author examined previous literature on motivations for general social media use (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al. 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013; Whiting & Williams, 2013), seven main categories of motivation were identified: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (3) integration and social interaction, (4) personal identity, (5) remuneration, (6) empowerment, and (7) functionality. Remuneration refers to desire for rewards and economic incentives (Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011), empowerment to the ability to voice opinions about brands (Tsai & Men, 2013), and functionality to
usefulness (Lin & Lu, 2011) and utility needs (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Whiting and Williams, 2013).

Although, while, for instance, Muntinga et al. (2011) and Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015) apply the aforementioned categories of motivation in general social media use as a basis for their brand-related social media use studies, other studies revealed additional motivations that drive solely brand-related social media use. Therefore, the motivations for brand-related use are discussed next.

### 2.2.2. Motivations for COBRAs

Thus far, research has mainly focused on exploring motivations for social media use in general, or motivations for a specific social media channel’s use. Some studies have, however, investigated the motivations for brand-related social media use. The main emphasis has been on examining why consumers join brand-related SNS pages (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2013; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013), brand consumption motivations in a social media brand community (Davis et al., 2014) and why consumers produce eWOM (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). Although only Muntinga et al. (2011) have explicitly studied the motivations for COBRAs, the aforementioned studies contribute to the knowledge of motivations for brand-related use, since COBRAs are defined as any brand-related activities that occur either between consumers or between consumer(s) and the brand. Therefore, joining a brand’s SNS page, engaging with a brand in an online community, or producing eWOM are all considered brand-related activities.

When comparing the motivations for brand-related activities with motivations for general social media activities, the main categories of motivation did not vary significantly. All seven categories of motivation that characterized general social media use were found to drive brand-related use as well. Only one category, relational motives, suggested by Davis et al. (2014), was found to uniquely drive brand-related activities. The biggest difference was, however, found in the importance of motivation categories. For instance, while general SNS use was mainly motivated by interaction with others (Vorvoreanu, 2009), brand-related use in SNSs was mostly driven by remuneration (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Therefore, based on previous research, it can be argued that general social media use is driven by hedonic motives while brand-related use is motivated by utilitarian needs.
Several different theoretical approaches have been applied when examining COBRA motivations. Similarly to general social media motivations, U&G is also the most used theory when exploring motivations for brand-related use (e.g. Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013). However, other theoretical lenses have been applied as well. Davis et al. (2014) applied brand and social media theories, Gironda and Korgaonkar (2014) the decomposed theory of planned behavior (DTPB), and Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) used word-of-mouth theories. Despite the use of different theoretical backgrounds, what is similar in most of the studies is that the motivations are examined in relation to the consumer activities, i.e. consumption, participation and production. In fact, only Davis et al. (2014) and Gironda and Korgaonkar (2014) did not mention the relation between activities and motivations per se, but referred to motivations for e.g. 'liking a page' or 'interacting with brand'.

Indeed, similarly to motivations for general social media use that vary based on the consumer activities (Heinonen, 2011), it can be argued that COBRAs also share this interdependency. This correlation is further supported by empirical results (e.g. by Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Hence, in Table 3, COBRA motivations identified from previous studies are presented in relation to activities.

The matrix (Table 3) is adapted from Heinonen’s (2011) conceptual framework for general social media activities that conceptualizes the relation between activities and motivations. In Heinonen’s framework, motivations are divided into three rows (information, entertainment, and social interaction) and activities into three columns (consumption, participation, and production). However, as COBRAs are driven by different motivations than general social media activities, Heinonen’s (2011) framework is extended with additional categories of motivation. Similar categorization in terms of activities is used, as no alternative typology for brand-related activities has been suggested. The empty boxes in Table 3 indicate that although possible, those motivations have not been previously found. Additionally, while some studies (e.g. Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013) have focused solely on motivations for brand-related use in SNSs, the motivations that are applicable in this study as SNSs are considered as part of social media ecosystem. The table is further explained next.
Table 3  Summary of COBRA motivations in relation to consumers activities based on previous research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations for consuming brand-related content.</th>
<th>Consumption</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Surveillance Knowledge Pre-purchase information Inspiration</td>
<td>(Non)Product/service information</td>
<td>Opinion exchange Discussion of brands Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Enjoyment Relaxation Pass time</td>
<td>Enjoyment Relaxation</td>
<td>Enjoyment Pass time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal identity</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>Self-expression Self-assurance</td>
<td>Self-expression Self-assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>Access to rewards, discounts and jobs</td>
<td>Access to rewards, discounts and jobs</td>
<td>Economic motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Access to information through only one channel</td>
<td>Access to instant information Convenience utility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration and social interaction</td>
<td>Social interaction Social identity Helping Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Social interaction Social pressure Social identity Concern for others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational motives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to co-create or get to know to brand, Desire to receive personalized brand interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Convincing others to (not to) use or (not to) purchase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivations for consuming brand-related content. Consumption is driven by five main categories of motivation: information, entertainment, personal identity, remuneration and functionality. Each category further consists of various sub-motivations, as illustrated in the first column in Table 3.

First, information is one of the most important motivations that drive consumption of brand-related content. More specifically, consumption is driven by the following sub-motivations: surveillance (Muntinga et al., 2011), getting knowledge about the company and its products (Men & Tsai, 2013; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013), especially those that are new (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), getting pre-purchase information (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) and getting inspiration (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). In fact, in relation to a consumers’ decision-making process, social media is used for getting pre-purchase information (Galan et al., 2015), and when forming an opinion about the brand and/or its products (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Secondly, entertainment motivates users to consume...
brand-related content, as they seek to enjoy, relax and pass time (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), in particular when relieving boredom (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015).

Third, *personal identity*, and, more specifically, self-actualization (Davis et al., 2014; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), motivates consumption. This occurs when the corporate SNSs page corresponds to users’ values, or when users feel sympathy for the company (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Further, consumption is motivated by *remuneration*. Users wish to access rewards (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), discounts (Men & Tsai, 2012; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) and employment possibilities (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Finally, consumption is driven by *functionality*, as an SNS page is considered to be a convenient channel for accessing information through one page (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015).

**Motivations for participating in brand-related content.** Motivations for participation in brand-related content are presented in the second column in Table 3. Participation is motivated by six main incentives: information, entertainment, personal identity, remuneration, functionality and integration and social interaction, that further consist of sub-motivations.

First, participation is driven by *information*, as users want to gain access to (non) product or (non) brand-related and liking a company’s Facebook page makes the information appear on the user’s wall (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Second, *entertainment* drives participation. Similarly to consumption, participation is motivated by desire to enjoy and relax by experiencing fun and leisure (Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011) or by escaping reality (Davis et al., 2014).

Third, participation is driven by *personal identity* that further consists of three sub-motivations. Self-presentation or impression management refers to the desire to provide an image of oneself (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Self-expression relates to users’ willingness to express and shape one’s identity, and self-assurance to the desire to gain recognition (Muntinga et al., 2011). Further, *remuneration* drives participation. SNS business pages were joined in order to access promotions or offers (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Davis et al., 2014; Men and Tsai, 2012), and employment or business opportunities (Ruehl &
Such economic incentives are claimed to be the most significant drivers of participation (Tsai & Men, 2013; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015).

Moreover, participation is motivated by functionality, which refers to users’ utility needs, and includes two sub-motivations. Convenience utility indicates that users start to follow a brand’s SNS page, as the brand’s page is the most convenient channel to interact with the brand and its customers (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014). Consumers also participate in order to gain better access to instant information (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Lastly, participation is driven by integration and social integration. This category consists of four sub-motivations: social interaction (Muntinga et al., 2011), social identity (Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al, 2011), helping (Muntinga et al., 2011) or informing others (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), and a sense of belonging (Davis et al., 2014). The latter, however, contradicts with Tsai & Men (2013) who suggest that a sense of belonging is not a sufficient motive for users to like or join brands’ Facebook pages.

**Motivations for producing brand-related content.** As illustrated in the last column in Table 3, seven motivators, namely information, entertainment, personal identity, remuneration, integration and social interaction, relational motives and empowerment, drive the production of brand-related content. Each category further includes several sub-motivations.

First, production is driven by information, that includes three sub-motivations: exchanging opinions (Galan et al., 2015; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; Men & Tsai, 2013), complimenting and complaining about brands and products (Men & Tsai, 2012; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015; (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004), and sending specific inquiries for the brand (Davis et al., 2014; Galan et al., 2015; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Interestingly, however, the latter contradicts with Vorvoreanu’s (2009) and Muntinga et al.’s (2011) findings. Indeed, Vorvoreanu (2009) claims that users do not want to contact brands through social media and Muntinga et al. (2011) did not find information to drive production.

Second, production is further driven by entertainment. Similarly to other activity types, production is also driven by a desire to enjoy and pastime (Muntinga et al. 2011). The third motivator driving production is personal identity. Users seek to provide an image
of them for others (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004; Muntinga et al., 2011), to express their own identity, and to get self-assurance, i.e. gain recognition (Muntinga et al., 2011) by producing content. Fourth, although other authors did not find remuneration to drive production, Henning-Thurau et al. (2014) argue that production of eWOM is motivated by economic incentives.

Further, similarly to participation, production is motivated by integration and social interaction. Users produce content, as they desire to interact with others (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) and to develop their own social identity (Muntinga et al., 2011). This is due to social pressure, i.e. because others have done it as well (Muntinga et al., 2011), and to concern for others (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004).

Unique motivations for production are relational motives and empowerment. Davis et al. (2014) propose, first, that relational motivations drive production. Relational motivations include three sub-motives: the desire to co-create a brand’s service offering, the desire for personalized brand interaction, and the desire to know the real people behind the brand (Davis et al. 2014). Similarly, Vorvoreanu (2009) also claims that users want to interact with small businesses on Facebook if they are able to form a personal connection with the company. The second motivation unique for production is empowerment. Empowerment refers to users’ willingness to encourage others to buy (or not to buy) brands’ products or services (Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011). Such brand advocates are often referred to as customer evangelists (Williams et al., 2012).

2.3. Summary of the research gap

Although consumers’ general social media use has been widely studied, less attention has been paid to brand-related social media use. The results of the studies that have explored brand-related social media use further indicate that more research is needed, as several issues arise.

Consumers’ brand-related use needs further examination due to two reasons. Firstly, research has been delimited to a large extent to examining particular social media channels. However, as Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) study indicates, activities and motivations vary depending on the type of social medium. Secondly, previously no distinction between consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand activities has been
made. Yet, as motivations vary depending on the type of COBRA, it would be interesting to examine whether and how motivations for such activities differ. Hence, in order to understand brand-related social media use comprehensively, consumers’ brand-related use in the social media ecosystem should be further explored.

Moreover, the current state of activities needs to be examined for the following reasons. First, the brand-related activity categories are currently adopted from general social media literature. Yet, an adoption of such an approach is not necessarily applicable to today’s brand-related use. For instance, in recent years, online shopping has emerged to social media. Collaborative consumption (Hamari et al., 2015) and “instant-shopping services” (The Economist, 2015) are excellent examples of increased variety of brand-related activities consumers engage in today. Hence, online shopping indicates that brand-related use may not be limited to consumption of, participation in, and production of brand-related content, but that it is extended to tangible activities as well. Second, not only consumer behavior, but also the reasons why social media is used, has changed. For instance, while Vorvoreanu (2009) argues that users do not want to contact brands through social media, Davis et al. (2014) claim that users want to send specific inquiries for brands through the social media community. One reason for the change may be emerging social media channels, such as Snapchat, that allow users to engage in new brand-related activities, thus having an effect on the usage patterns. Yet no research about brand-related use in the newer channels has been conducted. Still, brands are increasingly turning to these channels in the hope of achieving a first-mover advantage (The Economist, 2015). This results only in inefficient social media marketing activities. As a result, therefore, knowledge about brand-related social media use in today’s social media environment is needed.
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the chosen research method is discussed. First, the data collection method is described and the choice of focus group interviews is justified. Second, the selection of the sample is presented, followed by a discussion of the data collection. Lastly, the data analysis process is summarized and the quality of the data is assessed.

3.1 Data collection method

Although both qualitative (e.g. Davis et al., 2015; Heinonen, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011) and quantitative (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2013) methods have been applied in social media research, here, qualitative data were collected for two reasons. First, brand-related use has not received a lot of attention in literature. Therefore, it is proposed that more exploratory studies about the topic are needed (Davis et al., 2014). Second, this study aims to discover consumers’ brand-related activities and their motivations. As users are typically aware of their media use and related motivations (Katz et al., 1973), qualitative methods are proposed to be the most applicable when exploring such motivations (Ruggiero, 2000).

Interviews were chosen as the most suitable method for data collection. Although observations would have enabled the researcher to survey people’s behavior instead of relying on the information that they tell (Silverman, 2006), perceptions and values, such as motivations, cannot be observed (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Consequently, as this study aims to learn both consumer activities and motivations, interviews were deemed to provide the best access to relevant data.

More specifically, focus group interviews were selected as the best method for conducting the interviews. A focus group interview refers to such an interview that is conducted for a small group of people about a specific topic and guided by a moderator (Burns & Bush, 2010). For the purpose of this study, focus groups were considered superior to one-on-one interviews for the following reasons. First, focus groups are commonly used in similar exploratory studies that aim to learn consumers’ needs, motives, perceptions and attitudes (Burns & Bush, 2010). For instance, Vorvoreanu (2009) used focus groups when exploring motivations for Facebook use and Davis et al. (2014) when examining motivations for brand consumption in social media. Secondly, the pilot studies (Appendix 2) indicated that the social interaction between the
informants is essential for gaining in-depth data. As the main advantage of focus group lies in the social interaction (Patton, 2015), focus group interviews were, hence, chosen as the best method for data collection. A detailed description of how this conclusion was reached is presented in Appendix 2.

Although the results of the pilot studies indicated that here the interaction between the informants would yield more versatile data, the interactive nature of focus groups bears risks. First, the informants may adapt to others’ answers due to social pressure (Patton, 2015). Second, if the informants consider their opinions to represent a minority perspective, they may not be willing to speak up (Patton, 2015). Such risks were avoided as follows. As the nature of the topic was neither highly sensitive nor debatable, it was assessed that highly contradicting opinions, that would affect the integrity of the data, would not arise. Additionally, the focus group interviews were conducted on a homogeneous sample, as homogeneity helps to avoid such bias by improving the informants’ comfort of communication and participation (Burns & Bush, 2010). Indeed, the pilot studies indicated that instead of being restricted by others, the discussion helped the informants to reflect and elaborate their own brand-related social media use. Homogeneity of the final sample is further addressed in the next chapter when discussing the sample selection. Most importantly, the lack of the informant’s ability to recall social media activities during the one-on-one interview was considered the biggest issue, as the aim was to seek as versatile activities and motivations as possible. Therefore, focus group interviews were deemed the most appropriate data collection method.

Each focus group interview was further supported with photo elicitation, so that the informants would not have any difficulties in recalling their brand-related social media use. Photo elicitation refers to a method in which supporting documents are provided for the informants in order to “stimulate reflections, support memory recall, and elicit stories” (Patton, 2015, p. 485). Hence, prior to conducting the focus group interviews, the researcher collected examples of brand-related activities from social media and the document was sent to the informants a week prior to the focus group interviews. This ensured that the informants could observe their social media behavior beforehand and be better aware of their own social media behavior during the interviews.
3.2. Sample

When selecting a sample, it is essential to first identify the population, as it defines the set of entity from which the sample will be selected (Eisenhardt, 1989). As previously stated, the population for this study was defined as Finnish, Generation Y consumers, living in the Helsinki Metropolitan area. Bolton et al. (2013) propose that Generation Y include people born between 1981 and 1999. However, as even within this target group social media use varies significantly (MarMai, 2016), the population was further delimited to consumers between ages 24 to 30 who are expected to share similar social media behavior patterns.

Out of this population, the final sample was selected purposefully by applying three sampling strategies: quota sampling, intensity sampling, and snowballing sampling. The sample was also a non-random convenience sample. The sampling strategies are summarized in Table 4 and discussed further next.

Table 4 Summary of the sample selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling strategy</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Selection of the informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quota sampling</td>
<td>Access to relevant informants</td>
<td>Similar demographic factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity sampling</td>
<td>Access to information-rich cases</td>
<td>Frequent social media users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball sampling</td>
<td>Access to informants</td>
<td>Recommended information rich cases by the selected informants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, non-proportional quota sampling was applied in order to access the predetermined quota that is 24-30 year old Finnish consumers from the Helsinki metropolitan area. Quota sampling, which is typically used when selecting a focus group sample (Patton, 2015), helped the researcher to purposefully select the informants from the predetermined population. This guaranteed homogeneity of the sample that is essential when forming focus groups (Burns & Bush, 2010; Patton, 2015).

However, it was assumed that not everyone within the quota would be a suitable informant for this study. Therefore, quota sampling was supported with intensity sampling that provided access to information-rich cases within the quota. Information rich cases refer to “cases from which one can learn a great deal about the focus of inquiry and which therefore are worthy of in-depth study” (Patton, 2015, p. 39). Here,
information rich cases were defined as consumers who frequently use social media, as such informants were expected to more likely be interested in discussing their social media behavior. The frequency was determined based on the activity of the informants’ social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram) and by asking whether they used social media on a daily basis. As a result of these two sampling strategies, eight informants were selected.

Additionally, in order to access the appropriate number of representatives and information rich cases, snowballing (Patton, 2015) was applied. The selected informants were asked to recommend additional informants who would fit in the quota and who frequently used social media. As a result, the final sample was drawn. It consisted of 16 Finnish, 24 to 30 year old information-rich cases, who were frequent social media users and who lived in Helsinki metropolitan area. 10 of the informants were women and 6 of them were men.

3.3. Data collection

In this chapter the data collection is discussed. First, the focus group interviews are described. Second, a pre-designed interview guide, which provided a framework for the interviews, is presented.

3.3.1. Focus groups

As the pilot focus group interview only functioned as a test for finding the suitable method, three actual focus group interviews were conducted for data collection. When collecting data through focus groups, it is advised to pay attention to the formulation of the groups (i.e. design and structure), level of formality, and the researcher's involvement (i.e. moderator involvement) (Morgan, 1997). Each of these elements was carefully considered in relation to the aim of the study when designing the focus groups. The final focus group formation is presented in Table 5.
Table 5  Focus group formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Focus group 1</th>
<th>Focus group 2</th>
<th>Focus group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*M1</td>
<td>**F1</td>
<td>F6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>F7</td>
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<td>M3</td>
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<td>Length</td>
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<td>2 h 03 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of formality</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator involvement</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Recording</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M=male informant  
**F=female informant

The 16 informants were first divided into three focus groups that each consisted of 5-6 individuals. Typically, focus groups consist of five to eight people (Patton, 2015). As the sample was homogeneous in terms demographic factors, dividing the informants into groups based on their gender ensured further homogeneity within each group. As a result, two female focus groups of 5 informants each, and one male focus group of 6 informants were formed.

The focus group interviews were conducted during one week in March 2016 in Helsinki. Focus group interviews are advised to last one to two hours (Patton, 2015), and each interview lasted approximately 2 hours. To the best of the author’s knowledge, no exact recommendation for the number of focus groups has been given. Each focus group interview should, however, provide various perspectives and support for emerged patterns (Patton, 2015). The number of focus groups was, hence, determined on a continuous assessment. Although the third interview provided new insights on the matter, it included many similarities with the previous interviews. The researcher evaluated, therefore, that three focus groups provided adequate amount of data to answer the aim.

In each focus group interview, the discussion was informal in order to guarantee a low level of formality. A low level of formality was assessed to affect the informants’ ability to communicate as freely and honestly as possible and, hence, to improve the integrity of the data. Indeed, the informants should feel comfortable during the interview in order to share their ideas and perceptions (Patton, 2015). Conducting the interviews at
the researcher's home further ensured a low level of formality and no outside distractions disturbed the discussion. Additionally, snacks were served so that the informants felt welcomed and appreciated.

The moderator involvement was high during the discussions, as the researcher actively participated in the discussions by presenting questions. However, the involvement was merely guidance of the discussions so that the focus remained throughout the interviews while the informants were still able to consider and elaborate their answers freely. Further description of the structure of the discussions is provided in the next chapter.

Finally, the data were collected by recoding each focus group interview. In case of possible technical errors, the interviews were recorded using two smartphones. Capturing the informants' actual words enabled the researcher to afterwards interpret the informants' perceptions as fully and fairly as possible. Data collection relied solely on the recordings, as the moderator needed to focus on listening to the informants and interacting with them instead of taking notes. This technique ensured that the informal nature of the discussion remained throughout the interviews. Additionally, no video recordings were needed since the researcher was able to separate the individual voices from the recordings. Therefore, in the results chapter (chapter 4), the citations from the text are coded with individual informants' codes (e.g. F5, M3), rather than anonymous quotes from the discussion.

3.3.2. Interview guide

The focus group interviews were conducted with an interview guide. Although focus groups should encourage spontaneous discussion, the moderator needs to ensure that the discussion is focused on a specific topic (Burns & Bush, 2010). This is typically assured by using open-ended interviews (Patton, 2015). When conducting focus group interviews, an interview guide is the most commonly used type of an open-ended interview (Patton, 2015), and it was, therefore, selected for this study.

The interview guide (Appendix 3) consisted of 11 questions, which is in accordance with Patton’s (2011) guidelines. The questions were divided into three parts, as summarized in Table 6. The first part started the discussion with warm-up questions that were related to the informants' general social media behavior. The second part aimed to
discover the informants’ brand-related activities. Finally, the purpose of the last part was to explore motivations for the identified activities.

### Table 6  Summary of the interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Warm-up</td>
<td>Start the discussion  Get background information about general social media use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: What consumers do in social media in relation to brands?</td>
<td>Discover consumption, participation, and production-related activities  Discover new brand-related activities  Discover consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3: Why do they do the activities identified in Part 2?</td>
<td>Discover motivations for different activities  Discover the relation between activities and motivations  Discover the main motivations that drive brand-related activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview guide functioned merely as a checklist for the moderator. Although the focus of each discussion varied based on the informants’ perceptions, the interview guide ensured that the discussion remained focused yet conversational. Interestingly, as the informants were aware of the topic prior to the discussion, they were able to naturally discuss about the topic without the moderator’s strict guidance. Indeed, the discussion naturally turned into brand-related social media use after the warm-up. Additionally, as expected by the researcher, activities and motivations were discussed simultaneously even though they were divided into two separate parts in the interview guide. In fact, the parts 2 and 3 functioned mainly as a reminder for the moderator to cover both aspects. For instance, if the informants mentioned a brand-related activity, the moderator asked about the related motivation directly instead of discussing activities and motivations separately. This ensured the natural course of discussion while making sure that all the essential topics were covered.

### 3.4. Analysis of the data

For the data analysis, each focus group interview was transcribed carefully. As certain parts of the raw data were not relevant for the aim of the study, such parts were left out
from the transcriptions. For instance, some passages concerned general social media use and did not relate to the aim of the study. However, in order to ensure that every relevant piece of data was included, the researcher carefully considered each passage and their importance for the study prior to leaving them out.

Content analysis was used to analyze the data. It enabled the researcher to, firstly, reduce the data and identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2015), secondly, to analyze different units of analysis (Silverman, 2011), namely activities and motivations, and, finally, to draw conclusions (Spiggle, 1994). Spiggle’s (1994) framework for content analysis was applied, as it provided the most detailed guideline for the analysis process, ensuring the most trustworthy findings. The data analysis process included six main steps: abstraction, comparison, dimensionalization, integration, and iteration. However, as Spiggle (1994) suggests, the steps were not performed separately or in a specific order, but the researcher shuttled back and forth through the steps throughout the analysis process. An overview of the data analysis process is illustrated in Table 7.
Table 7   Overview of the analysis of the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization and categorization <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To organize the data and to discover cohesive meanings from the text</td>
<td>23 activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83 motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction and comparison <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To reduce the data by formulating cohesive categories: what is already known and what is new</td>
<td>4 activity categories (3 existing, 1 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 categories of motivation (7 existing, 3 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensionalization: Examine the connection between activities and motivations based on the conceptual framework <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To understand how the activities and motivations are related</td>
<td>Discovering the inadequacy of the conceptual framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and categorization <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To re-examine the data and to find defining constructs To evaluate the initial constructs</td>
<td>Two underlying factors Four main COBRA categories Social media ecosystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 activities 46 motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction and comparison <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To re-organize the data again according to the new constructs and comparison with the existing literature</td>
<td>6 activity categories (4 existing, 2 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 categories of motivation (7 existing, 2 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensionalization and integration: Re-examine the connection between activities and motivations <em>(Iteration)</em></td>
<td>To assess the relation of the activities and motivations according to the new constructs</td>
<td>Differences in the importance of motivations The relation between activities and motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a model of brand-related social media use</td>
<td>To organize the findings into a matrix in order to explain consumers’ brand-related social media use</td>
<td>The conceptual model for brand-related use (Table 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, after transcribing the interviews, the raw data were organized. The transcriptions were read carefully and such passages that involved any references to brand-related activities and motivations were highlighted with different colors. The coded activities and related motivations were collected in a separate Excel sheet. During the collection process each activity passage was evaluated to see whether the activity corresponded with the already collected activities or whether it should be deemed as a new activity. As a result, 23 activities were listed. Motivations were collected in relation to activities, as this relation needed to be later assessed when seeking interdependencies. For instance, even if a similar motivation existed but it was previously not found to relate to a particular activity, the motivation was still added. In addition, the motivations were analyzed separately and, as a result, 83 distinct motivations were found.
The next step was to group the data by formulating cohesive categories for activities and motivations. The data were compared to the existing literature simultaneously. Most of the 21 activities corresponded with the existing activity categories (i.e. consumption, participation, and production) and were categorized accordingly. However, as some activities did not fall under any of the three categories, one additional activity category, social shopping, was developed. As a result, *four activity categories* were formed. A similar process was performed for motivations. The majority of the motivations fell under the seven categories of motivation proposed in previous literature (i.e. information, relational motives, empowerment, functionality, remuneration, integration and social interaction, and personal identity). However, as some motivations did not relate to any of the existing categories of motivations, three new categories (emotional motives, ethical motives and no motives) were developed. As a result, the 83 motivations were divided under *ten categories of motivation*. The conceptual framework that was developed based on the existing literature was, hence, supplemented with one new activity category and three new categories of motivation.

Thereafter, the categories were dimensionalized in order to seek relations between activities and motivations. The conceptual framework, which was supplemented with an additional activity category and three categories of motivation, functioned as the basis for dimensionalization. Indeed, the researcher started dividing the 83 found motivations according to the 4 activity, and 10 motivation -categories. However, the activities and motivations did not correlate as expected since the researcher was not able to allocate the sub-motivations into the framework according to the two dimensions (i.e. activity and motivation categories).

Therefore, the raw data were re-examined in order to find defining constructs. Two underlying constructs were found: the type of interaction and the level of privacy. Each construct was further found to consist of two dimensions each, and a matrix of four new COBRA categories was developed, which will be presented in the results section. Additionally, it was found that activities and motivations occurred in the social media ecosystem, and varied according to the type of social media. As the purpose of the study was not, however, to explore differences between channels, this finding was not analyzed in-depth.

While re-examining the data, the initial activities and motivations were re-assessed. It was found that some of the categories were too similar and overlapping, and thus
activities and motivations were re-organized. During the process, the amount of activities varied between 17 and 23, and the amount of motivations between 46 and 50. After careful iteration, the number of both activities and motivations was reduced resulting in 17 activities and 46 motivations.

Thereafter, the 17 activities and the 46 motivations were re-categorized under the four new categories relating to type of interaction and level of privacy. Instead of using the already identified categories of activities and motivations, the researcher re-categorized the data in order to assess the applicability of the underlying elements and COBRA categories. After re-organizing the activities and motivations into the developed four COBRA categories, the initial categories of activities and motivations were re-evaluated. As a result, both of the categories were modified. First, it was found that the four activity categories were not adequate to describe all the activities. Thus, the four activity categories were supplemented with two new activity categories, dark participation and dark production, resulting in six activity categories. Second, the ethical motives were deemed to overlap with personal identity, and hence, ethical motives was discarded as a separate motive. This resulted in total of nine final categories of motivation.

The applicability of the new constructs was further evaluated by re-examining the relation between activities and motivations through dimensionalization and integration. It was found that not all motivations were equally important, but each category shared different primary and secondary motives. Additionally, a similar relation that was expected based on the literature review between activities and motivations was found within each category. Finally, the findings were organized into a conceptual framework that explained the consumers’ brand-related social media use. The results are presented in the next chapter.

3.5. Quality of the research

The quality of the data is evaluated based on three criteria: credibility, confirmability, and integrity. Additionally, the study’s ethical matters are assessed. As the trustworthiness of the study should be also evaluated in terms of the quality of the findings (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989), the quality of the research is further assessed in chapter 5.
Credibility. The first criterion, credibility, assesses the study’s internal validity. The credibility of the data should be evaluated based on the presentation of the methods, prolonged engagement, triangulation of methods and sources, and member checks (Gummesson, 2000; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Firstly, the choice of methods are argued in relation to the aim of the study, in order to determine their adequacy and help others understand why and how the decisions were made. Due to the limited timeframe of the study, the prolonged engagement and triangulation of methods were, however, minimalistic. Indeed, the data were collected only by conducting focus group interviews. Yet, prolonged engagement was taken into account as the informants were asked to recall and reflect their social media use prior the focus group interviews.

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to objectivity that can be achieved with the help of, for instance, triangulation of researchers, detailed transcripts, video and audio recording, and reflective journals (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Triangulation of researchers was not feasible due to the study's requirements. The study was, however, supervised by a professor. Each focus group interview was recorded with the help of two smartphones. After the first focus group interview, the researcher evaluated whether video recordings would benefit the data analysis process. As the researcher was able to separate the individual voices from the recordings, and as the aim was not to observe the informants, video recordings would not have improved the study's confirmability. Further, the raw data were transcribed carefully and precisely in order to avoid the researcher bias and misinterpretations.

Integrity. The third criterion, integrity, refers to the assessment of the informants’ trustworthiness: have the informants provided truthful information or could the results be affected by misinformation (Gummeson, 2000; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). It is proposed that such risks could be avoided by developing trust with the right interviewing technique and prolonged engagement, as well as by assuring the informants’ anonymity (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Prior to conducting the focus group interviews, the researcher studied various interview techniques. During the interviews, the integrity was ensured by solely focusing on listening to the informants and following the discussion, instead of taking notes, for instance. This further assured that the informants felt appreciated, as the researcher seemed interested in what they had to say, and that they could express their thoughts as freely as possible. Additionally, although informants could adapt their answers to each other’s answers in a focus group interview, here each informant actively participated in the discussions, and differing
views on the topic were presented. Further, as each informant was a frequent social media user, they did not have any difficulties in discussing their behavior. The comments that others made seemed to help them to reflect their own behavior, rather than restricting them. Therefore, it can be claimed that the data were honest and truthful.

Additionally, it is advised that ethical matters should be taken into account when assessing the quality of the research (Silverman, 2006). The evaluation of ethical matters is assessed here based on three criteria: (1) did the informants participate voluntarily, (2) was the confidentiality guaranteed, and (3) were the informants protected from harm (Silverman, 2006). First, each informant was asked whether she/he voluntarily wanted to participate and was given the possibility to decline. Second, the focus group interviews were conducted at the researcher’s home. This was thought to ensure the informants’ confidentiality, as only the researcher and the informants were present during the discussions, and confidentiality could have been risked in a public place. Third, the informants were protected from any harm that could have occurred in a public place. Although Silverman (2006) proposes that written ethical guidelines would further improve the study’s ethicality, the lack of such guidelines did not affect the quality of the research, as the nature of the topic was not highly sensitive. Therefore, it can be concluded that no ethical problems occurred.
4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: WHAT DO CONSUMERS DO IN SOCIAL MEDIA IN RELATION TO BRANDS AND WHY?

In this chapter, the results of the empirical study are presented in three parts. First, the main findings are summarized in the conceptual model of brand-related use. Second, consumers’ brand-related activities are described and a new COBRA typology is presented. Finally, motivations are discussed.

4.1 Conceptual model of brand-related use

The main findings of the study are summarized in the conceptual model of brand-related use (Table 8). The findings indicate that brand-related use can be seen as a sum of two underlying factors: the type of interaction and the level of privacy. These two factors are further divided into two dimensions each: human-to-human (H2H) vs. human-to-brand (H2B) interactions, and private vs. public activities. Together, these elements form a matrix of four COBRA categories. All brand-related activities can be allocated into one of the COBRA categories, which result in a new COBRA typology. Additionally, consumers’ motivations vary primarily based on these categories.

In this chapter, the underlying factors are discussed. Each type of interaction is explained, followed by a description of the level of privacy. The contents of the table, i.e. activities and motivations, are described in more detail in chapters 4.2 and 4.3.
Table 8  Conceptual model of brand-related use

H2H interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private H2H COBRAs</th>
<th>Public H2H COBRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity types:</td>
<td>Activity types:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark participation</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social shopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary motive:</td>
<td>Primary motive:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian needs</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H2B interactions

4.1.1. The type of interaction

Two types of interactions, illustrated on the vertical axis of Table 8, were found: human-to-human (H2H) and human-to-brand (H2B). When it comes to brand-related matters, users can interact with two types of accounts: those that belong to other users and those that belong to brands. This differentiation helps explain the myriad activities in which users engage.

**H2H interactions** refer to interactions between two users that occur through personal social media accounts. Such interactions include, for instance, the consumption of eWOM, e.g. searching for eWOM; social shopping, i.e. peer-to-peer commerce; participation in eWOM, e.g. liking a CEO’s Facebook account or producing eWOM, e.g. publishing a photo about a product on Instagram.

As one person may engage in brand-related activities by adopting different roles (e.g. a consumer, an employee, an entrepreneur, or a personal brand, such as a blogger or a celebrity), these interactions are referred to as H2H interactions instead of consumer-
to-consumer interactions. For instance, one of the informants published work-related photos through her personal profile, hence, adopting the role of an entrepreneur. However, it was insignificant whether the content was produced for commercial purposes or not: “For me, it doesn’t really matter whether the content is produced for commercial purposes or not as long as the content adds value.” (F8) The important factor is that the interaction occurs with a real person and a personal profile. For instance: “I don’t start to follow any boring companies. But if the CEO of a boring company has a personal account through which he shares interesting stuff, I have started following such personal profiles.” (M2) Therefore, interactions between two people were labeled as human-to-human interactions.

**H2B interactions** refer to interactions between a person (i.e. a personal social media account) and a brand (i.e. a brand’s social media account). While H2H interactions occur between two individuals, H2B interactions occur between a brand and a person. H2B interactions include activities, such as consuming brand-generated content, e.g. reading a content created by a brand, dark production, e.g. sending a private message to a brand through social media, and participating in brand-generated content, e.g. liking a brand’s social media account.

The differentiation between interactions is essential for understanding consumers’ brand-related social media use for the following reasons. First, the informants paid attention to what kind of content they consume and who had produced the content. For instance: “I prefer a recipe created by a blogger over a recipe created by Cocovi. I trust the blogger more even if I know that the blogger is cooperating with a brand and, hence, sponsored by Cocovi.” (F1)

Second, some H2H and H2B interactions, especially consumption related activities, are driven by different gratifications. For instance, the informants considered eWOM to be a more reliable source of information than brand-generated content:

“I think social media is a more reliable source of information. For instance, I rely more on blogs that are based on other people’s own experiences compared to, for instance, TripAdvisor or Yelp, that brands are able to manipulate.” (M6)

Finally, the type of interaction in which users choose to engage depends on the consequence of the interaction, i.e. what they wanted to achieve from the interaction. For instance, if the informants wanted to access interesting insights, they consumed content created by a person rather than a brand. On the other hand, if they wanted to
access information about the brand’s offerings, they preferred brand-generated content, and engaged in H2B interactions.

“When it comes to lifestyle brands, I prefer following the CEO or other employees as I feel that they generate better content (than the brand). But when it comes to clothing brands, for instance, I prefer following the brand as I want to get the latest information about the clothes rather than see the CEO’s life.” (F3)

4.1.2. The level of privacy

There are two general privacy levels, private activities and public activities, as illustrated on the horizontal axis of Table 8.

**Private activities** refer to all brand-related activities that are visible only to a selected audience or to oneself. Private activities occur mainly in instant messaging applications (e.g. Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp), privately in Snapchat, or in private Facebook groups. For instance: “I don’t want to share everything on my wall on Facebook. But I do share a lot of stuff on WhatsApp.” (F8)

**Public activities** refer to brand-related activities that are visible to all social media users or to all the user’s friends and/or followers. Public activities occur on all social media channels, such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn or on MyStory in Snapchat. For instance: “When I applied to Adidas Tribe, one requirement was to make the Instagram account public and to post pictures from the training sessions.” (F8)

The level of privacy is significant for understanding consumers’ brand-related social media use as public and private activities are motivated by different gratifications. Public activities are primarily driven by social identity. The informants wanted to affect others’ perceptions about themselves by carefully considering what kind of content they participated in and what kind of content they produced:

“I mainly post lifestyle and health related photos in which I often showcase products and to which I tag the brand in question. And it’s really about building my personal brand as I want others to perceive me as someone who is health oriented. That’s why I don’t post, for instance, any fashion related stuff.” (F3)

Private activities, on the other hand, are primarily driven by utilitarian needs, i.e. information and/or functionality motives, and the desire to protect one’s social identity. For instance: “I find Twitter and Facebook as the best channels for contacting a brand. Usually I PM (=send a private message) them as I don’t want to others so see my messages.” (M3) The motivations are further discussed in chapter 4.3.
As illustrated in Table 8, both public and private activity categories consist of different types of activities. These activities are presented next.

4.2. Brand-related activities

The aim of the study was to further explore consumers’ brand-related activities. The findings indicate that there are six main activity categories: consumption, dark participation, participation, dark production, production, and social shopping. These categories can be divided into private and public activities. Additionally, each main activity category consists of sub-activities that vary based on the type of interaction. As a result, all brand-related activities can be categorized into one of four categories: private H2H activities, private H2B activities, public H2H activities, and public H2B activities. These elements constitute the new COBRA typology (Table 9). Example citations of each sub-activity are given in Appendix 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
<th>New COBRA typology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>H2H interactions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Read eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Search for eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark participation</td>
<td>Join a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss in a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark production</td>
<td>Send brand-related content privately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social shopping</td>
<td>Peer-to-peer commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Follow/like brand-related account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share other users’ brand-related content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like other users’ brand-related content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Publish brand-related content (photo or text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Update personal profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consumption of brand-related content is the first activity type within the private activity category. It refers to activities of which only the user him/herself is aware (e.g. reading or searching) or which other users cannot see nor observe. Users may consume either content created by other users, i.e. eWOM, or content created by brands. First, consumption of eWOM includes three sub-activities: reading, searching, and watching content created by other users. Second, consumption of brand-generated content includes four sub-activities: reading or searching for brand-generated content, such as news; watching brand-generated videos; and ignoring brands.

Dark participation, the second type of private activities, denotes participation in brand-related content that is visible only to the user him/herself or to a selected audience. Such activities occur mainly through instant messaging applications (e.g. on Facebook Messenger, Snapchat and WhatsApp) and in private groups on Facebook and Pinterest. There are further two types of dark participation. First, dark participation in eWOM includes three sub-activities: joining a private group on Facebook and discussing brand-related matters in it, and collecting user-generated content on a private board on Pinterest. For instance:

“We have this private cook book board on Pinterest. You can test a recipe and add it (=the photo of the recipe) there if you liked it so that other members can test it as well. And usually there’s a link from the picture to a blog or a cook book from which the recipe is.” (F1)

Second, dark participation in brand-generated content includes three sub-activities: sharing brand-generated content for oneself or for the selected users, collecting brand-generated content on a private board on Pinterest, and unfollowing a brand’s page.

Dark production is the third type of private activities that signifies private content creation. Similarly to dark participation, dark production is visible only to the user him/herself or to a selected audience. Dark production mainly occurs in instant messaging applications, or in other channels that enable private messages (e.g. Twitter and Instagram). Two types of dark production were found. First, dark production of eWOM includes sending self-produced brand-related content, such as photos or text, privately. For instance: “Usually when I visit a nice place (such as restaurant) I often take a photo and share it in WhatsApp.” (M2) Second, dark production for H2B interaction includes to sending a private message to a brand.
**Social shopping**, the last type of private activities, entails two sub-activities. First, H2H social shopping refers to peer-to-peer commerce, which means selling items to, or buying items from other users. This occurs mainly through private second hand groups on Facebook, and on Instagram and is, hence, visible only to the group’s members or to oneself: “I have bought one blogger’s clothes from Instagram. She created a separate second hand account for selling her clothes. It’s really easy to see when she’s added new products and then I just contact her via email.” (F1)

Second, H2B social shopping refers to e-commerce in social media. E-commerce in social media occurs in private groups, mainly on Facebook, through cross-reference links from a brand’s social media account (e.g. Instagram) or through direct links from blogs. For instance: “I really like that buying clothes is so easy. You usually just click, for instance, a blogger’s photo that showcases clothes and then I am directly forwarded to the online store where I can easily complete the purchase.” (F2) It is, therefore, private, as others are not able to observe neither private groups nor clicks.

**Participation** in brand-related content is the first type of public activities. It refers to participation that is visible to all other users or to the user’s friends and followers. There are two types of participation. First, participation in eWOM includes four sub-activities: collecting brand-related content created by other users on a public board on Pinterest, sharing or liking other users’ brand-related content, and following/liking a personal yet brand-related account (e.g. blogger or CEO). For instance: “I follow many bloggers on Facebook in order to get the information about the latest posts.” (F8)

Second, participation in brand-generated content includes five sub-activities: following/liking a brand’s account, collecting brand-generated content on a public board on Pinterest, showing interest in a brand’s event on Facebook (by clicking ‘interested’), tagging a brand on a photo, and sharing brand-generated content. For instance: “I am part of Amnesty International and I often share their posts.” (F6) Sharing occurs mainly on Facebook, tagging on Instagram, collecting on Pinterest and liking or following e.g. on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Production** of brand-related content, the second type of public activities, refers to creating content that is published publicly on social media. Production can be considered as creation of eWOM although two different types of production were found. First, production of content for H2H interactions include publishing brand-
related content through own profile (photos, videos and/or status), and updating work-related information on personal profiles. For instance: “It's funny actually that I updated my work place to my Facebook profile and that made me kind of a brand ambassador of the company.” (F5)

Second, producing content for H2B interactions refers to publishing content (photo and/or text) to brand’s social media account: “I once bought a bottle of Sol beer. Once I started drinking it I noticed that the liquid wasn't beer and I was afraid it was poisoned. So I took a photo of the bottle and posted that with a message to Hartwall's Facebook wall.” (M1)

4.3. Motivations for brand-related activities

The study aims to explore motivations and explore how motivations and activities are related. The data revealed nine categories of motivation that drive brand-related use: information, functionality, empowerment, personal identity, social interaction, remuneration, relational motives, emotional motives, and no motives. Each category consists of sub-motivations and altogether 46 sub-motivations were found (Appendix 5). Example citations of each sub-motive are given in the following subchapters.

Not all categories of motivation are, however, equally important, as is illustrated in Table 8. As stated previously, public activities are driven primarily by social identity and private activities primarily by utilitarian needs and secondly by the desire to protect one’s social identity. Additionally, activities were found to further be driven by secondary motives as summarized in Table 10. The secondary categories of motivation vary based on the type of interaction and the type of activity.
Table 10  Summary of COBRA motivations

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Motivations for H2H interactions</th>
<th>Motivations for H2B interactions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumption</strong></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Emotional motives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emotional motives</td>
<td>Relational motives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No motives</td>
<td>Personal identity</td>
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<td><strong>Private activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dark participation</strong></td>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Functionality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>Emotional motives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
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<td><strong>Dark production</strong></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<td>Functionality</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social shopping</strong></td>
<td>Functionality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal identity</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Participation** | Social interaction | Social interaction |
|                  | Personal identity   | Information         |
|                  | Information         | Functionality        |
|                  | Empowerment         | Remuneration         |
|                  | Remuneration        | Relational motives   |
| **Production**   | Social interaction  | Social interaction   |
|                  | Emotional motives   | Emotional motives    |
|                  | Remuneration        | Functionality        |
|                  | Empowerment         | Empowerment          |
|                  | Information         |                       |

The type of interaction and the type of activity affect the sub-motivations. For instance, although both consumption and dark production are driven by functionality, they are driven by different sub-motivations for functionality. Consumption is motivated by the desire to access up-to-date information and dark production by the desire to receive quick customer service. Such instances as well as the content of Table 10 are presented next.

4.3.1. Motivations for private H2H COBRAs

The first COBRA category, private H2H activities, includes the consumption of, dark participation in and dark production of eWOM as well as social shopping. These activities are primarily driven by the desire to protect one’s social identity, as others are not able to form an opinion based on the behavior. Instead, they are primarily motivated by utilitarian needs, i.e. information and functionality. Each type of activity is further driven by different sub-motivations for information and/or functionality and by secondary motives.
**Motivations for consumption.** The consumption of eWOM is primarily driven by information and functionality and secondarily by emotional motives and no motives. Firstly, **information** includes the need for (1) recommendations and ratings, and (2) good insights, (3) education, (4) support for purchasing decisions, and (5) up-to-date information. Example citations of each sub-motive are given below.

**Recommendations:** “I think that searching for recommendations through social media is really effective. For instance, if I am about to buy such a product that I really need to consider, I really quickly search others’ experiences and recommendations directly through social media.” (F9)

**Good insights:** “I read this blog relating to defense political matters as I get good insights from there.” (M1)

**Education:** “I broke my iPhone 5 once and directly went to YouTube to watch others’ videos about how to deconstruct an iPhone. And for similar instances as well, YouTube functions as a good channel for self-education purposes.” (M5)

**Support for purchasing decisions:** “I have searched photos, for instance, of restaurants or travel destinations to have some support for my purchasing decisions. You can easily get a pretty good idea about a place based on Instagram photos.” (F2)

**Up-to-date information:** “Instagram is also so much more up-to-date. If someone has posted a picture, for instance, from the restaurant, you know that she/he has visited it lately. Compared if you read ratings from a website, even ratings that date a couple months back may be outdated.” (F1)

Secondly, consumption is driven by **functionality**, as (1) the informants were able to access content that is already filtered by others and as (2) a work tool.

**Filtered content:** “Last summer we went to Italy and I went to TripAdvisor to look for travel tips. But there was so much information that it was really hard to find anything. So I went to visit this blog from which I found the article ‘Top 5 places to go in Tuscany’. And it was so much easier to get something out of it as someone had already filtered all the information for me and I did not have to do it.” (M1)

**Work tool:** “I use Periscope at work a lot as I watch seminars, for instance, through it.” (M2)

The difference between information and functionality lies in the user’s needs. Whereas information refers to the users’ need for specific information, functionality refers to the users’ need for getting certain jobs done conveniently. For instance, the aforementioned male informant (M1) mentioned reading travel tips from a blog because it was the most functional way for him to consume the content.

Consumption is secondarily driven by emotional motives and no motives. First, **emotional motives** drive consumption, as content created by other users is considered more reliable than brand-generated content: “I think social media is more trustworthy source of information. For instance, I rely on blogs that are based on other people’s own
experiences compared to, for instance, TripAdvisor or Yelp, that brands are able to manipulate.” (M6)

Lastly, consumption may also be initiated without a motive. Instead, the consumption may be originated by habit when the user does not have any particular motive for consumption: “I may go to social media just by habit and I don’t have any actual reason for that.” (F3)

**Motivations for dark participation.** Participation in eWOM is driven by three categories of motivation: functionality, remuneration, and social interaction. First, functionality drives dark participation as social media is used as a work tool: “There is this private Facebook group at work which I joined. And we daily discuss about relevant job-related matters in the group. So for us, it’s a work tool.” (F9)

Second, joining a group is motivated by remuneration as it provides access to exclusive job opportunities about which the user would not otherwise know. For instance: “I recently joined this Ompeluseura group as I wanted to get access to exclusive job opportunities. People post job ads there that are usually available only to the group members.” (F9)

Last, collecting eWOM on a private board is driven by social identity, as the informants wanted to help others: “We have this private cook book board on Pinterest. You can test a recipe and add it there if you liked it so that other members can test it as well. And usually there’s a link from the picture to the blog or a cook book from which the recipe is.” (F1)

**Motivations for dark production.** Dark production, i.e. sending a self-created content privately, is driven only by empowerment. More specifically, users want to send pictures privately to convince others to buy or not to buy. For instance: “In WhatsApp, I often tell about good experiences or post a picture of my new clothes. It’s quite common in fact and I do it to recommend my friend to buy as well.” (M2)

**Motivations for social shopping.** Peer-to-peer commerce is driven by functionality, and personal identity. First, functionality includes the following sub-motivations: (1) ease of use, (2) real-time in relation to the fast turnover of the goods, and (3) one-channel access that is convenient for buying and selling. Examples of each sub-motive are given in the following citation: “It is just so easy since I’m anyways on Facebook and I don’t have to separately register to another platform and separately register
each item I’m selling. It is also real-time as you may find the buyers from next door quickly.” (F2)

Additionally, peer-to-peer commerce is motivated by personal identity and more specifically self-actualization. The informants were selling and buying items from second-hand groups as second-hand commerce corresponds with their values, such as sustainability: “Second-hand commerce matches my values. I support sustainable consumption and I’ve noticed that people sell quality products for considerably low prices.” (F9)

4.3.2. Motivations for private H2B COBRAs

The second category, private H2B COBRAs, occurs between a user and a brand and includes the following activity types: consumption, dark participation, dark production, and social shopping as illustrated in Table 10. Although also private H2B COBRAs are primarily driven by utilitarian needs, each type is driven by a distinct sub-motive of information and/or functionality as well as secondary motives.

**Motivations for consumption.** The consumption of brand-generated content is motivated by four categories of motivation: information, emotional motives, relational motives, and personal identity. First, consumption is driven by information that further includes four sub-motivations: (1) instant information, (2) the desire to keep up with trends, (3) source of inspiration, and (4) product information. Example citations of each category are listed below.

*Instant information:* “I actually used Twitter and Reddit mainly when there were those terror attacks in Paris as that was the best channel to get the latest news updates (e.g. from BBC).” (M1)

*Keeping up with trends:* “The other day I did this random thing and watched Chanel’s fashion show from YouTube. -- And it was a really good way to get to know what will be the season’s must-have pieces and what kind of clothes are trending this season.” (F9)

*Source of inspiration:* “I use Pinterest usually for getting interior design inspiration. Now, we are, for instance, going to make this glass wall. And there’s a million ways of how you can do it and I had no clue who makes those and what they cost, so the first place from which I started searching was Pinterest.” (F8)

*Product information:* “I wanted to buy a new bike so I started searching for products and brands on Pinterest to see what’s out there.” (M4)

Second, ignoring brands is driven by emotional motives if the user perceives the brand’s ads as annoying. For instance: “I dislike YouTube ads so much. They are so
annoying and I just always stare at the 'Skip the ad' button while I'm definitely not watching the ad but singing something so that I wouldn't hear the sound. Kind of a protest. It’s so old-fashioned to force people to watch ads.” (F8)

Further, consumption is driven by personal identity, more specifically self-presentation. This refers to consuming the kind of content that helps the user to enhance one’s self-image.

"I made the purchasing decision about strollers on Instagram. I had two brands that I was considering to buy and I knew those were the best ones. I started following both but at some point after seeing their photos the one brand just started to annoy me. And I just completely fell for the other brand as I could relate to the brand based on its photos and the brand represented exactly what I want to be myself." (F3)

Additionally, consumption of content is motivated by relational motives, as consumption enables the user to get to know the brand by seeing behind the scenes material. This is especially important in relation to exclusive or luxury brands, whose tangible products the user cannot afford.

"The other day I did this random thing and watched Chanel’s fashion show from YouTube. Usually I am not buying Chanel’s products as they are way out of my budget but by watching the fashion show I got access to behind the scenes to which I otherwise would not have access to.” (F9)

Motivations for dark participation. Participation in brand-generated content is driven by functionality, emotional motives and social interaction. First, lack of functionality drove the informants to unfollow a brand’s page. Indeed, if the quality of the content is poor in terms of, for instance, relevancy and consistency, or if the brand produces too much information that results in information flood, users may unfollow/unlike the brand’s page, as the evidenced below demonstrates.

Quality of content: “It’s very important that the content is consistent. For instance, I started following this photography brand on Instagram, as their content was very cool. But I stopped following them, as their photos were not consistent with one theme. But Red Bull, for example, posts photos about extreme sports and that’s why I follow them. If they started to post some political pictures I would unfollow them as I have another channels for receiving such information. So if the content is not consistent, I stop following.” (M1)

Information flood: “I don’t want to spend too much time on one channel. I, for instance, stopped following this yoga brand on Instagram as it took always 20 minutes to watch their MyStory so they just posted too much information.” (F3)

Furthermore, unfollowing a brand’s page is driven by emotional motives. The informants unfollowed a brand’s page due to a lack of interest that can occur for two
reasons. First, the user perceives the brand as uninteresting: “It happens, in fact, quite often with brands that you start following an account but after a while you realize that you’re just not that interested in it so you unfollow it.” (M4) Second, the content the brand posts does not interest the user: “I follow many downhill skiing brands and quite often I unfollow them as they produce the kind of content I don’t like.” (F2)

Last, sharing a post privately is motivated by social interaction. The users want to help others by sharing content. Instead of sharing it publicly, the content is shared privately, as others are not able to observe such behavior. Indeed, private sharing is mainly driven by the desire to protect one’s social identity.

“I actually share articles or links to websites a lot. But I don’t want others to see what kind of articles I share with my friends, as especially those who really don’t know me could form an opinion of me based on what I do in social media.” (F4)

Motivations for dark production. Dark production, i.e. sending a private message to a brand, is motivated by both emotional motives and functionality. First, dark production only occurs once the customer experience has aroused emotions, mainly confusion or negative feelings. Second, the production is also motivated by functionality, as social media is considered as the most convenient channel for receiving customer service and getting a problem solved. Examples of both of the motives are described in the citation below.

“Once, I, for instance, had troubles with flights and sent a private message on Twitter to the airline company about the problems. At another time I was visiting this consulting company’s website which was down as there were some server problems. Well, I couldn’t PM the company on Twitter, and they didn’t have such an active Facebook profile so I ended up sending their CEO a message on LinkedIn.” (M3)

Motivations for social shopping. E-commerce in social media is motivated by functionality and empowerment. First, purchasing brands’ products through social media is considered easy, and hence, driven by functionality.

“I actually saw these iPhone covers on Instagram and placed an order through their account. It was so easy as they had a direct link to their online store so I didn’t really have to think about how to buy them. Buying has been made super simple.” (F5)

Additionally, e-commerce in social media is driven by empowerment, as the informants were able to support local business with their purchase.

“I have used this REKO cooperative farm that operates through a private Facebook group. The local farmers sell their produce directly to the consumers. I really like buying food through the group, as I know that I am able to help and give support for those local farmers and in fact do something good.” (F10)
4.3.3. **Motivations for public H2H COBRAs**

The first column of the lower row in Table 10 represents public H2H COBRAs. This category includes participation in and production of eWOM. Although public H2H activities are primarily driven by social identity as stated previously, participation and production are driven also by secondary motives.

**Motivations for participation.** Public participation in eWOM is driven by five categories of motivation: social interaction, personal identity, information, empowerment, and remuneration. First, participation is primarily driven by social identity that is a sub-motive of social interaction. However, secondary sub-motives of social interaction drive participation. Indeed, the informants wanted to help their friends by sharing content about, for instance, their work-related projects or liking their brand-related pages.

"Sometimes my good friends have asked me to like their page (relating to their work-related projects) on Facebook which I otherwise wouldn’t have necessarily liked." (M1)

Second, personal identity drives participation as sharing other users’ content is motivated by self-actualization, i.e. the topic of the content corresponds with one’s own values.

"I wouldn’t share something that would be conflicting with my own values or which I wouldn’t personally perceive important. For instance, if a friend would found a gun company, I wouldn’t share it." (M2)

Additionally, empowerment drives participation. The informants wanted to spread awareness, and convince others to participate: “Something I have noticed I do a lot is that if my friends have some good projects or stuff, I definitely want to tell others about them and spread the awareness on social media. For instance, I shared information about Duara, as it is my friend’s company, in all possible social media channels so that people would know about it and if someone would be interested in attending the pilot." (M2)

Participation was further motivated by information. More specifically the informants participated in eWOM due to their desire to be inspired. As one of the informants stated, content created by a person was considered more inspirational than brand-generated content: “For instance, I started to follow Steve Jobs because I am more interested in his thoughts than Apple’s content, which is presumably generated by some social media intern.” (F1)
Finally, participation in eWOM was driven by *remuneration* as, for example, liking a blogger’s account provides access to deals and giveaways.

"I follow this blogger on Snapchat as I know that she does cooperation with Sand and she always informs about Sand’s sales through her Snapchat." (F10)

**Motivations for production.** The production of eWOM is, again, primarily driven by *social identity*. However, the data revealed that *emotional motives* are an equally important motivation for production as the content is only produced if the customer experience arouses positive or negative feelings.

Positive feelings: “We went to Krog Roba the other night for drinks. We ordered the drinks and they were so unusual that I published a lot of videos about them on MyStory. The drinks were so weird that they aroused some feelings in me. Krog Roba definitely was able to totally exceed my expectations.” (M1)

Negative feelings: “I was reading the digital version of Kauppalehti. The whole page was, however, full of ads and I couldn’t see the links to the actual articles. The whole experience was so bad that I needed to take a screenshot and tweet it.” (F7)

Production is further driven by the following secondary motives: remuneration, empowerment, information, and social interaction. First, *remuneration* drives production, as publishing content through one’s personal profile provides access to potential customers. For instance: “Before I founded my company I hadn’t really been active on Facebook. But now I kind of have to be there. It’s a great way of informing my personal network where we sell our stuff as people have been asking me where they can buy the products.” (F4)

Further, production is driven by *empowerment*, as users want to (1) inspire others, (2) spread awareness, and (3) convince others to buy or not to buy. Citations from each category are provided below.

Inspire others & convince others to buy: “I always try to inspire others and I would never publish, for instance, a photo of a restaurant that I couldn’t recommend to others. And the same thing was with this yoga mat photo that I published. I really wanted to recommend that to others.” (F1)

Spread awareness: “Last weekend I was in KGB [a bar] singing karaoke. I took a video from there and posted it on MyStory on Snapchat as I had so much fun and I think that’s the best karaoke place in Helsinki. But it’s quite new. People don’t know about it yet so I thought I could tell my friends about the place so that everyone would start going there.” (M2)

Additionally, writing a status update is driven by *information*, as social media was considered the best channel for acquiring recommendations: “I once wrote a status update because I was organizing an event and I needed to find a good venue. I tried to find
some venues through this one platform, but in the end, Facebook was to the best channel to find the right place as my friend recommended me a lot of great venues.” (F7)

Finally, the content is produced due to social interaction, as creating content may be required by others, for instance in relation to a project: “When I applied to Adidas Tribe, one requirement was to make your Instagram account public and to post pictures from the training sessions. So I posted pictures about the gifted products because I had to, not because I wanted to.” (F8)

4.3.4. Motivations for public H2B COBRAs

The last COBRA category, public H2B COBRAs, includes participating in brand-generated content and producing content to a brand’s page. Public H2B activities are primarily driven by social identity, and secondary by the following motivations.

Motivations for participation. Public participation in brand-generated content is driven by information, functionality, remuneration, relational motives, empowerment, personal identity, and social interaction. First, although participation is primarily driven by social identity, participation is secondarily motivated by other sub-motives of social interaction. Indeed, word-of-mouth is a powerful tool for spreading information and users start following brands as a result of communication with others. For instance: “Especially the brands that I can’t really afford, which, hence, wouldn’t otherwise cross my mind, I often start following as a result of a discussion much like this one.” (F6)

Second, following or liking a brand’s page is motivated by information, which includes two sub-motivations: (1) access to instant information and (2) keeping up with trends. Examples of both categories are provided below.

Instant information: “I follow, for instance, some clothing brands as they usually publish information about new launches or other stuff first on their social media. I also follow Flow festival’s Snapchat as they launch all the artist first through Snapchat.” (M4)

Keeping up with trends: “I mostly follow brands that don’t yet have stores in Finland. So I can be up-to-date about all the trends.” (F6)

Third, functionality drives participation. More specifically, participation is motivated by (1) the possibility to customize what content is seen, and (2) one-channel access to information. Additionally, non-participation, i.e. not liking or sharing brand-generated
content is driven by (3) the lack of targeted content. Citations of each sub-motive are listed below:

**Quality of content:** “I have become a bit more critical towards what I like on Facebook. There is so much information that I really need to consider carefully what I want to see on my feed before I like a brand. So I want all the content on my feed to be interesting and relevant in someway and something that adds value and is not spam.” (F9)

**One-channel access:** “I follow several news media and blogs on Facebook. Then I get the information about new news or posts directly through Facebook and I don’t have to remember to check each blog separately.” (M3)

**Lack of targeted content:** “It’s so annoying that I am Wolt’s customer but many times there is Wolt’s ad on my feed in which new customers are offered a 5 euro voucher. It was annoying and I immediately started thinking why I am not given the same voucher. And also these campaigns in which the users are asked to like or shared are so annoying. I was like well now I am definitely not going to like or share anything.” (F7)

Fourth, *remuneration* drives participation. More specifically, the informants started to follow brands as participation provides access to (1) job opportunities, (2) deals and giveaways or (3) other added value in terms of content:

**Job opportunities:** “I have also started following some brands on Facebook because I know that I get the information about job openings much faster and easier from their social media account.” (M5)

**Deals and giveaways:** “I actually follow some online stores only because I know that they publish these sales codes through their social media accounts.” (F10)

**Added value:** “I have noticed that the brand needs to offer be something extra if they want me to follow them. For instance, product pictures are not enough. A good example is Valio who is doing a pretty good job. They post these recipes and it is something that adds value to me.” (F7)

Furthermore, following a brand is driven by *relational motives* as users (1) want to get to know the brand, e.g. through behind the scenes content, (2) share personal ties with the brand, (3) perceive the brand relevant, and (4) have the desire to co-create. Examples of each sub-motivation are given below.

**Getting to know the brand:** “It is interesting when brands produce some behind the scenes content, for instance, about their employees instead of just product pictures. And that is really beneficial, for instance, for recruiting purposes. I get to know the brand, how does it look like to work there and whether I could see myself working there.” (M4)

**Personal ties:** “Actually I started following Loop and Red Bull because my friends are working there.” (M6)

**Brand is relevant & The desire to co-create:** “They just opened this new K-Supermarket next door. And I started following it because it is so relevant in my everyday life and the entrepreneurs seem like very nice people. And also by liking their page I am able to affect their offerings.” (F7)
Empowerment is the sixth motivation that drives participation. The informants participated in brand-generated content in order to (1) express support for e.g. local business, (2) spread awareness, (3) make a difference with a like, and (4) encourage others to participate. Citations of each sub-motive are provided below:

Express support: “I feel that I have increasingly started liking the brands to whom my like is important. For instance, I have started following some smaller brands, such as cafes, as I want to support them.” (F9)

Spread awareness: “If I share something, it usually relates to something I perceive meaningful personally and of which I want tell others as well.” (F8)

Make a difference: “Although I am not that active in sharing and posting stuff on social media I still often share the kind of content that is somehow meaningful. For instance, I am part of Amnesty International and I often share their posts since I hope that my like or share would somehow make a difference.” (F6)

Encourage others: “I often like and share something that I have self-endorsed, for instance animal rights related content. And I want to encourage others to endorse them as well because I think that there is no harm for me that I publicly support such matters.” (F8)

Finally, participation is driven by personal identity, namely self-expression, as users want to project their self-image through participation. For instance: “I am willing to share something I can back up 100 %. But, for instance, currently I am working in this company that I don’t completely support and therefore I don’t want to share any work-related stuff through my personal profiles.” (F2)

Motivations for production. Similarly to production of public H2H content, production of H2B content, i.e. publishing content on a brand’s page, is motivated primarily by both social identity and emotional motives. Indeed, the informants primarily posted content on a brand’s page when the customer experience had aroused negative or positive emotions: “We had a really bad experience at Bronda once because the waiter recommended way too much food but at the end they didn’t allow us to pack the rest in a doggy-bag. So after that I went to Facebook and wrote a long status update to my wall to which I tagged by mom. I also posted a similar review to Bronda’s Facebook page.” (F3)

Production is secondarily driven by functionality, and empowerment. First, posting a message on a brand’s account is driven by functionality, as it was considered as the fastest way of receiving customer service. For instance: “I was using this new parking app in San Francisco. I needed to get my car back on a Sunday evening but the app wasn’t working and no one was answering to my calls or emails. So I ended up tweeting and the CEO replied immediately.” (M1)
Additionally, production is driven by *empowerment*. Depending on whether the consumer has been satisfied with the brand or not, production is either driven by the desire to encourage others to buy or not to buy a product or a service: “I once ordered something from this online store and they delivered the wrong items to me. But they handled the whole case so well that I needed to write a review on their Facebook page because I was so satisfied with them and I wanted others to know as well.” (F2)

4.4. COBRAs in social media ecosystem

The study also aimed to explore in which media brand-related social media use occurs. The findings indicate that users engage in brand-related activities in all the social media channels they are using. More importantly, however, consumers’ brand-related use is not media specific but consumers engage in brand-related activities across channels in a social media ecosystem. Consumers’ ecosystems consist of the channels that are relevant for each individual and each channel has a different purpose and hence, motivation in the ecosystem.

Consumers do not engage in only one type of COBRA in one specific social medium but a combination of them in social media ecosystem. Indeed, users shuffle from one social medium to another as channels are used interdependently. During that journey, they engage in multiple activities. For instance, a consumer may follow a brand on Facebook that results in consumption of the brand’s content on Facebook. She/he consumes the content and sees a link to their blog, clicks it and starts reading, hence, consuming content on the blog: “Yesterday I was scanning one blogger’s Instagram feed and I really liked her look. I realized I hadn’t been reading her blog in a while so I clicked the blog link in her profile. In the blog, I then started searching for the posts in order to find those clothes that I had seen on Instagram. And then I ended up to Topshop’s online store because one dress was from there.” (F7)

The ecosystem consists of various social media channels. Although the channels are used interdependently, each channel has a distinct purpose in the ecosystem. Therefore, in each channel consumers engage in those activities that are characteristic for that channel. For instance, the informants mainly engaged in consumption related activities in Facebook, while the most content is produced in Snapchat.

"It depends on the media. In some channels – for instance on Snapchat – I mainly produce content but on Facebook I mainly consume it. And I started using Twitter two weeks ago and there I do both.” (M2)
“The psychological barriers have an impact on what you do. On Facebook and LinkedIn they are the highest and you mainly consume content there. On Instagram, they are a bit lower. Then again on Snapchat and on private groups the barrier is the lowest and therefore I produce a lot of content there.” (M1)

As each channel has a different purpose, also motivations vary in the ecosystem. Indeed, users do not engage in activities for the same reasons, but activities are motivated by different gratifications in each channel. Activities on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are driven, for example, by consumers’ utilitarian needs, while activities on Instagram and Pinterest are driven, among others, by the desire to get inspiration: “I use Twitter for professional purposes. You get a lot of good insights from there and it is one of the best news media at the moment. But both Twitter and Facebook are also very good channels for being in touch with brands, as you can easily receive customer service there. And the main motivations for using Instagram are the source of inspiration and beautiful content.” (F7)

These findings can be considered as a foundation to further studies. Comparison of activities and motivations in different social media channels, need, indeed, to be further explored as such matters are not included in the scope of this study.
5 CONCLUSIONS

The chapter is divided into two parts. First, the key findings of consumers’ brand-related social media use are presented and discussed in relation to the existing literature. The discussion is largely based on the conceptual model of brand-related use that was developed based on the data. Second, the implications and limitations are presented and suggestions for further research are proposed.

5.1 Conceptualizing brand-related social media use

The aim of the study was to explore consumers’ brand-related social media use by examining brand-related activities, motivations and their relation. The main findings are summarized in Figure 2 and are as follows. First, there are two underlying factors that define brand-related use: the type of interaction and the level of privacy. Based on the two factors, four COBRA categories are proposed. Second, since new brand-related activities were discovered, a new COBRA typology is proposed. Third, differences in the importance of motivations were found as motivations for brand-related use are affected by the type of interaction, level of privacy, and the type of activity. Fourth, brand-related use is not media specific but occurs across channels in the social media ecosystem.

Figure 2 Summary of the main findings and main contribution of the study
5.1.1. **Underlying factors of brand-related social media use**

The empirical study revealed new findings on the underlying factors of brand-related social media use. The type of interaction and the level of privacy were found to be important explanatory categories of brand-related social media use. The factors function as dimensions for the categorization of the activities and the motivations.

Consumers were found to behave differently depending on whether the activity was private or public. Previously no distinction between public and private brand-related activities has been proposed presumably for two reasons. Firstly, many studies (e.g. Davis et al., 2014; Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) have been delimited to a particular type of social media, mainly SNSs. This has resulted in the lack of knowledge about brand-related activities in, for instance, instant messaging applications. Since private activities most commonly occur in those channels, the level of privacy has been neglected. Secondly, instant messaging applications have only recently started to significantly affect on social media behavior (MarMai, 2016) and they were not relevant when, for instance, Muntinga et al.’s (2011) study was conducted. However, as the level of privacy was found to primarily affect the motivations for brand-related use, it is an important finding.

Another finding was the type of interaction affecting consumers’ brand-related social media use. Similarly, it consists similarly of two dimensions: human-to-human (H2H) and human-to-brand (H2B) interactions. Such distinction is essential as users engage in either type of interaction depending on what gratification is sought. Additionally, users may adopt multiple roles and engage in brand-related activities as, for instance, a consumer, an employee or an entrepreneur through his/her personal profile. However, the role the user adapts is insignificant as the determining factor is whether the user is interacting with another person or with a brand. Previously neither different interaction nor different roles have been identified. Although there are studies on H2H interaction, such as the production of eWOM (e.g. Henning-Thurau et al., 2004), H2B interaction like following a brand in social media (e.g. Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), a differentiation between the types of interactions has not been proposed. This differentiation has been lacking, presumably, because previously the focus has been on users in general (Muntinga et al., 2011), stakeholders (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015) or consumers (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Heinonen, 2011) and different roles of
users have been neglected. Yet, as type of interaction is the second factor affecting the motivations for activities, this differentiation between types of interactions is essential.

As the underlying factors consist of two dimensions each, four COBRA categories are proposed: private H2H activities, private H2B activities, public H2H activities, and public H2B activities. These four categories function as a basis for categorization of the activities and motivations. Previously brand-related use has only been explained based on the direct correlation between activities and motivations e.g. by Muntinga et al. (2011) and Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015). Yet, neither acknowledges differences in the level of privacy or type of interactions. As the level of privacy and the type of interaction were found to define brand-related social media use, the new conceptual model describes it more adequately. Hence, this is the first attempt to comprehensively describe consumers’ brand-related social media use.

5.1.2. New COBRA typology

The study revealed six main activity categories: consumption, dark participation, participation, dark production, production, and social shopping. Three of these supplement earlier findings: dark participation, dark production, and social shopping. Dark participation and dark production are variations of the original categories participation and production. However, the activities differ in important ways, making it necessary to separate them. Thus, a new COBRA typology that consists of six types of activities is proposed.

Previously, three categories of activities have been proposed: consumption, participation and production (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011 and Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). Presumably, there are two possible reasons why the three additional activities were identified in this study. First, Muntinga et al.’s (2011) nor Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) studies were conceptual articles based on previous findings and new reasoning. Although Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015) proposed new sub-activities, the main categories, according to which the sub-activities were organized, were adopted from Shao’s (2009) conceptual typology for general social media activities. Second, as Muntinga et al.’s (2011) study dates five years back, consumer social media behaviour has changed due to technological development. For instance, online shopping has become increasingly popular and therefore social shopping activities have emerged. The findings hence
support the notion that consumer behaviour on social media develops at a fast rate and therefore it is important to constantly collect new empirical data (Heinonen, 2011).

Two additional findings on activities were made. First, users do not exclusively engage in one type of COBRAs but a combination of them. Consumers may, for instance, consume brand-related content and share it privately. This is in accordance with Muntinga et al.’s (2011) suggestions. Second, the main activity categories included several sub-activities. The following sub-activities were discovered: ignoring brands, collecting content, tagging, sending, showing interest towards a brand’s event, peer-to-peer commerce, and e-commerce. Other identified sub-activities correspond to large extent with (1) general social media activities (Bolton et al., 2013; de Valck et al., 2009; Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; Li and Bernoff, 2008; Zhu and Chen, 2015,) and (2) brand-related activities (Ruehl and Ingenhoff, 2015). In Appendix 6, new and existing sub-activities are listed. Thus, as expected by the author, Muntinga et al.’s (2011) COBRA typology does not fully represent current consumer brand-related activities, as consumers engage not only in main activities but also in various sub-activities.

5.1.3. The relation between activities and motivations

Nine categories of motivation that drive brand-related use were found: information, functionality, empowerment, social interaction and integration, personal identity, remuneration, relational motives, emotional motives, and no motives. Two of these, emotional motives and no motives have not previously been revealed to drive brand-related use. Emotional motives indicate that users engage in brand-related activities if the customer experience arouses feelings. No motive category indicates that users engage in brand-related activities without a motive and merely by habit, as they do not want to fulfill any need. Additionally, entertainment, that has been found to drive brand-related activities (e.g. by Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), was not identified in this study.

Others (e.g. Davis et al., 2014; Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) have examined the motivations for a specific brand-related activity, but this study shows that a broader approach to consumer social media use can lead to the identification of new motivation categories. The findings indicate further that motivations for brand-related use correspond largely with the existing categories of motivation, but that new sub-motives exist. A list of
existing and new sub-motives is provided in Appendix 5. The most important findings are discussed next.

The findings indicate most importantly that all motivations are not equally important. The relation between activities and motivations depends on three factors. The primary factor affecting the motivations is the level of privacy (public vs. private). Private activities are primarily driven by utilitarian needs (i.e. information and/or functionality) while public activities are driven primarily by social identity. Therefore, also the barrier of engaging in private activities is lower compared to public activities in which the barrier of engaging is higher. Previous studies led to the assumption that COBRAs are primarily motivated by utilitarian needs, which is refuted by this finding. The secondary motivations vary further depending on the type of interaction (H2H vs. H2B interactions) and the type of activity (consumption, (dark) participation, (dark) production, and social shopping). Others (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) have identified the relationship between the type of activity and motivations. However, previously differences in the importance of motivation nor other factors (i.e. type of interaction and level of privacy) have not been found to affect the motivations.

Therefore, contrary to what the author expected, it is argued that the conceptual framework that was developed based on the literature review, is insufficient for understanding consumers' brand-related social media use. Instead, as motivations and activities depend on the three aforementioned factors (i.e. the type of interaction, level of privacy, and type of activity), the conceptual model of brand-related use should be applied.

5.1.4. **Brand-related use in social media ecosystem**

The final important finding is that brand-related social media use occurs in social media ecosystem where consumers shuttle agilely from one channel to another. The finding supports the assumption of this thesis that social media use should not be studied only for single channels, as most studies currently do. Although this was expected by the author, similar patterns of behaviour have not been previously discussed in the brand-related social media literature. Thus far the literature has mainly focused on studying one type of social media, such as SNSs (e.g. Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014), blogs (e.g. Liljander et al., 2015), or one specific social medium (e.g. Piwek, & Joinson, 2016). Although such studies have provided important information
for understanding brand-related social media use in the chosen channel, they have not provided comprehensive understanding of consumers’ brand-related social media use in the social media ecosystem. Indeed, adoption of the ecosystem approach to social media allowed the discovery of such usage patterns.

The findings further suggest that not all the COBRAs occur in every social media channel. Some activities are more characteristic of one channel than of the other as each channel has a different purpose in the user’s ecosystem. For instance, while users mainly consume brand-related content on Facebook, they produce brand-related content the most on Snapchat. This contradicts with existing research. Previously many studies (e.g. Subrahmanyama et al., 2008; Tsai and Men, 2013, Bolton et al., 2013; Nielsen, 2009) have suggested that consumers mainly consume and participate. However, the empirical results suggest, similarly to what Ruehl and Ingenhoff’s (2015) findings indicate, that the type of COBRA a user engages in depends on the channel in which the activities are performed while the COBRA type itself is of less significance. Thus, in order to understand consumer behaviour in social media, brand-related use needs to be examined in the social media ecosystem instead of in individual channels.

5.2. Implications

The study is concluded by presenting the theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, limitations of the study are acknowledged and suggestions for further research are presented.

5.2.1. Theoretical implications

The aim of the study was to explore consumers’ brand-related social media use. The study, hence, contributes to the brand-related social media literature in five ways. First, the main theoretical contribution of this study is the new conceptual model of brand-related use that comprehensively explains consumers’ brand-related social media use. Whereas previously, the research on brand-related social media use has centered on the brand-related activities and motivations (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), this study proposes two underlying constructs that define brand-related social media use: type of interaction and level of privacy. Based on these two factors, four main brand-related activity categories are suggested: private H2H COBRAs, private H2B COBRAs, public H2H COBRAs, and public H2B COBRAs. All
brand-related activities and motivations can be categorized according to the new model.

Second, whereas previously all the motivations were considered equally important, the study contributes to the theory by proposing *different motivational drivers* for the four categories. The primary factor affecting the motivations is the level of privacy since private and public COBRAs are driven primarily by different motivations. Whereas private COBRAs are driven by utilitarian needs, public COBRAs are motivated by social identity. The secondary factors affecting the motivations are the type of interaction and the type of activity, which result in each COBRA categories having different secondary motives. Hence, the findings indicate that the motivations should be examined in relation to the level of privacy and the type of interaction, and the relation between the type of activity and motivations, that was previously the central construct of brand-related social media use literature, should be investigated within each four COBRA categories.

The study, thirdly, contributes to the theory by proposing three new activity types: *dark participation, dark production,* and *social shopping.* Each category further consists of sub-activities and the following novel sub-activities are suggested: ignoring brands, collecting content, tagging, sending, showing interest towards a brand’s event, peer-to-peer commerce and e-commerce. These activity types and sub-activities supplement the existing COBRA typology. Fourth, the study suggests two additional categories of motivation that drive COBRAs. The findings indicate that the COBRAs are not driven by entertainment as suggested previously, but in addition to the seven existing categories of motivation, COBRAs are driven by *emotional motives,* and no motives.

Last, the findings indicate that *users engage in various COBRAs in social media ecosystem.* It has been suggested that users engage in various COBRAs (e.g. Muntinga et al., 2011), and that the COBRAs vary in each channel (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). However, the study contributes to the research by combining these two elements; users engage in various COBRAs both in one social medium and engage in different COBRAs in different social media as they shuttle in the social media ecosystem.
5.2.2. Managerial implications

Three main managerial implications are proposed. First, companies should understand the difference between and importance of H2H and H2B interactions. Second, brands should not consider social media as a separate entity but tie it strongly together with the other marketing activities. Finally, all social media activities should be implemented based on a social media strategy. These implications are described next.

Firstly, currently, the majority of brands’ social media marketing activities focus largely on human-to-brand interactions. H2B interactions refer to all the interactions in social media between the brand and the users. Including also human-to-human interactions into social media marketing is essential, because they form part of consumers’ brand-related use. H2H interactions, from the marketing perspective, include, for instance, employee engagement and cooperation with influential opinion leaders, such as with bloggers. Including both types of interactions into social media marketing strategies is necessary as different interactions are driven by distinct gratifications and needs. For instance, in certain circumstances users perceive content created by other users (even if it is produced for commercial purposes) more reliable than brand-generated content.

Secondly, although brands cannot control the production of eWOM, brands should better understand in which situations eWOM is produced and how to handle it. First, brands should focus on building such brands that the employees and customers are willing to promote from free will, instead of forcing them to share brand-related content. This is essential also because users engage in H2B interactions if the brand corresponds with their values. Second, eWOM is produced in social media only when users consume the brand’s offerings and when the customer experience arouses either negative or positive feelings. Therefore, brands should increasingly focus on providing superior customer experiences that result in the creation of positive eWOM. Additionally, instead of being afraid of creating negative eWOM, which will evidently occur, brands should improve their post-purchase activities in social media. In brief, brands should not consider social media as a separate entity but understand it as part of the customer experience and be ready to serve the customers also in social media.

Finally, although social media marketing should be strongly tied to other marketing activities, cohesive social media strategies are needed. As users engage in different brand-related activities in a social media ecosystem, brands should adopt the
omnichannel approach to social media marketing instead of implementing marketing activities in independent social media channels.

The first step for creating effective social media marketing strategies is to define the customers’ social media ecosystem: what are the customers’ most relevant social media channels in relation to brands and why they engage in COBRAs in those channels. Based on those findings, social media marketing strategies and content creation should be implemented. It is not effective to neither be involved with as many social media as possible nor publish irrelevant content. Instead, brands should focus on those channels that are relevant for the customers’ brand-related social media use, define a purpose for each channel and align the content in relation to H2H and H2B interactions according to the customers’ needs and expectations. Bad optimization of interactions and content may result in losing valuable followers. For instance, selecting such influential opinion leaders whose personal brand does not correspond with the brand’s values is fatal as underestimation of the customers’ media intelligence is expected to result only in decreased brand loyalty. Additionally, in order to avoid annoyance and ignorance towards the brand, advertising on social media should be carefully thought and guidelines for advertisement should be included in the social media strategy. Indeed, instead of push advertisements, firms should carefully target both the content and the ads to the right consumers. Lack of optimization and in-depth understanding of the customers’ need not only make the customers ignore brands but may also negatively affect on brand image. Understanding why the customers engage in various activities and different interactions is essential for effective social media strategies as it ultimately results in strong customer relationships and improved brand loyalty.

5.2.3. Limitations and future research

The study has certain limitations that are here acknowledged and suggestions for future research are proposed. Firstly, the study was delimited to 24-30 year old consumers from Helsinki Metropolitan area. The conclusions are, hence, limited to that specific age group and are not necessarily transferable to other age groups or cultural backgrounds. Indeed, it is expected by the author and supported by recent statistics (e.g. MarMai, 2016) that social media behaviour varies between different age groups. Therefore, it is suggested that a similar study could be repeated for millennials and generation X in order to identify whether and how their brand-related social media use and motivations differ from this target group’s patterns of use.
Second, it is acknowledged that the sample size was small in relation to the size of the population and the sample was not randomly selected. Thus, the results of this study could be quantitatively tested in order to explore whether and to what extent the findings are generalizable to all 24-30 year-old Finnish consumers. Third, the results provide a framework for mapping 24-30 year-old consumers' social media use but do not fit the behaviour of consumers towards specific brands. Consumers’ social media use varies depending on what users expect from the brand, in what COBRAs they engage, why and in which channels. Future research could, hence, focus on exploring more in-detail how the COBRAs vary in the social media ecosystem and identifying different user types within the population. Especially a comparison of COBRAs in each channel would help not only brands to develop more accurate social media strategies but would also improve theoretical understanding of consumers’ brand-related social media use.

Further, due to the limited timeframe of the study the data were collected during one week and prolonged observation nor engagement were feasible. However, as Wallendorf and Belk (1989) propose, repeating the study a year later could strengthen the study’s dependability. Yet, as consumers’ social media behavior keeps developing at a fast rate, one might question whether a similar study would yield identical results a year later and improve trustworthiness. Therefore, instead, it would be more beneficial to repeat a similar study later and compare whether and how the usage has changed. For brands this would especially be out of high value, as brands need to be constantly aware of new patterns of behavior.

Additionally, no triangulation of methods or researchers was applied due to the scope of the study. Therefore, as focus group interviews always bear a risk of adapting to others’ opinions and interviews, in general, are necessarily not a truthful representation of the informants’ behavior, the study could be repeated by using supplementary methods, such as observation. However, other possible credibility and confirmability issues were avoided with the following manners. Firstly, the interpretations of the data are supported with adequate direct quotes and other references to the data. Secondly, recording and transcribing each focus group interview carefully avoided possible bias and misinterpretations by the researcher. Yet, it needs to be acknowledged that the results are the researcher’s own interpretations of the data.
Finally, there is an additional line of research that could be further explored. As stated previously, social media’s impact on consumer behaviour has been acknowledged previously (e.g. Galan et al., 2015; Hayta, 2013). However, it would be out of interest to study the COBRAs relation to purchasing behaviour in-depth. For instance, it would be interesting to explore further the relation between customer experience and the COBRAs as a strong link between them was already found. This would help brands to incorporate their social media marketing into other marketing objectives and extend the knowledge of brand-related social media use.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1 DISCUSSION ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA – WHAT IS IT?

Since its emergence into mass use in 2003 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), social media has grown in popularity among practitioners and consumers. In the literature, social media is defined in number of different, and somewhat contradicting, ways (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For instance, whereas some suggest that user-generated content (UGC) is a characteristic of social media, others use the two terms semi-substitutable (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, a clear distinction between the concepts should be made.

To the best of author’s knowledge, the most commonly used definition of social media (e.g. Galan, Lawley, & Clements, 2015; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015) is Kaplan and Haenlein’s (2010, p. 61), who define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.” The term Web 2.0, synonym to social web (Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015), refers to an online platform through which the social media is operated (Galan et al., 2015) and in which online sharing is possible (Hayta, 2013). User-generated content, on the other hand, covers various types of media content that is publicly available, involves certain amount of creativity, and is created by the consumers for non-commercial purposes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

This is consistent with Krishnamurthy and Dou (2008) who define social media as an online service through which the content is created and shared by users. Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, and Seymour (2011) take a somewhat similar approach and stress the importance of creation and exchange of UGC through online communities, e.g. social networks and blogs. Further, Barefoot and Szabo (2010) state that although both brand and consumers participate in social media, the communication and collaboration among users is the most significant factor.

Platon (2015), on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the social and the media, two main elements of the social media. She suggests that the combination of the two elements results in a content creation process that is available for all Internet users globally. Despite somewhat different approach that Platon (2015) takes, still all the authors seem to acknowledge the two underlying elements that define social media: some type of an online platform, through which UGC is created and exchanged.
If social media is defined as a Web 2.0 platform in which UGC is created and exchanged, the definition of UGC is significant. Typically UGC is understood according to Kaplan and Haenlein’s (2010) definition that suggest that three criteria need to be fulfilled: the content needs to be publicly available, it needs to involve creativity and it needs to be created for non-commercial purposes. However, these criteria raise several problems. First, in certain social media applications, such as in Instagram, the user may create an account that is available only for the selected users and hence, it is not publicly available. If the user has such private profile, is his/her profile then not social media? According to the second criterion, social media requires a certain amount of creativity. However, the problem arises when determining whether the content is creative or not. Indeed, how can one define whether the content is creative enough to be UGC as creativity is a very subjective concept? The last criterion of UGC is that it needs to be created for non-commercial purposes. Yet, when considering blogs, some posts may be created in cooperation with brands making it commercial, but the blog may include also non-commercial posts that may, for instance, emphasize personal brand-related preferences. Is the blog then social media or not?

Hence, based on a common understanding of current practice, social media can consists of a small group of users, creativity is difficult to determine and not that important, and many private blogs include commercial aspects today. Therefore, it can be argued that the definitions that are currently applied in academic research are not suitable for the purpose of this study. Instead, social media could be considered as an ecosystem that centers on the consumer experience (Hanna et al., 2011). Users may switch between roles and make use of anything created by other consumers – or even brands – that provides value for him/her at the particular point. Hence, the ecosystem approach is not limited to particular channels but it encompasses wide range of online media relevant for the consumer. Reflecting this to the previous discussion, the ecosystem approach offers the best overview for social media, as it is understood today.

The ecosystem approach is also the most suitable for the purpose of this study as it is not delimited to certain social media channels, as illustrated in Figure 3 (applied also by Hanna et al., 2011). Additionally, it is proposed that in order to understand users’ activities in social media, social media channels should not be seen as mutually exclusive (Hanna et al., 2011; Subrahmanya et al., 2008). Yet, currently many brands fail to considered social media as an ecosystem and treat social media channels as independent platforms (Hanna et al., 2011). For instance, based on author’s
experiences, consumers’ actions are fragmented throughout the social media: users act differently in different channels and engage in the ecosystem rather than in individual channels. Therefore, by applying the ecosystem approach, the findings of this study provide new knowledge of consumers’ social media behavior for both academia and practitioners.

Figure 3 Social media ecosystem (Schultz, 2007 cited in Hanna et al., 2011, p. 268)
APPENDIX 2  PILOT STUDIES

Two pilot studies, a one-on-one interview and a focus group interview, were conducted prior collecting the actual data. The purpose of the pilot studies was to determine the advantages and disadvantages of one-on-one vs. focus group interviews in relation to this study and to decide which method would provide the most relevant data.

First, a pilot one-on-one interview was conducted. During the interview, the informant did not recall any brand-related activities but instead, claimed that he interacts with friends in social media. Indeed, as consumers mainly go to social media to interact with their peers (e.g. Vorvoreanu, 2009), secondary activities, such as brand-related activities, may be difficult to recall.

Next, a pilot focus group interview was conducted. The same informant also attended to the focus group interview and the researcher observed whether the informant was able to better describe his brand-related social media use in a group discussion. It was found that the informant elaborated his brand-related social media use based on other informants’ responses and came up with several brand related activities during the discussion. Unlike in one-on-one interviews, the informants are, indeed, able to reflect others’ comments, elaborate their original responses better, and reflect their responses from other perspectives (Patton, 2015). As a result, it was determined that, for the purpose of this study, the social interaction between informants was essential for gaining in-depth data.
### APPENDIX 3  INTERVIEW GUIDE

Table 11. Interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Warm-up</td>
<td>Start the discussion&lt;br&gt;Get background information about general social media use</td>
<td>What social media do you use and why?&lt;br&gt;What do you do in social media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: What consumers do in social media in relation to brands?</td>
<td>Discover consumption, participation, and production-related activities&lt;br&gt;Discover new negative and positive brand-related activities&lt;br&gt;Discover consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand interactions</td>
<td>What do you do/not do in social media in relation to brands, products, and services?&lt;br&gt;Consider this in relation to consumption, participation, and production and interactions with other users and brands.&lt;br&gt;Do you avoid brands in SM? If yes, how?&lt;br&gt;Can you think of any particular action(s) you have done lately in relation to brands? Positive and negative experiences.&lt;br&gt;Scenario 1: You are planning to buy a new gadget. How do social media typically relate to this process? Think of both company and customer generated content.&lt;br&gt;Scenario 2: You start to follow a brand in a social medium. How and where do you interact with the brand after this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3: Why do they do the activities identified in Part 2?</td>
<td>Discover motivations for different activities&lt;br&gt;Discover the relation between activities and motivations&lt;br&gt;Discover the main motivations that drive brand-related activities</td>
<td>Why do you do such actions (both with other users and with brands)?&lt;br&gt;Why do you consume, participate and produce brand-related content in social media?&lt;br&gt;Why do you avoid brands in SM (if they say they do)?&lt;br&gt;What is the most important motivation for each activity?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4  EXAMPLE QUOTATIONS OF SUB-ACTIVITIES

In Tables 12-15 sub-activities of each COBRA category are listed and example citations of the sub-activities are given in the last columns.

Table 12. Example quotations of sub-activities within private H2H COBRA category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H2H interactions</th>
<th>Example citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumption</strong></td>
<td>Read eWOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Mä luen jotain puolustuspoliittista blogia ja sielt tulee tosi hyvää insighttia.&quot; (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search eWOM</td>
<td>&quot;Ni mä tosi usein etin vaik Instagramista sil tuotteen nimellä, nyt mä esim etin yhtä Pepe Jeansin takin kuvaa, ni mä vaan kirjotin Pepe Jeans -hakusanan ja sit sielt tuli ihmisiä joil oli se sama takki päällä.&quot; (F10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch eWOM</td>
<td>&quot;...mä oon joskus nähny et Masa on laittanut Snapin, missä se on ollu Krog Robassa drinkeillä ja sielt on tullu joku sika oudon näkönen drinkki.&quot; (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dark</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dark</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation</td>
<td>Join a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss in a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Mäki oon sellases työpaikassa jossa tapahtuu ihan hirveesti Facebookissa. Meil on oma ryhmä, johon mä sit liittyin ja siel käydään päivittäin ihan fiksu keskustelu työasioihin liittyen.&quot; (F9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect eWOM</td>
<td>&quot;Meil on sellanen privaatti reseptikansio Pinterestissä. Ja me kerätään sinne sellasia reseptejä joita on testannu ni muut tietää et oikei toi on hyvä resepti. Ja monesti siin on linkki johonki blogiin tai keittokirjaan.&quot; (F1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark production</td>
<td><strong>Dark</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send brand-related content privately</td>
<td>&quot;Et jos sä oot jossain kivassa paikassa ja sul on tosi hauskaa ni kyl mä usein jaan varsinki Snapissa tai Whatsappissina.&quot; (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social shopping</td>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer commerce</td>
<td>&quot;Mä taas on Instagramin kautta ostanu yhen bloggarin vaatteita ku se perusti oman tilin sen second hand -vaatteille.&quot; (F1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2B interactions</td>
<td>Example citations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>&quot;Facebookissa mä enemmän luen uutisia, niinku vaik Hesaria.&quot; (M5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read brand-generated content</td>
<td>&quot;Sit ku mä selasin Urban A:n kuvia ni mä sit sieltä löysin sen kellon ja sen kellobrändin.&quot; (F4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search brand-generated content</td>
<td>&quot;Mä katoi siis Chaneinin muotinäytöksen YouTubista&quot; (F9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch brand-generated content</td>
<td>&quot;Mä niin inhoon niit YouTube mainoksii. Ne on niin ärsyttäviä ja mä vaan aina tuijotain sitä Skip the ad nappulaa ja samalla en todellakaan kato sitä mainosta vaan laualn vaan jotain etten kuule sitä ääntä. Ihan vaan protestina&quot; (F8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore brands</td>
<td>&quot;No mul ainaki et jos mä löydän jonku artikkelin joka sopii jollekki henkilölle ni mä jaan sen ehdottomasti Messengerin kautta enkä sen toisen seinällä.&quot; (F8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share brand-generated content</td>
<td>&quot;Miel on sellanen privaatti reseptikansio Pinterestissä. Ja me kerätään sinne sellasia reseptejä joita on testannu ni muut tietää et okei toi on hyvä resepti. Ja monesti siin on linkki johonki blogiin tai keittokirjaan.&quot; (F1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect brand-generated content</td>
<td>&quot;Mut varmaan jotain Calirootssii must tuntuu et mä seurasin, mut mä lopetin sen seuraamisen ku pääosin se sisältö oli vaan tylsää ja siel oli vaan joku jutu jotka kiinnosti mua.&quot; (M4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send a private message to a brand</td>
<td>&quot;Mä käytän aika paljon Twitteriä ja Facebookia. Ja yleensä... No se vähän riippuu. Mut mä tykkäään käyttää direct messagei et mä en jaksa sitä et mä rupeen laittaa kaikkest jotain julkisii päivityksiä.&quot; (M3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfollow a brand</td>
<td>&quot;Mä olin kokonaan unohtanu kertoo mut tuol Vaasassa on sellasanen REKO-Vaasa-ruokapiiri. Siellä pienotuotajat myy suoraan kuluttajille ja se järkätään Facebookissa sellasen yksityisen ryhmän välityksellä.&quot; (F10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14. Example quotations of sub-activities within public H2H COBRA category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public activities</th>
<th>H2H interactions</th>
<th>Example citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Follow/like brand-related account</td>
<td>&quot;Monesti myös hyvinvointibrändeissä on se et seuraa mielummin niiden toimitusjohtajaa tai jotain tyyppejä ku tuntuu et saa parempaa sisältöä niiltä.&quot; (F3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect eWOM</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Mä esim suunnittelin et mä haluun Tapiovaaran pöydän ni mä aloin sit kerää niit kuvii Pinterestiin. Mut suurinosaa niist Tapiovaaran kuvista ei ollu mistään suomalaisista vaan jotain skandinaavisii blogeja.&quot; (F7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share other users'</td>
<td>brand-related content</td>
<td>&quot;Mut ehkä kerran mä oon jeesanu frendii jakamalla niiden päivityksen. (M3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like other users'</td>
<td>brand-related content</td>
<td>&quot;Nii totta joskus mun hyvät frendit on pyytäny mua vaik likettää jotain sivuu Facebookissa ni mä oon likettäny siitä sivuu vaik mä en muuten välttämättä tykkäis siitä.&quot; (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Publish brand-related content (photo or text)</td>
<td>&quot;Mut toisaalta on se kyl kaikille koska oon mäki jakanu jokku Niken uudet jouksukengät. Tai Mokon kynttilöitä.&quot; (F5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Ni mä laitoin yhteen projektiin liittyen ylipäätään sellasen gallupin. Ja sit jos on järjestäny jotain tapahtumii ja jos on lähemmäs tuhat kaverii Facebookissa ni sielt varmaan löytyy ihmisiä jotka tietää hyvän tilan, esim hinnan puolesta ja näin.&quot; (F7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Update personal profile</td>
<td>&quot;Mä päivitin mun Facebook profilin että missää oon töissä ja sit must tavallaan tuli meijän firman brand ambassador. Ja itseasia monet on sen jälkeen kyselly et voinko antaa suosituksia.&quot; (F5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15. Example quotations of sub-activities within public H2B COBRA category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H2B interactions</th>
<th>Example citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow/like a brand’s account</td>
<td>“Meil on just tulos se K-Supermarket Kasarmi sihen meijän viereen ni mä aloin just seuraa sitä.” (F7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect brand-generated content</td>
<td>“Sit taas Pinterestistä on tullu yllättäen henkilökohtanaan kanava et mun poikastävä sano et se näkee suoraan mun sieluun ku se kattoo niit mun tauluja. Et nyt esim mä oon keränny kaikkien bloggareiden ja sit kans brändien kuvia Italiasta kun mä oon menos sinne.” (F2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be interested in a brand’s event</td>
<td>’Jos taas miettii et missä sosiaalises medias on aktiivinen ni Facebookissa varmaan likettelee juttui ja on kiinnostunu tapahtumista, vaik festareita ja muista.” (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag a brand on a photo</td>
<td>“Kun mä taas usein laitan kuvia jostain ruoasta, vaikka vihersmoothiesta ja tagaan sitten sen brändin siihen.” (F3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share brand-generated content</td>
<td>’Mä esim kuulun vaik Amnesty Internationaliin ja mä sitä kautta teen jotain allekirjoituksii jos ihmisoikeuksii on loukattu jostain. Ni tosi usein mä oon jopa niitä jakanu.” (F6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish post on a brand’s page</td>
<td>“Mä siis olin ostanu olutpullon kaupasta mut se olut oli aivan täysin pilaantunutta ja mä sit laitoin palautetta Hartwallin Facebook-sivuille.” (M1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5  LIST OF SUB-MOTIVATIONS

In Table 16 sub-motivations are listed and example citations of the sub-motivations are given in the last column.

Table 16 also demonstrates which sub-motives are discovered in the study (marked with italics). Rest of the sub-motives (marked with regular text) have been previously identified. However, no all the existing sub-motives were identified in brand-related literature but correspond with motivations for general social media use.
Table 16. List of sub-motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main motivation category</th>
<th>Sub-motivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Product information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for purchasing decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping up with trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up-to-date information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source of inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Good insights</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Instant information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>One-channel access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Filtered content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(Lack of) Customized content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quality of the content (inconsistent, relevance)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Information flood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ease of use</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Real-time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motives</td>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Annoyance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(Lack of) Interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Customer experience arouses feelings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No motive</td>
<td><strong>Habit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Incentive from another SM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Seeing an ad</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>Exclusive job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to deals and giveaways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Access to potential customers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Added value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(Protection of) Social identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required by others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Convincing/encouraging others to buy or not to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spread awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Inspiring others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Expressing support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Making a difference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal identity</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational motives</td>
<td>Getting to know to the brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to co-create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal connection</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Brand’s relevance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6  LIST OF NEW AND EXISTING SUB-ACTIVITIES

Table 17 also demonstrate which sub-activities are discovered in the study. The new sub-activities are marked with *italics* and the existing sub-activities are marked with regular text. The following sub-activities were discovered in this study: ignoring brands, collecting content, tagging, sending, show interest towards an event and social shopping related activities. Rest of the sub-activities correspond to large extent to general social media activities identified by Bolton et al., 2013, Hoffman and Fodor, 2010, de Valck et al., 2009, Zhu and Chen, 2015 and Li and Bernoff, 2008 that were summarized in Table 1. In fact, all the sub-COBRAAs that relate to reading, searching, watching, sharing, joining, discussing, publishing, writing, and updating correspond with general social media activities. Additionally, unfollowing and following/liking related activities were identified in brand-related social media literature e.g. by Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015).

Table 17. List of new and existing sub-activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private activities</th>
<th>H2H interactions</th>
<th>H2B interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Read eWOM</td>
<td>Read brand-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Search eWOM</td>
<td>Search brand-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch eWOM</td>
<td>Watch brand-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ignore brands</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark participation</td>
<td>Join a group</td>
<td>Share brand-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss in a group</td>
<td><em>Collect brand-generated content</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Collect eWOM</em></td>
<td>Unfollow a brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark production</td>
<td><strong>Send brand-related content privately</strong></td>
<td><strong>Send a private message to a brand</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social shopping</td>
<td><strong>Peer-to-peer commerce</strong></td>
<td><strong>E-commerce</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public activities</th>
<th>H2H interactions</th>
<th>H2B interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Follow/like brand-related account</td>
<td>Follow/like a brand’s account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Collect eWOM</em></td>
<td><em>Collect brand-generated content</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share other users’ brand-related content</td>
<td><em>Be interested in a brand’s event</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like other users’ brand-related content</td>
<td><em>Tag a brand on a photo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share brand-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Publish brand-related content (photo or text)</td>
<td>Publish post on a brand’s page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Update personal profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>